

# 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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**Date:** Nov 27, 2023    **For Release:** Immediately    **Contact:** Mark Laventure  
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## **It's time every student gets the support they need – Our Kids Can't Wait**

(Halifax-Kjipuktuk, NS) This Wednesday, November 29<sup>th</sup>, Nova Scotia's more than 9,500 teachers and educational specialists will be holding a day of action to raise awareness about the deepening teacher shortage and its impact on students.

Over the past week, thousands of buttons and stickers displaying the slogan "Our Kids Can't Wait" have been delivered to every teacher and specialist across the province. As part of the day of action, NSTU members will be wearing these items to draw attention to the ongoing challenges created by the teacher recruitment and retention crisis. Nova Scotians are also encouraged to share their views or personal stories about the shortage on social media using the hashtag #OurKidsCantWait.

"Teachers who support our most vulnerable students such as learning centre teachers, resource teachers, school counsellors, specialists and literacy support teachers are often the first to be pulled away from their normal duties in order to supervise a class when a colleague is unable to work," says NSTU President Ryan Lutes. "As a result, the students who need the most specialized support, are often receiving the least. This can't continue. Our kids can't wait. The Province needs to take urgent action to address the shortage."

"According to a recent survey of NSTU members, 70 per cent of teachers have lost assessment, lesson planning and preparation time in order to cover for an absent colleague since 2022. Similarly, 29 per cent have been asked to supervise multiple classrooms simultaneously due to the shortage. Eighty-one per cent of teachers and specialists say they've felt pressure to attend school while feeling sick, or cancel medical appointments, because of a lack of substitute teachers. "

In recent years the NSTU has made two proposals to address the shortage. It has asked that the Province create a teacher recruitment and retention policy in order to address many of the underlying causes of the shortage. Similarly, it has asked the Province to increase compensation for substitute teachers, who currently are amongst the lowest paid in Canada.

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