



Exceptional News!

Student Support Services Division
Department of Education
and Early Childhood Development
Newsletter

May 2016

Assistive Technology



Tablets

A limited number of tablets are available for qualifying students transitioning to Grade 7.

Applications to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) for a tablet as assistive technology will be open to students who meet the following criteria:

The student:

- i. has a formal identification of Specific Learning Disorder (or Learning Disability) in written expression
- ii. is currently in Grade 6
- iii. has trialed assistive technology to support learning needs related to written expression for a minimum of 30 days

An application package requires:

- i. Assistive Technology (Tablet) Application
- ii. Trial Form - 30 day minimum
- iii. Acceptable Use Agreement - signed by the student and parent

These forms are available at:

www.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/studentssupportservices/assistive_tech.html

Sample Forms

Now available on the EECD Assistive Technology web page is a sample Assistive Technology Trial Form. This document will illustrate the type of feedback expected when trialing a device or software with a student for the required 30 day period.

Applications are often returned to schools with a request for more detail as to the features used and the curriculum outcomes addressed. Another tip is to ensure that the application and trial form contain student-specific examples and not similar generic statements on the applications for a number of students. This practice causes applications to be returned and slows the approval and deployment process.

Technology no longer being used

When a student no longer requires the use of a piece of technology, it is to be returned to the district office. The personnel in Student Support Services will collaborate with the EECD in order to arrange for suitable redeployment. This allows for prompt provision of devices to students who require such support.



Safe and Caring Schools



Graduating Student Awards

The Safe and Caring Schools *Graduating Student Awards* will be awarded to 14 deserving graduates from across the province. The aim of these awards is to promote student awareness of the *Safe and Caring Schools Policy*, and acknowledge the contributions of youth in establishing and maintaining safe and caring schools and communities.

Specifically, the goals are to:

- recognize the leadership of youth across the province in completing projects and activities aimed at enhancing the safety and well-being of others in their schools and communities.
- help students recognize that they can make a difference in the lives of others.
- encourage students to become involved in future initiatives.

Congratulations are extended to all applicants for the important work they are doing in our schools and school communities.

LGBTQ Guidelines

In conjunction with the LGBTQ awareness training the NLESD is providing to educators across the province, the EECD has developed a draft document, *Guidelines for Creating Safe, Caring and Inclusive Learning Environments for Students and Staff with Diverse Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities and Gender Expressions*. These guidelines were written through ongoing consultations with the Safe and Caring Schools and Inclusive Education Itinerants, and other NLESD staff. When ready to be released the

guidelines will be included as a procedure under the Safe and Caring Policy.

Review 360

Safe and Caring Schools Itinerants continue to support schools with the implementation of the Review 360 database. Many SCS itinerants have facilitated PL sessions with their respective schools. These sessions have included the use of the training webinar, generating reports using the Review 360 practice portal, signing on to Review 360 live via PowerSchool and question & answer periods. Sessions for smaller groups of administrators have also been facilitated focusing more on the key considerations of using Review 360.



Relationships First:
Restorative Justice in Education

Relationships First: Restorative Justice Professional Learning for Itinerants

Over the past several months, the Safe and Caring Schools and the Inclusive Education Itinerants participated in Relationships First: Restorative Justice in Education professional learning with Dorothy Vaandering. Dorothy is a professor in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University, and one of the founding members of Relationships First: Restorative Justice in Education Consortium-NL. Through these sessions, the itinerants are learning how to support the creation of educational cultures that focus on relationships first. The goals for professional learning include:

- gaining a clear understanding of Relationships First-Restorative Justice Education (RF-RJE) and its role in the Safe and Caring Schools Policy.
- applying RF-RJE principles and practices to daily responsibilities both professionally and personally.
- modeling for others how to engage with RF-RJE principles and practices in their daily lives.
- providing opportunities for educators and other professionals to engage with RF-RJE in meaningful ways.



Relationships First - Restorative Justice - Education Corner

What is Relationships First: Restorative Justice Education?

It is a philosophy that:

- honours the worth of all regardless of who they are or what they do
- recognizes the importance of community in individual lives
- believes healing of relationships is possible

It is not:

- a school discipline policy
- a way to control student behaviour
- a student code of conduct
- a packaged program

Relationships First: Restorative Justice in Education nurtures the capacity of people to engage with one another and their environment in a manner that supports and respects the inherent dignity and worth of all within their environments.

What does a Restorative Justice Education look like in the School Environment?

The school environment focuses on:

- relationships before rules and behaviour
- people before policies
- honouring before measuring
- well-being before success
- meaning before knowledge
- problem solving before transmission
- asking before telling

Relationships First (RF) provides the context for how we live our lives, do our work, and engage with one another. The philosophy of RF supports us, and gives us strength for troubled and challenging times as we respond to the needs

around us in ways that honour everyone through support and accountability.

This is a great video to share with schools, as it supports the philosophy of RF-RJE. *What does it mean to be human?* The 2015 Templeton Prize Laureate speaks on what it means to be human in the context of relationships.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWrRu31ZPzo

Further information and resources can be found on the consortium's web page frjnl@mun.ca.

Please look for the next Relationships First - Restorative Justice - Education Corner in the next Student Support Services Newsletter.



Gifted Education: Suggested Websites

Teachers frequently ask about resources to extend the learning of students who are particularly able or those who have been identified as Gifted and Talented. It is important to realize that students who are gifted and talented have strengths and interests in many areas. What is a favourite for one might not be of interest to another. The following sites might be worth exploring:

Canadian Geographic Maps

The Canadian Geographic site has a number of resources available for downloading including several tiled maps related to World War I. www.canadiangeographic.ca/educational_products/tiled_maps.asp

Also available for a three week loan is a floor map of Vimy Ridge.

www.canadiangeographic.ca/educational_products/vimy_ridge_floor_map.asp

Optical Illusions and Visual Phenomena

This site has 123 optical illusions of a number of types. It explains the visual mechanisms involved with each. The reading level of the explanations is perhaps intermediate or above.

www.michaelbach.de/ot/index.html



Picassohead

This site allows users to drag and drop features drawn by Picasso in order to make your own picture. Features include colour, and tools for rotating and scaling images.

www.picassohead.com/create.html

Differentiation Instruction Strategy

Centres/Stations

Centres are great for differentiating instruction. They can be organized in a variety of ways: skill level, interest level, multiple intelligences and/or content. Centres can be used in any subject area and help in fostering independence. There are a number of types of centres:

1. Stationary Centre – An activity centre is set up in the classroom, as an aside, to support subject area learning. Students are free to explore the centre during free time or when their assigned work has been completed.
2. Rotating Activity Centres – Subject/topic oriented activities are set up in the classroom and are completed by small groups of students

during scheduled class time. Students are usually placed in groups of 2-4 students and are provided with centre supplies and instructions to be completed during one class. The students rotate through the centres over a few days or a number of class periods. All students complete all centres. Although planning is required initially, once the centres are prepared, and the students understand what they have to do, centres can run without much maintenance over the course of a few days.

3. Student Interest Centres – Students are provided with a selection of activities from which to choose and complete individually. These activities can be used as part of instruction, or as items the students can work on during their free time. Teachers can set requirements for completion. Students often show increased levels of motivation when they are given the opportunity to direct their own learning.



Working Together to Support Student Achievement Pilot

The two year pilot ends June 2016. Feedback from the pilot will ensure a thorough and extensive professional learning package that will support district and school personnel in the implementation of Guidelines for Service Delivery: K-3 Reading and Writing, which will be posted in the Fall.

Preliminary feedback also provides insight into successes and challenges. Successes include improved academic performance and a reduction in student referrals to special education.

Challenges include communication, teacher scheduling and capacity building.

A complete report on the pilot will be available this fall.

Alternate Format Materials (AFM)

AFMNL Applications

A reminder that an application for AFM resources for 2016-17 must be received by **May 15th** in order for resources to be available for September 2016.

Application forms for both new and previously approved students are available at www.gov.nl.ca/edu/forms/studentsupport/applications.html. Please read directions carefully, as they have changed.

Further information is available at <https://cmnaf.gov.nl.ca/> and (www.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/studentsupportservices/resource_center/index.html).

Professional Learning Resources Online

The EECDC Professional Learning site (www.k12pl.nl.ca) now has a section entitled *Student Support Services*. Professional Learning for the *Service Delivery Model for Students with Exceptionalities* is available in English. The French version will follow shortly.

Also available from this site is a compilation of differentiated instruction strategies. Follow the link from the Welcome page which reads **Differentiation in the Inclusive Classroom: Strategies for Success**.

The screenshot shows the Professional Learning website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Welcome!', 'Curriculum PL', 'Student Support Services', and 'Sign Out'. Below this is a blue header with the 'Professional Learning K-12 NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR' logo and the 'Newfoundland Labrador' logo. The main content area includes a 'Menu' on the left with links for 'About Us', 'Vision for Professional Learning', and 'Testimonials'. A central 'Welcome!' section contains a note about login requirements and a paragraph about the site's purpose. To the right is a 'Search' box. Below the search box is a 'Newly Released' section with a list of resources, including 'Differentiated Instruction in the Inclusive Classroom: Strategies for Success'. A large purple arrow points from the right towards this resource link.

Click here for DI resource

Feedback

Please share your thoughts regarding this newsletter including any suggestions for future articles.

Contact us at: **Sharon Whalen**

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