



July 8, 2020

Honourable Dwight Ball, Premier
Confederation Building, East Block
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

Dear Premier:

Since May 15, the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association has formally raised concern regarding the issue of paid leave for NLTA members who are directed to stay at home if they exhibit COVID-19 symptoms. As per the K-12 Education Re-Entry Plan released recently by government, this will be a strictly enforced requirement, even if the symptoms resemble only a mild cold. Our concern has been expressed regularly at meetings with government officials, and the Association has been advised repeatedly that this matter is being considered.

NLTA members are expected to assess their own fitness for work under Articles 15 and 27 of the Provincial and Labrador West Collective Agreements respectively. Teachers, Teaching and Learning Assistants and School Administrators, like many professionals, often attend the workplace when not feeling quite 100% if they otherwise feel well enough to do their jobs. If NLTA members are required to remain at home, not because they are unable to perform their duties due to illness, but in compliance with Public Health directives, there should be no negative financial consequences to them, including loss of accrued sick leave benefits or a requirement to take unpaid leave.

The Association has been patient, waiting nearly two months for a response while raising the issue repeatedly. The release of the Re-Entry Plan has shone a spotlight on this issue which is, understandably, a significant question and source of anxiety for NLTA members. I am now seeking a clear response from your government on this issue. If a teacher is required to stay at home due to Public Health directives, will they be approved to work from home or, if this is not possible, be placed on paid leave with no loss of benefits? To be clear, it is the Association's position that paid leave in this context could have no impact on accrued sick leave benefits.

I look forward to your response.

Dean Ingram
President

- c. Honourable Brian Warr – Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development
NLTA Provincial Executive