



*January 18, 2018*

## COMMUNIQUÉ

### **Atlantic Ministers to Endorse a Regional Mental Health Approach in Public and Post-Secondary Education**

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Ministers of education and early childhood development, and ministers of post-secondary education and training, will be taking steps to further solidify regional collaboration to guide provincial and regional mental health initiatives by agreeing to develop an Atlantic Mental Health Framework. The Atlantic ministers' agreement to strengthen and promote mental health in public and post-secondary education emerged from the meeting of the Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET) held today in Halifax, and attended by Hon. Brian Kenny, NB Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development; Hon. Al Hawkins, NL Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour; Hon. Dale Kirby, NL Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development; Hon. Zach Churchill, NS Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development; Hon. Labi Kousoulis, NS Minister of Labour and Advanced Education; Hon. Jordan Brown, PEI Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture; and Hon. Sonny Gallant, PEI Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning.

The proposed framework will contain specific goals and objectives that ministers would like to pursue both regionally and provincially. The framework is meant to be an overarching direction for mental health in Atlantic Canada and will contain key mental health themes and priorities that provinces would like to address to support the delivery of provincial services. The framework will also include key goals, objectives, and themes that are within the responsibilities of ministers of education and early childhood development, post-secondary education, and training. The implementation of specific regional and provincial initiatives will continue to be the responsibility of each province.

The ministers strongly believe that a regional approach will be helpful in advancing provincial efforts to promote evidence-based policies, practices that are relevant and strategic in a learning environment, a continuum in the delivery of effective services to address mental health issues in public schools and post-secondary education institutions, and assist them in collaborating in a systematic way and making effective use of available data. In addition to laying the foundation for a regional mental health approach, ministers consider the proposed framework as a mechanism for their provinces to continue sharing information, learn from each other, and determine which strategies and programs are most effective.

Ministers responsible for public and post-secondary education have directed their departments to prepare a draft Atlantic Mental Health Framework for their consideration in 2018. The ministers believe that the framework should also reflect a comprehensive approach focused on equity, and be sensitive to diverse students and communities, including the establishment of strong relationships and partnerships among school systems, post-secondary education institutions, other government departments, non-government agencies, and community stakeholders.

The decision to proceed with the development of an Atlantic Mental Health Framework was made upon ministers of education and early childhood development, post-secondary education, and training receiving an update from the October 25-26, 2017 mental health symposium sponsored by CAMET. A total of 121 participants attended the two-day event, which focused on sharing of best practices and creating networking opportunities between and among participants from provincial departments of education and post-secondary education, other government departments, universities, school districts, community colleges, and non-government organizations.

The ministers also discussed entrepreneurship in public and post-secondary education, and more specifically, the critical importance to continue supporting an entrepreneurial culture in public schools and post-secondary education institutions in Atlantic Canada, and to ensure a successful student transition into the labour market.

To inform the ministers' discussions, Mr. Ray Ivany, Chair of the Nova Scotia Commission on Building a New Economy and past President of Acadia University, was invited to speak on the topic of entrepreneurship, more specifically, on current and future challenges, and thoughts and opportunities to further promote entrepreneurship in public schools and post-secondary education institutions. Ministers appreciated Mr. Ivany's presentation and directed their departments to explore regional opportunities that could be pursued.

The Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET) is an agency of the departments responsible for public and post-secondary education, and its purpose is to enhance cooperation in public (Entry-12) and post-secondary education in Atlantic Canada by working together to improve learning, optimize efficiencies and bring added value to provincial initiatives.

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