

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

Date: December 13, 2013 **For Release:** Immediately **Contact:** Angela Murray

NSTU concerned about child poverty

The Nova Scotia Teachers Union is concerned about results from the 2013 Report Card on Child Poverty and its link to student success.

“Teachers know there are many hungry children, adolescents and young adults out there, they see it every day,” says NSTU president Shelley Morse. “They continually find ways to help support these children because they know how difficult it is to learn when you experience hunger and poverty. Our members see the connection between poverty and students’ well-being and ability to succeed in school, and are concerned about their students not reaching their full potential.”

Research from Statistics Canada shows that children living in poverty are much less likely to achieve positive educational outcomes. “According to Campaign 2000, children from low income families are twice as likely to end up in special education, acquire mental illness and drop out of school,” continues Morse. Campaign 2000, a cross-Canada public education movement, aims to build support for the 1989 all-party House of Commons resolution to end child poverty by the year 2000.

According to the most recent Campaign 2000 report, 967,000 Canadian children live in poverty, 1.1 million experience food insecurity, and at least 22,000 are homeless. CCPA’s 2013 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Nova Scotia states that Nova Scotians have the fifth highest provincial rate of child poverty—17.3 per cent. “It’s coming up on 25 years since MPs voted to end child poverty in Canada continues Morse. “However, now there are even more Canadian students living in families where the income is at or below the poverty line.”

Morse hopes provincial and federal governments start to take action to alleviate child poverty. “Increasing income supports for lower income families, and adopting tax policies that create a more equitable wealth distribution are some ways this can be achieved,” she adds.

Morse, who was a member of the Canadian Teachers’ Federation’s Advisory Committee on Human Rights & Diversity, says that through a partnership with CTF’s Imagineaction program (<http://www.imagine-action.ca/>) school activities will be linked with community initiatives to better engage students in the issue of child poverty.

Morse is heartened to know that NSTU members are continually involved in helping to reduce poverty. “I am amazed at the number of initiatives our teachers and Community College members and their students are involved in throughout the school year to help others in need,” she continues. “During November and December this activity increases. Whether they run, or raise funds for breakfast and lunch programs, food banks and other community programs, they give of their time and resources and play a part in helping to end child poverty.”

The NSTU is providing support again this year to Feed Nova Scotia. “Feed Nova Scotia continues to try to eliminate chronic hunger and poverty through their many programs.”

The Nova Scotia Teachers Union represents more than 10,000 public school teachers, Community College faculty and professional support staff and teachers who work for the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority. Since 1895, it has worked to improve the quality of public education in Nova Scotia.

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