



COMMENTARY

"NBSA STATEMENT ON FTP/TRMC ANNOUNCEMENT"

by
Samuel Titus
Acting Executive Director

—
Thank you for the kind introduction.

The NBSA is pleased to stand here today in support of the efforts made by this government in addressing the significant financial barriers being faced by our low and middle income students. As the Minister has stated, the FTP/TRMC policy suite have provided tuition relief for nearly three-quarters of New Brunswick students currently relying on student financial aid to support their education. The positive impact of these programs has proven to be far-reaching and deeply impactful for those receiving it and it is undeniable that these programs have strengthened our postsecondary sector.

The NBSA firmly believes that the personal financial capacity of a student should not determine their capacity to be successful in this province and in our communities. These policies are a strong step towards establishing an accessible, affordable, high quality postsecondary education sector.

Today's announcement also highlights the demographic challenges facing the sector. While this aid has undoubtedly improved access to education for low and middle income students, financial barriers remain a daunting challenge for anyone pursuing higher education. The unfortunate reality is that tuition represents less than half of the total cost of education, and until factors such as intergenerational poverty, the rising cost of housing and textbooks, and the financial burden of mental health-related problems are properly addressed, postsecondary will remain, at least partially, inaccessible. That being said, these problems are not insurmountable and with continued support for programs such as the Free Tuition Program and Tuition Relief for the Middle Class, government can play an integral role in tackling them and we look forward to continuing these discussions in the coming months.

The Alliance reaffirms its belief that the soundest investment government can make is in its postsecondary students. The pathway to prosperity may be long, but we are committed to traveling it together.