



RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

MEMBER REPORT 2022

The Retired Teachers' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (RTANL) respectfully submits the following report to ACER/CART.

In the last two years, we have seen a change in the executive structure of our organization. In the past our Past President served an undefined term on our executive. By a vote at our last BGM, the term of office for our Past President was restricted to one year. We have found that while this works well on paper, it did not translate so well in real life. Implementation of a one-year term necessitated the election of an alternate for one year.

Due to BGM 2020 being delayed due to Covid 19, this one-year term for an alternate meant that the alternate would be joining the Provincial Executive for one meeting only, given that there was no guarantee that that person would be re-elected at the next BGM.

In an attempt to reduce the costs associated with the day-to-day running of our Foundation, (Retired Teachers' of Newfoundland and Labrador Foundation for Children's Charities), it was decided by vote at our last BGM that a Board of Directors for the Foundation would be reduced to five and recruited from one specific Division rather than from across the province.

This was seen as a way to reduce expenses, like travel, and per diem expenses would be eliminated. This did not go as smoothly as we had envisioned. We are finding it difficult to obtain enough members from a given division to fill the Foundation Board. In addition, we have identified a number of issues around this rotation of the Board. Specifically, our bank for the Foundation does not have branches in all of our Divisions, thus making the transfer of signing authority and regular banking difficult. Additionally, the changing of the Board members necessitates a change with the Charities Directorate and the Canadian Revenue Agency. These changes are complicated and time consuming.

We are still working through the issues and hope to have them rectified before the next BGM. Appropriate resolutions are being prepared for BGM 2022 in October.

The government of Newfoundland and Labrador commissioned a report on the economic state of our province. The PERT REPORT (Premier's Economic Recovery Team) issued their report in May of 2021. The report identified several ways economic recovery could be facilitated in our province. One major concern for us was the sections on pensions. While the currently retired teachers do not feel threatened by this report it has serious consequences for future retirees in our provincial pension plans. We remain vigilant as to the long-term implications of changes to any pensions in our government plan.

We are actively involved with the upcoming celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Faculty of Education of Memorial University. Our retired teachers have been contributing to a series of Facebook productions highlighting stories of teaching in Newfoundland and Labrador. We have commissioned a triptych art work piece which traces the milestones of the Faculty of Education. Unfortunately, events associated with this celebration have been postponed from the spring to the fall of 2022.

We, the RTANL, are looking forward to our BGM in October with our 50th anniversary celebration. We are planning on incorporating a visit to the Observatory at the MUN Grenfell Campus as part of our celebrations. We are hoping that our Divisions will nominate and fund one member per Division to attend this event.

Travelling around the province for Executive Meetings has been re-established since our COVID restrictions have been relaxed. We have found that such meetings afford us the opportunity to engage directly with members who would not have had any interaction with the Executive of the RTANL otherwise.

Last year the Group Insurance Managers launched a review of the Group Insurance Plan in preparation for a market study of our plan. The RTANL had a dedicated focus group to provide feedback to the Plan Managers. The result of the changes made as a result of member input resulted in an increase in dental fees, but better eye care provisions. Some aspects of our plan saw increases in premiums while others saw small decreases.

We maintain an active association with the Coalition of Seniors Retirees and Pensioners. They are in effect our Political Action arm. We coordinate with them on all aspects of government policy that affect pensioners. The Coalition has identified the development of a dental plan for seniors as a priority. Poor dental health impacts seniors' nutrition as well as the conditions normally associated with dental health. The Coalition is currently lobbying government for free vaccines of all types for seniors. This initiative will result in widespread savings to our overall health program. Members of the Coalition meet regularly with local MP's and MHA's. We were pleased with the announcement on March 23 that diabetic supplies will now be covered by direct billing effective May 1, 2022.

As I write this, we are awaiting the release of Health Accord for Newfoundland and Labrador, which was due in February. We are also pleased that Past President, Albert Legge, was invited to become a member of the ACER-CART Health Services Committee.

We felt valued as a member of the Coalition when they changed the date of their AGM so as not to conflict with our BGM.

In March, the Department of Education announced the launch of a pre-kindergarten program. We were particularly pleased that the value of retired teachers and the Retired Teachers' Association was recognized and validated in this process. Retired teachers were explicitly invited to fill roles in the delivery of this new initiative.

Our main activities as an organization have focused on member engagement. We find ourselves in the same position as other retired employee organizations across the country. We are having a difficult time recruiting new members. We are gaining about 20 new members each year but are losing about 100 per year through natural attrition. With this in mind, we have begun the process of drafting a policy and roadmap of how to proceed if we should find ourselves in the position that we have to cease as an organization. Our plan is to incorporate such a policy into our constitution and by-laws.

We remain hopeful that our organization has a long lifespan.

Sharon Penney
President RTANL.