
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2017 11:39 AM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Law Amendments Committee

Dear Honourable MLAs of Nova Scotia,

This year our province has been plunged into a long labour dispute between our current Liberal government and the teacher's union. Nova Scotia teachers have finally stood up and asked for help. They have asked for help for their students, their colleagues (both present and future educators) and themselves. I have listened to Premier Stephen McNeil express frustration and disbelief at the fact that teachers, traditionally a docile group to negotiate with, have turned down three consecutive offers. This disbelief and frustration are only plausible if Stephen McNeil is not listening to what teachers have been trying to tell him. I have read many well written letters detailing the challenges and frustrations students and teachers face every day in their classrooms and workplaces. I myself have written two previous letters to the premier, education minister and my MLA, the Honourable Stephen Gough. I have yet to receive a response to my concerns from any one.

The real reason that teachers have continued to turn down these contracts is that the contracts do nothing to effective changes in our education system. Teachers, psychologists and speech language pathologists are still being asked to deal with overwhelming cases loads and class sizes, outdated technology, too few teaching resources and students with increasing needs. If this contract goes through as proposed in this legislation, high school students will continue to be asked to cope with overcrowded classrooms where they have to race to their class in order to try to secure a desk. Classrooms will continue to include students with behavioural challenges that are intimidating and disruptive to other students and there will not be enough resources to help teachers cope with developing and implementing appropriate programming. Schools will continue to struggle to meet the needs of students that could potentially excel but the teacher doesn't have time to ensure enriched programming. Resource teachers will continue to have unreasonable caseloads where they try to help students, but often wonder if they are able to effect real change because the needs are overwhelming. The waiting times for psycho-educational and language assessments will remain unreasonably long and many students with needs won't be considered for assessment because they are not struggling 'enough'.

Premier McNeil has continued to talk about the cost of negotiating a fair contract for teachers and their students. However he is ignoring the cost of not doing so. How can we justify holding the course for our children when the course is set to failure?

Educator and parent,

Heather Coates Jones

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10