

Information Notice for Parents and Guardians

from the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

December 3, 2016

Public schools closed to students

As of Monday morning, Dec. 5, all public schools in Nova Scotia will be closed to students to ensure students' safety.

After consultation with school boards, government has concluded the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU) directive to teachers and administrators will create unacceptable risk to students. As an example, if a Principal is sick or otherwise unavailable, there is uncertainty whether a teacher can step in to those duties. From a safety and supervision perspective, this is deeply concerning.

"The safety of all of our students is paramount," said Education and Early Childhood Development Minister Karen Casey. "It is clear, after communicating with school board officials across Nova Scotia, that the job actions proposed by the NSTU could put our schools in an emergency situation. Superintendents could simply not guarantee student safety, and recommended schools be closed."

More than 43,000 students are supervised at lunch. Children could end up stranded in schoolyards, or unsupervised in classrooms, after arriving on buses more than 20 minutes before classes begin.

"We were warned that educational assistants may not be there to meet students with special needs as they arrive by bus," said Ms. Casey. "If only one student is stranded by the action directed by the union, that would be one too many."

New legislation

Government will bring forward legislation Monday, Dec. 5, that will get students back to school as quickly as possible. While schools are closed to students, teachers and other staff are still expected to report to work.



The Teachers' Professional Agreement (2016) Act will adopt the tentative agreement reached by the union and the government on Sept. 2, 2016 - as an NSTU contract extending until the end of July, 2019.

"We are confident that we are taking the right steps to ensure our schools continue to operate as safe and productive places of learning," said Ms. Casey.

Classes will resume when boards are assured safety concerns are addressed. Information for parents can be found online at [**novascotia.ca/parentinformation**](http://novascotia.ca/parentinformation)

