

2009-2012 STRATEGIC DIRECTION



**Council of Atlantic Ministers of
Education and Training**

December 15, 2008

1. INTRODUCTION

The Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET) 2009-2012 Strategic Direction outlines the broad orientation in public and post-secondary education and focuses on specific project areas. Each of these noted areas are considered important in order to meet the goals not only set forth in this strategic plan, but also in the education plans of the provinces. The CAMET strategic plan and specific projects will provide added value and complement provincial policies and programs.

On April 15, 2008, the CMEC released a joint declaration, *Learn 2020*, which encompasses four pillars of life-long learning in the areas of early childhood learning and development, elementary to high school systems, post-secondary education and adult learning, and skills development. Work undertaken by departments of education and training as outlined in this strategic direction document supports CMEC in its ongoing commitment to achieve goals in its 2020 document.

2. PUBLIC EDUCATION 2009-2012

2.1 Objective

The initiatives outlined in this document support the overall objective for Atlantic Canada high school graduates to achieve or perform at or above the same level as other high school graduates in Canada. This strategic direction will also support ongoing commitments undertaken in previous years in the areas of curriculum development.

2.2 Guiding Principles

The 2009-2012 Strategic Direction embraces actions to respond to the following guiding principles:

- a) children will arrive at school ready to learn (grades E and 1);
- b) students will leave grade 5 with the tools necessary to continue learning (cognitive backpack for grades 2 to 5); and
- c) students will complete grade 12 ready to pursue a career or future studies with interest and passion (grades 6 to 12).

2.3 Strategic Areas

2.3.1 Early Childhood Development	<p>Atlantic provincial governments also recognize the importance of promoting literacy and related interventions at an early age and the need to work together. Numerous research studies on early brain development have revealed that appropriate stimulation is required from a child's earliest days in order to develop neurological connections needed to prepare the child for later cognitive development.</p> <p>Departments responsible for early childhood development have agreed to participate in a review of current assessment tools, including consideration of the value of their implementation at a younger age. Ministers of education recognize the importance of this work in the context of school readiness.</p> <p>Building on the success of existing provincial programs and policies in early childhood development, a joint Atlantic table will be struck to recommend regional opportunities for early childhood development, beginning with early literacy.</p> <p><u>Goals:</u> Review and consider current assessment tools for provincial/regional implementation. Prepare recommendations/identify actions to promote early childhood literacy.</p>
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<p>2.3.2 Educational Leadership</p>	<p>The departments of education in Atlantic Canada have a vested interest in ensuring that educators at all levels receive the support required in order to deliver high quality programming in the schools for all levels of learners.</p> <p><u>Goals:</u> To establish an Atlantic provinces' leadership standards document for principals and other education leaders in both linguistic sectors.</p> <p>To develop a standards-based Atlantic principals' leadership development program, including mentorship, for use in both linguistic sectors.</p> <p>To develop a model for leadership assessment for use in both linguistic sectors.</p>
<p>2.3.3 Instructional Practice for All Students</p>	<p>Further to providing support to those educators in leadership roles, the departments of education recognize the importance of providing classroom teachers with extra tools and guidance in order to fulfill the departments' mandate of providing high quality programming for all students.</p> <p><u>Goals:</u> To increase the utilization of differentiated instruction at the middle school level.</p> <p>To increase the repertoire of strategies for all teachers.</p> <p>To increase classroom-based assessment.</p> <p>To have teachers well prepared and supported when entering the education system.</p>
<p>2.3.4 Numeracy</p>	<p>Numeracy has become an important focus area in the past several years. While some students perform well on international and national standardized tests, a great number of students continue to struggle and the learning gap between boys and girls remains a challenge for educators.</p> <p><u>Goals:</u> To develop classroom-based assessment tools to assist teachers with monitoring numeracy skills of students.</p> <p>To provide students with access to an effective next generation math curriculum.</p> <p>To ensure widespread understanding at all leadership levels (departments, boards/districts, school administration, etc.) of the critical importance of numeracy promotion and classroom instruction.</p> <p>To develop cooperative strategies to increase the number of numeracy courses and professional learning opportunities available to numeracy coaches and classroom teachers. Encourage Atlantic universities to become leaders in the pursuit of the numeracy expertise field.</p>
<p>2.3.5 Public Education Literacy</p>	<p>This plan focuses on activities that address identified challenges in Atlantic Canada in improving literacy outcomes for all students. These challenges are categorized as: literacy teaching, literacy learning, literacy leadership, and literacy in the curriculum. They also complement numerous initiatives already being undertaken in the four Atlantic provinces.</p> <p><u>Goals:</u> To establish standards for teaching reading and writing for all entry to grade 12 teachers.</p> <p>To develop reading and writing standards as well as produce exemplars for the French first language sector.</p> <p>To ensure widespread understanding at all leadership levels (departments, boards/districts, school administration, etc.) of the critical importance of literacy promotion and classroom instruction.</p> <p>To develop cooperative strategies to increase the number of literacy courses and professional development opportunities available to literacy coaches and classroom teachers. Encourage Atlantic universities to become leaders in the pursuit of the literacy expertise field.</p> <p>To research appropriate intervention strategies for grade 7–9 students.</p>

3. POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION 2009-2012

3.1 Objective

The initiatives outlined in this section of the document support the overall objective **to improve the quality and competitiveness of the region's post-secondary education institutions.**

3.2 Guiding Principles

The 2009-2012 Strategic Direction is designed to lead and improve the quality of the region's post-secondary institutions driven by the following guiding principles:

- a) students will receive the best possible post-secondary education in their field of study and will be well prepared to enter the labour force; and
- b) departments and stakeholders will work together to respond to emerging issues affecting post-secondary education.

3.3 Strategic Areas

3.3.1 Enrolment in Post-Secondary Institutions	<p>Low fertility rates and high out-migration numbers suggest that post-secondary institutions in Atlantic Canada will continue to experience student enrolment issues in the years to come. Data released recently from Statistics Canada shows that three of the four Atlantic provinces have fertility rates below the national average and all have proportionally more senior citizens than the rest of Canada. Statistics Canada records also indicate that, for the period 1994-2004, the population group between the ages of 20 and 34 decreased by approximately 60,000 in the Atlantic region.</p> <p>Atlantic provinces, individually and collectively, have introduced a number of initiatives to increase the population. These activities have also focused on the attraction and retention of immigrants and of international students. In the area of post-secondary education, some provinces have taken measures to increase the availability of university and community college programs.</p> <p><u>Goal:</u> To increase enrolment numbers in Atlantic Canadian post-secondary institutions.</p>
3.3.2 Quality Assurance – Post-Secondary Programs	<p>Atlantic provinces have structures in place to conduct quality assurance for public post-secondary programs. These systems are in place at both the university and community college sectors. For private trainers, the rules vary from province to province, which lead to inconsistencies.</p> <p><u>Goal:</u> To develop a list of quality indicators that will have a base in solid research planning.</p>
3.3.3 Skilled Trades	<p>Some of the provinces in Atlantic Canada have started to reintroduce skilled trades in their public education system. With this change, there will be new opportunities for colleges to partner with the public schools, which may lead to increased enrolment.</p> <p><u>Goal:</u> To improve the educational linkages for the apprenticeship program to ensure appropriate level of connections between post-secondary and K-12 systems.</p>
3.3.4 Adult Literacy	<p>Approximately half of adults living in the Atlantic region have below level 3 literacy and/or numeracy skills. This affects their ability to find and improve their employment situation and can add additional strain on their family lives. From this aspect, educators look to improve adult literacy rates from both an employer and community perspective.</p> <p><u>Goals:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing Awareness – to raise social awareness of the benefits of improving literacy and essential skills and to engage employers and industry groups in program ownership. 2. Learner Recruitment and Retention – to eliminate barriers to learning opportunities and assure relevance and value to the learner.

4. CONCLUSION

The CAMET 2009-2012 Strategic Direction outlines a blueprint for Atlantic departments of education and training in their pursuit, individually and collectively, to provide the most effective and efficient education systems for all Atlantic Canadians. It presents broad orientations for CAMET, which will complement and add value to provincial education plans.

Departments of education and training recognize that each linguistic sector may have different priorities. Therefore, each linguistic sector of departments of education will continue to respond to the needs that are specific to their clientele. In addition, other priorities may emerge as yet not identified, and departments will, collectively, continue to respond to these unforeseen issues.