

news



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N O V A S C O T I A T E A C H E R S U N I O N

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NSTU president wants clarification on funding cuts

NSTU president Alexis Allen is seeking clarification from the Dexter government regarding funding cuts to education. "We understand that school boards were asked to look at cutting \$196 million from their budgets over three years," says Allen.

This has been widely debated and discussed as a 22 per cent reduction. In a CBC Radio interview yesterday, new Education Minister Ramona Jennex said losing \$196 million is 16 per cent. "Whether it's a 16 or 22 per cent decrease in public education funding, it's still a drastic cut that will decimate the system. When will Nova Scotians be informed of what we're really dealing with in terms of public education funding?"

Jennex also referred to the changing needs in public education in the 21st Century and her Department's ongoing commitment to meet the needs of students in the classroom. "How can the province meet these needs by gutting the very resources that provide for students?"

"The majority of Nova Scotians believe the overall level of funding for the public school system should be increased," she continues. "It's clear Nova Scotians understand the importance of public education." Allen is referring to the 2010 Nova Scotia Education Issues Survey conducted by the Corporate Research Associates for the NSTU October 5 to 20, 2010. From that study, seven in ten Nova Scotians believe funding of the public school system should be increased. (The survey of 400 Nova Scotians produced a sampling error of plus or minus 4.9 per cent in 19 out of 20 samples.)

Premier Dexter has accused some of the province's school boards of fear mongering in public in their presentations of what a proposed 22 per cent cut would look like. The Premier says his government would never allow "dramatic scenarios with job cuts." "This is confusing," says Allen. "School boards were asked to prepare such scenarios. The Premier and the Minister of Education need to inform Nova Scotians of the reality of the situation. If this is merely an exercise that will never yield such cuts, it has caused needless fear and angst for students, teachers and parents around the province."

Allen is meeting with NSTU leaders from across the province on Friday in Halifax to discuss proposed cuts to public education.