



COSS

Council of Special Services

A Special Interest Council of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association



COSS Provincial Newsletter Fall 2024

Message from COSS President

Dear COSS Membership,

We like to welcome everyone back to the 2024-2025 school year. The COSS executive are looking forward to getting together virtually with all our members on November 14 between 7:00-8:30 PM for the COSS 2024 AGM! During the AGM we will review the number of items that COSS has been doing over the last two years and will be conducting nomination and voting for the 2025-2027. If you are attending the 2024 COSS AGM, please fill out the AGM form <https://forms.gle/khY8R7cHtjmAH9QB8>.



The current 2023-2024 COSS executive is composed of Stephanie Drover-Edmunds, President. Stephanie is currently a Guidance Counselor and Student Success Teacher for the PASS program at Amalgamated Academy in Bay Roberts. Maggie Warren is Vice-President. Maggie works in the position of School Counsellor at Carbonear Academy in Carbonear. Wendy Barrett is the Treasurer. Wendy has the dual role of Instructional Resource Teacher/Intermediate Science teacher with Persalvic School Complex in Victoria. Terri-Lee Bishop is the Communications Officer-Secretary. She is the Student Services Department Head and Instructional Resource Teacher at Amalgamated Academy in Bay Roberts. Danielle Doyle is the past president. She is the Student Services Department Head and an Instructional Resource Teacher at Carbonear Collegiate in Carbonear.

It has been a busy 2023-2024 year. Since November 2023 we have continued to identify and work on COSS members' challenges and concerns. To date, we have represented COSS through participation in several discussion panels with the Department of Education. COSS holds a unique perspective found within the K-12 educational system and as such most members took the time to complete the EngageNL survey as a means to voice our concerns. The COSS executive used these concerns as part of the conversations at the Teachers Think Tank (February 23rd, 2024). We have also been advocating COSS members' concerns with the RTL database and the deadlines associated with it. Over the summer break, COSS was in consultation with the NLTA and Memorial University of Newfoundland regarding programming and professional learning opportunities.

COSS would like to remind everyone of our website which will contain updates, forms, and resources: <https://cosssic.nlta.ca/>, and a Twitter account NLTA Council of Special Services

@NLTA_COSS that you can follow by clicking this link https://twitter.com/NLTA_COSS. We have also decided to send out two NEWSLETTERS to our members, Fall and Spring of the school year.

Those interested in being a member of COSS and receiving up-to-date information, and those who are current members and wish to continue with your membership you must update your membership by filling out the attached 2024-2025 membership form. <https://forms.gle/ZDDU2DUBAgugEV8t7>

Why become involved in a special interest council? We are a large group of individuals who work with the vulnerable group of students, with the most diverse needs and strengths. Our skill set and expertise can be both specific and varied. COSS strives to provide the best service to our students, and their teachers. To do that, we first need to be able to network with our peers across the province, and with different professionals working within Special Services. Membership helps the continued development of a community that supports quality delivery of special service education, provides a voice dedicated to Special Services Education within our province, and offers grants for members to attend National and Provincial Special Services Education conferences. COSS will seek out and participate in Professional Learning that will provide applicable PL to our members in topics that interest, and help with creating success for our students. Hopefully, the PL will inspire all of our members. Being general enough that it will include all those working with special education, and specific to our roles, that will be up to date with an introduction to the latest technologies and teaching techniques.

For those who are new to COSS or wish to become members, COSS will send out an email to let you know items that we have been advocating for our membership, correspondences with different groups and organizations that could be of interest to our membership, offer PL opportunities, updates, and sometimes send out questionnaires, surveys, or feedback. The information provided will be discussed and brought forth during crucial meetings with all the parties involved; NLSchools, NLTA Executive and/or NLTA Joint Council Meetings, MUN, etc...

Who can become a member of the Council of Special Services (COSS)?

1 There shall be two classes of membership in COSS:

(I) ACTIVE: professionals who work in the field of student support services; such as Instruction Resource Teachers, School Counsellors, Educational Psychologist, Itinerant Teachers – Autism, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Blind and Visually Impaired, Auditory Verbal Therapists, Speech Language Pathologist, ASL., etc. Persons who are active members of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association as specified in NLTA By-Laws are eligible for active membership in this council.

(II) ASSOCIATE: open to any persons whose professional interest is in special education. This could include university students enrolled in a Special Education Degree/Master's program, classroom teachers and/or special education instructors/professors.

2 The yearly membership form must be completed and submitted on or before September 30 each year.

3 All such members shall be entitled to full privileges of council membership including the right to vote and to hold office.

The COSS executive has been looking into securing meaningful professional learning for our members. We are excited to announce that we have secured two guest speakers for our first Virtual PL for February at no cost to membership, which is always nice! We have identified several free PLs offered by different organizations. The most recent one was offered by ReadTheory. We also provide funding for COSS members who participated in the COSS Train the Trainer program. We continue to look for expressions of interest from 12 of our members who will be interested in a professional learning opportunity: Train the Trainer; PATHs Program. Those interested must be willing to provide training to COSS members. A member will be selected from each region: Western, Vista Central, Burin, Labrador, and Northern Peninsula. COSS will pay the registration for the selected members. The criteria for selecting the participants:

- Must be an active COSS member
- Special Education Degree/Masters
- Individuals selected must agree to be a trainer for their region during professional learning days and/or approved Professional Learning time by NLSchools.
- Must be currently in the IRT role

Those interested can email COSS@mynlta.ca. The deadline for submissions will be December 30, 2024.

Those who have concerns, questions, or suggestions that you want to share privately, please go to <https://forms.gle/wo11ko3uUm3AyuJG9> and fill out the Concerns form, or email us directly at COSS@mynlta.ca. Our member's concerns are an important piece of COSS and your input is needed.

Remember your provincial executive is here for you and that an executive is only as good as its membership. Thanks so much, everyone, for your time. As always, reach out to your executive at any time!

Thank you,

Stephanie Drower-Edmunds

COSS President
A SIC of the NLTA