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*Dr. Jody
Carrington
delivers a
message about
relationships
at PEITF 2019
Convention.*



From the President

Holiday greetings! It is hard to believe that this time of year is upon us once again. Since beginning my first term as President, I have had the opportunity to see the Island public school system from a wide-angled lens. This time of year certainly adds to the business of everyday routines and structures. Concerts and fundraisers are wonderful examples of how our schools showcase the talents of our students in communities across our province. Thank you for supporting students through these opportunities.

Teachers continually go above and beyond to provide students with the best possible educational experiences. My visits to schools thus far have permitted me to see students thriving and flourishing through their participation in these events.

Teachers are dealing daily with needs within their classes that are extremely demanding. The Federation has placed focus on teacher wellness. We are encouraging teachers to access the Starling Minds program online. Please take the time to explore this online tool as we look forward to receiving feedback in the upcoming months.

At the convention in November, I referred to the Ministerial Mandate letter, which noted that the Minister is tasked with reviewing the educational funding and program model, and making practical adjustments to meet the complex and diverse needs in our Island classrooms. We plan on these conversations and analysis in 2020 as we know that workload issues and challenges in the classroom are steadily increasing. These issues, as well as many others, will be at the forefront in the New Year ahead.

“Teachers continually go above and beyond to provide students with the best possible educational experiences.”

The PEITF Advisory Committee will be bringing these issues forward with the Minister and Deputy Minister before the New Year. I will continue expressing your concerns to the powers that be so that our voice is collectively heard!

The month of December has been different for me as compared to the past 25 years of being in a school daily this time of year. Working with young people is a privilege in that you have so many ways to impact a life. I encourage you to look beyond the faces

of our children and focus on the heart. So many of my most memorable times teaching in the classroom were moments where I was able to sow a few seeds of happiness and joy. For many children, December can be very difficult due to circumstances at home.

“Working with young people is a privilege in that you have so many ways to impact a life. I encourage you to look beyond the faces of our children and focus on the heart. So many of my most memorable times teaching in the classroom were moments where I was able to sow a few seeds of happiness and joy.”

My wish for you this holiday season is to have time for yourself to reflect and breathe. Reflect based on your ability to capture every single thing in your life that is keeping you back from feeling happy and peaceful. I know that this profession can take its toll on your ability to do this, but you need to be kind to yourself first!

I wish you all a memorable Christmas holiday and a well-deserved relaxing break to spend time with loved ones and reconnect with family and friends. I hope it leaves you with a full heart and the promise of a wonderful and blessed New Year.



Aldene Smallman
President, PEITF

by Aldene Smallman



Chad Gallant

PD Corner

December is here in all its glory. I'm not sure where November has gone, but it seems like just yesterday, the convention committee was putting a bow on the annual convention. Now sitting here

engulfed in the peaceful hum of the coolers at Stonepark cafeteria after another day of professional learning, I reflect on the messages from our recent PD and how vitally important it is to take care of those that take care of our students.

First off, a big thank you to the Annual Convention Planning Committee for this year's event. I am always so appreciative of how plugged in these teachers are to the needs of our teachers. Finding a message that resonates with the vast majority of members is something the group wrestles with each year, but this year, as mentioned on Twitter, the committee, overall, "knocked it out of the park."

Teachers across the province are so locked into their curriculum outcomes, that the committee knew that teachers needed to hear not only what a difference teachers can make, but the impact of connection, both with students and colleagues. We often don't realize the power of taking a few moments to

get to know a student, but it makes all the difference to that child and your relationship with them. Your students will not remember your amazing lesson plan on the five-paragraph essay, but they will remember you because you made a connection. So to

the Annual Convention Planning Committee and to all of you who facilitated sessions or helped out in any way, thank you...Nice Bike. On a side note, I wonder how many high-quality meat trays have made into school staff rooms since Jody Carrington's presentation?

The Joint Staff day also provides for teachers to attend planned sessions or direct their learning through an Alternate PD activity. The planning committee, comprised of representatives from the PSB, the CSLF, the Department, and Federation, worked to put together an agenda with diverse opportunities. The number of teachers that choose an Appendix D on this day to meet with colleagues and dive into topics of

interest continues to be strong. For many teachers, Joint Staff day is a day they look most forward to and find most beneficial.

Should there be a topic you would like to see included in future PD offerings, send me a note, I would love to hear from you.

Take care and take time for you this holiday season.



**PEITF
Newsletter**

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND TEACHERS' FEDERATION

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Member CEPA

by Chad Gallant

Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation Executive



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Member-at-Large
WATA



David Chisholm
Member-at-Large
WATA



Sherri Campbell
Member-at-Large
EATA



*PEITF
Board of Governors
meet to discuss
school issues.*



Federation House will close on
Friday, December 20, 2019 for the holiday break.
The office will re-open on Monday, January 6, 2020.



BOARD OF GOVERNORS Area Coordinators and Assistants 2019-2020

This issue features the teachers who continue to work hard to support and represent your viewpoints and concerns. The members of the Board of Governors give generously of their time to do this work. On behalf of all teachers, accept our thanks for representation, hard work and professionalism.



Anne-Marie Rioux
École Pierre-Chiasson
Coordinator
AEEFL



Sharon Anderson
Somerset Elem.
Coordinator
WATA



Helen Smith-MacPhail
Bluefield Sr. High
Coordinator
EATA



Kendra Silliker
O'Leary Elem.
Assistant Coordinator
WATA



Éric Arseneault
École François-Buote
Assistant Coordinator
AEEFL



Scott MacCormack
Colonel Gray Sr. High
Assistant Coordinator
EATA

L'association des enseignantes et des enseignants de langue française



Rachelle Gallant
École Pierre-Chiasson



Ghislain Sonier
École Évangéline



Jean-Paul Gallant
École François-Buote

Missing Photos:
Susan Shive - École Saint-Augustin
James Hunt - École La-Belle-Cloche
Christopher Daigle - École-sur-Mer



Sheila Gaudette
Tignish Elem.



Paul Quinlan
Amherst Cove Cons.



Chris Richard
O'Leary Elem.



Barbra Forbes
Three Oaks Sr. High



Mary Hart
M.E. Callaghan Int.



Lesley Cousins
Kinkora Reg. High



Karen Smith
Greenfield Elem.



Jacqueline Perry
Westisle Composite High



Heather Harris
Alberton Elem.



Paul Shepard
Parkside Elem.



Melanie Gorveatt
Miscouche Cons.



Lori Gard
St. Louis Elem.



Eamon Graham
Kensington Inter.



Kaye Noonan
Elm Street Elem.



Jennifer Rozell
Elliesslie Elem.



Karen Brennan
Queen Elizabeth Elem.



Rachel Noye
Bloomfield Elem.



Melanie Corcoran
Hernewood Inter.



Mark MacNeill
Summerside Inter.



Robin Gale-Doucette
Athena Cons.



Krista Hickey
Three Oaks Sr. High



Lana Mill
Department of Education
and Lifelong Learning



Michelle Silliker
Substitute Teacher
Rep.



Margie McIver
Somerset Cons.

Missing Photo:
Cindy Mendoza
Public Schools Branch



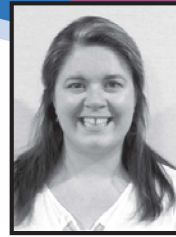
Jill Coffin
Bluefield Sr. High



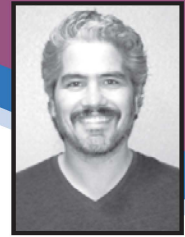
Lynn Sherren
Souris Reg.



Sharleen Dunphy
West Royalty Elem.



Stephanie Ford
L.M. Montgomery Elem.



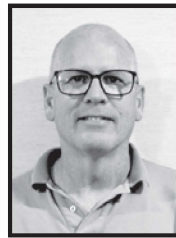
John Michael Murphy
Birchwood Int.



Lindy Waite
Englewood Cons.



Joanne MacNevin
Public Schools Branch



Calvin MacPhail
Southern Kings Cons.



Alexander Field
Colonel Gray Sr. High



Jillian Power
East Wiltshire Int.



Linda Gallant
Stonepark Int.



Kurt Duncan
Sherwood Elem.



Brenda Larsen
Eliot River Elem.



Elizabeth Johnston
Spring Park Elem.



Mireille Poirier
West Kent Elem.



JoAnne Jay
Spring Park Elem.



Stephen Daley
Montague Cons.



Jody MacKinnon
Belfast Cons.



Alanna Gauthier
Central Queens Elem.



Michaela Oliver
Morell Cons.



Jennifer Mutch
Queen Charlotte Int.



Janice Broderick
Charlottetown Rural
High



Treena Hann
Stratford Elem.



Mark Gaudet
Montague Int.



Bethany Ellis
Sherwood Elem.



Andrea Robbins
Parkdale Elem.



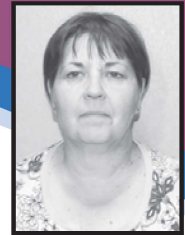
Sally Dunn
Prince Street Elem.



Carole McLeod
St. Jean Elem.



Chris Harkness
Stonepark Int.



Marion McGaughey
Donagh Regional



Vanda Deighan
West Royalty Elem.



Stephanie Ellsworth-Reid
Westwood Primary



Quinn Mills
Georgetown Elem.



Jacqueline Robbins
Mt. Stewart Cons.



Mark McGillivray
Gulf Shore Cons.



Lori-Dawn Gordon
Morell Reg. High



Clodagh Peverley
Westwood Primary



Chrissy MacAulay
Souris Reg.



Carolyn McQuaid
Bluefield Sr. High



Jeff Trainor
Queen Charlotte Int.



Trisha Burrows
Colonel Gray Sr. High



Andrea Pickett
Substitute Teacher
Rep.



Heather Campbell
East Wiltshire Int.



April Iguidez
Stratford Elem.



Roy Power
Cardigan Cons.



Lori Targett
Vernon River Cons.

Missing Photos: Victoria Coulson, Glen Stewart Elem.
Rebecca Fradsham, Charlottetown Rural High
Kathy Constable, Public Schools Branch
Nicholas Sheehan, Glen Stewart Primary
Kathryn Rajamanie, Montague Regional High
Sara MacKinnon-Cormier, Department of Education and Lifelong Learning

Canadian Teachers' Federation

Project Overseas



That Montserrat Mystique

In 2018, Megan Morrison and I were thrilled to be accepted as PEITF's representatives with the Canadian Teachers' Federation Project Overseas. We were sent to Haiti, where 5 days later we were quickly evacuated due to violent civil unrest in the country. We were devastated that we were unable to complete our project and felt that we let down our partner organizations in Haiti.

Fortunately, both PEITF and the CTF agreed that Megan and I would again participate with Project Overseas and we began preparing with our respective teams for a return to Haiti. We were so excited. We would be working with the same people from our 2018 project, so we had already developed close personal and professional relations with our teams, and we had very little planning to do because we had been unable to use any of the lessons we had already developed for the previous year.

Then in January of 2019, civil unrest again broke out in Haiti and we all watched anxiously as the violence escalated. Again our excitement turned to disappointment when in March we were told we could not return to Haiti. However, the CTF worked overtime and was able to offer both teams new projects. Megan's team would travel to Togo, Africa as a second team in the country and my team would be the very first Canadian team to partner with the Montserrat Teachers Union, a member of the umbrella organization the Carribean Teachers' Union.



Nicole Beaulieu (ETFO), Lana Mill (PEITF)
Shawn Arsenault (ATA), François Rémillard (MTA) prepare for a 30 hr trip to Montserrat

“I want to take you down to Kokomo

We'll get there fast and then we'll take it slow

That's where we want to go

Way down in Kokomo.

Martinique, that Montserrat mystique...”

- The Beach Boys



You'd be forgiven if, like me, you have never heard of this tiny Island. Montserrat is a British Overseas Territory situated south-west of Antigua and north-west of Guadeloupe in the Lesser Antilles in the West Indies. Two-thirds of this 16km x 11km island is considered an “exclusion zone” because of pyroclastic volcanic eruptions that occurred between 1995 and 2010 reducing the island's population to as low as 1200 people. The volcano is still considered active and mudslides from heavy rainfall make it impossible to return to the affected area.

History in Montserrat is defined as “pre-volcano” and “post-volcano”, and the memories of watching the eruptions, fleeing from falling boulders, breathing smoke, and seeing everything covered in a fine, white ash are still fresh in



the minds of those who continue to live on, or have returned to this little island. The economy has taken a steep dive as Montserrat, once considered the vacation retreat of members of the Beach Boys, Sting, Bryan Adams, Sir Paul McCartney and others, is struggling to dig out from the rubble.

Since the last volcanic eruption on February 11, 2010, evacuees have been slowly returning to Montserrat, with the population rising to 5000 as of 2016. Many of the people who have returned have children who grew up in Haiti, Dominica or Jamaica. Montserrat also has an English-based Creole dialect that is used much more frequently outside of the education and business sectors. Therefore teachers in Montserrat are faced with multilingual and multicultural classrooms with diverse needs. Sound familiar? The fact that teachers in Montserrat are struggling with the same challenges as teachers across Canada made it easier to bond and we quickly became allies in finding solutions to benefit our students.

The four Canadian team members were each partnered with a member of the Montserrat Union of Teachers and we spent the first 2 days “in country” planning and preparing with our co-instructors. We offered four sessions identified by the union as useful and necessary for Montserratian teachers - numeracy, language arts with an ESL approach, the integration of technology, and assessment and evaluation. Approximately 50 teachers participated and each chose 2 of the 4 sessions over a two week period. As a team we incorporated songs and interactive games throughout the day to demonstrate how we can engage students in the classroom, and I think our proudest moment came when one of the participants asked if she could lead the group in an interactive song that she knew!

Montserratians are so proud of their heritage and their culture and every day they shared a new part of that with us. Participants brought us fresh fruit from their gardens every day making sure we had tried as much as possible - sweet bananas, mangoes, starfruit, sweet tamarind - and took us to an amazing cultural festival known as Calabash. We listened to steel drum bands, watched traditional dancers and ate even more food! We visited a part of the exclusion zone as our co-teachers shared with us personal stories of the loss of homes, personal belongings and a sense of safety as they watched the volcanic eruptions. But they also wanted us to become honorary ambassadors of their home. We drank from Runaway Ghaut, a ravine that sends rainwater down the mountain. Legend has it, those who drink from this Ghaut will return to Montserrat.



I am humbled and awed at how quickly the Montserratian people accepted us into their community and shared their homes, their knowledge, and their hearts. We had an incredible experience which I will never forget. For more information on our experience in Montserrat check out <https://montserratctf.blogspot.com>, a day by day journal with many pictures of this incredible country and its people.



2019 Annual Convention





Save the Date:

The Canadian Foundation for Economic Education (CFEE) invites you to take part in the annual **Talk With Our Kids About Money Day**. On Wednesday, April 15, 2020, teachers in ANY subject area are encouraged to teach a lesson plan relevant to their subject area that focuses on a money topic.



Registration and **free resources** with lesson plans are available online at:
talkwithourkidsaboutmoney.com

Starling Minds

Studies show that while 1 in 5 Canadians experience mental health challenges every year, only 1 in 3 actually seek treatment. Although there is increasing attention focused on mental health and wellbeing, there is still a lot of stigma and misunderstandings attached to the topic.

Mental fitness is a concept that has only emerged in the past few years. It was developed to help people understand that just as we can improve our physical health by exercising, eating healthy, and getting enough sleep, we can proactively improve our mental health and our abilities to manage stress and anxiety by strengthening our minds.

How does it work?

Learning techniques that improve your mental fitness can be broken down into three skills:

1. Recognizing the patterns that create difficult emotions and negative moods.
2. Integrating techniques to regulate overwhelming emotions and thoughts as and when they arise.
3. Resolving the patterns that detract from your well-being by building new ones.

Part of strengthening your mental fitness is discovering strategies that are most effective for you. Starling Minds is an online program designed to help teachers improve their mental health. The concepts are based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), which is a form of evidence-based treatment that helps people understand how their thoughts, behaviours, and physiology affect how they feel.

Want to improve your mental fitness? Register here:

Teachers:

<http://app.starlingminds.com/registration/PEITF-T>

Administrators:

<http://app.starlingminds.com/registration/PEITF-A>

Already have an account? Log in here:

<https://app.starlingminds.com/>

Read more about mental fitness here:

<https://www.starlingminds.com/cbt-psychologist-explains-mental-fitness/>



Canadian Teachers' Federation

Project Overseas

Time to go to Togo!



I've been fortunate to participate in Project Overseas (PO) two and a half times! PO is an overseas teaching initiative through the Canadian Teachers' Federation, under their International and Social Justice Program, where you collaborate with public school teachers and CTF's overseas partner in the host country.

My first experience was in Uganda in 2016. I knew, even before leaving the orientation in Ottawa, I wanted to go again. Two short years later, I was selected to go to Haiti on a francophone team. I was up for the challenge of a new team, a new project, a new country, and working in French. Our project in Haiti didn't go as planned as, less than 24 hours after we arrived, civil unrest broke out. The Canadian embassy, airports, and borders closed. The capital city of Port-au-Prince was on lockdown. We left Islander Lana Mill and the other Canadian team a few hours before the situation erupted. They never left their hotel. After five days, both teams were extracted.

With the support of CTF and our partner organizations, we all agreed we wanted to stay together in our original teams and participate again. In January, CTF confirmed both teams we were going back to Haiti, and I was so thrilled. A new project would have been equally exciting. Still, summer 2018 and the evacuation left me feeling empty, and I really wanted to go back to finish what we started. Shortly after receiving the news, civil unrest erupted once again. It was similar to what we experienced in July, but it lasted much longer; children were unable to go to school, and a pattern of instability had developed.

In March, CTF informed us that a decision was made to put PO in Haiti on hold; we would be going to another country. I had been following the situation closely, so I was both relieved and disappointed. The guessing game began. Caribbean or Africa? New country/project or add a second team to an existing project? French or English? When the dust settled, we found out over March Break that we were going to Togo! Lana's team would be going to a Caribbean island called Montserrat, a totally new project for CTF.

Togo, not to be confused with Tonga or Tobago, is a small, francophone West African country, located on the Atlantic. Their time zone is only three hours ahead of us, which made it easy to keep in touch with friends and family. Our team leader, Sandy, had been to Togo in 2014 with PO, and I knew others who'd been before. Our team was beyond excited! We were a couple of months behind in the planning process, so we immediately got to the business of planning our project. In addition to designing our lessons, we began to plan our post-project travel (safari in Uganda with four other Canadian teachers and Rwanda just the four of us a few days in Amsterdam). Before I knew it, I had committed to being gone all summer; I couldn't wait! The orientation in Ottawa was old hat for us; we were chomping at the bit to get going! It was so nice to reconnect with the Haiti team from last summer to get to know the other Canadian team going to Togo. Also, we would meet the 'strangers' who we'd committed to doing a safari with!

The eight of us flew to the capital of Lomé, Togo, via Paris. We were late arriving (which is to be expected) but made it with seven of our eight checked bags!



Our hosts were on hand to greet us at the airport and take us for dinner at the restaurant across Hotel Excellence, where we would stay for our three weeks in Lomé.

In comparison to many African cities, the port city of Lomé is a well-organized, calm city. There are parts of the city that can be dangerous (for example, the border crossing into Ghana). Still, we always felt very safe and secure. We made friends with some local kids on one of those first days and met them for soccer games several times throughout our time in Lomé.

The people of la FESEN went above and beyond. They've been partnered with CTF for many years and to have two teams in Togo was a first, and seen as a very big deal. The longstanding relationship with CTF is one they spoke of with sincere admiration and love. They had remained in close contact with their Canadian colleagues from previous years. Sandy and Nicole (team leader of the other team), were both returning to Togo for a second time. It was something very special to experience their reunion with the staff of La FESEN.

Mme. Odille (a retired teacher) and Célestine (office administrator) have been working with la FESEN and the Canadian teams for a long time. We'd heard lots about them and our driver Djobo. They were a solid team and had us in stitches most days, as they were always joking back and forth, teasing one another. Anything we needed, they were there.

One of the first matters of business was M. Hounsimé suggested we get our hair braided, to become more "Togolaise". So, off we went, with Célestine and Mme. Odille, to buy bags of hair extensions and they arranged for the braiders to arrive at our hotel at 6 am the following morning! It was a very authentic experience, and everyone really appreciated our efforts to immerse ourselves in their culture. They began calling us les togolaises, which was always said in such a welcoming, sincere, yet joking way. As I write this, it brings me right back to that time; it's really emotional and overwhelming to recall just how they treated us and how they made me feel!

In Togo, the project was set up a little differently than what I'd done before. In Uganda and Haiti, it was team teaching with your in-country partner. In Togo, we worked together, but each country leads different sessions. I was responsible for Science





and

cooperative games.

My teammates facilitated sessions on math, literacy, and classroom management. We all pitched in to assist with the delivery of each other's topics. I co-facilitated a session on Gender Equity and Keeping Girls in School. My teammates presented on Ebola and AIDS prevention. During the first week, we had 40 elementary school teachers from all over the country, and the second week, we worked with 25 principals, inspectors, and members of the education faculty. Our Togolese partners did sessions on literacy, math, and information about their union.

Unlike in Canada, the teaching profession in Togo is over 90% male. Our participants were very curious as to why four women were there, which led to many discussions where we discovered more about each other and the teaching profession in Togo. They also taught us many games and dances and explained other traditions to us.

One that I found very fascinating was the practice of scaring your child with tribal marks. It's a traditional practice where lines are cut on the cheeks, with the intention of leaving scars. We found that it seemed to be something that was done in the past, but we met some younger people who had the scars on their arm or wrist. Many of our teacher participants had them. They explained, with great pride, that it was their family's tradition. At first, I could not wrap my head around it and found it so distracting. I couldn't help but wonder how painful the procedure and healing process must have been for a baby or a young child. I quickly grew accustomed to it and grew to find the scars very intriguing and beautiful.

As with any PO, the cultural exchange is equally important. *La fete togolo/canadienne* was a hit. We started the evening dressed in our new Togolese dresses and jewelry that we had been gifted. We then changed into Canadian t-shirts and taught them how to play mini-sticks hockey.

We got a chance to visit the other team in Kpalimé, which was a real highlight! We'd both been through a week of teaching at that point and had lots to tell each other. Our hosts also took us to a beach where we could walk around safely. We also visited a slave house (*Maison des esclaves*); two unforgettable experiences that we appreciated so much.

Once both projects had wrapped up, the teams reunited at Hotel Excellence! We shared a final dinner with all our Canadian and Togolese colleagues at the same restaurant we ate every day. The staff had become friends, and one server came in on her day off because it was going to be our last night. I was sad to be leaving but excited for what was ahead. It all kind of hit me at the airport – saying goodbye was much harder than I thought. Their kindness was so overwhelming.

During Project Overseas, the days can be long, but the time flies. Your new surroundings become familiar so quickly. Often, I had to tell myself, *you're in Togo!* because I would forget. Sounds silly, like how could you possibly forget *you're in Africa!* I guess I tend to dive right into what I'm doing, and it's important to take a step back and recognize what *you're* doing! You develop a strong awareness of what you need, as well as how to support others. What I have appreciated the most about my overseas experiences is the humbling reminder that *we're* really just all teachers. We are all trying to do the best we can to get our kids to stay engaged and learn in a meaningful way. We have a lot more resources at our fingertips here in Canada, but our goals and our challenges are often the same.

Huge thanks to all my teammates, CTF, PEITF, la FESEN, and to our Haitian colleagues, who are never far from my thoughts.





Thoughts and Comments from the General Secretary

Shaun MacCormac

Well, they say that time seems to pass faster the older you get. If that's true, I must be 105 years old because this year has been flying by. I can't believe it's almost Christmas break.

On the positive side, things seem to be pretty quiet in the education world in PEI. We are not seeing the upheaval that our colleagues are experiencing across the country. President Aldene Smallman and I were recently in Ottawa to meet with our counterparts from across the country, and things are pretty bleak in most provinces. Most notably, major battles continue in Ontario and British Columbia. Still, almost every other province and territory, except ours, seems to be experiencing a high level of difficulty dealing with their governments.

The new Government here seems to be taking a measured and patient approach on the Education file. Other than a review on assessments and talk about the possibility of an elected school board for the PSB, things have been pretty quiet. While there are some important issues that teachers need addressing, it is nice not to have to deal with systematic changes for change's sake. We have seen enough of that with the two previous governments.

Two of the most significant issues teachers need addressed are changes to staffing and the availability of substitute teachers. I don't need to explain these issues to you. The Federation continues to attempt to move these issues forward and to get the help and changes that must occur.

There is no review of our inclusion model in sight, and it is sorely needed. There are more and more classrooms that are becoming unmanageable, and the learning conditions in those are not fair for teachers or students. The system is not adequately supporting students who need help, student learning is being disrupted daily because of behavioural challenges, and teachers are burning out under the strain. In some situations, it's like sending firefighters to a house fire with hand-held extinguishers. It is unacceptable!

The little headway we were able to make with the previous Government included a Joint Committee on Teaching and Learning Conditions.

That committee has met and is ready to present a preliminary report to the Minister though the timelines are tight. PEITF, as part of that committee, wants a change to our staffing model in both how the number of FTE teachers are determined and the timing of funding teaching positions. The current staffing model does not work, and neither does the current government budget cycle as it relates to education. The budget process for Government for the next fiscal year has started already, however, and will be all but completed early in 2020 for a release by Government in April.

This Government has pledged new teaching positions, at least when they were running for election, and they did follow that up with additional positions for the current school year. The system, however, has to have a way to determine the needs and to establish how many positions are actually required to address the challenges that students and teachers are facing at the classroom level. The last time PEI had a model to try to address some of this was under the Pat Binns Government, of which Dennis King was involved. So there is some level of hope here.

Hope, however, is what some teachers are losing sight of. The PEITF continues to hear more and more from veteran teachers who have never before experienced classroom management problems in the past, yet now have classes who are unmanageable even with added supports. We are fearful of what some newer teachers are experiencing, given this situation. Newer teachers are less apt to seek help, as they don't want to seem like they can't manage their classes, and they are still developing the skills and resources that only come with time and experience. This situation is not acceptable, and it needs to be addressed. We await to see how this Government is going to respond. Sigh... Ba Humbug!

Thankfully, great things continue to happen every day in schools thanks to teachers, administrators, EAs, youth support workers, and the many others who interact with students at the school level. Those students are counting on you, and I know that you all give everything you have to make their experiences positive ones. For that, I sincerely thank you for all that you do to positively impact the lives of your students. I hope you have a restful and enjoyable holiday break and are able to return rejuvenated in the New Year. Be good to yourselves and to each other.