

NEWS RELEASE

May 7, 2019

District Refutes NLTA Claims

The Newfoundland and Labrador English School District today responded to an NLTA news release which claimed the NLESD is seeking to “silence” school principals because it chose not to participate in a CBC Sunday Edition panel discussion.

“This is absolutely false and a flagrant distortion of the facts,” said CEO/Director of Education Tony Stack. “Like any organization, the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District decides whether it will participate in media interviews or panel discussions, as was the case here, when approached by media outlets. And, like any employer, the District reserves the right to determine who is best equipped to represent the organization in the media, based on the subject matter.”

The process for determining a District spokesperson is clearly outlined in policy directive #7 of the District’s media policy, which has been shared and discussed with all District administrators. It can be viewed here: <https://www.nlesd.ca/includes/files/policies/doc/1503943416200.pdf>. In fact, this policy does not differ substantially from the NLTA’s own policy in this regard, which states:

In particular, the NLTA cultivates and maintains a positive working relationship with the news media. This is accomplished by

- 1. having the President as the principal spokesperson. If he/she is not available, the Vice President will take his/her place.*
- 2. With approval, the Executive Director or Communications Officer may make statements to the news media.*

“Ultimately, for a variety of reasons, the District determined it would not participate in the panel discussion as it was structured,” Mr. Stack said. “This had nothing whatsoever to do with the individual the media outlet had identified as its chosen panel member, and the NLTA was advised of this. In fact, the District routinely approves administrators, teachers and others to conduct media interviews on matters related to projects and activities within their local school communities.”

Mr. Stack said the District acknowledges that the NLTA has a right, and a duty, to advocate on behalf of its membership. However, when the union approaches the challenges associated with student behaviour in this manner, it diminishes the issue and prevents productive dialogue on solutions.

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