**ACER – CART**

**EAST COAST REPORT**

**January 2021**

With thanks to Roger Regimbal the East Coast Retired Teacher Organizations (ECRTO) met by Zoom on November 13th 2020. Roger remained with us through the meeting and ACER-CART President Gerry Tiede joined us for much of it. The Meeting Notes follow.

**Notes - ECRTO Zoom Meeting – November 13th, 2020**

**General Comments/Activities:**

* Meetings are being held in person when appropriate space available, including Presidents of locals, committees, AGM and Executive as well as by Zoom. (It was noted money saved due to Covid limitations was well spent on meeting face to face when participants felt comfortable as well as on other activities, including virtual and prizes to keep members engaged.)
* Quebec continues to be concerned about minority rights in education and is working collaboratively with others.
* Consideration needs be given to urban/rural differences and access
* Some local branches still active to extent possible within Covid restrictions

*Editorial Note: Items/observations under engaging members during Covid 19 may also be applicable/merit consideration in recruiting and keeping members and vice versa.*

**Engaging Members during Covid 19:**

* Virtual presentations held and planned – memoir and journal writing, card making, Christmas sing along
* Zoom holiday gatherings/sing song
* Provide for variety thus diverging interests of members
* Video talks/presentations/meetings then share
* Branch/provincial photo contest with significant prizes
* Regular calls to those who might need help/drives etc
* Virtual walking – take and submit pictures
* Newsletters/emails – share activities from around the province
* Encourage local branches/regions to connect, especially to those without email
* Post important bulletins/information on website
* Urge members to get flu shots, preferably high dose although not widely available
* Provide for face to face gatherings in areas, especially more rural. where space allows for adhering to distancing

**Substitute Teaching in the Pandemic: What’s Happening?** Supply teachers are not readily available. Conditions vary from province to province relative to using retirees, the number of days they can work, where they can work and the remuneration. Active teachers are worried about their health, have a very heavy workload and in many ways are emotionally drained.

**Non-teaching Members:** Several associations accept members from the “education community” – school board personnel, bus drivers, university faculty etc. A drawing card for many is the stand - alone Insurance Plans offered by many of the Member organizations, an option ECRTO Members are not able to offer. A/C’s protocols do not preclude this as Member Associations determine eligibility.

**Recruiting/Keeping Members:** A key point made in the discussions was “be known/visible” to active teachers.

* Go to/visit schools
* Create posters for display in schools
* Participate in/offer pre-retirement seminars, workshops and sessions on PD days
* Allow joining pre-retirement – BC noted that wasn’t particularly productive
* Prepare and circulate pre-retirement packages/information
* NB sending information, in next few weeks, to all teachers on pension with cooperation from Vestcor, the pension management corporation
* Connect with local active teacher associations
* NB present at provincial retirement luncheon, greeting retirees as they arrive and gather in their branches and addressing during luncheon remarks
* Consider stages of retirement – early, mid, late – then consider and plan activities to appeal to needs and interests of each group
* Privacy issues limit access to contact information for those retiring, thus a challenge to identify and reach out to them
* QPARSE can lose track of membs as their fee is a one - time payment
* Establish membership chairs/committees in each local
* Branch incentive funds to encourage joining
* Create contests for joining – significant prize to both “joiner” and “recruiter”
* Deliver meals to those who may need them
* Offer activities not easily available elsewhere – woodworking/carving, painting – and things not as easily accessed while active
* Experience has shown fun things, unique experiences/outings meals bring out those who would not necessarily partake of lunches

**ACER-CART Website:** Albert Legge notedIt provides ease of access on the home page to other associations. Visiting it was encouraged and in particular have a look at the newsletters, etc from each Member. Protocols for other links (eg Wellness) were reviewed and suggestions in accordance with them welcome. Roger Regimbault, who was the champion for a redesign, indicated if you do not have member access credentials to be in touch. Linda expressed appreciation French and English were released simultaneously.

**NBSRT Request:** Bob Fitzpatrick advised NBSRT is working on a 2 year strategic plan and will be in touch with questions such as plans going forward, what works/does not work etc. He did indicate that copies of any surveys would be welcome as NBSRT plans to survey members. It was suggested he contact Jim Grieve as Ontario had surveyed.

**A/C Priorities/Health Issues:** A/C priorities were verbally reviewed and Health issues are a significant concern – vaccines, pharmacy kickbacks, senior strategy, pharmacare, Covid impact. A memo from the Health Committee seeking information will be coming to each director in the near future.

High dose flu vaccine is not readily available. In discussion of kickbacks by pharmaceutical companies a caution was to consider that pharmacies might have to close in small communities. A pharmacist spouse indicated kickbacks would not seem to be an issue.

**ACER-CART President Gerry Tiede:** Pleased to be present, indicated much in common across the country, for example finding those willing to assume leadership roles locally as well as provincially. He noted

* Quebec introduced legislation the previous day regarding target benefit pensions and Bob Fitzpatrick offered to share his experience relative to target benefit pensions.
* Reminded Members to respond to the request from Martin Higgs, A/C Pension Chair.
* A/C has increased “grass roots” involvement through committees
* Hope June AGM will be a face to face

**Another Zoom Meeting/Sharing?:** Agreed there are benefits to another meeting

After the meeting Albert Legge, RTANL, sent a screen shot of the gathering and some posted it on web/facebook pages.

**Developments since that meetin**g:

**PEIRTA** has been invited to provide input on what would be a “Best Elected School Board Model” in the English sector and notes ideas for the French Board can be submitted online starting January 11th. The result will be a new governance model and required legislative and regulatory changes.

An Alberta retired teacher, who wrote an article on his move for the ARTA Newsletter, now lives in PEI and is a PIERTA affiliated member.

Meetings continue in socially distanced settings, including January 21st which will include a Christmas lunch. Items will include ACER-CART/ECRTO information.

**SERFNB** reports cancelling their planned jubilee celebration and will, instead, dedicate the next “Entre Nous” to them - then and now pictures and short presentations. Pins and certificates will be mailed.

**QPARSE** continues providing various zoom activities, including one about ongoing activities challenging Law 40 (management of English School Boards), which have been well received. Upcoming is one on Aging. As well, the Board of Directors gathered for a holiday celebration.

**RTO (NS)** branches found varied activities to replace traditional Christmas dinners/activities – sending cards to members, drive in turkey dinners, gifts to senior homes, a Christmas music video prepared by members, wreath and card making socially distanced workshops, donations to needy families and food banks.

RTO donated $5000 to Feed Nova Scotia and an additional $1000 to each branch to support the added costs of their activities. Masks with the RTO logo were made and much appreciated. “The Retired Teacher” newsletter included pictures showing activities held during the shut down. In person Executive and Branch Presidents Meetings are planned over the coming months provided Public Health guidelines can be met.

The Legacy Foundation received donations from affiliations who typically sponsor province-wide events (golf tournament, curling bonspiel and bowling tournament) since these events were not held during this year.

**RTANL** continues planning for a May BGM and has been compiling a series of Zoom pre-retirement seminars hosted by the provincial teachers’ association. (NLTA) and presented by table officers.

**A Concern:** In addition, one Member reported Division 50 of RTO/ERO had placed a “Seasons Greetings” article in a newspaper (attached). While it outlined the activities of the group, the numbers represented, including numbers in Atlantic Canada, and the benefits of belonging it concluded by inviting contact from those wishing to know more.

Other ECRTO Members were not aware of any such articles in local newspapers however, while recognizing that their members may not have been the “target” audience, they were concerned. Some recalled discussion about appropriate “outreach” across provincial boundaries at an ACER-CART AGM.

While ECRTO Members recognize Member Associations have “branches” in other provinces/territories they believe retired educator associations should be sharing, working together and collaborating for the common good. They feel that, at the very least, a courtesy contact would have been appropriate and prepared them for the questions from their own members.

**Next ECRTO Meeting:** A Zoom meeting is tentatively planned for March, prior to the ACER-CART Executive Meeting.

Respectfully submitted

Margaret Urquhart, East Coast Representative

