

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION  
 **MEDIA RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

March 16, 2020

## **SCHOOLS SHOULD NOT BE TREATED AS A CONVENIENCE**

St. John's, NL... The onset of COVID-19 is a public health crisis and is being dealt with as such. The NLTA is concerned about the health and welfare of our students and teachers and we have been in regular communication with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and school district officials.

The NLTA understands that this is a public health issue and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has assured us that, should the Chief Medical Officer for Health recommend school closures, they will comply.

"Teachers all over the province are asking that Government better explain how official public health policy regarding social distancing and the need for heightened personal hygiene practices is consistent with the decision to keep schools open," says Dean Ingram, President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association.

"Many people in this province, including myself, are concerned by the apparent lack of consistency between Government direction on social distancing, avoidance of large gatherings, enhanced hygiene and the decision to keep schools open. I believe that is a question a growing number of parents are asking as well."

Schools have large groups working in close quarters. In some schools students are expected to eat at their desks. Newfoundland and Labrador is the only Atlantic province that has not taken the precautionary step to close schools and there needs to be clarification as to why this is the case.

Convenience must not trump public health.

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