

*NSTU Provincial Equity Committee
Year-End Committee Report 2009-2010*

Committee Members:

Scott Murchison, Chair
Laura McCulley
Belinda Josephson
Donna Elliot
Tanya DeViller
Chris Weeks
John MacKay, Executive Member
G rard Cormier, NSTU Staff Liaison

Committee Mandate:

To address matters relating to the status of women, equity, and diversity.

Meeting dates:

Friday October 9th, 9:00-4:00

Friday February 19th, 9:00-4:00

Friday April 9th, 10:00-5:00

Budget:

As of July 30th, The Equity Committee spent \$13,856.45.

Committee Activities and Recommendations

1 NSTU POLICY REVIEW

The committee reviewed the policy up for review at Council 2010 and suggested reaffirmation of the majority of them as well as proposing various amendments.

2. NSTU Council Resolutions for 2010

There were no resolutions brought forth by the Equity Committee this year.

3. HALIFAX GAY PRIDE PARADE

There was once again discussion about the NSTU's future presence at the Halifax Gay Pride Parade. The committee members felt that perhaps a float would be a preferable presence in the future. They proposed that the idea be sent to the Provincial Executive as a recommendation for their consideration

4. Mandate

It was decided not to change the mandate of the NSTU Equity Committee at this time.

5. Sexual Minority Rights Brochure.

The NSTU has been mandated to develop a sexual minority rights brochure for distribution to every NSTU member. The committee spent a considerable amount of time deliberating and reflecting on this Q & A type of brochure. It has been reviewed by the committee and suggestions have been made to make it even more comprehensive including both resources suggested by the NSTU and the Department of Education.

6. Meeting with Natalie Flinn, Department of Education

We had the opportunity to meet with Natalie Flinn, Active Healthy Living Consultant for the Department of Education. This meeting allowed us the opportunity to collaborate on issues of equity and it marked the first time that a representative from the Department of Education has worked closely with the Equity Committee. She reviewed the outcome framework for the new Active Healthy Living course. She then presented resources available from the DOE that were inclusive of sexual minority realities. She also presented a book entitled "Growing Up OK" and discussed the recent media attention regarding the inclusion of sexual minority issues within the updated version. She highlighted a recent publication entitled "Anti-Bias Education", written by Louis Derman Sparks. Finally, she requested the NSTU Equity Committee's assistance with a future brochure which will be entitled "Let's Talk About Healthy Sexuality". This will be on the agenda for the 2010-2011 Equity Committee.

7. Equity Conference:

After last year's successful expanded conference on sexual minority issues, it was decided that this year's conference would be a Human Rights education initiative allowing for the connection of equity themes. The conference was held April 9th and 10th at the Delta Halifax; fifty delegates attended and were provided a choice of workshops dealing with human rights awareness and education.

The conference included a panel with a variety of speakers including a student as well as representation from the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission. We were honoured to have some of our own members presenting workshops on the types of human-rights education that they have developed in their own schools as well as workshops from key researchers in the areas of children's rights as well as human rights in general. The conference also allowed the committee to educate equity liaisons about their roles

and responsibilities as an equity liaison and each member received an equity liaison handbook. The equity conference was a success again this year as many of our members left with valuable information and were inspired to promote equity in our schools.

8. POSTERS

a) A poster for the 2010 Equity Conference

The equity committee made suggestions for a poster that contains a series of coloured plates. Each plate contains a different characteristic contained in the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act which is a prohibited ground of discrimination. The caption states that everyone has the right to a well-balanced plate. This poster was distributed to all equity liaisons in the province.

b) Sexuality Minority Issues among NSTU members

The equity committee brainstormed and made suggestions for a poster that was exclusively dealing with the NSTU membership. The poster shows 10 teachers with the headline “One in Ten teachers is gay, Which one? It shouldn’t matter.” This poster was also distributed to the equity liaisons in the province and it indicates the NSTU’s commitment to working with our members on issues of sexual orientation.

Due to the limited amount of wall space available to teachers, it was decided that all future posters would be made the same size (11 x 17)

It has been a great rewarding experience this year being the chair of the Equity committee. I would like to thank the NSTU for allowing me to be part of this wonderful committee the last two years, and I certainly hope to continue to be involved in NSTU Equity work in the future.

Scott Murchison