

Concerns and Facts

Government's Response to Dr. Glaze's Report: *Raise the Bar*

Concern Raised: Without the NSTU, administrators will no longer have seniority rights.

Fact: If an administrator returns to the classroom under the existing collective agreement provisions, their seniority is protected. This is an issue that we want to discuss with the NSTU. It may be that seniority could be recognized for all time spent whether in the bargaining unit or not; however, we cannot confirm this until discussions take place with the NSTU.

Concern Raised: Existing health, long-term disability, benefits and access to professional development will be lost.

Fact: Managerial positions are excluded from bargaining units throughout the public sector. In no case are terms and conditions less favourable for those employees. It will be no different with principals and vice-principals. We want principals and vice-principals to remain in these positions, as instructional leaders. We can only achieve this if we preserve all terms and conditions of employment that make a difference in their professional and personal lives (salary, sick leave, PD, etc.).

Principals, vice-principals and those in supervisory roles will have one year to decide whether they want to remain in their current role, or stay in the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union and return to the classroom. This will give them time to consider their options before they make this important decision.

Concern Raised: As non-unionized employees, administrators will be on their own in cases of conflict with the employer. The only option is to sue in civil court, at administrators' own expense.

Fact: The province provides legal support for its staff who are performing their duties in good faith. Principals and vice-principals will be entitled to the support that the province provides to its existing non-union staff.

Concern Raised: Once leaving the NSTU, there is no way to return to a classroom other than a fresh start in teaching.

Fact: If an administrator returns to the classroom under the existing collective agreement provisions, their seniority is protected. This is an issue that we want to discuss with the NSTU. It may be that seniority could be recognized for all time spent whether in the bargaining unit or not; however, we cannot confirm this until discussions take place with the NSTU.

Concern Raised: Teachers could be bumped from their jobs if principals and vice-principals return to teaching.

Fact: Principals and vice-principals cannot bump other teachers out of positions now. Bumping or displacement would not occur in the future either.

Concern Raised: Principals and vice-principals could have to work during the Christmas holidays, March break and summer.

Fact: Principals and vice-principals will not have to work during the Christmas holidays and March break. In summer, there are no plans to have principals and vice-principals work beyond the advance reporting days in summer that they can be asked to work now.

Concern Raised: Principals and vice-principals could have to supervise students in the morning, at lunch and after school.

Fact: We want our principals and vice-principals to be instructional leader in our schools, not schoolyard monitors. Nothing will change from what happens now.

Concern Raised: Principals and vice-principals could be hired who are not teachers.

Fact: We want principals and vice-principals to be instructional leaders in our schools. **None** will be hired unless they are a teacher first.

Concern Raised: The College of Educators will be a watchdog for the public.

Fact: A College is run by members of its profession, for its members. It will set its own procedures for investigating complaints, based on the professional standards that it again sets. The College role is to enhance the profession by focusing its efforts on teaching excellence. Thousands of health professionals are self-regulated by professional colleges in Nova Scotia. The expectations for this college are no different.

Concern Raised: The College of Educators will control certification.

Fact: The College will be responsible for certification, but that gives teachers more influence, not less. Currently, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development sets certification standards; in future, teachers, through their representation on the College, will set their own standards, just like nurses, accountants and other self-regulating professions.

Concern Raised: Salary increases related to the certification levels will now be up to the College.

Fact: Tying salary increases to certificate levels will **not** be up to the College. That will remain a matter for collective bargaining.

Concern Raised: A College of Educators will diminish teachers' professional voice.

Fact: Teachers will set their own standards for their profession, and the College will support them in upholding those standards. The College is composed of members of the profession and represents their professional interests as they see fit, not as government or the union does. The College will enhance teaching excellence in the province.

Concern Raised: A College of Educators will nullify important provisions of the collective agreement (standard of just cause, Union representation, grievance process, etc.).

Fact: The College will have nothing to do with the collective agreement between government and the NSTU. That is a contract between the employer and the union representing teachers and speaks to their terms and conditions of employment. This is no different than the case of accountants who are members of the NSGEU – their collective agreement covers their terms and conditions of employment, and has nothing to do with their professional certification.

Concern Raised: If teachers are accused of something, the allegation will be published by the College of Educators, like what happened in Ontario.

Fact: Allegations against teachers, principals and vice-principals will **not** be reported publicly. The College of Educators for Nova Scotia will be more like other self-governing colleges and boards in the province, such as those that exist for speech language pathologists, social workers, and school psychologists – professionals who also work in schools. After a complaint is investigated or heard, the College decides what is in the public interest to report to uphold the standards of the profession.

Concern Raised: The College of Educators will take on “teacher discipline” now handled between the employer and employee.

Fact: The discipline process between teachers and employers will continue with respect to employment matters – teachers will continue to be represented by the NSTU. The College’s involvement in disciplinary matters is limited to matters of professional misconduct as defined in the College’s professional standards and code of ethics, developed by educators themselves.

Concern Raised: Government plans to appoint business and industry representatives to the College of Educators.

Fact: Government does not plan to appoint representatives from business and industry to the College.

Concern Raised: Teachers could be forced to move anywhere in the province as a result of the recommendation regarding teacher mobility.

Fact: The recommendation on mobility is intended to increase flexibility and choice for teachers, while protecting seniority. It is complicated though, and we want to work with teachers on how this recommendation can be implemented. In no circumstance, however, will teachers be forced to move to another part of the province to teach.