

news



3106 Joseph Howe Drive
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3L 4L7
www.nstu.ca • pr@nstu.ca
Tel 902.477.5621
Fax 902.477.3517

N O V A S C O T I A T E A C H E R S U N I O N

Date: April 12, 2017 For Release: Immediately Contact: Angela Murray

Op-ed: Pre-election spending spree frustrating for teachers and students

Less than two months ago teachers across Nova Scotia were forced to go on strike for the first time in our province's history due to the actions of the McNeil government.

For almost a year and a half teachers fought hard for a fair contract that included steps to improve learning conditions for students, only to be told by the Premier that his cupboards were bare. He then used his majority to first erode the collective rights of teachers with Bill 148, then eliminate them altogether and impose a contract with Bill 75.

With Bill 75 the government took away close to \$20 million in salary from teachers included in its last offer, none of which was re-invested back into front-line education. It also eliminated long-held retirement benefits achieved through collective bargaining.

To add insult to injury, the Premier used the \$3.4 million in savings from NSTU's one day strike to purchase class trips and sports jerseys, instead of reducing class sizes or providing additional support for students with special needs.

It's for these reasons that teachers, students and families are extremely frustrated with the McNeil government's recent multi-million dollar spending spree. After years of watching our schools deteriorate in the name of fiscal restraint, this new found spending largesse is another betrayal of trust. To teachers it also appears as though the government is funding its pre-election campaign at their expense--and their students' expense.

While there have been some positive reforms in the past month thanks to the efforts of the teachers and other members on the Council to Improve Classroom Conditions, these changes alone will not fix the issues in our education system that have emerged under the current government. The Premier has not delivered on the promises he made to teachers during the last election. No amount of "March madness" spending announcements can disguise the fact that conditions in our classrooms are in steady decline.

- Liette Doucet, NSTU President

-30-

For more information, contact:

Angela Murray, 902- 479-4708, 902-497-0194 (cell), amurray@nstu.ca
Mark Laventure, 902-233-1953, mlaventure@staff.nstu.ca