



NWTTA NEWS

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DECEMBER 2025

Member Achievements Celebrated!

Congratulations to the following current and former members who have recently been recognized.

2024 NWT Education Hall of Fame

- **Heath Israel** (Beaufort Delta region) - *Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education*
- **Dianne Lafferty** (Tłıchó region) - *Community Outreach*
- **Denise McDonald** (Beaufort Delta retired educator) - *Minister's Choice*
- **David Murphy** (YCS region retired teacher and former NWTTA Executive Director) - *Leadership in Education*

2025 GNWT Premier's Award for Individual Excellence

- **Sonia Gregory** - East Three Elementary School (Beaufort Delta region)



NWT Premier R.J. Simpson presents Sonia Gregory with the 2025 GNWT Premier's Award for Individual Excellence

2025 Prime Minister's Award - Excellence in Early Childhood Education

- **Karen Faulkner** (Certificate of Excellence), N.J. Macpherson School (YK1 region)
- **Christine Ratel** (Certificate of Achievement), École Allain St-Cyr (CSFTNO region)

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President's Update

Rita Mueller, President



Dear NWTTA Members,

As you prepare for a well-deserved holiday break, I want to thank all of you for the care and effort you bring to your classroom, school and workplace each day. Despite the many challenges we often face within our day-to-day work, NWT teachers continue to show up, roll up their sleeves, and get down to the business of serving and meeting the needs of their students to the best of their abilities.

Thank you for continuing to be strong advocates for the needs of your students and for the resources and services they require. It is essential that teachers continue to express the services required within our schools so that all students can be safe and have their academic and social emotional needs met.

Along with assisting Matthew and Sara on supporting members that require assistance and representation, the following is an overview of some of the other activities I have been involved in since the beginning of October 2025. This includes:

Highlights of NWTTA President's Activities between October - December 2025:

Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF)

- Executive Board Meeting: October 6-7, 2025 in Ottawa
- CTF Constitution and Bylaws Committee: October 27, 2025 (virtual)
- CTF Advisory Committee on the Teaching Profession: November 5, 2025 (virtual)
- Executive Board Meeting: November 17, 2025 in Ottawa
- Board of Directors' Meeting: November 18-19, 2025 in Ottawa
- Executive Board Meeting: December 11, 2025 (virtual)

NWTTA Central Executive Meetings:

- Saturday October 25, 2025 in Yellowknife (in person)
- Saturday December 6, 2025 (virtual)

NWTTA Executive Leadership and Planning Meeting (ELPM):

- October 24 – 25, 2025 in Yellowknife

This meeting was attended by the nine NWTTA Regional Presidents (or their designate), and all NWTTA Central Executive members. During the ELPM participants were fortunate to have the opportunity to meet with and hear from the following:

- The Honourable Caitlin Cleveland, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE)
- James Fulford, Deputy Minister, ECE
- Shannon Barnett-Aikman, Assistant Deputy Minister, JK-12 Education
- Chris Kordyback, CIBC Wood Gundy, Associate Portfolio Manager
- Fanny Laveau, Starling Minds, Senior Customer Success Manager

NWTTA Committee Meetings:

- Finance Committee: October 1, 2025 (virtual)
- NWT School Administrators' Council: October 2, 2025 (virtual)
- Finance Committee: October 20, 2025 (virtual)
- Legislation Committee: December 8 – 9, 2025 in Yellowknife

NWTTA Collective Bargaining:

- NWTTA -YK1: October 14-17, 2025
- NWTTA GNWT Group of Seven Collective Bargaining Team: October 22-23, 2025 in Yellowknife
- YK1 Ratification Town Hall Meeting: October 28, 2025 (virtual)

Meetings with GNWT Department of Education Culture and Employment (ECE)

- ECE Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM): October 21, 2025 (virtual)
- ECE Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM): November 25, 2025 (virtual)
- ECE Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM): December 16, 2025 (virtual)

Meetings with other GNWT Departments:

- Senior Joint Consultation Meeting: October 3, 2025 in Yellowknife
- GNWT Consultation on Public Service Act changes: November 3, 2025 in Yellowknife
- GNWT Consultation on Public Service Act changes: November 14, 2025 in Yellowknife

Meetings with the NWT Superintendents of Education Association (NWTSA) Chairperson

- NWTSA Chairperson: October 20, 2025 (virtual)
- NWTSA Chairperson: November 13, 2025 (virtual)
- NWTSA Chairperson: December 16, 2025 (virtual)

In Person School Visits and/or Staff Presentations:

- St. Joe's School in Yellowknife: October 9, 2025
- Mildred Hall School in Yellowknife: October 20, 2025
- Weledeh School in Yellowknife: October 28, 2025
- Ilt'o School in Yellowknife: November 3, 2025
- Kaw Tay Whee School in Dettah: November 4, 2025

- N.J. Macpherson School in Yellowknife: November 4, 2025
- Sir John Franklin School in Yellowknife: November 4, 2025
- William McDonald School in Yellowknife: November 5, 2025
- Ecole Allain St. Cyr in Yellowknife: November 6, 2025
- Kalemi Dene School in Ndilo: November 6, 2025
- Yellowknife Catholic Schools (YCS) Board Coordinators in Yellowknife: November 7, 2025
- Yellowknife Public Education (YK1) Board Coordinators in Yellowknife: November 12, 2025
- St. Pat's School in Yellowknife: November 13, 2025

Regional Executive Scheduled Meetings Attended (Virtually)

- YK1 Regional Meeting: October 1, 2025
- Dehcho Regional Orientation Presentation: October 2, 2025
- Sahtu Regional Meeting: October 6, 2025
- Tłı̨cho Regional Meeting: October 7, 2025
- Beaufort Delta Regional Meeting: October 15, 2025
- Dehcho Regional Meeting: October 22, 2025
- Yellowknife Catholic Schools Regional Meeting: October 27, 2025
- Tłı̨cho Regional Meeting: November 4, 2025

Other Meetings/Events:

- Starling Minds: October 3, 2025 (virtual)
- CBC Trail Breaker Interview: November 3, 2025 in Yellowknife (in person)

Please note that the NWTTA office will be closed for the holiday break between Monday December 22, 2025 - Friday Jan 2, 2026. During this time should you need assistance please call or text me directly.

The NWTTA office will reopen at 8:30 am on Monday January 5, 2026.

As always, please do not hesitate to reach out to me with your questions, concerns or suggestions for improvement. I really want to hear from you and to serve you to the best of my ability.

Happy Holidays and wishing you all a safe and joyous New Year!

Rita

Contact

Rita

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Rita MUELLER

Acclaimed as President 2026-2028

As the current NWTTA President and an Educational Leader in the Northwest Territories for over 30 years, I believe in our JK-12 education system and the power of our Northern educators.

I believe that by having a united, focused, and strong Teachers' Association that strives to work collaboratively with all levels of Indigenous, Territorial, and Regional governments and organizations, our school system will continue to strengthen and evolve.

It is only by working together that we have the ability to ensure all NWT JK-12 students receive high-quality, culturally appropriate, and innovative curriculum, programs, supports, and services across all NWT communities. This, however, can only be achieved when our education is adequately funded, and all NWT teachers, school administrators, support staff, and board coordinators have the necessary and sufficient supports in place to do their jobs.

Educators need access to relevant and meaningful resources, tools, specialized supports and training, access to Support Assistants and ongoing professional learning opportunities. They also need to be supported by the broader community and key stakeholders and community organizations all working together with a common purpose of ensuring students are welcome, are receiving the supports they require and are safe and healthy so they are able to achieve their academic and career goals.

In my second term as NWTTA President, I will continue to be committed to:

- Be an excellent listener and communicator in both understanding and responding to NWTTA members' concerns and suggestions;
- Work collaboratively and innovatively with all levels of government (Indigenous, Federal, Territorial, and Regional) in order to ensure the necessary funding and resources are in place for students and teachers;
- Negotiate collective agreements for overall better

teacher working conditions that include wage increases that keep up with the cost of NWT living, and help attract and retain teachers;

- Advocate for acceptable and affordable housing for all NWTTA members in all communities;
- Advocate for increased mental health, wellness and safety services for all NWTTA Members and students;
- Develop positive and productive relationships with NWT Indigenous governments to support the increase of culturally relevant and appropriate curriculum, student resources and supports;

Working in a classroom and within a school environment is generally a wonderful and rewarding experience; however, it can also be complex and, at times, extremely challenging. It takes tremendous time, dedication, planning, commitment, and hard work to meet the needs of all students. Attracting and retaining experienced Northern teachers and principals is key to overall student and school success.

As the NWTTA President, I bring to this position unique qualifications, including a breadth of knowledge and extensive leadership experience from a variety of both NWTTA and Department of Education positions that I have served, including classroom teacher, guidance counsellor, school principal, board administrator, and Department of Education senior leadership.

These experiences have shaped my perspective and broadened my understanding of both the challenges and successes of our NWT education system. I understand the realities of living and working in small communities, regional centres, and in Yellowknife, and as a result, I know that no two communities are the same.

Utilizing my experience, knowledge, skills, work ethic, passion, and determination to get things done, I will be the strong, informed, and influential voice of the Association on behalf of all NWTTA members.

Northern Lights

Meet

Ryan Robinson

from Fort McPherson (Beaufort Delta region)



Q. Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Wiarton, Ontario, a small town on the Bruce Peninsula best known for Wiarton Willie, our famous groundhog. Nestled along the shores of Georgian Bay, Wiarton is surrounded by nature, and growing up there gave me a deep appreciation for the outdoors and a strong sense of community. It's the kind of place where everyone knows each other, and that close-knit environment really shaped my values. My upbringing in Wiarton continues to influence who I am today — grounded, community-oriented, and always appreciative of the natural beauty around me.

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?

Growing up in Wiarton, Ontario—a small, close-knit community surrounded by nature—had a big influence on why I decided to become a teacher. In a place where everyone knows and supports one another, I learned the value of connection, care, and helping others grow. That sense of community, along with my appreciation for learning and curiosity about the world around me, inspired me to want to create the same kind of supportive environment for students—one where they feel seen, valued, and encouraged to reach their potential.

Q. What do you teach?

This will be my third consecutive year teaching JK/K at Chief Julius School in Fort McPherson!

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

What I enjoy most about teaching is the sense of connection and community it creates—especially in a remote Arctic setting. Teaching in the North has given me the opportunity to really get to know my students and their families, and to learn from their culture, stories, and ways of life. Every day feels meaningful because education isn't just about academics—it's about building trust, fostering resilience, and celebrating learning together in a place where relationships truly matter. Seeing students grow in confidence and pride, both in their learning and their identity, is what inspires me most.

Q. How do you engage your students?

I engage my students by creating learning experiences that are meaningful, inclusive, and connected to their culture and community. In the classroom, I incorporate local traditions, stories, and perspectives so students see themselves reflected in what they learn. I also use differentiated instruction to meet the diverse needs of each learner—whether through hands-on activities, visual supports, or choice in how they demonstrate understanding. Collaboration is another key part of my approach; I encourage students to work together, share ideas, and learn from one another. This combination of cultural relevance, personalized learning, and teamwork helps students stay motivated, confident, and connected to their learning.

Laugh, Adapt and Embrace the Unexpected

During my third year teaching in the Arctic, I quickly learned that flexibility isn't just a skill—it's a survival strategy! One morning, I confidently set up my lesson plans, only to realize half my students were away because a wolf had wandered near the community, and everyone was waiting for it to move along before coming to school. I remember thinking, "They definitely didn't cover this in teacher's college."

Moments like that taught me to laugh, adapt, and embrace the unexpected. Whether it was teaching by flashlight during a power outage or turning a snowstorm into an impromptu science lesson, those experiences reminded me that teaching in the North is as much about community and resilience as it is about academics—and that every day brings a new adventure.

Executive Director Updates

Matthew Miller, Executive Director

One of Central Office’s key priorities this term has been the election for the Office of NWTTA President, held independently from other Central Executive positions for the first time. This change, approved at our Annual Meeting of the Central Council (AMCC) in April 2025, enables experienced and committed candidates to seek additional leadership opportunities if not elected as President. By separating the President’s election, the NWTTA ensures that qualified members who aspire to the position are not excluded from future executive roles, thus broadening the leadership pool and strengthening the Association's capacity.

Nominations for NWTTA President closed on November 15, 2025. We are pleased to announce that Rita Mueller has been acclaimed and will continue to serve as President until July 2028. Congratulations to Rita on her second term, and our sincere appreciation for her ongoing dedication to our Association.

Those interested in taking on the leadership roles in the Office of the Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer and Member-at-Large will see the nomination period open in January 2026, with the election scheduled through secure online voting on February 16, 2026. More information can be found on page 14 of this newsletter, will be shared by mass email closure to the nomination period.

The YK1 bargaining group have recently ratified a three-year collective agreement. Thank you to the team, Gwen Young, Jodi Lee-Lewis, Randy Caines and Stephen Offredi, who represented their colleagues well. Some highlights include: Salary/Allowance increases, Increase to Health Spending Account, Lieu Days for School-Sponsored Activities (maximum of 3 days), New Program Support Teacher allowance – 2025-2025 - \$2,821 (increase by the same percentage as salary grid %), Education Assistant Salary Grid Adjustment (remove steps 1-3 the salary grid starts at step 4).

The GNWT negotiations team, elected in October, includes Colin Pybus (Beaufort Delta), Dan Kearley (Fort Smith), Gwenan Guillas-Letai (CSFTNO), JP Bernard (Dehcho), Michael Craig (South Slave), Tyson Ruston (Sahtu), and Shellie Trimble (Tłı̨chı̨). The team began preparatory work in Yellowknife on October 22–23, and GNWT member surveys have been distributed from November 17 to December 17, 2025. Results will guide our bargaining priorities when negotiations commence with the Employer in late February 2026.

Following the completion of the updated NWTTA Bylaws and Policies Handbook, efforts are underway to ensure uniformity and consistency across all Regional Bylaws. While structure and presentation are being standardized, flexibility remains for regional language and additional provisions, provided these align with territorial bylaws. Both the Handbook and Regional Bylaws are available to members via the NWTTA website.

In the Spring of 2024, the NWTTA was notified of two proposed amendments regarding the Academic Year and School Attendance Regulations (the Regulations) provided by the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. At that time, the NWTTA conducted a survey with

the membership. The survey was completed by over 60% of our membership, highlighting significant opposition to both amendments. The first amendment proposed revising the daily maximum hours of instruction for Grades 1 to 6. The results were telling, with 81% of respondents expressing opposition and an additional 8% indicating they were unsure.

The second amendment introduced a mechanism for altering the approved school calendar in response to unplanned school closures. Here, the disapproval was even more pronounced, with 92% of respondents opposed and 4% unsure. The overwhelming disapproval reflects the profound concerns our educators have regarding the potential consequences of these proposals. Originally, we were told we would be contacted, “Prior to the development of the draft regulations, which will be shared during

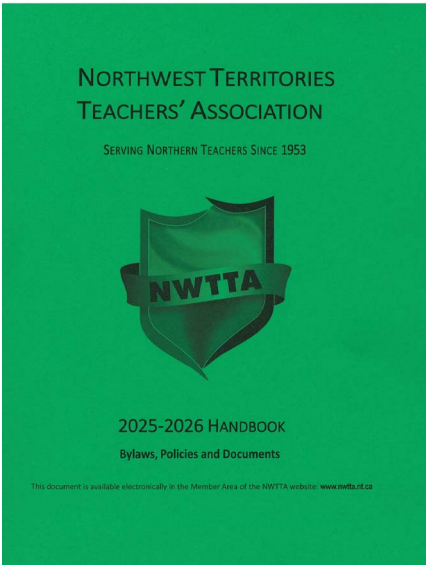
the second round of consultation expected to take place in September 2024.” That did not happen. We continued to ask for updates, but none were available. On November 4, 2025, we received draft language from the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. We are disappointed with the Employer's direction and are using all available tools, including our legal counsel, to oppose the current amendments. These amendments directly affect our members' working conditions. We expect educators' voices to be heard by those drafting the language and by those who will make the final decision. We will continue to advocate on behalf of our members to ensure that any changes to the Regulations support the best interests of our students and educators alike.

The NWT Educators’ Conference (Professional Development Conference) is quickly approaching. Please ensure you are registered on the NWTTA website and that you are receiving our emails. All communication, including session registration, will be through our mass emails. I want to thank Trent Waterhouse, NWTTA Professional Development Coordinator, the Central Professional Development Committee Members, the sub-committee that has been assisting, and contractor Marnie Villeneuve, who have been the driving force behind the conference. We are looking forward to seeing everyone together in Yellowknife.



**GNWT Group of 7 Collective Bargaining Team
Collective Bargaining 101 Orientation in
Yellowknife, October 22 & 23, 2025**

l-r Matthew Miller (Executive Director), Colin Pybus (Beaufort Delta), Tyson Ruston (Sahtu), Shellie Trimble (Tłı̨chı̨), Dan Kearley (Fort Smith), Tyler Godard (Legal Counsel, attended virtually), Rita Mueller (President), Sara McCrea (Assistant Executive Director), Michael Craig (South Slave), JP Bernard (Dehcho), Gwenan Guillas-Letai (CSFTNO)



The Bylaws and Policies Handbook can be found in your staff room and in the Member Area of nwtta.nt.ca



NWT Educators: Stay ConnectED!

Check out ConnectED NWT to find new professional learning opportunities specifically catered to NWT Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 educators.

Explore our catalogue of courses and opportunities, including book clubs, resource repositories and courses on curriculum renewal.

Enrol, explore and stay “connected” to educators across the NWT.

Learning opportunities are added on a regular basis.

Questions?

Email: connectedhelpdesk@gov.nt.ca

Government of
Northwest Territories



Professional Development

Trent Waterhouse, Professional Development Coordinator

GNWT Education Leave 2026-2027

One of the Professional Development (PD) benefits available to GNWT members in Article 16 through the Collective Agreement (CA) 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 2026-2027 is March 1, 2026 at 5:00 PM.

GNWT Education Leave Application can be found in the Professional Development section of our website.

Brief description of the terms of the granted leave(s) 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 and Appendix C of the current CA
- 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

GNWT - Application for Education Leave 2026-2027

Applications must be received by March 1, 2026 at 5:00 pm.

To be eligible to apply for Education Leave, an applicant must have completed four (4) continuous years of service as an NWTTA member employed by the GNWT. To clarify, a member is eligible to apply for an Education Leave during year five (5) of service.

All applications must include:

☐ Cover letter (outline your education leave goals)

☐ Application form and supporting document

☐ Written references of support (3)

☐ Proof of application or acceptance to your chosen program

1. Applicant Information

Full Name:

Mailing Address:

Email Address:

Community/Divisional Board:

Position Title:

Current Salary Category:

Step:

Home Phone Number:

Work Phone Number:

Member of NWTTA since:

(month)

(year)

2. Term of Leave Requested

I am requesting:

Education Leave With Allowances (LWA) - on campus:

☐

Education Leave With Allowances (LWA) - via distance:

☐

Education Leave Without Pay or Allowances (LWOPA):

☐

If you have applied for Leave With Allowances, would you accept Leave Without Allowances?

Yes ☐

No ☐

3. Previous Application

If you have applied for GNWT NWTTA Education Leave before, please list those institutions, programs and year applied:

Institution and Program	Year Applied	Granted?
		☐ Yes ☐ No
		☐ Yes ☐ No

Education Leave with allowances-via distance:

- allowance of 75% of base salary or 75% of the category V maximum, whichever is the lesser based on Appendix A Article A1 and Appendix C of the current CA
- no eligibility for 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 allowance
- travel and removal expenses from the community of employment to the post secondary institution based on Article B2.02 (2) of the current CA 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 one (1) year in a GNWT NWTTA position

I invite you to review the application and reach out for clarification if you are considering Education Leave as an option. The deadline for Education Leave applications for 2026-2027 is March 1, 2026 at 5:00 PM.

Celebrating Talented Members

École St. Joseph School (YCS region) phys-ed teacher **Cory Taylor** has released his first original song worldwide, written in memory of Eugène Roach. The tune will be featured on Bill Roach's East Coast Music Hour in Nova Scotia and in the coming weeks it will also be placed on the Canadian Indie Country Countdown.

"The Other Side" on Spotify:
<https://spotify.link/EPZcfOoXRXb>

Cory E. Taylor (École St. Joseph School)
--Songwriter/Vocals

David Dowe --Rhythm Guitar/Harmonies/
Percussion/Mixing/Mastering

Stephen Richardson (École St. Joseph School)
--Lead Acoustic Guitar/Cajons/Harmonies

Danny Larade (École St. Patrick High School) --
Iron Skillet Percussion



Blue Jays Day at NJM

Staff and Students at N.J. Macpherson School (YK1 region) cheered on the Toronto Blue Jays during the 2025 World Series

Comparison of Salary and Benefits Between the Three Bargaining Groups

Sara McCrea, Assistant Executive Director

Below and linked is a comparison of salary and benefits between the three NWTTA bargaining groups (Yellowknife Catholic Schools, Yellowknife Education District No. 1, Government of the Northwest Territories) as of November 13, 2025.

This chart is provided for general reference only and does not represent the official language of any collective agreement. In the event of any discrepancies, the official and binding versions of all agreements are those published by the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association, available on our website here: <https://nwtta.nt.ca/publications/collective-agreements>. [Click here](#) or on the image below to view the full 10-page comparison chart.

	YCS	YK1	GNWT
Length of School Year (days)	192	192	194
Salary effective 2025 (top of the scale)	Category 4 – 131,220	Category 4 – 134,781	Category 4 – 135,557
Pensionable	Category 5 – 141,259	Category 5 – 142,709	Category 5 – 147,489
	Category 6 – 151,225	Category 6 – 153,610	Category 6 – 153,748
Northern Allowance	N/A	N/A	\$3,700 – Yellowknife \$37,102- Ulukhaktok
Personal Allowance	N/A	N/A	\$1,300
Principal's Allowance	Minimum \$16,633 \$6000 plus \$44.07 per full-time student	Minimum \$17,465 \$5,503.95 plus \$46.28 per full-time student	Minimum \$22,123 Percentage of maximum Step of Category 5 depending on number of students
Principal's Allowance for school with 400 students	\$23,628	\$24,016	\$29,497
Principal's Allowance for school with 500 students	\$28,035	\$28,644	\$33,922
Coordinator's / Consultant's Allowance	\$3,000	\$2,962	\$5,345

Northern Lights

Meet
Jennifer Kolesar
from Tsiigehtchic (Beaufort Delta region)



Q. Where did you grow up?
I grew up on the Prairies of Manitoba. I lived 25 years in Minnedosa. First attending elementary and high school.

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?
I was often told that I was good at babysitting because I had creative ideas and liked to teach the children new things. I also had the best grade 2 teacher on the planet who had stickers! I knew I wanted a useful university degree to make my Grandpa Dobreen and my Mom proud. Getting a teaching degree would also lift me into a better financial position than what I grew up in. My Grandpa always used to tell me that every generation must do better and he had faith in me to do it.

Q. What do you teach?
My current position is in Tsiigehtchic teaching a JK-Grade 3 classroom of great students. It was a massive challenge at first because I had just arrived in the NWT for the first time, my furniture/food took weeks to arrive, and my students had had the same teacher for 4 years, whom they loved.

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?
The best part of teaching is watching the face of a child change to a big smile. Either when they run to see if I am waiting for them at the start of the day, or when someone who struggled to learn something, just figured it out. That's the best face ever.

Q. How do you engage your students?
I have always related better with children than with adults. I can give a wink and a smile while rubbing my hands together to make them wonder what is coming, I can quickly make up an interesting story, or I can take on a huge variety of voices as I speak. I can sound like Elmo one minute, then switch to a strong British accent, or squawk like a parrot, then sing Mary Poppins.

Thankful For All of the Adventures
My story is not an easy one, but I use it to encourage children so they believe they can achieve great things that look far out of reach. The poorest child who can't wear the brand names, the bullied child that doesn't like the way they look, and the struggling child that has to live through family circumstances, like alcoholism and abuse. I was very determined to work myself out of those challenges, and I did it. I started work as a dishwasher in a restaurant at age 12 and haven't stopped working. Although I worked all through high school, I had to use that money for my mom and I to live. After working 2-3 jobs for 2 years after high school, and finally qualifying for student loans, I was able to apply for university. For 3 years I drove a beat up old Ford truck to Brandon each day for my university classes. Some nights I slept in that truck because I didn't have enough gas money to drive home and back for the next day. I also used the Food Bank at the university. In my last year of studies, my truck had to be taken off the road for safety. Thankfully, I found someone to car-pool with.

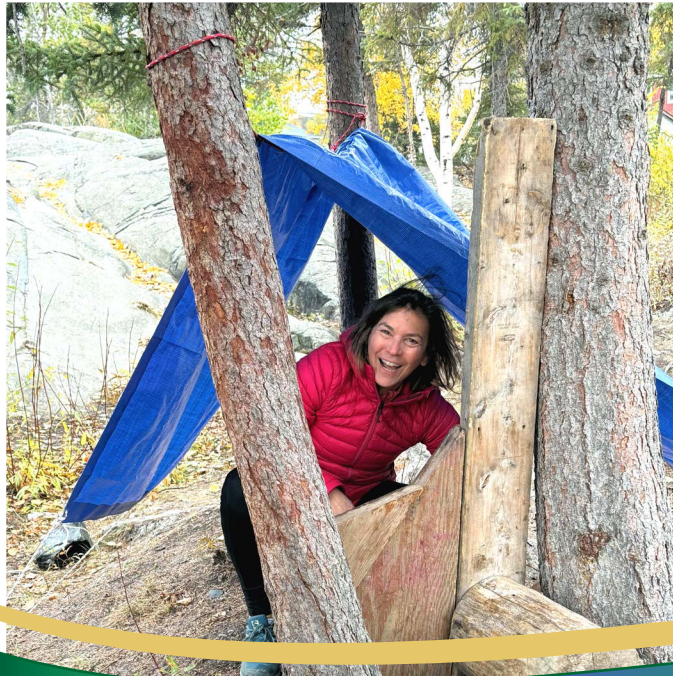
I could have developed a sad outlook through my life, but I was so proud that I had got myself to university that every day there was a happy one. I graduated on time, as a yearly honors student, and I was even awarded a \$5000 scholarship. My Mom really enjoyed seeing my graduation ceremony and my Grandpa was so proud when I showed him my degree, he cried.

Since then I have absolutely loved being able to use teaching as a way to immerse myself in new cultures. I have taught in a private Christian school in southern Manitoba, in 2 very different Cree Nations in northern Manitoba, on a Hutterite Colony, in single-grade classrooms and in many multi-grade classrooms. Now that I am in my last years of teaching, I wanted to find the greatest adventure I could in Canada. So here I am, above the Arctic Circle, working with awesome kids and staff, on the grand Mackenzie River. I share my Arctic adventures with all of my Facebook friends around the world, who encourage me while I am so far away from Manitoba. I am very thankful for all of the adventures I have had while being a teacher. Teaching is certainly not easy, but it is a perfect way to help our future, support those in great need, and to broaden your own horizons.

Shelter Building and Teamwork Professional Development



On September 29, the staff at École Jtł'ò (YK1 region) began the day around the fire. The morning began with a grounding activity - focusing on breathing in everything around us. Staff talked about sit spots, journal making, bannock on a stick and how to do these activities with each class. The highlight was getting into groups and cooperatively making shelters as part of this Indigenous Languages Professional Development.



NWTTA Collective Bargaining Update

Sara McCrea,
Assistant Executive
Director



Central Office provides collective bargaining updates through mass emails to NWTTA members.

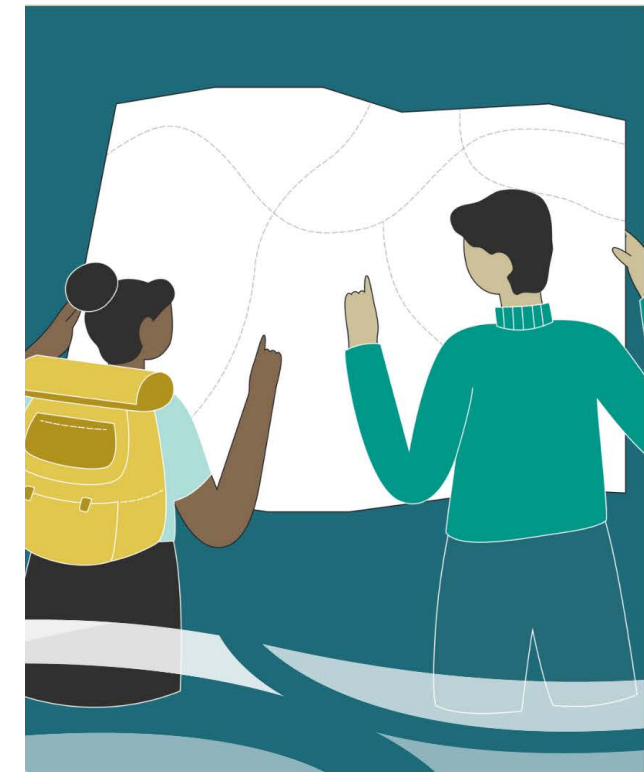
You will NOT receive the updates if you have not registered on our NWTTA Membership Website. If you have not already done so, we strongly encourage you to REGISTER.

The elected GNWT Group of 7 met on October 22 and 23 for a Negotiations 101 Workshop and to create the Membership Priorities Survey.

The survey was sent by mass email on November 17, 2025 to all GNWT members registered on our website.

The Survey is open until December 17, 2025. Your voice is important; make it heard by completing the survey!

If you are a GNWT member and have not received the survey, please contact me: sara.mccrea@nwttanta.ca





Career and Education Advisors

Are your high school students getting the support they need?

Career and Education Advisors provide services to every school and region!

They support Grade 9-12 students in their next steps after high school. They also provide practical support with applications, resumes and cover letters.

Find out more by emailing cea@gov.nt.ca or visit www.ece.gov.nt.ca/CEA

Government of Northwest Territories

Nominations Open Soon Central Executive 2026-2028

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, 2026.

Rita Mueller has been acclaimed as President for 2026-2028.

Central Executive 2026-2028 nominations open **January 5** for the positions of Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer and Member-at-Large.

The deadline for the receipt of nominations is **January 21** at 5:00 pm for the offices of Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, or Member-at-Large.

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

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.

A summary of Duties of Central Executive Officers:

The **President** shall:

- call meetings of Central Executive and Central Council;
- preside over the above mentioned meetings;
- represent the Association officially;
- serve as Canadian Teachers' Federation Director;
- address and support member concerns;
- consult with the Canadian Teachers' Federation, the Department of Education, Culture and

- Employment (ECE) and other bodies concerning legislation which affects the teachers and courses of study;
- have duties and responsibilities as directed by Central Executive in accordance with the 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;

The **Secretary-Treasurer** shall:

- exercise general financial control and supervision over the Association. by ensuring that:
- 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 financial statements audited at the end of the fiscal year,
- serve as an Executive Member-in-Charge and Chairperson of the Finance Committee,

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

- serve as the representative of all members in all regions;

Have questions?

Email them to nominations@nwtta.nt.ca

Central Executive 2026-2028

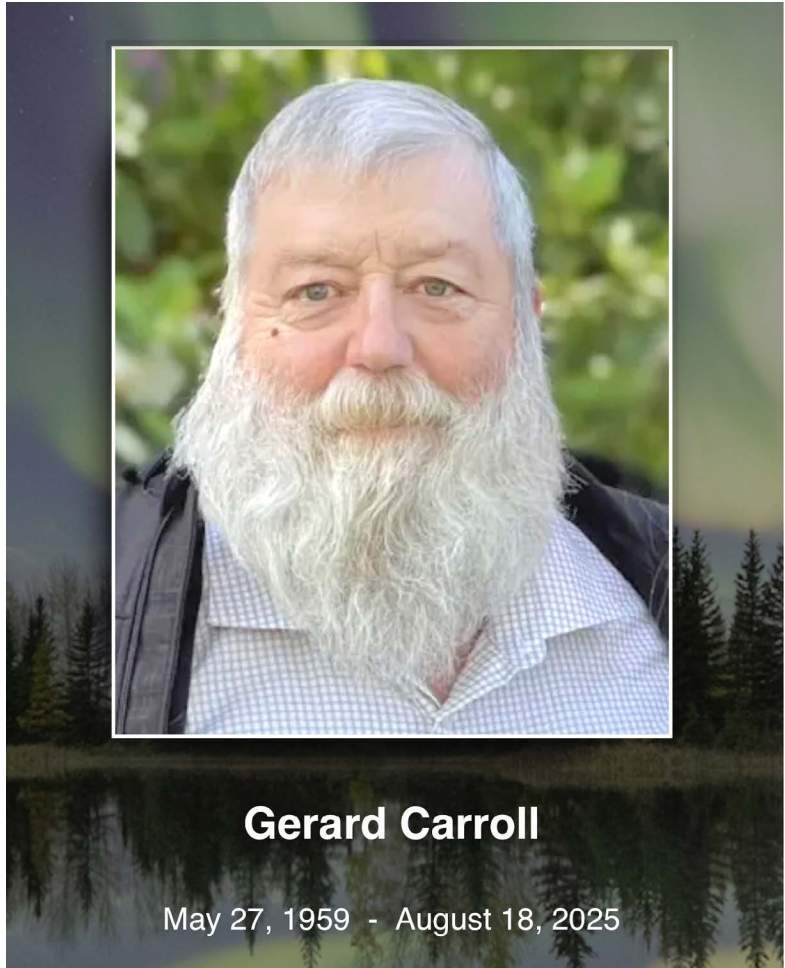
Term: July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2028

Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, Member-at-Large Nominations open: January 5, 2026

Deadline for nominations: January 21, 2026

Voting Day: February 16, 2026

Remembering Gerard Carroll



Gerard Carroll

May 27, 1959 - August 18, 2025

Following a brief battle with cancer, recently retired, long-serving NWTTA member Gerard Carroll of Hay River passed away with his family by his side on August 18, 2025, at the age of 66 years. Rest in peace.



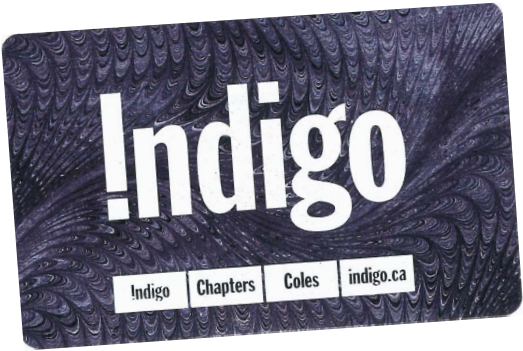
Echo Dene School (Dehcho region) staff showing their Halloween spirit!

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 16, 2026**



Win a \$50 Chapters-Indigo Gift Card!

1. When will NWTTA Central Office be closed for the holiday break?
2. What is the deadline for GNWT Education Leave 2026-2027 applications?
3. What team did students and staff at N.J. Macpherson cheer for in the 2025 World Series?
4. When do nominations open for Central Executive 2026-2028 positions of Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer and Member-at-Large?

Suzanne Annable from ?ehtseo Ayha School (Sahtu region) is the winner of the September 2025 Newsletter Trivia.

Cover: Dehcho, Fort Smith and South Slave Regional Orientation in Hay River, September 27, 2025.

2024-2026 Central Executive

Rita Mueller
President
rita.mueller@nwttta.nt.ca

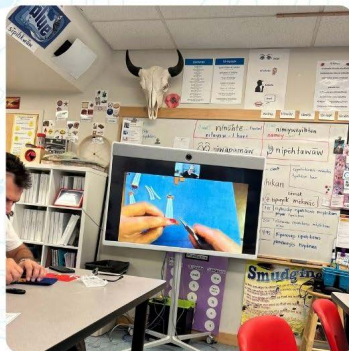
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Wendy Tulk
Secretary-Treasurer
wendy_tulk@edutlichonet

JP Bernard
Member-at-Large
jpbernard@ddec.ca

Loralea Wark
Regional Presidents' Representative
loralea.wark@yics.nt.ca

Connected North



Connected North is a charitable education program that uses video conferencing technology to deliver interactive education services to schools in remote communities.

Connected North currently serves **34 schools across the Northwest Territories**, reaching more than **4,000** students.

The program's goal is to provide participating schools with access to engaging and innovative learning experiences, with the hope of increasing feelings of empowerment in school and in life. This includes Indigenous role models, virtual field trips, and collaborations between schools across the North.

- **96.8% of teachers agree** Connected North sessions help to **engage their students, contributing to their attendance in class and motivation for learning** (Teacher Survey 2024)
- **98.6% of teachers are satisfied** with the variety of content available through Connected North (Teacher Survey 2024)
- Average **session teacher satisfaction rating 4.74 / 5 (95%)**
- **89% of students** felt Connected North virtual sessions made **learning more enjoyable** (York University)

TO LEARN MORE AND START BOOKING, PLEASE VISIT:
WWW.CONNECTEDNORTH.ORG

Central Office Contact

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www.nwttta.nt.ca

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Monday – Thursday: 8:30 am – 5:00 pm
Friday: 8:30 am – 4:30 pm

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