



Dear Colleagues:

by Gilles Arsenault



Gilles Arsenault

Welcome back! Summer has flown by. Hopefully you had a nice and enjoyable one. School is now on the forefront of our minds. For some, this will be their last year of teaching, for others their first experience in a classroom and for the rest of us, we are somewhere in between.

I truly hope that this year will be a fabulous experience for all of us. If I haven't had a chance to visit your school yet, I will certainly make an effort to tour it this year. At that time, it will be my pleasure to chat with you and your colleagues. I ask the experienced teachers to share their knowledge and expertise with the newer teachers. Even if you have been in the system for a long period of time, I am sure you can still remember the feelings you experienced as a new member on staff. Be welcoming, open, helpful and most of all, respectful towards one another.

As you might be aware, this year marks the end of our contract. As of June 30th, 2013, this contract will end. Our negotiating team is in place and ready to meet the challenges of negotiating a new contract. We hope that this negotiating process will show the integrity and respect that this government has for teachers, as this is not always the case in other Canadian jurisdictions.

We will need your input and support in ensuring a fair and a well-balanced collective agreement! I will stand for you and for all Island teachers in order to achieve these goals.

Have a great year and don't forget to take time for yourself!

Take Care!

Gilles Arsenault
President

Chers enseignants,
Bienvenue à cette nouvelle année scolaire qui vient de s'amorcer. J'espère que vous avez passé de belles vacances et que maintenant vous êtes prêts pour le travail qui vous attend. Pour certains, cette année sera la dernière en enseignement, pour d'autres leur toute première, et pour le reste, nous sommes quelque part au milieu.

J'espère que cette année scolaire sera exceptionnelle! Si je n'ai toujours pas visité votre école, je souhaite pouvoir le faire au cours de cette année. Il me fera plaisir à ce moment de discuter avec vous.

Je voudrais aussi demander aux enseignants d'expérience de partager leurs connaissances avec les nouveaux enseignants. Soyons accueillants, ouverts et avant tout, respectueux les uns envers les autres.

Comme vous l'avez peut-être réalisé, cette année marque la fin de notre contrat. Notre équipe de négociation est en place et nous sommes prêts à faire face aux défis de négociation d'une nouvelle entente collective. Nous souhaitons que ce processus de négociation nous permette de constater l'intégrité et le respect de ce gouvernement envers les enseignants, car ce n'est pas toujours le cas dans certaines autres régions au Canada.

Nous aurons besoin de votre engagement et de votre appui afin d'assurer un contrat juste et équitable. Je vous assure de ma collaboration tout au long de ce processus.

Je vous souhaite une excellente année et n'oubliez surtout pas de prendre du temps pour vous.

Visit our website at www.peitf.com

Au plaisir,
Gilles Arsenault
Président

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Lois Adams

May I Be of Assistance? Helping Our New Teachers Transition Into the Profession

Editorial by Lois Adams

I worked for many years in the retail industry. I had the privilege of learning from some of the finest sales associates around. They greeted each customer with this phrase. Some readily accepted the offer; others declined - to look for themselves. In both cases, these fine associates remained

vigilant – quietly so in the case of the latter. However, when they would see this customer make a selection, they were quickly there to assist in sizing and color, and to set up in a fitting room. These successful ladies never lied to a customer. If the customer asked how they looked, and it was not a good look, they would not criticize but rather offer another suggestion that they felt would work better.

So too it is with dealing with our new teachers. Some of them will actively seek and accept assistance; others will be more reluctant. We cannot, and must not, assume this means they do not need our assistance. We must be quietly vigilant, ready to step in with support, information and encouragement as needed.

According to several sources, beginning teachers want and need the following things: first and foremost, they need a trusted colleague who can inform them about policies and practices at the school and district levels, and the politics of the same. Call them mentors or coaches, what a beginning teacher needs is someone they can collaborate, co-plan with and observe.

With schools using collaborative teams, subject level teams, and grade level teams, new teachers will hopefully be part of a community of learners as they start their professional journeys. These groups can help support the beginning teachers need for information around curriculum, assessment (how to use it to support student learning), instructional strategies to meet the diverse needs of their students, and a plan for what is essential for students to learn and scaffolding that information for optimal learning. They need a mentor/coach who can help them develop a discipline plan that is both consistent and flexible. Consistent in what is and isn't acceptable, but flexible in that we know that each child is unique and must be dealt with accordingly. They need to know that you praise in public and deal with discipline with the least embarrassment as possible to the student, so you do not destroy your relationship with them.

As an administrator, one needs to ensure that this group is able to meet the needs and support the beginning teacher in more than

just the areas of curriculum and instruction. New teachers also need to know how to engage and support parents in a partnership to promote student learning. They need someone who will provide advice on how to do this, while maintaining appropriate boundaries. You cannot be available 24/7 – answering and writing e-mail at 2 a.m. is not a good idea.

This relationship requires a commitment on behalf of both the new teacher and the mentor/coach. The mentor must be available, and check in frequently with the teacher to find out if they 'may be of assistance'. They cannot leave the beginning teacher to their own devices and assume because they have not asked for help that they do not need it. The beginning teacher may be so overwhelmed by all that is expected of them, that they don't have time to seek their mentor out, or they may not know what they need support in. It is ideal if a mentor and beginning teacher develop a relationship of support and collaboration that extends into the future beyond the first year of teaching.

These beginning teachers are joining our highly respected profession. It will bring them many rewards and many challenges. The journey will be easier with the support of their administrators and colleagues. New teachers bring enthusiasm, new ideas, and often, new skills to our schools and classrooms. If there is anything you can do to assist our beginning teachers in their work, we will all benefit. ●

UPEI News Faculty of Education

"It is back to school time again! The excitement is contagious and our BEd students at UPEI are certainly excited to continue on their journey of becoming educators.

We wanted to start this UPEI Faculty of Education news section by saluting all of PEI's outstanding teachers, educational assistants and administrators. We wish you a safe and rewarding 2012-13 school year. We also want to thank all cooperating teachers and school leaders, past and present, who generously host our students during their practica in island schools. We could not operate our programs without you!

Second we wanted to provide an update on what the Faculty of Education is up to this year. In order to better reflect the job market realities in PEI and beyond, we have admitted 50% more French students in 2012 and we have decreased the number of English admissions accordingly. We are also renewing our BEd program for 2014. The changes aim to reflect what we are hearing from schools in terms of areas of need: increased literacy and mathematics methods courses along with more of a focus on differentiated instruction. Information related to this is forthcoming and we will be seeking input from schools, the PEITF and the Department of Education before any change is confirmed. We are excited about the direction the renewed program is taking us and we welcome any and all input regarding the changes." ●



**PEITF
Newsletter**

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND TEACHERS' FEDERATION

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Good Bye Old Friend

After 25 years of serving the teachers of Prince Edward Island in the areas of Professional Development, Communications and Public Relations, Bob MacRae has embarked on a new adventure – retirement!



Bob MacRae



L-R: Michel Plamondon, Patrick MacFadyen, Bob MacRae, Shaun MacCormac

We want to thank Bob for his dedication to the profession and his advocacy on behalf of Island teachers. Bob was recognized, and respected, by his colleagues and peers in the other Atlantic and Canadian teacher associations for his wisdom, and his willingness to mentor new people. Bob's big grin and friendly manner will be greatly missed particularly as we pass by the Information Desk at the Annual Convention, where he has been a fixture for many years.

We know of his love of travel – he and his wife Diane have already had many great adventures in other countries and around Canada. We have no doubt this wanderlust will continue to be indulged as he enjoys a well-deserved retirement.

Happy trails, old friend! 🍷

Meet your Colleague CORNER



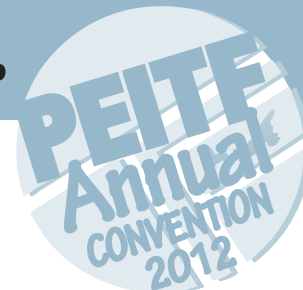
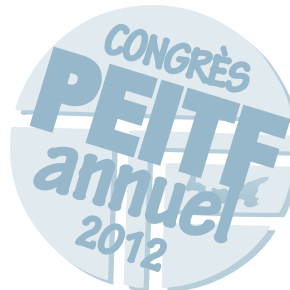
*Do you know who teaches
down the road from you?*

*Who are the teachers
in your area?*

Look for our
Meet your Colleague CORNER,
which will profile PEI teachers.

Beginning the next issue of the PEITF Newsletter.

REMINDER...



**Please fill out your on-line
Convention evaluation
at www.peitf.com**

Retired PEI Teacher Shares Skills in Rwanda

Mary Hickey volunteered overseas as a young woman in 1969, and now after a rewarding 30-year career as a schoolteacher, she has done it again. The Stratford resident returned to PEI in the spring after spending 18 months teaching teachers in Africa for Cuso International.

"I had in my mind when I retired I would enjoy my grandchildren and just putter. But there's only so much puttering you can do," says Hickey. "I always wanted to return to Africa. It feels a bit like going home, though there's no rhyme or reason."

Her first Cuso experience was in Nigeria and, as well, she later spent one summer volunteering in Tanzania through the Canadian Teachers' Federation. This time Hickey was placed in the central/eastern African country of Rwanda for a 12-month stint introducing a new methodology to teachers. She worked with them in French – a great challenge to Hickey – but she also helped teachers with their English, the language now used for teaching. She helped teachers adjust from a "chalk and talk" methodology to a more child-centered approach with time for practicing skills and using the language. "It's a more exciting way to teach," Hickey says.

After her contract, she returned home to PEI, but not for long. "All I could think about was the work I was doing and how meaningful it was." She returned to Rwanda a few months later on a six-month contract.

Hickey worked in a different region this time but continued to educate teachers. She conducted day-long and weekend workshops for teachers and did weekly visits to 12 schools. "Sometimes I would teach the lesson, but once I developed a relationship we'd plan the lesson together and team-teach. Eventually they would teach and I'd give feedback."

Hickey never doubted that her assistance was useful. "Their goal is to have teacher trainers in every school. They face great challenges – huge classrooms and not a lot of teaching resources."

She enjoyed the Rwandan people but found the lifestyle challenging with no running water and traveling to school by motorbike. She, however, confesses it makes for great stories.

Hickey says she would still love to return to Africa and encourages mid-career or other retired teachers to consider volunteering as well. "There are many teachers who retire but aren't ready for retirement. You're now able to choose how to spend your time and this is good, meaningful work."

Cuso International recently celebrated its 50th anniversary and has formed "Volunteer 4 the World" committees across Canada to raise awareness and engage Canadians in development issues. The gatherings also provide an opportunity for returned volunteers to share their experiences.

"Cuso has always believed we can make a difference one volunteer at a time," says Hickey. "It's hard work but I loved it."

Mary Hickey will be available to speak with Island teachers at Cuso International's display at the Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation Annual Convention, October 11 and 12.

She will also speak at a Cuso Information Session, Tuesday, October 30 at 7:30 p.m., Murphy Community Centre, 200 Richmond Street, Charlottetown.

For further information, contact Marian White at 1-800-676-8411 or [HYPERLINK "mailto:atlanticconnect@cusointernational.org"](mailto:atlanticconnect@cusointernational.org)



Mary Hickey

DSS (Developing Successful Schools)



DSS (Developing Successful Schools) Institute is held every July in Mt. Allison. It is a jointly sponsored event by PEITE, NSTU, NLTA, and NBTA. Each year speakers are brought in to work with administrators, teachers and consultants for 3+ days. These intensive sessions allow participants to delve deeply in to topics supported by experts in the field. This year, Dr. Robert Hickey, Dr. Glenda Fisk and Dr. Brendan Sweeney from Queens University led a session on 'Strategic Approaches to Conflict Management and Negotiations'. As teachers, and educational leaders, negotiation is a part of our daily lives, whether it is with a child, a parent, or a colleague. This institute through hands on activities, discussions, and interactive presentations participants examined their own negotiating style, and

reflected on how to strengthen their management skills. These Institutes are valuable PD, and many of the same faces show up yearly due to the quality of PD offered and the opportunity to network with colleagues from across the Atlantic Provinces.

Student Mental Health: Canadian Teachers Call for More Resources and Professional Development in Schools

The following release is available on the CTF Web site, www.ctf-fce.ca, under NEWSROOM.

Ce texte est disponible en français au <http://www.ctf-fce.ca/Newsroom/News.aspx?NewsID=1983984766&lang=FR>.

July 12, 2012

Halifax... According to a recent national survey of 3,900 teachers, many Canadian schools are ill-equipped and under-resourced to adequately support the mental health of students. This recurring theme emerged from the survey conducted by the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) last winter. Findings were released today at the opening of the Federation's Annual General Meeting currently underway in Halifax.

The CTF survey set out to examine the teachers' perspective on issues related to student mental health and well-being in Canadian schools, including their perceptions of factors that may act as potential barriers to the provision of mental health services for students. Teachers were also asked about their level of preparedness to address the mental health issues that they may face.

"Along with certified teachers, schools need educational assistants, psychologists, psychiatrists and other professionals to support students. However, 89 % of teachers who responded to our survey said there is a shortage of school-based mental health professionals."

Most teachers reported they have not received any professional development in the area of student mental health. Over 96% of teachers indicated they wanted professional development opportunities and that the lack of provision of training could be a barrier to recognizing and understanding mental health issues in children, and to implementing strategies for working with children with externalizing behaviour problems.

Here are additional survey findings regarding pressing mental health concerns:

- 9 in 10 teachers identified attention deficit disorders (ADD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorders (ADHD), as well as learning disabilities such as autism spectrum disorder and dyslexia were pressing concerns.
- 79% of teachers agreed that stress (i.e. students feeling over-stressed) was a pressing concern, including one-third who "strongly" agreed.
- 73% of teachers agreed that anxiety disorders were a pressing concern including 24% who "strongly" agreed.
- a majority of teachers (59%) agreed that depression disorders were a pressing concern including 16% who "strongly" agreed.

"What teachers told us in this survey should be a call to action for all education partners," concluded Taillefer. "This survey should help to inform the discussion about the role of schools and teachers in promoting student health and well-being and addressing mental illness."

The online survey, conducted Feb. 6-17, 2012, drew the responses of 2,324 elementary school teachers and 1,603 secondary school teachers in both English schools (including

immersion) and French as a first language schools thanks to participating CTF Member organizations.

CTF acknowledges the valuable support provided by the Mental Health Commission of Canada for assisting in the survey development and analysis. The full report, Understanding Teachers' Perspectives on Student Mental Health, is available on the CTF Web site at www.ctf-fce.ca.

An alliance of 15 Member organizations and one Affiliate Member representing nearly 200,000 teachers across the country, the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) is a member of the international body of teachers, Education International (EI).

Follow CTF on Twitter @CTFPresident, @CanTeachersFed, @EnseigneCanada

Comments: Paul Taillefer, CTF President

Contact: Francine Filion, Director of Communications, 613-899-4247 (cell)

Editor's Note: Permission granted to reproduce this article which appeared in the 2012 June issue of Perspectives.

<http://perspectives.ctf-fce.ca/en/8/Default.aspx>.

Vous avez la permission de publier l'article qui a paru dans le plus récent numéro de Perspectives.

<http://perspectives.ctf-fce.ca/fr/8/Default.aspx> 

Volunteer Overseas with CTF

Would you like to assist teachers in a developing country? Are you interested in learning more about global education issues? Can you see yourself volunteering in Africa, Asia or the Caribbean?


Project Overseas 2013

50 Canadians each year are chosen to work on CTF's Project Overseas, to assist teachers abroad. Administrative, travel and living expenses are borne by the Canadian Teachers' Federation, its member agencies, the Canadian International Development Agency and the Wild Rose Foundation.

The sponsors of Project Overseas do not pay salaries or honoraria to teachers who apply, nor do the sponsors pay any costs associated with substitute teachers or release time.

REQUIREMENTS - An appropriate teachers' certificate, a minimum of five years teaching experience in Canada, Canadian citizenship, excellent health, and evidence of flexibility and mature judgement.

2013 Project Overseas will operate July and August in English and French speaking countries.

APPLICATIONS - Deadline is **November 15, 2012**. Further information and application forms are available from Lois Adams at Federation House (902) 569-4157 or 1-800-903-4157. 



Patrick MacFadyen

The Scoop

You may notice some changes on your pay stub this year.

Federation Fees

Teachers voted in the spring to decrease federation fees from 1.5% to 1.4% of gross salary. This will not make a big difference on your pay (about \$2.60 a pay) but the Federation has reached the target amount in the Contingency Fund. Although we are in uncertain times the Finance and

Property Committee, Executive, and Board are confident that a balanced budget can be achieved at the 1.4%.

Group Insurance

The Group Insurance Trustees had gone to market last year to allow companies to bid on our business. As you may recall, teachers own most of the group insurance plan (health, dental, and some of the life insurance). The insurance companies predict what the cost will be for the upcoming year and the Trustees decide on the final amount to charge. At the end of the year, if the money that was taken in is more than what was paid out (including administration fees) then that difference comes back to the plan. Over the past few years the plan has had some large surpluses, mostly because of the life insurance.

When the Trustees went to market they focused on three things:

- 1) What administration fees would be charged by the providers;
- 2) What the new rates would be set at; and
- 3) What improvements could be made.

When all comparisons were made, the Trustees decided to stay with the current providers although many of the rates were reduced even with an increase in benefits. The rates are now set at a more reflective picture of the costs and some admin. fees have been lowered. Here are some of the highlights:

- The health plan will see a decrease of about 9% for single and family coverage with a new rate of \$30.63 and \$85.66 respectively.
- The basic life (\$100,000 cost shared) will see a decrease of about 27% for single and family coverage with new rates of \$8.70 and \$9.33 respectively.
- Salary continuation will also see a large decrease from

1.02% of gross salary to the new rate of 0.758% of gross salary. For a teacher who makes \$67,000 a year this would mean a savings of \$175.54.

- The dental plan will stay the same.
- There have also been some benefit increases including an increase to 80% for frames and lenses to a maximum of \$200 (payment of \$160). For more updated information you can check the website at peitf.com

The changes to the Group Insurance rates and benefits take place October 1, 2012.

Pension

As you have probably heard in the news, the Government is taking a close look at the pension plans. The Government currently has a policy to keep the plan at a 90% funding level, which means an extra payment of 80 million was needed after the last valuation. The Government has stated that they can't continue to make these extra payments and are looking for ways to make the plan sustainable. There is a working group made up of representatives from the unions currently looking at the plans to protect the future of the plan. They will give their information to a steering group made up of the union Presidents. Our representatives on the working group are Shaun MacCormac and Michel Plamondon and President Gilles Arsenault is on the steering committee. Up until now the discussions have been on where the plans are currently and how they got to this position. There have not been any discussions to this point about changes that may or may not be looked at. The Federation will be in contact with teachers to give updates on what is happening with that committee when more information is available.

Substitute Teachers

The Government has agreed to make changes to the School Act which will allow substitute teachers to become members of the Teachers' Federation following the withdrawal of CUPE's application to the Labour Board. Although the changes have not happened yet, the Federation is in the process of preparing for negotiations. We anticipate the changes will happen sometime this fall.

At the Board of Governors Annual Meeting in June, there was clear direction given by teachers on the membership rights for substitute teachers. The official changes to the By-laws will be voted on this year.

WANTED

Submissions



PEITF
Newsletter
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND TEACHERS' FEDERATION

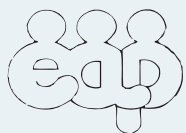
Please...tell us all about it!

We are inviting you to send us your articles / photos describing the great things happening in your school.

Please submit YOUR story / information to:

Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation • P.O. Box 6000, Charlottetown • Prince Edward Island • C1A 8B4
Editor: Lois Adams
ladams@peitf.com

Potential contributions must be signed by and bear the address of the writer.



Self-Care for Teachers

Caring for Yourself So You Can Care for Others

You became a teacher because you want to make a difference; because you love children; because you enjoy seeing the expression on a child's face when he or she finally understands a new concept. It is that passion that makes you a great teacher-the same passion that can also lead to burn-out.

Avoiding burn-out is why self-care is important. You cannot care for others if you do not take care of yourself. Practicing self-care enables you to be an effective teacher. If you are tired, either emotionally or physically, you cannot do your job well. Finally, self-care is important so you can model good balance and healthy boundaries to your students and co-workers. Here are several strategies to help you care for yourself more effectively:

Set healthy boundaries. Say yes when you mean yes and no when you mean no. Recognize your limits, and do what is most important. Trying to be super-teacher has consequences (mostly negative ones). No, you cannot leap tall buildings in a single bound!

Take breaks often. You will be amazed at what a five minute break will do. Whether it's spent just relaxing your brain and body, eating a healthy snack, or meditating, you will be rejuvenated so the work you do is more efficient. Set a goal to take a five minute break at least every hour.

Exercise. Research shows that exercise can help increase energy, improve concentration, and decrease stress and depression. It also allows you to focus on yourself and take care of your body. Both are important for reducing burn-out.

Know your own threshold for stress. Recognize the first signs of stress. These may include increased heart rate, change in appetite, fatigue and irritability. Pay attention to what triggers stress for you and either avoid those situations or learn relaxation techniques so you can manage your stress

effectively. Modeling these skills for your students will teach them how they can handle their own stress. Focused breathing and deep muscle relaxation have been proven to work.

Find at least three activities that relieve stress for you. Do these things consistently. Planning ahead of time to prevent stress or becoming aware of what you can do when you become stressed will help decrease burn-out.

Start the day on a positive note. Begin your day by doing something that lifts you up and makes you feel good. It may be enjoying quiet time in meditation or prayer, thinking about the positive things that are in store for you that day, taking a walk or conversing with your spouse about positive things. What you do first can set the tone for how you manage your entire day. ☺

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
Tel: 902-368-5738
Toll-free: 1-800-239-3826



RTA CORNER

by James MacAulay

Another school year has come around and all active teachers and support staff have returned to duty.

Those of us who are now enjoying retirement wish you a productive and satisfying year. Although we have retired, the Prince Edward Island Retired Teachers' Association (PEIRTA) is very active on retirement concerns. Our organization is now preparing for our annual meeting on November 8, 2012. At this meeting, we will be reviewing our year which will include ongoing concerns with Group Insurance and Pension. Our organization is also affiliated

with the national organization known as The Canadian Association of Retired Teachers. Through this membership, we are able to stay in touch with national issues which affect teachers both active and retired. We are also a member of the Eastern Canada Retired Teachers Organization. We meet every two years and our second meeting is this fall. I realize after attending both groups' meetings that we all have the same concerns for our retired teachers. All the best for each and every one of you and have a great year. ☺



Shaun MacCormac

Thoughts and Comments from the General Secretary

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome back teachers to a new school year. A special welcome to any teacher who has received her/his first contract. That is an exciting time full of many new experiences.

Despite the many challenges that teachers face today, teaching is still a very rewarding career and teachers remain as highly respected and valued members of our society. What each of you does in the classroom has an affect on your students' lives and that is a huge responsibility that I know teachers do not take lightly. Rightly or wrongly, parents and the public expect teachers to take a large role in developing children into strong citizens with an awareness in many areas that go beyond the curriculum. I wish teachers success and joy in working with students in this endeavor or in whatever role some of you have outside the classroom/school for this school year.

As teachers return to their classrooms for their important work, there is one constant that they can expect in education and that is – change! There was certainly not one year that I remember as a classroom teacher that didn't have some element of change in it. New curriculum, new reporting structure, new expectations and new ways of doing things, there always seemed to be someone changing the way I had to work as a teacher. Not that all of the changes were bad, but sometimes it was hard to see why they were necessary. Well, hold on to your hats because this year will be a doozy.

It is still hard to tell what all of the impacts will be on teachers and the classroom, but there will definitely be some. I'm not even sure where to start, maybe from the top.

Our government is not alone, at this point in time, in facing some fiscal challenges. Even the "have" provinces in this country are facing some tough fiscal choices, so that will give you some indication of the seriousness that faces the "have not" provinces like PEI. Despite the semantics, there have been cuts to all government departments including education.

For the first time in memory, maybe ever, there have been cuts to teaching positions on the Island. The excuse may be declining enrolment, but anyone in education knows that, even with declining enrolment, we actually need more teachers to deal with the increasing amount of needs in our system. Fewer teachers paired with increasing needs for students equals increased workload for those of you who are teaching now. That is not good news.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development continues to go through a restructuring. I can't honestly say I know what impact this is going to have on education. The Federation has yet to be shown any plan (although I believe one exists) for this restructuring or been given much rationale for its occurrence. It has taken place concurrently with the Governance Report, not because of it, and we do not know at what point it will be finished. This is not to say that there will not be a positive impact by these changes, but simply to say that the Federation has not been

well informed of its intent or direction. We do, however, continue to have a good working relationship with the Department and we continue to be patient as they work through their own many changes.

The new PEI English Language School Board (ELSB) is all but official and that will ceremoniously take place in January of 2013. Operationally, this single English school board is already in place and the staffing has been completed. Like most things that change, there are likely to be both positives and negatives with the consolidation of the Western School Board and the Eastern School District. It is safe to say that there will be both benefits and challenges ahead on this front. The Federation has already been working through questions and concerns with the new school board and I'm sure that work will continue.

As some of you know, this is also a negotiating year. The Economic Welfare Committee is already hard at work preparing for the spring of 2013. It is always hard to predict how negotiations will go that far away, but the committee is mindful that the landscape both inside and outside this province is grim. Teachers in both British Columbia and Ontario are under attack – literally not proverbially and our Atlantic counterparts are all currently negotiating and experiencing their own challenges. The committee will continue to monitor these situations and expect to have the Economic Welfare Survey out to teachers this fall. Please make sure that you fill this out. Your input is invaluable.

And last, but certainly not least in the minds of teachers and all government employees is the pension review that is going on in this province. This review was mentioned in the Speech From the Throne this spring and the government is working with the unions, including the PEITF, to try and come up with some solutions to the challenges being faced by the Civil Service Superannuation Fund (CSSF) and the Teachers Superannuation Fund (TSF). The Federation will be in constant contact with teachers to update them on information as it becomes available. If any decision is to be made, teachers will have both input and the final say on the Federation's position to government on this issue.

That is a lot to handle! I encourage you to be a "the cup is half-full" kind of person in light of these many changes and to try and not worry about things that are out of your control and to act professionally on those things that are. Please remember, it is the Federation's job to answer your questions and work on your concerns. It is very important that you be an active part of the process and make sure that you express any questions or concerns to your local Board of Governor, the President and/or the Executive, and/or to the Federation staff. I sincerely hope that you find this teaching year a rewarding one and that you experience many opportunities to smile. Be good to yourself and to your fellow teachers. ☺

Visit our website at
www.peitf.com