



BRANCHING OUT

NOVA SCOTIA
Education

**NEWS FROM
PUBLIC SCHOOLS BRANCH**

October 2009

<http://EDnet.ns.ca>



Alan Lowe in Quito, Ecuador

Sixth Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Education

I had the honour of leading the Canadian delegation to the Sixth Inter-American meeting of Ministers of Education in Quito, Ecuador, August 12–14, 2009. The meeting was held under the auspices of the Organization of American States; thirty-six countries of the western hemisphere participated.

The focus of the meeting was on secondary education. The main themes were as follows: increasing the number of students who complete high school (only four countries have at least a 75% rate of success); ensuring that access to high school education is both universal and equitable; making high school courses relevant to the 21st century; increasing education in technology; providing more hands-on learning and more relevant career counseling; providing more skills training and more opportunities for transitioning from school to work; developing more standardized methods for assessing student achievement; ensuring social justice values are taught; and educating youth to become responsible citizens in a democratic society.

Canada's contributions were in the areas of closing the gap for Aboriginal/First Nations students (based on Saskatchewan models) and providing multiple pathways for students and former students to enter into training programs in skills and trades (based on Quebec models). Bolivia and Venezuela were particularly interested in the Canadian presentation and asked for follow-up information.

The most dramatic event was a presentation by a group of high school students representing ten South American countries. Apart from reflecting the main themes listed above, they made three points that somewhat shocked and then moved the delegates:

- High school teachers need more training in values—both in respecting their students as persons and in teaching social justice values.
- The goal of the conference—to teach students to become future citizens in a democratic society—should be changed to reflect the fact that the students are *already* citizens.
- The absence of the minister from Honduras (who had been “uninvited” because of the political turmoil in Honduras) was cowardly and unconscionable because the interests of Honduran students were not properly represented at this meeting.

The Ministers responded by applauding the students for their honest and thoughtful presentation and passing a motion that student delegates should be invited to all future meetings.

My most lasting impression and memory from the meetings was the passionate resolve from official delegates and from the students that the right to education for all was so important that it had to be embedded in the very constitutions of their (mostly new) democracies.

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

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Wabanaki People of the Dawn: Part Three - Dreamcatchers

The province has produced an hour-long video profiling four successful young Mi'kmaq who are considered role models for Nova Scotia youth.

Wabanaki People of the Dawn: *Dreamcatchers* is the third in a series of videos produced by the Office of Aboriginal Affairs in conjunction with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada to give Nova Scotians a better understanding of the province's first inhabitants.

Dreamcatchers shows how the four overcame adversity with determination and persistence. It features profiles of Chad Denny, of Eskasoni First Nation, who was drafted by the Atlanta Thrashers of the NHL and now plays in the team's farm system with the Chicago Wolves; Jesse Benjamin, a veterinarian living near Bridgewater; Bridget Stevens, a boxer living in Bedford; and Constable Troy Julien of the RCMP in Eskasoni.

The first two videos of the series, along with a learning guide, were sent to schools and libraries throughout the province last year. All three videos in the series were produced by John Soosaar of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs, directed by Terry Fulmer of Pine Tree Productions, and edited by Communications Nova Scotia.

The Mi'kmaq Liaison Office

The Mi'kmaq Liaison Office (MLO) serves as a conduit between the Department of Education and the province's aboriginal communities. To achieve this, the MLO works closely with various branches of the Department of Education and liaises with the community through the Council on Mi'kmaq Education, the Tripartite Forum Education Working Group, the Mi'kmaq Kinamatnewey Education Working Group, and other organizations. The Director of the MLO, while an employee of the Department of Education, also serves as an advocate for the needs of aboriginal learners in the province.

The MLO works with Mi'kmaq Kinamatnewey to provide services to teachers and administrators in Nova Scotia's band-operated schools. The MLO also assists the public school system through professional development and curriculum/resource development to promote the inclusion of Mi'kmaq content and perspectives in all of the province's classrooms.

The MLO is exploring ways to create and enhance opportunities for Mi'kmaq language instruction across the province.

For more information, please visit
<http://mikmaq.ednet.ns.ca/>



Health Promoting Schools Showcase

The province's second Health Promoting Schools (HPS) Showcase will take place in Dartmouth on October 16th, 2009. It will highlight the great

work being done by schools across Nova Scotia to incorporate healthy, active living into everyday school life.

The showcase will mark an important celebration of what the Health Promoting Schools Program has achieved over the last three years.

The Health Promoting Schools approach brings together school boards, district health authorities, community members, and other health and education partners to enhance and nurture positive school health environments.

A HPS website, logo, and brochure will be launched at the event. The website will allow educators, health professionals, board administrators, and other stakeholders to share information and coordinate various activities to promote healthy schools. In addition, the website will provide the wider school community an opportunity to know where to find quick, accurate, and easy-to-understand information on initiatives schools are implementing to promote physical and emotional well-being of students.



Veterans Affairs Canada Learning Resources

Remembrance Week, November 5 to 11, is a time for all Canadians to recognize the sacrifices and achievements of those who have served the cause of peace and security for our country. Veterans

Affairs Canada offers a broad selection of free, bilingual learning resources about Remembrance and Canada's military history for teachers and students. From public information sheets and historical booklets to comprehensive multimedia learning kits that offer in-depth historical information on the First World War, the Second World War, and the Korean War, the Youth and Educators' section of the Veterans Affairs website at http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/youth/sub.cfm?source=teach_resources provides free educational materials to aid educators and engage students in learning about Canada's military history.

October is Mi'kmaq Heritage Month

Grade 1 Professional Learning Workshops

Support for the cohort of young students who entered primary last year further to the change in entry date continues this year through a two-part workshop to be held around the province for teachers and administrators of grade 1 students.

The unifying concept for these two days is “Evidence of Knowing.” The premise throughout will be to examine, through student artifacts, what students have under control and to use this information to make instructional decisions about what to do and where to go next. Teachers will be using provided artifacts in the first fall session and will extend and expand their thinking in the second winter session through using their own student artifacts.

Surveys Coming to 66 Schools in November

A sample of 66 schools is participating in a Nova Scotia pilot data collection project next month. This is being administered on our behalf by Dr. Ronald Ferguson, the Co-Director of a research body—the Achievement Gap Initiative—at Harvard University. His interest is in raising achievement for all students, while narrowing gaps among students from different racial, ethnic, and social backgrounds, and he has been administering surveys to this end since 2001. Harvard has analysed more than 150,000 surveys to date and has identified the classroom conditions that promote five student engagement targets: Trust and Interest, Control and Autonomy, Ambitiousness, Industriousness, and Mastery and Consolidation.

This survey forms part of the ongoing implementation of the provincial Racial Equity Policy. By gathering this information, and sharing the results, we believe we will be able to identify ways to better help all students reach their full potential. Our goal is to better understand the student perspective as we strive to address the learning needs of all students.

In Nova Scotia, students in grades 3–12 and their teachers in the 66 schools will be asked to complete surveys, which are completely confidential: no participating student or teacher can be identified. The survey is voluntary, but those being asked to complete the surveys are being asked to be completely candid when responding to the surveys, in order to maximize the learning benefits of this project.

A Steering Committee, consisting of representatives of all school boards and the Department of Education, is actively working to support schools and school boards to effectively administer the surveys for this pilot project. The results, and recommendations for next steps, are anticipated later in this school year.

Grade 1 Resources

Schools will receive in the next few weeks one resource collection of *Time for Kids Reader's Set* (Canada - 8 pack) for each grade 1 classroom or combinations thereof. This resource is a package of eight non-fiction titles. The pages of each book have colourful photographs accompanied by texts ranging from one or two sentences to more complex texts for those who are further along in the stages of reading development. At the back of each book is a glossary and a helpful list of important words. The titles are *Insects and Spiders*, *Sea Life*, *Animals*, *A Bee's Life*, *A Butterfly's Life*, *A Frog's Life*, *Horses*, and *Snakes*.



Primary Invitational Professional Learning—Connecting Play with Learning in Science, Visual Arts, and Movement

English Program Services, in partnership with school boards, is sponsoring a one-day professional learning session for primary teachers and administrators. The workshop is designed to exemplify a developmentally appropriate play-based approach to learning.

Participants should plan to play! Throughout the day, play, reflection, and information sessions will confirm the central role of play in a developmentally appropriate Primary classroom. Participants will engage in visual arts, science, and movement experiences as the medium through which Primary outcomes are addressed. Teachers will explore the influence of developmental progress on educational experience, the factors that support a positive student/teacher relationship, and the role the environment plays in building confidence and competence among our youngest learners.

Each participating teacher will receive a copy of *Young Learners Experiences in Art*, the Department of Education and the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia's recent joint publication. This visually rich text will serve as a framework for exploring children's development as observed through their art. A selection of learning resources related to the day's events and designed to promote play-based learning will also be provided to participating teachers. As well, each participating elementary school will receive one copy of *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8* (2009, 3rd ed.), edited by Carol Copple and Sue Bredekamp. This book presents the internationally recognized position statement on developmentally appropriate practices and is an important reference text.

Second Step Resources

Newly redeveloped *Second Step* resources for grades 6, 7, and 8 have recently been added to *Authorized Learning Resources*. These comprehensive teacher resources have a wealth of learning experiences that align well with new curriculum outcomes for grade 6 health education and grades 7 and 8 Healthy Living in the areas of problem solving, decision-making and goal setting, emotional management, empathy and communication skills, and bullying prevention. This resource may also be of interest to guidance counsellors.

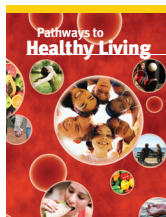
Physical Education

NCCP Fundamental Movement Skills: Improving Children's Lives through Physical Literacy is a new high school leadership workshop teacher's guide consisting of a DVD of all fundamental movement skills, a CD with student handouts and resource material in a print-friendly format, a teacher's guide, and a fundamental movement skills poster. Teachers of Physical Education 10, Physically Active Living 11, Fitness Leadership 11, and Physical Education Leadership 12 will find this resource relevant to their course outcomes. The Department will provide one copy of this new resource from the National Coaching Certification Program for each high school.



Healthy Living 9

Teachers of Healthy Living 9 can expect to receive student textbooks and a teacher's manual to support implementation of the new Healthy Living 9 course that will be introduced over the course of the year. Teachers will also receive a package of supplementary resources that complement learning and teaching in Healthy Living 9. Schools can expect to receive these distributions late fall.



Reminder: Toll Free Access to Department 1-888-825-7770

The Department of Education has a toll free number! Toll Free Access complements 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.

Health Education

A new learning outcomes framework has been developed for Health Education Primary–6 and Healthy Living 7–9. It features a reduced number of outcomes at each grade level, the number ranging from 12 to 22. The new curriculum was developed using the World Health Organization's life skills model as one of its foundational principles and identifies six health priority areas which the outcomes address—mental health; physical activity; healthy eating; sexual health; injury and disease prevention; and substance use and gambling. The new learning outcomes framework will be introduced to schools during the 2009–2010 school year.

Classroom student and teacher resources to support learning and teaching in health education across the grade levels are being distributed to schools. *Germes Are Not for Sharing*, a timely picture book for primary–2 students as the cold and flu season begins, highlights sound hygiene practices to reduce the spread of germs. *Just Kidding* and *Trouble Talk* are two picture books for grades 4 and 5 classrooms that address the concept of relational aggression and the hurt it causes among peer relationships. *Healthy Mind, Healthy Body: My Health and My Brain*, the mental health curriculum supplement to support new health education curriculum outcomes in grades primary–3, will be distributed to schools early spring.

New Productions from LRTS:

A new DVD resource, *Assistive Technology: Options & Strategies* (LRTS catalogue #V2772), was released on September 18. This DVD is part of a comprehensive set of resources for the use of Assistive Technology available through the Student Services Division. If you have students with special needs, this resource may help you see how assistive technology is already at work in Nova Scotian schools and how it might work in yours.

Writing Workshop Primary–3 (coming soon) This professional development DVD series is a companion piece to *Writing Workshop 4–9* (LRTS catalogue #V2771) released earlier this year. In the current project, four exemplary Nova Scotian practitioners of writing workshop pedagogy demonstrate what, how, and why they do what they do to maximize writing development in grades primary–3. The series is currently in post production at LRTS, and will be released in January 2010. Watch for it then!

October is Health Literacy Month

Make a Difference, Build a Future

Developed as a partnership between the Construction Association of Nova Scotia (CANS); NS

Department of Education—English Program Services; NS Department of Labour and Workforce Development—Apprenticeship Division, and the Nova Scotia Community College, Building Futures for Youth (BFY) is a pilot program begun in 2008. BFY provides grades 10 and 11 Co-operative Education students with an opportunity to explore careers in the construction industry. This three-part program includes delivery of the in-school component of co-operative education, 100 hours of CANS industry orientation and safety training at NSCC campuses, and 6–7 weeks of paid employment as a registered construction trades pre-apprentice. Successful completion of the program requirements can result in the student earning up to three co-operative education credits, banked apprenticeship hours, and eligibility for one of three CANS Building Futures for Youth/NSCC scholarships. The BFY partners enter into memoranda of understanding with school boards to facilitate program delivery and access. Host employers are recruited and oriented by CANS, with a focus on mentorship.

In 2009, 36 students from four school boards across the province were able to take advantage of this opportunity. In 2010 Building Futures will be offered in all school boards, with the potential to reach 100 students.

For more information contact Juanita MacDonald, HR Development Coordinator for the Construction Association of Nova Scotia (CANS) at 468-2267 or jmacdonald@cans.ns.ca or check out our website at www.buildingfutures.ca



Arts Education Update

Implementation of new grade 7 arts education curriculum begins this school year.

To support arts educators serving grade 7 students and implementation of the new curriculum for Band Instruments 7, Music 7, and Visual Arts 7, professional learning workshops will be offered in each board.

Schools implementing these courses have received text and video resources, and boards will receive guitar and world drumming kits to distribute on a rotating basis among schools in the board offering Music 7. Schools offering Visual Arts 7 will soon receive a startup kit containing a range of art supplies.

In addition, new arts education curriculum at the grade 8 level is being piloted this year.

Keeping Pace of Young People's Eating and Physical Activity

A new study will give the province a better picture of eating and physical activity habits of Nova Scotian children and youth.

From early October 2009 to June 2010, Keeping Pace will track 2,200 grades 3, 7, and 11 students from 60 schools across Nova Scotia. Trends will be calculated using similar studies from 2002 and 2006.

Students will wear accelerometers to determine whether they get the recommended 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day, at least five days per week.

Grades 7 and 11 students will also track their eating patterns using an online tool designed to measure how many are eating according to Canada's Food Guide standards.

The results will be available by December 2010.

BLAC Report Implementation Review Completed

The Implementation Review of the *Black Learners Advisory Committee Report on Education, Redressing Inequity—Empowering Black Learners* (1994), conducted by Dr. Enid Lee, has been completed and will be presented to the Minister by the end of October. In addition to her presentation to Department of Education senior staff, Dr. Lee will present the report at Principals in Focus regional sessions in early November. The report, which looked at the progress and success of some of the initiatives recommended by the BLAC Report on Education, will have recommendations impacting on school boards, schools, the Department of Education, and the Council on African Canadian Education.

African Canadian Services Division Consultant

Wendie Poitras has joined the African Canadian Services Division as a Curriculum Consultant, effective August 4, 2009. Wendie joins the Department from the Halifax Regional School Board, where she has been teaching at Joseph Howe School, in Halifax.

A graduate of Saint Mary's University, Wendie also has a B.Ed. and M.Ed. from Mount Saint Vincent University. Passionate about early literacy, Wendie will focus on working with and supporting teachers in elementary and junior high, identifying learning resources to engage students in reading and writing. Wendie Poitras can be reached at poitrawl@gov.ns.ca or (902) 424-7534.



Census at School—Statistics Canada

Statistics Canada heads the Canadian component of Census at School (<http://www.censusatschool.ca>), an international online project that can be used to teach students about

data management. The project began in the United Kingdom in 2000 and now includes participation from schools in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, and Japan.

This project combines fun and learning for the thousands of students around the world. Students discover how to use and interpret relevant information as part of their classroom learning in math, social studies, or information technology. They start by anonymously completing an online questionnaire in class. They supply non-confidential information about their lives, answering general questions about such topics as their height, the time it takes to travel to school, and the breakfast foods they prefer. The questionnaire takes about 20 minutes to complete, requires Internet access, and is suitable for grades 4 and up. For the 2009–10 school year, there is an emphasis on questions concerning environmental practices. Responses to the survey are compiled in a national database and are then added to an international database that is maintained in the United Kingdom.

Teachers can find everything needed to get started with this project at the following website:

http://www.censusatschool.ca/02/02_000-eng.htm

For additional hints on finding and using data from Statistics Canada see the publication *Teacher's Guide to Data Discovery* at <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/12-593-x/12-593-x2007001-eng.htm>

Get involved in Census at School today! Have fun with your class and address outcomes for your data management strand at the same time.



Third Annual Science Olympics

The Nova Scotia 2009 Science Olympics was held

at St. Mary's University on October 3, 2009. Over 60 students from grades 4 and 5 classrooms from around the province participated this year. They worked on four interesting challenges, and spent the entire day working as young scientists, doing hands-on, minds-on science.

Media Literacy Week, November 2–6, 2009

Media Literacy Week was conceived in 2006 under the name National Media Education Week to promote media literacy as a key component in the education of young people and to encourage the integration and the practice of media education in Canadian homes, schools and communities.



Media are powerful forces in the lives of youth. Young people are immersed in media, moving beyond geographical and regulatory boundaries as they access, absorb, communicate, create, and repurpose media content. And they are doing this largely without guidance and often without reflection.

To be media literate in this new environment, young people need to develop knowledge, values, and a range of critical thinking, communication, and information management skills. Media education is an essential tool in helping them acquire these skills.

The theme for Media Literacy Week 2009 is Media Literacy in the Digital Age, emphasizing the multiple literacy skills needed by today's youth for accessing, evaluating, repurposing, creating, and distributing media content to successfully navigate their digital media world. How do they find, evaluate and make sense of online information? Do they know how to protect their privacy online, stay safe using social networks, and be good digital citizens?

For further information about Media Literacy Week, please visit <http://www.medialiteracyweek.ca>

Literacy Success 10–12

The final in a series of professional learning opportunities for 90 high school teachers through Literacy Success was held on October 14–16, 2009. The theme was “The Future is Now,” and all workshops looked at various components of literacy practice as related to 21st century literacies and learning. Highlights included looking at strategies for engaging millennial students, connecting state of the art practice to Essential Graduation Learnings, and putting the spotlight on 21st century teaching. Reading and Writing Workshops as a framework in English language arts and content areas were a focus.



October 17–23: School Safety Week

Mathematics Curriculum Revision

The two foci of the review of the mathematics curriculum are to ensure that the curriculum is developmentally appropriate and that it is manageable for teachers to address in ways that allow students to develop the depth of understanding desired.

The number of outcomes in the proposed revised mathematics curriculum, grades primary–9, has been significantly reduced while retaining the robust character of the current curriculum. Changes to the total number of outcomes in each grade were accomplished by two processes.

First, the revised outcomes focus on bigger ideas, rather than on small discrete pieces. This process will make the curriculum more manageable in three ways:

- It will be easier for teachers to cluster outcomes to plan instructional units.
- Lesson plans will focus on fewer but more significant mathematical concepts.
- Tracking and reporting will be simplified.

Second, the revised curriculum will be more focussed. This means there will be fewer concepts in each grade, allowing for greater depth of exploration—not *every* concept will be addressed in *every* grade.

Other changes designed to create a more manageable curriculum for teachers are as follows:

- Numbering of outcomes is consistent across the grade levels.
- Performance indicators have been added to the curriculum outcomes to
 - describe how students can demonstrate achievement of the outcomes
 - clarify for teachers outcomes requiring proficiency and those in the development stage.

A significant component of the curriculum revision has been a focus on the process standards. All five processes will be clearly visible in the performance indicators. In addition, three process standards (reasoning, problem-solving, and communication) will also have outcomes.

Teachers can expect to see a consultation draft of the proposed revisions early in the new year. Teachers will be encouraged to review the documents pertaining to the grade levels with which they are familiar, to see if the proposed revised curriculum is manageable at those grade levels. Teachers will have ample time and multiple modes to provide feedback to the department, including online submissions and regional focus groups.

Following the consultation process and subsequent revisions, pilots will begin in September 2010. We expect to begin implementation the following school year, 2011–12.



Program of Learning Assessment for Nova Scotia (PLANS) 2009–2010

Grade 3

Literacy: Procedures for marking the Early Language Literacy Assessment (ELLA) writing tasks have been adjusted. If a grade 3 teacher at a school has attended both previous marking sessions, the principal may want to send a grade 2 or grade 1 teacher instead.

Mathematics: The Early Elementary Mathematical Literacy Assessment (EEMLA) and Évaluation des apprentissages en mathématiques: 1^{er} cycle–élémentaire (ÉAM1erCÉ) will be administered over two days rather than three. The assessment format will change and will comprise selected response questions only. The assessment will be machine scored.

Grade 6

Mathematics: A new assessment, Elementary Mathematical Literacy Assessment (EMLA) and Évaluation des apprentissages en mathématiques: 2^e cycle–élémentaire (ÉAM2eCÉ) will be administered May 26–27, 2010.

Grade 12

Mathematics: Regional marking will continue for the 2009–10 school year.

English: In 2009–10, teachers will continue to mark their own students' exams, and the department will centrally mark a sample of student exams for provincial and board results. In 2009–10, English exams will be written in one morning (3 hours).

Assessment Schedule

The assessment schedule, along with information about PLANS and each assessment project, is available at <http://plans.EDnet.ns.ca>.



Program of Learning Assessment for Nova Scotia

dataPLANS

dataPLANS is a web-based information system designed to permit access to provincial, board, and school-based results from provincial assessments. The system will include both tables and graphs for overall assessment results, assessment components, and outcomes. Results may be obtained from current as well as previous assessment administrations. The site will be launched in November and will support school improvement planning. Schools will access the dataPLANS website through the secure student record website with their school username and password.

National School Library Day

October has been designated as Canadian Library Month! The idea for a month dedicated to library and information services in Canada was developed by library partners from across the country to help raise public awareness of the valuable role that libraries play in the lives of Canadians. National School Library Day, celebrated on the fourth Monday in October, will be on October 26th, 2009. The theme for 2009 is *Now More Than Ever Your Library, Your World*.

For more information about this, please visit

<http://www.clatoolbox.ca/casl/nsld.html>

Further to the distribution of this year's Hackmatack collection to all schools with grades 4–6, and to celebrate the role of libraries in Nova Scotia, the Department of Education will provide Primary to 3 schools with an exciting collection of eighteen picture books. The collection includes these titles—*Ancient Thunder*, *Creature ABC*, *Don't Laugh at Me*, *Elephants Never Forget*, *Eyelike: Numbers*, *First the Egg*, *I Like Myself*, *Looking Closely through the Forest*, *the OK book*, *One*, *Our Tree Named Steve*, *Read It! Don't Eat It!*, *Silly Billy*, *Song for the Mira*, *Twice Comes Twilight*, *A Visitor for Bear*, *The Water Hole*, and *We Belong Together*.

These books will provide teachers with wonderful opportunities for Read Alouds and students with great independent reading experiences.

Summer Professional Learning

Lori Jamison, author of *Early Literacy Instruction in Kindergarten*, *Marvellous Minilessons for Teaching Beginning Writing, K–3*, kept 74 grades primary and 1 teachers thinking and moving as she presented a two-day interactive workshop around reading and writing in the early years. Highlights included routines, elements of a balanced literacy program, the important role of play, and developmentally appropriate practice.

Ralph Fletcher, author of many books on writing including *Teaching the Qualities of Writing* and *Boy Writers*, and Michael Smith, co-author of *Reading Don't Fix No Chevys: Literacy in the Lives of Young Men*, presented two-day concurrent sessions around the unifying concept of Boys, with 92 teachers participating. Mr. Fletcher looked specifically at boy writers in elementary grades, and Mr. Smith looked at literacy in the lives of young adolescent males.

Great learning was enjoyed by all who participated in these sessions!



Physical Literacy in Canada Website

To celebrate the UNESCO proclamation of September 8 as International Literacy Day, Physical and Health Education Canada (PHE Canada), through the support of the Government of Canada, launched a new Physical Literacy in Canada website—a site that targets educators and parents to support the development of physical literacy in children and youth.

“Literacy development is more than just establishing the ability to read and write,” says Mark Jones, president of PHE Canada. “It is also about establishing the physical ability in children to move with competence in a range of physical activities, and fostering the development and understanding of habits to support healthy lifestyle choices.”

The launch of <http://www.physical-literacy.ca> also coincided with back to school for children across Canada, emphasizing the important role that quality physical education programs play in the development of physical literacy in all children. The corresponding French website <http://www.savoir-fairephysique.ca> was launched shortly after the English site.

Provincial physical education curricula across Canada support the sequential development of fundamental movement skills, skills that lay the foundation for all children to participate in a variety of physical activities and sport programs. These skills are critical since a child who has not had the opportunity to develop these basic motor skills experiences difficulties or barriers when participating in sport experiences or later school-based programs that involve more difficult skills.

Despite the critical role that physical education plays in the development of physical literacy, schools across Canada are challenged in their delivery of quality physical education due to inadequate time in the school schedule, a lack of physical education specialists and qualified physical education teachers to deliver this subject, and insufficient resources and tools. PHE Canada has established www.physical-literacy.ca as a means of offering support to educators to assist them in understanding their critical role in a child's healthy development, and providing useful tools and resources to assist them in the delivery of quality physical education programs.



October 26: National School Library Day

Literacy in the Core French Classroom

The French Second Language division of the Department of Education has targeted a renewal of the Core French Program as one of its top priorities. To this end, a three-year experimental initiative has been set in motion with an intense focus on literacy: speaking, reading, and writing. The two main strands or components are centred on literacy strategies and intensity of instruction.

In May 2007, two school boards (Tri-County and Strait) were invited to participate in an experiment to try out literacy strategies being successfully piloted in Intensive French classes across the country. Along with the implementation of the strategies, school administrators were asked to 'tweak' their school schedules to provide more intensive instructional periods for Core French without increasing the amount of time allocated.

Seven teachers at grades 5, 7, and 8 volunteered. A variety of professional development opportunities were provided, which included a visit to an Intensive French class in Cape Breton, a two-day summer institute session focussing on literacy, workshop sessions in October and May, and virtual meetings using the Marratech video conferencing platform. New resources were identified and provided to these teachers for field testing.

In the second year, the initiative involved eight classes from three school boards: Tri-County, Strait, and Cape Breton-Victoria. This year, there are twenty-one experimental classes in five boards: Tri-County, Annapolis Valley, Chignecto-Central, Strait, and Cape Breton-Victoria. Plans are in place to do intensive PD work during the year with a leadership group from the Halifax school board.

Teachers and students alike have been very enthusiastic about this program and have found it to be motivating and exciting.

Take Our Kids to Work Day

Take Our Kids to Work Day is a national initiative for grade 9 students, organized by the Learning Partnership and provincial Departments of Education across the country. It takes place annually on the first Wednesday of November and will be held on November 4, 2009. It is intended to promote work experience and career exploration by exposing students to the workplace of a parent, a relative, or a volunteer. It allows students the opportunity to see the adults in their lives at work, as well as the job responsibilities of those adults which determine how they earn their income.

Database to Support Accreditation

The accreditation database is an online tool developed by the Department of Education to help school, board and department staff to meet and manage the requirements of the Nova Scotia School Accreditation Program (NSSAP). Piloted in 2007–08 by schools in the South Shore Regional School Board, the database was made available to all schools entering the accreditation cycle starting in 2008–09.

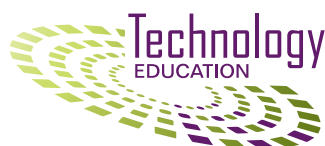
The database is a web-based repository for schools to enter their school improvement plans. As schools prepare their annual reports, the database helps users to focus their reflection. It formats the information and comments into a user-friendly template. The school improvement plan and the annual report information are kept together in one place, making it easy to tell what actions have been completed and which still need to be implemented.

The database allows schools to search for common goals. For example, a school could search for all mathematics goals in the database, or it could customize the search to filter the results by board, school size, and/or grade. The search can be further refined by indicating one or more strands within a particular curriculum area. This provides schools with examples of real strategies being employed by other schools and supports school-to-school networking about common concerns and practices. This information will make it simple for schools and boards to share with neighbouring schools and support co-ordination of professional learning based on common goals.

Accreditation Coordinators within each board also have access to the database. They can view plans and support schools as plans are developed. Other school board professional staff may review professional learning plans for their schools and coordinate board support.

For more information on the database, or to request a username and password, please contact Deborah Andrews in the Department of Education at andrewd@gov.ns.ca or telephone 424-0040.

This initiative has been extremely successful in Nova Scotia, with close to 10,000 students taking part in this special day, a participation rate of 96%. This year, we are hoping to increase student participation to 100% in order to enable all grade 9 students to experience this valuable learning opportunity. Information and resources about the Take Our Kids to Work Day program have been sent to schools, and schools are now working hard to support students and families in organizing appropriate work placements. Guides, posters, and activities are available online at <http://www.takeourkidstoworkday.ca>



Technology Education

Technology Education programs in the province will be enhanced

by the introduction of updated curriculum for Communications Technology 11 and Communications Technology 12. The new academic curriculum will be launched on November 26 and 27, 2009 with two full days of professional development for teachers from across the province.

Boards have committed to the directed purchase of \$60,000 learning resources for Communications Technology 11 and Communications Technology 12 to include support texts in the area of photography and software in the area of technical design solid modeling. The Department of Education has committed funding for hands-on resources so that schools may address outcomes in the mandatory module on photography, all of which will be distributed to schools by way of the curriculum implementation launch. In addition, the Department of Education has distributed the approved texts *The Non-Designer's Web Book* and *The Non-Designer's Design Book* to all schools currently offering Communications Technology 11 or Communications Technology 12.

Junior High Technology Education curriculum is currently being revised by a working group of teachers representing each of the English school boards. Areas of study for grades 7–9 will include Innovations and Inventions, Communications Engineering, Energy Engineering, and Manufacturing.

International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program

One hundred and forty-two Nova Scotia IB Diploma Program teachers gathered at Halifax West High School, Halifax on October 1, 2, and 3, 2009 for an intensive Level II training workshop, led by IB trainers from across North America.

The workshop opened with a Plenary session on Wednesday, September 30, with guest speakers, Dennis Cochrane, Deputy Minister of Education; Ann Blackwood, Director, English Program Services; and Paul Campbell, Director of Special Projects, IB Americas, New York. The following days' sessions afforded participants the opportunity to attend workshops specific to their responsibilities, namely English, French B, History, Math Studies, Mathematics SL, Mathematics HL, Visual Arts, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Theory of Knowledge, and Administration.

One participant commented on how informative and productive the course-specific professional development was for him: "It was great to work with local educators who face the same challenges in starting a new program and to have the opportunity to hear their success stories and creative problem-solving approaches."

After completing the workshop, each teacher received a Level II certificate in his/her relevant subject(s) from the IB Americas office, New York.



Skilled Trades Education

Skilled Trades Education in Nova Scotia is building. Literally. Construction Trades 11 is currently being piloted in five schools this semester. Seventy-two young men and women across Nova Scotia are picking up the tools and building four-unit buildings inside the Skilled Trades Centres.

Construction Trades 11 students are putting the skills and knowledge from Skilled Trades 10 to good use as they focus their learning specifically on six construction trades:

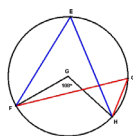
carpenter, plumber, construction electrician, lather (interior systems), painter and decorator, and floor covering installer. During Construction Trades 11 each student will work in each of these trades so that he or she can "get the feel" of that trade.



Along with the building project, excitement about the Skilled Trades is also building in the schools. "You wouldn't believe the number of students and teachers that have come down to the Skilled Trades Centre to see the project," said Annapolis West Education

Centre teacher, Ferry Patterson. "They can't believe that their fellow students are actually building a building. Students are learning through doing and having a great time doing it."

Skilled Trades Education in Nova Scotia is designed to give students an opportunity to experience the skilled trades as a possible career option. Judging from the plans of many of the students currently taking Construction Trades 11, that career option is viable.



Inservicing for Grade 9 Geometry Outcomes

During the 2009–2010 school year, grade 9 mathematics teachers will have the opportunity to participate in four days of inservicing, facilitated by the Department of Education, for the new grade 9 geometry outcomes.

The first two-day session will be in October or November, 2009, featuring work on geometric reasoning with transformations and similar triangles. The second two-day session, to be held in February or March 2010, will focus on geometric reasoning with circles and polyhedra. To support the implementation of these outcomes, teachers are being provided with Geo-Strips, Polydrons, and class sets of the Bulls Eye Compass.

Teachers are also being introduced to electronic versions of diagrams from the text that have been created for their use. The diagrams are provided in several formats: *The Geometer's Sketchpad* and *Microsoft Word* for the 2-D materials, and *Google Sketchup* and image files for the 3-D diagrams. These diagrams are available for teacher use at <http://lrt.ednet.ns.ca/PD/math.shtml>

Correspondence Studies Website

Correspondence Studies has a new website. Visit <http://csp.ednet.ns.ca> for information about courses, textbooks, prices, and eligibility requirements. Find answers to frequently asked questions about our services, print an enrollment form, and review opportunities to mark or write courses.

Moodle News

Hello, Fellow Moodlers! We're interested in surveying your interest in attending one or more 30–45 minute free webinars on focussed topics related to the use of Moodle as an extension of your classroom.

To that end, we've created a short survey to collect your interest and needs. Would you take a few minutes to respond to the survey?

To participate in the survey, use the user name and password of your staff.ednet.ns.ca email account to

- Login to the Nova Scotia Virtual School at <http://nsvs.ednet.ns.ca/moodle>
- Select the All Courses link. Select the Professional Learning Category and the course NSVS: Learn to Use Moodle.
- Moodle Live Webinars: A Survey of Interest and Need is at the top.



October 23 is Provincial Professional Development Day

In October of each year, teachers and administrators from around the province attend professional development conferences organized by the Special Associations of the NSTU. These conferences are planned and organized by Nova Scotia teachers and are intended to provide teachers with up-to-date information through sessions provided by their peers and guest speakers. These conferences also give teachers many opportunities for sharing with others from all areas of the province.

Although registration for this year's sessions is now closed, you can learn more at <http://www.nstu.ca>

Public Schools Branch consists of the following Divisions:

African Canadian Services	902-424-3151	acsd@ednet.ns.ca	http://acs.ednet.ns.ca
Diversity, Equity, and Special Projects	902-722-1405	smithcla@gov.ns.ca	
Education Quality Services	902-424-0040	crandase@gov.ns.ca	
English Program Services	902-424-8945	eps@ednet.ns.ca	http://eps.ednet.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
Mi'kmaq Liaison Office	902-424-3428	Palmatcj@gov.ns.ca	http://mikmaq.ednet.ns.ca
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://www.ednet.ns.ca>

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