

For Immediate Release

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NLTA PLEASED TEACHER ALLOCATION REVIEW IS FINALLY COMPLETED, REVIEWING THE DETAILS

St. John's, NL... The Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association received the report and recommendations of the Teacher Allocation Review Committee today. The completion of this process represents the fulfillment of a long-overdue obligation of the Provincial Government to conduct an independent review of the Teacher Allocation Model.

"It has been well over a decade since the Provincial Government first pledged to do this work," says Trent Langdon, President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. "During that time, conditions in our schools have changed significantly. There are ongoing, and major, resourcing, staffing and class size concerns, exacerbated by teacher recruitment/retention challenges and inadequately supported new initiatives. It is our hope that we will now start to see some definitive action from government to address these concerns and the creation of a Teacher Allocation Model that is truly needs based as opposed to a budgetary exercise. The students of this province deserve that."

Like the rest of the province, the NLTA received the Committee's final report this morning. It is a lengthy document with ten chapters and 90 recommendations, which the Association intends on reviewing and responding to thoroughly at a later date. This will take some time. However, based on an initial review, the Association has the following observations:

- We are pleased to see the recommendations for an earlier annual determination of resource allocations to the K-12 public education system. This is something that the Association has been seeking for some time;
- The acknowledgment of the need to provide incentives to recruit/retain teachers for rural/remote schools, including our Indigenous communities is positive;
- While still falling short of NLTA recommendations in certain respects, we are pleased to see some strongly worded recommendations on class size caps, including the call for greater certainty and stability in adherence to established limits;
- Recognition of the significance of class composition is welcome, including reference to reduced class size and increased allocations for Instructional Resource Teachers;
- The recommended allocations for guidance counsellors and school administrators are movement in the right direction, but we are concerned about the lack of clarity with respect to the recommendation of a "needs based" allocation in these areas for our smallest schools, whose challenges are truly unique;
- Part-time teaching positions present many challenges and recruitment is difficult for such jobs across both the Francophone and English school systems. It is disappointing that the recommendation for limits on, or "rounding up" of partial positions is limited to the CSFP when the vast majority of partial positions, some of which are less than 25%, occur within the NLESD;
- The failure to incorporate the provision of teacher preparation time within the recommended allocation model is disappointing, particularly given Department of Education and school district reliance on policies and programs based heavily on teacher collaboration and associated team meetings at the school level;
- The failure to clearly address the very high case loads and demands on some of our most specialized supports for students with very specific needs is unfortunate – this would include speech language pathologists, DHH and BVI teachers. As well, allocations recommendations for the critical supports provided by educational psychologists are not addressed; and,
- Simply maintaining already inadequate student assistant allocation levels will only continue to result in highly qualified and credentialed teachers, guidance counsellors and school administrators being routinely deployed outside their proper roles and scopes of practice to attend to student personal care and safety issues.

“The NLTA is alarmed by the Committee’s apparent over-reach of its terms of reference with respect to recommendations that go well beyond matters of resource allocation, deployment, class size, professional roles/responsibilities, and service delivery,” says President Langdon. “In particular, the interpretation of collective agreement provisions and arbitration decisions on matters that are the long-established domain of collective bargaining is deeply concerning. In the Association’s view, the Committee has dramatically overstepped its mandate, as per the stated terms of reference, by inappropriately involving itself in collective bargaining matters which are exclusively the jurisdiction of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and its agencies/boards as employers, and the bargaining agent which legally represents K-12 teachers in the public education system, the NLTA.”

The NLTA has been sounding the alarm about the pressures in the system for quite some time and the Association is more than ready and willing to step up and help the powers that be understand what meaningful change is required.

“NLTA members have been and continue to step up day after day, navigating a broken system and doing their best to make it work,” says President Langdon. “It’s time to get this right. This is important work as access to a strong public education system, with reasonable class sizes and allowances for complexity in class composition, enhances economic productivity, improves health outcomes, and can reduce demands on other public supports, including the justice system and community social services. We are preparing and look forward to further engagement with the Department of Education as the Committee’s report and recommendations are considered.”

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