

## President's Spring Update

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### Dear Trustees:

Another school year is coming to a close. Our attention within our own Board / District offices is becoming consumed with planning for the year ahead. Yet, we have an entire spring semester to work through, before we conclude our activities for the summer recess.

The purpose of this message is to update you on our Association's activities as we prepare for our AGM which is slated for Corner Brook on June 3-4, eight short weeks away.



Don Brown, President

### Strategic Review

You will recall that a major outcome from the 2010 AGM was a decision to embark upon a five year Strategic Review of our activities and direction. It was in June 2005 that we held a re-inaugural meeting to revamp our association in order to ensure its relevance within the new provincial school board structure which came into effect the previous September. While the concept of such a review was very welcome and necessary, some concern was noted about the scope, expense and nature of the exercise.

After much consideration by our Board of Governors, it was decided to obtain the services of a facilitator to assist us with this task. It was agreed that the review would attempt to encompass three broad goals.

- (i) A review and confirmation of the current NLSBA structure and operation;
- (ii) A focus and identification of key issues; and
- (iii) A report and involvement of the AGM.

After seeking out several interested parties, Mr. John Fisher was retained to work with us in this regard. You will meet him during the AGM.

An intensive meeting with Mr. Fisher and the BOG occurred on March 15 and 16. A further session is planned for April 29. It is our intention to provide a major session at the AGM which will provide

an opportunity for delegates to participate in the process via the discussion and debate of a working paper with respect to the future direction and operation of NLSBA. Following the AGM, efforts will be designed to ensure that each individual School Board has an opportunity to meaningfully engage this process. In due course the BOG will accept a report and it is our intention to rely upon the report for guidance over the years ahead.

### **New Premier and New Minister of Education**

At the risk of restating the obvious, a major shift at provincial government level has occurred since the resignation of Premier Williams in late 2010. I am confident that Premier Dunderdale's government will retain the priority position afforded education over recent years. Indeed the recent Speech from the Throne bears this out. Minister Joan Burke served the province faithfully as our Education Minister from November 2005 to 2007. She was appointed again in January 2011. During that time she was firmly focused on the development of our schools, our programs, and the achievement of our pupils. We welcome Ms. Burke back into the education portfolio. Of course, we also acknowledge the support of her immediate predecessor Dr. Darin King; and we wish him well in his new portfolio. Before the AGM I will be meeting with Ms. Burke to review the NLSBA priorities and to assure her of the commitment of our School Boards to continuing educational excellence within our province. Our Boards represent an essential linkage between the communities and families on the one hand, and the role of Government with

respect to the direction, support, and accountability of our local schools, on the other. While our public school system is centrally resourced and guided by the Provincial Government, our day to day operations and planning cannot be effective without local community input and direction. School Board governance has been proven to be an effective element within the improvement of our public education system nationwide!

### **Pre-Budget Consultation**

Our BOG participated in the Pre-Budget Consultation process at a special meeting with both the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Education on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. All School Board Chairpersons and Directors of Education were present. NLSBA coordinated this presentation. Each School Board elaborated upon its district priority needs. A Provincial over view of major themes was approved for this purpose by the BOG; these were: Capital Infrastructure, Information Technology Support, Human Resources, Operational Assistance and Key Programs support. The Speech from the Throne in general terms was encouraging. However, it will not be until the release of the Provincial Budget before we can gauge the success of our input. This joint presentation by our Boards has been ongoing for five years. In my opinion the approach is being well received and presents a unified front with respect to the prioritization of provincial education system related needs.



## Upcoming Trustee Professional Development Opportunities

Apart from personal and local initiatives in this regard, four major PD Forums will be available for School Board trustees in the months ahead. Our own AGM in Corner Brook will run on June 3 and 4 at the Glynmill Inn. The 2011 Atlantic Conference for School Boards will take place in Gander on November 17-19, 2011. At the national level the (CSBA) Canadian School Boards Associations National Congress will be held in Ottawa Ontario from July 7 - 10, 2011. The

Canadian Association for the Practice of Law in Education Annual Conference will take place May 1-3, 2011 at the Sheraton Hotel, St. John's.

More specific information about these is available for your own School Board office. These meetings are proven sources of relevant professional development. I encourage your attendance if at all possible at these events.



I am pleased to report to you that in February the CSBA achieved its first ever meeting with the full Council of Ministers of Education Canada. The theme of the presentation centered upon the role of School Boards in the development of two identified national areas of importance: Aboriginal Education and Twenty First Century Teaching and Learning Skills. It was a positive meeting and emphasized how both groups could support each other in regard to these initiatives.

A second point of note with regard to CSBA is that our own Nada Borden will complete her term as National President at the end of June. Nada has served CSBA with distinction and helped shepherd the organization through a major re-organization and re-alignment.

Her leadership was a source of pride for all of us within NLSBA. I wish to extend to her our appreciation for her work and extend best wishes to her for the future.

## Collective Bargaining



In 2012 all of our major collective agreements in education will expire and become ready for re-negotiation. Our Staff Relations Consultant, Wayne Noseworthy, is fully engaged in making preparations for these rounds of bargaining in conjunction with those who administer these agreements within your own Board offices. Next year will be a busy year at the bargaining tables. We will endeavor to update you via the BOG and other formats as the year progresses.

### Dates to Remember

#### **NL School Councils AGM**

Max Simms Memorial Camp, Bishop's Falls, NL  
April 15-17, 2011

#### **CAPSLE Conference**

Sheraton Hotel, St. John's, NL, May 1-3, 2011

#### **NLSBA AGM**

Glynmill Inn, Corner Brook, NL June 3-4, 2011

#### **National CSBA Congress 2011**

The Westin Ottawa  
Ottawa, Ontario, July 7-10, 2011

#### **Atlantic School Boards Conference**

Gander Hotel, NL November 17-19, 2011

## 2011 Federal Election - May 2<sup>nd</sup>

While K-12 education is constitutionally a provincial responsibility the interplay between a Federal Government and the provinces can exert a major influence upon the provincial prioritization and funding ability for our school system, I encourage each of our School Board members to alert those seeking election to this fact and reference specifically, the importance of transfer payments, technology, internet enabled

communication, social programs, interprovincial reciprocity of qualifications, copyright matters and so forth. Our CSBA will also be engaging the Federal parties as per its customary practice. Please involve yourself in the Federal Election process and inform yourself about issues which will impact directly or otherwise, upon public education.

## NLSBA Annual General Meeting

As stated previously, our own meetings will take place in Corner Brook. While each of our member Boards has five votes it is important to remember that there is no proxy voting. A delegate has to be present to vote. The AGM is an opportunity to receive some solid professional development and to share ideas and experiences with colleague trustees from across our province. It is also the main accountability forum for our organization and poses a unique opportunity to direct the Association over the year ahead. There is no limit on the number of trustees a Board may send. I urge you to consider spending the evening of the June 3<sup>rd</sup> and all day on June 4<sup>th</sup> with us on the west coast. We will learn from each other, enjoy each other's company and address the annual general business of our Association.

Recently released research about School Boards from the National School

Boards Association in the United States tells us that School Boards remain the critical link between school administration and the community at large. However, the same body of research states that the accountability standards of our system must become more measurable. The report states that American School Board members are seeking more training in funding and budgeting, more understanding about student achievement and more information about legal and policy issues. Our job is challenging and will become only more challenging. Direction setting for our system and measuring accountability are merely two of the outstanding demands facing us.

Working together, we will better understand the roles and responsibilities which relate to us as trustees.

Thanking you for your support, I remain,

**Don Brown**  
NLSBA President