

For Immediate Release

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## **NLTA RESPONDS TO COMMENTS BY THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION**

St. John's, NL... During Question Period yesterday, the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, the Hon. Brian Warr, indicated that the goal of government is to have students back full time, learning the full curriculum and with public exams reinstated, for the September start of the 2020-21 school year.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association has been in discussions with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District on plans for September 2020. These plans include the possible use of distance education, shift systems and compressed days, depending on the direction from Public Health. The NLTA is concerned that government has yet to announce or commit additional funds to support full time attendance for the full curriculum.

"We have been told by the Chief Medical Officer for Health, we have been told by the Minister of Health and we have been told by the Premier that physical distancing is our best defense against COVID-19 and a possible second wave. If this is true for restaurants and barbershops, it is just as true for crowded classrooms," states Dean Ingram, President of the NLTA. "If the goal is 100% attendance, if the goal is to comply with physical distancing rules to keep our children safe, if the goal is to avoid another shutdown of school, government needs to invest in the education plan for September and they need to let us know soon."

The NLTA has been advocating for a review of the Teacher Allocation Formula for several years, a review that had been required and was not conducted back in 2011. "Class size matters and we are convinced that reducing class size will, over time, save government money in health care, social services and criminal justice costs. In the COVID-19 world, if the goal is 100% attendance, class size matters more than ever."

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