



It's Time to Get it Right!

NLTA Submission
to the Teacher Allocation
Review Committee



April 11, 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Introduction 2
- Consultation 3
- The Case for Investing in our Kids. 4
- Class Size and Composition 5
 - The Significance of Class Size 5
 - The Teacher Allocation Commission (2006-2007) and Where We Are Now. 5
 - The Impact of Class Composition 7
 - Recommendations on Class Size and Class Composition. 11
- Essential Supports for Teaching and Learning 12
 - Recommendations on Essential Supports for Teaching and Learning 14
- School Administrators 15
 - Recommendations on School Administrators 17
- Specialist Teachers 18
 - Recommendations on Specialist Teachers 18
- Student Assistants 19
 - Recommendation on Student Assistants 20
- Innovative Approaches to Service Delivery 20
 - Recommendations on Innovative Approaches to Service Delivery 20
- Meeting Unexpected or Emergent Needs 21
 - Recommendation on Meeting Unexpected or Emergent Needs 21
- Other Factors to Consider 23
 - Recommendations 24
- Conclusion 25
- Appendix A: Recommendations 26

INTRODUCTION

The working conditions for teachers are the learning conditions for students; this is reality. School is a shared experience. The context in which teachers carry out their professional roles and responsibilities providing instruction, striving to create safe and inclusive environments in which students can learn, grow, and benefit from access to positive role models, relationships and opportunities is the same context in which students spend six or more hours a day each school year. Close to 50% of a student's waking hours, not counting co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, are spent in the classroom.

This actuality should be the foundation for all decisions that affect the K-12 public school system in Newfoundland and Labrador. There is no one factor that has a more significant impact on teaching and learning, or more potential to advance public education and the future of our province, than the provision of appropriate, professional human resource levels in our schools. If our goal is for schools to be inclusive, safe and caring, accountable, accessible, engaging and stimulating places for learning to occur and for students' needs to be met – as it should be – then we must be willing to take into account that it is the expertise, time and talents of the professionals charged with this important responsibility who “make it so”. Otherwise, we might as well just acknowledge the fiction of this rhetoric.

Teaching has always been an intense vocation. Because teachers work with children and are responsible for their safety, supervision and constant attention are essential – there is no down time. While school buildings have changed little in appearance over the years, the realities and demands of the teaching profession have evolved significantly. Technology requirements, classroom dynamics and diversity, service delivery models, approaches to student assessment, the volume of required administrative documentation, and demands for and accessibility of services and supports from other community/public services and agencies have all changed. We have also lived through a global pandemic and two-year state of Public Health emergency, the impacts of which are significant and ongoing. COVID-19 has highlighted, more than ever before, the critical role of schools and those who work in them for students and for society in general, and has exposed an urgent need for proactive measures to improve school safety and resiliency in the future.

Many of today's classrooms have very high class sizes and complex composition, often including a wide spectrum of student needs and abilities. The class size “cap” model for allocating teaching units, introduced in 2008 (prior to the implementation of the Inclusive Education Initiative, full-day Kindergarten and the Responsive Teaching and Learning Policy) has been eroded by subsequent provincial budgets without any substantive review, other than financial.

Combined grades were introduced in schools where student numbers do not warrant multi-grade/age classes. Allocated time for school administrators has been reduced, while 20+ years of school district restructuring and amalgamation, including the ongoing transition process to integrate the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLESD) into the Department of Education, has continued to download responsibilities to the school level. The allocation models for instructional resource teachers (IRT) and school counsellors have been stagnant since before 2006, despite the resources needed to support inclusive education practices, as well as the very high rate of complex needs and increased mental health and addictions issues among school-aged individuals, as noted recently in the final report of the Health Accord for Newfoundland and Labrador.

The expected approach to meeting emergent/unexpected student needs is most often to redeploy existing resources and supports, spreading them more thinly despite deeper demands. New staffing resources for the school system introduced following the 2017 report and recommendations of the Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes have all come with new initiatives and expectations for teachers. The critical need for increases to school administrator and school counsellor allocations, which have long been evident, received some support in reaction to the pandemic, but no long-term, proactive commitment has been made to maintain these necessary supports for student learning.

The impact of inadequate human resources in our public education system is felt by students and teachers alike. Efforts to improve student learning must be considered and developed in the context in which they would have to be actioned. Improving working conditions for teachers cannot help but have a positive impact on the learning environment for students. The work of the Teacher Allocation Review Committee (the Committee) is long overdue – it's time to get it right!

CONSULTATION

The Importance of Getting the “Real” Picture

Provincial legislation recognizes the significance of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers’ Association (NLTA) as the voice of the profession. The *Teachers’ Association Act* states, in section 4:

The objects of the association are

- (a) **to promote the cause of education** in the province by
 - (i) affording to educational authorities, teachers and the public in general the **benefits of the collective experience and advice of teachers on practical educational matters**. [emphasis added]

The NLTA and its more than 6500 members take this right and responsibility very seriously – collective agreement provisions echo the principles outlined in legislation, requiring consultation with the Association on contemplated regulatory or policy changes that would affect teachers. There is no issue more “practical” or concrete in its impact on teaching and learning than that of appropriate professional staffing levels for our schools. With respect to decisions around teacher allocations, the importance of hearing, understanding and taking into account the lived experience of NLTA members in the field and on the front lines in our schools cannot be overstated.

The NLTA has and will continue to encourage and support members to take advantage of opportunities to participate in the Committee’s consultation and information gathering processes. We are encouraged to know that leveraging technology to facilitate focus groups and live feedback sessions will be included. While quantitative input from surveys is of value, some NLTA members have expressed frustration with the limitations of this method. The day-to-day reality and demands in the K-12 system are complex and often in flux, making it difficult to capture the true nature of the roles and responsibilities associated with specific work assignments “on paper”. A deeper dive is essential.

We recommend that as much capacity as possible be provided to allow for teacher participation in discussion/conversation-based information gathering. Adequate collection of qualitative and anecdotal data will help to ensure the Committee achieves a more fulsome and nuanced understanding of the teaching and learning context in our schools, and the importance of an approach to allocations that supports human resource levels that are appropriate and adequate to meet student needs.

THE CASE FOR INVESTING IN OUR KIDS

The significance of a robust, publicly funded public education system to long-term future prosperity for our province is well established. The titles of past reports of reviews of teacher allocations indicate that this theme is not a new one:

1992: *Our Children, Our Future*

2000: *Supporting Learning*

2007: *Education & Our Future, A Road Map to Innovation and Excellence.*

Education is an accepted determinant of other socio-economic outcomes. Indeed, the recent report of the Health Accord of Newfoundland and Labrador (February 2022) identifies the importance of education:

*People with higher education tend to be healthier than those with lower educational attainment. **The level of education is highly linked with other SDH such as the level of income, employment security, and working conditions.*** [emphasis added]

In 2011, the Canadian Policy Network report, *Return on Investment, Mental Health Promotion and Mental Illness Prevention*, stated that early intervention, including school programs, “have a substantial effect on individuals as well as on costs to society.” The report further found that the returns for such investments, “(economic or otherwise) typically show up in a sector other than the one in which the initial investments are made.” This finding is echoed in the key findings of the 2019 Conference Board of Canada report, *The Economic Case for Investing in Education*, which included that:

Each dollar of public education spending generates \$1.30 in total economic impacts to Ontario. At the same time, the inverse holds true for each dollar taken from public education.

Public education can generate social benefits, such as a healthier population, a higher standard of living, and a reduction in crime. That lessens demand for Ontario’s social assistance, public health care, and criminal justice services.

We can no longer afford to ignore the gap between our resources for K-12 education and our province’s economic health. There are no quick fixes, but the research shows that **improving public education will lead to positive economic returns and social benefits**. It is time to get it right, time for a proactive approach and a long-term vision based on the established fact that access to quality, publicly funded public education is a key determinant of future productivity, improved health outcomes, and lesser demands on other public services and supports.

*Note: Please review the Association’s collection of research and resources on the importance of investing in education (investinourkids.ca)

CLASS SIZE AND COMPOSITION

The Significance of Class Size

The 2014 paper, *Does Class Size Matter?*, authored by Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach of the National Education Policy Center of the University of Colorado, states that “common-sense” is validated by research demonstrating that class size does matter and is “an important determinant of student outcomes.” The study found that teachers are able to be more effective with small class sizes and that the resulting benefit to students is not limited to their performance in school, but will continue to be an advantage over their entire lifetime. The author’s recommendations include:

- *Money saved today by increasing class sizes will be offset by more substantial social and educational costs in the future.*
- *The payoff from class-size reduction is greater for low-income and minority children, while any increases in class size will likely be most harmful to these populations.*
- *...While lower class size has a demonstrable cost, it may prove the more cost-effective policy overall.*

David Zyngier, Senior Lecturer in Curriculum and Pedagogy at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia also concluded in 2014 that the research overwhelmingly supports small class sizes. Among the many benefits of small class sizes, Zyngier lists:

- *teachers can teach more in-depth;*
- *teachers can move through material faster;*
- *classes are managed better – with less time spent on discipline and more on learning;*
- *students receive more individualized attention, including encouragement and monitoring;*
- *students are more attentive;*
- *students wait less to receive their teachers’ attention.*

Parents, teachers and the general public in Newfoundland and Labrador are no strangers to these common-sense conclusions. The June 2016 report of the Panel on the Status of Public Education in Newfoundland and Labrador, authored by Dr. Bruce Sheppard and Dr. Kirk Anderson, identified class size as a “pervasive concern... throughout the K-12 system.”

The NLTA commissioned an independent firm, MQO Research, to conduct surveys of the general public/parents and teachers regarding the 2016 Provincial Budget. Seventy-three percent of the general public, 83% of parents and 95% of teachers surveyed felt that increased class sizes would have a negative impact on the quality of education in the province. Increased class sizes and loss of teaching units were seen as having the most significantly negative impact by the general public and parents. In the November 2016 follow-up survey, 79% of parents and 95% of teachers surveyed indicated that increased class sizes were having a negative impact on the quality of education in the province. In January 2019, the report of the Child and Youth Advocate on chronic school absenteeism identified “Large class size that prevents getting individual help” as a factor that impedes school attendance from students’ perspectives.

More recently, in August 2021, a further NLTA survey conducted by MQO found that the general public and parents currently rank “increasing class sizes” as the top challenge facing the K-12 education system. In the same research, teachers surveyed ranked addressing class size as the highest priority for the next 3-5 years and the most significant factor impacting their job satisfaction.

The Teacher Allocation Commission (2006-2007) and Where We Are Now

The May 2007 final report of the Teacher Allocation Commission agreed with the research showing that, “reducing class size has a significant effect on the overall achievement of students”. The Commission made 35 recommendations, 11 of which spoke specifically to needed improvements in class size and the allocation of teaching units. Subsequently, in March 2008, the Provincial Government introduced a new approach to the allocation of teaching resources. This new model referenced maximum class size numbers for Grades K-9 and was described by the Minister of Education at that time as being focused “on need, not numbers ... on programming and teaching needs and maximum class sizes in the K-9 system.” This new Teacher Allocation Model included increased administrative time for schools of all sizes and prescribed the following class size caps:

Kindergarten – 20 students;
Grades 1-6 – 25 students;
Grades 7-9 – 27 students.

The model also decreased class sizes for some multi-grade situations and increased allocations for specialist teachers (music, physical education, French, and literacy and numeracy) and learning resource teachers.

Yet, despite the extensive evidence of the opinions of researchers, the teaching profession, students, parents and the general public, Government has, since the introduction of this new model, embarked upon a course of reducing allocations and increasing class sizes. This has occurred without the required review, which was supposed to be done in 2011, as noted by the province's Auditor General in a November 2016 report to the House of Assembly on a Performance Audit of Department and Crown Agencies:

Despite being directed by Cabinet to evaluate the Teacher Allocation Model three years after it was implemented in 2008-09, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has not completed the assessment and has not reported back to Cabinet.

Not only did Government fail to ensure that the mandated review was completed, it gradually implemented a more intense, resource dependent model of education while simultaneously increasing class sizes and reducing teacher and administrator supports within the system. What the Committee is reviewing now is not what was established in 2008.

The positive changes made in 2008, while not reflective of all of the Commission's recommendations, were welcome and came forward just one school year prior to the launch of the Inclusive Education Initiative at the beginning of the 2009-10 school year, which saw students with special needs placed in the regular classroom setting without adequate supports. However, despite the clear recognition of the need for increased allocations and the new demands arising from the required implementation of inclusion, teacher allocations have seen significant reductions since 2008. In particular, Budget 2016 decreased teacher allocations for high school, and class size caps for multi-grade situations were returned to (and in one case now exceed) limits that were in place prior to 2008. Full-day Kindergarten (FDK) was implemented with no additional teaching units in the system, an increase in maximum class sizes for Grades 4-9, and the introduction of combined grade classes for Grades 1-6. Indeed, the 2016-17 school year, when FDK was launched, saw the lowest provincial student/teacher ratio in over a 12-year period, clearly demonstrating that the decision to enhance and expand early learning was made at the expense of human resources available for existing programming.

The current iteration of the Teacher Allocation Model also allows for classes to exceed established "caps" when teaching units are deployed to schools. This approach was recommended by the Commission in 2007 as an "exception to the rule", to be applied only in addressing emergent/unanticipated local circumstances, with a maximum increase to class size of 2 students, subject to prior approval of the Director of Education. However, the exception has now become the rule – class sizes today are typically expected to exceed the "soft cap" at the time of deployment, as well as a further "hard cap" of 2-4 additional students, before extra teacher allocations are considered (no guarantee):

Classroom teachers with class size caps

Allocations to school districts are determined by class caps. School districts may exceed the cap by up to 2 students when deployment occurs. French Immersion classes may exceed the cap by another additional 2 students when deployment occurs.

The following tables demonstrate the difference between the Allocation Model introduced as "needs based" in 2008, and the current reality with respect to class size (reductions are in bold; "hard caps" – an extra 2 students for English classes, 4 for French Immersion – are in red):

Grades	Class Size Maximums (Not including hard cap of +2-4)	
	2008-09	Current
Kindergarten	20	20 (22-24)
Primary (1-3)	25	25 (27-29)
Elementary (4-6)	25	28 (30-32)
Intermediate (7-9)	27	31 (33-35)
Combined Grades (1-6) 2 grades in 1 class		18 (20-22)

Number of Students per Grade Level	High School Allocation Divisor		
	2008-09		Current
≤ 30 students per grade	1 unit/21 students	Combined < 100 students per grade	1 unit/24 students
30-99 students per grade	1 unit/24 students		1 unit/24 students
≥ 100 per grade	1 unit/28 students		1 unit/29 students

Information available on the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLESD) website clearly shows numerous class sizes that exceed “soft” and “hard” caps, as well as high schools with a significant number of classes with more than 35 students. The current model provides no direction or process for ensuring teacher resourcing needs in such situations are addressed.

The NLTA acknowledges that some additional teaching resources have been added to the system since the Premier’s Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes issued its final report and recommendations in July of 2017. As well, just like the increased demands of the 2009 Inclusive Schools Initiative followed swiftly on the heels of the 2008 improvements to class size, the additional resources introduced since 2018 for K-6 do not address class size and have also come with new expectations through implementation of the Responsive Teaching and Learning Policy, although Government has not, to date, made a long-term commitment to maintain these resources.

The Impact of Class Composition

As discussed above, class size is an important issue that has a significant impact on the learning and teaching environment in schools. However, numbers alone are not the answer. Today’s schools do not separate students into homogeneous groups – difference and diversity within classrooms is the norm and must be considered equally and alongside the number of pupils present.

Students come to our schools with varied experiences, abilities, family situations, interests, learning styles, cultural backgrounds, etc. Students need to feel that they belong, are valued and can contribute. Fundamentally, all children deserve to be educated in inclusive and supportive environments, with their peers – wherever possible – regardless of their physical or intellectual capabilities, race, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity or any other characteristic.

In *Class Size and Student Diversity – Two Sides of the Same Coin*, the Canadian Teachers’ Federation reported on a 2011 national teacher survey and research review on class size and composition. Their findings included:

Class size matters, but so does class composition – in other words, when we talk about class size, we also need to be thinking about the degree of student diversity in those classes. In order to enhance quality and equity in our public schools, they need to be addressed together.

Data on average class size can only tell a small part of the story. The degree of student diversity as a proportion of the total class size needs to be taken into account. [emphasis added]

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the classroom environment does impact teacher effectiveness. In 2013, the OECD conducted the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS). This international survey of teachers, including teachers in Canada, identified class composition as an important variable that impacts teacher effectiveness. The OECD found that:

Certain classroom characteristics can make a teacher's work more challenging. Teaching classes in which a large proportion of students have different achievement levels, special needs or behavioural problems can affect a teacher's self-efficacy and job satisfaction, especially if the teacher is not properly prepared or supported.

According to the research model used by the OECD, a classroom was considered to be challenging if “more than 10% of students in class are low achievers or more than 10% of students have behaviour problems.”

These findings are significant if one accepts that, as professionals, teachers are in the best position to determine their own effectiveness. Teachers reporting how class composition, without adequate supports, impacts their work provides valuable insight on how inadequate human resourcing in schools affects their ability to support student learning. What makes this information all the more alarming is that not only is the quality of education being negatively impacted by under-resourcing, but there is also evidence that links a stressful classroom environment to teacher and student stress.

Dr. Eva Oberle and Dr. Kimberly Schonert-Reichl at the University of British Columbia found a link between the cortisol levels of over 400 elementary students and the incidence of teacher burnout and exhaustion. According to the report:

As expected, we found that after adjusting for differences in cortisol levels due to age, gender, and time of awaking, higher morning cortisol levels in students could be significantly predicted from higher burnout levels in classroom teachers. In fact, before considering the predictive role of teacher burnout in the present sample, we found an initial 10% of variability in morning cortisol levels between classrooms. Thus, morning cortisol levels not only significantly differed among individual students, but could also be predicted from the particular classroom where lessons took place. The significant differences in cortisol levels due to the classroom setting provided strong rationale for identifying classroom-indicators to predict students' cortisol levels. We found that classroom-specific variability was significantly reduced by more than 50% from 10% to 4.6% when considering the role of teacher burnout in relation to students' morning cortisol levels. This finding is new and important. It extends the field of school-based experiences and cortisol activity as an indicator of stress regulation in students and links teachers' stressful occupational experiences to students' biological stress levels.

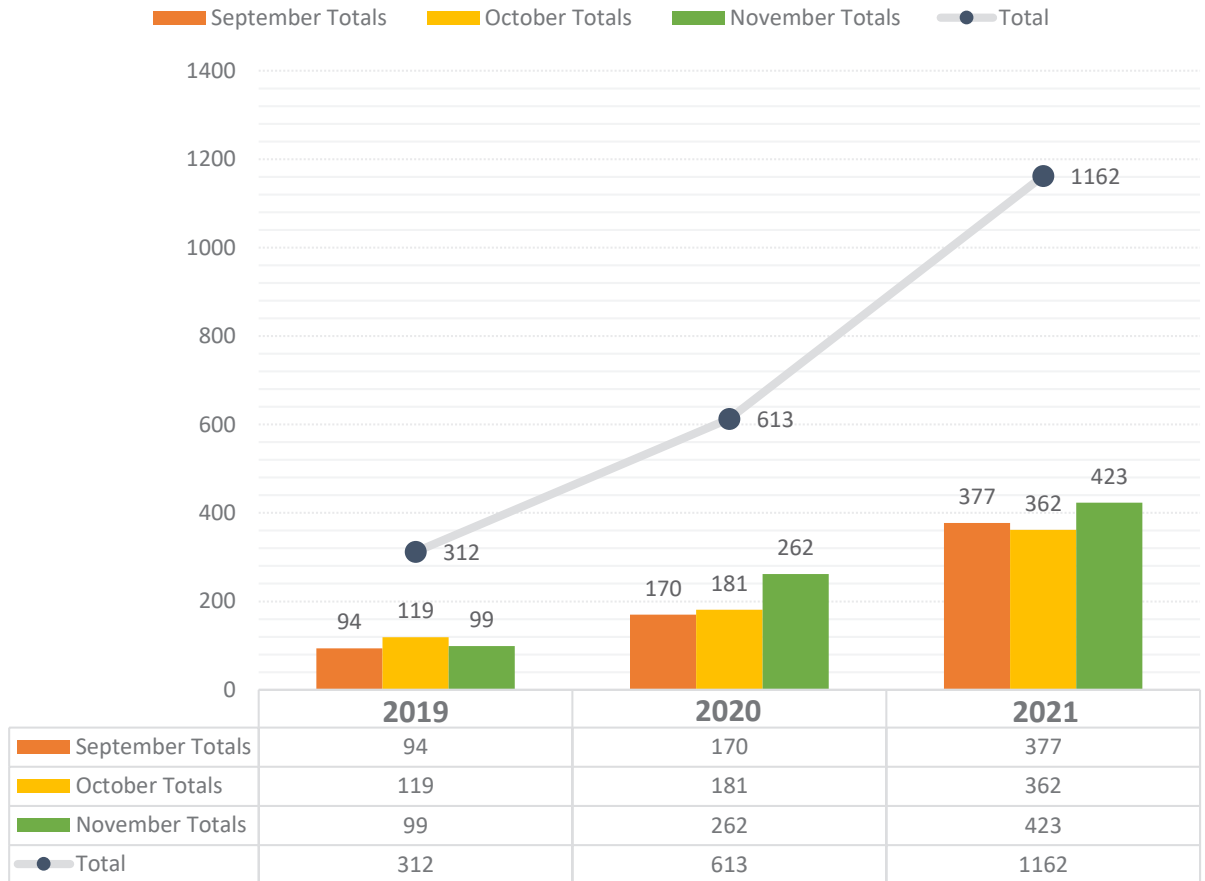
(Stress contagion in the classroom? The link between classroom teacher burnout and morning cortisol in elementary school students, April 2016)

One of the causes for the stressful classroom environment noted by the study was classroom environments where there are inadequate supports for teachers.

We know that teachers are indeed feeling the impact of high stress teaching and learning conditions. In its January 2017 submission to the Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes, the NLTA presented statistics from the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for Teachers, which showed the rise in teacher stress and burnout at that point in time. From 2013-14 to 2015-16, NLTA members accessing counselling supports increased from 7.7% of the total teacher population to 10%. Teachers' reasons for contacting EAP were also telling as personal/work stress accounted for 47.1% of EAP cases in 2013-14 and increased to 51% in 2015-16. Recent trends are, unfortunately, consistent with this past experience, with total requests for EAP supports (including in-person, phone and e-mail services of EAP coordinators; direct teacher referrals for intervention, crisis counseling, Medeca, and short-term counseling; and, consults with counsellors, physicians, NLTA Administrative Officers, school board representatives) increasing drastically from 2019-21: (see chart page 9)



EAP Services



It is therefore not surprising that, more and more, we hear discussions regarding compassion fatigue and the “cost of caring” among teachers. The March 2013 edition of Education Canada published an article titled Caring without Tiring – Dealing with compassion fatigue burnout in teaching. The article states that teachers:

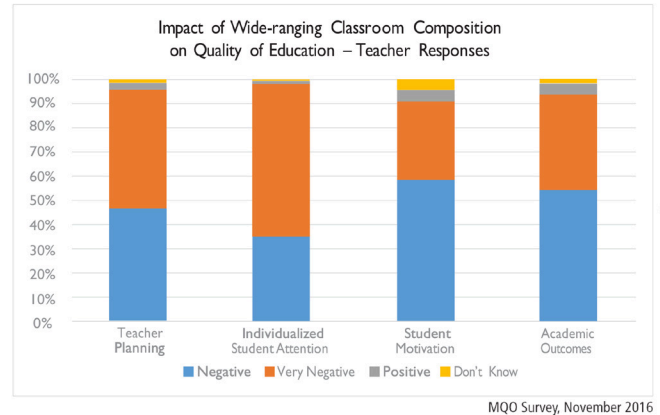
*... can be drained by personal overwork or by the response to the demands of an educational system that overworks and under-supports teachers. Students learn when teachers care, but when passionate teachers burn out from compassion fatigue, no one wins. Teacher engagement is diminished, **student learning is compromised**, and school environments suffer. ...*

*When budgets for educational services and support are cut, teachers are left to do more, with a more vulnerable student population, with fewer resources and less assistance. A lack of Educational Assistants, lack of timely educational testing for students who are struggling academically, and limited budgets for materials (causing teachers to feel compelled to spend out-of-pocket) are examples of stressful impacts of inadequate budgets. Funding cuts to services that support youth and families are also felt in the classroom, since teachers are on the front lines of support. Teachers know that kids who are hungry don't learn well, that students who don't have community activities to connect with feel alienated, that cuts in social services affect families in need. **We have empathy – and that is exactly why it is difficult to keep compassion fatigue in check.** [emphasis added]*

Teachers' overall experiences are in line with the research. As part of the previously referenced November 2016 survey by MQO Research, teachers were asked about the impact of wide-ranging classroom composition in a number of areas: teacher planning, individualized student attention, student motivation and academic outcomes. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 = very negative impact and 10 = very positive impact, more than 90% of teachers surveyed indicated that there would be a negative impact in all areas (score between 1-5), with the most significantly negative effect on individualized student attention:

These results echo what was heard by the Panel on the Status of Public Education in Newfoundland Labrador during their extensive consultations, and it is therefore not surprising that the second of 32 recommendations included in the Panel report was:

That Government and the School District(s) in cooperation with the NLTA and other stakeholders establish a new class size cap for classes with a composition diversity of greater than 10% in primary, elementary, intermediate and senior high schools.



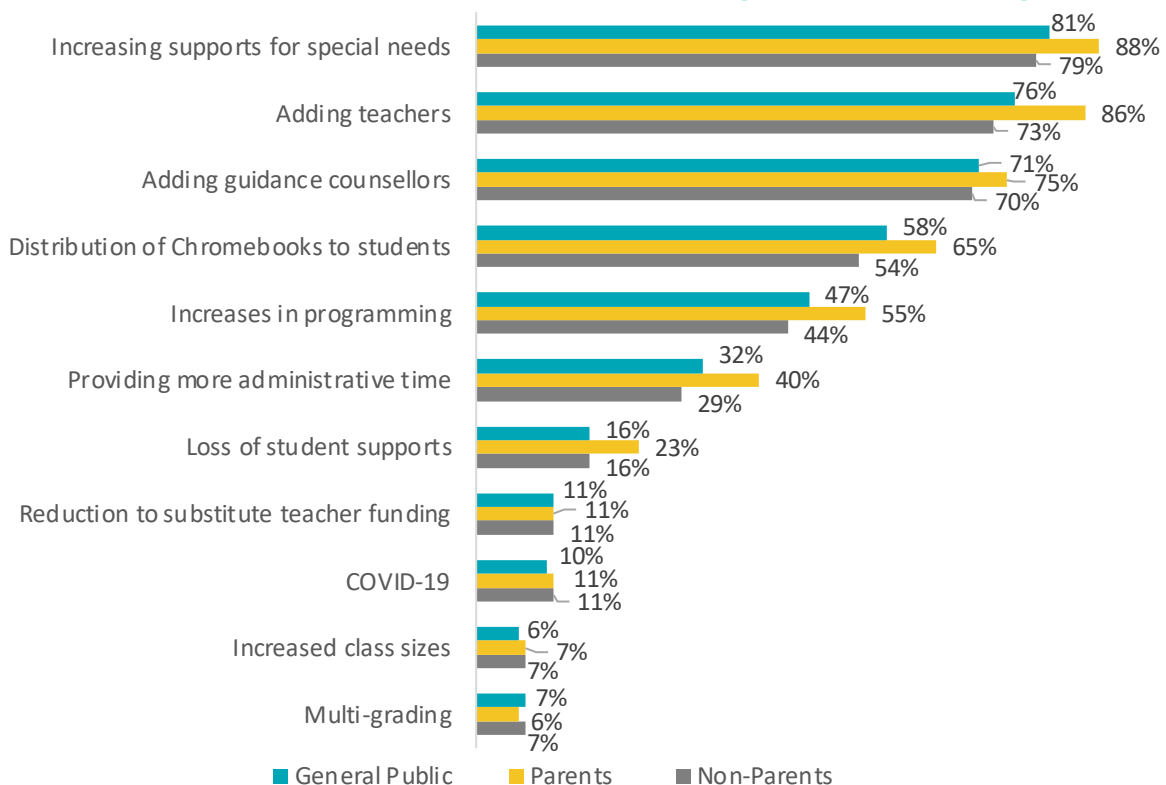
The 2017 report of the Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes also addressed the impact of complex class composition in its examination of inclusive education practices.

The Task Force made the following finding regarding the challenges of providing regular instruction and meeting high levels of diverse student needs for specialized supports in the classroom:

This arrangement creates a challenging teaching and learning environment for both teachers and students. For teachers, it is difficult to conduct whole class instruction ... For students, there is an impeded opportunity for specialist support...

Recent independent research commissioned by the NLTA demonstrates that concerns around class composition, including the need for increased supports for students with special needs, continue today among parents, the general public and teachers.

POSITIVE IMPACT ON EDUCATION (% 8 OR HIGHER)



The survey results included that 81% of the general public and 88% of parents ranked **increased supports for students with special needs** as a factor that would have a positive impact on education. 76% of the general public and 86% of parents identified **adding more teachers** to the K-12 system as a factor that would have a positive impact on education.

Recommendations on Class Size and Class Composition

Advocating for appropriate limits on class size that take into account the real impact of complex class composition goes to the core of the NLTA mission and our role/responsibilities under the Teachers’ Association Act. Association policy states:

*The NLTA maintains the view that a direct relationship exists between student achievement and class size. Therefore, in order to promote effective teaching and learning conditions and in the interest of quality education and enhanced levels of student achievement, the Association will make every effort to pursue **limits on class sizes appropriate to the teaching situation involved ...** [emphasis added]*

1. The NLTA recommends the following allocation guidelines to address class size and composition:

Kindergarten classes	maximum 12 students
Primary (grades 1-3) classes	maximum 20 students
Elementary/Intermediate and High School (grades 4-12) classes	maximum 20 students
Allowance for smaller class size in response to significant complexity/diversity of student needs (10% or greater) within a regular classroom setting	maximum 15 students
Special education classes	maximum 6 students; maximum 4 students if presenting with complex/severe needs
Laboratory, workshop and computer classes	Subject to recommended caps, should not exceed the number of fully equipped student work stations provided.
Multigrade/multicourse classes, K-3	maximum 10 students
Multigrade/multicourse classes, 4-6	maximum 12 students
Multigrade/multicourse classes, 7-12	maximum 15 students

ESSENTIAL SUPPORTS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

The terms of reference for the Committee include a mandate to review the roles and responsibilities of a number of specific and specialized focus areas within the profession in determining the appropriate allocation of teaching resources:

- Guidance Counsellors
- Educational Psychologists
- Speech Language Pathologists (SLP)
- Itinerant Teachers for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH)
- Itinerant Teachers for the Blind/Visually Impaired (BVI)
- Instructional Resource Teachers (IRT)
- Learning Resource Teachers (LRT)
- PASS Teachers
- Student Support Services Itinerant Teachers
- Program Specialists
- English as a Second Language (ESL) Teachers
- Teaching and Learning Assistants (TLA)
- Reading Specialists

Considering the complexity and specialization of expertise and roles reflected within this group, the importance of the Committee engaging in meaningful and fulsome consultation with NLTA members in the field who work in these positions cannot be overstated. Role specific surveys have been conducted but we believe the planned focus groups are essential to a thorough and comprehensive review, as well as engagement with relevant NLTA Special Interest Councils (SICs - www.nlta.nl.ca/sics/).

What these diverse practice areas have in common is that they are all roles carried out by very highly qualified professionals who support students, the work of classroom teachers, and student learning overall. They are essential to any effective approach to the challenges of class composition, and specifically support efforts to ensure equitable access to education for our students with the highest and most complex needs, including but not limited to:

- mental health and addictions
- learning disabilities and other exceptionalities
- social and emotional learning and well-being
- physical, emotional, academic, communication needs
- health and safety, basic needs
- accommodations
- socio-economic challenges, family struggles, trauma
- new Canadians
- safety, respect and inclusion
- individualized interventions and supports
- support and guidance for teachers re curriculum, learning resources, professional learning
- interventions/supports for complex situations

Towards Recovery, the March 2017 report of the All Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, recognized the significance of adequate resourcing for education professionals in the school setting, including guidance counsellors, educational psychologists and IRTs, in meeting the mental health and addictions needs of students in the K-12 system. The Child and Youth Advocate's 2019 report on chronic school absenteeism noted, "Lack of access to guidance services" and "Inadequate accommodation for individual learning needs/styles," as student identified impediments to attendance. The February 2022 Health Accord report found that, in this province:

We have the highest rate of children and youth with complex health care needs, 53% higher than the national average. Our province has one of the highest prevalence rates of children and youth in alternate care, and these children and youth are among the most vulnerable groups in our society. ... Many children in this group have developmental trauma, complex mental health issues, learning and academic challenges, and significant medical diagnoses.

The report goes on to identify mental health as a concern that arose consistently throughout the Accord's public engagement initiative, including a special symposium with high school students. It was further noted that the suicide rate for the province "has tripled since the 1980s and is among the highest in Canada."

Current allocations for guidance counsellors are woefully inadequate to meet student needs for mental/emotional health and related supports. The 2007 Commission report recommended a student to counsellor ratio of 1/333, while 1/250 is the generally accepted appropriate standard in Canada. Yet, our allocations still sit at 1/500 (increases for 2020-21 and 2021-22 in response to the pandemic have been maintained for 2022-23, but are still temporary measures).

Educational psychologists, SLPs, DHH and BVI itinerant teachers, and ESL teachers are spread too thin, and often struggle to balance caseloads well in excess of professionally recommended standards with required travel time. IRT allocation formulae have remained stagnant for many years, despite the well-documented increase in complex student needs, and there is no clearly established, consistent criteria for the allocation of PASS teachers. Support from itinerant teachers for Student Support Services are not equitably accessible across the province.

Allocations for LRTs, Reading Specialists and TLAs, while critical to the implementation of the Responsive Teaching and Learning Policy (RTL), have never been officially included in the current Teacher Allocation Model and have indeed been spread more thinly within schools as the RTL phase-in has proceeded. NLTA surveys of members in "phase schools" during each stage of the RTL implementation clearly showed that, while there is general support for the principles and philosophy of the policy, it is not sustainable in the long term due to resourcing deficiencies. Indeed, in the results of the Department of Education 2020-21 year end survey of phase schools, classroom teachers indicated that close to 30% of students who required targeted/intensive interventions (as determined by the Teaching and Learning or Program Planning Teams) did not receive the required intervention. The survey did not inquire further as to why that was the case, but we submit that a direct connection to human resource levels would be the most likely reason. To date, there has been no indication from Government of the plans for properly resourcing implementation of the RTL beyond K-6.

Curriculum/program specific supports and related professional learning for teachers are also essential to teaching and learning. Program specialists have a critical role in this regard. The report of the Premier's Task Force found that effective professional development requires dedicated resources for sustainability, and that:

*System- and school-directed professional development is essential for implementation of new curricula, policies and emerging educational realities. **The link between teacher professional development and student outcomes is well documented.** [emphasis added]*

Despite Government's expressed commitment to its Education Action Plan, Budget 2022 made no reference to maintaining the program specialists positions that are specifically related to this initiative.

Teaching and supporting student learning in the K-12 public education system is a team effort. Knowledge, understanding and experience of the "on the ground" realities in the system, school operations and resource levels, curriculum, and program requirements are essential to a cooperative and cohesive team to provide effective supports for student learning. **Suggestions by some that moving certain areas of professional focus outside the education system would realize efficiencies are misguided and would not serve the best interests of teaching and learning.**

Important factors to keep in mind in considering the roles, responsibilities and appropriate allocation for the teaching resources addressed in this section include:

- professional caseload standards
- growing impact of mental/emotional health concerns on student learning

- class composition
- inclusion, human rights, accommodations
- impact of teacher stress on students
- sustainability of new curricula, programs, policies, etc.
- the need for a long-term vision – gains through investments in student supports vs. the cost of a triage, “band aid” approach (proactive vs. reactive)
- a resourcing model that keeps pace with the need, as opposed to just spreading limited resources more thinly

Recommendations on Essential Supports for Teaching and Learning

2. The NLTA recommends the following allocation guidelines:

Guidance Counsellors	1:250
Educational Psychologists	1:1000
SLPs	1:40, maximum of 25 direct contact students per allocated position
DHH/BVI Itinerants	1:20, maximum of 5 core case load students
IRTs	20:1000 + additional allocation for students with complex needs or who require intensive supports; immediate additional resources in response to emergent and changing student needs
Learning Resource Teachers	1:250
PASS	consistent, permanent allocation providing equitable access for all schools
SSS Itinerants	consistent, permanent allocation providing equitable access for all schools
Program Specialists	minimum of 60 FTE positions, essential support for all grade level divisions and curriculum areas
ESL Teachers	1:15 with a lower ratio in cases of significant teacher travel time requirements between school sites; immediate additional resources in response to increases in student numbers due to immigration initiatives; etc.
TLAs	1 per every 4 K-6 classrooms
Reading Specialists	1:250

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

An effective principal is not all that is required for an effective school, but it is very difficult to have a good school without a good principal. (Southern Regional Education Board – Challenge to Lead Series, 2004) [emphasis added]

The significance of school leadership to teaching and learning is critical and warrants particular attention in this submission and the work of the Committee. It is no coincidence that the Schools Act identifies instructional leadership as the first responsibility of principals. This is the fundamental essence of school leadership – principals and assistant principals are, by design and in effect, the lead teachers in their schools. This critical role will indeed be the focus of national discussion at the uLead Summit on School Leadership Within the Teaching Profession in April 2022, to take place in conjunction with the annual conference of the Canadian Association of Principals.

This is not a new realization or concept. It is in keeping with the 1992 report, *Our Children, Our Future*, which stated that:

...no meaningful change can take place in education unless there is a recognition of the significant contribution of the school principal ... and any discussion of what this role is or, should be, must center on the concept of instructional leadership.

However, this is not a principal's sole responsibility. The statutory obligations of principals (and by extension in practice, assistant principals) have always been rooted in, but have grown beyond, instructional leadership. In 2007, the Teacher Allocation Commission found that:

... modern school leadership must respond to a myriad of demands for school development, staff development, community relations, and accountability for all aspects of student learning and school operational effectiveness. In addition, necessary teaching responsibilities for administrators only exacerbate these challenges. The balancing act between leadership roles and classroom responsibilities can have a negative impact on student learning, especially when administrators are brought out of the classroom to address urgent administrative issues such as discipline.

*... The principal is responsible for nearly every ongoing process in a given school and **any discussion of teacher allocation incorporates the provision of adequate time for administrators to perform well in their roles.*** [emphasis added]

This time to “perform well in their roles” has been under attack since well before 2007. The NLTA, in its 2006 submission to the Teacher Allocation Commission, reported that:

Currently, school administrators are overwhelmed with significant increases in the downloading of responsibilities created as a result of School Board restructuring and consolidation. No longer are these positions attractive to those who have aspirations of entering into administration.

This unfortunate trend has continued. The NLTA survey of school administrators in 2014, conducted shortly after the amalgamation of all English school boards and creation of the NLESD, revealed the following reality with respect to administrators' workload:

NLTA School Administrators' Survey 2014

My work responsibilities over time have:		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Increased	92.9%	380
Decreased	0.7%	3
Remained the same	3.9%	16
Don't know	0.2%	1
N/A	2.2%	9
Total Respondents		409

As well, less than 50% of administrators at that time said they would, knowing what they knew then, still have chosen this career path, while 27% expressed uncertainty about whether they would have decided to enter administration:

Given your current professional circumstance and knowing what you know today, would you still have decided on a career as a school administrator?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	47.6%	197
No	24.9%	103
Don't know	26.8%	111
N/A	0.7%	3
Total Respondents		414

But yet, the 2016-17 school year saw reductions in administrative allocations, a significant rollback of gains made following the 2007 Commission report and, like increases to class size, a decision made in the absence of the review of allocations that should have been done in 2011. These changes are further evidence of the trend of introducing new initiatives and programming – full-day kindergarten in September 2016 – at the expense of existing programming and human resources. These changes also came with the complete elimination of any administrative time for those who take on the unique leadership challenges of our smallest schools, which the 2007 Commission report characterized as “unfair,” given that the “duties of leadership and management exist,” regardless of school size.

The following table demonstrates the current allocations for school administration, following the disastrous budget decisions of 2016, in comparison to the model introduced in 2008-09 (reductions are in **bold**):

Administrative Allocation			
Student Population	2008-09	Student Population Adjusted Ranges	Current
1-25	0.5 units	26-74	0 units
26-74	0.5 units		.5 units
75-149	1.0 units	75-174	1.0 units
150-249	1.25 units	175-399	1.25 units
250-399	1.5 units		1.25 units
400-549	1.75 units	550-849	1.5 units
550-699	2.0 units		2.0 units
700-849	2.25 units		2.0 units
850+	3.0 units		2.5 units

We acknowledge that the increase to administrative allocations for the past two school years will be continued for 2022-23, but this remains, to date, a temporary measure.

It should therefore come as no surprise that the overriding theme of feedback from school administrators has not changed since the 2014 survey results, especially in light of the continuing pressures related to COVID-19, increased school community communications demands that come at all hours and all times, and ongoing uncertainty around the impact of the NLESD/ Department of Education integration process. A very small sample of anecdotal reports received by the NLTA President from administrators during the 2021-22 school year includes:

“... As for Administration, now in my 15th year as Principal I feel this is my most challenging year yet and certainly believe I am a school manager as opposed to Educational Leader.”

“This is my 30th year of teaching and my 17th year as an administrator. I have never seen a more urgent NEED for human resources than right now!”

“Great job yesterday with the media release. Your presentation clearly articulated the very real pressures that we are all seeing and experiencing in our schools. As administrators, we are feeling it very acutely. Your presentation was right on the mark with respect to what we have been dealing with and in relation to the feedback that we are getting from teachers.”

“Administrators are ... burned out!”

Any successful organization or enterprise needs solid leadership, and our school leaders – administrators – need time to lead. Allocations for administrative time need to be separate, not come at the expense of teaching resources, and must incorporate and account for the importance of a team approach between principals and assistant principals in most schools.

Recommendations on School Administrators

3. The NLTA recommends that dedicated time for school administration be allocated to schools as follows:

Number of Pupils	Administrative Allocation
1 – 49	0.5 units
50 – 174	1.0 units
175 – 249	1.25 units
250 – 399	1.5 units
400 – 549	1.75 units
550 – 699	2.0 units
700 – 849	2.5 units
850 +	3.0 units

SPECIALIST TEACHERS

The May 2007 report of the Teacher Allocation Commission recognized that:

*Society is a mosaic of many individuals, with distinct needs and interests who combine to create the dynamic, complex world in which we live. ... Specialists are a part of a well-run school community. Just as hospitals require physicians with diverse specialties, **the education system needs to be resourced with professionals with unique, expert skill sets.*** [emphasis added]

Considering this finding from 2007, it is interesting to reflect upon the experience of the past two school years. Throughout the pandemic, Public Health officials and experts in pediatrics have consistently cited the importance of in person schooling for children, not just for academics, but for the overall well-being and development of the whole child, including equity of access to opportunities in and exposure to physical activity, the arts, technology, etc. which some students can only avail of at school.

NLTA policy states that:

Teachers for specialty program areas such as physical education, music, Core French, reading recovery, and later literacy should be excluded from the normal pupil-teacher allocation ratio and allocated on a different formula devised to provide adequate personnel to deliver a curriculum expected of schools in today's society.

The programming and supports provided by teachers in specialty areas are essential to a well-rounded educational experience. They complement and reinforce academic objectives, promote physical and social-emotional health and well-being, and provide opportunities for students to explore and develop their individual interests and talents.

Teachers in many of these focus areas are leading the way in supporting their colleagues with professional learning initiatives through involvement in various NLTA Special Interest Councils. We encourage the Committee to seek out and provide opportunities for consultation and feedback with the relevant SICs (www.nlta.nl.ca/sics/) in reviewing and making recommendations on allocations for specialist teachers.

Recommendation on Specialist Teachers

4. The NLTA recommends specialist teacher-student ratios for all grade levels as follows:

Music	1:125
Art	1:125
French	1:125
Physical Education	1:125
Technology	1:125

STUDENT ASSISTANTS

Student assistants are an essential support for teaching and learning in our schools. A true picture of the reality in our schools and classrooms must include acknowledgement of the fact that, when student assistant time is inadequate, teachers, guidance counsellors and administrators are regularly redeployed to attend to personal care, safety and other supports that should be carried out by student assistants. This is an ineffective use of professional time and expertise, and is a consistent challenge for NLTA members, diverting them from their proper and intended roles, responsibilities and respective scopes of practice.

In a detailed letter to the Minister of Education, Tom Osborne, on October 29, 2021, NLTA President Trent Langdon wrote:

*School counsellors, IRTs and administrators are regularly being redeployed to attend to personal care tasks, physical supports and supervision for safety reasons. This is occurring not just on an ad hoc basis when, for example, substitute SAs to replace absent staff cannot be found, but also as part of a regular, scheduled routine due to the overall inadequacy of SA time to meet student needs. **These highly trained professionals are therefore less available to use and apply their skills and expertise to meet the needs in their schools around student mental health, social/emotional learning, special education supports and targeted interventions and instructional leadership.** [emphasis added]*

This is not a new concern – the need for increased student assistant time has been a consistent focus in NLTA advocacy efforts for many years. The NLTA’s October 2006 submission to the Teacher Allocation Commission spoke to the direct impact of student assistant supports on teaching and learning, and voiced the frustration of NLTA members overwhelmed by documentation requirements and intense approval processes, “year-after-year in an attempt to obtain the same level of student assistance support for the same student with the same needs.”

In conducting this review, it is important for the Committee to ensure the feedback and input opportunities for NLTA members include a chance to address the impact that inadequate student assistant time has on their ability to fulfill the roles and responsibilities for which they were trained and hired. Just a few examples of anecdotal accounts received by the NLTA during the current school year include:

I am scheduled with students, acting as an SA all day long with not even a recess break (I am a full time guidance counsellor “in theory”.)

I am emailing with a question around the request for administrators to travel on the Alternate Needs Bus ... if there are no Student Assistants available to fill the SA position. There are many issues around this request and I would like to seek input from NLTA.

Many... counsellors ... are finding themselves without actual counselling time; ... they are being deployed to ensure student safety needs are being met. Teachers... have little ability to do targeted intervention with students who have notable learning difficulties because of the sheer number of needs in their classrooms, and access to IRT time is scant as these professionals are, again, responsible for keeping students safe, due to the lack of resourcing in both IRTs and Student Assistants.

... many school counsellors and even administrators are finding themselves responding frequently to student safety incidents, and even being placed in the schedule for covering the students during the day as the student assistant allocations are insufficient. As a school psychologist, I am feeling futile. At this point in the school year I am frequently observing students for the purposes of making recommendations for interventions; however, there is little room in schools’ schedules to enact these interventions as the IRT resources are spread so thin.

My school counsellor and IRT colleagues are exasperated, spending their recess and lunch breaks with students, as there are not enough student assistants to meet the many and varied student needs in the building at these times. As a result, duty schedules are affected, and classroom/subject teachers are being assigned additional duty to offset the loss of IRT/school counsellor coverage while these professionals are ensuring that our highest need students are safe.

Recommendation on Student Assistants

5. The NLTA recommends that an established, needs-based allocation model for student assistant supports be established, as opposed to a global budget line that provides a finite number of hours per year. The model must ensure that student assistant allocations are adequate to support all student personal care needs, as well as safety/behavioural supervision requirements, and provide consistency in support levels for student needs that do not change significantly from year to year.

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO SERVICE DELIVERY

The Committee's terms of reference include direction to consider innovative approaches to the delivery of education services. This includes reviewing the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI), along with other virtual learning resources introduced by school districts during the pandemic.

Innovation and creativity are welcome, but the NLTA cautions against and cannot support any approach that is about looking to do more, adding expectations and responsibilities, without increasing human resources.

The provincial model of virtual teaching and learning – CDLI – is a world class example of an effective, synchronous alternative that enables students in small and remote communities/schools to access the full curriculum with instruction from teachers who are subject area specialists. It is also available to students in other areas who may be medically unable to attend school in person. The NLTA would support the expansion of CDLI programming, subject to adequate resourcing. Increasing need and opportunity for CDLI and related services should not be met by spreading existing resources more thinly. As well, NLTA members in CDLI positions should be actively involved, included and engaged in efforts to explore new options and possibilities with other partners. Their experience and expertise is essential to any such endeavours.

Pandemic lessons must also be kept in mind:

- We know, as Public Health and pediatric specialists have stated, that, whenever possible (and subject to safety and Public Health requirements), in person schooling is the best option on the whole for teaching and learning and for overall student development and well-being.
- We also learned, during the 2020-21 school year, that a “hybrid” or “blended” model is ineffective and problematic. Teachers cannot effectively teach and supervise students in person while also providing virtual instruction and resources. This is a significant and unreasonable teacher workload issue and is contrary to everything we know about creating engaging and inclusive classroom environments. Teaching is not a “Ted Talk”. Dynamic, student-centered classroom practices are inconsistent with the idea of a stationary teacher who must be “live and on camera” for a remote audience. An expansion of virtual teaching and learning options must come with dedicated human resources.
- Virtual learning should not simply be about parent or student choice. Schools provide many in person benefits and opportunities for student learning and development that cannot be effectively replaced in a virtual format. As well, the ability to make such “choices” is relative – not all students’ circumstances are conducive to effective virtual learning and this reality, including related socio-economic factors, must be taken into account. Caution is warranted to avoid going down a path that would serve only to undermine and weaken the public K-12 education system.

Other issues to keep in mind include:

- equity and access concerns (including technology, internet access, etc.)
- student/teacher/home privacy concerns
- social/emotional impacts
- excessive screen time
- decreased physical activity
- impact on student engagement
- challenges in accessing other school supports
- barriers for certain students with complex needs

Recommendations on Innovative Approaches to Service Delivery

6. The NLTA recommends the following allocations for CDLI teaching resources:

- class size cap of 20 students per CDLI class
- maximum of 8 students per CDLI course per distance education site
- dedicated school based teacher allocation for CDLI support and student supervision

7. The NLTA recommends that a joint committee or working group be formed to determine options for new and innovative approaches to service delivery. The committee should include representation from the Department of Education, school districts, the Memorial University Faculty of Education, and the NLTA, along with CDLI teacher representatives.

MEETING UNEXPECTED OR EMERGENT NEEDS

The 2006 terms of reference for the Teacher Allocation Commission also included this area of focus:

Government's acknowledgment of the need for provision in the model to meet unexpected/emerging needs each school year.

This reality in our schools is not something new, but the challenge of responding to unanticipated and evolving student needs in the context of a budget-based, as opposed to needs-based, approach to teacher allocations (and student assistant budgets) is all too familiar. As previously noted, the May 2007 Commission recommendation of increasing class sizes by, “not more than two students subject to the approval of the Director of Education,” has now become the expected approach in the first instance instead of the “exception to the rule”. In any event, this recommendation alone was never adequate to address anything other than pure issues of class size, and was not responsive to needs related to class composition and students with complex needs. We are long overdue for a thoughtful, responsive, reliable and clearly articulated procedure for addressing such matters.

Recommendations on appropriate ways to meet unexpected or emerging needs must also be considered and developed in consideration of and in support of broader government initiatives that have a direct impact on class size, class composition and the level of student needs in our schools. For example, the impact of immigration and the traumatic experiences that many new Canadians have lived through prior to arriving in the province must be taken into account. If Government is serious about keeping families here and attracting and retaining newcomers, then ensuring they are satisfied with the learning environment and educational supports for their school-aged children should be a critical aspect of any recruitment/retention strategy aimed at growing our population.

What is clear is that what we are doing now is not effective. Meeting unexpected or emergent needs is not the same as a triage approach whereby existing resources are redeployed to respond to the most immediate and critical needs, effectively “robbing Peter to pay Paul”. Yet, this is the daily reality in our schools and for NLTA members. What is regularly occurring “on the ground” when, for example, a new student arrives at a school who needs supports from IRTs and/or student assistants, is that existing human resources are redeployed. This results in a reduction in available supports for students who were already receiving them, whose needs were not diminished by the new student’s arrival. Teachers and administrators at the school level are left to explain this to students and families.

Teachers, administrators and other school staff are “making it work”, doing their best for students, which is to be commended but is perhaps not in the best interests of the education system as a whole. Many parents and concerned citizens only see what is on the surface. They remain unaware of how thinly school resources are spread in order to deal with the “fires” that are burning most strongly, while others smolder and build until they too threaten to ignite.

Recommendation on Meeting Unexpected or Emergent Needs

8. The NLTA recommends that an adequate and flexible annual reserve allocation and budget be established, separate from regular allocations, to address emergent needs in a timely manner and without increasing class size or reducing/removing supports for students that are already in place.

OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER

There is no doubt that Newfoundland and Labrador faces challenges, some of which are unique to our circumstances. Our provincial context and other key factors impacting the K-12 systems must be taken into account as the Committee works through its mandate.

School safety and resiliency – The past two school years of pandemic responses have laid bare the realities in our schools and shone a harsh light on the importance of in-person K-12 learning, not just for students but for society as a whole. Establishing and enforcing smaller, more reasonable class sizes at all times would make schools more resilient and adaptable in the event of future Public Health emergencies.

Teacher preparation time – Newfoundland and Labrador is one of a few jurisdictions in the country in which teachers have no guarantee of adequate, or any, preparation time during the regular school day. Schools are incredibly intense, tightly scheduled and dynamic workplaces, and the allocation of teaching resources needs to include allowances for the regular scheduling of teacher preparation time at the school level. Most schools in the province are able to make this work to some degree for teaching staff, but preparation time for planning and collaboration is neither assured nor adequate, and we have schools in which teachers have no access to this at all. Appropriate preparation time is not only important to teacher efficacy and quality of work life, it is also essential to programming and supports for students. In this regard, it is notable that the results of the Department of Education’s 2020-21 survey of RTL phase-in schools report that, when asked about barriers to schools being professional learning communities, almost 70% of respondents identified a “lack of consistent time for collaboration” as being an issue to some degree (very large barrier – 14.5%; large barrier – 13.8%; medium barrier – 15.1%; small barrier – 25.2%). Policies and programs that rely so heavily on a collaborative, team approach requiring regular meetings should not be introduced without proper supports.

Partial positions – The challenges of partial positions were discussed by the Commission back in 2007, although the concern at that time was primarily around full-time jobs that encompassed multiple distinct professional roles/responsibilities. Since that time, the K-12 system has seen a significant increase in the number of very small percentages of positions being advertised as stand-alone jobs – it is not uncommon to see positions of 25% and less, sometimes even single digit percentages, posted regularly. Such vacancies often pose recruitment challenges and present difficulties (beyond the obvious financial realities of part-time work) due to the fact the school scheduling demands can be decidedly unfair to part-time teachers, resulting in schedules that effectively require full-time attendance for part-time pay, limiting opportunities to supplement income through substitute teaching. The NLESD plan to fully implement automated call-ins for substitute teachers will only serve to exacerbate this issue, removing the human discretion to make adjustments that accommodate part-time staff. Part-time teachers are not required to be compensated for their participation in required professional learning that occurs during times when they would not ordinarily be scheduled to work, placing them at a distinct financial and professional disadvantage. Teacher allocations should incorporate reasonable parameters around the use of part-time positions.

French immersion – The allocation of teaching resources should build in allowances for greater equity in resourcing between French immersion and English stream programs. If we are offering French immersion (which the NLTA supports), then there needs to be a planned approach that goes beyond class size and provides for appropriate supports to make it as accessible as possible for students without disadvantaging English stream programming or resources.

Small schools – An effective model for allocating teaching resources must be grounded in and responsive to the demographic realities of our province. Current and past Ministers of Education have often made reference to our overall, average provincial student/teacher ratio comparing favourably against that of other provinces. However, what officials are less eager to highlight is how the fact that Newfoundland and Labrador has the lowest population density in Canada (excluding the territories) skews this statistic. The realities of providing services, including public education, in the context of our geography and population spread must be factored into decisions impacting the allocation of teaching resources to our schools. We have, by necessity, small schools that will continue to be required in their rural and remote communities. Their staffing requirements should not come at the expense of large class sizes and inadequate supports for complex class compositions in other areas.

Teacher recruitment and retention – The pandemic has exacerbated what was already a growing concern around teacher recruitment and retention. This is not just a provincial issue, but a national and international reality – the Newfoundland and

Labrador K-12 system is competing with the country and the world to keep our own teachers and recruit candidates from other jurisdictions. New teacher graduates have many choices today and are aggressively recruited by other systems, often well in advance of the time frame for posting/filling vacancies in NL. The annual determination of allocations is so tightly tied to provincial budget processes that our K-12 system is always well behind other jurisdictions in commencing its hiring processes, and frequently still struggles to fill vacancies very late into the summer. We need a comprehensive strategy on recruitment/retention that includes an approach to teacher allocations that ensures the teaching and learning conditions of the profession in NL (including class size/composition, preparation time, partial positions, student supports, etc.) are competitive and appealing, and that available teaching positions can be posted and filled in a timely manner.

Recommendations

- 9.** The NLTA recommends that the allocation of teaching resources to schools include allowance for a reasonable amount of dedicated, regularly scheduled teacher preparation time in all schools.
- 10.** The NLTA recommends that the allocation of teaching resources to schools should incorporate reasonable parameters around the use of part-time positions.
- 11.** The NLTA recommends that the allocation of teaching resources should incorporate provisions on class size and supports for students with special needs to ensure greater equity in resourcing and access between French immersion and English stream programs.
- 12.** The NLTA recommends that the allocation of teaching resources for small schools should be determined in a manner that is appropriate and responsive to their unique needs and circumstances, and which does not have a detrimental impact on the level of resourcing available for other schools.
- 13.** The NLTA recommends an approach to determining annual allocations of teaching resources at an earlier point in time each year and within a timeframe that allows for earlier posting and filling of vacant positions.

CONCLUSION

The public K-12 education system in Newfoundland and Labrador desperately needs a long-term, needs-based approach to ensuring that human resourcing in our schools is adequate to address current/known circumstances and student needs while being able to respond to truly unexpected situations. It is time to take an approach based in the knowledge that investing in our kids by appropriately resourcing public education IS an investment in the overall future prosperity and well-being of our province and its people.

The NLTA recommends and calls for a model for the allocation of teaching resources to our schools that:

- is truly needs based, as opposed to budget based
- reduces class size
- includes class composition as a required component factoring into the establishment of appropriate class sizes
- is responsive to the reality of student needs at the school level
- includes built-in allowances to ensure that unexpected/emergent needs are addressed without taking away from existing student supports
- is consistent with and supportive of broader government priorities and initiatives to achieve and sustain population growth, including through immigration
- will create better, less stressful and better supported teaching and learning environments in the best interests of students and school staff
- promotes and supports the recruitment and retention of qualified teachers in a timely manner

It is time to get it right!

APPENDIX A: RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The NLTA recommends the following allocation guidelines to address class size and composition:

Kindergarten classes	maximum 12 students
Primary (grades 1-3) classes	maximum 20 students
Elementary/Intermediate and High School (grades 4-12) classes	maximum 20 students
Allowance for smaller class size in response to significant complexity/diversity of student needs (10% or greater) within a regular classroom setting	maximum 15 students
Special education classes	maximum 6 students; maximum 4 students if presenting with complex/severe needs
Laboratory, workshop and computer classes	Subject to recommended caps, should not exceed the number of fully equipped student work stations provided.
Multigrade/multicourse classes, K-3	maximum 10 students
Multigrade/multicourse classes, 4-6	maximum 12 students
Multigrade/multicourse classes, 7-12	maximum 15 students

2. The NLTA recommends the following allocation guidelines:

Guidance Counsellors	1:250
Educational Psychologists	1:1000
SLPs	1:40, maximum of 5 core case load students
DHH/BVI Itinerants	1:20, maximum of 5 core case load students
IRTs	20:1000 + additional allocation for students with complex needs or who require intensive supports; immediate additional resources in response to emergent and changing student needs
Learning Resource Teachers	1:250
PASS	consistent, permanent allocation providing equitable access for all schools
SSS Itinerants	consistent, permanent allocation providing equitable access for all schools
Program Specialists	minimum of 60 FTE positions, essential support for all grade level divisions and curriculum areas
ESL Teachers	1:15 with a lower ratio in cases of significant teacher travel time requirements between school sites; immediate additional resources in response to increases in student numbers due to immigration initiatives; etc.
TLAs	1 per every 4 K-6 classrooms
Reading Specialists	1:250

3. The NLTA recommends that dedicated time for school administration be allocated to schools as follows:

Number of Pupils	Administrative Allocation
1 – 49	0.5 units
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175 – 249	1.25 units
250 – 399	1.5 units
400 – 549	1.75 units
550 – 699	2.0 units
700 – 849	2.5 units
850 +	3.0 units

4. The NLTA recommends specialist teacher-student ratios for all grade levels as follows:

Music	1:125
Art	1:125
French	1:125
Physical Education	1:125
Technology	1:125

5. The NLTA recommends that an established, needs-based allocation model for student assistant supports be established, as opposed to a global budget line that provides a finite number of hours per year. The model must ensure that student assistant allocations are adequate to support all student personal care needs, as well as safety/behavioural supervision requirements, and provide consistency in support levels for student needs that do not change significantly from year to year.
6. The NLTA recommends the following allocations for CDLI teaching resources:
- class size cap of 20 students per CDLI class
 - maximum of 8 students per CDLI course per distance education site
 - dedicated school based teacher allocation for CDLI support and student supervision
7. The NLTA recommends that a joint committee or working group be formed to determine options for new and innovative approaches to service delivery. The committee should include representation from the Department of Education, school districts, the Memorial University Faculty of Education, and the NLTA, along with CDLI teacher representatives.
8. The NLTA recommends that an adequate and flexible annual reserve allocation and budget be established, separate from regular allocations, to address emergent needs in a timely manner and without increasing class size or reducing/removing supports for students that are already in place.
9. The NLTA recommends that the allocation of teaching resources to schools include allowance for a reasonable amount of dedicated, regularly scheduled teacher preparation time in all schools.
10. The NLTA recommends that the allocation of teaching resources to schools should incorporate reasonable parameters around the use of part-time positions.
11. The NLTA recommends that the allocation of teaching resources should incorporate provisions on class size and supports for students with special needs to ensure greater equity in resourcing and access between French immersion and English stream programs.
12. The NLTA recommends that the allocation of teaching resources for small schools should be determined in a manner that is appropriate and responsive to their unique needs and circumstances, and which does not have a detrimental impact on the level of resourcing available for other schools.
13. The NLTA recommends an approach to determining annual allocations of teaching resources at an earlier point in time each year and within a timeframe that allows for earlier posting and filling of vacant positions.

