

Department of Education

STATEMENT OF MANDATE

2011–2012



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Statement of Mandate 2011–12

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1. Message from the Minister and Deputy Minister

I am pleased to present the 2011–12 Statement of Mandate for the Nova Scotia Department of Education.

In January, the Department of Education underwent significant change. The Higher Education Branch of the department moved to the new Department of Labour and Advanced Education, which includes responsibility for colleges and universities, student financial assistance, private career colleges, and post-secondary disability services. The Provincial Library moved to the new Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

In 2011–12, the Department of Education will continue to focus on supporting a high quality, accessible education system for grades primary to 12. The department will be working with key partners, including school boards, on exploring new and innovative ways to deliver services and programs in pursuit of greater efficiency, improved program outcomes, and to ensure programs are sustainable and relevant to the needs of stakeholders. The department will collaborate with school boards and others on how to ensure stronger student engagement, increase student achievement, and encourage a positive school culture as we move forward in the 21st century.

The department has a number of initiatives that aim to increase student learning and achievement in Nova Scotia public schools. The department is working with the Nova Scotia Educational Leadership Consortium to develop and deliver an Instructional Leadership diploma program that will provide principals with the knowledge and skills to improve the effectiveness of instruction. We are also working closely with key partners to support effective professional learning practices and explore ways to embed those practices in the school day.

In collaboration with the departments of Health and Wellness, Community Services, Justice, and other key partners, we have expanded the SchoolsPlus pilot to an Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) model, which will provide services and supports to children, youth, and their families at school sites in all eight school boards. The ISD model will continue to support the *Our Kids Are Worth It: Strategy for Children and Youth* by bringing professionals and programs together, with the vision of promoting schools as centres for service delivery. The ISD model facilitates the sharing of information and resources between departments and agencies, provides timely and effective supports to students and their families, and expands service delivery beyond the school day.

In addition, the department will be introducing a new grant program to strengthen schools as centres of their communities. The grant program will support community groups who wish to use the school facilities for physical activity, cultural, and educational purposes and provide funding for after-school hours physical activity programming targeted to youth who are inactive.

The department continues to provide students with a variety of pathways for educational success, including the International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme, Options and Opportunities (O₂), and Co-operative Education. These successful programs engage students in the learning process and facilitate the transition to both post-secondary institutions and the workforce. The department has also introduced workplace health and safety training to the curriculum. This training provides students with a foundation in safety training to help ensure that they stay safe as they complete their education and transition into the workforce.

In 2011–12, we will continue to work closely with key partners to address current and emerging challenges, build on existing strengths, identify opportunities to promote increased collaboration and efficiency, and foster quality education services and supports for children, youth, and their families.

Original signed by

Original signed by

Honourable Ramona Jennex
Minister of Education

Rosalind Penfound
Deputy Minister

2. Mandate and Mission

The mission of the Department of Education is to ensure excellence in education for personal fulfilment and to enable students to contribute to a productive society and a prosperous, sustainable economy. In Nova Scotia education is valued, achievement is celebrated, and learners are provided with opportunities and tools for rewarding and successful learning experiences.

The department's mandate is carried out through the provision of a publicly funded school system with:

- high quality educational programs and student services in both official languages;
- strong assessment and evaluation services;
- a focus on developing cultural proficiency throughout the system to support student learning;
- a progressive and responsive policy environment; and
- effective financial management, facilities planning, and comptrollership.

3. Core Business Areas

The core business areas of the Department of Education are Public Schools, Acadian and French Language Services, Corporate Policy, and Corporate Services, as described briefly below.

Public Schools Branch

This branch comprises African Canadian Services, Education Quality Services, English Program Services, Evaluation Services, French Second Language Program Services, Learning Resources and Technology Services, Mi'kmaq Liaison Office, Regional Education Services, School Board Labour Relations, and Student Services.

The Public Schools Branch is responsible for all educational programs and services for the English language public school system. In close collaboration with the Acadian and French Language Services Branch, it is responsible for services provided to the public school system in assessment and evaluation, educational technology, and school board liaison.

Acadian and French Language Services Branch

The Acadian and French Language Services Branch monitors and approves curriculum development for French first language education, works in close collaboration with other branches of the department to ensure that common services are available in French for the French first language schools, coordinates activities related to federal–provincial funding agreements for French minority language education and French second language instruction, and coordinates and manages implementation of national official languages programs for Nova Scotia.

This branch is also responsible for liaison with all community and representative groups as they relate to French first language education and for the coordination of all French language services as they relate to the *French Language Services Act / Loi sur les services en français* and its

regulations, including implementing priorities identified in the departmental *French Language Services Plan* (2010).

Corporate Policy Branch

This branch comprises Policy and Planning, Information Management, and the departmental library. It is responsible for providing advice and support in policy, planning, legislation, research, coordination, and information and publishing services to all areas of the department. Corporate Policy coordinates departmental accountability processes including the departmental business plan and support to school board planning processes. This branch is also responsible for supporting effective school board relationships, records management, copyright, coordination of appointments to agencies, boards, and commissions, and administration and advice on the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Program-related responsibilities of Corporate Policy include the development and administration of the Nova Scotia Instructional Leadership Program and leading a major change initiative on creating capacity in the public education system for teacher planning, learning, and reflection. This involves working with the school boards, Nova Scotia School Boards Association, and the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, as well as department staff.

Corporate Services Branch

This branch comprises Financial Management, Education Funding and Accountability, Facilities Management, Information Technology Services, Statistics and Data Management, and Teacher Certification. It is responsible for the delivery of business and support services to the Department of Education, including financial management and comptrollership responsibilities, provision of facilities planning and capital projects, coordination of pupil transportation with boards, information technology, and province-wide delivery of data communications. This branch provides selected services to school boards including a common wide area network, management of education related data and statistics, and certification of Nova Scotia teachers.

4. Government Priorities

Government's three core priorities are:

1. **Make health care better for you and your family.**
2. **Create good jobs and grow the economy.**
3. **Get back to balance and ensure government lives within its means.**

The Department of Education has an important role to play in helping government meet its priorities. The priorities provide the overarching framework to guide and/or inform department policy development and planning.

Make health care better for you and your family.

Education is critical to improving the social and economic determinants of health. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, educational attainment is associated with almost every measure of population health. The Department of Education focuses on improving educational attainment for all children in school. This includes curriculum and programming to build literacy and mathematics skills, initiatives that encourage disengaged youth to stay in school, and programs that address the multiple needs of students today. One important initiative that will build literacy skills is the department's new early literacy support program.

The Integrated Service Delivery model provides children, youth, and their families with access to a range of services, including counselling, behavioural supports, and mental health services to address the multiple needs of students. This approach brings professionals and programs together, facilitates the sharing of information and resources between agencies, provides timely and effective supports, and expands service delivery beyond the school day. Preliminary findings have shown fewer behavioural and attendance issues and increased student engagement in their education.

The Department of Education promotes healthy active living through curriculum, programming, and supports for students, their families, and the community. The department works closely with school boards and other partners and agencies to ensure that families and community groups are able to take advantage of school facilities to pursue recreational activities. The department has implemented a number of programs, policies, and practices aimed at addressing healthy eating, physical activity, youth sexual health, tobacco reduction, addiction, and injury prevention, as well as a range of other health issues within the school setting. The department has also implemented curriculum on workplace health and safety. As well, the new community use of schools grant is designed in part to increase levels of physical activity among inactive youth.

These combined supports help ensure that Nova Scotian students develop healthy eating habits, participate in physical activity, have access to physical and mental health supports, and continue to lead safe and active lives as productive, healthy citizens.

Create good jobs and grow the economy.

Research has been very clear on the critical importance of a strong education system to grow the economy and support long term prosperity. Our students compete in a global market place and while Nova Scotian students perform well among their OECD counterparts we know we can do better.

System knowledge of the research on effective professional learning practices has grown significantly in Nova Scotia over the past decade. There is a clearer understanding of what it takes to truly improve student learning. It has become well understood that the instructional practices of the teacher are the most important factor in student achievement, second only to the role of the principal as instructional leader. This knowledge and understanding has been brought forward through key reports such as the *Report and Recommendations of the Education Professional Development Committee* (2009) and *Promoting Student Engagement: Report of the Minister's Working Committee on Absenteeism and Classroom Climate* (2009). The Department of Education is focusing on implementing the adopted recommendations in these reports with a targeted focus on how to build capacity and time for effective teacher professional learning communities in Nova Scotia's schools.

A highly developed education system is vital in ensuring that Nova Scotians have the knowledge and skills needed for the 21st century global economy. The jobsHere Strategy stresses the importance of a better trained, better educated workforce as critical to economic development in the province.

The Department of Education continues to provide students with a variety of pathways for educational success, ensuring that the programs and services are in place to provide every student with the supports they need to complete high school. Through the Nova Scotia Virtual School, students across the province have access to online courses they need to obtain a high school graduation diploma, as well as the pre-requisites for post-secondary education.

The Department of Education has a number of programs that have been highly successful in engaging students in the learning process and providing expanded opportunities for youth. Options and Opportunities (O₂) offers students hands-on learning experiences with a career focus. The program focuses on students who require re-engagement with their learning and with school. Students are able to link their in-school learning to the workplace and enhance their employability skills. Programs like Co-operative Education, and Community-Based Learning, Technology Education, and Skilled Trades provide high school students with the opportunity to gain the technical skills they need to work in high demand areas.

Students are also able to participate in the International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma programme and French Immersion programs. These programs provide students with the knowledge and skill sets to help them successfully transition into post-secondary institutions. As well, the department has a number of initiatives in place to support students as they transition from junior to senior high school, and eventually to post-secondary institutions or the workforce.

Get back to balance and ensure government lives within its means.

The Department of Education is undergoing a process to explore new and innovative ways to deliver services in pursuit of greater efficiency and improved program outcomes. This process will help to ensure programs are sustainable and relevant to the needs of stakeholders. The department is working with key stakeholders, including school boards, to prepare operational plans that will reduce spending.

The department will work closely with its partners on strategies to maintain the quality of learning experiences for students, while addressing issues that include making the best use of human resources and optimizing the use of school buildings. Through this work, the department will consider ways to optimize expenditures to support student learning while living within its means.

The Department of Education is implementing the new provincial student information system, iNSchool. iNSchool is an integrated, province-wide system to assist the department with managing, analyzing, and reporting on student data. Consistent, up-to-date data will improve efficiencies in managing education programs and services, in gathering information related to student achievement and school performance, and informing decision-making to provide programming that more effectively targets the needs of students.

Inter-departmental and inter-agency collaboration are important to providing both effective and efficient delivery of education in a sustainable manner. Improved collaboration allows for the sharing of resources and infrastructure, improved access to services, and more effective referral and service delivery. For example, the Integrated Service Delivery model allows partner agencies to make use of underutilized school space to provide additional supports and services to students and their families at the school site.

5. Performance Measures

Outcome	Measure/Rationale	Data (Base Year)	Target	Trends	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
Schools identify areas needing improvement and develop a plan	Number of schools involved in School Improvement Planning/Accreditation	419 (2010–11)	All 427 schools (2013–14)	No trend available; base year 2010–11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ workshops and support materials (e.g. handbooks for all schools involved) ▶ conduct external reviews for each school ▶ monitor school annual reports ▶ conduct accreditation visits ▶ fund initial implementation grants ▶ establish database ▶ website location for school improvement plans ▶ futuristic look toward the school improvement process
	Number of schools receiving accreditation	111 (27%) (2010–11)	408 schools (2013–14)	No trend available; base year 2010–11	
Responsive and flexible learning environment	Student enrollment in online public school courses (provincially funded students)	200 provincially funded students (2010–11)	Increase over baseline (2013–14)	No trend available; base year 2010–11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ online courses are available to students through the Nova Scotia Virtual School ▶ develop a common provincial platform for online learning
	Number of courses developed/reviewed to meet the Nova Scotia Virtual School standards	2 courses (2010–11)	Increase over baseline (2013–14)	No trend available; base year 2010–11	

Outcome	Measure/Rationale	Data (Base Year)	Target	Trends	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
Nova Scotian students have improved reading and writing skills	Early Language Assessment (grade 3), percent meeting provincial expectations in language arts	75% (2007–08)	Increase over baseline (2011–12)	82% (2008–09) 76% (2009–10) 78% (2010–11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active Young Readers / Jeunes Lecteurs actifs in grades primary–6 and Active Readers / Lecteurs actifs grades 7–9 implement <i>Teaching in Action</i> primary–3, 4–6, and 7–9 resources support the literacy mentor program mandate instructional time allotments for language arts for grades primary–8 implement <i>Spelling Grades Primary–9: A Teaching Resource</i> professional learning, print and media resources, workshops, institutes
	Elementary Literacy Assessment (grade 6) percent meeting expectations in reading	84% (2010–11)	Increase over baseline (2015–16)	No trend available; base year 2010–11	
	Elementary Literacy Assessment (grade 6) percent meeting expectations in writing	94% (2010–11)	Increase over baseline (2015–16)	No trend available; base year 2010–11	
Nova Scotian students have improved math skills	Junior High Literacy Assessment (grade 9) percent meeting provincial expectations	82% (2007–08)	Increase over baseline (2011–12)	81% (2008–09) 80% (2009–10) 78% (2010–11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> teaching resources for mathematics grades primary–9 mandate instructional time allotment for mathematics for grades primary–8 expand the implementation of the PRIME professional learning program review specific curriculum outcomes, primary–3 implement <i>Atlantic Canada Mathematics Assessment Resources, Entry–3</i>
	Early Elementary Mathematical Literacy Assessment (grade 3), percent meeting provincial expectations ¹	67% (2007–08)	Increase over baseline (2011–12)	72% (2008–09) 71% (2009–10) 75% (2010–11)	
	Elementary Mathematical Literacy Assessment (grade 6), percent meeting provincial expectations	63% (2009–10)	Increase over baseline (2015–16)	No trend available; base year 2009–10	

¹ Dates for the Early Elementary Mathematical Literacy Assessment indicate the year in which data was reported, not the year the assessment was delivered.

Outcome	Measure/Rationale	Data (Base Year)	Target	Trends	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
Nova Scotia is accountable for education based on national and international comparison of assessment results	Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results for 15-year-olds, scale score	<u>Reading</u> 516 (NS 2009) 524 (Canada 2009) <u>Math</u> 512 (NS 2009) 527 (Canada 2009) <u>Science</u> 523 (NS 2009) 529 (Canada 2009)	<u>Reading</u> ² 516 (NS 2009) <u>Math</u> 515 (NS 2003) <u>Science</u> 520 (NS 2006) (2013–14)	No trend available; base year 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ increase board leadership capacity to support school-based professional learning communities ▶ support implementation of <i>Teaching in Action</i> resources for grades primary–3, 4–6, and 7–9 ▶ support implementation of Literacy Success 10, 11, and 12 ▶ reduce total number of curriculum outcomes in science and mathematics ▶ teaching resources for mathematics primary–9 ▶ implement PRIME, Dynamic Classroom Assessment, and Break Through professional learning programs ▶ support implementation of Science 10 curriculum
	Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP) results for 13-year-olds, scale score	<u>Reading</u> ³ 417 (NS 2007) 500 (Canada 2007) <u>Math</u> 457 (NS 2007) 500 (Canada 2007) <u>Science</u> 480 (NS 2007) 500 (Canada 2007)	Increase over baseline (2013–14)	No trend available; base year 2007	

² Targets for this measure are based on the most recent year each domain figured as the major domain in the assessment. PISA is administered every three years. In all PISA cycles the domains of reading and mathematical and science literacy are assessed. One domain is the main focus of assessment each assessment cycle.

³ PCAP was administered in spring 2010, however assessment results will not be available until Spring 2011.

Outcome	Measure/Rationale	Data (Base Year)	Target	Trends	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
Better educated Nova Scotians	Nova Scotia Examinations (NSE) percent passing	English: 76 (2009–10) ⁴ Math: 48 (2009–10) ⁴	Increase over baseline (2015–16)	No trend available; base year 2009–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ implement Writers in Action / Écrivains à l'oeuvre 4–12 ▶ implement resources that can be used by mathematics 10–12 teachers to increase the algebra skills of students ▶ upgrade the online Mathematics Itembank ▶ create a Mathematics Professional Learning website ▶ support literacy and math mentor program ▶ implement <i>Teaching in Action</i> resources for grades primary–9 and launch <i>Teaching in Action 10–12</i> ▶ implement Literacy Success 10, 11, and 12 ▶ implement PRIME, Dynamic Classroom Assessment and BreakThrough professional learning programs
Students have access to computers in their classrooms	Percent of grade 4–6 classrooms with three or more current computers	68.2% (2009–10)	65% (2013–14)	No trend available; base year 2009–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Information Economy Initiative Extension program funds software, professional development, and technological support in schools ▶ Computers for Schools provides computers each year to public schools

⁴ Numbers based on targets set for 2009–10 NSE. The NSE English and Math exams were not administered by the province in 2009–10, therefore provincial average for percentages are not available.

Outcome	Measure/Rationale	Data (Base Year)	Target	Trends	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
Students make more effective career decisions	Student enrolment in the Options and Opportunities Program	1,803 (2010-11)	Increase over baseline (2013-14)	No trend available; base year 2010-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ implement strategies targeted towards youth at risk of leaving school early ▶ Nova Scotia Community College development and growth strategy ▶ increase awareness of and access to pathways to post-secondary destinations ▶ provide opportunities to improve career development and education decision making ▶ increase access to Building Futures for Youth program ▶ Parents as Career Coaches program ▶ Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling Services ▶ develop a strategy to introduce Opportunities Academy ▶ promote workplace health and safety through curriculum development and resources
	Number of credits completed by students in the Co-operative Education Program	3,612 (2009-10)	Increase over baseline (2013-14)	No trend available; base year 2009-10	
Better educated Nova Scotians	High School Graduation Rate	86.1% (2009-10)	Increase over baseline (2013-14)	No trend available; base year 2009-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ implement strategies targeted towards youth including Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling services, SchoolsPlus / Integrated Service Delivery, Achievement Gap Initiative, and the Racial Equity Policy
Department of Education as a preferred place to work	Employees Engagement Index	71% (2009)	Increase over baseline (2013)	No trend available; base year 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Human Resources division to provide support in reviewing the <i>How is Work Going?</i> survey administered by the Public Service Commission every two years ▶ Human Resources division to assist the department in identifying areas for improvement to increase employee engagement

6. Budget Context

Education and Assistance to Universities			
	2010–11 Estimate	2010–11 Forecast	2011–12 Estimate
Program and Service Area	(\$thousands)	(\$thousands)	(\$thousands)
Total Education Gross Program Expenses:			
Senior Management	750	690	729
Corporate Policy	1,678	1,422	1,729
Corporate Services	14,843	14,107	16,323
Public Schools	33,707	32,682	34,426
Higher Education	36,721	38,789	0
Acadian and French Language Services	1,536	1,710	1,715
Public Education Funding	945,562	946,825	946,410
Other Grants	19,063	19,193	4,900
Learning Resources Credit Allocation	8,813	8,813	6,813
Teachers' Pension	59,631	60,221	59,631
School Capital Amortization	66,757	64,902	62,561
Community College Grants	126,304	126,897	0
Total Education Gross Program Expenses	1,315,365	1,316,251	1,135,237
Total Assistance to Universities – Gross	60,643	57,010	0
Total Education and Assistance to Universities	1,376,008	1,373,261	1,135,237
Additional Information:			
Education: Fees and Other Charges	(1,783)	(1,940)	(1,853)
Education: Ordinary Recoveries	(16,522)	(22,109)	(12,036)
Assistance to Universities: Ordinary Recoveries	(11,139)	(11,139)	0
TCA Purchase Requirements	146,460	135,826	93,383
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	296.2	258.2	200.1