



NWTTA NEWS

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NWTTA Executive Leadership Planning Meetings

On October 27 & 28, 2023, the NWTTA held its annual Executive Leadership Planning Meetings in Yellowknife. The meetings are attended by members of Central Executive, Regional Presidents and senior Central Office staff.

The two days were jam-packed with presentations from the GNWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) and the NWT Human Rights Commission. The ECE sessions focused on trialing of the Curriculum Renewal and the draft Educator Growth and Development Framework. The Human Rights presentation provided an overview of the areas and grounds for which individuals may file a complaint. They reviewed the process for resolving complaints including filing a complaint up to hearings by the NWT Human Rights Adjudication Panel.

Regional presidents had an opportunity to share with each other celebrations and concerns from their respective regions. Participants were also provided an opportunity to review sections of the



l-r Sara McCrea (Assistant Executive Director), Tyson Ruston (Sahtu President), Shellie Trimble (Tlicho President), Stephanie Mallet (YCS Vice-President), Colin Pybus (Member-at-Large & Beaufort-Delta President), JP Bernard (Dehcho President), Wendy Tulk (Secretary-Treasurer), Gwen Young (Vice-President & YK1 President), Christine Sivret (CSFTNO Vice-President), Todd Sturgeon (Regional Presidents' Representative & Fort Smith President), Matthew Miller (President), Peter Beaton (South Slave Vice-President), David Murphy (Executive Director)

NWTTA Bylaws and Policies from the NWTTA Handbook.

It was a very successful two days and this success was quite evident in the passion demonstrated by all.

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President's Update

Matthew Miller, President

Hello NWTTA Members,

It seems each year goes faster with new challenges. With the evacuations throughout the Northwest Territories at the start of the year, we are even more acutely reminded of the swift and unpredictable nature of the challenges we face. It has only been a month since our last NWTTA Newsletter went out but a lot has happened in that time.

The Association hosted the NWTTA Executive Leadership & Planning Meeting in October. During this time Regional Presidents, or designates, meet with Central Executive and NWTTA staff for updates and presentations. Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) provided a presentation on Curriculum Renewal as well as the draft Educator Growth and Development Framework which may be trialling in your school. We also received a presentation from the NWT Human Rights Commission to review their role, what human rights an individual has, how to submit a complaint, and resources available to teachers.

We reviewed and discussed the capacity building report presented at our last Annual Meeting of Central Council (AMCC) which focused on motivators/incentives, and barriers which impact the number of members taking on leadership roles at a school, regional, and territorial level. This trend, not unique to the NWTTA, appears to be a broader trend with fewer individuals stepping into crucial positions that play a pivotal role in providing support and leadership. The strength of our Association lies in the active involvement and commitment of its members, especially in leadership capacities. The current trend, if left unaddressed, could have significant implications for our collective ability to fulfill the Association's mandate and advocate for our members.

One area which has been negatively affected is our NWTTA Committees. Every two years a call out for interested individuals is distributed to the membership. There are times when a member resigns from a committee due to a change in their role within the school, workload, or a change of interests. This year an additional call out was mass emailed looking to replenish those committees with eager and energetic members.

Another area which requires commitment from the membership is Central and Regional elections which will occur this year. All positions are on a two-year term. Nominations for Central Executive positions (President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, and Member-at-Large) will open December 1. It would be remarkable to have a comprehensive roster of candidates for every role. The election will take place on the first day available all schools are in session on or after February 15. Regional Elections will occur based on Regional Bylaws usually in the spring.



Having knowledgeable, capable, and dedicated individuals in these key roles directly impacts you as a member and the direction the Association takes moving forward.

A grievance was filled during the 2022-2023 school year over the creation of school calendars. Although we were optimistic a resolution could have been found before calendars were approved, it was not until October 2023 when a resolution was agreed upon. Through the grievance it is clear that more needs to be done to provide training to those creating and approving calendars, instruction need to be clearly stated, and reviewing for compliance needs to occur at different levels with key stakeholders. More regarding the grievance can be found on page 13 of this newsletter.

As you may be aware, one of the more impactful events has been the resignation of David Murphy, NWTTA Executive Director. David's decades-long contributions to the Association would be impossible for me to summarize here. David's work ethic is second-to-none and only matched by his genuine desire to assist members. We are happy to have David for the remainder of the year before wishing him a happy retirement with his wife, Julie.

On behalf of the Association, I want to extend our appreciation for the work you do in supporting your schools, communities, and colleagues. I hope you are able to find peace and relaxation with your friends and family during the upcoming holidays.

Matthew

Northern Lights

Meet Heather Willard from Tulita (Sahtu region)



Q. Where did you grow up?
I grew up in Scarborough, Ontario, a 15-minute bicycle ride away from Lake Ontario, and spent summers on the Nottawasaga River in Wasaga Beach. As an adult I've lived and taught in Western and Northern Canada...always near the shore of a river, lake or ocean.

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?
During my first job as a day camp counselor, after teaching campers to independently tie their shoelaces and baking muffins by estimating cups and half cups of ingredients using mugs, I found delight in breaking skills down to help others feel success.

Q. What do you teach?
I am currently a math and literacy interventionist in Tulita. In this role I am teaching and consistently re-learning with students everything from counting to algebra, and segmenting words to writing essays. I love working with classes, students and teachers as I support their learning journey.

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?
Smiles, excitement for learning and life, as well as continuously developing students' independence, is a true joy for me. What I love about teaching is I can facilitate inquiry projects and games where I am learning - or just one step ahead of their learning experience - right alongside the students. It's all about the dance of scaffolding for curiosity and independence!

Q. How do you engage your students?
In my classroom space in Tulita I have a NWT geographical features map, 3 by 3 Rubik's cubes, and some small hand-made, natural material percussion instruments from Brazil. These curiosities inevitably engage the students in conversation, exploration, and a minds-on experience. The challenge to solve more sides of the Rubik's cube next time, or conversation about how to solve a side sparks their minds. Similarly, through the NWT map students share interesting stories of boat trips to visit family along the Mackenzie river or hunting trips. Truthfully the students are also engaging my mind in their stories, yet my goal is sparking their mind to be ready for learning.

My First Mentor Teacher
My father, now 97, was truly my first mentor teacher. With him I learned how to change tires on the car, weld a metalpipe swing and monkey-bar set, write a speech, sew on the sewing machine, and design, then build furniture. Through his scaffolding I believed together we could do anything, and through his patient mentorship I realized mistakes were part of learning. Through persistence I figured-out learning anything was possible!

Christmas Math Puzzle!

Matrix is counting their Christmas tree lights.

- They have between 500 and 1000 lights.
- The hundreds digit of this number is a multiple of 3.
- The total of all the digits of this number is 10.



How many lights could Matrix have?

(There may be more than one answer and hence try to find all the possible answers).

By Mr. Sushil Jasper M.Sc., B.Ed.,
Mathematics and Science Teacher
Liidlii Kue Regional High School (Dehcho region)

Answer on page 19



Incorporate human rights learning into your classroom with ease.

No matter what grade you teach, we have a selection of ready-to-use human rights lessons.

Resources are

- FREE
- downloadable
- organized by grade
- tied to the social studies curriculum
- curriculum objectives are included

We also have information on creating accessible classrooms, sexual harassment at school, supporting LGBT youth, building equal and health relationships and anti-racism resources.

Visit our website to access the Teachers' Toolkit!
nwthumanrights.ca/resources/forteachers/

nwthumanrights.ca

Nominations Open December 1 for Central Executive 2024-2026

Are you interested in becoming a leader with the NWTTA? Here's your chance!

NWTTA Central Executive consists of five positions, four of which (President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer and Member-at-Large) are elected for two-year terms, and the fifth, a Regional Presidents' Representative who is selected by Regional Presidents. The term of office for the current Central Executive ends June 30, 2024.

Nominations open **December 1** for the 2024-2026 four Central Executive positions listed above.
Deadline for nominations to be received at Central Office is January 15, 2024 at 5:00 pm.

All nominations must be moved and seconded by two NWTTA members, and approved by Central Executive, a Regional executive, or the Nominations Committee.

The [Central Executive Nomination Form](#) can be found in the Forms section of the NWTTA website (nwttta.nt.ca).

To be eligible for nomination to the office of the President, a member must have previous NWTTA Central and Regional Executive experience. There is no previous Central or Regional experience requirement for the positions of Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer and Member-at-Large.

Duties of Central Executive Officers:

The **President** shall:

- call meetings of Central Executive and Central Council
- preside over the above mentioned meetings
- be a member ex-officio of all committees
- represent the Association officially
- be legal custodian of the property of the Association, but shall not have the power to acquire or dispose of Association property
- serve as Canadian Teachers' Federation Director
- the President's duties and responsibilities are to be as directed by Central Executive in accordance with its Bylaws and Policies

The **Vice-President** shall:

- assume the duties of the President in the event of a vacancy in that position or the President's

inability to perform their duties, or in their absence

- assist the President by acting for them when requested
- assist other Executive Officers as directed by Central Executive
- perform other duties as specified by Central Executive

The **Secretary-Treasurer** shall:

- ensure that the minutes of meetings of Central Executive are recorded
- ensure that minutes are typed, circulated, filed promptly after each meeting of Central Executive
- ensure that the newsletter is published and oversee the financial aspect of a newsletter and other publications
- exercise general financial control and supervision over the Association
- present a financial report and proposed budget to Central Council at AMCC or such other time as may be designated by Central Council
- cause to have the books audited at the end of the fiscal year
- perform other duties as specified by Central Executive

The **Member-at-Large** shall:

- serve as the representative of all members in all regions
- perform other duties as specified by Central Executive

Have questions?

Email them to membership@nwttta.nt.ca

Central Executive 2024-2026

Term: July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2026

Nominations open: December 1, 2023

Nomination deadline: January 15, 2024

Campaign material deadline: January 18, 2024

Voting Day: To Be Determined



Career and Education Advisors

Do you have high school students who need direction? Career and Education Advisors can help!

They work one-on-one with Grade 9-12 students in every NWT community.

They help youth see how their own strengths and interests can lead to jobs or further education.

To connect your students with a CEA, email cea@gov.nt.ca



Government of
Northwest Territories

School Staff Photos 2023-2024



Deh Gah Elementary & Secondary School
Fort Providence (Dehcho region)



École Allain St-Cyr
Yellowknife (CSFTNO region)

Food First Foundation

Jocelyn Apps, Coordinator, Food First Foundation

The [Food First Foundation](#) is a registered charity based in Yellowknife. Our mission is to support food and nutrition education programs in schools across the NWT, encouraging a healthy population of children and youth for future generations.

Thirty percent of NWT children live in food-insecure households; the second highest of any province/territory in Canada. Many of these children are going to school hungry and undernourished. As teachers and administrators know all too well, inadequate nourishment leads to poor concentration, classroom behavioural issues, higher absenteeism, and reduced scholastic success. Healthy food provides the energy children need to be attentive and enthusiastic in school, increasing their ability to concentrate, learn, and develop into outstanding adults.

Food First provides funding to schools to feed their hungry students via breakfast, lunch, and snack programs. The support we are able to offer varies from year to year, and is meant to help fill gaps in funding that schools may have. Food First has also developed a cooking program called Taste Makers which complements the NWT curriculum and teaches students practical kitchen skills. There is a student and teacher's manual which are available year round digitally, (you can download this from our website [foodfirst.ca](#) or send us an email if you would like it on a jump drive!), as well as a bit of funding

for ingredients and supplies distributed at the start of the school year. We also help schools to stock their kitchens with equipment and support school gardening programs with supplies and funding.

Over the course of the 2022/2023 school year, we supported 27 school food programs, provided funds for 14 school cooking programs, and sent gardening supplies to 17 schools across the NWT. We were also able to offer reusable dishes for schools as part of the GNWT's waste reduction and recycling initiative.

The Great Big Crunch was another huge success this year! This is an event involving a synchronised crunch of an apple, (or other healthy snack), which promotes the importance of enjoying food together and

enhances student understanding of where their food comes from.



École Boréale in Hay River



?ehtseo Ayha School in Deline

The application process and reporting requirements for Food First funding are simple. We know how much time and energy teachers and administrators dedicate to their school food programs, and we strive to make things as easy and as flexible as possible. Principals, watch out for an email from us in late spring 2024 for the 2024/2025 school year!

Thank you once again to the NWTTA for the Christmas donation. It will be put to good use for NWT school food programs!

For more information about Food First, please visit [www.foodfirst.ca](#), or email [coordinator@foodfirst.ca](#).

The Science Behind Sundogs, an Optical Phenomenon in the Polar Regions

Sushil Jasper M.Sc., B.Ed., Liidlí Kue Regional High School (Dehcho region)

A sundog is an atmospheric optical illusion often observed in the polar regions of Earth. It occurs when the Sun is low, and the atmosphere is filled with ice crystals during the cold weather days.

The formal term of sundog is parhelion. A rainbow typically signals an end to the rain, while a sundog often indicates that rain is on the way, most probably within the next 24 hours.

Sundogs are the coloured circular spots of light that develop due to the refraction of light through ice crystals - found in cirrus clouds, which are the thin, wispy clouds in the sky.

Sundogs are located approximately 22 degrees, either right or left, or both sides from the Sun, depending on where the ice crystals are present. The colours go from



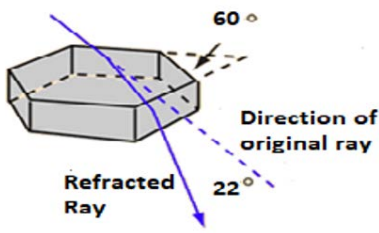
the red closest to the Sun and blue farthest from the Sun. The red colour band has a longer wavelength than the blue band, and hence, red has a more prominent appearance in the sky.

During my time teaching at Jean Wettrade High School in Gameti NT, located at the latitude of 64.1°N, I had an opportunity to observe sundog on a freezing weather day at -36° C.

Sundogs are commonly caused by the two refractions of light from either side of horizontally oriented, flat, hexagonal-shaped ice crystals. This two-refraction process causes the sunlight to deviate by at least 22 degrees. This deviation forms a bright spot on both sides of the Sun, called the optical illusion sundog.

By having the 60° vertex angle (A) of the prism formed by extending the sides of the hexagonal-shaped ice crystal and the index of refraction of ice (n=1.31), it is possible to calculate the angle of minimum deviation (D) to be 22° as follows:

$$\text{Index of Refraction } n = \frac{\sin \frac{A+D}{2}}{\sin \frac{A}{2}}$$
$$1.31 = \frac{\sin \frac{60+D}{2}}{\sin \frac{60}{2}}$$
$$\sin \frac{60+D}{2} = 1.31 \times \sin 30$$
$$\frac{60+D}{2} = 40.92$$



Hence, the angle of minimum deviation D = 22°

Working for Our Members A Glimpse of What We Do

David Murphy, Executive Director

As you may know by now this will be my last year working for the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association (NWTTA) and serving you, our members. I have submitted my resignation and the search for a new Executive Director for the NWTTA has begun. My last day of work will be on Friday, June 28, 2024 with the new Executive Director commencing on July 1, 2024.

My history with the NWTTA began in August 1988 when I accepted a teaching position with Yellowknife Catholic Schools (YCS) at St. Patrick's Elementary School, now Weledeh Catholic School (Weledeh). I attended my first NWTTA meeting at the former St. Patrick's High School, now École St. Patrick High School. The next year I served as Secretary-Treasurer and from there went on to serve the YCS Region as its Vice-President and President. Later I was elected to Central Executive and served in several positions for a few years and in 2000 I was elected NWTTA President.

When my term as NWTTA President was over, I returned to YCS and spent my last teaching years at Weledeh where I had started in August 1988. I resigned my teaching position at Weledeh in June 2017 and began working with the NWTTA first as Assistant Executive Director and now as Executive Director.

I am very grateful and honoured for the opportunity to have served the Association for the past several years as its Assistant Executive Director and now as its Executive Director. I can honestly say that I have enjoyed every minute that I have spent serving members of our Association. During the next several months I shall do everything possible to wrap up my duties and work with other team members to ensure a smooth transition.

Currently there is lots going on. Our focus, at the moment, for the next few weeks is the selection of the new Executive Director as per the direction set by Central Executive. As of this writing the job ad has been posted in various outlets including a mass email to our membership and we are now waiting for the applications to arrive.


Nominations for Central Executive positions for the two-year term 2024-2026 are open as of December 1, 2023 with the election of officers on or after February 15, 2024 on a day when all schools are in session. Central Executive elections follow the direction as per Bylaw 8, Nomination and Election of Central Executive Officers and Policy 8.4.7, Central Executive Election Procedures. If you would like additional information regarding the Central Executive elections you may download the NWTTA Bylaws and Policies Handbook from the NWTTA website to view all the election procedures.

Negotiations for a new collective agreement for the GNWT bargaining unit is still ongoing and will more than likely take us into the new year. YCS and YK1 bargaining units concluded their negotiations for new collective agreements and have collective agreements in place from September 2021 to August 2025. Members of these bargaining units are paying particular attention to the GNWT negotiations as any pay increase percentage will also be applied to their respective collective agreements.

This year's "Thank You for Making a Difference (TYFMAD)" finale is taking place in Hay River. For 27 years this has always been an exciting time to celebrate our teachers who make a difference in the lives of our students, schools and communities. We are thankful to Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) for the sponsorship of this event and look forward to the celebration. TYFMAD grand prizes will be drawn from all active NWTTA members totaling \$10,000 in \$500 gift cards.

I look forward during the remainder of my tenure to attending your regional meetings either virtually or in person and assisting you with any concerns you may have. If there is anything I can assist you with between now and June please reach out to me. I shall appreciate the opportunity to serve you.

In closing, please remember, if you do encounter any bumps along the way please contact us and we will try our best to level them for you so your journey is more pleasant.




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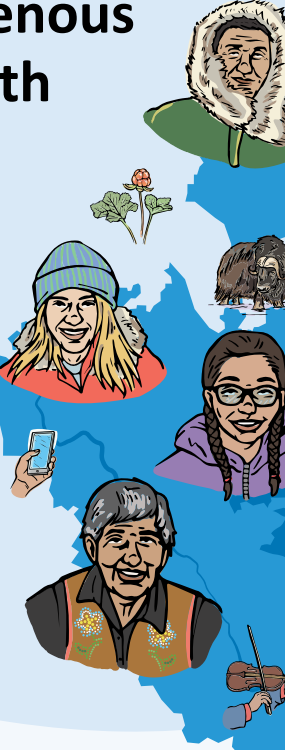
Celebrate Indigenous Languages Month this February

For ideas on how to celebrate Indigenous Languages Month in your classroom, visit:

- www.ourlanguagesnwt.com
- www.pwnhc.ca
- www.nwtliteracy.ca

 www.facebook.com/GNWTecce

#IndigenousLanguagesMonth
www.ece.gov.nt.ca/ILM



Tsiigehtchic Cultural Immersion Exchange with Westmont Montessori School in Victoria, BC

Chris MacLea, Chief Paul Niditchie School (Beaufort-Delta region)

“We are proud to be Gwich’in, and we are proud to share our culture and community”

In April 2023, Chief Paul Niditchie School (CPNS) in Tsiigehtchic hosted 10 high school students from Westmont Montessori school in Victoria, British Columbia. We started planning this exchange in September 2022. Countless hours of fundraisers and student-led donation meetings with local leaders, companies, and organizations was all worth it when Westmont arrived in Tsiigehtchic to meet our students for the first time.

The nerves of meeting their exchange partners did not last long once we started several team building activities. CPNS students and parents helped plan an exciting itinerary that highlighted core community values and cultural activities. Our students were proud to teach about their Gwich’in identities and explore Tsiigehtchic with their partners with a fun town scavenger hunt.

One key objective of the exchange was to have the British Columbia students immersed into Gwich’in culture and the daily life of people in Tsiigehtchic, and build our students’ confidence and leadership to share their strengths, talents, and culture. The first night they arrived the community came together to welcome them with a feast at our school. CPNS students taught the Westmont kids traditional Dene games, such as arm pull, leg wrestling and hand games. Our grade 6 female student was the undisputed leg wrestling champion of both groups. The students were also able to share bannock and caribou stew with our elders, and listen to their stories about the history of Tsiigehtchic, Treaty 11, and the Gwichya Gwich’in people. Westmont was thrilled to learn the winter carnival games, such as nail drive, tea boiling competitions, and log cut. It’s safe to say they need some practice, but they had tremendous engagement and attitudes.

A significant moment of our exchange was harvesting a lynx. A CPNS high school student trapped the lynx and

shared it with our exchange group to be worked with. One of our students’ fathers came in and delivered a masterclass on skinning techniques, as well as told rich cultural stories and respectful harvesting practices while working with animals.



After several days in Tsiigehtchic we were fortunate enough to participate in the Inuvik Jamboree, which celebrates Gwich’in and Inuvialuit cultures. The students got involved in limbo competitions, old time dancing, eating fresh donuts, and watching the elegant Inuvialuit drummers and dancers. A surprising highlight of the trip was taking the students to the Mackenzie River ice road where students took many pictures and spent a long time sliding on the ice.

A fulfilling and unanimous favorite experience of the trip for both groups was going dog sledding on a chilly April afternoon. Not only was it exhilarating, it also allowed for a deep conversation surrounding the appreciation and significance of dogsledding for Gwich’in people and connecting our students to a traditional form of traveling. The experience brought pure joy to everyone.

Finally we had plans to go to Tuktoyaktuk for a tour of the pingos, see the Arctic Ocean, and learn about Inuvialuit culture first hand. However, bad weather and road conditions kept us in Inuvik. The students showed great adaptability and made the best of the situation by playing countless group games into the evening.

The next morning when we dropped the Westmont students off at the airport many CPNS students were heard saying, “I don’t want them to go” or “As soon as I get home I’m going to cry, because I will miss them already.” The excitement to see their friends in Victoria was massive!

When CPNS started our long journey down to Victoria in

June there was so much anticipation. The students knew they would be meeting their friends’ families, staying in their homes, and soon participating in beach days, tree top trekking, whale watching, sea kayaking and numerous first time experiences in Victoria and Vancouver Island.

CPNS students challenged themselves in all aspects of the trip and showed great resilience. They shared their traditional Gwich’in games, stories, and culture with the entire Westmont school. We were all astonished by the enormous size of the old growth trees in the rainforest compared to the trees in Tsiigehtchic above the Arctic Circle. Every part of the trip was a learning opportunity; how to navigate an airport and city transit, budgeting their money, safety strategies when traveling in cities, and improving social skills in a variety of new settings. All of our breaths were taken when we were whale watching off the coast of Vancouver Island and got so close to a wild orca pod, comprised of three massive adults and one calf. Another major highlight for the students was experiencing what life would be like as a post-secondary student at the University of Victoria. Many students were inspired and loved the on-campus First Peoples House, movie theatre, rock climbing wall and residence buildings. The campus beautifully infused local Indigenous histories and culture throughout the grounds and buildings. However this was not the norm throughout Vancouver Island.

The students were asked to be critically observant of their surroundings. The guiding question of our trip was, *How is the history of colonization memorialized and Indigenous cultures honored in Victoria and on Vancouver Island?*

Imagine you are next to a beautifully handcrafted 130 foot tall totem pole in the capital of British Columbia, and then, you walk over to the sign and it says “Memento of the nation’s infancy, symbol of a proud race, monument to a rare native art, proof of united community interest and the purest form of Canadiana.1956.” When we read



this sign as a group, our hearts sank. The students emphasized that it was clear the sign was not written by an Indigenous person, but rather, a British settler. The students collectively agreed the monument description is spreading a misleading and romanticized colonial message to its audience that neglects to share the reality of the relationship between Indigenous groups and colonizers of Vancouver Island in the 1900s.

This was one of many memorials that was misleading or glorified the colonizers of Victoria and it highlights the lack of perspectives on Vancouver Island and across Canada as a whole. The students

actively documented what they observed with photographs including monuments, signs and street art, and as a group we critically discussed the desired colonial message to the viewer or how some monuments honored Indigenous cultures, identity, and language. This exchange trip was a step towards reconciliation, and honoring First Nations cultures in Canada. We admired and critiqued perspectives that were presented, and critically questioned who’s perspectives were missing.

Although each group comes from very different places, both schools shared incredible experiences and developed a strong sense of community. There was never a dull moment throughout the trip. Bus rides had students singing songs, telling jokes, and lots of laughter. The happy, but also sad tears, that were shared in the final goodbye group hug verified that the genuine relationships built were strong and will have long lasting positive effects on the students, teachers, families and communities that participated.

Mahsi Choo to the organizers Chris MacLea, Morgan Morel, Principal Lara Mercier and Experiences Canada, Tsiigehtchic community members and organizations, Westmont Montessori school and families, East Three Secondary School, and the Beaufort-Delta Education Council for making this exchange possible!



School Staff Photos

2023-2024



School Calendar

Call Letter Grievance

Matthew Miller, President

To provide a summary, the NWTTA filed a grievance in relation to the school calendar call letter issued by the GNWT Department of Education, Culture & Employment (ECE) during the 2022-2023 school year. A resolution was reached on October 4, 2023. The catalyst was the outside instructional hours which directly impacts the workload of teachers. Steps are now being taken to ensure each school is in compliance with the Education Act, Regulations, Legislation, Directives, and Collective Agreements through a joint school calendar committee composed of representation from the NWTTA, ECE and Superintendents.

Each school can have up to a maximum of 45 outside instruction hours. It is important to note there is **no requirement** to have any hours outside of the instruction day.

As a result of the grievance, the Employer and Association have come to an agreement on the following items:

- The limitation on activities outside of regular school day hours to include:
 - Parent/teacher conferences,
 - Three-way conferences,
 - Open house/welcome to school events, and
 - Cultural Events/Ceremonies (as outlined below).
- Ensure all schools follow the STIP directive on the allocations of hours.
- School calendars and revisions were forwarded to NWTTA throughout the review process, final/ revised copies of school calendars that required edits will be submitted to the NWTTA.
- Provide the NWTTA with any further changes to school calendars as they arise throughout the year.
- Training will be provided by ECE to school principals in the 2023-2024 school year ahead of 2024-2025 school calendar development.

For existing 2023-2024 school year calendars: No revisions to the outside instructional hours will be required, however the following will apply through to the end of the current school year:

- Any activities that fall on a day of rest (weekend) or statutory holiday will be cancelled
- Any activities that are not specifically one of the four outlined (parent/teacher meetings, 3-way conferences, open houses, or cultural events/ ceremonies) will become voluntary for staff involvement.

Specifically, when reviewing / approving the inclusion of cultural events in instructional activities outside the school day, the following criteria will be applied:

- Activities / events are instructional in nature,
- Students are present and engaged in these activities / events,
- Activities are not extra-curricular in nature (i.e. clubs, sports teams),
- Activities / events are not scheduled on statutory holidays or designated days of rest,
- And activities / events must be scheduled and approved in accordance with calendar timelines.

The Association and the Employer agree, acknowledge, and recognize culture events and celebrations are vital to schools because:

- the relationship between languages, culture, learning, and school programs must be grounded in the cultures of the NWT;
- the events contribute to culturally safe learning environments that respect and promote local Indigenous worldviews, cultures, and languages that support NWT students to succeed; and
- often, authentic cultural learning experiences may be planned in conjunction with representatives from local Indigenous Government Organizations or their designates (including Chiefs, Elders, Knowledge Holders, etc.) which further strengthens positive relationships between the school and community.

Bring a Sense of Calm this Holiday Season

In the hustle and bustle, as we approach the end of the year and holiday season, it's easy to become overwhelmed by work demands on top of planning, shopping, and socializing. However, by incorporating mindfulness into your holiday routines, you can create small but more meaningful and joyous moments for yourself and your loved ones.



Our partners at Starling Minds hosted a wellness series called, **Mindful Living: A Path to Preventing Burnout**. The webinar series is now complete and available to you on the Starling Minds Mental Fitness platform!

Here is a glimpse into some strategies you can learn for this holiday season!

- **Mindful Breathing:** Before the day kicks off, spend a few minutes focusing solely on your breath. Observe the rise and fall of your chest, the sensation of air entering and leaving your nostrils.
- **Walking Meditation:** Walking in the snow or a nearby Winter Wonderland can bring you a lot of peace and quiet. Remember to notice the sensation of your feet touching the ground and the rhythm of your steps.
- **Mindful Eating:** It can be hard to practice this (especially during the holidays), but try to pay attention to the taste, texture, and aroma for just one meal a day, even if it's just a quick snack.
- **Body Scan:** At the end of the day when the festivities are done, lie down and mentally scan your body from head to toe, observing any tension or discomfort and letting the day go.
- **Guided Meditations:** Use apps or online programs like Starling Minds and gain access to guided mindfulness and meditation sessions. It may take a bit of time to get use to this practice, but your body will learn to feel less anxious with mindfulness.

Want to watch the Mindful Living Series? Just log in to your account, go to Webinars, and find the Mindful Living Series.

Not a member yet? Register at members.starlingminds.com and enter your access code: **NWTMEMBER**

Invite family members 16+ years old with the access code: **NWTFAMILY**

[Register now](#)

Questions? We'd love to hear from you. Email our Support Team at members@starlingminds.com.

Mindfulness for the holidays.



GNWT Education Leave

Trent Waterhouse, Professional Development Coordinator/
Member Services

One of the Professional Development (PD) benefits available to GNWT members in Article 16 through the Collective Agreement between the NWTTA and the GNWT is Education Leave. This bargained opportunity grants a member one year of leave to complete full-time studies at a post-secondary institution. Eligible members must have completed four (4) continuous years of service as a GNWT NWTTA employee.

The deadline for Education Leave applications for 2024-2025 is March 1, 2024 at 5:00 PM.

[GNWT Education Leave Application Form](#)

Brief description of the terms of leave request are as follows:

Education Leave with allowances - on campus:

- allowance of 60% of base salary or 60% of the category V maximum, whichever is the lesser based on Appendix A Article A1 Appendix C
- travel and removal expenses from the community of employment to the post secondary institution based on Article B2.02 (2) multiplied by 1.5
- tuition, student fees, graduate fees, and required course materials (not including books) up to \$12,000.00
- obligated to return to employment with the bargaining unit for two (2) years in a GNWT NWTTA position

Education Leave with allowances - via distance:

- an allowance of 75% of base salary or 75% of the category V maximum, whichever is the lesser based on Appendix A Article A1 Appendix C
- no eligible travel or removal expenses and must remain within the geographic jurisdiction of the NWT
- tuition, student fees, graduate fees, and required course materials (not including books) up to \$12,000.00
- obligated to return to employment with the bargaining unit for two (2) years in a GNWT NWTTA position

Education Leave without allowances:

- no eligible salary allowances
- tuition, student fees, graduate fees, and required course materials (not including books) up to \$12,000.00
- obligated to return to employment with the bargaining unit for one (1) year in a GNWT NWTTA position

I invite you to review the application form and reach out as soon as possible if you are considering Education Leave as an option.

Northern Lights

Meet
Diana Reed
from Yellowknife (YK1 region)



Q. Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Spruce Grove, Alberta. My family has lived in Spruce Grove for 6 generations. However, my husband is from Yellowknife and as a family we moved here in 2020.

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?

I always knew that I loved to be around children but it wasn't until I became a mom myself that the idea of teaching came to me. Before choosing to become a teacher I took business and also became a Journeyman Hairstylist. Although I loved these careers, there always seemed to be something missing. Once my children were in school themselves, I started working in their school as an Educational Assistant while attending college full time. I couldn't be happier with the decision I made to become a teacher and feel more fulfilled and happy everyday.

Q. What do you teach?

I feel privileged to be one of the Junior Kindergarten teachers at N.J. Macpherson School in Yellowknife.

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

What I love most about teaching is the excitement in children's faces when they learn something new, explore something new, see something new. In Junior Kindergarten, it is the children's first experiences in a school setting and because of that, everything is new. Their bright eyes, smiles and big hugs I get daily brings me so much joy!

Q. How do you engage your students?

I engage with students first by building relationships and trust. Then I engage with them through hands-on experiences, getting down to their level to engage in the learning and play and by watching for their interests and building learning experiences that reflect them.

Understanding the World Around Them

Now living in the north I am struck by the amount of hands-on learning the children do. Last week we learned about the bird grouse and the children touched the feathers, the heart and the wings and absolutely loved it. They were so engaged and it really made me realize as a teacher that children want to understand the world around them.

Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching 2023



Paige Driscoll

Mangilaluk School
Tuktoyaktuk
Beaufort-Delta region

Certificate of Excellent Recipient

Giving Students Ownership of their Learning

Paige understands that integrating learning within the community is important and she regularly incorporates aspects of the Inuvialuit culture, touching on relevant themes such as the relationship to the land and animals, seasonal patterns, traditional knowledge, and animal migrations. Teaching through topics that are meaningful and relevant for her students has fostered stronger and healthier connections with education for all, empowering students' voice and agency.

[Read more on the Prime Minister's Award website.](#)

Jennifer Tweedie

Princess Alexandra & Harry
Hamsell Schools
Hay River
South-Slave region



Certificate of Achievement Recipient

Bridging Cultures in Education

Jennifer continues to establish connections with the Dene culture and ensures that those connections are integrated into her learning environment. She promotes the principle that citizenship is about working together to find common ground, in recognition and respect.

[Read more on the Prime Minister's Award website.](#)

YCS Professional Development on the New Curriculum

Jenny Reid, District Principal of Curriculum and Assessment (YCS region)

Yellowknife Catholic Schools (YCS) is excited to begin our journey with the new curriculum. We are trialing the new curriculum in grades 4,5,6,7 and 9 for the 2023-24 school year. The new curriculum will allow us to continue to develop our existing priorities of Inspiring Thinking, Cultivating Wellbeing, and Building Relationships. This will be a learning year and we expect to have more questions than answers at this point, but our educators are excited for this shift.

On Friday, October 20, 2023, YCS held a Professional Development Day for our NWTTA members on the New Curriculum. Ryan Sikkes, a former teacher, principal and Assistant Deputy Minister from the Yukon Department of Education gave us a Keynote entitled, "Competency-based curricula as a path to a more hopeful future". He explained that the new competency based curriculum can be a catalyst for change and that if implemented effectively, can help prepare our students for the increasingly complex world we live in.

We also had staff from the GNWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment present to us some key messages about the new curriculum, what the curriculum might look like in our classrooms and they went through the draft assessment guide for educators. We appreciate this opportunity to ask questions and work together to understand how the new curriculum can support us in developing capable people together.



Attention NWT Educators!

Check out [ConnectEd NWT](#) to find training on the new, adapted JK-12 curriculum.

Log in and explore the courses, view the curriculum, and give feedback.

New courses will continue to be added!

Questions?
Email: nwtcurriculum_renewal@gov.nt.ca



<https://catalogue.getconnectednwt.ca/>

Government of
Northwest Territories

Welcome to Moose Kerr School



Above: Working together to prepare a school thanksgiving feast for the students

Left: Moose Kerr's new amazing admin team!

Below: Welcoming our new staff with a friends giving feast

Travel through the history of the Northwest Territories: the people, the land, pivotal events, and ways of life

The renewed NWT Historical Timeline brings archives, museum collections, and stories to your classroom!

Educators can use the timeline as a resource for courses like Northern Studies, Social Studies and beyond. Students can use it as a primary resource for research.

nwttimeline.ca

Northern Lights

Meet **Kathy Brady**
from Gameti (Tlicho region)



Q. Where did you grow up?
I spent my childhood moving around Canada living in different towns and cities. Every 2-3 years my family lived in a different place.

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?
After I got my Bachelor of Arts I spent three years teaching English as a Second Language in Taiwan, which showed me the joy and excitement I received helping people learn. When I came back to Canada, I went back to school to get my education degree.

Q. What do you teach?
I have spent the last six years teaching JK-6 students in Wekweeti and Gameti, and am currently working as the Leveled Literacy Intervention Instructor for the school and teaching Junior High Health and Grade 10 Social Studies.

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?
I love working with the students and seeing when they make a connection between what we are learning and what they understand. Over the years working here in Gameti, I have learned so much about their culture, language and the land from the students. Seeing the kindness every day that the students show each other and to the staff in the school is wonderful.

Q. How do you engage your students?
I try to plan lessons around what they need to learn and what interests they have so that they can see the connections between school and themselves. I love doing inquiry-based projects with the students to have them do a deep dive into the topics of their choosing, and presenting it in a way that they find comfortable.

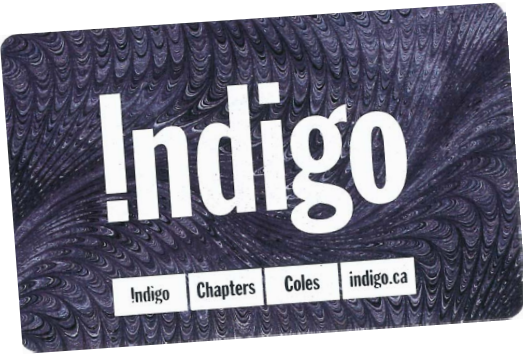
The Right Choice
Working in the same small school for a number of years has allowed me to really connect with most of the students in the school. Many times as I walk down the hall students stop to have a quick conversation or tell me a story. This tells me everyday that I have made the right choice.

Newsletter Trivia

Send your answers to the trivia questions below to news@nwtta.nt.ca with subject *Trivia*.

Trivia answers are contained within this edition of the newsletter. Newsletter Trivia contests are open to active NWTTA members.

Deadline for entries: **February 12, 2024**



Win a \$50 Chapters-Indigo Gift Card!

- 1. Who is the CSFTNO Vice-President?
- 2. When is the Central Executive 2024-2026 deadline for nominations to be received at Central Office?
- 3. How many Westmount Montessori School high school students were hosted in Tsiigehtchic in April 2023?
- 4. What are two Starling Minds strategies you can learn for this holiday season?

Janna Linnen from K'alemi Dene School (YK1 region) is the winner of the October 2023 Newsletter Trivia.

Cover: ELP group, left-to right: **Back Row:** Christopher Anyadubalu, Randy Caines, Paul Kelly, Tiffany Kelly, Don Reid, Richard Darrah, Geoff Cook, Kristy Nicholls, Korinne McDonald, Bryce Glendenning, **Middle Row:** Graham Arts, Shawn Coleman, Lisa Zoe, Jaspar Wong, Stephen Slattery, Sylvie Larose, Ben Adams, Matt Zink, Sylvester Boadi, Alicia Larade, Kally Moorhouse, Chauna MacNeil, Kaitlyn Fox-LaPierre, Jenny Reid, Illonis Hall, **Front Row:** Velma Illasiak, Gerry Kisoun, Sarah Jerome, Nicolas Kopot

Christmas Math Puzzle! (page 4) answers: 640, 604, 631, 613, 901, 910, 622

2022-2024 Central Executive

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*l-r Matthew Miller, NWTTA President & Jocelyn Apps,
Food First Foundation Coordinator*

In lieu of sending Christmas cards, for the twelfth year, the NWTTA has made a donation to the Food First Foundation, a registered charity whose mission is to support food and nutrition education programs in schools across the Northwest Territories.

<https://foodfirst.ca/>

