



House of Assembly Assemblée législative
Nova Scotia Nouvelle-Écosse

Honourable Labi Kousoulis
Department of Labour and Advanced Education
1505 Barrington Street, 3rd Floor
Halifax, NS
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August 25, 2020

Minister Kousoulis,

The need for reliable access to proper high-speed internet is essential across Nova Scotia, particularly many rural areas, has been underlined during the last number of months. Unfortunately, there remain many communities in my constituency that are underserved or unserved.

For the business community, this puts them at a competitive disadvantage. For many constituents, it is a major inconvenience not being able to check their emails, do their online banking or work from home, as many Nova Scotians were required to do throughout the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Students will be returning to school very shortly. As post-secondary students begin to learn more about their educational institution's plans for this year's learning experience, I have discovered that some courses and programs will be taught on-site, while some are offered exclusively online.

The guidelines from some institutions will limit students' movement on campus, certainly making for a much different experience this year. Students learning online do not want to live such an isolated experience away from family and friends. For some post-secondary students in Argyle-Barrington, online learning from home will not only be challenging, but nearly impossible due to poor and unreliable internet access. Unfortunately, there are students who may opt not to attend college or university this year due to the technology barrier.

I would like to explore options to support post-secondary students in my constituency who decide to learn from home this year, to ensure that they have the internet access required for them to be successful in their studies.

Colton LeBlanc, MLA

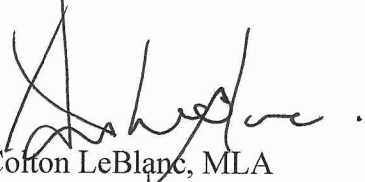
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One option that comes to mind is to invest in our public libraries – existing infrastructure – to increase the hours and frequency of operations. There are two public libraries in my constituency – one in Pubnico, the other in Barrington. There are also libraries in Yarmouth and Shelburne which are both in neighbouring constituencies.

I would appreciate your assistance and any other possible suggestions to ensure that post-secondary students in rural Nova Scotia have an equal chance to learn safely this year. Please reach out to my office to arrange an opportunity to discuss.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colton LeBlanc', with a period at the end. The signature is written in a cursive style.

Colton LeBlanc, MLA
Argyle-Barrington

cc: Brian Comer, MLA for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg and PC Critic for Labour and Advanced Education