

President's Message

The following memo has been sent to the Education Accord Leadership and Advisory Board and is being forwarded to MUNFA members for their information.

To: Education Accord Leadership and Advisory Board

Cc. Hon. Krista Howell, Minister of Education
Dr. Ashrafee Hossain, President, MUNFA

Date: January 13, 2025

From: Dr. Josh Lepawsky

Dear Education Accord Leadership Team and Advisory Board,

I am writing to inform you that I am stepping down from my position on the Education Accord Advisory Board, effective immediately. This decision has the full support of the Executive Committee of the Memorial University Faculty Association (MUNFA). Additionally, MUNFA will cease participation in and withdraw endorsement of the government's Education Accord.

The Education Accord, announced in January 2024, aims to:

"reimagine the education system to ensure students and learners at all levels receive the educational services they need in the classroom, are prepared for the modern global economy, and develop strong decision-making skills to foster positive health and well-being."

Despite its collaborative premise, the process has been characterized by predetermined outcomes and limited meaningful consultation. I raised concerns about this approach during the process. Nevertheless, I maintained my participation to ensure faculty perspectives were represented and to advocate for recommendations that would lead to meaningful and substantive change.

The recent handling of the Interim Report exemplifies our concerns about the process. During the holiday break [media reports](#) indicated the report had been submitted, prompting inquiries from faculty members. The subsequent public release of the report, without proper consultation, confirms our assessment that the Accord process serves primarily as a public relations exercise rather than genuine stakeholder engagement.

The Interim Report, as it pertains to post-secondary education, presents an inadequate and dismissive view of the fundamental challenges facing our province's university system. These challenges include chronic underfunding and poor administrative governance, which negatively impact students, faculty, and the broader public. These are issues MUNFA has stressed publicly on many occasions and substantiated again in [our written submission](#) to the Education Accord.

MUNFA has consistently and in good faith participated in various assessments of the provincial university system, providing [public recommendations](#).

The Interim Report demonstrates a blatant disregard for the significant concerns raised by those who deliver the core mission of our province's only university. Consequently, neither I nor the Faculty Union can, in good conscience, continue to lend our names to this flawed report.

This resignation is not intended to disparage the individual members of the Advisory Board or the organizations they represent. Our frustration stems from the deeply flawed process itself: its top-down approach, the inadequate and incomplete recommendations, and the ultimate failure to address the critical needs of our education system, our students, and our province.

Sincerely,

Dr. Josh Lepawsky
Professor, Memorial University of Newfoundland