

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 welcomes Auditor General's Report into School Violence

(Halifax-Kjipuktuk, NS) NSTU President Ryan Lutes says the release of the Auditor General's (AG) report into school violence validates the concerns that the NSTU has been raising for the past two years. The NSTU is prepared to work with the Province along with communities and parents and guardians to develop and implement a strategy that ensures all schools are safe. The NSTU has long maintained that incidents of violence in schools are underreported and that a Provincial strategy is necessary to properly address the problem.

A membership survey the NSTU conducted in the Spring of 2023 revealed that more than 55 per cent of teachers and specialists have been the victim of violence or threats at the workplace, and that approximately 87 per cent believe that rates of violence have grown worse in the past five years. The Auditor General's report is a clear confirmation that educational practitioners have been correct in their concerns.

"I want to thank Auditor General Kim Adair and her team for examining the issue of school violence and for making it a priority to consult with teachers and school specialists as part of that process," says Lutes. "This report can have a transformative impact on our public education system if properly implemented. Currently escalating levels of violence are having a profoundly negative impact on learning conditions and creating safer schools should be a priority for all Nova Scotians."

According to the NSTU any plan to address the issue of school violence will need to include:

1. Clear reporting requirements that include individual incidents, school lock-down incidents, safe and secure school and classroom evacuation incidents.
2. Clear consequences that address all incidents of school violence.
3. Adequate human resources to address increasingly diverse and complex student needs and school supervision.
4. Province wide training on Occupational Health and Safety Training with dedicated RCE and CSAP personnel dedicated to school safety.

Lutes adds, "Teachers and specialists have been passionately calling for safer schools for a long time, and this report provides considerable validation for their advocacy. It's time we put in place a plan that ensures that every student and their teachers can go to school each day feeling safe and supported."

The Auditor General's full report can be found here: <https://www.oag-ns.ca/audit-reports/preventing-and-addressing-violence-nova-scotia-public-schools>

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