



NBTA

New Brunswick
Teachers' Association

POLITICAL SURVEY

Responses

NBTA

Political Party Survey 2024

The New Brunswick Teachers' Association (NBTA) released a survey on July 17, 2024 asking New Brunswick political parties about their positions on education.

This survey was designed as a tool for teachers and voters to assess which parties align most closely with the needs and priorities of the New Brunswick education system.

The NBTA works to educate and influence all parties, legislators, and community leaders about issues impacting publicly funded public education and the teaching profession in New Brunswick.

This information is crucial for educators and the public as they consider their choices in the upcoming provincial election.

The NBTA Political Party Survey concluded on August 6, 2024. Replies were received from the Green Party NB, Liberal Party NB, NB New Democratic Party, and the Progressive Conservative Party NB. The People's Alliance Party provided no answers in writing with regard to their platform citing concerns over their capacity to provide costing of any commitments they might make.

The following questions were sent to Green Party NB, Liberal Party NB, NB New Democratic Party, Progressive Conservative Party NB, and the People's Alliance Party via LimeSurvey:

1. How does your platform reflect the need for improved funding of public education?
2. What is your party's position on the urgency of underfunded public schools?
3. What is your party's position on the use of public funds for privatizing education? What is your party's commitment to strengthening public education?
4. How would you support recommendations to restore and enhance NB's world-class mentorship program to support early career teachers?
5. What is the party's commitment to actioning recommendations on page 21 from the Building a Better Education System long-term action plan?
6. What is your position, particularly, to government policies and resources that promote a positive learning and working environment, that restores respect and prevents harassment in school communities and online?
7. What is your party's position on the idea that educational decisions should involve teachers and that the government should include teaching professionals at the decision-making table?
8. How will your party ensure decisions impacting education are not swayed by destabilizing political agendas?



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Disclaimer: The following parties are presented in alphabetical order.

**“New
Brunswick
needs a
leader who
respects
teachers and
educational
staff.”**

GREEN

Political Survey Responses

How does your platform reflect the need for improved funding of public education?

Our platform recognizes the critical need for improved funding in public education, from early learning to schools. We aim to increase childcare spaces, ensure equitable funding for Francophone centers, enhance wages and benefits for early childhood educators, and support neurodivergent children. In schools, we support giving schools budgetary autonomy, funding inclusive education, establishing universal meal programs, and collaborating with unions on staff retention and recruitment strategies.

What is your party's position on the urgency of underfunded public schools?

The Green Party acknowledges the critical need to address the underfunding of public schools and is dedicated to tackling this issue urgently. We aim to ensure that every child has access to a high-quality education and that teachers benefit from a positive working environment, enabling them to create effective learning conditions. We believe that investing in public education is vital for the future of our communities and society.

What is your party's position on the use of public funds for privatizing education? What is your party's commitment to strengthening public education?

The Green Party opposes the use of public funds for privatizing education, believing that public education is a cornerstone of a fair and equitable society. We are committed to strengthening public education by increasing funding to ensure schools have the resources needed for high-quality education, improving infrastructure to create safe and conducive learning environments, and supporting teachers with better training, pay, and working conditions.

How would you support recommendations to restore and enhance NB's world-class mentorship program to support early career teachers?

The Green Party supports restoring and enhancing New Brunswick's world-class mentorship program for early career teachers. We believe investing in teachers' professional development is crucial for high-quality education. We would allocate resources to reinstate and expand the mentorship program, making it accessible to all new teachers. Additionally, we would provide comprehensive training for experienced teachers to effectively support and guide new educators.

What is your position, particularly, to government policies and resources that promote a positive learning and working environment, that restores respect and prevents harassment in school communities and online?

The Green Party believes that restoring respect in our school communities begins at the top, with the leadership from the Premier. New Brunswick needs a leader who respects teachers and educational staff, setting a positive tone for the entire education system. To support this, we advocate for government policies and resources that ensure schools are well-equipped with necessary supplies and building materials, allowing teachers to focus on their teaching. To promote a positive learning environment, we are committed to establishing a universal school breakfast and lunch program tailored to local needs and embedding support teams in schools to assist with mental health and behavioral issues. Additionally, we will ensure adequate resources for the effective implementation of inclusive education policies, while promoting a culture of respect and inclusion to prevent harassment in school communities and online.

What is the party's commitment to actioning recommendations on page 21 from the Building a Better Education System long-term action plan?

The Green Party is committed to implementing the recommendations from page 21 of the Building a Better Education System Plan, focusing on recruiting and retaining qualified teachers and specialized health professionals. We will collaborate with unions to create a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy covering various staff, including teachers, custodians, psychologists, and speech-language pathologists. Our approach includes offering competitive salaries, fostering a supportive work environment, reducing administrative burdens, and ensuring manageable class sizes. We will also partner with universities to align education programs with system needs and provide practical training opportunities.

What is your party's position on the idea that educational decisions should involve teachers and that the government should include teaching professionals at the decision-making table?

The Green Party strongly supports including teachers and teaching professionals in education decision-making. We recognize that educators, who are on the front lines, have invaluable insights into what works best for students and schools. By incorporating their perspectives into policy discussions, we can create more effective and relevant educational strategies that reflect the real needs of classrooms.

How will your party ensure decisions impacting education are not swayed by destabilizing political agendas?

The Green Party is dedicated to keeping education decisions focused on the needs of students and educators, free from political interference. We recognize that past political interference from both Liberal and Conservative governments, such as changes to the French Immersion Program and Policy 713, has harmed student performance. To counteract this, we will restore the number of school districts to 14 to enhance local responsiveness and ensure that District Education Councils remain publicly accountable through elected members, maintaining transparency.

“We would allocate resources to reinstate and expand the mentorship program.”

LIBERAL

Political Survey Responses

How does your platform reflect the need for improved funding of public education?

We are dedicated to stability in education. Literacy and numeracy levels have reached an all-time low due to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, combined with our system being overextended and under-resourced. It's essential to empower local, district, and school professionals to address the needs of their communities. While underfunding is an issue, we must also examine how funds are allocated and distributed throughout the system. Understanding the impact of effective programs on students is crucial. We will invest in nourishing our students through universal free breakfast and pay-what-you-can lunches and stabilize our classrooms by implementing an education staffing plan.

What is your party's position on the urgency of underfunded public schools?

In the spring of this year, our leader, Susan Holt, visited schools and met with educators across the province. Nearly every educator she spoke with identified that the system as a whole is underfunded and in urgent need of support. We believe that education is an investment. We will adopt a balanced approach to investing in education – no more hoarding funds while children are forced to use porta potties at school.

What is your party's position on the use of public funds for privatizing education? What is your party's commitment to strengthening public education?

Public funds should not be used for private education. The expertise to provide a world-class education exists within our public education system. Our teachers and education experts should be empowered by the government to do what they do best.

How would you support recommendations to restore and enhance NB's world-class mentorship program to support early career teachers?

Growing the education profession is critical to stabilizing our classrooms and ensuring our schools are adequately staffed. This involves investing in the retention of our existing educators and the recruitment of new personnel as part of a broader staffing recruitment plan. Our approach will be based on collaboration between the government, education districts, the New Brunswick Teachers Association, the Association des enseignantes et des enseignants francophones du Nouveau-Brunswick, and the New Brunswick Teachers Federation to leverage local leadership and capacity building.

What is your position, particularly, to government policies and resources that promote a positive learning and working environment, that restores respect and prevents harassment in school communities and online?

Over the past six years, we have witnessed how a government focused on its own agenda within the education system can negatively impact students, teachers, and the goal of ensuring all New Brunswick students have what they need to succeed. Instead, the government should prioritize providing the foundation and necessary tools to promote positive learning and improve working conditions. This all starts with respect. Our teachers and other educational professionals need to feel properly valued for the crucial role they play in our province and its future. They go to work every day with the best interests of students in mind, and it is the government's job to ensure these educators have what they need to provide the best education possible. Whether through the promotion of a positive learning environment via expertly designed policies or proper resources, we will be there to support New Brunswick's teachers and students.

“Public funds should not be used for private education.”

What is the party's commitment to actioning recommendations on page 21 from the Building a Better Education System long-term action plan?

Recommendation from action plan:

1. Remove roadblocks for qualified applicants, coming to New Brunswick with teaching degrees, to be employed in classrooms in the province which means accelerating efforts to recognize credentials from other jurisdictions -- As part of our broader recruitment strategy, we will work with relevant parties to remove barriers to credential recognition.

2. Undertake a formal research project to understand why fewer people are choosing to become teachers. We need to understand if it is a choice about the profession, or something entirely different -- An understanding of why fewer people are joining the profession and why people are choosing to work outside of NB are crucial to developing a retention and recruitment strategy.

3. Develop a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy aimed at increasing the number of qualified teachers and specialized health service professionals and keeping them in the system -- We are committed to an education staffing plan, and a healthcare staffing plan to address the gaps system wide. In addition to retaining our graduates and existing professionals, we need to leverage innovative recruiting tools to close the gap.

4. Explore alternative service delivery models that could be used to support children throughout the system -- There needs to be opportunities throughout the province's public education system for all types of learners to excel. This includes supporting classroom teachers and neighborhood schools as well as providing districts the appropriate resources to investigate and create alternative service delivery models, as needed. There needs to be a concerted effort to explore and understand these models while training educators on how to effectively implement any new model.

5. Make the profession more appealing to a new generation of teachers through efforts to address classroom composition, and a commitment to explore team teaching models -- Through an education staffing plan, all opportunities for retention and recruitment will be explored. There are successful cases of schools using team teaching and student regrouping in NB. There needs to be a concerted effort to take the best practices of these schools and expand them to other schools in the province, while also looking at models farther afield.

“It is crucial for teachers to play a role in decision-making.”

What is your party's position on the idea that educational decisions should involve teachers and that the government should include teaching professionals at the decision-making table?

Our leadership style will emphasize collaboration and partnership. We firmly believe that education decisions should be based on well-informed professional opinions, crafted through a balance of experience and practical research. It is crucial for teachers to play a role in decision-making. We also believe that one size does not fit all. Therefore, we will create more opportunities for communities to set the direction that works best for them.

How will your party ensure decisions impacting education are not swayed by destabilizing political agendas?

The education system desperately needs stability after being used to create wedge issues for political gain by the Higgs government. It is essential for leaders in the province to honour the system's mandate to educate and train the next generation. The wellbeing, numeracy, and literacy of New Brunswick's youth will be the priority of a Liberal government and will guide all decision-making. We are committed to bringing forward stability, balance and vision for the sector.

NEW Political Survey Responses

DEMOCRATIC

PARTY

How does your platform reflect the need for improved funding of public education?

Education is a main plank in the NDP platform. We are fully aware of the necessity for increases to education funding to provide all our professionals with the resources, materials, support, staffing, and other necessities to improve job quality, staff retention, student outcomes, and our public education system as a whole.

What is your party's position on the urgency of underfunded public schools?

The urgency cannot be understated. We have seen an increase in the number of students in our public system, but no corresponding increase in funding or resources, no hiring of more professionals of any

type. This is leading to job dissatisfaction, worse student outcomes, and threatens to worsen the staffing crisis. Education is a fundamental investment in our province, and it must be funded as such.

What is your party's position on the use of public funds for privatizing education? What is your party's commitment to strengthening public education?

Zero tolerance. The NDP will not ever support privatizing education using public funds. The NDP is entirely committed to listening to the professionals in the field, and strengthening public education to the betterment of professionals, students, families, and the province.

How would you support recommendations to restore and enhance NB's world-class mentorship program to support early career teachers?

NB should be proud of such a world class program, and it deserves to be restored and enhanced. The NDP would look at the recommendations offered by the professionals, and the resources required, and do what was required to ensure the program is restored and leads to support and improved staffing and retention of early career teachers.

“Education is a fundamental investment in our province.”

What is your position, particularly, to government policies and resources that promote a positive learning and working environment, that restores respect and prevents harassment in school communities and online?

There is zero tolerance within the NDP in any regard for a workplace that does not ensure positive working environments, with a focus on respect and zero harassment. School communities, as well as online, should ensure this standard both for professionals and students. The NDP would ensure that these government policies and resources are adequate, up to date, and reasonable.

What is the party's commitment to actioning recommendations on page 21 from the Building a Better Education System long-term action plan?

Having read the action plan, the NDP is committed to doing whatever possible in implementing the recommendations as stated. The stated goals are all essential to modernizing our education system and the working timelines seem reasonable. They will go a long way towards improving our education system to the point where it will serve the public education system, professionals, and students.

What is your party's position on the idea that educational decisions should involve teachers and that the government should include teaching professionals at the decision-making table?

We agree 100%. The teachers and teaching professionals should be included at the table, as they have first hand experience and expertise, something which is absolutely required.

How will your party ensure decisions impacting education are not swayed by destabilizing political agendas?

Ideally, education policy would be implemented on a long term basis, rather than on an individual year to year budgetary decision, and once implemented it would ideally be done so in a way where the decision is cannot be revoked on a political whim. In addition, DEC's should have stronger control over individual policies that affect their students and staff.

“DECs should have stronger control over individual policies that affect their students and staff.”

PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE

Political Survey Responses

How does your platform reflect the need for improved funding of public education?

The Department of Education budget has increased each year and schools will continue to be properly funded to deliver a quality education. This year the department has a record budget. Since 2018, the education budget (capital + ordinary budget) grew from \$1.276 billion to this year's budget of \$2.098 billion. That's an increase of 64%. It's not simply how much money is spent, however, that determines results. We need to continually look at how taxpayer dollars are being spent and how it can be used more effectively to improve educational outcomes for students.

What is your party's position on the urgency of underfunded public schools?

Educational funding has never been higher in the history of New Brunswick. While recent contracts signed with teachers, for example, will ensure more money is going into the system, it's important that we continue to look at how taxpayer funds are used to make sure we are getting the best results for students. Our government is always open to suggestions on how money can be spent more efficiently to get better outcomes.

What is your party's position on the use of public funds for privatizing education? What is your party's commitment to strengthening public education?

The Department of Education oversees public schools in New Brunswick. We do not fund private schools nor do we fund home schooling. While we respect the choice of parents to educate their children as they deem appropriate, the funding and policy work of the Department is focused on public education. The short and the long-term recommendations of Building a Better Education System are focused on strengthening public education. These recommendations, as you know, were developed and are being worked on in partnership with the NBTA and the Department of Education, School Districts, and other stakeholders.

How would you support recommendations to restore and enhance NB's world-class mentorship program to support early career teachers?

Teaching is certainly a challenging career. Early career teachers as well as new administrators need to be supported. Early career teachers shall have the opportunity to be mentored in best practices, classroom management, lesson planning and meeting the diverse needs of learners. We will tap into the expertise of our seasoned teachers as well as some of our retired teachers. We are also working with universities to ensure that new teachers are prepared for the

diverse educational needs of our classrooms. The NB Lead Initiative is an initiative to support current and aspiring school leaders in their leadership journeys. This initiative is one of the goals of the long-term recommendations document entitled, "Building a Better Education System". This document was created through a partnership between the NBTA, EECD and other key partners. The NBTA and EECD have co-chaired the process and continue to be leads in the implementation process.

What is your position, particularly, to government policies and resources that promote a positive learning and working environment, that restores respect and prevents harassment in school communities and online?

EECD Policy 703 Positive Working and Learning Environment outlines steps to be taken to ensure that all individuals in the have a safe, positive harassment free environment. This policy is very clear outlines acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and the consequences for not following the policy. It references the role of parents as outlined in the Education Act as well as a student code of conduct. We will support the education staff, administrators, Directors of Schools, and Superintendents in restoring respect and in eliminating all forms of harassment. The actions that are outlined in the application of the policy will be completely and actively supported and defended by Department staff. Our Government has introduced policy changes to restrict cell phone usage in classrooms and overseen by teachers with the goal to eliminate online bullying during the instructional day.

“Early career teachers as well as new administrators need to be supported.”

What is the party's commitment to actioning recommendations on page 21 from the Building a Better Education System long-term action plan?

Page 21 of the action plan deals with significant training, professional learning and collaboration required to support learners with a wide range of learning disabilities, physical disabilities, behavioural challenges, and many other diverse needs of students.

Educational Assistants are a significant part of the education system, and it is important to understand how the role of educational assistants has changed over the years and can change throughout the school year. Traditionally, this role is being assigned to support class composition issues when another resource may be better suited such as a Behaviour Intervention Worker or possibly an additional teacher. This needs to be reviewed and opportunities are needed to enhance the school support network, putting in place the most appropriate resources to ensure student success.

We will work with partners in Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) 2745 to develop and align roles and responsibilities, training, and work assignments for educational assistants. This will require a review of the roles and responsibilities of educational assistants, the creation of position descriptions and training requirements to support job assignments. Tailored training programs and resource allocation to equip educational assistants with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively support diverse student needs and support specific job assignments will need to be developed.

Update the parameters for matching paraprofessionals and professionals to fulfil the needs of learners who require support and ensure an appropriate role for the educational assistant.

Developing onboarding packages to build capacity for educational assistants to work effectively as a valued member of the classroom and school team with core information for transitions and career success.

Having a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of educational assistants within the educational setting, including identifying specific tasks, duties, and expectations associated with the role to provide clarity for other support positions.

After roles and responsibilities are established, the knowledge, abilities, and qualifications necessary to perform the

role will have been identified, which will lead to a training framework that includes objectives and learning content.

Overall, success will be measured by the educational assistant's ability to apply the acquired skills to their roles and contribute to student success.

Accurately assessing learner needs and aligning them with skilled professional and paraprofessional. This ensures appropriate assignments for educational assistants, leading to enhanced support and improved outcomes for students.

This is the timeline we have collaboratively created – including in concert with the NBTA - to achieve this important recommendation.

(See *Timeline* on page 15)

What is your party’s position on the idea that educational decisions should involve teachers and that the government should include teaching professionals at the decision-making table?

Traditionally the NBTA, NBTA committees and teacher leaders are partners in decisions that involve teachers and the teaching profession. For example, teachers are involved in curriculum committees, Teacher Certification and Centers of Excellence to name a few. When necessary, the department will create an ad hoc committee to address a particular need. The most recent partnership has been the steering committee which developed the near- and long-term recommendations, in the Anglophone Sector. From this, an Implementation Committee was created to develop a plan to implement the recommendations, which is well underway.

How will your party ensure decisions impacting education are not swayed by destabilizing political agendas?

Our government is committed to ensuring that the NB Education Act is being followed and will continue to strive for open communication with all members working in our education system to provide assistance, support, professional learning opportunities and resources.

“Our government is committed to ensuring that the NB Education Act is being followed.”

TIMELINE	2024-2025				2025-2026				2026-2027				2027-2028			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Standard Protocol																
Tracking and Reporting																
Absence Intervention Model																
Awareness Campaign																

Disclaimer: The PC Party submitted the information provided in this table in text format only. We retrieved this table from their "Building a better education system" action plan.