

# Expecting the best from Everyone

*Recommendations for a 10-year education plan  
(Anglophone sector)  
Executive Summary  
June 2016*

New Brunswick  
Nouveau Brunswick



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**Executive Summary**

Published by:

Province of New Brunswick  
PO Box 6000  
Fredericton, NB  
E3B 5H1  
Canada

June 2016

978-1-4605-1282-1 (print edition)  
978-1-4605-1284-5 (PDF: English)

10686

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# Executive summary

## A message from the co-chair

**T**he purpose of a provincial education plan is to establish objectives and expectations for public education in New Brunswick. It sets out the general directions that guide the initiatives and actions of those who work in the education system to ensure our children succeed at school. Under the *Education Act*, the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development is responsible for developing a provincial education plan for each linguistic sector. Traditionally, the department works with school districts and District Education Councils (DECs) to develop a plan that covers three to five years. In this case, the provincial government committed to developing a 10-year plan through a broad public engagement process. To that end, I was asked, as a co-chair, to conduct this large-scale engagement and call on major players in the education sector and system partners using a non-partisan approach. The process was to result in recommendations serving as a foundation for the development of the next education plan.

*Passion...* This word describes how New Brunswickers feel about public education. During the consulting phase, they spoke from their hearts and minds. Families, teachers, school and district leaders, students, community leaders, business leaders, parents and concerned individuals made submissions, wrote newspaper articles and met together, providing thoughtful and reflective facts and opinions on the needs for the future of public education. They completed 3,412 online surveys,

sent 258 submissions from schools and made 70 submissions. Many participated in 13 provincial open-house sessions and several workshops hosted by District Education Councils (DECs) and Parent School Support Committees (PSSCs). Many teachers, principals and others met me one-on-one.

Thank you for the opportunity to engage in thoughtful discussions and opportunities to learn from creative, intelligent, progressive, caring and hard-working New Brunswickers. It has been a privilege and honour to do this work on your behalf.

From the first focus group meeting until the last consultation, certain themes emerged. Some of them have been addressed in previous consultation reports. Many findings align with recommendations made to provincial governments during the past 25 years. I appreciate and recognize these recommendations as well as the important research and effective practices followed in schools. Throughout the report, an attempt will be made to align some of the earlier reports to identified current needs. An important component and goal of these recommendations and supporting evidence are to create an understanding of the critical attention that must be made to focus and align systems, strategies, supports and resources to the needs of children and youth. This work will rely on having all adults who touch the lives of young learners being accountable for the efforts that will be needed during the next 10 years.

The recommendations are summarized into areas that need immediate and long-term attention:

- **Systems** – Creating overarching, evidence-based processes, practices, accountability and monitoring with strong governance and leadership for needed reforms. These include areas such as high school programming, graduate expectations and attention to an overall child-centered culture of high levels of learning.
- **Early childhood** – Investing in early childhood education and providing support for families and children (from birth). This must align with Early Childhood Task Force recommendations; include coordinated and effective services that eliminate duplication and red tape; and build an understanding of the value of education.
- **Meeting the needs of children and youth** – Increasing our effectiveness at addressing mental health, poverty, physical fitness, nutrition, addiction and school attendance. This will be accomplished through appropriate support services and resources for families and children, equitably in all communities in a culture of inclusivity.
- **Honouring First Nations (Indigenous people)** – Ensuring that the education-related Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s final report are implemented in New Brunswick and a culture of mutual understanding and respect for First Nations (Indigenous people) is a priority in the next education plan.
- **Prioritizing what we want students to know and be able to do** – Providing clear, rigorous expectations for student achievement that are aligned to global competencies (such

as critical thinking, problem-solving, hands-on learning, communication, citizenship, entrepreneurship, application of knowledge, inquiry and exploratory-based learning); and ensuring that educators are highly skilled in delivering the necessary instruction, assessment and interventions needed to support a globally competitive level of learning for all students.

- **Learning: School culture, leadership and teachers** – Expecting all schools to create the necessary conditions for high levels of student achievement, built on a focused direction, collaborative cultures, deep learning and accountability with appropriate support and resources to build strong school leaders; and built, furthermore, on competent educators and support services teams.

New Brunswick has a unique culture of partnership with unions, businesses, community organizations, post-secondary education and volunteers. We have organizations that offer innovative and culturally rich opportunities recognized by others as leaders in their field (e.g., Sistema, Atlantic Ballet Theatre of Canada, Brilliant Labs, Science East, New Brunswick Association of Community Living, Elementary Literacy Friends [ELF], Partners Assisting Local Schools [PALS], Atlantic Education International [AEI], Canadian Parents for French). I saw community school initiatives that embrace flexibility and creativity to solve issues around school sustainability – putting health centres, daycares, senior centres and other resources in schools to share spaces. I heard of community and business partners that have challenged the norm and are organizing and leading opportunities for students to support learning. As strong as these partnerships are, they cannot replace

the fundamental responsibility of the provincial government to ensure needs-based funding and adequate staffing to meet the needs of children and youth.

I heard about inconsistent expectations, procedures and decisions, varying by provincial department, district and school. The current governance structure creates a complicated role for superintendents who officially report to the DEC’s but receive funding, resources and direction from the provincial government. With each election, provincial governments have made decisions and changed direction that affect student learning. I learned that the lack of continuity and evidence-based decisions as a province is perceived as a critical risk by those in and outside of the system.

We live in a culturally diverse province, with a rich First Nation population, Anglophone and Francophone heritages, and roots in many European and other countries, all of which define New Brunswick. Through immigrant strategies bringing newcomer students to our schools, our diversity of cultures and languages is growing; so are our opportunities to learn. We must understand each other, appreciate our differences and celebrate the opportunities that this mosaic of cultures provides to all. And critically important, we are known as a “caring” province, and our school system has a strong reputation of nurturing and caring for students. We must live up to this reputation and provide consistent direction with the necessary support to children and youth.

The report aspires to lay a thoughtful and sustainable roadmap before decision-makers and to encourage all New Brunswickers to see a long-term education plan as everyone’s responsibility. These

recommendations are my best attempt at identifying the priorities and focus necessary to develop a culture of learning built on evidence-based, effective practices and research. An important component will be for the provincial government to provide continuous opportunities for collaboration around the next education plan. There is great will to share ownership of the next education plan and to see this develop, grow, monitored and adjusted over 10 years based on evidence of success, expertise, research and collaborative structures.

New Brunswickers do not want an education plan “housed” or owned at the department level. This must be part of an overall change in how we do business.

I was asked many times if I could guarantee that these recommendations would actually lead to an education plan that could outlast elections, political agendas as well as personal opinions and influence. I know there is no guarantee. However, from all conversations, submissions and research,

I can state, with confidence, that, as a province, we do not have a choice. The intent of this initiative was to fully engage New Brunswickers in a non-partisan manner and that the resulting plan would span across the next 10 years, regardless of the political landscape. For this, I have hope, and I believe it is possible.

*Karen Power, Co-chair, Anglophone sector*

## Recommendations

The following recommendations are being presented following extensive public consultation, a review of current research in the field of high performing education systems, and an analysis of the strengths and gaps in New Brunswick’s publically funded education system. While these recommendations are being presented in this executive summary, to be fully appreciated they should be considered within the context of the entire report, which provides important background information and rationale.

### **Chapter 2: Systems for success:**

#### **Sustain and implement a student-centered, evidence-based education plan**

Ensure the sustainability and deep implementation of a student-centred, evidence-based 10-year education plan that is “owned” by the people of New Brunswick by:

- creating a governance structure that includes representatives of stakeholders,

- including early childhood service providers, District Education Councils (DECs), schools, service providers, post-secondary institutions, communities, families, students and all parties of government to provide guidance as well as expertise to monitor deep implementation and accountability of the plan;
- developing a funding model and human resources support structure to ensure actions are deeply implemented to meet the needs of learners;
- aligning all government decisions, including contracts and accountability for these decisions with the work identified in the plan;
- using performance-based management strategies supported by change leaders for long-term implementation of the plan;
- continuing the focus on formative assessment practices at the provincial, district, school and classroom level to frequently monitor student performance and ensure timely interventions to meet the needs of learners. Doing so will ensure the plan is working;

- considering, with an open mind, the parameters around the definition of “the school” and “the school day” as opportunities to explore creative and flexible ways to support learning;
- increasing flexibility and autonomy at the school and district level to create authentic accountability for meeting the needs of the learner as per the plan.

#### **Define the roles and responsibilities of educators**

Develop a strong, collaborative system of support for all educators, school-based leaders and learners by:

- defining the professional job expectations of an educator and aligning this job description to the skills and competencies needed to meet the goals established in a 10-year education plan;
- providing ongoing professional support to educators and support the development



- of their skills in accordance with this job description;
- reviewing the *Education Act* to ensure it aligns with the roles, responsibilities and actions associated with the education plan;
- ensuring that educators are highly skilled in differentiating instruction and response to intervention as well as creating cultures of learning to meet the diverse needs of learners;
- ensuring that school leaders are highly skilled as instructional leaders and that they can provide feedback and support to educators with effective instruction and assessment practices;
- providing opportunities for school leaders and educators to deepen their understanding of the value and work of collaborative teams;
- expecting all educators and school leaders to work collaboratively and share ownership of the needs of their learners;
- developing centres of learning in each district that require action research and provincial leadership in at least one action item from the education plan. This work will be led at the district level and built from a guiding coalition of school, district, university and department educators and community partners;
- creating systems of support through coaching, mentoring, demonstration sites, model classrooms and schools and opportunities for educators and leaders to learn from each other in localized, hands-on learning environments;
- working with post-secondary institutions to align course options and professional learning opportunities with the skills and

- competencies needed by educators and school leaders;
- establishing a self-regulating professional governance structure to oversee certification, licensing, discipline and professional learning opportunities for educators;
- developing a school leaders' network and professional structure to provide action research opportunities, leadership skill development, mentoring and the sharing of effective practices among school leaders.

#### **Foster collaboration among the provincial government, educators, districts and District Education Councils (DECs)**

Clearly define roles, responsibilities, expectations and monitoring of authentic collaboration between the provincial government, early childhood service providers, Anglophone districts and District Education Councils (DECs) with the goal of supporting children and youth by:

- redefining roles and responsibilities and re-staffing where needed based on the following:
  - meeting the needs of our diverse children and youth (including early childhood and newcomers) through collaborative structures, integrated services, well-planned and implemented individual learning plans as well as timely and appropriate interventions for all learners;
  - ensuring that instruction, assessment and curriculum become one unit that provides clear direction on effective, engaging instruction. This will ensure learners understand the learning goals and are supported in achieving at a high level through self- and formative assessment

- practices, classroom management and curriculum;
  - encouraging and establishing partnerships that support a 10-year education plan. This includes inter-departmental, post-secondary, districts, schools, early childhood and community partners;
  - ensuring that family and student support includes mediation and conflict resolution; and
  - re-establishing professional learning for teachers and school administrators as a priority for long-term sustainability, leading to a self-governing structure for professional growth and monitoring.
- ensuring evidence-based decisions and Performance Management structures support the change process;
- ensuring that district ends policies and district and school improvement plans and initiatives are aligned with the education plan and a provincial monitoring plan;
- creating opportunities for Educational Services to work more closely with Finance, Facilities and technology to align decisions to meet student needs;
- developing a communication portfolio to support proactively the building of a culture of learning with families, educators and school and early childhood leaders.

#### **Improve high school programming (Year 1 and Year 2)**

Make immediate changes to high school programming and learning opportunities for students by:

- working closely with principals, teachers and students to plan first steps in innovative ways to create flexibility and creative options



- for study. This should include looking at how and when students learn;
- describing the instructional expectations needed to support student mastery of New Brunswick graduate profile competencies and immediately begin a professional learning strategy to deliver this type of instruction;
  - developing observation protocols with principals and teachers to ensure quality feedback is provided to teachers based on instructional expectations;
  - ensuring all students establish goals and self-assess their learning progress on a consistent basis as part of their school experience;
  - revisiting the e-learning and technology opportunities offered to students, beginning with data to determine the best fit within an array of flexible learning opportunities;
  - working closely with post-secondary institutions to create more opportunities and equitable access for students to know about and pursue post-secondary studies in the province;
  - seeking opportunities for equitable access to flexible and engaging options for students in small schools, more vulnerable communities and in schools of high need;
  - ensuring curricula and learning settings provide an abundance of opportunities for application of knowledge, experimental learning and authentic and engaging lessons to support skill development;
  - including exposure to skilled trades, the arts and other electives to provide choice based on personal goals and interests;
  - ensuring guidance counsellors have the knowledge, time, resources and networks to

- better provide career counselling, information about post-secondary options and the wrap-around support needed by all students;
- collaborating with the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour as well as post-secondary institutions to respond to student needs with accessible entry to appropriate programs;
  - creating centres of learning for innovative, engaging programming that can serve as models and demonstration sites for other schools;
  - providing timely, ongoing support and professional learning so that teachers can work in teams to meet the needs of students;
  - providing more opportunities for students with learning and physical disabilities to have flexible options, apprenticeship opportunities and hands-on learning tasks.

#### **Strengthen programming in the elementary grades**

Ensure primary classrooms (K-2) are structured to provide maximum opportunity for each learner to be successful (especially in learning to read and write) and upper elementary classes continue to strengthen this work by:

- establishing instructional time for K-2 learners that is comparable with other provinces;
- considering a more play-based curriculum focus for kindergarten;
- supporting K-2 educators to deepen their understanding of how to build foundational literacy and mathematics skills and concepts. Extended time may be required to deliver engaging lessons with investigative thinking and problem-solving; ongoing formative

- assessment; and incremental steps toward self-regulation and independent learning;
- revisiting the Early Years literacy support that was in place from 2004 to 2010 to examine human resources allocation and other supports for teachers and students who made this a successful implementation;
  - ensuring teachers have competencies needed to provide quality instruction in mathematics;
  - ensuring planning and partnerships are in place for supportive transitions into and within school;
  - ensuring K-2 classrooms are well supported with adults who can recognize strengths and provide intervention and remediation immediately when needed;
  - providing K-2 and upper elementary teachers with sufficient support and resources to ensure strong instructional practices in the foundational skills of literacy;
  - partnering to provide required health supports, including easy access to speech language pathologists, guidance counsellors and mental health workers, as well as volunteer programs and other community initiatives to support learning;
  - partnering with the Department of Social Development and communities to communicate student physical and emotional requirements such as connectedness, nutrition, adequate exercise and sleep.

#### **Develop a middle school focus**

Develop a strong middle school focus to ensure adolescents develop the skills and competencies in the graduate profile by:

- revisiting the middle school philosophy to ensure students have collaborative, hands-on, innovative and engaging lessons as well as an entrepreneurial and experiential learning-focused school;
- providing opportunities for students to be exposed to a variety of college and career learning opportunities;
- supporting educators as they develop strong student-teacher relationships;
- providing schools with adequate resources, collaborative working time and professional learning to support their teams and to deepen their understanding of the needs of this age group.

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### **Chapter 3: Early childhood education**

#### **Integrate the recommendation of the report with those of the Child Care Review Task Force**

A 10-year education plan must combine the comments, thoughts and recommendations in the report with those in the more detailed and in-depth report of the Child Care Review Task Force by:

- ensuring that the recommendations in the task force and in the report are given immediate attention to create the early childhood culture of learning needed in New Brunswick;
- providing opportunities for stakeholders in early childhood to be directly involved in the creation of the education plan.

#### **Encourage continued collaboration between the federal and provincial governments**

A 10-year education plan must include immediate collaborative efforts with the federal government

(which has given signs that it is committed to the development of the early childhood sector) by:

- proposing that pilot projects be carried out in New Brunswick, the only officially bilingual province, which will increase accessibility, training and program quality;
- accessing all available federal resources to support children and their families in New Brunswick.

#### **Encourage collaboration among public and private institutions, families and the community**

A 10-year education plan must establish processes for ongoing collaboration and partnerships among public and private institutions, families and communities by:

- building the interdependence and complementarity of early childhood services and access through a single entry point in both urban and rural areas and the coordination of an early screening system;
- sharing information and creating a single identifier for each child, used for all services received;
- providing smooth transitions as a result of continuity in the delivery of quality services at all stages of the education of children from birth to the age of eight;
- developing an integrated, seamless structure within the provincial government, districts and communities, giving districts primary responsibility for the delivery of early childhood services;
- ensuring districts are well staffed and supported to provide the required services;

- creating communication strategies that ensure families understand the services available to them.

#### **Respond to the diverse needs of childcare**

A 10-year education plan must respond to the diverse needs for various types of childcare and should be supported by:

- working with families to understand the range of childcare needs, developing innovative models and quantifying the return on investment for childcare and other early childhood services to better communicate the immediate and long-term value for all;
- creating easy accessibility to flexible, quality childcare services for families in all communities;
- creating funding and resources that provide a needs-based response for vulnerable communities and families that most need support;
- developing deep understanding in districts and communities of the need to collaborate and integrate all services to meet the needs of the most vulnerable children and their families.

#### **Support parents as the first educators of the child**

A 10-year education plan must support the parents of children from birth to the age of eight, as first educators of the child, to ensure they receive support, guidance, quality resources and information about their rights, enabling them to:

- choose childcare, services and education, starting in the perinatal period, that best suit their circumstances;
- participate fully in their child's education;
- contribute to the overall development of their child;
- fully play their role in fostering and disseminating their culture.

### **Support parents and families**

A 10-year education plan must support the effective functioning of structures for:

- communicating with parents about the value of learning, school readiness and the importance of overall health and well-being for learning;
- raising the awareness of families about their responsibilities as first educators of their children;
- providing resources and information, and encouraging parents to enrol their children at birth in the district of their choice, thus increasing access to services throughout the education continuum;
- monitoring the use of support structures and resources and communicating with parents who are not accessing the support to determine next steps.

### **Improve early childhood education, early intervention**

A 10-year education plan must promote the value and effectiveness of early childhood education and intervention professions by:

- supporting the recruitment and retention of professional staff capable of working

- in English and French (depending on the sector) with children from birth to the age of eight;
- working closely with post-secondary institutions to ensure that early childhood education and intervention professionals have access to professional learning based on current, evidence-informed practices and to ensure that learning opportunities are delivered in a timely manner.

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## ***Chapter 4: Meeting the needs of children and youth***

### **Increase our effectiveness at addressing mental health**

Immediately remove the roadblocks and address gaps in mental health supports for early learning environments, in schools and in communities, and provide long-term prevention strategies by:

- increasing the expertise and staffing urgently needed to provide mental-health supports to children and youth in need, including school-based psychology, speech-language, mental health and addiction services;
- implementing the Integrated Service Delivery Model provincially and monitoring for effectiveness;
- ensuring that all learners have early identification of mental and physical health challenges and that they are provided with immediate and timely interventions to meet their needs;
- ensuring that all provincial services are coordinated and appropriately staffed to meet the needs of children, youth and their families. This includes eliminating duplication

- of services and moving needed services to vulnerable communities and schools;
- developing expertise to train educators on how to teach explicitly the fundamentals of mental fitness and pro-social behaviour, just as the fundamentals of literacy, critical thinking and physical education are explicitly taught;
- establishing a collaborative, provincial body of researchers and partners to work with districts and the provincial government to ensure that effective strategies for prevention and intervention are deeply implemented. Include provincially established targets, indicators and a monitoring plan to hold everyone accountable for student well-being. This should include mental health, speech-language and addiction services, physical activity, physical education and healthy food choices in schools;
- ensuring that parents and communities are part of the education and solutions supporting student well-being as part of a provincial culture of learning;
- increasing opportunities to support the most vulnerable communities and schools.

### **Understand the influences of poverty (begin in Year 1)**

Based on leading and current research, the provincial government should lead the development of strategies to foster understanding of the causes and effects of poverty and the actions staff, learners and communities can undertake to halt the cycle of poverty and its roadblocks to learning. This should include:

- encouraging community development of initiatives and support to improve the lives of all;
- developing skills and competencies of educators and support staff to work successfully with learners affected by poverty;
- collaboratively developing education-oriented definitions of “vulnerable” community, school and classroom;
- using appropriate data to identify vulnerable communities, schools and classrooms and strategically plan and provide the resources for equitable, collaborative and effective support to meet the needs of learners.

### **Celebrate and meet the diverse needs of students (begin in Year 1)**

Ensure that the diverse needs of all students can be met in a culture of student-centred service, where flexibility is expected and supported with adequate human resources and systematic training, with consistent implementation of Policy 322, Inclusive Education (2013), by:

- expecting Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs) are well developed, supported and monitored for implementation and student success in a consistent and sustainable manner;
- creating ongoing professional learning opportunities for teachers to develop the necessary expertise in differentiated instructional practices and monitor implementation;
- providing the support and resources to ensure that meeting the needs of students is a collaborative effort, led by the teacher responsible, with sufficient autonomy to provide flexibility in time on task, alternative

- locations for learning, assignment of personnel to the student, program delivery, etc.;
- ensuring that school administrators and personnel deeply understand effective behaviour management strategies and have the support and resources needed to ensure positive and safe learning environments;
- developing school-based expertise for collaborative teams to meet the needs of individual students effectively based on evidence of need and intervention plans;
- ensuring systematic training for all school personnel, including bus drivers, to foster awareness of the causes of misbehaviour and best practices for responding in ways that are positive and affirming of appropriate behaviour;
- providing staffing support, guidelines and provincial expectations for positions such as behaviour interventionists and other adults to support individual learning as needed in school;
- ensuring that educational assistants have the needed competencies, are appropriately assigned and are able to contribute to the overall decision-making about the necessary steps to be taken to meet a student’s needs;
- reviewing the implementation and application of Policy 322 to ensure common understanding and adequate support and training for administrators, teachers and support personnel to meet the needs of individual students;
- developing a communications plan and guide for school personnel to ensure that Policy 322 is understood and interpreted correctly in all schools;
- ensuring that performance indicators of implementation of all of the above are

monitored and aligned to measures of individual student success as well as school and classroom practice.

### **Clarify parent and student roles and responsibilities**

Increase awareness and accountability for the role and responsibility of parents and students regarding personal well-being, seeking support and resources when needed, academic requirements and behaviour by:

- ensuring that parents are authentically involved with individual intervention plans and that students are working toward self-directed learning goals and ownership of their learning;
- developing strategies for all families, beginning with the birth of a child, to be well-informed about the value and importance of learning and student success;
- expecting teachers and school administrators to communicate academic and behavioural expectations with parents and students on an ongoing basis and closely monitoring progress for success;
- reviewing mediation/conflict resolution processes to understand gaps and collaborate with partners to implement solutions;
- considering provincial legislation to strengthen accountability for parents and students in regard to attendance at school;
- providing procedures, guidelines and monitoring of policies to establish safe and respectful work environments for staff to meet the needs of students;
- seeking every opportunity to learn from alternative settings, other jurisdictions, and

- others that have successfully engaged parents and students as partners;
- communicating consistently and frequently with parents to build trust in the work of educating students.

### **Celebrate and meet the diverse needs of students**

Support a culture of respect, diversity and learning for all children and youth with further attention to the needs of those with physical disabilities, LGBTQ and newcomers by:

- seeking advice from Ability NB when needed to ensure that policies, guidelines and procedures are positively supporting the recommendations in the *New Brunswick Disability Action Plan* (2013);
- continuing to work on creating conditions and expectations that diversity is valued and heterocentricity and cisnormative assumptions, expressions and actions are gradually eliminated through professional learning, affirmative curricular content and support for implementation;
- developing a provincial strategic plan for support and resources (academic, social-emotional, cultural) with early childhood partners, districts and schools to meet the needs of newcomers to public schools and early learning environments;
- inviting partners such as post-secondary institutions, community agencies, businesses and international organizations to work together to engage in long-term sustainability and attraction of newcomers;
- developing progress monitoring of English/French as a second language to ensure

targeted interventions are successfully implemented with newcomers.

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## **Chapter 5: Honouring First Nations**

### **Encourage cultural respect of First Nation people**

Ensure that policies, guidelines, and decisions made at the government, district and school levels reflect understanding of First Nations culture and distinct characteristics of First Nation communities, and encourage the development of shared understanding of our First Nation people by all New Brunswickers by:

- creating shared ownership and leadership among First Nations and government to promote and develop understanding and celebrate the rich and diverse culture and history of First Nation people;
- ensuring that the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada are applied to decisions made for First Nation people of New Brunswick, specifically:
  - 62.i. "Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students."
  - 63.ii. Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.
  - 63.iii. Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect.

### **Meeting the needs of First Nation students**

Ensure the needs of each First Nation student in provincial schools are identified in a timely manner and the necessary support, resources and targeted interventions are available with the intent to close the achievement gap between First Nation and non-First Nation students by:

- establishing monitoring and reporting processes of the progress of First Nation students in provincial schools;
- sharing ownership and responsibility with First Nation people to ensure all efforts are focused on the successful attainment of the New Brunswick graduate profile for all First Nation students;
- providing ongoing literacy support as a primary focus with First Nation students in provincial schools;
- demonstrating support of First Nation students in provincial schools through appropriate and immediate adult actions and intervention plans to meet the needs of individual First Nation students;
- supporting a focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) as well as the arts, recognizing the needed content area for First Nation students in provincial schools;
- developing opportunities for First Nation students to share their cultural experiences with non-First Nation students through presentations, projects and experiential learning opportunities.

### **Improve First Nations teaching and learning**

Develop expectations for teacher practice that demonstrate an understanding of the needs of First Nation students by:

- providing opportunities for band-operated and provincial school teachers to learn together to increase their expertise in instruction, assessment and meeting the needs of their students;
- developing a communications plan in partnership with First Nation leaders and the New Brunswick Teachers' Association/ Association des enseignantes et enseignants francophones du Nouveau-Brunswick with the goal of developing awareness with teachers of First Nations' cultural differences and needs in New Brunswick;
- working with the universities to ensure that the Call to Action 63.iv from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada is implemented in university pre-service training and in ongoing professional learning for certified teachers and educational assistants:
  - 63.iv. "Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above."

#### **Provide ongoing partnership, collaboration and governance for First Nations education**

Support the development of First Nations leadership in education and learning by:

- ensuring adequate staffing at the department level to support First Nation students in provincial schools and transitioning into and out of the provincial education system;
- continuing to ensure that hiring decisions for First Nation teachers and staff in public education are made in consultation with First Nations;
- encouraging First Nation students to pursue post-secondary opportunities and stay and work in New Brunswick;

- continuing to work with post-secondary institutions and First Nations to attract and train First Nation individuals for educational and supporting professional and paraprofessional positions;
- reviewing and continuing the development of the current structure of tuition enhancement agreements and the planning, implementation and monitoring of these agreements.

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#### ***Chapter 6: Learning: Prioritizing what we want students to know and be able to do***

##### **Update skills and competencies expected of learners**

Immediately update the expected skills and competencies necessary for learners to be engaged and responsible for their learning and to have rigorous, relevant daily lessons by:

- establishing an internationally competitive graduate profile, including 21st Century competencies and foundational skills, for lifelong mental and physical health;
- using "backward planning and design" based on the New Brunswick graduate competency profile align the learning progression from early years and grade to grade across all content areas;
- expecting students to have self-directed portfolios to monitor their journey toward mastery of the New Brunswick graduate profile;
- supporting educators to develop a culture of rigorous and relevant learning;
- centering instructional practices and classroom organization on students' need for

- autonomy, competence and relatedness to foster their motivation and ownership of learning;
- developing teacher expertise in the instructional steps involved in the gradual release of responsibility for learning to students;
- helping students build a deep understanding of proficient work, to self-evaluate, set short- and long-term learning goals as well as understand the steps required to obtain proficiency;
- developing individual learning plans and profiles with students to address their learning styles and needs;
- ensuring the culture shift is well articulated and understood by students and parents;
- ensuring teachers have a detailed understanding of what students must accomplish at each grade level so they have the prerequisite skills and knowledge for the next grade level;
- continuing to involve post-secondary, industry and health partners, educators, parents and stakeholders to validate the requirements for success;
- using this first recommendation to lead to further discussions for change to programs and learning opportunities at the high school level.

##### **Rewrite outdated curriculum**

Leverage district and school expertise to rewrite outdated curriculum, beginning with literacy and science, technology, engineering and mathematics content areas (STEM), to ensure a guaranteed, viable, consistent and current curriculum by:

- reviewing, prioritizing and reducing curriculum outcomes as necessary to allow for



- mastery versus coverage, thus ensuring students attain a competitive graduation profile with proficiency at levels equal to other successful provinces and countries;
- formalizing the value stream for delivering the provincial program of studies. This should integrate curriculum, assessment, professional learning as well as teacher and system accountability;
  - providing sufficient resources to enable critical documents to be produced in a timely manner;
  - ensuring that technology options in middle school and high school afford students an introduction to coding skills;
  - planning for flexibility, autonomy, and accountability for communities, districts, school leaders and teachers to provide vocational skills, exposure to the arts, entrepreneurial opportunities and unique learnings that support partnerships and community needs through easy access to local options and challenge for credit.

#### **Promote literacy skills**

Immediately provide the resources and targeted supports needed for developing strong literacy skills from birth for all New Brunswickers by:

- ensuring that our educators are highly trained to teach reading and writing skills as well as having a deep understanding of multi-modal literacy;
- collaborating with educators and school leaders, develop courses and materials needed to ensure teachers have the skills, expertise and competencies required to teach literacy;

- providing the tools necessary for early identification of learning disabilities and literacy learning needs;
- ensuring that each student receives targeted support to meet his or her needs in a timely manner;
- creating learning targets and goals for mastery of the necessary skills and competencies to ensure learners in New Brunswick have the same high expectations for literacy development as those in the most successful jurisdictions;
- continuing to work with partners and communities to increase opportunities for learners;
- creating expectations and opportunities for multi-modal and cross-content literacy in all grades;
- expecting and monitoring “reading- and writing-to-learn” strategies applied consistently and effectively in all classrooms;
- communicating the importance and value of literacy beginning at birth with all New Brunswickers;
- working with post-secondary educators to create opportunities for further understanding the development of literacy skills.

#### **Strengthen STEM education**

Prioritize the development of skills and competencies associated with STEM education, skill trades and entrepreneurial education for all learners by:

- strengthening mastery of mathematics skills and concepts with high expectations for success beginning in early years;
- ensuring teachers are hired and assigned to teach in areas that match competencies,

especially in mathematics and other components of STEM;

- creating expectations and opportunities for educators to develop student-centered instructional practices that support the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, innovation, inquiry-based and experiential learning as well as higher-order thinking skills;
- immediately addressing individual student needs with appropriate and timely interventions to increase their level of competence in mathematics;
- ensuring the New Brunswick graduate profile includes expectations for students to master 21st Century competencies through established targets and monitoring processes;
- creating and supporting the development of centres of learning for STEM-focused skills and competencies and innovation for educators and learners;
- providing a deep understanding of and opportunities for skilled trades, entrepreneurial education and flexible course options to meet the needs of students who wish to pursue careers aligned to these competencies;
- working with Science East, Brilliant Labs, Engineers and Geoscientists of New Brunswick and other provincial partners to support effective STEM instructional practices in schools;
- developing assessment expectations and self-reporting opportunities to ensure the monitoring of student mastery of STEM competencies;
- ensuring that all students are exposed to updated technology opportunities, including coding, and that equipment is refreshed in all schools as a continuing provincial priority;



- removing provincial barriers to partnerships and learning opportunities with technology-based companies (such as Apple, Microsoft) that can provide support for innovative, creative and inquiry-based learning;
- working closely with post-secondary institutions to create partnerships and opportunities for learners to support a STEM-focused learning culture.

### **Strengthen instruction in the arts**

Ensure that the arts are incorporated in the curriculum, are supported by effective instructional strategies, and are included in learning opportunities beyond the classroom; also ensure their benefits are understood by educators, parents and students as well as influence decisions by the provincial government by:

- providing educators with opportunities to build skills and competencies in the use of music, art and drama in daily instructional practices to engage students;
- developing consistent, strong partnerships with provincial, national and international organizations that can offer opportunities for exposure to the arts and skill development for students and educators;
- ensuring that arts are well-represented in curricular content and that students have flexible options for being exposed to and pursuing studies in the arts;
- creating equitable opportunities for students in all schools and all communities (including rural and vulnerable) to have exposure to arts programs, activities and community events.

### **Improve and expand opportunities for French second-language instruction**

Create universal, flexible, high-quality French second-language opportunities, including high expectations for achievement and student self-assessment, and provide flexible opportunities for the study of other languages by:

- developing strategies to ensure that students and parents are well aware of the opportunities to learn French as a second language and understand the importance of second-language study;
- continuing to develop personal student portfolios for self-assessment that help students understand and document their continuum of French second-language proficiency;
- ensuring that all communities have equitable access to French language programs with the goal of attaining current proficiency targets;
- working with post-secondary institutions, provide French second-language opportunities for increased exposure for students and educators;
- focusing on increasing the quality of French Immersion pedagogy (content-specific as well as French as a language) to ensure students receive quality instruction;
- revisiting the implementation of Intensive French to ensure continued effectiveness as an equitable option for French language instruction;
- ensuring that the reversal of the Grade 1 entry option for French Immersion is implemented in a manner that does not have a negative impact overall on the system. Careful attention should be paid to our ability to staff this change adequately and that we

have the financial resources to prioritize this as a system change. If the projected impact on the system is more negative than positive, this decision should be reconsidered;

- working with communities, post-secondary institutions, e-learning opportunities and flexible curriculum options to provide choice and creativity in second- and third-language studies for learners.

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### ***Chapter 7: Learning: School culture, leadership and the teacher***

#### **Create effective learning cultures**

Ensure all schools have highly effective learning cultures by:

- determining a focused direction and ensuring that it is supported, from all levels, to ensure deep implementation;
- expecting and creating alignment of provincial and district plans, decisions, actions and policies to this plan;
- ensuring school leaders are highly skilled in establishing a positive learning culture, establishing effective procedures and adult actions, and that they understand their critical role in the learning success of students;
- providing parents and students with clear messages about their responsibility in creating an effective learning culture. This includes positive behaviour plans and expectations, attendance, learning targets, adult and student respect, and compliance with policies and guidelines;
- supporting and expecting collaboration within the province, district and schools,

- based on evidence, to determine next steps in supporting learners;
- deepening the understanding of effective pedagogy among all staff to create a more focused culture of learning;
  - providing districts and schools with flexibility for funding and resource allocation in response to learner needs;
  - creating accountability expectations from within the schools and districts to ensure all decisions are measurably supporting student learning;
  - creating a public monitoring plan for provincial government decisions and actions that align to this plan;
  - revisiting collective agreements and other human resource decisions to ensure effective, efficient and timely support is available to all learners;
  - supporting centres of learning that can model successful implementation of indicators of effective school culture based on Fullan and Quinn's Coherence Framework.

### **Strengthen school leadership (beginning in Year 1 and Year 2)**

New Brunswick should demonstrate that school leadership is a priority by:

- defining the skills, competencies and expectations of a school leader;
- hosting a provincial forum for networking, collaborative learning and open dialogue between the provincial government and principals;
- developing a provincial centre of learning as a collaborative network with post-secondary institutions, the New Brunswick Teachers' Association/New Brunswick Teachers'

- Federation, business leaders, government, districts and principals to ensure long-term, quality and sustainable professional learning, research and networking opportunities for all principals, leading to a self-regulating professional organization for school leaders;
- collaborating with post-secondary institutions to ensure that principals have access to current, research-based courses of study aligned to school effectiveness to receive and maintain certification as school leaders;
  - providing mentoring and coaching opportunities for school leaders to continuously develop the skills and competencies needed to effectively lead their schools;
  - establishing demonstration schools that exemplify the necessary effective practices and provide opportunities for school leaders to learn from these sites;
  - ensuring that the characteristics of the Coherence Framework are expected and supported in each school;
  - creating leadership competence and expertise in evidence-based decision-making that provides immediate attention to the needs of students in each school;
  - expecting that school effectiveness is monitored by student growth and student achievement;
  - developing Key Performance Indicators for successful school leadership that are monitored and ensuring school leaders receive feedback about their performance on a regular basis;
  - ensuring that hiring criteria and continuing contracts of school leaders are evidence-based and aligned to school effectiveness;

- researching best practices in other jurisdictions with successful school leadership models, including considering the possible benefits of removing principals from the New Brunswick Teachers Federation.
- Strengthen professional development for teachers
- Ensure educators are highly skilled, valued as professionals, and provide effective learning experiences for learners that lead to mastery of the New Brunswick graduate profile by:
- prioritizing and supporting all recommendations from previous chapters that affect the professional development and competencies of educators;
- creating a deep understanding of the importance of lesson design and implementation for effective instruction;
- developing effective professional development opportunities for educators that are differentiated and reflect the professional standards established by Learning Forward ([www.learningforward.org](http://www.learningforward.org));
- reviewing how time provided for professional learning is allocated throughout the school year. The time provided must be more effectively structured for educators to collaboratively study, research and develop the skills and competencies needed to deeply implement evidence-informed practices. This is particularly urgent in the Anglophone sector;
- developing consistent expectations for educators that are reflected in hiring practices, observations, feedback and evaluation of educators;
- promoting innovative, creative and student-centered strategies in all classes;

- expecting that partners such as post-secondary institutions, the New Brunswick Teachers' Association/New Brunswick Teachers' Federation, business leaders, government, districts, principals and teachers work collaboratively to create the needed courses of study, professional learning, certification, licensing and self-regulating organization required to ensure long-term, sustainable and current effective practices in schools;
- strengthening internal and external communication practices to support a more positive understanding of the critical role of educators.