

My name is Nicole Whiteway, I am a proud teacher and a proud Nova Scotian.

I am able to attend Law Amendments, and have requested to speak before you; emailing statements is intended for citizens who cannot stand before you; however I have been denied that opportunity. Below is what I would have spoken. Please take the time to read this in a tone of voice that is determined, and hopeful. Please read in my words a desire to rebuild broken relationships and move forward. Teachers never give up on their student's ability to improve, and I have not given up on your ability to do the right thing.

When considering what I would speak on today, I thought of my many roles in the classroom, and the roles I expect my elected officials to hold. As a teacher I am an instructor, a leader, a negotiator, a mediator, and a trusted adult. I expect my elected officials to hold similar roles. I am guided by the ethical principles of my profession, and, as I am also a proud member of the Canadian Forces Reserve, I am also guided by the Statement of Defence Ethics.

In preparation I reviewed the ethical principles of both of my roles, and out of curiosity, I searched for the Ethical Principles my Members of Legislature are guided by. I searched the Provincial Website, I asked Google. I found the ethical principles for Public Service Employees, which clearly delineates public sector from elected officials. I tried again and found a link called "Code of Conduct", encouraged I clicked on it... the message I received...

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I can find a Code of Conduct for school, I can find a Code of Conduct for my profession, I cannot find the principles that guide my government. In the absence of guiding principles for members of the Legislature, please allow me to share some the principles that I am guided by:

First there is Integrity – Always act with integrity, never use official roles inappropriately. Take **ALL** possible steps to prevent and resolve conflict. Act to maintain trust of supervisors, peers and students. Communicate and act with honesty. Remain dedicated to fairness and justice. Essentially, say what you mean and mean what you say.

Secondly Stewardship – Effectively and efficiently use public resources. Consider both the present AND long term effects of my actions. Provide purpose and direction to motivate the

people and students I work with. Ensure that resources are in place to meet future challenges. In other words, manage your resources appropriately, and recognize that money isn't your only resource.

Third Loyalty – Ensure fair treatment of all students and people I work with. Act in good faith when making decisions. To me this means act as a team and care about the people you work with.

Fourthly Excellence – Continually improve the quality of policies, programmes and services. Promote teamwork, learning and innovation with everyone, including students, that I work with. Make conscious efforts to get better and better at my job and responsibilities.

Finally Courage – Face challenges with determination and strength of character. Make the right choice amongst difficult alternatives. Discuss and resolve issues. In my opinion this is the hardest, but most important, of them all...it most often looks like admitting when you are wrong, but it's not, it's about owning up to your responsibilities and where I need to improve on how I am doing.

I do not believe this government is always acting by these guiding principles.

Enacting this bill shows a lack of integrity, a lack of faith and trust in teachers. The Premier has said he supports fair and collective bargaining, he has said he supports the right to strike. This bill strips away both of these things now, and restricts future strike action. It shows a lack of trust in the teachers and their continued push to work with this government to improve

This bill shows a lack of stewardship. Nowhere in this bill are current classroom issues addressed. Money for commissions and councils is wasted money. Talking about issues that the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development already knows about; issues that our union has already presented to the government is a waste of valuable time. Time that would be better spent implementing solutions for the students who are suffering now. This suffering lies in many intangibles that don't show up in test scores, but these problems will catch up with us and make our educational efforts less and less effective. Teachers need to be listened to now with respect to how serious these issues are, or we will all pay in the long run.

The Premier and the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development have shown little loyalty to the teachers of this province. They have each stated that they look forward to

teachers returning to the classroom, as if they had ever left. They talk of a return to normal, as if their tactics have not severely damaged the morale of teachers. The climate in schools won't be the same for many years to come, and that is due to the lack of respect demonstrated in this bill, and throughout this process. It doesn't have to be this way.

This bill is lacking in excellence. No policies have been improved, no programmes or new services implemented to better the classrooms. Only conversations, and no real commitment to make anything of those conversations. Talking without action is the same as not talking at all. This bill removes the only power for any action by eliminating the previously negotiated arbiter.

This bill lacks courage. This government could show courage by agreeing that the previous relationship has been soured, accept their responsibility in that action, and reach out to move forward through continued communication rather than the "easy way out" with a majority government bill.

The state of education in Nova Scotia did not get where it is overnight, nor in a week. No contract, or bill, will solve all the problems today. A leader must make hard decisions while considering their guiding principles. Enacting Bill 75 will further the divide between teachers and the government, and I believe go against guiding values.

The only way forward is through unencumbered, mutually respectful discussion. I strongly encourage this government to engage with us in that discussion and to not give up at this point.