

## NEWS RELEASE

*October 2, 2018*

### **School Board Chair Clarifies Student Assistant Allocation Numbers**

Goronwy Price, Chair of the Board of Trustees for the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District, responded today to information being shared by the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association (NLTA) on the subject of the allocation of student assistant hours.

“While we appreciate the NLTA’s advocacy role in seeking additional classroom supports, it is important to note that the District is fully funded by the Provincial Government and deploys available student assistant resources, according to its budget, on a priority basis throughout more than 250 schools in the province,” said Mr. Price. “Furthermore, students with identified needs also avail of multiple supports within the school environment - including support from the classroom teacher, administration, Instructional Resource Teachers, educational psychologists, guidance counsellors, speech-language pathologists, itinerant teachers with specialized training and expertise in a wide range of exceptionalities, and more.

“There are also new resources being assigned to the classroom this year, in the form of teaching and learning assistants, as a result of the Provincial Government’s Education Action Plan. This commitment will see 54 new positions allocated to classrooms this year, with a total of 200 new positions being added to the system over the next three years,” Mr. Price added. “While these teaching and learning assistants will not be assigned duties which are the specific responsibility of student assistants, they will be part of a school team responsible for supporting all students within an inclusive school environment.”

The criteria for student assistant support is available on the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's website here (Student Profile for Student Assistant):  
<http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/forms/studentssupport/applications.html>.

Mr. Price noted the figures quoted in the NLTA’s September 28, 2018 news release do not tell the complete story, and it is important to provide the public with accurate information.

Each spring, District staff members develop profiles used to help determine a school’s student assistant needs for the following school year. This process continues throughout the summer and into the new school year. The NLTA based its news release and subsequent commentary on allocations approved (3583.5 hours) during a snapshot in time (August 6, 2018). There are, in fact, a total of 3,790 student assistant hours allocated to date - over 200 more than the NLTA reported.

Mr. Price said the Board would certainly welcome any increase in the student assistant budget, just as it has welcomed and appreciated the addition of teaching and learning assistants, reading specialists and mathematics specialists assigned through implementation of the Provincial Government’s Education Action Plan.

“There can be several reasons for a change to student assistant allocations to schools, from one school year to the next,” Mr. Price added. “It can be based on new students enrolling in a school, or students departing. It can be based on whether a student has developed a certain life skill; responded to behavioural management interventions, or become less dependent on the specific functions carried out by a student assistant. Our goal, and the goal of the student’s Individual Education Planning (IEP) team, is to encourage personal growth and student independence, wherever possible. We are confident in the ability of our school principals to manage available resources in a manner which takes advantage of all qualified personnel who provide support to the school.

“Finally, the Board acknowledges that the NLTA has a right, and a duty, to advocate on behalf of its membership. However, we feel the need to set the record straight when the union encourages school councils and the public to write to District staff, and the trustees of our Board, based on inaccurate and incomplete information.”

## NEWS RELEASE

In Budget 2018, the Provincial Government provided approximately \$23.1M for student assistant support to the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District. A recent year-to-year comparison of budget allocations can be viewed below.

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### BACKGROUNDER

The budget provided to the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District, from the Provincial Government, for student assistant support can be viewed in the table below.

#### Student Assistant Support - 2013 to Present

Year	Student Enrolment	Original Budget	Revised Budget
2012-13	67,256	15,098,800	15,098,800
2013-14	67,080	15,098,800	16,046,800
2014-15	66,935	16,000,800	16,452,300
2015-16	66,451	17,362,800	20,228,300*
2016-17	66,182	22,163,300	22,163,300
2017-18	65,068	23,536,600	22,536,600**
2018-19	65,190***	23,236,600	

\* Pay increase, subsequent to JES (Job Evaluation System)

\*\* One fewer pay period

\*\*\* Confirmed as of this date