



# NWTTA NEWS

JANUARY 2024

## *Election Edition*

2024-2026 CENTRAL EXECUTIVE ELECTION

## VOTING DAY IS Tuesday, February 20, 2024

This special edition of the NWTTA News serves to introduce you to the candidates who have stepped forward for consideration to become your 2024-2026 Central Executive. All Central Executive positions but the President are volunteer. Thank you to these candidates and all Central Executive, Regional Executive and LROs whose volunteer time makes the NWTTA a strong Association over a large Territory in 49 schools and 8 DEA/DEC offices.

**There is an election for the position of President, Secretary-Treasurer and Member-at-Large positions. The Vice-President position has been acclaimed.**

LROs will serve as Returning Officer at your school or worksite on Voting Day.

If you are not available to vote on your Voting Day, you can vote through **Proxy**.

A maximum of one (1) proxy vote can be cast by a member, in addition to their own vote.

### **To authorize a member to act as their proxy, a member must:**

Hand-write/print/type a note stating that they (their name) authorize the person voting as their proxy (proxy's name) to act as their proxy for the NWTTA 2024-2026 Central Executive election vote on February 20, 2024. The proxy note must be signed by the person authorizing the proxy.

#### **Example:**

*I, John Doe, authorize Jane Doe to act as my proxy for the NWTTA 2024-2026 Central Executive election vote on February 20, 2024.*

*John Doe's signature*



# Candidate for President Rita MUELLER

JK-12 Teaching Principal  
Jean Wetrade Gamètì School  
Gamètì

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It is with great enthusiasm and excitement that I ask all NWTTA members to put your trust in me to serve as your next NWTTA President.

The NWT has been my home since 1989, when I first moved from Ontario to Deninu Kų́ę to take on a summer job as a swimming instructor. I immediately fell in love with the spectacular land, the rich and diverse cultures and languages, and most of all, with the beautiful people of the North.

Over the past 34 years, I have had the privilege of living and working in a number of NWT communities, both small and large, in a variety of education related positions. This includes serving NWTTA and Department of Education as follows:

- Grades 7-12 Classroom Teacher (ELA, Math, Science, Socials, Health, PE)
- Grades 8-12 Guidance Counsellor
- K-12 Principal, Chief Jimmy Bruneau School (Behchokų́)
- JK-12 Jean Wetrade Gamètì School (Gamètì)
- Chief Executive Officer, Tłıchų Community Services Agency (Education, Health and Child and Family Services)
- Director, Assistant Deputy Minister and Deputy Minister, Department of ECE

These experiences have shaped my perspective and understanding of both the challenges and successes of our NWT education system and how essential it is for all NWT teachers, school administrators, and support staff, to have relevant and meaningful tools, resources, supports and professional learning opportunities, in order to effectively support JK-12 student success and wellness.

Over the next month, I would love to meet and hear from as many of you as possible, specifically on what you expect from the Association, and the priorities of the next NWTTA President. Masi cho and take care.

**As your NWTTA President, I will bring to the position a breadth of knowledge and unique lived leadership experience including:**

### **NWTTA Leadership Experience:**

- 3 years as the Tłıchų Regional Executive President
- 1 year on Central Executive as the Regional Presidents' Representative
- 1 year as Chairperson, NWT School Administrators' Council
- 1 year as Board Director, Canadian Association of Principals (CAP)
- Member of NWTTA/GNWT Collective Bargaining Team (on NWTTA side)

### **Other Leadership and Board Experience:**

- 2 years as Chairperson, Advisory Committee of Deputy Ministers of Education Canada (ACDME) (National)
- 6 years as Human Rights Commissioner, NWT Human Rights Committee (Territorial)
- 9 years as Board Member, Wek'èezhìi Land and Water Board (Federal)
- 4 years as Behchokų́ Community Council Member, Community Government of Behchokų́ (Locally Elected)
- Member of GNWT/NWTTA Collective Bargaining Team (on GNWT side)



# Candidate for President Todd STURGEON

Coordinator and Technology Manager  
South Slave Divisional Education Council  
Fort Smith

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Hello, my name is Todd Sturgeon and I am running for the position of NWTTA President. I am originally from Cornwall, Ontario. I graduated from St. Francis Xavier University (B.A. in English) and earned my B.Ed. from the University of Maine. I recently completed my master's degree in management & technology. My current position is coordinator and technology manager for the South Slave Divisional Education Council. Before moving north in 2005, I was a teacher in Halifax, Nova Scotia (grades 7-12 English, Math and Drama). For the past 20 years, I've supported teachers and schools in the NWT. I have held and still hold many leadership roles within our Association. I represent teachers on numerous teams, working groups, and committees organized by the Department of Education, Culture, and Employment. I pride myself on having broad experience within the NWT education system. My educational background and work experience are in teaching, business, organizational management, strategic planning, policy development, and operations.

I have been a certified teacher and NWTTA member since 2005. I know the challenges teachers face: I know what it's like to have term teaching contracts and the struggle to get a permanent position. I know what it's like to be overworked while raising young children and volunteering in a small northern town. I know what it's like to have new work suddenly dropped on me and what it's like to work in challenging environments. Student behaviour and violence in classrooms are growing concerns for our members. Many teachers face issues with workload. These and other teacher priorities need to be addressed. I believe the NWTTA can aspire to serve members better and make improvements to meet current and future challenges.

My efforts and achievements have been aimed at supporting members and improving the work lives of teachers. I enjoy and excel at building innovative programs and projects that make a positive difference for teachers. I am one of the few people in the NWT who has had to actively fight against lay-offs to help save GNWT teacher jobs. I received the NWTTA President's Award for always advancing the aims of the Association with an emphasis on fairness and equity. I was awarded the Jill Taylor Above & Beyond Volunteer Award for "exemplary management and services with a positive response and hard work that goes above and beyond expectations ... positive energy and an upbeat attitude contributing greatly to the mental and emotional well-being of staff and students." I advocated for STIP in the early days and, in solidarity, helped ensure that teachers would get half that time. Likewise, I fought against onerous restrictions on teachers' STIP time.

I want our teachers' association the way it's supposed to be: I want every NWTTA member to feel safe, supported, and proud to be a member. I want to improve workload for all members, regardless of what region you work in. I would like to see the Association be stronger and more united. We need to find and build more open communication and trust. I think the Association can be more transparent and accountable, and place more emphasis on the quality of services we provide to members. I think it's time we had a clear, unified strategic plan that members help shape and support. We need leadership that considers all members, actions that respect our diverse member perspectives, and plans that value members' priorities, time, and energy.

Why vote for me? I have a reputation for being responsive, good to work with and eager to support all members. I am a good listener with deep experience in how the Association works to protect and serve members. I've had decades of experience managing other people and organizations. I'm honest, committed, hard-working and reliable. I am dedicated and have an appreciation for our association's diverse membership, and I would be honoured to serve you as your President.

Thank you.

Todd Sturgeon

## NWTTA LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

- Regional Presidents' Representative on Central Executive - 2016-2018, 2022 to current
- Fort Smith Regional President - Fort Smith - 2014 to current
- Secretary-Treasurer on Central Executive - 2018-2022
- Collective Bargaining Team Member - 2019-2021
- Indigenous Educators & Leadership Council Member - 2022 to current
- NWTTA Legislation Committee Member - 2020 to current
- NWTTA Central Professional Development Committee Member - 2016 to current
- GNWT Working Group on Workload - 2022 to current
- Recipient of an Educational Leave - 2021-2022
- NWTTA President's Award Winner - 2020
- Professional Relations Committee - 2017 to current
- Finance Committee Member - 2018-2022
- Discipline Committee Member - 2018-2020
- Nominations Committee Member - 2016 to current
- Regional Vice President - Fort Smith - 2013-2014
- Regional Awards & Social Committee - 2014 to present



# Candidate for President Gwen YOUNG

Science Department Head and Senior Biology Teacher  
École Sir John Franklin High School  
Yellowknife

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2024 brings the opportunity for change. With a new political environment, a new NWT curriculum, and a new executive of the NWTTA, the NWTTA President needs to be at the forefront, leading this change.

To change Education, we need to bring stakeholders together to build a system, that supports everyone. Issues such as workload, staffing, housing, funding, complex student needs, HR issues, health and wellness supports must be on the agenda. As educators, we have made many sacrifices and now it is our turn to be supported so we can meet the growing and changing needs of our students.

I have been a classroom teacher in the North for 32 years. I continue to deal with the ever-changing and challenging expectations that are put on me to ensure my students are learning, and I feel the pressures to bridge the gaps in my students learning as I make the transition into the new curriculum. I worry for the mental health and safety of my students, colleagues and myself, as we all try to survive. To create change, the new NWTTA President needs to be a voice for members. I believe that my experiences as a classroom teacher will give me the grounding I need to be that voice.

I am honored to call myself a northerner. I grew up in the community of Hay River where my parents were northern educators for 34 years. After university graduation, I returned to the north where I have lived and taught in Yellowknife for thirty-two years. Each region has its own unique needs and challenges, and each region's issues and concerns are equally important. I will take every opportunity to interact with the GNWT, Indigenous Governments, DEAs and CTF, to advocate and present these unique, Northern, regional challenges and work to support members.

As the current NWTTA Vice president, I have prioritized attending regional meetings so that I can hear directly from members and raise their concerns. I am passionate about ensuring that the challenges educators face in the north, are raised on every committee I serve. As President of the

NWTTA, I will be dedicated, supportive, driven, and focused to ensure that members are treated fairly and equitably. I believe in the Education in the North and the professionals that offer everything to ensure our students succeed.

Thank you for the opportunity to run for the position of President on the NWTTA Central Executive. I look forward to working with the new Executive to ensure that all of you are supported.

Gwen M. Young

## UNION LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE Canadian Teachers Federation

Committee Member of the CTF Status of Women Advisory Committee 2023-2025, 2019-2021

NWTTA Delegate at the CTF Status of Women Symposium - Ottawa 2023, Halifax 2021, Toronto 2020, Vancouver 2019

## NWTTA

Vice President 2022-2024

YK1 Regional President 2020-2024

NWTTA President Candidate Elections 2020

Central Executive Member - Member-at-Large Position 2018-2020

Member of Yk1 2020-2022 Negotiations Team

Vice President West/Director on the Board of Northern Employee Benefits Services (YK1 & YCS Pension Board) 2019-2027

Chair and Committee Member of the NWTTA Status of Women Committee 2018-2024

Committee Member of the NWTTA Legislative Committee 2019-2024

Committee Member of the NWTTA Wellness Committee 2017-2020

Member-at-Large YK1 Regional Executive 2017-2020

Committee Member of the NWTTA PD and Curriculum Committee 2012, 2018-2020, 2022-2024

## Meet the Candidate - Gwen Young

Join me for an informal meeting on Zoom, where I can answer your questions.

**Thursday, February 8, 2024 at 4:00pm**

Join Zoom Meeting Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5398191388?pwd=RWtRUUttY2Z5RFZqQncyajJ4eVhsUT09&omn=87563033563>





# Candidate for Secretary-Treasurer Charyl O'QUINN

Teaching Principal  
Charles Yohin School  
Nahanni Butte

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My name is Charyl O'Quinn and I am a candidate running for the position of Secretary-Treasurer. I presently work for the Dehcho region and am the teaching principal at Charles Yohin School in Nahanni Butte. I graduated from Acadia University, in Nova Scotia and have been teaching since 1997.

I feel I was called to the North in 2021, after teaching for 24 years in Nova Scotia, to serve a greater purpose. By being of service to indigenous youth, I feel that I am influencing their development and abilities in a positive manner to help effect change. My work assures me that students are in fact working towards something meaningful for their future.

I began this journey in Sambaa K'e, in August of 2021 as a JK-4 classroom teacher. My love for Literacy moved me to acquire my designation in Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI). Shortly after, I accepted a position as LLI specialist in Fort Simpson. I did relocate to Nunavik, Northern Quebec, briefly to teach English immersion from 2022-2023 but was drawn back to the Northwest Territories where I settled in Nahanni Butte in August of 2023. I am presently the teaching principal of a JK-10 school, slated for grade extension to level 12 in the fall of 2024.

Life in the North has been a series of transitions for me. I have certainly slowed down my life dance since relocating to the Northwest Territories and find both solace and harmony in my new position, home, and surroundings.

When it comes to being involved with unions, at the start of my career, I began as an overly eager NSTU school representative. I was then encouraged to become part of the Dartmouth local, in NS, where I served as a member of the Professional Development committee. I later held the Public Relations committee chair position for the Dartmouth local in 2011.

I have optimism for both our new and veteran teachers' roles within this territory and it is our devote drive and motivation to educate that is full of hope, promise and passion, however, our work is very demanding and challenging.

My desire is to support teachers to fuel the persistence and resilience necessary to thrive in what we do. We work long hours and face many obstacles, daily, and it is normal to seek out support and advice to flourish.

Let me be your sounding board for change as I stand in solidarity with you for the upcoming next two years.

Kindest regards,

Charyl O'Quinn



# Candidate for **Secretary-Treasurer** **Wendy TULK**

Curriculum Coordinator  
Tłıchq Community Services Agency  
Behchokǝ

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My name is Wendy Tulk and I currently work in the Tłıchq region. I taught across Canada before coming to the NWT in 2008, and the NWT is now my forever home.

Living in the north is always an adventure – challenging at times but also awe-inspiring and rewarding. As teachers we experience both daily. I have lived in a small community, and our capital city; I have worked in larger schools with 90 staff, and schools with a staff of 6. I understand the challenges that teachers face every day, from classroom issues to housing concerns, salary and leave time. I believe the NWTTA is an extremely important support and connection for teachers in the territory, and I have been privileged to work with many wonderful people both as a teacher and a member of the NWTTA.

I worked at Chief Jimmy Bruneau School for 13 years, and have worked throughout the Tłıchq region as curriculum coordinator for the past 3 years. I have been involved with the NWTTA since 2010, serving as LRO, Secretary/Treasurer, and President of the Tłıchq Regional Executive, and on the Central Executive as the Regional President's Representative, Member at Large and currently as the Secretary-Treasurer. I have also served on many NWTTA committees, including the Status of Women Committee, the Housing Committee, the Indigenous Educators and Leadership Council, and others. I was also chair of the regional professional development committee for many years.

The Secretary-Treasurer has been a position in which I have learned a lot. Finding a balance between serving the membership and not overspending, and ensuring that we are being financially responsible with the funds we manage has been a challenge at times, but the NWTTA is currently in a healthy financial situation. We have been able to add to our member protection fund, while also successfully dealing with unexpected costs during the last 2 years.

I hope to be able to support and help teachers in any way I can as they work to provide high-level education in sometimes less-than-ideal environments. Teachers now have to be more adaptable and flexible than ever before and are sometimes facing issues many had never imagined. My goal is to help improve these concerns for teachers by continuing to be a strong voice on our Central Executive. I would be honored to represent and serve the teachers of the Northwest Territories as the NWTTA Secretary-Treasurer for the next two years!



# Member-at-Large Jean-Paul (JP) BERNARD

IT Teacher Consultant  
Dehcho Education Council District Office  
Fort Simpson

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Hello NWTTA members. Negha dágqndíí?

I was born and raised in a small French village on PEI with five siblings, I attended a K - 12 French school, I proceeded to pursue a degree in Applied Sciences at the Université de Moncton, and received my B. Ed from Memorial University. I taught high school and coached soccer for 3 years on PEI then after a few short-term contracts teaching in Alberta, I moved to Norman Wells in January 2007 to begin my career in the NWT. From teaching High and Junior High school at Mackenzie Mountain School, I made my way to Tulita until eventually settling in as the IT Teacher Consultant at the Sahtu DEC. After 10 years, I began a new adventure as the IT Teacher Consultant at the Dehcho DEC. Some of my past experience beyond work includes coaching Super Soccer teams, being a member of the Norman Wells volunteer firefighter department, a town Councillor, and VP North of the NWT Soccer Association.

As for my NWTTA experience, I have been Local Receiving Officer (LRO), Regional Vice President, Regional President, sat on the NWTTA Capacity Working Group to discuss how to better engage members in union activities and matters, and have recently been elected as Regional President of the Dehcho.

I have always enjoyed my work and involvement with the NWTTA as it provides an avenue for me to help fellow NWTTA members and this is why I would like to take a more influential role with our association by running for the Member-at-Large position on Central Executive.

I am trustworthy, work hard, and believe in communication and transparency. My position as an IT Consultant at two districts (Sahtu and Dehcho) has allowed me the privilege of travelling to many communities across the NWT to get to know the unique needs of schools and staff in their respective communities. I feel that my experience makes me a strong candidate to help and represent the NWTTA members. If elected as the Member at Large, you can be confident that I will work hard to ensure that your concerns are heard as I know that if I can help take care of teachers, the teachers will take care of their students, and that is why we are all here.

Mahsi cho and best regards,

JP (Jean-Paul) Bernard

## 15+ years of NWTTA experience:

- Regional President
- Regional Vice-President
- Local Receiving Officer
- Membership
- Annual Meeting of Central Council
- NWTTA Capacity Working Group



# Member-at-Large Arthur ELMS

Regional Education Technology Coordinator  
Tłıchq Community Services Agency  
Behchokǝ

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My name is Arthur Elms and I am running for the position of Member-at-Large. I grew up in Newfoundland where I graduated from Memorial University with a BSc in Computer Science, and a Bachelor of Education (intermediate/secondary). I also completed my MEd in Leadership Studies at Memorial University

I started teaching in 2004 and taught in Manitoba and Newfoundland before settling in the Northwest Territories in 2008. I have been with the Tłıchq Community Services Agency for almost 16 years. I taught grade 8 at Chief Jimmy Bruneau School for 5 years before moving into my current role as the Regional Education Technology Coordinator. This position has given me the chance to travel throughout the territory and visit many communities. This also allows me to spend time in different schools talking with teachers. Through this, I have a broad knowledge of the concerns of our members in both large and small schools, and in quite different communities.

During my time in the Tłıchq region I have been very active with the association. I became Secretary-Treasurer of our regional executive in 2016 and then moved into the role of regional vice president. I was in the position of regional vice president until June 2022.

I am also currently sitting on the NWTTA Negotiation Team. While serving on the regional executive I was given the opportunity to attend AMCC multiple times which has given me better insight into how the association operates and supports our members. I feel that our association does important work for our members and my range of experience has given me the confidence to effectively communicate member concerns and support our membership in the work they do. I look forward to the opportunity to represent our members as the Member-at-Large for the upcoming term.

Thank You,

Arthur





# Member-at-Large Kyle SAGERT

Principal - High School Teacher  
Angik School  
Paulatuk

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(867) 688-1616

Vahn Gwinzii, Uvlaami, Bonjour and Hello everyone,

My name is Kyle Sagert and it would be a privilege to serve NWTTA members as the Member-at-Large for the Central Executive.

Originally I am from Swan River, Manitoba and have enjoyed my teaching career in the North since 2009 across Nunavut, Yukon and here in the Northwest Territories. Currently I am the Principal / High School Teacher at Angik School in Paulatuk. My primary background is Physical Education and History and have spent time teaching various grade levels and subjects along with being a Program Support Teacher and Vice-Principal duties.

It would be an honor to serve members across the Territory and support their needs and challenges to help improve working conditions along with supporting student success. I would like to thank everyone for their hard work and dedication to the Territory and your students.

Thank you for the opportunity to run for the Member-at-Large position on the NWTTA Central Executive. My goal would be to advocate for members with the new Executive as we move forward into the coming school years.

## Experience

- 2023-2024 LRO at Angik School in Paulatuk
- 2021-2022 Vice-President for the Sahtu Region
- 2021-2022 LRO at Colville Lake School in Colville Lake
- 2020-2021 Secretary Treasurer for the Tlicho Region
- 2018-2019 LRO at Chief Julius School in Fort McPherson



# Vice-President **ACCLAIMED** **Colin** **PYBUS**

On-the-Land Itinerant Teacher  
Beaufort-Delta Education District Office  
Inuvik

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My name is Colin Pybus and I work at the Beaufort-Delta District Office. My current position allows me to travel across this District, supporting teachers with land-based education, Indigenous integration practices, as well as physical and outdoor education. I'm fortunate and grateful for the opportunity to experience the cultures of each community within this beautiful region and work with the amazing educators who call the Beau-Del home. Originally from Walkerton Ontario, I'm in my 11<sup>th</sup> year of teaching in the NWT and 8<sup>th</sup> year of active engagement with the NWTTA. During my time in the NWT, I have had the chance to be an LRO, hold each of the Regional Executive positions, be involved in numerous NWTTA committees and am finishing my two-year term at the Member-at-Large on your Central Executive.

I have a care and commitment to NWTTA members not only in the Beau-Del but across the NWT. Educators are facing greater, harder and more challenging conditions daily in our schools and our communities. The NWT climate has changed so much in my 11 years and the realities for members are far different than when I began my career. Navigating these times requires our Association to have strong leadership, relationships, experience and knowledge. These elections bring forward many candidates with these qualities and will move the direction of the Association for our next steps. Supporting an engaged membership that is active, informed and involved is a humbling position to be in.

I am proud to be able to be your Vice-President for the next two years, am excited for the changes that are happening within education in the NWT and for the role that the NWTTA will play in supporting our membership today and in the future.

## **NWT Teaching Experience:**

- BDDEC On-the-Land Itinerant teacher (2022-present)
- Co-Administrator/Vice Principal - East Three Secondary School (ETSS), Inuvik (2021-22)
- High School CTS, physical education, online teacher, ETSS (2020-21)
- Education Leave Recipient - (2019-20)
- Physical Education Teacher, High School CTS, ETSS (2013-2019)
- Physical Education Teacher, Mangilaluk School, Tuktoyaktuk (2012-13)
- Aboriginal Sport Circle NWTTA Teacher Award Winner - 2021
- B.C. Gillie Bursary Winner - 2020

## **NWTTA Experiences:**

- Central Executive Member-at-Large (2022-present)
- Beaufort-Delta Regional President (2020-present)
- GNWT Collective Bargaining team (2021 & 2023)
- Central Professional Development Committee (2020-present)
- NWTTA Teacher Wellness Committee (2018-present)
- NWTTA Small Communities Committee (2022-present)
- NWTTA Professional Relations Committee (2022-present)
- NWTTA Curriculum Committee (2016-20)
- NWT Teacher's Conference Planning Committee (2018 & 2022)
- Beaufort Delta Regional Executive (2016-present)
- Local Receiving Officer, East Three Secondary (2015)