



BRANCHING OUT

NOVA SCOTIA

Department of Education

News from

PUBLIC SCHOOLS BRANCH

May 2008

<http://ednet.ns.ca>

As I approach the end of my first year as Senior Executive Director of Public Schools, I would like to thank all those teachers and administrators who have given so generously of their time and talents in working with us on committees and projects. It is through such ongoing contacts that we are able to keep in touch with the ever-changing challenges of schools and classrooms.

The exciting work and growing success of schools is reflected in the accreditation reports and I specifically want to commend all those involved in the professional discussions and hard work required for these school improvement initiatives.

We are currently engaged in developing *Learning for Life III*. The focus of the document is on supporting schools who in turn are supporting teachers and students. It is the school and the classroom that create the opportunities for student success. In Nova Scotia we have professional teachers whose dedication to students is of the highest order and I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge them and to thank them for their continuing good work.

It is clear that student success depends in large part on all of us working together: parents, guardians, teachers, administrators, boards, the Department of Education and all other community and government organizations whose mandate is to care for children. In the year ahead, we will be working to strengthen these cooperative efforts.

Dr. Alan Lowe, Senior Executive Director, Public Schools Branch

EBSCOhost Gets a New Look



In July, EBSCOhost 2.0 will incorporate the latest technology to facilitate your use of the database. To preview the new look of EBSCOhost, and to learn more about its key features, go to: <http://www.ebscohost.com/thisTopic.php?marketID=1&topicID=969>.

Sign up for a guided tour through the EBSCOhost 2.0 Support Center that includes Help Sheets, a User Guide. You can access FAQs, Help Sheets, a User Guide, a PowerPoint tutorial, and other information that will orient you to the new look and features.

The Public Schools Branch provides public schools access to EBSCO online databases such as *Canadian Reference Centre*, *Advanced Placement Database*, and a professional development collection called *Education Research Complete*. Access is available to all staff, students, and families in Nova Scotia public schools through EDnet or using passwords that are available



Hackmatack Books for School Libraries

This year, the Department of Education will be bringing students some of the best Canadian books aimed at grade 4, 5, and 6 students by providing two sets of the Hackmatack Award books to elementary school libraries in Nova Scotia.

Hackmatack is Atlantic Canada's children's choice book award. It enables young students to read and vote for their favourite titles in any of four categories—English fiction, English non-fiction, French fiction, or French non-fiction.

The 2008–2009 winner will be announced at a gala ceremony at Pier 21 next May.

The Education Media Library is on the move!

In June, the Media Library will be moving to join the rest of Learning Resources and Technology Services at Brunswick Place, 2021 Brunswick Street, Halifax. Our phone number remains 902-424-2440; email is mediacir@ednet.ns.ca; fax 902-428-5828.

BRANCHING OUT is published 3 times yearly in October, February, and May.

Back issues are available at <http://lrt.ednet.ns.ca/branching.shtml>

If you wish to receive the newsletter, please send an email to lrt@ednet.ns.ca.



Writers in Action Consolidation Workshop

The consolidation of Writers in Action 7, 8, and 9 will be held May 14–16 in the Annapolis Valley. Lead teams from across the province will attend this three-day event featuring a one-day workshop facilitated by the planning team members and a two-day writing workshop facilitated by Penny Kittle.

Penny is the co-author (with Donald H. Graves) of *Inside Writing*, provided to grade 8 English language arts teachers, and *The Greatest Catch*, provided to grade 9 teachers. In the fall, grades 7–9 English language arts and content area teachers will receive a copy of Penny Kittle's fourth book, *Write Beside Them: Risk, Voice, and Clarity in High School Writing*.

This year Penny will concentrate on Writers Workshop, particularly argument and commentary writing, conferring, and writing across the content areas.



Wow! Box Sent to Schools!

In March, English Program Services sent the Wow! Box to elementary schools. This is a resource package of books, professional resources, DVDs, and a 20-foot parachute to support learning and teaching in the areas of physical activity and healthy eating. More resources will be arriving at schools this spring.

By the end of this school year or in the early fall, schools will also be receiving a resource package to support physical activity in dance. This package will support learning and teaching in health education, physical education, and music at the elementary level.

In April, more than 100 high school physical education teachers participated in the Physical Education 10 Implementation Workshop at Oak Island Resort. The workshop introduced the new Physical Education 10 course and other new courses planned for the high school level. One full day of the workshop was devoted to outdoor pursuits; teacher leaders and facilitators from around the province shared their expertise and passion with their peers.

SPELLING PRIMARY–9

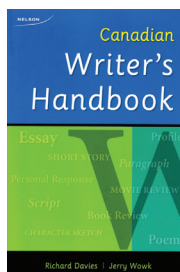


Spelling Primary–9: A Teaching Resource Launched at Professional Development Workshop in March 2008.

Lynne Healy, from Acadia University, facilitated two sessions—Spelling Primary–9: An Overview and A Closer Look at Spelling Development.

Dr. Ruth McQuirter Scott was a featured speaker at the spelling launch. Dr. Scott teaches language arts to preservice students at Brock University's Faculty of Education. She has written several books about spelling and language arts: *Spelling: Sharing the Secrets*, *Spelling: Connecting the Pieces*, *Knowing Words: Creating Word-Rich Classrooms*, and *Knowing Words: Creating Word-Rich Classrooms*.

Schools will receive copies of *Spelling: Connecting the Pieces for grades 7–9*; *Word Savvy: Integrated Vocabulary, Spelling, & Word Study, Grades 3–6*; and *The Wonder of Word Study: Lessons and Activities to Create Independent Readers, Writers, and Spellers for Primary–2*. A pamphlet for parents, *Let's Talk about ... Spelling Primary–8*, will also be distributed to schools.



Grade 9 Students Get Nelson Canadian Writer's Handbook

All grade 9 students will receive a copy of the 2008 Nelson *Canadian Writers Handbook*. The handbooks will belong to students for use in grade 9, and throughout high school, as a writer's reference in school and at home.

Grade 9 English language arts classrooms will receive 15 copies of the Nelson *Canadian Writer's Handbook* to complement other Writing Centre resources distributed in April.

The Nelson *Canadian Writer's Handbook* offers powerful and practical ideas that can help to make student writing stronger and more effective. Topics include an overview of the writing process; review of sentence and paragraph writing; how to write an essay; and forms of writing and representing, such as profiles, résumés, book and movie reviews, and research papers. Other interesting ideas included in the handbook address speech writing and designing oral presentations. The handbook also offers spelling tips, grammar basics, and information on other writing conventions.

May is Asian and Gaelic Heritage Month



Winners of LRTS' "The ImagesProject Wants YOU" Contest

Contestants contributed original photographs to the ImagesProject, a web-based collection of free, copyright cleared images for teacher and student curriculum use hosted by the Nova Scotia Department of Education. The contributed images will bring the collection to approximately 1500 photographs that teachers and students are welcome to download, edit, and freely publish in curricular projects. From school, there is no login required. From home, teachers and students use their student or staff ednet.ns.ca username and password.

1st Prize - Teresa Kewachuk, Chignecto-Central Regional School Board won 12 copies of the animation software Frames and a Saturday workshop for 12 people.

Additional prizes awarded to Paul Butler (CCRSB), Linda MacIntyre (SSRSB), Aaron Thompson (SSRSB) and Peter Smith (NSDOE).

<http://imagesproject.ednet.ns.ca>



Democracy 250

The Democracy 250 initiative continues to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the first parliamentary democracy in what is now Canada. The General Assembly met for the first time in Halifax on October 2, 1758.

Youth Town Hall Meetings are currently being held throughout the province.

Online learning resources are available to support students learning in Social Studies 7 and Canadian History 11 at <http://www.democracy250.ca>. A print version of these primary-document based resources will soon be distributed to schools.

Visit the related D250: Make Your Mark web site—at <http://www.d250.ca>—which encourages youth to get involved in their communities and to make their mark by speaking out on issues and voting. The site also identifies events that D250 is hosting and promoting in Nova Scotia and Canada.

Third Annual Math/Literacy Mentor Event

On April 24 and 25, 2008, the Nova Scotia Department of Education hosted the third annual Math/Literacy Mentor event at the Park Place Ramada Hotel in Dartmouth.

Mathematics and Literacy Mentors from across the province participated in a two-day workshop focussing on "differentiation" as a unifying concept. Gayle H. Gregory from Nelson Education Canada led a session called "Differentiated Instructional Strategies: One Size Does not Fit All." This was followed by a variety of Mathematics- and Literacy-specific professional learning opportunities.

Other featured speakers included Doug Duff from Nelson Education Canada and Lawrence Ryan from CCRSB.

New Toll Free Access to Department 1-888-825-7770

The Department of Education has a toll free number ! Toll Free Access will complement other forms of communication including e-mail, the Departmental website at <http://ednet.ns.ca> and the individual contact information on the last page of this newsletter.



Learning Resources and Technology Services' PD DVD, *Teaching and Learning: A Primary Focus*, recently won the K-12 Award of Excellence at the 2008 Media Festival of the Canadian Network for Innovation in Education (CNIE). Crew pictured above includes: camera operators Paul LeBlanc and Dan Leadley (far left and right), technical producer Barry Fraser (seated), producer Ray Whitley and content consultant Barb Rushton.

May 31 is World No Tobacco Day

Focus on Junior High Geometry

During 2007–2008, grade 7 mathematics teachers received four days of professional learning on the grade 7 geometry outcomes. Two chapters of the grade 7 text, *Mathematics 7: Focus on Understanding* were written to address these outcomes.

Teachers also received the following materials to be used for geometry instruction: Pattern Blocks, Power Polygons, Geometry templates, Polydrons, Bulls-Eye Compass, Geo-Strips, and Math-Vu Mirrors

Our plan for 2008–2009 is to provide opportunities for four days of professional learning for each grade 8 mathematics teacher on the grade 8 geometry outcomes and to provide appropriate resources to support learning and teaching.



Arts Education Update

The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia will exhibit selected works from the deGarthe Scholarship submissions in the Newman Daughters Gallery. This exhibition will take place between May 26 and June 6.

A very exciting celebration event for students of Advanced Music 12 and Advanced Visual Arts 12 will take place on May 29 and 30 at Liscombe Lodge. Students will be participating in master classes with university professors and will be involved in challenging workshops.

Summer Institutes will be offered in all fine arts disciplines—dance, drama, music, and visual arts. Teachers are encouraged to check the Department of Education website at <http://www.ednet.ns.ca/> to find out more about these fantastic professional development opportunities.



Science 6 Textbook Sent to Schools

Hot off the press, *Nova Scotia Science 6* textbooks were sent to schools in March. Special features of the text include Nova Scotia connections to the units, Nova Scotia pictures, Conversations with Elders, career information in “Ask a ...”, present technologies, and a book scavenger hunt. The hands-on, minds-on activities reflect how students can be engaged in their learning. The Teacher Resource will be sent to schools in September.

Energy and Me: An Educational Resource for Science 2 and Science 3

Conserve NS and the Department of Education have collaborated to produce an exciting science resource kit that includes equipment, life cycle cards, and a booklet of activities that may be used as an innovative approach to learning and teaching the Growth and Change units in grades 2 and 3.

Resource components will be distributed in May (kits and cards) and June (booklet).



Model Legislature 2008: May 23 to 25

The sixth annual Nova Scotia Model Legislature is slated for May 23–25, 2008. High school students from across the province, along with teachers and parents, will gather at Province House in Halifax. Participants will meet with politicians, debate topical issues, and attend workshops. If you have students who are interested in attending, or if you are interested in participating as a teacher, contact Bruce Fisher, Social Studies Consultant, at fisherbh@gov.ns.ca.

Public Schools Branch consists of the following Divisions:

African Canadian Services	902-424-3151	acsd@ednet.ns.ca	http://acs.ednet.ns.ca
English Program Services	902-424-8945	eps@ednet.ns.ca	http://eps.ednet.ns.ca
Education Quality Services	902-424-0040	crandase@gov.ns.ca	
Evaluation Services	902-424-7746	testeval@ednet.ns.ca	http://plans.ednet.ns.ca
French Second Language Program Services	902-424-6646	fls@ednet.ns.ca	
Learning Resources and Technology Services	902-424-2462	lrt@ednet.ns.ca	http://lrt.ednet.ns.ca
School Board Labour Relations	902-424-8758		
Student Services	902-424-7454	studentsvcs@ednet.ns.ca	
Regional Education Services	902-424-5799	(Halifax - SSRSB, HRSB)	902-424-6097 (Halifax - CSAP)
	902-563-2080	(Sydney - CBVRSB)	
	902-893-5890	(Truro - CCRSB, SRSB)	
	902-742-3427	(Yarmouth - TCRSB, AVRSB)	
Senior Executive Director	902-424-5829	lowead@gov.ns.ca	

Nova Scotia Department of Education website: <http://ednet.ns.ca>