

Curriculum Corner



The year's first Curriculum Committee meeting started with a blend of familiar and new committee members as well as a trio of special guests. Among those returning are Stéphane Richard, Branda Zwicker and Nathan Orman. New Faces include Grant Frost, Joyce Lively, Cathy Doucet, Tanya Samson and Cindy MacKinnon, the committee's Provincial Executive representative. Always present is the group's stabilizing force and staff liaison, Ron Brunton.

The focus of the committee is to monitor the curriculum for significant updates, make recommendations on curriculum policy, study and research different aspects of the curriculum, and most importantly to relay information concerning trends and occurrences within the field of Nova Scotia's public school curriculum. Schools, school boards, teacher organizations (provincial, national, international), universities and the Department of Education all play a role and influence our province's curriculum.

During the first meeting of the new school year, the committee welcomed special guest Ann Blackwood, Director of English Program Services. Ann enlightened the committee on various enterprises the Department of Education is continuing and initiating. In addition to this information, educators are also encouraged to visit the Department of Education's ednet website to view the publication *Branching Out*, which gives even more insight into the department's initiatives. To view the current issues, go to the Department of Education's website or go directly to the document by using the following link: <http://lrt.ednet.ns.ca/branching.shtml>.

Janet Porter was also present to discuss initiatives with the curriculum committee. Ms. Porter was able to shed light on current and new Language Arts supports as well as evaluations through the various Literacy Assessments. Concerns regarding the most recent Grade 3 Language Arts Assessment and the preparedness of younger students for such an assessment, in particular students who entered grade primary at the age of four, were voiced. Discussions also focused on the Grade 9 Junior High Literacy Assessment and the upcoming Grade 8 Junior High Mathematics Assessment.

John Fahie was present to field any questions about the Province's Student Information System. Implementation across the province is continuing as more schools, particularly elementary, are integrating the SIS into their teaching and assessment practices. Most concerns related to linking outcomes to most (if not all) aspects of evaluation and also that of teacher training in using the system. A new component of the SIS system, TIENET, was also discussed and will, when implemented, assist with IPP and other aspects of program planning.

The committee also had the opportunity to review the CTF publication *The Voice of the Canadian Teacher*. This document is an amalgamation of reports by teachers from across the country and its aim is to give concise and authentic accounts of the issues facing Canadian teachers. Its main goal is to be "...informing and influencing education policy decisions to enhance the quality of education all students receive." This document is an ideal document for not only teachers but also members of the public, municipal and provincial governments and school boards to review.

The committee's next meeting takes place January 6, 2012. Jim Rice, Director of Evaluating Services will be in attendance to discuss various topics.



Shown above are members of the Curriculum Committee. Back row: NSTU staff liaison Ron Brunton, Joyce Lively (Cape Breton District), Brenda Zwicker (Lunenburg County), Stéphane Richard (CSANE), Cathy Doucet (Colchester-East Hants) and committee chair Nathan Orman (Shelburne). Front row: executive member liaison Cindy MacKinnon, Tanya Sampson (Richmond), and Grant Frost (Halifax County).