



**Local 70 & 73  
STANDING  
UP FOR  
PARITY!**

Early Childhood Educator, member of Local 73, Allison Stymest, with a student on the picket line in Kingston.

# THE NO-20 STAND



Dear members,

As we enter the holiday season and the end of 2022, I want to acknowledge our members for the important work you do. Delivering vital public services in health care, government services, and education to all Nova Scotians. Whether you are working in a school, hospital, group home, long-term care facility, clinic, office, liquor store or anywhere else in the province, serving the public directly or behind the scenes, you have most likely been working short and in stressful conditions, as so many of our workplaces are critically under-staffed.

At the same time, our members are standing up for better wages and working conditions with strong strike votes and for the first time in many years, going out on strike to achieve much-needed improvements to their agreements. This fall, members of Locals 73 and 70 who work in the Annapolis Valley Regional and South Shore Regional Centres for Education took a stand for parity with other workers doing the same job in the province – and they won! They made a real difference for themselves, and paved the way for others who have been paid less for doing the same work throughout the province.

I want to thank all those who showed their support to these members. Local 70 and 73 had the support of over 34,000 members of this union behind them, and it gave them the strength and determination they needed to achieve real gains at the bargaining table. It was an important and powerful demonstration of solidarity. We couldn't have done it without everyone's participation.

For many of our members in almost every sector, working conditions are extremely stressful. Please be aware of your rights listed in your collective agreement, and use the resources available to you. If you need support with any workplace issues, please give the union a call or send us an email at [inquiry@nsgeu.ca](mailto:inquiry@nsgeu.ca).

I wish I could say that things are looking better, but with

inflationary pressures as they are, we can anticipate that Nova Scotians are going to need health care, government services and supports even more. We have much work to do. These are the times we really see why standing together and investing in public services is so important.

We are fighting for wages that ensure members do not lose economic ground as prices for energy, food and housing rise and that address issues of recruitment and retention.

We are supporting initiatives like the national childcare strategy and Pharmacare-for-all, affordable housing, and fair taxation that will help to address inequality. We are raising our voices to keep profits out of our public health care system. We can, and we will meet our challenges by continuing to stand together in unwavering solidarity.

I wish you all a happy and safe holiday season and look forward to seeing you at a union event in 2023!

In solidarity and with kind regards,  
Sandra Mullen, President NSGEU



**NSGEU Board of Directors took this photo to send support to striking school support workers in Ontario facing anti-worker legislation. The show of solidarity by unions forced Premier Ford to back off his legislation. #solidarity**

Hugh Gillis, 1st Vice-President, NSGEU.

Hugh is assisting President Mullen and working directly with local executives to strengthen the NSGEU from one end of the province to the other.

He would like to thank the membership for all their cooperation this fall and he is looking forward to continuing to work together in 2023.

If you have any questions, you can contact Hugh at [hgillis@nsgeu.ca](mailto:hgillis@nsgeu.ca).

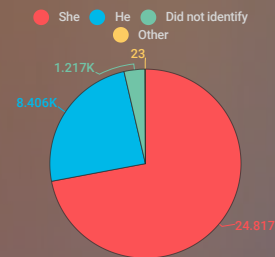


# Meet your union!

The membership of the Nova Scotia Government & General Employees Union is incredibly diverse.

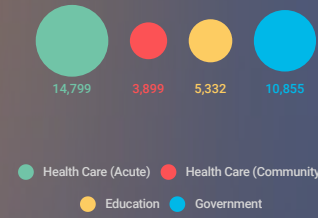
## Gender

Approximately 72 per cent of NSGEU's members identify as female. Our union has a very strong & active Women's Issues Committee to represent these members' issues.



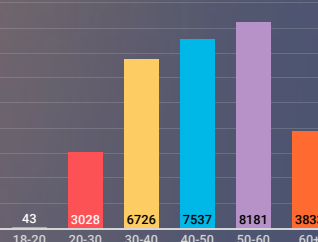
## Sectors

Our members work in a wide range of occupations, which fall under four main categories: Health Care (Acute), Health Care (Community), Government & Education.



## Ages

Our data shows that NSGEU members range in age from 18 to 60+ (some people did not disclose their age to us).

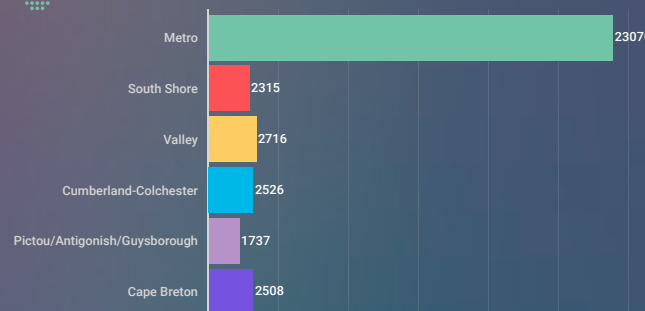


## Contracts

More than 62 full-time staff at the NSGEU help negotiate and service 96 separate collective agreements on behalf of our members.

## Where can you find us?

NSGEU members live & work in communities throughout the province: Metro HRM, Cumberland-Colchester, Cape Breton, Pictou Antigonish Guysborough, the Valley and South Shore.



## FEATURES

- 4-11 Strike: Local 70 & 73 achieve pay parity
- 12 Member Profile: Veronica Carr
- 13 Campaign: In a Nurses Words
- 14-23 Local Officers & Occupational Council
- 24 Health Care Bargaining Update
- 25 Political Update
- 26 KUDOS to local 66
- 28-29 NSGEU Education Courses
- 30-31 Around th Union in Photos

## NSGEU TWEETS

NS Teachers Union @NSTeachersUnion

NSTU Local Presidents send their support and solidarity to striking @NSGEU support workers in the Valley and South Shore.

#support4schoolsupport #nspoli

Nova Scotia NDP @NSNDP

The union makes us strong! Wages should be fair for all the people doing this work, and we stand with you. #wageparitynow #solidarityforever #nspoli#nsndp

Spring Magazine @springmagca

Hundreds of education workers are on strike in Nova Scotia! Enough is enough, workers are demanding better working conditions, better pay and stronger public services. Workers are rallying at the Nova Scotia legislature. #NSpoli #39kIsNotEnough

Sam Krawec @KrawecSam

If we can't make it to the Rally in Support of Striking School Support Workers at the legislature tomorrow morning, we can still show solidarity!

Solidarity from members of NSGEU Local 102 (unionized workers at the NEHC). @NSGEU #support4schoolsupport #equalworkequalwage

## CONNECT WITH US!

We want to hear from our members. If you have thoughts on this issue of The Stand, or ongoing union issues, send us your feedback! You can email us at [inquiry@nsgeu.ca](mailto:inquiry@nsgeu.ca) or connect with us:

[facebook.com/NSGEU](https://facebook.com/NSGEU)

@NSGEU

## THE STAND

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255 John Savage Ave.  
Dartmouth, NS, B3B 0J3

### Executive Officers

- President  
Sandra Mullen  
902-424-4063
- 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
Hugh Gillis  
902-322-3543
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
Tammy Gillis  
902-759-7530
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President  
Peter Perry  
902-471-9623
- Secretary-Treasurer  
Darren McPhee  
902-449-7778

### Contributors

- Holly Fraughton
- Zita Hildebrandt
- Shannon MacIntyre
- David MacKenzie
- Sandra Mullen
- Deedee Slye

Contact NSGEU  
902-424-4063  
1-877-556-7438  
[inquiry@nsgeu.ca](mailto:inquiry@nsgeu.ca)

The NSGEU is affiliated with the Canadian Labour Congress, the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, and the National Union of Public and General Employees.  
[unionsyeah.ca](http://unionsyeah.ca)



The Union Stand is proudly produced by NSGEU with the help of members of IAMAW Local 2797.



# School Support Workers Lead the Way

Our members who work in our provincial public education system have historically made different salaries with not-so-different job descriptions. Whether they are an Educational Assistant, Early Childhood Educator, a Student Support Worker, in IT, or a Clerk or Secretary, they were paid differently depending on where in the province they worked. Despite years of trying to close that gap in bargaining, we had never managed to level the playing field – until now.

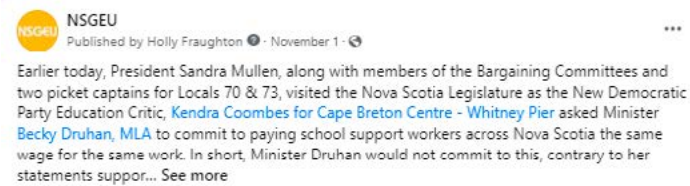
This fall, members in the Annapolis Valley Regional Centre for Education (AVRCE) and South Shore Regional Centre for Education (SSRCE) took a stand and said they deserve the same wage for the same work as someone living in Halifax or Cape Breton.

On October 24th at 8 a.m., Local 73's picket lines went up in Windsor, New Minas, Berwick and Annapolis Royal. Our message on Twitter conveyed the feelings of the local: "Strike has begun for support workers at the AVRCE at picket lines throughout valley. Members are missing their students and not happy to have to strike but feel they have to stand together now. @nseducation @allthingsannapolis #Nspoli #support4supportworkers."

Members of Local 70 began their strike a day later, at 8 a.m. on October 25th. Picket lines went up in Chester, Liverpool and Bridgewater. The members expressed similar sentiments of wanting to get back to school to support their students. They didn't want to be on strike, but they had to do it. They marched together in rain and shine and wind and were able to grow community support for the important work they do and their fight for parity.

## We Lobbied!

Off the picket lines, plenty was happening behind the scenes to apply pressure to both the employers and government officials. The union created radio spots and took out advertisements in The Chronicle Herald and in community newspapers to help the public better understand why school support workers were on strike. An online letter-writing campaign was also launched, which saw almost 1,500 emails sent to the Premier,



Minister of Education and Opposition leaders. Parents of students affected by the strike began speaking out in the media in support of the workers. Momentum was beginning to build.

On November 1st, members of the bargaining committees of both Local 70 & 73, along with two

picket captains, accompanied NSGEU President Sandra Mullen on a visit to the Nova Scotia Legislature as the New Democratic Party Education Critic and MLA for Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier, Kendra Coombes, asked Education Minister Becky Druhan to commit to paying school support workers across Nova Scotia the same wage for the same work. Minister Druhan wouldn't commit to this, contrary to her earlier statements supporting parity.

## We Rallied!

We held an extremely effective rally at the provincial Legislature in downtown Halifax on Thursday, November 3rd. Buses full of members danced and chanted around the Legislature, and were joined by throngs of supporters, media, and politicians from all parties, who wanted to hear more about their fight for parity. The energetic display of support on the streets outside the Legislature definitely amped up the pressure on government to come to the table with an acceptable offer.

## We Won!

On November 8th and 9th, members of Local 73 (AVRCE) and Local 70 (SSRCE) voted to end their strike and ratify a tentative agreement recommended by their bargaining committees. The new agreement achieves what the members were asking for: wage parity with workers doing the same job elsewhere in the province.

This principle of parity will now spill over into public education contracts throughout the province. This will mean a great deal to many employees and their families.



continued on pg 6

## Our members of Local 70 and 73 stood up and won!

The story of this victory is really the story of every victory in collective bargaining. It is the story of people standing up for what is fair and refusing to accept less. Congratulations to the members of Locals 70 and 73 and a big thank you to all those who showed their support along the way.

Meanwhile, our members of Local 74 had begun to organize with Picket Captains and were getting ready to join Local 70 and 73 on the picket lines. In the end, they didn't need to do that, as the strike created the pressure needed to reach a tentative agreement at their table. The terms of the tentative agreement were acceptable to the members of Local 74 as well as they ratified their agreement on November 22nd by 100%.

## We Received So Much Support!

Our members were overwhelmed by the support they received from the community. Their students joined the picket lines, parents came out to support, and local businesses showed their love in many ways including donations of food and much needed coffee. There were cakes, and gift cards, and sandwiches, and soup... from businesses and people too numerous to mention. It was amazing and inspiring to see and feel the love for these workers, who are often overlooked in the workplace and community.

Labour leaders were out too, including the President of the Teachers' Union and the President of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour. Politicians like the NDP President Claudia Chender, MLA Suzy Hansen and MLA Kendra Coombes (just to name a few). All of this helped us to achieve a tentative agreement.

We created videos to document and share the strike with the members and public. You can view them here:

Day one on the picket lines in the Valley. <https://bit.ly/3Frtgtg>

South Shore Strike Begins: <https://bit.ly/3Fxtj3>

Chender, Hansen & Cavanagh visit the picket line: <https://bit.ly/3FXYCJG>

NSTU President visits striking workers: <https://bit.ly/3WjgJPt>

Parents and Students Support Day: <https://bit.ly/3UVw87q>

Stay Strong: Halloween: <https://bit.ly/3Wp4jpl>

continued on pg 8



NSGEU @NSGEU · Nov 2  
Has a school support worker made a positive difference in your life, or the life of your child? Share your story with us here: [fs2.forumsite.com/nsgeu/nkyl0esh...](https://fs2.forumsite.com/nsgeu/nkyl0esh...)  
#support4schoolsupport #equalworkequalwage #nspoil



To support the strike, we also created some ads that ran on the radio and in print:

Radio Ad 1: <https://bit.ly/3W3MZGD>

Print Ad: The Chronicle Herald: <https://bit.ly/3BHXCqj>

Press Releases:

SSRCE vote to ratify agreement - <https://bit.ly/3V3LO8y>

AVRCE vote to ratify agreement - <https://bit.ly/3BEYegs>

AVRCE called back to table - <https://bit.ly/3HBvRDG>

Education Minister dodges parity question in Legislature - <https://bit.ly/3HFVzN>

Education Minister must explain her concept of parity - <https://bit.ly/3BFNkHK>

AVRCE in violation of province's guiding principles of inclusion - <https://bit.ly/3V6AdWq>

### Media

Our members' actions and press releases resulted in some great media coverage. Here are some highlights:

No pre-primary classes in Annapolis Valley, South Shore - <https://bit.ly/3UV5USA>

QCCR News & Update - <https://bit.ly/3Px7MQn>

Global News - Parents, students join striking school workers - <https://bit.ly/3vcV7sF>

Radio-Canada - Parents and children join striking school support staff - <https://bit.ly/3Wox6Kn>

Kirsten Malone - When Teachers Go on Strike - <https://bit.ly/3HDWise>

CTV - N.s. school staff set to head back to bargaining table - <https://bit.ly/3FV8HXH>

CTV - School Workers on South Shore join strike - <https://bit.ly/3BHhKc1>

CTV - video - <https://bit.ly/3FX6DyV>

CTV - striking workers rally - <https://bit.ly/3FXsWnl>

<https://globalnews.ca/news/9221751/school-staff-nova-scotias-annapolis-valley-strike/>

Global - hundreds of school staff strike - <https://bit.ly/3UVxL52>

Saltwire - Wage disparity at heart - <https://bit.ly/3PzrXgr>

Saltwire - AVRCE school support ratify - <https://bit.ly/3Fp7uGA>



You Retweeted  
Ryan Lutes @ryanlutes · Oct 26  
The @NSTeachersUnion supports @NSGEU school support workers fighting for pay equity.  
On Friday, I encourage all teachers to wear RFD for ED, and help show your support.  
These workers are critical to ensuring that our schools are safe, inclusive environments for our children.



You Retweeted  
Global Halifax @globalhalifax · Oct 25  
Official  
WATCH: Schools in the Annapolis Valley are without support staff Monday with over 600 workers walking off the job in the morning. The strike comes after more than a year of bargaining.  
Read: [globalnews.ca/news/9221751/s...](https://globalnews.ca/news/9221751/s...)



Wednesday 16 November 2022  
**NSGEU workers achieve what they set out to do in strike**



SOUTH SHORE – Striking school support workers with the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union (NSGEU) Local 70 the...

You Retweeted  
s.mq. @mrsQ 22 · Oct 27  
Replying to @NSGEU and @TimHoustonNS





## SAME WORK, SAME WAGE!

It's simple. Our school support workers are standing up for equal pay for equal work.

Workers in rural parts of Nova Scotia get less pay than others who do the same work elsewhere in the province. That just doesn't make sense.

These workers are essential to our children's education and well-being, yet some make less than fast food workers. This makes it almost impossible to recruit and retain workers in this sector.

So we're taking action for our neighbours, parents, students and community.

This is an easy lesson for the Houston government: **equal work deserves equal pay.**

# NSGEU

The NSGEU placed this ad in the Chronicle Herald on October 26<sup>th</sup>.



Brett McCann joined his Educational Assistant, Amanda White on the picket line in Kingston this morning to show his support for her and the importance of the work she does.



Above: Charmine Toney of AVRCE walks the picket line in New Minas.

Left: November 1<sup>st</sup> in Kingston, students left school and were met by their parents to march in support of support workers.



Striking school support workers at a rainy Chester picket line were joined by Danielle Barkhouse - Public Servant/MLA for Chester-St. Margaret's, who shared her support for workers on the line.



The fog set an eerie stage for a Halloween picket in Bridgetown on October 31<sup>st</sup>.



Above & bottom left: Members dressed up to picket during Halloween in Chester.

# Member Profile: Veronica Carr

This is Veronica Carr, an Educational Assistant with AVRCE Local 73. We asked her a few questions about being a Steward.



## 1. How long have you been a Steward?

I have been a steward for 10 years - this is my first term as a Chief Steward

## 2. What made you want to become a Steward?

I wanted to become a Steward because I had questions and concerns at my workplace and I wasn't sure who to talk to or how to access help. I decided the best way to know is to get involved, then I decided share my knowledge and to be available for my colleges.

## 3. What issues do you typically deal with in your workplace as a Steward?

There's a variety of issues and each is unique to the individual and situation. It could be a grievance or misunderstandings interpreting the collective agreement. I educate members to understand their rights but also be a soundboard and listen to their frustrations and offer support and comfort.

## 3. Have you faced any discrimination in the workplace by stepping forward to become a Steward?

I have not faced any discrimination in the workplace. Though, my workplace is not without discrimination and I am here to support any members that feel they have been discriminated against.

## 4. What kind of skills has being a Steward given you?

I have learned so much since becoming a Steward! I gained effective communication skills, better conflict resolution strategies, and how to advocate for others by asking tough questions. I am more self assured and confident in my abilities to stand up for my members' rights.

## 5. Would you recommend other people become a Steward in their workplace and why or why not?

I absolutely would recommend becoming a steward to anyone who believes in fair rights for all employees and to anyone who wants a better understanding of how unions work. Making a difference in someone's life by giving them a voice is very rewarding. ■

NOTE: This is the second in a series of Steward profiles we will be sharing throughout this term. Please check our website to see more.

# In a Nurses Words

There's no doubt about it: our public health care system is in chaos. Decades of neglect and underfunding have starved the system of much-needed investment, and after weathering almost three years of a pandemic, the seams are more than a little frayed: they're bursting.

The situation comes as no surprise to anyone who has been working on the front lines. Health care workers and the unions that advocate for them have been desperately trying to get the public and government to pay attention.

NSGEU nurses have always been at the forefront of our fight. In 2014, after Stephen McNeil's Liberal government refused to listen to their pleas for safer staffing levels and mandatory minimum nurse to patient ratios, and instead tried to legislate away their union membership and right to an effective strike, our nurses took a stand, walking off the job in protest.

Now, just eight years later, the system we fought so hard to protect is at the brink of collapse.

Will this new government listen to its nurses, now?

In July 2022, the NSGEU released the first in our series of interviews with nurses who are again bravely taking a stand. This time, they're speaking out about what it is actually like to be working inside of Nova Scotia's hospitals right now.

[In a Nurses Words, Part 1: "Chaos"](#)

[In a Nurse's Words, Part 2: "Thrown to the Wolves"](#)

[In A Nurse's Words, Part 3: "The Worst I've Ever Seen"](#)

We have done our best to protect the identity of these nurses while still allowing them to tell their stories, in their own words. Our hope is that these videos will open up a dialogue with the employer, government and public, so we can start making some meaningful improvements in the acute care system immediately, based on feedback we received during our conversations with these nurses.

Please take some time to watch and share the videos, and stay tuned for more to come as we head into nurses' bargaining in the new year. It is in all our interests to support the nurses in their fight for an improved public health care system. ■





President Sandra Mullen speaks to members of the Civil Service and Youth and Equity Councils gathered for training and elections at the NSGEU office on September 14th.

## Local Officers & Council Training

Every three years the union holds elections for many leadership positions. During Convention, all delegates participate in electing the Provincial Executive. Your local holds its own elections where you vote for a new Executive including President, Vice-president, Treasurer, Secretary, Steward/Chief Steward and labour representatives to the local District Labour Council. You also elect representatives to Regional and Occupational Councils including the new Equity Council and Young Worker's Council, and to the union's committee pool. Members elected to councils and committees come together in the fall to elect a representative to the Board of Directors.

In order to support members who volunteer for these positions, we offer post-Convention local officer, committee, and council training in September/October to get everyone up to speed on responsibilities, policies, procedures, and best practices. The training is a good opportunity to learn new things, gain skills and meet new people. It's held in different regions across the province.

Here are some photos from our council meetings and local officer training sessions this past Fall. We would like to thank all the members who choose to get involved and become active in their union - the union is YOU!



Kim Sheppard-Campbell was elected as a representative to the Board of Directors. She works in Mental Health & Addictions.

Pam Grace was elected as a representative on the Board of Directors from the Health Care Administrative Professional Occupational Council. She works in Finance at the IWK.



Health Care Administrative Professional Occupational Council.

Health Care Support Services Occupational Council.







Uta Berthold-Brush was elected to be a representative on the Board of Directors by her Health Care Occupational Council. She has worked as a Continuing Care Coordinator out of the Berwick area.



Shauna Frampton was elected as an alternative representative to the Board of Directors from her Health Care Occupational Council. Shauna is in blood transfusion services and is a Medical Laboratory Technologist. She has been working in this area for 20 years.



Natalie Steel Quinn has been elected as the alternate representative from the Health Care Occupational Council to sit on the Board of Directors. She works for the IWK family intensive outreach service (FIOS.)

Mary Atwater was elected as an Alternate to the Board Representative. She has worked for 33 years at Regional Residential Services Society.



Vera McCarthy has been elected Chair of the Health Care Occupational Council. Vera works as a Medical Laboratory Technologist.

Laura MacMillan was elected by the Health Care Occupational Council to be their representative on the Board of Directors. Laura is an Orthopedic Technologist working at the Dartmouth General Hospital.





Natalie Groom works for Louisdale Community Homes in Louisdale, Cape Breton. Natalie was elected as representative from her Group Homes Occupational Council to sit on the Board of Directors. She has worked there for 12 years.

Mary Drake is Local 24 President and a member of the Health Care Support Services Occupational Council. She works as a floor finisher in central laundry and makes sure all the laundry goes out. Mary was elected as the alternate Board of Directors representative by the members of her Council.



Charly Weaver, Local 66, was elected to sit as the chair of Group Home Occupational Council. She has been a member of Local 66 for 20 years.

Matthew Walsh was elected to be the Chair of the Health Care Support Occupational Council. He works as an electrician at the Nova Scotia Health Authority.



Health Care Occupational Council.

Ray Theriault was elected as the representative on the Board of Directors from the Health Care Support Occupational Council. Ray works as a journeyman cook. He prepares baked goods for five hospitals across the Health Authority.





Audrey Oliver has worked for 26 years in home care and works for the VON in Annapolis Valley. She was elected as the representative to the Board of Directors from her Home Care Occupational Council.



Tracey Groves was elected as an alternative representative to the Board of Directors by the Home Care Occupational Council. Tracey has worked at Northside Homemakers for 28 and a half years.



Tara Matheson Alberts was elected Chair of her Home Care Occupational Council. She works for Northwood homecare.



Amanda Hemmings is a CCA and works at Evergreen Home for Special Care. She was elected as a representative to the Board of Directors by members of her Longterm Care Occupational Council.



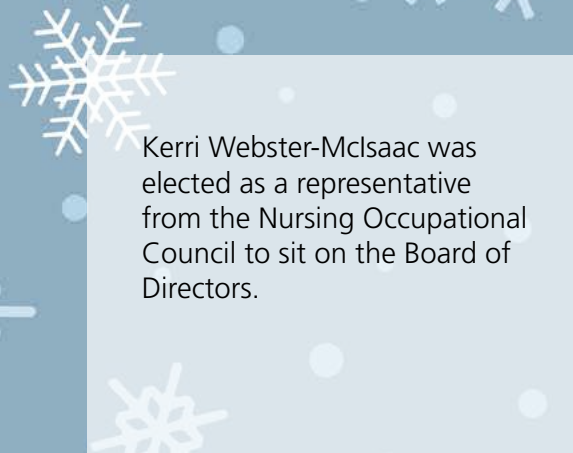
Home Care Occupational Council.



Longterm Care Occupational Council.



Priscilla Connell was elected as alternate representative to the Board of Directors and Chair by her Longterm Care Occupational Council members. She works as a Personal Care Worker.



Kerri Webster-McIsaac was elected as a representative from the Nursing Occupational Council to sit on the Board of Directors.



Morgane Stocker was elected as an alternate to the Board of Directors and Occupational Council Secretary. She works in public health and is a health promoter.



Chantelle Walsh is a nurse in Local 193 working in the Aberdeen Hospital. She was elected Chair of the Nursing Occupational Council.



David Watts was elected as the Chair and Board Alternate by the members of the Health Care Administrative Professional Occupational Council. David is a staffing officer at Northwood Homecare.

Nursing Occupational Council.



# Health Care Bargaining Update

Workers in our acute health care sector are under an enormous amount of pressure in the workplace right now, as our hospitals are being overwhelmed with respiratory illnesses. But many of these workers are also feeling the strain in another area of their life: their finances.

We're all seeing the impacts of sky-high costs of living right now. Here in Nova Scotia, we're experiencing shockingly high increases in housing, food and fuel prices, and many people – including our own members – are struggling to make ends meet. It doesn't help that seven years of legislative interference from the previous Liberal government stifled any efforts to achieve fair economic increases for public sector workers.

In the face of these economic pressures, members of the health care bargaining committees are doing their best to push back at the bargaining table and demand more from their employers to help ease the burden on the members, and to ensure that we are better able to recruit and retain staff within our public system.

The Health Authorities Act, passed by the provincial government in 2014, requires all health care workers employed at Nova Scotia Health (NSH) and the IWK Health Centre to bargain together in a Council of Unions. Under the four Council constitutions, one union appoints the chief negotiator for each Council (you can view the Council Constitutions here.)

Much has changed since the Council of Unions began this round of negotiations for its four health care units: Canada's rate of inflation has surged from 1.0 per cent at the beginning of 2021, when we began preparing for health care negotiations, to a whopping 8.1 per cent in June 2022.

Health Care initially exchanged proposals with the employer in April 2021, which means that during the first quarter of the year, while proposals were being developed, the rate of inflation ranged between 1 per cent and 2.2 per cent. In early July, Health Care workers voted to accept a contract effective November 1st, 2020 to October 31st, 2023, which included a 5.5% wage increase for all pay grades (1.5% effective November 1st, 2020, 1.5% effective November 1st, 2021, 1.5% effective November 1st, 2022, and 1%

effective the final day of the agreement, October 31st, 2023); as well as additional wage increases for Care Team Assistants (CTAs), amounting to 2% on date of ratification and 3% on June 1st, 2022; and matching acute care paramedics' rates of pay to those of IOUE retroactive to Nov. 1st, 2020.

Following the conclusion of the Health Care unit's negotiations, the Health Support bargaining unit began to negotiate in late 2021. By that point, inflationary pressures were continuing to mount, with the rate of inflation hitting 4.8 per cent by the end of 2021. This gave us some additional leverage to break pattern and achieve a bit more at the table for Health Support members.

After many days at the bargaining table and with the assistance of a Conciliation Officer, in the early hours of August 16th, 2022, the Council reached a tentative agreement with Nova Scotia Health and IWK. That agreement included economic adjustments totaling 6.5% (compounded) over three years (1.5% effective November 1st, 2020; 1.5% effective November 1st, 2021; 3.0% effective November 1st, 2022; 0.5% to all pay grades on October 31st, 2023; and an extra \$1 per hour increase at each step prior to the 3.0% increase effective November 1st, 2022 for all classifications with a top rate of less than \$20 per hour as of October 31st, 2022.

Since Health Support ratified their agreement, the Administrative Professionals group has exchanged proposals with their employers, and the Nursing group has been busy developing updated proposals, based on newly collected feedback from members of the bargaining unit.

These bargaining committees will continue to push hard for more for our members as we advance in bargaining at these tables, and we will keep members updated as talks progress. ■

# Political Update - Fall 2022

The Houston government marked their first year in office by calling a rare summer sitting of the legislature. The Premier said it was to block an approved wage increase for MLAs, however, it was clear that neither government nor Opposition MLAs were prepared to accept any increase in the face of the cost-of-living crisis being experienced by Nova Scotians.

The session turned out not to be about MLAs' wages as much as it was about Tim Houston's desire to eliminate boards, commissions, and as much government oversight as possible, consolidating all decision making to him and his ministers.

Independent oversight is one way to ensure that money is being invested without political interference or influence. By eliminating these independent, third-party boards, Nova Scotians lose even more input and transparency into how our money is spent or handed out.

Both the opposition Liberals and New Democrats took the government to task on the appointment of the Premier's 'personal friends' to high-paying jobs within the new government structure, and questioned Houston daily about why his government hasn't done more to support people during this unprecedented inflationary crisis.

Increasing the home heating rebate, removing out of pocket dispensing fees from the family and seniors pharamacare program, and direct payments to families who can't make ends meet were just some of the options put forward but dismissed by the government.

The fall legislative session took place during the UARB hearings where Nova Scotia Power had applied for a rate increase. The Houston government brought

forward legislation that limited the size of the increase. Despite the government's rhetoric, the truth is that Nova Scotians will be paying more for heat and power in the new year. The government interference also meant that Nova Scotia Power had their credit rating reduced. This means that it will be more expensive for Nova Scotia Power to do things like, reinforce the grid to make it more secure, and build new infrastructure to

help reduce coal burning and make the provinces energy greener and more affordable. These cost increases will most likely be passed on to customers meaning even higher bills to come.

The government was also in a labour dispute with our own NSGEU educational support workers in Local 70 and 73. The main issue was that workers in some areas were getting paid more than those doing the same jobs in other areas of the province. Your union launched an effective marketing campaign

running radio and print ads. The central argument was: "Why should people doing the same work be paid less than others? Government MLAs get paid the same wage regardless of where they live."

The pressure applied to the employers and in particular politicians had a positive impact on the negotiations and a deal was reached.

Cost of living and the state of health care were the main issues raised by the Opposition in the fall session. Nearly all metric health outcomes are worse today than they were a year ago. Fixing health care is a huge undertaking, but expectations on government will continue to rise as people can't find a family doctor, are left waiting for hours, or days in ERs, waiting for an ambulance, and waiting to get the surgery they need. ■

## Fall sitting at N.S. Legislature concludes, but uncertainty looms for government



Health care, affordability and the environment remain ongoing challenges

Michael Gorman CBC News Posted: Nov 09, 2022 9:44 PM AT | Last Updated: November 9



Premier Tim Houston delivers pieces of legislation to Lt.-Gov. Arthur LeBlanc Wednesday evening at Province House. (Jean Laroche/CBC)

# KUDOS to Local 66

With all of the negativity in the world (and workplaces) right now, one NSGEU local has launched a new initiative to highlight the positive.

Local 66, Regional Residential Services Society, is a not-for-profit organization that provides person-directed support for adults with intellectual disabilities across 53 locations throughout the Halifax Regional Municipality.

This fall, their Local executive launched the “Kudos Program,” which is all about acknowledging each other and the positive things that we do that go above and beyond. The hope is that this will create a more positive mindset and work environment, improve staff morale and result in a greater sense of community amongst all staff. Let’s look for the positive in each other, instead of the negative!”

Through the Local’s Facebook group, they’ve asked

members to submit a story, video, song or other creative performance that highlights a teammate they wish to nominate who has done something positive or impactful that has added value to the home they work in, the lives of the people they support, or their team.

Submissions are due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month, and at the end of each month, a “winner” will be randomly drawn to receive a \$25 gift card of their choosing (which is purchased through the Local’s social fund.) The winning nominations are then posted (with permission) on the Local 66 Facebook group. Allison, Secretary for Local 66, has also created and maintained a KUDOS book, which has all the nominations in it for anyone to read at any Local meeting.

Great job to the Executive of Local 66 for coming up with such a creative way to promote your fellow members! ■

## September

“I am sending my recommendation to nominate Andreína Márquez de la Plata from Ravenrock. Andie is always just a ray of sunshine no matter what the day brings! She is always filling the house with laughter and entertaining everyone with her comical stories. She makes every shift fun for both staff and residents.”

Andie was nominated by Lori-Anne Coffin and received a \$25 gift card for Sobeys from the local.



NSGEU member Andreína Márquez

## October

“I would like to nominate Hannah Hutchinson for this month’s kudos! I previously worked with Hannah at one of the Friesians, and I very much miss working together now.

Hannah is extremely caring and thoughtful towards the residents she supports. She also isn’t afraid to share her opinion, but always does so in a respectful and productive way. While we were working together, I always knew I could depend on Hannah for a good laugh or support on a hard day. I’d also like to mention, Hannah makes a mean bannock bread!

Hannah is studying to be a social worker at the moment. Based off her strong concern of the social welfare for the residents she supports, it’s evident she’ll make a truly tremendous social worker one day too.

Thanks Hannah for all you do in and outside of work! Here’s a kudos for you”

**Submitted By: Allison Cascanette**

Sock It To Poverty



Help your Human Rights Committee raise funds and donations for new accessories like socks, hats, gloves, and mittens for those in need.

Visit [nsgeu.ca](http://nsgeu.ca) or click [here](#)



## Unions make a difference in our lives.

Unions fought for many of the benefits workers enjoy today: Sick leave, maternity & paternity leave, vacation, minimum wage, paid breaks, overtime, workplace safety standards and regulations, collective bargaining rights, and much, much more.

Do you know of a group of non-unionized workers who might be interested in joining the NSGEU? Please contact:

Lori Smith, Education & Organizing Officer  
902-456-6531 or 1-877-556-7438 or [lsmith@nsgeu.ca](mailto:lsmith@nsgeu.ca)



# NSGEU Education - Available Courses

## Ongoing Education

### Steward Orientation (2 days)

Must be a local steward. In this two (2) day workshop, Stewards discuss their role as Educators, Grievance Handlers, Communicators, Leaders, Organizers and Activists. Tools are provided to assist Stewards in supporting local members. Ongoing, local specific, steward training is provided by EROs.

### Dealing with Workplace Conflict (1.5 days)

Must be a Steward or Local Executive Officer. In this one-and-a-half (1.5) day workshop, we will define and analyse conflict and look at the range of processes aimed at alleviating or eliminating sources of conflict. We will also look at mediation and its role in conflict resolution. Any steward or local executive officer that has not previously attended this workshop is eligible to attend.

### Mental Health: Challenging Stigma in the Workplace (1.5 days)

Any steward or local executive officer that has not previously attended this workshop is eligible to attend. In this one-and-a-half (1.5) day workshop, we will explore mental health, mental health concerns, and stigma in the workplace. Some of the topics covered in this course include: demystifying mental health; individual, union, and employer responsibilities; member-to-member issues; and some strategies to challenge stigma and build inclusion.

### Workers in Transition (.5 day)

In this ½ day course, Local Executive Officers and Stewards will better understand the role we all play to better protect the rights of our trans members and ensure they have the support they need in our workplaces, in our unions and in our communities.

### Domestic Violence: Why is it a Workplace Issue? (.5 day)

In this ½ day course, Local Executive Officers and Stewards will learn about the impact of intimate partner violence in the workplace. They will be provided tools to support members who experience intimate partner violence in the workplace.

### Taking Action on Racism (.5 day)

This ½ day course will raise awareness of the issue of racism and includes actions members can take at the local level to build a stronger, anti-racist and more inclusive union. Local Executive Officers and Stewards are eligible to register.

## Upcoming Education

### NSGEU 101 (online)

Any member in good standing can participate. In this online workshop, members will learn the history of NSGEU, how the NSGEU is structured, and why, and discuss why NSGEU and other unions exist.

### Steward Orientation (online)

Any member in good standing can participate. A quick overview of the steward role to get you going in the right direction.

## Handbooks and Supplements

President, Steward, Secretary and Treasurer Handbooks are available. Supplements available are:

- Running Effective Local Meetings
- Effective Local Elections
- Rules of Order
- Workplace Mapping

All Toolkits and Supplements can be found in the executive portal on the NSGEU website and [here](#).

## Additional Resources

Educational **videos**, including an introduction to the NSGEU and short introductions to Local Executive roles as well as videos on Labour/ Management Committees and Rules of Order available on the NSGEU website [here](#).

Pre-Retirement Seminars, Joint Occupational Health and Safety Training, Executive, Regional and Occupational Council and Board training are ongoing.

Please visit the **member library** off the Solarium in the member office area in the Main NSGEU office in Dartmouth. These books include children's books, so take some time to go discover what we have available.

## Labour School 2023

Communications, Advanced Steward, Leadership, and Mobilizing Through the Generations will be offered at NSGEU Labour School 2023 – Dates TBD.

### Communications

This course will help activists and leaders improve their confidence and skills in communicating in a variety of different ways. We will discuss and practice public speaking as well as a variety of forms of on-line communication like Zoom, Facebook, and Twitter. We will discuss and practice communicating in ways that respect diversity and are inclusive. We will also discuss and practice communicating with people about topics that are political/social and how best to have difficult conversations. We will look at union campaigns and discuss communicating issues happening in our communities and in our workplaces.

### Advanced Steward

The Advanced Steward course is designed to enhance a member's understanding on the role of the steward. The course aims to assist stewards in contract interpretation, investigating complaints and grievances, meeting with members or management, problem solving in a solution focused manner, as well as advocating for workplace leadership. Advanced Steward has been created to support our stewards in becoming comfortable with what traditionally has been uncomfortable in their workplaces.

### Mobilizing through the Generations

Workplaces are rapidly changing, as a new generation enters the workforce. There are at least 4 generations trying to work together, and we need the participation of workers from multiple generations to run this course successfully. Its purpose is to increase your awareness of the needs and realities of the members of different generations in the union and workplace. This course will build your level of comfort and skill to engage in meaningful cross-generational dialogue, in order to make and ensure our workplaces are safe and healthy for all. Union membership has to be active to make gains, protect what we have won, or work out new ways of working together to achieve our goals in the workplace.

### Leadership

The Leadership course develops skills necessary for today's leaders in the labour movement. It will review critical issues facing the labour movement while also working on important skills like strategic planning, team building, self-assessment, decision making and critical analysis.

## Short Local Delivered Courses

(Participant and Facilitator booklets and more information can be found on the NSGEU website)

Local Executives can provide these 1 hour quick courses independently.

### Time Management: Finding Time for the Important Things

Participants will: review some basic principles of time management, set goals and priorities and find time in their schedules for their goals and priorities

### Facing the Employer

Participants will build their confidence in facing management, identify common issues and management tactics when challenged and strategize for meetings with management

### Effective One on One Communications

Participants will choose the most effective mechanism for communicating each message to their members, use non-verbal communication skills effectively, recognize the non-verbal message when others are speaking, match how they are saying something with the message they are conveying and write and deliver an effective message.

### Public Speaking

Participants will build confidence in speaking publicly, practice body language and vocal delivery and practice giving an impromptu speech using the "5 Magic Phrases" technique.

## Workplace Mapping

There will be ongoing training for locals on **Building Local Steward Networks through Workplace Mapping**. Workplace Mapping is the process of obtaining accurate and relevant information about where, and who, the local members are. It can form the basis of most successful union activity, including recruiting, communications, developing activists and campaigning around issues. Developing strong local steward networks is the goal!

# Valley Regional Council BBQ at Willowbank Farms



# Labour Day 2022



The Labour Day theme this year was solidarity. NUPGE Secretary-Treasurer and NGEU past-president, Jason MacLean joined President Sandra Mullen and 2nd VP Tammy Gillis on the march. NSGEU 3<sup>rd</sup> VP Peter Perry talked about the need to focus on the health care crisis and defend public health care.





# Warmest Wishes



**NSGEU**

Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union  
255 John Savage Avenue, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, B3B 0J3  
902.424.4063 | 1.877.556.7438 | nsgeu.ca | inquiry@nsgeu.ca  
Publication Mail Number 40010698

