

Dehcho NWTTA Regional Newsletter

Collectives and Small Communities

October 26, 2007

2007-2008 Dehcho NWTTA

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Dehcho NWTTA

Local Receiving Officers

Bompas - Lea Lamoureux

TSS - Sherri Thomson

Echo Dene - Jonathon MacKeigan

Charles Yohin School - Terry Davidson

Chief Julian Yendo - Doreen Payne

Kakisa - Sheila Hilliard

Trout Lake - Maria Jones

Jean Marie River - Linda Urban

Board Office - Brian Jaffray

Deh Gah - David Jackson

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A Regional President's Message

In the very near future, you will be asked to fill out a Teacher Welfare Survey for our negotiation team. I can not stress enough the importance of filling out this Survey. It will help guide our negotiation team. Of all the rights and the responsibilities you have as an NWTTA member, filling out this Survey ties for first with exercising your vote.

Before you fill out the Survey, I respectfully request that you remember the following: small communities and the collective.

When our negotiation team meets with the Employer (the GNWT), they will negotiate for an improved Collective Agreement that serves the interests of our members based on the Surveys we fill out and return. In short, they are negotiating for the COLLECTIVE GOOD of ALL members and not for individuals.

With that said, we must keep in mind that our bargaining unit is spread out over a vast geographic area. Out of the 32 NWT communities that comprise our bargaining unit, only eight have populations over 1000 people. In addition, only fourteen communities have year round all-season road access. That means those 18 other communities have very little services and are very isolated.

Therefore, what I would like to see in our Collective Agreement from a Fort Providence perspective might be different from what a member in Trout Lake or Sachs Harbour would like to see.

So what is my point? My point is we should look at ways with our Employer to keep exceptionally qualified teachers in these smaller communities.

I firmly believe that there is a direct correlation between living conditions in a small community, teaching conditions and learning conditions. Housing concerns, high travel costs and the everyday cost of living in these small communities put added stress on our teaching members who are already teaching in a stressful environment. At the end of the day, teachers will most likely ask themselves "Are the rewards worth the hassle?" And I don't mean money. I mean making a difference in our students' lives. So let's look at ways to reduce teacher turnover in these smaller communities so those students can have a consistent quality education.

How can we do this? Communicate. Communicate with the members in your school, in your region and the NWT. Find out what they need to succeed as teachers in the NWT. To help facilitate this communication, we will hold a conference call in November for all members to voice their concerns and offer their suggestions.

Whether we are in a small community or large, we are not alone. Together, we are strong. Together, we are a collective. Together, WE are the NWTTA!

Yours in solidarity,
Christopher Jack-Carson
Regional President, Dehcho NWTTA

Communication: Member's Concerns, Questions or Grievances

If you, a member, have a concern, question or grievance - please follow these steps in communication:

1. Talk to your LRO - your LRO will guide you in the right direction;
2. If you need further guidance, call or email your Regional President - Christopher Jack-Carson. He will discuss options and solutions with you and he will represent you if desired;
3. If your Regional President is unable to help for whatever reason, you call Central Office at 867-873-8501.

NOTE: If your concern is of a sensitive nature, feel free to contact Amanda or Dave at Central Office directly. Your Regional President can not and will not deal with any concerns regarding professional relations with other members or legal issues.

Share, share, share!

Do you have something to share with the members in the region? Email coachcarson14@hotmail.com or Chris Jack-Carson on FirstClass - it might be published in the next regional newsletter.

Regional Professional Development Fund

As you will see when you read the regional PD guidelines on the following pages, each member in our region is entitled to access up to \$800.00. In the five years I have been here, this regional PD amount has ranged from \$450 to \$930. The reason for this wide range is surplus. This year we have a healthy surplus which the regional PD committee decided to spread out over the next year two years to help our regional members to attend PD.

But why do we have a surplus? Members in our region did not access the PD fund to its fullest potential last year and in years past. Why? Talking to members in our region, they have indicated that the regional PD amount is not enough to cover the true cost of attending PD outside their communities.

What can you do about that? Write down on your Teacher Welfare Survey what you want to see for PD funding or email me and the rest of the regional PD committee your suggestions. Please refer to the current revised Article 16 in our Collective Agreement for more info on PD.

Collective Agreement Suggestion Box

Here are a few suggestions to think over and maybe write down on your Teacher Welfare Survey.

Suggestion One

Article 13.01 (5) Amend this article by making Discretionary Days earnable days off. For instance, teachers in their first year with the GNWT get one discretionary day, teachers in their second year get two discretionary days, and so on until the fifth year or more years, teachers get five discretionary days.

Suggestion Two

Article 11.07 Replace current clause with: Teachers shall receive no less than 80 minutes of preparation time per week during regular instructional hours.

Suggestion Three

New – Freight Allowance – Teachers in communities that are isolated (no year round road) or do not have a well stocked grocery store will receive a 250 pounds freight allowance each academic year.

Suggestion Four

New – Travel Assistance – Teachers in fly-in communities shall receive paid airfare for them and their dependents to be used at anytime once every two years.

Suggestion Five

Professional Development – Each NWTTA member can access through their regional PD committee funds that are based on the communities' location.

Example:

Fort Providence, Kakisa - \$1000.00

Fort Simpson, Fort Liard, Jean Marie River - \$1200.00

Wrigley, Trout Lake, Nahanni Butte - \$1500.00

All Sahtu - \$1500.00

BDEC excluding Inuvik - \$2000.00

Inuvik - \$1200.00

and so on.

Suggestion Six

Relocation Expenses – Triple the relocation expenses in regards to meals.

Do you have any suggestions? Email them to coachcarson14@hotmail.com!

Coffee Break Contests ANSWERS!!!

Judging by the zero responses to these two contests, I must assume one of two things. The contests are a waste of time OR like me, we are too darn busy to answer a trivial but fun contest. I did promise the answers to these contests. Here you go! How many did you get right?

The Attack of the Abbreviations and Acronyms

In the north, we have tons of abbreviations and acronyms for almost everything. Do you know what they all mean?

1. NWTTA = Northwest Territories Teachers' Association
2. GNWT = Government of the Northwest Territories
3. FASD = Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
4. TSS = Thomas Simpson School
5. DGEES = Deh Gah Elementary and Secondary School
6. FMBS = Financial Management Board Secretariat
7. OREO = Ongoing Record of Evaluation Outcomes
8. TYFMAD = Thank You For Making A Difference
9. LRO = Local Receiving Officer
10. TGIF = Thank Goodness Its Friday

The Green Handbook and Collective Agreement Challenge!

How well do you know our Green Handbook and Collective Agreement? Take this challenge and find out.

1. All teachers in the NWT are active members of the NWTTA. True False **It Depends**
(Teachers are active members when they are employed as a teacher in the NWT or on approved leave)
2. A substitute teacher can vote in NWTTA election and/or ratification vote. True False **It Depends**
(All active members can vote. A sub is an active member on the days they are employed. If a vote falls on that day, the sub can vote.)
3. Maximum number of special leave credits a GNWT teacher can accrue is 30. **True** False
4. Language Allowance is worth \$10,000. True **False**
(It is \$5000)
5. Central Office's phone number is 873-8501. **True** False
6. The NWTTA motto is "Ultra et Supra". **True** False
7. You are allowed two discretionary days per academic year. True **False**
(It is only one but it should be more)
8. The NWTTA President is Nicole Ash. True **False**
(It is Amanda Mallon. Nicole is our Central Office super secretary who will be on maternity leave very soon)

Thanks for taking the challenge - I got you to read those documents! :-)

Professional Development for 2007-2008 Dehcho Region

The following definitions and characteristics are used to describe PD in the NWT. The purpose is to bring validity and consistency to PD activities across the territory.

Definition of Professional Development

Professional Development is the continuous growth of personal and professional knowledge and expertise that enhances teaching in support of student learning. It engages individuals and groups in a broad range of activities.

Professional Development should be based on teacher, school, and regional needs and should have a group as well as an individual focus.

This understanding of professional growth views teachers as decision makers and problem solvers who identify their own learning needs, accept responsibility for professional decisions and actions, and are committed to self reflection, personal professional renewal, and life long learning.

Characteristics of Effective Professional Development (Revised)

1. Linked to enhanced and purposeful student learning
2. Based on teacher identified needs (teacher centered)
3. Enhances teacher knowledge, improves teacher practice and promotes an active professional learning community.
4. Involves careful planning for timely implementations connecting to system/ school goals, evaluation and reflection.
5. Relevant and contextual (connects to culture).
6. Continuous and on going by nature (sustained over time)
7. Includes a variety of individual and collective/collaborative practical activities.
8. Based on and promotes research into teaching and learning.
9. Makes the best use of resources available (time, facilities etc)

From the territorial guidelines and prior feedback from teachers in the region, the following guidelines have been established for PD in the Dehcho. Our PD committee is comprised of 2 teachers appointed by the NWTTA regional executive and 2 members appointed by the Board (Nolan Swartzentruber) - it turns out that our Board's two appointees are also members of the NWTTA. This is not the case in other regions. We feel the board is trustful of how the teachers in the Dehcho are utilizing their PD opportunities.

Division of fund:

25 % of the yearly allotment will be placed into the Regional Conference fund. The regional conference will occur every second year in consultation and collaboration with the Board. This year 15% of this year's allotment will be taken out to be put towards the NWT Educators conference for February 2009. The other 60 % will be placed into the individual fund. The cost to bring Trout Lake and Nahanni Butte teachers to Fort Simpson will be deducted from this 60%, then the remaining will be divided equally amongst the number of teachers in the region. The surplus that has accumulated over the years will be used to help supplement individual amounts for this and the next academic years. There is no individual member rollover.

Reimbursement for this year will be up to \$800 with receipts. You can claim the following receipts: air travel, hotel, conference registration, taxi, car rental, mileage at the current employer directed rate for travel within and outside the NWT and based on the mileage chart at the NWTTA office. If more than one person is traveling in a vehicle only one person can claim the mileage. The idea of the PD fund is to help off set the cost to participate in PD activities. The fund is all of ours as a collective and does not belong to people individually.

Regional PD Application Procedures:

Applications and reports are to be sent electronically.

- 1) Applications are to go to the chairperson on First Class - applications will be reviewed by the committee as they arrive.
 - must have name and date of proposed PD
 - must show relevancy to current or future teaching situation
 - must provide a budget of approximate costs
- 2) Must note if have leave approved from principal- if in session
- 3) Must fill in a travel form for insurance purposes - kept at school while you are away on PD
- 4) After PD is over must submit a paragraph summarizing your PD activity - this is to share with colleagues (+ve, -ve, recommendations) send to chairperson on First Class
- 5) Upon completion submit receipts for reimbursement to the NWTTA office - PD coordinator, Colleen Eckert
 - If you are on leave you can not apply to the fund PD
 - If you are a term employee or resign from your position, you cannot take PD after the last day of school
 - You can do PD on your time and \$ if you wish
 - If you choose to take PD during the summer - remember Central PI also supports summer PD
 - Must do PD for the current year by August 31
 - All PD for reimbursement must be approved **prior** to the activity or no funds will be released

Note: Staff submissions and reports can be made on a school basis.

The Regional PD Committee will entertain application(s) for additional PD funding from our members after March 31, 2008.

If you have any questions or suggestions for the future please send them to the PD committee. Please forward all feedback to the committee ASAP.

The Regional PD Committee wishes everyone the best of luck with your PD and we look forward to everyone sharing what they have learned.

Dehcho Regional PD Committee for 2007 - 2008

Val Gendron - Chairperson

Chris Jack-Carson

Teresa Bezanson-Byatt

Brian Jaffray