

NDP Caucus News

For Immediate Release

October 6, 2026

Government Failing on Recruitment and Retention of Teachers, School Staff

NL NDP Leader Jim Dinn (St. John's Centre) is questioning government's lack of action on the recruitment and retention of teachers and school staff, calling for a plan to address ongoing staffing shortages so schools are not left without the supports they need.

This follows the announcement from the principal of Peacock Primary that she is stepping down, citing "high levels of understaffing and increasing demands on the education system," which she says are impacting her "ability to make decisions that protect student safety, well-being and the quality of their education." Dinn says this should come as no surprise, with schools across the province feeling the strain of ongoing staffing shortages.

"I want to thank this principal for standing up for her students and staff and bringing this issue to light. I know as an educator myself it couldn't have been an easy decision to make, but it shouldn't have gotten to this point. Governments, both PC and Liberal, have spent years neglecting the recruitment and retention of teachers and school staff," said Dinn. "Schools across this province are struggling to deliver the quality of education our children deserve because government has left them to fend for themselves. Class size and composition, violence in schools, scheduled duty – these are all things teachers continue to struggle with."

"Report after report on education over the years, and now the Education Accord, which even contained AI-generated sources, where has that gotten us? How many reports do we need? At what point does government decide to listen and work with those on the front lines to address these problems? We are talking about education, our children and the future of our province. At some point, government has to stop commissioning reports and start getting this work done. They've known about these issues for years and have refused to act. It's shameful."

Dinn says meaningfully addressing the staffing crisis will require government to take concrete steps to make the profession more accessible and support people entering the workforce.

"The NDP ran on paid work terms for teachers, because they are another group being forced to work without pay while obtaining their education. Paying these work terms would help remove a barrier for people entering the profession and help bring more teachers into our workforce. Government should also establish a program to support people who want to become teachers but cannot afford to pursue that education," said Dinn.

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“We can’t continue to kick the can down the road. This is about the education and safety of our students, and about supporting the workers in our schools who are doing everything they can to provide that education. They deserve better, and so do our children.”

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