 

**Media Advisory**

**For Immediate Release**

**Monday, November 25, 2013**

**PIAAC Result Show Nova Scotia Youth 16-24 years Fall Below International Averages for Literacy and Numeracy**

**(Dartmouth, NS) Community Leaders and Learners Meet to Discuss National Framework for Literacy**

It is difficult to understand and accept that Canada has a literacy problem. The fact is we do. Forty-two percent of Canadians struggle with low literacy. In Nova Scotia the rates range from 38% to a record high of 54.9% in some rural communities. Recently released results from the Program for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) are cause for concern for community learning organizations in Nova Scotia. Result show adults 16-65 years of age have average literacy skills and below average numeracy skills compared to 24 international countries. A far greater concern is Nova Scotia youth 16-24 years measure below the international average for literacy and numeracy skills according to the PIAAC study.

Canada is one of the few industrialized countries that do not have a national literacy strategy. “A national strategy for literacy will provide us with a plan to improve the quality of life for millions of Canadians. We hope to achieve this by creating a coordinated literacy system from early childhood to adult. We have invited representatives from all levels of government, community leaders, educators and learners to join us today to explore what they need and what they want Canada to stand for in the world when it comes to literacy,” says Dana Atwell, Chair of the Board of Directors for the Dartmouth Learning Network.

In Canada many groups and organizations are committed to educating the public and policy makers about literacy needs, but there are no federal resources being provided directly to literacy programs. In Nova Scotia literacy programs are funded through Department of Labour and Advanced Education and delivered by community-based organizations, school boards and the Nova Scotia Community College. Community learning organizations provide academic support to adult learners with low literacy and together under the umbrella organization of The Association of Nova Scotia Community Learning Organizations (ANSCLO) work to coordinate literacy services and advocate on behalf of community learning organizations and the learners they serve.

No child chooses low literacy, yet many children are already placed at a significant disadvantage before they enter school. These children are often raised in homes where family members have limited literacy skills excluding them from many activities in life that we take for granted. Literacy is more than reading and writing, it means understanding your rights as a citizen, community member and employee. We all have a Right to Literacy,” says Lesley Dunn, Executive Director of the Dartmouth Learning Network

**Event Details - Let’s Talk – A National Framework for Literacy Town Hall**

**Date: Monday November 25, 2013**

**Location: Dartmouth North Community Centre**

**105 Highfield Park Drive, Dartmouth NS**

**Time: 11:30 am – 2:00 pm**

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**For more information, please contact:**

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**ABOUT**

**DARTMOUTH LEARNING NETWORK** [**www.dartmouthlearning.net**](http://www.dartmouthlearning.net)

Originally founded in 1985 by the former Premier of Nova Scotia Dr. John Savage, The Dartmouth Learning Network offers free literacy and essential skills programming in classroom/small group and one-on-one environments; daytime and evening programs are held on site, and at community partner locations throughout Dartmouth. We offer basic adult literacy programs, math upgrading, computer basics, and employment readiness program in addition to a General Education Development (GED) program.

**Program for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)**

[**http://skills.oecd.org/skillsoutlook.htm**](http://skills.oecd.org/skillsoutlook.htm)

PIAAC is an initiative of the Organization for the Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to assess the skills of working age adults in 24 countries. It assesses literacy, numeracy and the ability to solve problems in a technology-rich environment. The survey focuses on cognition and workplace skills required for successful participation in the economy and in society.