

Dear Honourable NS MLAs,

I am a lifelong resident Kings County, a mother, and a school counsellor in the AVRSB.

I am writing to you today to implore you to please vote against this imposing and unfair legislation put forth that is currently attempting to force a contract on teachers. Please use your position and influence to do the right thing, and oppose Bill 75.

There are many things at stake here but I believe the 2 most important are:

- (1) the education and sustainability of our future NS generations - this is what we are fighting for.
- (2) Perhaps even more importantly, however, is upholding our Canadian right to fair & collective bargaining.

More on what is needed to help improve our system:

In my 12 year career in education, I have worked at 5 different High Schools and 3 different Junior High schools within our province and it has given me much perspective and experience. There are serious problems within our NS education system that are not being adequately addressed and will not be fixed by the contract set to be imposed. Our system is broken right now and teachers and school staff are working way overtime to hold it together with tape and glue.

We are overloaded and overwhelmed by the needs (academic, health, mental health, social-emotional and more), and meaningful change is not going to happen by funding more committees to debate what changes should be made over time. We need to take a serious first step towards making meaningful changes to improve classroom conditions today.

Unfortunately, kids are paying the price on our current system. Some of the greatest challenges are the massive disparity between student needs and supplied supports - above all, we are desperate for more human resources. Learning needs are not being met and adequately supported, social and emotional and mental health needs are higher than they have ever been in youth, students have no accountability due to social promotion (knowing they won't fail, some don't even try), some classrooms have almost half their students on IPPs, and the majority of students are on Adaptations. Despite this, teachers are expected to meet all the individual needs of every child, with nowhere close to adequate supports, and often with inadequate training. Regardless, this is an impossible job. But most importantly, these challenging and impossible classroom conditions impact ALL STUDENTS' education, not just those in the classroom who have "needs".

For our students, and also for the well-being of NS for generations to come, we must sincerely and adequately begin addressing the significant classroom needs that teachers and specialists are working to service in schools every day.

In summary, students simply deserve better than this, and our province NEEDS better than this if we are to thrive or even attempt to sustain ourselves in future.

I am requesting that you please take a clear and direct stand against this Bill and vote it down. We simply need a better plan and contract that supports students. Please consider what you would want for your own child in the classroom - they deserve better than what we are currently able to give them, and this is what we're fighting for.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration. These are matters that will impact us all.

Sincerely,

Sarah Wellwood, M.Ed
School Counsellor & Concerned Parent
Port Williams, NS