

Media Release

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Nova Scotia Needs to Prioritise Diverse Learners

HALIFAX – Over the last two days, autistic students and students with disabilities are once again feeling the sting of exclusion as no contingency plans for their learning needs materialize.

“Learners requiring support to access their educational right are, yet again, being left behind during this strike,” says Cynthia Carroll, Executive Director of Autism Nova Scotia. “We are talking about some of the most vulnerable and marginalised students and families in the education system who are being sent the message that their education is not a priority, that they are not important enough to merit a plan, and that they are on their own. This is simply not acceptable and has to stop.”

Despite the [Inclusive Education Policy](#) that has been in place since 2020, this strike is far from the first-time diverse learners have been left behind. More accountability by the Regional Education Centres, and direction from the Department of Education and government needs to happen.

“We are still seeing a lack of coordinated approaches when it comes to student’s needs and their learning outcomes,” continues Carroll. “Whether a student is excluded from school should not be based on the individual decision of a principal or school. It is a provincial responsibility to ensure access to education for all learners.”

With the amount of lost classroom time piling up, and still no emerging plan, families in the disability community are bearing the brunt. “Families are frustrated and disappointed,” Carroll states. “Every time a disruption to the education system happens – whether that’s a pandemic, a strike, or a facilities issue—it is the same students being told again and again to stay home while they watch their peers go to school. This is not an issue that is going away: it is past time for Nova Scotia to step up and truly embrace inclusive and accessible education for all.”

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About Autism Nova Scotia:

Autism Nova Scotia is a non-profit community-based organization that builds understanding, acceptance, and inclusion for Autistics/individuals on the autism spectrum and their families through leadership, advocacy, education, training, and programming across the lifespan.

Autism Nova Scotia was founded in 2002 by Joan and Jack Craig, parents of an autistic adult son.

Autism Nova Scotia delivers programming in Halifax and across Nova Scotia through our 10 Regional Autism Centres. Our programs and services include Early Years, Social & Community Inclusion; Mental Health & Wellness; Post Secondary & Employment Support; Community Engagement; and Family & Caregiver Support.

www.autismnovascotia.ca