

*Dear NSTU siblings,*

*Welcome back to the beginning of this school year like no other. I am proud of you for the incredible work you've done and continue to do to step up for students and their families. I have received lots of praise from parents who understand the impossible position you're in and value the caring, world class support you give to their kids. Keep up the amazing work!*

*This has also been a summer like no other, and it's been an uphill battle to have our school re-opening concerns addressed by Government.*

*But we're not alone. Our siblings in other unions and close to 20,000 parents are standing with us. And we always have each other. I've never been more proud of you than I have been these past months as we've stood up for safety, proper resources and common sense for all our students. We remain united in the face of these challenges, and that matters.*

*Despite the legitimate concerns you have about safety and health, I know how excited you were to see your students again. We've done everything we can to advocate for them and create conditions that keep them safe. Let's remember that these last six months have turned their lives upside down. Our care, patience and kindness have never mattered more for them. You make a difference no one else can make for them—I know you will shine brighter than ever in these troubling times.*

*I encourage you to take care of yourself. Empty people can't pour into others. Feed your joy, lift each other up in your schools, and let's continue to stand strong for our students and one another for changes that will help keep schools safe for the long haul.*

*Please do not stop sharing with us details about overcrowded classrooms, lack of physical distancing, and other safety concerns like poor ventilation at [readynotready@nstu.ca](mailto:readynotready@nstu.ca). Similarly if you haven't already, or aren't satisfied with the response you received the first time, please send a message to your MLA at [www.actforeducation.ca](http://www.actforeducation.ca).*

*At the same time, we also need to address specific issues at the school level through our Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees (JOHSC). This needs to be a critical priority for everyone so familiarize yourself about Occupational Health and Safety and your rights. (see page 6 for details). We continue to collect questions and concerns through your Provincial Executive members, Local Presidents and regional staff officers.*

*At a time where so much feels overwhelming, remember that you are not alone. Your union is here to support you. Reach out for help and advice when you need it—we'll be here.*



*Paul Wozney*