

Fiftieth Anniversary NSSAA

This past fall the Nova Scotia School Administrator Association celebrated its 50th Anniversary in conjunction with the annual October Conference which was held at Northeast Kings Education Centre, Canning, Annapolis Valley. The event was hosted by the Annapolis Valley SAA local.

In the late 1950s', school administrators were looking for a means within the NSTU to discuss and potentially resolve problems of particular interest and concern to administrators. At the 1961 Annual Council of NSTU a framework for special association was presented and adopted. The first association to be formed under this new format was the School Administrators' Association (SAA), and the first conference was held at Dalhousie University in September 1961 with Chuck Eaton, Principal of Horton District High School serving as its first president.

Throughout the next fifty years the SAA became a voice for administrators within the NSTU, addressing such concerns as the role of administrators within the school setting, the length of the school year, supervision and evaluation of teachers, administrative allowances, substitute teachers, achievement tests, student suspensions, and school budget cuts among others. These and other numerous issues were discussed and brought before the NSTU. Thus, over the years, the SAA became an advocate, speaking on behalf of school administrators on many issues pertaining to educational leadership. However, due to the constraints placed upon special associations within the NSTU, the

SAA is constitutionally unable to directly bring issues vital to the welfare and interests of its membership to the NSTU executive table. With the creation of an NSTU standing committee named Teachers with Administrative Responsibilities (TWAR), administrators were at last given the opportunity to have a direct link to the Provincial NSTU executive. From the beginning, SAA and TWAR have been working together on issues of mutual concern, particularly related to achieving a contractual means to support administrators, improve remuneration, study release time requirements and deal responsibly with wellness issues. A member of the provincial SAA executive sits on the TWAR committee, and both groups meet jointly each year. The dialogue between both has been positive, cordial, and very productive.

At the national level, the SAA has been a member of the Canadian Association of Principals (CAP) since 1980. All SAA members are also members of CAP. CAP provides administrators with professional development opportunities at the national level through the annual CAP conference which is held each spring, as well as through the CAP Journal and website. Through our provincial representative on CAP, the SAA has a voice on issues which have an impact on students, schools, educators, and particularly on school administrators, all across Canada. The SAA is also a member of the Atlantic Association of School Administrators (AASA). This association provides networking opportunities for school administrators in the Atlantic Region.

The SAA is also an affiliate of the Nova Scotia Educational Leadership Consortium (NSELC). The NSELC offers a wide variety of professional development opportunities

designed to develop and expand continuing education for present and aspiring educational leaders. Two members of the SAA were invited by the Department of Education to sit on the Instructional Leadership Council.

Over the past 50 years, the SAA has not existed exclusively to provide PD support to its members as other special association of the NSTU. The SAA has in the past, spoken on behalf of administrators, has voiced issues and concerns, and has been a consistent advocate on behalf of administrators. Unlike other special associations of the NSTU, the SAA has local branches and it does not represent a specific curriculum area that defines its activities. The interests of the SAA are much broader and encompass all aspects of the practice of educational administration. The value and relevance of this organization to school administrators in Nova Scotia should never be underestimated. Up to this point in time, many hard fought battles have been won to the benefit of our membership, but there is still much to be accomplished. There can be no doubt that the interests of administrators and those of other members of the NSTU do not always align perfectly. Within this reality, it is crucial that school administrators have strong, dependable representation. It is the role and responsibility of the SAA to make certain that our interests are put forward in a consistent, professional and determined manner. At this point in the evolution of the SAA, we need to reflect upon critical issues facing administrators in Nova Scotia today. We have taken your concerns seriously and acted according to your needs and wishes effectively and will continue to do so.

In 1961 we joined together as a group of professionals who shared common interests and common goals and felt the need to be represented by a common voice. That has not changed. As we look to the future, it is to be hoped by all of us that the SAA will continue to be that strong, dependable voice which school administrators can count on to represent their interests within the NSTU. If you would like more information about being a member of SAA please visit our website <http://local.nstu.ca/web/saa>

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