



# VOTE WALLY FIANDER FOR NSTU PRESIDENT

I was born and raised in Yarmouth, NS. I grew up in a large family of eighteen children. You can only really understand what growing up in a family that size is like if you have experienced it yourself. Sixteen older siblings meant that I quickly developed a thick skin and broad shoulders. It also means that I have a deep understanding of the importance of family, and the importance of coming to the supper table the first time I am called.

During my years at the Nova Scotia Teachers College, I first realized my spirit for unionism. The government of the day had decided that they should close the College and I quickly became active in the campaign to stop them. While we were not successful in that venture, it began my future of standing up for what I knew was right, even when the odds were against me.

Shortly after completing my degree, I began my teaching career at the Yarmouth High School. After twenty years, I am still teaching sciences at Yarmouth High where I have been actively participating in many aspects of school life. In my second year of a contract, I started to attend NSTU Local meetings and quickly found myself in an election where I became the Vice-President of Economic Welfare. That year, the Southwest Regional School Board decided to reduce teachers in effort to balance their budget. This set my NSTU career into action. I have consistently been filling leadership roles at various levels within the NSTU since that time.

Looking forward, I see two major areas within the NSTU which need improvement: Working Conditions and Communication.

## WORKING CONDITIONS

Teachers of Nova Scotia are at a breaking point and can't give any more. The NSTU must reverse the deterioration of working conditions in our schools. While we must recognize the difficulty that declining enrollment brings, we do not need to accept the austerity agenda that the current governments have adopted. We will need to change the attitudes of the public to create a genuine belief that education is an investment and not a drain on our provincial purse. Further, many positive changes could be made which would be cost neutral, but if these changes are to improve our working conditions they must be driven not by a government-directed paper, but by teachers.

We seem to have lost the focus of shaping lives to the data-based goals of standardized tests and scores that cannot accurately reflect the actual academic ability of the student, let alone assess the achievement of the full person. Unfortunately, we have become enslaved to the scores and data so often referenced in the media.

I find it disheartening that today the teaching profession has become unfriendly to families. The teaching profession was once one which was attractive to the family-oriented person, not just because of the hours worked, but because the intrinsic satisfaction of the job is appealing to the same personality type. Today, sadly, the profession has become one in which teachers struggle to balance teaching with being a parent. Teachers are spending longer hours at school and bringing more work home than we have in the past.

Recently the number of violent acts committed against teachers has dramatically increased. Teachers should be in charge of their classrooms and not have to fear being hurt while at work. We must work to protect teachers from all forms of violence or injury.



The atmosphere created by these unreasonable conditions undoubtedly contributes to the growing number of teachers who are struggling with mental illness. These teachers need real support, but just as important, is the need to advocate for working environments which do not create illness in the first place.

Finally, we need to recognize the root of many of these difficulties, and others, is child poverty. We must continue to support programs and groups whose goal it is to put an end to this. We should be voicing this position publicly and participating in activities which promote an end to child poverty.

## COMMUNICATION

There is a perception held by some members that the NSTU is broken. I believe this is an unfounded notion. Granted, in December we did see differing opinions on key issues, but I believe that difference in opinion is healthy. The real issue is one of communication and trust. Much of the turmoil this past winter was based on misunderstanding, misinformation and lack of information. While the NSTU did work to get the message out through the traditional means, as well as employing

a few new ideas, there is still work to be done in that area. If teachers are to make headway on any issue, we must do it together, united as one. Differences need to be recognized and celebrated, not held tight like a wedge between us. The NSTU, under its new President, must bring all members together and engage in union activity. We must unite and move forward.

The NSTU needs to look at new ways of communicating with its members. Ever-changing technology and social media, combined with the changing dynamic of our members as teachers retire and younger teachers are hired, has changed the landscape and the means of communication. We must utilize forms of two-way communication for members so that they can have meaningful input and be heard on issues.

Outside of our own members, the NSTU needs to be more vigilant in getting our message to the public and to the media. When teachers listen to or read the demoralizing commentaries often found in the media, they need to know that the NSTU will defend them publicly. While the NSTU addresses this, it is at the mercy of the media outlets to get the teachers' point of view out. We need to better utilize other forms of media better to ensure that the information is in the public domain.

We need a President who has first-hand knowledge of the issues faced in the classrooms today and one who is currently working under these very conditions in the classroom. If we are to continue to move forward with success in improving working conditions in schools, we will need experience in our leadership. We will need a leader with a background in negotiations, and thorough understanding of our rights and how we fought so hard to achieve what we have. I have gained much of that experience over the last two decades. I have been, and still am, in the classroom. I am known to be open and honest, and ready to discuss issues with teachers. I have served to protect our collective interests through some hard times. I have proven my ability as a leader in several levels of our organization and look forward to continuing my work as your President.

I have been able to make difficult decisions when I need to and I am prepared to push back when the situation warrants. I am now asking that you allow me the opportunity to continue in my efforts to work on your behalf. I am confident that I will be an effective voice for teachers of Nova Scotia as the NSTU President. Please choose a proven effective leader as your next NSTU President. Please vote for me, Wally Fiander

~ Proven Effective Leadership ~

### NATIONAL/ INTERNATIONAL

CAPTO spring 2015  
CTF AGM 2015  
Education International World Congress 2015

### PROVINCIAL EXPERIENCE

First Vice-President  
Second Vice-President  
Provincial Executive Member  
Provincial Bargaining Team  
Personnel Committee (Chair)  
Appeals Committee (Chair)  
Member Services Committee (Chair)  
Public Affairs Committee  
Public Relations Committee  
Single-Tier Bargaining Team  
Provincial Economic Welfare Committee  
NSTU Structure Review Committee  
Distance Education Committee  
NSTU Representative on Science 10 Curriculum Review Committee  
Attended Lt. Gov. Excellence in Teaching Award Presentation 2015 on behalf of NSTU  
Spoke at NS Education Week Teachers Awards Ceremony 2015 on behalf of NSTU

### REGIONAL EXPERIENCE

RRC Chair  
REWC Chair  
Regional Negotiations Chair  
Regional Negotiations Committee  
Grievance Committee Chair  
Job Security Committee



RRC Member at Large  
Teacher Wellness Committee

### LOCAL EXPERIENCE

Local President  
First Vice-President  
Vice-President Public Affairs/Public Relations  
Public Affairs/Public Relations Committee  
Finance Committee  
Resolutions Committee  
Speaker at several NSTU Retirement ceremonies

### NEGOTIATIONS EXPERIENCE

Regional Contract Negotiations (three different rounds, TCRSB)  
Single-Tier Bargaining Committee  
Served on PEWC (two rounds)  
Provincial Bargaining Team  
Negotiated NSTU Professional Executive Staff Contracts (Once as Member, once as Chair)  
Negotiated NSTU Professional Support Staff Contract (Chair)

### PERSONAL RELEVANT EXPERIENCES

Presented at N.S. Law Amendments Committee (two separate occasions)  
Search Director, Yarmouth County Ground Search and Rescue  
Board of Directors, Yarmouth County Ground Search and Rescue  
Training Officer, Yarmouth County Ground Search and Rescue  
Presenter at Several Special Association Conferences  
Presenter at multiple NSTU Representative Retreats  
Presenter at O2 Teacher Training Sessions  
Presenter at Science In-services TCRSB  
Educational Consultant NS SCIENCE 10

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