

For Immediate Release

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IT'S TIME FOR THE MINISTER TO TIGHTEN UP PUBLIC HEALTH PRECAUTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

St. John's, NL... The Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association is once again raising concerns about inadequate public health precautions for students and teachers in our public schools.

"We are seeing an increase in active COVID-19 cases, including confirmed clusters in Grand Bank and the Deer Lake area. As I have said before, schools are where all of the homes, workplaces and gatherings in our communities come together and, unfortunately, it is also where all of the viruses in a community meet," said Dean Ingram, President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. "We cannot afford to wait to improve protections for our students. We should be learning from the poor decisions that have been made in other Canadian jurisdictions."

Since the Minister of Education released the K-12 Education Re-entry Plan during the first week of July, the NLTA has persistently called for implementation of the same level of protections for students and teachers that exist in all other community activities.

"In recent weeks, we have seen the lesser health and safety precautions for students and school staff even further relaxed through greater non-essential access to schools for sports and other extra-curricular programs, without any additional precautions," said President Ingram.

"Where physical distancing cannot be assured, we need mandatory face masks and physical barriers to ensure our students and staffs are as safe as possible. The reality of 25-30 students, and more in some cases, in a crowded, poorly ventilated classroom without masks or barriers for extended periods of time should not be acceptable."

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