

# 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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## **Budget fails to address teacher shortage, school violence**

(Halifax-Kjipuktuk, NS) NSTU President Ryan Lutes says today's provincial budget demonstrates a lack of resolve on the part of government to improve learning conditions for students or address the deepening teacher shortage.

"This is a status quo budget at a time when there is nothing status quo about the challenges students and their teachers are facing in our schools," says Lutes. "Our most vulnerable students aren't getting the support they need because of a lack of teachers, there has been an alarming rise in violent incidents that are becoming increasingly severe, and 84 per cent of teachers are considering leaving the profession due to burnout and a lack of recourses to support their students."

"The NSTU was hoping this budget would signal a genuine desire on the part of Government to create healthier, safer and more sustainable learning environments for students and their teachers. Instead, what Government delivered was the same old enrollment-based funding formula that's existed for the last decade. This government isn't doing anything 'faster or sooner' when it comes to supporting our children at school," says Lutes.

Lutes says enrollment is predicted to increase by 3.3 per cent over the coming year and the additional funding in this year's budget for P-12 education does not keep pace. Some of the needed changes to public education that the government failed to deliver in this budget include: increased pay for substitute teachers who remain among the lowest paid in Canada, funding to develop a comprehensive teacher retention and recruitment plan to address the shortage, and additional resources to combat school violence.

The NSTU is supportive of the investment being made to create a universal school lunch program.

"Kids struggle to learn when they are hungry, so this is positive news. However, we would like to see the universal school lunch program implemented sooner than what is currently being promised."

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