



Office of the Premier

One Government Place
1713 Barrington Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 1X5

October 23, 2026

Dear Premier Houston and Minister Maguire,

We are writing today to urge you both to ensure that a fair deal is reached before Monday, October 26 with the more than 5,500 CUPE school support workers across the province.

The Nova Scotia School Board Council of Unions has spent months communicating with the province's Regional Centres for Education and Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial about what they need in order to keep schools open and operating in a safe manner. Last month, the presidents across the eight unions warned that they had reached an impasse at bargaining tables across the province. Now, without an agreement in place, these workers could go on strike at the start of next week.

From pre-primary to grade 12, there are over 133,000 students in Nova Scotia. If workers are forced into a strike, every single student will be impacted. Some schools in the province will fully close their doors while others will see student supports reduced, school buses cancelled, pre-primary programs paused, and school lunch programs suspended.

We're hearing from parents who can't afford to deal with the consequences of this strike. For families across the province, the strike will mean lost wages and increased spending on things like transportation and food. And we know that families with children who require additional classroom supports will be most impacted.

This government has said that it's committed to inclusive education, and that every child in this province has a right to education. But we know that gaps remain. A recent report from Inclusion Nova Scotia shows that children with disabilities experience ongoing exclusion in the province's public school system. Refusing to reach a fair deal with school support workers, including the educational program assistants who work directly with students with disabilities, will put the province further away from closing the gaps that keep some kids out of classrooms.

This government can no longer sit idly by. It's time to find common ground with CUPE school support staff and ensure that their work is valued for the good of the children across this province. We all remember how difficult life was for students, parents, and workers during the 2023 CUPE school support staff strike. We are calling on you both to ensure that this does not happen again.

Sincerely,

Claudia Chender

Leader of the Official Opposition

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Chender".

Paul Wozney

Official Opposition Critic for Education

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Wozney".

NOVA SCOTIA NDP CAUCUS

5151 George Street, Suite 1401 | Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 1M5