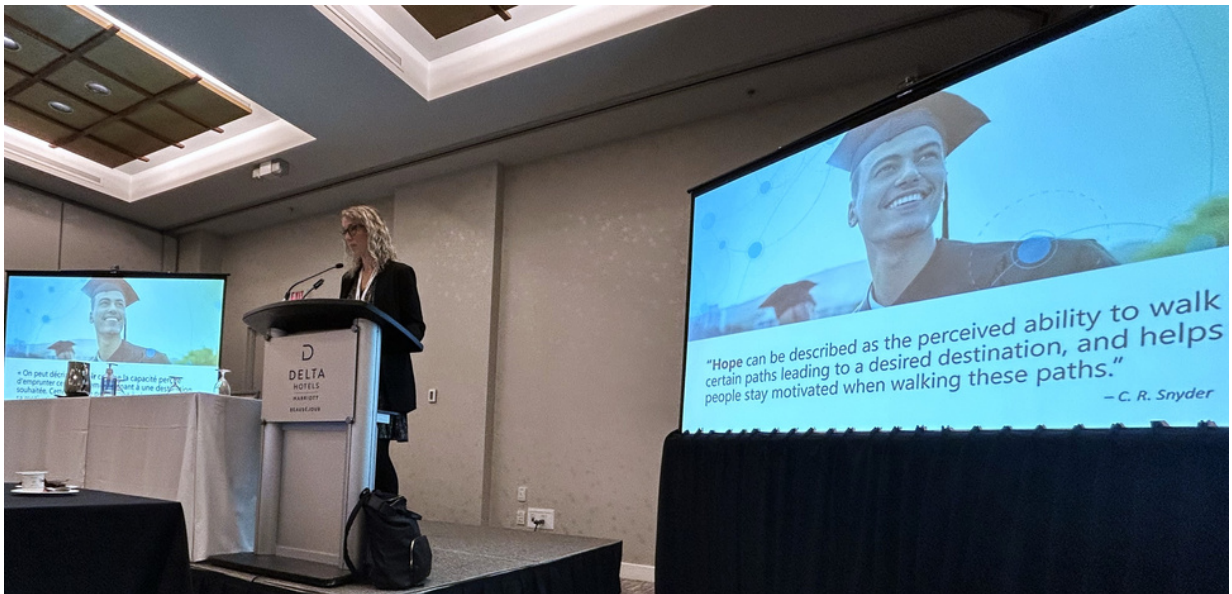


Education Services Division News

NEWS | EVENTS



February 2024



Tricia Berry, Learning Specialist for Career Education at EECD, presented the Hopeful Transition pilot at the New Brunswick Career Development Association (NBCDA) Conference in November at the Delta Fredericton. Berry was also the keynote speaker for New Zealand's career conference that month, and presented at the national Canadian career conference, Cannexus, in January in Ottawa. Photo: Submitted

Hopeful Transitions helps learners prepare for life after high school

by Bruce Hallihan

Thinking about life after high school can be stressful for many young people, but Transition Coaches have been hired in each school district to help selected pilot schools in supporting their learners.

Hopeful Transitions is a pilot project developed in collaboration with the anglophone and francophone sectors of the Department of Education and Early Childhood – and backed with funding from Post-Secondary, Education, Training and Labour (PETL).

The four district Transition Coaches on the anglophone side are Sarah McLellan in ASD-West, Leaya Mullin in ASD-North, Anna Paradis in ASD-East, and Mariam Parekh in ASD-South.

“Our world is changing rapidly, and today’s learners will experience many transitions,” said Tricia Berry, Learning Specialist for Career Education at EECD. “To best position them with the skills, knowledge, and abilities for future success, we must recognize the importance of transition planning for each student. Every learner deserves a hopeful transition – one that encourages self-determination – to obtain employment and/or pursue their education, improve their economic and social well-being, and achieve their preferred future.

“Simply put, a hopeful transition is a positive mental health intervention,” Berry said. “If we believe that every learner deserves a hopeful future, it follows that personalized career pathway transition planning should be universally accessible to all.”

“In the school system, we want to give each learner information so they can make informed choices,” McLellan said. “Even students with great family support and good economic status can be undecided. They may be strong in the sciences but have a passion for psychology or education. So, it’s about learning how to put all those things together to have a fulfilling career and be able to pay your bills.”

Through Career Connected Learning (gnb.ca) students “can really understand what life, learning and work may look like,” McLellan said. “I want to help schools communicate that career decision-making is about the knowledge and skills you gain and how you use them on your next step.”

For Transition Coaches, the pilot is “more about supporting schools and educators” than delivering services directly to students, she said.

Berry explained that “This will allow for educators to feel confident and competent in supporting learners in career pathway decision-making with less and less coaching from the Transition Coach.”

Hopeful Transitions, p. 2

The Hopeful Transitions Guide, complemented by the website/online tool, provides all educators, regardless of their role in the school, with ideas of how they can support their learners.

“As well, the website offers an online repository/filter of resources and learning activities that any educator can draw from for use in their classroom and/or practice,” Berry said.

“We’re connecting outside partners and community organizations to schools and teachers, making sure everyone is aware of the opportunities that exist for their learners,” McLellan said.

The Transition Coach can organize guest speakers to come and speak with educators and learners. Recently, the Transition Coaches organized the New Brunswick Financial and Consumer Services Commission to offer presentations on financial wellness within classrooms across the pilot schools. It was well-received by students but also by the educators as they learned alongside one another.

In reflecting on their own transition from high school, the Transition Coaches recognized they each experienced some hardships that may have been reduced if Hopeful Transitions had existed at that time.

“High school was a major struggle for me,” Mullin said. “I almost didn’t graduate on time because I didn’t have enough credits, and I had to do an online course. My future was up in the air at that point. I believed I was stupid, an unintelligent person, and it just calcified everything. I felt the post-secondary route was out of my reach.”

Three years after graduating from James M. Hill, Mullin enrolled at St. Thomas University, where she earned a double Bachelor of Arts degree.

“I went in with a ‘I have nothing to lose’ attitude,” Mullin said. “When I got an A+ on my first assignment, it just shattered all those glass ceilings.”

Studies have shown that inadequate career education, coupled with weak links between learning and skills requirements in the labour market, can result in students switching programs more often and taking additional coursework, diplomas, degrees, and training to settle on a career direction and ultimately achieve labour-market attachment.

Hopeful Transitions aims to help situations like Mullin’s.

Hopeful Transitions, p. 3

“We want learners to have as smooth a transition to post-secondary life, learning and work as possible,” Berry said. “This requires ongoing and frequent career-connected learning, with a focus on Hopeful Transitions between grades 6-12. We want learners to graduate excited and confident about their next steps.”

Paradis says her passion for the Transition Coach job – and why she believes it’s important – is due in part to her own experience.

“While I had a very good support system when I was going through school, I never felt the content I was learning applied to what I was passionate about or what I was interested in,” Paradis said. “I was a good student, but it wasn’t until I was in university as a political science student where I was like ‘Oh, my gosh, this is what I want to do.’”

“The biggest driving force, I feel, is being able to support educators in identifying students’ passions early, so we can ensure we’re building a solid transition plan before they leave high schools,” Paradis said. “I enjoy supporting schools in identifying those students who are like me. They’re doing well in their classes, but probably could be applying themselves a little bit more. They just haven’t found their spark yet.”

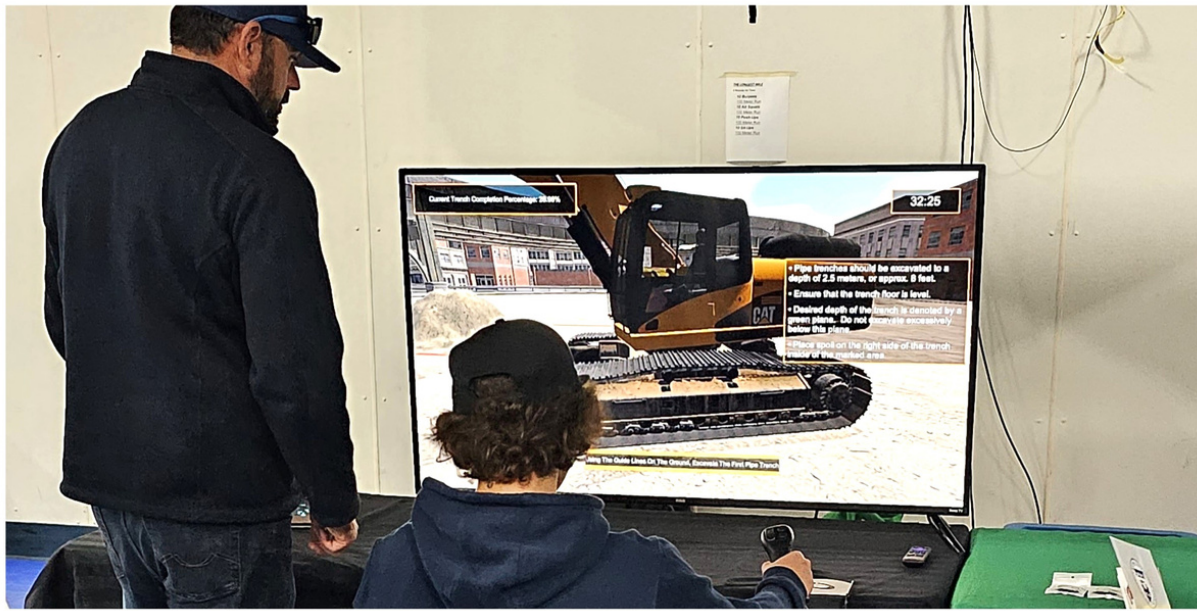
“I like how there is diversity in how Hopeful Transitions is implemented between the schools and districts” Parekh said. “The needs in the North may not be the same as those in the South. It is also unique to each individual school. I also like the relationship-building component of Hopeful Transitions.

“Some of our learners’ cultures may have a specific perspective in terms of what their child might do after high school. (Mine) wanted me to be an engineer or a doctor as these career options were viewed with great respect within my family and culture. That just did not interest me, but I had that pressure and stress level in my home growing up; that level of anxiety inside me feeling ‘I’m not good enough.’ I found wonderful mentors, fortunately, who supported me in learning about what I wanted to do after high school.

“So, this job appealed to me because I can help schools support anyone – any student from any background – and it gives me a good feeling that culturally diverse learners will find mentorship for future planning,” Parekh said.

Hopeful Transitions, p. 4

“Every learner deserves hope, and every educator is a career influencer and plays a role in the life of their learners,” she said. “Career describes each learner’s journey through life, learning and work, and every educator and school is supporting career. It reinforces ‘We’re all in this together, so let’s work together.’”



Students at Kennebecasis Valley High School in Quispamsis engage in Transition Fair, which provides valuable support for students with exceptionalities and their caregivers. The event highlights the school’s commitment to inclusive education and ensuring a smooth transition for all students. Photos: Submitted



Lisa Legere, from the Financial and Consumer Services Commission of NB, delivered an "Understanding Credit" presentation to more than 110 students in grades 9 to 11 at Nackawic High School on November 15. Students from Woodstock High School attended a try-a-trade event at Leo Hayes High School on October 24. The event, which had more than 25 booths where students could learn about careers in the trades sector, also included a fire burn demonstration put on by the Fredericton Fire Department. Photos: Submitted



Top photo: Grade 9 and 10 students from Salisbury Regional took part in a myBlueprint workshop series, as a revisit from their whole-school workshop last school year. Students were able to review their Career Life Plan, a new graduation requirement for 2026. Bottom photo: NBCC Open House Day took place on November 17, with students from ASD-East attending and taking part in the interactive booths and experiences as they plan for their career pathways. Photos: Submitted



Fredericton Community Kitchens general manager Cassandra LeBlanc says the organization's overall annual budget has surpassed \$900,000, including more than \$250,000 to run the Student Hunger Program. Photo: Bruce Hallihan/EECD

Student Hunger Program fills need: 'You can't learn on an empty stomach'

By Bruce Hallihan

Natalie Mombourquette arrived a little late for a noon-hour presentation to some Department of Education and Early Childhood employees. But the manager of Fredericton Community Kitchens' Student Hunger Program had a good reason.

The program's manager had just helped provide 329 students from 18 area schools with a fresh, nutritious lunch.

EECD Learning Specialist Amber Bishop, a director for the Fredericton Community Kitchens, invited Mombourquette and executive director Cassandra LeBlanc to inform colleagues about what the organization does.

They primarily focused on students' needs: "You can't learn on an empty stomach," LeBlanc said.

The Student Hunger Program makes and delivers more than 40,000 meals annually, with halal, vegetarian, vegan and regular options. As well, a backpack program provides non-perishable goods to about 200 students every week – exceeding 5,000 backpacks last year.

"We've seen a dramatic increase, especially since the pandemic," LeBlanc said. "Every year, our output is increasing more and more. That's partly because of the need and partly because we're getting better at sharing about our program and getting more schools on board to serve their clientele."

When it comes to addressing student hunger needs, Prince Edward Island "is killing it," LeBlanc said. "They're the smallest province but they have a provincial lunch program."

Bon Appetit offers all Island students, K-12, a healthy and affordable lunch option each school day.

"Students can order their lunch and pay what they can," LeBlanc said. "They either pay full price, pay what they can, or they get it for free. I would say P.E.I. is the Cadillac and we're somewhere in between."

On leave from teaching after almost 20 years, Mombourquette "really wanted to focus on food security for kids," she said. "It's been a wonderful, rewarding experience. It's been hectic, no question, but we have six to eight volunteers who come in and make lunches. A lot of them have been doing it for a long time and we have upwards of 10 Leo Hayes students a day who help as well."

With the rising cost of food, "we're up 50 to 75 meals per day since September," Mombourquette said. "There's been no drop; it's just been consistently going up as the (school) year's progressed."

"All of our expenses have gone up dramatically the past two years especially," LeBlanc said, "with inflation on groceries, the increased need, and having to pay staff more. A livable wage in Fredericton is \$24.50 per hour now. We feel a deep ownership that we shouldn't be paying poverty wages to our staff. The staff working to alleviate poverty shouldn't also be living in poverty."

The Fredericton Community Kitchens' overall annual budget has surpassed \$900,000, LeBlanc said, including more than \$250,000 to run the Student Hunger Program.

There are various ways to give financial support: buy a lunch for \$5, buy a backpack for \$15, sponsor a student for \$25, or sponsor a class for \$250.

EECD employees are granted one paid volunteer day per year, and Daneen Dymond, a member of the department's Energize team, plans to gauge interest to see how many would

be interested in volunteering to help distribute lunches one day.

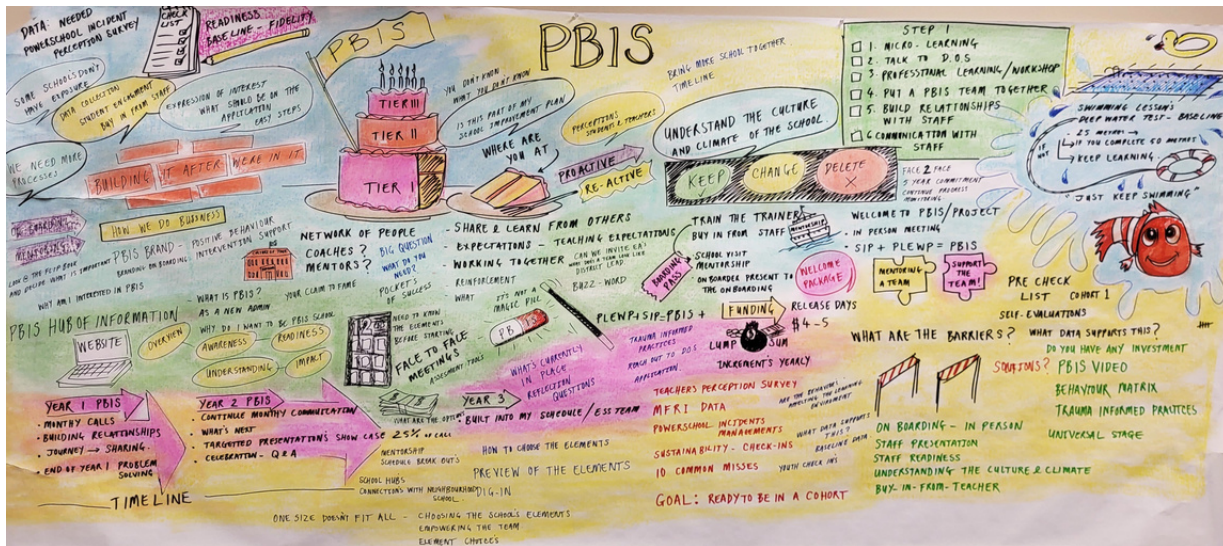
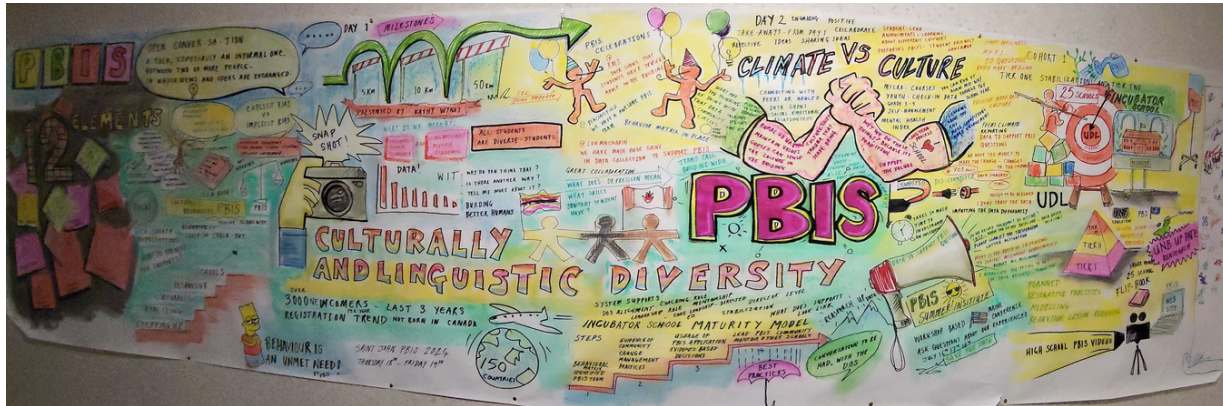
Should you be able to support this organization, you may do so by donating online at www.frederictoncommunitykitchens.com

If you'd like to volunteer, email Jothi Chandrasekar at volunteer@frederictoncommunitykitchens.com or Mombourquette at studenthunger@frederictoncommunitykitchens.com



A Banner Day for PBIS

A Positive Behaviour Intervention Supports (PBIS) cohort schools retreat was held January 18 and 19 in Saint John. Neil Hocking, a Behaviour Intervention Mentor (BIM) / trained PATH facilitator from Anglophone School District – East, created two colourful meeting-minute murals based on input from participants. The retreat included representatives from 24 PBIS schools, all four school districts, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and the University of New Brunswick. Photos: Bruce Hallihan/EECD



Professional Learning Hub a new tool for educators

As a one-stop shop, the Professional Learning Hub was set up to provide educators and staff with access to a wide range of PL opportunities, resources, and tools to help you enhance your professional practice.

The PL Hub is populated with content from the four anglophone school districts, the New Brunswick Teachers' Association (NBTA), Atlantic Education International (AEI), the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD), and other educational partners.

The collaborative nature can be found by browsing the current content at plhub.nbed.ca, where upcoming events are listed and new material is added throughout the school year.

For general questions and inquiries, please reach out to: plhub@gnb.ca

The PL Hub is designed to provide you with access to a wide range of professional learning opportunities, resources, and tools to help you enhance your professional practice.



development is essential for all adult learners, and achieve your professional learning goals.

forward to supporting you on your learning



Excellence for Math Improvement
Open Entry

Climate and Creativity
Open Entry

Office of First Nation Education
Open Entry

Leadership Modules – Principal Certificate
Contact for Entry

Microsoft Learn – Educator Center
Open Entry

SERVICES LINGUISTIQUES
ASDS-S Services Linguistiques
2024

UNB Fredericton Education
Educational Administration and Leadership (Master's)

Braiding Indigenous and Western Science- Ways of Knowing

Energize Committee Updates



2024 events organized by the Energize Committee are underway.

A movie trivia quiz was held on January 30 with the following results.

1st place - Bernard Thériault
2nd place- Heather Stewart
3rd place- Marcia Franklin

All three win a book of their choice, value up to \$50!

Coming up next, all ESD staff are invited to an informal social event on Friday, February 23, from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. at Rustico. Location is 304 King Street in Fredericton.

On Saturday, February 24, all ESD staff and significant others are invited to the Capital Winter Club in Fredericton from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. for a night of curling and trivia. People will be on hand to assist for those new to curling. Location is 232 Rookwood Avenue.

You can also come simply to watch the curling and play trivia. Appetizers will be provided by Namaste.



New Education Services Division staff

RODY LINE PRESTON, Language Coach, Learning and Achievement

CRYSTAL ROBERTS, Program Consultant for Enhanced Co-op, System Excellence and Innovation





DO YOU HAVE NEWS TO COMMUNICATE TO EDUCATION SERVICES DIVISION COLLEAGUES?

- Step 1: Compose your message. If there is a link, please include it.
- Step 2: Do send a photo or two and text of something which has happened. We can also include illustrations for upcoming, or non-photographed events.
- Step 3: Send your messages and photos to derek.carlisle@gnb.ca before February 23 for the next edition of the newsletter.