

# 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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## **Overwhelming majority of teachers feel in-person learning currently unsafe for students and staff**

(Halifax, NS) According to 4,418 teachers and school specialists that responded to a NSTU survey distributed yesterday, 84 per cent (83.90 per cent) believe in-person learning is not currently safe for students and their families. Only about 7 per cent (6.79 per cent) are confident that schools will be safe next Monday, while about 10 per cent (9.51 per cent) are unsure.

“It’s clear from the responses we received that teachers don’t believe they can keep their students safe under these conditions, which is always their top priority,” says NSTU President Paul Wozney. “With daily case counts now in the thousands, there is a high likelihood of hundreds of schools exposures on the first day of school alone.”

Teachers were also provided with a list of protective measures and asked which they felt are required to keep them and their students safe. The top response was contact tracing in schools which about 85 per cent said was crucial, followed by greater access to rapid tests at 84 per cent. Other safety measures teachers have strong support for are priority booster shots for all school staff at 79 per cent, and medical grade (N95, KN95) masks provided for all students and staff at 78 per cent. Only 42 per cent of teachers felt that hand washing protocols were an effective layer of protection, while 52 per cent believed the strict cohorting of students improved safety. It is clear from these responses, that teachers feel more can be done to ensure staff and student safety.

“Public Health has decided to suspend contact tracing in schools in the midst of the Omicron wave and has not prioritized school staff for boosters; as a result teachers and families are feeling extremely vulnerable heading back to in-person learning next week,” says Wozney. “We’ve had two years to strengthen safety measures inside schools so in-person learning could be sustained during outbreaks. Unfortunately, much has been said about the protections we all know contribute to safe and sustainable in-person learning, but precious little has actually been done. It’s time to use the financial resources available, to provide teachers and students with the safe learning and working environment they deserve.”

For full survey results see the following [data file](#).