

My name is Paul Wozney. I am parent of a 14 year old son in grade 9, an 11 year old daughter in grade 5 and a 9 year old daughter in grade 3, all attending Nova Scotia public schools. I teach at Charles P. Allen High School in the Halifax Regional School Board, and I am both an NSTU member and provincial executive member representing the Halifax County Local, which is made up of approximately 2200 members.

My original presentation spoke directly to the widely held concerns regarding the deletion of existing language regarding the obligation of school boards to provide programming for students with diverse needs within classroom settings with age-peers. It is my understanding that the Liberal government intends to table an amendment to Bill 72 to address this egregious deletion. Having had the opportunity to peruse the proposed amendment, I am gravely concerned that the "shall" in the existing language, a non-negotiable imperative has been replaced with the nebulous "objects," a term that has no common legal interpretation.

I would urge all members of the house not to support Bill 72 without ensuring that the requirement of Regional Education Centres as "education entities" meets the minimum standard of "shall" under the existing law. Students who rely on our practice of inclusion deserve that much, if not stronger, clearer language backed by appropriate funding for the first time since this policy was introduced in our province.

I would like to explore the consequences of redefining principals as managers in the proposed legislative framework of Bill 72.

There are too many specific instances where the language of principals, who are principal teachers, is being deleted and replaced with "manager" to list within the five minutes I was originally scheduled to present. Some brief examples include Clause 5 sections C & D, Clause 20 section C, Clause 30 and Clause 40.

The redefinition of principals as managers is married to the government's mistaken belief that our classrooms are facing an epidemic of unaccountable and ineffective teachers, and that the only solution to this problem is to weaponize school level managers to terminate these individuals with prejudice.

The government proposes that Bill 72 will enhance the autonomy of principals to more effectively provide instructional leadership that better supports student achievement.

I would like to speak directly to how redefining principals as managers in law will have the opposite effect.

At present, principals teach every day. While some principals have teaching duties, many principals in full time administrative roles do not teach in classrooms using curriculum outlined by the public school program.

Some might find this problematic, but perhaps exploring what principals teach students every day would allay those concerns.

Because principals are NOT managers, they have time to teach students how to access services and supports for personal crises that include, but are not limited to:

- Addiction
- Abuse of all description
- Unstable family dynamics and issues of custody and parental neglect
- Mental health
- Pregnancy
- Criminal and legal problems
- Homelessness, poverty and hunger

Because principals are NOT managers, they have time to teach students how to navigate their present and future, including, but not limited to:

- How to create positive relationships with partners like teachers, guidance counsellors, community support people
- How to resolve conflict with peers
- How to self-advocate and find support in confronting systemic issues like racism, misogyny, homo and transphobia
- How to find community partners to explore career paths and future employment and training

Every parent in Nova Scotia watched in horror less than three weeks ago as 17 students and teachers were senselessly murdered at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in the ongoing epidemic of school shootings. We live in a false sense of security here, believing these threats exist only south of the border, however it is because principals are NOT managers, they have time to establish meaningful relationships with students who are at risk that help them protect their schools from violence.

There have been several documented incidents in the metro region alone over the past five years where loaded firearms have been brought to schools by troubled students who intended to take life and inflict harm. It is ONLY because principals aren't managers who find time to invest in personal connections with these troubled students that our schools have not been bloodied by the violence that afflicts public schools south of our border.

Lest you think me overly dramatic, let me explain how one single change that redefining principals as managers will mitigate the ability of principals to teach students in the manner I have described.

Once this law is passed, managers will have sole responsibility for conducting the evaluation of all unionized teaching and educational support staff in a school. Right now, the regional agreements in place provide principals with the autonomy to empower others within the school

to share this duty. Vice principals and department heads also participate, which makes sure that a range of perspectives inform the employer's understanding of a teacher or other educational staff member's performance. The language of current regional agreements, of which there are eight, permits principals the professional judgement to share this work with other professionals within a school to make evaluation as meaningful as possible.

Bill 72 redacts that autonomy and forces this job (evaluation of unionized educational staff) to be done exclusively by the school manager. While it appears this government appears to believe that this is a mere adjustment on paper, this "simple" change translates to a tremendous, crushing burden in practice.

I'd like you to consider what this means for a principal like the one I work for. With a unionized teaching staff of seventy-eight (which does not include unionized educational support staff like EPAs, newcomer support workers and others), my principal would immediately have to find hundreds of hours of time within their work year they are currently able to share with a highly trained team to complete a cycle of evaluations.

This time must occur within the teaching day. The simple math for my principal means that this time must be extracted from other priorities. The one that will suffer most is the time that principals presently spend teaching students.

There can only be one cost to this change in definition. Managers, by definition, will become individuals whose work it is to marshal staff. The demands imposed by Bill 72 ensure that more of a manager's time will be spent on administration, not on teaching.

Principals are teachers uniquely positioned to make a difference in the lives of students. Redefining their role in a way that funnels their energies away from their focus on students towards the minutiae of dollars, staffing, administration, statistics and the priorities of a government bureaucracy that will balloon to more than twice its current size by swallowing 7 regional school boards?

These are the outcomes of similar moves by the governments in BC, Ontario and Scotland, all places that have implemented changes recommended by Dr. Glaze.

For the sake of students, I call on all MLA's not to support the redefinition of principals as managers and removal from the Nova Scotia Teachers Union in Bill 72, and seek amendments that preserve principals' true role in our schools: principal teachers. I thank you.