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Education in Nova Scotia

Concerned about your children's education?
You're not alone.

Over the past two years, Nova Scotia's public education system has been forced to absorb over \$65 million in cuts. In total, we lost over 1,100 positions from our education system – including nearly 700 teachers, plus education assistants, library technicians, literacy and math mentors, and others who support student learning.

Here in Metro, the Halifax Regional School Board announced in May that it was cutting 152 teaching positions; the board indicated only 25 of those teacher cuts were related to declining enrolment. 46 support positions were cut as well.

This year, the province budgeted \$3.2 million dollars less for HRSB, even as costs to run schools continue to climb. It costs more to heat schools, to pay teachers, even to turn on classroom lights, so HRSB is actually absorbing a \$10.2 million dollar cut.

The enrolment decline amounts to less than one student per classroom.

It's not as if Nova Scotia is cutting this money from the education budget because we have a Cadillac system and our scores are at the top of the country. In fact, Nova Scotia's per student funding is the second-lowest in the country. Our test scores reflect the lack of money in the system.

The province has reduced funding for education support in the classroom. I routinely hear about students with learning challenges being unable to get the assistance they need. I hear about guidance counsellors teaching classes, instead of working individually with students. I hear about classes of over 40 in the upper grades.

The Official Opposition has been warning the province for the past two years that its cuts were damaging the education system here in Nova Scotia. We spent whole Question Periods

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The needs in the classroom have not diminished and, despite what the minister has said, neither have the class sizes. The only thing that has changed is that this government has decimated the support systems for these students - they have failed them, and they have failed the teachers who want to teach those students.

Kelly Regan in the Legislature, April 11, 2012

The Future of Public Education in Nova Scotia Town Hall Meeting

With **Opposition Leader Stephen McNeil** and **Education Critic Karen Casey**

Date: Wednesday, November 7, 2012

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Where: Charles P. Allen High School, 670 Rocky Lake Drive, Bedford

Rising Electricity Rates a Real Concern for Nova Scotians

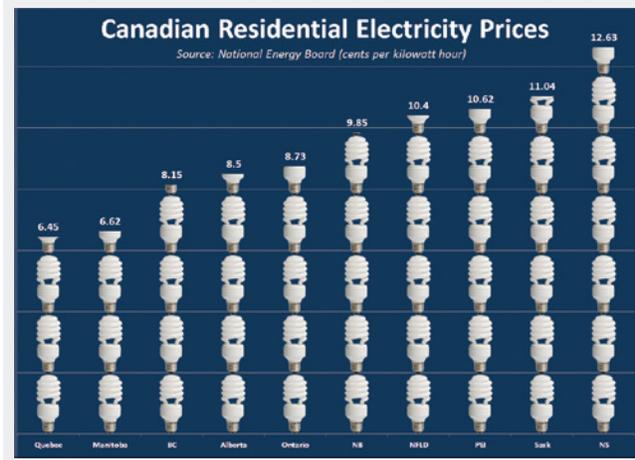
Without a doubt, the issue I've heard about most from Bedford – Birch Cove residents is the rising cost of electricity. According to the National Energy Board, Nova Scotians already pay the highest residential costs per kilowatt hour in Canada. Over the last ten years, our electricity prices have increased by nearly 40%. When the province's new "efficiency fee" on bills and the Nova Scotia Power rate increases are combined, prices increased by 20% in the last three years alone.

The Liberal Caucus has intervened at every Nova Scotia Power rate hearing since I was elected as your MLA. We've introduced many proposals to reduce power bills, including:

- measures to stop executive bonuses from being charged to ratepayers;
- auditing Nova Scotia Power (just as the Auditor General audits government departments);
- reducing Nova Scotia Power's rate of return to shareholders;
- removing the efficiency tax the current government added to power bills – instead, having NSP shareholders pay for efficiency programs; and
- purchasing inexpensive green energy from Hydro Quebec to bring down the average cost of electricity in Nova Scotia.

We've also recommended allowing renewable energy producers to sell directly to consumers – within a well-regulated market. This practice exists already in New Brunswick and other jurisdictions, and is supported many studies – including one completed by the province's own Department of Energy. Despite the government's claims to the contrary, this is not deregulation.

If you're concerned about power rate increases, you can sign the petition opposing the rate increase. It's available at my office, or we can send you a copy of the petition so you can help collect signatures. You may also speak at Nova Scotia Power rate hearings before the Utility and Review Board. <http://www.nsuarb.ca/> lists all upcoming review hearings.



New Bedford High School Update

On October 2nd, I was very pleased to lace up some steel-toed boots for a tour of the new community centre/high school on Innovation Drive. Each day, about 150 workers are on site building our new facility; they have lost very few days to weather so far.

PCL Construction Superintendent Sharif Hashem took Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal Chief Architect Terry Smith-Lamothe and me around the school - showing us places like the soon-to-be green roof, the outdoor bandshell, casual student workspaces, and classrooms that overlook the basin. I came away from the tour very excited about the high school our students will soon experience.

The replacement school for Charles P. Allen High School is on time and on budget, and is expected to open in September 2013. HRSB requested a school built for 1200 students and that is what is being built. While this new school can accommodate up to 1400 students, I remain concerned our new school will be quickly overcrowded unless another new high school is soon built. (None has been approved by the Department of Education at this time.)

HRM is building a community centre and gym attached to the school, and has upgraded the field with Astroturf and lights. Bleachers and the scoreboard have yet to come, but it's pretty exciting to see that field ready and waiting.



Power of Positive Change Awards

I was delighted join (then-)grade 4 student Parker Murchison of École Beaubassin as he was awarded a Power of Positive Change Award in June. The award citation noted that Parker's positive attitude, leadership and charisma inspire everyone he meets. Parker was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia in 2010, and even though chemotherapy left him weak, he was determined to attend school - even when he could only go for a few hours. He was the focus of his school's Terry Fox Run and helped them raise \$22,000 for cancer research; and he was school leader for Change Bandits, raising \$2,000 in just a few days. In addition to his award, Parker received a \$2,000 bursary for post-secondary study.

Way to go, Parker!



Education In Nova Scotia

Continued from page 1

asking the government questions about P-12 education. Opposition Leader Stephen McNeil introduced a bill calling for a review of the Nova Scotia Public School Program; this curriculum review would be a first step in ensuring students in Nova Scotia are getting the highest standard of education. And on April 26, our caucus tabled the Kids Not Cuts petition – signed by over 20,000 Nova Scotians – in the Legislature.

But the province persisted in its approach.

It wasn't until September 27th that Minister of Education Ramona Jennex finally bowed to pressure and announced that up to 45 new teachers in grades primary to 3 will be hired.

To quote Herald columnist Marilla Stephenson: *"This whole mess could have been avoided if Jennex had chosen... to listen to concerns voiced last year about removing the classroom cap on student numbers, and the impact of deep cuts to the education system that cannot be easily absorbed..."*

My caucus colleagues and I believe that education is the key to a successful future for all students and for Nova Scotia's growth. We need an education system that ensures that students have strong literacy and math skills so they're prepared to fully participate in the workforce and in society.

We believe that all students in the province should be given the tools to succeed.

We believe that improving education in Nova Scotia starts with supporting the student in the classroom.

And we will continue to push the province to reverse these damaging cuts. I hope you can join Opposition Leader Stephen McNeil, Education Critic Karen Casey and me for an Education Town Hall on Wednesday, November 7 at 7 p.m. at Charles P. Allen High School. We believe this is an issue too important to ignore.

Kelly

New Boundaries for Our Riding

On Tuesday, September 25, the Nova Scotia Electoral Boundaries Commission issued its final report.

As I've explained previously, I would have liked to continue representing all of Bedford-Birch Cove after the next election. However, I knew our riding was too populous, and we would be split up. (Bedford-Birch Cove has the second – highest number of electors in the province, well above the average.) Our riding has been divided between two new ridings: Bedford and Clayton Park West. It remains among the most populous in the province.

You can find the new riding descriptions at: <http://nselectoralboundaries.ca/pubs/Electoral-Boundaries-Report-en.pdf> The new Bedford riding is described on page 54 and the new Clayton Park riding is described on page 56.

In earlier reports, there were a number of polls that were placed in ridings other than Bedford or Clayton Park West. For example, two polls at the top of the Basinview subdivision were hived off from Bedford and placed in the Hammonds Plains - Upper Sackville - Mount Uniacke riding, even though residents would have to travel through Bedford to get to their new riding. Those polls – and the poll where Bedford West, the BMO Centre and the new high school/community centre are located – have been returned to the Bedford riding. Similarly, the Kearney Lake Road poll has been placed in Clayton Park West; it too was originally in the Hammonds Plains – Upper Sackville – Mount Uniacke riding.

I want to commend all the residents who wrote in to the Commission to indicate their preferences; thank you for your thoughtful representations. You definitely made a difference in the outcome.

The government will introduce legislation this fall that will change the boundaries for the next election. The current boundaries will remain until an election is called. (The government has complete discretion to choose an election date.) I am pleased to continue to represent all Bedford-Birch Cove residents until that time.

Kelly in the Community



Our own Olympic champion!

I was delighted to participate in a farewell for a couple of our Olympic athletes at Maskwa this summer - Amy Cotton and Mark DeJonge. Both are superb competitors and very approachable people. And it was very exciting when we watched Mark cross that finish line in London ... then waited in anticipation for the announcement that he'd won a bronze medal. The room at Maskwa (where young local paddlers had a sleepover in anticipation of Mark's 5:30 a.m. medal race) exploded at the announcement. **Mark – and all the Nova Scotian athletes who competed at the Olympics – did us proud.**

Recent Actions on Bedford Waterfront file:

Letter to Premier Dexter: request to meet with Save Bedford Waterfront Committee (October 3, 2012)

News release: Regan: Halt Bedford Waterfront Infill (September 17, 2012)

Meeting: Colin MacLean, Waterfront Development Commission (August 23, 2012)

News release: Regan: Waterfront Development Corporation Should Release Infill Report (August 5, 2012)

Followup letter to Economic and Rural Development Minister Percy Paris (August 10, 2012)

Followup letter to Environment Minister Sterling Belliveau (August 10, 2012)

FOIPOP (Freedom of Information) application from Liberal Caucus (August 2012)

Meeting with Opposition Leader Stephen McNeil and members of Save Bedford Reef at infill site (July 13, 2012)

Meeting with members of Save Bedford Reef (June 4, 2012)

Questions in House of Assembly re: Bedford Waterfront (May 16, 2012) to:
Premier Darrell Dexter
Communities Culture and Heritage Minister Dave Wilson
Economic and Rural Development Minister Percy Paris

Followup letters to:
Premier Darrell Dexter (July 23, 2012)
Minister Preyra (replaced Min. Wilson) (July 19, 2012)
Minister Percy Paris (August 9, 2012)

Questions in House of Assembly re: Bedford Waterfront (May 9, 2012) to:
Environment Minister Sterling Belliveau

Request for ATIP (Access to Information and Privacy Programs) application to MP Geoff Regan (March, 2012)
Filed with Dept of Fisheries & Oceans March 27, 2012
DFO requested extension April 27, 2012

Bedford Waterfront Update

Many residents attended a meeting on the future of the Bedford Waterfront on September 27th at the Bedford Legion, or have seen the signs portraying a high density development posted around town.

This consultant's concept has not been approved by HRM. Councillor Tim Outhit has made it clear that he will not support it. The development is on hold while the municipality conducts a traffic, transit and services study to look at development in our area, which will take 12 to 18 months. After that, HRM will conduct a year-long community consultation process to approve, reject or amend any proposed development.

I want to assure residents that I have been supportive of Save Bedford Waterfront's goals, just as I was supportive of its predecessor, Save Bedford Reef. I have offered to meet with the former to see how we can work together to make the Bedford Waterfront reflect what our community wants. The Liberal caucus has also extended an invitation to meet with the committee.

I'm pleased to see Waterfront Development Corporation has indicated it will re-consult with Bedford residents and I'm pleased to see it is re-examining the need for infilling. These are steps in the right direction, and I believe it's important to give credit when government departments or agencies do the right thing.

I attended some of the previous consultations (along with several hundred other residents) and I believe that two things will be necessary for this new round of consultations to work:

- 1) we as Bedford residents will have to participate fully, and
- 2) Waterfront Development Corporation will have to listen, and act on what we indicate we want.

In the meantime, if you have concerns about the development along the waterfront, please sign the petition, and please email me to let me know what you want to see at the waterfront. To the left are some of my recent actions on this file. Most of the items can be viewed on my website, www.kellyregan.ca.

Volunteer Awards

I was delighted to be on hand earlier this year as the **Bedford Volunteer of the Year Awards** took place at the Bedford Lions Den. Congratulations go to Brian MacLellan, Mary Boston, Dawson Miller, Joanne Guilderson, Joyce Heffler, Gordon Savage, Sue Stewart, Isabel Wynn, Joanne MacCallum, Sandy Tillman, Diana Haydon, Christina MacDougall, Betty Smith, Ken Smith, Bill Wilson, Terry Yuill, Lawrence Baker, and Brenna MacMillan, who were all honoured for their volunteer work in the community. And congratulations to Bev Grace and Sarah Kuehn, who were named Bedford Volunteer of the Year and Bedford Youth Volunteer of the year respectively.

This group of people represents thousands of hours donated over many years – in some cases, many decades. Thank you to the volunteers honoured, and to the organizers and sponsors.



Bev Grace was named Bedford Volunteer of the Year



Sarah Kuehn was named Bedford Youth Volunteer of the Year

I was also pleased to participate in the **9th Annual Halifax Mainland North Community Champion Awards** at Maskwa, where we honoured some terrific volunteers. Congratulations go out to Don Allen, Frances MacDonald, Felicia Eghan, Ron Hirtle, Ann Hallal, Corinne Boudreau, Pam Miller and Todd Beal. Thanks goes out to them for all their volunteer efforts, and to the organizers and sponsors of this event.

▶
Bedford Volunteer Award honourees with Bedford Business Association and elected officials.



◀
The Halifax Mainland North Community Champions.

Diamond Jubilee Awards –

Six Bedford – Birch Cove residents were awarded Diamond Jubilee Medals in August at a ceremony in Halifax: Mary Boston, Bev Grace, Diana Haydon, Logan MacGillivray and Philip Riteman, ONS, all of Bedford, and the late Patricia Arab of Halifax. All six medals are well deserved – congratulations!

As well, Honourary Captain Fred George of the Royal Canadian Navy received his Jubilee Medal in Ottawa. Capt. George has been a huge supporter of our Forces and I'm delighted to see him honoured.



Fred George after receiving his Jubilee Medal



Diana Haydon and Philip Riteman with their Diamond Jubilee Medals

What is Lyme Disease?



"Lyme disease is the most common tick-borne illness in North America and Europe. Lyme disease is caused by the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi*.

Deer ticks, which feed on the blood of animals and humans, can harbor the bacteria and spread it when feeding." – The Mayo Clinic

Lyme disease often presents with a bull's eye rash or malaise, fatigue, fever, headache, stiff neck, or myalgia. It can also result in cardiovascular symptoms, arthritis, facial palsy or meningitis. If left untreated, symptoms (including arthritis and neurological problems) may develop months to years after tick exposure. - Source: Report on Lyme Disease Epidemiology and Surveillance in Nova Scotia.

Lyme Disease Update

"Lyme disease bearing black-legged ticks are still active until temperatures have dropped below 4 degrees for several days in a row."

Earlier this year, I attended a briefing with Dr. Robert Strang, Chief Medical Officer of Health, on the Epidemiology of Lyme and Tick Surveillance. Some surprising facts emerged from the session:

- Only 70 percent of confirmed Lyme cases in N.S. presented with flu-like symptoms.
- Only 81.7% presented with a bull's eye rash.
- The number of Lyme disease cases reported annually in Nova Scotia tripled between 2010 and 2011 – from 17 to 54.

Some not-so-surprising facts emerged as well: for example, the areas where Lyme disease bearing black-legged ticks are considered endemic are expanding, and our climate is becoming more hospitable to ticks. The report concludes that "[c]limate change models predict that Nova Scotia is very close to having a suitable climate for tick establishment across the entire province."

You can find that report at <http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/populationhealth/> under Surveillance Reports. Also available on the same page is a map showing the endemic areas of the province. The map shows the tick population in HRM has moved beyond the boundaries of Bedford out to Fall River, Waverley, Upper Tantallon, and Halifax.

On October 22, the Bedford Residents' Association and I held a public screening of the Lyme disease documentary "Under Our Skin" at the Bedford Legion. This movie follows several chronic Lyme sufferers and their doctors over a period of time, and dissects the way the American medical establishment has treated (or not treated) this disease.

Also on hand to present and answer questions were Larry Burke of CanLyme and Dr. Bryan Rade, ND, from Sackville Naturopathic Clinic. Larry's wife, Kelly, was among the first Nova Scotia Lyme cases identified – and that happened at a time when the medical establishment did not believe we had Lyme disease in the province. Both presentations and the movie were eye openers for many of us in the audience.

You can sign the petition calling on the federal government to develop a national Lyme strategy at my office.

Community Honours

A lot of what you see from the House of Assembly can be negative as legislators debate the merits (or demerits) of bills and policies.

One of the more positive parts of our day can come during Notices of Motion, when MLAs have the opportunity to mark the achievements and special moments in the lives of our constituents by moving adoption of resolutions.

In the past, after each session was over, I mailed out a special copy of the resolution to the person honoured. This year, we decided to hold a reception to present the resolutions. We held the event in June at the Lions Den, and the event was very successful.

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Some of the cast of Charles P. Allen's hit musical "Little Shop of Horrors" as they were honoured.

Community Connect:

Public Information Session

Renters and Landlords:
Your Rights and Responsibilities.

With Dalhousie Legal Aid

Thursday, November 15, 2012
7 p.m.

École secondaire du Sommet
500 Larry Uteck Blvd., Halifax



Joyce Heffler was recognized for her extensive volunteer efforts over many years.



Here To Help

My office is here to assist you in any way possible. We're open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Please call or email with your concerns or to set up an appointment.

We can help with:

- Information and guidance regarding provincial government programs
- Legislative concerns
- Notary Public services (via appointment, free of charge)
- Congratulatory certificates for milestone birthdays, anniversaries, and events - including new business openings

Family Pharmacare – Available for All Nova Scotians

The Family Pharmacare program is available to all Nova Scotians, whether or not they are covered by private insurance. You can enrol at any time during the year; there is no premium or registration fee. Your family deductible will be calculated each year based on your income and the number of family members. For more information on this program or to register, please visit www.nspharmacare.ca or contact my office.

Community Honours

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If you know of a group or a person who should be honoured with a resolution in the House of Assembly for an achievement or a milestone (a significant anniversary or major birthday), please contact my office; we'd be happy to include them.

This is what a resolution looks like:

RESOLUTION NO. 341

MS. KELLY REGAN « »: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution: Whereas 21-year-old Bedford resident Melani Hatter used her love of skateboarding to help her recover from severe depression; and Whereas Melani was then motivated to raise awareness of mental disorders, which strike one in five Canadians during their lifetimes, and to raise money to fight these devastating illnesses; and Whereas this terrific young woman has already raised \$5,000 for the Canadian Mental Health Association, and is planning a skateboarding event in HRM in August to raise yet more money and draw more attention to mental illness;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly congratulate Melani Hatter for her courage in publicizing her fight with this disease, applaud her ongoing fundraising efforts, and wish her well in her resumption of university studies.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice and passage without debate.



Rosalind Duffus received the resolution honouring her late mother, Carol Duffus.



Swimmer Danial Murphy was recognized for winning 4 gold medals, one silver and one bronze at the Para Can-Am championships.



And here's Melani Hatter with me at her latest fundraising venture this summer.



Mary Boston was recognized for her many years of dedicated volunteering.