
From: Scott Underhill [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 14, 2017 11:50 AM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Lack of Funding For Nova Scotia Schools

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to ask you not to allow Stephen McNeil to pass this legislation imposing a contract on the NSTU. Taking the teachers' right to fight fairly for our students is both wrong and unconstitutional. I am a speech-language pathologist for the school board. I have worked in schools outside of this province in addition to other jobs outside of the school board. In my 18 years of working in this profession I have never seen people so dedicated to their jobs from teachers to EPAs to Speech-Language Pathologists to Psychologists to Social workers to Principals. I have seen teachers become part of students' hearts, their families' hearts, wash students' clothes, donate food, donate clothes, donate money, donate time from their own families and pay for resources to name a few. Teachers want to follow through with my recommendations as a Speech-Language Pathologist however are unable to with improper manpower and resources at their disposal. We have lengthy meetings discussing what each of my students need and I write reports on my days off as this is the only time I have to do so. These reports then sit in a 'glass case' on Tienet and little to no recommendations are followed as teachers are not able to take on any more tasks. My own caseload size in fact makes it impossible for myself to follow my own recommendations. Caseload sizes across the school board are up to 2 to 3 times the recommended size declared by my National Association, SAC (Speech-language Pathologists and Audiologists of Canada). The entire school board is operating in a state of crisis and has for a long time. Teachers, EPAs, Learning Centre teachers, resource teachers, Speech-Language Pathologists, Psychologists and Social workers need direct immediate investments in the classrooms by hiring more staff for each position. We do not need studies. We are experts in our fields and there are thousands and thousands of pages on Tienet/Powerschool already documenting how we would approach individual children's education if we were given more resources. I will continue to work for free at home if this legislation is not passed however if it is, I will no longer do so as it is not part of my contract. Passing this legislation would be the largest mistake this government could make. It would transform teachers who currently take from themselves and their families out of their own good will to disgruntled employees who will only do what is contractually obligated with negative attitudes. I implore you to vote against this legislation for the students of Nova Scotia, the children on my caseload and for my own children. If this legislation passes, teachers will create a new normal which in fact will be an unofficial work to rule which will last indefinitely. I trust you will make the responsible choice by investing directly in classrooms immediately by hiring more staff and voting against this bill. Lack of proper supports for students with special needs affects not only those students but all students and each employee in a negative way, adding stress to all and making the school environment less productive. It is not too late to do the right thing for the children of today and the adults of tomorrow. Our province and our country depends on it.

Regards,
Natalie Underhill