

TOP ISSUES FOR MTS MEMBERS

Bill 64:

- includes system-wide changes that lack evidence of their impact on improving educational outcomes—the stated intent of commissioning the education review. The status of principals and vice principals within the teacher bargaining unit is one such example. How does this improve student learning?
- eliminates principals and vice principals from the definition of teacher in the legislation. This removes them from the profession of teaching narrowing their role to management and away from instructional leadership. This deprofessionalizes the principalship and will have consequences that are wide-reaching. Students are best served from a unified and collaborative profession.
- introduces mechanisms for parent influence over decision-making in areas best suited for the expertise of trained teachers and principal teachers, including, but not limited to, staff hiring and performance evaluations, recommendations regarding priorities and policies on discipline management and analysis of student achievement.
- includes mechanisms to issue directives and requirements for system accountability that will increase standardized testing as well as publication and public comparison of test results. This will serve to widen existing systemic discrimination and inequities.
- authorizes the Provincial Education Authority Board, whose members are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, to implement policies about potentially sensitive curricular content, opening the door for regressive curriculum.
- attacks local democracy through a public appointment structure that can be subject to politically partisan influence and loyalty, susceptible to appointment rescindments with or without cause, and indicates no structure to ensure diverse community representation.
- obstructs free and fair collective bargaining. Under Bill 64, the new teacher employer—the provincial government—requires arbitrators to take into account the ability of the employer—also the provincial government—to pay. Arbitration is the only dispute resolution mechanism for teacher bargaining, and it must remain robust, effective and fair.
- eliminates all school divisions and creates regional catchments that may not be equipped to respond to local needs, based on their size. This centralized structure could *increase* bureaucracy and high-level administration rather than reduce it.
- creates uncertainty at a time when the COVID pandemic makes public services more important than ever.

While not all aspects of the BEST report appear in the Bill, the government is not finished. Through the establishment of regulations, the education minister could implement change that does not require legislation. MTS will be vigilant and intentional in our communication, both with the government and with you, to ensure protections for our members remain in place.