NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release
October 26, 2026

NLTA CALLING ON GOVERNMENT TO IMMEDIATELY ADDRESS CRITICAL EDUCATION ISSUES

St. John's, NL… The Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association hears from educators and school administrators daily who are facing inadequate staffing, increasing class complexity and concerns about safety in classrooms. These critical issues are taking a toll on members, and it is long past time for government to do something.

"When educators are working without the resources and proper supports they need, it has a huge impact, not only on the teachers but on the students," said Dale Lambe, President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. "We are clearly seeing the results of this in Happy Valley-Goose Bay right now and in other rural and remote areas of the province. Teachers, school administrators and other educators are continually being asked to do more, with less. Government must recognize that working conditions of our teachers are the learning conditions of our students and when schools are adequately staffed and properly resourced, everyone benefits."

This government has been in power for a full year, and what they have shown is that education is at the bottom of their priority list. The recent issues in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, including the resignation of the Principal of Peacock Primary School, should serve as a wake-up call for this government – our education system is not ok. The current government response in Happy Valley-Goose Bay is a band-aid solution. Flying in temporary resources and relying on retired teachers does not address the underlying issues. And this is not just a Happy Valley-Goose Bay problem. President Lambe recently travelled to Labrador to hear first-hand the challenges educators are facing, and as a result, has written the Minister of Education urging immediate action to address the critical issues affecting educators and students. A copy of the letter is included below.

"This is a systemic problem, not an isolated school issue," said President Lambe. "Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador West, coastal Labrador, and rural areas of Newfoundland are all facing challenges and temporary fixes are not a long-term plan. Government said everything was on the table. Now it needs to demonstrate that commitment through meaningful action. We cannot keep responding only when a school reaches a breaking point. We need a plan, meaningful action and follow-through."

- 30 -

For further information contact:
Jennifer Tulk, NLTA Communications, 709-682-3751; jtulk@nlta.ca

Newfoundland and Labrador
Teachers' Association

October 16, 2026

Honourable Paul Dinn
Minister of Education
P.O. Box 8700
Confederation Building
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

Dear Minister Dinn,

I am writing today to bring forward concerns from our members who teach in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador. On October 13th and 14th, I had the opportunity to visit the schools in that community and have face to face discussions with the staffs from each school. Our conversations were respectful, but hopeful that something could be done. For two days I listened to members who shared frustrations that they do not have enough resources to effectively serve the needs of their students. The spirit of their concerns was not rooted in complaint. It came from a place of despair and was centered around a feeling of failure towards their school communities. These teachers and TLAs deserve better. Based on these firsthand conversations, the following themes came through:

Housing. Teachers are wondering why housing that is owned by government, and is currently unoccupied, is not being offered to new teachers in the community. They also shared that they were not provided with any information to assist with their relocation if they were non-residents who were willing to move into the area. One would think that the provision of these simple items would be automatic when we have known about recruitment and retention issues in this region for several years.

Communication. It was quite evident that employees are feeling disconnected from the employer due to long lapses in response times, should replies happen at all. Teachers who moved into the area several years ago and established roots cited a more personal approach that led to a feeling of commitment to the community. The staff of Peacock Primary also shared that they were offended by the public statement that there was a "plan" for re-opening when they have not heard about any such "plan." At the very least, one would hope these members receive some direction and hope that things are being worked upon. Written or verbal communication to these educators would be an act of human decency.

Incentives. Travel home was a major point for several of the younger members. More senior teachers shared stories of previous discounts for teachers due to a partnership with PAL Airlines. Younger teachers shared airline ticket prices that kept them from returning to their

hometowns as they were far more than the allowances that have been allotted here. We want to create conditions for these young teachers that allow them to adjust to a new life and their career. Items which seem simple, such as the cost of travel, are preventing some of our brightest young minds from choosing rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

Minister Dinn, I implore you to sit with your team to create correspondence for these teachers at Peacock Primary. They need to know the plan and progress since the resignation of their Principal. They continue to work in coverage mode, compromising the safety and education of their students. They deserve to know how things are being operationalized so they can work in clear conscience and serve the needs of their families. More importantly government needs to work harder at connecting these teachers to an educational authority as they are not feeling a connection to NLSchools. These members have requested visits, which you have stated in the media would happen. I assure you it will not be a negative experience. Lastly, we need to work together to develop a thorough plan to address retention and recruitment issues throughout the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Our youth deserve it and our members need to feel support during these challenging times.

I would love to have an opportunity to sit with you and your staff in the next few days to specifically discuss my observations and interactions with the fine teachers and TLAs in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, including some of the very reasonable and practical solutions that they brought forward in my discussions with them.

Respectfully,

Dale Lambe
NLTA President