

For Immediate Release  
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## **NLTA REACTS TO BUDGET 2024**

St. John's, NL... The Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association is disappointed that Budget 2024 did not include adequate funding to support a comprehensive plan to address the systemic and well-established issues plaguing the province's public education system.

"Our Association has long been shining a light on the hidden reality in our schools, a reality that is making teaching and learning in this province exceptionally difficult. To say I am disappointed in this budget and with this government is an understatement," said Trent Langdon, President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. "How much more evidence does this government need to understand that our education system is in crisis? How many more heart wrenching stories from teachers and parents do they need in order to take action? On the heels of the Teachers' Think Tank process, during which over 2,200 teachers honestly expressed their concerns about the K-12 public education system and offered solutions to fix it, we expected more. Teachers expected an acknowledgement that the system is not adequately resourced, that teaching and learning is suffering as a result, and that appropriate human resources to enable schools to meet student needs are necessary if we ever hope to address teacher retention and recruitment challenges. The NLTA and its members supported the Teachers' Think Tank, trusting that government would truly be listening; teachers and students deserved real action and real investments to bring real improvements."

The NLTA has been calling for a comprehensive strategy to address the retention and recruitment of certified teachers and the ongoing challenges caused by inadequate human resourcing for some time. The Think Tank demonstrated clearly that working conditions are having a significant and negative impact on teacher retention and are the cause of rising teacher burnout. Class size and composition remain a critical concern – schools need smaller class groupings and increased allocations for the essential supports many students need to enable them to access the same learning opportunities as their peers. The Association has, in good faith, participated in and prepared presentations and submissions for many and varied reviews, committees, task forces, studies and commissions in the hopes of seeing practical and tangible positive change. The NLTA will be reviewing the budget information in detail, but minimal increases to teacher and student assistant allocations in the context of growing student needs will, at best, maintain a woefully inadequate status quo. Budget 2024 has failed to:

- Respond to the significant challenges presented by large class sizes and increasingly complex class composition;
- Acknowledge and act on the thousands of concerns and suggestions submitted by teachers during the Think Tank; and,
- Provide any assurances that the Education Accord NL (or any previous studies/reports) will lead to real and meaningful positive change.

“The time for talking is over. Government must act to address the fact that many of our schools are in triage mode,” said President Langdon. “Our education system is not okay. Teachers and Administrators are applying bandages daily, trying to create an environment in which students can learn and grow – an overwhelmingly difficult task when they are faced with inadequate resources, complex class compositions, daily incidents of violence, and teacher shortages. Our teachers and administrators cannot continue to deal with this alone. The system does not need another action plan that is not effectively implemented, improvements that are rolled back over time, or policies and procedures that are not adequately resourced. Government has once again missed an opportunity with Budget 2024 to focus on the current challenges in our education system and to embark upon a path that will help us achieve the long-term social and economic benefits that would come with investment in education. The working conditions for teachers ARE the learning conditions for students; this is reality.”

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