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NLTA CALLS AGAIN FOR ACTION TO ADDRESS TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

St. John's, NL... The Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association is renewing its call for the Provincial Government to implement a comprehensive approach to address the recruitment, retention and resourcing issues that are impacting schools throughout the province.

"The focus for decision makers in public education right now needs to be the three Rs – recruitment, retention and resources," said Trent Langdon, President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. "Our Association is calling for a comprehensive strategy in response to the short and long-term challenges with recruitment and retention of certified teachers in this province. With report card season upon us, the ongoing impact of staff redeployment for internal coverage, unfilled positions, shortages of Instructional Resource Teachers, student assistants and substitutes – what we have referred to as the 'hidden reality' in our schools – is becoming even more pronounced. We acknowledge that recruitment incentives have been offered for a small number of hard to fill teaching positions, but there has been no confirmed, clearly communicated, consistent approach for such situations and no action to address retention of highly credentialed professionals. Action is needed now."

While the Department of Education has been assessing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on K-12 learning, we cannot ignore the current and continuing effect of staffing shortages and overall under-resourcing of our schools. Inaction is allowing the repercussions on learning conditions for students and working conditions for teachers to continue, compounding longstanding issues related to class size and composition.

"NLTA provincial and local branch teacher leaders gathered recently for our Joint Council meeting, and the message was clear – we need a comprehensive, consistent and coordinated approach to alleviate the pressure that is building in our public education system," said President Langdon. "Shortages of professionals may not be as 'visible' in the K-12 school system as they are in other public services. Children still get on the bus in the morning and come home at the end of the school day. But it is not 'business as usual' inside our classrooms. The NLTA has been calling for a comprehensive strategy to address teacher recruitment and retention since early last spring. Minister Haggie has publicly stated this is a priority for him, and I am calling for action now."

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NLTA Provincial Executive and Branch Presidents are calling on the Provincial Government to act now to address recruitment, retention and resourcing concerns in schools.