

EDUCATION/EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT--New Provincial Policy Will Support Inclusive Education for Students

The province now has its first inclusive education policy to support students.

The policy applies to all Regional Centres for Education and the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial. It provides guidelines on education and student supports, and describes what all partners in education will be working toward.

It also sets up the next stages of work, including development of new guidelines for standards in schools and classrooms, an autism strategy and development of a student support worker program for African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaw students.

“Every student has different needs. Being truly inclusive is about understanding what those needs are then working to support each student to be successful,” said Education and Early Childhood Education Minister Zach Churchill. “This policy will provide a consistent, across the province guideline around what it means to deliver inclusive education for students.”

The inclusive education policy was created in response to a recommendation from the Commission on Inclusive Education. The policy will come into full effect in September 2020.

Quotes:

“Nova Scotia is taking an important step forward with this new provincial policy on inclusive education. The excellent work done by teachers and school leaders in the past provides a base on which to build. The teachers and other staff who provide instruction daily in Nova Scotia classrooms need to know they are valued and supported. This policy will help make that a reality, along with an implementation plan that brings the efforts of school officials, teachers and parents together to serve Nova Scotia families and students.

- Gordon Porter, Inclusive Education Canada

"We in the disability community are extremely pleased to see the government taking seriously this country's commitment to human rights, including the right to education for persons with disabilities, those living in poverty, African Nova Scotians and other traditionally underserved groups. We are eager to see how this policy develops once in the hands of the teachers and education professionals who do so much for children in this province and hope that as students, families and educators we continue to grow on this journey towards high quality education for all."

- Alice Evans, chair, Special Education Programs and Services Committee and executive director of The Club Inclusion

Quick Facts:

-- government worked with Dr. Gordon Porter, Inclusive Education Canada, along with

teachers and more than 150 individuals and stakeholder groups to develop the policy
-- schools will be able to access professional development to support their work on inclusion and student equity
-- \$15 million more is being invested this year to add 173 more inclusive education specialists, teachers and non-teaching staff
-- in the past two years, 364 new inclusive education hires have been added to schools, including teachers, specialists like teachers for students with autism and non-teaching staff like school psychologists

Additional Resources:

Inclusive Education Policy, <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/inclusiveeducationpolicyen.pdf>

Breakdown of new Inclusive Education hires in Nova

Scotia, <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/inclusiveeducation>

Inclusive Education Canada, <https://inclusiveeducation.ca>

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