



Exceptional News!

**Student Support Services Division
Department of Education**

Newsletter

October 2012

Staffing Changes



Over the summer, the Department of Education's Student Support Services Division said farewell to the following staff:

Jewel Cousens – Jewel worked as the alternate format materials librarian for the past 2+ years. She is currently working in the public library system.

Nelson Sheppard – After 5 years with the Department of Education, Nelson has returned to Eastern School District as an educational psychologist.

Jason Geary – Jason replaced Paulette Jackman while she was on maternity leave. Jason is now teaching at a private college and Memorial University.

Welcome back to Paulette Jackman, who has returned as our consultant for Autism and Speech Language Pathology.

Service Delivery Model

With professional learning well underway regarding the Service Delivery Model for Students with Exceptionalities, the Department of Education has released the updated record-keeping forms related to this model. These are available on the Department's website www.gov.nl.ca/edu/forms/studentsupport/sdm.html. Forms are available in a fillable format. Teachers may type directly into the forms and save them to a personal computer or memory device. There have been several versions of the alternate curriculum template provided in response to teachers' comments on the variety of programming in this area.

The CDLI learning site has not yet updated the forms linked from their site. We hope this will happen in the very near future.





ESL Students & Students from Diverse Cultures: Guidelines for Comprehensive Assessment

In June 2012, the document *ESL Students & Students from Diverse Cultures: Guidelines for Comprehensive Assessment* was provided to all districts. At this time, Professional Learning on this document was provided to school and district personnel, including Program Specialists for SSS & ESL, ESL & LEARN teachers and educational psychologists and guidance counsellors in schools with ESL students. This document can be found on the Department of Education website (go to K-12, then Student Support Services, and then Publications).

This document references several other documents developed by the Department of Education that are useful in programming and supporting students from diverse cultures, such as *Meeting the Needs of Students from Diverse Cultures: A Handbook for Administrators* and *Literacy Enrichment and Academic Readiness for Newcomers (LEARN)*. These and other relevant documents can be found on the Department of Education website (go to K-12, then Curriculum, then English Program Curriculum

Guides, and then English as a Second Language and Newcomer Programs).

Alternate Format Materials Tidbits



Online Resources

The Alternate Format Materials (AFM) library has a variety of online resources available to meet the needs of students who require resources in alternate formats. These formats include:

- Digital audio (MP3): A format where the text is automatically read to the student but the actual words are not visible on the screen. Many of these files are read by a human voice but some are recordings which feature computer-generated voices. These files can be played on a personal MP3 audio player or any computer with audio software.
- E-text files: A format which requires text-to-voice software that enables a computer-generated voice to read the text while the text is simultaneously highlighted on the computer screen. E-text files are provided in PDF, WORD or Kurzweil format.
 - PDF format provides an online version of the text (including pictures and diagrams). Adobe Reader and other text-to-voice software will allow the student to hear the text being read aloud while following it on the screen.
 - WORD format provides a copy of just the text (without pictures and diagrams). Text-to-voice software allows the student to hear the text being read aloud while following it on the screen.
 - Kurzweil format requires Kurzweil software which may be used by

some students at the secondary school level.

Offline alternate format materials resources will only be provided by the Department of Education if:

- The resource is not available in electronic format from the AFM library;
- The school is unable to access the electronic files due to poor Internet access.

Schools that request offline materials for students will be provided the resource online, if it is available. If a student requires the resource offline for use at home, the school can download the resources required for the student onto a CD or flash drive.



AFM for students with Hearing or Vision Loss

AFM applications for students with hearing or vision loss must be approved by the DHH or Visual itinerant assigned to the school. Visual itinerants will submit requests for students with visual impairments to APSEA for processing. Applications for students with hearing loss are processed through the Department of Education; however they must first be approved by the DHH itinerant assigned to your school.



Usernames and Passwords

When students are approved for alternate format materials (AFM) by the Department of Education, schools are sent the student's username and password (if online materials have been requested). Contact teachers are asked to place a copy of the username and password that has been assigned by the Department of Education in the student's cumulative file. This password can be used to

reset the password that the student creates, should it be forgotten, and will also be needed to gain access to AFM resources in subsequent years. It is also a good practice to keep a copy of the alternate format materials application in the student's cumulative file.



Did you know that Adobe Reader can be used to read pdf files?

Although text-to-voice software programs such as Read and Write Gold or Read Q Speak Q provide better options for voice selection, Adobe Reader can also be used to read pdf files. If you have Adobe Reader on your computer (it is free software) simply follow these steps:

1. Open the pdf file
2. On the top menu bar click "View"
3. Scroll down to "Read Out Loud" and then click on "Activate Read Out Loud"
4. Click View again
5. Scroll down to "Read Out Loud" and then click either "Read This Page Only" or "Read to the End of Document".
6. At any time you can pause or stop the reading by clicking on "View", scrolling down to "Read Out Loud" and then clicking on "Pause" or "Stop"

You can change the speed and volume of the reading voice by clicking on "Edit" on the top menu bar then Preferences, then Reading (from the left side menu).

You can also add sticky notes or highlight text using Adobe Reader. To do this, click on the corresponding symbols on the Adobe menu bar and then click on where you want to add this effect to the text. To remove highlights or sticky notes, simply right click and then left click on "Delete".



English Language Arts Resources

The Department of Education, in compliance with copyright legislation, provides qualified students access to the AFM resources required by the student in order to access the curriculum. When schools are requesting English Language Arts resources in alternate format, only those resources that the student will actually be using should be requested. If this has not been decided when the application is being submitted, schools can simply update the student's request list when this information is available. This can be done by e-mailing Tina Loveless (tinaloveless@gov.nl.ca) to request the additional resources. Resources can generally be added to online profiles within 1-2 days.



Differentiated Instruction Strategy

Colourful Words

This strategy allows students to learn and use richer vocabulary words and better prepares students for increased comprehension and well-developed writing.

Process:

- Divide students into groups
- Give each group an overused, common word (such as good, happy, interesting, look, and nice).
- You may have students brainstorm words from their own experiences or allow them to choose words from a dictionary or thesaurus to find synonyms for the overused word.
- Give students a limited time to find as many colourful synonyms as possible.
- Have students rank the synonyms in terms of intensity of meaning.
- Using strips of coloured paper from light to dark shades. Have students place the least intense words on the lighter shades of paper and the more intense words on the darker shades of paper.
- Have each group present their colourful words to the class.
- Students then paste the strips of paper on poster board and hang the poster board on a wall in the class.
- Have them write the overused word at the top and then paste the synonyms under it starting with the least intense shades of paper and ending with the most intense shades of paper.

Example of colourful words:

over used word:	happy
synonyms:	glad blessed content ecstatic jubilant

Source: Adapted from: Gregory, Gayle H., and Lin Kuzmich. *Differentiated Literacy Strategies for Student Growth and Achievement in Grades 7-12*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2005

Students with Hearing Loss

The Department of Education has designed a brochure; *Your Child has Hearing Loss?* Copies of this brochure are now in the hands of all audiologists and teachers for the deaf and hard of hearing all over the province. It highlights the services available in the education system for children with hearing loss. The following link will take you to the brochure. Please feel free to share this link with any parent/guardian of a child with hearing issues.

[www.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/studentsupport
services/publications/dhh_brochure.pdf](http://www.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/studentsupport/services/publications/dhh_brochure.pdf)

Professional Learning

Teachers for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing gathered in St. John's on October 2-4, 2012 for professional development. Sue Ley from the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) provided training on assessment tools, strategies and goal writing for students with hearing loss. Karen Anderson provided strategies and tips on

assisting students with hearing loss in the fast paced classroom. Ms. Anderson highlighted excerpts from her new book, *Building Skills for Success in the Fast-Paced Classroom: Optimizing Achievement for Students with Hearing Loss* by Karen L. Anderson and Kathleen A. Arnoldi.

Feedback

Please share your thoughts regarding this newsletter including any suggestions for future articles. Our hope is to facilitate better communication with all teachers throughout the province.

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Safe & Caring Schools Special Project Awards

Do you have a fantastic idea to promote
Safe & Caring Schools
in your school or community?

The Provincial Advisory Committee for Safe & Caring Schools
has \$500 to award to each of 40 bright ideas
across the province.



Be a Bright Idea.

Contest is open to district, school and student groups.

Applications are available through your district office
as well as the Department of Education website
www.gov.nl.ca/edu/

Application deadline is November 30, 2012