

Special Election E-news

September 26th, 2008

Canadians go to the polls to vote for a new government on October 14th, 2008. The NWT Literacy Council has put together some information on the election, on the voting process and questions you can ask your candidates about literacy in the NWT. We encourage you to use this information with your learners. This is a great opportunity to explore literacy issues in Canada and the NWT and also talk about the voting process and Canadian politics.

The time is right for federal leadership.

Literacy is too important to our nation not to have national leadership, vision and a comprehensive Canadian Literacy Strategy. Four out of ten Canadians (42%) aged 16 – 65 face serious literacy challenges that leave them without the skills they need to deal with the demands of today's constantly changing information-based economy and society. These literacy challenges have a cost – for families, communities and our country. 11,000 people in the NWT have less than what the experts say are the necessary literacy levels to fully participate in a knowledge-based economy. Thirty-eight per cent of the employed population of the NWT has literacy rates below this level.

This election provides an important opportunity for literacy champions to question candidates on how they plan to support and promote literacy in the NWT. The Western Arctic MP needs to be aware that many constituents face literacy challenges in the NWT. They also need to be aware that literacy has an impact on the social and economic health of your community.

What can you do? VOTE!

You can also participate through opinion polls, radio phone-in shows, talk to candidates that knock at your door and attend and ask questions at all-candidate debates.

Ask:

- a. How is improving literacy levels part of your platform? When elected, what will you do within your caucus and within parliament to position and promote literacy as a national priority?
- b. What are the literacy challenges and needs of your constituents and our territory? What will you do to respond to these challenges and needs?

To find out more about the literacy picture in Canada and the NWT go to our website at www.nwt.literacy.ca and go to the section “Literacy Facts.” You will find eight different documents that explore Literacy in Canada, Literacy in the NWT, Literacy and the Economy, Literacy and Health, Literacy and Unemployment, Literacy and Youth, Literacy and Families and Literacy and the Workforce.

Election Materials

Election How-to-Kit 2008

The NWT Literacy Council has revised our *Election How-to-Kit*. You will find the updated version on our website at www.nwtliteracy.ca under “What’s New” and “Adult Literacy Resources.” This *Election How to Kit 2008* includes literacy activities that you can do with adult learners around the election. There are suggestions for activities that will: inform learners, help learners realize that their voice and vote count, develop vocabulary used in elections and encourage learners to take an active role in the upcoming election.

Federal Elections Toolkit

The Nunavut Literacy Council has developed a *Federal Elections Toolkit*. In this tool kit you will find questions and answers about the federal elections and the voting process and election activities and resources you can use with your learners. Attached is the PDF document: *Federal Elections Toolkit*.

Online Interactive Election Tool

The Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL) has developed an online interactive tool on the election. Learn more about voting, election vocabulary and where you can find more information about the election. This tool is great for people who struggle with reading as you can listen to each section as the text is being highlighted. Go to <http://www.literacy.ca> and look under the “What’s New” section on the front page.

Election Study Kit

The Movement for Canadian Literacy has developed a study kit for teachers to use with their learners. The kit has information about federal elections, the voting process and activities that you can do with your learners. You can download a PDF copy on MCL’s website at <http://www.literacy.ca> under the “What’s New” section on the front page.

Websites

Elections Canada <http://www.elections.ca/home.asp>

This website has:

- Information for voters, young voters, Aboriginal voters
- Information about how to contact the returning officer for the NWT
- Finding your electoral district
- Publications that include resources for teachers

Other resources you will find on this website are:

- *I Can Vote!* is a user-friendly guide to voting in Canada.
- *Choosing our mascot* is an election simulation scenario for children aged five to ten, in school (kindergarten to Grade 4) or youth groups. The purpose of the election is to choose a mascot that reflects the group's spirit.
- *Election Simulation* is a great resource for leaders of community groups. It explains how to organize an election simulation for a class of students or a group of young people. It's designed to help them learn about their right to vote and how to exercise it.
- *Election Supplies* includes: Sample Marked Ballots; Accepted and Rejected Sample Ballot Paper; Sample Blank Ballot Papers; Voters List; Tally Sheet; Official Statement of the Vote.

The *Elections 2008 How-to-Kit* on our website has all this information including the web addresses for all the resources.

Apathy is Boring: <http://www.apathyisboring.com/en>

Check out this website for lots of information on the elections. It is particularly appealing to the youth population. You will find:

- General elections information
- Party platforms
- How to vote
- Information on your riding

Student Vote: www.studentvote.ca

Student Vote is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that works with educators to establish habits of democratic citizenship within young Canadians. Sign up to receive free voting supplies to hold your own vote in your school or program. You must sign up by Friday, September 26th or you can download copies from the website.

NODICE Elections: <http://www.nodice.ca/elections>

This website has everything you could want to know about the elections! Check out the most recent public opinion polls and the seat projections for this election. You will also find information about your riding and candidates and the parties and leaders.

Canada Votes 2008 – CBC: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canadavotes>

Get up-to-date news and information about the election and parties on the CBC website.

Please feel free to pass this e-news along to others. Let us know if you would like to be removed from our e-news list.