

NCTE Report 2008

The annual business meeting of the board of directors and other members of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) took place on Friday, November 21, 2008 at the Marriott Rivercenter Hotel in San Antonio, Texas.

Among the noteworthy events during the meeting were the presentation of the Distinguished Service Award to Leila Christenbury, and the James R. Squires Award to Donald Graves whose ill health prevented his being present. A dear friend and close collaborator, Penny Kittle, accepted it on his behalf.

The winner of the David H. Russell Award to Leila Christenbury was announced for her research into reading.

Kent Williamson, executive director of NCTE reported on the finances for the 2008 fiscal year, stating that despite a predicted operating loss, there was a surplus of \$140,946.00. There is a problem because of losses on investments. However, because of reserves of approximately \$21 million it is anticipated that the association is prepared for the hazardous future.

Two main resolutions were presented for discussion and approval. Resolution 1 dealt with opposition to "scripted curricula" and the constraints being placed on classroom teachers whose decisions about materials and practices in literacy education are being disregarded.

It was resolved to oppose such "one-size-fits-all" programmes.

The second resolution dealt with English-only instructional policies. NCTE is "concerned with seeing students succeed academically. This includes giving students who speak languages other than English at home the opportunity to develop fluency in English."

It was resolved that the National Council of Teachers of English oppose policies that fail to recognize, in all content areas, the importance of adequate materials in students first language, and the necessity for personnel trained in language minority issues.

This is a very brief overview of the main resolutions voted upon. More details will be available on the NCTE website.

On Saturday, November 22, 2008, the secondary Section of NCTE held its luncheon at the annual convention in San Antonio. Several awards, including the 2008 NCTE High School Teacher of Excellence Awards, were presented. I was among the twenty-five persons who received the honour this year. I would like to thank the Association of Teachers of English in Quebec for nominating me for this prestigious award. I was deeply moved by this demonstration of appreciation.

Kevin Wright
NCTE Liaison for ATEQ