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Mandy McLean
Executive Director
/ Directrice générale
College of Psychologists of New Brunswick
/ Collège des psychologues du Nouveau-Brunswick

Regarding New Brunswick Bill 35
Letter of Support for the

Dear Ms. McLean

PAA's mission is to advance the science-based profession of psychology & to promote the well-being & potential of all Albertans. On behalf of the Psychologists' Association of Alberta, in alignment with the public statements of the Association of Canadian Psychology Regulatory Organizations, and the Canadian Psychological Association, we support your efforts in opposition of New Brunswick's Bill 35.

Legislators in New Brunswick must reconsider Bill-35 which, as passed, poses considerable risks to the populace in New Brunswick as it would elsewhere. In careful review of this proposed bill, and the science in this regard, I lend my full support in opposition to this bill as currently presented.

During these trying times we have all born witness to the disastrous outcomes that have arisen when communities, and leadership, ignore critical advice and from scientific expert. Educators with a master's degree are not sufficiently trained to administer and interpret sensitive psychological cognitive assessment instruments, such as the WISC, outside of the context of a psychoeducational assessment. Further, the aspect of that bill which propose the ability to "supersede all other provisions in the Psychologists Act and any regulation made under that Act" undermines the integrity of your Psychologists Act and the related public safety it is in place to provide.

Psychologists have extensive training and expertise in the use of these assessment tools as one aspect of appropriate psychoeducational assessments that optimize long term outcomes and determine the needs of students beyond test scores. Correctly administered, such assessments can identify neuro-developmental disorders and other problems in need of intervention, and the requisite solutions.

Consequences of insufficient trained test administrators are not limited to potential negative mental health impacts on students and their families. New Brunswick's most vulnerable students will be at the greatest risk. When tests are used outside this context, or incorrectly, misdiagnosis or missed diagnoses can result in inappropriate medical, educational, or psychological interventions, negatively impact a child's cognitive, academic, social, and emotional development, and learning. These are considerable public safety risks.

Whilst this bill may appear to support short-term solutions there are significant long-term risks and concerns that can be addressed through amendment with actionable solutions and recommendations in alignment with science and best practices. There are alternatives to long wait times including enhanced measures to screen and triage testing referrals, redistributing workloads of psychologists already trained to provide these services (within educational, training, or private practice settings), and taking measures to ensure that New Brunswick has the necessary psychologists to meet your educational needs.

New Brunswick Legislators must attend to science and the input of experts and reconsider Bill-35.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Judi L. Malone', written in a cursive style.

Dr Judi L Malone, R. Psych (AB)
CEO, Psychologists' Association of Alberta