

# 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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## **Contact tracing required to ensure schools are safe**

(Halifax, NS) NSTU President Paul Wozney is questioning how parents and caregivers can be assured their child's school is safe from COVID-19 now that contact tracing has been suspended in school settings. He says it's crucial that families have timely and accurate information about the spread of the virus in their school communities so they can make informed decisions based on their individual health care needs.

"The education system was on the verge of operational collapse prior to the Christmas break, and we are concerned the uncertainty created by the Public Health's decision to make parents responsible for contract tracing will further reduce parental confidence in the system," says Wozney. "We have had almost two years to ensure our public health system was resilient and able to meet the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, with hospitalizations climbing we are removing key layers of protection and reducing monitoring in our largest unvaccinated community."

He adds, "How will we know when schools become points of virus transmission? How will parents maintain confidence that their children and, by extension, their families are safe?"

On Tuesday, the NSTU said its members were ready to move to remote learning to ensure the operational viability of the education system.

"What we learned prior to Christmas is that the teacher shortage makes the entire system vulnerable when teachers or entire classes are getting sick or teachers are exposed to students who are COVID positive," says Wozney. "You can't leave children unsupervised nor can you mix classes or increase class size to address staffing shortages under these circumstances. These impossible choices cannot be the ones school staff are left with to act in the interests of student and school staff safety."

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