

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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Political decision to restore in-person learning creates anxiety and uncertainty in public school system

(Halifax, NS) Premier Iain Rankin’s commitment to maintaining remote learning for the final few weeks of June brought closure and a level of certainty to students, teachers and families after COVID-19 ravaged the public school system in late April. Today’s announcement will generate more anxiety and needless confusion for families already struggling under the impacts of this pandemic, according to the NSTU.

“I appreciate how difficult the decision was to suspend in-person learning for the remainder of the year. It impacted a lot of households and there are compelling views on either side of the issue,” says NSTU President Paul Wozney “But given how many teachers and students were infected just a few weeks ago in schools, and how little time remains in the academic year, the appropriate decision was made last week. Reversing the decision now for a brief return to school brings with it significant risk and could cause a lot of fear and anxiety for families.”

From mid-April to early May there were over 60 schools across Nova Scotia with positive COVID-19 cases, often more than one. Since then, nearly 1000 children have tested positive for COVID-19 in Nova Scotia as well as many teachers and school staff, who in some cases were hospitalized. Yesterday, the Ontario government released a document stating that since mid-April schools have experienced more COVID-19 outbreaks than any other workplace in that province.

“It’s unfortunate, but in late April, government and public health repeatedly assured families that schools were safe for kids, when clearly they were not,” says Wozney. “Hearing those same assurances repeated again today will stir up negative emotions for those directly impacted by COVID-19 at their school.”

He adds, “Dr. Strang has been very clear about the dangers of the new variants and how they impact children more severely than the original virus. Yet, next week thousands of students will return to crowded classrooms with minimal safety precautions without having been vaccinated.

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