

news



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N O V A S C O T I A T E A C H E R S U N I O N

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Summer of uncertainty for Nova Scotia's education specialists

NSTU President Paul Wozney says the McNeil government's decision to ban new school psychologists and speech language pathologists (SLP) from belonging to a union is creating confusion within the public education system.

The unilateral change is also a lost opportunity for government to rebuild some trust with teachers, he adds. "Given that the report on inclusive education calls for the addition of more SLPs and school psychologists, one has to question why the government is creating a more divisive and toxic environment for these valuable professionals," says Wozney. "Over the last few weeks, the feedback I'm getting from specialists is that there is a considerable amount of anxiety about the coming instructional year which has been heightened by the government's unwillingness to provide answers to many questions."

Wozney is calling on government to reconsider its position and be willing to work with the NSTU to develop constructive solutions to challenges in the system. He also wants government to clarify a number of issues including:

- What are the terms and conditions of employment for this new class of non-unionized specialists?
- How are contracts being negotiated with new non-unionized specialists?
- How many non-unionized specialists have been hired by government since the end of the previous school year?
- How will RCEs determine which students receive specialists support during the school year, versus those that will only have access during the summer months?
- What evidence does the government have that their new approach will help with recruitment, and how will the performance of this policy be evaluated?

Wozney recognizes that improving service delivery is vital to better support students. He expects the government to engage, listen and collaborate to find the best way forward.

The Nova Scotia Teachers Union represents approximately 10,000 public school teachers and teachers who work for the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. Since 1895, it has worked to improve the quality of public education for children and youth in Nova Scotia, while promoting and advancing the teaching profession.

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