

**Subject: Plans for Tri-County Schools if a Strike Occurs**

April 14, 2023

Dear Families and School Community Members:

As shared with you earlier this week, we are in contract negotiations with the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Local 964. As part of that process, members have voted in favour of a strike. That said, work continues to reach a fair, negotiated agreement that would avoid this strike, and **the earliest a strike could happen would be Friday, April 21, 2023.**

In Tri-County, the employees involved are bus drivers, janitors and custodians, tradespeople, motor vehicle body repairer and mechanics, building operators, building specialists, and general labourers. We value and respect these employees, as they do important work for our students and in our schools.

At the same time, our priority must be to ensure students can continue their learning safely and on schedule. We want to share as much information as possible, so you can plan and know what to expect, if a strike occurs:

- Elementary students will continue to attend classes at their school.
- Learning for most middle and high school students will shift to online. The exceptions are those students who regularly attend class in the Learning Centre, Connect Centre and/or Alternative High Schools. They can continue to do so and individual schools will be in touch with families for planning next steps.
- Bussing will not be available for any students, unless previous arrangements are in place for your child to be bussed privately.
- Schools will not be available for before or after school use, except for any existing child care programs.
- Extracurricular activities that require the use of the school or school buses will be suspended. However, class trips or other activities that do not involve school use or buses, as well as sports on fields and grounds, may continue.

It is important to remember that CUPE is in contract negotiations affecting schools provincially. You may see or hear media reports and social posts about services affected in other parts of the province that are not affected in our schools. For example, Pre-Primary will continue and our teacher assistants remain at work.

We know these changes will be disruptive for all of our students, but some students will face unique challenges. Your principal, teachers and other school staff will work with you on how to meet those challenges.



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We all hope that we can reach an agreement to avoid a labour disruption. However, we must continue to develop plans to ensure that student learning can continue, if a strike occurs.

I know you must have a lot of questions. Some additional information is in the Q and A attached, and principals will share more school-specific information with you early next week. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Jared Purdy  
Regional Executive Director of Education

**Plans for Tri-County Schools if a Strike Occurs: Frequently Asked Questions for Families, April 14, 2023**

What happens if I cannot find a way to get my child to school?

- We hope families can work together and with people in their communities to get students to school. If that is not possible, your school will work with you on a plan to ensure your child can continue learning.

What about concerns around traffic safety?

- Your school principal is working on a plan to manage traffic and will share details next week.

What about concerns around crossing picket lines?

- Picket lines may be close to the school but are not allowed on school grounds. If you need to cross a picket line to get to the school, the people picketing may share information but should not stop you from getting to the school.
- We encourage everyone to be respectful as we are all members of our school communities. Like all labour disruptions, if it happens, it will come to an end, and everyone will again be working together to support our students.

What if our family does not have Internet access or if our Internet connection is unreliable?

- Unlike during COVID, students may be able to access the Internet outside their home, at their library for example. If students cannot access the Internet at home or in their community, a plan can be developed with your school to continue learning.

Will students who receive additional supports at school still have access to those supports at home?

- Our commitment to inclusion continues. SchoolsPlus and Student Services staff, Student Support Workers, Coordinators of African Nova Scotian Education and Mi'kmaq Education, our Equity Consultant and others will work together to support students. As well, your principal, teachers and other school staff will work with you on how to respond to unique circumstances that your child may face.

What about students who are involved with Co-Op placements, etc?

- Schools and the region will work with community partners to ensure these continue.

Who will keep our schools clean?

- Regional and school administration staff, managers and non-union staff.

Will prom and graduation be affected?

- Planning for prom and graduation will continue.