



**Choice and
Accountability
in
Canadian
Education
Appendices**

Choice and Accountability in Canadian Education

Comprehensive Appendices

Prepared by the Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families (CUP) as part of the CACE project

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Funding for the Choice and Accountability in Canadian Education Project was provided by the Max Bell Foundation. The authors are grateful to Allan Northcott of the Max Bell Foundation for his very useful suggestions and support, to Lynn Bosetti and Dan Brown for their helpful comments on previous drafts, and to Miranda Diakiw, Kelly Shaw, and Leslie Mackey for their expert assistance in various phases of the project. This report and other, related documents are available at ww.cup.ualberta.ca/resources_documents.html.

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December, 2003

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PREFACE

Issues related to school choice, program choice, and accountability are increasingly recognized as being central to discussions on how to improve primary and secondary education in Canada. As a means of contributing to this discussion, the Choice and Accountability in Canadian Education (CACE) Project was undertaken (a) to document the range of choice and accountability policies and practices in all provinces and in 11 urban centres and (b) to provide a review of the policies, practices, and findings that will inform future discussions and explorations of choice and accountability in Canadian education. The products of this work are presented in four related documents: these *CACE Comprehensive Appendices*; the *CACE Report*; the *CACE Literature Review*; and the *CACE Reference Guide to Choice and Accountability in Canadian Education*.¹ The *CACE Comprehensive Appendices* include documents related to methods used in the project, as well as reports on provincial and jurisdiction policies and practices. The *CACE Technical Report* includes a summary of research on school choice; an overview of policies and practices in all 10 provinces, 11 urban areas, and 27 urban school jurisdictions; and a discussion of critical issues and findings related to choice and accountability. The *CACE Literature Review* is an extensive analysis of issues and research related to school choice. The *CACE Reference Guide* provides a snapshot of the current state of policies and practices related to choice and accountability, as well as summaries of related findings and issues.

¹ All four documents can be found at www.cup.ualberta.ca/resources_documents.html.

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY DOCUMENTS

APPENDIX A.1 DOCUMENT REVIEW GUIDES

District Questions – Document Review	
1	<p>Does the district support school choice?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are school boundaries open? • How does the district fund school choice?
2	<p>Does the district support program choice?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the district support program choice? • How does the district fund program choice?
3	<p>What choices are available within program of need?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the district fund programs of need?
4	<p>What are the various types of schools permitted by the district’s policies, regulations and practices?</p>
5	<p>What are the various types of programs required, and/or permitted by the district’s policies, regulations and practices?</p>
6	<p>What information is available to parents and students about school and program choice?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What information is in print? • What is available on the website?
7	<p>What are the provisions in the district policies, regulations and practices that support school choice?</p>
8	<p>What are the provisions in the district policies, regulations and practices that support program choice?</p>
9	<p>Are the various provisions directive, or permissive?</p>
10	<p>Does the district support inter-district choice?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a child chooses another district, do you send the provincial funding to that district? • Do you accept students who are residents of other districts?
11	<p>What are the various types of programs required, and/or permitted by the district’s policies, regulations and practices?</p>
12	<p>How does age impact eligibility for enrolment?</p>
13	<p>What are the district funding provisions that support choice?</p>
14	<p>Does district student funding follow the student?</p>
15	<p>Does the district permit students to enroll in the school of their choice?</p>

16	To what extent do students choose a school other than their neighborhood school? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is historical information available?
17	What are the five year data for enrollments in the various types of schools of choice, and programs of choice operated by the district?
18	Does the district permit students to enroll in the program of their choice?
19	What kinds of accountability measures are available to parents and students to assist them in making choices? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What form do these measures take?• How can they be accessed?

Provincial Questions – Document Review	
1	<p>Does the Ministry support school choice?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the Ministry support school choice? • Does the Ministry support charter schools? • Does the Ministry support independent schools? • Does the Ministry support home schooling?
2	<p>Does the Ministry support program choice?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the Ministry support program choice?
3	What are the provisions in the Act, regulations, and policies that support choice?
4	What are the provisions in the Act, regulations, and policies that support program choice?
5	Are the various provisions directive or permissive?
6	Does the Ministry describe, and differentiate between schools and/or programs of choice, and schools and/or programs of need?
7	What are the various types of schools permitted by provincial legislation, regulation and policy?
8	What are the various types of programs required, and/or permitted by provincial legislation, regulation and policy?
10	<p>What choices are available within programs of need?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the province mandate programs of need? • Which ones? • Does the province operate programs of need?
11	How does age impact eligibility for enrolment?
12	<p>What information is available from the Ministry to parents and students about school and program choice?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it in print? • Is it on the website?
13	Does the province permit students to enroll in the school district of their choice?
14	What are the funding provisions that support choice?
15	<p>Does provincial student funding follow the student?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the funding amounts for the various kinds of schools and programs?
16	What kinds of accountability measures are available to students and parents to assist them in making choices?

17	What form do these measures take? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curriculum?• Tests?• Surveys?• School, and/ or program evaluations?
18	What are the five-year data for enrollments in the various types of schools and programs permitted by the ministry? What other data are available?
19	To what extent do students choose a district other than their resident district?
20	Is information on student movement among districts available?

APPENDIX A.2 INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM



**Community-University
Partnership**

for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families

I, _____, hereby consent to be
Please print name

- Interviewed
- Tape recorded
- And/ or participate in a survey

I understand that:

- I may withdraw from the research at any time without penalty.
- All information gathered will be treated confidentially and only be accessed by members of the research project. Our procedures conform to the Alberta (FOIPP) Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
- When participating in focus groups, any information provided by other members of the discussion is confidential; I promise not to repeat it to anyone. The research team cannot guarantee that other members in the focus group will maintain confidentiality.
- I will not be identified in any documents resulting from this research without giving my consent. However, I understand that because of my position or role in this organization (identifying characteristics), it may be difficult for the researchers to ensure my anonymity.

I also understand that the results of this research will be used for:

- A report for the cooperating partners (including funders)
- Presentations and publications.

Participant's Signature

Date signed: _____

APPENDIX A.3 INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

District Questions - Interviews	
1	<p>In your district, can a student choose to attend any of your schools?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under what conditions? • Does the district provide alternative programs from which parents and/or students can choose?
2	<p>What does the district do to encourage choice?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you make parents and students aware of choices they can make? • What is your perception of how parents view the approaches your district takes to encouraging choice?
3	<p>What gets in your school district's way in offering choice?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask about choice as it relates to schools and programs • Do provincial policies or regulations get in the way? • What about the external environment (e.g., Where people live) and logistics (e.g., busing)
4	<p>How are schools in your district held accountable?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction surveys (e.g., parent, student, community) • Standardized tests • Resource use (financial audits, other) • User rates (e.g., enrolments going up or down) • Curriculum audits • School and/or program evaluations • Is there a different approach to accountability for your alternative programs or schools of choice?
5	<p>What information do you make available to parents and students to help them make informed choices?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What form does this information take? • How can the information be accessed?
6	<p>To what extent do you think parents and students are using the information you make available?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence do you have? (e.g., web site hits, logged phone calls, requests for information, attendance at school show and tells?)

	Francophone, Charter and Independent Schools
1	What choices are available to students within the school?
2	What accountability mechanisms are used by the school beyond those mandated by the ministry?
3	What measures of accountability are used by parents when making a choice?
4	To what extent do parents and students use accountability measures to assist them in making choices?
5	What encouragements exist that increase parents' ability and/or willingness to choose the school?
6	What impediments exist that limit parents' ability and/or willingness to choose the school?
7	What are the greatest challenges faced in operating the school?
8	What do you believe is the likely future for providing school and/or program choices for parents and students in your province? In your school?

Provincial Questions - Interviews	
1	<p>In your province, can a student choose to attend any school, or school district?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under what conditions? • Does the province require that districts provide alternative programs from which students can choose?
2	<p>What does the province do to encourage choice?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the province make parents and students aware of choices they can make? • What is your perception of how parents view the approaches the province takes to encouraging choice?
3	<p>What gets in the province's way in encouraging the provision of choice?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask about choice as it relates to both schools and programs of choice? • What about the external environment (e.g., Where people live?), logistics (e.g., busing), reluctance of local districts
4	<p>How are school districts and individual schools held accountable by the province?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction surveys (e.g., parent, student and community) • Standardized tests • Resource use (financial audits, other) • User rates (i.e., enrolments going up or down) • Curriculum audits • School and/or district program evaluations • Is there a different approach to accountability for your alternative programs or schools of choice?
5	<p>What information does the province make available to parents and students to help them make informed choices?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What form does this information take? • How can the information be accessed?
6	<p>To what extent do you think parents and students are using the information you make available?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence do you have? (e.g., web site hits, logged phone calls, requests for information)

	Organizations and Interest Groups Including Teachers' Organizations, Trustee Organizations, Parent Organizations and School Organizations
1	What are the association's policies in relation to school choice?
2	What are the association's policies in relation to program choice?
3	What are the association's policies in relation to accountability?
4	What are the factors that led to the development of the association's policies?
5	What encouragements does the association see in relation to the provision of school choice at the provincial and district levels?
6	What impediments does the association see in relation to the provision of school choice at the provincial and district levels?
7	What are the association's views regarding accountability mechanism in relation to school choice?

APPENDIX A.4 SAMPLE LETTER OF INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

February 13, 2003

Dr. Harold Press
Deputy Minister of Education
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's NL
A1B 4JS

Dear Dr. Press:

The Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families (CUP) at the University of Alberta has received funding from the Max Bell Foundation to conduct an investigation of school choice and accountability across Canada. For this project, CUP has created a research team that combines the expertise and experience of senior administrators from Edmonton Public Schools and researchers in education and policy analysis at the University of Alberta.

To fully document issues and options related to school choice and accountability, the research team will conduct the research with the goal of producing three documents:

- An inventory of policies and practices at provincial and jurisdiction levels, to be summarized in a *Policies and Practices Roadmap*;
- A *Critical Review and Analysis* of issues related to school choice and accountability; and
- A comprehensive *Technical Report* that will include extensive documentation of the inventory data and materials related to the review.

The Max Bell Foundation believes this study will be a first step toward creating a national dialogue on school choice and accountability.

Research interns will gather information from each of the provincial Ministries, and from school jurisdictions in Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Regina, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal, Halifax, Fredericton, Charlottetown, and St. John's.

I am writing to advise you of the project, to ask for your support, and to request that you identify the person within the Ministry who would be our contact for information at the provincial level. Erika Goble has been hired as the intern for the Atlantic provinces. The majority of Erika's work will be to summarize information from Ministry documents. We will also request a short interview to ensure that we have accurately summarized the information, and to seek answers to

a limited number of questions that cannot be answered through a document review. I would be pleased to receive your response by e-mail to bmcintos@telusplanet.net. We anticipate that the information-gathering phase of the project will occur in March and April of 2003, with the final reports being available in October, 2003. We will, of course, provide you with copies of each of the reports that result from this study.

Yours truly,

Bruce McIntosh
Project Coordinator
School Choice and Accountability Project

APPENDIX A.5 FOLLOW UP E-MAIL SENT TO ALL NON-REPLIES

In February your office received a letter (copy attached) requesting your support for our study of School Choice and Accountability in Canada. The letter indicated that we would be summarizing information about your Ministry from your public documents.

I also requested that you identify someone in the Ministry that we could contact in order to confirm the accuracy of our summary, and who would be available for a short interview to respond to questions not answerable through a document review.

To date, we have had positive responses from the vast majority of provincial Ministries, and from most of the major school districts in Canada. I look forward to your reply, and to your support. I can be reached by e-mail at bmcintos@telusplanet.net.

Sincerely,
Bruce McIntosh

APPENDIX A. 6 FINAL VERIFICATION LETTER



Community-University Partnership
for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families

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Early Childhood Development
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Susan Lynch
Child Study Centre
University of Alberta

Barbara McDougall
Agency & Community Services
United Way

Richard Ouellet
Region 6 Edmonton & Area Child and
Family Services Authority

Donald J. Philippon (*ex officio*)
Health Sciences Council
University of Alberta

Linda Phillips
Centre for Research in Literacy
University of Alberta

Delmarie Sadoway
Community Health Services
Capital Health

Sherry Thompson
Children's Services
Government of Alberta

Brenda Willis
Edmonton Catholic Schools

Doug Wilson
Public Health Sciences
University of Alberta

October 21, 2003

Ms. Gloria Chalmers
Edmonton Public Schools

Dear Ms. Gloria Chalmers,

The Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families (CUP) at the University of Alberta is presently finalizing the various reports for the study of School Choice and Accountability. We appreciate the time you have taken to assist our intern, Lorraine Woolard, gather information for the study, and the time you've taken to review the reports to ensure they fairly represented your District.

As we complete the various summaries, we ask that you take a few minutes to review your district material to ensure we have not inadvertently misrepresented your information in our compilations. As we had gathered the information between March and July 2003, we ask that the information reflect your district as of the spring of 2003. We request that we receive your final feedback by November 4, 2003 so that we can publish our reports by December 31, 2003. As indicated in our original letter we will provide you with a copy of the entire report upon completion. I would be pleased to receive your response by e-mail to bmcintos@telusplanet.net.

Yours truly,

Bruce McIntosh
Project Coordinator
School Choice and Accountability Project

Attachment

APPENDIX B: PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT REPORTS

APPENDIX B.1 ALBERTA

Final Report: Alberta Learning By Lorraine Woollard

Overview

The province of Alberta supports school and program choice through its *School Act*, Learning Policies, and Regulations. The following report is divided into six sections: section one outlines attendance, age, and enrolment requirements; section two describes school choices; section three describes program choices; section four describes programs of need; section five outlines funding practices; section six outlines accountability requirements.

The Alberta student population for the 2001/2002 was 590, 904.

Authority Type	ECS	Gr 1-6	Gr 7-9	Gr 10-12	Total
Public	27,516	181,689	97,502	111,320	418,030*
Separate	8,814	60,465	29,218	28,480	126,977
Francophone	357	1,896	670	356	3,279
Charter	258	1,971	570	71	2,870
ECS (Private)	2,774				2,774
Private School	2,061	12,076	5,811	5,928	26,077**
Other	1,045	4,220	1,740	3,892	10,897

* includes 3 ungraded students

** includes 201 ungraded students

Attendance/Age/Enrolment

Students between the ages of 6 and 19 are entitled to attend school in Alberta (Section 8, *School Act*), and are required to attend school if they are between the ages of 6 and 16 (Section 13, *School Act*). An individual school board may provide education to a student who falls outside these defined age limits if s/he meets the citizenship requirements defined in the *School Act* (Section 8).

Students are entitled to instruction in English (Section 9, *School Act*). Students are entitled to instruction in French if they are given such entitlement under Section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Section 10). Additionally, an individual school board may provide instruction in any language (Section 11, *School Act*); in which case, regulations pertaining to the provisions for alternative programs have relevance (Section 21, *School Act*).

Generally, students are considered to be residents of the area in which their parents/guardians normally reside. They can claim only one place of residency. Each local school board is responsible for providing an education for each student residing within its jurisdiction.

An individual school board may establish an attendance area for a school (Section 13, *School Act*), then a resident student (defined in Section 44 of the *School Act*) must enrol in the designated school if a suitable program exists in that school. A resident student has priority over a non-resident student in conditions of resource scarcity.

School Choice

Students in Alberta can choose to attend public schools, separate schools, francophone schools, charter schools, or private schools. The option also exists to provide home schooling, home education/blended schooling, and online (virtual) schooling.

Public Schools follow the Alberta Curriculum and provide basic universal education. Public schools may also provide a variety of optional programs to meet the particular needs of students in their respective communities.

Separate Schools (primarily Roman Catholic) also follow the Alberta Curriculum and provide basic universal education. Separate schools may also provide a variety of optional programs to meet the needs of students in their respective communities. Any student may enrol in a separate school if there is sufficient space and resources.

Francophone Schools (regulations and policies currently underdevelopment) must provide education programs in French to those students entitled to French language instruction under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. If a student entitled to instruction in French does not reside within the specified distance from the school (in a designated Francophone Education Region established under the *School Act*) the Regional Authority may enrol such a student in that school under terms set out by the Regional Authority (Section 6, *School Act*).

Charter Schools may be established by any person or society only in the case where the board of the district/division refuses to establish the alternative program (under Section 21, *School Act*) requested by the person or society. If the Minister permits the establishment of a charter school, subject to specific guidelines (Section 32, *School Act*), the operator must operate in accordance with the charter approved, must not charge fees other than those normally charged by a board, must not be affiliated with a religious faith/denomination, and must not enlarge its purpose beyond that of operating a charter school (Sections 33-35, *School Act*).

Private Schools are defined under Section 28 of the *School Act*. A private school may be registered as such if it provides a program of studies and meets standards of achievement approved by the Minister, agrees to regular evaluation and monitoring, and is housed in a certifiably safe building. Registered private schools do not have to offer the Alberta Program of Studies, do not have to employ certified teachers, but are monitored by Alberta Learning. Students in registered private schools cannot earn credits towards an Alberta graduation diploma.

Nor does the government of Alberta fund registered private schools. A private school may be accredited if it follows the Alberta Program of Studies, employs certified teachers, and is monitored by Alberta Learning. Students in accredited private schools can earn credits towards an Alberta graduation diploma. These schools may receive provincial general revenue if they are operated by a non-profit society or corporation. They may also receive the same funding for severe special needs children as do public schools.

Home Schooling is defined under Section 29 of the *School Act*. A parent of a student may provide education at home, or elsewhere, if the program of studies is prescribed, authorized, or approved by the Minister of Education and is under the supervision of a board, accredited private school, or the Minister (in an unorganized territory). A student in a home education program can earn credits towards an Alberta graduation diploma. A “blended” program consists of two parts: an in-school program where a teacher employed by a school board or an accredited private school is responsible for providing the delivery and evaluation of courses **and** a Home Education program that meets the requirements of the Home Education Regulation.

Online (Virtual) Schooling is programming offered by a school that is delivered electronically at a school site **or** off-campus. It is under the instruction and complete supervision of a certificated teacher of a board or an accredited private school.

Program Choice

In general, the Minister of Education may **prescribe** courses of study and education programs; **authorize** courses of study, education programs, or instructional materials; **approve** any course, educational program, or instructional materials; and **prohibit** the use of a course, education program, or instructional material (subject to a Board’s right to provide religious instruction)—(Section 39, *School Act*).

More specifically, the *School Act* makes explicit provision for a school board to offer Alternative programs, Early Childhood Services programs, and Off-Campus programs.

Alternative Programs may be offered if there is sufficient demand and the school board continues to offer regular educational programs. Essentially, an alternative program is one that emphasizes a particular language, culture, religion, or subject matter, or one that uses a particular teaching philosophy. An alternative program is **not** a special education program, a French instruction program (for students constitutionally entitled to such programs), or a religious program offered by a separate board (Section 21, *School Act*).

Early Childhood Services (ECS) Programs may be offered for children under the age of 6 if the parent agrees or if the school board and the parent think the program will benefit the child. Non-instructional fees may be charged (for snack, supplies, etc.), but no instructional fees may be charged to parents for the basic ECS program of 475 hours.

Off-Campus Education Programs may be offered to junior and senior high school students to provide them with the opportunity to apply skills and knowledge acquired through course work to situations outside the school (in community-based work stations, work sites, volunteer agencies etc.). Consent must be given by the parent/guardian (or student if the student is over 16) and the program is subject to regulations governing workplace agreements.

Programs of Need

In general, educating students with special needs in regular classrooms in neighbourhood or local schools is the first placement option considered. An individual school board may determine that a particular student needs a special education program, and if this is determined to be the case, the student is entitled access to a special education program (Section 47, *School Act*). However, the school board determines that there is no suitable program to meet the needs of a particular student (defined as behavioural, communicative, intellectual, learning and/or physical), then the matter must be referred to a Special Needs Tribunal (Section 48, *School Act*). If the Tribunal disagrees with the school board's determination, the board will be directed to provide an appropriate program. If the Tribunal agrees with the school board's determination, then the Special Needs Tribunal will be charged with developing a special needs plan and with apportioning responsibilities and costs to the school board and the government (or person designated by the government).

Funding

Generally, the funding follows the student in the province. For 2002/2003, total support for public and separate school boards, including charter schools and home schooling, was approximately \$3.5 billion (*Alberta Learning: Back to School Information Kit 2002/2003*). While registered private schools receive no funding from Alberta Learning, accredited private schools receive 60% of the public education system per student funding for basic education, but no funding to build/renovate/maintain schools, cover transportation costs, or administrative expenses (except for ECS and designated special education private schools).

The Funding Manual for School Authorities, September 2002, outlines the funding available for students for the 2002-2003 year depending upon their program of studies.

Basic Instruction	Grades 1 – 9	\$4,367
	Grade 10 (31+ credits)	\$4,997
	Grade 10 (<31 credits)	\$2,498.50
	Grade 11 –12	\$124.77/Credit (Max 60)

Once a school board offers a program beyond the basic instruction required, more funding may be available. For example, if a school board offers an Outreach Program, the per student funding allocation is the same as for the Basic Instruction; however, there is also a \$50,000 base operating funding available. If a school board operates an Integrated Occupational Program

(IOP), the funding is \$6,000 per full-time Grade 10 student and \$207.95/Credit for a Grade 11 or 12 student. A student eligible for severe disabilities funding (cognitive, multiple, physical/medical, deaf, blind) is funded at a rate of \$13,120. Each student eligible for instruction in English as a Second Language receives \$722 in additional funding. A school board can also receive \$1,121 per funded home education student.

From time to time, the province dispenses one-time grants for specially targeted programs or initiatives. These grants are over and above the “normal” funding for a jurisdiction.

Accountability

Generally, a school board must develop a reporting and accountability system on any public matter the Minister prescribes, must disseminate information from the reports and accounts developed for students, parents, electors, or the Minister, as prescribed by the Minister, and must use such information as the Minister prescribes (Section 78, *School Act*).

Alberta Learning has a *Three-Year Plan for Education* that requires the education system to be open and accountable. Essentially, each school authority’s education plan must include: mission, mandate, vision, beliefs, goals, provincial priority improvement areas, results desired, performance measures, strategies, expenditure plan, and list of capital priorities and projects. Additional requirements for plans may be required from time to time.

School authorities must also publish *Annual Education Results Reports* that must include: a statement of school authority responsibility; progress and accomplishments; results achieved from local and provincial goals, including provincial priorities for improvement; and an expenditure summary and report on capital projects. Additional requirements for reports may be required from time to time.

Finally, Alberta Learning has developed policy regulations for the analysis, interpretation, use, and communication of provincial assessments results. (Provincial assessment results include Grades 3, 6, and 9 achievement tests and Grade 12 diploma examinations.) School authorities are required to report annually to school councils and to the public the results of such assessments, including information on the local context and the limitations of such assessments.

Summary

Alberta Learning both supports and encourages choice. Funding follows the student in Alberta; charter schools are permitted by legislation; and, alternative programs are clearly defined in the *School Act* (Section 21). The Alberta Learning web site clearly delineates many of the choices available to students. Information is also available in print.

Accountability and assessment tools are well developed in Alberta. Accountability measures—in particular the *Annual Education Results Reports*—are available for parents and their students and can be used by them to make informed choices. Individual schools are required to report annually to their parents and their communities on student achievement and the school's use of resources.

Alberta Learning is in the midst of developing a new measurement tool that blends together the assessment teachers are doing in the classroom with the external measures of achievement exams to produce a more holistic model of accountability. Once available, such information will no doubt be provided to parents to assist them in making their choices.

References

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Final Report: Alberta Charter Schools **By Lorraine Woollard**

Alberta is the only province in Canada that supports Charter Schools. Bill 19, enacted in May 1994, enabled the establishment of Charter Schools within the province. Currently, there are 10 established Charter Schools within in the province; however, by September 2003 there ought to be 3 more schools as the Minister of Learning has approved two new charters in the city of Calgary and one new charter west of the city of Edmonton.

According to the *Charter Schools Handbook* (Alberta Learning December 2002), “A charter school is a public school that provides a basic education in a different or enhanced way to improve student learning” (p.1). In order to be granted a charter, applicants (who may include parents, teachers, and/ or community members) must first satisfy Alberta Learning that the local school board does not and will not provide the alternative program outlined by the applicants. Once this has been determined, the charter organizers then submit an application to the Minister (following the requirements given in the *Charter Schools Regulations*) who reviews the request and approves the charter as submitted, approves it with conditions, or rejects it stating the reasons for doing so. A charter board is the corporate body responsible for operating and governing one or more charter schools; all schools run by a single charter board are subject to the same charter, policies, and procedures. Charter boards are not required to provide transportation.

All charters are term-specific and must be renewed, each renewal determined, in part, by the results of regular school evaluations. Charter organizers are charged with the responsibility of designing a student assessment model that accurately measures how well students are achieving learning expectations. Generally speaking, at the school opening, the total minimum student enrolment is set at 100 students (exceptions, however, may be made at the discretion of the Minister who considers, primarily, the financial and educational viability of the school). Students attend such schools by choice and any student may attempt an educational program provided by a charter school; however, because such a school is designed to meet the needs of a specific group of students, certain students (such as those with special needs) may find that the program offered is inappropriate for their needs. A charter public school does not charge tuition (but may charge for instructional supplies or materials as may all schools in the public education system), may not be affiliated with a religious denomination, employs certified teachers, and teaches the provincial curriculum.

Provincial grants for funding charter schools flow directly to the charter board; Alberta Learning funds charter boards in the same manner as if funds public boards. There is no additional funding available for start-up costs but Alberta Learning may advance payments taken from the projected charter school allotment for the year. This would be a one-time advancement only. Charter schools control their own budget and are free to fundraise and accept donations, just like the public schools; and, like the public schools, they are not permitted to run a deficit budget. *Charter Schools Regulations 212/2002* provide clear operating rules for charter schools in the province.

Charter Schools in Alberta**Edmonton**

Aurora Charter Schools	ECS 1-9	Traditional Education Program
Boyle Street Education Centre	Ages 14-19	Students at Risk
Suzuki Charter School	ECS 1-6	Suzuki Philosophy and Music
*Mother Earth Children's Charter School	ECS 1-12	Traditional Indigenous Methodology Program

Calgary

Almadina Charter School	ECS 1-9	English as a Second Language
*Calgary Arts Academy	ECS 1-9	Infusion of Arts into the Curriculum
*Calgary Girls School	4-8	Leadership in Young Girls
Calgary Science School	4-9	Focus on Science and Math Integrated Platforms
Foundations for the Future Charter Academy (4 campuses)	ECS 1-10	Back to Basics
Westmount Charter School	ECS 1-9	Gifted and Talented

* denotes the new charter schools approved for September 2003

In addition to the charter schools listed above, there are three other charter schools in the province:

Centre for Academic and Personal Excellence (CAPE) Medicine Hat	1-9	Academic and Personal Excellence
Moberly Hall Charter School Fort McMurray	1-8	Learning Styles
New Horizons Schools (Sherwood Park)	ECS 1-9	Gifted and Talented

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Final Report: Alberta Private Schools By Lorraine Woollard

In the province of Alberta, there are three types of private schools: **registered**, **accredited**, and **accredited-funded**.

All private schools in Alberta must register and meet the basic requirements of Section 28(1) of the *School Act*. Schools which do not go beyond this registration stage are referred to as **registered schools**. Such schools are not eligible for Alberta learning funding nor are they required to employ instructors with Alberta Teaching Certificates.

All registered private schools must provide a program of studies meeting goals and standards approved by the Minister; must meet standards of achievement and achievement testing acceptable by the Minister; must agree to regular evaluation and monitoring by the Minister; must meet all local and provincial health, safety, and building standards. In addition to meeting these requirements, registered private schools must also submit an Annual Operational Plan (AOP); keep records of student enrolment and attendance; keep individual student records; have policies on discipline, suspension, and expulsion of students; and inform parents (in writing) of the following:

- students attending the school may not necessarily be placed in the same grade if they register in a different school
- the school cannot grant credit for senior high school courses
- the qualifications of the staff
- the general liability insurance coverage held by the operator

To become **accredited**, a registered private school must meet additional requirements as set out in 28(2) of the *School Act*. Such a school must follow an education program approved by the Minister, enroll 7 or more students from 2 or more families, and employ teachers with valid Alberta Teacher Certificates. Accredited schools must also have policies for teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation and for evaluation of student progress.

“Accredited private schools are eligible for provincial funding after having provided instruction to students for a minimum of one year, unless otherwise approved by the Minister” (*Funding Manual for School Authorities*). An **accredited funded private school** must be incorporated as a non-profit legal identity; must appoint a chairperson/president and a secretary-treasurer (or secretary and treasurer); must appoint a certified auditor; must keep a blanket fidelity bond covering the operator and the employees; must keep in force a general liability insurance policy; and must submit, annually, a Budget Report Form, an Audited Financial Statement, a Three-Year Education Plan, and an Education Results Report.

Accredited funded private schools follow the same teaching requirements as public schools and, therefore, must achieve provincial learning outcomes, use provincial achievement tests and diploma exams, and ensure that students meet provincial graduation requirements.

There are two special category accredited funded private schools:

1. **Heritage Language Schools**—accredited only for high school credit courses in heritage languages (other than French and English); such schools may be funded. They are not required to develop Three-Year Education Plans or Annual Education Results Reports
2. **Designated Special Education Schools**—accredited by the Minister and approved by the Director Of the Special Education Branch annually, these schools provide exclusive service to students entitled to special education programs

Early Childhood Services (ECS) Programs

All private schools may offer ECS programs, providing they are registered as a non-profit society, a non-profit company, or a non-profit corporation incorporated by or under an act of the Legislature. Funding is available from the first year of operation for 475 hours of instruction; providers may charge fees for any instruction offered beyond 475 hours and for other incidentals.

Home Education/Blended Programs

Private schools may offer home education, blended and virtual school programs but only funded accredited ones receive funding.

Home schooling parents assume primary responsibility for their child's program of studies in partnership with an accredited funded private school (or school board).

A blended program combines a home schooling component (which meets the requirements of the Home Education Regulation) with an in-school program (where a teacher employed either by an accredited private school or a school board provides delivery and evaluation of courses). Teachers employed for on-line components of a blended program and for the home education program must have valid Alberta Teaching certificates.

The Association of Independent Schools and Colleges in Alberta lists among its 2003 members, 13 ECS operators and 27 independent schools in Calgary and 8 ECS operators and 14 independent schools in Edmonton.

There is no legal requirement for a private school to accept all students.

**Number of Students Enrolled and Number of Students Funded in Private Schools
(2001/2002)**

Number of students enrolled in registered schools	355
Number of students enrolled in non-funded accredited schools	1,310
Number of students enrolled in funded-accredited schools	22,258
Total number of students enrolled	23,923
Number of ECS children enrolled in accredited private schools (figure includes 30 children in non-funded accredited schools)	2,070*
Number of students funded in private schools (by grade level)	
▪ Grades 1 – 9	12,922
▪ Grades 10 – 12	3,226
▪ Home Ed, Grades 1 – 9	4,037**
▪ Home Ed, Grades 10 – 12	695**
Total Funded Students	20,890

* All private ECS programs are funded at same rate as public schools.

** Home education programs are funded at a different rate than classroom students (\$1,121 compared to basic instruction rate of \$2,620).

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Private schools reference manual (2002). Retrieved June 27, 2003 from
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School Act (Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter S-3).

Final Report: Calgary Roman Catholic School District #1 By Lorraine Woollard

Overview

The Calgary Catholic School District (CSSD), known also under its jurisdiction name as the Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School District #1, is the largest Catholic school district in Alberta.

The Chief Superintendent is responsible for ensuring that all students have access to core subjects stipulated by Alberta Learning, have access to the Religious Education Program (prescribed as a core subject by the District), and access to complementary subjects, depending upon available resources.

The following report is divided into five sections: section one outlines attendance, age, and enrolment requirements; section two describes school choices; section three describes program choices; section four describes programs of need; section five outlines accountability requirements.

Parents wishing information about the school district can obtain it either from the CSSD Website <http://www.cssd.ab.ca> or by contacting the central office:

Catholic School Centre
1000 – 5th Ave SW
Calgary, AB
Phone: (403) 298-1411

Attendance/Age/Enrolment

The district enrolment for September 30, 2002 was 44, 245 students in a total of 92 schools: 47 elementary, 28 elementary/junior high, 1 junior/senior high, 6 junior high, 8 senior high, and 2 congregated special education.

For a student to be eligible to enrol in any school in the Calgary Catholic School District, parents (guardians) must be residents of Calgary or the surrounding geographic area served by the district (which includes Airdrie, Cochrane, Chestermere, and the related Municipal District lands of Rocky View). In addition, at least one parent (guardian) must be Catholic.

Generally, students attend the school designated for the geographic area in which they live; should students wish to take programs at another school (for e.g. the International Baccalaureate Program offered at one of two high schools), they may be allocated space at the receiving school according to boundaries established by the Calgary Catholic School District.

Non-resident students must apply for acceptance on a yearly basis, and they will only be accepted after all resident students have been accommodated. Non-resident students are those who do not live in the geographic area served by the school or who do not have one parent (guardian) who is Catholic.

The Calgary Catholic School District offers a half-day kindergarten program for children who are 5 years old by February 28 of the upcoming year. In order to register in Grade 1, a student must be 6 years old by February of the upcoming year. For the student's first registration in the Calgary Catholic School District, both the student's birth certificate and one parent's (guardian's) baptismal certificate should be presented. A student with special needs should register at the local school first, then once the student is assessed, s/he may be assigned to another appropriate school.

Kindergarten children and students in Grades 1 through 6 will be provided with AM/PM/NOON charter transportation if they are required to travel outside their community to their designated school, and they may be provided with AM/PM charter transportation (where numbers warrant) to their designated "Program of Choice" school.

School Choice

As stated earlier, neighbourhood school boundaries are designated for all Catholic residents; students normally attend the school whose boundaries include their own neighbourhood. Non-resident students will only be accepted once all of the resident students have been accommodated.

The Calgary Catholic School District Website lists all the schools, by community and by district; individual schools have their own Websites that detail the programs they offer. Below is a list of the school choices that are available to Calgary Catholic students, given the registration constraints outlined above.

- Early French Immersion Schools: Kindergarten to Grade 9 (10 schools)
- Late French Immersion Schools: Grades 7 to 9 (3 schools)
- Two Fine Arts Schools: Grades 4 – 6, Grades 7 – 9
- Two Elementary Schools on a Dual-Track year round schedule
- Two Junior High Schools on a Dual-Track year round schedule
- One Congregated Setting School for students with learning disabilities: Grades 4 – 9
- One Congregated Setting School for students with severe emotional/behavioural needs: Grades 4 – 9
- One Continuous Progress/Independent Learning Senior High
- One Senior High School for returning Grade 12 students who need to complete or upgrade high school credit courses to graduate

Program Choice

As stated earlier, students are expected to enrol in their designated school; however, they are eligible to enrol in a non-designated school once all the resident students have been accommodated. The rules are modified somewhat with respect to certain high school programs that are offered at a limited number of sites. Students wishing to enrol in the Extended French Program or the International Baccalaureate Program will be allowed to register at one site only, according to how the boundaries are established by the Calgary Catholic School District. While they have the option of enrolling in a program of choice, they do not necessarily have the option of choosing the particular site. Similarly, the school offering a continuing progress/independent learning program determines which students it will admit.

Below is a list of the “special” program choices that are available to Calgary Catholic students, given the registration constraints outlined above.

- One Spanish Bilingual Program: Kindergarten to Grade 1
- Three Extended French Senior High Programs
- Two International Baccalaureate Programs

In addition to these named “special” programs listed on the CSSD Website, there are also a number of “additional” programs delineated below.

Aboriginal Education: designed to support aboriginal students by providing a communication link between the home and the school community; the Aboriginal Education team also delivers the aboriginal cultural component within the context of the various instructional programs; provides academic support to aboriginal students; and, provides instructional programs on Aboriginal history, traditions, art, beliefs, and contemporary issues.

Advanced Placement: offered at all Calgary Catholic High schools to allow students to take college level academic learning in AP courses and obtain credit, advanced placement, or both from co-operating colleges and universities.

English as a Second Language: provides assistance as required to students who have a first language other than English to achieve sufficient fluency so they can integrate quickly into the regular classroom.

KARA (Program for pregnant and parenting teens): allows pregnant and parenting teens to continue their regular high school classes at one of three designated schools.

Sanctuary Outreach: offers an alternative program for students 16 –19 who are no longer attending a regular school.

Self/Home Study: allows any student who wishes home schooling or wishes to follow a program of independent study via Alberta Distance Learning courses. There is one designated site for this program and students register for it at their local school.

And finally (as outlined in a Calgary Catholic School District document entitled “Charting Your Course” which pertains to high school education) following is a short list of alternative courses that are available at some high schools (there is some overlap with previous listings).

Advanced Placement (AP)

International Baccalaureate Program (IB)

Extended French Program

Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP): a program under which students can begin training in any one of 50 apprenticeship trades while in high school.

Career Internship: a program designed to provide opportunities for students to explore Potential careers in their area of interest.

REACH (Remedial Education and Assistance for Change): a program designed to help students who are at risk of dropping out of school; remedial assistance is given in Language Arts and/or Mathematics; students in this program may also participate in credit and non-credit courses (e.g. work experience, special projects). An IPP (Individual Program Plan) is designed for each student. After consultation with guidance counsellors, social workers, and parents, candidates are identified and enter the program on a one month trial basis. The Individual Program Plans are reviewed twice a year.

Integrated Occupational Program (IOP): a program designed for students who need an integrated, real-life approach to teaching and learning; this program offers courses to improve students’ basic skills in Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies and offers students the opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge and experience at a worksite. After receiving 80 credits, students earn a Certificate of Achievement. Candidates are identified after a consultation with teachers, guidance counsellors, and Parents. IOP generally runs from Grade 8 to Grade 12.

Aboriginal Education: a program designed to offer optional courses for aboriginal students so they can learn more about their culture and develop a sense of identity.

Work Study Program: a program designed for high school age students coming out of the Education Support program in Junior High; course content is adapted to meet the needs of each student with the aim of preparing each for independent living.

MAX (Maximum Potential): a program designed for students with severe developmental learning disabilities; the emphasis in the MAX class is to assist students in developing specific attending, organizational, work and time management skills.

In addition to these various programs, Calgary Catholic High Schools also offer instruction in a number of international languages such as German, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Spanish, and Mandarin.

4. Programs of Need

As stated earlier, students with special needs are instructed to register at their local school; once assessed, the student may be assigned to another appropriate school. According to the Annual Education Results Report for 2001-2002, “The Instructional Support and Student Support teams delivered extensive on-site support to District schools in preparing, monitoring, revising, and evaluating Individual Program Plans (IPPs)...The District’s congregated program for students with emotional/behavioural disabilities completed its first year successfully” (p. 12).

A large variety of programs are available at the various schools in the Calgary Catholic School District, as required by the *School Act*.

5. Accountability

All school jurisdictions in Alberta must comply with the requirements of the provincial government’s accountability framework. According to the 2003 *Guide for school board planning and results reporting*, each jurisdiction must, “[P]lan and implement three-year education plans aligned with Ministry direction; allocate resources to schools and program; monitor progress; assess and report results annually to stakeholders and use results to plan improvements” (p. 3). More specifically, each jurisdiction must produce an annual report for public distribution. Each report must highlight the jurisdiction results and accomplishments for the last year; highlight the results of the required provincial measures; describe major education issues and priorities for the next few years; highlight progress on major facility projects; and, provide a comprehensive financial summary, based on their audited financial statement. Each school within a jurisdiction must also report annually to parents and their communities on student achievement and the use of resources. Such reports are required to include provincial student achievement measures and may include other information deemed necessary by the board.

Summary

CSSD declined to be interviewed for this study because “The focus of the survey, as outlined by the question is outside of the District focus on teaching and learning” (personal communication). As a result, this entire report was compiled using only the information available from CSSD’s web site (and associated links). Quite likely, much of the information available on the web site is also available in print for parents to access.

References

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Final Report: Calgary School District #19 By Lorraine Woollard

Overview

In the spring of 2000, the Calgary Board of Education (CBE) initiated an extensive Program Renewal. Since the fall of 2000, the CBE has approved and implemented 15 new alternative programs and has expanded the number of sites of existing alternative programs.

In an effort to clarify the kinds of programs offered, the CBE has provided program definitions.

- **Mandated Programs:** those required by Alberta Learning.
- **Alternative Programs:** those approved by the CBE following a clearly defined proposal process; to be approved, such programs must demonstrate sufficient enrolment interest and submit a viable three-year business plan; these programs may qualify for start-up funding and may also receive financial or other support from organizations outside the CBE.
- **Programs of Choice:** those not requiring CBE approval; such programs emphasize particular educational approaches that support specific learning styles; these programs qualify for varying levels of resource support.
- **Special Education Programs:** those designed to address specific educational requirements of special needs students, as defined by Alberta learning.
- **Other Programs:** those not formally defined as specialize programs, alternatives, or programs of choice; these option programs provide additional resources, support and direction.

The CBE now offers 26 alternative programs and continues to receive proposals for new alternative programs from its public.

The following report is divided into five sections: section one outlines attendance, age, and enrolment requirements; section two describes alternative schools/programs; section three outlines programs of need; section four details funding considerations; section five outlines accountability.

Parents wishing information about the school district can obtain it either the CBE Website www.cbe.ab.ca or by contacting the central office:

**Education Centre
515 Macleod Trail
Calgary, AB
Tel: (403) 294-8211
Fax: (403) 294-8119**

1. Attendance/Age/Enrolment

The district enrolment for September 2002 was 96,351 students in a total of 218 schools: 140 elementary, 9 elementary/junior high, 35 junior high, 2 junior/senior high, and 18 senior high schools. It is the largest school district in western Canada.

Every student is eligible to attend school in a clearly defined attendance area; CBE does not have open boundaries. However, if a student wishes to attend a school outside the defined attendance area, the principal of the receiving school must be contacted to find out about space availability and/or enrolment guidelines that may be in place. Some alternative schools and programs have individual registration and timelines. When students attend schools outside their attendance area, transportation usually becomes the responsibility of the parents. (Transportation policy is currently being revised).

The CBE offers an optional half-day kindergarten for children who turn 4 years old before the last day in February. Transportation is provided if the child attends his/her designated school and lives more than 1.2 km away. There are several alternative kindergarten programs offered by the CBE: fine arts/technology; French Immersion; German, Mandarin, or Spanish bilingual; Aboriginal culture based; Montessori; Traditional Learning; and Workplace school.

2. Alternative Schools/Programs

As stated earlier, every student is eligible to attend school in a clearly defined attendance area. However, a student may attend a school outside the attendance area if the receiving school has sufficient resources and a suitable program. For many of the alternative programs, there are waiting lists—to address this issue, the CBE generally adds another site for such popular programs.

The CBE Web site lists all of the schools in each district; individual schools have their own Websites that detail the programs they offer and the registration procedures they follow. There are 28 schools in the system operating on modified school year calendars (classes for approximately 45 days, followed by vacation for 5 to 15 days, with the cycle repeated 4 times over the year).

What follows is a brief summary of the various alternative programs, as defined by the CBE at a regular meeting of the Board on June 3, 2003.

Alternative programs

Academy of Creative Arts: for students who want to learn the core subjects through an integrated arts-focused approach (1 site).

Advanced Placement: for students who want to write challenging internationally recognized examinations that may lead to advanced standing at the university level (4 sites).

Alberta Ballet Program: for students who are members of the Alberta Ballet School of Dance to combine their school program with their dance program (1 site).

Alice Jamieson Girls Academy: for girls who want a program based on gender equity (1 site).

Alternative High School: for students who want a personalized, informal, and democratic learning situation and who are academically capable but have not met with success in a regular high school setting (1 site).

Cbe-learn: for students who want an on-line learning program.

Centre for Creative Learning at Balmoral: for students who want to learn through the arts and combine their learning with the innovative use of technology (1 site).

Chinese (Mandarin) Bilingual: for students wanting to acquire or maintain proficiency in the Chinese language and culture (1 site).

Creative Arts Centre: for students who want to learn all subjects through the arts (1 site).

Discovering Choices: for students wanting a community-based high school experience; offered in partnership with the Calgary Achievement Centre for Youth (CACY) (1 site).

Dynastars Hockey and Life Skills Development: for students who have an interest in hockey and personal growth as responsible leaders (1 site).

Fine Arts/Technology Learning Centre: for students who want to learn in a small school environment that is based on the fine arts and technology; allows students to be engaged in contract learning; operates in partnership with DeVry Institute of Technology (1 site).

French Immersion: for students wanting to acquire or maintain proficiency in the French language and culture (22 sites).

Galileo (Program/School of Choice)—A Site of Critical Inquiry: for students wanting a program that supports learning with a strong technological component; operated in conjunction with the Galileo Educational Network (1 site).

German Bilingual: for students wanting to acquire or maintain proficiency in the German language and culture (1 site).

International Baccalaureate: for students wanting a demanding pre-university course with a community-service component; students may enrol in a partial or full program (5 sites).

International Spanish Academy: for students wanting to acquire the basic skills for speaking, reading, and writing both English and Standard Spanish (3 sites).

Juno Beach, Academy of Canadian Studies: for students wanting a program with an emphasis on Canadian studies (1 site).

Louise Dean: for students who are pregnant and parenting teens (1 site).

Montessori: for students wanting a program instructed by Montessori trained teachers (2 sites).

National Sport Academy—Hockey: for students who are experienced minor league hockey players who need to integrate their schooling with their hockey (3 sites).

National Sport School: for students who are recommended and sanctioned by an eligible Canadian Olympic Sport governing body and who need to integrate their academic and athletic needs; partnered with the Calgary Olympic Development Association (1 site).

National Synchronized Swimming Program: for students who need to integrate their academic and athletic needs; eligibility requires participation in the Calgary Aquabelles Synchronized Swim Club (1 site).

Piitoaysis Family School: for students wanting a program offered from an Aboriginal perspective—both Cree and Blackfoot languages are offered in this Aboriginal family school (1 site).

Traditional Learning Centre: for students wanting a program that focuses on academic excellence and character development in a traditional learning setting (3 sites).

Workplace: for students wanting childcare in conjunction with an integrated approach to the curriculum; offered in partnership with Telus (1 site).

Programs of Choice and Other Programs

Programs not specifically defined as alternative programs also exist in the CBE. For convenience, they are simply listed under the headings which appear in the CBE brochure entitled *Special Programs* (2002).

High School Education

- Integrated Occupational Program
- Adult Academic Programs (Chinook)
- Registered Apprenticeship Program
- The Skill Factory
- Work Experience/Discovering Choices
- Virtual Learning (Manning Centre for Innovation and Professional Development)

Language-Focused Programs

- English as a Second Language (Chinook)

Special Interest Programs

- Central Memorial Conservatory of Performing and fine Arts
- Campus Calgary/Chevron Open Minds
- Continuing Education (Chinook)
- Medicine Wheel Centre
- Virtual Learning (Manning Centre for Innovation and Professional Development)
- West Dalhousie Elementary School
- Ernest Manning Centre of Excellence
- Canadian Arts Partners in Education Society (CAPES)
- Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI)

3. Programs of Need

The CBE offers support for students with special needs and provides placement for such students in either their community school or, if deemed necessary, in a specialized referral school or residential school/treatment facility. In order to take part in the following list of programs, a student requires referral and/or assessment.

- AADAC (Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission) Adolescent Treatment Centre.
- AARC (Alberta Adolescent Recovery Centre): drug rehabilitation program.
- Christine Meikle School: for students (12-19 years old) who are dependent handicapped (mentally fragile or developmentally disabled with compounding difficulties such as behavioural problems, health problems, safety/security issues).
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program: (3 sites).
- Dr. Gordon Townsend School: for students (all ages) with mental health needs and physical/rehabilitation needs.
- Dr. Oakley School: for students (7-15 years old) with difficulty in reading, writing, oral language and organizational skills.
- Emily Follensbee School: for students (2.5 to 19 years old) with complex learning needs (including cognitive and physical disabilities, behavioural needs).
- Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) Program: for students (Grades 4-12) who are intellectually gifted (6 sites).

The CBE also offers programs for students identified as “at-risk”, as is illustrated in the following list:

- The HERA Program: for adolescent girls (14-18 years old) and their families.
- Salvation Army Children’s Village: for students (Grades 1-6) with emotional and behavioural difficulties in their community schools. This program was developed based on a partnership between CBE, Alberta Family and Social Services, and the Salvation Army.
- William Roper Hull School: for students (all ages) with behavioural and emotional difficulties. The program at this school was developed based on a partnership between CBE and Hull Child and Family Services.

- Wood's Homes: for students (12-18 years old) with moderate to severe psychological, social, and family difficulties who may be in danger of losing their community school placement; residential and non-residential programs are available at various sites including some within existing schools.

4. Funding

CBE provides once-only start-up dollars when a new program is introduced. The program must demonstrate through its 3 year business plan how it will be self-sustaining.

The 2002-2003 budget commitments of the Program Renewal Office indicate the following expenses:

- \$1, 103, 313.66 **Start Up for New Programs** (Alice Jamieson Girls' Academy, Cbe-learn, Juno Beach, Academy of Canadian Studies; Piitoayis; Traditional Learning Centre at Colonel Sanders)
- \$217, 046.78 **Expansion of Existing Programs** (French Immersion-2; Mandarin-1; Montessori-1; Traditional Learning-2)
- \$158, 371.21 **Administration** (Salary and benefits; supplies; meeting; travel; media services)
- \$10, 627.79 **Feasibility** (includes marketing, advertising, print materials, meetings, postage for prospective programs)
- \$ 9, 622.00 **Support to Existing Programs** (Montessori teacher training; Piitoayis print materials)

CBE provides other kinds of support for these programs (for example, expertise/advice from the Communications Department; Xeroxing).

5. Accountability

All school jurisdictions in Alberta must comply with the requirements of the provincial government's accountability framework.

In Calgary there are 9 Collaborative Learning Community (CLC) Directors (each associated with a particular geographic area). Each of the CLC Directors is held accountable for choice, equity, access, and excellence in their CLC through an accountability agreement with the chief superintendent. How well they perform is reflected in their salaries.

As part of their accountability requirements, each CLC Director monitors the success of alternative programs through a variety of qualitative and quantitative measures. Indicators of success include: student enrolment and enrolment trends, student achievement, parent and student satisfaction, community interest in expansion of programs, and waiting lists for existing programs. In September, 2003 a new field will be created on the student information system (SIRS) for tracking the enrolments in alternative programs

In June of 2003, the first annual accountability report on alternative programs was presented to the Board: the report ends,

Over the past 30 months the Calgary Board of Education has approved and implemented 15 new alternative programs—an average of 1 new program every 2 months. Further, established alternative programs have been expanded to new locations in order to provide more equitable access to programs for CBE students.

Public pressure and interest in issues of equity, access, excellence and choice have prompted the Calgary Board of Education's bold and aggressive program renewal agenda. The Calgary Board of Education's responsible response to public demand for excellent programs is work that is ongoing.

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Final Report: Edmonton Catholic Separate School District #7 By Lorraine Woollard

Overview

The Chief Superintendent is responsible for ensuring that all students have access to the Alberta Learning curriculum within a Christ-centred learning community.

Schools in the Edmonton Catholic Separate School District (ECSSD) operate within a site-based decision-making process “in which people who implement and are affected by decisions participate in a collegial and cooperative manner in making those decisions” (Administrative Policy 102). As a result, decisions can be made at the school level about curriculum emphasis and the management of resources: both have potential effect on program choice. ECSSD has specific administrative policies for locally developed programs and courses (Administrative Policy 312) and for piloting new courses (Administrative Policy 313).

For the past three years, the ECSSD has been responding to its community by developing programs of choice—which in their district are called **focus schools** and **focus programs**. In April of 2000, the Board approved policy (Administrative Policy 303) that defined focus school/program as “one that emphasizes a particular language, culture, or subject matter or which uses a particular teaching philosophy”. The policy goes on to stipulate that it will consider the development and implementation of focus schools/programs provided they are in

- keeping with the goal and objectives of the district,
- response to documented needs and/or interests of students and parents,
- keeping with sound educational principle, and
- keeping with the district’s financial capabilities.

For a focus school or program to be considered, the proponents must submit a proposal to the director of Educational Planning and Administrative Services prior to the start up date (usually one year prior). The approach to placing focus programs within a particular school is a collaborative one; however, on occasion, the district does name the location for certain focus programs.

The following report is divided into five sections: section one outlines attendance, age, and enrolment requirements; section two describes focus schools/programs; section three outlines programs of need; section four details funding considerations; section five outlines accountability.

Parents wishing information about the school district can obtain it either from the ECSSD Website www.ecsd.net or by contacting the central office:

Catholic Education Services
9807-106 street
Edmonton, AB, T5K 1C2
Tel: (780) 441-6019
Fax: (780) 425-7429

1. Attendance/Age/Enrolment

The ECSSD features an open boundary system; therefore, students are free to enroll in the school of their choice, given adequate resources and a suitable educational program. At the same time, each geographic region within the city is associated with designated feeder schools; and, residents within a particular “catchment” area or school boundary are entitled to attend the specific feeder schools. Designation to both junior and senior high schools is based on where the student resides, not necessarily on the elementary school that the student attends.

A resident student is one who is baptized Catholic or has at least one parent/guardian who is baptized Catholic and who lives within the city of Edmonton. Additionally, to be considered a resident, a student must be 6 years old prior to March 1, and no older than 19 years on September 1 of the current school year (those older than 19 on September 1 are considered to be adult students). Residency requirements do not apply to Kindergarten students, who normally must be 5 years old by March of the current school year in order to be eligible to enroll (exceptions are made for students with special needs).

Each school is required to register all resident students in the catchment area first. Once all those resident students who wish to register have been accommodated, new students are registered in the following order:

- 1) non-Catholic students in the catchment area currently enrolled in
- 2) Edmonton Catholic Schools who have the recommendation of their principal that they be allowed to continue on to the next level of their educational program in the district
- 3) resident students residing outside the catchment area
- 4) non-resident students residing within the catchment area
- 5) non-resident students residing outside the catchment area

2. Focus Schools/Programs

As stated above, the ECSSD operates under an open boundary system; however, each resident Catholic student is guaranteed placement in a designated school. The ECSSD Web site lists all of the schools in the ECSSD; individual schools have their own Websites that detail the programs that they offer.

In the 2003-2004 *Guide to Edmonton Catholic Schools*, each school's program offerings are detailed. Following, is a summary of the programs available:

Second Language Programs

- Cree Language and Culture (1 site)
- English as a Second Language (3 sites)
- French Immersion (partial and complete) (12 sites)
- French as a Second Language (most schools)
- Italian Language and Culture (10 sites)
- Italian IB (1 site)
- Japanese Language and Culture (1 site)
- Latin (1 site)
- Polish Bilingual (1 site)
- Polish Language and Culture (1 site)
- Spanish Bilingual (1 site)
- Spanish Language and Culture (6 sites)
- Ukrainian Bilingual (4 sites)
- Ukrainian Language and Culture (1 site)

In addition to the various second language programs offered by the ECSSD, they also offer a series of programs through their Centre for Lifelong Learning and Alternate Education Services (Phone 780: 944-2000).

Program for Newcomers to Canada: Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC); Full Time ESL; ESL Literacy and Community Integration Program; Basilian Projects (intensive full time English instruction for small groups).

The School of Alternative Education: night school program (semestered classroom instruction for high school and adult students with emphasis on core Grade 11 and 12).

Tutorial Programs: elementary and junior high programs offered three times/year on Saturday mornings and in the summer for two-week periods; high school programs offered three times/year; high school diploma prep classes offered in January and June.

Fresh Start High School Outreach: program for students who require an alternative, flexible, non-traditional high schools program (4 sites).

Our Lady of Grace Program : program for pregnant and parenting teens.

Partners for Youth Outreach Program: junior and senior high school program for students no longer attending mainstream schools; offers continuous student intake and a flexible approach.

Revelation Online Learning Program: program to facilitate online instruction (high school courses).

P.A.S.S. (Part-Time, Alternative, Self-Paced School): program for high school students who need an extra course, need to repeat a course, or need more flexibility in their timetables; students work at their own pace and can meet with teachers for one-on-one help.

Summer School Credit Program: program for high school students offered four weeks in July (7 sites).

And, finally, the *Guide to Edmonton Catholic Schools* lists several “other” programs as programs of choice for 2003-2004:

- **PELE** (Personal Electronic Learning Environment) (1 site)
- **IB** (International Baccalaureate Programmes) (2 high school sites; 3 junior high sites; 2 primary sites)
- **SA** (Sports Academy) (2 high school sites; 1 junior high site)
- **PLS** (Professional Learning School) (2 sites)
- **SL** (Skills for Life: Literacy and Technology) (1 site)
- **NE** (Native Education) (1 site)
- **ISPL** (Individual Self-Paced Learning) (1 site)

3. Programs of Need

The ECSSD supports inclusive education, as a policy, and attempts to meet students’ needs in regular classroom settings within the neighbourhood school community. Where this is not possible, students will be enrolled in a more suitable site, after consultation with parents (guardians) and, if appropriate, with students themselves.

Students with special needs can choose to attend a school other than their designated one; however, they, too, are subject to the parameters of the admissions policy.

As a matter of programming, many schools offer various levels of support for students with particular needs. For example, for students with mild to severe developmental delays or with mild mental disabilities there are 10 elementary, 5 Junior High, and 3 Senior High sites that can meet their needs. For students who are language or learning disabled, there are 9 elementary, 3 Junior High, and 2 Senior High sites that can meet their needs. And finally, for students who have severe behavioural or emotional disabilities, there are 8 elementary sites, 3 Junior High, and 3 Senior High sites that can meet their needs.

4. Funding

There is a block of money available to provide limited funds to focus schools/programs during their start up. The ECSSD offers limited support for a focus program in its first three years; after that, the district continues to pay advertising and marketing costs as it would for other programs.

5. Accountability

All school jurisdictions in Alberta must comply with the requirements of the provincial government's accountability framework.

In addition to meeting all the accountability requirements of the provincial government, the ECSSD is measuring the response to its focus schools/programs in a number of ways. At the central office, phone calls and website hits are tracked; individual schools are asked to find out how parents learn of focus schools/programs. According to parent/student surveys, parents are generally satisfied with the choices ECSSD is offering but they also believe that more choices should be offered in the future.

Summary

ECSSD is responding to its parent community's desire for more school and program choice. To that end, ECSSD is actively promoting what it calls its focus programs and focus schools through the public media (notably newspapers), in school newsletters, and at school open houses in the spring. Detailed information about individual schools and focus programs is also available on the ECSSD web site. Schools in the district have web sites delineating their offerings. Billboards and brochures are used to introduce new programs and announce additional sites for expanding programs. While the district has yet to develop a formal system to determine how parents are using the various sources of available information, they do log web site hits and telephone calls.

Presently ECSSD knows when students choose to go outside the district, but they do not necessarily know where they go—new exit surveys will allow them to more accurately track student movement. ECSSD supports interdistrict movement; funding follows students in Alberta until September 30.

Students are free to enroll in the school of their choice, given adequate resources and suitable educational program. Some programs may have particular criteria that students must meet before they can be admitted; ultimately, the receiving school has the final decision regarding admittance.

Students are provided with transportation if they choose to attend their neighbourhood schools but not if they choose to attend outside their catchment area. For some individuals, this may prove to be a barrier. For the district, general levels of funding available and provincial space utilization policies may also prove to be barriers to choice. By providing more choice, through focus programs, ECSSD is trying to attract new students to its district; while at the same time, responding to its existing community.

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Final Report: Edmonton Public Schools By Lorraine Woollard

Overview

Edmonton Public Schools (EPS) is known as a district of choice, as reflected in their mission statement: “The mission of Edmonton Public Schools, as an advocate of choice, is to ensure that all students achieve success in their individual programs of study” (Personal Communication).

Board Policy states: “The board, as an advocate of choice, will consider alternative programs which emphasize a particular language, culture, religion, subject-matter, or uses a particular teaching philosophy. Such programs will be offered only in designated district centers” (Student Programs HA: BP).

EPS has been providing alternative program since 1974. Currently, they offer over 30 alternative programs; many are offered at multiple sites. Of the 208 schools in the district, more than 80 offer at least one alternative program.

EPS has practiced site-based decision making since 1979 which means that staffing and decisions about resource spending (on supplies, textbooks, and technology, for example) are decided at the school level. EPS encourages the involvement of parents and community members in the budgeting process, both at the school and the district level.

The following report is divided into five sections: section one outlines attendance, age and enrolment requirements; section two describes alternative schools/programs; section three outlines programs of need; section four details funding considerations; section five outlines accountability.

Parents wishing information about the school district can obtain it either from the EPS Website www.epsb.ca or by contacting the central office:

Centre for Education
One Kingsway
Phone (780) 429-800
Fax (780) 429-8318

1. Attendance/Age/Enrolment

As a general rule, each student is guaranteed accommodation in his or her neighbourhood school; exceptions may be made if there is no suitable program for the student there.

Since 1973, EPS has featured an open boundary system; therefore, students are free to enroll in any school in the district if the receiving school provides programming to suit the needs of the child and the school has adequate space to accommodate the child who lives outside the school’s attendance area. Some schools have maximum enrollment guidelines; in these schools,

admission of students from outside the designated area is by random selection. If one sibling is chosen and there is another sibling, both are admitted.

Other schools have closed boundaries, which means there is only enough space for students within the designated area.

Generally, if students choose to attend a school other than their designated one, parents/guardians are responsible for providing transportation; exceptions may be made for students requiring special needs programs or for elementary students wanting alternative programming. All students do have access to subsidized bus passes on Edmonton Transit.

In the 2002-2003 school year, 48% of elementary students, 54% of junior high students, and 62% of senior high students chose to attend schools other than their designated ones.

EPS offers kindergarten classes to students who are 4 years old by March 1 of the upcoming year; to enroll in Grade 1, a child must be 5 years old by March 1 of the upcoming year. There is an expectation that all students will complete high school within three years of enrolling in Grade 10; exceptions may be made in extenuating circumstances. Students do have access to high school programming at Centre High for a fourth and fifth year of programming, providing they have not turned 19 years of age by September 1 of the school year.

2. Alternative Schools/Programs

As stated earlier, EPS operates under an open boundary system, with the exceptions noted above. Students are encouraged to call the schools in which they are interested and ask for either a handbook or a tour of the school. In order to maximize the chance of being accepted in the school of choice, all students are encouraged to pre-register in the spring during the normal pre-registration process. If the school is oversubscribed, then a lottery will take place; only students who have pre-registered have a chance to be picked. The EPS Website lists all the schools in the district; individual schools have their own Websites, which detail the programs they offer and the conditions, if any, for acceptance.

In addition to offering the curriculum mandated by Alberta Learning, EPS offers programming under three different categories: programs of choice (alternative programs), special needs programs, and other programs. What follows is a brief summary of the various programs available, according to the 2003-2004 *School and Program Guide for Grades K – 12*.

Programs of choice (alternative programs)

Aboriginal Studies (Amiskwaciy and Awasis): for students interested in pursuing their studies from an Aboriginal perspective (3 sites).

Academic Alternative: for motivated students who have achieved above average performance (4 sites).

Advanced Placement: for students who wish to write challenging internationally recognized examinations that may lead to advanced standing at the university level (7 sites).

Arts Core: for students interested in the visual and performing arts (3 sites).

Canadian Studies: for students who want academic excellence with an emphasis on studies of Canada and its history (1 site).

Cadet Program: for students who want a program with emphasis on the cadet movement (1 site).

Caraway: for students who want mixed-age groupings and integrated thematically organized instruction with an emphasis on parental involvement, creative approaches to learning and a strong sense of community (1 site).

Child Study Centre: for students who wish to explore their environment and express themselves through an in-depth study of a particular topic (1 site).

Christian Alternative Programs: three different programs

Logos: for students who want a traditional approach to instruction within a Christian environment (8 sites).

Edmonton Christian: for students who want integration of Biblical principles into all areas of study (4 sites).

Millwoods Christian: for students who want instruction offered in the context of an evangelical Christian tradition (1 site).

Cogito: for students who want programming based on whole-group, teacher-centred instruction (4 sites).

Dance Program: for students who want to pursue dance studies in partnership with Edmonton School of Ballet (1 site).

Focus in Research, Science and Technology (F.I.R.S.T.): for students with a strong motivation to learn and share a common interest in science and mathematics (1 site).

Hockey Program: for students interested in developing their skills in an elite hockey program (3 sites).

Home Education, Blended Programming, and Correspondance: for students wanting primarily on-line instruction—with either a traditional or Christian focus (3 sites).

International Baccalaureate Primary Years: for students who want a program emphasizing the education of the whole child in both a classroom setting and in other environments (2 sites in the process of pursuing official designation).

International Baccalaureate Middle Years: for students who want academic challenge in a program that focuses on the whole child; this follows naturally from the primary program (6 sites).

International Baccalaureate Senior Years: for students who want a demanding pre-university course with a community service component; students may enrol in a partial or full program (8 sites).

International Languages: for students who want to acquire or maintain proficiency in languages other than English:

French Immersion: (12 sites)

Bilingual Programs: **Arabic** (4 sites)

Chinese- Mandarin (11 sites)

German (5 sites)

Hebrew (1 site)

International Spanish Academy (1 site)

Ukrainian (3 sites)

Second language courses: offered in several languages at various grade levels.

LearnNet: for students wishing on-line (virtual) instruction.

Nellie McClung: for girls who want a curriculum enhanced by the inclusion of a women's studies component and an emphasis on experiential learning (3 sites).

Performing and Visual Arts: for students who want an arts-oriented program that emphasizes the visual and performing arts—art, music, drama, dance (1 site).

Science Alberta Foundation (SAF): for students who want a program with a special focus on science, mathematics and technology where they can become ethical leaders (2 sites).

Sports Alternative: for students who want a program which facilitates training, travel, and participation in competitions by providing flexible scheduling—may involve distance learning and computer-assisted instruction (3 sites).

Tevie Miller Heritage School Program: for students who want a program that assists with the development of language, literacy, motor and learning skills needed to experience success with the curriculum (1 site).

Traditional School: for students who want a program that provides for high academic success and standards of conduct and depends upon direct instruction of basic skills and continuity of instruction and resources across the grade levels (1 site).

3. Programs of Need

Within programs of need, EPS also offers choice. EPS offers inclusive settings, partially segregated settings, and totally congregated settings. The neighbourhood school provides the first point of entry for all students, including those with special needs. The first option for EPS, according to board policy, is to accommodate students with special needs in the regular classroom. What follows is a brief summary of the various programs available, according to the 2003-2004 *School and Program Guide for Grades K – 12*.

Academic Challenge: for students in Grades 1 to 9 who need a challenging course of studies to match their intellectual abilities and achievements.

Behaviour and Learning Assistance: for students who need a wide variety of learning strategies to help them gain appropriate behavioural, social, and academic skills.

Behaviour Assistance and Community Learning Skills: for students who need a highly structured behavioural and academic program that helps them deal with severe emotional and/or behavioural disabilities, as well as moderate mental disabilities.

Community Learning Skills Program: for students with moderate mental disabilities who need a program that helps them gain basic reading, writing, and numeracy skills that can be applied to daily life.

Deaf and Hearing Impaired: for students who are deaf or hearing impaired, this program provides a bilingual/bicultural learning environment using ASL.

Early Education: for students aged 2 ½ to 5 ½ who have severe special needs.

Early Intervention: for students from birth to 2 ½ who have severe special needs.

English as a Second Language: for students whose limited ability to speak and write in English impairs their functioning in school.

Individual Support: for students with complex and multiple disabilities who need help in increasing independence in communication and social interaction, personal care, and leisure and recreation.

Interactions Program: for students with pervasive developmental disabilities who need a program that helps them gain academic and life skills; some achieve at grade level while others demonstrate severe delays in most or all levels.

Literacy: for students, beginning in Grade 4, this program provides intensive instruction in basic literacy and numeracy skills for those students whose intellectual ability is in the low average to average range.

Opportunity: for students with mild mental disabilities who need assistance in developing life skills as well as academic skills (with an emphasis on literacy and numeracy); emphasis is also on helping these students apply their skills to social, work, and independent living situations.

Strategies: for students with learning disabilities who have average or above average intellectual ability and who experience significant difficulties in language arts and other subjects; programming helps students to gain the ability to use and apply a variety of learning and coping strategies.

Other Programs

Braemar School: for pregnant and parenting students.

Metro College: for students needing flexible programming which enables them to earn a wide range of high school credits outside of traditional school hours; provides supplemental learning for students in K – 12.

Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP): for students who want to earn a high school diploma and hours towards a first year apprenticeship in a specific trade.

Transition and Outreach Programs: provides programs for students who are not experiencing success in traditional school environments.

Chimo: for 13-16 year olds (2 sites).

Transition Programs: for 12-15 year olds (1 site).

Rites of Passage: for 12-15 year olds of Aboriginal ancestry (1 site).

YMCA Enterprise Centre: for 12-17 year olds (1 site).

The Learning Store: for 16 – 19 year olds (5 sites).

4. Funding

EPS provides start up funds when a new program is introduced. A school is given an additional per pupil grant in the first year to purchase supplies. Funding is also supplied in the second year because, in the experience of EPS, the second year is the growth year for a new program so sites generally require additional funding. Funding is also provided for advertising in the first year of a program.

All schools in EPS with multiple programs (either programs of choice or programs of need) receive a multiple program grant because, in the view of the board, having multiple programs in a school increases the complexity of managing the school. Curriculum co-ordinators, counselors, or assistant principals may be needed to help manage effectively. However, as the total number of students in a school increases, the multiple program grant goes down because the idea is that the more students there are in the school, the more money the school receives (on a per student basis); therefore, the need for extra funding decreases. EPS recognizes that introducing alternative programs does increase funding needs, but only when such programs are starting up.

5. Accountability

All school jurisdictions in Alberta must comply with the requirements of the provincial government's accountability framework. EPS closely monitors student enrolments, by school and by program. In the past three years, they have added a focus on supporting teaching and learning within the district and have asked schools to develop both external and internal measures for evaluating their successes. The accountability for regular programs and for alternative programs is the same; however, EPS acknowledges that they would like to be able to develop some better measures for gauging the success of the unique programs. Funding is a consideration.

One initiative EPS has taken is to set district wide standardized tests—Highest Level of Achievement Tests (HLAT)—in reading and writing for Grades 1 – 9. So far, they have also developed HLATs for French and for Mandarin as a means of measuring the success of these two choice programs.

For some of the alternative programs, notably those in the Performing Arts areas, students are evaluated by professional critics: these evaluations provide the board with an external means of measuring the success of such programs.

According to parent/student/staff satisfaction surveys, the satisfaction rate with EPS is very high.

Summary

EPS has offered alternative programming since 1974; in fact, programs of choice were introduced before the provincial government enacted enabling legislation. According to parent/student/staff satisfaction surveys, everyone is highly satisfied with the choices offered. Growth in the number of programs available has been steady over the past 30 years.

EPS is not inundated with requests for new programs; however, they are constantly expanding the number of sites where alternative programs are being offered. It is estimated that over 15% of students are enrolled in choice programs and that over half of all students attend schools other than their designated ones. This would suggest the general public is supportive of both program and school choice. EPS supports interdistrict movement; funding follows students in Alberta until September 30.

Students are free to enroll in the school of their choice, given adequate resources and a suitable educational program. Some programs may have particular criteria that students must meet before they can be admitted, but it is estimated that 95% of the programs offered are open to all.

EPS actively promotes choice through the public media, in advertising supplements and feature stories; at fairs; in school newsletters and web sites; and at school open houses in the spring. Detailed information about individual schools and programs is also available on the EPS web site and at its district office. Interestingly, the district provides city realtors with information packages they can then deliver to their clients in the market for a school and/or a specific program.

Parents seem most interested in learning about the location of schools, the achievement standards within a particular school, and the transportation offered. Much of this information can be accessed on the school's web site or from the school itself. Parents are welcome to participate in Parent Councils where they can also discuss such topics—as well as the school's budget.

EPS has both the support of its trustees and the necessary provincial legislation to offer choice. For the district, general levels of funding and space considerations are the primary barriers to choice. For the parents, transportation is the biggest barrier.

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APPENDIX B.2 BRITISH COLUMBIA

Final Report: British Columbia Ministry of Education By Pamela Hardy

The current Liberal Provincial Government in British Columbia, headed by Minister Christy Clark, has been implementing changes and enhancing previously established goals since 2001. These initiatives support both school choice and accountability concerns. Minister Clark has repeatedly informed the public that the Ministry of Education aims to include a “solid foundation for improving achievement by focusing on increasing accountability of the system, enhancing choice and encouraging parental involvement” (*New Task Force*, 2002c).

In the *Service Plan (2003/4)*, and the *Annual Report: A New Era Update (2001/2)*, the Ministry of Education emphasized the importance of “parents; [provision] of choices for students; support for local decision-making; and strengthening accountability at every level across the system to improve student achievement” (British Columbia Ministry of Education [BCMOE], 2002a, Minister’s Letter section). The current government strives to be parent responsive. Informal and formal parent response to these Ministry initiatives has been positive (BCMOE official, personal communication, June 03, 2003).

Alternatives to Public Schools

Charter Schools

At the current moment charter schools do not exist in British Columbia. While there is local interest in the concept of charter schools amongst education administrators, teachers, parents and university academics, no mention is made of this concept in Ministry of Education documents.

Independent Schools

Independent schools are authorized under the *Independent School Act [RSBC, 1996] c. 216*. The Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools is responsible for registration, inspection and classification of K – 12 independent schools in the province (BCMOE, n.d., Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools section).

In the 2001/02 school year, 59,951 students were enrolled in 340 independent schools. This constitutes nine percent of the provincial for the K-12 student population. An amount of \$147 million in grants was issued to these schools in the same school year (BCMOE, n.d., Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools section). In the *Independent School Act [RSBC, 1996] c. 216*, four classification categories for independent schools are provided (see Appendix A for group classifications).

The Ministry of Education would like the Public Education System to offer more programme choices tailored to the needs of students so that it can compete with independent schools (BCMOE, n.d., School Choice section).

Home Schooling

There are 4,700 registered home school students in British Columbia. Approximately 4,000 are registered with independent schools, and 700 with public schools. A funding allocation of \$250 is set aside for each child registered as a home schooled student (Kuehn, 2002). Students may be taught at home by their parents without the supervision of a teacher, but must be registered with an independent, francophone, distance education or public school authority, or with the Ministry of Education (BCMOE, 2002a).

With the development of Distributed Electronic Learning (DEL) programmes in 2002, the Ministry of Education has been promoting an alternative programme delivery method (Kuehn, 2002).

Programme Choice

The Ministry of Education intends to increase autonomy and flexibility in the public school system by providing more choice in the availability of programmes, thereby meeting the needs of the students and parents. Schools and districts are currently offering optional programmes. Choices include the International Baccalaureate certificate courses and diploma programmes; the Montessori primary (K), elementary and middle school programmes; First Nations education; music and art programmes; and, computer programmes (BCMOE, n.d., School Choice section). An increased level of funding from the Federal Government has enabled the Ministry of Children and Family Development to pay more attention to Early Childhood Education. The Ministry of Education has identified an increased interest linking preschools and full-day kindergartens to current K-12 programme offerings (BCMOE, 2003c).

Provisions in Acts, Regulations and Policies (Choice)

The Ministry of Education has not yet developed a formal policy regarding school choice. Sections 2 of the *School Amendment Act (2002)* and 74.1 of the *School Amendment Act (2003)* contain information about choice in public schools. Part B of the *Statement of Education Policy Order (Mandate for the School System) (OIC 1280/89)* contains information about diversity and choice. The order states the following:

In an effort to accommodate varying parental and student expectations of school services, public schools, within available resources, will provide parents and students with choice of programs. Government is also committed to the principle that parents have an historic right of choice regarding the schooling of their children. Parents ... have the right to enroll their children in a public school or in any independent school of their choice. (BCMOE, 1989)

This policy is currently being revised by BC Ministry of Education officials (BCMOE official, personal communication, July 19, 2003). Policy information regarding school choice can also be found at the individual school boards (BCMOE, n.d., School Choice section).

Section 74.1 of the *School Amendment Act (2003)* outlines enrollment requirements in an educational programme. References to requirements for enrollment and ability to refuse enrollment are given, along with priorities regarding enrollment of students in a non-catchment area (BCMOE, 2002f)¹.

Provisions in Acts, Regulations and Policies (Programme Choice)

Section 6 (2) of the *School Act [RSBC 1996] c. 412* requires that “a student attending a school or a Provincial school must participate in an educational program as directed by the board or by the principal of the provincial school” (BCMOE, 1996b). The student and the student’s parent are entitled to consult with a teacher or principal, vice principal or director of instruction regarding the student’s own educational program.

Section 5 (2) of the *School Act [RSBC 1996] c. 412* states that students who are eligible according to Section 23 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1992)* are entitled to receive instruction in a language other than English (BCMOE, 1996b).²

Schools Required or Permitted by Provincial Legislation, Regulation and Policy

The Ministry of Education requires that school districts provide choice; however, these districts have the autonomy to decide what type of choices they will provide. This concept of choice includes types of schools and programmes and identities that educators and administrators choose to define the uniqueness of their institutions (BCMOE official, personal communication, June 03, 2003).

Public Schools, including francophone schools, are legislated under the authority of the *School Act [RSBC 1996] c. 412* of British Columbia. Independent schools, a home schooling option and offshore schools exist under the authority of the *Independent School Act [RSBC, 1996] c. 216* (BCMOE, n.d. Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools section).

The Ministry of Education differentiates between schools or programmes of choice and schools and programmes of need by using the term “special education”.

Francophone Educational Programmes/Schools

The Conseil Scolaire Francophone de la Colombie-Britannique has authority over all francophone schools in the province. Further details can be found in the Sections 166.12, 166.13, 166.14 and 175 of the *School Act [RSBC 1996] c. 412* and in the *School Amendment Act (2003)*.³

A francophone educational programme is distinguished from a French language course in Part 1 of the *School Act [RSBC 1996] c. 412*. Eligible students for francophone programmes are those students who have parents who, “under Section 223 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982)*, has the right to have his or her children receive primary and secondary instruction in French in British Columbia” (BCMOE, 1996b).

Choice in Language of Instruction.

Every student is entitled to receive an education in English. Students who have eligibility under Section 23 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982)* may receive instruction in a language other than English.

Programmes Required or Permitted by Provincial Legislation, Regulation and Policy

Alternative Programmes

The following programmes are supported by the Ministry of Education:

Containment Centre. These centres are the educational component of an institution operated by the Ministry of the Attorney General.

Provincial Resource Programs. These services are provided, on a regional and provincial basis, by schools to students with special needs.⁴

Alternate Programmes. These include programmes such as Montessori or Waldorf (Rudolf Steiner) programmes; schools affiliated with a specific religion; or schools classified as “Traditional,” for example.

Distance Education Schools. These schools provide courses through correspondence to elementary and secondary students.

Continuing Education Centres. These programmes are established for adult students who are upgrading their high school skills.

Distributed Electronic Learning Schools (DEL). DEL programmes are developed, directed and assessed by a BC certified teacher employed by a school board. A report on the student’s level of achievement must be made and the student must take the Foundation Skills Assessment test. The student must also follow provincially or locally approved curriculum (Kuehn, 2002).⁵

Programmes of Need

Students with special needs have “disabilities of an intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional or behavioural nature, or have a learning disability or have exceptional gifts or talents (BCMOE, 1995, Meeting the Educational Needs section).”⁶

Each school district makes choices that meet the needs of the community. The provincial government sets policies and guidelines regarding placement, some choices regarding the types of services to provide, and provides some provincial resource programmes. There are also some provincial initiatives involving public school district based programmes. Gifted children, for example, can attend University Hill School and children who are hearing impaired can receive support. Other than these types of variations, decisions about choices for students with special needs are made at the school district level (BCMOE official, personal communication, June 03, 2003).

In accordance with a focus on accountability issues, the Ministry of Education has specified that special education funding will be given primarily to students enrolled in “neighbourhood schools.” Three distance education schools in Saanich, Chilliwack and Comox Valley are exceptions. Extra funding for special needs will be limited to three programmes (Kuehn, 2002).

The Ministry of Education publishes a manual entitled *Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines*. This publication includes a summary of the *Special Education Policy Framework for BC (1995)*. Guidelines and resource guides are provided for individual special education topics. These selected topics outline a range of choices for children with special needs (BCMOE, n.d., Special Education section) (see Table 1). The policy framework is based on consultation with education partners in British Columbia (BCMOE, 1995).

Accountability supports the parents’ ability to know how the child is doing in school and the ability of the public to assess how the education system is doing (BCMOE, 1995, Greater Accountability section). Funding for children with special needs is provided by the Ministry of Education.⁷

Full Day Kindergarten for Children with Special Needs

Eligibility requirements for full day kindergarten are outlined in the *School Act [RSBC 1996] c. 412, Section 3*.⁸

Age Related Eligibility for Enrolment

Section 3 (1) of the *School Act [RSBC 1996] c. 412* refers to the age range of students permitted to enroll in educational programmes provided by a school board. The upper age limit is 19. Students are required to remain enrolled in a programme until age 16. Students may enroll on the first day of a school year if they will be five on or before December 31st of that school year. A parent of the child may defer the enrollment until the first day of the next year. This Section of the *School Act [RSBC 1996] c. 412* does not apply to independent schools, or to provincial schools or institutions operated by the federal government or by a band (BCMOE, 1996b).

Information Available to Parents and Students

Information is available in hard copy and on the Ministry of Education Web site regarding school and programme choice. Information can be found on Web sites district wide. On some of these Web sites information about choice is listed under other topics. Additionally, in some districts there are communications officers (BCMOE official, personal communication, June 03, 2003).⁹

Cross-District Enrollment Possibilities

The Ministry of Education supports the possibility for parents and students to “vote with their feet if schools and boards are not performing and not improving student achievement” (BCMOE, n.d., School Choice section). Students have the authority and flexibility to move anywhere in the province to attend school (BCMOE official, personal communication, June 03, 2003). In the *School Amendment Act (2002)*, authorization is given for students to go to a school other than their neighbourhood school, providing there is space. First preference, in any school, is given to students who live in that catchment area (BCMOE, n.d., School Choice section).¹⁰

Non-school district children are entitled to claim a space in a school before a child in that district if the latter enrolls after the application date deadline. Two or more persons with the same priority are enrolled according to their application date (BCMOE, 2002f, section 74.1). Districts can create policies at the school board level regarding foreign students. Approximately ten districts have staff assigned to work specifically with students from overseas (BCMOE official, personal communication, June 03, 2003).

The *School Amendment Act (2003)* provides further clarification related to the prioritization of students who enroll in educational programmes. Under certain circumstances enrollment priority can be given to a non-catchment area child or sibling (BCMOE, 2003b).

Funding

Funding Provisions That Support Choice

Funding allocated for each student will follow the student to the school where they attend classes, whether this is at their local school, or a school in a different catchment area. This funding decision is also intended to encourage schools to focus on improving student achievement in order to recruit and/or maintain students. Improved student achievement is part of the Ministry of Education’s focus on accountability (BCMOE, n.d. School Choice section). Funding considerations are the most serious impediment to school and programme choice possibilities. Many districts offer a considerable range of choice including public Montessori, traditional schools, immersion, language schools and fine arts orientation schools. At a time of fiscal restraint, while having to cover an increase in teacher salary, closing of schools, declining enrollment and a focus on achievement, user autonomy and higher accountability, provision of choice can be a challenge (BCMOE official, personal communication, June 03, 2003).

Funding of Schools and Programmes

The Ministry of Education has allocated \$3.79 billion for school districts in the 2002/03 school year. This amount is divided into two areas: the General Operating Grants and the Formula Buffer Grants. The Formula Buffer Grants are provided to aid school boards while this new allocation system is being phased in. The General Operating Grants are designed using a new funding allocation system which is divided into six sections: basic allocation; and supplements for enrolment decline, unique student needs, salary differential, unique geographic factors, and transportation and housing (BCMOE, 2002d) (see Appendix B on the funding allocation system).

Accountability Measures

Accountability is defined by the Ministry of Education as compliance through accountability contracts, monitoring and public reporting (BCMOE, 2002a). New content regarding accountability measures has been added to the *School Act [RSBC 1996] c. 412* by way of the *School Amendment Act (2002)*, including Sections 8.1, 8.2, 8.3 and 79.2 (BCMOE, 2002e). (BCMOE official, personal communication, June 03, 2003)

School District Reviews

Twenty District Reviews are conducted each year. Each District Review contains ten points of inquiry. After the review is completed and the recommendations have been made, the Deputy Minister of Education contacts the schools and asks for an update regarding the progress that has been made. The results from these reviews are placed on the Ministry of Education Web site. One third of the schools in the province are also reviewed and in some instances all of the schools are reviewed (BCMOE official, personal communication, June 03, 2003).

The Deputy Minister also visits twenty schools districts each year and conducts a three-hour interview with the Superintendent of the school district. The interview is based on the same ten points of inquiry that is used in the District Review. This visit enables the school districts to prepare for their upcoming District Review. This system is similar to the methods used in independent schools (BCMOE official, personal communication, June 03, 2003).

Accountability Contracts

Section 79.2 of the *School Amendment Act (2002)* states that each school board must develop an accountability contract regarding the improvement of student achievement and related concerns. This contract must be submitted by October 31st of each year to the Ministry of Education. It must also be made available to residents in that school district, including parents of students at the schools affected by the contract (BCMOE, 2002f). Sections 7 (1) (a) and 7 (1) (b) state that a parent of a student is entitled to be informed of the student's progress and may request to see the school plan and accountability contract (BCMOE, 2002f, section 7 (1) (b); BCMOE, 1996b, section 7 (1) (a); BCMOE, 2003c). Accountability contracts for schools, school districts and the Ministry of Education are available to the public (BCMOE, 2002b).

Independent Schools

Alternative schools are inspected, but they also have greater flexibility. The Ministry inspection programme makes sure that the schools are teaching their set curriculum. However these schools are not required, for example, to take on an Accountability Contract or District Review process (BCMOE official, personal communication, June 03, 2003).

School Level Accountability Measures

Section 8.1 of the *School Amendment Act (2002)* states that a school board must “establish a School Planning Council for each school, except a Provincial resource program, in its school district” (BCMOE, 2002f). The council should consist of a principal of the school; a teacher from the school, elected annually; one student if the school enrolls students in grades 10, 11 or 12; and three representatives from the Parents’ Advisory Council of the school (BCMOE, 2002f; BCMOE 2003b).

The school board must work with the planning council to allocate staff and resources in the school, ensure that the content of the board’s accountability contract is applied, and plan educational services and programmes (BCMOE, 2002f, section 8.2).

School Planning Councils became law on July 1, 2002. Transition to the School Planning Council model will take place in the 2002/2003 school year. “A School Planning Interim Guidelines, 2003-2003” brochure is available in print and electronic form (BCMOE, n.d., Satisfaction Survey section).

The Ministry of Education has identified a need to clarify commonly agreed-upon definitions for achievement, methods for measuring achievement and best practices within school districts (*New Task Force*, 2002c). Accountability contracts are based on goals from a variety of data.¹¹

Ministry Accountability Goals

In the Ministry of Education’s budget of 2003, two goals focus on improved student achievement and the development of a high quality performance-oriented education system (BCMOE, 2003d). Each goal includes objectives and strategies, performance measures, a 2002/3 base, and targets for the following three years.

Goal One: The first goal aims to improve student achievement in areas of intellectual development, and reduce inequalities among students in terms of their ability to meet the goals of education and improve achievement in areas of human and social development. To support these objectives “standards will be established; information collected; performance monitored; high and low performance identified and reported; and school boards will be encouraged to undertake initiatives to improve performance” (BCMOE, 2003d). Data will be derived from FSA results, completion rates, transition rates, percentage of grades higher than C, School Achievement Indicators Program, 2001 Mathematics III assessments and student acceptance rates related to socially responsible behaviour. Various targets are aligned with these performance measurements.

Goal Two: The second goal aims to establish infrastructure to support a renewed focus on student achievement, enable parents to become more involved and increase school board autonomy through deregulation and streamlining processes. It also aims to create an emphasis on choice and flexibility, focus on performance outcomes, and build an open, performance oriented culture in the Ministry of Education (see Appendix D for information on the Ministry of Education’s objectives).

Classroom Assessment

Resources are developed by the Ministry of Education and made available to teachers regarding assessment, evaluation, and reporting of student progress. Performance standards and student reporting policy and legislation is available in electronic form on the Ministry of Education's Web site (BCMOE, n.d., Classroom Assessment section).¹²

Performance Standards

Performance standards may be used by teachers on a voluntary basis as a support for instruction, assessment and communication with parents. They are the result of a collection of professional judgements from numerous BC educators regarding standards and expectations.¹³

Curriculum

A kindergarten to Grade 12 Education Plan was revised in September 2000 (see Appendix D for the Education Plan).

Provincial Student Assessment Programme

Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA). The FSA occurs annually and includes an assessment of academic skills, and learning foundation skills in reading comprehension, writing and numeracy. Students in Grades 4, 7 and 10 in public and independent schools take the test.

The test was developed by BC teachers and is linked with BC curriculum and provincial performance standards. Ministerial orders related to the FSA include the *Student Learning Assessment Order* (under the authority of *School Act [RSBC 1996] c. 412*, Sections 81 and 168 (2) and the *FSA Instructions for School/District Administrators* (BCMOE, n.d., FSA Legislation section). FSA results are shared with educators, students and parents, and are part of the goal to improve student achievement (BCMOE, n.d., Foundation Skills Assessment section).

Provincial Learning Assessments. Subjects or curriculum content not covered by the FSA is tested on a sample basis in Grades 4, 7 and 10 (BCMOE, n.d., Provincial Student Assessment Program section).

National and International Assessments. A sample group of students in different age groups write tests on various subjects. These tests are compared against results from students in other provinces and countries (BCMOE, n.d., Provincial Student Assessment Program section).
Grade 12 Provincial Examinations. *These tests confirm the performance level of all graduating students from BC provincial and independent schools* (BCMOE, n.d., Provincial Student Assessment Program section).

Graduation Requirements Review. A Graduation Requirements Review was completed in 2002-2003. The purpose of the review is to support student achievement and improve the quality of public education (BCMOE, 2003a). Proposed changes will include more choice regarding courses and programs that the student can enter. During the consultation process it was found that current assessment procedures are too narrow and students do not have enough choice regarding courses and programmes (BCMOE, n.d., Graduation Requirements Review Discussion Paper section).¹⁴

Satisfaction Surveys. An annual accountability cycle is supported by satisfaction surveys that are completed by students, parents of students and teachers. The results are made available to the public. The survey addresses issues of achievement, safety and human and social development (BCMOE, n.d., Satisfaction Survey section). The goal of these surveys is to improve learning opportunities, and promote higher achievement for students (BCMOE, 2003c).

Enrollment Data in Different Types of Schools and Programmes

In the *Summary of Key Info Report*, province wide historical enrollment figures back to 1992 are available (BCMOE, n.d., Sources of K-12 Performance Data section). However, most enrollment data is available for three-year historical cycles (BCMOE official, personal conversation, March 21, 2003). This information is presented in graph and chart form, including total elementary and secondary enrollment in public schools. A pie chart showing student distribution in alternative programmes for 2001/2 is also available (see Appendix F for a breakdown of enrollment in alternative programmes.) Each student entering the school system is given a PIN number. This system provides a reliable database of information (BCMOE official, personal communication, June 03, 2003).

K-12 Standard Reports

These reports include three-year historic enrolment data.¹⁵

Other Data

The Ministry of Education looks at data related to performance throughout the system and statistics data that can be used by administrators. This information is seen to help education professionals make informed decisions that will help improve student achievement. Improvement of student achievement is a goal included in the Ministry of Education's objective of accountability (BCMOE, n.d., Data Analysis and Performance Reports section).

Performance and statistical reports are available at a provincial, district and school level (BCMOE, n.d., Sources of K-12 Performance Data section). A wide variety of K-12 performance data is also available in the form of individual reports and as part of the Summary of Key Information (see Appendix G for information on K-12 performance data.)

Cross-District Mobility Rates and Information

Information regarding student mobility from one jurisdiction or district to another is not currently available from the Ministry of Education. Using data available from the Ministry of Education, it is possible to look at the difference between totals in enrollment from one year to the next. There are many reasons why a child would leave a school such including graduation, a move out of province, district, or jurisdiction (BCMOE official, personal conversation, March 21, 2003). A common student information system, province wide, does not currently exist. Some school districts, such as Maple Ridge, have a long history of tracking how many children are in or out of catchment area when attending a school. Until choice policies were developed, the PIN system data, for the most part, was used to study the location of boundaries and catchment areas (BCMOE official, personal communication, June 03, 2003)

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Appendix A

Group Classifications

Group 1: offer programmes consistent with the BC curriculum employ certified teachers, maintain adequate education facilities, and meet municipal codes. Funding is received on a per-student basis at 50 percent of the student costs of public schools;

Group 2: meet the same requirements as group 1, but receives funding at 35 percent because their per-student costs are higher than local public schools.

Group 3: maintain adequate facilities and meet municipal codes; and,

Group 4: are for non-provincial students. At least 80% of their teachers are certified. They are bonded and are not eligible for grants. They meet the same curriculum requirements as Group 1.

Source: (BCMOE, 2002a, p. 30).

Appendix B

Funding Allocation System

The following funding information is relevant to the topic of school and programme choice and is taken from the *Operating Grants Manual, 2002-2003* (BCMOE, 2002d):

Formula Descriptions

Basic Allocation

\$5,308 is provided for each school age FTE student (including Distributed Electronic Learning). \$250 is provided for each registered home-schooler (headcount).

If parents want to home school their children, but take advantage of public resources such as computers, Internet access and resource materials, they must give up some autonomy and submit to the guidelines stipulated for Distance Electronic Learning.

Parents who wish to have their child home-schooled must meet increased requirements in order to obtain funding. A British Columbia College of Teachers certified teacher must be responsible for the child's education. Courses and curriculum described in Ministerial Orders must be taught and the teacher, not parent, must evaluate the child (Kuehn, 2002) (see Table 2).

Supplement for Unique Student Needs.

\$1,100 is provided for each ESL FTE Student. This grant is designed to fund ESL education for a student for a maximum of five years (see Table 3). \$950 is provided for each aboriginal FTE student (Targeted). A minimum amount of spending for Aboriginal Education programs is stipulated in Section 106.4 of the *School Act [RSBC 1996] c. 412* (BCMOE, n.d., 2002/03 Final Funding Allocations section) (see Table 3). Aboriginal Education funds are part of a targeted grant designed to improve student achievement in this at-risk group.

Students with Special Needs.

\$30,000 is provided for each Level 1 FTE student. This includes students identified as Dependent Handicapped and Deaf/blind).

An amount of \$15,000 is provided for each Level 2 FTE student. This includes students identified as moderate to profound intellectually disabled, or physically disabled (BCMOE, 2002d). Final funding allocations for students with Special Needs, listed by district, is available in the 2002/03 Operating Grants Manual (BCMOE, n.d., Operating Grants Manual section).

The Ministry of Education provides funding for students who receive their education in "neighbourhood schools." Extra funding is providing for a limited amount of programmes, with three distance education schools being the only non-neighbourhood schools eligible for extra funding. This change in focus is part of the Ministry of Education's increased concern about accountability (Kuehn, 2002).

For each Level 3 FTE student who is chronic health impaired, visually impaired, deaf/ hearing impaired, or autistic, \$6,000 is provided. This includes students identified as needing intensive behaviour interventions or as having serious mental illness.

For each Adult FTE student, \$4,012 (average) is provided. Preliminary enrolments and funding level are initially maintained at 2001/ 02 levels. Final enrolments and funding level will be determined pending review.

Appendix C

Ministry of Education Objectives: Accountability Goals

To support the Ministry of Education's accountability goals the following objectives have been set:

- enhancement of data collection and information systems;
- enhancement of technological infrastructure of BC schools;
- revision of models for curriculum development;
- administration and report of satisfaction surveys;
- improvement of communications using electronic media;
- requirement of accountability within school boards for the implementation of school planning councils and parental involvement;
- review and modification, if necessary, of Ministry of Education's legislation, regulations, policies and procedures;
- enable schools to take part in entrepreneurial ventures;
- establish a three-year funding envelope;
- streamline capital management and planning;
- provision of student achievement and satisfaction data to parents and students;
- implementation of legislation related to increased choice and flexibility;
- review of district accountability contracts, including 20 district reviews;
- development and implementation of leadership and performance management framework for Ministry of Education's directors; and,
- implementation of the Ministry of Education's corporate human resources plan.

Source: (BCMOE, 2003d, Goal Two section)

Appendix D

Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education Plan (Revised September 2000)

The Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education Plan

- The Education Plan includes the following content:
- contents;
- introduction;
- the kindergarten to Grade 12 Education Program;
- principles of learning;
- equity and access for all learners;
- schools and their communities;
- a common core of learning;
- student choice and course planning;
- the primary years;
- the intermediate years;
- the graduation years;
- required areas of study, recommended time allotments, graduation requirement;
- programme features;
- personal planning and career and personal planning;
- work experience;
- information and communication technologies;
- fine arts and applied skills;
- balance of theoretical and applied studies;
- second language;
- equivalency;
- challenge;
- independent-directed studies;
- external courses;
- partial credit;
- reporting on student progress;
- evaluation and student reporting;
- letter grades and symbols;
- students with special needs;
- placement;
- credentials in the graduation years;
- accountability; and,
- mission, goals and attributes of the school system.

Source: (BCMOE, n.d., The Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education Plan section).

Appendix E

Breakdown of Enrollment in Alternative Programmes

Provincial resource programme: 0.5 %
Distance education schools: 6.7%
Alternate programmes: 11.0 %
Continuing education centres: 17.4%
Distributed electronic learning programs (DEL): 2.2%
Home school: 3.6%
Independent school: 58.7%

Source: (BCMOE, n.d., Sources of K-12 Performance Data section).

Appendix F

K-12 Performance Data in Provincial Reports

Performance data is available in individual reports and as part of the Summary of Key information. Provincial reports focus on the following:

Aboriginal Academic Performance
Course Enrolment/Class Size
End of School Year
Exam Results
FSA Results
Independent Schools
Inter-provincial statistics
Provincial and District Scholarships
Provincial Headcount, FTE
Satisfaction Surveys
School Type by Gender
Special Education
Summary of Key Info
Teacher Salary/FTE
Teacher Qualifications

Source: (BCMOE, n.d., School, District and Provincial Performance and Statistical Reports section).

Summary of Key Info Report for 2001/2

This summary is a 63 page document that includes illustrations of data provided in the K-12 Standard Reports (BCMOE, n.d., School, District and Provincial Performance and Statistical Reports section).

K-12 Standard Reports (Other information).

These reports include the following data, in addition to enrolment data:

- career preparation;
- teacher salary/full-time equivalent (FTE); and,
- teacher qualifications (BCMOE, n.d., K-12 Standard Reports section).

The Ministry of Education produces many online publications and reports.

Alphabetical Listing of Reports & Publications.

Annual Reports
BC Guide for Independent Schools
BC Teachers Exchange Programme
Course Information

Diversity in BC Schools – A Framework
Election Procedures I BC (School Trustees)
Environmental Concepts in the classroom – A Guide for Teachers 1995
Evaluation of Career Programmes: Summary Report
Evaluation of the Accreditation Programme

Evaluation of the Secondary School Apprenticeship Scholarship Strategic Initiative: Summary Report

Focus on Bullying – A prevention programme for elementary schools
Foundation Skills Assessment – Highlights 1999
Guide for Graduates
Guide to Post-secondary Education
Guidelines for Student Reporting
Handbook of Procedures
Interpretation of District Assessment Results – 1999
K-12 Curriculum & Learning Resources (Integrated Resource Packages)
K-12 Policy Manual for BC Schools
K-12 Education Plan (Revised September 2000)
Live Violence Free
Making Connections
Manual of School Law (includes the *School Act [RSBC 1996] c. 412*, *Teaching Profession Act [1996] c. 449*
Independent School Act [RSBC 1996] c. 216 (and related Regulations and Orders)
Math Science Provincial Assessment Technical Report 95
Mathematics and Social Studies Task Force Reports
Ministry of Education Performance Plan for 2001/02-2002/03
Parents Handbook on School Curriculum
Performance Standards for Reading, Writing, Numeracy and Social Responsibility
Appendix F Continued – K-12 Performance Data in Provincial Reports
Primary Programme
Provincial Examinations and Keys
Provincial Examinations Specifications
Provincial Examinations, Keys and Reports to Schools
Public and Independent Schools Book
School Act [RSBC 1996] c. 412
Shared Learnings – Integrated BC Aboriginal Content K-10
Social Studies Provincial Assessment 96
Special Education On-line Documents (various)
Standard School Calendar
Task Force Reports – Social Studies and Math

Sources: (BCMOE, n.d., Reports and Publications section, n.d.)

Footnotes

1. In the School Amendment Act, 2002 the following addition can be found: (2) Subject to section 74.1, a person may enroll in an educational program provided by a board of a school district and attend any school in British Columbia if the person is of school age the person is resident in British Columbia, and the board providing the educational program determines that space and facilities are available for the person at the school in which the educational program is made available. (BCMOE, 2002f, Section 2)
2. A board may authorize programmes in other languages. This authorization comes under the auspices of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, which makes regulations “respecting the provision of educational programs in languages other than English (BCMOE, 1996b, p. C-17).
3. Section 166.24 of the *School Act [RSBC 1996] c. 412*, as per the *School Amendment Act (2002)* explains the rights of any eligible child of school age and resident in British Columbia. He/she “is entitled to enroll in a francophone educational programme provided by the francophone education authority if [...] space and facilities are available...”(BCMOE, 2002f, 166.24 section). Section 166.25 of the *School Act [RSBC 1996] c. 412* states that such a programme may be provided in a francophone district. The *School Amendment Act (2003)* outlines the established hierarchy to prioritize incoming applications from students to the francophone education authority.
4. Provincial Resource Programmes include: Youth Custody Centres and Residential Attendance Centre programmes; residential programs for treatment and rehabilitation; educational programs in hospitals; Special Education Technology Centres; and, programmes for exceptionally low-incidence populations, often non-residents of a district (BCMOE, 1995, Eligibility section, para.1).
5. According to the Gold Trail Audit report, which is described in the “BCTF Research Report, June, 2002.
6. The Ministry of Education’s programmes for special needs must help support a system that is equitable, of high quality, relevant, accessible and accountable (BCMOE, 1995, Meeting the Educational Needs section).
7. Funding for students with special needs includes: funding for students with severe behavioural difficulties; speech-language pathologists, school psychologists and itinerant specialists; and school-based learning assistance that supports regular classroom instruction. It also includes resource rooms; special outside-of-school options including hospital and home-based services; teacher assistant support; and, provincial programmes and services (BCMOE, 1995, Special Education Framework - Funding section).
8. Students must be either dependent handicapped; have moderate, severe, or profound intellectual disabilities; are deaf or hard of hearing; have visual impairment; have autism; and/or have physical disabilities (BCMOE, 1995, Special Education Services - Full Day Kindergarten section).
9. Parents and students can access information about programs and services for parents by using sources such as the “Curriculum Parent Handbook”, the Provincial Student Assessment Programme, and the “Numeracy for Secondary Students Handbook for Parents” (BCMOE, n.d., Curriculum Implementation Information section.). Information related to individual subjects taught is also made available. Programme specific information is available regarding French programmes; Aboriginal education; English as a Second Language; Independent Directed Studies; and International Education programmes (including a British Columbia-Germany Three-Month Exchange Programme and BC Teacher Exchange Programme) (BCMOE, n.d., Independent Directed Studies section.).
10. Section 74.1 (6) of the *School Amendment Act (2002)* reads as follows: If a board determines that space and facilities are available at the school in which the educational program is made available, a person whose application was received by the board by the date established under subsection (4) is entitled to enroll in that educational program in the following descending order of priority: a catchment area child who, in the previous school year, attended the school at which the educational program is made available; a catchment area child; a non-catchment area child a non-school district child Subsections 6.1 and 6.2 in the *School Amendment Act (2003)* pertain to the prioritization of student applications from inside and outside the catchment area, and the related governing rules.
11. Accountability contracts are based on goals connected to a variety of data sources. These data sources include classroom, school and district assessment results; Foundation Skills Assessments; provincial exam results; school completion rates and graduation rates; grade-to-grade transition rates; Aboriginal student achievement rates; special education student achievement rates; human and social development issues/safety issues; and, parent, staff and student satisfaction surveys.(BCMOE, 2002 - 2003 Accountability Contracts section).
12. Classroom Assessment and Student Reporting Legislation: the Manual of School Law contains assessment orders and Ministry policies including: Policy Circular 97-04; *Provincial Letter Grades Order (1994)*; *Student Progress Report Order (1994)*; and, *Permanent Student Record Order (1991)* (BCMOE, n.d., Monitoring of K-12 section; *New Task Force, 2002c*).
13. Standards are available regarding: reading; writing (English and French Immersion); numeracy; and, social responsibility (BCMOE, n.d., Performance Standards section).

14. Increased choice could involve changes to: mathematics and social studies course options; access to independent directed studies, external credentials and distance/electronically delivered courses; use of post-secondary institution credits towards graduation; and, innovative partnerships with business, employers and communities (BCMOE, Summary-Graduation section).
15. K-12 Standard Reports include information regarding: grade enrolment, including historical data going back to 1995, course enrolment and class size; course enrolment/class size; end of school year; independent schools; other demographics; other programs; school lists and organizations; and, special education (BCMOE, n.d., K-12 Standard Reports section).

Table 1
Index of Special Education Topics

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Guidelines Available</i>	<i>Resource Guide Available</i>	<i>Other Support Available</i>
Accessibility/ Equipment/ Facilities	X		
Adjudications/ Grade 12 exams	X		
Anti-Bullying/ Anti- Violence		X	
Assistive Computer Technology			X
Attention Deficit		X	
Autism	X	X	
Behaviour	X	X	
Critical Incidents			X
Deaf/ Hard of Hearing – Auditory Training Equipment	X	X	
Discipline		X	
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)		X	
Gifted	X	X	
Individual Education Plan (IEP)	X	X	
Intellectual Disabilities	X	X	
Inter-Ministry Protocols	X		
Learning Assistance			X
Learning Disabilities	X	X	
Mental Health		X	
Occupational/ Physiotherapy	X		
Physical Disabilities/Chronic Health	X	X	X

(table continues)

<i>Topic (Contd.)</i>	<i>Guidelines Available</i>	<i>Resource Guide Available</i>	<i>Other Support Available</i>
Physical Disabilities/Chronic Health	X	X	X
Provincial Resource Programs	X		
School Safety			X
Sexual Health			X
Special Education Guidelines			X
Special Education Review			X
Speech Language Pathology	X		
Teachers' Assistants	X		
Transition Planning	X	X	
Visual	X	X	

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Table 2

Operating Grants Manual 2002/2003: Selected Data from Table 1, Provincial Overview of Operating Grants - 2002/2003

<i>School District</i>	<i>Basic Allocation Funding @</i>	<i>Per Home-schooler</i>	<i>Supplementary Funding</i>
	\$5,308	\$250	Unique Student Needs
Conseil Scholaire Francophone	14,164,649	2,750	673,476
North Vancouver SD #44	95,147,152	1,500	8,321,931
Vancouver SD #39	302,194,451	5,250	45,516,149
West Vancouver SD #45	31,865,059	2,250	1,829,982
Surrey SD # 36	312,766,523	6,500	34,869,105
Coquitlam SD # 43	170,052,809	2,500	15,929,542
Burnaby SD # 41	127,635,155	250	14,367,817

Note. From *Operating Grants Manual* [Electronic version], (p.7), by British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2002, Victoria: Author. Copyright 2001 by the Province of British Columbia. Reprinted with permission. Draft note: pending.

Table 3
Operating Grants Manual 2002/2003

Selected data from Table 3 (b), Supplement for Unique Student Needs – Other (ESL and Aboriginal Education) - 2002/2003

<i>School District</i>	ESL		<i>Aboriginal Education</i>	
	FTEs	Funding @ \$1,100	FTEs	Funding @ \$950
Conseil Scholaire Francophone	236.0	259,600	79.5	75,525
North Vancouver #44	1,868.5	2,055,350	520.5	494,475
Vancouver SD #39	16,361.5	17,997,650	2,037.0	1,931,350
West Vancouver SD #45	387.0	425,700	-	0
Surrey SD #36	10,987.5	12,086,250	2,258.5	2,145,575
Coquitlam SD #43	3,962.0	4,358,200	1,071.0	1,017,450
Burnaby SD #41	4,217.0	4,638,700	638.5	606,575

Note. From *Operating Grants Manual* [Electronic version] (p.11), by British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2002, Victoria: Author. Copyright 2001 by the Province of British Columbia. Reprinted with permission. -draft note:pending.

Final Report: British Columbia Independent Schools By Pamela Hardy

Independent schools have operated in British Columbia since the mid 1980s when the Sisters of St. Ann opened St. Ann's Academy in Victoria. The Federation of Independent School Associations was founded in 1965 and represents independent schools throughout the province that register on a voluntary basis (CISVA, n.d., History section). FISA is an umbrella organization that represents 54,037 students in 249 independent schools. Approximately 9% of students throughout British Columbia (59,951) attended independent schools in the 2001-2002 school year (FISA, n.d., Statistics section).

Of the 59,760 students who attended 351 independent schools in the 1999-2000 school year, the following enrollment distribution occurred:

	<u>Enrollment</u>
Associate member schools (one of a kind or small associations of schools):	16,346
Roman Catholic Independent Schools (In five dioceses):	21, 314
Independent School Association (based on the British tradition):	8,056
Society of Christian Schools (evangelical Protestant): (FISA, n.d., Statistics section).	8,321

Funding

Financial support for independent schools began in 1977 with the passing of the *Independent Schools Support Act*. In 1989, as a result of the Sullivan Royal Commission on Education of 1989, this grant was raised to fifty percent. This increased level of funding provided for thirty percent of the per-student operating costs of the local public school districts. The current categorical funding levels are 50%, 35%, 10% and 0% respectively, of the public per-pupil allocation to the school districts in which the independent schools are located (FISA, n.d., History section). In 2001/2002 grants totaled \$158 million including \$5.55 million for special education and \$0.68 for 3,302 homeschoolers (British Columbia Ministry of Education, n.d., Office of the Inspector section).

Choice and Accountability

The principles of diversity and choice were presented to the Sullivan Commission by FISA as founding principles of independent schools. The Commission confirmed the need for accountability including regulations that became part of the *Independent School Act (1996)*; a collection of statistical data by the Ministry of Education; and curricular, assessment and inspection requirements (FISA, n.d., 1988 Royal Commission section).

Examples of choice within independent schools include:

- religious schools (Christian, Jewish, Jewish Orthodox and Seikh);
- traditional learning;
- Montessori schools;
- Rudolf Steiner/Waldorf schools;
- gifted education;
- French immersion;
- language programmes including Chinese, Hebrew, Punjabi and English as a Second language;
- university preparatory programmes;
- enrichment education;
- boarding facilities; and,
- programmes for children with social, emotional and/or medical learning disabilities and special needs (FISA, n.d., FISA Schools section).

Profile of Roman Catholic Independent Schools (British Columbia)

Roman Catholic schools were established in British Columbia in the mid 1800s by the Sisters of St. Ann. Since then religious orders have maintained a dominant role in the Roman Catholic education system.

Funding

In 1954 Roman Catholic schools received funding from the provincial government for the first time. This funding was related to health services. Further funding support, aside from the removal of taxation on school property, was not available until 1977 and 1989. Roman Catholic schools are built using parish and diocesan funds. Operating funds come from the provincial government (50%), tuition and parish funds (including fund-raising). Schools receive no provincial government funding for capital costs (CISVA, n.d., History section). The schools are therefore accountable to the provincial government, the parish and parents.

School Choice

There are two types of Roman Catholic Schools: diocesan schools owned and operated by the Archdiocese of Vancouver; and congregational schools owned and operated by a religious order. There are 49 Roman Catholic schools in British Columbia including 40 Elementary (K-7) and 9 Secondary (8-12). Three secondary schools and one elementary school are congregational schools. Six secondary and 39 elementary schools are diocesan schools (CISVA, n.d., History section).

Programme Choice

Roman Catholic Schools teach the BC Curriculum set by the Ministry of Education, in a Christ-centered setting. In addition to the religious education programme, the schools use the community focussed “I’m a Gift from God” programme and the Spirit Alive curriculum which integrates faith with the regular B.C. curriculum. (I2-7)

Enrolment

Approval for admission is based on registration in a parish, regular attendance of Mass, use of Sunday envelopes on a regular basis and participation in work activities required by the parish. Most schools are full and have a waiting list (FISA, n.d., Admissions section).

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Final Report: School District No. 36 (Surrey) **By Pamela Hardy**

Surrey School District No. 36 (SD No. 36) is the largest school district in British Columbia, and one of the fastest growing districts in Canada. Its schools are located in Surrey and neighbouring White Rock. In the 2002 – 2003 school year, over 62,000 students from a broad range of cultural backgrounds attended school in School District No. 36. Two First Nations are located in this school district: the Katzie First Nation and the Semiahmoo First Nation (SD No. 36, 2002d). One in four of the district's students are from a household that features a primary language other than English (SD No. 36, Guide to Schools section). Eight percent of the student body comes from households that rely on income assistance. The school district grows by approximately 1,000 students each year (SD No. 36, 2002a).

District No. 36 is comprised of 99 elementary schools, 18 secondary schools and six learning centres in rural and urban settings. School populations range from 49–662 students at the elementary level and 1,031-1,708 students at the secondary level. Classrooms include either single or multi-age groupings (SD No. 36, Guide to School section). In the past ten years, 25 new elementary schools opened, and all of the secondary schools are either new or recently renovated (SD No. 36, 2002a).

Cross-District Enrollment Policy

Students are encouraged to attend their local schools, but are entitled to attend schools outside of their catchment area, pending space and programme availability. The *School Amendment Act (2003)* gives school districts the ability to prioritize enrollment applications from catchment and non-catchment students, and siblings, according to specific criteria (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2003).

The majority of student movement between neighbouring school districts occurs with Langley and Delta school districts. School District No. 36 is known to attract students for its Fine Arts Programme and Special Needs Education programmes (School district official, personal communication, June 6, 2003).

Transportation cannot be provided to students who choose to attend a school that is out of their catchment area. Additional impediment include size and facility constraints (School district official, personal communication, June 6, 2003).

Enrollment Criteria

Children may enroll in Kindergarten in the September of the year that they turn five years old (see Appendix on *School Act (1996) Division 2*) (SD No. 36, n.d.- e).

Available Information Regarding Choice Options

The school district places advertisements about its choice programmes in newspapers. These advertisements are placed around the time of registration. Information is also available on the school district Web site, in brochures and by word of mouth (School district official, personal communication, June 6, 2003).

Analysis of information usage by students and parents is not currently being undertaken in the school district. The main measure is the degree to which students have enrolled in programmes. If there are no seats available, the needs of the students are being met (School district official, personal communication, June 6, 2003).

“The parents and community have approached the school district office with queries about the programmes. Some of the new initiatives, such as the Fine Arts Programme, have been built based on requests from parents. The perception of the parents appears to be that the district is responsive” (School district official, personal communication, June 6, 2003).

Locally Developed Programmes

The [school board] may support community-initiated educational programs [that] bring a particular educational emphasis to student talents or to particular student needs, within the parameters of provincially prescribed and/or locally developed curriculum. (SD No 36, 1997)

Regulation No. 8320.1 describes the process regarding the submission of proposals for locally developed programmes or curriculum. Community groups may request that the Board establish a programme of choice and must submit a written brief to these school boards containing a rationale for the programme (SD No. 36, 1997).

School and Programme Choice

Choice programmes, such as the Fine Arts Programme, were developed in Surrey before they were a requirement of the Ministry of Education. School district policy No. 8320, approved in 1997, describes the district and community-initiated programmes (programmes of choice). “The [school board] will offer district programs that respond to the needs and interests of students, are economically viable and support Ministry and [school board] goals for intellectual, personal, social and career development” (SD No. 36, 1997). The policy describes programmes that require full time and part time attendance.

In the 2002 - 2003 school year, the School Board outlined four goal areas in a document entitled “Long Term Goals and Annual Objectives”. These goals included student learning related to intellectual, human and social development; career development; increased access to programmes of choice; managing change within the system; and managing sustainability in relation to stability, predictability and cost effectiveness of programmes and services. Each goal has related objectives to enhance the school district’s system of accountability (SD No. 36, n.d.-e, Board Goals and Objectives section; SD No. 36, 2002b).

The school district is committed to strategically placing schools in different areas so that they are as accessible as possible for students. As a result, the choice programmes can be found in more than one location (School district official, personal communication, June 6, 2003). These programmes require part-time attendance at the programme site (SD No. 36, 1997).

Aboriginal Students

The two Aboriginal programmes in School District No. 36 include a programme for students in senior elementary (Grades six and seven), and a programme for secondary level students. In comparison to province wide FSA results, Aboriginal students perform better in School District No. 36 (SD No. 36, 2002d).

A band school does not exist in the school district; however, the Aboriginal community, including the Katzie and Semiahmoo First Nations, has shown a strong degree of support for the idea of separate schools. A separate Aboriginal school would represent more than one band (School district official, personal communication, June 6, 2003).

Programme Choice

School District No. 36 offers a variety of programme choices to meet the diverse needs of students. All of the options available follow the BC curriculum and enable the student to complete Grade 12 (SD No. 36, 2001).

District Wide Programmes

Apprentice programmes. In the 2001 - 2002 school year, 177 students enrolled in these programmes. Students can receive paid training while completing secondary school (SD No. 36, 2002a; SD No. 36, n.d.-a).

English as a Second Language (ESL). In the 2001 – 2002 school year, this programme met the needs of more than 12,000 students, representing 92 different languages. The “Soar to Success” ESL programme involves small groups of students in Grades 4 - 7. Authentic literature, reciprocal teaching and graphic organizers are used (SD No. 36, n.d.-e, Guide to Schools section; SD No. 36, 2002d).

Core French, French as a Second Language and French Immersion. These programmes are available to all students. In French Immersion classes students study in French, while following the BC curriculum learning outcomes. Early Immersion is from Grades K – 7, and Late Immersion starts in Grade six. The French Immersion and English programmes are housed in the same dual-track school. (SD No. 36, n.d.-e, French Immersion goals; SD No. 36, n.d.-b).

Career Programmes. Almost 5,000 students were enrolled in the 2002 - 2003 school year. These programmes help students to strengthen their education and employment opportunities through career exploration, acquisition of skills and practicums (SD No. 36, 2002a; SD No. 36, n.d.-a).

Inter A. This is a programme that is typically used in Grades 7 – 9. It builds leadership, teamwork and interpersonal skills. Students learn in multi-age groupings. Work experience, cooperative education, and local and international field trips can be part of the programme (SD No. 36, n.d., Inter-A section; SD No. 36, n.d.-a).

International Baccalaureate programme (IB). This is a two-year pre-university programme that provides advanced credit in the programmes of participating universities and colleges. The IB is offered in one secondary school in Surrey. The goal of this programme is to educate an international community of skilled, compassionate, and responsible citizens. Volunteer work and involvement in sports and the arts is also required (SD No. 36, n.d.-e, International Baccalaureate section).

International Education. Over 300 foreign students are currently enrolled in School District No. 36 (SD No. 36, 2002a).

International Languages. Courses in French, Spanish, German, Mandarin and Japanese are available in secondary schools (SD No. 36, n.d.-a).

Student Support Services. These programmes include psycho-educational counseling and assessments; school-based counseling; speech and language therapy; specialized instruction, Individual Learning Plans (ILPs); transportation, where necessary, for students with special needs; multicultural support services; and instruction for hospital/homebound children (SD No. 36, Guide to Schools section).

Summer School. In 2002, 2,500 students completed this programme (SD No. 36, 2002a).

Other programmes. These programmes include Advanced Placement (AP), gifted education and learning assistance.

Growing Together. Academic courses, instruction related to child development, and work experience opportunities are provided for pregnant and parenting students who wish to complete secondary school (SD No. 36, n.d.-a).

Integrated Studies. This is a programme for students in Grades 8-10 and is offered at a secondary school in Surrey. The programme focuses on student choice, self-directed learning and a holistic perspective. Students have the same academic teachers year long, follow block schedules and use an interdisciplinary, multiple intelligence curriculum. The development of both creative artistic abilities and academic excellence are supported (SD No. 36, n.d.-e, Integrated Studies section; SD No. 36, n.d.-c).

Intensive Fine Arts. In this programme, for students in Grades 1 – 7, the Fine Arts are given as much attention as mathematics, language arts, social studies and science. Brain research and multiple intelligence learning theories support the goal to focus on visual arts, music, drama and dance. The school that houses this programme is located in White Rock (SD No. 36, n.d.-e, Intensive Fine Arts section; SD No. 36, n.d.-d).

Other programmes

Other programmes offered include Learning Centres and the Program for Athletes and Performing Artists (PAPA).

School Choice

Alternative Elementary Schools

Discovery School. This school promotes a community where learning is a “discovery” of self-motivation understanding, responsibility, commitment and inclusiveness. Classes are multi-aged and school-wide themes are often used. It is based on the main beliefs of Adlerian philosophy (SD No. 36, n.d.-e, Discovery section; SD No. 36, n.d.-a).

Heritage School. This is a Grades K-7 school that is situated in a rural setting. Traditional and co-operative learning approaches are used, with a focus on social responsibility, technology and academic achievement. The curriculum includes a strong focus on basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics, and an emphasis on early literacy programmes (SD No. 36, n.d.-e, Heritage School section; SD no. 36, 2003).

Home Schooling. Home School learners registered in School District No. 36 are entitled to resources and services in accordance with *School Regulation 3 (1)(a)*, *3 (1)(b)(I)* and *3(1)(b)(ii)*. These resources and services include receipt of core texts on loan and access to the school library. Parents can also access on-site resources that support parents who home school their children. Computers, laboratory equipment, shop equipment and A.V. materials are not available to these home school learners. Provincial exams and standardized tests are administered at the school by teaching staff. Ministry of Education approved software provides interactive tutorials in Mathematics (K-8) and Reading (K-7) (BCSTA, n.d., Home School Learners section; SD No. 36, n.d.-f).

Montessori. These programmes are offered in two elementary schools in Surrey and enroll almost 400 children. The age groupings are 6 – 9 year-olds and 9 – 12 year-olds. The programme is individualized, uses materials that are self-correcting, involves long work periods and helps the child to develop a global perspective. Students usually spend three years with the same teacher. Space is limited and wait lists are maintained (SD No. 36, n.d.-e, Montessori section; SD No. 36, n.d.-a).

Traditional. Three schools in Surrey are designed in this format. The learning environment is structured; individual achievement is supported; behaviour expectations are clearly defined; and parent involvement is welcomed. Students are required to wear a school uniform (SD No. 36, n.d.-3, Traditional section; SD No. 36, n.d.-g).

Accountability Measures

Each year the school board develops a number of initiatives to support the district wide goal of improving student achievement. Current strategies include a focus on early literacy in inner city schools; English as a second language; students with special needs; aboriginal students; and re-entry and graduation programmes that support at-risk youth (SD No. 36, 2002a). In the fall of 2003 a document will be released describing a process called “Planning for Student Success”. The school district is endeavouring to align its efforts with Ministry of Education reporting deadlines and achievement data releases; student programme planning; the calendar and school year, and budget cycles; and the availability of school district data (SD No. 36, 2002a).

In 1995 the Improving Student Learning Initiative was initiated, with the goal of increasing the Grade 12 exam levels and scholarship rate. This process was established prior to the requirement of an Accountability Contract. The initiative currently includes thirty goals. In 2002, the eighth Annual Report was published. Background, actions taken, results, observations and recommendations sections related to each goal are provided. An appendix includes a copy of the school district Accountability Contract; a report on the final, and now replaced, accreditation process, including the goals of schools that took part; and, information regarding literacy (SD No. 36, 2002d).

The school district publishes a School Profiles and District Report that is shared with other school districts. An introduction discusses Foundation Skills (FSA) and District Writing Performance assessments. Achievement results are provided for each school, along with sub-categories that present goals; accomplishments and initiatives; enrolment characteristics; and the district programmes that are available. Results are presented for elementary and secondary schools, and learning centres (School district official, personal communication, June 6, 2003; SD No. 36, 2002c).

Alternative Programmes

Alternative programmes and schools must complete the same accountability requirements as any programme or school in the school district. As a result of different parental expectations, there can be differences in overall performances from school to school. Comparison between the different programmes can be made using the School Profiles report (School district official, personal communication, June 6, 2003).

Enrolment Data

Data bases for enrollment and projections are maintained by the school district planning department. This department keeps track of the home address of students in a catchment area; the location of the student's school; and the names of students in schools outside of their catchment area (School district official, personal communication, June 6, 2003).

Other Data

The Improving Student Learning Initiative report provides information on different types of data collection and analysis measures completed and ongoing in the school district (SD No. 36, 2002d).

Funding

The school district operating budget for the 2002 - 2003 school year was \$377 million, with a capital budget of \$78 million. (S1-2) Extra funding to support programmes of choice does not exist. The costs for these programmes are hidden rather than existing as a direct fund. In some programmes concessions for class sizes have been made. Programmes of choice operate within the standard funding bracket and must operate with the same level of costs as regular programmes. It is possible that increasingly families will need to pay for a higher proportion of the fees that cover extra costs incurred in specialized programmes (School district official, personal communication, June 6, 2003).

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Appendix

School Act (1996) Part 6: School Boards (Division 2: Powers and Duties, 74.1 (6))

(6) If a board determines that space and facilities are available at the school in which the educational program is made available, a person whose application was received by the board by the date established under subsection (4) is entitled to enroll in that educational program in the following descending order or priority:

- (a) a catchment area child who, in the previous school year, attended the school at which the educational program is made available;
- (b) a catchment area child
- (c) a non-catchment area child;
- (d) a non-school district child

Source: (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1996, pp. 52-53).

Final Report: School District No. 39 (Vancouver)
By Pamela Hardy

The Vancouver School District No. 39 (SD No. 39) is one of the largest school districts in British Columbia. It was established in 1886 and meets the needs of a diverse, urban education environment that has a unique social, cultural and economic climate (SD No. 39, n.d., Employment section).

The district is divided into four administrative areas including Jericho, Fraserview, Marineview and Sunrise (SD No. 39, n.d., School Board section). Schools are organized into “family of schools” groupings, with elementary schools from Kindergarten to Grade 7 and annexes (K. to grade 3) feeding into secondary schools (grades 8 – 12). There are 109 schools in total (SD No. 39, n.d., Schools section). Each of these schools has its own catchment area and is administered locally by a principal and vice-principal(s) ((SD No. 39, n.d., School Board section).

There are no band-operated schools in this school district. The school district collaborates with the Musqueam nation on arrangements for the students to attend local public schools. (School district official, personal communication, June 09, 2003).

Enrollment Criteria

Children may enroll in Kindergarten in the September of the year that they turn five years old (see Appendix on *School Act (1996) Division 2*).

Cross-District Enrollment Policy

Students are encouraged to attend their local schools, but are entitled to attend schools outside of their catchment area, pending space and programme availability (SD No. 39, n.d., Policies section). The *School Amendment Act (2003)* gives school districts the ability to prioritize enrollment applications from catchment and non-catchment students, and siblings, according to specific criteria (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2003). School District No. 39 follows the legislation on choice and has always had a fair amount of cross boundary choice and a number of available options. The district reviewed its policies after the Ministry passed legislation regarding choice (SD No. 39, n.d., Policies section). This review ensured that district policies were in line with the new ministry requirements regarding choice (School district official, personal communication, June 09, 2003). Information about Cross Boundary Applications are provided to parents who wish to enroll their children in a programme offered by the school district (SD No. 39, 2003b).

School and Programme Choice

There has been a long-term focus in the district on equitable accessibility to programmes. Some students take advantage of semester system programmes in the New Westminster school district. The Vancouver School District will also have students leave the district, or will receive students from other districts, for specific programmes. Counseling with the students regarding such possibilities would happen on a one-to-one basis. Neighbourhood schools are supported, but recognition is given to parents and students who have needs that go beyond what can be provided by their local neighbourhood school (School district official, personal communication, June 09, 2003).

Other than a situation such as transportation, there are no major obstacles to students and parents should they wish to take advantage of the existing choices. Programmes of choice are district programmes and are therefore not specific to a catchment area. Due to budget constraints, the 2002-2003 school year is the first year that the district will have charged fees for special programmes such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme. However, the district has a policy stating that no student will be denied access to a programme due to their financial abilities (School district official, personal communication, June 09, 2003).

Available Information Regarding Choice Options

The choice *Options* brochure is the most popular method for advertising secondary school programmes of choice (SD No. 39, 2003d). It comes out in the autumn every year. A related calendar is also published (SD No. 39, n.d., Calendars section). Another brochure is published regarding alternative programmes for students who are in the “at risk” category. Information meetings are also effective since parents get to meet teachers in the programmes of choice. Every January, lists of programmes are placed in the paper along with application deadlines. Some of these programmes have an associated application form and some send out information packages. All of this information goes on the Web site (School district official, personal communication, June 09, 2003; SD No. 39, 2003a; SD No. 39, 2003d).

The main indication that parents and students are using communication sources has been the increased number of people commenting on information available on the school district Web site. The over subscription of programmes is a good indication of the support that the community has made for the choices offered (School district official, personal communication, June 09, 2003)

Local Programme Development

The Gifted Learner programmes are unique within the province and across Canada (School district official, personal communication, June 09, 2003).

Programme Choice

Alternative Programmes for Assistance

Bridge Programmes

John Oliver Bridge and West Side Bridge programmes. Both programmes help Grade 8 students to transition from elementary to secondary school. The programme is designed to encourage curiosity, independence and competence in schoolwork, and is one year in length (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section). In both programmes a Teacher and Youth and Family Worker work with 20 students.

Intermediate Alternative Programmes

8J/9J. This programme enables students between 13 and 16 years of age to complete Grade 10 and to be ready to complete Grades 11 and 12. As part of an application process, students must complete the Canadian Achievement Testing with a minimum of Grade 5 level. Additionally an interview with the applicant focuses on the student's level of motivation and suitability (SD No. 39, 2003a).

East Side Alternative School. This is an off-site programme that enables students to complete core courses in grades 9 and 10 in small, one-to-one, structured academic settings (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section). The programme has a waiting list and enrolls students on a "space available" basis during the year (SD No. 39, 2003a).

Foundation. This programme enrolls students who have been asked to leave their regular schools during grades 8 to 10. The programme emphasizes the development of computer skills. Participation in sporting events is also required (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section).

Midtown Alternate @ Tupper. This is a programme for students ages 15 to 17 who have had limited success in large schools, often due to a history of academic, social, family or behavioural issues. The maximum enrollment is 40 students (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section).

Street Front Programme. This programme is designed for repeating Grade 8 students, and students in Grades 9 and 10 who are not succeeding for various reasons (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section). Students taking part in this programme need to be interested in unique physical development and outdoor education. Counseling sessions are part of the programme (SD No. 39, 2003a).

Riley Alternative Programme (RAP). This programme provides students in Grades 9 to 10 with an opportunity to learn in a small, structured group setting. The programme includes a focus on increased self-esteem and more independent and disciplined work habits (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section).

Sunrise East Programme. This is a programme for students in Grades 9 and 10 that focuses on core academic courses offered as either regular or modified credit. The goal is to re-engage students in school (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section). Counseling and involvement in out-of-school activities are part of the programme. There are 30 students in the programme, in addition to two teachers and two Youth and Family workers (SD No. 39, 2003a).

Vinery Programme. This is a programme for Grades 9 and 10 students. The students work at their own pace and individual goals are set each year. Community involvement is encouraged and core subjects are covered (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section). A waitlist is maintained for this programme and students are accepted on a “space available” basis (SD No. 39, 2003a).

Senior Alternative Programmes

Spectrum. This programme provides students in grades 11 and 12 with an alternative setting in which they can complete graduation requirements (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section). It is well suited for students who have the academic skills necessary to graduate, but who also need support (SD No. 39, 2003a).

Total Education. This is a district wide senior secondary programme for Grades 11 and 12, for students age 16 to 18. The programme focuses on social development and lifestyle management, as well as academic work and post-secondary planning (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section). The “total” approach of the programme includes a focus on individual learning styles and life experiences (SD No. 39, 2003a).

Take a Hike. This programme focuses on high-risk youth age 16 to 19. This is a self-paced programme that focuses on learning, and the academic and social/emotional needs of youth. Outdoor and adventure-based activities support the academic and personal goals (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section). Evaluation and personal development planning for each student is also included (SD No. 39, 2003a).

First Nations Programmes

Aries Project. This project is a day/evening programme where aboriginal youth can find a safe, non-threatening environment in which they can learn, grow and enjoy life regardless of personal problems. Students need to be 13 years of age, First Nations and “street involved”. (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section).

Britannia Outreach Secondary School. This school is an alternative school for First Nations students who want to complete a high school leaving certificate. A modified academic programme, extensive outdoor education, counseling, life-skills and First Nations cultural component are part of the curriculum (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section). Students may be referred to this programme by a school counselor, administrator, friend, relative, district staff member, or community or provincial agency worker (SD No. 39, 2003a).

Day Programmes

Avalon School. This school is a long-term day programme for students age 13 to 18, in grades 8 to 10 who have not been successful in regular schools or alternate programmes due to behavioural and emotional challenges. In addition to academic work, recreational activities are integrated into the daily programme (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section).

Eagle High. This is a special education/counseling programme that includes academics and group counseling, and recreational activities. Students have academic and social/emotional challenges working in regular programmes (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section). Referrals are made to this programme by a social worker (SD No. 39, 2003a).

Pacific Alternate Secondary School (PASS). This is a short-term programme with a maximum enrollment of 15 students aged 13 to 17 in Grades 8 to 10. The maximum length of stay for students is 12 weeks. Further options are investigated with the student during this time (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section).

Phoenix Programme. The Ministry of Children and Family Development and the Vancouver School Board provide funding for this programme. It is designed for students aged 12 to 18 who have been out of school for an extended time period. These students require a more structured environment that includes schedule choice and activities (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section).

Southtown Alternative Programme. Students aged 13 to 17 work at their own pace and use goal sheets as a guide. Academic work in core subjects is completed as a group (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section). This programme places emphasis on recreation, including 3 camping trips, year round recreation and local field trips (SD No. 39, 2003a).

Other Programmes

Adult Education Centres. Educational opportunities are offered to youth and adults in flexible and accessible programmes. Students can begin the programme any time in one of six centres. Students must meet with an instructor and be referred by a counselor or administrator. English and Math assessment tests are also required before entering the programme (SD No. 39, 2003a).

Collingwood Outreach Programme. Students may join the programme in September or February and must be between the ages of 16 and 18. Students work at their own level up to Grade 10 and focus on core subject areas (SD No. 39, 2003a).

Focus. This is a fifteen-week programme for young mothers and pregnant teens up to age 24. It helps young mothers to transition into further education, training or employment. Daycare services are provided (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section).

Genesis. Students on probation and who have a history of non-engagement in school may enter one of the three programmes available. Classes focus on a positive learning experience and opportunities for students to reconnect with the school and community (SD No. 39, 2003a).

New Start Programme. This is a programme designed for students who speak English as a second language and who have been living in Vancouver for four or more years (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section).

Social/Pre-employment, Academic, Recreation, Community (SPARC). This is a programme for students aged 13 to 16 who need help with their ESL skills. Literacy and numeracy up to Grade 10 are taught, along with job readiness skills (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section).

Step Up. This is an education rehabilitation programme for students in Grades 8 to 10, and is provided by the Vancouver School Board and the Ministry for Children and Family Development. The programme goal is to improve basic academic skills up to grade 10 equivalency (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section).

Tupper Young Parents Secondary. The Vancouver School Board, Y.W.C.A and the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board jointly offer this programme to young parents and expectant parents (SD No. 39, 2003a). Along with various services to support the health and well being of the family, flexible student schedules help the parent to attend classes in a secondary school (SD No. 39, 2003a).

Youth Language Arts. High-risk youth under age 25 work in individual or focus-group settings in this programme. Students focus on reading, writing, comprehension and life skills (SD No. 39, 2003a).

Alternative Programmes for Enrichment

Britannia Venture Programme. This is an academically challenging programme designed for students in grades 8 to 10. The programme's philosophy is based on concepts of universal values, global understanding, personal excellence and community service (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section). The maximum enrollment is limited to 30 students. This programme is suggested as an appropriate pre-IB programme (SD No. 39, 2003d).

Byng Arts Mini School. This Fine Arts programme for students in Grades 8 to 12 is focussed on rigorous curricula, interdisciplinary study, cooperative endeavour and orientation to the professional arts community. In 2001 – 2002 54% of the applicants were cross-boundary students (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section). Other than English 11 and 12, students take part in the main school population's senior level academic subjects (SD No. 39, 2003d).

Charles Dickens Elementary Alternative program. This programme focuses on "mutual respect, continuous learning and opportunities for leadership within a child-centred, multi-aged framework" (SD No. 39, 2003b). The programme also features a high level of parent participation; school-wide team teaching; mentorship and teacher training; and, report cards based on written comments rather than grades. Students are involved in three-way student-teacher-parent conferences (SD No. 39, 2003b).

City School (King George). This programme has provided alternative education since 1971 and has a maximum total student population of 40 students. School goals include development of a high standard of academic competence, curiosity, self-motivation, reasoning ability and social responsibility. The small size of the school provides flexibility regarding the location of learning opportunities (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section).

David Thompson Odyssey Programme. This is a challenging programme for highly motivated, creative students to learn using an interdisciplinary approach and cross-curricular themes. Students in Grades 8 – 12 are encouraged to develop higher level thinking processes, and to develop a positive self-concept, work independently and cooperatively and develop confidence to respond orally and in writing (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section). Due to the accelerated nature of the junior level courses, the programme is considered to be an appropriate preparation for Advanced Placement courses (SD No. 39, 2003d).

French Immersion. Early French Immersion is offered continuously from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Late French Immersion is offered in Grade 6 for students whose native language is not English (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section).

French Immersion (Churchill, Kitsilano, Vancouver Technical). This programme enables students who have completed the Early French Immersion Programme to continue to develop higher level thinking and verbal skills in their second language (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section). The French Immersion programme can be combined with enrollment in the IB programme (SD No. 39, 2003d).

Gladstone Mini School. This is a two-year programme with a focus on the academic and social development of talented, creative and motivated junior secondary students in Grades 8 to 10. Students may enroll in one or both of the programme streams including: humanities and math/science/technology (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section). This is a “school within a school” programme.

Hamber Challenge Programme. This programme focuses on academic acceleration and enrichment opportunities in Grades 8 to 10. Students excel in one or more subject areas including English, social studies, science and mathematics (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section). Students must write an entrance exam and one hour exams for each subject area for which they are applying (SD No. 39, 2003d).

Ideal Mini School. This school offers a small group learning environment for 112 students. Personal responsibility and the development of independence and self-confidence are emphasized. The curriculum is focussed on academic competence and current social issues (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section). The school includes a theatre and arts programme, and places an emphasis on social and environmental issues (SD No. 39, 2003d).

International Baccalaureate Programme. This programme provides an intellectually rigorous and academically challenging curriculum for students world-wide. It includes a comprehensive two-year pre-university programme in Grades 11 and 12 that emphasizes critical thinking, research skills and service. Students may take the full diploma or individual certificate courses. Applicants are tested and interviewed, and then accepted according to the results (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section). The programme is located at Sir Winston Churchill and Britannia schools.

John Oliver Mini School. This school provides a comprehensive and accelerated programme in a small group setting for students in grades 8 to 12. Acceleration in math and social studies programmes is encouraged. Field trips and outdoor education enhance the student's learning opportunities (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section). Parent involvement is also an important part of this programme (SD No. 39, 2003d).

Killarney Mini School. This school offers enriched and challenging curricula in the humanities and math/sciences for students in Grades 8 to 10. Activities are learner centred and include ethics, social justice and citizenship (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section). Students are encouraged to enroll in AP courses and challenging elective classes (SD No. 39, 2003d).

Magee SPARTS Programme. Students in Grades 8 to 12 may take part in this educational programme for students in high performance athletics or Arts training programmes. Students attend secondary school in the morning and take part in their chosen discipline in the afternoon (SD No. 39, 2003a).

Montessori Secondary Programme. This programme includes students in Grades 8 to 10 and is a "school within a school" programme. The programme focuses on core academics including science, mathematics and the humanities. The teachings of Dr. Maria Montessori are emphasized including: holistic education, experiential education, democratic education, and humanistic education. Students are expected to complete 25 hours of community service per year and participate in the operation of a small business venture (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section). Students with high academic standing and good reading and verbal skills may enroll in the programme (SD No. 39, 2003d).

Nootka Elementary School (Fine Arts Program). This programme offers students an enriched artistic and academic environment committed to excellence. The Arts is integrated with subject areas: dance, drama, visual Arts and music comprise 30% of the week's time schedule. This programme will expand in the 2003 –2004 school year to include a grade four class. This latest addition will join the current offerings of one half day kindergarten class; and one of Grades one, two and three classes respectively (SD No. 39, 2003c).

Point Grey Mini School. This school consists of approximately 150 students from Grades 8 to 12 are enrolled in enriched and challenging courses offered in small learning environments. Learning opportunities include group studies, individual projects, traditional classroom lectures and demonstrations, multi-grade activities, guest speakers and field trips (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section). Parental involvement is also encouraged in this school (SD No. 39, 2003d).

Prince of Wales Mini School. This school consists of approximately 140 students from Grades 8 to 12. Four main areas are emphasized including: enrichment, in-depth study of topics; development of a sense of community; student leadership; and well roundedness (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section). The school also includes an outdoor education focus and field trips that challenge the student academically and emotionally (SD No. 39, 2003d).

SUMMIT. This programme meets the needs of academically gifted students in Grades 8 to 10. Its goals focus on “high academic achievement, community service, group cohesiveness and total involvement in school, as much as possible” (SD No. 39, 2003d).

Technology Immersion Programme (King George Secondary). This programme integrates computer technology into the core academic areas of social studies, English, mathematics and science. Through technology, students become part of a learning community. The programme has approximately 500 students in Grades 8 to 12. Student leadership and service in the community are also encouraged (SD No. 39, 2003d).

Templeton Mini School. This school emphasizes a focus on concentration and effort and dedication, with an emphasis on social responsibility to the school and community. Students are prepared for success in post-secondary institutions (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section). Outdoor education and enrichment excursions are also part of the programme (SD No. 39, 2003d).

TREK (Prince of Wales, Vancouver Technica)l. This programme provides an academic, wilderness adventures and environmental education for students in Grade 10. Hands on learning and character development are fundamental components of the programme. Each year, 112 students are admitted (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section).

Tupper Mini. Students in this programme remain in the same classes for English, Social Studies, Science and Math. Science and math coursework for students in Grades 8, 9 and 10 are completed by the end of Grade 9. Students are encouraged to developed their creative thinking skills by considering current social issues in democratic nations (SD No. 39, 2003d).

Tyee Elementary School (Montessori Alternative Program). This Montessori programme provides opportunities for students to develop power of concentration, problem solving skills and experience sequential learning activities. This environment enables self-directed learning and a non-competitive atmosphere. Students are not required to have previous Montessori experience if they enroll in the Kindergarten and Grade four levels. Siblings of current students are given first priority for enrollment (SD No. 39, 2003e).

Vancouver Technical Summit Programme. This programme is available for academically gifted and motivated students in Grades 8 to 10. Accelerated science and mathematics programmes are available, along with an enriched English programme (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section).

VSB/UBC Transition Programme. This is a programme that enables early entrance to university, supports academic excellence, and promotes social and emotional development of academically gifted students from ages 13 to 15 (Grades 7 to 9). These students will enter university after two years in transition. The programme is located on the UBC campus and accepts 50% of enrolled students from outside of the Vancouver School District. It is a unique programme in British Columbia and Canada (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section).

Career Programmes

These programmes help students to develop skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for success in their life and work plans (see Figure 1) (SD No. 39, n.d., Career Programs section)

Challenge. This programme allows students the opportunity to challenge Grade 11 and 12 courses using tests developed to assess prior learning. Students can challenge courses at any time during the year (SD No. 39, n.d., Programs section).

Connect. This is an integrated computer-enhanced, multimedia distance education programme to support students in distance education courses (GVDES, n.d., Connect section).

District-wide Programmes

International Education. This programme enables foreign students to study at a local school for a year or graduate with a Grade 12 diploma (SD No. 39, n.d., International Education section).

Literacy Programmes. This programme includes district projects, parental involvement, First Nations involvement, French Immersion, specific programmes, special events, partnerships and research (SD No. 39, n.d., Literacy Programmes section).

Distance Education

Distance Education School. This school provides services for 9,000 students from all over the world. Programmes for students from primary and secondary schools are provided in a non-traditional way (GVDES, n.d.).

Gifted Learner Summer Programme. This programme is designed for students aged 4 to 15, and takes place for two weeks in July. The programme challenges the student's abilities, promotes self-awareness, increased level of interests and stimulates interactions with peers (SD No. 39, n.d., Gifted Learner Summer Program section).

Home Schooling. Home Schooling is permitted under the *School Act (1996)*. Students must register at a school in their district by September 30th of each school year. Home schooled students may use learning resources in public schools, including the library. They may not attend part-time classes or take part in school activities. Testing is administered by teaching personnel in the school where the student is registered (SD No. 39, n.d., Home Schooling section).

Special Education

A variety of programmes and integrated services are available for support for students with special needs. High incidence students are supported through the Area Learning Services Teams, while low incidence students are supported through services available at District Learning Services. Special needs designations include Multiple Disabilities; Deaf/Blind; Moderate to Severe Profound Intellectual Disabilities; Physical Disabilities or Chronic Health Impairments; Visual Impairment; Deaf or Hard of Hearing; and Autism. The school board is also responsible for the home education of students who have missed more than three weeks of school. Students with a physical disability may be eligible to have support from a Resource Teacher (SD No. 39, n.d., Special Education section).

Summer Flex-Ed Programme. This programme is designed for students who have failed a course and who require a credit and grade. Students can also audit courses to prepare for upcoming courses in which they might need extra help (GVDES, n.d, Flex-Ed section).

Accountability Measures

In its *Accountability Contract*, submitted to the Ministry of Education in October 2002, the Vancouver School Board emphasized the School District's focus on maximizing the students' potential for excellence. The school board supports a comprehensive assessment of schools that takes into account the unique characteristics and culture of students and personnel. It will use in addition to the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA), school and classroom assessment, and student, programme and perception data. The three current improvement goals include literacy, numeracy and social responsibility (SD No. 39, 2002).

The school district uses assessment data, in addition to the use of satisfaction surveys, standardized tests, user rates, curriculum audits, school and district evaluations, School Planning Councils and accountability contracts. This data provides information to help make better decisions. The literacy project, for example, involves regular data gathering (School district official, personal communication, June 09, 2003).

Alternative programmes and schools fulfill the same requirements that all public schools in the district must meet. The alternative programmes for assistance for students who are at risk is an example of programmes that receives funding from the Ministry of Children and Family. The school district works with this Ministry to develop a framework to look at outcomes and to provide output information (School district official, personal communication, June 09, 2003).

Enrollment Data

Data regarding cross-boundary enrollment is available but has not been used specifically for decision making. The information services office has compiled information about how many students are out of catchment area so that schools can start looking at trend data in their areas (School district official, personal communication, June 09, 2003).

Other Data

A central registration system to monitor the level of interest in programmes does not exist. As many as 100 to 300 applications arrive for 28 to 30 seats. With the current data collection system used in the school district, it is difficult to know how many of the applications in different programmes are from the same student (School district official, personal communication, June 09, 2003).

Funding Provisions

The provincial government provides a population driven funding formula of \$5,308 per student. (V1-3) There is no additional funding outside of this funding formula. Some programmes for families with specific needs receive funding assistance from the Ministry of Children and Family. Staffing in alternative programmes is 20 students to one teacher. Additional funding goes into the programmes through the staffing requirements. In the mini school programmes, for example, there are extra time blocks for administration and the organization of field trips (School district official, personal communication, June 09, 2003).

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Appendix

School Act (1996) Part 6: School Boards (Division 2: Powers and Duties, 74.1 (6))

If a board determines that space and facilities are available at the school in which the educational program is made available, a person whose application was received by the board by the date established under subsection (4) is entitled to enroll in that educational program in the following descending order or priority:

a catchment area child who, in the previous school year, attended the school at which the educational program is made available;

- a catchment area child
- a non-catchment area child;
- a non-school district child

Source: (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1996, pp. 52-53).

Final Report: School District No. 43 (Coquitlam) **By Pamela Hardy**

During the 2001 – 2002 school year, School District No. 43 (Coquitlam) (SD No. 43) served 31,453 students in Kindergarten to Grade 12. Students in this district come from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds. There are 1,071 Aboriginal students and 4,000 Special Education students attending school in this district. Ten percent of the student population speaks English as a second language (SD No. 43, 2003).

This school district is located 20 minutes from Greater Vancouver, is the third largest of sixty school districts in British Columbia and includes the cities of Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody and the villages of Anmore and Belcarra (SD No. 43, 2003). The region has a challenging topography that includes mountains and ravines (School district official, personal communication, June 4, 2002). The school district is comprised of 53 elementary schools (Grades K-5), 13 middle schools (Grades 6-8) and 7 secondary schools (Grades 9-12) (SD No. 43, 2003).

Cross-District Enrollment Policy

Students are encouraged to attend their local school, but are entitled to attend schools outside of their catchment area, pending space and programme availability. Children may enroll in Kindergarten in the September of the year that they turn five years old (see Appendix on School Act (1996) Division 2). This school district follows the provincial legislation and has a history of students moving from one school to another. The only impediment to this option for students would be lack of space (School District official, personal communication, June 4, 2003). The School Amendment Act (2003) gives school districts the ability to prioritize enrollment applications from catchment and non-catchment students, and siblings, according to specific criteria (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2003).

School and Programme Choice

Traditionally School District No. 43 (Coquitlam) has offered choice to its students. French Immersion started in British Columbia in the Coquitlam School District. In the early 1990s the district established a strategic plan to focus on the provision of appropriate education for children. Parents, business community members and other stake holder groups were involved. The outcome was a commitment to focus on a middle school model of education. Consequently the district has many options at the middle school level. Numerous programmes of choice are also offered at the secondary level. The career preparation programmes focus on choice and are linked to various programming themes. Students can choose to take these courses at any of the schools in the district, pending space availability (School district official, personal communication, June 4, 2002).

Except for the CADBE programme, which was set up as an equivalent, alternate basic education programme, programmes of choice are required by district policy to be set up in a dual track setting along side other standard programmes (School district official, personal communication, June 4, 2002).

Available Information Regarding Choice Options

The district Web site and teacher interface are the two most popular methods used to provide information on choices to parents and students. These choices in programmes are maintained and generated because of popularity amongst students. The [current] availability of programmes of choice can be correlated to the level of interest from the public. The public support for the district's [offerings] has been strong, particularly at the secondary level where it has been possible to develop a wide array of innovations in terms of programmes. A majority of the families support the attendance of their children in local schools in their catchment area. This support has enabled the district to provide an increased number of choices to the students (School district official, personal communication, June 4, 2002).

Advertisements are placed in local print media on a regular basis regarding Montessori and French Immersion programmes, especially at registration time. Information for Secondary School programmes is available in brochures. The district office also works with community and district committees, such as the Parents for French Committee or Montessori Liaison Committee, to disseminate information. Some programmes have generated attention in the media due to their national and international recognition. An example is an information technology programme that co-operates with the British Columbia Institute of Technology. Similar programmes are available with Douglas Community College, Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia (School district official, personal communication, June 4, 2002).

Local Programme Development

Initiatives regarding the development of programmes have been within the school district. The district has offered programmes and has entered into relationships with various outside agencies such as CISCO Systems. The district cannot provide busing for programmes of choice, except for a limited amount of students who live more than 3.2 KM away from their local catchment school (School district official, personal communication, June 4, 2002).

Programme Choice

Coquitlam Outdoor Academic School Term (COAST)

COAST is an environmental education programme which Grade 10 students can complete during one semester. The skills learned includes outdoor survival skills, navigation, orienteering, rock climbing, back packing and first aid (D. Robbie, personal communication, April 11, 2002).

Computer Networking Apprenticeship 11 and 12

Business and post secondary opportunities are presented to students in Information Technology Management (D. Robbie, personal communication, April 11, 2002).

Culinary Arts (Grades 11 and 12)

This programme helps to prepare students for a college education in the culinary arts (D. Robbie, personal communication, April 11, 2002).

Dance (Performance Dance)

This programme is available for experienced dancers who gain admission after completing an audition (D. Robbie, personal communication, April 11, 2002).

English as a Second Language (ESL)

ESL enables students to become proficient in English, develop intellectually, and achieve learning outcomes of the provincial curriculum; and supports citizenship (SD No. 43, n.d., General Information section). ESL teachers are supported by an ESL Support Team (SD No. 43, 2002b).

Environmental Science 9/10

These programmes are focussed on local ecology and environmental issues. Lab work, field trips and community-based projects are part of the programme (School district official, personal communication, April 11, 2002).

Experiential Studies 10

This programme includes courses focussed on Earth Science, Social Studies and Physical Education and combines class work, science labs, projects and field studies. Students enrolled in this programme will take part in related fundraising activities (School district official, personal communication, April 11, 2002).

Fish & Wildlife 12 (Fisheries Ecology 12)

This is a one semester course which provides students with the opportunity to run a fish hatchery; conduct studies looking at local streams, harbour seals, plankton and streamside vegetation; and learn how to operate small vessels and radio equipment. Students take part in public fairs and classroom visits to elementary schools to promote environmental issues (School district official, personal communication, April 11, 2002).

French Immersion

Apart from the French Language Arts Program, the French Immersion curriculum is the same as the English curriculum in the district. The core programme focuses on attitudes, culture and language. Early Immersion is offered in nine schools and focuses on enabling the student to achieve, reach and become functionally bilingual. Late immersion is offered in two middle schools and enables students to achieve equivalent levels of learning in all subject areas and become functionally bilingual (SD No. 43, n.d., French Immersion section). Students may progress from late immersion programmes into one of the immersion programmes at two secondary schools (SD No. 43, 2002c).

Admission is based on a first come, first serve basis and pending the availability of space. No boundaries are in place for this programme.

Global Perspectives 12

This programme enables students to take part in a hands-on project in a developing country and is integrated with Career Preparation Work Experience (School district official, personal communication, April 11, 2002).

International Baccalaureate

Pre-IB Courses. Courses in Art, English, French, Social Studies, Mathematics and Science are offered in grade 9 and 10.

IB Diploma or IB Certificate (grades 11 and 12)

This programme is designed to meet the needs of talented and highly motivated students. The programme is available at one secondary school and open to students within and outside the catchment area for the school (SD No. 43, n.d., International Baccalaureate section).

Montessori

This programme emphasizes individual student choice in learning, with a balance between whole class lessons and individual lessons. Five elementary schools and one middle school offer the programme. Students can start the programme the year they turn five years old (SD No. 43, n.d., Montessori section). A liaison committee provides a communication link between the district, schools and parents. The Coquitlam Montessori Society is a charitable society that was formed by parents in SD No. 43 Montessori schools. It fund raised to purchase materials for Montessori classrooms (SD No. 43, 2002d).

Multiculturalism/Anti-Racism

This programme includes resources, in-services for schools, professional development opportunities and multicultural initiatives. The purpose is to support a safe learning environment and promote positive behaviours and attitudes (SD No. 43, n.d., General Information section).

Theatre Management (Grades 11 and 12)

This programme provides students with an introduction to a career in theatre sector (D. Robbie, personal communication, April 11, 2002).

Additional Choices in Courses

Students may choose to enroll in additional courses such as Italian language classes, Latin, Musical Theatre 11/12, Psychology 12 AP, Recording Arts, Rock School (Recording Business career related), String Orchestra 9-12, Technology Design & Invention 11. Online learning is available for ten courses and is offered by two schools (D. Robbie, personal communication, April 11, 2002).

District-wide Programmes

*Alternative Programmes**The CABE (Coquitlam Alternate Basic Education)*

This programme assists students aged sixteen to eighteen who have spent time away from school and want to obtain grade ten equivalency or core grade 11 and 12 courses.

IOCO

This is an alternate programme for students needing a high degree of behavioural support.

Aboriginal Education

These programmes provide Aboriginal students from grades K-12 with an opportunity to meet an Aboriginal Support Work or Itinerant Teacher outside of the classroom. Cultural identity of the students is supported through cultural events, presentations, or First nations clubs (SD No. 43, n.d., Aboriginal Education section). The Kwayhquitlum Nation is located in Coquitlam. The number of Aboriginal student is approximately 900 out of the 33,000 students living in the school district. These students are interspersed throughout the school district, rather than being concentrated in one school - very few live on the two reserves in the area. The Aboriginal education programme is focussed on students attending schools through the district (School district official, personal communication, June 4, 2002).

Career Preparation and Secondary CAPP

This programme promotes the development of skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary in post-secondary education and the work place (SD No. 43, n.d., General Information section). The programme is designed for Grades 11 and 12 students who are enrolled in a regular school programme, and who want to focus part of their studies on a specific career path (School district official, personal communication, December 5, 2001).

Gifted Education

This programme includes school-based, district-based and community-based programmes. At all levels the regular classroom incorporates adaptations, enrichment, acceleration, telescoping, screening and identification processes.

Elementary School

These programmes include pullout challenge classes; extra-curricular programmes; challenge centres and Odyssey of the Mind tournaments.

Middle School

These programmes include pullout challenge classes, leadership programmes, accelerated classes; magnet workshops in art, writing, math, science and technology; and Odyssey of the Mind tournaments.

Secondary School

These programmes include IEP consultation/career planning; IB, AP, Honours and On-line courses; secondary workshops on careers and writing; and district leadership programmes (SD No. 43, n.d., General Information section).

International Education

This programme enables foreign students to attend school in the district and promotes an increased level of cultural diversity and enhanced global understanding in the schools (SD No. 43, n.d., General Information section).

Languages K-12 programme

This programme promotes an understanding and appreciation of diversity and provides instruction in a second language in addition to English. The programme includes core French (Grades 5-12); French Immersion (Grades K-12: early entry at K, and late entry at grade 6); and other languages (grades 9-12) including Italian, Latin, Mandarin, Spanish and Japanese (SD No. 43, n.d., General Information section).

Special Education Services

These programmes include aboriginal education, counselling services, English as a second language and special education. Programmes are consistent with provincial legislation policies, procedures and guidelines (British Columbia Trustees, 2000, SD No. 43 section).

*School Choice**Community Schools*

Community schools provide programmes, services and events for children, youth, adults, seniors and families. Each school has a council comprised of parents, school employees and community residents from varied backgrounds. There is also a community school coordinator on staff at each of the four community schools in this school district. Three of these schools are at the elementary level and one is at the secondary level (SD No. 43, 2002a).

Accountability Measures

The School District No. 43's commitment to comprehensive input into programmes and services includes performance plan partner groups; a principals and vice principals group; advisory groups; a district planning and coordinating committee; and the board of school trustees. Results of feedback regarding presentations on choice in the school district to these stakeholder groups has been positive (School district official, personal communication, June 4, 2002). This stakeholder input supports the four goals of the district including literacy; numeracy; graduation rates; and student safety and belonging. These goals are based on the following:

- district directions established by the Board and representatives of all partner groups;
- the school improvement plan submitted to the board annually;
- interpretation of the Foundation Skills Assessment results;
- Ministry of Education Satisfaction Surveys;
- provincial exam and scholarship results; and,
- graduation and transition rates (SD No. 43, 2003).

School District No. 43 (Coquitlam) also takes part in District Reviews conducted by the Ministry of Education. The District Review is available on the school Web site (School district official, personal communication, June 04, 2002).

The school district uses indicators at a school level regarding school wide rates, performance standards and other indicators. The district is piloting an electronic collection of impressions of staff and students. Parents are surveyed using a paper based survey. Discussions are ongoing regarding further use of data such as French language data and school retention data (School district official, personal communication, June 4, 2002).

District goals are supported by various strategies and include the following commitments:

- to provide and communicate clearly [their] programmes of choice;
- to conduct needs assessments;
- to research and develop student achievement data collection and analysis capabilities; and,
- to monitor continuously the strategic plan to ensure goals are met and adjustments are made when necessary (SD No. 43, n.d., General Information – Goals section).

Enrollment Data

There is a history of enrollment data collecting in School District No. 43 (Coquitlam). This information has been used in the planning process but is not captured in terms of evaluative data. Out of catchment area data is not tracked by the school district (School district official, personal communication, June 4, 2002).

Funding Provisions

The provincial government provides funding on a per student basis for student registration in a school. The amount is currently \$5,308 per student and does not take into account the programme in which the student is enrolled. Incentive to provide particular programmes is not offered by the Ministry of Education (School district official, personal communication, June 4, 2002).

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Appendix

School Act (1996) Part 6: School Boards (Division 2: Powers and Duties, 74.1 (6))

- (6) If a board determines that space and facilities are available at the school in which the educational program is made available, a person whose application was received by the board by the date established under subsection (4) is entitled to enroll in that educational program in the following descending order or priority:
- (a) a catchment area child who, in the previous school year, attended the school at which the educational program is made available;
 - (b) a catchment area child
 - (c) a non-catchment area child;
 - (d) a non-school district child

Source: (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1996, pp. 52-53).

Final Report: School District No. 44 (North Vancouver)
By Pamela Hardy

In the 2001-2002 school year, 18,500 students were enrolled in Grades K to 12 in the North Vancouver School District No. 44 (SD No. 44) (SD No. 44, 2001b, November). There are two First nations in the school district – the Squamish nation and Tsleil’waututh nation. Both nations enroll their children in the public school system. Additionally, the Squamish nation uses the private school system in West Vancouver (School district official, personal communication, June 05, 2003). During the past decade the number of ESL students in the district increased rapidly, however this increase in numbers has recently leveled off (SD No. 44, n.d., English as a Second Language section).

School District No. 44 is comprised of 32 elementary schools (K-7), including two annexes for K-2; 8 secondary schools; 2 alternate schools and a residential outdoor education centre called the Outdoor School, located in Squamish, B.C (SD No. 44, n.d., School Information section).

Enrollment Criteria

Children may enroll in kindergarten in the September of the year that they turn five years old (see Appendix on *School Act (1996) Division 2*; SD No. 44, n.d., Changes to Student Admission section).

Cross-District Enrollment Policy

Students are encouraged to attend their neighbourhood schools, but are entitled to attend schools outside of their catchment area, pending space and programme availability. This option is available to students in any catchment area or district. Other than space constraints, there are no impediments to students attending any school in the school district. Space constraints are the major impediment to offering programmes of choice. The district will not, however, put portables in schools to make accommodations due to lack of space (School district official, personal communication, June 05, 2003).

The school district guarantees choice of programmes for students and attendance at neighbourhood schools. The *School Amendment Act (2003)* gives school districts the ability to prioritize enrollment applications from catchment and non-catchment students, and siblings, according to specific criteria (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2003). Students do not tend to leave this district to attend a school in another district; however, the school district does receive students from other districts (School district official, personal communication, June 05, 2003). In the 2000-2001 school year, 13 percent of North Vancouver students registered in local schools outside of their catchment areas (Brayne, 2001, September).

School and Programme Choice

The school board in North Vancouver has stated that a definition of greater choice and accountability should be connected to efforts to address inequalities between advantaged and disadvantaged students. According to the school board, increased choice includes improved offerings for pre-school education; more programme flexibility; and new organizational structures and resources for high quality learning environments (SD No. 44, 2001b, November).

There are many different choice options available in the school district, if members of the community choose to look for them. The policies of the district enable choice. For example, the district has a large summer school that provides many opportunities to students (School district official, personal communication, June 05, 2003).

Available Information Regarding Choice Options

The choice option is widely known in the school district. To meet the needs of the demand side of educational reforms, information is provided on the district Web site. There is a placement officer in the school district and different types of communication available to provide information about choices. Achievement information related to schools is also available on the district Web site (School district official, personal communication, June 05, 2003).

Different communications methods are used to communicate information about choice options to the community. These methods include District Advisory Councils, Parent Advisory Councils, mandated School Planning Councils, school Web sites and newsletters, and the school district Web site. Parents and students may also call the school district office for information that might not be available in these types of media. The school district does not have the capacity to monitor the reasons why a student chooses to attend one school over another, and is not inclined to do so at this moment. Statistics related to user rates of information processes is not part of the school district's knowledge management process (School district official, personal communication, June 05, 2003).

Satisfaction surveys report that the community has high levels of satisfaction related to the school district's choice offerings. This satisfaction is reflected in the high level of support that parents exhibit towards the programmes that are offered (School district official, personal communication, June 05, 2003).

Programme and curriculum initiatives are based on community expectations. The North Vancouver region is a high performing area, academically, and parents have high expectations regarding education (School district official, personal communication, June 05, 2003).

Local Programme Development

The K-12 education programme (offered in English and French) consists of over 200 provincial and locally developed educational programmes and services (SD No. 44, 2001b, November).

Programme Choice

The four goals for the school district include improvement of reading proficiency in students; improvement of success rates in mathematics; improvement of success rates of Aboriginal students; and provision of safe and caring school environments (SD No.44, 2001a, November).

The different choices available to students include alternate schools and alternate delivery systems. Different modes of accessing learning opportunities are also available. These options include challenge, equivalency, partial credit, independent studies, summer school, evening school, E-learning and advanced placement. The school district considers choice to be as much about a concept as it is about a location (School district official, personal communication, June 05, 2003).

Busing is not provided for students to attend schools and programmes. Although buses are provided for special events and the outdoor school, and taxis are contracted for students with special needs, or for specific events (School district official, personal communication, June 05, 2003).

Advanced Placement (AP). AP courses enable students in Grades 10 – 12 to complete college-level studies and to receive credit, advanced placement or both from participating colleges and universities (Brayne, 2001).

Enrichment Programmes. These programmes include the Elementary Band and Strings programme, and the Artists for Kids Trust (SD No. 44, 2001b, November). Performers in artistic or athletic events are allowed a flexible programme schedule (as per *North Vancouver Policy 105*) (Brayne, 2001).

The Artists for Kids Trust was established in 1989. Original prints by patron artists are sold, with the profit supporting school district art programmes (Artists for Kids, 1999). The educational opportunities afforded by this programme are beyond what is available in the provincial curriculum. *Equivalency.* These programmes involve the recognition of learning that has taken place in other educational settings. Courses and credentials include AP, IB, music, cadets, languages, sports, 4-H, tourism, first aid, lifesaving, scouts, guides, driver education, water safety, aviation, dance, drama, speech, horticulture and American Sign Language (Brayne, 2001).

French Immersion. This is a language programme for non-French speaking students who want to develop a high level of ability in both English and French. The programme is available to all students and is offered in three secondary schools and six elementary schools. It does not require prior knowledge of French. Early Immersion is offered starting in Kindergarten or Grade one, with one Late Immersion starting in Grade six (SD No. 44, n.d., English as a Second Language section and School Information section). Secondary bilingual programmes are also available (SD No. 44, n.d., About Us section). Approximately eight percent of students enrolled in North Vancouver schools choose French Immersion (Brayne, 2001).

Gifted Programme. This programme is available for elementary and secondary students. Students may meet with gifted peers, receive curriculum in a differentiated format to meet individual needs, and take part in Challenge Centre and Zone Exploration (pull-out) programmes. The programme includes individual education plans (IEPs); zone explorations (half day per week with gifted peers); and district challenge centres (SD No. 44, n.d., Gifted Programming section).

School Choice

Alternate Programmes. These programmes include smaller class settings and more individual attention. The individuality and strength of the learners is emphasized. Two schools (KLASS and Windsor House) offer alternate programmes (SD No. 44, 2001b, November; Brayne, 2001). (As per *North Vancouver Policy 204.*)

Homeschooling. This programme is supported by on-line learning services that provide an alternative for the delivery of programmes, and greater choice to access different types of educational opportunities (Brayne, 2001).

Outdoor School. This is a residential outdoor education centre located near Squamish that has been involved in environmental studies since 1969. The school includes 165 hectares of forests, streams, ponds and special resource classrooms. Aquatic, forestry, agricultural and wildlife studies are part of the natural history programme. A traditional Coast Salish Big House is the focus of the cultural history programme (Skw' une – was). Access to these programmes is restricted to North Vancouver students (as per *North Vancouver Policy 205.*) (Brayne, 2001).

District-wide Programmes

Career and Personal Planning (CAPP). CAPP is designed to help students make informed choices and take responsibility for their personal and career development. (As per *North Vancouver Policy 2002.*) (SD No. 44, n.d., Programmes section).

Challenge. Students can challenge for credit any Grade 11 or 12 courses offered in the district rather than enrolling in the course. In the 2000-2001 school year, 33 courses were available for challenge. There is no limit to the number of credits a student can receive through this process (Brayne, 2001).

English as a Second Language (ESL). ESL inclusion in regular classes occurs as soon as it is feasible. The student's intellectual development is maintained during second language acquisition (SD No. 44, n.d., Programmes section).

International Education Programmes. These programmes are available for long and short term commitments involving approximately 300 students from foreign countries (SD No. 44, 2001b, November).

Language Programmes. These programmes are offered to meet the needs of the community. A Farsi programme was developed locally and is offered along with Mandarin, Japanese, German and Spanish (Brayne, 2001).

Summer Programmes. In the summer of 2001, 1,800 students enrolled in summer school. The district offers summer programmes during the first six weeks of summer vacation. The curriculum includes academic coursework for students in grades K-12, ESL and adult courses (SD No. 44, n.d., Programmes – Gifted section). International summer programmes are also available. (As per *North Vancouver Policy 208.*) (Brayne, 2001).

The Artists for Kids Trust supports the Paradise Valley Summer School of Visual Art for students. This Summer School features programming with five- day residential camps. Established visual artists and art teachers take part in the summer school (Artists for Kids, 2003).

Student Services. There are 16 specialized services for students with exceptional needs (SD No. 44, n.d., 2001b, November). The district supports the philosophy of inclusion with the goal that children should be educated in neighbourhood schools, regular classrooms and in age appropriate settings as much as possible. The following programmes are offered:

- counseling services;
- hearing resource program;
- hospital/homebound program;
- school psychology;
- learning support team;
- literacy centres using locally developed resources such as Reading 44, The Core Reading Framework and Firm Foundations; and Early Literacy Teaching and Learning (Brayne, 2001);
- vision support;
- speech and language therapy; and,
- other additional services (SD No. 44, n.d., Programmes – Special Education section).
(As per *North Vancouver Policy 211.*)

Accountability Measures

As outlined by the school board in a presentation to the Standing Committee on Education (2001), a greater level of accountability to parents, students and the public is a priority in School District No. 44 (SD No. 44, 2001b, November). The core school district values include “the importance of teaching and learning, high standards of excellence and accountability, success for all learners, diversity of educational programmes and innovation” (SD No. 44, 2001b, November, p. 1). District-wide goals, priorities and emphases for curriculum and instruction are reviewed yearly by the North Vancouver School Board (SD No. 44, 2001b, November, p. 1).

Locally developed assessment measures focus on numeracy and literacy skills in Kindergarten students. The school district conducts Kindergarten Emergent Literacy testing and tracking; Kindergarten Phonological Awareness; and At Risk Reading on an annual basis. The district developed the Reading 44 programme to look at reading performance tasks (School district official, personal communication, June 05, 2003). There are also district wide calibrated tests for mathematics in Grades 6 and 8.

Assessment practices are contracted with Edudata BC, a company that is developing a system of knowledge management. Each school has an Annual Plan with objectives, and related strategies and outcome measures that include benchmark data, target data and actual data. This data is used to track achievement and report information in a transparent way (School district official, personal communication, June 05, 2003).

Alternate schools must meet the same accountability requirements by submitting a School Plan and required data. Differences exist in the goals that are set by alternate schools. However all schools must meet the established district priorities of literacy, mathematics, success for Aboriginal students and safe and caring school environments (School district official, personal communication, June 05, 2003).

Enrollment Data

Despite the choice policy, approximately 90% of students choose to attend their neighbourhood schools, at the elementary level in particular. Other than satisfaction surveys, data collection in the school district focuses on outcomes and student achievement. (School district official, personal communication, June 05, 2003).

Funding Provisions

An operating budget of \$120 million was set for the 2002 – 2003 school year, supported by a \$28 million annual capital budget for new construction, renovation and improvements (SD No. 44, n.d., About Us section).

The provincial government provides a population driven funding formula of \$5,308 per student. This type of funding plan does not recognize space concerns or the types of programmes available in the district. Therefore the school district has alternate funding sources, including ancillary services. It owns and operates an Art Gallery, an environmental residential setting, an international student programme and an Enrichment Band and Strings programme. These programmes operate on a cost recoverable basis, but are not profitable (School district official, personal communication, June 05, 2003).

Reading 44 Firm Foundations is an example of a profitable programme that involves the sale of curriculum material, netting \$300,000 per year. This profit is reinvested to develop math programmes that address numeracy objectives (School district official, personal communication, June 05, 2003). Programmes such as the Artists for Kids Trust raise funds for a wide range of extra-curricular art programmes. These programmes benefit young artists aged 5-18, on weekdays and Sundays throughout the school year and summer (Artists for Kids, 2003). This legacy funding has been established to provide permanent support for the community (Artists for Kids, 1999).

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Appendix

School Act (1996) Part 6: School Boards (Division 2: Powers and Duties, 74.1 (6))

- (6) If a board determines that space and facilities are available at the school in which the educational program is made available, a person whose application was received by the board by the date established under subsection (4) is entitled to enroll in that educational program in the following descending order or priority:
- a) a catchment area child who, in the previous school year, attended the school at which the educational program is made available;
 - b) a catchment area child
 - c) a non-catchment area child;
 - d) a non-school district child

Source: (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1996, pp. 52-53).

Final Report: School District No. 45 (West Vancouver)
By Pamela Hardy

School District No. 45 (SD No. 45) served approximately 6,200 students in the 2002-2003 school year. This student population is supported by an adult population with higher than average levels of educational training: 82 percent have finished high school, compared to 70 percent provincially; 33 percent have at least one university degree, compared with 14 percent provincially (SD No. 45, 2002a; SD No. 45, 2002b). More than 25% of households feature a primary language other than English at home (SD No. 45, 2002a). A small number of Aboriginal students attend schools in this school district (School district official, personal communication, June 05, 2003).

West Vancouver is a residential community located across the Burrard Inlet from Vancouver. The total population is approximately 45,000. The School District includes West Vancouver, the villages of Lions Bay and Bowen Island, and covers a distance of 18.5 kilometers from Capilano River to Howe Sound (SD No. 45, 2002b). This school district includes three primary schools, ten elementary schools and three secondary schools.

The school district is comprised of the following types of schools and programmes:

- K-7 schools (ten schools, including five that offer K Plus)
- K-3 (two schools, including one that offers K Plus)
- Grade 8-11 (one school which will change to 8-12 in 2003-2004)
- Grade 8 – 12 (two offer Grades 8 – 12 and one offers A.C.C.E.S.S.)

Cross-District Enrollment Policy

Students are encouraged to attend their local school, but are entitled to attend schools outside of their catchment area, pending space and programme availability. Programmes such as French Immersion are structured as district programmes rather than being located in a particular catchment area. In this type of programme there must be room in the programme on a district basis. School District No. 45 follows the provincial legislation and the standards established by the Coast Metro Schools, an association of school districts in the Lower Mainland. In certain circumstances, students will be counseled to attend a programme outside of the district; however, the School District does not promote attendance in programmes outside of its vicinity (School district official, personal communication, June 05, 2003). The *School Amendment Act (2003)* gives school districts the ability to prioritize enrollment applications from catchment and non-catchment students, and siblings, according to specific criteria (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2003). Children may enroll in Kindergarten in the September of the year that they turn five years old (see Appendix on *School Act (1996) Division 2*) (SD No. 45, 2002b).

School and Programme Choice

This school district is focused on maintaining the current level of programming rather than expansion. The exception to this focus would be the expansion of the K Plus programme. Currently, special programmes such as IB, AP and the Hockey Academy (Super Achievers) are offered (School district official, personal communication, June 05, 2003).

The parents in the school district favour choice and have been supportive of the school district's initiatives so far. The community also appears to support more choice programmes. The school district and schools are looking at ways of moving into more choice programmes that meet the needs of the community and the teaching staffs at the schools. Due to the small size of the school district, the school district would like to exercise caution when implementing programmes so that they are successful and meet the needs of the community. Consideration is given to the need for balance between a high achieving school district and maintenance of the current level of achievement (School district official, personal communication, June 05, 2003).

Enrollment Criteria

Students who apply to specific programmes within the school district must meet all programme requirements and will take part in a selection process appropriate for the programme (SD No., n.d.-c, International Baccalaureate section). The International Baccalaureate programme is an example of a programme that has admissions criteria. Advertising brochures welcome applications from students who live within and outside of the West Vancouver school district (SD No. 45, n.d.-d). Foreign students may enroll in the school district, subject to regulations under the Immigration Canada and School District No. 45 policy (SD No. 45, 2002b).

Available Information Regarding Choice Options

Information about programme offerings is printed in the local media on the north shore (in West and North Vancouver) and brochures are made available to the parents and students. There is also a communication officer in the school district office (School district official, personal communication, June 05, 2003). The Board of School Trustees and School District office are currently holding discussions regarding the need to assess how parents and students are using information sources. One concern is that different types of media have associated costs (School district official, personal communication, June 05, 2003).

Local Programme Development

The Hockey Academy, Super Achievers and K Plus are all examples of locally developed programmes that are responding to community support and interest in public education. Parents, business leaders and community members support the efforts of local students and these community members advocate for new and innovative educational practices. As an example, the Board of School Trustees approved the K-Plus programme to meet the needs of the youngest students in the school district (SD No. 45, n.d.-b).

The development of new district programmes that meet the needs of the community is encouraged. *School District Policy 7.160* supports the desire to provide an innovative delivery of programmes and services (SD No. 45, n.d.-c, Policy section).

Programme Choice

A recent reconfiguration in the school district has enabled three schools to offer International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced Placement (AP) and French Immersion (SD No. 45, 2002b).

A.C.C.E.S.S. This is an alternate programme that helps children who do not fit into the regular school system to complete the requirements for graduation from high school (SD No. 45, 2002b). There is an enrollment maximum of 40 students.

Advanced Placement (AP). This programme is available at three secondary schools. It enables students in Grades 10 – 12 to complete college-level studies and to receive credit, advanced placement or both from colleges or universities that participate in the AP programme. Completion of the AP exam is required in order to receive course credits (SD No. 45, District Programs section). The student must pay a resource fee costing from \$20 to \$75 per course (SD No. 45, n.d.-c, Advanced Placement section). AP is offered in two secondary schools.

Computer Immersion (Grade 8 & 9). One secondary school enrolls students who use their laptop computers as learning tools. This opportunity facilitates and enhances the student's studies in academic subjects and while the student uses the library (School district official, personal communication, May 26, 2003).

French Immersion and Late French Immersion. Three schools share the responsibility for this programme. Late immersion students are eventually integrated with early immersion students (SD No. 45, n.d. c, 2002b). Immersion programmes are designed for students whose first language is a language other than French. Parents do not need to be able to speak French (SD No. 45, n.d.-c, Late French Immersion section). Early French Immersion (K and Grade 1) and late French Immersion (Grade 6) are both offered at one elementary school.

Early Immersion at the Kindergarten and Grade One level helps students whose primary language is not French to develop functional bilingualism (SD No. 45, n.d.-a). Students may continue in French Immersion at one secondary school, and if the requisite number of courses are taken in French, may be eligible for a Bilingual Dogwood certificate upon graduation in addition to the regular Dogwood [graduation certificate] (School district official, personal communication, May 26, 2003). Secondary immersion is from Grades 8 – 12 and focuses on the continued expansion of the student's language skills and support for the student's intellectual growth (SD No. 45, n.d.-a).

Hockey Academy. Male and female students in Grades 8 – 12 with intermediate to advanced levels of ability playing hockey, and an interest to improve their skill level, may enroll in this programme. It is offered in one secondary school and may be taken in the afternoon after the student completes academic studies in the morning (School district official, personal communication, May 26, 2003).

International Baccalaureate (IB). This is an internationally recognized pre-university programme that provides a broad and challenging high school curriculum. The IB Diploma is recognized as an admissions credential in universities worldwide. These universities give credit and/or advanced placement for IB course credits. The student pays the fees for each course selected. IB is offered in one secondary school (SD No. 45, n.d.-c, International Baccalaureate section).

K PLUS Programme (formerly CHILD). This is a fee-based afternoon half-day learning opportunity. It is currently offered in six schools and builds on the foundations skills learned in the government funded half-day kindergarten programme. Aboriginal and ESL students and children with special needs may attend provincially funded kindergartens full day. Children attend a three or five day per week play-based learning programme that was developed to meet the needs of the community and is exclusive to this school district (SD No. 45, 2002; SD No. 45, K Plus section). Registration is based on space availability and is on a first come, first serve basis.

This programme was introduced in three elementary schools in September 2000. Within a year this programme was expanded to five elementary schools and is increasing in size (SD No. 45, n.d.-b).

District-wide Programmes

Career Programmes. This programme includes career preparation and work experience for students in Grade 11 or 12. Classroom theory is combined with a minimum of 100 hours of work experience in the community. Students develop job skills and gain practical workplace experience (SD No. 45, 2002b).

Challenge. In exceptional circumstances, students will be allowed to challenge grade 11 and 12 courses. The student may receive course credit without taking the course if he/she can demonstrate the level of achievement required by provincial or local curriculum (as per Ministry Policy Circular #96-04 and the Ministry Handbook of Procedures) (SD No. 45, n.d.-c, Policy section).

English as a Second Language (ESL). ESL is available for students who are normally resident in the community and whose parents or legal guardians are residents (SD No. 45, 2002b).

Home Education. The school board will establish procedures in support of the School Act and its regulations regarding home schooling. Parents are entitled to register their child with the neighbourhood school, or another school in the school district. Evaluation and assessment of the student is overseen by teaching staff at the school (SD No. 45, n.d.-c, Policy section).

International Exchange Programme. Students in three secondary schools may apply to take part in an Asia-Pacific or Scandinavian exchange programme. During the past seven years, 34 students have studied in Japan for one year (SD No. 45, 2002); (School district official, personal communication, June 5, 2003).

International Student Programme. This programme supports cultural enrichment in the schools and promotes a deeper understanding of other cultures and countries. Fee-paying students from other countries are eligible to apply, subject to regulations under the Immigration Canada and School District #45 policy. Students pay a \$13,500 annual fee, which is paid by the family (SD No. 45, 2002b).

Student Support Services. These services provide identification, consultation, and direct teaching to students with special needs. Funding is provided by the Ministry of Education, and in part by the Ministry of Children and Families and private agencies that provide support to youth. Provincial regulations dictate the level of funding and guidelines for expectations regarding programme operations (SD No. 45, 2002b).

Super Achievers. This programme supports the efforts of students who compete or perform at a provincial or international level in the arts or sports. The student may arrange his or her timetable to include training time in their specialty in the afternoon, several times a week (School district official, personal communication, May 26, 2003).

School Choice

The Early Immersion programme (Grade K – 7) is located in Ecole Pauline Johnson, a single-track (French only) immersion school (SD No. 45, n.d.-a).

Accountability Measures

The Accountability Contract of 2002-2003 focused on three goals: an improved Dogwood Completion Rate (High School); a focus on personal safety and respect for others, including social responsibility; and a continued focus on intellectual development and reading. Administrators are involved in training sessions that look at the use of assessment data to plan for instruction; and accountability to support improvements in student learning (SD No. 45, 2002).

The School Board goals of 2000 - 2002 include a commitment to “ensure a quality system by reviewing [their] achievement results on an annual basis with a view to attaining community expectations and excellence” (SD No. 45, 2002b, p. 3).

The School Plans involves the analysis of a variety of ways to gather data. These ideas have come from the parent group, working with the school staff, who develop their own accountability measures. The school district looks at the data and makes plans around what it needs to improve (School district official, personal communication, June 05, 2003).

School District No. 45 takes part in District Reviews conducted by the Ministry of Education. The District Review is available on the school Web site.

Enrollment Data

This school district uses the Win School software programme to track enrollment across the schools (Chancery Student, 2000, April 3). Enrollment is tracked for schools and for specific programmes, such as the Hockey Academy or the International Baccalaureate programme (School district official, personal communication, June 05, 2003).

Funding Provisions

Some of the programmes of choice have related fees. The Hockey Academy, for example, charges fees to pay for ice time and special coaches. This type of funding comes from sources outside of the Ministry's per pupil formula of \$5,308. The student must pay for costs that are associated with specialty programmes (School district official, personal communication, June 05, 2003).

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Appendix

School Act (1996) Part 6: School Boards (Division 2: Powers and Duties, 74.1 (6))

- (5) If a board determines that space and facilities are available at the school in which the educational program is made available, a person whose application was received by the board by the date established under subsection (4) is entitled to enroll in that educational program in the following descending order or priority:
- (a) a catchment area child who, in the previous school year, attended the school at which the educational program is made available;
 - (b) a catchment area child
 - (c) a non-catchment area child;
 - (d) a non-school district child

Source: (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1996, pp. 52-53).

APPENDIX B. 3 MANITOBA

Final Report: Manitoba Education and Youth (MEY)

By Brian Barth

This report provides a concise account of selected policies and practices in Manitoba Education. The first section focuses on the procedures of accessing schools of choice, and the categories of school and program options. The second section addresses practices of accountability used by Manitoba schools, school divisions, and the Manitoba government. Following this is a treatment of the public dissemination of material on school choice and accountability. Five-year enrolment statistics are presented for the Winnipeg school divisions, the Francophone school division, and the use of home schooling. Finally, a summary explains the relationship between school choice and accountability in Manitoba, and spells out the generally accepted purposes of these policy frameworks.

School and Program Choice

Manitoba Education and Youth (MEY) established policies to allow for school choice during the 1997-98 school year. In short, the province of Manitoba allows school choice with some conditions. The document *Schools of Choice Frequently Asked Questions* (electronic source, n.d.) explains that students in Manitoba may enroll in schools of choice unless:

- space is not available,
- special equipment or physical facilities required by the student are not available,
- enrolling the student would be detrimental to the continuity of his or her education,
- the program is not suited to the age, ability, or aptitude of the student,
- enrolling the student would be detrimental to order, discipline and well-being of the students in the school, or
- proper notification is not provided by the parent or student

Students may also be refused attendance if the program requires a specific academic standing not met by the applicant.

School choice is intended by MEY to be an avenue of flexible alternatives rather than a catalyst for competition among and schools and school divisions. Schools are to equally serve the students in their local communities. Whether parents seek specific programs, school environments, or other conveniences, school choice is set up to accommodate diverse needs without undermining the community school.

MEY does not provide transportation to students who attend schools of choice. As well, no school division or other organization is required to provide transport to such students. That said, MEY does not restrict the provision of transportation to and from schools of choice. Each school and school division is free to provide this service, but without funding from MEY.

While funding for students moves from the home school to the school of choice, funding for special equipment and accommodations does not. MEY does not restrict the funding of special needs students by schools and school divisions, nor does it require this.

Admission to Schools of Choice

In order to attend a school of choice, the parents of a student must submit a written application or applications (parents may apply to as many schools of choice as they wish) on or before May 15 to ensure enrolment in September of the same year. The receiving school board must notify the applicant of acceptance or refusal no later than June 30 of the same year.

Schools will enroll students in the following priority sequence:

- students designated to attend that school,
- students residing in the school division, and
- other Manitoba students

(Schools of Choice Frequently Asked Questions, electronic source, n.d.)

Once a student has been accepted to attend a school of choice that is not the designated school or is outside of the student's home school division, the student is considered *designated* to the receiving school. The student need not re-apply in successive years of enrollment. Acceptance of a student to a school of choice does not guarantee the acceptance of that student's siblings—additional application must be made for each additional child.

If a student is refused admittance to a school of choice, there is an option for appeal. The school division containing the school of choice is the final arbiter (within the framework of legislation and regulation) in the decision to admit a student to a school. Parents may approach the school division administration for an appeal.

Once choice has been exercised within the above deadlines, and once the student has been admitted to the school of choice, a *transfer fee* will be paid by the home school division. This transfer fee is sent automatically on the student's behalf to the school of choice by the home school division. A student may return during the school year to the home school division. In such a case, a portion of the transfer fee may be returned to the home school division at the receiving school division's discretion.

International students (foreign students who are not landed immigrants) may apply to attend Manitoba schools. If acceptance is given, an international student must pay fees to attend their school of choice.

Age and Enrolment

Children in Manitoba are *required* to attend school in the fall term if they are seven years or older on December 31 of the same year. Children are *entitled* to attend school in the fall term if they are six years of age on December 31 of the same year. Students can attend school until they are either 21 on the last school day of June, or have been awarded a graduation diploma (The Public Schools Act: 2003).

Private Schools

The Ministry supports private schools in legislation and regulation. The Education Administration Act (2003) states that a “**private school**” means any school, other than a public school, which provides a curriculum and a standard of education equivalent to that provided by the public schools, but does not include any home or place to which clause 262(b) of *The Public Schools Act* applies.”

Home Schools

The Ministry of Education requires the parent(s) of any student attending a home school to give official notification. This notification should include the name and birth date of the student, the name of the school and the school division that would normally be attended by the student, and an outline of his/her grade level and educational program. Finally, parents are held accountable by the Ministry inasmuch as they are required to submit periodic (twice per school year) progress reports. These reports must contain information requested by a formal schedule provided by the Ministry (J. Shaw; personal communication).

Francophone Schools

Français schools operate in the Francophone school division of Manitoba (*Division Scolaire Franco Manitobaine (DSFM)*). Francophone schools must provide the same core curricula and submit the same accountability evidence as their English counterparts in Manitoba. The DSFM is a province wide school division. There are five DSFM schools in Winnipeg, they are all located in the Louis Riel School Division (Schools in Manitoba 2003, Manitoba Education and Youth; 2003).

Programming: General

Manitoba offers three general school programs to students:

- English (available from K-S4)
- Français (available in DSFM schools)
- French Immersion (available from K-S4)
- Technology education (available from S1-S4)

These programs are centered around core and complementary curricula.

Required Programming

Renewing Education: New Directions, A Blueprint For Action was released by the Ministry in 1994. This document makes curriculum requirements for grades K-S4. The required subjects are divided as follows:

- Foundation Skill Areas (integrated at all grade levels)
 - Literacy and communication
 - Problem solving
 - Human relations
 - Technology
- Core Subject Areas
 - Language arts (English and Français)
 - Mathematics
 - Sciences
 - Social studies
- Complementary core subject areas
 - The arts
 - Physical education

Course Options

The Ministry of Education supports the offering of several course options. Basic subject areas are broken down into those developed by the department (e.g., English language arts), those approved by the department (e.g. special language credits other than French), those developed externally (e.g. International Baccalaureate Program), and those developed locally and registered with the department (e.g., courses developed by individual schools).

Further programs in categories of technology are supported by the Ministry. These categories are the *Senior Years Apprenticeship option*, the *Business and Marketing Education program*, *Tech-Ed Dual Credit option (University or College)*, and the *Technological/Vocational option*. The Technological/Vocational option is divided further into clusters including heavy and light industries, and human services.

Courses developed by individual schools are offered largely at the senior level. A student at the senior level may receive elective credit from at least four of these courses in a year.

French Language Programming

French Immersion program choices are supported by the Ministry of Education. The goal of the French Immersion program is to develop functional bilingualism in students whose first language is not French. This goal is accomplished by the provision of instruction in French (100% at Kindergarten, 75-80% in Grades 1-6, and 50-80% from Grades 7-S4).

The Francophone school division offers programs exclusively in French and is province wide. As mentioned earlier, the school division is subject to the requirements and regulations in The Public Schools Act, and The Public Schools Amendment Act.

Programs for Students With Exceptional Needs.

MEY accommodates disabled students using a model of inclusion and integration. Students with special needs are educated in the mainstream classroom setting with their non-disabled peers. Disabled students are educated separately only in cases where specific accommodations are needed.

The province of Manitoba has guidelines for programs of need for students who are blind/visually impaired, deaf/hard of hearing, and students who are cognitively, physically, and developmentally impaired). The *Student Services Branch* collaborates with the various school divisions to provide special programming for students with the needs mentioned above.

Through consultation with speech language pathologists, occupational and physical therapists, social workers, psychologists, and guidance counselors, the *Student Services Branch* helps individual schools and school divisions create and implement their programs of need. These programs often take the form of an Individual Education Plan (IEP). An IEP is developed using a team approach that includes teachers, clinicians and parents. No IEP is undertaken without parental consent.

Accountability

The *Public Schools Act* requires school boards to establish written procedures for collecting, storing, and retrieving student information (such as demographic information, grades recorded and courses taken). Parents and students are allowed access to these evaluative records, and are entitled to reports from the school board at least twice per year.

Evaluation

The *Provincial Assessment Program* makes provisions for support and advice on formative assessment, and conducts summative student assessment on provincial curricula. These data are used to certify student achievement and to analyze the effectiveness of the Kindergarten-Senior 4 system.

Standards tests exist for students in the programs of English, Francais, and French Immersion. Results from these tests are distributed in reports to school divisions and schools. Departmental tests are administered at various stages and frequencies during the school year within the K-S4 system. Tests and examination methods are provided by MEY, and administered by each school division.

The following is an excerpt from MEY's online resources (Assessment and Evaluation: Overview of the Provincial Assessment Program).

- The department provides assessment materials and professional learning opportunities for teachers in support of the assessment of critical competencies in Reading, Lecture and Numeracy/Notions de calcul for students at the beginning of Grade 3.
- Optional standards tests are developed and administered annually in Grade 6 English Language Arts/Français langue première, Français langue seconde-Immersion, English LA-Immersion. The decision to participate in these tests is made by school divisions. These tests are locally marked and results may count up to 20% toward the student's final grade.
- Optional standards tests are developed and administered annually in Senior 1 Mathematics/Mathématiques. The decision to participate in these tests is made by school divisions. These tests are locally marked and results may count up to 25% toward the student's final grade.
- Mandatory standards tests are developed and administered each semester in Senior 4 English Language Arts/Français langue première, Français langue seconde-Immersion and Senior 4 Mathematics/Mathématiques (Pre-calculus/pré-calcul, Applied/appliquées, and Consumer/consommateur). These tests are locally marked and results count for 30% of the student's final grade.

Manitoba is also involved in national and international testing programs in education such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Youth In Transition Survey (YITS), and the School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP), under the guidance of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC).

Reporting

MEY publishes annual reports that profile student success. The document *A Profile of Student Learning: Outcomes in Manitoba 2002* reports on performance statistics for Manitoba students on school, national, and international assessments. High school completion, and grade retention and promotion are also reported in the document.

Promotion and Dissemination

In the Education Agenda for Student Success 2002-2006 (2002), The Ministry establishes six priorities for action:

1. Improved outcomes.
2. Strong links between schools, families and communities.
3. Strong school planning and reporting.
4. Professional learning opportunities for educators.
5. Strong pathways among secondary and post-secondary schools, and work
6. Links between policy and practice with research and evidence.

Several actions have been implemented as a result of these set priorities. In terms of accountability, these actions include:

- The distribution of research on promising programs and good practice.
- Each November, the Ministry reviews school plans and provides constructive feedback.
- Schools and divisions are expected to publicly report on a range of student success measures.

Dissemination on School Choice

Options for school choice are disseminated by MEY to parents and consumers through a variety of media. Electronic and print documents are the most common examples. Aside from the regulations and legislation that are publicly available, there are materials that explain school and program choice in a more accessible format. One example is the Schools of Choice Frequently Asked Questions (2003). This document outlines the information parents must know if they decide to send their children to schools of choice.

A second example, Schools in Manitoba 2003 (2003) is an inventory of all Manitoba schools (public and private). It includes school locations, divisions, numbers of pupils, teacher/student ratios, language of instruction, and programs offered. This document is available online or in print.

Enrolment Statistics

Provincial enrollment statistics for the use of schools of choice are not available to the public from MEY. This information may be accessible however through application procedures provided under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

FRAME reports (Financial Reporting and Accounting in Manitoba Education) are prepared annually by MEY. These documents are available online and in print from the Manitoba government. The *FRAME* reports are comprehensive collections of school division enrolment, funding and program use. The table below shows a cursory summary of the Winnipeg Urban school Division enrolments for the past five years.

School Division or Organization	2002/2003 Enrolment	2001/2002 Enrolment	2000/2001 Enrolment	1999/2000 Enrolment	1998/1999 Enrolment
WINNIPEG*	32217	32248	32193	31689	31456
ST. JAMES – ASSINIBOIA*	9458	9556	9684	9594	9482
ASSINIBOINE SOUTH*	6679	6762	6763	6899	6314
FORT GARRY *	7545	7412	7411	7434	7315
ST. VITAL*	9204	9179	9180	9320	9989
ST. BONIFACE*	6206	6172	6173	6051	5920
TRANSCONA – SPRINGFIELD*	7907	8049	8738	8683	8507
SEVEN OAKS*	8876	8888	8910	9036	9008
D.S.F.M. (Francophone School Division)*	4435	4478	4477	4524	4469
HOME SCHOOLS** (Provincial Enrolment)	1342	1308	1242	1167	1034

*FRAME Reports, Manitoba Education and Youth; 1998-2003.

**Home Schooling Office, MEY; personal communication.

In the autumn of 2000, Manitoba underwent school division amalgamation. The changes relevant to the above table are as follows:

- St. Boniface and St. Vital became *Louis Riel*
- Fort Garry and Assiniboine South became *Pembina Trails*
- Transcona-Springfield and River East became *River East Transcona*

The FRAME reports from which the table statistics were taken were assembled pre-amalgamation (Sept. 30/2002).

Summary

Manitoba provides citizens with school choice options that are flexible, accommodating, if not totally free and unrestricted. The purpose of school choice in Manitoba is to allow parents and students access to diverse program options, school environments, and other conveniences.

Accountability in Manitoba education focuses on program development and assessment, and the monitoring and improvement of the K-S4 system. Moreover, accountability in Manitoba education is broad and comprehensive—inclusive of, but not exclusive to school choice.

It is the intention of MEY that each school in Manitoba adequately and effectively serve its local community. School choice is intended to foster co-operation among schools and school divisions. School choice is not intended to create competition among and between public schools and school divisions.

Because of the focus away from competition in Manitoba school choice, the relationship between choice and accountability must be clearly articulated. The purpose of accountability in Manitoba is broad. Parents and children in Manitoba are aided in attending schools they select. Accountability does not appear to be set up to aid parents and children in this selection. Parents and students can access some accountability information (in aggregate form). This information does not present schools and school divisions in a hierarchy of evaluative success.

Schools outside of the public system are treated in various ways depending on the level of funding they receive from the Manitoba government. While independent schools (and sometimes public schools) often promote themselves, this information is usually in the form of program advertisement and not evaluation scores.

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Final Report: Manitoba Independent Schools
By Brian Barth

Private schools in Manitoba are divided into two categories: *Funded Independent Schools*, and *Non-Funded Independent Schools*. There is a third category of non-public education, *Home Schooling*. This category is detailed in its own report for the SCA research.

Funded Independent Schools

For an independent school to be funded by the government of Manitoba, the following criteria must be met:

- At least two contiguous grades must be simultaneously offered between grade 1 and S4.
- Sufficient numbers of approved courses must be offered by the school, the school must use Manitoba curriculum and other associated material, and must use provincial assessment policies.
- A minimum of fifteen students must attend the school.
- The school must employ Manitoba certified teachers and a principal holding a Manitoba teaching certificate.
- A school building that meets all fire and health safety regulations in the community.
- A minimum of 190 teaching days (5.5 hours each) and 10 administration/professional development days, and adherence to the vacation and school days/hours regulations.
- An incorporated board of directors and an advisory committee with at least three parents of currently enrolled students.
- Exhaustive documentation of school information to Manitoba Education and Youth (MEY), including all financial audits conducted each fall.
- Submission of senior years students' marks to MEY.
- The submission of an education plan according to the specifications set by MEY for all public schools.

Funded Independent Schools in Manitoba may set their own fee schedules for attendees. The province funds approved schools according to a formula that takes into account the total full time enrolment and total operating expenditures of Manitoba public schools. A detailed explanation of this formula can be found in The Public Schools Act of Manitoba Regulation 267/97.

Funded Independent Schools operate under the umbrellas of several different organizations.

- *Archdiocese of Winnipeg Catholic Schools (Winnipeg)* (9 schools, 192 teachers, and 2,900 students)
- *Catholic Schools Commission (Winnipeg) (Formerly Archdiocese of St. Boniface and Ukrainian Archeparchy of Winnipeg Catholic Schools)* (8 schools, 111 teachers and 1,619 students)
- *The Gray Academy of Jewish Educators (Winnipeg)* (2 schools, 61 teachers, and 594 students).
- *Manitoba Federation of Independent Schools (Manitoba-wide)* (35 schools, 626 teachers and 8,051 students) This organization represents schools ranging across a variety of faiths and mandates.

The city of Winnipeg itself contains 27 Funded Independent Schools.

Essentially, Funded Independent Schools in Manitoba are managed under the same accountability framework used by MEY for all public schools.

Non-funded Independent Schools

Non-funded Independent Schools in Manitoba receive no funding from the Province, except for an annual \$50 per student textbook grant. Students in Non-funded Independent Schools are not necessarily taught MEY curricula, and are not necessarily instructed by teachers holding MEY teaching certificates.

Three major curricula are used in Manitoba Non-funded Independent schools:

- Church of God in Christ Curriculum (based in Anabaptist teachings)
- School of Tomorrow Curriculum (internationally used Christian curriculum)
- Christian Light Curriculum (based in Mennonite teachings)

Other curricula (such as Montessori) are also used in some Non-funded Independent Manitoba Schools.

In terms of accountability Non-funded Independent Schools in Manitoba are monitored by liaison staff from MEY. The liaison staff make certain that the Non-funded schools are offering adequate education. This monitoring is slightly less rigorous than that conducted on Home Schools.

References

- The Education Administration Act*, Continuing Consolidation of the Statutes of Manitoba c. E10. Consolidated to March 3/2003. Retrieved March 3/2003 from <http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/e010e.php>.
- Public Schools Act, Sections 1-270, Continuing Consolidation of the Statutes of Manitoba c. P250. Consolidated to March 3/2003. Retrieved March 3/2003 from http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/p250_2e.php
- Public Schools Act, Private Schools Grants Regulation (Nov. 24, 1997). Continuing Consolidation of the Statutes of Manitoba, Regulation 267/97.
- Manitoba Education and Youth (n.d.). *Funded Independent Schools*. Retrieved June 2003 from http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/sdds/indsch/funded_ind.html#Guidelines.
- Manitoba Education and Youth (n.d.). *Non-Funded Independent Schools*. Retrieved June 2003 from http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/sdds/indsch/non_fund_ind.html#top.
- Manitoba Education and Youth (2003). *Schools in Manitoba 2003*. Retrieved June 10/2003 from http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/schools/2003_mb_schools_book.pdf.

Final Report: Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) By Brian Barth

The Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) provides education to 15,517 students in 33 elementary and 18 secondary schools staffed by 1,026 teachers. English language, French Immersion, and Heritage language schools are among the options to students in the LRSD.

Choice

School choice is supported for resident student of the LRSD. Parents/guardians wishing to enroll their children in a division school other than that designated must submit a *School of Choice* application form to the principal of the receiving school before May 15th of the year when attendance will begin. The principal of the home school must also be notified of this application. If the application is approved (according to program suitability, available space, and other considerations), no fee is required.

Students not residing in LRSD may also apply to attend a school within the division boundaries. Such applications will be considered based on available space, appropriate programming, and the level of risk posed by the applicant to the health and safety of current students. Non-resident student fees must be paid to the school if the applicant is successful. For Canadian students, this is the provincial transfer fee, and the non-resident fee determined annually by LRSD.

International (VISA) student programs are promoted by the LRSD for foreign students wishing to attend a Canadian secondary school. Along with opportunities to enroll in standard courses, foreign students have access to English as a Second Language courses. Foreign students must pay a *Foreign Residual Rate* based on the school division's per student costs.

LRSD provides French Immersion programs to all students living within division boundaries. Like French Immersion programs in other Manitoba schools, the French Language is taught throughout the educational program of students choosing this option.

Aside from the curricula programs required by the Provincial Government, LRSD provides the option for the creation (by teachers, parents and students) of alternative courses at the senior level.

Exceptional Needs

LRSD provides accommodation to students who have one or more disability, or who are identified as gifted. For students with disabilities, an integrative approach is taken. This approach attempts to include the child in regular classes, programs, and activities. Individual Education Plans (IEP) are created by a team including teachers, support staff, parents and clinicians. An IEP may adjust curricular material, provide access to services, or add adaptations to the existing educational environment. Parents are notified of changes and details throughout the process.

In special cases, summer programs are also offered for students with special needs.

Accountability

LRSD has extensive policies regarding the assessment, evaluation, and reporting of both student and program performances. Assessment of students is conducted in accordance with Provincial guidelines, and is reported to parents/guardians, and to school and division administration. Program assessment is carried out to evaluate the effectiveness and validity of curricular material.

Dissemination of information regarding the LRSD is available online. This information does not contain rates and scores of evaluations. However, minutes from the LRSD board of trustees, budget and planning information, schools lists and policy manuals (of each legacy school division; St. Boniface and St. Vital).

References

- Manitoba Education and Youth (2003). *Schools in Manitoba 2003*. Retrieved June 10/2003 from http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/schools/2003_mb_schools_book.pdf.
- St. Boniface School Division (n.d.). *St. Boniface School Division Policy Manual*, Retrieved April 2003 from: <http://www.rielsd.org/svsdpolicy/>.
- St. Vital School Division (September 2001). *St. Vital School Division Policy Manual*, Retrieved April 2003 from: <http://www.rielsd.org/svsdpolicy/>.

Final Report: Pembina Trails Division (PTSD) By Brian Barth

The Pembina Trails school division (PTSD) employs 927 teachers in 29 elementary and 14 secondary schools. 14,363 students attend schools in English and French Immersion (Schools in Manitoba 2003).

Choice

With a few conditions (set out by Manitoba Education and Youth) school choice is permitted by the PTSD. Generally, transportation is not provided by the school division to those students attending schools of choice outside of their catchment area. The one exception is students with special needs—these students are always provided transportation.

Students using English as a Second Language (ESL) programming are accommodated in the PTSD. Roughly one ESL teacher is provided for each 70 students using the programming. International non-resident students may attend PTSD schools after paying fees. Roughly 125 students use the international student programming per year. About 66% of these students use the ESL programming.

Information regarding the movement of students among and between school divisions and catchment areas is not available to the general public.

Exceptional Needs

Special needs programming in the PTSD is focused on inclusion in, and integration with the mainstream programming. In some cases, ‘clustering’ is used to accommodate students with special needs in a single classroom. PTSD hires clinicians from the professions of occupational and physical therapy, speech and language pathology. Other professionals such as counselors and resource teachers are also hired by the school division to accommodate students with special needs.

Gifted students are provided with programming at all grades. Gifted programming takes the form of in-class enrichment and group pull-outs. Instruction for gifted students is funded at a rate of one teacher for every 1000 students in the school division.

Non-resident students with special needs may attend schools in the PTSD. However, funding for special equipment or staff does not transfer from the sending school division to the receiving one.

Accountability

PTSD supports the administration of a variety of student performance examinations. Early childhood development testing, career aptitude testing, and national standards testing are conducted at different stages in the education of students.

Evaluation results are disseminated to parents through report cards and meetings with teachers and other school staff. Aggregate data from performance evaluations is used to inform programming and instruction decisions.

Parent, community and student surveys are conducted by consultants hired by the PTSD.

Information on budgets, planning, meeting minutes, and programming is available both on-line and in print from the PTSD. More than likely due to division amalgamation the on-line resources are currently silent on some topics.

References

The Assiniboine South School Division No. 3 (n.d.). *Policy Manual*, Retrieved April 2003 from: <http://www.assd3.org/policy/index.htm>.

Fort Garry School Division (n.d.). *Policy Manual*, Retrieved April 2003 from: <http://www.fgsd5.ca/divisional%20Info/policy.htm>.

Manitoba Education and Youth (2003). *Schools in Manitoba 2003*. Retrieved June 10/2003 from http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/schools/2003_mb_schools_book.pdf.

Final Report: River East Transcona School Division (RET)
By Brian Barth

Choice

The River East Transcona school division employs 1,240 teachers and serves 18,423 students in 36 elementary and 14 secondary schools (Schools in Manitoba 2003). RET permits school choice. In this regard, RET follows the legislation and regulation created by Manitoba Education and Youth.

Application to schools of choice must be approved by the principal of the receiving school. Upon acceptance, the principal of the designated school must be notified. Admission to schools of choice in RET is on a year-to-year basis.

Students enrolled in a school of choice are not typically transported by the school division. The exceptions are students enrolled in language-based instruction—if their school is outside of their home catchment area, they are bused.

RET offers a robust international education program for foreign students who wish to experience a Canadian education. The international education program involves English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, and the option of home-stay with a Winnipeg family. Foreign students must pay all fees for the international education programs. The ESL programming is also available without cost to students residing in the RET school division.

Languages other than English are taught in immersion, bilingual, and core contexts in the RET school division. The following language course and program options are available: French, German, Ukrainian, Spanish and Japanese.

Information regarding the movement of students among and between school divisions and catchment areas is not available to the general public.

Exceptional Needs

The RET serves its community with the philosophy of equity, recognizing that students have a diversity of needs and gifts. The school division contracts its clinicians from the *Child Guidance Clinic* (of the Winnipeg school division). In addition, resource teachers are available to all students in the school division with relevant needs.

Other supports for students with exceptional challenges include peer tutor programs. At the high school level, students may offer their services as free tutors to their peers in exchange for course credit.

While the RET school division does not offer gifted programming per se, there are other academic options available. Three schools in the division offer International Baccalaureate and Advanced placement programs for secondary students.

Accountability

School audits are carried out by the RET. However, as a result of the recent school division amalgamation, the process of harmonizing legacy division practice is currently under way. Currently, financial statements and budgets are available to the general public on line and in print.

Student evaluation at the school division level consists of the administration of report cards. Other forms of evaluation vary from school to school within the division. These forms of evaluation are broken into the following three categories:

1. Performance assessments focus on student assignments, portfolios, and presentations.
2. Classroom validations include student learning logs, observation, and conferences.
3. Examinations including Provincial standards tests, and classroom tests and quizzes.

Results of student evaluation and assessment are used in the reporting of student performance to parents, and in the planning of lessons and the needs of individual students.

Reporting of student performance is conducted at each grade level; three times per year at the elementary stage, four times per year at the junior high stage, and six times per year at the senior high stage. Upon receipt of report cards, parents and students are invited to attend conferences with their students' instructors.

Dissemination of information such as policy manuals, promotional materials, program guides, and meeting minutes is thorough. The RET website (<http://www.resd.mb.ca/index.html>) provides extensive information and contacts regarding many topics. All of the information available on line can be requested in print from the school division.

References

River East-Transcona School Division (n.d.). *River East School Division No. 9 Policy Manual*, Retrieved March 2003 from: http://www.resd.mb.ca/resd_hs/about/docs/resdpolicy.pdf.

River East-Transcona School Division (n.d.). *Student Services Department Handbook*, Retrieved March 2003 from: http://www.resd.mb.ca/resd_hs/stu_svcs/sss_manual.pdf.

Manitoba Education and Youth (2003). *Schools in Manitoba 2003*. Retrieved June 10/2003 from http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/schools/2003_mb_schools_book.pdf.

Final Report: St. James Assiniboia School Division (SJA)
By Brian Barth

The St. James Assiniboia school division (SJA) serves 9,507 students in 27 schools. Employing 623 teachers, the SJA is home to both English and French Immersion schools (Schools in Manitoba 2003).

Choice

The SJA permits school choice in accordance with Manitoba Education and Youth (MEY). Beyond the MEY policy, school principals have discretionary power to admit resident and non-resident students to schools outside of their catchment areas. Non-resident students with special needs may attend schools of choice in the SJA. However, funding for special equipment must come from the sending school division.

Transportation is available to resident students from kindergarten through grade six who live more than one km. from their designated school. Transportation may also be purchased from the SJA for a fee by parents with students not otherwise eligible.

In addition to standard curricula required by the Province of Manitoba, SJA offers several other program options. The Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs are advanced academic options for secondary students.

The SJA invites international students to attend its schools after paying all applicable fees. Home stay programs can also be organized through the SJA.

Information regarding the movement of students among and between school divisions and catchment areas is not available to the general public.

Exceptional Needs

The SJA Student Support Services department provides a wide range of accommodations and resources to parents and students. A variety of clinicians and other professionals are employed by the school division to provide general support programs and special needs programs. Special needs programs include:

- Language Development
- Program for Employment Preparation
- Program for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing
- C.L.A.S.S. (Behavior Program)
- Program for Students With Special Needs
- Second Start (Alternative Program for Teens)

Support services are available to all students who require them. In some cases this requirement is determined in a clinical framework, in other cases it is not.

Accountability

School principals are mandated by the SJA to develop, in consultation with parents and teachers, assessment and evaluation procedures. The following aid materials are used in the development of evaluation procedures:

1. Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada, (Joint Advisory Committee, Edmonton, 1993).
2. Student Evaluation: A Guide for Teacher Reflection (North York Board of Education)

In addition to the above procedure requirements, each school in the SJA must have a five-year education plan available to the school division.

Division wide testing is conducted by SJA in order to accomplish several goals; to assist in student and teacher evaluation, to provide information to the general public, to ensure curricula adherence, and to improve programs and delivery of programs. All assessment instruments are approved by Manitoba Education, Training and Youth. Along with these instruments, SJA uses the provincial Manitoba Education and Training examinations and assessments and the National School Indicators Program.

Graduate, staff, and community surveys are conducted every three years by the school division. Also, schools themselves conduct parent surveys every two years. The survey data is available to parents and schools.

Annual financial audits are conducted each year by the SJA. The firm Price-Waterhouse audits the entire school division.

Public dissemination happens in the form of newspaper bulletins (4 or 5 times per year), and hard copy materials. As well, SJA provides online and print material regarding policy, curriculum, services, and choice options and procedures.

References

St. James Assiniboia School Division (n.d.). *St. James Assiniboia School Division Policy Manual*, Retrieved April 2003 from: <http://polmanual.sjsd.net/PolX/FMPro>.

Manitoba Education and Youth (2003). *Schools in Manitoba 2003*. Retrieved June 10/2003 from http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/schools/2003_mb_schools_book.pdf.

Final Report: Seven Oaks School Division (SOSD) By Brian Barth

The Seven Oaks School Division (SOSD) provides education to 8,847 students in 17 elementary and 3 high schools staffed by 588 teachers. English language, French Immersion, and Heritage language schools are among the options to students in the WSD.

Choice

School choice is promoted by the SOSD. Manitoba provincial legislation permits students to attend schools of choice within and between school divisions. Although the provincial legislation does not require funds transfer for special equipment required by students attending schools of choice, the SOSD will accept such students, on a case-by-case basis, and absorb any additional costs.

Promotion of school choice in the SOSD focuses on the strength of each and every school to both provide for its local community, and to allow flexibility to parents and students seeking alternative options.

International students are welcome to attend schools in the SOSD (with fees), but active recruitment of such students is not carried out. ESL programming for students in SOSD schools is typically provided in-class by the regular teacher.

The Seven Oaks School Division offers after school Heritage Language Programs in Filipino, Polish, Italian, Portuguese, Punjabi, Spanish, German, Ojibwe and Cree, during the 2002 – 2003 school year. This program is offered free to students from the Seven Oaks School Division; applications from non-resident students will be accepted with a charge of \$100.00 for the school year. Transportation is offered to students who do not live in the catchment area of the heritage language school at which they attend after school courses.

Exceptional Needs

The SOSD provides full school choice to disabled students inside and outside of the school division boundaries. Accommodations for these students are made on a case-by-case basis.

In cases where students are unable to attend school as a result of injury or illness, the SOSD provides one hour of free tutoring per day to the student. This initiative is aimed at not only maintaining the child's education, but at maintaining a connection between the child and the school community.

The SOSD has a broad view of the 'gifted' student. In other words, the school division is focused on the fact that all students have unique gifts, and that all gifts must be fostered. All students are challenged in the classroom in order to accommodate their requirements for individual excellence. No pull-out gifted education programs are offered. No formal testing is performed at the school division level.

Accountability

SOSD administers only those standards tests that are mandatory (the tests provided by Manitoba Education and Youth). High school exams are not division-based. Students are also assessed through the maintenance of portfolios of their work. There is no cross-school comparison or broadcast of student performances on evaluative measures.

Focus groups are held by the SOSD to help in program planning and assessment. Such groups include parents, students and teachers. Student-lead conferences are also held on individual bases with parents and teachers. Finally, schools in the SOSD offer orientation days for parents and students.

The SOSD participates in all mandatory auditing required by the province of Manitoba.

Various forms of information are disseminated by the school division. Each school distributed newsletters and organizes one-on-one meetings with parents. Each school must also provide a school plan to the SOSD regarding programming and enrolment. Finally, some schools have prepared profiles that can be viewed by parents and students.

All of the above disseminated material is available in hard copy from the school division. The online availability of material for SOSD is relatively limited. No policy manual exists online, and the available hard copy policy manual is partly outdated regarding issues of school choice. At the same time, the SOSD website does offer detailed information on selected policies, the availability of student and parent supports, and other promotional material.

References

Seven Oaks School Division (n.d.). *Seven Oaks School Division Website*, Consulted April 2003 at: <http://www.7oaks.org/>.

Manitoba Education and Youth (2003). *Schools in Manitoba 2003*. Retrieved June 10/2003 from http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/schools/2003_mb_schools_book.pdf.

Final Report: Winnipeg School Division (WSD)
By Brian Barth

The Winnipeg School Division (WSD) provides education to 34,173 students in 82 schools staffed by 2,445 teachers. English language, French Immersion, and Heritage language schools are among the options to students in the WSD.

Choice

School choice in the WSD operates under the legislation of Manitoba Education and Youth (MEY). Limited space is the most common reason that children are refused admittance to schools of choice. Provincial funding follows students in and out of the WSD when attending schools of choice.

Notwithstanding the MEY legislation, the Winnipeg School Division reserves the right to withdraw its acceptance of non-resident students and to withdraw such students if in the opinion of the principal:

- i. the student fails to meet the behavioral expectations for students at that school;
- ii. the educational requirements of the student result in the need to provide additional supports to the student during the course of the school year;
- iii. there is a significant increase in costs to the Division during the course of the school year.

Transportation is offered to students who attend schools of choice due to the presence of specific programs. Special needs students are also transported to schools of choice outside of their catchment areas. No transportation is provided for those students using schools of choice due to personal preference. As well, no transportation is given to students residing outside of the WSD that attend a school of choice within the school division.

English as a Second Language services are offered for foreign students in WSD. Landed and non-landed immigrant students have the same rights to attend schools in WSD as do other resident students.

In the secondary years (S1-S4) students are required (as in all Winnipeg area school divisions) by Manitoba Education and Youth to complete 28 course credits to graduate. In the WSD, students may spread these credits over more than four years. This option is intended to allow for such things as serious engagement in athletics, full or part time work, child-rearing, or other commitments. After graduation, or until age 22, students in WSD can enroll in 3 extra course credits.

Exceptional Needs

One on one division-wide assessment of students is provided from kindergarten to grade five. This assessment is called CAP, or The Comprehensive Assessment Program. This assessment focuses on five areas, and, after parents are consulted, it can be used in referrals to clinicians. While most schools in the WSD are wheelchair accessible, programming availability at specific schools for special needs students sometimes limits the universe of options available for school choice. There are no special education schools in the WSD—all special needs students are instructed at mainstream schools, and are integrated into mainstream programming where possible.

Gifted students are integrated into regular programming with their peers. On occasion, gifted students are pulled out of class in groups for special educational experiences. Other academically talented students have the option of the International Baccalaureate (offered at Kelvin High School only). As well, the AP (advanced placement) option allows students to take courses recognized by post-secondary institutions. AP is available at all high schools in WSD

Accountability

WSD policy requires assessment of student performance through the use of standards tests, Norm Reference Tests, in-class observation, and summative and formative assessment. Information from the various student assessments is used to inform parents/guardians, the school board, and in some cases, the general public. Assessment results are also used to evaluate programs, allocate resources, and to place students in suitable programs.

Schools in WSD are audited each three years (each year, one third of division schools are audited). School audits are conducted by WSD teams. The audits are exhaustive, and include investigation of school equipment (including software), staff, monthly enrolments, petty cash, and school accounts.

Student and parent advisory boards to the WSD trustees are also a means of accountability in the school division.

Alternative schools (those schools providing alternative programming) are required to provide report cards and other evaluation in the same way as are their mainstream counterparts.

In terms of dissemination, WSD advertises program options in newspapers, and displays school programming through open houses and 'road-shows' provided by individual schools.

Exhaustive material on schools and programs is available online and in print upon request from the WSD. This information includes board meeting minutes, budget and planning information, and details on programming and curricula.

References

Winnipeg School Division (n.d.). *Winnipeg School Division Policy Manual*, Retrieved April 2003 from: http://www.wsd1.org/Board/policy_minutes/policies.htm.

Manitoba Education and Youth (2003). *Schools in Manitoba 2003*. Retrieved June 10/2003 from http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/schools/2003_mb_schools_book.pdf.

APPENDIX B.4 NEW BRUNSWICK

Final Report: New Brunswick Department of Education
By Erika Goble

Overview:

Between 1997 and 2001, the New Brunswick school system was restructured. The two equal public school sectors, Anglophone and Francophone, which provide non-sectarian public schooling to all areas of the province, were restructured to give school districts greater powers and responsibilities concerning finances, curriculum, organization, accountability, and programs. This allowed school districts to specialize schools and programs to suit their constituents. While provincial legislation enables the creation of diverse programs, it does not directly regulate choice – this is a power given to school districts.

The Education Act (1997) regulates all educational options in the Province of New Brunswick, including public schooling (Anglophone and Francophone), private schooling and home schooling. While the majority of the Education Act (1997) regulates public schooling, it is section 16(2) of the Education Act (1997) that is the key phrase that enables both home schooling and private schooling. “The Minister shall, on application of the parent of a child, exempt in writing the child from attending school where the Minister is satisfied that the child is under effective instruction elsewhere” (*Education Act*, 1997, section 16(2)).

Attendance, Age, and Enrolment

Between the ages of 5 and 21 residents of New Brunswick have the right to free schooling in either public school sector (*Education Act*, 1997, section 15(1)a).¹ Access to either sector is only limited by a student’s proficiency in either official language, except when s/he qualifies under section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Students *must* attend school, public or private, or be enrolled in a home education program from the age of 5 until graduation or the age of 18 (*Education Act*, 1997, section 15(1)b). Until the age of 16, failure to comply is punishable by law (*Education Act*, 1997, section 15(8)).

In New Brunswick Kindergarten is the first year of school in the public system and is compulsory (*Education Act*, 1997, section 11(2)). Students are assigned to districts within the Anglophone or Francophone sector and to schools within those districts by the location of their residences. While the district superintendent places each student in a grade, program, and school, parents have the right to appeal their child(ren)’s placement or apply to transfer their child(ren). A standardized appeal process has been established by the Department of Education and can be found in *The User’s Guide for the Appeal Process* (no date). All transfer policies and procedures are established at the district level.²

¹ The Minister of Education has the right to grant free schooling to other people (section 8(3), (4), *Education Act*, 1997).

School Choice

In New Brunswick students may attend public schools in the Anglophone or Francophone sectors, attend private schools or receive home schooling. Students attending public schools register with their local school district. Home schooled and privately/ independently schooled students must register with the Department of Education through a district representative and may be exempt from attending public schools.

Public Schools

The two public school sectors, Anglophone (English First Language) and Francophone (French First Language), provide education to the majority of eligible students in New Brunswick and it is to either sector that all eligible persons are assigned until they choose to be educated otherwise. The Anglophone and Francophone sectors provide instruction exclusively in English or French respectively, except in the case of second language instruction, and the French Immersion Program in the Anglophone sector. Each sector encompasses the whole of New Brunswick and divides the province into districts (9 Anglophone districts and 5 Francophone districts).³ Each district is headed by a District Education Council and a District Superintendent. Equal in all powers, each sector functions under the Minister of Education, but is headed by different Assistant Deputy Ministers/ Sous-Ministres. Each sector also establishes the curriculum and general policies for evaluation to be implemented by its schools and is responsible for developing its own programs and setting standards for the evaluation of programs, services, and students. As of the 2002-2003 school year there were approximately 85,700 students taught in the Anglophone sector (327 schools) and 37,100 in the Francophone sector (116 schools).⁴ Enrolment by district for the last available four years was⁵:

³ The Anglophone districts are: School District 02 – Moncton; 06 – Rothesay; 08 – Saint John; 10 – St. Stephan; 14 – Woodstock; 15 – Dalhousie; 16 – Miramichi; 17 – Oromocto; and 18 – Fredericton.

The Francophone districts are: School District 01 – Dieppe; 03 – Grand-Sault; 05 – Campbellton; 09 – Tracadie/ Sheila; and 11 – Richibouctou.

⁴ In 2001-2002 the Anglophone sector had 175 schools teaching Grades K - 5 (101 English; 74 English and French Immersion), 101 schools providing Grades 6 - 8 (46 English; 55 English and French Immersion), and 51 schools providing Grades 9 - 12 (14 English; 37 English and Immersion) (*2001-2002 Annual Report: Education*, 2002, p. 132). The same year, the Francophone sector had 95 schools teaching Grades K - 8 and 21 schools teaching Grades 9 - 12 (*2001-2002 Annual Report: Education*, 2002, p. 132).

⁵ The enrolment numbers for the 2002 - 2003 school year are currently not available.

	District:	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002
Anglophone:	02 – Moncton	17237	17104	17034	16860*
	06 – Rothesay	11057	10963	10774	10762
	08 – Saint John	14725	14571	14390	14209•
	10 – St. Stephan	4657	4603	4670	4610
	14 – Woodstock	9556	9403	9393	9123
	15 – Dalhousie	4954	4819	4666	4516
	16 – Miramichi	7111	7030	6839	6850
	17 – Oromocto	6062	6081	5988	5936
	18 – Fredericton	12897	12919	12801	12823
Francophone:	01 - Dieppe	6917	6845	6913	6914
	03 - Grand-Sault	9080	8727	8365	8024*
	05 - Campbellton	7536	7289	7069	6722
	09 - Tracadie/ Sheila	9714	9272	8827	8442
	11 - Richibouctou	7628	7377	7213	7001
Total:	Anglophone:	88256	87493	86555	85689
	Francophone:	40875	39510	38387	37103
	Province:	129131	127003	124942	122792

* Includes 1 non-graded student, Grades 10-12.

• Includes 10 non-graded students, Grades 7-9.

* Includes 3 non-graded students, Grades 10-12.

(*Annual Report 2001-2002: Education, 2002, p. 125*).

School District 18

School District 18 is the third largest Anglophone school district in New Brunswick with a total of 34 schools and serving 12,823 students. It encompasses the provincial capital, Fredericton, as well as Boiestown, Doaktown, [Harvey](#), [McAdam](#), [New Maryland](#), and Stanley.

School District 18 has 2 primary schools (1 site serves K – Grade 2, 1 site serves K – Grade 3), 19 primary-elementary schools (K – Grade 5), 1 consolidated primary-elementary-middle school (K – Grade 8), 1 elementary school (Grades 3 – 5), 1 consolidated elementary-middle-high school (Grades 4-12), 4 middle schools (Grades 6 –8), 4 consolidated middle-high schools (Grades 6 – 12), and 2 high schools (Grades 9 – 12). The majority of the schools in the District operate on a classroom-based, grade-divided system.

To accommodate the movement of its students through the education system, the District has a system of “feeder schools” in place to direct the movement of students through primary, elementary, middle and high school. While this feeder system is directive, the District also follows an open boundary concept, which allows students to transfer between schools upon application (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003).

Transfer Process

In School District 18, students are assigned to schools by the location of their parents' residences and apply to the District to attend the various programs offered and/or to transfer schools. The District encourages students to attend their neighbourhood schools but allows school transfers to take place (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003). If a parent wishes to transfer his/her child from the neighbourhood school, it is the responsibility of the parent to research the alternatives within and outside the District (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003). To facilitate this process, School District 18 makes information available to parents upon request and actively attempts to reconcile what the child's neighbourhood school can offer with the requests outlined by the parents (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003). It has been noted that there are few transfers between schools within the district *simply because* there are few alternatives to a student's neighbourhood school – there are no alternative schools in rural areas of the District and only two high schools within Fredericton (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003).

Should a parent wish to transfer his/her child between schools, the parent must formally apply to the District office (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003). In the 2001-2002 school year over 200 transfer requests were made and none was refused (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003). Approval is usually given unless the school does not have sufficient staffing or space to accommodate the student (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003). Once approval for the transfer is given, the student is deemed an "out of zone student" at the receiving school for the remainder of his/her time at that school. If a school suffers staffing or space restrictions out of zone students "at any time, can be asked to return to their neighbourhood school" (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003). Should a student be asked to return to his/her neighbourhood school, the request is effective for the following school year (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003). In all cases, when a transfer is approved the School District is not obliged to provide transportation for the student (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003).

School District 18 also accepts transfers of students from other school districts and considers them "out of zone students" as well (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003). There is no priority of access given to district residents, only to residents within the attendance zone of a school. Otherwise all transfers are considered on a "first come, first serve" basis. Prior to School District 18 accepting a student, provincial policy requires that the student be released from his/her former school district (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003). "One hundred plus" students apply annually to attend School District 18 from other school districts, though inter-district transfers are largely a result from sharing a common population base, not a preference for programs and/or schools (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003). Parents find it is more convenient to have their child(ren) educated in one district over another due to location, rather than believe one to be better than the other (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003).

When students transfer schools no funding is reallocated to the receiving school except in the case of special needs students where support structures (e.g. teaching assistants), but not necessarily direct monetary funds, is provided (School District 18, personal e-mail, 28 May, 2003).

School Choice: School District 18

Multi-Age/ Split-Class Instruction

Multi-age and split class instruction has been piloted in projects by three schools in School District 18. One school primary-elementary school (K – Grade 5) in the district uses age-split/multiple grade instruction for Grades 1-5 due to small class sizes. Another school, serving grades K – Grade 8, uses a “mixed-age and multi-level” approach with “all grades work[ing] in one open-concept area, seated at tables for optimum group work and cooperative learning” (School District 18, Schools: “Keswick Ridge,” ¶3).

Other Educational Opportunities

The District makes available the Home and Hospital Tutoring Program for students who are not attending school (either in hospital or at home) for a variety of reason (e.g.s health, medical, or suspension). The District provides support through tutor services, support services, and/or home packages (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003). Under this program, the student’s educational progress is also monitored through these services. The Home and Hospital Tutoring Program is directly funded from a Tutor Budget, which is provided for by the Department of Education (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003).

Currently two schools within School District 18’s geographic area are designated Learning Centres: District 18 Education Centre and Nova Learning Centre, both serve Grades 9 – 12. Province-wide, there are a total of 19 Learning Centres. Beyond these centres, district schools (all grades) throughout the province promote the use of on-line learning through Distance Learning Centres and Community Access Centres. Various schools also offer their buildings to house Community Access Centres.

Home/ Hospital Tutoring

The Home/ Hospital Tutoring Programs are district-defined programs that provide educational support to students who are enrolled with the district and would normally be attending public school but are unable to attend due to, for instance, health concerns or suspension. Students are *not* defined as being home-schooled when taking part in a Home/ Hospital Tutoring Program and parents are *not* considered to be the teacher. These programs provide materials, provide support personnel and involve on-going assessment of a student’s progress in accordance with district practices. As noted above, these programs are directly funded through a Tutor Budget allocated by the Department of Education. Funds to support students who are unable to attend school due to suspension are found from sources other than the Home/ Hospital Tutoring Program.

Distance Learning

Students may undertake Distance Learning through TeleEducation, the New Brunswick Community College and/or Community Access sites. Distance learning can be taken through some schools, in conjunction with home education programs, or independently. Courses are designated by grade equivalent, level, and subject matter (ex. Biology, secondary Grade 9). The courses available come from numerous academic sources, in Canada and internationally, and cost is according to course taken. In the 2001-2002 school year, the Department of Education recorded 2,344 students enrolled in distance learning courses⁶ (*Annual Report 2001-2002: Education*, 2002, 25).

Home Education

Though under provincial review, Home Schooling is enabled by Education Act (1997, section 16(2)) and defined as “the education of children at home, usually with parents/guardians as teachers” (*Home Schooling Information Brochure*, 2002). To home school a child, parents must apply annually to the Minister of Education through the district representative of their local Anglophone school district and prove the ability to provide “effective instruction.” While district representatives facilitate the application process they *do not* approve the home schooling program (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003). Approval for home schooling programs can only be given by the Minister of Education.

To apply, the person who will be teaching the child must annually submit an *Annual Home Schooling Request & Information Form* (previously known as the *Home Schooling Information Form*) for each child that is to be home schooled. “This form asks for information on the resources used, concepts to be covered, the daily schedule, plans for socialization, evaluation methods, and the learning environment” (*Home Schooling Information Brochure*, 2002). The form is given to the local Anglophone district representative who meets with the parent/ teacher to discuss the proposed program, address any concerns, or negotiate any part-time attendance of the child at a local school (*Home Schooling Information Brochure*, 2002). After this meeting, a *Request for Exemption from Public School Attendance*, the *Annual Home Schooling Request & Information Form*, and the district representative’s recommendation are submitted to the Minister of Education for final approval (*Home Schooling Information Brochure* 2002).

⁶ This number includes elementary, intermediate, secondary, post-secondary and adult students enrolled in distance learning courses.

Programming

Parents individually define the parameters of the home schooling program that they offer, but are required by the Minister of Education to cover all areas of the provincially set curriculum. These areas include: Mathematics, Science, English Language Arts, French, Social Studies, Health, music, art, technology, career development and Physical Education (*Home Schooling Information Brochure*, 2002). Despite program requirements, “students who are home schooled are not eligible for a New Brunswick High School Diploma” (emphasis theirs, *Home Schooling Information Brochure*, 2002).

To fulfill the program requirements, parents may use the provincially established curriculum as outlined in the curriculum documents. These publications are made available by grade level and subject through the Department of Education’s Instructional Resources Branch and by the local district representatives responsible for home schooling. Parents may also use the on-line and correspondence courses of the New Brunswick Community College and Community Access sites (*Home Schooling Information Brochure*, 2002). Any costs accrued through a home schooling program, including distance learning courses, are assumed by the parent.

Parents/ teachers may also negotiate with their local school district to borrow support materials (e.g. textbooks) or to have the child attend a local school part-time. While this *may* be negotiated, school districts are “*under no obligation*” to provide these services (emphasis their, *Home Schooling Information Brochure*, 2002). If such arrangements are made, they are for a one-year term (*Home Schooling Information Brochure*, 2002).

With a home school program, parents must monitor and record a child’s progress (*Home Schooling Information Brochure*, 2002). These evaluations, along with samples of work are to be compiled into a portfolio that is reviewed by the local district representative. While the Minister of Education approves home schooling programs, it is the responsibility of each district representative to monitor the student’s progress and evaluate the home schooling program (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003). The standard for evaluation and monitoring is provincially set but is practically applied at the district level, therefore “you will get variance” between districts (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003). Each district ensures that all home schooling programs are “appropriate and progressive... [and] that the child’s educational progress is not being delayed in any manner” (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003). At the provincial level home schooled children are *invited* to take part in the provincial assessment examinations (*Home Schooling Information Brochure*, 2002), but some districts *require* participation in the provincial assessment examinations that are given at Grades 3, 5, 8 and 11 (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003).

Home Education Supports

As home education is not highly regulated by the Province of New Brunswick parents/ guardians who choose to home school their children have created a series of support groups and on-line support sites. Some groups and organizations are provincially based; others work on a national and international level, but all are relatively informal and draw information from a wide variety of sources. The information they provide is oriented to both parents who wish to *home school*

their child(ren) and to individuals seeking information on all forms of alternative education (charter schools and independent schools). They also provide contacts to a variety of educational organizations across Canada and internationally and some statistical information (sources unverifiable). Two New Brunswick based groups are:

- The Association of Home Based Education (<http://www.flora.org/homeschool-ca/index.html>), New Brunswick Branch (<http://www.flora.org/homeschool-ca/nb/>)
- Home Learners New Brunswick (www.homeschoolingnb.com).

Private Schools

The New Brunswick Department of Education lists 27 independent schools and 9 First Nations schools that currently operate in the province. According to the Federation of Independent Schools (2000), as of October 2000 there were approximately 900 students enrolled in independent schools in New Brunswick forming a total of 0.71% of the total student population of the province.⁷ The largest private school is Rothesay Netherwood School, which serves over 250 students Grades 6 – 12.

Though enabled under section 16(2) of the Education Act (1997), there is little legislation directly regulating the independent/ private schools in New Brunswick.⁸ At this time there is no evidence of a required application process for individuals who wish to operate an independent/ private school in New Brunswick and each independent/ private school establishes its own programs. Unlike the public education sectors, independent/ private schools may be religiously affiliated. There is no curriculum requirement *except that the students be under effective instruction*, the programs be “progressive,” and students’ “educational progress is not ... delayed in any manner” (School District 18, personal e-mail, 28 May 2003; School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003). Unlike home schooling programs, which *are* assessed by the local public Anglophone school district, school districts do not assess the independent/ private school programs. Instead, districts only acquire the information for the school’s assessment, which is performed by the Department of Education on an annual basis. Each school district is responsible for collecting data on the various independent schools within its geographic boundaries. “The School District’s role is to provide the background information to substantiate that fact. We do home visits to check curriculum, assess learning and provide support if requested. We provide the input, in a purely objective manner, to the Department [of Education] for their review and decision” (School District 18, personal e-mail, 28 May 2003). To date there is no indication that independent/ private schools may offer the New Brunswick High School Diploma and there is no provincial funding allocated to private or independent schools. All funding is through private sources and tuition fees.

⁷ This number may include home-schooled children registered with independent school associations.

⁸ No other legislation, regulations, or policies have been found that address independent/ private schools at the K- 12 level in the Province of New Brunswick.

Provincial Groups and Associations

According to the Federation of Independent Schools (2000), three independent groups/associations of independent schools are operating in New Brunswick:

- *The Atlantic Accelerated Christian Education Association,*
- *The Association of Christian Schools International,* and
- The Seventh-day Adventist.

Beyond these specific groups, a variety of parent support groups, often created as a home school support network, also offer information concerning independent schools in New Brunswick.

Program Choice

Under the Education Act (1997) the Minister may prescribe or approve:

- (i) *instructional organization, programs and courses, including special education programs and services, and evaluations for such instructional organization, programs, services and courses, including special education programs and services*
- (ii) *pilot, experimental and summer programs, services and courses, including special education programs and services (section 6(b)).*

The development of core curriculum is the responsibility of the Minister of Education, but schools and districts may specialize programs and services with Ministerial approval. Province-wide, New Brunswick has adopted the Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science (Kindergarten through Grade 12) created collaboratively by the four Atlantic Provinces under the auspices of the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation, along with the *Essential Graduation Learnings* and “learning outcomes” developed in the same manner. It has also adopted the arts curriculum developed collaboratively by the Atlantic Canada Arts Education Curriculum. Within districts, district boards, schools, and teachers develop individual programs, courses and services to meet the needs and demands of the district’s community.

Program Choice: School District 18:

Enabled within the Education Act (1997), the approach to programming is district specific. As implemented by School District 18, all programs offered within the District are comprehensive at all levels – the District has chosen not to have magnet schools for specific alternate programs and does not promote one school over another for specific programs (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003). The District does not designate program expertise to specific schools, but encourages individual schools to develop unique focuses and approaches to education (such as the multi-level classroom teaching model), which can result in unique programs within the District (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003).

Locally Developed Courses

Designated at the provincial level, District Education Councils are to choose which optional provincially mandated programs and services are offered in the various schools in the district (*Education Act, 1997* section 6.1). With the approval of the Minister, they may also create and institute locally developed courses, programs and services to fill demands and needs of their districts “not met by the compulsory or elective courses provided by New Brunswick’s curriculum” (*Policy 303 – Locally Developed Courses, 2001, 1*). Locally developed courses may only be created for Grades 11 and 12, and only one credit can be applied to high school graduation.

Enrichment Strategies and Programs

Used in tandem with Locally Developed Courses, Enrichment strategies and programs are courses, programs, and services that are modified (changed or added to) at the district level. “Enrichment learning” is designed to address the differing abilities of all students and develop a variety of skills in each pupil. Unlike locally developed courses, enrichment strategies and programs may be implemented in all grades. One common program employed in the province is multi-level or combined classes.⁹ As of the 2001-2002 school year, there were 376 multi-level classes in the Anglophone sector and 71 in the Francophone sector (447 total) (*Annual Report 2001-2002: Education, 2002, p. 129*).

Locally Developed Courses/ Enrichment Strategies and Programs: School District 18

School District 18 and its schools have developed and implemented a variety of locally developed courses, enrichment strategies and enrichment programs. The locally developed courses include, but are not limited to: Fine Arts Certificate (1 high school) and an Enterprise Certificate (1 high school). Locally developed courses include, but are not limited to: Spanish as a second language (1 site); Maliseet as a second language (2 sites); Political Science (1 site); Sociology (2 sites); Robotics (1 site); Hospitality and Tourism (1 site); and Interior Design/ Fashion (2 sites).

The enrichment strategies and programs include, but are not limited to: comprehensive or expanded physical education programs (7 sites); the arts enrichment programs (6 sites); *Good for Kids* tutoring program (2 sites); Mathematics Camp (1 site); English Camp (1 site); Math Night (5 sites); *Dialogue New Brunswick* Penpal Project (3 sites); Peer Helper (4 sites); Literacy and Numeracy in Physical Education (2 sites); Healthy Learners Breakfast/Snack program (6 sites); French Oratorical Contest (2 sites); English Oratorical Contest (2 sites); DARE Program (4 sites); and Enrichment Triad Models (3 sites).

⁹ For an example of the implementation of multi-level or combined classes, see discussion of school choice within School District 18 above.

French Second Language Programs

French second language programs are offered only in districts in the Anglophone sector. Core French is compulsory for Grades 1 through 10. French Immersion programs are considered electives and are established if there is sufficient interest in a district. The three French programs offered are the Core French Program, Early French Immersion Program, and Late French Immersion Program. The Core French Program is taught in Grades 1 to 12. In this program the French Language is taught one period each day. The Early French Immersion is taught in Grades 1 to 12, and the Late French Immersion Program in Grades 6 to 12. For the 2002-2003 school year, there were approximately 22,800 students enrolled in the French Immersion program. For the 2001-2002 school year, enrolment by district was as follows:

District:	K-5	6-8	9-12	Total:
02 – Moncton	2789	2149	2115	7053
06 – Rothesay	986	1330	1323	3639
08 – Saint John	763	1044	1029	2836
10 – St. Stephan	101	193	228	522
14 – Woodstock	492	487	415	1394
15 – Dalhousie	740	453	517	1710
16 – Miramichi	321	404	411	1136
17 – Oromocto	367	356	283	1006
18 – Fredericton	1471	1056	1008	3535
Total:	8030	7472	7329	22831

(*Summary Statistics: School Year 2001-2002, 2002, Table 23*).

French Second Language Programs: School District 18

School District 18 offers three French Language Programs in its schools: Core French, Early French Immersion, and Late French Immersion. Core French is taught in Grades 1-12 throughout the district, with one K – Grade 5 School currently offering an Intensive Core French Program as a pilot project at the Grade 5 level. Early French Immersion is taught in 2 primary schools (1 site for Grade 1 only, 1 site for Grades 1-2), 9 primary-elementary schools (8 sites for Grades 1 – 5, 1 site for Grades 1 – 4), 1 elementary school (Grade 3 – 5), and 2 middle schools (Grades 6 – 8). One school offers instruction for Grades 8 and 9 for the Mid Immersion and one school offers instruction for Grades 6 – 8 for Intermediate Immersion. Late French Immersion is offered at 3 middle schools (Grade 6 – 8). French Immersion is taught at the high school level at four sites in the District. As of the 2001-2002 school year a total of 3,603 students were enrolled in the various French Immersion Programs (*Annual Report 2001-2002: Education*).

Youth Apprenticeship Programs

The Youth Apprenticeship Program is a provincially established 2-year program for high school students. Students must first participate in “career exploration activities” in Grades 9 and 10, after which they may join the program in Grades 10, 11, or 12. The program is designed as an apprenticeship program to provide employment experience and teach skills. Students undertake paid work with participating businesses for two summer work terms and take classroom-based courses during the school year. Curriculum for the program is learning outcomes-based and created by the Department of Education. The program is to be taken *in addition* to the regular high school curriculum.

Youth Apprenticeship Program: School District 18

School District 18 participates in the provincially established Youth Apprenticeship Program, which offers work experience and skills training for high school students. Curriculum for the program is provincially set, but the participating businesses are specific to School District 18. As it has been set out in the provincial program, students within School District 18 can join the two-year program either in Grade 11 or 12 (at an unspecified number of sites).

Other Educational Programs: School District 18

Aboriginal/ Native Education

As of the 2001-2002 school year School District 18 undertook a renewed effort at increasing aboriginal/ native education. Currently two schools offer second language instruction in the Maliseet language (1 site for Grades K – 5, and 1 site for Grades 9 – 12). One high school offers a Native Elders Program, one high school offers a course in Native Art, and two high schools offer courses in Native Studies. The District has also instituted District Native Awareness Days.

Programs of Need

Special Education Programs are one of the few programs directly legislated in the Education Act (1997). Under the Education Act (1997) a “ ‘ special education program’ means an education program for an exceptional pupil that is based on the results of continuous assessment and evaluation and which includes a plan containing specific objectives and recommendations for education services that meet the needs of the pupil” (section 1). Special Education Programs are differentiated from other programs in that a student is deemed an “exceptional pupil” only when the exceptionalities of the student “contribut[e] to delayed exceptional developments” (*Education Act, 1997, section 12(1)*). Districts develop their own policies concerning programs of need, but in the development of these policies, the Education Act (1997) requires districts to have:

- A policy of inclusion,
- The creation of a unique program tailored to each exceptional pupil,
- Parental involvement in the creation of their child’s program, and
- The assessment and determination of need by qualified professionals.

The Department of Education has established a set of guidelines to ensure a “consistent and standardized method for the development and application of Special Education Plans and to provide a provincial template to be used by school districts” (*Guidelines and Standards: Educational Planning for Students With Exceptionalities*, 2002, p.4). Districts are also encouraged to use the services and resources of the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority.

Alternative Education

In an attempt to address other issues that may hinder a student’s education, the Department of Education has established a second set of guidelines, *Guidelines for New Brunswick: Alternative Education Programs and Services* (2002), which regulate programs and services “designed for students who are at high risk of dropping out of school before graduation” (p.1).¹⁰ According to the Department of Education, there are currently 19 Learning Centres throughout the province.

Programs of Need: School District 18

School District 18 follows the province’s mandated philosophy of inclusion and the provincially established guidelines for assessing exceptionalities in students and creating individual programs to meet those needs. The District’s Student Services Supervisor and the District Student Services Team are responsible for all special educational programs and services provided in the district. For each student deemed to have an exceptionality, a Special Education Plan is created through the collaboration of the student, his/her parents, teachers, administrators, and professionals. Accommodations are made through program, services, and curriculum modification or individualization to meet the needs of the student (*Guidelines and Standards: Educational Planning for Students With Exceptionalities*, 2002, 10). Special Education Plans are continuously monitored and students are continuously assessed.

School District 18 has also adopted the provincially established guidelines for Alternate Education and currently operates an Alternate Education Centre (1 site). The Alternate Education Centre serves students from the middle-high school levels and addresses behavioural issues in referred students (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003). Students are formally referred to attend the Centre’s program, which attempts to reintegrate the student back into his/her previous school as soon as possible (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003). The length of stay at the program rarely extends beyond six months (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003).

Positive Learning Environment Programs have also been established at schools throughout the District. To help the implementation of both special education and alternate education programs, the District keeps on staff three district psychologists and has Crisis Response Teams, Youth Conduct Disorder Teams, and Behaviour Intervention mentors/ workers.

¹⁰ These guidelines were the result of a 1998 study, *High School Graduation: The New School Leaving Age - the findings and recommendations of the School Leaving Age Task Force*, which examined the economic, social, and cultural effects of school leaving age in New Brunswick.

Limits to Choice

In New Brunswick parental and student choice is limited by various factors including limited resources within districts and schools, the inability of school districts to run a deficit, transportation/ distance, geography, and the orientation towards “attending one’s neighbourhood school.” Geography and transportation limit both a district’s ability to equally promote school transfers and a parent’s ability to choose to transfer a child. There are few schools in close geographic proximity to each other to enable transfers without a significant parental contribution of transportation. Limited resources and the illegality of running a deficit force school districts to restrict their program offerings to what is inexpensive and immediately feasible. The overall provincial promotion of attending one’s neighbourhood school, while a result of a recognition that there are few alternate schools, particularly in rural areas, also limits access to information – as in the case of School District 18, it is the parents’ responsibility to inquiry about alternatives and information is provided only upon request (with the exception of the French Immersion Program).

Funding

Only general information is available regarding funding arrangements for education within the province of New Brunswick. Education is funded 100% by the provincial government (*Let’s Discuss Public Education Governance*, 2000) and is paid directly to each district (*Education Act*, 1997, section 50.2(1)). Each District Education Council determines its annual budget and is prevented by the Education Act from running a deficit. Program and services funding is therefore established at the district level. While tuition fees for public schools are only levied against out of province students (*Policy 114 – Tuition fees to Attend New Brunswick Public schools*, 2001), districts are not obliged to provide funding or resources for home schooling (*Home Schooling Brochure*, 2002). According to the Federation of Independent Schools in Canada (2000), there is “no direct grant support” for private schools in New Brunswick.

Anglophone and Francophone school sectors receive funding on an equitable basis (*Education Act*, 1997, section 44(1)) to “assure to each of the education sectors established...an equivalent standard of education taking into account the needs and particular circumstances of each sector” (*Education Act*, 1997, section 4(2)). In certain cases, special funding is retained and provided for the advancement of education of specific demographic or cultural populations (*Education Act*, 1997, section 50(4)).

According to A Quality Learning Agenda, A Cornerstone of Greater Opportunity. New Brunswick’s prosperity plan 2002-2012, Policy statement on K-12: Quality Schools, High Results (2003), funding per student was \$4,900 in 1998-1999, \$5,300 in 1999-2000, \$5,400 in 2000-2001, and \$5,700 in 2001-2002 (p. 19).

Funding: School District 18

Basic funding for all educational programs is provided by the Minister of Education and is allocated to specific programs by the District Education Council for School District 18. For the 2001-2002 school year, 8.5% (\$5,355,595) of the operating budget funded special education programs and 3.0% (\$1,873,679) of the budget funded other programs (*Annual Report: 2001-2002*). Funding for schools in the District is “tied to a per capita funding model” (School District 18, personal e-mail, 28 May 2003). Funding is also monitored according to the purpose for which the District allocated it. Schools are expected to be “able to measure the gains they have made based on the funding that they get” (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003).

Accountability:¹¹

Within the New Brunswick Education system there is an attempt at transparency and accountability to the public at all levels.

Assessment

Students are assessed under district guidelines and on an annual basis by provincial examinations at key grade levels:

- Grade 2 Literacy Assessment for all students
- Grade 3 Mathematics Assessment for all students
- Grade 4 Literacy Assessment for all students
- Grade 5 Mathematics Assessment for all students
- Grade 6 (beginning 2006 - 2007) Science Assessment for all students
- Grade 7 Literacy Assessment in English for all students
- Grade 8 Mathematics Assessment for all students
- Grade 9 English Language Proficiency Assessment for all students - graduation requirement
- Grade 10 (beginning 2006 - 2007) Science Assessment; French oral proficiency assessment for all FSL students (phased in over three years)
- Grade 11 English Provincial examination for all students; Mathematics Provincial Examination for students enrolled in the compulsory grade 11 math course Patterns and Relations 113 or Functions and relations 111/112
- Grade 12 French oral proficiency assessment available for all students enrolled in grade 12 French courses.

The results of provincial tests are compiled into general reports and disseminated to school communities, but individual marks of students are not provided to parents.

¹¹ These accountability measures are only applicable to the Anglophone and Francophone public school systems, not to private/ independent schools or in home education programs.

Assessments: School District 18

Student performance is assessed according to the provincially established learning outcomes and through the use of provincial examinations (those given at the key Grades of 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, and 12). Results from Grade 11 provincial examinations in English Language Arts and Mathematics form 30% of the student's final mark in each subject. In terms of academic achievement, schools "are monitored and held accountable for their results through provincial assessment" (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003).

Other Forms of Accountability

The Department of Education uses various accountability tools in its assessment of elementary, intermediate and secondary education. Beyond the above-mentioned reports and assessment examinations, the Department of Education also employs surveys, school review units, and School Improvement Plans. Surveys can be area specific – as with the on-going survey of student satisfaction with distance learning courses – or general and provincial wide – as with the Spring 2002 "perception survey" administered to students, parents, and teachers (*Annual Report 2001-2002: Education*, 2002, 31). Both the Anglophone and Francophone sectors take part in the school review units, which "assess the quality of education provided to students" (New Brunswick Department of Education representative, personal e-mail, 04 November 2003).¹² The information collected from the school review units directly contributes to the establishment of School Improvement Plans. In the Francophone sector, the Programme d'évaluation des écoles is a five year cycle and within that five year cycle, all schools will be reviewed. In the Anglophone sector, the school unit review is also cyclical (approximately 4 years). In all school unit reviews, the school is evaluated by an internal and an external evaluation committee/ team composed of various stakeholders, including parents. The resulting reviews are used by the school to establish annual success plans.

The Department of Education also annually collects Statistic Canada Socio-Economic data from all of its public schools. It further collects all information gathered through internal and external reviews. All of this information – provincial assessment results, internal and external review results, Socio-Economic data, surveys, and "school generated data" – is collected in a centralized database accessible to schools and districts, but not the general public (*Annual Report, 2001-2002: Education*, 2002, 28).

¹² Each Francophone school is reviewed in the following areas: student learning, school climate, school life, language and culture, management and leadership, and partnerships. Each Anglophone school is reviewed in: school climate, school leadership, school management, management of staff performance, partnerships with parents, growth and improvement, and teaching and learning (New Brunswick Department of Education representative, personal interview, 04 November 2003).

Other Forms of Accountability: School District 18

School Reviews

School District 18 is currently entering a process of reviewing each school within the District. This *School Review Process* is a “comprehensive review process” that involves the collection and summary of data from surveys given to parents, students, and staff, student assessments, and other indicators (such as community supports) (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003). The District will perform this process for each school once every three years (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003). The information collected is to be given to individual school councils, given to the District Education Council, given to the managerial body of the district, including the District Superintendent, and disseminated throughout the community. The information contained in this report is to serve as a basis for the development of the School Improvement Plan for each school (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003).

Enhanced Professional Practice Reviews

Also within School District 18, teachers are assessed on professional improvement and pedagogical approaches through the Enhanced Professional Practice Review. The review is performed by school principals and monitored by the District, but contains no parental involvement.

Parent School Support Committee

Should parents wish to provide feedback to the school and the District, the most common form is through the local school Parent School Support Committee. The Parent School Support Committee advises the principal on the development of the school’s Improvement Plan, school policies, and the monitoring of performance.

Reporting

Parents are informed as to their child(ren)’s individual progress and performance through the use of standardized report cards and parent-teacher conferences. General information concerning student and program performance is reported through the series of annual reports submitted by education personnel and made available to parents and school communities.

On an annual basis principals prepare reports regarding the performance of students enrolled at the school, which are presented to “parents and the school community” (*Education Act, 1997, section 28(2)b, b1*). Superintendents prepare district performance reports, which are reviewed and approved by District Education Councils (*Education Act, 1997, section 48(2)d*). District Education Councils “establish, implement and monitor” district education plans which summarize what programs and services are to be provided in their respective districts. Along with “accountability measures for evaluating pupil achievement, monitoring school district performance and monitoring the achievement of strategic goals” (*Education Act, 1997, section 36.9(2)c*), District Education Councils also submit to the Minister of Education annual reports reviewing the district finances, student performance and generally the state of education in all

schools within the district (*Education Act, 1997*, section 40.1). Established between school districts, school sectors and the Ministry of Education, guidelines for performance evaluations are made available on-line and in the Department of Education.

Reporting: School District 18

Like all districts in the province, School District 18 reports individual student performance to parents through the provincially standardized report cards and parent-teacher conferences. The reporting of general student achievement and progress is provided in the various annual reports submitted by school principals and the District. All results from provincial examinations are collected by the district, tabulated, and reported to parents in the annual report and the School District's own *Report Card*. Annual reports and the District's *Report Card* compare district performance to the provincial average for the last three years at each level and in each subject examined. Further information about the district is also contained in the annual reports.

Publications

Along with information for parents regarding curriculum, appeals, teacher guidelines, examination schedules, statistics, resources, programs, and services, the Department of Education publishes the results of assessment examinations and evaluations in summary reports. The most common forms are the provincial *Annual Report Card* and the official *Annual Report: Education*. The reports and all other publications are made available at the Department of Education, on its website, and at all School District offices.

Information and Publications: School District 18

While specific program information is provided by the district upon request (School District 18, personal interview, 16 May 2003), most information about specific schools – programs offered and projects currently underway – is made available through the school profiles listed in the District *Annual Report: 2001-2002* and the *School Profiles* section of the District's website. General information concerning middle and high school programs is available through the District's office and on its website, and specific curriculum information (description and outcomes) is made available through the Department of Education and on its website.

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Final Report: Fredericton, New Brunswick
By Erika Goble

Overview

As of the 2003 Statistics Canada estimates¹³, the population of New Brunswick is 756,368, of which 6.2% (47,560) lives in the provincial capital, Fredericton. Two districts serve Fredericton, each representing one of the two school sectors of New Brunswick and encompassing the entire city: School District 01 – Dieppe, the Francophone school district; and School District 18 – Fredericton, the Anglophone school district. Beyond public schooling, persons in Fredericton may also avail themselves of home schooling and independent or private schools. The Education Act (1997) and the policies set forth by the New Brunswick Department of Education govern all educational options within Fredericton, but the various programs offered are largely determined by each district and school either under provincial programs (e.g. Enrichment Programs) or with provincial approval.

School Choice: School District 18 – Fredericton:

School District 18 is the Anglophone school district that encompasses Fredericton. It also encompasses the townships of Boiestown, Doaktown, Harvey, McAdam, New Maryland and Stanley. Of the District's 34 schools, 20 are located in the city of Fredericton and 2 within the immediate vicinity. This gives residents of Fredericton immediate access to 1 Kindergarten – Grade 2 school, 14 primary schools with a Kindergarten program (K – Grade 5), 1 primary school (Grades 1 – 5), 4 intermediate schools (Grades 6 – 8), and 2 high schools (Grades 9 – 12). Only 1 school, K – Grade 5, offers multi-age groupings. Also available within School District 18 is 1 Alternative Education Centre for intermediate level students. The school addresses behavioural issues, and students must be referred for admittance to the program. Under School District 18 policies, students are assigned to a neighbourhood school by their residency, but may apply to transfer to other schools throughout the District.

School District 01 – Dieppe

School District 01 is the Francophone school district that encompasses Fredericton, but unlike School District 18, its main office is located in Dieppe, New Brunswick. School District 01 also encompasses over one third of the geographic area of the province, though the majority of its 6,914 students live in urban areas (District scolaire 01, "Message de la directrice générale," ¶1). Of the District's 13 schools only 1 is located in Fredericton. This school offers French first language instruction from *maternelle* to *12e année* (Kindergarten to Grade 12). Similar to School District 18, the Director/ Directrice (Superintendent) of School District 01 places students in grades, programs, and schools by residency and request. Currently, all policies and procedures for School District 01 are unavailable, but students may attend if they are fluent in French or they have rights to French first language instruction under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

¹³ Statistics Canada's 2003 preliminary postcensal estimates.

Home Schooling

Home schooling in Fredericton is regulated by the Department of Education, but monitored and applied by School District 18. Parents must apply to the Minister of Education through School District 18's home education representative. The parent develops home education programs and may negotiate the use of materials or school access with the district representative. The parent also establishes the method of evaluation, but must submit a portfolio of work representative of the student's progress to the district representative for review. There is no funding for home education programs and the parent assumes all costs incurred from the program.

Private Schools

Of the 27 independent schools in New Brunswick, 3 are located in Fredericton. These schools are: Devon Park Christian School, which serves Kindergarten to Grade 12; Fredericton Montessori School, which serves Kindergarten and Grade 1; and River Valley Seventh-day Adventist School, which serves Kindergarten to Grade 9. Unlike public schools, private schools may charge tuition fees and have specific admission requirements.

First Nations Schools

There are two First Nation schools in the Fredericton area: St. Mary's Band School, which serves K – Grade 4, and Kingsclear First Nations, which serves K – Grade 5.

Learning Centres

Of the 19 Learning Centres throughout New Brunswick, 1 is located in Fredericton. The District 18 Education Centre is not directly operated by School District 18, but operated by the Department of Education in conjunction with TeleEducation.

Program Choice

Various programs are available within Fredericton, though largely school and district specific. Under the current structure of the New Brunswick Department of Education, districts are responsible for developing programs that meet the needs and demands of their communities. As such, programs and services are often developed by Districts "where numbers warrant." In general, the Minister of Education does not directly fund specific programs. Instead, it is the District Education Council of each district that allocates specific program funding from the general operating budget. While districts may develop new programs and District Education Councils allocate program funding, all programs must be Minister approved prior to their implementation.

Within School District 18, the various programs offered in Fredericton include Core French, Early French Immersion (14 sites), Late French Immersion (4 sites), Maliseet as a second language (2 sites), Youth Apprenticeship Programs (an unspecified number of sites), a Native Elders Program (1 site) and various enrichment programs. The locally developed programs include Fine Arts Certification (1 site) and an Enterprise Certification (1 site) and the locally

developed courses include Native Studies (2 sites), Native Art (1 site), Spanish as a second language (1 site), social science courses (e.g.s sociology, political science, or economics) (2 sites), and various other courses created on community interest (e.g.s Hospitality and Tourism, Interior Design, and Robotics).

Programs of Need

Exceptional pupils may avail of all the educational options offered in Fredericton, including private schools, though there may be admissions requirements for private schools. Both the Anglophone and Francophone school districts in Fredericton follow policies of inclusion and create individual Special Education Plans to meet the student's needs. In School District 18, exceptional pupils may also apply to transfer schools and, when approved, the receiving school will receive the support structures (e.g.s teacher's assistants or equipment) required by the student, but not direct funding.

Conclusion

While parents and students in Fredericton theoretically have access to these various educational options and programs, they must make choices within very real confines. These include the personal cost assumed when choosing to attend any school other than their designated neighbourhood school (e.g.s tuition fees for private schools, cost of materials for home education programs, or cost of transportation when transferring schools). Access, and thereby choice, is also confined by the limited resources of a district (e.g.s is there space in the school or the program? Or can the district afford to establish a requested program?). Similarly, parents and students are confined by geography (e.g. Is there a school within close geographical proximity that offers a specific program or type of schooling?). This becomes particularly acute when one considers that School District 01 covers approximately one third of the province, but has only 13 schools.

As parents and students face these various limiting factors in school and program choice, school districts are aware and monitoring, not only the choices made, but also the factors that limit choice. This is evidenced in the collection of data and the resulting centralized database that schools and districts may access. The information contained in this database is the result of reviews, perception surveys, assessment examinations, "school generated data" and the Statistics Canada Socio-Economic data from each public school. This database, combined with community input, allows districts to offer feasible choices to their communities in relation to the cost it will bring to the district and the required population to support the program, but also to the various external factors that limit parents and students from being able to make choices.

APPENDIX B.5 NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Final Report: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Department of Education
By Erika Goble

Background

In 1997-1998 the education system in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador was restructured, abolishing all denominational schools that were not operated as private schools. A result of Williams Royal Commission (1992), the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador proposed changes to Term 17 of the Terms of Union between Newfoundland and Canada, under which was “guaranteed a system of education based on religious denomination” (Department of Education, Fast Facts). In 1997, after two referendums and negotiations with the various denominations, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador changed Term 17 to give the Legislature exclusive control over education, which was to be non-denominational though inclusive of a religious education curriculum and permissive of religious observances upon parental request (Department of Education, Current and Proposed Term 17). “At the time of consolidation there were Roman Catholic Schools, Pentecostal Schools, Seventh-day Adventist Schools, and the Anglican, United Church, Salvation Army, Moravian, and Presbyterian denominations had agreed to operate their church schools under an “Integrated” partnership” (Department of Education, personal e-mail, 16 June 2003). As a result, the Education Act, 1996 and the Schools Act, 1996 were repealed and replaced with the current legislation, the Schools Act, 1997.

Overview

As of the 2002-2003 school year, the Department of Education in Newfoundland and Labrador served 84,268 students. To facilitate the provision of education, the province is divided into 11 school districts, including one province-wide francophone school district, which offers French First Language instruction. Beyond the publicly funded schools operated by each district, provincial legislation allows the operation of private schools, provincial schools, schools in institutions, and band-operated schools, as well as home schooling.

School choice and program choice are not provincially prescribed in Newfoundland and Labrador, but are enabled by the Schools Act, 1997. Districts are allowed to choose which non-core curricular programs are offered and students may only change schools subject to the district’s approval. In contrast, accountability in education is highly legislated at the provincial level. There are accountability measures instituted by law at all levels of government and within all Department of Education agreements and policies. All accountability measures demand transparency and public dissemination of information.

Other than established provincial curriculum, the Core French Program (Grades 4 to 9), School Development, and Literacy Development, there are few prescribed programs. Programs of need are not directly defined by the Schools Act, 1997, but under section 75(b) boards must educate all eligible persons regardless of ability. To ensure a consistent approach to educating people of differing abilities, the Department of Education has established a standard provincial *Pathways to Programming and Graduation*.

Age, Attendance and Enrolment

The Schools Act, 1997 allows any citizen or permanent resident of Canada and his/her child(ren) to receive free schooling between the ages of 5 and 21 (section 3). While district boards may admit persons older than age 21 (section 3 (2), *Schools Act, 1997*), attendance is required for those legally eligible between the ages of 6 and 16 (section 4(1), *Schools Act, 1997*). This age requirement extends to students attending private schools and to home-schooled children. Students must attend public school unless ill, suspended, expelled, graduated, or if, “(c) with the prior written approval of the director, [they are] under instruction satisfactory to the director, at home or elsewhere, for a period specified by the director” (section 5, *Schools Act, 1997*). This caveat allows students to be home schooled or enrolled in private schools. It is further extended to informal, non-institutional educational opportunities and activities by allowing students who have “...the written permission of the principal to be absent from school for a reasonable period because, in the opinion of the principal and in accordance with the policy of the board, the student will be exposed to other experiences of significant educational and social value” (section 5(d), *Schools Act, 1997*).

Students enrol in the district in which they live and are placed in an Anglophone district school until they choose to be educated otherwise (section 4, *Schools Act, 1997*). For accountability reasons, all students within the geographical boundaries of a school district must register with that district, including those persons who are attending private schools or who are home schooled (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003). While registered with a school board, these students are exempt from attending district schools as long as they are *under satisfactory instruction elsewhere*. For the last five years, total enrolment with the Department of Education is as follows:

School Year:	K	Gr. 1-6	Gr. 7-9	Gr. 10-12	Total:
1998-1999	5855	41363	23996	26187	97401
1999-2000	5817	39906	22734	25500	93957
2000-2001	5466	38405	21804	24492	90167
2001-2002	5465	36667	21234	23532	86898
2002-2003	5254	35205	21117	22692	84268

(*Educational Statistics, 2002-2003*, 2003, 13).

The current enrolment by District is as follows. The numbers given include district-registered home schooled and privately schooled students, but do not include those persons who are not registered with a district.

District:	K	Gr. 1-6	Gr. 7-9	Gr. 10-12*	Total:
1 Labrador	313	2218	1266	1173	4970
Northern Peninsula/					
2 Labrador South	185	1220	790	878	3073
Corner Brook/ Deer					
3 Lake/ St. Barbe	451	3164	1915	1981	7511
4 Cormack Trail	296	2236	1378	1457	5367
Baie Verte/ Central/					
5 Connaigre	507	3262	2031	2207	8007
6 Lewisporte/ Gander	447	3138	1998	2173	7756
7 Burin	252	1574	1018	1060	3904
8 Vista	254	1721	972	1134	4081
9 Avalon West	561	3845	2366	2799	9571
10 Avalon East	1971	12682	7344	7801	29798
Conseil scolaire					
11 francophone provincial	17	145	39	29	230
Total	5254	35205	21117	22692	84268

- Includes students designated as “4th Year:” students who have attended senior high for more than three years. (*Educational Statistics, 2002-2003*, 2003, 15).

Under provincial legislation, “a board may establish an attendance zone for each school within its district” (section 78(1), *Schools Act, 1997*) to determine student placement by residency. A board may also establish “feeder systems” to facilitate student movement through the education system and may permit students to attend school in other zones (section 78, *Schools Act, 1997*). District boards establish all transfer processes applicable within their respective districts.¹⁴ While few in number, there are some inter-district transfers of students, mainly consisting of those students who wish to take part in programs not available within their home district (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003). When students transfer to a district from another district, the receiving district is given the provincially allocated funding for that student once the student is registered with that district (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003).

¹⁴ For a discussion of the transfer process of District #10 – Avalon East, see Appendix A.

School Choice

In Newfoundland and Labrador, students may attend district-operated Anglophone schools, district-operated Francophone schools, district-regulated home schooling programs, private schools, band-operated schools, provincial schools/ social services schools, or schools in institutions. Students also have the opportunity to participate in web-based courses/ distance learning in conjunction with any of the other educational options.

District-Operated Schools/ District-Regulated Programs

Anglophone Schools

The Anglophone District school system is the majority education system in Newfoundland and Labrador. All students have the right to attend school in this system and it is to this system of schools that eligible students are initially assigned until they choose to be educated otherwise. As of the 2002-2003, there were 84,038 students enrolled in the 10 Anglophone school districts.

Conseil scolaire francophone provincial

The province wide District 11 – Conseil scolaire francophone provincial serves individuals who, under section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, have the right to French First Language educational instruction. Under the Schools Act, 1997, the Conseil scolaire francophone provincial is to be the *only* educational body operating French First Language schools (section 113), but otherwise has the same responsibility as any other school board. Each school elects a *Conseil d'école* whose responsibility it is “to develop, encourage and promote policies, practices and activities to enhance French language and culture, a French ambience, the quality of school programs and the levels of student achievement in a school for which it is responsible” (section 106, *Schools Act, 1997*).

Within the Conseil scolaire francophone provincial there are currently five minority schools. Two offer instruction in Grades K-12, two in Grades K-9, and one in Grades K-7. For the 2002-2003 school year, there were a total of 230 students enrolled.

Home Schooling

In Newfoundland and Labrador the process of application and the policies specifically concerning home schooling programs are determined at the district level, but the choice to home-school is enabled and generally regulated at the provincial level. The Schools Act, 1997 gives the power of approving home schooling programs to district Directors of Education and mandates that district boards establish policies concerning required curriculum, program reviews and methods of evaluation for home schooling programs undertaken by their registered students.¹⁵

¹⁵ For a discussion of the Home Schooling Policy for District #10 – Avalon East, see Appendix B.

The Department of Education allows parents to home-school their child(ren) with approval from the Director of Education of their local school district. Furthermore, students must continue to enrol with the district in which they live (section 5(c), 6, *Schools Act, 1997*).¹⁶ Section 7 limits home schooling to a period of one year, but parents may apply annually for renewal (*Schools Act, 1997*). Section 5(d), which gives parents the right to temporarily remove their child(ren) from school with permission from the school principal because “the student will be exposed to other experiences of significant educational and social value” (*Schools Act, 1997*), is not considered related to formal home schooling programs.

Private Schools

The Schools Act, 1997 allows private schools to operate in Newfoundland and Labrador under the conditions that:

1. They acquire the permission of the Minister of Education to operate as a private school.
2. They inform the Minister of Education concerning:
 - a. The ownership and operation of the school.
 - b. The purpose of the school.
 - c. The programs to be offered at the school.
3. The Minister of Education approves the programs offered.
4. The programs offered follow the provincially prescribed curriculum.
5. The building is appropriate to be operated as a school.
6. Those who will be teaching hold valid certification.
7. Each school submits an annual report to the Minister of Education regarding performance, programs, services, and enrolment.
8. Students are tested under “provincial testing programs” (*Schools Act, 1997*).

While the operators of the private school may operate under the School Act, 1997, the Minister of Education reserves the right to revoke permission to operate the school if the school or its operators do not meet the above requirements (section 46).

Currently there are 7 private schools serving approximately 800 students, which according to the Federation of Independent Schools in Canada (2000) consists of 0.76% of all students enrolled in school (2000). Four schools serve Grades K-12, one school serves Grades 10-12, and two schools serve Grades K-9. Four of the private schools are found in the provincial capital, St. John's. Unlike public schools, private schools may charge tuition fees and be religiously affiliated. After the 1997 restructuring of the public education system, some private schools were created to maintain previously held religious orientations.

¹⁶ Under the Schools Act, 1997, students may be home schooled if, “(c) with the prior written approval of the director, [they are] under instruction satisfactory to the director, at home or elsewhere, for a period specified by the director” (section 5(c)). Furthermore, “A parent of a student may provide, at home or elsewhere, instruction for that student where the student is excused from attending a school under paragraph 5(c)” (section 6(1), *Schools Act, 1997*).

Despite any denominational affiliations, all private schools in Newfoundland and Labrador are required to follow the provincially set curriculum, including “learning outcomes” and Essential Graduation Learnings, but may offer other internally developed programs or expanded provincial curriculum. These alterations are unique to each school, but *all programs* that are offered in the private school *must be approved* by the Department of Education prior to application. Private schools may offer denomination-specific religious education and promote a specific religious orientation in their programming. All private schools must also assess their students’ progress using standardized examinations, which include the Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRT), Student Achievement Indicators Program, standardized public examinations, and the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) examinations.

A Temporary Public-Private School Participation

Despite the Integrated partnership proposed by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador in the mid-1990’s, some religious organizations chose to establish private schools in the post-restructuring period. Similarly, some parents chose to transfer their children, previously enrolled in a denominational school and participated in programs offered in those schools, to private schools. Various districts within the newly restructured system made the decision to allow these students to continue participating in school activities until the students graduated (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003). As a result, there are a limited and ever decreasing number of students enrolled in private schools but taking part in district school activities. No new students are allowed to take part in this practice, which is gradually being “phased out” (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003).

Band-Operated Schools

St. Anneway Kegnomogwom is a band-operated school located on the Conne River Reserve. It is the only “totally First Nations Pre-K to Grade Twelve [and adult education] school in the province” and provides the provincially set curriculum supplemented with native curriculum of which traditional cultural activities are a part (St. Anneway Kegnomogwom website). Though operated by the Band Council, by agreement with the province St. Anneway Kegnomogwom “follows provincial high school graduation requirements” and, upon completion of these requirements, its graduates are eligible to receive high school graduation certificates (Department of Education, personal e-mail, 16 June 2003). The school is “operated with funding provided by the federal government” and it receives a provincial “tuition fee for each non-registered Indian attending the school” (Department of Education, personal email, 16 June 2003). Currently there are 172 students enrolled.

Provincial Schools/ Social Services Schools

Provincial schools are established and managed under the direction of the Minister of Education unless s/he gives the responsibility to the Department of Education or another department (section 50, *Schools Act, 1997*). Funding for provincial schools is specifically provided for by the Legislature (section 50(3), *Schools Act, 1997*). In Newfoundland and Labrador there are two provincial schools: the Newfoundland School for the Deaf and the Newfoundland-Labrador Youth Centre.

The Newfoundland School for the Deaf is a provincial school operated directly by the Department of Education (*Newfoundland School for the Deaf website*). It serves grades K-12 and currently has 69 students enrolled. Its purpose is to serve students who are deaf and hard of hearing who cannot avail of oral programming. The school follows the provincially prescribed curriculum and appropriate *Pathways to Programming and Graduation* and annually evaluates student performance.

Operated by the Department of Justice, the Newfoundland-Labrador Youth Centre at Whitbourne is a “closed custody institution.” In the 2002-2003 school year, 60 students were enrolled.

Other Schools

The *Schools Act, 1997*, also allows the Minister of Education to create schools in institutions (usually hospitals or prisons) should the need arise. The Minister of Health manages schools in hospitals and the Minister of Justice manages schools in prisons (section 51, *Schools Act, 1997*). Schools are currently being operated in the Janeway Children’s Hospital by School Board #10, Avalon West, and the Western Memorial Hospital by School Board #3, Deer Lake/ Corner Brook/ Saint Barbe (Department of Education, personal e-mail, 16 June 2003).

Web-based Courses/ Distance Learning

Through the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation students can take courses that are web-based and teachers can use on-line teaching resources. Each course offered is developed collaboratively by teachers and the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation and, when undertaken by students, requires the same amount of time as a regular classroom course. The Centre can also be used in conjunction with home schooling.

Program Choice

In conjunction with the other Atlantic Provinces, the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador has adopted the core curriculum of the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation in English Language Art and Mathematics, as well as Français, Mathématiques and sciences for French First Language schools. It has also adopted the Foundation’s Essential Graduation Learnings and the process of evaluating student progress by means of “learning outcomes” established for each subject, grade, and key level (3, 6, 9, and 12). Each school must follow the provincially established curriculum, Essential Graduation Learnings, and learning outcomes, but may offer alternative courses under section 75(m) of the School Act, 1997 if they are Minister approved (Department of Education, personal e-mail, 16 June 2003).

General Programs

As outlined in the *Program of Studies, 2002-2003*, the Department of Education has established a program, set of courses, and curriculum for each grade level.

Primary Program

The Primary Program for grades 1-3 requires: English Language Arts, mathematics, science, social studies, music, art, physical education and religious education. Schools have the option of offering a Core French Program starting in Grade 1.

Elementary Program:

The Elementary Program serves grades 4-6 and requires: English Language Arts, Core French, enterprise education, mathematics, science, social studies, music, art, physical education, health, and religious education. An Intensive Core French program may be introduced in Grade 6 but is not compulsory.

Intermediate Program

The Intermediate Program for grades 7-9 requires: English Language Arts, Core French, mathematics, science, social studies, music, art, physical education, health, and religious education. It also includes enterprise education, career exploration (in Grade 9), industrial arts, technology education and home economics.

Senior High Program

The Senior High Program serves grades 10-12 and Graduation Requirements are found in the *Senior High School Certification Handbook*. The required courses include those in language arts (French and English), mathematics, the sciences, social studies, economic/ enterprise education and personal development courses (electives of art, music, theatre, family studies, physical education, and/or religious education).

Religious Education

While schools are non-sectarian, they do provide a provincially regulated core curriculum in religious education Grades K-12 and are allowed to hold religious observances. The multi-denominational religious education addresses all of the major world religions and the role of faith in personal development. It is fundamentally “non-confessional...[and there is] no attempt to indoctrinate, proselytize or present a biased world view...” (*Religious Education: Grades 4-6*, 2000, 3-4).

While the curriculum is considered to be part of a student’s core curriculum, under the Schools Act, 1997 parents have the right to withdraw their child from religious education courses and/or have their child not participate in religious observances (section 10). Parents may also request religious observances, services and programs to be held by district schools (given reasonable notice) (section 10, *Schools Act, 1997*).

Kindergarten

In Newfoundland and Labrador all school boards must offer Kindergarten. While Kindergarten is considered the first year of school in the province, attendance is not compulsory. Students must be enrolled in school if they are 6 years of age by December of that school year, but “may enrol in school one year earlier, provided they attend Kindergarten” (Department of Education personal e-mail, 16 June 2003). The Kindergarten program “provides for integrated and discrete learning in: language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, art, music, health, physical education, and religious education” (*Program of Studies*, 2002, 7).

French Programs

French First Language Instruction

Persons who qualify for French First Language instruction under section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms will be educated by the Conseil scolaire francophone provincial, which has the exclusive right to operate French first language schools. The Department of Education establishes French First Language schools “where numbers warrant” throughout the province.

Core French

The Core French Program is a provincially established, province-wide program offered in all of the Anglophone school districts. This program officially begins in Grade 4 and must be offered until Grade 9. French as a second language is to be offered at the Senior High level and, if not available, may be taken through distance education (schedule B, *Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Agreement for Minority Education and Second-Language Instruction: Action Plan 2000-2001 to 2002-2003*, 2001). Some school districts have begun offering an Early Core French Program as early as Kindergarten and others offer an Intensive Core French Program starting in Grade 6 (schedule B, 1, *Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Agreement for Minority Education and Second-Language Instruction: Action Plan 2000-2001 to 2002-2003*, 2001). In some districts there has also been the introduction of an Expanded Core French Program, which is taught only in High School and involves an accelerated study of French for one year.

French Immersion

Two French Immersion programs, *Early* and *Late*, are offered at various schools throughout the province. Early French Immersion begins in Kindergarten and is carried through to Grade 12. In Grade 3 English Language Arts are introduced. Late French Immersion begins in Grade 7 and is carried through to Grade 12.

According to the *Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Agreement for Minority Education and Second-Language Instruction: Action Plan 2000-2001 to 2002-2003*, 7 districts offer the Early French Immersion Program and 2 offer the Late French Immersion Program (schedule B, 2, 2001). For the 1999-2000 school year, 3,832 students (in total) were enrolled in the Early French Immersion Program and 973 in the Late French Immersion Program (schedule B, 2, 2001).

For the 2002-2003 school year, enrolment in the various French Language educational options was

2002-2003	K	Gr. 1-6	Gr. 7-9	Gr. 10-12	Total:	No. of Schools
Core French	590	20752	17103	3976	42421	288
Expanded Core French	0	0	0	309	309	6
Intensive Core French*	-	715	17	-	732	22
French Immersion	520	1976	1983	1211	5690	59
French First Language	17	144	40	29	230	5

*Grades 6 and 7 only

(*Educational Statistics, 2002-2003*, 2003, 36).

School Development

While curriculum is developed at a provincial level, the Department of Education has established a School Development Program, which allows schools to establish a “plan” which specializes programs, services, and curriculum to the community it serves. According to the Department of Education website, “through a collaborative process [between the province, districts, and schools], the school community analyses school data - including standardized test results - and based on that analysis, sets goals, and creates and implements action plans to address those goals” (Department of Education, School Development website). On an annual basis, schools report to their respective communities a School Report Card, which documents performance and the school’s progress towards the goals established in their School Development Plan.

Alternative Courses

Districts and schools may offer courses above those prescribed by the Department of Education, as long as the Minister of Education approves them prior to implementation. These courses are district and often school specific. They include second languages other than French, Advanced Placement Courses at the Senior High School level (ex. International Baccalaureate Program), Enrichment Programs (limited to the intermediate level), and advanced career development programs.

Literacy Programs

The Literacy Branch of the Department of Education works with many stakeholders to increase literacy levels and it coordinates all literacy programs and services. Under the Literacy Branch, the KinderStart Program, the Read and Succeed Program, and the Adult Basic Education Programs were established. The Literacy Branch also grants funds to locally developed early childhood literacy programs and has published *A Reading Handbook for Parents and Words to Live By: A Strategic Literacy Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador* (2000).

Special Education Programs and Services

The Schools Act, 1997 does not directly regulate education provided to individuals with differing abilities or the establishment of programs of need, but does require that boards provide education to all eligible persons regardless of ability and “ensure that policies and guidelines issued by the minister relating to special education for students are followed in schools under its jurisdiction” (section 75(1)b, d, *Schools Act, 1997*). The Student Support Services Division of the Department of Education is responsible for all special education programs and services, including those offered by the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority. “The Student Support Services Division has Pathways to Programming and Graduation, which addresses the curriculum and manner of instruction for all individuals attending school. This framework outlines five pathways to describe programming in each subject/curriculum area” (Department of Education, personal e-mail, 16 June 2003). The Pathways Program does not differentiate between students of need and other students, and all students will take one of the five pathways.

Pathway 1 is the standard provincially set curriculum;

Pathway 2 is where a student is given accommodation or support to complete the provincially set curriculum;

Pathway 3 is where the provincially set curriculum is modified to meet the needs of the student;

Pathway 4 is a highly modified provincial curriculum and non-provincially set curriculum in designated areas to develop skills; and

Pathway 5 is a completely unique curriculum developed for the individual with a strong focus on daily living skills

(*Pathways to Programming and Graduation*).

Students who will participate in any pathway other than Pathway 1 will also have an Individual Support Services Plan¹⁷ developed through the co-operation of the student, school, educators, parents, professional practitioners, and individuals from other agencies to aid and orient the student's education. This includes those students deemed by their District to be "exceptionally able learners."¹⁸

Limits to Choice

School districts within Newfoundland and Labrador provide the greatest amount of choice possible and by offering those choices does encourage participation in those programs (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003). Yet it is considered that, fundamentally, there is a standard curriculum provided throughout the province by all neighbourhood schools. Parents may be informed of other program offerings available throughout their respective districts and if the parent chooses another program, district offices often provide the necessary information about the program, application, and (if necessary) transfer, yet there are various factors that limit access to programs (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003).

Limited resources, transportation and space resulting in a limited ability to accommodate students are the key items that prevent school districts from offering greater choice (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003). A district's inability to assure transportation to all transferred students also limits the choices of some families when they are deciding which schools and programs their child will attend (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003). Yet a district's ability to offer choice is not hindered by provincial legislation or regulation; "it is assumed that the choices [the District] would offer would facilitate the student through the system towards graduation," in that any special programs would follow the objectives of the *learning outcomes* and meet the curriculum requirements (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003).

¹⁷ Individual Student Services Plans are created for students when any curriculum *changes* are made to meet the student's needs. In the Plan, the changed curriculum is documented, along with the newly established *learning outcomes*, and methods of assessment. Individual Student Services Plan must be approved by the student's parent and are kept in the student's permanent file. Along with the Individual Student Services Plan, all provided services, program adaptations and modification, are noted in the student's permanent file.

¹⁸ For a discussion of the Programs of Need within District #10 – Avalon East, see Appendix C.

Funding

Public schooling in Newfoundland and Labrador is free, though “school council[s] may, subject to the by-laws of the board, approve a levy, the payment of which is voluntary, once in a school year, instead of, or as a supplement to, fund raising activities for the school” (section 26(4), *Schools Act, 1997*; Department of Education, personal e-mail, 16 June 2003). Other fees may only be charged by private schools and by public schools for education outside of normal school hours, for the cost of supplies, or to people attending school in the province under a Canadian visitor’s visa (section 13, *Schools Act, 1997*). The Department of Education does not provide any funding for home schooling programs, but for students enrolled with District Boards funding is provided to the District on behalf of that student. For private schools there is “no direct grant support” in Newfoundland and Labrador (Federation of Independent Schools in Canada, 2000). Funding is achieved in a variety of ways: private sponsorship of the school, direct federal funding, or through tuition fees.

The Minister determines funding after school boards submit their annual budgets, though the budgets are not approved by the Minister (Department of Education, personal e-mail, 16 June 2003). All operational funding for school districts is determined by a scale established by the Minister, unless a school otherwise qualifies for assistance. All funds are paid directly to and accounted for by the school districts.

Beyond the provincial funds received some school districts have established non-profit foundations, which promote community responsibility for education and actively solicit private. As of the 2001-2002 school year, the average amount spent per student (including all forms of revenue) was approximately \$6,200.00 (*Educational Statistics, 2002-2003*, 2003, 79).

Special Funding Measures

Two special funding measures exist within the Schools Act, 1997 – those provided to the Conseil scolaire francophone provincial and those provided to small isolated schools. Under section 99(a) of the Schools Act, 1997, the Conseil scolaire francophone provincial may receive additional funding – “a french first language school shall receive an allocation of resources approved by the minister.” Similarly, in some cases the Minister may recognize small isolated district schools as not being able to provide the minimum standard of education set by the province. In these cases, the Minister can provide the school with extra resources and funds (section 77(3), *Schools Act, 1997*).

Accountability

The Ministry of Education in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador has a policy of accountability and transparency throughout the education system. At all levels information regarding student performance, enrolment, programs and services is collected and disseminated to parents and the public.

While the Minister of Education is ultimately responsible for curriculum/ program development and accountability measures and must ensure the availability of this information to the public, measuring and reporting begins at the school level. School principals are required to evaluate student, teachers, and program performance, and provide the school district with annual reports (section 24(3), *Schools Act, 1997*). District boards and district superintendents similarly must account to the Minister of Education for district finances and the general performance of all schools, programs, and students (section 75(3), *Schools Act, 1997*) and provide him/her with reports of school and district performance. These reports are combined in the form of a School Report Card. All School Report Cards follow a standardized template established by the Department of Education. Past and current information from School Report Cards are available through the Department of Education website.

Assessment: Students, School, and Program Evaluations

Evaluations of programs and schools are routinely performed by the Department of Education and within districts by Program Specialists (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003). Furthermore, students are assessed according to the curriculum-based learning outcomes, the Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRT), Student Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP) and standardized public examinations. Public examinations include those administered by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

Each school within each district takes part in a School Development/ School Improvement Process. In this process, each school and community jointly establishes a school plan, including goals and methods of evaluation, which are unique to that school but correspond to the regulations set by the district (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003). Accountability is “generally addressed in the localized planning cycle at the school site;” the plans address the financial situation of the school, infrastructure improvements, programs, student and overall performance, and the relationship between the school and its community (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003). This process is the basis for school reports and audits.

Reporting

Parents are kept informed of their child’s performance through the use of standardized report cards and parent-teacher conferences. Student performance is publicly documented and reported to the school councils, who then disseminate it to the public through the Annual School Reports (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003). Annual School Reports outline the performance by students within the school according to the standardized examination results and compare them to other schools in the District and other “comparable schools” (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003). Further information and general performance information is made available through School Report Cards and School Development Plans.

For financial reporting, “each school must submit a financial statement to the District... and school budgets are centrally controlled” (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003). In some districts, schools are centrally connected by an intranet system through which all financial transactions must take place and are monitored (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003). School councils are responsible for legally documenting all fundraising income and must provide reports to the public (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003).

School districts themselves must regularly provide the provincial government and the general public with audited statements (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003).

Publication

Currently the accountability measures implemented by the Department of Education province-wide are provincial assessment examinations, School Report Cards, District Annual Reports, and audits of provincial programs. There is an attempt to publish relevant statistics and the results of student assessment, which are available through the annual *Educational Statistics* publication. Information is made available through district offices and compiled by, regularly updated by and easily accessible through the Department of Education’s website. Through this website parents have access to the provincially established curriculum, information on the desired outcomes of curriculum and information on provincial testing, but not to individual test results.

The Program of Studies 2002-2003 is a publication that outlines the various provincially set education programs. It provides course descriptions, program descriptions, course prerequisites, indicates the number of resources that will be provided to each school for each course, and lists “Authorized Learning Resources,” software, teacher references and student reference material. Also available throughout the Department of Education’s website are various forms parents may need during the course of their child(ren)’s education.

On a district level, information regarding available programs is distributed through publications, on website, in printed documents available through district offices, and local information meetings (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003). Specific information concerning district and school established programs and learning outcomes is available through the District offices, specific schools, and their websites.¹⁹

¹⁹ For a discussion of the perceived use of available information for District #10 – Avalon East, see Appendix D.

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Appendix A: Transfer Process for District #10 – Avalon East

All eligible persons who live within the District #10 - Avalon East geographical boundaries, including those who are home schooled or enrolled in a private school, must be enrolled with the school district unless they have formally transferred to another district. When registered, students are initially assigned to neighbourhood primary/elementary schools (K-6) according to the attendance zone in which the residence of their parents lies. The district “feeder system” determines subsequent attendance in intermediate schools and high schools, unless the parents of the student choose otherwise.

Students may transfer schools if a sibling attends another school or if they wish to undertake a program not offered at their designated school (*Policy 206*, “Student Transfer Request Protocol”). Access to schools is always based on space, program and resource availability and is at the discretion of the principal of the school to which the student wishes to transfer (206.4, *Policy 206*, “Student Transfer Request Protocol”). To transfer a child, parents must submit an *Avalon East School Board Request For Student Transfer Form*, (206.3, *Policy 206*, “Student Transfer Request Protocol”). All transfers will be considered on a “first come, first serve” basis (206.4, *Policy 203*, “Student Transfer Request Protocol”). The priority for access is as follows:

1. Students who reside within the attendance zone of the school have first priority in accessing a school and its programs.
2. If there is space and resources, students registered with the District but residing outside the attendance zone of the school may then access the school and its programs.
3. If there is still space and resources available, then students from outside the District (who are not at the time of application registered with the District) may be transferred to the District and the specific school and its programs.

Once transferred, a student is considered a member of that school’s population for each subsequent school year until the student’s residence changes or s/he chooses to attend school outside of the public system (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003). In all cases, when students are transferred the District does not guarantee the ability to provide transportation (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003).

Since 1997 and the system restructuring, the number of students seeking transfers each year is approximately 50 (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003). There are a small number of inter-district transfers, mainly from students who wish to take part in the International Baccalaureate Program or the District’s music programs (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003).

When students transfer between schools within the Avalon East School District the funding given to the receiving school does not change as schools are allocated an operating budget from the district (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003). The money is not directly transferred between schools. When students transfer to the District from another district, once the student is registered with the District the receiving district *does* receive the provincially allocated funding for that student (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003).

Appendix B: Home Schooling within District #10- Avalon East

Students who reside in the Avalon East School District must register with the district if they are to be home-schooled. Parents annually apply (in May) to the Director of Education for permission to home-school their child(ren) in the following school year (543.3H, *Policy 503*, “Home Schooling Policy”). Application forms are available through the District office and are submitted to the Director of Education with a copy sent to the principal of the child’s assigned school (543.2A, 543.2B, *Policy 503*, “Home Schooling Policy”). When submitted, applications must include:

- Name of child to be home schooled
- Child’s date of birth
- Gender
- Name of proposed teacher/ program provider
- Qualifications of the program provider
- Proposed site of program
- Program curriculum
- Parent’s signature

Upon receipt of the application, the Director of Education will assess the proposed program, site, and qualifications of the program provider (543.2, *Policy 503*, “Home Schooling Policy”). If acceptable, the Director of Education, the school principal, and the parent will meet to review the proposed program, establish methods of evaluation, and finalize the program to be given (543.3, *Policy 503*, “Home Schooling Policy”). At this meeting, the program and methods of evaluation are largely negotiated between the school principal and the parent, after which the program will be administered by the parent or designated program provider. The child’s progress will be evaluated by the school principal and overseen by the Director of Education (643.8, 543.9, *Policy 503*, “Home Schooling Policy”).

The home schooling program is developed by parents but regulated by the District. The program must follow the provincially set curriculum or be of an equivalent level and *must* include English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and 2 or more electives (French Second Language, Religious Education, Physical Education, Health, or the Arts). In the case of home schooling programs for students with special needs, an Individual Student Services Plan is developed by the parent, district administrators, and qualified professionals prior to the program’s application (543.6C, *Policy 503*, “Home Schooling Policy”).

To help parents who home-school their child(ren), principals make available “course outlines, curriculum guides and teacher resources/ guides... and student textbooks” (543.7B, *Policy 503*, “Home Schooling Policy”). Parents are also given access to teacher resources and guides through the District’s Learning Resources Distribution Centre (543.7B, *Policy 503*, “Home Schooling Policy”). Furthermore, all home-schooled students have the right to all services and activities in their assigned school and parents have the right to request that their child attend specific programs or courses offered by the school (543.7, *Policy 503*, “Home Schooling Policy”). Parents may also include as part of the home schooling program web-based courses offered through the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation.

Some home-school programs are eligible for High School Credits if:

- The subject is following the provincially established curriculum,
- The student takes part in regular evaluations and examinations,
- The District submits marks for the student to the Department of Education (543.11, *Policy 503*, “Home Schooling Policy”).

The Department of Education does not provide any funding for home schooling programs, but for students enrolled with districts and with local schools, funding is provided to the District on behalf of that student. Any costs associated with home-schooling programs in the Avalon East School District are assumed by the parent who submitted the home schooling application (543.6F, *Policy 503*, “Home Schooling Policy”).

Assessment and Accountability

The principal of the school to which the child was assigned is responsible for assessing and ensuring the progress of home-schooled students (543.9, *Policy 503*, “Home Schooling Policy”). Formal evaluations of a student’s progress must be performed at least 3 times per year (543.9B, *Policy 503*, “Home Schooling Policy”). Evaluations consist of a meeting between an evaluator, the parent and the student where a portfolio of work is reviewed for all subjects, the student may be examined as to his/her current understanding of subjects, and future objectives are set by the parent and evaluator (543.9B, *Policy 503*, “Home Schooling Policy”). Following the meeting, the evaluator will complete a written report that is kept in the student’s permanent file (543.9, *Policy 503*, “Home Schooling Policy”). The formal evaluations of the child’s progress (academic, social, emotional, and behavioural) are reported to the child’s guardian and to the Director of Education (543.9Im 543.9J, *Policy 503*, “Home Schooling Policy”). To ensure progress, home-schooled students in Grade 3 or higher *must* take part in the in-school standardized examinations given at the end of each school year (543.9G, *Policy 503*, “Home Schooling Policy”).

Appendix C: Programs of Need within District #10 – Avalon East

Adopting the provincial approach to programs of need, the Avalon East School District does not differentiate programs of need from other programs, but instead creates specific programs (individual or school-wide) based on the range of students abilities, learning styles, and educational needs. It has further adopted the provincially set Pathways Program as a method of addressing differing abilities.

Exceptionally Able Learners

Students demonstrating an exceptional ability in any subject, or showing exceptional performance in intellectually, artistically, or in a leadership capacity are defined by the Avalon East School District as being an *exceptionally able learners* (“definitions,” *Policy 405*, “Exceptionally Able Learner”). The District attempts to screen for exceptionally able learners at all levels, but key screening occurs in Grade 3 with the administration of the Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test (CCAT) (405.2, *Policy 405*, “Exceptionally Able Learner”). Parental approval must be obtained before assessment exams may be given. The district assesses the various needs of exceptionally able learners so as to be able to create school-wide enrichment programs suited to the students (405.3, *Policy 405*, “Exceptionally Able Learner”). For each level, the District has outlined suitable program and curriculum modifications, adaptation, and changes for enrichment programs (each level is outlined in detail in *Policy 405*, “Exceptionally Able Learner”). Any student whose needs are not met by the enrichment programs is eligible for an Individual Student Services Plan (405.3(a), *Policy 405*, “Exceptionally Able Learner”).

Individual Student Services Plans

Individual Student Services Plans are established and individual created for students when curriculum *changes* are made to meet the student’s needs. In the Individual Student Services Plan, the changed curriculum is documented, along with the newly established learning outcomes and methods of assessment. The Individual Student Services Plan must be approved by the student’s parent and are kept in the student’s permanent file.

Learning Disabilities

Under Policy 402 “Learning Disabilities: Assessment, diagnosis and programming for students with learning disabilities,” the Avalon East School District has established a standard set of procedures for addressing learning disabilities from first observation of the learning disability, to assessment and diagnosis, to program development, implementation, and progress assessment. Between the parent, teachers, and the school’s special services team, an individual program is developed to meet the student’s needs. At all levels parental involvement is required. Should a student require any modification to the provincially set curriculum, an Individual Student Services Plan will be created. Along with the Individual Student Services Plan, all provided services, program adaptations and modifications, are noted in the student’s permanent file.

For students who miss a minimum of four weeks of school due to a disability, parents may apply for home tutoring.

Appendix D: Perception of Usefulness of Information for District #10 – Avalon East.

The Avalon East School District publicizes information regarding programs that are offered throughout the District through distributed publications, its website, printed documents available through its office, and localized meetings which provide further information and answer any questions or concerns parents may have (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 28 2003). Specific information concerning provincially established curriculum, programs, and learning outcomes is made available through the district office, the District's website, the Department of Education, and the Department of Education's website. Information on district and school established programs and learning outcomes is available through the district office, specific schools, and their websites. Beyond the websites and Annual Report, general information about the district is provided in the regular board newsletters, the *District Digest* newsletters and Board Up-dates.

To date, the Avalon East School District perceives the public to be content with the manner of information dissemination and the method of offering school and program choice, but notes that there are two levels of use of the available information (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003). The District notes that there is good use of information concerning the alternate programs (French Immersion Programs, International Baccalaureate Program) and specialty programs (Music Programs) available within their District, but that information concerning choices that must be made within the standard curriculum stream (Environmental Education, grade level subject choices) is less accessed and used by parents and students (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003).

Final Report: St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador
By Erika Goble

Introduction

As of the latest 2003 Statistics Canada estimates²⁰, the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador has a population of 531,145 of which approximately 18.5% lives in the provincial capital, St. John's. Students and parents who live in St. John's have the elementary and secondary educational options of publicly-funded district-operated schools, home schooling, private schools and web-based/ distance learning courses. The Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education regulates all educational options through the Schools Act, 1997.

School Choice:

District #10 – Avalon East:

The provincially established District #10 – Avalon East (Avalon East School District) is the majority educational provider in St. John's. Under provincial legislation, the Avalon East School District is responsible for:

- The administration of the provincially set curriculum and programs in the schools operated by the District.
- The administration of all home schooling programs which take place within the geographic boundaries of the District.
- The administration of all programs of need within the District, either in District-operated schools or home schooling programs.
- The development, promotion and administration of all District-specific and school-specific programs, courses, and services.

The District is further charged with the responsibility of ensuring all eligible persons within its geographic area are registered even if they are not attending a district-operated school. As a school district, the Avalon East School District was formed through the amalgamation of five school districts in the post-1997 restructuring period. It is the largest school district in Newfoundland and Labrador, having 66 schools and serving 30,600 students. It encompasses the areas of St. John's, Mount Pearl, North Bell Island, Gould, Southern Shore, and Conception Bay South. Permitted under the Schools Act, 1997, the Avalon East School District has established attendance zones and "feeder systems" for all schools within its district based on residency. While it generally promotes the practice of attending one's neighbourhood school, the District has developed a policy that allows school and district transfers, with certain restrictions (for a full discussion see Appendix A of the *Provincial Report: Newfoundland and Labrador*). Should a student transfer schools, the district is not responsible for providing transportation.

²⁰ Statistics Canada's 2003 preliminary postcensal estimates.

Distance Learning

All students in St. John's may participate in the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation. Developed and managed by the Department of Education, the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation allows students to take web-based courses either through participating district schools, in home schooling programs, or independently. All courses are recognized by the Department of Education and take the same period of time to complete as a classroom based course.

Home Schooling

Parents apply to the Avalon East School District's Director of Education for permission to home school their child(ren). The District-wide Policy 503 "Home Schooling Policy" has been developed to regulate the application to home school, the development of programs and the establishment of an on-going evaluation of student progress. Parents, the District and the Principal of the student's neighbourhood school work closely to develop and implement the program. Under this practice, home-schooled students have the right to access the same facilities, programs and services as any other student of the local school (for further discussion see Appendix B of the *Provincial Report: Newfoundland and Labrador*).

Private Schools

In St. John's there are four private schools in which students may enrol.

Brother T. I. Murphy Learning Resource Centre Incorporated

A non-profit, charitable organization, the Brother T.I. Murphy Learning Resource Centre Inc. provides alternative education and services to persons who have dropped out of the district-operated school system. It is oriented towards persons between the ages of 17 to 24 and offers academic services (*Adult Basic Education Program* and *High School Credit Program*), Life Style Education Services and Employment Services. It offers courses in *Career Education and Development*, as well as programs such as *Youth Works*, *Supportive Employment Services*, *Employment Action*, *Experience Ireland*, *Youth Services Canada*, and *Youth Mentoring*. Various government agencies fund programs at the school, including Human Resources Development Canada, Health Canada, and Human Resources and Employment (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador). All persons may apply to attend the school and the cost is \$10 per semester for books and supplies. It currently has 374 students enrolled.

Lakecrest – St. John's Independent School

Lakecrest St. John's Independent School follows the provincially established curriculum with a focus on academic development, leadership and critical thinking.

It provides education for Grades K-9 and currently has 375 students enrolled.

St. Bonaventure's College

St. Bonaventure's College is a K-12 independent Roman Catholic School in the Jesuit Tradition. Formed after the restructuring of the education system, it charges tuition fees but has a Bursary fund that will supplement students who are not financially able to afford the fees.²¹ St. Bonaventure's College currently has 450 students enrolled.

St. John's Adventist Academy

Established in 1895, the St. John's Adventist Academy was re-formed after the restructuring of the education system in 1997. A Seventh-day Adventist school, it serves Grades K-12 and charges fees for enrolment and attendance, though some local Seventh-day Adventist Churches provide subsidies to congregation members. It currently has 352 students enrolled.

Program Choice

The more choice we can offer within the public school funded system of education, the better able we will be to serve the community so... we are certainly interested in providing as much choice as we can within the system. (Avalon East School District, personal interview, 28 May 2003).

The Avalon East School District offers numerous provincially prescribed and locally developed programs and courses, which are open to students attending the District-operated schools and home schooled children. These include programs such as **Kindergarten**, **Advanced Placement Courses**, and the **International Baccalaureate Program** (1 site Grades 11-12 only). The French language programs offered are **Core French**, **Expanded Core French** (3 sites), **Intensive Core French** (15 sites), **Early French Immersion** (28 sites), **Late French Immersion** (20 sites). Second language courses are offered in **Spanish** (8 sites), **German** (2 sites), **Russian** (1 site) and **English Second Language** (4 sites). The District also offers:

- **Enrichment Programs:** A set of optional *Enrichment Mini Courses* are offered at the intermediate level throughout the district. Created in collaboration with various post-secondary institutions, the programs run for 2-3 days and address specific issues in a wide range of topics.²² Students enrol in the programs addressing their areas of interest. First priority for participation in each program is given to students determined to be "exceptionally able learners," next to Grade 9 students, then Grade 8 students, and then Grade 7 students.

²¹ The annual fees are currently (2003-2004 school year): Kindergarten: \$3000.00 (1st or 2nd child), \$2050.00 (3rd child), \$1925.00 (4th child), No charge (5th child and over), and; Grades 1-12: \$ 3825.00 (1st or 2nd child), \$2025.00 (3rd child), \$1925.00 (4th child). Currently, the Bursary Fund financially aids approximately 40% of the total student population.

²² For the 2002-2003 school year, the topics covered in the *Enrichment Mini Courses* included environmental education, the sciences (biology, chemistry, medical science, physics, marine biology, geography), engineering, mathematics, language and culture (Russian, Japanese, German, Spanish, French), popular culture, computers (robotics, programming, internet publishing, video production), history, fine arts (art, art history, music, acting, textiles), marketing, creative writing, linguistics, psychology (human, animal), physical education/ kinesiology, multiculturalism, anthropology (archaeology, folklore, folk culture), early childhood education, and peer counselling.

- **The Brother Brennan Environmental Education Program:** The Brother Brennan Environmental Education Program is an extension of the Grade 8 science program. The program takes place at the Brother Brennan Environmental Education Centre and runs for a full 2½ days (including overnight). All schools in the Avalon East District are eligible to participate and the program is only to be offered once for each Grade 8 class.

The **Career Development Programs**, which the district offers through the Community Career Centre, are:

- **Job Shadowing:** where a student observes a workplace for 1 full day.
- **Occupational Interviews:** where students interview someone working in an area in which they have a personal interest.
- **Ask a Person With Experience Email Program:** similar to an Occupational Interview, except performed by e-mail.
- **Speakers' Bureau Information:** a speaker series where persons from a variety of community businesses and organizations discuss their own experience and career development with students.
- **Work Placement Programs:** where students temporarily work (unpaid) in a business or organization in order to gain experience. This program also includes classroom coursework and is offered in 10 sites in the Avalon East School District.
- **Curriculum Enhancement Programs:** for grades K-12, where teachers adapt or expand established programs and curriculum to teach career development and workplace skills.

Despite these various choices, access is limited by available resources, transportation, space, and cost. These factors not only limit personal access to programs and schools (whether or not parents can afford the cost, whether they are able to transport the student to the location, or whether there is space in an existing program to accommodate the student), but also limit what programs, services, and courses districts and schools can offer. Limited resources make costly programs less viable.

Programs of Need

In St. John's students with differing abilities are largely addressed through the Avalon East School District. Adopting the provincial Pathways to Programming and Graduation Program, the District attempts to screen for and address, either through the creation of school-wide enrichment programs or Individual Student Service Plans, the various differing abilities of its students. Like the Department of Education itself, the Avalon East School District has adopted an approach of inclusion (for further discussion see Appendix C of the *Provincial Report: Newfoundland and Labrador*).

Beyond the Avalon East School District, the Department of Education operates the Newfoundland School for the Deaf, a provincial school directed towards persons who are deaf or hard of hearing and unable to be suitably accommodate in district-operated schools. Parents are referred to the program and once admitted, students will receive a program individualized to their needs, which may or may not be applied in conjunction with district school programming. Currently the school has 377 students enrolled.

Funding

Funding for district-operated schools is largely provided by the Department of Education, though schools may approve a levy in lieu of fundraising. A scale set by the Minister of Education determines Operating Budgets, though some schools may qualify to receive extra assistance. To supplement this funding the Avalon East School District has formed the Avalon East Educational Foundation, a non-profit organization which solicits private donations. While home schooling is not directly funded, districts do receive provincially allocated funds for each home-schooled child registered. Private schools are not funded by the Department of Education, but receive funding through tuition fees, donations, or grants.

Accountability

Accountability appears in numerous forms in the various educational options in St. John's. The broadest spanning forms of accountability which encompass all school programs, including those offered by private schools or developed as home schooling programs, are the curriculum-based learning outcomes and the standardized public examinations given to all students. Dissemination of performance results occurs at a school level, a district level (if applicable), and a provincial level through various annual reports and "report cards."

APPENDIX B.6 NOVA SCOTIA

Final Report: Nova Scotia, Department of Education
By Erika Goble

Overview

The education system within the province of Nova Scotia serves approximately 156,000 students each year. Within the education system, the province allows Anglophone public schools, Conseil acadien (Francophone) schools, home education, correspondence education and private schools. The Minister of Education prescribes the core curriculum and the programs provided by school districts. Beyond the required programs, school districts may choose to provide a variety of school programs and services. Choice is not legislated at the provincial level but defined at the district level. In contrast, accountability is legislated at the provincial level and is readily implemented at all levels of the education system.

This report will briefly outline school and program choice, and the measures of accountability in the province of Nova Scotia. The report is divided into five sections – Attendance, Age, and Enrolment; School Choice; Program Choice; Funding; and Accountability. The report will outline provincial regulations and then examine the various educational options as they appear in the Halifax Regional School Board, the largest of the province’s eight public school districts.

Attendance, Age, and Enrolment

Under the Nova Scotia Education Act (1996) all public schools are *free schools* and everyone between the age of 5 and 21 inclusive has the right to attend a public school. Attendance is mandatory between the ages of 6 and 15 (*Education Act*, 1996, section 111), unless the student is receiving home schooling or enrolled in a private school (*Education Act*, 1996, section 113). Students have the right to attend the public schools in the Anglophone school district in which they reside and the Superintendent/ Director of Education of each district determines student placement in school, grade, and program (*Ministerial Education Act Regulations*, 2000, section 6(1)). School boards assign students to specific schools according to “catchment areas” but each school board has developed its own transfer policies to allow students to attend schools other than the one to which they are assigned. Those transfer policies are not provincially prescribed but developed at the district level.

School Choice

Public Schools

Public schools in Nova Scotia are the schools to which all eligible persons have the right to attend and to which they are prescribed until they choose to be educated otherwise. Public schools are non-sectarian and follow provincially mandated curriculum and programs. Eight school boards comprise the Nova Scotia public education system: one is urban, the Halifax Regional Municipality School Board, and seven are regional, including one Francophone school

board, the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial.²³ The Southwest Regional School Board encompasses two school districts: the Tri County School District and the South Shore School District, which are currently operating as pilot districts. All other school boards serve one school district. An elected district board and a hired Superintendent or Director of Education govern each district.²⁴

A total of 153,450 students were enrolled in the public school system in the 2001-2002 school year (*Minister's Report to Parents: 2002 Student Assessment Results for Nova Scotia, 2002*). Of this number, 97.4% of those students, approximately 149,460, attended an Anglophone public school (*Minister's Report to Parents: 2002 Student Assessment Results for Nova Scotia, 2002*).

The Halifax Regional School Board

The largest school district in Nova Scotia, the Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) has 137 schools²⁵ and served 56,965 students in the 2002-2003 school year.²⁶ The Board is divided into three areas - Area A, Area B, and Area C – 13 districts, and 16 families of schools. For each area the Board has established a number of families of schools, which form a system of “feeder schools.” Each family of schools includes one or more elementary schools, one or more junior high schools, and one high school. Specific elementary schools “feed into” specific junior high schools, and these feed into specific high schools. Different “feeder” systems have been established for students following the standard English curriculum and the French Immersion programs.

In the HRSB, students do not have the right to attend any school under the Board's jurisdiction, but an *Out of Area Transfer Request* policy has been developed to allow students to *apply* to transfer. Students, in general, “are expected [and encouraged] to attend their neighbourhood school so students... can't choose... They are technically locked into whatever the direction that the school in their neighbourhood has chosen to go” (Halifax Regional School Board, personal interview, 14 May 2003).

²³ The eight school boards are: the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board, the Cape Breton – Victoria Regional School Board, the Chignecto – Central Regional School Board, the Halifax Regional School Board, the Southwest Regional School Board, the Strait Regional School Board and the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial.

²⁴ One Superintendent manages each School Board of Education in the Province of Nova Scotia. A Director of Education oversees the Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial, as well as each of the two pilot District School Boards in the Province. While Superintendents “have responsibility for the whole range of education and support issues,” Directors of Education “are only responsible for educational... not the support functions” (Department of Education, personal interview, 16 May 2003).

²⁵ The Halifax Regional School Board serves 94 elementary schools, 12 elementary-junior high schools, 24 junior high schools, 3 junior-senior high schools, and 14 senior high schools.

²⁶ The Province of Nova Scotia has recently reduced hundreds of school boards to 22 and then to 8 in 1996 in an attempt to standardize the delivery model. All of the existing school boards were formed through this final amalgamation

Attendance and Enrolment

In the Halifax Regional School Board students are initially assigned to schools according to location of residency of their parents. By the beginning of March students are expected to register with their local area school for the following school year (*Policy Manual*, “Creating School Populations,” 2002, 2.0). Students enrol at this time in the various programs they wish to undertake. Access to all programs is based on availability of space and resources, and first priority is given to a school’s local area residents. If a student wishes to attend a program not offered at the area school, the Board will transfer that student to another school that offers the program if possible (*Policy Manual*, “Creating School Populations,” 2002, 2.2). When transfer requests are submitted, the Principal of the receiving school makes the decision on all requests *after* s/he knows the following school years budget, staffing, and material/ resource allocation. Students are enrolled in programs on an annual basis and each student must continue to register with his/her local area school even if s/he attends another school. After a transfer request has been accepted, the student is considered part of the receiving school’s population for that school year and any subsequent school years - no re-application is necessary.

Principals and School Program Planning Teams may request the transfer of students based on an individual student’s needs (*Policy Manual*, “Creating School Populations,” 2002, 3.2). Parents wishing to transfer a child to another school must submit a Transfer Request Form to that school’s principal (*Policy Manual*, “Creating School Populations,” 2002, 15.1). Access is at the discretion of the school principal and is based on space and resource availability in the receiving school (*Policy Manual*, “Creating School Populations,” 2002, 4.0). If such a transfer occurs, the Board is not responsible for providing transportation and the student may be charged a surcharge²⁷ (if within the Board’s jurisdiction) or tuition fees (if from outside of the Board’s jurisdiction) (*Policy Manual*, “Creating School Populations,” 2002).

Funding for Transferred Students

For the first year of a transfer, the school receives no allocated funding for the transferred student because the transfers are accepted after the district has distributed the schools’ resources. But because a transferred student becomes part of the school’s population following the transfer, the district does provide funding (staff and material resources) for those students for the subsequent school years.

Alternate Schools/ Programs

Within the HRSD there are few Alternate schools and programs. Prior to amalgamation, some of the various school districts did have alternate programs and schools established, but these “disappeared through erosion of funding” and the active discouragement by the Province of school boards offering programs that “did not meet the requirement of the Public School Program” (Halifax Regional School Board, personal interview, 14 May 2003).

²⁷ The surcharge is a “supplementary fee equal to the difference between the per pupil funding levels approved for the purposes of the budget” (*Supplementary Funding*, “Policy”, 2001, section 7.1). This fee is determined by the amount that is contributed to the Halifax Regional School Board from each municipality for schools *within* that municipality. Students transferring to a new school will not have had municipal funding allocated to them and must assume the difference in funding levels. If surcharges are not paid, the student will not be allowed to register with the school to which they transferred for the following school year (*Supplementary Funding*, “Procedure,” 2001, section 7.5, 7.6).

There are three alternate schools in the HRSB, which are offered at the secondary level with “an independent learning focus” (Halifax Regional School Board, personal interview, 14 May 2003). There is one school in Halifax, one in Dartmouth, and one in Sackville. To access the programs, students must qualify according to an established age range and have dropped out of school for a certain period of time. The programs are funded from the Board’s General Fund.

A further program is offered at one site in the Halifax area, which addresses students between the ages of 15-16. The program currently has 4 teachers and is funded through the HRSB’s Supplementary Fund.

Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial

Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (Conseil acadien) is one school district that encompasses the entire province. It oversees, implements, and monitors all French First Language Schools and programs for entitled persons (*Education Act*, 1996, section 11(1)).²⁸ The Conseil acadien implements provincially established curriculum and French First Language Programs and is responsible for “engag[ing] in activities that promote Acadian culture and the French language” (*Education Act*, 1996, section 16(c)). Persons who wish to attend the Conseil acadien must make an official declaration to the provincial government, and the Conseil acadien will determine eligibility before enrolment is permitted (*Governor in Council Education Act Regulations*, 2003, section 55). As of 2001-2002, 2.6% (approximately 4000) of all students enrolled in public schools were enrolled in the Conseil acadien (*Minister’s Report to Parent: 2002 Student Assessment Results for Nova Scotia*, 2002).

Home Education

In Nova Scotia Home Education is directly regulated by the Department of Education but managed at the district level. Under the Education Act (1996), a home education program is defined as “a course of study provided to a student under the direction of the student’s parent and centred in the student’s home” (section 3(1)). Enabled by Section 128 of the Education Act (1996), a child may receive home education if:

1. S/he is registered with the Minister of Education each academic year;
2. The parent provides a description of the proposed educational courses (*Governor in Council Education Act Regulations*, 2003, section 39(2)c); and
3. In June of each year the parent reports to the Minister of Education of the child’s progress.

When registering to home educate a child, parents must submit a registration form for each child that they plan to home educate. Under the Governor in Council Education Act Regulations (2003, section 39), the registration form requires the following information:

1. The last public school grade level attained by the child if the child ever attended public school;
2. And/or the last “program level of achievement and estimated equivalent public school grade level” acquired through a previous home education program; and
3. A description of the currently proposed course of study

²⁸ Persons who are entitled under section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Registration must be performed for each child that is to be home educated and must occur by September 20th for that academic year, unless the parent only intends to home school for part of the academic year. If only home educating their child for part of the academic year, a parent must register with the Minister of Education prior to providing the home education program (*Governor in Council Education Act Regulations*, 2003, section 39). Currently there are no available figures for the number of home-educated students in Nova Scotia.

For home education programs in Nova Scotia, each parent determines the curriculum that is to be covered in the program and parents are *not required* to follow the provincially prescribed curriculum. Should parents wish to follow the provincially set curriculum, the Department of Education has made available on-line curriculum guides through its Home Education Branch. Furthermore, the Department of Education actively promotes the use of provincial curriculum guides in home schooling programs to ensure that students receive a significant portion of the provincially prescribed curriculum. As correspondence study is directly regulated by the Department of Education, the Department approves all courses offered, and the courses offered follow the provincially set curriculum. The Department of Education also recognizes any correspondence courses taken as part of a home education program. Not all courses required for each grade program are available through Correspondence Study.

Enabled both within provincial legislation (*Education Act*, 1996) and some district policies, in some school boards parents may acquire permission to have a home-educated student attend certain classes, programs or services (*Education Act*, 1996, section 128(3)). The policy for this practice is determined at the Board level and any decision concerning home-educated students' attendance at school is often left to each school's principal.

When a parent provides a home education program to his/her child, the parent must report *at least once per year*, in June, to the Minister of Education about his/her child's progress (*Education Act*, 1996, section 128). The report submitted must assess the child's progress and be "in a manner consistent with the type of program provided and which accurately reflects the child's progress" (*Governor in Council Education Act Regulations*, 2003, section 40(b)). Assessment of progress can be shown through the use of national or international standardized testing or a portfolio of work, defined as "a representative, multi-curricula selection of the child's work performed over a period of time" (*Governor in Council Education Act Regulations*, 2003, section 41(3)), or by "assessment from a qualified assessor" (*Education Act*, 1996, section 128(4)). To help in the process, parents have the right to request that their child be assessed by his/her local school board "at the same time and under the same conditions as it is administered to public school students; and taken by the child with age-alike or grade-alike public school students." (*Governor in Council Education Act Regulations*, 2003, section 43(a), (b)).

As a result of these annual reports, if the Minister of Education believes the student is not making progress s/he may require further assessment by a qualified assessor or revoke the home education privilege (*Education Act*, 1996, section 128(5), 129). Should parents be informed of the termination of their home education program, they have the right to appeal.

According to the Department of Education website, *Home Schooling in Nova Scotia*, there is no provincial funding designated for providing full-time home education. However, if a home-educated student takes part in classes, programs or services offered within a school district, the province considers that student to be a member of that district. The province will then provide funding to the district for the student (Department of Education, personal interview, 16 May 2003). In the case of Correspondence Study, students must pay per course taken and the parent of the student must assume any costs incurred.

Home Education: Halifax Regional School Board

Though Home Schooling in Nova Scotia is directly regulated by the Department of Education and home-educated students *must* be registered with the Minister of Education, schools under the jurisdiction of the Halifax Regional School Board may provide services and programs to home-educated students. While the Board does not require schools to provide this service, it does encourage school principals to work with home-educating parents (Halifax Regional School Board, personal interview, 14 May 2003). According to the HRSB policy, parents who wish to utilize the services and/or programs of a local school must apply to that school's principal. Permission to participate in services, programs, or courses is at the discretion of the principal, but before permission can be given the principal *must* receive written confirmation of the student's registration with the Minister of Education (Halifax Regional School Board, personal interview, 14 May 2003; *Policy Manual*, "Home Schooling," 2002, 2.0.). Furthermore, the home education program *must* be provincially approved (Halifax Regional School Board, personal interview 14 May 2003). If permission is given, the parent and principal will draft and sign an agreement, a copy of which is forwarded to the Area Assistant Superintendent (*Policy Manual*, "Home Schooling," 2002, 4.0).

Correspondence Study

The Department of Education recognizes and directly regulates correspondence study. Students must pay per course taken and not all courses required for each grade program are offered. Courses are available for Grades 7 to 12 in English, French, Mathematics, Social Studies, Health, Atlantic Studies, Family Studies, Geography, German, History, Keyboarding, Accounting, Career and Life Management, Chemistry, Child Studies, Economics, Food and Nutrition, Biology, Physics, Canadian Families, and Science.²⁹ Correspondence study can be used in conjunction with home education to ensure that students receive a significant portion of the provincially prescribed curriculum.

Correspondence Study: Halifax Regional School Board

Students enrolled in the Halifax Regional School Board may undertake correspondence courses for Grades 7-12 with signed approval from their school principal (*Policy Manual*, "Correspondence Courses," 2002, 4.0). If correspondence study is undertaken because the courses are not offered at the local high school or the student is ill or suspended, parents may apply to have the Board cover the cost of registration and textbooks (*Policy Manual*, "Correspondence Courses," 2002, 2.0). If undertaken for any other reason, parents must assume the cost of correspondence study.

²⁹ Not all courses listed are offered for each grade.

Private Schools

A private school is defined as “a school, other than a public school, that serves school-age children and has a curriculum comparable to that provided by the public schools but does not include a home-education program” (*Education Act*, 1996, section 3(x)) and may operate throughout Nova Scotia under section 131 of the *Education Act* (1996). Students *have the right* to attend private schools instead of public schools under section 130 of the *Education Act*, but private schools *are not required* to accept all applicants. Each private school determines its own rules of eligibility and application process. Currently there are 31 private schools in operation in Nova Scotia, serving various grade levels and having a total of 2664 students enrolled.³⁰ Privately schooled students form about 1.7% of the total student population in the province (Federation of Independent Schools in Canada, “Enrolment by Province”).

Private schools within the Province of Nova Scotia are considered independent and separate from the public school system (Department of Education, personal interview, 26 May 2003). While the Minister of Education has the right to “enter and intervene on behalf of a student” if s/he does not believe that progress is being made, there is little direct management by the Department of Education (Department of Education, personal interview, 26 May 2003). Private schools must apply to the Minister of Education for permission to operate (Department of Education, personal interview, 16 May 2003), but do not need to apply for a *license*. Instead, they must be registered with the province as a private school and meet the Department of Education’s standards of:

- 1) Safety – health and building;
- 2) Effective age-grade appropriate education; and
- 3) Demonstrated progressive learning.

Private schools must also regularly provide the Department of Education with statistical information (number of students enrolled, etc.), operational information and, if requested, provide evidence of adequate student achievement (*Education Act*, 1996, section 131; Department of Education, personal interview, 16 May 2003).³¹

Programs and Public School Equivalency

Private schools determine their own curriculum and programs with the condition that the curriculum and programs they offer be of an equivalent age-grade level to that of the Public School Program. If they wish for provincial recognition of the programs offered, they must apply to the Department of Education. Unlike public schools, private schools “may offer a religious-based curriculum” (*Education Act*, section 131(3)). Under provincial regulations “private schools [that] meet the equivalent learning outcomes at the High School Level can be given the right to give the Nova Scotia High School Diploma,” but must pursue this process on their own initiative. (Department of Education, personal interview, 16 May 2003).

³⁰ This number may include some home-schooled students.

³¹ This information may consist of names of persons owning and operating the school, the school’s name and location, the number of students enrolled each school year, a list and description of courses offered, a list of prescribed courses, a list of optional courses, and a list and description of courses that differ from the established provincial curriculum (*Governor in Council Education Act Regulations*, 2003, section 45, 46).

Private schools have the right to apply to have their educational programs recognized as equivalent to the Public School Program. If they wish to pursue this application, they must submit the following information to the Department of Education for consideration:

- 1) Name(s) of person(s) owning and operating the school;
- 2) Name of the school;
- 3) School location;
- 4) Number of students enrolled each school year;
- 5) Inventory and description of all courses offered; including
 - a. Those designated as prescribed courses;
 - b. Those designated as optional courses; and
 - c. Courses that differ from the established provincial curriculum
- 6) As well as:
 - a. A statement of the philosophy, outcomes, content, scope and sequence of each course;
 - b. The list of major learning resources for each course approved by the governing body of the school;
 - c. A description of how the program contributes to the Essential Graduation Learnings recognized by the Department;
 - d. The number of hours of instruction for each course;
 - e. Provincial course coding equivalency for all courses and programs;
 - f. An outline of instructional strategies to be used; and
 - g. An outline of evaluation strategies and procedures.

(*Governor in Council Education Act Regulations*, section 45, 46, 48).

If the Minister of Education recognizes the equivalency of a private education program, he may grant recognition for up to three years after which a private school can reapply for continued recognition of equivalency (*Governor in Council Education Act Regulations*, section 50).

Accountability

While private schools are considered *separate* and *independent* of the public school system, the Minister of Education does collect statistical information from the schools and have the right to “enter and intervene on behalf of student” if s/he does not believe that progress is being made (Department of Education, personal interview, 16 May 2003). Similarly, the Minister of Education has the right to request evidence of “reasonable educational progress appropriate for [the student’s] age and grade level based upon results of nationally or internationally recognized standardized achievement tests” (*Education Act*, 1996, section 131(3)). Private schools are not required to administer these standardized achievement examinations unless requested by the Minister of Education, and otherwise determine their own assessment strategies.

Private schools: Halifax Regional School Board

Throughout the Halifax Regional School Board area there are a series of small-scale private schools. In the opinion of the HRSB, the declining enrolment throughout the school districts province-wide is exacerbated by the draw of private schools, which, unlike public schools, tend not to be highly concentrated in specific areas (Halifax Regional School Board, personal interview, 14 May 2003).

Program Choice:

While the Department of Education establishes all provincial curriculum, policies, and regulations regarding education in the province of Nova Scotia, program choice is developed at the district level. The Education Act (1996) enables program choice by allowing district boards to:

- a) Provide such courses as are approved by the Minister;
- b) Provide such additional services and benefits as the school board may consider desirable;
- c) Enter into agreements, including tuition agreements, for the provision of services and benefits;
- d) Permit persons to offer religious studies in its schools in accordance with the policies of the school board (section 64(3)).

The province “does not *prescribe* alternate programs... [but] encourages and supports the development of alternate programs” (Department of Education, personal interview, 16 May 2003). Sources of funding for these programs are the district’s global funding and pilot project funding, both of which are provided by the province to districts on an annual basis.

In terms of school and program choice the Department of Education defines itself as neutral. As a Department of Education representative noted about school and program choice, “It is not our domain” (Department of Education, personal interview, 16 May 2003). The Department of Education neither encourages nor discourages districts in the offering of choices, but allows those decisions to be made at the district level. Furthermore, the Department of Education recognizes that “the only choices available are those at the local level” and leaves the publication and distribution of that information to the local school districts and school boards (Department of Education, personal interview, 16 May 2003).

While currently neutral on the issue of “choice,” with the recent history of amalgamation there was an attempt by the Department of Education to eliminate the different delivery models previously employed throughout the province. The Department of Education’s main focus was to ensure that the newly formed School Boards were offering the provincially set Public School Program; thereby they actively discouraged the creation of programs that did not follow that model (Halifax Regional School Board, 14 May 2003). This has resulted in the province and various boards not being favourably inclined to support choice for parents (Halifax Regional School Board, 14 May 2003).

Program Choice: Halifax Regional School Board

Choice at the board level is limited to the French program; choice at the school level in terms of courses, not programs, is a little different (Halifax Regional School Board, personal interview, 14 May 2003).

The only district-wide alternate programs offered in the HRSB are the French Second Language Programs, though there are various area-specific programs offered only to students of those areas of the Board. The French Second Language Programs are the only programs that, if parents register their child by March 1st for the following school year, the Board will guarantee the child's enrolment in that program. As such, the French Programs are the only "pure parental choice" (Halifax Regional School Board, personal interview, 14 May 2003). Access and availability in all other programs is program and area specific; choice is in the parent's application to see if his/her child qualifies. The inability for the HRSB to offer all programs district wide is partially a result of the incomplete amalgamation of the Board (which occurred in 1996).³² It is also partially because the current policies do not adequately address the geographic area of eligibility for all of the programs offered within the district and the amalgamated district operates with four different levels of funding (the municipal supplementary funding is not evenly applied across the district, but area specific).

Other than the French Programs, choice currently exists at the high school level and through the locally developed courses, which are school specific. In either case, there are limits on persons accessing the programs and courses, though parents have the right to apply for a transfer.

Councils

Some programs are developed or altered by the Department of Education as a result of councils that advise the Minister of Education on programs and services concerning minority groups. To date, two councils have been formed in Nova Scotia to promote cultural understanding, advance minority culture and heritage, and aid in the education of minority students: the Council on Mi'kmaq Education and the Council on African-Canadian Education (also known as the Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC)). Each council investigates and advises the Minister on methods through which educational programs and services can "promote the rights and interests" of the Mi'kmaq or of African-Canadians. Should this process result in new programs and services, or changes to existing programs and services, school boards are expected to implement these programs and services and to provide learning resources concerning Mi'kmaq and African-Canadian culture and history (*Education Act*, 1996, section 138, 140).

³² The HRSB was formed in 1996 from the amalgamation of three separate school boards.

Required programs

Certain programs are required to be offered by all school districts. Should a district fail to provide required programs, the Minister has the right to withhold funds normally paid to that district (*Education Act*, 1996, section 79(a)). The required programs for all schools include:

- 1) For Primary to Grade 6: Language Arts, Health, Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, Physical Education, Music and Visual Arts.
- 2) For primary schools in the Conseil acadien: English Language Arts beginning in Grade 3.
- 3) For primary schools in all Anglophone districts: Core French beginning in Grade 4.
- 4) For Grades 7 - 12: English, French or Mi'kmaq or Gaelic, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science (Biology, Chemistry, or Physics), and Physical Education.
- 5) Grades 10 - 12: 1 fine arts course; 2 other courses in Mathematics, Science or technology; 1 Physical Education course; 1 course of Career and Life Management; and 1 global studies course.
- 6) For Grades 7 - 9: Personal Development and Relationships and two of: Industrial Arts Technology, Technology Education, Family Studies, Art, and Music.
- 7) For all levels: programs of need for students with special learning needs and abilities.

Programs required to be offered within a school district but not in all schools in that district are Music, Art, Family Studies, Entrepreneurship, Business Education, and Industrial Arts Technology.

Grade Primary

Grade Primary is the first year of public education and precedes Grade 1. It is compulsory and is designed to create “a transition from home to school and provid[e] a foundation for independent lifelong learning” (*Public School Programs*, 1999, B-8). Students enter at age 5 and “the Department of Education recommends that all children entering school for the first time in the Primary Grade be part of a planned program of registration and preschool orientation” (*Public School Programs*, 1999, B-8).

Essential Graduation Learnings

For *all* programs and courses the Nova Scotia Department of Education has adopted the *Essential Graduation Learnings* as a means of assessing student performance and learning. The *Essential Graduation Learnings* promotes the development of six key areas: Aesthetic Expression, Citizenship, Communication, Personal Development, Problem Solving, and Technological Competence (*Public School Programs Handbook*, A-4). These areas are established and assessed in all courses, programs, grade levels, and areas of schooling.

Advanced Courses

Schools may offer advanced courses *only* at the Grade 11 and 12 levels. Advanced courses may be provincially or locally developed to replace or enhance provincially established advanced curriculum. Schools are also free to choose to use the Grade 11 and 12 International Baccalaureate Program courses as advanced courses (*Policies and Procedures*, 3).

Challenge for Credit

Students who already have the knowledge and skills associated with specific courses may undertake the *Challenge for Credit* process. Courses that students may apply to “challenge” are Mathematics, Physical Education, fine arts courses, and Language courses (*Policies and Procedures*, 5). In the Halifax Regional School Board students may only challenge for credit courses within the Fine Arts Program (visual arts, drama, dance, and music).

Locally Developed Courses

Locally developed courses are developed by the school to “fit a specific need within their community” and are highly utilized by students (Halifax Regional School Board, personal interview, 14 May 2003). Encouragement for developing locally developed courses does not largely occur at the Board level, but at the provincial level. Current provincial legislation and regulations encourages schools to develop new locally developed courses, but it also enables schools and/or boards to adopt the *already existing* locally developed courses from other schools. All locally developed courses must be approved by the Department of Education prior to their implementation.

Numerous locally developed courses are offered in schools under the Halifax Regional School Board’s jurisdiction, all at the high school level. These courses include: Sociology 12 (2 sites), Power Mechanics 12 (1 site, involves 1 week of work experience), Philosophy 12 (1 site), Peer Tutoring 12 (2 sites), Investment and Finance 12 (2 sites), Introduction to Music 10 (1 site), Aviation Technology 12 (1 site), Astronomy 12 (1 site), Applied Information Technology (1 site), and Accounting 11 Academic (2 sites). As one Halifax Regional School Board representative noted, “literally thousands of students are involved in our locally developed courses and for the majority of those students it is one of the reasons that they are still in school – they play a key role” (Halifax Regional School Board, personal interview, 14 May 2003).

Exploratory Options

For Grade 7-9 schools may institute Exploratory Options, which are short term (~6 week) programs that extend or enhance other curriculum (*Public School Programs*, 1999, B-10).

French Programs

All French programs offered in Nova Scotia, including the curriculum, programs, and services offered in the Conseil acadien, are the responsibility of the Acadian and French Programs Branch of the Department of Education. Core French from Grade 4 to 9 inclusive is a required program, while Early French Immersion, Late French Immersion and expanded Core French are optional programs.

Programmes Français: Halifax Regional School Board

In the Halifax Regional School Board a variety of French programs are offered by schools under its jurisdiction and include:

Core French

The Core French Program is offered Grade 4 - 12 and is compulsory between Grades 4 - 9 inclusive (offered in all schools encompassing the range of Grades 4 - 9 and select schools for Grades 9-12).

Extended Core French Program

The Extended Core French Program is offered Grades 4 - 12 and, in high school, consists of Social Studies taught in French and French Language Arts classes. The program is offered at three sites (2 schools Grades 7 - 12, 1 high school Grades 10 - 12).

Early French Immersion Program

The Early French Immersion Program follows the provincially established curriculum and is offered from primary to Grade 12. For High School Graduation 50% of courses (9 of 18) taken must be in the French Language. It is offered in 4 primary sites, 15 elementary schools (1 site for grades Primary – Grade 3, 6 site for Primary – Grade 6, 1 site for Grades 1 - 6, 3 sites for Primary – Grade 1, 2 sites for Grades 2 - 6, and 1 site for Primary – Grade 5), 4 junior high schools (1 site for Grades 6 - 9, 3 sites for Grades 7 - 9), and 2 high schools.

Late French Immersion Program

The Late French Immersion Program is offered in Grades 7 - 12. For High School Graduation 50% of courses (9 of 18) taken must be in the French Language. The program is offered in 19 junior high schools (16 sites Grades 7 - 9 and 3 sites Grades 7 - 8), 1 consolidated school (Grades 7 - 12), and 7 high schools (Grades 10 - 12).

On the *Programmes Français* web-page curriculum information is available for the core curriculum courses offered in the French Immersion Programs (Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, and Personal and Social Development) (see www.hrsb.ns.ca/programs/fre/RAS).

Websites are also available for the standard core curriculum of Mathematics, Science, English Language Arts and Physical Education. These sites similarly contain relevant documents, descriptions, links, and desired outcomes for each course.

Independent Study

Students may develop and undertake independent studies to tailor their high school programs to their individual interests. Students are allowed 1 credit of independent study for grade 11 and 1 credit for Grade 12 (*Policies and Procedures*, 5).

Various schools under the Halifax Regional School Board's jurisdiction, Independent Studies have been adopted into the curriculum of Mi'kmaq Studies 10, African Studies 11, and Canadian History 11.³³ Independent Studies are used as an integral (and compulsory) part of the learning process to promote and develop independent research skills.

Work Education Programs

Work Education Programs are designed to teach employment skills and attitudes and consist of classroom-based courses, as well as possibly **Work Experience Programs** or **Job Shadowing**. Job Shadowing is a short-term (usually 1 day) observation of a person at his/ her employment; no Ministerial approval is needed (*Public Schools Programs*, B-20). Work Experience is part-time (1 day per week or 1 - 3 week segment) non-paid employment in a business. Students *must* be 16 years of age or older, have written parental permission, be supervised, and be approved by the Minister of Education to enrol in Work Experience Programs (*Public School Programs*, 1999, B-20).

Other Programs/ Courses

Programs that may be provided by school districts, but are not required by the Minister, are library programs and an **International Student Program** (*Ministerial Education Act Regulations*, 2000, section 50). Districts may also offer **Gaelic** and **Mi'kmaq** as second languages starting in Grade 3 (*Public School Programs*, 1999, B-6).

Other Programs: Halifax Regional School Board

A variety of programs are offered in schools that fall under the Halifax Regional School Board's jurisdiction, but access is limited. For most programs listed websites have been created containing relevant documents, descriptions, links, and desired outcomes. Beyond the programs discussed above, the programs offered are:

Junior High Instrumental Music

The Junior High Instrumental Music Program is a cumulative program offered in Grades 6-12 throughout schools in the Halifax Regional School Board. The introductory level is only offered in Grade 6; therefore students with little or no other musical experience must be enrolled in the program from Grade 6 onward.

Fine Arts Program

The Board offers a Fine Arts Program in all grades and in all of its schools. The Fine Arts Program differs between schools but within each family of schools drama, dance, visual arts, and music are offered. The Board specifically allocates funding for the program and the program is centrally administrated by the Fine Art Program Co-ordinator to ensure teaching expertise and program quality.

³³ While these are the courses that overtly use Independent Study, under the regulations listed in the *Public School Programs Handbook* (1999) it is feasible that students can develop and undertake Independent Studies in other areas.

Extracurricular Programs: HRSB

The Halifax Regional Municipality also encourages a wide variety of extracurricular programs for students. These programs include:

Dartmouth All City Music Program

The Dartmouth All City Music Program is a music program that teaches in the areas of strings, band, and choir. It is only available to residents of the (former) City of Dartmouth and is funded exclusively through Supplementary Funding

Halifax All City Music Program

Similar to the Dartmouth All City Music Program, the Halifax All City Music Program is an after-school music program only available to residents of the (former) City of Halifax.

International Student Program

The International Student Program enables students from a variety of countries to live with host families in the Halifax Regional Municipality and study in schools under the jurisdiction of the Halifax Regional School Board. This program is limited to high school age students and participants must pay tuition fees.

Breakfast for Success Program

Created to address child hunger and teach good nutrition, the Breakfast for Success Program provides breakfasts or snacks to students. The program is offered (in variation) in 29 schools under the Board's jurisdiction and the program is fully funded by community donations.

EXCEL Childcare Program

Organized and administered by the Halifax Regional School Board, the Excel Childcare Program offers childcare services before school, at lunch, and after school. Students between Grades Primary and 6 are eligible. The program is offered at 54 schools under the Board's jurisdiction and is funded through student fees (fees vary according to designated times the student is enrolled in the program: full-time or part-time, and before school, during lunch, and/or after school).

Programs of Need:

In Nova Scotia, the Department of Education does not differentiate programs of need and other programs, but promotes program and curriculum adaptation "to meet the diverse needs and varying rates and patterns of learning of all students" (*Public School Programs Handbook*, 1999, B-5). This may involve "the manipulation of instructional variables" such as the employment of different teaching strategies, the alteration of time used per course, or the use of different evaluation measures (*Public School Programs Handbook*, 1999, B-5). All such changes are noted in a student's permanent file.

If the outcomes of a program or course are significantly altered to fit a student's needs then an Individual Program Plan (IPP) is developed by a *program planning team* (involving administrators, parents, the student, teachers, and possibly other professionals) (*Public School Programs*, 1999, B-5). IPPs note the newly established outcomes, as well as document the

additional services and supports used by the student. They are parent approved and are kept in the student's permanent file. District approved IPP's can be used as credit towards high school graduation (*Public School Programs*, 1999, B-5).

All programs of need and program alterations are developed at the district level and district boards are accountable for them (*Education Act*, 1996, section 64(2)d). In each district the Superintendent/ Director of Education is responsible for arranging student assessments and creating suitable education programs. Under the Education Act (1996) parents *have the right* and *teachers are expected* to be involved in the development of a pupil's program (section 25).

Specific funding for programs of need is received by district boards from the Minister of Education under *specific purpose grants* (*Governor in Council Education Act Regulations*, 2003, section 8(5)), the formula for which is determined by the Governor in Council. These grants are to "assist with the costs of programming and services" and *must* be used to cover costs additional to the programs and services offered by classroom teachers (*Public School Programs*, 1999, B-5, B-6).

In conjunction with the other Atlantic provinces Nova Scotia has established the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority whose purpose it is to serve individuals diagnosed with sensory impairments. Individuals may be served by the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority upon a referral from the students' local district school board (*The Handicapped Person's Education Act*, 1990, section 11(1)). The Authority is not required to serve individuals "where suitable educational provision is available to that handicapped person in the school district where he resides" (*The Handicapped Person's Education Act*, 1990, section 11(4)).

Programs of Need: Halifax Regional School Board

The Student Services Division of the Halifax Regional School Board is responsible for addressing all special educational needs of students within the Board, and at each level a Planning Team is responsible for the provision of services (*Policy Manual*, "Special Education Procedures," 2002, 2.0).³⁴ Like the Province itself, the Board follows a policy of inclusion and does not differentiate programs of need from other programs. According to the Board's Policy "students with special needs are those whose needs are such that they require supports in addition to those provided by a classroom teacher" (*Policy Manual*, "Special Education Policy," 2002, 1.1). For this reason, the Student Services Division addresses learning disabilities, behavioural disabilities, speech or language disabilities, and gifted or talented students. It is also responsible for providing guidance and counselling to all students, a variety of disability services, and assistive technology. It is responsible for the Resource Learning Centre and keeps registered psychologists and social workers on staff. For each school under the Board's jurisdiction, a brochure is created and made available noting the student services offered in that school (*Policy Manual*, "Special Education Procedures," 2002, 5.0).

³⁴ Throughout the Board there are School Planning Teams (one for each school), Family of Schools Planning Teams (one for each family of schools), Area Planning Teams (one for each area) and a Regional Planning Team.

Students with special educational needs may have those needs resolved with adapted teaching strategies or may require curriculum changes. Should changes be made to the provincial curriculum, the School Planning Team, in conjunction with the parent and student, develops an Individual Program Plan to meet the student's needs. The student's guardian must approve all formal assessments undertaken and/or program changes made in the Board's attempt to meet the student's special educational needs.

Limits to Choice

Currently in Nova Scotia there are various limits to both enabling and encouraging school and program choice. At the provincial level, "that hasn't been the culture and history [of choice in education] in this province" (Department of Education, personal interview, 16 May 2003). This was further exacerbated by the 1996 amalgamation and the provincial attempt to standardize the delivery of education. Providing and enabling choice was not a priority.

Furthermore, the current philosophical orientation of the Department of Education is, that to encourage choice beyond the public system would be detrimental and "problematic" to the long-term goal of "sustaining, maintaining and enhancing the public school system" (Department of Education, personal interview, 16 May 2003). This is evidenced in the draw of private schools within the Halifax Regional School Board, adding to the decrease in enrolment and the loss of funds.

Limits to Choice: Halifax Regional School Board

For the Halifax Regional School Board, there are various factors that limit choice beyond the philosophy of the Department of Education or the history of the Province. These factors include ensuring equitable education between small and large schools, and between rural and urban schools. This is recognized by the Department of Education, because throughout the province there are various locations where there is no alternate school to attend within a reasonable geographical area. For this reason, the Department of Education encourages schools, parents and communities to develop and improve their local school, rather than seek another external school or program.

Within the Halifax Regional School Board and for most boards within Nova Scotia, there is also the problem of funding and limited resources. Within the HRSB, funding is low when calculated per student which decreases the ability of the Board to offer greater choice.³⁵ The HRSB recognizes that often choice cannot be offered if a program or school creates any significant additional costs or strains current resources. Additional costs might be incurred by, for example, if a program requires an additional teacher or a school bus for transportation. All alternate programs must be "lean" in relation to their required resource base to be feasible before the Board will agree to provide it. However, the issue is highly political controversial because of the differing stresses each board (rural and urban) within the Province currently faces.

³⁵ The HRSB perceives its funding to be low nationally and within the province.

Parental Perception of Choice

Within the Halifax Regional School Board, parental perception of the HRSB's methods of encouraging choice is considered highly political and largely driven by the French Immersion population (Halifax Regional School Board, personal interview, 14 May 2003). The Board recognizes that the public does not believe that the HRSB is meeting the public demand for the program. However, the program must be offered through a "single staffing formula" with little additional financial assistance from the province, thus the HRSB is unable to expand it further without a sustainable student population. According to their data, the HRSB is currently offering the program in locations where there is not a large enough population to sustain the French Immersion program over 13 years (primary – Grade 12) (Halifax Regional School Board, personal interview, 14 May 2003).

In terms of locally developed courses, when students are not allowed to freely transfer between schools to access those courses the Board recognizes that students often believe that they are being "held back" by the Board by being unable to freely access all courses offered in the schools under the Board's jurisdiction (Halifax Regional School Board, personal interview, 14 May 2003).

Future Trends

Yet the HRSB believes that "student's learning options" are being reconsidered as a result of recent consultations and their recently released *Blueprint* document. As the HRSB and the Province continue to work with the new *Learning Outcome Frameworks*, the Board believes there will be an increased focus on individual student needs and student options within and outside of the system.

Funding

Education is funded partially by municipal taxation (determined by the Department of Education) and partially by the provincial government. The Minister of Education provides funding directly to school boards for the number of eligible students in the district, the number of schools, and the programs and services offered. Should a student designated to a school district by residence attend school elsewhere, the board of that student's home district which received money for that student's tuition will transfer that money to the "other boards or authorities in accordance with the regulations" (*Education Act*, 1996, section 64(2)I).

Funding: Halifax Regional School Board

Within the Halifax Regional School Board sources of funding vary. Partial funding is received through the Department of Education and partial funding is received through municipal taxation. Because the Halifax Regional School Board encompasses more than one "municipality" within the Halifax Regional Municipality, taxation received from each municipality is designated *only* to the family of schools located within that municipality. The money received through municipal taxation serves as the base for each family of school's supplementary funding. Under this structure, municipal taxation funds received from the former city of Halifax are designated to the supplementary funds of the families of schools within the former city of Halifax; the funds received from the taxes levied in the former city of Dartmouth are given to the families of schools located in the former city of Dartmouth; and the those received from the Halifax County

– Bedford area are designated to the families of schools within the former Halifax County – Bedford area. The taxes levied in each area differ; therefore the funds received by the families of schools in each area differ. This taxation structure is also the cause for the surcharge or fee levied against all students who transfer to an area where the supplementary funding per student is higher than their neighbourhood family of schools. In the case of a Board suggested transfer for a student with special needs, the surcharge or fee is waived (*Supplementary Funding, “Policy,”* 2001, 7.4)

Individual program funding within the Halifax Regional School Board varies. For some programs, funding is allocated from the Global or Supplementary Fund Budgets; others are directly funded by the Provincial Government; and in some cases funding is completely based on community donation. For specific extracurricular programs, such as the EXCEL Childcare Program, parents may be levied fees. Fees may also be levied against students residing outside of the Board’s jurisdiction, who attend schools within it. Students may also be levied a “surcharge” if they have transferred schools due to parental requests.

Funding for special education programs is provided, in part, through a grant given by the Department of Education (*Policy Manual, “Special Education Policy,”* 2002, 2.1). From the Global Budget, the Regional Planning Teams allocates resources and from the Supplementary Fund Student Services provides each school with “enhanced services” (*Policy Manual, “Special Education Procedures,”* 2002, 1.4, 1.5). Allocation of resources, services, and funds is based on individual school need.

Accountability

The Education Act of Nova Scotia (1996) establishes a structure of accountability which begins with the teacher and extends up through the system directly to the Minister of Education. At all levels, there exists constant monitoring and documentation. Results are compiled into reports, provided to the supervising authority, and disseminated to parents and the public. As stated in the Education Act (1996):

1. Teachers assess and document student progress, administer evaluation methods, meet with parents (Education Act, 1996, section 26(1)), and report to school principals.
2. Principals implement curriculum, programs, and services, perform regular evaluations of students and staff, and help the school advisory council to create an annual report concerning the performance of the school, its programs, services and students (Education Act, 1996, section 38(2)).
3. School Advisory Councils develop school improvement plans, prepare annual performance reports, and advise on school policies, funding, curriculum, and programs (legislated in the Education Act, 1996, section 22). Their annual reports are given to the Superintendent/ Director of Education.
4. Directors of Education/ Superintendents “implement, administer and evaluate the programs [and services] offered by the district school board,” review school improvement plans, review annual reports provided by school advisory councils and distribute resources to schools in the district (Education Act, 1996, section 10E(2)).
5. District school boards develop, implement, and monitor policies concerning the educational programs and services of its district (Education Act, 1996, section

- 10B(1)b). They ensure that all schools in their district follow provincial programs and curriculum (Education Act, 1996, section 64(2)) and all eligible students are educated. Each District school board submits an annual report to the minister (Education Act, 1996, section 64(2)am) and makes it publicly available at its district office (Education Act, 1996, section 65(3)).
6. Overseeing this process, the Minister “collect[s], compile[s], and disseminate[s] educational statistics and information” (Education Act, 1996, section 141(k)).

The Department of Education is currently developing a “Cascading Model” of accountability, where the school boards would hold schools accountable and the province would hold the districts accountable (Department of Education, personal interview, 16 May 2003). Yet it is recognized that this type of loop can only be created through regular “reporting and monitoring” (Department of Education, personal interview, 16 May 2003). Furthermore, School Advisory Councils in the schools enable a grassroots input in this process because one of the key duties of the School Advisory Council is the “development of a school improvement plan and reporting annually on that plan.” As a Department of Education representative noted, the pieces of the accountability system exist in the education system, but the Province is currently attempting to “operationalize it better” (Department of Education, personal interview, 16 May 2003). The province has also introduced “more public reporting” about collected data on student achievement (the annual reports) and its plans for improving it. It is believed that this will place the claims of the Department of Education into the public domain and enable the public to demand accountability from the provincial education system for those claims. The Department of Education would like to see this process in operation at all district and school levels (Department of Education, personal interview, 16 May 2003).

Accountability: Halifax Regional School Board

Within the HRSB there are a variety of accountability mechanisms, both formal and informal, which include: the HRSB’s review of individual school’s Course Offering Booklets; discussions with principals, with the HRSB and with parents; internal assessments of whether the provincially mandated curriculum is being covered; the development of a feedback loop established through the presence of School Advisory Councils; the development of required School Improvement Plans for each school; teacher and administrative appraisals; and assessment examinations.

Assessment

Two of the most ready forms of accountability in education are annual reports and assessment examinations. Assessment examinations are performed by the school district on its own initiative and under the direction of the Minister of Education. The district, the province, the Programme for International Student Assessment, and the School Achievement Indicators Program have all developed various assessment examinations that are given.³⁶ The assessment examinations are used for regional, provincial, national, or international comparison. Results are summarized into general reports that can be accessed through district offices or the Department of Education, but individual assessment examinations are not accessible by parents or the public.

³⁶ The Department of Education no longer uses the assessment examinations that were developed by the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (Department of Education, personal interview, 16 May 2003).

In assessing student development in the six key areas of the *Essential Graduation Learnings*, the Department of Education has established *Learning Outcome Frameworks* which “consist of a series of curriculum statements describing what knowledge, skills, and attitudes students are expected to demonstrate as a result of their cumulative learning experiences in the primary-graduation continuum” (*Public School Programs Handbook*, 1999, B-4). Students are assessed according to provincially established “curriculum outcome statements.” General or “key stage” curriculum outcome statements are assessed at grades 3, 6, 9 and 12 (*Public School Programs Handbook*, 1999, B-4). Specific curriculum outcome statements are assessed for each grade and course (*Public School Programs Handbook*, 1999, B-4).

Assessment: Halifax Regional School Board

As a result of the new curriculum and learning outcomes, students are assessed using a variety of formats. As learning outcomes reflect learned knowledge and skills, students are assessed both on their knowledge and skills.

Assessment strategies include but are not limited to portfolios, work samples, models, oral and/or written journals/ reports/ logs/ presentations, performances, graphic/ visual representations, experiments, concept maps, quizzes, tests, debates, projects, checklists, anecdotal records, conferences, surveys, and observations. (*Policy Manual*, “Student Assessment and Evaluation,” 2002)

Programs are evaluated Board-wide by “large-scale student assessments” and the information collected may be used to evaluate student performance, but teacher evaluation and opinion is always given primacy in student assessment (*Policy Manual*, “Student Assessment and Evaluation,” 2002, 6.2).

While there has been a history of constantly changing provincial assessment examinations, the existence of these examinations has made schools accountable to parents and the HRSB. To help teachers prepare for new examinations and the new provincial policy of mailing home results, the HRSB has recently undertaken teacher training. Until the 2002-2003 school year only standardized board assessment examination results were mailed to parents with provincial assessment results only available on a board-by-board basis. From the 2002-2003 school year forward both provincial assessment results and board assessment results will be mailed directly to parents. The HRSB recognizes that with this new policy, teachers are concerned that the mailed results will exclusively be the basis for accountability to parents.

Parental Feedback

Parental feedback is largely received through the monthly School Advisory Council meetings and the relatively informal communication with the schools through open houses, parent-teacher meetings, and school fairs.

For the 2003-2004 school year the HRSB will be implementing formally developed parent surveys, a project that was piloted a few years ago to allow both a HRSB-wide analysis and a localized school-based analysis of parental opinion. The HRSB also designates one board meeting per month exclusively to parental and community group presentations.

Other Forms of Accountability within the Halifax Regional School Board

Communication Plans for Student Learning

Within the Halifax Regional School Board, schools are responsible for the development and application of Communication Plans for Student Learning, which outline “when [schools] will be in touch with parents, what form that will take, the information that will be transmitted” (Halifax Regional School Board, personal interview, 14 May 2003).

Reporting

Annual reports are made available to parents and the community through district offices. One new format is *The Minister’s Report To Parents: Student Assessment Results for Nova Scotia*. Issued by the Minister of Education, the report for the 2001-2002 academic year is the second annual report and addresses issues such as enrolment statistics, student performance on a provincial level, a national level, and an international level, and an action plan to increase student performance (*Minister’s Report to Parents: 2002*, 2002). It also includes a three-year comparison of student performance. Students are assessed in the areas of Language Arts (English), Mathematics, and the Sciences (*Minister’s Report to Parents: 2002*). While *The Minister’s Report to Parents* accounts for performance, financial accountability is provided in the yearly *Nova Scotia Department of Education Annual Accountability Report for the Fiscal Year*.

In addition to the Minister’s reports, the public can access school statistics, program information, assessment information, educational support databases, curriculum, forms, resources and government documents (Act, regulations and policies) through district offices, the Department of Education and the Department of Education’s website.

Reporting: Halifax Regional School Board

In the Halifax Regional School Board, parents are informed of their child(ren)’s performance through Board-standardized (or Board approved) report cards reflecting the expected learning outcomes. Parents are also kept informed about their child’s progress through direct communication with teachers (through conferences). For information on the *method* of student assessment, each school also creates, institutes and makes available a *School Plan for Communicating School Learning*, which is available to parents through the school and area offices.

Blueprint For Improvement

The recently published *Blueprint For Improvement*, 2003, documented the new Superintendent’s recent consultation with students, parents, and staff throughout the district. The *Blueprint* addressed concerns expressed by parents, students, and staff throughout the HRSB, the strengths of the HRSB, and a five-year plan for overall improvement.

Information, Publications, and Use

Throughout Nova Scotia, parents can access program information and information on the new curriculum, learning outcomes, and methods of teaching through all schools, the Board office, area offices, and on the Board’s website. Further information about performance, services and programs is made available through the biweekly newsletter from the Superintendent, the

updated compilation of relevant news releases (available on the website), the regular Board newsletters, the Board's Policies and Procedures, and in the recently released *Blueprint for Improvement*. Parents can also access program and curriculum information through the Board offices and its website.

In addition to the above listed information, the Board's website also keeps archived and makes available the Board Meeting Minutes, reports on education (those performed both internally and externally), financial statements, business plans, financial plans and budgets. Generally all information is available for the last three years.

At the provincial level the following information is available to parents: The Minister's Report to Parents, Public Schools Programs, and information brochures (literacy initiative, mathematics). The province is currently attempting to create a parent-friendly website and increase the information brochures available, not to increase knowledge about choice, but to enable parents "to monitor their own child's progress and their own schools performance" (Department of Education, personal interview, 16 May 2003).

In terms of parental use of available information, the Department of Education believes that parents are likely using the information as well as they could. As one Department of Education representative noted, "I'm not sure there is a whole lot of useful information at this point in time" (Department of Education, personal interview, 16 May 2003). While the Department of Education recognized that some parents "make themselves knowledgeable," its aim is to make the information accessible to all parents (Department of Education, personal interview, 16 May 2003). The Department of Education would like to establish "a broad based communication plan for parents" where parents are aware of the role of schools, the expected learning outcomes, the curriculum, and the performance expectations (Department of Education, personal interview 16 May 2003).

Information and Publications: Halifax Regional School Board

In the Halifax Regional School Board, students are made aware of the various locally developed courses largely through the High School transition meetings, which are held in Grade 9, and through meetings with guidance counsellors when students are selecting courses. The information is also published in each school's Course Offering book and on the HRSB's website. Furthermore, some schools (increasing in numbers) are establishing a system where parents may go to the school, review attendance, review homework assignments, and marks.

In general, information is made available through published documents (available at the HRSB office and local schools), informal communication, and school and HRSB websites. On the HRSB website there is an "Ask the School Board" e-mail component, from which the Board receives "quite a [steady] flow of questions that come in and that is a really consistent way of sharing information back to the system" (Halifax Regional School Board, personal interview, 14 May 2003). This e-mail component can be used by anyone from the public and the Board ensures that each e-mail is responded to promptly.

Parental Response

According to the HRSB there was a good response to the Blueprint, but they are unsure about parental response to and use of the HRSB's website. At a local level, the HRSB perceives parents to be content with information they can acquire from the local schools as there is a great deal of use of each school's website (each school tracks the number of website "hits.")

"At the local level [parents] can get what they need and what they want and they are happy with it" (Halifax Regional School District, personal interview, 14 May 2003). Parental access to information at the school level occurs on a day-to-day basis, but accessing information from the HRSB is performed on an "as needed basis" (Halifax Regional School District, personal interview, 14 May 2003). The HRSB perceives parental satisfaction with the information available to be partially a result of the answers parents are given – if parents are unhappy with specific answers at the school level, they then seek further information from the HRSB. Furthermore, at the board level the HRSB, itself, perceives parental response to be far more politically based and aimed at directly influencing board policy. Quite often when parents are coming to the Board for information or requests it is somewhat more negative than when they are at the school level because usually at the school level their answers are positive and they get what they need and sometimes it's a reactionary thing at this level (Halifax Regional School District, personal interview, 14 May 2003).

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Final Report: Halifax Regional Municipality, Nova Scotia
By Erika Goble

Overview

As of the 2003 Statistics Canada estimates, the population of Nova Scotia is 944,456. Of the total population, approximately 38% (or 359,000) lives in the provincial capital, the Halifax Regional Municipality. The Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) is composed of four amalgamated municipalities of the former City of Halifax, the former City of Dartmouth, Bedford, and Halifax County. For all persons living in the HRM, the educational options are Anglophone public schools under the jurisdiction of the Halifax Regional School Board, Francophone schools under the jurisdiction of the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial, home education, correspondence education and private schools. All educational options are governed by the Education Act (1996) and its regulations and all public schools follow the provincially established curriculum. Programs, course, and services, other than those of core curriculum, are developed or individualized by each district and/ or school but the Department of Education does not follow an open boundary policy in the delivery of education, therefore access is limited.

School Choice

Halifax Regional School Board

The Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) is the Anglophone public school board, which encompasses the HRM. It is divided into three areas, Area A, Area B, and Area C, and operates under 16 families of schools. Students are assigned to schools by residency but may apply for permission to transfer to any school under the jurisdiction of the Board. If a transfer is approved the student may be levied a fee equal to the supplementary funding per student for students in the receiving district. As of the 2002-2003 school year, the HRSB was composed of 137 schools and served 56,965 students. Within the District are 94 elementary schools, 12 elementary-junior high schools, 24 junior high schools, 3 junior-senior high schools, and 14 senior high schools.

Conseil scolaire acadien provincial

The Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (Conseil acadien) is the province-wide Francophone school district. The Conseil acadien serves all persons who have French first language rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Currently the Conseil acadien has two schools in the HRM, one that serves maternelle to 8e année (Primary to Grade 8) and one that serves maternelle to 6e année (Primary to Grade 6).

Home Education

Parents within the HRM who wish to home educate their child(ren) must apply to and register with the Minister of Education. Parents individually determine home education programs, but may use on-line correspondence courses and negotiate with their neighbourhood school's principal for the child to attend certain classes, programs or services.

Correspondence Education

Persons within the HRM may take correspondence education or distance learning course exclusively or in supplement to other educational options. All courses offered are authorized and recognized by the Department of Education, though are only available for Grades 7 – 12. If a student is attending a school within the HRSB and wishes to take correspondence courses, s/he must first acquire the approval of his/her school principal.

Private Schools

There are currently 11 private schools operating within the HRM. Four schools serve Primary to Grade 12; one school serves only Primary; one school serves students pre-school age to Grade 6 (does not operate under an age-grade division); one school serves Primary to Grade 6; one school offers Kindergarten to Grade 8; one school serves Grades 1- 12; one school serves Grades 7 – 12; and one school offers education to learning disabled persons with above average intelligence ages 8 to 19.

Program Choice

A wide variety of programs and specialized courses are offered throughout the HRM, both by public schools and by private schools.

Public School Programs

The majority of the public school programs and courses are offered by the HRSB. These programs include, but are not limited to, the French Language Programs (Core French Programs and the French Immersion Programs), the International Baccalaureate Program, Work Experience Programs (including co-operative work programs), and the All City Music Programs (Halifax or Dartmouth). Specialized courses include courses in the social sciences (e.g. sociology), the sciences (e.g. astronomy), humanities, languages, industrial arts, counselling (e.g. peer tutoring), business, and the arts. Students may also “Challenge for Credit” courses in the provincial curriculum or undertake Independent Studies.

Private School Programs

Various programs are offered through the private schools located in the HRM. These programs include, but are not limited to, various enriched programs, programs that focus on the integration of the arts, the International Baccalaureate Program, pre-university programs, various language courses (Spanish, French, Japanese, and Chinese), focus on citizenship, and martial arts. The curriculum offered varies between non-secular to Christian education and Catholic education. Some private school choose to follow the provincially prescribed curriculum and others have adopted other curricula (e.g. one school offers the Core Virtues curriculum developed by Crossroads).

Programs of Need

Most programs of need in the HRM are served by the HRSB, though one private school does operate exclusively for above-average persons diagnosed with learning disabilities. Within the HRSB's, programs of need are addressed by the Student Services Division and all schools under the jurisdiction of the HRSB create, in conjunction with the Student Services Division, the student and his/her parents, an Individual Program Plan to address the student's needs. While the HRSB follows a policy of inclusion, it may recommend the student transfer to another school better equipped to meet the student's needs. In such instances, the Board will waive any transfer surcharge or fee.

Limits to Choice

While various programs are offered throughout the HRM, access is often limited. For programs held in private schools, students must meet admissions requirements and pay tuition fees to attend. For public schools, students are often limited by the location of their residence and do not have unrestricted access to all courses and programs offered in the schools under the board's jurisdiction. Age is also a factor for individuals living in the HRM as there is a severe shortage of space in pre-school programs. In some cases, private schools will allow the admission of students one year earlier than public schools (admission at age 4 instead of age 5). Working parents who have been unable to find available pre-school programs may choose to enrol their child(ren) in a private school, so that their child is enrolled in a full-day program and the parent need not either stay home or continue to arrange alternative car

APPENDIX B.7 ONTARIO

Final Report: Ontario Ministry of Education Summary By Rob Ho

Age, Attendance, and Enrollment

Students who are between the ages of 6 and 16 are required to attend school in Ontario (Section 21, Education Act). If the school board operates a junior kindergarten and/or kindergarten in a school, the pupil may not be younger than 4 or 5 years of age, respectively (Section 34, Education Act). Students who attend schools in Ontario are also not allowed to be older than 21 (Section 33, Education Act).

The provincial government funds four types of schools in Ontario: English Public, French Public, English Roman Catholic, and French Roman Catholic (Section 37 (2), Education Act).

Every district school board in Ontario administers “attendance areas” for its schools, and generally, students attend schools located in the same attendance area in which they live. Parents wishing to send their children to a school outside their normal attendance area must make a formal request to the local school board for permission. Under current legislation in Ontario, a person who is qualified to be a resident pupil of a school board has the right to attend a school in the attendance area (Section 32 (1), Education Act).

If a student wishes to attend a school outside of the board in which he/she lives, provided there is sufficient accommodation for the child, a school board may admit to one of its schools a non-resident pupil who is qualified to attend such a school. The school board of the attendance area in which the student is a resident may pay a fee to the school board that operates the school actually attended by the student (Section 49, Education Act). However, a resident pupil is given priority over a non-resident pupil to attend a school in any attendance area.

According to the Ministry of Education’s *Quick Facts: Ontario Schools, 2000-2001* (2002), total public elementary school enrollment in 2000-2001 in the province was 958,489, and secondary school enrollment was 508,041. Of these public schools, 590,636 elementary students took French as a second language (either the ‘Core’, ‘Extended’, or ‘Immersion’ Program), while 96,748 secondary students did the same. At Roman Catholic schools in Ontario, there were 476,256 total elementary students and 200,813 secondary students. Roman Catholic elementary students who took French as a second language numbered 335,613, while Roman Catholic secondary students who also took French as a second language totaled 35,961. The number of private school students registered in Ontario that year (2000-2001) was 109,904, and they attended 743 separate private schools. There were 51,163 students enrolled in *private elementary schools*, 12,377 in *private secondary schools*, and 46,364 in *private elementary/secondary schools*. The Ministry does not track statistics on student movement within districts.

Supporting School Choice

The Ministry of Education supports school choice in several ways, and there are numerous types of schools available. Students in Ontario can attend public English and French schools, English and French Roman Catholic (separate) schools, private/independent schools, or home schooling. Currently, charter schools are unavailable in this province.

Public English schools entitle all students to an English-language education that adheres to the Ontario school curriculum. Schools in particular areas may offer specific programs and courses outside of the provincial curriculum to meet the needs of students in those communities.

Public French schools are the same as public English schools, except they offer instruction in French.

English Roman Catholic (separate) schools also offer a basic education that follows the official Ontario curriculum. Roman Catholic boards/schools may create and maintain programs and courses of study in religious education for their students (Section 52, Education Act). In addition, these schools may offer optional programs and/or courses to meet the needs of their students in consultation with parents, students, and the community.

French Roman Catholic (separate) schools provide a basic education that adheres to the Ontario curriculum guidelines. These schools operate in the same manner as English Roman Catholic schools, except they offer instruction in French.

Private/independent schools are allowed to operate within the province, provided each school submits an annual notice to the Ministry of Education of their intention to operate such a school (Section 16, Education Act). These schools are subject to inspection by Ministry officers (Section 16 (6), Education Act). The types of schools available are varied; they can be boarding or day schools, single-sex and co-ed, large or small, rural or urban, or religious or non-religious. Band-operated schools are classified as private schools and as such are funded by the federal government. Generally, students at elementary band schools at some point end up at publicly funded secondary schools, since a lot of bands are not offering secondary education. If a band-operated school is offering the Ontario curriculum, the Ministry does inspect them (as long as they are off-reserve schools).

Home schooling is a relatively recent addition to the type of education offered in Ontario. The Ministry recognizes the existence of this kind of schooling and tries to facilitate it. School boards must excuse children from attendance at school when students are receiving satisfactory instruction at home (Section 21 (2a), Education Act). Parents must notify their local school board in writing on a yearly basis of their intention to provide home schooling for their child(ren) (Ontario Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum No. 131). Parents are subject to investigation if a school board has reasonable grounds to believe that such instruction may not be satisfactory.

In 2000-2001, 1,466,530 students attended public English or French schools, and 677,069 attended English or French Roman Catholic schools. Combined, the number of students attending either public or Catholic schools in Ontario totaled 2,143,599. By comparison, in October 2000, 109,904 attended a private school. Home schooling figures were unavailable.

While the Ontario Ministry of Education supports the notion that children should be able to attend the school of their choice, the reality of that notion can often be mired in practical challenges at the local board level. “To the extent that they can, the Ministry encourages kids [to go] to the school they want to go to, but it may not always be possible, so the real decision is left up to local boards” (Ministry of Education staff, personal communication, June 23, 2003). Students in Ontario cannot automatically choose to attend any school in any location in his/her district due to the logistical issues presented in allowing such moves to be done. Local school boards, however, are empowered by the *School Act* to set their own policies regarding school choice. There is usually more flexibility among urban boards to offer this type of choice. “Generally, urban boards have a policy that states if a student wants to go to a certain school, then they lay out a whole process [to do so], but up in the North (of Ontario), it’s not really an option” (ibid).

As for international students who choose to come to study in Ontario, the majority of these students are selecting schools in the urban centres. The Ministry maintains it does not get involved in recommending particular schools to students from overseas.

In addition, specialty schools (e.g. fine arts schools) may set their own admissions criteria, in which case the Ministry cannot interfere with a student’s ability to be admitted to a particular school.

The Ontario government has extensive online web resources available for parents and students about school and program choice. Publicly-funded school and program options, listings of private schools and related information about tax credits, and information about home schooling are all available on their education website: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca>. Information in print on these topics is more limited.

While the website is their main source of public information, the Ministry of Education also fields many telephone inquiries from the public as well as communicates with parents and stakeholders vis-à-vis six field service officers. These field services officers are Ministry staff members who serve as liaisons between the Ministry and the public by way of phone calls and letters.

Supporting Program Choice

In the four publicly funded school boards (English, French, English Catholic, and French Catholic), there are different streams of secondary school education. Announced by the Ministry of Education in 1998, students in Grades 9 and 10 can choose either academic (focusing more on theory and abstract concepts) or applied (focusing on how the course content relates to daily life) versions of courses (Ontario Ministry of Education Backgrounder: New Streamed Courses Mean Students Have More Choices). In Grades 11 and 12, students can choose from four different

streams: workplace preparation, university preparation, college preparation, or preparation for both college and university. Students throughout high school are allowed to switch streams, but they may have to take transfer courses and/or invest additional study time to complete the switch. In addition, there are other variations of program choice within the publicly funded system.

Alternative schools offer a different approach to mainstream schooling. Each alternative school has its own distinct style of curriculum delivery and often features a dedication to experimental programs. These schools usually have smaller student populations and have volunteer commitment from parents and other community members (TDSB, 2003).

French immersion programs offer students in English Public or English Catholic schools the opportunity to learn French in various subject areas and to enhance their French language skills in an intensive program. There are various starting points for these programs (e.g., Senior Kindergarten and Grade 4), and students in secondary school who complete the required number of credits in French are eligible for a certificate in French immersion.

Some Ontario high schools also offer the International Baccalaureate (I.B.) Program, an internationally recognized diploma that gives students first year university credits. The I.B. program is a demanding academic program that requires students to study English, a second language, math, science, social science, the arts, and theory of knowledge. Students also commit to 150 hours of activity divided among volunteer service, arts, and sports. This program prepares students for the challenges associated with attending university anywhere in the world (ibid).

However, program choices may be subject to the approval of the Education Minister who may authorize courses or areas of study that may not be developed from curriculum guidelines (Section 8, Education Act).

Having parents examine different options of schooling for their children seems to indicate an awareness of choice. “The fact that parents do make choices indicates that there is some interest...parents are shopping for choices, and they find ways to get their choices” (Ministry of Education staff, personal communication, June 23, 2003).

Despite the Ministry’s stated position of encouraging school choice and an increasingly savvy parent demographic that wants choices, there are obstacles to making extensive school and program choice a reality. Geography and lack of available programs are key factors that affect the Ministry’s ability to encourage school and program choice. Smaller schools may not be able to provide a wide variety of programs and options that a larger school can. All schools in the province offer core programs, but it is still the urban schools that are able to offer the most options.

A growing trend in Ontario is e-learning. Across the province, “Boards are making deals with other boards to get some courses delivered that way to students” (ibid). During 2002/03, there were 5700 credit courses that were taken by Ontario students through e-learning. Students in rural boards have a lot of interest in these types of courses, since they would otherwise find it difficult to take such specialized courses. The Ministry encourages this method of instruction.

The Ontario Ministry does not require that school districts provide certain program options to students. All secondary students must take 18 compulsory courses and can choose 12 optional courses (for a total of 30 credits). They do not mandate that boards provide particular choices, since they encourage locally developed courses (subject to approval).

Programs of Need

The Minister must ensure that all exceptional children in Ontario have available to them appropriate special education programs and special education services without payment of fees by parents or guardians (Section 8 (35-3), Education Act). The Minister is also required to ensure that school boards implement procedures for early and ongoing identification of the learning abilities and needs of their students. An Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) sets out the procedures involved in identifying students as exceptional, decides the pupil's placement, and handles appeals when the parent does not agree with the IPRC's decisions (Regulation 181/98).

The Ministry encourages and supports a wide range of programming for special needs students. With the assistance of the resources available (including information resulting from the diagnostic procedures), the school principal, in consultation with personnel from special education and student services, has the job of ensuring that an appropriate program will be implemented for each student. According to the Ministry of Education *Policy/Program Memorandum No. 8* (revised 1982), students with mild forms of learning disabilities can be served appropriately within the regular classroom, students with moderate forms of learning disabilities will probably require assistance outside of the regular classroom on a part-time basis, and students with severe forms of learning disabilities may require placement in a special education class for children with learning disabilities. Special needs students can access the same program options as their peers, as long as they have the abilities to do so. There is also a large number of modifications and accommodations made available to these students.

There are a few provincial schools in Ontario specially designated to meet the needs of students who are blind (in Brantford) and deaf (in Belleville, Milton, and London) (R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 296, Education Act).

Funding

Since 1998, funding for schools in Ontario has been "student-focused." The Foundation Grant gives every school board a basic level of funding for each student. Student-focused funding then adds more funding through ten special-purpose grants based on particular costs or needs that affect some school boards more than others (Ontario Ministry of Education Parents' Guide to Student-Focused Funding 2002–03). In the 2002-03 school year, public and Catholic school boards in Ontario are projected to receive \$14.2 billion from the province. The average provincial per-student funding for this period will be \$6,687, though the Catholic school boards are set to receive slightly more (\$6,724) on average than the Public school boards (\$6,648) (Mackenzie, 2002).

In addition, every year there may be one-time grants for specially-targeted education programs. These are excluded, however, from the funding that school boards usually receive from the province.

Independent/private schools receive the vast majority of their funding from the tuition and additional fees (e.g. room and board) they charge their students. In May 2001, the Ontario Ministry of Finance (and interestingly *not* the Ministry of Education) announced an Equity in Education Tax Credit that would give parents a tax credit of up to \$3,500, phased in over five years (reaching full implementation in 2006), for fees they have paid to send their children to independent/private schools in Ontario. Though the program was suspended in 2002, the government announced on March 20, 2003 that they intend to introduce legislation to phase in this tax credit according to the original schedule (*2003 Ontario Budget*). However, with a looming provincial election upcoming in the next few months, it is uncertain whether this legislation will actually be tabled.

Accountability

School accountability takes several forms in the province of Ontario. If schools are publicly supported, they are all subject to the accountability processes set forth by the Ministry – this includes alternative and specialized schools/programs. The Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), an independent branch of the Government of Ontario, seeks to provide “accurate, objective, and clear information about student achievement and the quality of publicly funded education in Ontario” (EQAO Mandate, 2003). This organization develops and administers province-wide testing of students in elementary and secondary schools. At the elementary level, students in Grades 3 and 6 are tested annually in mathematics, reading, and writing. At the secondary level, Grade 9 students are tested annually in mathematics. A literacy test is required for all Grade 10 students, and students must pass the test in order to graduate from high school. Beginning in 2002-03, testing will expand over a five-year period to include more tests on core subjects for Grades 3 to 11 (Ontario Ministry of Education, *Ontario Expands Province-Wide Testing*).

In 2001, Ontario commissioned the first parent survey on education (Ontario Parents Get Their Say in Education Survey). This survey provided parents with an opportunity to voice their concerns and express what they believe to be priorities in education.

The establishment of ‘school councils’ – bodies that consist of elected representatives of parents, teachers, non-teaching staff, community members, and (in some schools) students – in all publicly-funded schools was mandated in 1997 under the *Education Quality Improvement Act*. Ontario's *Charter of Education Rights and Responsibilities* states that “every parent has the right to know how their children and their schools are performing in comparison to others, and the responsibility to be an active partner in the education system” (Strengthening School Councils, 2000). First established in 1995, these councils provide advice to the principal and, when appropriate, to the local school board. Today, every publicly funded school in Ontario has a school council in place.

The Ministry is responsible for school boards, and thus boards are accountable to the Ministry. Schools are responsible to their board but not directly to the Ministry. The Ministry expects each board to meet all accountability practices, including province-wide testing at various grades.

Independent/private schools are not subject to the same accountability processes as publicly funded ones. The Ministry only enters a private elementary school when a teacher training there wants Ontario teaching certification, and private secondary schools are not inspected unless they offer the Ontario curriculum. This latter inspection also applies to the 19 offshore schools around the world that are offering the Ontario curriculum. However, it should be noted that the recently announced private school tax credit can only be claimed if the school that the parents send their child to meets the set of criteria set out by the government (though these are *not* the same types of inspections that publicly supported schools must face).

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Final Report: Toronto Catholic District School Board Summary
By Rob Ho

Supporting School Choice

The Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) allows Roman Catholic students whose parents are residents of the city of Toronto to attend its schools. Non-Catholic children of Catholic parents may also be admitted, provided there is verification of the custodial parents' Catholicity. However, non-Catholic children of non-Catholic parents are not eligible for admittance to the TCDSB. To attend a school in the district, one must usually be either Catholic or have parents who are Catholic.

The district gives priority to students who reside in the city of Toronto. If there is space available, non-Toronto Catholic students who are residents of Ontario may also be admitted (see Admission of Pupils SA.01, 1998).

The TCDSB recognizes that not all programs and services can be offered in all schools, so whenever possible (and subject to other regulations), it endeavors to place a pupil in the school of his/her choice (if the student is an adult) or, if the student is not an adult, in a school of his/her parents' choice (Placement of Pupils SA.02, 1998). Students who meet admission requirements for the board are placed in a school and program based on, among other factors, the needs of the pupil, the wishes of the parents, and the availability of the space in the requested school and program.

Whenever it is not possible (due to program and space limitations) to initially place all secondary school students in the school of their choice (and if the students do not accept redirection to the next nearest secondary school), the Director of Education will add the names of the students who have not been placed to the waiting list for the respective secondary school and program, and as space becomes available, place the students according to their respective positions on the priority lists.

The TCDSB permits two types of arts-based schools: Cardinal Carter Academy for the Arts (offering instruction in instrumental music, vocal music, visual arts, and performing arts) and the world-renowned St. Michael's Choir School (also offering special instruction in vocal and instrumental music).

Education with a focus on Ukrainian heritage and language can be selected from three elementary schools: St. Demetrius, St. Josaphat, and Cardinal Josyf Slipyj Catholic School (Kindergarten-grade 8).

Various alternative schools also exist in the district, each with their own admission criteria. These schools are targeted at youth who are at risk and experiencing a lack of success with the regular secondary school system.

Supporting Program Choice

The programs offered by the TCDSB are quite varied. The board caters to the different learning needs of its students by providing a wide range of academic courses (Secondary School Reform: A Guide for Parents and Students, 2002).

The *Extended French Program* (a continuation of the elementary middle French Immersion Program) is offered at several Toronto Catholic secondary schools. Upon graduation, students in this program are eligible for the 'Extended French Certificate' of the TCDSB. The French Immersion Program (a continuation of the elementary early French Immersion Program) is offered at Bishop Allen Academy and Senator O'Connor College.

The *Gifted Program* offered in secondary schools is provided to students who have been identified as exceptional/gifted by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC).

Cooperative Education Programs are available to all Catholic secondary schools at all levels of difficulty in grades 11 and 12. These programs integrate in-school learning with out-of-school learning experiences, and students can earn academic credits through experience in supervised work placements within the community. The Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) is a part of this program, and it promotes careers in skilled professions (e.g. carpentry, automotive technician, chef, etc.).

The *International Baccalaureate (IB) Program*, available at Michael Power/St. Joseph Catholic Secondary School and at Pope John Paul II Catholic School, offers an internationally-acclaimed program available at many schools worldwide. This program consists of a two-year international curriculum and also allows students to fulfill the requirements for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

Business Studies Programs are offered in all TCDSB secondary schools. Courses in Business Studies provide students with opportunities to develop business-related skills and knowledge. Students who earn a total of eight credits in any of the several business courses available receive a 'Business Studies Concentration' notation on their Ontario Secondary School Transcript.

The *Continuing Education* Department of the TCDSB offers a large number of credit courses to students who wish to supplement their day school programs. Courses are conducted outside of regular school hours and during the summer in many secondary schools in the region.

Supervised Alternative Learning for Excused Pupils (S.A.L.E.P.) is a program for students aged fourteen and fifteen who, for a variety of reasons, find that the regular school program is not beneficial to them. The onus is on parent to decide to whether to apply to the program, and the parent must sign the application.

The *Technological Studies Program* provides learning opportunities that allow each student to become knowledgeable in the principles and application of technology. The technology courses of the TCDSB have been developed so that the needs of all students can be met, regardless of

their individual abilities. These broad-based programs are designed primarily for grades 10-12, though introductory courses are offered at the grade nine level.

The *Program in English as a Second Language (ESL) and English Literacy Development (ELD)* is offered in all secondary schools to assist students in developing proficiency in the English language.

In September 2002, a curriculum focus on science and technology was introduced at Epiphany of Our Lord Catholic Academy and a curriculum focus on the arts was initiated at St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic School. The TCDSB also offers a program of self-directed learning at Mary Ward Catholic Secondary School (grades 9-12), and a curriculum with a media focus is being implemented at Marshall McLuhan Catholic Secondary School.

Information about funding for school and program choice is currently unavailable from the TCDSB. However, there is a large amount of other information about school and program choice available at their website: <http://www.tcdsb.org>. Their site includes information about policies, regulations, and procedures that the TCDSB follows.

Programs of Need

Programs and services for students with special needs are offered in most Catholic secondary schools. The following list indicates the types of special education programs available, according to the TCDSB Parents' Guide to Special Education (2003):

- Behavioural Program
- Blind, low vision
- Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing
- Developmental Disability
- Gifted
- Language Impaired
- Learning Disability
- Multiple Exceptionalities
- Physically Handicapped
- Special Education Resource

The Ontario Ministry of Education operates provincial and demonstration schools throughout the province for deaf, blind, deaf-blind, and severely learning-disabled students, as well as those with attention deficit hyper-activity disorder (ADHD).

Funding

All school boards receive from the Province of Ontario a Foundation Grant and Pupil Accommodation Grant for every student enrolled (including special needs students). These grants are used to cover the basic costs of providing a classroom education for all students. Costs of special education programs and supports above and beyond the basic costs of education for all students are funded by the Special Education Grant.

The Special Education Grant consists of two components: the Special Education Per Pupil Amount (SEPPA) and the Intensive Support Amount (ISA). The former is a standard per-pupil amount based on each board's total enrollment, while the latter is a variable amount based on each board's share of high need students. The ISA is comprised of five funding levels and provides financial support to boards to fund specialized equipment, programs and services, and staff support for their high need students (TDSB Special Education Plan, 2001, part XVII, section 1).

Funding for special education is also accessed from other special purpose grants (e.g. Transportation Grant and Teacher Compensation Grant) to further assist the requirements of special needs students.

Inter-district Choice

The TCDSB makes no explicit reference as to whether they support inter-district school/program choice or to the specific funding implications that would be involved, though it is allowed under the provincial *Education Act* (see Section 49, Education Act, 1990). Under the provisions of the *Act*, if a student wishes to attend a school outside of the board where she resides, provided there is sufficient accommodation for the student, a board may admit to one of its schools a non-resident pupil who is qualified to attend the school.

Age, Enrollment, and Accountability

All students in the TCDSB are between the ages of 4 and 21, and those between the ages of 6 and 16 are required to attend school. These provisions are part of the Ontario *Education Act* and thus consistent throughout the province. There is no data available that shows how age impacts enrolment for school and program choice in the district.

Similarly, five-year data is also unavailable for enrolments in the various types of school and program choices.

The TCDSB is "committed to student and program assessment that is comprehensive, valid, informative, equitable, ethical, collaborative and focused on the pursuit of excellence" (Student and Program Assessment S.P.13, 1996). Student and program assessment will provide information needed to improve student learning and the effectiveness of programs. Accountability measures at the TCDSB include testing (e.g. Education Quality and Accountability Office provincial math and literacy tests – results are available online at the TCDSB website), student self-assessments, peer assessments, individual and group assessments, and Assessment Action Plans that each school must develop that will guide the regular review of this Policy. The results of these assessments are to be reported to students, parents, and other stakeholders so as to provide appropriate feedback on proficiency and progress in an accurate and accountable manner.

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Final Report: Toronto District School Board Summary
By Rob Ho

Supporting School Choice

Students who live within the City of Toronto are given the right to attend a school that is designated to serve their residential address. Students are entitled to attend schools located in the same attendance area in which they live. The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) Street Guide identifies the designated schools for each residential address, and generally students attend their assigned local school. However, the TDSB also values parental and school choice within the education system, and students have the right to access schools and programs that best suit their needs, abilities, and interests. To facilitate this, students can apply for admission to schools and programs outside of the designated attendance area in which they live. This is known as applying for optional attendance. Acceptance at these schools is subject to space and program availability, and must follow the guidelines of the Optional Attendance Policy (C.08, 1999). Administrative and Operational Procedures Section C-1, 001 (School Operations, Attendance, 2000) details the procedures to be followed to implement this policy.

In January of every year, schools are categorized as **open**, **limited** or **closed** to optional attendance based on the available space they have for the upcoming school year. According to the TDSB's website (<http://www.tdsb.on.ca>),

“An **open** school has space available and can accept students on optional attendance up to the school's optimal level of enrolment.

A **limited** school has a current enrolment that exceeds the school's optimal level of enrolment, but the school can accept a restricted number of students on optional attendance up to a specified level.

A **closed** school has no space available for students on optional attendance; only students residing within the school's attendance area will be accepted.”

Therefore, only schools classified as 'open' or 'limited' may accept students outside of their designated attendance area. If requests to attend a particular school exceed the space available, students will be admitted based on a lottery system (see Optional Attendance Policy C.08, 1999). Optional attendance status does not apply to alternative schools/programs or to specialized schools/programs. Students will be selected for admission to these schools and programs based on meeting the required criteria necessary for acceptance.

Several types of schools are permitted in the TDSB at both the elementary and the secondary levels. In addition to regular public schools, students at both levels can attend alternative (e.g. East York Alternative School) or arts-based schools (e.g. Claude Watson School for the Arts). Students at the secondary level can also attend an entrepreneurial school (Scarlett Heights Entrepreneurial Academy).

Supporting Program Choice

The TDSB offers more options for students when it comes to program choice. The Optional Attendance Policy (C.08, 1999) outlines the types of choices available to students. At the elementary level, besides regular programs, students can choose from programs such as: International Baccalaureate (various schools), arts (various), or CyberARTS (Don Mills Middle School and C.H. Best Middle School).

At the secondary level, in addition to regular programs, students can enroll in alternative, French (core, immersion, or extended), or specialized programs. Specifically, these latter programs include: International Baccalaureate (several), co-op (various), arts (several), CyberARTS (Northview Heights Secondary and Don Mills Collegiate), CyberScience (Emery Collegiate), athletic (various), Ontario Youth Apprenticeship (various), Honours Math-Science (Northview Heights Secondary), Macs (William Lyon Mackenzie Collegiate), advanced placement (various), SATEC (The Scarborough Academy for Technological, Environmental and Computer Studies at W.A. Porter Collegiate), school to work (various), TOPS (Talented Offerings for Programs in the Sciences at Marc Garneau Collegiate), gifted (various), Interact (Vaughan Road), Cisco/Nortel Systems (various), dental assistant (Etobicoke Collegiate), and Triangle (Canada's only classroom dedicated to serving the needs of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered youth who have faced homophobia in the mainstream school system, located at Oasis Alternative Secondary).

Administrative and Operational Procedures Section C-1, 001 (School Operations, Attendance, 2001) provides information about how these programs are to be administered.

Information about funding for school and program choice is currently unavailable from the TDSB. However, the school board has a great deal of other information about school and program choice available at its website: <http://www.tdsb.on.ca>. This award-winning website carries online versions of various policies and procedures that students, parents, teachers, educators, and administrators in the TDSB must follow.

Programs of Need

Several programs are available to provide support for students with special needs. The *Education Act* (Regulation 306 - amended) requires that each school board in the province of Ontario maintain a Special Education Plan to meet the needs of its exceptional students. The TDSB is heading towards a "holistic approach in building a *Strengths/Needs Profile*" (Special Education Plan, 2001, p. v) for its exceptional students in determining their level of functioning and the type of support they need to achieve their full potential. This *Strengths/Needs Profile* is used to help teachers and school teams in developing a general profile of a student's needs. It is with this profile, in conjunction with in-school support strategies, academic testing and other assessment, that a complete and clear picture of a student's strengths and needs is completed.

Several placement options are available to meet the needs of each exceptional student. The educational placement of a student is dependent upon the individual strengths of the student and the wishes of the parent (Special Education Plan, 2001, part IV, section 17). There are numerous placement options available, such as:

“A regular class with indirect support. The student is placed in a regular class for the entire day, and the teacher receives specialized consultative services.

A regular class with resource assistance. The student is placed in the regular class for most or all of the day and receives specialized instruction, individually or in a small group, within the regular classroom from a qualified special education teacher.

A regular class with withdrawal assistance. The student is placed in the regular class and receives instruction outside of the classroom for less than 50 per cent of the school day from a qualified special education teacher.

A special education class with partial integration. The student is placed by the IPRC [Identification, Placement, and Review Committee] in a special education class where the student-teacher ratio conforms to Regulation 298, section 31, for at least 50 per cent of the school day, but is integrated with a regular class for at least one instructional period daily.

A special education class full time. The student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class, where the student-teacher ratio conforms to Regulation 298, section 31, for the entire school day” (Special Education Plan, 2001, part IX, section 2).

This range of programs and services also enables a student to shift in and out of various placement options throughout the student’s educational career.

In addition, there are other options that offered to meet the individual needs of a student. Exceptional students can apply for admission to a Provincial School for students who are blind, deaf, or deaf-blind or to a provincial Demonstration School for those who have severe learning disabilities. The applications to these schools are coordinated and submitted by the local school board. Facilities that offer the necessary care and treatment suitable to the student’s condition may also be explored, and the parent can apply directly to the facility for admittance (with the possible assistance of school board staff).

Special Education Funding

All school boards receive from the Province of Ontario a Foundation Grant and Pupil Accommodation Grant for every student enrolled (including special needs students). These grants are used to cover the basic costs of providing a classroom education for all students. Costs of special education programs and supports above and beyond the basic costs of education for all students are funded by the Special Education Grant.

The Special Education Grant consists of two components: the Special Education Per Pupil Amount (SEPPA) and the Intensive Support Amount (ISA). The former is a standard per-pupil amount based on each board's total enrollment, while the latter is a variable amount based on each board's share of high need students. The ISA is comprised of five funding levels and provides financial support to boards to fund specialized equipment, programs and services, and staff support for their high need students (Special Education Plan, 2001, part XVII, section 1).

Funding for special education is also accessed from other special purpose grants (e.g. Transportation Grant and Teacher Compensation Grant) to further assist the needs of exceptional students.

Inter-district Choice

The TDSB makes no explicit reference as to whether they support inter-district school/program choice or to the funding implications that would be involved, though it is allowed under the provincial *Education Act* (see *Section 49, Education Act*). Under the provisions of the *Act*, if a student wishes to attend a school outside of the board where she resides, provided there is sufficient accommodation for the student, a board may admit to one of its schools a non-resident pupil who is qualified to attend the school.

Age, Enrollment, and Accountability

All students in the TDSB are between the ages of 4 and 21, and those between the ages of 6 and 16 are required to attend school. These provisions are part of the Ontario *Education Act* and thus consistent throughout the province. There is no data available that shows how age impacts enrolment for school and program choice in the district.

Similarly, five-year data is also unavailable for enrolments in the various types of school and program choices.

The TDSB places the utmost importance in being accountable for and finding ways to improve student achievement (Accountability for Student Achievement Policy, D.01, 1998). The Board is committed to a continuous cycle of planning, implementing, evaluating, and reporting in trying to create a classroom learning environment that allows students to meet high levels of achievement. This process indicates a strong dedication to public accountability, quality programming, and continuous improvement. Accountability measures at the TDSB include:

- 1) student achievement assessments (e.g., grades, test scores)
- 2) school effectiveness reviews
- 3) assessment of educational programs and initiatives
- 4) communicating the successes of students in the Board to all stakeholders
- 5) system-wide self examination and reflection
- 6) a commitment to constant improvement

The evaluation and assessment of students is an important step in helping parents and students make choices about schools and programs. The TDSB believes in a balanced approach to assessment, and its evaluation methods are claimed to be varied, equitable, and free of bias. In the Accountability for Student Achievement Policy, D.01 (1998), the Board explicitly states that information about expectations, assessment methods, and results should be communicated to stakeholders quickly, clearly, and openly, but that the assessment and evaluation information related to individual students, other than being shared with students and their parents, will be kept confidential.

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APPENDIX B.8 PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Final Report: Prince Edward Island, Department of Education
By Erika Goble

Overview:

Approximately 134,500 people live in Prince Edward Island (PEI). Of the total island population approximately 23,900 are students enrolled in various primary and secondary education programs. The primary and secondary educational options that are allowed to operate in the province are: Anglophone public schools, Francophone (French First Language) public schools, private schools, and home schooling programs. The School Act (2000), Ministerial Directives, and the policies set out by the Department of Education regulate all educational options available in the province.

This report will briefly outline school and program choice, and measures of accountability in the province of Prince Edward Island. Divided into five sections – Attendance; Age, and Enrolment; School Choice; Program Choice; Funding; and Accountability – the report will outline provincial regulations and then examine the various educational options as they appear in the Eastern School District, the largest of the province’s three public school districts.

Attendance, Age, and Enrolment:

A legal resident of the Province of Prince Edward Island who has not graduated from high school has the right to free schooling between the ages of 6 and 20 (*School Act*, 2000, section 68). Attendance is mandatory between the ages of 6 and 16 (*School Act*, 2000, section 69) and any child who will be 7 years of age on or before January 31 of a school year *must* be enrolled in school in September of that school year (“Student and Parents Regulations,” *School Act Regulations*, 2000, section 2). Attendance is classified as being enrolled in: a public school; a legally licensed private school; a home schooling program; or an “education program authorized by the Minister” (*School Act*, 2000, section 69(4)).

Under the School Act, all students have the right to English Language instruction in a public school (2000, section 113). Should a parent wish his/her child to attend a private school, attend a French First Language school, or enrol in a home education program, they must apply through the Department of Education. For each placement, the entry requirements, enrolment forms and processes are unique.

When students enrol in a public school, “a school board shall determine the placement of students in the various classes and schools in accordance with the students’ needs, their educational attainments, the facilities of the unit and any school attendance plan currently in effect in the unit” (*School Act*, 2000, section 51(2)). Enrolment and placement in private schools is individually determined by each private school.

School Choice

The Public Education Branch of the Department of Education oversees four divisions and one section, which provide a variety of educational programs and services. These branches are:

- 1) The Kindergarten Section, which is responsible for funding core program, curriculum development and support, and communication within government and the community (Annual Report 2002-2003, 2003).
- 2) The Continuing Education and Training Division, which is responsible for adult education, post-secondary education, and apprenticeship programs.
- 3) The English Programs Division, which is responsible for all curriculum, programs, and services offered in primary and secondary Anglophone public schools.
- 4) The French Programs Division, which is responsible for all curriculum, programs, and services concerning the French language offered in all public schools. The Division is generally charged with promoting French language and culture in PEI.
- 5) The Student Services Division, which is responsible for special education and programs of need, student counselling, guidance, career development, and *alternative education programs* (Annual Report: 2000-2001, 2001).

Statistical Data

Only very limited statistics data for the last five years is available to the general public. From the last available Annual Report, 2000-2001, the enrolment by district by grade was:

	Gr. 1 - 3	Gr. 3 - 6	Gr. 7 - 9	Gr. 10 - 12	Total:
Eastern School District	3595	3815	3866	4089	15365
Western School Board	1746	1984	1973	2020	7723
Commission scolaire de langue française	135	147	165	156	603
Public School Total:	5476	5946	6004	6265	23691
Private Schools Total:	58	57	62	39	216
Total:	5534	6003	6066	6304	23907

(Annual Report 2000-2001, 2001, Appendix A).

Public Schools

Prince Edward Island's public school system is divided into three school units: the Eastern School District, the Western School Board, and La Commission scolaire de langue française. The Eastern School District and the Western School Board are responsible for all Anglophone public schools in their respective areas and La Commission scolaire de langue française is responsible for all French First language schools throughout the province. All public schools are required to be non-sectarian (*School Act*, section 142).

Currently the Eastern School District is responsible for 43 schools with approximately 15,300 students enrolled. The Western School Board serves 22 schools with approximately 7,700 students enrolled, and La Commission scolaire de langue française oversees 5 schools with approximately 600 students enrolled.

Eastern School District

Children are registered with the Eastern School District by their parents upon first entering the District (whether at Grade 1 or when they move to the District). At that time, parents may indicate whether their child has French Language Rights (at which point they move to the Commission scolaire de langue française) or if they wish their child to take one of the three French Immersion Programs (Early, Mid, and Late). Students are assigned by the District Board to attend specific schools according to the “attendance zone” in which they live, though the Board will take into consideration the programs in which parents desire their child(ren) to be enrolled.

The Eastern School District is composed of 11 electoral zones and all schools in the District are divided into six families of schools.³⁷ Each family of schools has at least one senior high school. In total, the District has:

- Four elementary schools (one offering Grades 1 - 3, 12 Grades 1 - 6, one offering Grades 1 - 4, and one offering Grades 4 - 6);
- 17 consolidated schools (11 offering Grades 1 - 8, one offering Grades 5 - 8, and five offering Grades 1 - 9);
- Five intermediate schools (all offering Grades 7-9); and
- Six high schools (2 offering Grades 9-12 and 4 offering Grades 10-12).

Alternative schools (3 sites)

The Eastern School District also has three Alternative Schools, each of which is in a site separate from other public schools and has a small student population. The Alternative Schools follows the provincial curriculum, but teach it in a manner different than in the regular schools and not necessarily in a classroom setting. The programs are designed for students who have difficulty learning from the standard teaching techniques employed in the school system, but the programs are not designed to address behavioural issues. These programs are largely used by high school students with few intermediate and elementary students.

Transfer Process:

In the Eastern School District, students may attend schools outside of their assigned zone if the Superintendent gives them permission. To gain permission, parents must submit a formal written application and include the reason(s) for the transfer. In most cases this must be done prior to the start of the school year. Parents must apply each year for the transfer because permission is only given if space is available and the school can meet the student’s needs (*Policy JFACB-R: Student Transfers*). The most common reason for student transfers is to attend programs or courses not available in the student’s assigned school.

³⁷ The six families are: Bluefield Family, Charlottetown Rural Family, Colonel Gray Family, Montague Family, Morell Family, and Souris Family.

If a student wishes to transfer into a program with limited space, “they can be given a conditional entrance, conditional on the idea that they can transfer to the school but they may not be able to transfer into a particular program” (Eastern School District, personal interview, 30 May 2003). A student, after transferring schools, is then considered part of the receiving school’s population for that school year. For subsequent school years, the Eastern School District’s policy requires students reapply for the transfer. Guaranteed entrance for one year does not guarantee entrance for subsequent school years. When students transfer schools, there is no transfer of funding between schools.

Inter-district transfers also take place with a protocol followed if the student’s residence remains outside of the Eastern School District’s geographic boundaries, but students are accepted into the Eastern School District under the same process as a new student. Like inter-school transfers, no funding follows students who request inter-district transfers.

In all cases, when a transfer is approved the District is not responsible for providing transportation to that student. The inability of the District to offer transportation limits some parents ability to choose alternative schools and programs for their child(ren). On average, the District processes 70-80 transfers per year.

La Commission Scolaire de langue française

Parents who have the right and wish to have their child(ren) educated in French First Language schools enrol their child(ren) in La Commission scolaire de langue française. Individuals must be eligible under section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and must sign a declaration of eligibility before enrolment is allowed.

Because of the size and population of PEI, it is not always possible to provide French First Language education in French Language schools. Schools are only established if, according to the Minister and Lieutenant Governor in Council, “numbers warrant” (*School Act*, 2000, section 112(2)). The Lieutenant Governor in Council may allow students who are not normally eligible to attend French First Language schools to attend the schools if their presence will not disrupt the integrity and purpose of the French First Language education (“French First Language Instruction Regulations,” *School Act Regulations*, 2000, section 10(1)).³⁸ To attend La Commission scolaire de langue française, students must be “released” by the Anglophone school district in which they reside (“French First Language Instruction Regulations,” *School Act Regulations*, 2000, section 10(2)).

³⁸ In PEI the Lieutenant Governor in Council regulates the French School System, which duty includes dealing with issues of eligibility and enrolment, school district transferring, transportation, facilities, and regulating with the relationship between the English and French systems (*School Act*, section 114).

Private Schools

Primary and secondary private schools are allowed to operate in PEI under Section 133 of the *School Act* so long as the Minister of Education licenses the schools.³⁹ Currently there are four private schools⁴⁰ operating in the Province of Prince Edward Island with approximately 215 students enrolled. According to the Federation of Independent Schools in Canada (2000), students who are privately schooled form 0.87% of the total student enrolment in the province. Unlike public schools in the province, private schools are not required to accept all applicants and each school individually sets the rules of enrolment.

To acquire a license a private school must “submit a proposal which outlines how they will meet the requirements in the School Act” (Department of Education, personal e-mail, 9 June 2003). This proposal or “operational plan” must include:

- a) A statement of philosophy or the goals of the school;
- b) The educational program(s) that are to be offered;
- c) “Course outline by grade level;” and
- d) Staffing. (“Private Schools and Home Education Regulations,” *School Act Regulations*, 2000, section 2(a)).

The operators must further employ qualified teachers and administrators (individuals who are eligible for a PEI teaching certificate) and prove that the school meets the provincial safety standards (“Private Schools and Home Education Regulations,” *Schools Act Regulations*, 2000, section 2(b), (c)). Once this information is provided, the Minister of Education may then grant an operating license to the school.

After the license is given, the Minister of Education may inspect the school a minimum of once per year, including administering examinations to enrolled students. To maintain their licenses, private schools must submit reports on enrolment (annually) and student attendance (monthly) to the Minister of Education (“Private Schools and Home Education Regulations,” *School Act Regulations*, 2000, section 5). The Minister of Education may choose to review a private school and, upon review, require changes to be made, suspend the operating licence, or revoke the license (“Private Schools and Home Education Regulations,” *School Act Regulations*, 2000, section 9).⁴¹

³⁹ “The Minister may license a private school, if, in the Minister’s opinion, the private school makes provision for the effective instruction of its students.” (“Private Schools and Home Education Regulations,” *School Act Regulations*, section 3).

⁴⁰ These schools are: Immanuel Christian School, Full Circle Co-operative School, Fair Isle Adventist School and Grace Christian School.

⁴¹ Private School licenses may be suspended or revoked by the Minister of Education if:

- a) The private school fails to comply with or maintain any of the standards required by the regulations;
- b) The private school employs unqualified instructional personnel or administrators; or
- c) In the opinion of the Minister, the students registered at the private school are not achieving acceptable educational progress (*School Act*, 2000, section 134).

While private schools *may not* be operated in Prince Edward Island without a license, they do have the right to appeal the suspension or cancellation of the license to the Appeals Board within 30 days of notice (“Private Schools and Home Education Regulations,” *School Act Regulations*, 2000, section 2, 10).

The Department of Education approves courses and materials for all private schools. Private schools are not required to provide the provincially prescribed curriculum, but many do so (Department of Education, personal e-mail, 9 June 2003).⁴² When private schools choose to provide provincial curriculum, the Department of Education provides schools with the curriculum and invites school operators to curriculum in-services (Department of Education, personal e-mail, 9 June 2003). The most common alternative curriculum used is a Christian curriculum from the southern United States (Department of Education, personal e-mail, 9 June 2003).

Unlike public schools, private schools may offer religious education, but all other programs must follow, to a degree, an equivalent of the provincial curriculum. If they wish to change the program offerings, they must apply to the Minister of Education for recognition and approval of that program *prior* to the program’s implementation (“Private Schools and Home Education Regulations,” *School Act Regulations*, section 6).

Students who attend private schools may apply to a public school board under Section 52 of the School Act to receive “placement or grant credit for (a) educational activities provided by a licensed private school...” Through applying for public school credits, privately schooled students may receive a Prince Edward Island High School Diploma.

Accountability

Each year private schools shall supply the Minister with annual reports on enrollment on or before September 30 of each year (School Act, section 5). In addition, monthly attendance records are requested from each private school due on the 15th of the month. No other annual reporting is necessary. Private schools are inspected annually, and as often as the Minister determines is necessary, any private school, including examination of the physical facilities and course materials and the observation of classes taught by the school, and the Minister shall also have the right to administer tests to students (School Act, section 4(1)).

Despite being regulated by the Department of Education, private schools in PEI receive no provincial funding though the Department of Education may provide authorized textbooks at no cost to the private school (School Act, section 7). All funding is received through tuition and fees.

⁴² In the last 5-6 years, the private schools in PEI are increasingly using the provincial curriculum (Department of Education, personal e-mail, 9 June 2003).

Provincial Groups and Associations

The Federation of Independent Schools lists the following school groups and association of independent schools to be operating in Prince Edward Island:

- Association of Christian Schools International
- Atlantic Accelerated Christian Education Association
- Christian Schools International (District 10)
- Seventh-day Adventist

Home Education

In Prince Edward Island, the Student Services Division of the Public Education Branch of the Department of Education oversees all home schooling programs (*Annual Report: 2000-2001*). The School Act (2000) and the School Act Regulations (2000) directly regulate home schooling programs in detail, requiring little other explanatory policies. As of 2002, section 139 of the School Act (2000) allowed parents to home-school their child so long as the Minister of Education deems the program to be providing “effective instruction.” To be providing “effective instruction” home schooling programs must “sufficiently [meet] the criteria set out in the program of studies authorized by the Department for use in the public schools, including the appropriate grade level for the student” (“Private Schools and Home Education Regulations,” *School Act Regulations*, 2000, section 19(2)a). If existing programs fail to provide this instruction, the student fails to show progress, or parents fail to submit the required progress reports, the Minister of Education may revoke the home schooling privilege (section 19(2)).

Until spring of 2003, parents who wished to home school their child applied on an annual basis to the Minister of Education; as of winter 2003, parents are only required to notify the Minister of Education of their intent to home educate their child (ren). The Minister may only grant permission to the parent for the period of up to one year (“Private Schools and Home Education Regulations,” *School Act Regulations*, 2000, section 20). Home schooling programs are individually defined by the parents and be age and grade appropriate for the student. Because home school programs are authorized by the Minister of Education, school boards are permitted to recognize the programs “for placement or [to] grant credit” (*School Act*, 2000, section 52), the process of which is outlined in Minister’s Directives No. MD 01-07 (2001).

To help facilitate home school program offerings, the Department of Education will provide textbooks to parents upon receipt of a \$50 deposit, which is refunded upon return of the textbooks. The Department of Education further allows, with permission from the school, home-schooled students to attend specific classes, courses or programs in that school (“Private Schools and Home Education Regulations,” *School Act Regulations*, 2000, section 21(1)). Should this be arranged, students do not have other school privileges (“Private Schools and Home Education Regulations,” *School Act Regulations*, 2000, section 21(2)).

Once a home education program is approved, parents must then submit at least twice per year a progress report to a designated “teacher-monitor” selected by the parent. A teacher-monitor “must be a person who is certified to teach in Prince Edward Island, and parents make arrangements with the teacher monitor for the duties to be performed” (Department of Education representative, personal e-mail, 17 November 2003). The teacher monitor twice annually

(January and June) reviews the student's progress and attests to his/her progress. Standardized testing of home schooled students is not required by law in Prince Edward Island, but parents may have their child(ren) take part in it if they wish. According to an Eastern School District Representative, the relationship between home schooling programs and their District is "the same relationship [the District has] with any other school" (Eastern School District, personal interview, 30 May 2003). The District does not approve home schooling programs, but once the program is approved by the Minister of Education, the District may be responsible for evaluating the child's progress should the student wish to return to the public system (Department of Education, personal e-mail, 17 November 2003).

Program Choice

The Department of Education uses curriculum developed both regionally and provincially for the education system in Prince Edward Island. The Minister has adopted to prescribe the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation's core curriculum in English Language Arts and Mathematics, as well as its Essential Graduation Learnings and *learning outcomes*. Further prescribed instruction must be given in Physical Education, Science and Social Studies. Program diversity is made possible through Section 7(2) of the School Act (2000). The School Act (2000) also encourages the development of local programs by encouraging teachers "to assist in the development, implementation and evaluation of pilot or local programs in the schools" (section 50(f)). While program diversity is encouraged at the provincial level, program choice is regulated at the district level.

Program Choice: Eastern School District

The Eastern School District offers a wide variety of programs; both provincially prescribed and locally developed.

High School Courses:

The six high schools in the Eastern School District offer a variety of programs suited to differing abilities, future goals and interests. These include courses deemed by the Department of Education to be:

University Preparatory (Enriched/Advanced) This term refers to a university preparatory program that requires intensified and independent study. Students are expected to perform at advanced levels of achievement so as to be better prepared for university programs.

University Preparatory (Academic) These courses are regular university preparatory courses that allow students to enter post secondary study.

Open These courses vary in level of difficulty and are considered a worthwhile selection for any student.

General This is a non-university preparatory program. The emphasis is placed on the immediate application of the subject matter to everyday situations.

Practical [Life Skills] These courses are offered at a very basic level and are intended to prepare students for the world of work and develop specific skills training.

Modified Learning outcomes of a course are modified to meet the needs of the learner.

Charlottetown Rural High School Website, “Course Descriptions,” no date.

Not all six high schools offer all of the above listed course options, but all schools offer core curriculum, modified programs, programs of need, and locally developed programs and projects.⁴³

French Language Programs

All French language programs fall under the responsibility of the Department of Education, French Programs Division. This includes programs and services for the French First Language School System, as well as French Immersion, and Core French.

French first language instruction involves complete instruction, in French, of programs and services from grades K-12, except in the case of English Language Arts, which is introduced in Grade 4. French first language instruction is largely performed in the Commission Scolaire de langue française, though may be used in an Anglophone school if numbers do not warrant the formation of a Francophone school.

While the French Immersion Programs also offer the majority of instruction in the French language, they are part of the English school system and therefore some services and programs are given in English. Within PEI there are three streams of French Immersion: Early, Mid, and Late. The Early French Immersion Program begins in Grade 1 and is carried through to Grade 12. The Mid French Immersion Program begins in Grade 4 and in Grade 10 students join the Early French Immersion program through Grade 12. The Late French Immersion Program begins in Grade 7 and in Grade 10 students also join the Early French Immersion Program through Grade 12. Not all streams are offered in all schools, nor are they prescribed in either district.

Unlike French first language instruction and the French Immersions Programs, the Core French Program offers only part-time instruction in the French language and is available from Grade 4 onward in all schools.

⁴³ Many of the locally developed programs and projects were created and established through the provincial GrassRoots Program.

French Immersion Programs: Eastern School District

The availability of the French Immersion Programs varies across the Eastern School District. Early French Immersion (Grades 1 to 6) is available in at least one school per family. Mid French Immersion, a pilot project, is only offered in one school. Continuing Early French Immersion (for those continuing from the Early program) is available at the intermediate level in four families of schools. Late French Immersion is offered in three families of schools and Continuing French Immersion (for all programs) is available at the high school level in four families of schools. Six schools offer the Early French Immersion Program, 1 offers Mid Immersion, 4 offer Late French Immersion, 4 offer Continuing Early Immersion, and 4 offer Continuing French Immersion in Senior High.

For all French Immersion programs, except the Mid French Immersion Program, students who do not live in one of the zones which offer the program desired may apply to attend school in another zone in order to take part in the program (*Policy IHBE-R*, 1). In February, students register to attend the various French Immersion programs for the following school year. Currently, because it is a pilot project, only students attending the Gulf Shore School may enrol in the Mid French Immersion Program. If a student attends school outside of his or her zone the board is not responsible for the transportation of that student.

Publicly Funded Kindergarten

In Prince Edward Island kindergarten is not compulsory, but in 2000 the province implemented a three-year pilot project for publicly funded kindergarten. This program serves approximately 1,700 students at over 90 locations throughout the province and offers a curriculum that includes English Language Arts and Mathematics. The program provides the equivalent of 12.5 hours of schooling per week for students enrolled.

GrassRoots Programs:

The GrassRoots programs are optional programs schools can undertake and for which they can receive funding. Programs are to be designed by the school to increase technological skills in combination with education and increased cultural awareness. The four main objectives of this program are to:

- Foster innovation through the integration of information and communications technology (ICT) into learning;
- Foster the acquisition of skills needed by Canadian youth to succeed in the [knowledge economy](#);
- Contribute to building Canadian content on the Internet; and
- Support ICT connectivity, usage and training.

(Grassroots, <http://www.schoolnet.ca/grassroots/e/home/about/index.asp>)

Other Programs: Eastern School District

Beyond the above-mentioned programs, the Eastern School District offers a variety of District and school-specific programs. Enrolment in the various programs is often based on the student being selected by the District, though parents may suggest the appropriateness of their child to one of the programs. The selection process and referral protocols are program specific.

A+ Program (2 sites)

The A+ Program is an alternative program oriented to students with behavioural issues, often those who are or have been suspended from the regular school because of those behaviours. The program teaches the provincial curriculum while intervening in those behavioural issues. The program is oriented towards students Grades 4-6.

Aboriginal Program (1 site)

The Aboriginal Program is oriented towards aboriginal students and offered at a site separate from the other schools in the district. Aboriginal students are not required to take part in the program, but may make use of it if they “feel more comfortable in going to this program” (Eastern School District, personal interview, 30 May 2003).

Musical/ Instrumental Program (7 sites)

The Musical/ Instrumental Program is a junior high program that extends to the high school level (only 1 junior high school and 2 high schools currently do not take part in this program). The program is unique to each school that offers it, but throughout the district each year there is a rigorous screening process, leaving some parents demanding greater programs and more space. “Every year there is disappointment...there are always a lot of parents who wish they had more choice in [placing] their child in an instrumental program or a music program...In terms of programs, [it] would be the one that breeds the most discontent in terms of accessibility” (Eastern School District, personal interview, 30 May 2003).

Other Programs and Courses

A variety of other programs and courses are offered in the high schools throughout the districts. These include *Visual Communications* (1 site), *Environmental Management* (1 site), *Hospitality and Tourism* (1 site), *Peer Helper* (2 sites), *Vocational Programs* (site specific), *Transition’s Program* (1 site, pilot project that will become a Career Exploration Program) and *Cooperative Work Study* (1 site).

Programs and projects are also developed at the elementary and intermediate level and many are funded through the GrassRoots Program. Such programs and projects include the *Society Environment and Energy Development Studies*, *Adopt an Eagle*, *Anger Management Programs*, and the *Waterfront Development Project* to name a few.

Promoting Choice, Not Promoting Choice, and Reluctant Choice

The Eastern School District both encourages and discourages certain choices by parents and students, though it recognizes the parental right to most choices. Under District policies, parents may apply to transfer their child(ren) to any school within the district, but cannot choose the school or program “and gain immediate access to it.” Instead, they are subject to the requirements of the transferring procedure.

The Eastern School District does not promote school transfers, though it recognizes the parent's right to apply for a transfer and will provide the necessary information upon request. Similarly, the District does not promote the parent or student choosing one of the District's alternate programs, instead relying on a referral process, but will accept parental recommendations of a child's enrolment in one of the programs.⁴⁴

Despite not promoting school transfers, the Eastern School District actively publicizes, recruits and promotes program choices for its French Immersion Programs and high school program streams. For French Immersion Programs, the District highly advertised and facilitates parental choice in enrolling their child(ren) in the various programs offered (Early, Mid, or Late).

At the high school level, students are offered the choice of four streams of programs: the Practical program, the General program, the Academic program, and, at some schools, the Advanced/ Honours program. "Students would be encouraged to take the program that best suited their choices and their abilities in some cases" (Eastern School District, personal interview, 30 May 2003). High school students may also take part in vocational programs and specific course configurations best suited towards their post-graduation goals. The District believes that, in terms of these stream offerings, the majority of parents wish to enrol their children in the Academic stream, which is seen as offering the greatest of future possibilities and most potential for them. "It would only be with some reluctance that they would try to stream them or put them in a program that would not lead to University. Although there is choice there, it would be a reluctant choice" (Eastern School District, personal interview 30 May 2003).

Programs of Need

The method for establishing and implementing programs of need in the education system in Prince Edward Island is currently being reviewed. To date, the province has access to the resources and information available through the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority. Programs of need are established at the district level between parents, children, educators, and professionals and are not differentiated from other programs. Students who are deemed to have "special needs" include those with physical or mental disabilities, emotional illnesses, physical illnesses, and those who become pregnant. In all cases, programs are created to suit the needs of the individual (*Annual Report 2000-2001*, 2001). Annually, schools submit to their local boards profiles of all students deemed to have "special needs."

Programs of Need: Eastern School District

In the Eastern School District, three categories of programs of need are defined: Adapted programs, Modified programs, and Individual Educational Plans. Adapted programs are programs where curriculum is not changed but the method of instruction or assessment is altered to aid the student's learning process. Modified programs are programs where the curriculum has been altered to aid in the student's education. Individual Education Plans are established when the curriculum is significantly modified.

⁴⁴ The Eastern School District recognizes that for the alternative programs, there are always more applicants than there is space. From parental feedback, those who are accepted to the programs are, in the District's perspective, happy with the program and those who are not accepted to the program, believe that there is insufficient space (Eastern School District, personal interview, 30 May 2003).

The Student Services Department of the Eastern School District is responsible for addressing all alternations to programs, programs of need, and supplying aid to enable a student's learning process. These services include tutoring, counselling, assessments, referrals, and transfers. At first notice of a student's difficulty teachers contact parents, collect information, and attempt new teaching strategies. If a student continues to have difficulty, the teacher and parent then consult with school personnel and form a school-based team in an attempt to establish aids and programs that facilitate the student's learning. Should this fail to provide improvement, a District Student Services Team is then contacted. The District Student Services Team and the school-based team jointly establish a program individual to the student. "Student Services personnel may recommend referral to other professionals or agencies, alternate placement or settings, or alternative learning materials and strategies" (Student Services, "Referral Process," ¶6).

The District policy is that students are to be educated with their age peers unless "determined by the administration, teachers, school student services teams, and parents" (*Policy IKA-R: Assessment/ Reporting/ Documentation*) This includes the retention/ "holding back" of students as well as the promotion/ "skipping" of students. In Policy IKA-R, the District authorizes "curricular and instruction modification and adaptation" in order to educate all students "with their age appropriate peers" (*Policy IKA-R: Assessment/ Reporting/ Documentation*, 1). Any changes or modifications to the curriculum and programs must be signed by the student's parent(s).

The Director of Instruction/Student Services, teachers, parents, professionals and the student jointly establish Individual Educational Plans for each student with special educational needs. The Individual Educational Plan must be signed by his/her parent(s) and a copy is kept in the student's permanent file. Where a teacher assistant is required, the plan "must be submitted to District Student Services by January of each school year" (*Policy IKA-R: Assessment/ Reporting/ Documentation*, 2). The Individual Education Plan, all assessments, reports, and interventions are documented in the student's permanent file. Schools also submit profiles of students with special needs on an annual basis to the District Board.

Funding

Public schooling in Prince Edward Island is free to all legal residences, except those "who are the responsibility of a federal government department" (e.g. persons in prison) ("Students and Parents Regulations" *School Act Regulations*, 2000, section 4(4)). These individuals and those who wish to attend private schools may be charged fees and tuition in order to receive education.

General program funding is regulated and provided for by the Minister, but if school boards wish “to offer programs and services above and beyond those for which funding is provided for by the Minister” they can do so through instituting a local tax (*School Act*, 2000, section 146(1)).

Should a school desire to implement a tax to pay for special programs, they must first ensure that:

1. The program is approved by the Department of Education, even if the program is locally developed;
2. Information about the proposed program and tax has been locally published prior to the tax being implemented; and
3. A plebiscite has been held prior to the tax being implemented (needing 5% or more of the local population to vote against the tax to prevent the tax from being implemented) (*School Act*, 2000, section 146(2)).

Funding: Eastern School District

Funding is provided to the District by the Department of Education according to the number of students enrolled, but that money is not designated to certain programs. Furthermore, there is no special funding given by the Department of Education for the alternate programs, but in the past the District has been able to request more funding after establishing a new program (though this practice is not approved by the Department of Education.)

While the Minister of Education supplies funding for prescribed curriculum and programs, monies for non-prescribed programs can be acquired through local taxation, fundraising, and/or community donation. In 1999, the Eastern School District established the Eastern School District Education Foundation Incorporated. This foundation actively works towards promoting the concept that education is a community responsibility and acquires community donations for the District beyond those provided by the Minister of Education. These funds are used to promote *innovative* quality education by funding pilot projects and non-governmentally funded activities in schools throughout the District (*Policy KGAA: District Education Foundation*, 1999).

Accountability

Accountability in Prince Edward Island begins with and always returns to the Minister of Education. The Minister establishes methods of accountability and assessment within the provincial education system and is accountable to the population of Prince Edward Island. District boards implement the provincially/ regionally developed curriculum and tests are performed at the school level by teachers or administrators (School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP)) or by Statistics Canada (Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)). They may also create and implement their own assessment methods (*School Act*, 2000, section 50(e)). One provincial assessment examination is the School Achievement Indicators Program, which tests 13- and 16-year-old students in Mathematics, Science, Reading and Writing. This assessment is performed on an annual basis and its results are reported in the Annual Report issued by the Department of Education.

School Councils

The province of Prince Edward Island considers accountability to consist of more than simply reporting statistical information and examination results: School Councils are established in each school to ensure that parents and the local community are brought into dialogue with the school and school district (*School Act*, section 67(b)). School Councils also work with principals and school districts to create school improvement plans.

Accountability: Eastern School District

In the Eastern School District, accountability is largely informal. Currently there is “no comprehensive accountability model that reports back to the client”⁴⁵ (Eastern School District, personal interview, 30 May 2003), but there are a series of separate mechanisms in the system that are able to provide feedback to parents and students about the student’s educational progress - such as exams, test, and informal meetings with parents. Accountability measures for alternate programs are *theoretically* the same as for the standard programs and curriculum, though in practice they may differ depending on the program.

Testing

Currently in Prince Edward Island there are no standardized provincial examinations, but the school districts do take part in national and international examinations, such as the School Achievement Indicators Program and Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Otherwise, all testing and assessment examinations are determined by individual school districts.

Testing: Eastern School District

In the Eastern School District students are given no formal standardized tests from Grades 1 to 8, and from Grades 9 to 12 standardized tests may consist of no more than 40% of a student’s final mark (*Policy IKA-R: Assessment/ Reporting/ Documentation*, 1). When standardized tests are used they are used in a “fragmented approach” (Eastern School District, personal interview, 30 May 2003). The Eastern School District uses some of the standardized examinations created by the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation, but not all. Its adoption of those exams depends on the program in question. According to District Policy, “staff and board support the use of alternative forms of assessment in addition to formal testing as a measure of student achievement” (*Policy IKA-R: Assessment/ Reporting/ Documentation*, 1). This reflects the larger province-wide effort to establish learning as a life-long process and recognize the various types of learning.

Annual Reports

The most frequent form of accountability in the Province of Prince Edward Island is the Annual Report. Every school board submits an annual report to the Minister (*School Act*, 2000, section 48). In turn, the Minister publishes an Annual Report to the people of the province. This report is made available through district offices, the Department of Education, and on the Department’s website.

⁴⁵ The District is currently constructing the protocols for such an accountability model.

The Department of Education views education as a life-long learning process and the annual report reflects this belief. The report covers each sector of the Department of Education and provides a summary of the achievements made in each area over the last year. Information ranges from early childhood development programs to Adult and Continuing Education. Statistical numbers are given achievements are listed according to divisional goals. Performance is addressed on a general level, in terms of objectives and outcomes of improvement rather than abstract numbers. Throughout the report there are calls for and evidence of efforts at increased accountability at all levels of the education system.

Reporting: Eastern School District

The Eastern School District requires all schools to hold parent-teacher conferences twice a year, as well as provide regular report cards on student progress. The policy on parent teacher conferences reflects the province-wide belief that dialogue is fundamental to public accountability in education. Report card formats were recently changed to reflect the curriculum adopted from the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation. The report cards now evaluate students according to the set curriculum-based desired outcomes for each subject with the goal being that parents are informed on the skills and knowledge levels of their child(ren) rather than being given abstract numbers.

In terms of financial accountability, the District must annually submit reports of its income and expenditures to the Department of Education and is annually audited. It is further held financially accountable for its distribution and use of resources by its Board of Trustees.

Other Forms of Accountability: Eastern School District

Teacher Evaluations

Throughout the Eastern School District, all teachers are given Teacher Evaluations, one aspect of which provides the district with the information on whether or not the provincial curriculum is being followed. While Teacher Evaluations are a measure of accountability, there is no direct parental input during the evaluation process.

Surveys

Every year the Eastern School District surveys areas of the district that do not have a French Immersion program to test the local interest, acquire “an interest inventory,” in order to determine if there is a critical mass of students to warrant the introduction of a program. Periodically the District will also perform a survey of parents, students, and community members to assess a particular aspect of the School District and to gauge community response to education. A study recently performed by the Eastern School District assessing performance and addressing what the community thought education *should be*, involved both surveys and focus groups (for a discussion of the findings of the study, see Appendix A).

Program Reviews

In the Eastern School District there are no district administered program reviews, but the District does take part in the program reviews administered by the Department of Education and will periodically assess programs specific to the District and its schools.

Published Information

Various published information is available to parents through school district offices, the Department of Education, and its website. As the Department approaches education as a life-long learning process, a wide-variety of information concerning education is provided. These three sources provide parents with curriculum guides, annual reports, Acts, policies, and regulations concerning education, and any information they may need or desire when enrolling their child in school. The Department also disseminates information about apprenticeship programs, adult-education, early childhood education, kindergarten, and its literacy programs. It also includes information for university students, career planning, and surveys concerning students' attitudes, choices, and expectations of education and their futures.

Information and Publications: Eastern School District

The information the District makes available to parents concerning programs depends on the program in question. For some programs, such as the French Immersion Programs and Musical/Instrumental Program, the District has very rigid protocols concerning when it must publicize recruitment dates and establish sign-up deadlines. The information is provided to the public in newspapers, by radio, by television, on-line through its website and in-school publications. Otherwise, "parents are informed in a reactive way – when they phone and ask a question we give them the information" and a "proactive way" through district, school, and student handbooks, newsletters, parent meetings, and information pamphlets (Eastern School District, personal interview, 30 May 2003).

Information about the District, its schools, and programs can be found through the Eastern School District Office or on its website. It further provides parents with information concerning transportation, policies, regulations, events and pilot programs. It also makes available any forms parents, teachers or administrators might need, along with surveys for parents on their perception of the quality of education in the District.

The District does not track the number of information requests, but it is aware that parents are using the information available. There are rarely grievances issued based on a lack of available or provided information (Eastern School District, personal interview, 30 May 2003).

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Appendix A: Internal Study - Eastern School District The Role of Education and the Implication for School Choice

The Eastern School District recently (2002-2003) performed an internal study to assess if what they were offering met the needs and desires of the students and parents. The research was performed through the use of a survey and a series of focus groups were held with parents and students separately at schools throughout the District. Surveys were administered and returned electronically and focus groups with parents and students were held separately. Some of the questions asked of parents and students included: What is the job of a school? What should it be? And, how are we doing our job?

The results, which are currently being compiled into a report, determined that parents and students wanted the following items from a school *in this specific order*:

- 1) For children to be physically safe (mainly expressed by parents)
- 2) For a conscious social development in children (expressed by both groups).
Specifically, the nurturing of empathy and for opportunities to be given to develop interpersonal communication, social growth and emotional maturity – these opportunities should not occur by default, but should be intentionally provided; and
- 3) Skills development (reading, writing, arithmetic).

After reviewing the results, the District was confronted with the realization that the current system was not sufficient. One student noted, “What we learn most about going to school is about how to go to school” (Eastern School District, personal interview, 30 May 2003). Furthermore, the District realized that students and parents felt that what the School District valued was evidenced in what they evaluated. As a result, the School District is currently grappling with how to establish a method through which they can evaluate emotional maturity, social development, and interpersonal communication – those attributes developed through opportunities that parents and students specifically asked the School District to provide.

In terms of choice, the District became aware that parents and students are *not* being given the choice concerning the *focus* of education within the school system. “We do offer a lot of choice, but one of the things we are not offering is a choice of the emphasis our curriculum places on types of learning” (Eastern School District, personal interview, 30 May 2003). Furthermore, the District is concerned that at times parents do not know what their choices are in terms of what is being measured (skill directed schooling or skill directed schooling and addressing the affective domain) and there are invisible choices of which few people are aware (Eastern School District, personal interview, 30 May 2003). “We are all ignorant of the type of choices that could be – that ought to be – but simply aren’t. We are really making choices within a very narrow set of choices” (Eastern School District, personal interview, 30 May 2003).

The District representative interviewed suggests that to address affective domain there needs to be a paradigm shift towards accounting for both skill development and personal growth. When asked about the Essential Graduation Learnings (which provide some focus on personal growth), the representative stated that, while theoretically they are good, there are currently only limited methods of measuring, reporting or assessing them. Therefore, as social and personal growth are difficult to assess and academic skill, demonstrated through performance, is easy to assess, it is often the result that the “lower order skills... end up being stressed in the classroom,” rather than the more abstract (Eastern School District, personal interview, 30 May 2003).

Final Report: Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island By Erika Goble

Overview

As of the 2003 Statistics Canada estimates, the population of Prince Edward Island (PEI) is 140,412. Approximately 23% of the population (or 32,245 people) lives in the provincial capital, Charlottetown, and 17% of the Province's population (or 23,900 people) are enrolled in a primary or secondary educational program in the province. The elementary and secondary educational options in Charlottetown are Anglophone public schools, Francophone public schools, home education, distance education, and private schools.

School Choice

In Prince Edward Island, all educational options are governed under the School Act (2000), Minister's Directives, and School Act Regulations (2000). The Department of Education outlines provincial curriculum but allows individual public school districts to develop locally developed programs, which are approved by the Minister of Education.

Charlottetown is encompassed by the Eastern School District (Anglophone public school unit) and La Commission scolaire de langue française (Francophone public school unit). In Charlottetown, there is only one Commission scolaire de langue française school, L'école Française – Buote, which serves Grades 1 to 12. There are 10 Eastern School District schools in Charlottetown and 2 more within the immediate vicinity. Six schools serve Grade 1 – 6, two serve Grades 7 – 9, and two serve Grades 10 – 12.

All four private schools in Prince Edward Island operate in Charlottetown. Private schools in Prince Edward Island are not required to follow provincial curriculum, but must provide an equivalent. Furthermore, private schools must apply to acquire a license to operate and, in application, must fully detail to the Department of Education all programs, courses, and services provided at all levels and grades. For information on the programs offered in the private schools, parents must contact each school individually.

Home education programs are approved by the Minister of Education and individually developed by parents, but are expected to either follow or be of an equivalent to the provincially prescribed curriculum. In Charlottetown, parents with Ministerial permission to home educate their children must submit, at least twice annually, progress reports to a selected teacher monitor. Distance learning may be incorporated into home education programs to provide approved courses.

When students undertake distance learning, home education programs, or instruction in a private school and wish to qualify for a Prince Edward Island High School Diploma, they must apply to a public school district to be granted equivalent high school credit.

Program Choice

A variety of programs are available to students in Charlottetown, including the six high school streams: University Preparatory (Enriched/Advanced), University Preparatory (Academic), Open, General, Practical [Life Skills], and Modified. They may also take part in the French Immersion Programs (Early, Late and Continuing), as two schools Grades 1 – 6 offer early French Immersion, 3 schools Grades 7 – 9 offer Late French Immersion, 2 schools Grades 7 – 9 offer Continuing French Immersion, and both high schools, Grades 10 – 12, offer Continuing French Immersion. Various Eastern School District schools in Charlottetown offer the District's music program, which begins in Grade 6 and extends through high school. These music programs are individualized to each school, but include Concert Bands, Jazz Ensembles, and String Orchestras.

Beyond these programs, students may take part in the publicly funded kindergarten and the various locally developed courses offered by both school units. These courses include, but are not limited to, career exploration courses (e.g.s. Business and Information, Food Services, or Modern Home Maintenance), anger management courses, Economics, Political Science, and specialized curriculum courses (e.g. Art Talk).

Programs of Need

All programs of need are regulated by the Department of Education and implemented by either school unit. The district, in conjunction with parents, the student, and professionals, creates individual programs of need. In the Eastern School District, the Student Services Division is responsible for all programs of need and programs are Adapted, Modified, or result in Individual Educational Plans. The Eastern School District also follows a policy of inclusion with age-grade peers.

Limits to Choice

If students transfer schools, attend private schools, or enrol in home education programs, there is no transfer of provincially allocated funds. Private schools and home education programs receive no provincial funding, and schools are allocated funding by school boards. As the Eastern School District representative noted, "We know what choices *ought* to be offered but we are constrained by the dollars that we have to offer them" (Eastern School District, personal interview, 30 May 2003). The Department determines how much money is provided per student to each district, so depending on that formula certain programs are available and others are deemed unfeasible.

A second limit to choice is the problem of transportation. The District is not responsible for the transportation of students attending schools outside of their attendance zone, which limits some parents from being able to choose alternate schools or programs for their child(ren). While the province is small, so too is the population and the geographical location of schools is dispersed. To attend a specific program becomes problematic if it is only offered in one school on the other side of the Eastern School District, which spans one half of the province.

A third limit, and the limit which has come to recent attention in the Eastern School District, is the limitation of educational orientation. In the current educational climate, the main educational focus is on skills development with little placed on personal and social development. This results in an invisibility of certain choices within the education system. Even when parents and students place importance on the development of those qualities, they do not know they have the right to demand that development within a school. It currently does not exist as a known option.

In conclusion, while parents and students in Charlottetown have access to a wide array of educational options (public schools, private schools, home education programs, and distance learning), they are restrained by the limited programs offered, the location of schools, the need for transportation, and the orientation of public education towards skill development. While school choice and district policies allow the freedom of choice, parents and students are currently choosing within a limited sphere.

APPENDIX B.9 QUEBEC

Final Report: Quebec Ministry of Education and Montreal School Board
By Isabelle Goulet

Introduction: Québec's Educational System

Of the 7.5 million people that live in Québec, nearly half reside in Montréal and the Greater Montréal region, and another 700, 000 people live in and around Québec City, the province's capital. Of these, about a hundred cultural communities concentrated mainly in the Montréal region account for approximately 9% of Québec's population. French is the official language in Québec. Approximately 83 per cent of the population speaks French at home, while 11 per cent speaks English, and 6 per cent speaks another language. Most of the 11 Aboriginal nations speak their Native languages and use either French or English as a second language (*An Overview*, p3).

Since there is no ministry responsible for education at the federal level, "[in] Québec, the Ministère de l'Éducation is the government body responsible for promoting access to all forms of education for all those who have the desire and ability to be educated" (*An Overview*, p.3). Québec's education system is based on a sharing of responsibilities by the government, universities, colleges (Cégeps), school boards and schools.

French is the language of instruction in most educational institutions in Québec. According to the Charter of the French Language, instruction is to be given in French at the preschool, elementary and secondary levels. However, some students who meet specific requirements of the Charter may receive their schooling in English (See Appendix for criteria of eligibility to receive education in English). These students account for approximately 10 per cent of the total enrollment in Québec's elementary and secondary schools. College and university students can enroll in either English or French language institutions.

The education system is made up of public and private French and English educational institutions. After the health sector, education receives the most funding. Québec's education system has four levels: elementary (which also includes preschool), secondary, college (Cégep) and university.

Education is free at the elementary, secondary and college levels of the public sector (this is different for the private sector). For handicapped people, education is free until the age of 18 or 21. Also, school books and didactic material are free and are lent to students. However, university students are required to pay tuition, which is relatively low by North American standards and financial aid is available (*An Overview*, p.3).

Education is recognized as a right and at the same time an obligation to attend school from the age of 6 to 16 (see Home Schooling on page 36 for exceptions). This right to education applies to preschool, elementary and secondary school and applies until the age of 18 or 21 in the case of an handicapped person.

Levels of education are as follows: pre-school or kindergarten (which is not mandatory); primary and secondary. Education is mandatory until the fifth year of secondary (or age 16). After completing their secondary studies, students may choose to do vocational studies within vocational centers or may go to cégeps or private colleges to either pursue pre-university studies or technical studies.

Preschool and Elementary Education

Elementary education consists of six years of schooling divided into three cycles of two years each. Schooling generally begins at the age of 6, and is mandatory up to the age of 16. However, most children attend an optional year of full-time kindergarten; some children with handicaps or from low-income families can attend part-time kindergarten at the age of 4.

Public elementary and secondary schools fall under the jurisdiction of school boards managed by elected school commissioners. It is the governing board's responsibility to adopt the school's educational project.

Secondary Education

Secondary school offers five years of general education, divided into two cycles. Cycle One, which lasts three years, allows students to consolidate the learning acquired in elementary school and to begin to think about their career options. "From the third year on, optional subjects are added to the general curriculum, giving students the opportunity to explore various subject areas (sciences, arts, etc.)." (*An Overview*, p.5) By the end of the fifth year of secondary education, students are awarded a Secondary School Diploma (SSD) that provides access to college, but does not lead directly to university.

Vocational and Technical Education (the latter given in Cégeps)

Since Québec has been facing a growing demand in skilled occupations in the recent years, particular attention has therefore been paid to vocational and technical studies. Programs are developed in conjunction with industry to ensure that training is relevant and that programs have adapted to new needs. "There are a total of 300 vocational and technical education programs, divided into 21 sectors. These programs are offered at the secondary or college level, depending on the complexity of the occupation as well as the language, mathematical and scientific skills they require" (*An Overview*, p.6).

While vocational education programs are offered at the secondary level by institutions called vocational education centres, college level technical programs are offered by Cégeps and private institutions (see Cégeps on page 26). The so-called vocational education centers prepare students to practice skilled or semi-skilled trades, which can lead to jobs as technicians.

Vocational and Technical education activities within industry are the result of cooperation between the Ministère de l'Éducation, the ministries in charge of labour and workforce planning, and partners in the education system (*An Overview*, p.7). Moreover, certain technical and university programs are offered only outside of large cities in order to maximize the use of regional potential.

Vocational and technical education as well as pre-university education may be given either in French or in English. The student does not need a certificate of eligibility to be admitted in these programs.

Cégeps : Pre-university Education and Technical Education

College is a particular feature of Québec's education system. College constitutes an intermediary level between secondary and university education.

“There are some 50 public general and vocational colleges, known as CEGEPs, and 24 private colleges. All of these institutions offer two-year pre-university programs and three-year technical programs leading to a Diploma of College Studies (DCS) as well as shorter technical programs leading to an Attestation of College Studies (ACS)” (*An Overview*, p.6).

A Diploma of College Studies (DCS) is required for admission to university. Pre-university programs lead directly to university, whereas technical programs generally lead to the labor market, but can, under certain conditions, also lead to *university* (*An Overview*, p.6).

Cégeps are governed by a separate, specific law: each institution is administered by a board of directors made up of teachers, students, and community representatives (*An Overview*, p.6).

At Cégep, students have a wide range of choices for studies either for a pre-university program (2 years of studies) or a technical program (generally three years of studies), that lead to either a D.C.S. (Diploma of College Studies) or an A.T.S. (Attestation of College Studies). The list of programs available in Québec as well as the list of cégeps by region are available on the MEQ web site. Therefore, it is possible to do a search by choice of program and obtain the list of schools that are offering each program, or search by cégeps and obtain the list of programs offered within each cégep. There are also electronic publications for each program sector, and programs and/or courses are available on the Quebec Education Ministry web site, although it may be more helpful to check out the cégeps' web sites to obtain more concrete details about the programs.

College studies are divided into three principal programs of education (pre-university, technique and general which is a combination of the two). See Program Choice at Cégeps on page 26 for more details.

School Choice

In Quebec, school choice is based on the principle of the neighborhood school (*école de quartier*); each child should have access and get automatically admitted to the identified closest school in order to receive educational services he or she has the right to: that is the regular or general education (the Quebec Education Ministry's pedagogical program) and excludes schools with a particular vocation or special project. (Interview). Thus, a school with a particular project cannot be considered as a neighborhood school since it is intended to a particular group of people. However, the neighborhood school may have a particular program where not every child may be admitted, as long as it does not impede the students living in the school's area from attending that school.

Even if the law is based on the principle of the neighborhood school, the ministry favors the freedom of choice for parents and students. (Interview) Indeed, the choice of a school depends upon the student or the student's parents: "Every student, or the student's parents if the student is not of full age, shall have the right to choose, every year, the school that best reflects their preferences from among the schools of the school board whose jurisdiction the student comes under that provide services to which the student is entitled" (*Education Act, s 4*).

School Choice: General Enrollment Criteria and Schools' Educational Project

According to the Education Act, "[each] year, every school board shall enroll students in its schools in keeping with the choice of each student's parents or the choice of the student, if of full age. However, if the number of applications for enrollment in a school exceeds the capacity of the school, enrollment shall be effected according to the criteria established by the school board after consultation with the parents' committee" (*Education Act, s 239*).

These enrollment criteria "must give priority to students coming under the jurisdiction of the school board and, as far as possible, to students whose place of residence is nearest to the school premises. They must be adopted, put into force and sent to each governing board at least 15 days before the beginning of the student enrollment period." (*Education Act, s 239*) However, the conditions or criteria for participation in a special project "may not serve as criteria for enrollment in a school; nor may they operate to exclude a student from the school of the student's choice if the student has a right to enroll in that school pursuant to the criteria referred to in the first paragraph" (*Education Act, s 239*). Thus, even if the government encourages the freedom of choice, sometimes it may be more difficult for a student to enroll in a school outside of the jurisdiction in which he or she lives.

In the effort to decentralize the power from the government and school boards, it is up to the schools to determine the criteria of admission according to their capacity and the different program(s) they offer, as long as it follows the Quebec Education Ministry policies. Of course, if students or students' parents are not happy with the school's decision, they may complain to the school board and/or to the ministry. However, the schools with one or many particular projects (particular vocation schools) are free to determine their enrollment criteria (these may be based on academic results, examinations, etc.).

As for admission according to age, there can be exceptions: “[for] humanitarian reasons or to avoid a serious prejudice to a child who has not attained the age of admission, the school board may, following a request giving reasons therefor made by the parents, in cases determined by regulation of the Minister, (1) admit the child to preschool education for the school year in which he attains 5 years of age, or admit him to elementary school education for the school year in which he attains 6 years of age; (2) admit to elementary school education a child admitted to preschool education who has attained 5 years of age” (*Education Act, s 241.1*). In the event of a refusal by the school board, “the Minister may, at the request of the parents and if he considers it expedient on the grounds mentioned in the first paragraph, order the school board to admit the child, in the cases and subject to the conditions prescribed in the first paragraph” (*Education Act, s 241.1*).

Also, “[following] a request, with reasons, from the parents of a child who has not achieved the objectives of preschool education, the principal may admit the child, as prescribed by regulation of the Minister, to preschool education for the school year in which he would be eligible for admission to elementary school education, if there are reasonable grounds to believe that such measure will enable the child to achieve those objectives” (*Education Act, s 96.17*).

As for foreign students, the enrollment criteria apply the same in the case of a landed immigrant or permanent resident; they have the same rights and obligations as a Canadian citizen residing in Québec and thus, public school is free of charge for them too. Generally, according to the level of education attained in the coming country as well as the language(s) spoken, the school and the school board will evaluate the type of class and time needed (may be *classe d’accueil* and *francisation*) for the child to integrate the regular school system. These classes are taught within schools throughout Québec, especially in Montréal given the number of landing immigrants.

The school’s role is “to provide to the persons entitled thereto under section 1 the educational services provided for by this Act and prescribed by the basic school regulation established by the Government under section 447 and to contribute to the social and cultural development of the community. A school shall, in particular, facilitate the spiritual development of students so as to promote self-fulfillment” (*Education Act, s 36*). The mission of a school is “to impart knowledge to students, foster their social development and give them qualifications, while enabling them to undertake and achieve success in a course of study” (*Education Act, s 36*).

As for the school’s educational project, the Act mentions that “[a] school shall pursue its mission within the framework of an educational project defined, implemented and periodically evaluated in collaboration with the students, the parents, the principal, the teachers and other school staff, representatives of the community and the school board” (*Education Act, s 6*). In addition, “[a] school’s educational project shall set out the specific aims and objectives of the school, and the means by which the educational project is to be implemented and evaluated” (*Education Act, s 37*). It is up to the school and not to the ministry nor the school board to decide and determine the school educational project. According to the government’s efforts to decentralize the power, the initiative must come from the school itself and/or the community in elaborating the educational project. (Interview).

In relation to needs and priorities, “[the] aims and objectives of the project, and the means by which it is to be implemented, shall be designed to ensure that the provincial educational policy defined by law, the basic school regulation and the programs of studies established by the Minister are implemented, adapted and enriched to reflect the needs of the students and the priorities of the school” (*Education Act, s 37*). The educational project must also respect the freedom of the community it serves: “[the] educational project of the school must respect the freedom of conscience and of religion of the students, the parents and the school staff” (*Education Act, s 37*).

However, the educational project doesn’t have to be religious: “[by] way of exception, at the request of a group of parents and after consulting with the parents’ committee, a school board may, with the Minister’s approval, establish a school for the purposes of a specific project other than a religious project, subject to the conditions and for the period determined by the Minister” (*Education Act, s 240*). See Religion in Public Schools on page 20 for the latest changes in the educational system regarding religious matters.

School Choice: Public and Private Schools

Basically, students and students’ parents may choose between two sectors of schooling establishments: public and private. The main difference is the economic variable, since public schools are free of charge and private may be costly.

Now, both public and private schools have to provide the pedagogical program stated by the Ministry and allow the necessary time for each course for preschool, elementary, secondary and college.

Public schools are under the jurisdiction of a school board (Commission scolaire). The constitution of French and English school boards according to the territory division is developed by the government. See the section called French and English School Boards on page 10 for details about their responsibilities.

Québec Private Schools

The Quebec Ministry of Education web site publishes a repertory (school year 2002-2003) of all private schools with a license under 7 categories :

- Admission reserved for handicapped students or with learning or social integration disabilities ;
- Preschool services (kindergarten)
- Primary school services
- Secondary general education services
- Secondary Professional education services
- Adult education (secondary level)
- Education services in virtue of an international agreement (e.g., German college)

Following these categories we can find a detailed list in alphabetical order of all private schools in the province of Quebec with their address and contact number, the educational services provided (education levels) as well as some other features such as the language(s) of instruction, the students' gender, if there is stay-in, etc.

The FEEP (Fédération des établissements d'Enseignement Privés) represents 159 schooling establishments and more than 90 000 students throughout Québec. The mission of the FEEP is to defend the establishments' interests; to promote private education; support the establishment's members development; and contribute to the progress and the improvement of education. FEEP also promotes "the distinct characteristic of the private school: its discipline, care and attention to people, high requirements, high standard of intellectual education; the curriculum reform and learning evaluation tools; results obligation; funding; the technologies integrated to teaching and learning". (FEEP web site at www.feep.qc.ca).

Montréal Private Schools

Still on the ministry web site, we can find a list of private schools in Montreal that have a licence. They are first classified by education level(s) (preschool, primary, secondary, college or professional) and by language(s) of instruction (French and/or English or other). Other features are religious (may be other than catholic or protestant), international, intercultural, artistic, Montessori, community schools, specialized school or division for students with special needs, as well as other information such as the students' gender, if there is a stay-in service, small classes or groups, if uniforms are required, focusing on writing and politeness toward teachers and students, etc. There are also vocational schools (secondary level, college or adult) which are focussing on one or many topics (e.g., Circus, Artists Management, etc.). It is also mentioned if the school is funded by the government.

Public sector: French and English School Boards

Until recently, Québec' school boards used to be religious (confessional). They were either protestant or catholic (see Religion within Public Schools on page 20). From now on, the division of the Québec territory is made into French and English school boards as it is stated in the Education Act: "[the] Government [that] shall, by order, divide the territory of Québec into two groups of territories: one of territories for French language school boards and the other, of territories for English language school boards. The territory of the Cree School Board, that of the Kativik School Board and that of the Commission scolaire du Littoral established by chapter 125 of the statutes of Québec, 1966-67, are excluded from such division, however" (*Education Act*, s 111), and "[a] school board shall be established in each territory" since the public schools fall under the jurisdiction of school boards.

However, there are only three school boards in Quebec with a particular status, i.e. that are excluded from the territorial cutting into French and English school boards: The Commission scolaire du Littoral, the Commission scolaire Crie and the Commission scolaire Kativik. Their schools are all located in the northern regions of Quebec.

The Québec English schools are grouped under the Quebec English Schools Network and are represented by the Advisory Board for English schools to the MEQ (Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec). The Advisory Board's mandate is to advise the Minister of Education on all matters affecting the educational services offered in English elementary and secondary schools. The Board meets once a month.

There are 72 Québec school boards that ensure the education of nearly 1,225,000 young and adult students. In 2001-2002, there were :

- 72 school boards in Québec, of which:
 - 60 were French,
 - 9 were English,
 - 3 were of a particular status, and
- 2,933 schools, of which:
 - 63 were only offering preschool education,
 - 365 were only offering elementary education,
 - 493 were only offering secondary education,
- 1,812 were offering preschool and elementary education,
 - 52 were offering elementary and secondary education, and
 - 148 were offering preschool, elementary and secondary education,
 - 392 vocational training centres and adult education centers
- 1,305 school commissioners (school boards are managed by a council of commissioners) were elected in 1998, of which:
 - 1,142 were within French school boards, and
 - 163 were within English school boards.

The Education Act now allocates important responsibilities to the new school boards, including planning, resource distribution, support to their schools and training centers, plus evaluation tasks and accounts control. Furthermore, the mandate of the schools and training centers includes the organization and evaluation of educational services, resource management, and the organization of the partnership within the local community. (See accountability on page 37)

According to the Education Act, the functions and powers of the school boards are as follows: "the school board shall, in particular, (1) admit persons who come under its jurisdiction to educational services; (2) organize educational services or, if the school board can establish that its resources are insufficient or if the school board agrees to grant the request of parents, entrust the organization of educational services to another school board, a body or a person with which or whom it has entered into an agreement pursuant to any of sections 213 to 215.1, while making sure the services are provided as near the students' place of residence as possible; (3) if it does not arrange certain vocational education programs or adult education services for which it receives no subsidies following a decision of the Minister pursuant to section 466 or 467, refer persons to a school board which provides such services. In addition, a school board shall provide educational services to persons who come under the jurisdiction of another school board, to the extent indicated in a decision of the Minister pursuant to section 468" (*Education Act*, s 209).

In relation to the language of instruction, the Education Act states that, “[a] French language school board shall provide educational services in French; an English language school board shall provide educational services in English. However, vocational training and adult education services shall be provided in French or in English according to law; the same applies in respect of educational services provided to persons coming under the jurisdiction of a school board of another category pursuant to section 213 or 468. Nothing in this section shall prevent the teaching of a second language in that language” (*Education Act, s 210*).

The implementation or replacement of a program by a school board is also under the Minister’s approbation: “[every] school board shall ensure that the basic school regulation established by the Government is implemented in accordance with the gradual implementation procedure established by the Minister under section 459. For humanitarian reasons or to avoid serious harm to a student, the school board may, following a request, with reasons, made by the parents of the student, by the student, if of full age, or by the school principal, exempt the student from the application of a provision of the basic school regulation. In the case of an exemption from the rules governing certification of studies referred to in section 460, the school board must apply therefor to the Minister” (*Education Act, s 222.1*).

Similarly, concerning a special project: “[the] school board may also, subject to the rules governing certification of studies prescribed by the basic school regulation, permit a departure from a provision of the basic school regulation so that a special school project applicable to a group of students may be carried out. In the case of a departure from the list of subjects, the school board must obtain the authorization of the Minister in accordance with section 459” (*s 222.1*), or for a local program: “[as] well, a school board may, with the authorization of and subject to the conditions determined by the Minister, allow a school to replace a program of studies established by the Minister by a local program of studies designed for a student or a category of students who are unable to benefit from the programs of studies established by the Minister. Every such local program of studies must be submitted by the school board to the Minister for approval” (*Education Act, s 222.1*).

Also, the school board is expected to provide special services to its students: “[every] school board shall establish a program for each student service and special educational service contemplated in the basic school regulation except in matters coming under the jurisdiction of a minister other than the Minister of Education” (*Education Act, s 224*).

Montreal School Boards

In the new city of Montreal, that is on Montreal island, there are now five school districts each of which is headed by a school board. Three of the school districts include Public French schools and are headed by the Commission scolaire de Montréal, Commission scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys and Commission scolaire de la Pointe-de-l’Île respectively. The other two school districts include Public English schools and are headed by the English Montreal School Board and Lester-B. Pearson School Board respectively. Each school board has its own web site and provides a list of schools and their web sites (for a number of them) to help parents and students who are choosing a school.

Since information on school and program choice is not always available on the school's web site, there are alternative ways to find information, such as by consulting a school's publications, or by directly contacting the school's administration for further information. Some school boards also give further information on their schools and program choices in a "card-index" form, or within their annual reports.

In addition to the regular program prescribed by the Quebec Ministry of Education at pre-school, primary, or secondary levels, many schools offer alternative programs, such as an enriched or more intensive curriculum or other courses or special projects. Each school board must help students with special needs, as is prescribed by the *Education Act*.

As mentioned previously, Cégeps do not fall under a school board's jurisdiction. Rather Cégeps are governed by a separate, specific law and administered by a board of directors comprised of teachers, students, and community representatives. Cégeps are treated later in this document since they form part of a necessary path after secondary school for students who wish to pursue university studies, or for those who wish to join the workforce as technicians. (See Program Choice at Cégeps on page 26)

The Commission Scolaire de Montréal

The Commission scolaire de Montréal (CSDM) serves the largest number of students in Québec. The CSDM was created as a new francophone school board on July 1, 1998 by the *Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'instruction publique* (Law 109), which favors territorial division based on language rather than religion. The CSDM's mission is to organize and offer, within a given territory, quality educational services to students at pre-school, elementary and secondary levels as well vocational training and adult education. It also offers services to students with a handicap or students with learning or social integration disabilities in specific services establishments. Other than providing a range of services to its students, the CSDM may also organize the transport of students under its jurisdiction.

The CSDM offers a large range of educational and complementary services within a network of quality neighborhood schools. It also offers adapted services in its networks of dedicated schools and special schools. The CSDM's role is also to offer services to the community; the CSDM owns several buildings that shelter community organizations that work closely with it.

The CSDM comprises six geographical groupings which are responsible for the primary and secondary schools, and three other specific groupings dedicated to particular students: primary and secondary special schools (for handicapped students or students with learning or social integration disabilities), vocational training schools, and adult education centres.

The CSDM school population of 107,915 students is distributed among 131 primary schools, 7 primary and secondary schools, 31 secondary schools, 14 adult education centres, 9 vocational training schools and 28 school services places for students having particular problems (special schools, hospital centers, etc.). As for the general education for youngsters, the CSDM sums up to 77,010 students.

Enrollment criteria at the Commission Scolaire de Montréal

As for admission, the CSDM must respect the provisions contained in the Education Act, which specifies that it is up to the schools to decide the admission criteria. The schools must follow the ministry provisions which are based on the concept of neighborhood school as we saw earlier. The only exceptions apply to schools with a special project. Thus, the CSDM normally first grants its vacancies to students that reside on its territory. Admission priority is granted to members of a family who already have a member attending the school and registered for the next school year. Secondly, the school will enroll students that reside on the CSDM's territory and that provide a free choice admission request. Here again, admission priority is granted to the student's brothers and sisters that already attend that school and that have acquired resident status in Québec. A priority of admission is also granted to students already attending day care services at the CSDM.

Thirdly, the school may enroll a student that comes from another jurisdiction on the condition that he or she does not prevent another student residing on the CSDM's territory from attending the school or receiving services, and that this registration doesn't entail additional costs. Moreover, the student must have obtained permission from his/her original school board and that permission must be renewed every year.

Age is also a condition for admission; and is enforced according to the provincial law for the public sector. However, parents may counter the age rule if their child presents particular capacities. They must inform the school that they wish to make a request for derogation and hand in the psychological report attesting that their child would suffer from damages if he/she began school at the envisaged year. There exist a few pre-kindergarten schools (aimed at 4 years old students) located within poor areas.

Finally, for admission within another school board, a parent has to send a request by mail or fax that includes explanations for the change in school boards. This request will be accepted only in the case of particular humanitarian reasons or when the program wanted is not offered by the CSDM.

There are also instructions for immigrant students wishing to register at a CSDM school. The information is available on the web site or by contacting the school directly. It goes along with the ministerial policy stated previously.

Some schools will request an entry exam when available places are limited according to the special program they offer. That is the same for schools with a particular project (special vocation schools).

The Commission Scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys

The Commission Scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys (CSMB) includes 44,000 students of which 26,000 at the elementary level and 13,000 at the secondary level are distributed in 62 primary schools and 15 secondary schools. The CSMB territory is divided into three groupings covering 14 Montreal districts: *regroupement Nord*; *regroupement Ouest*; and *regroupement Sud*.

The CSMB territory (600 km²) is made up of both urban and semi-rural areas. Coming from nearly a hundred countries, CSMB students often speak two languages, sometimes three. Socio-economical realities are also polarized. The CSMB offers educational services corresponding to the needs of its students.

The CSMB was developed on July 1998 from the fusion of six school boards. By spring 2002, the CSMB revealed its institutional vision, the theme of which was *L'élève, au cœur de nos actions* (The student is at the heart of our actions). The theme contained three values: respect, equality and transparency.

Enrollment criteria at the Commission Scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys

Priority for admission to a regular school from the CSMB is given to students who reside within the CSMB's territory. The registration of a student in a school where educational services are required is determined by the following criteria, by order of priority:

- 1) the residence of the student is located in the territory's portion served by the school,
- 2) the student comes from another school's sector of the CSMB, and
- 3) the student comes from another school board.

Age for admission to pre-school (kindergarten) is 5 years old before October 1st. However, a handicapped student that is 4 years old before October 1st may be admitted to pre-school under certain conditions (determined by the pedagogical regime or the Ministry of Education). Age for admission to primary school is 6 years old before October 1st. Although every child has the obligation to attend school by the age of 6 (according to article 14 of the *Education Act*), a student may be exempt from attending school according to criteria from article 15 of the *Education Act*. Parents may also appeal for a derogation to age of admission according to actual rules at the school and at the school board. Forms for derogation to age of admission or exempt from attending school are available on the CSMB web site.

The CSMB may transfer students from one school to another if the number of registrations for a given class is superior to the functional capacity of the school in that class. The following order of preference is given to transfer students: a student coming from another school board; a student that voluntarily wants to register for another school where transport will be assured; a student coming from another school's sector of the CSMB; a student that can walk by foot to another school; and a student to whom transport services will be provided toward a new school. However, the CSMB must inform the student's parents that they have the right to come back to the original school the following year if there are vacancies available. Also, the CSMB cannot transfer a student more than one time during his/her primary or secondary schooling.

The parent may also ask for a transfer to school other than the one in his/her neighborhood. The parent's request may be accepted if: there are vacant places in the school; the school is giving educational services to which the student has a right. However, this right does not include transport services. The parent's request must be renewed every year and at the time of registration.

The criteria for admission to a special vocation school (with one or many particular project(s)) are established by article 240 of the *Education Act* and are under the school board's responsibility. When schools are established in virtue of article 468 of the *Education Act*, when they offer a unique particular program, or when they offer many particular programs in addition to the regular program, some schools will have specific requirements related to their pedagogical options or their specification. Because of the pedagogical features of these schools and of the limited number of students they can admit, the registrations may be submitted to a special committee in the school or to the CSMB. In relation to admission of a student to a specialized course, the school may require evidence that the student has the skills necessary to complete the course. Finally, priority will be given to students from the CSMB.

Students with a handicap or with learning and social integration disabilities may be grouped within specialized schools, classes or groups. Their admission must go according to Article 235 of the *Education Act*. For more information, see Students with special needs on page 28

The CSMB has also policies concerning home schooling or students that are endowed or exceptionally gifted. These measures detail the procedure to be undertaken for students to receive education at home, be admitted into a *programme enrichi* (enriched program), follow an education program adapted to the student's needs, and/or skip year(s) of schooling. The procedure for the endowed or exceptionally gifted student begins with the identification of the gifted student. Identification involves the collaboration of many individuals (parents, professionals, teachers, school's principal, the school board, the establishment council, etc.) who elaborate a plan of intervention according to the student's needs. As for home schooling, it is the parents' responsibility to request it for their children. The request will be studied by the school's principal and by the sector's principal. Forms for exemption of school attendance are available on the CSMB web site.

Commission Scolaire de la Pointe-de-l'Île

The Commission scolaire de la Pointe-de-l'Île (CSPI) is in charge of some of the urban Montreal sectors: Montréal-Est, Anjou, Saint-Léonard, Montréal-Nord, Pointe-aux-Trembles, and Rivière-des-Prairies. The CSPI has 42 primary schools, 8 secondary schools and 5 special schools (1 primary school; 3 secondary schools; and 1 school that offers pre-school, primary, and secondary). The CSPI also provides vocational training establishments. There are direct links to schools on the CSPI web site, though there is no information about school choice and program choice except on some schools' sites. There are no policy documents available on the CSPI web site, nor is there much information on CSPI.

Enrollment Criteria at the Commission Scolaire de la Pointe-de-l'Île

General admission information for the year 2003-2004 is available on the CSPI web site. For students that are already attending a school of the CSPI, the required documents and information will be given to each child by their school so that the parents will have access to the information. However, if parents wish to register their child in a school from another school board, an educational agreement has to be developed with the other school board. The information that parents need in order to develop the educational agreement is available in each school.

Children who are 5 years of age before October 1st must be registered if their parents wish them to attend pre-school (kindergarten). Children who are 6 years of age before October 1st must register in a school. According to the measures of support for schools located in some poor areas, children of certain districts in Montreal-North (St-Rémi school, Jules-Verne school, Adélarde-Desrosiers school, de la Fraternité school) who are 4 years of age before October 1st may be admitted to pre-kindergarten school.

There is also the possibility of obtaining an exemption from following the admissions' rulings on age. In exceptional cases, children under 5 years of age could be admitted to pre-school and children under 6 could be admitted to primary school. However, it must be proven that there would be serious damage to the child if the child did not begin school at the requested age. Damage to the child must be assessed by a psychological report paid for by the parents of the child. Parental requests must be formulated and given to the school's principal along with the psychological report before April 30, 2003.

Some schools (four primary schools of which one is alternative and another focuses on physical education) do not have territorial boundaries, and they have a limited number of places available for students.

English Montreal School Board

On July 1st, 1998 the English sectors of the former Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal, the Commission des Écoles Catholiques de Montréal (CECM), Commission scolaire Jérôme-Le-Royer, and the Commission scolaire Sainte-Croix were amalgamated to form the English Montreal School Board (EMSB). The EMSB is the largest English school board in the province of Québec. More than 38,000 students are served by 61 elementary and secondary schools, 7 outreach schools and 11 adult and vocational centres.

Enrollment Criteria at English Montreal School Board

First of all, in order to qualify for English instruction in Quebec Public Schools, students must meet certain eligibility criteria under the Charter of the French Language as set out by the Quebec government. The EMSB provides answers and guidelines on its web site to some questions and procedures that parents must undertake in order to determine if their child may obtain a certificate of eligibility. The application for a certificate of eligibility can be completed at the child's neighborhood school.

As for age for admission, children must be 4 years of age before September 30, for admission to Pre-kindergarten. Pre-kindergarten is offered in certain schools recognized by the MEQ (Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec) as inner city schools. For admission to Kindergarten, a child must be 5 years of age before September 30. Otherwise, parents may apply for derogation which is available on the EMSB web site (at www.emsb.qc.ca). For admission to Grade 1, a child must be 6 years of age before September 30. Otherwise, again, parents can apply for derogation.

On the EMSB web site there are three registration agents to contact for more information as well as contact addresses and a list of web sites links. The web site specifies that the school must be contacted directly for matters concerning: foreign students, students having a severe learning, physical or emotional disability; parents who are landed immigrants living in another province of Canada and coming to Quebec on a temporary work assignment or to study.

Lester-B. Pearson School Board

Going into its fifth year, the Lester B. Pearson School Board (LBPSB) includes 45 elementary, 15 secondary schools, 4 alternative learning centres, and 14 other specialized institutions.

Enrollment Criteria at Lester B. Pearson School Board

The LBPSB policy regarding enrollment criteria for the 2003-2004 school year establishes orders of priority for both elementary and secondary school levels. At the elementary level, students shall be registered in the following order of priority, according to the capacity of the school and the space available at each grade level:

- 1) Students currently attending from within the school's attendance zone.
- 2) Siblings of students currently attending from within the school's attendance zone.
- 3) Students residing within the designated walking distance of the school and within the school's attendance zone.
- 4) Students residing inside the school's transportation boundary.
- 5) Students residing inside the school's attendance zone, but outside of the transportation boundary.
- 6) Students currently attending from outside of the school's attendance zone.
- 7) Siblings of students currently attending from outside of the school's attendance zone.
- 8) Students residing outside of the school's attendance zone.
- 9) Students residing outside of the territory of the Board and currently attending the school.
- 10) Siblings of students residing outside of the territory of the Board and currently attending the school.
- 11) Students residing outside of the territory of the Board.

For secondary school, students are registered in the following order of priority:

- 1) Students currently attending the school from within the territory of the Board.
- 2) Students residing within the designated walking distance of the school.
- 3) Siblings of students currently attending from within the territory of the Board.
- 4) Students residing inside the territory of the Board.
- 5) Students currently attending from outside of the territory of the Board.
- 6) Siblings of students currently attending from outside of the territory of the Board.
- 7) Students residing outside of the territory of the school board.

It is important to note that within each of these categories, acceptance will be based upon a "first-come, first-served basis". Moreover, there is also an exception, in schools where magnet programs are in place, the entrance requirements of the magnet program take precedence.

International Schools

The international schools' objective is to awake an interest toward international humanism through the learning of other languages, initiation to media and the study of different cultures. The program offered corresponds to an enriched program from the regular prescribed programs by the Quebec Education Minister. The students are submitted to both the requirements of the ministry for the secondary diploma and the *Société des écoles d'éducation internationale* (SEEI). The international schools can be public or private. The international education schools fall under the authority of the Quebec Ministry of Education; the different school boards; the *Société des écoles d'éducation internationale du Canada* (SEEI); and the *Organisation du baccalauréat international*.

The international schools exist at primary, secondary and college level. The enrollment criteria for primary and secondary students are as follows: academics results higher than average; a good study methodology; good learning capacities; an open mind toward other cultures; and to succeed the mandatory selection exam (which consists of French, mathematics, and general intellectual capacities tests). In order to get admitted to college level international schools, the students must have academic results superior to the average.

The registering fees may vary from a school to another. The public international schools are free of charge. Also, it is not necessary to reside on the school's territory to be able to attend an international school. For further information on international schools or to find an international school in a specific location, we can address to the regional Quebec Ministry of Education office, to contact the SEEI (at secseei@csmv.qc.ca) or contact directly the school board.

Religion in Public Schools

The recent situation was as follows: The student or the students' parents could choose a course in Catholic religious instruction, Protestant religious education or moral education lasting two hours per week throughout the 11 years of elementary and secondary school. From the elementary level on to the first two years of secondary education, parents were the ones who could choose for their child. From cycle two at secondary level, the student could make that choice for himself or herself.

In elementary school, students had access to Catholic pastoral care and guidance services or Protestant religious care and guidance services (according to the school) funded entirely by the government. Moreover, some public schools had a specific project of a religious nature. In these schools, religious education, particularly Bible study, was integrated into all subjects.

Two committees, namely the Catholic and Protestant committees, had the power to make regulations concerning confessional education and the status of schools. Also, two associate deputy ministers at the Ministère de l'Éducation, one for the Catholic faith and one for the Protestant, were making sure that the management of the education system took into account the concerns of the Catholic and Protestant churches respectively.

Actually, all public schools now have a lay status rather than a confessional (religious) status. Since the proposed situation by the Ministère de l'Éducation on May 10, 2000, measures and legal provisions have been adopted to make effective the new government's orientations toward the place of religion within public schools. Overall, the number of hours and years of religious courses has been decreased and they replaced the cycle two at secondary level with a course in ethics and religious culture. Also, there is no more public schools with a specific project of a religious nature since public schools are no longer religious (confessional). Rather, the school's educational project, developed with the participation of parents, must convey the values of the milieu. This is in response to the growing number of students with a different cultural and religious background.

Program Choice

The Ministère de l'Éducation has also implemented a major reform of the curriculum aimed at reinforcing basic subjects, enhancing cultural literacy across all subjects and giving students a more active role in their own learning. (*An Overview*, p.9) The program, or the list of courses at preschool, elementary, and secondary levels and their description as stated by the government is available on the web.

The Regular Program According to the Ministerial Reform

Elementary education focuses on the basic subjects. Since the Program Reform, the programs at elementary level were to be implemented as follows. In Cycle One, the two first years of elementary school, students learn French or English as the instructional language. They also learn mathematics, music, physical education and health education. French is learned as a second language by Anglophones. In Cycle Two, i.e., third and fourth year of elementary school, students learn science and technology, history, geography and civic education. English is learned as a second language by Francophones.

The implementation of the reform at secondary level began in September 2001 with the following programs: history and civic education; sciences and technology; geography; English as second language and moral and religious education. In September 2002, the programs of French and English as languages of instruction, mathematics, music, physical education and health education as well as French as a second language were implemented. The program of Contemporary World supposes knowledge in history and geography, thus, it will be implemented by September 2004. However, economics will still be taught in grade 5.

Also, from Cycle Two, the student may choose between moral or religious education, or according to the school, between the local programs of oecumenic studies or ethical and religious culture studies.

Also, various vocational education programs leading to a trade are offered in Cycle Two (some of these programs start in the third year of secondary school). "Over 170 vocational education programs in 21 sectors allow young people and adults to earn a Diploma of Vocational Studies (DVS) and then, if they choose so, an Attestation of Vocational Specialization (AVS)." (*An Overview*, p.5) After Grade 3, students may also enroll in a program leading to an Attestation of Vocational Education (AVE) in order to prepare for a semi-skilled occupation.

The *Commission des programmes d'études* (CPE) is the body responsible for acting as a counselor and analyst of the programs of studies put into place by the government. It focuses especially on the elementary level but also on the secondary one. What it entails to observe and analyze are the education program structure, its disciplinary content, the learning evaluation tools, the interdisciplinary feature, suggestions for improvement by the TIC (Technologies d'Information et de Communication) and the conditions of implementing.

There are provincial (ministerial) examinations at preschool, primary and secondary. Next school year (2003-2004), the ministerial examinations will take place for the following subjects:

Examinations in French:

- French Reading for grade 6 (primary);
- French Writing grade 6 (primary);
- French Oral Communication (secondary 5);
- Oral Discourse Production in English (secondary 4);
- Oral Discourse Production in English (secondary 5);
- Laboratory exam in Physical Sciences 416 (secondary 4);
- French Writing (secondary 5);
- Written Discourse Production in English (secondary 4);
- Mathematics 436 (secondary 4);
- French Reading (secondary 5);
- History of Quebec and Canada (secondary);
- Physical Sciences 416 (secondary 4);
- Oral Discourse and Written Discourse Comprehension in English (secondary 4);
- Written Discourse Production in English (secondary 5);
- Oral Discourse and Written Discourse Comprehension in English (secondary 5);
- Mathematics 426 (secondary 4);
- Mathematics 514 (secondary 5).

Examinations in English:

- French Speaking;
- English Language Arts 516 (secondary 5);
- Local Lab. Exam in Physical Sciences 416 (secondary 4);
- English Language Arts (Elementary 6);
- English Language Arts 516 (secondary 5);
- French Reading;
- French Writing;
- French Listening;
- Mathematics 436 (secondary 4);
- History of Quebec and Canada;
- Physical Science 416 (secondary 4);
- Mathematics 426 (secondary 4);
- Mathematics 514 (secondary 5).

At college, there are either two language examinations in order to pursue studies at university level: Ministerial examination of College French or College English.

Other Programs

Other than the courses amended by the reform, there are other programs of studies that focus on arts or sports (the list of schools providing these are on the web). The *Arts-Études* program is divided into three parts according to the number of artistic disciplines it covers and the number of hours it dedicates to each of them. Projects that fall under type A are those aimed at training in a specific artistic discipline. Type B projects are the ones that cover various artistic disciplines and type C projects are those that favor interdisciplinary based on artistic education, though there is no school providing the latter at the moment.

Sports-études is another program that focuses on a specific sport activity. The main objective of a sport-études program is to allow athletes-students achieving sporting excellency to reconcile their sporting and school objectives. The notion of athletes-students achieving sporting excellency implies that these young students have gone beyond the level of initiation to a sport or that they only wish to allow more time to practise their favorite sport. To be able to participate in a recognized sport-études program, the problem to reconcile the academic success and the sport's demands have to be real. The admission conditions depend on each school and vary from one school to another. Therefore, the people interested in it must contact the school of their choice.

There is also a lot of information concerning program choice for college and vocational studies. This demonstrates the government's preoccupation towards the market demand.

School and Program Choice at the Commission Scolaire de Montréal

There are a variety of choices available to students and students' parents for pre-school and elementary levels in the CSDM. Every school belongs to a geographical grouping according to its territory or its type of school (see special schools on the next page). Also, most of the schools covered by the CSDM has a descriptive "card-index" form on the school board's web site that allows parents to find out about the type of school and the programs offered for each. There are many different types of schools including regular, alternative, artistic vocation, *douance* (particular vocation school), international, musical and schools for deaf children. Programs include intensive English, international education and of course, the regular program that is prescribed by the government's reform.

At the secondary level of education, schools may be regular, alternative, artistic, focus on international education, orientation and tutorial, or focus on a more intensive level than the regular program that is called *programme enrichi* (enriched program). Program choices and course options vary as follows: sciences concentration; English immersion; multimedia concentration; *sports-études*; *arts plastiques-études* (visual arts); *danse-études*; international concentration; more intensive courses and pedagogy by projects; performing groups and optional courses; international education; drama; music; sector for deaf students; options in arts; classic guitar; *cheminement particulier* (for special needs students); and P.A.S. program (adapted program). There are other options such as schools only for girls and classes that are provided during days or evenings.

There are 14 vocational centers at CSDM offering either Airspace labors, Gardening, Computer Science, Marketing and Management, Digital Layout, Furniture Finishing, etc.

School and Program Choice at the Commission Scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys

Since the CSMB schools' web sites are not very clear about the programs available, the CSMB provides an annual report (2001-2002) in which each school is presented briefly with a short profile and the latest news in terms of accomplishments and activities. School profiles consist of presenting how many students are accommodated and which levels of education are provided. For each school, districts in which students reside are mentioned. Also mentioned is the proportion of students who come from another ethnic or cultural background, as well as their mother tongues. In many cases, the schools put their energy into "welcoming" classes to help students to adapt to their new country and society. French language courses (as second language) and French language improvement (*classe d'accueil* and *francisation*) courses may also be held.

As well, for some schools the educational project and some of the programs that they focus on are mentioned in their profile. In addition to the regular program that is monitored by the Quebec Ministry of Education (which emphasizes the basic subjects), some of these programs include a concentration in French, mathematics, music, computer sciences, citizenship education, ecology, international education (at the secondary level, which is affiliated with *Organisation du baccalauréat international (OBI)*, and with *Société des écoles d'éducation internationale (SÉÉI)*), *cheminement particulier* (for students with special needs at the secondary level), *formation temporaire et continue* (at the secondary level), and/or intercultural education. Mainly, schools seem to be focusing on *classe d'accueil* and *francisation* as well as social life matters such as *gestion de conflit* (how to manage conflicts) and *code de conduite* (behavioral conduct).

What may also help parents and students in making their choice is the information on the accomplishments and activities that are going on in each school. These activities comprise projects that are integrated into the educational program as well as extra-curricular activities that may be constructed in partnership with parents and community.

The vocational programs offered at CSMB are numerous; it goes from Hairdressing to accounting, Computer Assisted Drafting to Automobile Mechanics, Computer Science to welding, Tourism and Telemarketing, etc.

School and Program Choice at the Commission Scolaire de la Pointe-de-l'Île

Although there is not much information about school and program choice, the CSPI web site provides information on schools with one or many particular project(s). There are 15 schools that offer a particular approach and project. These schools are either regular or alternative and have at least one particular project. There are three schools at the primary level of education and 12 schools at the secondary level of education. Projects or programs at the primary level include, for example, a concentration in physical education or international education, and an intensive English language program for Grade 6 students. At the secondary level of education, students can choose from an international school (OBI) with a concentration in arts (visual and music); science, or sports. In addition, the main subject of concentration can be combined with either a

mathematics-sciences profile, a social sciences-media (communications) profile, or an arts-computer graphics profile, including arts, drama, journalism, the ARTEC program (arts and communication combined with sciences and technology), *sports-études*; *langue-étude*; or an enriched program.

For these schools and programs, students must have good academic grades and must undergo an entry exam prior to admission.

At CSPI, the vocational centers offer many different programs as Accounting, Marketing, Secretarial studies, Computer Assisted Drafting, Automobile Mechanics, Security Guardian, Hairdressing, Aesthetics, Electro-mechanics, welding, and more.

School and Program Choice at the English Montreal School Board

There is a short description the programs available on a “card-index” form for each school under the EMSB jurisdiction. The card-index makes it easy for parents and students to identify the philosophy (educational project) as well as the programs offered in each for elementary and secondary school. Moreover, events and activities as well as services and resources available and parental participation are provided to help identify what each school can offer to its students. Types of schools include regular, alternative or special schools.

Such programs are on a large scale at the primary level, including : English or French immersion (or both); the Special Education program; Religious programs (either Catholic/Protestant education or Moral education); music; science; physical education; programs dealing with study skills (enrichment program) that address negative behavior and support positive behavior; the Information Technology Literacy program; English Language Arts programs; the Défi-Challenging Math program; the After-School program (activities like arts and craft, a variety of sports and homework supervision); the English Alternative program (Mini-Step, French Aid, Music and Quest Enrichment); the “Quest” Enrichment program (which focuses on Geography); the Fine arts program (which includes drama, visual arts, instrumental and vocal music); the Language Arts program; the “Success For All” program (enriches student learning in reading, writing and the language arts); Individualized Educational Plans; the Interactive Mathematics program; the Partial Immersion program for French and a creative English Language Arts program; the cross-curricular music program (students are exposed to music from other cultures, as well as their own, while learning the fundamentals of music theory and instrumentation); the Heritage Language program (Italian geography, history, holidays and customs); Computer science programs; the Bilingual Program PELO (Italian); the Special Education Music Program; Special Education Autistic classes; the Mathematics Tutorial Program; the PELO Program (Italian classes are integrated into the regular schedule); enriched math and science programs; Jewish Heritage Studies; the Renzulli Enrichment Model (school-wide enrichment activities); the PROBE program (enables students to work on individual projects); French Language Arts programs; the remediation program (to help reduce class sizes); the Music/Choir program; Music (Guitar) and Dance programs; the Kindergarten Special Education program in conjunction with the Montreal Children’s Hospital; and more.

At the secondary level of education, program choice includes: Advanced drama, visual arts, and instrumental and vocal music programs; Advanced Science programs; Business Education complementary courses (Ministry-funded program emphasizing computer use in the classroom); French and English Immersion; Intensive Mathematics; Fine Arts programs (music, art and dance); Vocational programs (such as building maintenance, food services, early childhood education, special care, woodwork and hairdressing linked to stages in the community); International Program of Studies; Special Education programs; the Alabama Science Program (focusing on a hands-on approach to Science); First Steps Literacy Resources (focusing on reading and writing, behaviors, attitudes, and development); the Recuperation/tutorial program; Advanced computer applications; Career exploration and CEGEP orientation activities; Enriched English, Math and Science programs; the Media Education Department (with television and photography studios); the International Baccalaureate Program; Enriched programs in French and Physical Sciences; the Physics and Chemistry Bilingual Certificate; the *Sports-Études* Program; the *Français Langue Maternelle* Program; North American Literature; the Third Language Option; World History; the Post French Immersion program; College Math; the Individual project option; the “Compute ‘n Compose” program (a unique music concentration program including music performances, concerts and competitions); Choral and Chamber Music; Calculus Math; Leadership Credit Courses; Tutorial programs; French Mother Tongue and Immersion leading to the Bilingual Certificate; the Vocational Diploma Life and Work Skills Program; the School Honour Society Transition Program (for students unable to meet the requirements of either the regular Secondary School Diploma or the Vocational Diploma); the Psycho-educational program (for students with behavioral difficulties as classified by the MEQ); the Modified program (alternative to the regular program for students that have experienced difficulties in elementary school); Innovation courses (helping students at secondary I level to develop organizational and study skills and good note taking techniques); Sports Leadership and more.

For vocational studies in its different vocational centers, the EMSB offers: Secretarial Studies, Accounting, Professional Sales, Secretarial Studies-Legal, Bilingual Hotel Receptionist, Automated Accounting and Finance, Travel Sales, Computing Support, Aesthetics, Electrolysis, Automobile Mechanics, Hairdressing, Computer Graphics, Automated Systems, Electromechanics, Computer Assisted Drafting, Digital Layout and Printing, Cabinetmaking, Furniture Finishing, Machining Techniques, Industrial Machines, Telecommunications, Starting a Business, Restaurant Services, Professional Cooking, and Contemporary Cuisine.

School and Program Choice at the Lester B. Pearson School Board

The schools under the LBPSB are divided into 4 “sectors.” Sectors 1 to 3 are comprised of elementary schools and Sector 4 represents the secondary schools. The sectors also take into consideration the schools’ geographical location. Most of the schools have direct links to their web sites. The school can be contacted directly or in many cases the school web site can be searched to obtain more information about programs that are offered at each school. Some of the mentioned programs include English and French immersion, Arts, and music.

As for vocational studies, the programs offered include administration, Food and Tourism, Automobile, Interior Decorating and Display Drafting, Health, and Beauty Care.

Program Choice at Cégeps

The general education program

Since 1994-1995, for all the programs leading to the Diploma of College Studies (D.C.S.), general education is comprised of three components:

- the general education program common to all the programs, comprising three courses of taught language (French or English) and literature, one course of second language, two philosophy courses and three physical education courses;
- the general education program suitable to the chosen program of studies, comprising one taught language and literature course, one second language course and one philosophy course; and
- the general complementary education, comprising two courses in other fields of studies and the courses of the chosen program.

The pre-university program of education

In addition to the courses of the general education program, the pre-university program includes specific courses suitable to the chosen program of studies. In science, this specialized component is comprised of 32 units of course work; in social sciences the specialized component is comprised of 30 units; and in arts, music, visual arts, literature, and speech sciences the specialized component is comprised of 24 units (28 in 1996-1997). One unit corresponds to 45 hours of learning activities, including courses, practical work and personal work. There are generally two units per course, however, sometimes there are more or less.

There are up to 8 general pre-university programs sectors, 15 combined general pre-university programs sectors, as well as the International Baccalaureate program.

The general pre-university sectors of programs include:

- Sciences,
- Social sciences,
- Creative arts, languages and literature,
- Music,
- Dance,
- Visual Arts,
- History and Civilization, and
- Science, creative arts, languages and literature.

The technical program of education

In addition to the general education program, the program of technical education includes specific courses suitable to the chosen program. The program of technical education is comprised of 45 to 65 units of course work. The technical program of education include 15 to 30 units of specialized course work.

In certain cases, the program of technical education is divided into modules (e.g. three), that can be completed on a successive or an independent basis. Success in each module is determined by the individual college offering the program.

The technical education program general sectors include the following:

- Management, commerce and computer science,
- Agriculture and fishing,
- Food and tourism,
- Arts,
- Wood and related materials,
- Chemistry and biology,
- Building and urban maintenance,
- Environment and territory planning,
- Electro-technique,
- Motorized equipment maintenance,
- Mechanical manufacture,
- Forestry and paper,
- Communication and documentation,
- Mechanical maintenance,
- Mines,
- Metallurgy,
- Transport,
- Leather, textile and clothing,
- Health, and
- Social services, educational services and legal services.

Students with Special Needs

Ministerial Policies and measures

According to the Education Act, “[every] school board shall, subject to sections 222 and 222.1, adapt the educational services provided to a handicapped student or a student with a social maladjustment or a learning disability according to the student's needs and in keeping with the student's abilities as evaluated by the school board according to the procedures prescribed under subparagraph 1 of the second paragraph of section 235” (*Education Act, s 234*).

Thus, “[every] school board shall adopt, after consultation with the advisory committee on services for handicapped students and students with social integration or learning disabilities, a policy concerning the organization of educational services for such students to ensure the harmonious integration of each such student into a regular class or group and into school activities if it has been established on the basis of the evaluation of the student's abilities and needs that such integration would facilitate the student's learning and social integration and would not impose an excessive constraint or significantly undermine the rights of the other students” (*Education Act, s 235*). Furthermore, it is the school director's responsibility to ensure that these services are provided fully and adequately according to each student's needs (*Education Act, s 96.14*).

A new policy, entitled *Une école adaptée à tous ses élèves* (A school adapted to every of its students), insists on the necessity to act as soon as student difficulties have been demonstrated and to adapt the services to the student's needs.

According to this new policy, the government's plan of action is as follows:

- 1) Reduce the number of students at preschool and first cycle at elementary; also add 1,978 teachers' positions (\$100,5 M).
- 2) Add 860 professional and pedagogical support personnel (\$36,5 M).
- 3) Improve the access to information and communication technologies for handicapped students (\$3,3 M).
- 4) Improve the financial assistance program for the integration of handicapped students into ordinary classes (\$4 M).
- 5) Establish regional services of support and expertise to help schools personnel to organize and provide services to students with learning and behavioral difficulties (\$1,8 M).
- 6) Research development on priorities such as the collaboration between the school, the family, and the community on academic success issues and interventions to be able respond the best to the students with possible upcoming difficulties (\$1 M).
- 7) Propose measures to pursue the continuous progress and recognize the learning of disabled students.
- 8) Propose approaches to improve reading.
- 9) Propose means to support the personnel in their interventions with the students with or without hyperactivity.
- 10) Improve access to the various types of education, such as the vocational training (vocational studies).
- 11) Decrease the difficulties experienced by management in relation to the nominal declaration of students, by reviewing the definitions and reducing categories of students declared.
- 12) Define a communication link between the Ministère de l'Éducation and the Ministère de la Santé et des Services Sociaux to help develop concerted actions.
- 13) Promote agreements between the school boards, the municipalities, and other organizations to help youngsters have access to educational, sporting and cultural activities.
- 14) Develop indicators to facilitate the evaluation of student progress as well as the provision of services offered.
- 15) Define an evaluation protocol in policy concerning school adaptation.
- 16) Decrease the number of students per class.

Source: Communiqué at www.meq.gouv.qc.ca/cpress/cprss2001/c010503.htm

The DASSC (Direction de l'adaptation scolaire et des services complémentaires) is responsible for following the school adaptations for handicapped students or students with learning disabilities at preschool, elementary and secondary levels. There is also a program only at secondary level called "Cheminement particulier" that is geared to students who have social adaptation and learning disabilities, and remain a year behind in their first language and in mathematics education.

Students with special needs at the Commission Scolaire de Montréal

At the CSDM, schools offer aid measures and specialized services to students having learning and social disabilities:

- Pedagogical or professional support in class for the student,
- Resource-class at the neighborhood school for auxiliary services (?), and
- Specialized classes in a regular school.

As for students identified as gifted, the CSDM' schools offer enriched programs. For students presenting a more serious dysfunction such as behavioral problems, physical deficiency, sensorial deficiency, intellectual deficiency, or severe development problems three other options may be taken into account:

- special school,
- home schooling, or
- pedagogical services offered in institutions (Youth centres, hospitals or others).

The special schools are identified under the grouping number 7 (*Regroupement 7*). These schools are aimed at either students with severe behavioral problems, hospitalized students, or handicapped students. There are also special schools for "dropping and coming back" students (12 to 18 years old) and young mothers (12 to 18 years old).

When a school has exhausted all its resources and the ones of its grouping (*Regroupement*) and the school is still not able to meet the growing needs of the student, a special school may be required. Parents or the school board may appeal for the services of a social, medical, or pedagogical professional at the direction of their sector. Together, they analyze the student's file and point out the possible professional care to support the student in his learning (*rapport SE-C-263: Révision des procédures de référence et de révision de classement des EHDAA, conseil pédagogique du 13 novembre 1991*).

By the time the choice is made of one of the options, with the approbation of the sector's and the school's direction, the pedagogical advisor, the parents, or the social or medical professional address themselves to one of the schools within *Regroupement 7*. The student's file, adequately documented, is sent according to the case, to a school admission committee or a central committee of reference to review the case. In the case of a refusal, the different committees must justify their decision. The school that admits a student must follow him/her and respond to any needs that arise during the stay at this special school. After attending a school from *Regroupement 7*, the student is reoriented, if possible, towards his neighborhood school or to another school that will respond to his needs.

At all times, the CSDM schools, by the mediation of their pedagogical advisor or any other professional designated by a recognized organization at the CSDM, may submit files for evaluation. However, it is preferable to submit the files during the annual period reserved for administrative matters (February-March).

Some CSDM' special schools (for students with special needs) also serve students coming from other school boards.

Students with special needs at the Commission Scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys

There are also a number of schools that focus on students with special needs or that are integrated into regular classes or into sectors or groups. Some of the special schools have open boundaries such as *John-F. Kennedy school* which enrolls students aged 4 to 21 who come from eight other school boards on the outskirts of Montreal area. John-F. Kennedy also has satellite classes in four other schools.

The CSMB has policies regarding students with special needs that are mostly based on provincial laws contained in the *Education Act*.

Students with special needs at the Commission Scolaire de la Pointe-de-l'Île

As mentioned earlier, there are 5 special schools (1 primary school, 3 secondary schools and 1 school that offers Pre-school, primary and secondary) for students with special needs that regular schools wouldn't meet.

Students with special needs at the English Montreal School Board

In addition to the Special Education programs mentioned previously, there are a number of special education services offered to students. It is the Student Services Department that is responsible for the coordination of the EMSB' special education programs. Coordination of the special education programs involves the following components:

- 1) Case conferences.
 - Discussion and identification of appropriate services for students.
 - Development of the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
- 2) Complementary Datas
 - Annual updating of students' difficulty codes.
 - Submission to the MEQ for validation.
- 3) Coordination between regular schools and Social Affairs schools.
 - Hospitals e.g., Victoria High
 - Reception centers e.g., Cité des Prairies
 - Rehabilitation centers e.g., Mackay Center
- 4) Staffing of special education classes and allocation of human resources in collaboration with the Human Resources Department.

- 5) Organization of appropriate service delivery models in all schools - see Annex 1 - "The Cascade System of Educational Services."
- 6) The Cascade System of Educational Services is the preferred model for the schools of the EMSB. The model of educational services is an adaptation of the one presented by B.R.Gearheart in *Organization and Administration of Educational Programs for Exceptional Children* (Thomas, 1974, p. 242). The modification that took place was the addition of level 5, that is, the student attends a self-contained class and is partially integrated into a regular class in a regular school.
- 7) Academic planning, adaptation of curriculum, and development of a variety of teaching strategies for special needs students in collaboration with Pedagogical Services.
- 8) Organization of staff training workshops (e.g.s, administrators, teachers, child care workers).
- 9) Implementation of the Education Act.
 - Ministry of Education Special Education Policy.
 - English Montreal School Board Special Education Policy.
 - Special Education Advisory Committee (ACSES) .
- 10) Allocation and coordination of support personnel:
 - Child care workers
 - ISPJ workers
 - Oral interpreters
 - EMSB itinerant teachers
- 11) Special Education Committee (EMSB)
- 12) Agreements
 - Other schools outside of the network (e.g., Summit , Peter Hall).
 - Inter-board agreements.

There are also other services available for students and students' parents such as the following:

1. Derogations

Processing of parent requests for students who are considered candidates for early Kindergarten or Grade 1 entry.

2. Form K (Bill 101 exemptions)

Processing of parent requests for students who may be exempt from compulsory French language instruction because they have been identified as having specific learning disabilities and/or severe emotional/social problems and/or intellectual/physical/sensorial handicaps.

3. Traumatic Events Support Team (T.E.S.T.)

Services Trauma Team: Psychologists, guidance counselors, social workers, ethnocultural community school workers, pastoral animators, etc..

Services: Provides support to a school in crisis, develops a resource network, conducts follow-ups, develops resource materials.

4. Project Harbour

A school-based intervention team created to assist and train teachers, administrators and support personnel in coping with students exhibiting disruptive behaviors.

5. Homebound Tutoring

A service provided for students who are awaiting placement in an EMSB school or other setting.

6. Second Start Program

A program, housed in the St-Raphael's Centre, that is offered to students (10-12 year olds) exhibiting severe disruptive behavior and social maladjustment.

7. Identification of at-risk students / recommendations for services.

This service comprises the identification of secondary students with behavioral problems and provides recommendations for appropriate services.

Special Education Programs are integrated into regular schools. The goal is to integrate and support students with special needs in regular classrooms. Finally, there are special schools, such as Paul IV alternative high school, that welcome students from 13 to 21 years of age who come from various school boards and who have been diagnosed with learning difficulties. Paul IV alternative high school offers Individual Paths for Learning (IPL) for students in the following categories: Moderately Intellectually Handicapped, Mildly Intellectually Handicapped, Severely Learning Disabled, and Multiple Handicapped.

Students with special needs at the Lester B. Pearson School Board

Students with special needs will normally attend their community school. According to the "Policy for the Organization of Educational Services For Handicapped Students With Social Maladjustments or Learning Disabilities," within that school students with special needs attend regular classes, and receive support services as indicated in their individualized education plans. The plans include the goals, methods, support services, and provisions for periodical evaluation. "In exceptional circumstances and in accordance with the provisions of Article 235 of the *Education Act* where the special needs of a student are such that they cannot be met within the regular school setting, the Lester B. Pearson School Board will consider an alternative placement in keeping with the individual needs and abilities of the student, as evaluated. This alternative placement will be considered in consultation with the parents/guardians and the student where appropriate" (Special Needs Policy, Lester B. Pearson School Board). However, there do not appear to be any special schools.

Transportation

The government does not oblige a school to provide student transportation, nor that it has to be free: “A school board may, with the authorization of the Minister, provide transportation for all or part of its students.” (Article 291) “Student transportation provided by a school board before the beginning of classes and after the end of classes each day is free of charge. Where the transportation is provided under a contract with a public transit authority or with the holder of a bus transport permit, within the meaning of government regulation, the school board may claim from a student that portion of the cost of the transportation pass which corresponds to service in addition to service before the beginning of classes and after the end of classes each day.” (*Education Act, s 292*)

So costs may vary depending on the school board and if the student require transportation during lunch time. This variable is an important one to consider in the choice to attend a school. However, transport is normally free at primary.

Transportation at the Commission Scolaire de Montréal

School transport services are offered to students that reside within the CSDM’s territory. In order to have access to transport services, the student must attend a school designated by the CSDM and must be defined within a territory. The right to the free choice of a school does not allow the student to receive transport services nor to benefit from a vacant place.

Other general conditions that limit the right to have access to busing are as follows: the student must live within the school territorial boundaries; and must reside at a significant distance from the school which varies according to age. Transport is free at primary.

Transportation at the Commission Scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys

The student registered in Pre-school that lives farther than 0.8 km from the school, as determined by the school board, has the right to transport services. At the primary level of education, the student that lives farther than 1.6 km from his designated school has the right to transport services, or he/she may use public transport. At the secondary level of education, the prescribed limit is 2.4 km to be eligible to receive transport services or use public transportation. However, due to handicap or for health reasons, the student may have the right to transport services provided by the school independent of the distance that separates him/her from school.

The fees related to transportation can be refunded partially or totally to parents; it is the CSMB who determines that proportion annually. However, the refund is for 100% for a student attending primary school.

Furthermore, a courtesy transport service exists for students that do not have the right to have access to transportation (morning and night); this service exists only when there are places available. The cost of the courtesy transport service is established annually by each school, and may be reduced or cancelled at any time according to the changing number of students that have the right to regular transportation services and places available.

Transportation at the Commission Scolaire de la Pointe-de-l'Île

The only information about transport services for students of the CSPI is as follows: students eligible to receive transport services receive a notice specifying the bus number and schedule at the beginning of the school year. Students are eligible for transportation services if: the student lives 0.7 km or more from the school for Pre-school; 1.2 km or more for the first three years of primary school; and 1.5 km or more for Grades 4, 5, and 6 in primary school. There is no mention of fees.

Transportation at the English Montreal School Board

The following eligibility criteria apply to students residing in the territory under the EMSB jurisdiction and who are registered in and attending schools administered by the School Board. For Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten students residing more than 0.6 km from the closest school offering the program of their choice are eligible for bussing. Elementary students (Grades 1 to 6) residing more than 1.4 km from the school closest to their residence offering the program of their choice are also eligible for bussing. Students with physical or sensory handicaps and special education students are transported according to the recommendations from the Student Services Department. Also, particular health conditions may justify access to bussing. For such cases, a medical report must be sent to and approved by the Student Services Department.

Students who do not meet the eligibility criteria may be accommodated if there remain additional available seats on the bus. Accommodation bussing may be reduced or cancelled at any time. In exceptional cases where the safety of children is concerned, accommodation bussing may be made available.

Transportation at the Lester B. Pearson School Board

The policy regarding eligibility for transportation services is in relation to distance between home and school: Kindergarten students must be more than 0.8 km from the school; elementary students must be more than 1.6 km from the school; and secondary students must be more than 2.4 km from the school. According to this policy, secondary students who use either bussing or public transportation may apply for reimbursement of the cost. It is the LBPSB Board that establishes percentage, terms, and conditions of the reimbursement to parents. In addition, students with physical or sensory handicaps having submitted a medical certificate satisfactory to the LBPSB Board are eligible for transportation. Health conditions may also justify access to bussing, no matter what the distance is from school.

During the 2000-2001 school year, over 13,000 students (equivalent to 48% of the total student enrolment) were transported by the LBPSB to 45 elementary, 15 secondary schools, 4 alternative learning centres and 14 other specialized institutions in the Greater Montreal area. In addition, almost 900 students were offered seats in the Courtesy Bussing Program. Nearly 600 students were also bussed home for lunch, a service fully paid for by parents who request it.

Again this school year, representation was made to the Ministry of Education to increase the level of funding supplied to LBPSB to better reflect the costs that were associated with the operation of the transportation services.

Home Schooling

Home schooling is considered a special service: *aide à l'intégration scolaire et sociale, enseignement à domicile ou en milieu hospitalier, orthopédagogie*. However, there is not much information on Home Schooling other than in the Education Act. The following students are exempt from compulsory school attendance: “1) a student excused by the school board by reason of illness or for the purpose of receiving medical treatment or care required by his state of health; 2) a student excused by the school board, at the request of his parents and after consultation with the advisory committee on services for handicapped students and students with social integration or learning disabilities established under section 185, by reason of a physical or mental handicap which prevents him from attending school; 3) a student expelled from school by the school board pursuant to section 242; 4) a student who receives home schooling and benefits from an educational experience which, according to an evaluation made by or for the school board, are equivalent to what is provided at school” (*Education Act, s 15*).

There exists an Association called the Quebec Association Home Based Education on the web at www.aqed.qc.ca where parents can become members and have access to a whole range of information and support for the education of their child or children. There are discussion groups, brochures, suggestions on didactic resources, info about how to obtain diplomas, hints and support for children with special needs, a list of other related links throughout the world (mostly in France), answers to frequently asked questions, etc. However, most of the information is in French.

There is also a service of correspondence or virtual education offered to all Quebec residents at vocational, college and university level. Students must be 16 years old in order to be eligible to receive this type of education. So for vocational studies, college and university education there is a central body called SOFAD (Société de formation à distance des commissions scolaires du Québec) which produces didactical material and offers it to all school boards and educational establishments which wish to use them. There are only some school boards which offer correspondence education for vocational studies. In Montreal, it is the CSPI and CSDM. As for college studies, it is the Cégep@distance (created in 1991 following an agreement between the Quebec Education Ministry and the Collège de Rosemont) which is in charge of correspondence education.

Accountability

Parents' participation

The school board structure offers several possibilities to parents to share their point of view regarding many issues. Also, the parents' representatives are invited annually to participate in the commissioners council, the parents' committee, the committee concerning the handicapped students or with social adaptation and learning disabilities, as well as the governing board of the school that their child is attending. They may also create an organism of parents' participation.

The latest changes into the Education Act allow the governing board to give more power and autonomy to schools. Its main functions are related to the educational orientations of the school, to tutorial and extra-school services. Parents and personnel members have an equal number of positions in this board and the person that is designated president is chosen among parents' representatives.

The parents' committee is invited to elect two commissioners-parents to participate to the works done by the commissioners council, i.e. a representative at elementary and another at secondary. These commissioners-parents have the same rights, powers and obligations as the other commissioners, though they don't have the right to vote at the council.

New provisions to measure accountability based on a success plan

The law no. 124, law modifying the Education Act, modifies the way the school boards work. This new law intends to analyze the situation at the school based on the educational project that the school has given itself; in other words, if the educational project has been successful or not. Since the new provisions state that the educational project of a school must be implemented by means of a success plan, that is the implementation of the aims and objectives of the educational project which will then be submitted to the governing board, this evaluation exercise will ensure the school's ongoing adaptation and improvement.

The school and the school board are obliged to develop a strategic plan in order to provide information and accountability to the population. Thus, the educational project and the success plan will have to be made public. The evaluation of the implementation of the success plan will be the subject of an annual report. In addition, a clear and accessible document explaining the educational project and reporting on the evaluation of the implementation of the success plan will be distributed to the parents and the school staff.

The strategic planning exercise presupposes consultation of interested parties. The Act identifies two parties by name: the parents' committee (s. 193, para. 1.1) and the principal of a school or educational centre (ss 96.25, 110.13 and 183). So, the parents' committee will be consulted about the school board's strategic plan, while the principal of the school or centre will participate in its development within the framework of the advisory committee or management. That does not exclude the possibility of consulting parents, students and teachers.

How School Choice Information is made available to the population

There are many ways to get information about school choice and program choice in Québec. First, parents and students may consult the Quebec Education Ministry web site where there is a lot of information on educational matters as well as lists of schools and school boards addresses and web sites by region. There is a special search engine that people can use in order to find schools with specific criteria (e.g., in which city, public or private, school or school board, language, school level, etc.).

Other than that, there is the annual school brochure provided by the school as well as the annual school board's report explaining the range of choice among its schools at preschool, primary, secondary and vocational level.

Government's funding

The school boards get their funding from two main sources. The first one consists of government's funding of which it sums up to approximately 84,5 % of the total budget. The second one, the school tax, accounts for about 15,5 % of their budget.

The facts are that the school boards don't have much space left in their management. Nearly 80 % of their budget goes to personnel members salaries. Moreover, the government has settled a limit for school taxation; so the solution has been to give more autonomy to school and school boards as it is mentioned in the Act.

Although school boards have more freedom in their management, they still have to follow specific guidelines as follows: "[every] school board shall allocate among its schools, vocational training centers and adult education centers, in an equitable manner and in consideration of social and economic disparities and of the needs expressed by the institutions, the operating subsidies granted by the Minister, including equalization grants, if any, school tax proceeds and income derived from the investment of all or part of those proceeds, reserving the amount determined by the school board to be necessary for its own needs and the needs of its committees." (Education Act, Article 275)

There are some private schools that receive funding from the government. Also, both private and public schools are required to provide an annual financial report. But it seems that English Private schools which do not receive any funding from the government are not required to ask an eligibility certificate to their students.

Public school boards were to receive 15 millions of dollars for the school year 1999-2000 in order to decrease the amount of fees asked to parents as for the required material and several services provided to students; the funding was to depend on the new socio-economical school map. Some investigations are undergoing in order to evaluate the impact of such financial aid measure and to get the picture of what is the actual amount asked to parents to contribute. A study shows that at the elementary level, the fees vary between 42\$ to 98\$ per student, and from 81\$ to 149\$ per student for secondary level. These fees comprise notebooks, photocopies, other type of material (locker, id card, picture, etc.), educational activities and other fees (didactic material for the teaching of education programs like painting, flute, wood for introduction to technology, food or textile for Family economics, dictionaries, grammars, novels, etc.). Other fees add to that as, for example, transportation and surveillance during lunch time.

Parents and parents with a handicapped child may receive funding from the government; this funding depends on the MFE (Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance) and not on the MEQ. However, this is intended to low-income families only.

Finally, no vouchers are available at the moment. Only some discussions on the matter are conducted, but nothing that seems official until now.

Government's orientations as regards to Education

As we said previously, the Québec government amended the *Education Act* in order to give more power and autonomy to elementary and secondary schools, in particular by creating governing boards. "These boards, consisting of an equal number of parents and school staff, are now key partners of school administrators, which now have more power to make decisions with regard to pedagogical and budgetary issues." (An Overview, p.9)

The Ministère de l'Éducation has also implemented a major reform of the curriculum aimed at reinforcing basic subjects, enhancing cultural literacy across all subjects and giving students a more active role in their own learning. (An Overview, p.9)

In this reform, seven major lines of action were defined:

1.	Providing services for young children
2.	Teaching the essential subjects
3.	Giving more autonomy to schools
4.	Supporting Montréal schools (schools in Montréal's low-income areas)
5.	Intensifying the reform of vocational and technical education
6.	Consolidating and rationalizing post-secondary education
7.	Providing better access to continuing education

Source: Reform

The Ministère de l'Éducation has also introduced a mechanism for strategic planning throughout the education system to improve the quality of schools and promote academic success for the greater number of students. Such mechanism consists of analyzing the measures and policies that were implemented in order to evaluate the results of such measures. An example of this is the Supporting Montréal Schools program for the 1998-1999 school year where four of six measures were analyzed: Pedagogical practices; Cooperation between schools, families and communities; Access to cultural resources; and Professional development for school administrators and school teams. Overall, the results were pretty positive since "[the] flexibility of the program enabled schools to adapt their projects to the needs of students from disadvantaged neighborhoods, who often experience learning problems related to their origin, their social context or difficulties in their family setting. The schools showed initiative by enlisting the external expertise needed to carry out projects or by building partnerships ties that promote the students' educational growth." (Compulsory Measures, p.6)

Other measures are put into consideration. For instance, plans of action are drawn for the integration in school of arriving students from other countries and intercultural education as well as for students with learning disabilities. Although these programs are still at a starting level, they try to improve the actual education system for all students and provide solutions to new issues that Québec encounter. This is also the case for the place of religion within the public schools.

Conclusion

Overall, the recurring issue in each school and school board is the implementation of the regular program monitored by the provincial reform. However, it is up to the schools to determine their educational project, their success plan (based on the objectives of the educational project) and to evaluate it. It is the school which decides if it will offer one or many particular programs, that is, if the whole school will have a particular status (special vocation status) or just one or a few particular programs in addition to the regular program.

There are a wide selection of choices when it comes to cégeps and vocational training, since the government is concerned about preparing more people for the workforce. However, at cégep and vocational training levels, academic results will also be an important factor for admission, since many programs can have fixed quotas according to the number of places available each year.

In many cases, freedom of choice does not only depend on ministerial and school boards policies, it really depends upon schools admission policies, that is if there is vacancy and if the student meets the school's requirements. The program admittance policy or the school admittance policy (special vocation school) takes precedence over the board's policy. However, a child should never be prevented from attending his or her neighborhood school.

What is interesting to note is the preoccupation of schools, school boards and the ministry to adapt to their students changing realities in terms of their cultural and language background and their social and economical situation. Parents' participation is also an important matter for school boards and schools. Parent participation in addition to the participation of student representatives can help maximize the range of school and program choices available to students.

Appendix: Criteria for Eligibility to English Education

Eligibility

Under the Charter of the French Language, children in the following three categories may be enrolled in English-language schools:

- children who are permanent residents of Québec and who qualify for a certificate of eligibility for instruction in English;
- children who are permanent residents of Québec and who are entitled to receive instruction in English under a special authorization;
- children who are living in Québec temporarily and who qualify for a temporary authorization to receive instruction in English.

Certificate of Eligibility

A certificate of eligibility is generally delivered to children:

- who did most of their elementary or secondary studies in English in Canada; or
- whose brother or sister did most of his or her elementary studies in English in Canada; or
- whose father or mother did most of his or her elementary studies in English in Canada; or
- whose father or mother attended school in Québec after August 26, 1977 and could have been declared eligible for instruction in English at that time.

In the first two cases, the father or mother of the child must be a Canadian citizen. In the third case, the father or mother must be a Canadian citizen, unless he or she did his or her studies in Québec.

The certificate of eligibility for instruction in English is permanent. In other words, there is no time limit after which it expires.

Children who are declared eligible for instruction in English under section 73, 76 or 86.1 may pursue their studies in French and still transfer their right to receive instruction in English to their children.

When a child is declared eligible for instruction in English, his or her brothers and sisters may also be declared eligible.

These are the most common cases in which children are eligible for instruction in English, but there are other, more special cases, for example:

- children with severe learning disabilities as defined in the government regulation made under section 81 of the Charter;
- children whose father or mother was declared eligible for instruction in English but who did his or her elementary and secondary studies in French after August 26, 1977.

The certificate of eligibility for instruction in English is permanent. In other words, there is no time limit after which it expires.

Children who are declared eligible for instruction in English may pursue their studies in French and still transfer their right to receive instruction in English to their children.

When a child is declared eligible for instruction in English, his or her brothers and sisters may also be declared eligible.

Special authorization

Children who entitled to receive instruction in English under a special authorization fall into two broad categories:

- children with serious learning disabilities as defined in the government regulation made under section 81 of the Charter;
- children admitted to receive instruction in English by the Minister of Education by reason of a serious family or humanitarian situation, following a recommendation by the examining committee, after an assessment by a person designated by the Minister stating that the children's situation is not covered under any provision of the Charter.

Temporary Authorization

Children entitled to receive instruction in English under a temporary authorization fall into three broad categories:

- the dependent children of persons living in Québec temporarily to study or work, including:
 - the dependent children of foreign nationals who hold a Québec certificate of acceptance or an employment authorization or a student authorization issued in accordance with the federal Immigration Act, or who are exempted from holding such a certificate or authorization under a statute applicable in Québec;
 - the dependent children of Canadian citizens or permanent residents living in Québec temporarily to study or work;
- the dependent children of persons who are not Canadian citizens and who are posted in Québec temporarily as representatives or officers of a country other than Canada or of an international organization;
- the dependent children of members of the Canadian Armed Forces who are posted in Québec temporarily.

The temporary authorization to receive instruction in English is delivered to the child and is valid for the same period as the immigration document issued to the parent or child or for the duration of the temporary stay as specified in a sworn declaration. It expires on June 30 of the school year in which the parent's or child's temporary stay ends.

A temporary authorization to receive instruction in English may be renewed provided that the applicant still meets the same criteria as in his or her first application.

However, the authorization cannot be granted to the children of foreign nationals who are claiming refugee status for themselves or their children, or of foreign nationals who choose to settle in Québec on a permanent basis and obtain a Québec certificate of acceptance. If an authorization has already been granted, it expires on June 30 of the school year in which the certificate of acceptance is delivered.

References

Every documents and information were taken from the Quebec Ministry of Education (Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec) web site at www.meq.gouv.qc.ca

Commission des programmes d'études at www.cpe.gouv.qc.ca

Commission scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys at www.csmb.qc.ca

Commission scolaire de Montréal web site at www.csdm.qc.ca

Commission scolaire de la Pointe-de-l'Île at www.csqi.qc.ca

DASSC at www.meq.gouv.qc.ca/dassc/cheminements.html

Education Act on www.meq.gouv.qc.ca

Education in Québec; An Overview from www.meq.gouv.qc.ca

English Montreal School Board web site at www.emsb.qc.ca

Fédération des établissements d'enseignement privé (FEEP) at www.feep.qc.ca

Lester B. Pearson School Board web site at www.lbpsb.qc.ca

Reform at www.meq.gouv.qc.ca/reforme/reform.htm

From an Interview done on June 23rd/2003 with a representative from educational resources services at the Commission Scolaire de Montréal (CSDM).

APPENDIX B.10 SASKATCHEWAN

Final Report: Saskatchewan Learning
By Lorraine Woollard

Overview

The province of Saskatchewan offers parents choices as to where their children will be educated; however, as a rule students attend their local or community school, particularly in the rural areas. In Saskatchewan, the needs of the community are met by the local school division(s) that has the autonomy to offer choices deemed relevant by the community. School^{Plus} “describes a new way of looking at schools as centres of learning, services and community for the children and families they serve [and] acknowledges the importance of schools and communities working together to support the two primary functions of schools:

- to educate children and youth—developing the whole child, intellectually, socially, emotionally, spiritually and physically; and,
- to support service delivery—serving centres at the community level for the delivery of appropriate social, health, recreation, culture, justice and other services for children and their families” (*Saskatchewan Education Indicators, 2002*, p. 131).

The following report is divided into six sections: section one outlines attendance, age, and enrolment requirements; section two describes school choices; section three describes program choices; section four describes programs of need; section five outlines funding practices; section six outlines accountability requirements.

The Saskatchewan student population in June 2002 was 196, 687; this population has been declining, particularly in recent years and in rural areas. The student population decline is particularly evident at the elementary level (*Saskatchewan Education Indicators, 2002*, p. 25)

School Type	Number of Students (2001-2002)
Publicly-funded (Public and Separate)	181, 101
First Nations	15, 914
Independent Schools	2, 832
Home-Based	1, 792
Other	207

The number of K-12 students living on reserves, on the other hand, has increased in recent years, from 13, 333 in 1986-87 to 19, 201 in 2001-02 (*Saskatchewan Education Indicators, 2002*, p. 29).

	Number of Students (2001-2002)	% in First Nations Schools
Kindergarten	2, 459	95%
Elementary	7, 715	86%
Middle	5, 586	80%
Secondary	3, 098	71%
Special or Non-Graded	343	91%

(With all these numbers, double counts can occur as student counts may occur at different times for different institutions).

Attendance/Age/Enrolment

Students between the ages of 6 and 22 are entitled to attend school in Saskatchewan (Section 142, *Education Act*).

Students are entitled to instruction in English (Section 180, *Education Act*). Students are entitled to instruction in French if they have one parent who is a minority language adult (Section 143, *Education Act*). Students who do not qualify for instruction in French may attend a school where the language of instruction is in French (a francophone school) or they may attend a minority language instruction program (Section 180, *Education Act*). However, both the school board for the area where the student would normally attend and the receiving board for the area where the student would like to attend must agree to the student's selection of a school (Section 144, *Education Act*). Additionally, an individual school board may provide instruction in any language (Section 180, *Education Act*) so long as there is provision made for a student not wishing instruction in that language to have a suitable alternative program (Section 180, *Education Act*).

Generally, students are considered to be residents of the area in which their parents/guardians normally reside. They are entitled to receive appropriate instruction (for their age and level of educational attainment) from a school in their division, or from a school outside their school division (Section 142, *Education Act*) or their division scolaire francophone (Section 143, *Education Act*), as arranged by their board of education or their conseil scolaire. Generally, boards of education and conseil scolaire may recover costs from non-resident persons (Sections 171 and 172, *Education Act*) and from certain resident persons (residents of any portion of an Indian reserve included in a school division, or residents who are not Canadian citizens or permanent residents).

Boards of education (public or separate and conseil scolaires) determine which school an individual student can attend (Sections 85 and 86, *Education Act*). However, any person who has resident status in a city may choose to attend either a public or separate high school by declaring such an intention in writing by June 1 for the following school year (Section 145, *Education Act*).

Saskatchewan Learning has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations—the goal of this partnership is to build a co-managed education system throughout the province. Currently, a child can choose to attend an off-reserve school, with the permission of the Chief and the Tribal Council; likewise, with permission from the local School Board, a child can choose to attend a school on reserve. Tuition is paid to the receiving school by the sending school.

School Choice

Students in Saskatchewan can attend public schools, separate schools, francophone schools or private/independent schools. The option also exists for students to be home schooled. In general, it is the prerogative of the school board or conseil scolaire to determine which school the students of the school division will attend. Arrangements can be made, however, to accommodate students outside the home school division as noted above.

Public Schools offer the prescribed provincially developed course offerings; however, individual school boards may authorize and approve programs that differ from those that are provincially developed (Sections 85 and 176, *Education Act*), subject to the Minister's approval (Section 4, *Education Act*).

Separate Schools (primarily Roman Catholic) offer the prescribed provincially developed course offerings. As is true of public schools, individual school boards may authorize and approve programs that differ from those that are provincially developed, subject to the Minister's approval.

Francophone Schools (Fransakois Schools) offer the prescribed provincially developed course offerings and deliver instruction in French to those students who have a right to minority language instruction. As is true of public and separate boards, a conseil scolaire may authorize and approve programs that differ from those that are provincially developed, subject to the Minister's approval.

Private (Independent) Schools must be registered under the supervision of the Department of Education before students can attend and receive Division IV (high school) credits. In order to qualify for registration, an independent school must have its programs, course of studies, and arrangements for evaluating students approved by the Department of Education. The qualifications of the teachers instructing the students must also be approved. There is provision in the *Education Act* to fine anyone operating an unregistered independent school (Section 363). Of the 46 independent schools in the province, 8 had become "associated" in 2001-2002: an "associated" school is one that has worked out a contractual arrangement with a school division. Each contract is unique to the parties involved and provides a framework for various sharing activities (in professional development, consultative support etc.).

Home Education can be provided by parents if they register an Education Plan with the local school board or conseil scolaire or, in some instances, with the Department of Education. Parents need to submit the Education Plans on a yearly basis (provincial guidelines are provided for devising such plans). A student in a registered home education program can receive Division IV credits.

Program Choice

In general, the Minister of Education may **prescribe** subjects of instruction and issue courses of study; **define** compulsory and optional subjects and course requirements; and **authorize** any course developed by a school, (approved by the school board or conseil scolaire), to be taught either as an alternative, or in addition to any course prescribed by the Department of Education. Consequently, the Minister of Education has the ultimate authority for approving any proposed alternative programs or course proposed in the province (Section 4, *Education Act*).

Explicit policies and procedures cover locally developed and modified courses of study and alternative education programs (a brief example of such a policy for education of secondary students is outlined below).

Locally Developed Courses are defined as those courses developed by school divisions to meet local needs not met by provincially-developed curricula; generally, locally developed courses do not cover required areas of study (e.g., certain electives).

Locally Modified Courses are based on provincially-developed courses and are only permitted in English/French Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and/or Social Studies. Locally modified courses may be at an advanced or basic level depending upon the needs of the students. Whether the modified courses are at an advanced level or at a basic level, the modifications must meet criteria specified in the provincially developed curricula and guidelines.

Alternative Education Programs are designed for students who are unable to succeed in the Regular Education Program. Upon completion of such programs, students may receive standing in an Alternative Grade 10, 11, or 12 program.

Functional Integrated Programs are designed for students with severe multiple or intellectual disabilities who require individual programs. Students in these programs do not receive credits for individual courses; rather, they receive recognition for completing the program.

Programs of Need

In general, students with special needs are entitled to receive a program of instruction consistent with their needs and abilities. However, should the principal of the individual school believe that the school cannot provide such a program, s/he must refer the student to the Director, or designate, for study and evaluation. A parent/guardian who believes the student will not benefit from the school program offered may request that the principal refer the matter to the Director, or designate, for study and evaluation.

Should a child be deemed in need of special education services, the school board or conseil scolaire is required to make such services available either directly, in a division school, or by entering into an agreement with a suitable person, agency, institution, or other board of education. Costs are normally absorbed by the sending school board.

Funding

Generally, funding does not follow the student directly in Saskatchewan. Individual school divisions are provided money from the Foundation Operation Grant (founded in 1972) and are allowed to raise money through property taxation. The government provides approximately 50% of the revenues for the province's 99 school divisions. Boards with a rich tax base receive very little, if any, provincial funding: these are referred to as zero grant boards. Funding is administered, based on a Foundation Grant Formula that takes into account administration, instruction, plant operation and maintenance, non-capital furniture and equipment, non-capital renovations and repairs, current interest expenses and bank charges, and special events transportation. Conditional funding may also be given to cover the cost of special education students, special needs program funding, transportation, tuition fee expenses, shared services, and second language programs. Special funding is provided for French first language and second language education through the Saskatchewan-Canada Bilateral agreement.

The average provincial per pupil expenditure in the 2000 calendar year was \$6,491. Expenditure is generally higher in rural and northern areas than in urban areas (large distances, scattered student population, and climate are all mitigating factors).

With regard to independent schools, elementary schools are not eligible to receive provincial funding; a limited number of secondary schools do receive provincial support at 50% or the per pupil rates. Consequently, the main sources of funding for independent schools are tuition fees and room and board charges.

Accountability

In 1994, the Department of Education produced an accountability framework—dubbed the Saskatchewan Education Indicators—that operated at two levels: the provincial level (with both student and systems goals) and the division level (using either the provincial level indicators, the division's own indicators, or a combination of the two). For a variety of reasons, the initiative has been more successful at the provincial level than at the divisional level.

According to the accountability framework, there were three types of indicators: contextual indicators (describing the social, economic, demographic influences); process indicators (describing policies, resources, and activities); and outcome indicators (providing information about results).

Generally, indicators for student goals described how well students were doing in the development of basic, social, and personal skills; indicators for system goals described how well the system was doing regarding the goals of relevance, accessibility, equity, and accountability.

Every year, Saskatchewan Education also surveys the public to discover the public's perception of education and to see if the public perception has changed over the years.

Summary

Essentially Saskatchewan Learning neither encourages or discourages choice. The focus of Saskatchewan Learning is to ensure that individual schools serve their community in a responsive manner, adding or deleting courses to meet the needs of a particular community. As a consequence, most information about program and school choice is provided at the school and district levels. It is, therefore, difficult for Saskatchewan Learning to gauge what information parents use in making their choices.

In Saskatchewan, where an individual lives limits the choices available; that being said, satisfaction surveys indicate that most residents are happy with the education system. Transportation is often a barrier to choice, as is the decreasing population, particularly in rural areas.

The province is in the midst of developing a strong indicators and assessment program. The results are presented back to the individual schools so they can measure their performance against the aggregated data. Much of this information—in its aggregated form—is available to the public, both on Saskatchewan Learning's Web site and in printed form.

Saskatchewan Learning is also in the midst of developing a student tracking system (which will operate in conjunction with the Department of Health and First Nations) so they will, in the future, be able to better understand student movement trends.

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Final Report: Saskatchewan Private Schools By Lorraine Woollard

In the province of Saskatchewan, private (independent) schools must be registered under the supervision of the Department of Education before students can attend and receive Division IV (high school) credits.

In order to qualify for registration, an independent school must have its programs, course of studies, and arrangements for evaluating students approved by the Department of Education. The qualifications of the teacher instructing the students must also be approved. There is provision in the *Education Act* to fine anyone operating an unregistered independent school (Section 363).

For an independent school to register, it must be owned or operated by a Saskatchewan corporation, it must have a board (comprised of at least three adults from three different family units), and it must enrol students between the ages of 6 and 21 from at least two different family units. The school facilities must meet recognized safety, health, and construction standards. An independent school that is owned/operated by or for the benefit of students from an Indian Band is not eligible for registration.

If the Minister of Education is satisfied that the applicant is eligible to become registered as an independent school, the Minister will issue a certificate of registration on any terms and conditions considered advisable.

In the province of Saskatchewan, there are eight named **historical high schools** deemed to hold certificates of registration without making formal application (Athol Murray College of Notre Dame, Caronport High School, College Mathieu, Luther College, Lutheran Collegiate Bible Institute, Rivier Academy, Rosthern Junior College, and St. Angela's Academy). Additionally, there are **associate schools** (independent schools with a subsisting agreement with a board of education to operate in association with that board) which are also deemed to hold certificates of registration as long as the agreement with their associated board exists.

Each **registered independent school** must appoint a school director (who may also act as the principal). Generally, teachers must be certified or hold a letter or eligibility to teach. The owner/operator of the school has the right to restrict employment to teachers who share the owner's faith and practice.

Each **registered independent school** is charged with providing instruction in the required areas of study (as determined by the minister) that is comparable in quality to that of schools and consistent with generally accepted teaching practices. Each school can add to the prescribed goals of education for Saskatchewan and define responsibility for their achievement among the school, the home, the church and the community.

Registered independent school boards may authorize and approve their own programs and courses of instruction. Such boards may also follow restrictive enrolment policies with regard to enrolment on the basis of sex, creed, religion, or physical disability.

According to information provided by the Federation of Independent Schools in Canada, in the year 2000, there were 3, 810 students in 50 independent schools.

This represents, according to their calculations, approximately 1.98% of the student population in Saskatchewan. With the exception of the eight historical high schools, four associate schools, and three alternative schools, independent schools in Saskatchewan do not receive provincial funding. Four of the historical high schools receive full funding; the other four receive approximately 40% of the provincial grant. All four associate schools (those with agreements with school divisions) receive full per-pupil funding. Three alternative schools receive per-pupil and special education funding.

Final Report: Regina Catholic Separate School Division #81
By Lorraine Woollard

Overview

Choice is not actively promoted by the Regina Catholic Separate School Division; rather, this division concentrates on making sure that their schools are of equal quality. Rather than adding a myriad of program choices to the curriculum, this district has chosen to adapt the Core Curriculum, mandated by Saskatchewan Learning, to meet the varied needs of the student population. For example, a portion of the teacher-librarian's time in elementary schools is now devoted to adapting the curriculum for bright learners (extended learning) so they can enjoy an enriched program. Regina Catholic also offers system wide (or after hours) courses for high school students so that all students have equal access to specialized course (for example, dance). Programs are shaped to meet the community needs, as most students prefer to stay in their neighbourhood school.

The following report is divided into five sections: section one outlines attendance, age, and enrolment requirements; section two describes school and program choice; section three outlines programs of need; section four details funding arrangements; section five outlines accountability.

Parents wishing information about the school district can obtain it either from the Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division Website <http://w3.rcs.sk.ca/> or by contacting the central office:

Catholic Education Centre
2160 Cameron Street
Regina, SK, S4T 2V6
Tel: (306) 791-7200 Fax: (306) 347-7699

Attendance/Age/Enrolment

There are 30 schools in the Regina Catholic Separate School Division: 25 elementary; 4 senior high, 1 alternative high school. Three of the elementary schools are listed as French Immersion sites; one is listed as a dual track—French/English.

The Board establishes boundaries, setting out attendance areas for each school. Generally, elementary students attend their designated school. If a parent accesses day care or child support services in a different school community than the designated one, the child is eligible to register in the community where these services are provided even though the family residence is in another community. Most high school students (estimated to be 75%) also attend their designated schools. Students are permitted to enroll in a school of their choice if there are sufficient resources to accommodate them; however, they must first obtain permission from the Superintendent. Permission is granted on a yearly basis and the parents are normally responsible for any transportation costs. The board also establishes attendance boundaries for special programs.

Children who have one parent/guardian baptized Catholic are eligible to enroll in the fall term in Kindergarten if they are 5 years old on or before December 31. They are entitled to remain in the system until they reach the age of 22.

Non-Catholic students are permitted to enroll in a Catholic school if they can be accommodated; they must, however, go through an interview process (often with the parish priest as well as the principal). If they are admitted, they are required to sign a form saying they will comply with all the rules and guidelines around religious instruction, participation in masses and in school celebrations. Approximately 20% of the total student population is non-Catholic.

School/Program Choice

As stated earlier, neighbourhood school boundaries are designated by the Board; however, students can enroll in the school of their choice if there are sufficient resources to accommodate them. Generally, the final decision is made at the school level. Many individual schools have a Website that details the programs they offer; other schools are in the process of developing their personal Websites. Most commonly, parents learn about the programs available by visiting the community school (at all levels) or by attending information evenings (at the high school level). The Board sponsors an annual parent conference (at one of the larger high schools) to inform their public about curriculums, programs, and interventions.

Regina Catholic Schools (RCS) follows the Core Curriculum, adopted by the Province of Saskatchewan (seven areas of study: arts education, health education, language arts, mathematics, physical education, science and social studies). Insofar as is practical, the Core Curriculum is adapted (by special education teachers and by teacher-librarians) to meet the needs of the student learners.

In addition to the Core Curriculum, RCS offers certain optional courses, as listed below

- Advanced Placement
- Cree
- French Immersion
- Spanish
- Ukrainian

RCS also offers Religious Education and Christian Ethics as part of its locally determined option offerings. According to Board Policy (#8300), all elementary and middle level students must take an approved Religion course and all secondary students are required to enroll in a Christian Ethics course at each grade level.

RCS supports work-based learning opportunities by establishing partnerships between schools and community agencies or businesses. Individual schools offer services to home-based educators (who have devised written educational programs in accordance with the *Education Act* and the *Home-Based Education Program Regulations*) as much as their resources allow.

RCS, as required by the *Education Act*, supports Alternate Placement Programs for students with diverse or special needs; at times, other educational jurisdictions or agencies may be involved in providing students with such programs.

Finally, RCS offers **after hours** or **system courses** at the high school level. The Board identifies a particular course (for e.g., CISCO Certification) as one that ought to be offered to all high school students, not only to those in the school where the course is housed. In order to allow more students equal access to such courses, these courses are scheduled, either in the afternoon or immediately after school; students, therefore, travel to a different site for a system course but stay in their neighbourhood school for the rest of their program. (Transportation is not provided).

Programs of Need

Students with special needs register at their neighbourhood school, are integrated into the regular classroom, and are provided with learning resource support as appropriate. If it is determined that an individual student would be better served by a program in another school (or by a program offered by an outside agency), then the student will be placed in that setting (Policies 8730 and 12100). There are 6 elementary schools and 2 high schools that offer specialized programs for students with cognitive deficits: Elementary Functional Academic Program (EFAP) at the elementary level and Functional Integrated Alternative Education Program (FIAEP) at the high school level. For profoundly disabled students, RCS has a special education school that is attached to an elementary school. Transportation is provided for special needs students.

There is also an alternate school which houses five distinct programs: a short term behavioural program for K-7; a longer term, more intensive behavioural program for K-9; a program for high school students with psychiatric issues; a re-entry program for students who have dropped out of school; and a Storefront program (not housed in the alternate school) designed to stabilize high risk students so that they can return to the re-entry program at the alternate school.

Funding

If a student comes from another district (or if RCS sends one of its students to another district), the receiving district bills the sending district a fee for service that is almost identical to the grant the school division receives from Saskatchewan Learning. The payment is not made, however, until the following year. No special monetary provisions are offered to fund programs of choice.

Accountability

Satisfaction surveys conducted by individual schools indicate that, overall, parents are satisfied. The Board offers an extensive assessment program and produces both system level and school level profiles. According to the 2002-2003 Annual Report, the following assessments were administered.

- Grade 1 and 2 student reading skills
- Grade 4, 7, and 10 standardized achievement
- Grade 4 mathematics problem-solving
- Grade 8 and 12 writing skills
- French language benchmark

Since programs are shaped to meet the needs of a specific community, the accountability for programming and choices tends to rest at the school level.

References

The Education Act, 1995.

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Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division #81 Website <http://w3.rcs.sk.ca>

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Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division. (personal communication, June 18, 2003).

Final Report: Regina Public School District #4
By Lorraine Woollard

Overview

Choice is not actively promoted by Regina Public Schools (RPS). Rather than adding a myriad of program choices, RPS adapts and modifies the Core Curriculum, mandated by Saskatchewan Learning, to meet the needs of their students on a case by case basis. For example, RPS employs a consultant to provide enrichment for advanced learners to extend their learning both inside and outside the regular classroom. RPS also offers system wide after school courses for high school students so that all students have equal access to specialized courses (for example, computer technology, commercial cooking, automotives). Programs are shaped to meet the community needs, as most students prefer to stay in their neighbourhood school.

The following report is divided into five sections: section one outlines attendance, age, and enrolment requirements; section two describes school and program choice; section three outlines programs of need; section four details funding arrangements; section five outlines accountability.

Parents wishing information about the school district can obtain it either from the RPS Website <http://www.rbe.sk.ca> or by contacting the central office:

J. A. Burnett Education Centre
1600 4th avenue
Regina, SK, S4R 8C8
Tel: (306) 791-8200 Fax: (306) 352-2898

Attendance/Age/Enrolment

RPS is the largest school district in the province; the district enrolment for September 2002 was approximately 23, 000 students in a total of 60 schools: 50 elementary, 10 high schools.

Generally, the city is divided into both elementary and high school attendance areas and most students go to the nearest neighbourhood school; however, elementary students can attend any school they choose. Should an elementary student wish to attend a school other than the neighbourhood one, however, the parents (guardians) are responsible for transportation. (Normally, kindergarten and Grade 1 students further than .6km from their school and Grade 2-8 students further than 1.2 km from their school are provided with transportation). A half-day kindergarten program is offered for children who are 5 years old on or before December 31 of the year they enrol. Pre-kindergarten is offered at 10 schools to provide educational and social experiences to qualifying children who are 3 and 4 years old.

Exceptions are made for those students enrolled in French Immersion or for those students requiring Special Education classes; transportation may be provided in these instances if a student needs to attend a school other than the neighbourhood one. Elementary students taking Ukrainian (one half day a week) are given a transportation allowance that covers part of the cost because the program is offered in only one site.

Boundary restrictions apply to one particular high school, Winston Knoll Collegiate, because the school is full to capacity. Additionally, another high school (Cochrane), which offers a modified high school program, takes students by recommendation only. Transportation is not provided for high school students.

School/Program Choice

As stated earlier, neighbourhood school boundaries are designated; however, students can enrol in the school of their choice (with the exception of the two high schools mentioned above).

Attendance areas are also designated for the French Immersion schools (6 elementary and 2 high school sites). Again, students can enrol in the school of their choice but transportation is only provided to the designated school under the conditions outlined above.

There are 11 elementary and 4 high schools designated as community schools: such schools have been “founded upon a tradition of community education and work to build strong relationships with community members, organizations, and families to improve educational opportunities and to strengthen the communities where the schools are located” (Regina Public Schools, 2002, Annual Report).

Individual schools have a Website that details the programs they offer; most commonly, parents learn about the programs available through information packages provided at both the school level and the board level, through information evenings, and through advertisements in the local media. RPS also hosts parent conventions.

RPS follows the Core Curriculum, adopted by the Province of Saskatchewan in 1994 (seven areas of study: arts education, health education, language arts, mathematics, physical education, science and social studies). Insofar as is practical, the Core Curriculum is **adapted** to meet the needs of students on a case by case basis so they can meet the functional objectives of the course. In some cases, the functional objectives have to be **modified** for those students who have particular cognitive challenges.

In addition to the Core Curriculum, students may also select a variety of electives, including some that are locally developed and then approved by Saskatchewan Learning.

RPS, as required by the *Education Act*, supports Alternate Placement Programs for students with diverse or special needs; at times, other educational jurisdictions or agencies may be involved in providing students with such programs.

Finally, RPS offers **after school** courses at the high school level. The Board identifies a particular course (for e.g. Cisco Certification) as one that ought to be offered to all high school students, not only to those in the school where the course is housed. Such courses are scheduled immediately after school or in the evening; students, therefore, can choose to stay in their neighbourhood school during the day. Transportation is not provided and students are charged a nominal \$25.00 fee for these credit courses.

Following is a list of the “special” programs available to RPS students. The Web site listing of courses does not differentiate between programs of “choice” and programs of “need”.

Elementary School Special Programs

- Alternative Resource Program (12 sites)
- Behaviour Alternative Resource Program (2 sites)
- Cree
- Developmental Classroom (3 sites)
- Discovery Pre-school (3 sites)
- Early Observation (all sites)
- English as a Second Language (2 sites)
- Family Support Program (3 sites)
- French Immersion (6 sites)
- Functional Integrated Academic Program (5 sites)
- Learning Assistance (all sites)
- Learning Disability Resource Room (5 sites)
- Learning Through the Arts (all sites)
- Pre-Kindergarten (10 sites)
- Project Child (1 site)
- Resource Room for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (3 sites)
- Resource Room for the Visually Impaired (1 site)
- Speech Language (all sites)
- Structured Learning (7 sites)
- Supportive Environment Program (1 site)
- Ukrainian (1 site)

High School Special Program

- Advanced Placement (3 sites)
- Balfour Quiet School Program (1 site)
- Developmental Classroom (2 sites)
- English as a Second Language (1 site)
- Environmental Support Program (1 site)
- French Immersion (2 sites)
- Fresh Start (1 site)
- Functional Integrated Academic Program (2 sites)
- Integrated Services Program (2 sites)
- International Baccalaureate (2 sites)
- Individualized Programming Subject Units (1 site)
- Learning Assistance (10 sites)
- Learning Disabilities Resource Room (3 sites)
- Modified Secondary (1 site)
- Non-Semestered Program (1 site)
- Resource Room for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (1 site)
- Spanish
- Special Tutorial for Teen Mothers (1 site)
- Structured Learning Class (1 site)

- Vocational Alternative Program (3 sites)
- Vocational Transition Program (1 site)

Programs of Need

Depending on their needs, students with special needs register at their neighbourhood school. If it is determined that an individual student would be better served by a specialized program found within another school, the student would be enrolled in that school. Depending on the program and the age of the student, transportation to the specialized program is provided by the school division. The various programs of need are listed above.

Funding

No special funding provisions are made for offering programs of choice. Transportation is provided for French Immersion students and for Special Needs students, as required; likewise, a transportation allowance is given to students who must travel to take Ukrainian. Essentially, once the Board of Trustees approves the budget, programs of choice and core curriculum programs are funded in the same way. If a student cannot afford the fee for a specialized program, subsidies are given to provide equal access. Total per pupil expenditure in 2002 was \$5, 956.

Accountability

Three years ago, RPS began a new initiative to strengthen its accountability measures based on the Effective Schools research. Each school is now required to present a yearly profile. Since programs are shaped to meet the needs of a specific community, the accountability measures for programming and choices differs from school to school. Essentially, a program of choice is deemed to be meeting the needs of the community so long as there is sufficient enrolment in the program to warrant its continued existence.

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