

A celebration of schools

Focus on successes, not just criticism, key to future of school system

Nova Scotia's Education Partners are committed to ensuring the public education system provides education for all and we strive to maintain a system that will support all students in their learning.

We encourage honest discussion about the school system including a focus on areas for improvement and we intend to participate and respond to all dialogue, positive and negative, related to how the school system operates here in Nova Scotia.

We were disheartened to see the Op-Ed story submitted by Paul Bennett and Charles Cirtwill in the March 24 issue of *The Chronicle Herald*. We want to take the opportunity to correct a few inaccuracies, and to set the record straight about the Nova Scotia Tales Out of School campaign.

From its inception, the Nova Scotia Tales Out of School campaign has focused on telling positive stories about the public school system, and the programs and services it delivers. The education system affects all of us – from students and parents to business owners, community members and educators. If you think about it, the education system is preparing the workforce of the future and a good school system is a huge draw for attracting people to live here.

We developed this campaign because there is a general lack of awareness of these impacts and we believe real stories from Nova Scotians help put a face to what is happening behind the scenes. They also demonstrate how the success of the system affects everyone, not just families with kids in school.

We hear lots of negativity about the system, and we are working to improve it every day. But we think it's also important to celebrate our schools because we are proud of the work teachers, program administrators, and students do on a daily basis. If Nova Scotia is to thrive economically and at a community level, we need to work together and build on our strengths and spend less time criticizing.

Nova Scotia Tales Out of School was developed with the mindset that showcasing success creates more opportunities for success. It was developed because we need to ensure those things that are working are recognized and maintained, and because we know the positive results of this system have lasting effects on the economic success of our province.

Mr. Bennett and Mr. Cirtwill's letter implied that the Nova Scotia Federation of Home and School Associations recently joined Nova Scotia's Education Partners in awareness efforts. The reality is that the Nova Scotia Federation of Home and School Associations has been a member of Nova Scotia's Education Partners for many years and involved with public awareness efforts over the last three years. In addition to the anglophone parent association, la Fédération des parents acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse has been a member of Nova Scotia's education partners.

The [www.nstalesoutofschool.ca](http://www.nstalesoutofschool.ca) site is not limited to comments from parents of children in the system; the stories posted on the site reflect a much broader group. The site

shares stories from public school graduates, co-op students, program organizers and municipal and business leaders. There is a graduate whose experience with the high school music program inspired him to go on and become a professional musician, and an employer who has built his workforce through the Options and Opportunities program. These stories reflect the impact schools have on virtually all aspects of our society and economy here in Nova Scotia and beyond.

We know we have work to do. But we also know there's a lot we can celebrate. We invite anyone who has a positive experience with the school system to share to submit their comments and stories. We look forward to continuing to highlight the successes our school system achieves and celebrating what we have accomplished here in Nova Scotia.

#### Nova Scotia's Education Partners

Association of Nova Scotia Educational Administrators  
Fédération des parents acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse  
Nova Scotia Federation of Home and School Associations  
Nova Scotia School Boards Association  
Nova Scotia Teachers Union