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News Release

Website Launched to Promote November School Board Elections

The Newfoundland and Labrador School Boards Association (NLSBA) launched a website today to promote the School Board Elections which will occur on November 3, 2009.

With the slogan, *Make the difference. You can.*, the launch of the website is the start of the promotional campaign for the upcoming elections. Initially, it will encourage people to seek nomination for a school board trustee position in their area during the nominating period October 2-8 and, then, rally people to get out and cast their vote.

“We want people to understand the role of the school board trustee and how important the volunteer trustees are to our education system,” said Don Brown, NLSBA President. “School board trustees are the voice of the community in making decisions that directly affect students and schools. We know there are people right across this province who can show leadership and make a contribution to strengthening our education system. We are calling on them to seek election.”

As part of the effort to increase participation in the School Board Elections, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador announced on April 29, 2009 an increase in funding to \$400,000 for the elections. Previous elections had run concurrently with municipal elections but are now scheduled for later in the fall.

“The additional funding government is providing this year to the school board election process will allow for a renewed focus on building candidate and voter participation,” said the Honourable Darin King, Minister of Education. “The launch of the website, well in advance of the November election, will help raise awareness while providing valuable information to the general public. I encourage everyone to check out the site and begin planning for this important event for our school communities. It’s everyone’s opportunity to make a real difference and support our children and youth.”

The 2009 School Board Elections website, www.schoolboardselections09.com, provides information on the key dates for the election; contact information and web links for the four

districts involved in the election including Labrador, Western, Nova Central and Eastern. A candidate orientation package that contains general information for all candidates, district-specific information, and frequently asked questions for both candidates and voters are available on the web site.

Also contained on the website is a video message featuring veteran trustee Katie Healey of Corner Brook. She reflects on her personal experience with the Western district and what she gained from her 15 years experience as a trustee. Ms. Healey's involvement is part of the effort to increase the number of women who get involved as school board trustees.

"I have had a great experience as a school board trustee," said Ms. Healey. "I feel that what I have given to this role has been returned to me many times over. While there are sometimes difficult and challenging decisions to make when it comes to the education system, I always felt a lot of satisfaction when I saw what those decisions meant to the overall system in the Western district."

Brian Shortall, NLSBA Executive Director, said each of the four districts will organize the election logistics in their respective areas while the NLSBA will co-ordinate the promotional campaign and function as a resource for each of the boards. Mr. Shortall indicated the media and advertising strategy will kick into high gear in September once parents and students have settled into the new school year.

"We are sending the message to all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that it is important for them to engage in this election," said Mr. Shortall. "The school board election is a key part of our democratic process – just as important as our municipal, provincial and federal elections. A school board trustee can have a very rewarding experience through a direct involvement in the education system."

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