

# 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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**Date:** May 17, 2008    **For Release:** Immediately    **Contact:** Angela Murray

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## **Early childhood programs should be part of school system, say teachers**

The 88<sup>th</sup> Annual Council of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union wrapped up Sunday in Halifax. Over two-and-a-half days, 275 voting delegates debated some 120 resolutions dealing with issues ranging from integrating early human development programs into the education system to addressing the issue of chronic student truancy.

“Research clearly establishes the critical importance of providing an early childhood environment that is rich, stimulating, nurturing, educational and safe for children,” says NSTU President Alexis Allen. “Success in school, with social skills, lifelong health outcomes, lifespan and quality of life are tied to early experiences.

“Many parents and guardians are equipped to provide these essentials, but our current society has left far too many children without the necessary foundation to support them as both young and adult learners,” the NSTU president says.

The resolution calls for voluntary, equitable pre-school programs to be fully funded by the Departments of Education and Community Services, and taught by teachers certified in early human development.

“Nova Scotia universities should seek to integrate early childhood development programs and teacher education programs,” says Allen.

Delegates also passed a resolution calling upon the Department of Education to work with teachers in addressing the issue of chronic student truancy.

“Despite the best efforts of teachers, levels of student truancy are unacceptable,” says Allen. “It is time to address this issue in a serious manner. We must find the underlying reasons for chronic student absenteeism and solutions that involve not just classroom teachers but also students, parents and others involved in public education.”

On Friday evening, Shelley Morse was acclaimed first vice-president of the Union for a second one-year term. Morse is a primary teacher and vice-principal of Aldershot Elementary School in the Annapolis Valley.

The Nova Scotia Teachers Union represents some 10,900 public school teachers, community college faculty and community college professional support employees.

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