

Q: But didn't two different NSTU executives recommend three tentative agreements? The government had no choice but to end the impasse.

A: NSTU was not the only union to vote against a tentative agreement offered by the government. In fact no public sector "union" has negotiated a contract with the current government in the past two years. A permanent impasse was created by Bill 148, which placed limits on an arbitrator to decide a fair settlement. The government had a choice to negotiate, but instead chose to dictate.

Meeting your MLA or Candidate

During the election campaign there will be numerous occasions for you to meet the candidates. It's important that you be prepared to ask the right questions. It's also good that you vary your questions. As a teacher and NSTU member, education is your priority, but if you focus all your attention on a single issue, the candidate will have a tendency to fall back on his/her talking points. By mixing up your questions you can get a better sense of what the candidate is really thinking. Remember, you should treat each interaction like a test, and your job is to assess the candidate on key questions that relate to education and your community.

* It's also important to note that our Community College members are still without a contract since August 31, 2014.

Some tips

- Be respectful.
- Work your questions into a conversation.
- Do not approach the candidates at the grocery store, church, a doctor's office, or when they are going about their personal business.
- Do feel free to approach the candidate at community events where it's evident he/she wants to be seen in public.
- The best way to talk to a candidate is to call their campaign office and ask for a meeting or a return call.
- If you have already decided who you will vote for, and that person arrives on your door step, do not take up much of their time. Tell them they have your support and encourage them to move along. Candidates have a lot of doors to knock on during a campaign, and some will try and waste their valuable time by engaging them in a lengthy conversation at the doorstep.
- If a campaign volunteer arrives at your doorstep, feel free to ask them questions, but if you don't like the answers, request that the candidate contact you directly. If you are too combative with the volunteer, it's unlikely they will pass along your request.

Four key questions that every teacher should ask

- Why have classroom conditions deteriorated over the past four years?
- What are you going to do to improve our public education system?
- Did you support Bill 75 either by vote or in principle?
- If elected will your party repeal Bill 75 and negotiate fairly with teachers, and if so, when?

Provincial MLA/Candidate Contact

Progressive Conservative

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

New Democratic Party

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Liberal Party

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Other

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

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NSTU Guide to Political Engagement 2017

The NSTU Member is the message

A guide to support NSTU members in the
2017 Nova Scotia Provincial Election.



How do I get involved?

This election is about improving education and protecting your collective rights as a teacher and NSTU member. It's important that you are vocal with your concerns, while remembering to conduct yourself in an appropriate and professional manner.

To ensure the best outcome for education the most important thing you can do is vote. The first step to voting is making sure you are properly registered.

But there is much more you can do. Here are some suggestions:

1. Get involved in a local campaign for the best candidate for education
 - Donate your time to canvass, make phone calls, assemble and install signs, etc.
 - Agree to take a sign for your preferred candidate.
 - Donate money to the candidate or their party.
2. Have your voice heard on education
 - Stay engaged on social media, share stories that help frame the discussion.
 - Speak about the issues important to you with friends and family. You are an expert in education and your voice matters.
 - Write letters to your local newspaper expressing your own experiences in the classroom and the need for positive reform. (Please do not submit to the Chronicle Herald or its subsidiaries until HTU members receive a fair contract).
 - Share your own personal experiences on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. If you presented or wanted to present at Law Amendments share your presentation.

- Share a video, a photo or a graphic highlighting your education concerns.
 - Use appropriate hashtags on social media #vote4ed #NSTUUnited #nspoli.
3. Ask questions and dig for relevant facts
 - Write or email the candidates in your area. Ask them questions relevant to your community and your classroom.
 - Ask to meet with your MLA and the other candidates.
 - Similarly, prepare questions that you can ask if your local candidates arrive at your doorstep.
 - Follow your local candidates on social media. Stay abreast of what they are saying and sharing. If you disagree or have a question, feel free to express yourself in a respectful manner. Avoid getting into political disputes with partisans on-line.
 - Be mindful of the source of information on-line. Fake news is a real phenomenon so be wary of sources you are not familiar with.
 - The provincial NSTU will post information about how you can reach out to your local candidates on our Facebook page.
 - Many NSTU locals will be hosting candidate forums. Be sure to attend.

NSTU key messages

The Provincial government's unwillingness to address deteriorating classroom conditions led to the first province wide teachers' strike in 122 years.

Teachers wanted much needed reforms to their schools and classrooms; all they received in return from the Provincial government was a legislated contract.

The Provincial Government took away almost \$20 million in salary from teachers with Bill 75 and didn't reinvest the money into better education. Not a cent of it went to reduce classroom sizes, improve levels of support for students with special needs, or reduce unnecessary data entry so teachers have more time to focus on students.

To make matters worse, they took the \$3.4 million saved from NSTU's one day strike and spent it on extra curricular items like prom photos, class trips and sports jerseys. None of it was invested back into front line education.

The Provincial Government is willing to do anything to avoid investing in Education. This includes locking out students from their classrooms and taking away the collective rights of teachers.

The current government knows the cost of everything and the value of nothing; we need a government that values our education system and the important role teachers play.

Teachers want better learning conditions, safer schools and more time to spend helping students instead of doing paperwork. They also have a right to a fair collective bargaining process, something we have been denied by the current government.

During the last election the government included in their platform a promise to provide more support for students with special needs, but teachers will tell you the situation has continued to deteriorate.

We still have dozens of elementary school classes around the province that exceed provincial caps.

Nova Scotia is one of only four provinces in Canada that does not have classroom caps across all grades. Next door in New Brunswick the maximum cap in higher grades is 29 students.

High school classes in Nova Scotia can exceed 40 students

Facts about Bill 75

- Bill 75 was introduced on February 14, 2017 and passed a week later on February 21.
- It was supported by all 33 Liberal MLAs (Speaker only votes in a tie). Ten Progressive Conservative MLAs, 6 NDP MLAs and 1 independent MLA voted against Bill 75.
- The bill imposed a salary that did not factor in increases in the cost of living, it also took away retirement benefits for teachers.
- No money was included to immediately address classroom conditions across the province, in spite of numerous concerns raised by teachers.
- All Nova Scotians have a right to speak on a bill at the Legislature's Law Amendments committee, but for Bill 75 the government unilaterally prevented hundreds of teachers from presenting.
- Compared to the final tentative agreement, the government took away almost \$20 million in salary from teachers and none of this money was reinvested back into classrooms.
- Bill 75 took away the right to strike from teachers in this round of bargaining and limits future job action NSTU members can take. In the future NSTU members can no longer focus solely on classroom instruction by working-to-rule.
- Based on previous Supreme Court rulings it is likely that Bill 75 is unconstitutional and NSTU is challenging its validity in court.
- The government locked out students and was prepared to legislate a contract on teachers in December of 2016, but reversed course following a public backlash.