

Raise the Bar

A Coherent and Responsive
Education Administrative
System for Nova Scotia

January 2018

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INTRODUCTION TO THE REPORT

I am imagining myself now, sitting next to Nova Scotian primary students, perched at their desks on the first day of school. Thrumming with excitement over the possibilities of the years ahead.

I imagine my view from those desks, looking around their classroom in awe. And I wonder:

How can we help them thrive and succeed during their educational journey?

What can we do to support their teachers, the math specialist, the mental health counsellor, and the principal?

As I look around their classroom and the school itself, I consider the books, the technology, the roof that might need repairs. How do we support those things that keep our schools running?

Beyond their school are the other leaders in the education system. People with expertise, knowledge, and influence – people those little children may never meet, but people with enormous power to direct and shape their 13 years in the school system.

Though they may never see these people, how can we ensure that every student in every school community can see and feel the benefits when effective practices create a truly outstanding education system?

This report is about taking the next step to get there – making Nova Scotia's education system succeed, through better governance and administrative practices.

But, ultimately, it is about those children at their desks – and the grown-ups who must work together with common purpose, clear objectives, ambitious responsibilities and robust resources.

Let us all remember that view from the desks, as we build an education system that surrounds those children – and the other 118,000 Nova Scotian students – with the support they need, equitable outcomes and excellence in teaching, learning, and leadership.

The Hon. Zach Churchill
Nova Scotia Minister of Education & Early Childhood Development

Minister Churchill,

Thank you for the opportunity to listen to the voices of Nova Scotians, to look at the system, to examine related research and to work on such an important priority for the province.

This education system administrative review was announced on Oct. 11, 2017, with a deadline to submit a final report by Dec. 31, 2017. There is no question that was a bold timeline; and that kind of boldness is a good thing. There is no time to waste if we are serious about improving Nova Scotia's education system and transforming the province's students into the national and global leaders they must become.

During the course of this review, I have had the profound good fortune to meet with many Nova Scotians, all with thoughtful, passionate views on their education system. In all, I had 91 separate consultations with groups and individuals, received 1,500 questionnaires, along with phone calls and hand-written letters. I thank all the people who took the time to meet with me, prepare submissions, provide insights and make recommendations to improve the governance and administration of Nova Scotia schools.

All may have different backgrounds, different points of view, and different advice, yet every one of them has the best interests of students at heart. That common ground is an inspiring foundation to build upon.

I pay special tribute to all those who work each day to teach, lead and govern to ensure that the system best serves the needs of students. First and foremost, I thank our teachers for their work in improving instructional effectiveness and for the care they provide to our students. I have said time and again over the years in reports, and as I progressed in my career through the hierarchy of school systems: teachers are our heroes.

Like you, Minister, I firmly believe that Nova Scotia's education system must have students at the centre, with inspired and supported educators leading the way. I truly hope that this report and the recommendations that follow will help build a more student-centered school system with continuous improvement as its *raison d'être*. Together, we must raise the bar.

Respectfully,



Avis Glaze
International Education Adviser

MANDATE OF THE REPORT

According to the Terms of Reference of this review, the Department requested recommendations for improvement in four areas of focus within a student-centered education system:

1. **“Roles, responsibilities, and administrative structure within the education system including governing school boards, school board central office administration, and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.**
2. **Processes and management structure in all areas of administration and operations (e.g. human resources, finance, transportation, programs) to ensure effective and efficient use of resources.**
3. **Increased accountability, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency in decision making including budgetary decisions and resource allocation.**
4. **Strengthening interagency service delivery for children, youth, and their families.**

The Review will also consider the cultural, linguistic and geographic contexts of the Nova Scotia education system and current government priorities for public education.”¹

In considering this report, it is instructive to recall that the Department envisions this as the complementary next step to improving the entire school system. The recommendations and considerations about the administrative structures are not made in a vacuum; they follow the government’s renewed focus and increased financial support for improving student learning and achievement, the updated provincial curriculum, the creation of the Council to Improve Classroom Conditions, the Principals’ Forum, and the Commission on Inclusive Education.

Governance and administration may not be subjects that ignite conversation for everyone. But it would be a mistake to confuse a lack of widespread excitement with a lack of importance. How we govern and administer our schools is absolutely fundamental if we are to build a more robust education system in this province.

While this report focuses on the administration and governance of the system, the reflections and content also acknowledge the lingering impact of the recent labour dispute, a divisive and draining time, with effects that are still being felt months later.

I simply have too much passion for students and parents, teachers and administrators, to ignore school system issues that demand comment. With your indulgence, I will, on occasion, make note of such issues, but always with a lens to how they are entwined with structural questions and how interconnected and interdependent they are.

Perhaps the most encouraging element I have found across the province is this: goodwill. Regardless of differences of opinion and philosophy, hurt feelings and mistrust, frustration and cynicism, there is enormous goodwill within the system. We may not agree on all of the points, yet we all agree on this: the children of Nova Scotia cannot wait.

¹ Education System Review. Terms of Reference. October 2017.

PRINCIPLES FOR DECISION MAKING

Let me get right to the point: there is no perfect administrative model or perfect form of governance to fit every situation and context.

The task of this report is not to design a flawless system; given all the time in the world, one still could not do that. Inevitably, there are recommendations in this report that will upset some people. That, of course, is not my intention, but change is always unsettling, regardless of the intentions.

No matter where you stand or where you sit, we can all agree the administrative system needs significant improvement if Nova Scotian students are going to be the leaders of our communities, our nation, and our world.

It is important to understand that these recommendations are not simply randomly strung together ideas. They come from listening to thoughtful, passionate people and deep reflection, based on experience, principles and research that support these decisions.

Before getting into the specific recommendations, let me explain the principles that have guided the decision making. Each recommendation is made with these principles in mind to create a better system that addresses the needs of students and parents, teachers and administrators, and schools and communities of Nova Scotia.

The thinking and recommendations of this report must first be defensible and in step with these principles. They are divided into **three foundational principles** and **seven supporting principles**.

Foundational Principles

- a. **Student learning and achievement.** Nova Scotia must increase its students' performance nationally and internationally and close achievement gaps in general and in particular for historically marginalized groups, such as African Nova Scotians and Mi'kmaq.
- b. **Equity and excellence.** Regardless of cultural, geographic, or socioeconomic conditions, all actions must be made with a clear focus on ensuring everyone has access to the best education possible, not simply those of better fortune or greater influence, and be able to achieve equitable outcomes.
- c. **Well-being, character development, global citizenship.** Everything we do in the education system must be geared to support students as global citizens, to equip them with the skills, confidence, and character attributes to make meaningful contributions to their communities and the nation as a whole.

Supporting Principles

In addition to those broad, fundamental principles, I have followed a number of more-specifically focused, supporting ones:

- a. **Integration, alignment and coherence.** All recommendations must flow into a system that is straightforward and unified.
- b. **Trust, respect, and transparency.** These qualities must be constantly reinforced and form the basis of our relationships and interactions.
- c. **Empowered and responsible.** Everyone must know what they are supposed to do – and then be accountable for their decisions and actions. “Tell me what to do, not how to do it,” was a common, insightful refrain throughout the consultations.

- d. **Responsiveness and flexibility within established parameters and goals.** The system must be nimble, with a strong commitment to the grass roots, while also being clear and persistent about goals.
- e. **Stewardship.** Education is a shared responsibility, not a political tool. Decisions must be focused on the long-term and rooted in non-partisanship. We are all stewards of the responsibility entrusted to us to make improvements in our education system.
- f. **Efficiency and effectiveness.** Resources are precious; there must be no waste. Where opportunities exist to eliminate duplication and put resources into classrooms, they must be explored.
- g. **Clarity of roles and responsibilities.** Each recommendation must strive to reinforce clarity – who is responsible for what and how do they contribute to a student-centered system? Likewise, individuals must demonstrate fidelity to the expectations of their role if the system is to function effectively.



THE CURRENT MODEL

The current governance structure serving public education in Nova Scotia was designed in 1996 after a three-year consultative process that resulted in an amalgamation of 22 school boards into eight and a new legislative framework.

In Nova Scotia there are three levels of governance supporting public education: the *provincial* Department of Education, *regional* School Boards, and *local* School Advisory Councils (SACs). Since 1996, the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) has governed French first-language schools, as part of the Province's duty to uphold the Charter rights of the French first-language community to a degree of control and management over French-first language education.

The Education Act (nslegislature.ca/legc/statutes/education.pdf) outlines the roles and responsibilities for decision making and sets out roles for elected officials, school board staff, students, parents and community members.

Administration includes how schools are run and the responsibility for their success. **Governance** is about ensuring the province has the right structures, policies, roles, and responsibilities in place. With strong governance, educational goals can be monitored and reached, resources are well managed, and schools' key stakeholders have the opportunity to be involved and represented.

The main participants in the governance and administration of public education in the province are listed below:

Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

The Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) is responsible for the supervision of public schools and education in the province. As such, the department is entrusted with providing the policies, priorities, and overall leadership for the province's public education system. It is responsible for the public school program, curriculum, funding of school boards and other expenditures for educational purposes, and teacher certification.

Governing School Boards

There are eight school boards in Nova Scotia—seven regional boards and one provincial Francophone board, the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP). Governing school boards are made up of members elected every four years, representing the interests of Nova Scotians. All regional boards must have an elected African-Nova Scotian member and a Mi'kmaw representative, appointed by the minister in consultation with the Mi'kmaw community and the school board. Each governing board has a different number of elected officials, approved by the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board. School boards are responsible for the control and management of the public schools within their jurisdiction and are accountable to the Minister as outlined in the Education Act and regulations.

Responsibilities include:

- providing for the education and instruction of all students, adhering to provincial curriculum, and distributing resources equitably and effectively;
- managing school facilities, property, and financial resources;
- ensuring a safe learning environment, and promoting schools as community resources
- providing student transportation;
- hiring the superintendent, principals, teachers, and other staff supporting effective human resource practices, and identifying staff development needs;

- supporting student attendance, student achievement reporting, and student discipline;
- establishing policies that reflect school boards' responsibilities, consistent with any policies established by the Minister;
- other roles and responsibilities related to planning processes, support for school advisory councils, and other duties requested or delegated to school boards by the Minister.

School Board Administration

Each governing school board is supported by a central office with staff responsible for key functions including finance, operations, human resources, programs, and student services.

Superintendents

Each school board hires a superintendent, who is in charge of the daily decision making to bring life to the priorities of the education system. Superintendents have overall responsibility for program effectiveness, efficient operation of their school board office and public schools in their region, as well as the supervision of all employees of the school board.

School Advisory Councils (SACs)

Made up of volunteer representatives, such as parents, community members, students, and staff, these local groups meet regularly to discuss priority issues involving the individual school, students, parents and community. SACs provide advice and recommendations to school boards, school principals, and staff on a range of matters set out in the Education Act.

Principals

The leaders of their individual schools, principals have overall responsibility for the school. They set the tone for students, staff, and parents, provide a supervisory role for teachers, engage parents, assist school advisory councils, reflect the goals of the school board, and carry out strategies to meet student achievement targets.

Teachers

The roles and responsibilities of teachers are broad, significant, and critical to the success of students, families, and society. Ultimately, teachers are entrusted with providing their students with the best learning experiences possible and following the curriculum objectives in a safe, inclusive, and supportive setting.

Department of Education & Early Childhood Development

Milestones and key points in governance and administration of the system:

- In 2005, the province releases a new funding formula for school boards, a formula which becomes known as the Hogg Formula, after its author Bill Hogg, a former deputy minister of finance with the province.
- In 2006, the Minister of Education dissolves the Halifax Regional School Board over persistent performance issues, appointing former deputy minister Howard Windsor with the authority to carry out the board's duties. (Windsor is replaced by an elected board in the 2008 election).
- In 2008, the Minister of Education removes the Strait Regional School Board's powers over human resources and financial management. John Sears, a former university vice-president, is appointed by the minister to handle those functions until an election later that year.

- In 2011, the Minister of Education takes control of the South Shore Regional School Board, following a report on governance problems by Deloitte. Former Deputy Minister Judith Sullivan-Corney is given authority to serve as the appointed board.
- In 2014, the Minister appoints an independent advisor, Jim Gunn, to spend six months working with the governing board and senior staff at the Tri-County Regional School Board to implement recommendations from the auditor general.
- In 2014, the Minister's Panel on Education releases its report, following the first major review of the school system in 25 years. Chaired by former Lieutenant Governor Myra Freeman, the report, "Disrupting the Status Quo: Nova Scotians Demand a Better Future for Every Student", includes dozens of recommendations for the department.
- In 2015, the department releases "3Rs: Renew, Refocus and Rebuild, Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education, in response to the Freeman Report, aimed at improving student performance, modernizing the curriculum, and setting the course for a more robust school system.
- In 2016-17, the department and the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union engage in a protracted labour dispute.
- In 2017, the provincial government legislates an end to the labour dispute. The bill includes the establishment of the Council to Improve Classroom Conditions and the Commission on Inclusive Education.
- Later in the year, the department establishes pre-primary programming, creates the Principals' Forum, and announces this review of the education administrative and governance system.

Department Personnel

According to the most recent budget figures tabled in September 2017² by the Department of Finance and Treasury Board, as of December 2017, there are 214.8 employees within EECD.

(The budget notes that 17 of those positions are funded by "external agencies" – typically other government departments).

Department staff work within two broad mandates:

- Public School Education – Grades P to 12
- Early Years Education – 0 to 4 years

The Department is organized into seven branches:

- Senior Management
- Strategic Policy & Research
- Early Years
- Centre for Learning Excellence
- Education Innovation Programs and Service
- Student Equity and Support Services
- French Programs and Services

² novascotia.ca/budget/documents/Budget-2017-2018-Estimates-and-Supplementary-Detail.pdf EECD figures, pp. 61-71.

In addition, the Department supports:

- Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA), in partnership with the three other Atlantic provinces
- Council on African-Canadian Education (CACE)
- Council on Mi'kmaq Education (CME)

School Boards in Nova Scotia – An Overview

The chart below is a snapshot of the current system, listing boards, number of schools administered, enrollment, number of governing board members, and annual budget per board.

School Board	Number of Schools	Student Enrollment	Governing Board Members (2016-2020)	Budget
Annapolis Valley Regional School Board	43	13,042	12	\$138M
Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board	41	12,735	16	\$141M
Chignecto-Central Regional School Board	68	19,941	17	\$206M
Conseil scolaire acadien provincial	22	5,693	18	\$75M
Halifax Regional School Board	135	48,618	10	\$452M
South Shore Regional School Board	25	6,385	8	\$76M
Strait Regional School Board	21	6,287	12	\$79M
Tri-County Regional School Board	23	5,866	11	\$74M

In the summer of 2017, finance staff from EECD and the boards gathered staff complements for all eight boards. This exercise was not without its challenges, particularly in terms of classifying specific roles and titles within the boards. There is considerable variability in job titles, responsibilities, and areas of focus; boards have different positions, some have different names for similar roles, and others have unique positions, as well.

With those caveats in mind, the chart below provides a breakdown of the eight boards. In total, school-based positions (Full-Time Equivalents) accounted for 11,426.7; board operations, 1,915.1; and administration, 956.1.

School Board FTE Summary

16-17 Budget

	AVRSB	CBVRSB	CCRSB	CSAP	HRSB	SSRSB	SRSB	TCRSB	Total
School Based Positions	1,389.8	1,455.0	1,877.6	535.9	4,163.0	693.1	662.8	649.7	11,426.7
Operations	202.0	339.0	409.3	69.3	343.9	169.6	225.2	156.8	1,915.1
Administration	100.0	120.0	177.0	138.3	220.4	72.6	62.5	65.3	956.1
	1,691.8	1,914.0	2,463.9	743.5	4,727.3	935.3	950.5	871.8	14,297.9
Administration as % of Board Staff	5.9%	6.3%	7.2%	18.6%	4.7%	7.8%	6.6%	7.5%	6.7%

It should be noted that both the department and the boards suggested the other may be “hiding” employees.

Governing (Elected) School Boards

A frequent observation about governing boards during the consultations centred on the lack of turnover from one election to the next. Critics said the high level of acclaimed candidates and relatively low level of voter turnout make it difficult to portray school boards as high functioning models of local democracy.

October 2016 School Board Election Results

Board	Elected Members	Number acclaimed
Annapolis Valley	10	9
Cape Breton-Victoria	14	6
Chignecto-Central	15	12
Halifax Regional	8	3
South Shore	6	3
Strait	10	8
Tri-County	9	4
CSAP	18	11
African NS Member	7	5
Totals	97	61

As the results above show, 63 percent of candidates were acclaimed (61 of 97) in the most recent municipal elections. It would certainly be challenging to paint that as a portrait of a vibrant democracy in action. On the other hand, champions of elected boards point to the dedication and passion of the people who do step up as candidates and serve. And there can be no doubting the strong community spirit and time commitment of those Nova Scotians on the governing boards themselves.

According to the 2016 stipend report, board members receive \$13,000 per annum, the vice-chair receives \$15,800, and the chair \$21,300.

One of the challenges for governing boards is the question of reporting lines. Having been elected by their community, many board members tell me their loyalties and duties must then lie with their constituents, the people they bump into at Sobey's. On the other hand, others say regardless of who votes you in, your responsibility under the Education Act is to the Minister and Department. That duality and push-pull is difficult to reconcile for many who sit on a governing board.

The Nova Scotia School Boards Association has been working on this and other governance challenges for elected boards. In its draft report, shared with me, the Association pinpoints one of the other significant challenges for the governing boards in the province – role confusion:

“School boards in Nova Scotia lead and govern through policy. The school board policies clearly define the board's expectations for governance. In reviewing the typical policies that existed in Nova Scotia's school boards, it became clear that many of the policies were actually management policies (the superintendent's purview) not governance policies. This Governance Committee recognized that by not clearly distinguishing between management and governance policies, boards were contributing to the role confusion between the board and the superintendent.”³

3 Nova Scotia School Boards Association Governance Approach, Draft 11. Oct. 26, 2017, p.6.

School Boards in Canada

History of Boards

School boards have a long, storied history in North American education. Prior to the introduction of school boards, school matters were typically addressed amongst other issues of the day in town meetings, where the local adult voting population would gather and perform the functions of a local legislature. As populations grew and common schools exploded throughout the continent, issues associated with the administration of schools eventually became so great that it was felt that they were worthy of their own separate deliberative entities (Carol et al., 1986; Danzberger, 1992, 1994).

The idea behind the creation of local school boards was for civic leaders to gather together and decide how best to educate the children of the community. The first local school board was established in Boston in 1721 (Provenzo, 2008).

By the 19th century, school boards had become established in many North American cities and took on the primary task of hiring and firing teachers. In Canada, school board members have existed since 1807, making them the oldest elected form of representation in the country (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006).

Up until the early 1900s, school board members in both Canada and the U.S. were typically elected by local ward or neighbourhood. However, many elite business and education reformers in America felt that this resulted in school board members becoming too involved in local issues and politics. Thus, in the early 1900s, there was a move in America toward electing members of school boards in city-wide elections instead (Urban & Wagoner, 1996).

Canada has largely retained the tradition of locally elected school board members, albeit with some deviations. New Brunswick abolished school boards completely in 1997, but restored them in 2001. PEI began appointing members to its English language school board in 2011, although there has been a recent public campaign to restore elections (Brown, 2017). Newfoundland and Labrador consolidated boards in 2013 and now has two school districts (one English, one French), with trustees representing zones across the province.

School board members are elected for four-year terms in most provinces, with the exceptions being BC, Alberta, and Saskatchewan which have three-year terms. In addition to elected members, Quebec has parent representatives that serve on its school boards. Ontario boards have also student representatives who can voice concerns, but who do not have voting rights (Bradshaw & Osborne, 2010).



Recent Challenges

In the past two decades, school boards in Canada have undergone several dramatic changes. First, provincial governments have significantly decreased the number of school districts (Dibbon, Sheppard & Brown, 2012; Fleming & Hutton, 1997; Watson, et al., 2004), and these amalgamations have been accompanied by a large reduction in the number of school board members (Fleming & Hutton, 1997; Fredua-Kwarteng, 2005; MacLellan, 2007).

The result is that board members are now responsible for a much larger geographic area, with many more schools, students, and parents. This had made it more difficult to stay in touch with local community issues. Second, there has been a general decline in school board autonomy as educational policy and decision-making has become more centralized in the hands of provincial governments (Bradshaw & Osborne, 2010; Galway, 2012; Salter, 2012). These changes have put school boards in a difficult position. As Hill and colleagues (2002) note, school boards are now expected to simultaneously be:

- Interest representatives for their communities
- Trustees for all children educated by the school district
- Implementers of the directives of provincial governments.

These competing objectives “are in conflict because they require boards to serve different masters and accomplish different objectives” (p. 3). This can lead to role confusion, which is a major reason why some school boards appear dysfunctional.

A criticism is that school board members can become representatives of special interest or other highly mobilized groups within their constituencies, instead of working towards the common good of everyone in the district.

Furthermore, without the benefit of political parties to bind members together, research indicates that elected school boards can become undisciplined, fractious entities that fail to coalesce around common goals. The phenomenon of school board members representing narrow interests without a sense of common purpose has often been cited in the literature as a source of school board failure (Kowalski, 2008; Stover, 2009).

Another issue is that school boards can become jurisdictional silos. While school boards were initially created because educational issues could no longer be effectively managed alongside other municipal issues, they can sometimes operate walled off from the rest of local political and civic leadership. This can make it difficult to coordinate efforts on the ground to tackle complex social problems related to things like health, poverty, and crime.

Elected and Appointed Boards

Both elected and appointed boards contain their own strengths and weaknesses. No one model of governance is necessarily better than all of the others. School boards in different educational jurisdictions can operate in radically different contexts in terms of demographics, geography, political environment, and history. Therefore, there is no one-size-fits-all model of school board governance that will always be most effective in all circumstances. Rather, it is best to consider what model fits best, given the context of the particular jurisdiction at the time. In the words of governance experts Bradshaw and Osborne (2010):

“Given this range of differences between school boards, we do not believe it makes sense to argue that there is one ideal model of governance or one way that a board can effectively fulfill its key governance functions...how each board operates, and the governance model it adopts, will vary depending on its context and other factors.” (pp. 48-49)

Nova Scotian Student Performance

While student performance may not immediately be linked to administration and governance, I strongly believe it is. If the system is in a state of conflict or dysfunction, that can only have a negative effect on students. When teachers and administrators have too much on their plates and feel ignored and unappreciated, that hurts performance. And when the department and boards are at odds, that can have a corrosive impact.

All of that has been happening in Nova Scotia. And now the page must be turned. Everyone in the system must have a common purpose and believe that these changes will lead to a future that is better than the present.

Consider two recent assessments illustrated below: the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP), comparing provincial performance across the country; and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), administered by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), comparing students across the world. Both compare performance in science, reading, and math.

PCAP 2013

Pan-Canadian Assessment Program

JURISDICTION	SCIENCE					READING					MATHEMATICS				
	Mean	F/M		En/Fr		Mean	F/M		En/Fr		Mean	F/M		En/Fr	
British Columbia	501	503	498	501	495	502	518	486	502	499	489	491	487	489	513
Alberta	521	525	516	521	488	502	518	485	503	473	502	504	499	502	502
Saskatchewan	486	481	490	486	474	487	498	476	487	478	488	487	488	487	518
Manitoba	465	463	467	465	453	469	480	459	469	471	471	470	471	470	476
Ontario	511	511	511	513	464	524	538	510	526	481	512	511	514	512	500
Quebec	485	485	485	484	485	503	514	493	497	504	527	528	526	509	529
New Brunswick	469	472	467	467	475	471	485	459	466	485	480	483	477	470	507
Nova Scotia	492	491	492	493	466	488	499	477	489	468	488	489	487	488	499
Prince Edward Island	491	488	495	492	-	494	509	479	496	-	492	498	485	492	-
Newfoundland & Labrador	500	500	500	500	-	495	503	486	495	-	487	489	484	487	-
CANADA	500	501	499	505	483	508	521	494	510	501	507	507	507	501	526

OECD: PISA 2015

Performance of Canada's Youth

JURISDICTION	SCIENCE					READING					MATHEMATICS				
	Mean	F/M		En/Fr		Mean	F/M		En/Fr		Mean	F/M		En/Fr	
British Columbia	539	538	540	539	532	536	549	522	536	516	522	517	527	522	531
Alberta	541	539	542	541	504	533	545	521	534	487	511	506	517	512	503
Saskatchewan	496	493	498	-	-	496	508	485	-	-	484	479	489	-	-
Manitoba	499	500	499	501	473	498	512	486	501	461	489	485	493	489	482
Ontario	524	525	523	526	486	527	542	512	529	476	509	505	514	510	496
Quebec	537	533	541	514	540	532	541	522	523	533	544	538	550	505	549
New Brunswick	506	507	506	508	502	505	518	494	509	493	493	490	495	488	505
Nova Scotia	517	518	516	518	477	517	531	503	519	462	497	494	500	497	491
Prince Edward Island	515	521	509	-	-	515	534	497	-	-	499	499	499	-	-
Newfoundland & Labrador	506	502	510	-	-	505	514	496	-	-	486	477	494	-	-
CANADA	528	527	528	526	533	527	540	514	527	526	516	511	520	509	542

The results in these tests are simply not good enough. Nova Scotian students, parents and communities deserve better outcomes.

At the same time, achievement for African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaw students is significantly lower still. Improving that achievement gap must be central to a successful education model.



THE CONSULTATIONS

The consultation period ran between Tuesday, October 17 through Friday, November 10, 2017, providing an opportunity to visit many corners of the province and hear from hundreds of voices across the spectrum of education.⁴ Bridgewater, Berwick, Dartmouth, Yarmouth, Truro, Sydney, and Port Hawkesbury — I visited all of them, accompanied all the way by the province's spectacular fall colours. Particularly with school boards, I felt it was vital to meet with the superintendents, administrative teams, and governing boards in their own communities, the places where they do their work.

In all, I had 91 separate meetings, speaking with close to 500 people — all with passion, personal stories, experiences, perspectives and insights on education.

In addition to meetings with the individual school boards, I met with the Nova Scotia School Boards Association (NSSBA), which serves as a provincial voice for school boards across the province. The meeting with the NSSBA included the Leaders Advisory Committee, which consists of their executive, superintendents, and board chairs. The NSSBA Board of Directors also attended the meeting.

I met with representatives from Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey, the Council on Mi'kmaq Education, the Council on African Canadian Education (CACE), the Black Educators Association, and the Delmore Buddy Daye Learning Institute. They provided insights and advice on the unique experiences of both African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaw educators and learners in the province.

I met with senior officials from the Department of Education & Early Childhood Education (EECD) and other departments, and representatives from the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) and the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, who represent principals, teachers, and other staff working in schools.

I met with members of the Council to Improve Classroom Conditions and the Principals' Forum, as well as the commissioners leading the Commission on Inclusive Education.

It was important for me to hear from parents, too. I met with representatives from the Fédération des parents acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse (FPANÉ) and the Nova Scotia Federation of Home & School Associations (NSFHA), as well as both parent and community representatives from School Advisory Councils (SACs) from across the province.

Student voice was an important aspect of the consultation process. I had the pleasure of meeting with students at two high schools in the Halifax region, one group from Auburn Drive High and one from Lockview High — different schools and different student experiences — and both with valuable perspectives.

I spoke with adolescent mental health champion Dr. Stan Kutcher and also with former Lieutenant Governor (and former teacher), the Hon. Myra Freeman, who chaired the Minister's Panel on Education in 2014 and authored the report that helped spur so many positive changes in the education system.

I met with others in the education field, including Dr. Jeff Orr, Dean of the Faculty of Education at St. Francis Xavier University and Dr. Paul Bennett of Schoolhouse Consulting.

In addition to people of power and influence, I spoke with young people with no power or influence. I met one evening with youth in care in Halifax and another day with 10 young men at the provincial youth facility in Waterville. Their voices matter, too. Their experiences in the education system matter. Some felt lost and unloved by their teachers and schools; they seemed alternately vulnerable and defiant. Their situations were tragic and deeply distressing — and reaffirmed my mantra: there should be no throw-away kids.

⁴ The full list of consultation meetings can be found in the Appendix.

As the saying goes, if they don't go through the front doors of our schools upon graduation, they may, in time, come through the back doors of our communities. Nova Scotia, and Canada, needs all these children to be educated, productive members of our society. We owe it to the students, parents, and community. This review is for those kids and the educators and social workers who don't give up. Day in and day out, those workers contribute to nation-building by choosing to work with some of our most vulnerable youth.

And I wanted to cast the net wider still, hoping to reach people who might not have had time or even a specific role in the education system itself. So, an online survey asked three key questions about improving the administrative system. Approximately 1,500 people responded, providing even more insights, opinions, and texture to these issues.

That kind of accessibility and openness is particularly important in our busy society, with the ability to respond at your convenience from home. Other people sought me out directly, e-mailing me their thoughts. And I even received a few hand-written letters, which always does the heart good for a former teacher and superintendent.

"In truly equitable systems, factors such as socio-economic status, race and gender do not truncate students' life chances or prevent them from achieving ambitious outcomes."

(Glaze et al., 2012)

What I heard

Lack of clarity. Mistrust. Upon reflection, those may be the words that came up most frequently in my dozens of consultation sessions around the province. I will not point fingers. I will simply say that the relationships, the "us" and "them", and the frustration, even cynicism, were evident in many meetings and online surveys, as well.

Online survey

As mentioned earlier, the online survey drew some 1,500 responses. The three survey questions were designed to be broad, so as not to limit the topics that respondents could address. The survey itself was designed to allow respondents to include as much commentary as they wished.

The advantage of the survey is that it provided respondents with an opportunity to raise any issue they wished, as many issues as they wished, and to include as much content on each as they wished. As such, the survey was inclusive, accessible and allowed for maximum engagement.

The limitation is that it allowed for the identification of such a wide range of topics, issues and recommendations that fewer clear data trends could be identified than if the survey had been more directive and close-ended (e.g. multiple choice questions, scaled and ranked questions, etc.).

When a survey generates such a wide range of responses, as this one did, the data tend to be less clear in pointing the way forward. Having said that, each of the three questions generated data that clearly identify areas of concern and priority.

Lastly, because survey participants were allowed to include as many viewpoints and/or suggestions as they wished, it was possible for the percentage totals within each section to exceed 100 percent. This was the scenario that played out with the data generated by Question 1.

Similarly, it was also possible for responses to be so varied that were many with very low frequencies. In other words, a very large number of comments appeared so infrequently that they could not be presented here. This is what occurred in the data for Questions 2 and 3. As such, the response types in those sections add up to considerably below 100 percent.

Question 1: What administrative changes should be made to the education system to ensure the focus is on the needs of students?

The following is a list of the comments and suggestions that appeared most frequently:

a. Streamline the education system/invest more in schools (42 percent), including comments on:

- Decreasing the number of non-school administration in the system;
- Hiring more teachers;
- Reducing the number of school boards;
- More consistency and less change in direction over time;
- More collaboration between EECD and other government departments and between EECD and school boards and schools;
- More accountability for budget spending and outcomes.

“We need more teachers and less overhead. Save money at the top and put it where it needs to be—in the classroom. Rural areas shouldn’t have their top students taking courses online, just because they do not have the numbers to offer those courses in the classroom.”

“Reduction in the number of administrative bodies, specifically the removal of the school boards and a move towards smaller, community based schools with fewer administrative positions.”

b. Respect the experts (i.e. teachers, school-based administrators, school support staff and education researchers) (27 percent), including comments on:

- Increasing teacher/administrator/researcher input in provincial decision making in education;
- Decreasing centralization;
- Rescinding Bill 75 (the legislation to impose a contract upon teachers);
- Decreasing public input/control due to the lack of system knowledge.

“If we trusted teachers to do their jobs, and trusted that school-based administrators are the ones who identify the resources they require in order to improve classroom practice, then principals could be the instructional leaders that teaching staff require. Instead, their time is being devoured by administrivia, which takes away from their direct presence in the classroom, where they can have the greatest impact on student achievement.”

c. System administrators need to be experienced (9 percent), including comments on:

- Ensuring that system administrators have strong backgrounds working in schools;
- Making system administrators more accountable for what goes on in schools;
- Ensuring that system administrators regularly spend time working in schools so that they do not ‘lose touch’ with what is happening in schools and school communities.

“Administrators should regularly get out of their offices and work in classrooms so they can get first-hand experience of the challenges teachers and students are facing. Many of those in administrative positions at boards and the (EECD) have not been in classrooms in a long time and are out of touch with the realities.”

“Everyone who works at the (EECD) or a school board office should have to teach a full school year once every five years. That way they can feel the full impact of their decisions.”

Question 2: What changes should be made to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development?

The three most commonly identified changes respondents suggested were:

- Listen more to the experts (including teachers, early childhood educators and researchers) (18 percent)
 - Streamline the system and invest more in schools (16 percent)
 - Increase system accountability (15 percent)
- a. **Listen to the Experts.** Many respondents felt that too many decisions were being made without effective consultation and collaboration with teachers, support staff (especially early childhood educators) and educational researchers. Among those who spoke to this topic, several called for the end of political influence in the education sector:

“The Department should not have any connections to political parties. The Department should be run by an unbiased entity with no ties to any political party whatsoever.”

“We need a government that will listen, and a department that has the interest of students and teachers as a top priority. Students are suffering from a government that won't listen. There is a reason why Nova Scotia is so far behind education-wise compared to the rest of the country...Nova Scotia is not preparing its students for the future. If it wasn't for the teachers who went above and beyond what the government was saying was enough, I would not have finished one year of university, let alone almost four.”

- b. **Streamline the System.** Respondents suggested two main ways that the system could be streamlined and savings re-invested in schools. First, reduce the number of school boards in the province. Second, make significant cuts to the size of the department, including returning teachers to the classroom and administrators to schools.

“The EECD is top-heavy. There are too many directors and managers and not a lot of people to do the research and digging. Processes at the EECD work independently across divisions. There is lack of communication.”

“The priority should be eliminating the boards and rolling staff into the department so that everyone is working as one with the same vested interests in the students as the #1 priority and ensuring max \$\$ are directly reaching students.”

- c. **Increase System Accountability.** Among those respondents who called for more accountability, a large majority felt that a priority should be placed on hiring and promoting people with experience in education.

“Cut the top heavy Administration positions and get more people back to the classroom. Administrators often forget what the daily routine of teaching is like and they should rotate back into the schools so they KNOW what it is like to be there every day.”

“The Department of Ed is unwieldy, out of touch with classrooms and parents, and appears to have no clear understanding of long range planning, process, goal setting, etc. It is a career job for many folks who haven’t been in a classroom for years or even decades. The department needs to be revamped from top to bottom with the focus on teaching and learning.”

Question 3: What changes should be made to the administration of school boards?

Question 3 generated a wide range of comments. By far, the two most common responses repeated themes that already emerged in the previous questions: 1) reduce the number of school boards; and 2) reduce staff in school boards and direct any savings back into schools.

- a. **Reduce the number of boards.** Twenty-six percent recommended cutting school boards, with a large majority calling for either one for the entire province or two (one English, one French).

“School Boards themselves are obsolete. They eat up funds that can be directed back to the schools. Many provinces have already done away with local school boards...This would mean larger boards obviously, so the administration would need to change to allow for input from the ground source.”

- b. **Reduce staff at boards.** Twenty-one percent said school boards were ‘top heavy’ and recommended the number of administrators and consultants be reduced. The funds and staff generated by this reduction in centralized staff should then be invested into schools.

“Too much bureaucracy. Too many policies. All this public money for administrators. Let educators teach. We don’t have nearly enough people in schools, and the school boards are loaded full of people. If the system is underfunded as it is, get the specialists in the classrooms.”

“I’m a fan of local democracy and amalgamation never seems to produce long-term savings or efficiency, but some sort of mechanism to facilitate closer cooperation and sharing between the boards and DEECD would be beneficial.”

“Why do we need so many Boards in our small province of Nova Scotia? Personally, I believe we need to centralize Boards (much like the Health Authority). There are way too many administrative positions at the Central Offices of each school board. My children’s schools need more supports IN schools, not in Central Offices.”

“Members of the school board repeatedly show a lack of knowledge about issues within the schools. They appear to be more interested in politics and the bottom line than the wellbeing of the students.”

The following comments appeared much less frequently than those just described, but occurred frequently enough to be reported here:

“Elected school boards should be disbanded and replaced with regional offices of the Department of Education that work with local School Advisory Councils that, (in turn), provide direct student, parent, teacher and community input into public education...We need a new approach.”

“An elected school board has very little purpose anymore. There seems to be more and more power given to these positions, held by people with, in general, little to no educational experience ... other than the fact that they once went to school themselves. I think the elected positions could easily be eliminated. Central office positions could also be sized down and combined throughout the province. This would also allow for some consistency from one area to the next, as currently there can be many differences in procedure and operations from one to the next.”

“Politics plays a large role in education, as we have seen in recent elections. Boards are a stabilizing factor in that they do not affiliate with any one political party. I want to know that there is a local place that I can go that understands my children’s school and community, should I ever need a referee between myself and my school.”

In-person consultations

The in-person meetings were, of course, more free-flowing. As in the online results, many discussions around structure and governance would inevitably lead to passionate views on inclusion, curriculum, school policies, class sizes, the labour dispute of last year, and so on. While some of those comments do affect my recommendations, I will try to focus on the feedback that is germane to the terms of reference of this report.

There was a steady drumbeat for staff at the department and at the boards to be encouraged, even mandated, to spend more time in the schools on a regular basis. This approach would ensure they are aware of current trends in schools, kept apprised of required resources and developing challenges “on the frontlines”, and, therefore, perceived as being more adept and agile at identifying and delivering support and solutions to the schools themselves.

Some voices felt the administrative system should be left alone. Much of that point of view seems to come from the notion that the system has simply been overwhelmed recently, the result of too many changes in too short a time period. The calls to action of the Freeman Report (2014) were indeed followed by the Education Action Plan (2015) and its 101 recommended changes to the curriculum and school system. Both documents offer insight, innovation, and smart changes that I believe will help the system.

Others say the rapid changes in the system led directly to the labour dispute of last year: teachers and administrators felt their concerns simply weren’t being listened to; they were being disregarded and disrespected by the department; the contract negotiations were less about the contract and more about finally saying “enough is enough, this is finally our opportunity where we have to be heard.”

I heard loud and clear the calls for more diverse voices at every level of the education system, particularly at the decision-making tables. I could not agree more – and the recommendations will offer suggested actions.

There were several examples cited of the system not working the way it must – with clarity, direction, and two-way dialogue. People cited a number of well-intentioned actions or changes or policies that they believe have created unintended consequences. For example:

- Class caps
- Inclusion
- Competing or conflicting reporting structures

Many people said after the pace and volume of changes to the curriculum, combined with the labour dispute of the previous school year, it would be wise to just...pause. There is wisdom there. I suggest there should be a kind of cooling-off period, a slowing-down of new initiatives to let the system heal, to rebuild trust, and let people adjust. Moreover, there has to be time to build individual and system capacity if new initiatives are to succeed.

At the same time, some significant change is necessary – even overdue. And in the end, maintaining the status quo is, in effect, another suggested model of administration and governance. That is: leave the system the way it is; we're fine. Or, change somebody else's world, not mine.

However, it is clear for Nova Scotian students and educators that staying with the same approaches to governance is not in their best interests. Changes must be made now for the good of the system as a whole and to improve outcomes for students specifically. And while some of the recommended changes are significant, *how* they are implemented is just as important as what they are actually supposed to do. Implementation is critical. It will be addressed further in the section that follows the recommendations.



RECOMMENDATIONS

In organizing the recommendations for this report, I have divided them into six groups with a number of related, individual strategies within each. I am calling them Catalysts for Change.

Here are the six Catalysts for Change:

Catalyst 1: Organize the system to focus on student learning and achievement

Catalyst 2: Concentrate needed resources into classrooms and schools

Catalyst 3: Make the system better for teachers and principals

Catalyst 4: Increase trust, accountability, and transparency

Catalyst 5: Ensure equity and excellence in all schools across the province

Catalyst 6: Streamline the department's administration and operations and invest savings in the classroom

Many of these recommendations are inspired directly from the dedicated Nova Scotians I have met with and heard from through the consultation process. Your passion and insights reassure me about the future of the province's school system and it is my hope that you may find the spirit of some of your own ideas included here.

Finally, these recommendations have, at their very core, the wise words taken from the Terms of Reference, reminding us that we must "*...also consider the cultural, linguistic and geographic contexts of the Nova Scotia education system and current government priorities for public education.*"

"We can judge how well we are doing by the levels of success being achieved by our most vulnerable students."

(Glaze and Mattingly, 2012)

Catalyst 1: Organize the system to focus on student learning and achievement

One of the most consistent themes to emerge throughout the consultations was this troubling conclusion: there is tremendous confusion about roles and responsibilities, reporting chains, and accountabilities in the administrative system in Nova Scotia. Instead of one, unified system that is propelled by a shared goal of student achievement and learning for *all* students, we are left with nine different, disparate systems – the Department, the provincial CSAP, and seven regional school boards.

Not surprisingly, that has manifested itself at times in dysfunction, turf wars, mistrust, lack of communication, inconsistency in terms of curriculum and outcomes, and ultimately a failure to move the school system forward.

It has become clear that there are well-recognized problems facing the system and that business as usual cannot continue. While many good and competent Nova Scotian educators have struggled to make it work, we need serious reform to let them to do their best work under better conditions.

The current system is too fractured and fragmented for such a small province, playing catch-up when it comes to goals of 21st century education. This fracturing and fragmentation generates tensions within the system that distract from a focus on the areas that need greatest attention: student achievement and the capacity building to make this possible.

The recommendations are therefore designed to build a coherent system with clear and unified leadership that streamlines administration and allows frontline educators to be empowered and responsible for what they are supposed to be doing: instructional leadership and student achievement.

At the same time, the recommendations encourage local voice, responsiveness and innovation.

Building a coherent system will also allow teachers and resources to move more quickly and readily across the system to ensure equity in student outcomes. Teachers will have increased mobility by ensuring they don't lose their seniority when transferring between regions.

I believe this better aligned, more responsive structure will permit many services to be harmonized and managed system-wide to improve quality and efficiency, all the while bringing real focus to overdue priorities in the classroom.

Nova Scotia's students are not performing at their potential, particularly marginalized communities, and if we are going to fix that we need a system that is coordinated, unified, inclusive, and responsive.

Please see the Changes at a Glance chart on page 28, showing the key differences between the current and proposed system. As well, a chart on page 29 outlines the current governance and administrative structure, followed on page 30 by the proposed structure.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Shift from a system of nine disconnected silos to one coherent, aligned model, focused on student learning and achievement.

Right now, the department and eight school boards have a dysfunctional relationship, with student achievement and learning continuing to suffer. During my 91 consultations, reviewing the 1,500 online surveys, and also in the Auditor General's recent analysis, it became evident that the current system design suffers from unclear accountabilities, roles and responsibilities, redundancies and conflicts, overlapping authorities and reporting structures.

The system must be realigned to reflect a unified, coordinated, province-wide focus on students. The savings on unnecessary administration can be used instead on classroom priorities. The aligned system can finally help Nova Scotian students reach their potential. These are the key recommended changes:

a. The seven governing (elected) regional school boards should be eliminated.

Unfortunately, in Nova Scotia, at this time, I cannot ignore what I have heard: the dismissals of elected boards several times over the past decade; confused, unclear roles and responsibilities; a wide variety of performance from board to board; too many conflicting policies; transparency issues; an unhealthy level of acclaimed candidates and a lack of fresh voices; constituents not knowing their local board members, nor the roles they played, and so on.

b. Enhance local voice with the creation of vibrant School Advisory Councils (SACs) for all schools (or families of schools) in the province with enhanced influence, including:

- Regular, quarterly progress updates and accountability sessions with regional executive directors of education (the new job title for superintendents)
- Annual meeting with Minister of EECD to discuss priorities, policies and issues
- Opportunity for parents, community, principals, students to have their say
- Selection and participation of the SACs, including specific mandate, term limits, membership, and other role expectations need to be reviewed and clarified further in the months ahead.

c. Ensure voice of Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotians is heard at ministerial level.

The Council on Mi'kmaq Education (CME) and Council on African Canadian Education (CACE) must have enhanced roles, providing policy counsel to the Minister.

- d. **The role of Superintendents, now referred to as Regional Executive Directors of Education, is enhanced as leaders of education in their regions, responsible and accountable for student achievement, reporting directly to the Deputy Minister of EECD, overseeing regional education offices, and key to the success of School Advisory Councils in their regions.**

The Regional Executive Directors of Education are responsible for implementing provincial programs and policies; student learning and achievement; community outreach and engagement; local issues and operations. They are now placed in an enhanced position to use their repertoire of skills and knowledge of what works best in education to raise expectations and to ensure all students in their region succeed.

- e. **The existing seven regional administration offices continue under the leadership of regional executive directors of education with these areas of focus: implementing provincial policies and programs, day to day operations and, most importantly, focusing on student learning and achievement.**
- As a top priority, teaching support specialists will be moved from administration offices to classrooms (see: Recommendation 3).
 - To increase service effectiveness and efficiency, non-core administrative roles will be reviewed as part of a shared services model.
 - Step one should include consolidating those eight non-core systems to one. Rather than having nine separate approaches to the same policies, this approach should mean faster service, unified policies and procedures, reduced administrative costs, and a more nimble system. Examples might include: IT, payroll, facilities, finance, FOIPOP/ATIP, operations, and human resources.
 - Care should be taken to evaluate the best place to carry out each function. For instance, which centre has the best model or is best suited to do such work for the system? One region could be in charge of payroll, another for HR, etc.
 - At this point, we do not know which roles should go where to operate most effectively. This needs to be examined and evaluated to find the optimum approaches, as soon as possible.
- f. **The Department should review the role and responsibilities of Regional Education Officers (REOs) in light of these changes.**

These changes will require legislative changes to the Education Act to bring clarity and better reflect the system of today.

Changes to School Boards

For me, this is the most challenging aspect of this review: to make the recommendation to replace governing school boards. This discomfort is based on my own beliefs and experience.

I have worked with school board members who have demonstrated the highest level of commitment and professionalism. I remember working with trustees in Ontario who drove hours to and from board meetings, late at night, in the most unsafe conditions, simply because they wanted to serve their communities and ensure that children had the best possible education. I heard those same kinds of stories from the board members I met with across Nova Scotia this autumn.

Over the years, in my speeches I have extolled the value of representative democracy. As well, when I served as a member of the Royal Commission on Learning I travelled the Province listening to Ontarians speak about their vision for the future of education.

Unfortunately, Nova Scotia has had its share of what many described as dysfunction in its school boards over the years, and on occasion, the Minister has suspended a Board entirely and replaced it with a single, appointed Board Chair. Indeed, quite frequently during our consultations, people remarked that the one-person Board turned out to be the most effective, professional model they have experienced.

There are lessons to be learned from the one-person governing board. I am not prepared to go that far; local voices are still invaluable. What is instructive, however, is the importance of clarity in roles and responsibilities, the power and value of appointed, highly-qualified professionals, and the positive effects of a strategic vision carried out with discipline and timeliness.

In my opinion, that system dysfunction led to the recent creations of “work-arounds” such as the Council on Classroom Conditions, the Principals’ Forum, and the Commission on Inclusive Education. Had the system been working well, these voices would have been heard through the established channels. Clearly, teachers, principals, parents, and the community felt they were not being heard. The school boards share responsibility for this phenomenon, so too does the Department.

It is important to recognize how the recommended changes will enhance the role and responsibilities of the Regional Executive Directors of Education (formerly superintendents), overseeing schools in the same communities.

Again, I am not here to dismiss the value of local voices; I am simply responding to what I see as a crisis of low achievement in a province with an education administrative system that can seem too cumbersome, conflicted and adversarial to get to the urgent matters of student performance.

That is one fact. The other is that we cannot wait on everything – we are too far behind already in student achievement and it is simply unfair to children, families, and their communities to pause entirely or be paralyzed. It is not a contradiction to be both slowing down some elements and speeding up others. We need to do both.

I believe the suggested model of additional voices can work very well, providing parent, and student, community and regional voices, while ensuring diversity in advisory roles with direct access to the Minister.

This recommendation should not be seen as a blanket rejection of all elected school boards and trustees. The system has simply not worked to help Nova Scotian students improve their performance. Each model, each situation must be considered in its own environment, based on performance, coherence, responsibility and accountability. Regardless of student achievement levels, this proposed model should be reviewed in five years.



On the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP)

I am recommending maintaining the one, unique, pan-provincial school board structure, with some adjustments, for the Acadian community of schools. To the province's Acadians, the difference is fundamental, foundational, and absolutely critical to the renaissance they have worked so hard for over generations.

I believe the uniqueness of the CSAP demands a unique relationship in the system. The CSAP must work with the Department to ensure the provincial curriculum and priorities are followed, along with reasonable adjustments for the Acadian context.

I may also be criticized for not recommending more changes to the CSAP. The fact of the matter is that the Acadian experience *is* different and has been one of struggle and endurance. I was deeply affected by the personal stories I heard from leaders within the Acadian school board.

In a province and a continent dominated by the English language, Acadians make up four percent of the population and are justifiably proud of their culture, their language, and their place in the province. And they should also be encouraged to celebrate and protect the rights they have won within a within a predominantly anglophone culture.

During one consultation, this comment stuck with me, reinforcing the struggles, the challenges, and the resilience of Acadians: *"As a wise mentor once said to me (in French): 'In the Acadian community, we need to get up earlier in the morning and go to bed later at night and work twice as hard – but it is all worth it in the end.'"*

Nova Scotia turned a corner 20 years ago, recognizing the singular importance of Acadian cultural and linguistic controls in the school system. Now is not the time to turn back the clock or turn away from the Acadian community.

And to Michel Comeau, the Superintendent of CSAP: *Rassurez-vous, je n'oublierai pas ce petit garçon.*

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Maintain the CSAP provincial board structure, with the following changes:

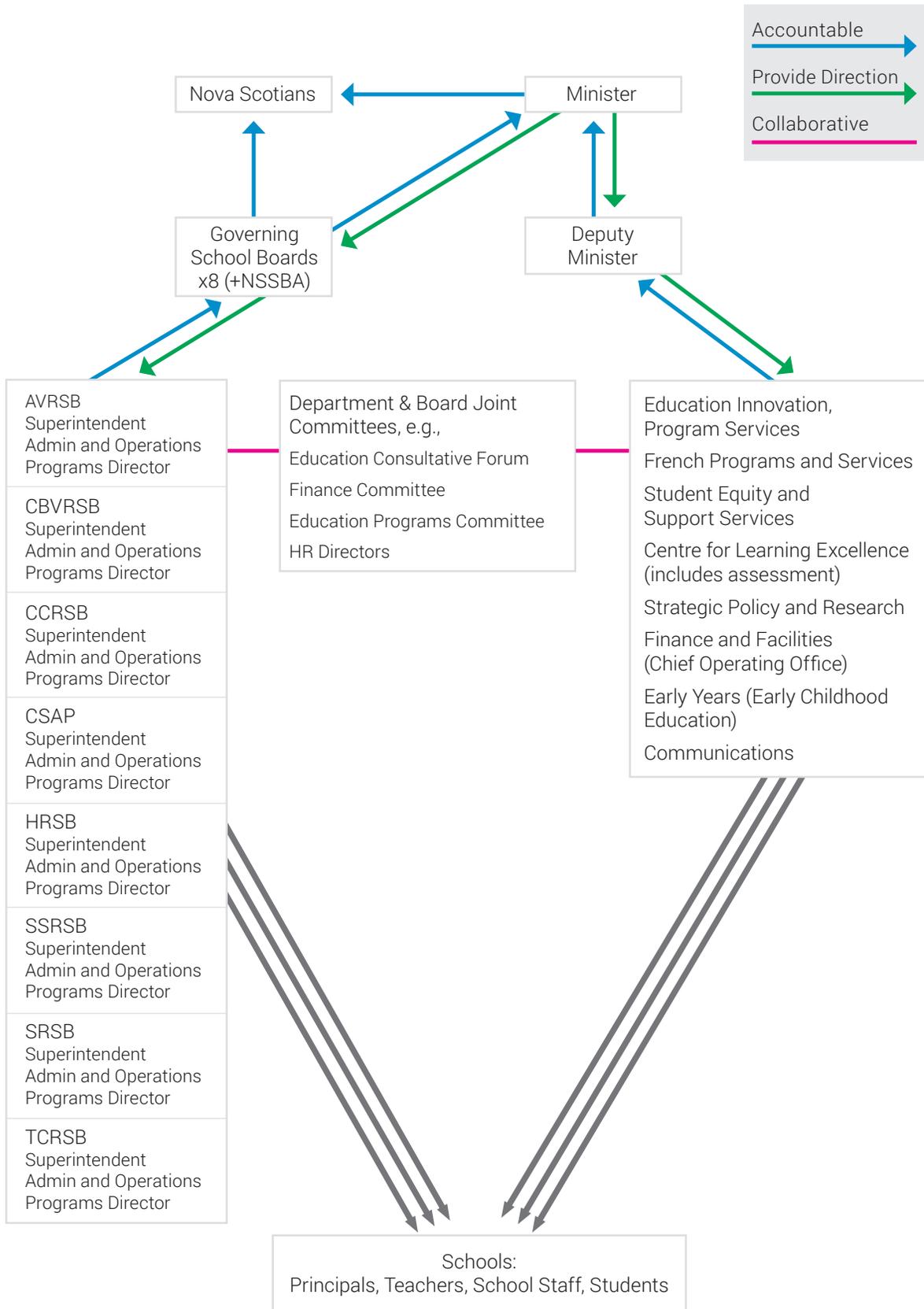
- The Superintendent is responsible to both the Deputy Minister of EECD and the CSAP board.
- CSAP controls cultural and linguistic matters, follows provincial curriculum outcomes, while being able to add cultural/linguistic priorities. This approach recognizes the Charter rights of the CSAP, while also ensuring provincial curriculum goals are aligned for all Nova Scotian students.
- There is a perhaps inevitable tension between the Department and the CSAP in terms of control over curriculum. If this administrative and governance model is to succeed for Acadian students, the Department, Superintendent and Board must find consensus that aligns with provincial curriculum priorities and outcomes, while at the same time ensuring the unique priorities of the Acadian experience and Charter rights are protected.

CHANGES AT A GLANCE

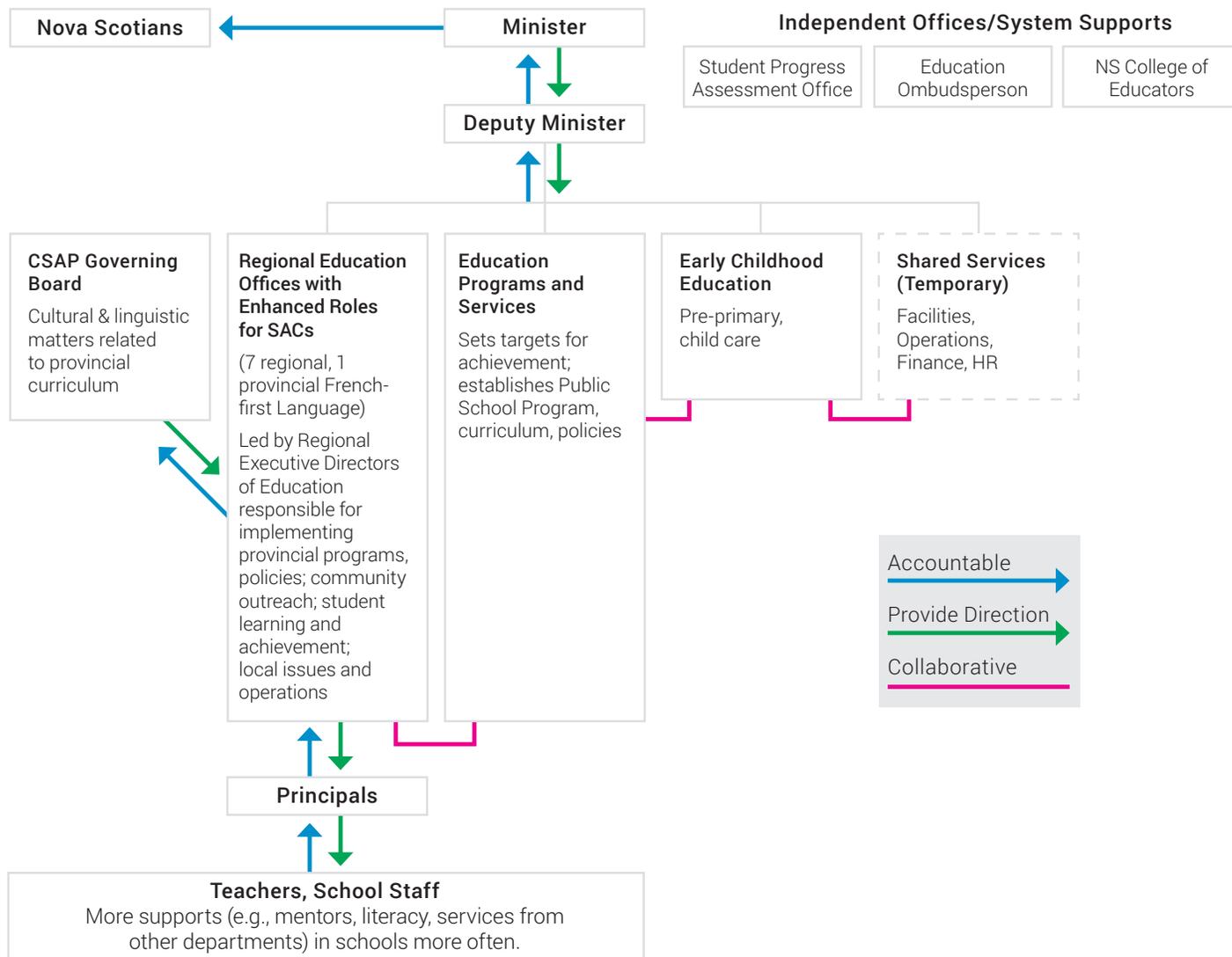
EECD Plus 8 School Boards	One Nova Scotia Education System
<p data-bbox="451 279 537 306">Uneven</p> <ul data-bbox="217 327 716 386" style="list-style-type: none"> Disparities in student achievement across the province 	<p data-bbox="1029 279 1131 306">Equitable</p> <ul data-bbox="800 327 1317 386" style="list-style-type: none"> Province-wide excellence with equity in student achievement
<p data-bbox="443 426 545 453">Fractured</p> <ul data-bbox="217 474 683 638" style="list-style-type: none"> Nine misaligned systems Conflicting priorities and direction from different sources Fragmentation, confusion, and inefficiency across the sector 	<p data-bbox="1029 426 1131 453">Coherent</p> <ul data-bbox="800 474 1349 604" style="list-style-type: none"> One aligned system Unified priorities and direction for the entire sector Integration, clarity, and efficiency across the sector
<p data-bbox="440 674 548 701">Top heavy</p> <ul data-bbox="217 722 695 781" style="list-style-type: none"> Too many staff outside the classroom Duplication of efforts throughout the sector 	<p data-bbox="1021 674 1135 701">Streamline</p> <ul data-bbox="800 722 1279 814" style="list-style-type: none"> More staff and services in schools Reductions of efforts throughout the sector (e.g. Shared services)
<p data-bbox="440 850 548 877">Distracted</p> <ul data-bbox="217 898 724 1167" style="list-style-type: none"> Heavy administrative burden on principals and teachers Too many non-educational responsibilities (e.g. Building issues, etc.) distracting from instructional leadership Disputes over who's in charge divert attention away from students Superintendents pulled in multiple directions 	<p data-bbox="1029 850 1127 877">Focused</p> <ul data-bbox="800 898 1325 1167" style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced administrative burden on principals and teachers Concentration on instructional leadership and capacity building Clear authorities and accountabilities; increased attention on student achievement Regional executive directors of education to champion student achievement
<p data-bbox="423 1203 565 1230">Unresponsive</p> <ul data-bbox="217 1251 756 1415" style="list-style-type: none"> Students' unique learning needs are not always met Parents don't experience meaningful involvement Principals' and teachers' voices get lost in the noise 	<p data-bbox="1021 1203 1141 1230">Responsive</p> <ul data-bbox="800 1251 1325 1449" style="list-style-type: none"> Students' learning needs are met regardless of background or other circumstances Parents have more opportunities for meaningful involvement Increased respect for principals' and teachers' professional judgment
<p data-bbox="451 1484 537 1512">Unclear</p> <ul data-bbox="217 1533 753 1696" style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clarity around what works best and how to communicate student progress to parents and the public Decisions are sometimes unclear and unpredictable 	<p data-bbox="1013 1484 1146 1512">Transparent</p> <ul data-bbox="800 1533 1333 1663" style="list-style-type: none"> Student progress is assessed by an independent student progress assessment office reporting directly to the public Decisions follow clear and predictable processes

CURRENT GOVERNANCE & ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Department of Education & Early Childhood Development plus 8 school boards



PROPOSED GOVERNANCE & ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE One Nova Scotia Education System



Catalyst 2: Concentrate needed resources into classrooms and schools

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Move teaching support specialists (literacy leads, math mentors, etc.) out of regional education offices and into classrooms four days a week, with the fifth day dedicated to collaborative planning and preparation for the next week.

Currently, there are more than 100 teaching support specialists in the regional offices whose main roles have evolved into too much paperwork, data entry, and administration, through no fault of their own.

The new requirement is to put their teaching abilities to work in the classrooms. Schools must be better served by them, with predictable, designated and accountable schedules. The fifth day is intended to be for data entry, lessons learned, reflection and planning; the Department must remove distracters to ensure that administrative work can be completed in a single day a week or less.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Encourage cross-fertilization between the Department and schools, bringing in classroom teachers to fill 50 percent of EECD curriculum positions and deploying Department staff in the system.

I recommend two- to three-year secondments, term appointments, or exchanges, starting in 2018-19. This approach can build understanding of the current classroom experience, spur collaboration and innovation, and help build relationships of mutual trust and respect.

This was a theme throughout the consultations: department staff should “walk a mile in our shoes” and truly experience what is happening in today’s classrooms.

It is critical to harness perspectives and insights from across the province, not simply provide the “view from Halifax.”

Accurate or not, there is a perception among some observers that the department is top-heavy, secretive and needs streamlining. Others point out they can’t tell because they can’t find out who’s accountable or how the organization works. The Department should acknowledge this perception and attempt to address it with a more transparent, accessible culture. At a minimum, its website should have a clear description of its structure, leadership, staff and services, organizational charts, and contact information.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Make all schools “wrap-around” facilities, where students and families can promptly access support from any government department, not just for education, but also support from mental health professionals, health care providers, justice, family services, and so on.

When serving students, there can no longer be silos between EECD and the Departments of Health & Wellness, Community Services, and Justice. To support this further:

- *SchoolsPlus* should be expanded as practically as possible.
- In planning and designing new schools and facilities for pre-primary, ensure that the wrap-around philosophy is at the centre.
- The wrap-around approach should also apply to strategies for older students, as they prepare to transition to the wider world of work, apprenticeships, community college or university.

In conversation, the esteemed mental health expert, Dr. Stan Kutcher, put the challenge of our school system this way: “The structural frameworks of our schools have not changed significantly since the 1800s, but the expectations have changed. Society is now expecting schools to be there to help parents raise their children.”

As Dr. Kutcher points out, this evolution of expectations has not translated into significant changes in how our schools are supported (in terms of funding, staffing, and professional expertise) or designed (in terms of the school day, the role of teachers, and so on).

Dr. Kutcher’s point centres on the long-overdue need for a public policy debate: do we want schools to raise our kids? And if so, how do we support them with resources and also hold them accountable for success?

The reality is that we can’t wait for that debate. Our schools have changed. The burdens and expectations on teachers and administrators can be wide-ranging and relentless. We have to act now to do a better job of serving our students and families and supporting our teachers and principals.

This recommendation for collaboration has been called for repeatedly, from the Freeman Report in 2014 to the interim report of the Inclusion Commission in June 2017. I will simply add my voice to the chorus and stress how vitally important it is to student achievement, learning, and well-being.

SchoolsPlus is an established step in this direction, roundly praised by those who use it, but too many students and families don’t have access in their community. Here’s how the Halifax Regional School Board describes SchoolsPlus:

“The vision for SchoolsPlus is that schools become a convenient place for government and other services to be delivered to families. This approach will make it easier for professionals to collaborate with each other on behalf of children, youth, and families. Families are served in a welcoming, accessible place that they are already familiar with - a school in their own community.”⁵

The program came in response to the 2005 Nunn Commission. Senior leaders at the relevant departments need to collaborate to build on this success, which shows both the positive potential and also the disparity in the education system, where resources have not been found, despite community wishes.

Schools must also do more to connect high school students to program opportunities and a broader range of career choices ahead with Nova Scotia Community College campuses, universities, and businesses.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

Give teachers and principals access to funding and responsibility for the selection of text books and learning materials to best support their teaching.

The Provincial Book Bureau system is outdated and not working as it should for schools of this era. All materials should be chosen using departmental bias evaluation guidelines. This should part of the planned review of the Hogg funding formula.

5 HRSB website: hrsb.ca/about-hrsb/program/student-services/schoolsplus

Catalyst 3: Make the system better for teachers and principals

RECOMMENDATION 7:

Create a provincial College of Educators, an independent body to license, govern, discipline and regulate the teaching profession, helping to improve public confidence in the education system across the province.

The College would perform some roles now held by the department, such as teacher certification, and by the NSTU, such as discipline. In the interests of openness and independence, an independent college of educators would be seen as impartial and without the conflict of interest when a group is in charge of both negotiating its membership needs and overseeing discipline.

The model is well-established elsewhere and in other professions, from physicians to lawyers, dentists to barbers. I believe that Nova Scotia teachers should achieve full professional status and a more significant role to contribute in the education system like their counterparts in other jurisdictions and countries. The Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) and the Scottish General Teaching Council (SGTC), among others, provide excellent examples of this vision.

Every five years, members should demonstrate to the College that they have continued their own education by taking accredited courses, aligned with departmental and school priorities. Partnerships should be forged with schools of education in Nova Scotia universities and elsewhere.

Membership should be enshrined in the Education Act, with the tenets, powers and duties set out in legislation. Professional educators (those with teaching certificates) should have significant presence in the membership of the College, with substantial representation from business, labour, industry, and others, such as provincial parent groups and community organizations. Government should appoint a Registrar to lead the College.

The number of participants and groups to make up the College needs to be determined. It should operate at arm's length, with no single interest group having undue influence on the operations and functioning of the College.

"I believe strongly that self-regulation elevates the status of a profession among its members and the public. In teaching, established and well-articulated professional standards help to shape and influence the work of teachers and administrators with students and inspire greater public confidence in the profession."

Michael Salvatore, CEO and Registrar of the Ontario College of Teachers

The principals I know and have met in Nova Scotia are filled with pride in their profession and seriousness about the role they have chosen. They are competent and committed professionals who want to ensure that their schools serve the needs of children. I have often said in my many years as a superintendent working with school principals that I have yet to work with one that I have not admired and respected.

During our consultations, many principals recounted stories of the struggles they faced and the high levels of discomfort they experienced during the recent labour dispute. Many said that was when they realized fully the precariousness of their positions. In some cases, there was some hostility towards them as they had to make the heart-wrenching choices, caught between loyalty to their union and loyalty to their roles as educational leaders and school administrators in their communities.

They are often torn between the exploding demands and high expectations. They spend their days putting out fires, tending to the needs of students and staff, parents, elected officials and communities. Many are exhausted as they work to take care of their own families, take post-graduate courses, all while being buffeted about with complaints and ever-expanding roles.

They walk the halls of their schools and listen to students' stories about their personal and family concerns. Frankly, I don't know how they cope. And they never show their exhaustion or let you know that they often feel overwhelmed or dispirited. They don't because they are consummate professionals. I hope that some of the following recommendations will help ease those burdens.

RECOMMENDATION 8:

Remove principals and vice-principals from the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU) and into a new professional association. Seniority, pension, benefits must not be impacted and there should be an option for those administrators who may wish to return to teaching and the NSTU.

This model would establish a coherent management-educator model, instead of the conflict of interest that currently exists with both management and employee in the same union.

The recent labour dispute in schools brought this issue to the fore and was a significant challenge, particularly during work to rule. It is worth noting that the Freeman Report ("*Disrupting the Status Quo*") made a similar recommendation in 2014.

I hasten to add that this association would not be designed to be another union. It would be a professional association to enhance the profession and build public confidence. It is a long-overdue change that would put Nova Scotia principals in step with their peers elsewhere.

"The legislative decision to move principals and vice-principals out of their respective teachers' federations in Ontario was met with great angst at the time (1998), but has had unforeseen positive impact. The level of collaboration and unified voice among elementary and secondary, as well as principals and vice-principals has created a culture of trust and mutual respect that we could never have anticipated.

"Principals and vice-principals are trusted to speak on behalf of the students, without the 'working conditions' agenda rising to the forefront. The level of alignment and coherence that results from the ongoing support that leaders experience has been a key lever in the internationally-recognized student achievement agenda."

Dr. Joanne Robinson
Ontario Principals' Council

RECOMMENDATION 9:

Create maintenance and operations positions such as a building manager for schools or families of schools, freeing principals from such non-educational tasks.

Principals need to be instructional leaders, accountable for student achievement, rather than spending precious hours checking fire alarms, defibrillators, building maintenance, and so on.

These important tasks can be carried out by others, specifically trained for such work.

RECOMMENDATION 10:

Provide support for accounting and financial functions in schools, rather than making them the responsibility of principals.

This common sense approach removes another time-consuming, non-core responsibility from the plate of principals while at the same time increasing professional oversight and responsibility for financial matters in schools.

RECOMMENDATION 11:

Ensure teachers have the mobility and choice to work in any region in Nova Scotia by removing barriers in collective agreements while maintaining seniority rights.

Nova Scotia needs teachers. It simply does not make sense to prevent teachers from moving freely from one community to the next, should a job vacancy arise. This is not to be used as a means of “bumping” younger teachers from their jobs. This may need to be addressed in the teachers’ bargaining agreement. I would encourage all who care about having outstanding teaching across the province to embrace this possibility.

RECOMMENDATION 12:

Create a coordinated professional development system for teachers and principals, tied directly to teaching standards, student achievement, curriculum priorities, such as math, literacy and culturally responsive teaching, and learning strategies that can be readily implemented in their classrooms.

Principals know their schools’ priorities and what their teachers and students need for continuous development. We must trust and empower them and not force feed a cookie-cutter approach to professional learning.

The department should provide principals with a dedicated fund earmarked to support their own professional learning priorities.

The professional learning must be of the highest calibre and tied to improvement priorities. Many current, off-the-shelf packages only undermine the perception that there is high-quality professional development for teachers and principals.

RECOMMENDATION 13:

Make clear the importance of extracurricular activities, sports, and community volunteer support by:

- Creating a dedicated Physical Activity and Extracurricular Coordinator position in each region or family of schools to assist with the coordination and promotion of a range of extracurricular activities, before and after school and summer programming, community use of schools, inter-school sport activities, and physical activity across the curriculum.
- Streamlining transportation and volunteer policies into one, pan-provincial document, rather than eight different policies from each region or board.
- Providing additional support for the position of Athletic Director in schools or families of schools. Directors coordinate all sport teams for the school – sometimes more than 40 separate programs – and are responsible for all registration details for gyms, fields, rinks and so on. This position is essential to schools but is not recognized in the Education Act or any staffing models provided to schools.
- Identifying Nova Scotia School Athletic Federation (NSSAF) in the organizational structure of the Department to show it as a priority for schools, students, and the EECD.

Schools are integral parts of the community and can provide an accessible venue for recreational and group activities. School facilities can provide a place for the community to come together, volunteer, access community programs, develop skills and lifetime passions, become physically active, build character and strong and healthy communities.

These changes may require revisions to the province’s Education Act.

“Intelligence alone is not enough; intelligence plus character is the true goal of education.”

(Martin Luther King)

Catalyst 4: Increase trust, accountability, and transparency

RECOMMENDATION 14:

Create an independent Student Progress Assessment Office (SPA0), taking responsibility away from the EECD, and establish an assessment division to develop high-quality student assessments, reporting directly to the public on province-wide results, and ensuring the assessments are aligned with the curriculum.

The department does not enjoy the full trust of Nova Scotians to fulfill this role; the new Office must be seen as credible so it can conduct research, analyze data, present findings, and make recommendations without perceived bias or interference.

Nova Scotia students are not doing well enough and the “achievement gap” for African Nova Scotian and Mi’kmaw students is a persistent and troubling problem that must be addressed.

All data should be disaggregated – broken down into various categories, such as region, gender, and economic status, including traditionally marginalized communities. Educators champion the disaggregation of data because it can reveal areas requiring attention, inequities and challenges that might otherwise not be readily apparent.

Nova Scotia students are not doing well enough; they are underperforming. In response to this, the Department has changed or is changing many elements in the system, including a new curriculum, this administrative review, the review of inclusion in schools, the new council on classroom conditions, and the creation of the principals’ forum. This new Office will be the trusted evaluator of students and progress, free from any suggestions of bias or politics.

For example, it could conduct assessments of progress on the Nova Scotia curriculum, and a test of literacy skills for graduation, beginning in Grade 10. If students do not pass the test, I would strongly suggest that they are given other chances to write it again in Grade 11 and 12. In Grade 12, the province could provide a literacy course of similar standard for students who have not yet passed the test. This is meant as a support, a way to provide the kinds of literacy skills all students will need upon graduation. It is not meant to be a high-stakes exam that may create an obstacle to graduation.

Students and parents would receive individual reports on how students are doing both as individuals and also in relation to their classmates. Schools should receive a general report on the areas that students have mastered and the areas in which they have not done well. Recommendations for improvement should accompany these reports and follow-up on the improvement plans put in place in the department and in schools to achieve learning outcomes.

The Office should have a mandate to work directly with the department, teachers and local regions, ensuring decisions, planning, and evaluations are based on research, provincial data, and the provincial curriculum.

RECOMMENDATION 15:

Establish an Education Ombudsperson – an independent officer to investigate and resolve concerns or complaints on administrative decisions and practices that affect the education of the children of Nova Scotia.

The ombudsperson must be independent of government, dedicated to matters related to student achievement, well-being and voice, and report regularly to the public.

This role is an independent and impartial officer with responsibility to investigate the actions in public authorities. This individual provides timely, accessible, transparent and cost effective ways for people to resolve disputes and disagreements with other agencies and departments.

There are many role descriptions of Ombudspersons. We do not have to reinvent the wheel. Many of these job descriptions can be adapted to make them specific to the needs, roles and expectations within the educational context.

Individual concerns should always first be addressed at the school level; the ombudsperson role is not meant to replace or usurp the relationship between parents and schools.

Catalyst 5: Ensure equity and excellence in all schools across the province

RECOMMENDATION 16:

The EECD must create new Executive Directors or similar level positions of influence and decision-making power for African Nova Scotian Achievement and Mi'kmaw Education.

Each position will require an open, transparent job competition. The department has made strides in building a more diverse workplace; now, it must do more. These voices need to be at the decision-making table at the highest level.

In tandem with those transformations at the decision-making level, the Department must work with the Public Service Commission to do more to ensure that staff at all levels truly reflect the diversity of Nova Scotia. We all have to see ourselves across the public service, not merely token gestures of diversity at senior levels of influence and decision making.

The provincial government has taken significant steps recently in addressing past mistakes and building a more inclusive province, from the inquiry into the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children to the Culture Action Plan to the Independent Commission on Effective Electoral Representation for Acadians and African Nova Scotians. The recommendations in this report are simply the next steps.

As new positions emerge, the Department must ensure that those selected for positions at the highest levels of decision-making reflect, more fully, the diversity of the Province of Nova Scotia. This change should be visible to Nova Scotians over time. These actions towards inclusiveness will help build public confidence in the government and in the growing diversity of the province.

The United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent recently called on this province and all of Canada to increase educational attainment of African Canadian children, recommending a national strategy to address such issues. Nova Scotia must play its part to ensure these children reach their full potential.

RECOMMENDATION 17:

Establish a dedicated unit in the Department, in collaboration with the Office of Immigration, for emerging immigrant communities in schools, with supports for students, teachers and parents.

According to November 2016 figures, there were 1,735 students who needed English as an Additional Language (EAL) support in the province's schools.

As Nova Scotia welcomes more and more immigrants, we must do more to provide welcoming, culturally-responsive supports.

RECOMMENDATION 18:

Develop a coordinated workforce strategy to identify, recruit and retain teachers, specialists and educational support staff in the communities that need them. In addition, particular attention should be paid to:

- Increasing diversity in teaching and educational leadership programs, particularly African Nova Scotian, Mi'kmaw and Acadian teachers.
- Hiring French language teachers and support workers for both CSAP and French Immersion programming, and English as an Additional Language (EAL) teachers.

To have true equity and excellence in the system, the province needs to deal with these issues as soon as possible and must work cooperatively with the faculties of education at universities in the province to find ways to attract and train diverse groups of potential educators, and retain accredited teachers.

This recruitment should extend across Canada and internationally, but first we must make every effort to grow our own teachers, with particular emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programs and the arts.

“Successful schools tend to be those that bolster the performance of students from less advantaged backgrounds. Similarly, countries that have the highest levels of performance tend to be those that are successful in not only raising the learning bar, but also levelling it.”

Willms, 2006, p. 67

RECOMMENDATION 19:

Develop targeted education strategies for specific challenges in the system:

1. A French Language Education Strategy to better reflect the priority of both French First Language and French Immersion for the province.
2. A Rural Education Strategy to better deal with the unique challenges facing schools in rural communities.
3. A strategy for students living in poverty.
4. A strategy for children in care in the province.

Nova Scotian students, families, and communities must be entitled to the same quality and variety of opportunities, from curriculum-related courses to health care access and social services. These strategies must be developed collaboratively with other relevant departments, agencies, and key stakeholders.

If we are to provide excellence in education, we must have equity – and that means we must do our best for every student from every background. Regardless of where they live, what language they speak, their family situation, students must have equitable opportunities and supports to thrive.

The Ivany Report (2014) described the particular pressures on rural schools and communities this way:

“Over the past forty years, P-12 enrolment in Nova Scotia has fallen by nearly 40%. The current school system no longer enjoys economies of scale advantages. In both rural and inner-city areas, we have too many schools operating below optimal enrolments and the cost of maintaining this infrastructure drains resources away from improvements in quality. Rural communities particularly struggle with the stresses of school closing and longer bussing routes. The Commission hopes that current efforts to improve the school review process will result in an enhanced willingness and capacity across the province to find the right balance between community needs and the efficient use of resources to deliver high quality learning opportunities. There won't be a “one size fits all” solution, and we acknowledge the special role schools play in how communities see themselves, particularly at the lower grade levels...”⁶

Catalyst 6: Streamline the department's administration and operations and invest savings in the classroom

RECOMMENDATION 20:

The EECD, in concert with the Departments of Finance and Transportation & Infrastructure Renewal, should create a transparent, predictable and documented multi-year (five-to-ten) capital funding process for schools. The process should also include these related elements:

- **Develop a mechanism to invest in existing schools to ensure they are maintained appropriately while it develops a plan to address the growing challenge of deferred maintenance.** Nova Scotia is not alone, but ongoing fiscal restraints mean that overdue upgrades and repairs are simply not being done as quickly as possible. If the budget cannot be increased, government should pursue innovative approaches, such as carbon reduction strategies that could have funding possibilities through the federal government. With the exception of Public-Private Partnership (P3) schools, deferred maintenance was a consistent problem mentioned by people in the system.
- **Review excess space in schools by developing an objective set of space criteria and engage an independent reviewer to ensure the appropriate use of any adjacent, non-school activity.** This is about increasing efficiency and effective use of spaces, not any kind of push to close rural schools. Due to declining student enrolment, a significant number of schools have excess capacity. A mechanism is needed to ensure excess space is identified and evaluated to enable better control of facility costs. Some schools are substantially underutilized, operating at about 50 percent capacity in some cases.
- **Improve the planning of school construction and renovation projects to avoid the problem of changes in size, scope and usage, ballooning costs, and protracted delays.** Increase coordination between EECD and Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (TIR) to ensure school projects are scoped, valued and timed accurately so projects can be completed in accordance with the government's capital plan. The strategy should also address a way to support building new schools in the CSAP system.
- **As part of the multi-year funding initiative, synchronize the fiscal year with the school year for regional office budgeting.** When the school year is September through June and the fiscal year runs April through March, this creates many challenges for planning and accuracy in forecasting.

6 Now or Never: An Urgent Call to Action for Nova Scotians, Feb. 2014, p. 58.

RECOMMENDATION 21:

Ensure that a new funding formula for schools is in place to replace the Hogg Formula to better reflect the priorities of today and the decade ahead.

I am pleased to hear that a review of the formula is underway, spurred by the Interim Report of the Commission on Inclusive Education.⁷ When it was first designed more than a decade ago, it addressed the priorities of its era. In consultations, I heard frequently that it is no longer working as intended and indeed has had unintended consequences such as effectively encouraging school closures. Priorities have changed, so too must the funding formula.

- The new funding formula should include enough flexibility to allow for some grassroots, bottom-up innovations at the Regional Executive Director of Education level.

While the overall notion behind targeted funding is sound – ensuring the provincial priorities for the system are followed – the “one-size fits all” approach doesn’t always work best. For example, if one region’s students are doing well in math, but struggling in some other subject, right now, the board must still follow the provincial priority and put funding into math.

That approach doesn’t always help students or teachers; it only increases frustrations. Targeted funding should allow a reasonable percentage to be earmarked and applied to specific priorities that target unique challenges in each region. Innovations and pilot projects should be encouraged, monitored and then adjusted if necessary

RECOMMENDATION 22:

Any financial savings realized in carrying out these recommendations must be documented and shared publicly, with all savings going directly into schools.

The point of this review is to improve the administrative and governance of the system to help schools run as best they can; but if there is money saved, it must support that tangibly, not be taken away for another government priority.



⁷ “Turning Point: Interim Report of the Commission on Inclusive Education”, Adela Njie, Dr. Sarah Shea, Monica Williams. June 29, 2017.

SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

Systems often fall short of achieving their goals because they do not spend adequate time on thinking through and planning for successful implementation in order to embed the changes into the fabric of the organization. The systems that achieve their goals are those that give focussed attention to the task of translating visions and recommendations into actual, concrete actions. They engage in the necessary planning and deep implementation.

In recent years, Nova Scotia has written some of the most progressive reports that I have seen in any school district across the globe. Recommendations abound. The time has come to translate all of these findings into reality.

Despite the current challenges, I am very optimistic about the future of education in Nova Scotia. The province has embarked on many innovations that set them apart from other jurisdictions. There is a strong research orientation and commitment to focussing on what works. The resolve to ensure that all children, regardless of cultural, socio-economic, linguistic or geographic differences realize their potential is unshakable.

As I travelled across the province, it was important to see and feel the passion of the presenters as they made a strong case for a governance structure that puts students first.

It was also important for me to see the uniqueness and similarities of the province and the accompanying needs of the students. So too was the opportunity to experience the intensity of their feelings and to be able to reflect on what they expect of the system.

There was a common call of parents to ensure that the education system meets the needs of their children. They want to do their part in their neighbourhood schools to ensure that their schools become the hub of their communities, offering the services that contribute to student success, wellbeing and community development.

More than anything else, they want the co-existence of equity and excellence, to close achievement gaps and to ensure that public education realizes its promise to educate all children effectively. More importantly, they want effective governance that brings about cohesiveness and coherence – one that enables the system to be more successful.

The students I met are eager to learn and achieve. They want to be successful, contributing members of society. Staff members at all levels of the organization want to do their part to ensure that these students are prepared to be global citizens, problem solvers and solution finders. They want an education system that prepares them to think critically and analytically, to demonstrate empathy and concern for others and to act wisely and ethically. Parents and community members want to support their education system and local schools. For them, there is a sense of urgency. For that reason, this report must be a call to action. Their children cannot wait.

“Culture does not change because we desire to change it. Culture changes when the organization is transformed; the culture reflects the realities of people working together every day.”

Frances Hesselbein, *The Key to Cultural Transformation* (1999)

Relationships matter. Trust matters. Mutual respect matters. We must change structures and we must change the culture. Two experts on education structure, Fullan and Quinn (2016), offer their perspective:

“...when it comes to system changes, *beware of an inordinate focus or total dependence on structural change*. What counts is not changes in structure, but changes in culture. If changes in structure are considered, make sure that culture is the driver. Changes in the number of school boards, for example, (change in structure), will not lead to anything worthwhile per se. Put another way, no progress can be made unless relationships between and among the sectors, especially those of teachers, the school boards, and the government change to develop joint solutions.”⁸

To my mind, any organization that desires deep, continuous and meaningful improvement needs to adopt clear measures to take their system to new heights. A few years ago, there was much emphasis in education on alignment. The notion was that aligning roles and responsibilities was the ultimate goal in system restructuring. This was, indeed, a very worthwhile goal of school reform initiatives during those times.

More recently though, the emphasis has been on achieving “coherence” – in essence, making natural and logical connections. When things cohere, they stick together, uniting to form a logical, consistent and cohesive whole. With coherence there is clarity of focus, emphasis and intentionality. Fullan and Quinn put it this way:

“...there is only one way of accomplishing this goal. It is a *change in culture*. Thus, you can only achieve it through ‘purposeful interaction among groups of teachers well led’. There are no shortcuts. Only focused interaction counts.”

One of the goals of this review is to ensure that the roles and responsibilities form a cohesive whole as individuals at all levels of the system work together to build upon the successes in order to transform the system. The grown-ups in the system need to communicate better with one another and with the communities around them, if we are ever going to help students succeed. That improvement starts with a change in culture.



8 Fullan & Quinn, Coherence, 2016.

Next Steps in Successful Implementation

For this report to succeed and for students to thrive, the recommendations must be considered carefully and then resolutely put into action. These recommendations are designed to be cohesive. The Department must implement them systematically and methodically and in a timely manner and resist the temptation to cherry-pick.

Whether at the regional level or the school level, one of the greatest roadblocks to improving student achievement is spotty or shallow implementation of improvement efforts. It is necessary to review all improvement plans to ensure that schools and regions are focusing on the right drivers, to use one of Fullan's terms, and that they are relying on research-informed strategies to bring about success

There must be an effective implementation strategy, which research indicates has a number of important components. I have adapted the following list in that spirit and inserted specifics based on my experience with implementation. There must be a Guiding Coalition, made up of the premier, Minister of Education & Early Childhood Department and individuals in key roles to remove obstacles and legislative barriers to ensure the plan is implemented. Actions would include:

- Establish the Guiding Coalition (e.g. premier, minister, deputy minister, union representation, superintendent, principal, business, parent, and teacher representation).
- Develop a plan with clear priorities. A good plan is sharp and focused, with a small number of key priorities.
- Have clear timelines and measurable indicators of success.
- Use strategies based on best research practices.
- Select a lead person. This person is a catalyst for change and a champion for the initiative. He or she must be knowledgeable about change processes and well respected within the field.
- Build a team for support. A key implementation task is to build a team of people who work together and support one another in achieving important goals. One example is to ensure that each school and region has a School Improvement Team working in concert with a Regional Improvement Team.
- Provide ongoing professional learning opportunities and development. Capacity building is key.
- Provide required resources: human, financial and material.
- Select a few non-negotiable goals within each plan at the local level. Allow some variation in local priorities if schools are already at the required level of attainment in a particular subject, such as reading or math.
- Require consistent and deep implementation of those goals.
- Identify indicators of progress. It is vital to collect data to see if progress towards the goal is being made and to share that information broadly so that everyone can assess the progress and make mid-course corrections, if necessary.
- Monitor progress closely, regularly and purposefully in both student achievement and implementation of this plan.
- Stay the course. Significant issues cannot be effectively addressed unless there is a multi-year commitment.
- Ensure early wins.
- Celebrate successes.
- Communicate often.

It is important to note that in many organizations, one of the most frequent staff complaints is inadequate communication from senior management. This should not be one-way communication. There must be deliberate efforts to have at least two way communication so that the needs of and insights from those who are expected to do the work can be incorporated.

Benjamin (2011) points out, “The two most important reasons why employees fail to implement a strategy are unclear expectations and failure of the leaders to check for satisfactory implementation” (p. 27).

Regional and school leaders need to monitor implementation regularly and provide ongoing feedback and coaching. Part of providing ongoing support is to give staff the opportunity to discuss implementation successes and challenges.

It is critical to establish relational trust so that people are willing to take risks and try new things. Whenever a new strategy is implemented, classrooms experience what is known as the “implementation dip”. As we innovate and have a steep learning curve our performance may not be optimum at all times. Knowing this, we should have strategies to address the “dip” when it occurs.

Dr. Jeff Orr, the Dean of Education at St. Francis Xavier University puts it this way: “...the importance of focusing on doing a few things well by integrating them and taking the necessary time to help people work together in new ways.”

As we get comfortable with the new innovations we become more proficient and our performance improves. Successful implementation doesn’t happen overnight. It takes both skill and will to embed new expectations into the fabric of a system.

A key role for leaders is to manage the distractions at this time. This refers to those things that can derail implementation and take the focus away from both the process and content of what is to be done.



CLOSING THOUGHTS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A robust and effective public education system is one of the best investments there is today to create a civil society. Consider the cost of educating a child compared to the costs that result from inadequate education. My visits with youth in care and the youth facility in Waterville made that abundantly clear to me. We know the many benefits of good education, not only for the individuals but for creating an even more just, harmonious and civil society – a vision for Nova Scotia which I know elected officials share with me.

On the question of a civil society, R. D. Putnam, a Harvard political scientist said in 1993:

“Communities which succeeded socially and economically did not become civil because they were rich, but rather became rich because they were civil.”

We also know from the work done in England by Wilkinson and Pickett, in their book, *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better* (2009), that one common factor that links the healthiest and happiest societies is the degree of equality among their members. Unequal societies are bad for everyone – the poor, the middle class and the rich. Wilkinson and Pickett assembled data that exposed stark differences even in wealthy nations. Almost every modern social problem – poor health, lack of community life, violence, drugs, obesity, mental illness, long working hours and large prison populations. – is more likely to occur in less equal societies.

I mention these points because I believe that one of the major tasks we have ahead is to provide the best possible education for all our children and we must organize our school system to do just that. That, to my mind, is the task we must tackle first and foremost.

In addition, we have to organize our system so that we can prove certain prominent researchers wrong. Here are four statements from these eminent researchers:

- “The longer our children are in school, the less curious and the less creative they become.” (Zhao)
- “High school students who exhibit creative personalities are more likely to drop out of school than other students.” (Wagner)
- “Schools are complicit with oppression.” (Kumisharo).
- “Statistically speaking, the best advice I would give to a poor child eager to get ahead through education is to choose richer parents.” (Connell).

These comments are a call to action. We must prove them wrong by redoubling our efforts to foster creativity and other 21st century skills and mindsets that students need to innovate, create, survive, thrive and become globally competent citizens. We must raise the bar and improve the governance of our system. Our successes will only be fully realized if we work in partnership with business, labour, and industry to further embed these expectations in our school system.

Recent national and international assessments tell us that our Nova Scotia children are not achieving their full potential. As an educator, this is an issue that concerns me. Our schools, as societal hubs, must ensure that students learn and achieve to the maximum of their capability, regardless of geographic, linguistic or cultural challenges. This also means that in the short term, our primary focus has to be on enhancing the learning, academic achievement and wellbeing of every student in Nova Scotia with a sense of urgency. My common refrain has always been: *the children cannot wait*.

In the spirit of this, let me address one more issue that should not be ignored because of its impact on students – and that civil society we all aspire to create.

I commend the Department of Education and Early Childhood Education for the intentions and development of the provincial attendance policy. They were responding to the concerns of teachers and principals.

But I have also heard so many comments as I travelled the province about the potential negative impact of this policy, especially on students from marginalized groups.

I am the first to admit that there are many positive aspects of this policy. If students are not in school they cannot learn. The old notion of “time on task” is still an important premise within education.

The policy only took effect in October, so no conclusions can be drawn at this point. I would call on leaders in the education system to closely monitor the policy and its effects – and revisit it if appears to be creating unintended negative consequences, particularly among marginalized communities.

To all Nova Scotians:

I cannot emphasize enough the call to action made by the recommendations in this report. I encourage you to continue your commitment to developing a caring province – one that fosters a strong sense of civic engagement; that is committed to equity, excellence and social justice; one that nurtures the character attributes such as respect, empathy and optimism. Generations hence, you will all be able to look back and be proud of the fact that you focussed on what matters most – namely, the qualities that endure and create the kind of society we all want.

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you and experience so much of your beautiful and forward-looking province. It is my hope that this is another step in Nova Scotia’s journey to become an even more prosperous and vibrant place to learn and live.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a pleasure to express heartfelt gratitude to all those who assisted with this administrative review. I admitted at the press conference that launched this review that these deadlines were very ambitious, but that I was prepared to work around the clock to get it done within the specified timelines.

Special thanks to Premier Stephen McNeil and Minister of Education & Early Childhood Development, Zach Churchill, for their vision and decision to conduct this review. It was obvious from the beginning that they wanted consultation with the widest possible cross-section of Nova Scotians. Sandra McKenzie, the now-retired Deputy Minister, deserves special commendation. As a leader, she used her experience in government to provide access to key people in other departments and the required supports we needed to complete our task.

As mentioned earlier in the report, I visited all school board offices, spoke with school board members, superintendents, other leaders and staff who wanted to offer their perspectives individually or in groups. I thank those in the field for their openness and willingness to share their views on what the future of education governance should look like in Nova Scotia.

It is not possible to mention everyone I need to thank for their assistance. Within the department, Sara Halliday and Jeremy Smith wasted no time in preparing the comprehensive schedule that helped us get off to an early start a few days after the announcement.

I have tried to list all of the names of staff and groups who discussed submissions with me. Despite those efforts, I suspect there may be omissions; if so, please accept my apologies and blame a faulty memory, rather than malice!

My conversations with Dr. Michael Fullan, prolific writer and global leader in education; Dr. Michael Salvatore, CEO and Registrar of the Ontario College of Teachers, and Dr. Joanne Robinson, Education Leadership Canada and Director of Professional Learning, Ontario Principals' Council were most helpful.

I would also like to acknowledge the additional research support and professional insights I received during the course of this review from Dr. Bill Hogarth, Former Director of Education, York District School Board; Sachin Maharaj, Ph.D. candidate and Canada Graduate Scholar in educational leadership and policy at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto; Scott Milne, Independent Research Consultant; and Issam Massouh, Former Manager of the Literacy and Numeracy Unit, French-Language Education Policy and Program Branch, Ontario Ministry of Education.

Hugh Fraser deserves special acknowledgement for his pivotal role in this process. He travelled the province with me and listened to Nova Scotians. His wise counsel and expertise in communications benefited this process tremendously.

This was certainly a collective effort. The power of teamwork has, once again, been demonstrated. The completion of this review, within such a short time frame, would not have been possible without the contributions of the groups and individuals listed in this report.

I hope you share my eagerness for the implementation of this report and my belief in the determination of all those who will seize the opportunity to redouble their efforts to raise the bar for the students of Nova Scotia.

"The solution to adult problems tomorrow, depends, in large measure, on how children grow up today. There is no greater insight into the future than realizing that when we save our children, we save ourselves."

Margaret Mead

TABLE OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Catalyst 1: Organize the system to focus on student learning and achievement

Recommendation 1:	<p>Shift from a system of nine disconnected silos to one coherent, aligned model, focused on student learning and achievement. Right now, the EECD and eight school boards have a dysfunctional relationship, with student achievement and learning continuing to suffer. During my 91 consultations, reviewing the 1,500 online surveys, and also in the Auditor General's recent analysis, it became evident that the current system design suffers from unclear accountabilities, roles and responsibilities, redundancies and conflicts, overlapping authorities and reporting structures.</p> <p>The system must be realigned to reflect a unified, coordinated, province-wide focus on students. The savings on unnecessary administration can be used instead on classroom priorities. The aligned system can finally help Nova Scotian students reach their potential. These are the key recommended changes:</p> <p>a. The seven governing (elected) regional school boards should be eliminated. Unfortunately, in Nova Scotia, at this time, I cannot ignore what I have heard: the dismissals of elected boards several times over the past decade; confused, unclear roles and responsibilities; a wide variety of performance; too many conflicting policies; transparency issues; poor voter turnout or apathy; an unhealthy level of acclaimed candidates and a lack of fresh voices; constituents not knowing their local board members, nor the roles they played, and so on.</p> <p>b. Enhance local voice with the creation of vibrant School Advisory Councils (SACs) for all schools (or families of schools) in the province with enhanced influence, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular, quarterly progress updates and accountability sessions with regional executive directors of education (the new job title for superintendents)• Annual meeting with Minister of EECD to discuss priorities, policies and issues• Opportunity for parents, community, principals, students to have their say• Selection and participation of the SACs, including specific mandate, term limits, membership, etc. need to be reviewed and clarified further in the months ahead. <p>c. Ensure voice of Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotians is heard at ministerial level. The Council on Mi'kmaq Education (CME) and Council on African Canadian Education (CACE) must have enhanced roles, providing policy counsel to the Minister.</p> <p>d. The role of superintendents, now referred to as Regional Executive Directors of Education, is enhanced as leaders of education in their regions, responsible and accountable for student achievement, reporting directly to the Deputy Minister of EECD, overseeing regional education offices, and key to the success of School Advisory Councils in their regions.</p> <p>The Regional Executive Directors of Education are responsible for implementing provincial programs and policies; student learning and achievement; community outreach and engagement; local issues and operations. They are now placed in an enhanced position to use their repertoire of skills and knowledge of what works best in education to raise expectations and to ensure all students in their region succeed.</p>
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- e. **The existing seven regional administration offices continue under the leadership of regional executive directors of education with these areas of focus: implementing provincial policies and programs, day to day operations and, most importantly, focusing on student learning and achievement.**
- As a top priority, teaching support specialists will be moved from administration offices to classrooms (see: Recommendation 3).
 - To increase service effectiveness and efficiency, non-core administrative roles will be reviewed as part of a shared services model.
 - Step one should include consolidating those eight non-core systems to one. Rather than having nine separate approaches to the same policies, this approach should mean faster service, unified policies and procedures, reduced administrative costs, and a more nimble system. Examples might include: IT, payroll, facilities, finance, FOIPOP/ATIP, operations, and human resources.
 - Care should be taken to evaluate the best place to carry out each function. For instance, which centre has the best model or is best suited to do such work for the system? One region could be in charge of payroll, another for HR, etc.
 - At this point, we do not know which roles should go where to operate most effectively. This needs to be examined and evaluated to find the optimum approaches, as soon as possible.
- f. **The Department should review the role and responsibilities of Regional Education Officers (REOs) in light of these changes.**

These changes will require legislative changes to the Education Act to bring clarity and better reflect the system of today.

Recommendation 2:

Maintain the CSAP provincial board structure, with the following changes:

- The Superintendent is responsible to Deputy Minister of EECD and the CSAP board.
- CSAP controls cultural and linguistic matters, follows provincial curriculum outcomes, while being able to add cultural/linguistic priorities. This approach recognizes the Charter rights of the CSAP, while also ensuring provincial curriculum goals are aligned for all Nova Scotian students.
- There is a perhaps inevitable tension between the Department and the CSAP in terms of control over curriculum. If this administrative and governance model is to succeed for Acadian students, the Department, Superintendent and Board must find consensus that aligns with provincial curriculum priorities and outcomes, while at the same time ensuring the unique priorities of the Acadian experience and Charter rights are protected.
- I believe the uniqueness of the CSAP demands a unique relationship in the system. The CSAP must work with the Department to ensure the provincial curriculum and priorities are followed, along with reasonable adjustments for the Acadian context. This approach is in step with other provinces in Canada.
- I may also be criticized for not changing the CSAP. The fact of the matter is that the Acadian experience is different and has been one of struggle and endurance. I was deeply affected by the personal stories I heard from leaders within the Acadian school board. In a province and a continent dominated by the English language, the four percent of Nova Scotians who are Acadian should have their culture, language, and place in the province validated.
- Nova Scotia turned a corner 20 years ago, recognizing the singular importance of Acadian cultural and linguistic controls in the school system. Now is not the time to turn back the clock or turn away from the Acadian community.
- And to Michel Comeau, the Superintendent of CSAP: *Rassurez-vous, je n'oublierai pas ce petit garçon.*

Catalyst 2: Concentrate needed resources into classrooms and schools

Recommendation 3:	<p>Move teaching support specialists (literacy leads, math mentors, etc.) out of regional education offices and into classrooms four days a week, with the fifth day dedicated to collaborative planning and preparation for the next week.</p> <p>Currently, there are more than 100 teaching support specialists in the regional offices whose main roles have evolved into too much paperwork, data entry, and administration, through no fault of their own.</p> <p>The new requirement is to put their teaching abilities to work in the classrooms. Schools must be better served by them, with predictable, designated and accountable schedules.</p> <p>The fifth day is intended to be for data entry, lessons learned, reflection and planning; the Department must remove distracters to ensure that administrative work can be completed in a single day a week or less.</p>
Recommendation 4:	<p>Encourage cross-fertilization between the Department and schools, bringing in classroom teachers to fill 50 percent of EECD curriculum positions and deploying Department staff in the system.</p> <p>I recommend two- to three-year secondments, term appointments, or exchanges, starting in 2018-19.</p> <p>This approach can build understanding of the current classroom experience, spur collaboration and innovation, and help build relationships of mutual trust and respect.</p> <p>This was a theme throughout the consultations: department staff should “walk a mile in our shoes” and truly experience what is happening in today’s classrooms.</p> <p>It is critical to harness perspectives and insights from across the province, not simply provide the “view from Halifax.”</p>
Recommendation 5:	<p>Make all schools “wrap-around” facilities, where students and families can promptly access support from any government department, not just for education, but also support from mental health professionals, health care providers, justice, family services, and so on.</p> <p>When serving students, there can no longer be silos between EECD and the Departments of Health & Wellness, Community Services, and Justice. To support this further:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SchoolsPlus should be expanded as practically as possible.• In planning and designing new schools and facilities for pre-primary, ensure that the wrap-around philosophy is at the centre.• The wrap-around approach should also apply to strategies for older students, as they prepare to transition to the wider world of work, apprenticeships, community college or university.
Recommendation 6:	<p>Give teachers and principals access to funding and responsibility for the selection of text books and learning materials to best support their teaching.</p> <p>The Provincial Book Bureau system is outdated and not working as it should for schools of this era. All materials should be chosen using departmental bias evaluation guidelines.</p> <p>This should part of the planned review of the Hogg funding formula.</p>

Catalyst 3: Make the system better for teachers and principals

Recommendation 7:	<p>Create a provincial College of Educators, an independent body to license, govern, discipline and regulate the teaching profession, helping to improve public confidence in the education system across the province.</p> <p>The College would perform some roles now held by the department, such as teacher certification, and by the NSTU, such as discipline. In the interests of openness and independence, an independent college of educators would be seen as impartial and without the conflict of interest when a group is in charge of both negotiating its membership needs and overseeing discipline.</p> <p>The model is well-established elsewhere and in other professions, from physicians to lawyers, dentists to barbers.</p> <p>I believe that Nova Scotia teachers should achieve full professional status and a more significant role to contribute in the education system like their counterparts in other jurisdictions and countries. The Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) and the Scottish General Teaching Council (SGTC), among others, provide excellent examples of this vision.</p> <p>Every five years, members should demonstrate to the College that they have continued their own education by taking accredited courses, aligned with departmental and school priorities. Partnerships should be forged with schools of education in Nova Scotia universities and elsewhere.</p> <p>Membership should be enshrined in the Education Act, with the tenets, powers and duties set out in legislation.</p> <p>Professional educators (those with teaching certificates) should have significant presence in the membership of the College, with substantial representation from business, labour, industry, and others, such as provincial parent groups and community organizations. Government should appoint a Registrar to lead the College.</p>
Recommendation 8:	<p>Remove principals and vice-principals from the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU) and into a new professional association. Seniority, pension, benefits must not be impacted and there should be an option for those administrators who may wish to return to teaching and the NSTU.</p> <p>This model would establish a coherent management-educator model, instead of the conflict of interest that currently exists with both management and employee in the same union.</p> <p>The recent labour dispute in schools brought this issue to the fore and was a significant challenge, particularly during work to rule.</p> <p>It is worth noting that the Freeman Report (“Disrupting the Status Quo”) made a similar recommendation in 2014.</p>
Recommendation 9:	<p>Create maintenance and operations positions such as a building manager for schools or families of schools, freeing principals from such non-educational tasks.</p> <p>Principals need to be instructional leaders, accountable for student achievement, rather than spending precious hours checking fire alarms, defibrillators, building maintenance, and so on.</p> <p>These important tasks can be carried out by others, specifically trained for such work.</p>

<p>Recommendation 10:</p>	<p>Provide support for accounting and financial functions in schools, rather than making them the responsibility of principals.</p> <p>This common sense approach removes another time-consuming, non-core responsibility from the plate of principals while at the same time increasing professional oversight and responsibility for financial matters in schools.</p>
<p>Recommendation 11:</p>	<p>Ensure teachers have the mobility and choice to work in any region in Nova Scotia by removing barriers in collective agreements while maintaining seniority rights.</p> <p>Nova Scotia needs teachers. It simply does not make sense to prevent teachers from moving freely from one community to the next, should a job vacancy arise.</p> <p>This is not to be used as a means of “bumping” younger teachers from their jobs.</p> <p>This may need to be addressed in the teachers’ bargaining agreement. I would encourage all who care about having outstanding teaching across the province to embrace this possibility.</p>
<p>Recommendation 12:</p>	<p>Create a coordinated professional development system for teachers and principals, tied directly to teaching standards, student achievement, curriculum priorities, such as: math, literacy and culturally responsive teaching and learning strategies that can be readily implemented in their classrooms.</p> <p>Principals know their schools’ priorities and what their teachers and students need for continuous development. We must trust and empower them and not force feed a cookie-cutter approach to professional learning.</p> <p>The department should provide principals with a dedicated fund earmarked to support their own professional learning priorities.</p> <p>The professional learning must be of the highest calibre and tied to improvement priorities. Many current, off-the-shelf packages only undermine the perception that there is high-quality professional development for teachers and principals.</p>
<p>Recommendation 13:</p>	<p>Make clear the importance of extracurricular activities, sports, and community volunteer support by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a dedicated Physical Activity and Extracurricular Coordinator position in each region or family of schools to assist with the coordination and promotion of a range of extracurricular activities, before and after school and summer programming, community use of schools, inter-school sport activities, and physical activity across the curriculum. • Streamlining transportation and volunteer policies into one, pan-provincial document, rather than eight different policies from each region or board. • Providing additional support for the position of Athletic Director in schools or families of schools. Directors coordinate all sport teams for the school — sometimes more than 40 separate programs — and are responsible for all registration details for gyms, fields, rinks and so on. This position is essential to schools but is not recognized in the Education Act or any staffing models provided to schools. • Identifying Nova Scotia School Athletic Federation (NSSAF) in the organizational structure of the Department to show it as a priority for schools, students, and the EECD. <p>These changes may require revisions to the province’s Education Act.</p>

Catalyst 4: Increase trust, accountability, and transparency

Recommendation 14:	<p>Create an independent Student Progress Assessment Office (SPAO), taking responsibility away from the EECD, and establish an assessment division to develop high-quality student assessments, reporting directly to the public on province-wide results, and ensuring the assessments are aligned with the curriculum.</p> <p>The department does not enjoy the full trust of Nova Scotians to fulfill this role; the new Office must be seen as credible so it can conduct research, analyze data, present findings, and make recommendations without perceived bias or interference.</p> <p>Nova Scotia students are not doing well enough and the “achievement gap” for African Nova Scotian and Mi’kmaq students is a persistent and troubling problem that must be addressed.</p> <p>All data should be disaggregated -- broken down into various categories, such as region, gender, and economic status, including traditionally marginalized communities. Educators champion the disaggregation of data because it can reveal areas requiring attention, inequities and challenges that might otherwise not be readily apparent.</p>
Recommendation 15:	<p>Establish an Education Ombudsperson -- an independent officer to investigate and resolve concerns or complaints on administrative decisions and practices that affect the education of the children of Nova Scotia.</p> <p>The ombudsperson must be independent of government, dedicated to matters related to student achievement, well-being and voice, and report regularly to the public.</p> <p>This role is an independent and impartial officer with responsibility to investigate the actions in public authorities. This individual provides timely, accessible, transparent and cost effective ways for people to resolve disputes and disagreements with other agencies and departments.</p> <p>Individual concerns should always first be addressed at the school level; the ombudsperson role is not meant to replace or usurp the relationship between parents and schools.</p>



Catalyst 5: Ensure equity and excellence in all schools across the province

Recommendation 16:	<p>The EECD must create new Executive Directors or similar level positions of influence and decision-making power for African Nova Scotian Achievement and Mi'kmaw Education.</p> <p>Each position will require an open, transparent job competition.</p> <p>The department has made strides in building a more diverse workplace; now, it must do more. These voices need to be at the decision-making table at the highest level.</p> <p>In tandem with those transformations at the decision-making level, work with the Public Service Commission to do more to ensure that staff at all levels truly reflect the diversity of Nova Scotia. We all have to see ourselves across the public service, not merely token gestures of diversity at senior levels of influence and decision making.</p> <p>The provincial government has taken significant steps recently in addressing past mistakes and building a more inclusive province, from the inquiry into the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children to the Culture Action Plan to the Commission on Effective Electoral Representation or Acadian and African Nova Scotians. The recommendations in this report are simply the next steps.</p> <p>As new positions emerge, the Department must ensure that those selected for positions at the highest levels of decision-making reflect, more fully, the diversity of the Province of Nova Scotia. This change should be visible to Nova Scotians over time. These actions towards inclusiveness will help build public confidence in the government and in the growing diversity of the province.</p>
Recommendation 17:	<p>Establish a dedicated unit in the Department, in collaboration with the Office of Immigration, for emerging immigrant communities in schools, with supports for students, teachers and parents.</p> <p>According to November 2016 figures, there were 1,735 students who needed English as an Additional Language (EAL) support in the province's schools.</p> <p>As Nova Scotia welcomes more and more immigrants, we must do more to provide welcoming, culturally-responsive supports.</p>
Recommendation 18:	<p>Develop a coordinated workforce strategy to identify, recruit and retain teachers, specialists and educational support staff in the communities that need them. In addition, particular attention should be paid to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing diversity in teaching and educational leadership programs, particularly African Nova Scotian, Mi'kmaw and Acadian teachers.• Hiring French language teachers and support workers for both CSAP and French Immersion programming, and English as an Additional Language (EAL) teachers. <p>To have true equity and excellence in the system, the province needs to deal with these issues as soon as possible and must work cooperatively with the faculties of education at universities in the province to find ways to attract and train diverse groups of potential educators, and retain accredited teachers.</p> <p>This recruitment should extend across Canada and internationally, but first we must make every effort to grow our own teachers, with particular emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programs and the arts.</p>

Recommendation 19: Develop targeted education strategies for specific challenges in the system:

1. A French Language Education Strategy to better reflect the priority of both French First Language and French Immersion for the province.
2. A Rural Education Strategy to better deal with the unique challenges facing schools in rural communities.
3. A strategy for students living in poverty.
4. A strategy for children in care in the province.

Nova Scotian students, families, and communities must be entitled to the same quality and variety of opportunities, from curriculum-related courses to health care access and social services.

If we are to provide excellence in education, we must have equity – and that means we must do our best for every student from every background. Regardless of where they live, what language they speak, their family situation, students must have equitable opportunities to thrive.

These strategies must be developed collaboratively with other relevant departments, agencies, and key stakeholders.



Catalyst 6: Streamline the department's administration and operations and invest savings in the classroom

- Recommendation 20:** The EECD, in concert with the Departments of Finance and Transportation & Infrastructure Renewal, should create a transparent, predictable and documented multi-year (five- to-ten) capital funding process for schools. The process should also include these related elements:
- **Develop a mechanism to invest in existing schools to ensure they are maintained appropriately while it develops a plan to address the growing challenge of deferred maintenance.** Nova Scotia is not alone, but ongoing fiscal restraints mean that overdue upgrades and repairs are simply not being done as quickly as possible. If the budget cannot be increased, government should pursue innovative approaches, such as carbon reduction strategies that could have funding possibilities through the federal government. With the exception of Public-Private Partnership (P3) schools, deferred maintenance was a consistent problem mentioned by people in the system.
 - **Review excess space in schools by developing an objective set of space criteria and engage an independent reviewer to ensure the appropriate use of any adjacent, non-school activity.** This is about increasing efficiency and effective use of spaces, not any kind of push to close rural schools. Due to declining student enrolment, a significant number of schools have excess capacity. A mechanism is needed to ensure excess space is identified and evaluated to enable better control of facility costs. Some schools are substantially underutilized, operating at about 50 percent capacity in some cases.
 - **Improve the planning of school construction and renovation projects to avoid the problem of changes in size, scope and usage, ballooning costs, and protracted delays.** Increase coordination between EECD and Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (TIR) to ensure school projects are scoped, valued and timed accurately so projects can be completed in accordance with the government's capital plan.
The strategy should also address a way to support building new schools in the CSAP system.
 - **As part of the multi-year funding initiative, synchronize the fiscal year with the school year for regional office budgeting.** When the school year is September through June and the fiscal year runs April through March, this creates many challenges for planning and accuracy in forecasting.

Recommendation 21: Ensure that a new funding formula for schools is in place to replace the Hogg Formula to better reflect the priorities of today and the decade ahead.

I am pleased to hear that a review of the formula is underway, spurred by the Interim Report of the Commission on Inclusive Education. When it was first designed more than a decade ago, it addressed the priorities of its era. In consultations, I heard frequently that it is no longer working as intended and indeed has had unintended consequences such as effectively encouraging school closures. Priorities have changed, so too must the funding formula.

The new funding formula should include enough flexibility to allow for some grassroots, bottom-up innovations at the superintendent level.

While the overall notion behind targeted funding is sound – ensuring the provincial priorities for the system are followed – the “one-size fits all” approach doesn’t always work best. For example, if one region’s students are doing well in math, but struggling in some other subject, right now, the board must still follow the provincial priority and put funding into math.

That approach doesn’t always help students or teachers; it only increases frustrations. Targeted funding should allow a reasonable percentage to be earmarked and applied to specific priorities that target unique challenges in each region. Innovations and pilot projects should be encouraged, monitored and then adjusted if necessary.

Recommendation 22: Any financial savings realized in carrying out these recommendations must be documented and shared publicly, with all savings going directly into schools.

The point of this review is to improve the administrative and governance of the system to help schools run as best they can; but if there is money saved, it must support that tangibly, not be taken away for another government priority.



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APPENDIX

Administrative & Governance Review Consultation Participants

School Boards

(Separate meetings were held with Senior Staff, Governing School Boards, and Superintendents in each board):

Annapolis Valley Regional School Board, Berwick

Lavinia Parrish Zwicker, Chair	Pat Murphy, Coordinator, Student Services
Jackie Foster, Board member	Krishinda McBride, Coordinator of Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Rights
Nancy Bigelow-Acker, Board member	Jeannne Saulnier, Director of Finance
Tassa Kennedy, Mi'kmaq Board member	Cindy Dickie, Coordinator of Programs & SSP
Peter Cromwell, African Nova Scotian member	David Floyd, Director of Operations
Susan Ritchie, Vice-Chair	Ryan Mainstock, Coordinator, Literacy and Educational Technology
Gerald Burrell, Board member	Debbie Graves, Coordinator, Human Resources
Sandy Fraser, Board member	Lesley MacDonald, Coordinator, Human Resources
Phil Van Zoost, Board member	Michael Ouellette, Supervisor of School Support Services
Pat Parker, Board member	Erica Weatherbie, Director of Human Resources
Donna Johnstone, Board member	
Roberta Kubik, Superintendent	
Dave Jones, Director of Programs & Services	

Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board, Sydney

Beth MacIsaac, Superintendent	Fred Tilley, Board member
Paul Oldford, Director of Operational Services	Joan Currie, Board member
Linn Crawford, Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Rights; Assessment	Jackie Organ, Board member
Cathy Viva, Director of Programs and Student Services	John Berk, Board member
Wendy King, Director of Human Resources	Liane Burke, Board member
Nancy Dove, Director of Finance	Steve Parsons, Vice-chair
Darren GooGoo, Chair	Charlotte Shaw, Board member
Steve Parsons, Vice-chair	Lorne MacNeil, Board member
Sandra Margettie, Board member	Stewart Matheson, Board member
	Joyce Lind, Board member
	Yvonne Kennedy, Board member

Chignecto-Central Regional School Board, Truro

Gary Adams, Superintendent	Jim Grue, Board member
Sharon Byers, Board member	Wendy Matheson-Withrow, Board member
David Myles, Board member	Robert George, Board member
Mackie Ross, Board member	Scott Adamson, Board member
Adam Davies, Board member	Ron Marks, Board member
Glenda Talbot, Board member	Marilyn Murray, Vice-chair
Margie Nicholson, Chair	Gary Adams, Board member

Trudy Thompson, Board member
Ron Turnbull, Family of Schools Supervisor
– Celtic Family
Valerie Gauthier, Director of Financial Services
Allison McGrath, Director of Human Resources
Chris Boulter, System Development Supervisor
Karla Mitchell-Smith, Family of Schools
Supervisor – Chignecto Family

Trish MacKinnon, Family of Schools Supervisor
– Nova Family
Nevi Jackson, Coordinator of Diversity
Herb Steeves, Director of Operational Services
Stephanie Isenor-Ryan, Director of Programs
and Student Services
Ian MacLeod, Family of Schools Supervisor
– Cobequid Family

Conseil scolaire acadien provincial, Dartmouth

Michel Comeau, Superintendent
Brent Surette, Regional Director, South West
Region, Student Success Planning
Stephane Bertrand, Director of Operational
Services
Normand DeCelles, Director of Human Resources
Stephanie Comeau, Communications Coordinator
Margaret Gillespie deGooyer, Director of
Programs and Educational Services
Jerry Thibeau, Regional Director, Central Region
Janine Saulnier, Director of Finance
Francios Roulot, Regional Director,
Northeast Region
Kenneth Gaudet, Chair
Marthe Craig, Board member
Hank Middleton, Board member

Clyde deViller, Board member
Marcel Cottreau, Board member
Jeanelle d'Entremont, Vice-chair
Alfred Benoit, Board member
Jerome Breau, Board member
Lucien Comeau, Board member
Donnie Jacquard, Board member
Joeleen Larade, Board member
Helene Lavigne, Board member
Léonard LeFort, Board member
Marcel LeFort, Board member
Louise Marchand, Board member
Blair Samson, Board member
André Surette, Board member
Sophie Thériault, Board member

Halifax Regional School Board, Dartmouth

Elwin LeRoux, Superintendent
Archy Beals, African Nova Scotian Representative
Cindy Littlefair, Board member
Suzy Hansen, Board member
Nancy Jakeman, Board member
Dave Wright, Chair
Jennifer Raven, Board member
Bridget Boutilier, Board member
Linda MacKay, Board member
Jessica Rose, Mi'kmaq Representative

Gin Yee, Board member (via telephone)
Steve Gallagher, Senior Staff Advisor
Tracy O'Kroneg, Director of Human Resources
Wendy Mackey, Senior Diversity Advisor
Selena Henderson, Corporate Secretary
Susan Tomie, Director of School Administration
Doug Hadley, Coordinator of Communications
Services
Alison King, Director of Program Student Services
Terri Thompson, Director of Financial Services

South Shore Regional School Board, Bridgewater

Scott Milner, Superintendent	Lori Ferraina, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent
Wade Tattrie, Acting Director of Human Resources	Christian Maguire, Board member
Jeff DeWolfe, Director of Programs & Student Services	Vernon Simms, African Nova Scotian Representative
Tiffany Joudrey – Acting Director of Finance	Elliott Payzant, Chair
Lamar Eason, Coordinator of Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Rights	Elizabeth Crossland, Board member
Brian Smith, Director of Operations	Michael Stewart, Board member
Theresa Schroder, Communications Coordinator	Pat Garrison, Mi'kmaq Representative
	Theresa Griffin, Vice-chair

Strait Regional School Board, Port Hawkesbury

Ford Rice, Superintendent	Kevin Walker, Coordinator of Student Transportation/Boundary Review
Janice Campbell, Coordinator of Student Success Planning	Richelle MacLaughlin, Board member (via telephone)
Wanda Fougere, Coordinator of Programs and Policy	George Kehoe, Board member
Deanna Gillis, Coordinator of Communications	Joanne Reddick, African Nova Scotian Representative
Janice Gough, Director of Human Resources	Mary Jess MacDonald, Board member
Chris Grover, Director of Finance	Anne Peters, Board member
Paul Landry, Director of Operations	Paula Paul, Mi'kmaq Representative
Sharon MacCuspig, Director of Programs and Student Services	Francine Boudreau, Chair
Kathy Rhodes, Coordinator of Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Rights	Jim Austin, Board member

Tri-County Regional School Board, Yarmouth

Paul Ash, Superintendent	Donna Tidd, Vice-chair
Steven Stoddart, Director of Operations	Faye Haley, Board Member
Genna LeBlanc, Coordinator of Finance	Sandra Fitzgerald, Board Member
Charmaine Romkey, Director of Human Resources	Dolores Atwood, Board Member
Trevor Cunningham, Director of Programs & Student Services	Michael Alden Fells, Board Member
Martin Morrison, Senior Staff Advisor: Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Rights	Melanie Surette-Kenney, Board Member
Michael Drew, Chair	Patricia Nickerson, Board Member

Nova Scotia School Boards Association (NSSBA)

Meeting with association members from across the province:

Lavinia Parrish Zwicker, Chair AVRSB

Robert Kubik, Superintendent AVRSB

Jackie Foster, NSSBA Board of Directors, AVRSB

Trudy Thompson, Chair, CCRSB

Gary Adams, Superintendent, CCRSB

Elwin LeRoux, Superintendent, HRSB

Marthe Craig, Director, CSAP

Kenneth Gaudet, Chair, CSAP

Elliott Payzant, Chair, SSRSB

Scott Milner, Superintendent, SSRSB

Beth MacIsaac, Superintendent, CBVRSB

Steve Parsons, Vice-chair, CBVRSB

Sandra Margettie, Director, CBVRSB

Trish Smith, NSSBA Communications

Danielle Cottreau, NSSBA Executive Assistant

Karen Budden, NSSBA Finance & Office Manager

Donna Tidd, Vice-chair, TCRSB

Paul Ash, Superintendent, TCRSB

Michael Drew, Chair, TCRSB

Ford Rice, Superintendent, SRSB

Francine Boudreau, Chair, SRSB

Richelle MacLaughlin, SRSB

Nancy Pynch-Worthylake, Executive Director, NSSBA

Susan Ritchie, NSSBA past president (AVRSB vice-chair)

Dave Wright, NSSBA vice-president (HRSB Chair)

Hank Middleton, NSSBA president

Individual meeting with Nancy Pynch-Worthylake, Executive Director, NSSBA, and Susan Ritchie, Chair, NSSBA Governance Committee

Nova Scotia Teachers Union

Wally Fiander, NSTU Members Services

Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)

Grant Dart, Education Sector Coordinator

Mary Jessome, School Board Sector Council Chair

Nan McFadgen, President

Committees and Organizations with School Board and Department staff

School Board HR Directors

Student Services & School Specialists

Schools Plus Facilitators/Mental Health Clinicians

Education Programs Committee (EPC)

Special Education Programs and Services (SEPS) Committee

Cultural Groups and Organizations

Council on Mi'kmaq Education (CME): Darren GooGoo; Paula Paul; John Jerome Paul; April Hiltz

Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey: Elenore Bernard; John Jerome Paul; Wyatt White

Council on African Canadian Education (CACE)/Black Educators Association: Irvine Carvery, Gerry Clarke, Alma Johnston-Tynes, Andrea Noylander-Marsman

Delmore "Buddy" Daye Learning Institute: Sylvia Parris, CEO; Yvonne Atwell, Vice-chair; Susan Brigham, Director

Fédération des parents acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse: Pierre Lebreton; Jessica Hinton

Canadian Parents for French: Rebecca Lancaster, Executive Director; Amyl Ghanem; Joan Dobbie

Individual and Group Consultations

Provincial SAC Parent/Community Focus Group, with participants from across the province

Auburn Drive High School – Youth of Today (Youth Summit)

Lockview High School Student Focus Group

Youth in Care, Nova Scotia Youth Facility, Waterville

Phoenix Youth, Halifax

Dr. Paul Bennett, Schoolhouse Consulting

Dr. Jeff Orr, Dean of Education, St. Francis Xavier University

Lisa Doucet, Superintendent, Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority

Nova Scotia Federation of Home & School Associations (NSFHSA):

Diane Power, President; Deborah Couzens, Secretary; Janet Walsh, Treasurer (all via teleconference)

Hon. Myra Freeman, Chair, Minister's Panel on Education

Dr. Stan Kutcher, Adolescent Mental Health expert, Dalhousie University (via teleconference)

Nova Scotia Small Schools Initiative/Rural school advocates:

Leif Helmer; Sean Sears; Brett Hanham; Dr. Mike Corbett (all via teleconference)

Association of Nova Scotia Educational Administrators:

Margo Tait, Executive Director; Gary Adams, President

Nova Scotia School Athletic Federation:

Stephen Gallant, Executive Director; Darrell LeBlanc, Board Chair

Matt Risser, Consultant

Dr. Michael Fullan, Global Leadership Director

Dr. Joanne Robinson, Director of Professional Learning, Ontario Principals' Council

Dr. Michael Salvatore, CEO and Registrar, Ontario College of Teachers

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Zach Churchill, Minister

Sandra McKenzie, Deputy Minister

Karen Gatien, Associate Deputy Minister

Sue Taylor-Foley, Executive Director, Education Innovation, Programs and Services

Ann Power, Executive Director, Student Equity and Support Services

Doreen Redmond, Executive Director, French Programs and Services

Susan Kelly, Executive Director, Centre for Learning Excellence

Joe MacEachern, Executive Director, Facilities & Transportation

Janet Lynn Huntington Executive Director, Pre-Primary

Vicki Elliott-Lopez, Executive Director, Early Years

Nathalie Blanchett, Executive Director, Strategic Initiatives

Sara Halliday, Executive Director, Strategic Policy & Research

David Potter, Director, Financial Services

Marlene Ruck Simmonds, Director, African Canadian Services Division

Paula Hayden, Director, Teacher Education

Angela Kidney, Director, School Board Labour Relations

Donna MacDonald, Executive Lead, Council on Classroom Conditions

Diane Racette, Consultant working on development of the Public School Program

Regional Education Officers (REOs): Dwayne Provo, Denise Bell, Stephen Amirault, Sherman England

Dr. Patrick Kakembo, Executive Lead, Education Research and Best Practices in African Nova Scotian Learners

Jeremy Smith, Director, Policy & Planning

Student Equity and Support Services (SESS)

Tom Henderson

Alicia Nolan

Ian Doucet

Stacy McRae

Rola AbiHanna

Joanne Syms

Janet Porter

Tara Moore

Natascha Joncas

Anne Marie Melnyk

Steve Carrington

Judy Elliot

Darleen Kyte

Litzie Brooks

Paroo MacKinnon

Doreen Milhet

Centre for Learning Excellence (CLE)

Jeremy Brown

Kim Matheson

Privacy and Record Management

Andrea John

Carlos Granados-Ocon

Other Government Departments

Karen Hudson, Deputy Minister, Department of Justice

Lynn Hartwell, Deputy Minister, Department of Community Services

Paul LaFleche, Deputy Minister, Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal

Frances Martin, Deputy Minister, Department of Environment

Jeff Conrad, Deputy Minister, Internal Services Department

Natalie McLean, Director, Shared Services

Marah Haywood, Executive Council Cabinet Advisor

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Claudia Chender, NDP Education Critic

Tim Halman, PC Education Critic

Councils, Committees, Commissions

Hon. Myra Freeman, Chair, Minister's Panel on Education

Commission on Inclusive Education (Dr. Sarah Shea; Monica Williams)

Council to Improve Classroom Conditions

Principals' Forum

Research Support

Dr. Bill Hogarth, Former Director of Education, York District School Board

Sachin Maharaj, PhD candidate and Canada Graduate Scholar in educational leadership and policy at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto

Scott Milne, Independent Research Consultant

Issam Massouh, Former Manager of the Literacy and Numeracy Unit, French-Language Education Policy and Program Branch, Ontario Ministry of Education. (Ancien chef de l'unité de la littératie et de la numératie, Direction des politiques et programmes d'éducation en langue française, Ministère de l'Éducation de l'Ontario).

AVIS GLAZE – BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Avis Glaze is one of Canada's outstanding educators and a recognized international leader in education. From classroom teacher to Superintendent and Director of Education, this award-winning educator has experience at all levels of the school system. She was one of five Commissioners on Ontario's Royal Commission on Learning, setting directions for the future of education. As Ontario's first Chief Student Achievement Officer and founding CEO of the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat, she played a pivotal role in working collaboratively with Ontario educators to close achievement gaps and to improve student learning and achievement.

Avis served as Ontario's Education Commissioner and Senior Adviser to the Minister of Education. She was sent to South Africa to help with education during their period of national reconstruction when Nelson Mandela requested Canada's assistance. She was invited to serve as adviser to the Minister of Education in New Zealand on national standards and, most recently, was appointed by Nicola Sturgeon of Scotland as an International Adviser for system reform to improve education in that country.

Avis has worked in teacher education at York University and the University of Toronto. She was Professor in Residence in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa. Currently, she is President of Edu-quest International Inc., offering a wide range of educational services and speaking engagements across the globe.

Dr. Glaze is a consummate capacity builder and inveterate learner who continues to take courses at every opportunity. She received designation as a Visible Learning Certified Trainer, co-authored many articles and books including: *Towards Freedom: The African Canadian Experience*; *Breaking Barriers: Excellence and Equity for All*; "High School Graduation: K-12 Strategies that Work," and, most recently, *Reaching the Heart of Leadership: Lessons Learned, Insights Gained, Actions Taken (2018.)*

Avis's international contributions to education in over 50 jurisdictions around the world were once again recognized when she received the Robert Owen Award, the first of its kind offered in Scotland. She was invited to Norway by Queen Sonya to address the issue of "Can schools build better societies?" and has served as International Adviser to organizations such as Curriculum Services Canada and Learning Forward.

Visit her website at: avisglaze.ca

