

# 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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## **NSTU concerned cuts will reduce student support and limit safety protocols in metro schools**

Halifax, NS -- The NSTU is concerned with an HRCE proposal to reduce staffing levels at schools across the HRM through the elimination of Unassigned Instructional Time (UIT). UIT is time during which teachers are scheduled to support students, other than facilitating learning for a whole class. Given the pressure COVID-19 has placed on the entire education system, NSTU President Paul Wozney says, now is an “inappropriate time to reduce resources that are critical to keeping students supported and safe at school.”

“Classroom resources have been stretched to the limit over the past year as we all try to navigate COVID-19,” says Wozney. “If we’ve learned anything from this experience, it’s that we need more teachers to support students and their diverse needs, not fewer. I strongly question why the HRCE is planning to eliminate UIT now, especially since the resource is used to implement and enhance COVID-19 protocols at some of HRM’s most populated schools.”

Teachers in all high schools and several elementary schools in the HRCE are provided with Unassigned Instructional Time (UIT) throughout the week to ensure the needs of students are being met. This time is used to provide 1-on-1 academic support and mentoring, coaching school sports, supporting drama and music clubs, assisting with student councils, serving as department heads, and during the current academic year, monitoring hallways to ensure students are following proper public health protocols such as social distancing and mask-wearing.

Recently the NSTU surveyed Halifax area teachers about the importance of Unassigned Instructional Time (UIT). Of those that responded, 80% indicated that they were “concerned” about its loss.

One teacher surveyed, described the importance of UIT as: “crucial to the success of students in our building. Musicals, athletics, school spirit, support for math, credit recovery for struggling students—it really is endless.” Another teacher pointed out that UIT: “allows for team building and relationship building with students. It keeps the hallways clear so COVID protocols are adhered to.”

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