

For Immediate Release

School Counsellors Coordinate Professional Development Opportunities through the PEITF

In February, 2006, the PEICA changed its organizational structure to accommodate special interests of counsellors. Two chapters were established within the organization: a *School Counsellors' Chapter* and a *Professional Counsellors' Chapter*. Counsellors with general membership in the organization can also be members of one or both chapters. The restructuring allowed for the *School Counsellors' Chapter* to become a special association within the PEI Teacher's Federation. This allows for school counsellors to host their own professional development activities as part of the regularly scheduled professional development coordinated by the PEI Teachers Federation (PEITF).

During the PEITF Annual Convention in October the PEITF School Counsellor's Association hosted a *CinePlex* at The City Cinema. PEICA School Counsellors facilitated sessions on how video can be used by professionals to help youth deal with issues such as stress, bullying, grief and developing peace within schools. These workshops received many positive comments and brought a deeper understanding to all with regard to the nature of issues presented in today's youth.

On the upcoming PEITF provincial professional development workshops on November 10th, the *PEITF - School Counsellor's Association* is offering counsellors the opportunity to expand their existing knowledge base. Workshops that are scheduled for counsellors on this day will focus on play therapy, career counselling, relaxation strategies and a discussion regarding the results of a survey of maritime university students. These workshops will take place at the UPEI campus.

The PEI Counselling Association is proud that all Prince Edward Island schools have access to a qualified School Counsellor. In addition to being a licensed teacher with two university degrees (usually a 4 year B.A. or B.Sc. and a 2 year B.Ed.) counsellors must have professional counselling skills. There is a Minister's Directive requiring all school counsellors to have in addition a Masters degree in Counselling, or in a counselling related field, and follow the national Canadian Counsellors Association's *Code of Ethics* in order to work in the school system. School Counsellors are the only licensed teacher required by law to have earned a Masters level degree - usually a minimum of 7 years of university training.

Certified Canadian Counsellors (CCC) are required to have ongoing professional development in areas related to counselling. Professional Counselling is a position that requires a high skill level with regard to mental health and cognitive assessment, various forms of therapy and extensive knowledge of ethics and ethical judgement. The Certified Canadian Counsellor (CCC) process has all the components of a regulated body. The initials CCC after a counsellors name ensures the public that they are receiving services from a highly trained professional and have recourse to lodge a complaint with CCA. PEICA is proud to support ongoing counsellor professional development through its *School Counsellors' Chapter* and its' association with the PEI Teacher's Federation.

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