

# Heidi Ryder — Statement

## It's About Respect



**Heidi Ryder**  
**Branch 1610**

Last year, as I visited schools, I encouraged you to tell your stories to raise awareness of the issues we face every day and to propose solutions so that we can move forward together. Our individual and collective teacher voice is the true power of our Association. I made a commitment to amplify our common messages. As a 23+ years classroom teacher, administrator and teacher leader in this province I have taken every opportunity to do so, not only this past year as your Vice President, but since the beginning of my career. I am prepared for the work ahead, having served teachers of this province for over two decades—in my local branch, on numerous NBTA, NBTF and EECD committees, on the NBTA Board of Directors and NBTA/NBTF Executive.

Teachers know their work is **valuable**, but they also need to feel their work is **valued**. As I listen to teach-

ers, a common theme is the fundamental idea that **it's about respect**.

- **Respect** evident in **safe and healthy work environments** that demonstrate concern for our well-being with—at minimum—adequate space to teach and learn, where violence is not normalized, social media attacks on teachers are not accepted, and teachers are encouraged to prioritize their well-being. Old adages are often proven true, and none more-so than the idea that we need to take care of our teachers, so that they can take care of the students.
- **Respect** reflected by a **competitive wage and benefits package** that attracts new teachers and also retains those in the system. With more career options than ever before for our highly educated and skilled workforce, we need to attract them to our schools and classrooms. Salary and benefits are one factor in remaining competitive.
- **Respect** for the **professionalism** of teachers. We need **certified teachers** leading our classrooms and schools, including recognition for trades certifications commensurate with their education and experience. Teachers are pedagogical and subject-matter experts and our goal must be to have certified teachers as the standard across the system, with more accessible options for achieving certification.
- **Respect** meaning **all** teachers are **supported**, from beginning teachers to those nearing the end of their careers. We need robust beginning teacher programs to

ensure a foundation for success, continued support for our uniquely NB teacher counselling program and accessible, accurate pension/retirement advice for teachers. Each stage of our career has different, but equally important needs. We need a **properly resourced system, both in financial and human terms**. The system's needs have continually grown, as have demands on teachers.

- **Respect** for the expertise inherent in teacher voices—**reflected and valued in educational decisions** at all levels. In 2014 I remember being told that teachers should not be “getting in the middle” of the pension fight. With our economic wellbeing on the line, we did not step aside. The same holds true today—we advocate daily for **quality, public education** in this province and will continue to ensure that we are not just in the middle, but at the forefront, of educational decision-making.

These systemic issues have a direct and significant impact on the **recruitment and retention** problem that is causing alarm in every jurisdiction across the country (and beyond). **We are at a tipping point**; we no longer have the luxury of discussing the issue in theory: the crisis is here, in very practical terms, at our classroom doors. Along with ensuring our profession is **respected** and teachers' work is **valued** we need viable steps towards solutions. It will take a concerted, collective effort (and **budget commitments**) by education partners. With your votes in April, I will be honoured to represent teachers and publicly funded education.



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