Tabled by the Leader of the Official Opposition
K. Hawkes George
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NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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NLTA CALLING ON GOVERNMENT TO IMMEDIATELY ADDRESS CRITICAL EDUCATION ISSUES

St. John's, NL... The Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association hears from educators and school administrators daily who are facing inadequate staffing, increasing class complexity and concerns about safety in classrooms. These critical issues are taking a toll on members, and it is long past time for government to do something.

"When educators are working without the resources and proper supports they need, it has a huge impact, not only on the teachers but on the students," said Dale Lambe, President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. "We are clearly seeing the results of this in Happy Valley-Goose Bay right now and in other rural and remote areas of the province. Teachers, school administrators and other educators are continually being asked to do more, with less. Government must recognize that working conditions of our teachers are the learning conditions of our students and when schools are adequately staffed and properly resourced, everyone benefits."

This government has been in power for a full year, and what they have shown is that education is at the bottom of their priority list. The recent issues in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, including the resignation of the Principal of Peacock Primary School, should serve as a wake-up call for this government – our education system is not ok. The current government response in Happy Valley-Goose Bay is a band-aid solution. Flying in temporary resources and relying on retired teachers does not address the underlying issues. And this is not just a Happy Valley-Goose Bay problem. President Lambe recently travelled to Labrador to hear first-hand the challenges educators are facing, and as a result, has written the Minister of Education urging immediate action to address the critical issues affecting educators and students. A copy of the letter is included below.

"This is a systemic problem, not an isolated school issue," said President Lambe. "Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador West, coastal Labrador, and rural areas of Newfoundland are all facing challenges and temporary fixes are not a long-term plan. Government said everything was on the table. Now it needs to demonstrate that commitment through meaningful action. We cannot keep responding only when a school reaches a breaking point. We need a plan, meaningful action and follow-through."

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