

From the NSTU President



Report to Council 2026

(excerpt from Peter Day's remarks to Annual Council 2026)

Welcome to Annual Council 2026!

I want to start by sincerely thanking every one of you for taking time out of your hectic schedules to be here this weekend. Your commitment to being part of this work, shaping the future of the NSTU, truly matters.

It's fantastic to see so many new faces joining us. I was informed that out of the 265 delegates, 66 are here for the first time.

This year, thanks to motions at annual council, the NSTU took an important step toward ensuring all members feel heard, valued, and respected by adding two new Provincial Executive seats representing African Nova Scotian and Indigenous teachers. Congratulations to Malik Adams and Francine Flemming on your recent election victories.

We also welcomed two new Executive Staff Officer positions dedicated for female and equity-deserving individuals. Congratulations to Roxanna John and Elizabeth Thomas on attending your first Annual Council as staff members.

It is my honour to soon be entering my third year as President of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. I stepped into this role with a simple belief: the NSTU must be a strong voice for teachers and specialists, and that voice must always reflect the experiences of our members in classrooms and schools across this province.

Because the NSTU is more than an organization. The NSTU is a community.

It is a community where we look out for one another, where we speak up when something isn't right, and where every member should feel a sense of belonging and support. That sense of solidarity is what has carried this union through challenges for more than a century.

We have spoken clearly about the rise in violence in our schools, ensuring that the public and government understand the realities our members face every day. Through media interviews, meetings with the Minister and Deputy Minister, and public advocacy, we have kept this issue at the forefront of the conversation about public education.

We listened to members when the exam schedule changes created chaos in schools across the province. Together, we gathered your experiences, documented the impacts, and brought that evidence directly to government. Because of your voices, we successfully pushed for changes that better reflect the needs of teachers and students.

We successfully pushed the federal government to honour its commitment to provide student loan relief to new teachers in rural and remote communities, by collecting more petition signatures than all other teacher organizations in Canada, combined.

We also saw the courts confirm what teachers have known for years, that Bill 148 was unconstitutional, joining Bill 75 as another piece of legislation imposed on educators that violated our rights. While the final remedy is still ahead of us, this decision was an important recognition that teachers' voices and collective bargaining rights, matter.

That wasn't the only important victory for our members this year. As most of you know this past year your respective RCEs erased teachers banked marking and prep time on snow days.

The NSTU filed a policy grievance on behalf of members across the province, and we won. We have now received the arbitration award, and the grievance was fully upheld. The Arbitrator found that the Employer breached the Teachers' Provincial Agreement by drawing down prep time banks on storm days. This is a complete victory on the interpretation issue and a clear reminder that when we stand together, defend our contract language, and advocate collectively, we can protect the rights of our members.

But our work isn't just about responding to challenges. It's also about building a stronger future for our profession.

Across Nova Scotia, we are facing a shortage of qualified teachers and specialists. While recruitment is important, the most effective recruitment strategy is retention. We must continue to focus on keeping the talented, passionate professionals in our classrooms. When teachers feel supported, respected, and able to do their jobs well, they stay in the profession, and that stability encourages new educators to join it.

In speaking at the Provincial Standing Committee on human resources, I told the room full of MLAs and EECD decision makers that if we want to recruit the next generation of teachers, we must first ensure the teachers we have today, want to stay.

That means advocating for manageable workloads, safer schools, smaller class sizes, and access to the supports our students need. These are the foundation of a strong and sustainable public education system.

Over the past two years, I have made it a priority to bring the voices of teachers and specialists into the public conversation, through media interviews, community events, and direct discussions with government. When the public understands the realities in our schools, it strengthens our ability to advocate for meaningful change.

We know that the work ahead will not be easy. We are entering negotiations during a time when the provincial government is pursuing austerity in its budget priorities. That means we must be clear, united, and determined in standing up for the supports our students need and the working conditions our members deserve.

Because negotiations are not just about salaries or contracts. They are about the future of our schools: class sizes, supports for

students with complex needs, access to teacher specialists, and the ability for teachers to do the job they entered this profession to do.

The strength we bring into those conversations will come from our unity, as a community:

A community that listens to one another.

A community that stands up for one another.

And a community that believes in the power of public education.

Together, we can enrich our profession and improve the lives of our fellow teachers and teacher specialists. Thank you.