

-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

Nova Central School Board
April 16, 2013

Nova Central School Board Trustees Oppose School Board Consolidation

The Trustees of Nova Central School Board want to express their strong opposition to the Government's decision to abolish school boards in rural Newfoundland & Labrador, and establish one new school board located in St. John's. The Trustees feel this is an ill-conceived decision that was undertaken with little planning and no real consultation with anyone outside the Department of Education.

Nova Central School Board Trustees did attempt to have input when they learned of potential cuts during a closed meeting of the Board on February 4, 2013. At the February 26, 2013 regular meeting of the Board, each Trustee agreed to make personal contact with at least one of the 10 MHAs who represent students and parents in this District. The majority of MHAs who were contacted (7 out of 9) indicated that they were not aware of any plans to consolidate the school district. If 7 of the MHAs from this region were not aware of the plan to consolidate the school boards in St. John's, Trustees have to wonder who made the decision and how much thought went into the consequences of this rash action.

As Trustees, we are also dismayed at the lack of public response from the organization with the responsibility of representing school boards in NL. The Newfoundland and Labrador School Boards Association (NLSBA) has chosen to not speak publicly on the issue of the consolidation of school boards. A major part of the Association's mandate is to advocate on behalf of member school boards. As Trustees, we cannot understand this lack of response and feel betrayed by the NLSBA. If not to stand up and support school boards as we work to support education in this Province then what is the purpose of the NLSBA?

After the initial shock of the announcement, people across the province are now starting to realize the impact of this attack on public education in Newfoundland and Labrador. A group of retired school board CEOs have expressed their concern and started a public action committee. Parents and citizens on the west coast, including Dave Callahan and Mike Ludee, have spoken publicly and issued a call to action. Guy Elliott, a trustee from Labrador City, and George Joyce, a trustee from St. John's, have publicly expressed their concern.

2/

Claude Elliott, the Mayor of Gander, has publicly voiced the concerns of the council with the transfer of jobs from rural NL to the City of St. John's, and the impact on employees from Grand Falls-Windsor, Lewisporte, Gander and all surrounding communities.

We call on all school board trustees, school councils, mayors, chambers of commerce and parents to stand up and be counted. It is time to fight for our local education system and time to fight for rural Newfoundland & Labrador.

Trustees of Nova Central School District:

John George	Zone 5
Kim Cheeks	Zone 11
Newman Harris	Zone 7
Raymond Jenkins	Zone 4
Thomas Kendell	Zone 3
Hubert Langdon	Zone 5
Kerry Noble	Zone 11
Andre Power	Zone 8
Hardy Sparkes	Zone 2
Don Sturge	Zone 9
George Tiller	Zone 6

MEDIA CONTACT

Heather Hillier
Senior Administrative Officer – Corporate Services
Nova Central School District:
(709) 256-2547, ext. 298
hhillier@novacentral.ca