

# 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:** March 26, 2024   **For Release:** Immediately   **Contact:** Mark Laventure  
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## **NSTU blocked from speaking on school violence at Nova Scotia Legislature**

(Halifax-Kjipuktuk, NS) The President of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union is expressing his disappointment that government members on the Provincial Standing Committee on Public Accounts voted to exclude the NSTU from a future meeting investigating school violence.

At the March 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of Public Accounts, PC MLA Nolan Young, representing Shelburne, introduced a motion on witnesses to testify at a future meeting addressing the Auditor General's upcoming Report titled: Preventing and Addressing Violence in Public Schools. The only witness listed on the motion was the Deputy Minister of Education. In spite of concerns raised by the opposition members on the committee, the government chose to pass the motion excluding the NSTU from appearing.

In a letter sent to the clerk of Public Accounts yesterday, NSTU President Ryan Lutes requested that the committee reconsider its decision to exclude the voice of Nova Scotia's almost 10,000 public school teachers and specialists on an issue that is having such a profound impact on their students.

"Teachers know first-hand the devastating impact of school violence on children, school staff and their families," says Lutes. "It's disrespectful to these hard-working professionals, dedicated to the betterment and wellbeing of our kids, that their union will not be able to share their perspective at this public meeting."

In a survey completed by 1,936 NSTU members between October 21-31 of 2023, 84 per cent of teachers and specialists indicated that the Province is not taking appropriate action to keep schools safe.

As one member described in the questionnaire: "Violence is so common in schools, I'm not sure we're recognizing it any more. Emotional, mental and physical abuse 'student to student' and 'student to teacher' is relentless. Our culture has shifted, not for the better, and schools just don't feel as safe as they used to. We're always just waiting for the next 'big event' that compromises our (and student) safety."

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