

December 7, 2010

## **Regan: School Boards Say 70 Schools Will Close, 3500 Jobs Lost With NDP Plan**



(Halifax, NS) Liberal education critic Kelly Regan confronted Premier Darrell Dexter today on the implications of proposed education cuts. The NDP government instructed school boards across the province to find 22 per cent savings in the education system over three years.

"The results are devastating for the system: at least 70 schools will close and 3500 full-time jobs will be lost, directly affecting students," said Regan. "The Nova Scotia School Board Association shared the numbers with the Liberal caucus today. We were advised Nova Scotia will have the worst education system in the country if the NDP follows through on its plans."

Although the boards have stripped every budget area - paring money spent on board governance, slashing professional development, reducing technology and assistive technology, restricting travel and reducing supplies and materials - cutting in these areas is not enough.

NSSBA indicated that initially, nearly 300 custodians and bus drivers would be let go. Bus routes would be eliminated or reduced. Schools would be cleaned less often.

Then 600 school-based non-teachers (library technicians, student support workers and educational assistants) would be laid off. Over 500 school-based non-classroom teachers (including speech language pathologists, French immersion specialists, adult education specialists, psychologists, severe learning disability specialists, guidance counsellors, resource teachers and autism facilitators) will be let go.

And finally, almost two thousand classroom teachers will get pink slips.

"The premier keeps trying to pretend these cuts are from boardrooms. Today's numbers show the premier is dead wrong: These cuts will hit the classroom," said Regan. "All these positions directly affect the health, safety and education of students."

"This means children most at risk will not get the help they need," Regan said. "Class sizes will increase and children who need help will be lost in the system."

The NDP government instructed school boards to cut 22 per cent. Teacher contracts make up about 80 per cent of the costs. School board administration accounts for about approximately five per cent.

"School boards only have the power to cut from 20 per cent of the overall budget. The NDP government is asking school boards to do their dirty work."

-30-