

January 12, 2022

educmin@novascotia.ca

Honourable Becky Druhan
Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development

PREMIER@novascotia.ca

Premier Tim Houston

Robert.Strang@novascotia.ca

Dr. Strang, Chief Medical Officer of Health

Good afternoon,

I would first like to thank you on behalf of the NSGEU members who work in our schools for the decision to delay opening by one week. We had been hearing from members across Nova Scotia regarding their unease in moving forward with re-opening in light of the impacts of the Omicron variant. Due to the members' unease, the NSGEU was in the midst of a survey of our members seeking their input on the issues facing frontline staff in schools.

The message from the membership was clear and you can review the results here:

<https://files.constantcontact.com/f8a4f1d7001/bd033a44-34b2-4f5c-b631-b87e1d4800f1.pdf>.

Members did not believe the system was prepared to accept students back to the schools and that is why they were thankful for the one week delay.

Even though the survey was based on a January 10th re-opening, there are outstanding issues remaining that need to be addressed. We are asking that more clarity be provided to staff on what the plan is for January 17th.

In order to ensure schools can remain safe and operational NSGEU members want:

- Access to KN95 or N95 masks
- Contact tracing of school based cases
- Access to rapid tests for staff and students

The Omicron variant is hitting Nova Scotia hard. The health care system is being stretched to its limit and every step must be taken to ensure the safety of

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students and staff upon their return to school. On behalf of our members the NSGEU is requesting that staff have access to N95 or KN95 masks, that contact tracing be re-established in schools and that staff and students have access to rapid testing before schools are reopened.

I look forward to your prompt reply.

Yours truly,



Jason MacLean
President

JML/lb

- c. Dave Jones, Regional Executive Director of Education, Annapolis Valley Regional Centre for Education executivedirector@avrce.ca
Susan Kelley, Regional Executive Director of Education, Cape Breton-Victoria Regional Centre for Education susankelley@cbvrce.ca
Gary Adams, Regional Executive Director of Education, Chignecto-Central Regional Centre for Education Jarvis-JordanJA@ccrce.ca
Michel Comeau, Directeur general, scolaire acadien provincial comeaum@scap.ca
Elwin LeRoux, Regional Executive Director of Education, Halifax Regional Centre for Education eleroux@hrsb.ca
Paul Ash, Regional Executive Director of Education, Shore Regional Centre for Education pash@ssrce.ca
Paul Landry, Regional Executive Director of Education, Strait Regional Centre for Education cheryl.macpherson@srce.ca
Chris Boulter, Regional Executive Director of Education, Tri-County Regional Centre for Education chris.boulter@tcrce.ca