

February 16, 2017

To Members of the Liberal Party including all Provincial MLAs,

My name is Madonna Sampson. I am a parent first and teacher second. I am a single mother to a 12 year old and a grade 2/3 elementary school teacher. From a parents perspective, I have seen, witnessed and experienced the difficulties my daughter has had to face in her classroom from primary to her current year of grade 7.

You see, my daughter suffers from severe anxiety and has had to endure the difficulties in all her years in Nova Scotia classrooms because of the violence, behavioural issues, lack of resources, human resources and otherwise to support her learning, protect her from the violence and ensure that she is receiving the best quality education she so rightly deserves. Her teachers have been amazing but they are so limited in how they can assist her because of all of the other difficulties in the classroom and lack of supports available to them. How is this allowed to happen in Nova Scotia classrooms?

As a teacher, I go to work every day already feeling defeated. I have two suspected autistic children in my classroom, six Syrians who cannot speak English, several behavioural issues, one runner and several children who fall significantly behind the curriculum outcomes. I have very little EPA support and quite honestly, it is virtually impossible to meet all of the needs of my students as one person. Let's not forget those students who are meeting the outcomes and those who go beyond their grade level outcomes; they too are suffering. How can I possibly meet all of these learners needs given ALL of the daily challenges?

The McNeil government prides themselves on claiming they have capped class sizes from P-3 at 20. I have 25 students in my classroom teaching two curriculums where six of my amazing students cannot understand one word I say. Those six students have a total of 40 minutes per week of English instruction. Why is it acceptable to put that on me as one classroom teacher? We have been screaming for help for years but all to no avail. Where is the support? Please tell me what the meaningful changes are to the very contract you are forcing on us. It is

abundantly clear to me that this forced contract does nothing to address the crisis not only in my classroom, but in every classroom throughout Nova Scotia.

How is it possible that this government, elected officials, can support a bill and a forced contract knowing that it is going to cost tax payers millions of dollars in a court of law? The government is not doing this for Nova Scotians. They ALL have their own agendas and it has nothing to do with the amazing kids in my classroom and all of the considerations and supports they need in EVERY classroom throughout Nova Scotia. Work to Rule has not impacted student learning whatsoever. What WTR has done, is put a spotlight on all the extras we do. It's unfortunate that WTR is being used by the Government to try and sway and mislead the people of Nova Scotia. Shame on this government!!!!!!

I am deeply troubled by the actions of this Government. I am terrified of where this Government is taking our Province. Our children are falling through the cracks at an alarming rate. Teachers are pleading with the Government to help and to hear our pleas. WTR has brought many of the horrors and difficulties in Nova Scotia classrooms to light; an awareness if you will. Our classroom conditions are deplorable and no one can deny that!!!! Why is the government denying that? More importantly, how can this government be allowed to get away with taking away our fundamental rights to fight for a fair and just contract?

I am embarrassed and ashamed of this government, the very government I voted for. I will not make that mistake the second time. It has cost me dearly as a parent and as a classroom teacher.

This is a very broken system and one in which the McNeil Government can take credit for. They have clearly shown how oblivious they are to the realities of Nova Scotian classrooms. They have their own agenda and clearly, it has nothing to do with the crisis in our classrooms and all the voices that are screaming to be heard are being ignored and vilified.

The public is listening. The public is involved. They are standing behind Nova Scotia's teachers in record numbers. We will not forget. I will not forget. I will not forget how this has impacted my daughter and my current 25 students.

I implore this Government to rethink the decision of passing Bill 75. Students are in crisis. Teachers are in crisis. Schools are in crisis. Our government is adding to the crisis.

Please be OUR voice and say No to Bill 75. You are accountable to the very people who elected you. Its time you listen to us!!

A concerned parent and frustrated teacher,

Madonna Sampson