

For Immediate Release
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NLTA QUESTIONS SCHOOLS REMAINING OPEN AS EXPOSURES INCREASE AND PRESENCE OF NEW VARIANT IN NL IS CONFIRMED

St. John's, NL... The Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association is asking why the Provincial Government has not moved to close K-12 schools early for the Christmas break to help control further spread of COVID-19 in the province.

"In the past number of days, we have seen a steady increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in the province, and the number of exposures and "high risk" contacts related to school community interactions is growing," said Trent Langdon, President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. "This, combined with recent confirmation that the more easily transmissible Omicron variant has arrived in the province should be a clear indication to government that the time has come to take more proactive steps to limit further spread. We are on the eve of a natural circuit breaker for our schools, which continue to be the largest daily indoor gathering of individuals who are not required to be vaccinated, our students. Why not start that break now, help control the spread of the virus within and beyond our K-12 school population, which contains the vast majority of unvaccinated people in the province?"

The NLTA is calling on government to take a proactive approach by instituting an earlier start date for the school Christmas break to eliminate risk of further spread of COVID-19 through contacts within the school system.

"Government has an opportunity right now to reduce the opportunity for COVID-19 exposures in advance of the holiday season, which will also help lower the risk of interruptions for students and families in January," added President Langdon. "We have seen our Atlantic counterparts make similar decisions in light of rising cases. We are urging our government to follow suit and not wait until things in Newfoundland and Labrador get to what we are seeing elsewhere before taking action."

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