

# 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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## **Provincial budget a step forward for public education**

The president of the province's 10,000-member teachers' union says today's provincial budget is a step forward for public school students in Nova Scotia.

"This budget includes \$18.6 million in new money for public education. The government sees increasing funding to public education as a strategic investment, and teachers do as well," says NSTU president Shelley Morse.

Morse says that the \$65 million cut to public education over the past three years has negatively impacted students and teachers. "Our students and the future of Nova Scotia can only benefit with a continued investment in the system."

The budget includes a new class cap of 20 students for Grades Primary to 2 while maintaining the cap for Grade 3 at 25. "There's an expectation that the caps will extend to Grades 4 to 6 in future budgets. We hope that the government will seriously look at extending caps to the junior and senior high level," continues Morse.

Morse is also pleased to see the hiring of additional guidance counsellors. "Teachers have long recognized the need to support at-risk youth and know the primary role our school guidance counsellors play in meeting social, emotional and educational needs of students," she says. "The addition of 17 counsellors is a step towards providing needed support for all learners. We hope to see this trend continue."

The budget also sees new funding for students with special needs and alleviates other cost pressures in schools. "Cutting funding to public education has seen teachers and parents spend more out of their pockets to ensure their students have the best learning experience," concludes Morse. "The increase to education funding will help to alleviate some of the pressure they've been feeling in filling in the gaps."

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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