

NDP Caucus News

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Dinn Questions Why Government isn't Prioritizing Education

Today in the House of Assembly, NL NDP Leader Jim Dinn (St. John's Centre) questioned government on their lack of action around major issues still plaguing the education system and called for a plan on how government intends to keep it's promises around investing in education.

Dinn says that the resignation of the principal at Peacock Primary School in Happy Valley-Goose Bay highlighted just how dire the situation is for recruitment and retention of teachers and school staff and the lack of preparation by the department for the upcoming school year. He says that this isn't just evident in Peacock Primary, but in schools across this province, including in St. John's.

"At the beginning of the school year, the Minister of Education, stated all schools have the "appropriate" number of positions in place and are "ready to roll." A month later into the school year the Principal of Peacock Primary resigned due to severe understaffing at the school," said Dinn. "I ask the Minister, how did he get it so wrong? How did his department allow the situation to get so bad that it took a principal's resignation to address the problem?"

"In a news release, the president of the NLTA concludes that education is at the bottom of this government's priority list. The current government response in Happy Valley-Goose Bay is a band-aid solution. Flying in temporary resources and relying on retired teachers does not address the underlying issues. Teachers were offended by public statements there was a plan for school reopening when obviously there wasn't one," said Dinn. "I ask the Minister to detail his department's long-term plan to address the long-term problem of teacher recruitment and retention in Labrador?"

With the state of schools in our province and the lack of action so far to address them, Dinn questioned how government plans to follow through on their commitments and promises around education.

"A year ago, the Premier promised a PC Government will deliver real inclusive education: individualise support, small group instruction, and student assistants for every child who needs them." Nice words. I ask the Premier how he plans to deliver on that promise when a year into his mandate and over a month into the school year he can't properly staff schools?"

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