



Accountability Report 2019–20

Education and Early
Childhood Development



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Accountability Report 2019–2020

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Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for the year ended March 31, 2020 is prepared pursuant to the Finance Act and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Business Plan for the fiscal year that just ended. The reporting of the department outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by department management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the department's 2019-20 Business Plan.



Hon. Zach Churchill
Minister



Cathy Montreuil
Deputy Minister

Message from the Minister

It is with pleasure that I present the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's (EECD) 2019-20 Accountability Report. This document reports on the department's activities as outlined in EECD's 2019-20 Business Plan.

This year ended with our schools experiencing an unprecedented event. In March 2020 all school buildings had to be closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers, students, and parents had to convert to at-home learning very quickly. We recognize that learning at home placed additional responsibilities and stress on teachers, children, and families. They have done great work in balancing all of their priorities while supporting student learning and I am proud of how everyone has accepted this challenge.

The department continues to advance improvements to the early years and public education systems in Nova Scotia, following the priority to implement recommendations stemming from the review of the province's education administrative system and the Commission on Inclusive Education.

In 2019-20, the department continued to invest in the Nova Scotia public education system so that students, families, and educators get the resources and support they need to succeed. This includes an investment of \$30 million over the past two years to support inclusive education. These investments helped create over 1,300 additional teaching and student support positions, including 364 inclusive education support staff.

New supports, such as autism specialists and child and youth practitioners, are helping our students succeed every day. We have also hired more staff for Alternative Education Sites, more African Nova Scotia and Mi'kmaq support workers, more SchoolsPlus facilitators, and are providing more funding for professional development for teachers.


Education and Early Childhood Development is committed to improving school programs, services and policies to support student achievement and well-being. A Student Survey was administered April and May 2019. The survey focused on students' experiences in Nova Scotia schools from both a well-being and academic perspective. The information from the survey will help inform school improvement planning.

In September 2019, the department introduced the Technology Advantage Program (TAP) pilot in selected Grade 9 classrooms. TAP is an experiential learning program designed to spark interest in a variety of technology jobs and fields. Students who participate in the program can earn a high school diploma and a tuition free Nova Scotia Community College diploma in an information technology (IT) field, while simultaneously gaining valuable industry experience. Many of these students will continue in the TAP pilot over the next 5 years.

The Government of Nova Scotia committed to implementing a free, universal pre-primary early learning program for four-year-olds that will set them on the road to success by helping them be confident learners as they transition into the school system. Full implementation of the program is on track for the 2020-21 school year. In 2019-20, 4,618 four-year-olds registered for the program. Government has committed to support access to the Pre-Primary Program through expanded before and after school child care and bussing options for eligible pre-primary children.

Although the upcoming year has some uncertainty, we are prepared to support our students, teachers, and the school community. I am confident by working together we will continue to make a positive difference in the lives of all students while supporting student achievement and well-being. I look forward to the continued collaboration with our regional centers for education,

Conseil scolaire acadien provincial, and education partners to ensure all students and children succeed.



Hon. Zach Churchill
Minister, Education and Early Childhood Development

Introduction and Structure

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2019-20 Accountability Report provides information on performance measures and finances identified in the 2019-20 Business Plan.

Student Assessments as Performance Measures

Performance measures related to student assessments are reported as the percentage of students performing at or above provincial expectations (Level 3 or 4) in reading, writing, and mathematics. The reporting years stated for all assessment results presented in this report refer to the academic year (September to June), rather than the fiscal year.

The department continues to review the Public School program and is focused on providing relevant and renewed curriculum and programs in the public education system. Ongoing improvements to student assessment and evaluation are a priority for the department.

Financial Results

2019-20 Accountability Report: Financial Table

	2019-20 Estimate	2019-20 Actual	2019-20 Variance
Program and Service Area	(\$ thousands)		
Departmental Expenses:			
Senior Management	\$1,164	\$1,129	(\$35)
Strategic Policy, RCE Liason and Research	\$3,820	\$3,662	(\$158)
Early Learning	\$36,240	\$35,233	(\$1,007)
Childcare and Licensing	\$79,969	\$82,350	\$2,381
Centre for Equity in Achievement and Well-Being	\$3,829	\$3,742	(\$87)
Education Innovation Programs and Services	\$15,470	\$16,083	\$613
Student Services and Equity	\$2,209	\$2,190	(\$19)
African Canadian Services	\$5,977	\$5,832	(\$145)
Mi'kmaq Services	\$1,087	\$998	(\$89)
French Programs and Services	\$10,187	\$10,923	\$736
Corporate Services	\$4,529	\$6,333	\$1,804
Public Education Funding	\$1,097,955	\$1,102,083	\$4,128
Teachers' Pension	\$91,911	\$93,086	\$1,175
School Capital Amortization	\$74,995	\$77,003	\$2,008
Total: Departmental Expenses	\$1,429,342	\$1,440,647	\$11,305
Additional Information:			
Ordinary Revenue	(\$200)	(\$485)	(\$285)
Fees and Other Charges	(\$2,406)	(\$2,919)	(\$513)
Ordinary Recoveries	(\$25,144)	(\$29,557)	(\$4,413)
Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries	(\$27,750)	(\$32,961)	(\$5,211)
TCA Purchase Requirements	\$69,035	\$107,156	\$38,121
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	207.8	194.3	(13.5)

Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development expenses were \$11.3 million or 0.8 per cent higher than estimate. This is primarily due to \$5.5 million in operation support grants provided to the childcare sector during closures associated with Covid-19; additional spend of \$2.3 million in public education funding as a result of enrollment pressures at Regional Centres for Education (RCEs); an increase in P3 escalator provisions of \$1.6 million; increased teachers' pension contributions of \$1.2 million based on increased teachers as well as increases in salary base; an increase in amortization of \$2 million, primarily as a result of a write-down in schools no longer in use; an increase in French Programs as a result of increased federal funding of \$1.1 million; and increased spending on property and building costs, including school maintenance, portable moves, lease increases, facilities refresh, etc. amounting to \$1.8 million. These pressures were partially offset by decreased QIG/PSG grant funding in the childcare sector of \$700 thousand; spending deferral of \$900 thousand relating to the Early Years federal agreement; less than budgeted pre-primary funding requirements of \$1 million; reduced subsidy utilization of \$1 million; and other various operational savings throughout branches of \$600 thousand.

Revenue, Fees, and Recoveries Variance Explanation:

Fees exceeded budget by \$513 thousand, primarily due to fees collected in EIPS (international schools and LRT) were greater than budget, as well as an increase in teacher certification fees. Ordinary Recoveries exceeded budget by \$4.4 million primarily due to the recovery of EECD's portion of unspent reserve funds at the end of the lease term of Horton High, amounting to \$3.1 million; an increase of \$1.1 million in recoveries for health and dental premiums; an increase of \$1.1 million in federal funding agreement for French Programs Services branch as well as approval for two complementary projects. These are partially offset by a decrease in cash sales of \$350 thousand in credit allocation and a reduction of \$500 thousand in Early Years as a portion of the ELCCA budget was deferred to 2020-21.

TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:

TCA exceed budget primarily as a result of the purchase and renovation costs of Newbridge Academy. New school projects also contributed to the overspend, as well as unbudgeted portables that were purchased, and increased spending in skilled trades centers.

Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:

Salary variance due to staff turnover and refilling vacancies throughout the year.

NOTE:

For Ordinary Revenues, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 2

For TCA Purchase Requirements, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 1

Measuring Our Performance

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's (EECD) 2019-20 Business Plan identified several priority initiatives to advance improvements to the early years and public education systems in Nova Scotia.

Outcome: Improve Early Childhood and P-12 Education

Performance Measures

The Department administers the Program of Learning Assessment for Nova Scotia (PLANS), which includes provincial, national and international assessments, in English and French.

The following changes have occurred to the Program of Learning Assessment for Nova Scotia:

- Reading and Writing in Grade 3 (RW3), Évaluation de la Nouvelle-Écosse: lecture et écriture en 3e année and Mathematics/Mathématiques in Grade 4 (M4) assessments were not administered in 2017–2018. They were re-introduced in 2018–19 as the Nova Scotia Assessment: Literacy and Mathematics in Grade 3 (LM3) and Évaluation de la Nouvelle-Écosse: littératie et mathématiques en 3e année (LM3-FR) and were administered in spring 2019.

Nova Scotia Assessments: Mathematics

The percentage of grades 3 and 6 students performing at or above provincial expectations in mathematics is one of the measures for a desired outcome of increased student learning and achievement in mathematics.

Results from these assessments are used to make broader decisions relating to curriculum, programming, and intervention strategies. Teachers and parents are provided with individual student reports that can be used to inform programming for students.

Reporting on 2019-20

Results for assessments in mathematics, have remained consistent since the base year of 2015-16.

Percentage of Students Meeting Math Expectations				
Nova Scotia Assessment: Mathematics				
	2015-16*	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Grade 3	N/A	N/A	N/A	72%
Grade 4	76%	77%*	N/A	N/A
Grade 6	68%	70%	70%	71%
Grade 8	62%	N/A	56%	57%

* Baseline **N/A**: Mathematics in Grade 4/Mathématiques en 4^e année was discontinued in 2017-18 and replaced with Mathematics in Grade 3/Mathématiques en 3^e année in 2018-19.

Where do we want to go/be in the future?

EECD has placed a strong focus on building the foundations of math and literacy for grades primary to 3, ensuring the supports are in place to address the full range of students' learning strengths and needs.

The department continues to review supports for mathematics and to consult with experts in this area. The development of a Mathematics strategy will form a foundation to support increased achievement in mathematics for all students, to focus on mathematics essentials and to provide teachers with resources and approaches to move students progressively toward stronger understanding and, ultimately, greater independence in the learning process.

A Mathematics Learning Specialist, grades 7-12, was seconded to the department in 2018-19 to assist with the strategy and with the development of additional supports for teachers and for student learning at these grades.

EECD's goal is for Nova Scotia students to achieve at high levels in mathematics so that they can thrive in school and beyond. To meet this goal, the department and its partners are focusing on helping teachers develop their instructional strategies so that students will learn how to solve problems, make connections, and represent their mathematical thinking in a variety of ways. Math supports are being coordinated through the provincial mathematics team.

Nova Scotia Assessments: Reading and Writing

The percentage of grades 3, 6, and 8 students performing at or above provincial expectations in reading and/or writing is measured for a desired outcome of increased student learning and achievement in literacy.

These assessments measure students' reading and writing ability in grades 3, 6, and 8. The assessment results are used to make broader decisions relating to curriculum, programming, and intervention strategies. Teachers and parents are provided with individual student reports that can be used to inform programming for students.

In addition to the French-language provincial assessments in reading and writing in grades 3, 6, and 8 students in the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) participate in the English-language provincial assessments in reading and writing in grades 6 and 8.

Reporting on 2019-20

Results for the English-language Nova Scotia Assessment in Reading and Writing in grades 3, 6, and 8 have remained consistent since the baseline year of 2015-16. EECD continues to prioritize literacy with a focus on improving outcomes in this area.

Assessments in literacy at the grade 3 level were not administered in 2017-18. This assessment was re-introduced in 2018-19 as the Nova Scotia Assessment: Literacy and Mathematics in Grade 3 (LM3) and Évaluation de la Nouvelle-Écosse: littératie et mathématiques en 3e année (LM3-FR) which was administered in spring 2019.

Percentage of Students Meeting Reading Expectations				
Nova Scotia Assessment: Reading				
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Grade 3*	67%	68%	N/A	70%
Grade 6	73%	73%	74%	74%
Grade 8	74%	N/A	75%	74%
L'Évaluation de la Nouvelle-Écosse : lecture (Conseil scolaire acadien provincial)				
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Grade 3*	70%	68%	N/A	67%
Grade 6	72%	71%	69%	73%

Grade 8	72%	N/A	74%	74%
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*Baseline *N/A*: The fall Reading and Writing in Grade 3 and Lecture et écriture en 3^e année were discontinued in 2017-18. A new assessment, Literacy in Grade 3/Littératie en 3^e was administered in spring 2018-19.

Percentage of Students Meeting Writing Expectations					
Nova Scotia Assessment: Writing					
	2014–15*	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Grade 3*					
Ideas	76%	73%	73%	<i>N/A</i>	66%
Organization	60%	59%	58%	<i>N/A</i>	51%
Language Use	64%	63%	63%	<i>N/A</i>	55%
Conventions	53%	51%	53%	<i>N/A</i>	43%
Grade 6					
Ideas	76%	78%	72%	74%	70%
Organization	61%	62%	57%	59%	55%
Language Use	66%	67%	63%	64%	59%
Conventions	58%	61%	53%	57%	53%
Grade 8					
Ideas	<i>N/A</i>	89%	<i>N/A</i>	89%	78%
Organization	<i>N/A</i>	77%	<i>N/A</i>	80%	66%
Language Use	<i>N/A</i>	80%	<i>N/A</i>	82%	70%
Conventions	<i>N/A</i>	69%	<i>N/A</i>	71%	59%
L'Évaluation de la Nouvelle-Écosse : écriture					
	2014–15*	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Grade 3*					
Ideas	65%	67%	68%	<i>N/A</i>	66%
Organization	60%	59%	58%	<i>N/A</i>	50%
Language Use	64%	63%	63%	<i>N/A</i>	47%
Conventions	53%	51%	53%	<i>N/A</i>	37%
Grade 6					
Ideas	71%	75%	73%	72%	69%
Organization	59%	67%	59%	65%	56%
Language Use	56%	61%	60%	59%	51%
Conventions	43%	47%	44%	42%	38%
Grade 8					
Ideas	<i>N/A</i>	70%	<i>N/A</i>	67%	79%
Organization	<i>N/A</i>	63%	<i>N/A</i>	58%	71%
Language Use	<i>N/A</i>	57%	<i>N/A</i>	55%	67%
Conventions	<i>N/A</i>	50%	<i>N/A</i>	40%	45%

*Baseline *N/A*: The fall Reading and Writing in Grade 3 and Lecture et écriture en 3^e année were discontinued in 2017-18. A new assessment, Literacy in Grade 3/Littératie en 3^e was administered in spring 2018-19.

Where do we want to go/be in the future?

Student outcomes in literacy achievement show that our entire education system needs to do more to support our students and their teachers. The goal of the Nova Scotia Provincial Literacy Strategy is for students to achieve a high level of literacy so that they can thrive in school and beyond. By 2022, the target goal for reading and writing will be an increase of 8% in the number of students who perform at or above expectations, measured by provincial assessments.

The Literacy Strategy is being implemented by the Literacy Steering Committee and a Literacy Working Group, using a research-based approach to implementation. To meet the goal, we will

continue to focus on phonemic awareness, reading and fluency, and comprehension, and on writing skills in all grades to support the development of these skills.

EECD continued to invest in the literacy strategy in 2019-20, to increase support for students and teachers to strengthen literacy learning in all subjects and grades. The department funded ten new Reading Recovery teaching positions with an additional investment of \$700,000 in 2019-20. Literacy will continue to be a priority area for public education in 2020-21.

Reading Recovery

In 2017-18 there were 192 schools with Reading Recovery. In 2018-19, 247 schools had Reading Recovery programs. The target of this measure was to have access to Reading Recovery reinstated in all elementary schools with grade 1 by the 2019-20 school year. This target has been met.

Teaching Positions	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Total
Reading Recovery Teachers	13	32	18	36.5	24.5	10	124
Reading Recovery Teacher Leader	9			3	3		15

Nova Scotia Reading Recovery Outcomes

Reading Recovery outcomes in Nova Scotia are trending positively with more students making accelerated progress each year. This means, that as a result of Reading Recovery, more children are performing without the need for literacy support within the classrooms of Nova Scotia.

Nova Scotia Examinations

Nova Scotia Examinations (NSE) are administered in the following courses: English 10, Mathematics 10 and Français 10 (CSAP). NSEs are designed to evaluate student achievement in relation to selected curriculum outcomes for each course. The examination results contribute 20% to students' final course mark. The target for these measures is to maintain or increase the percentage of students meeting expectations over the baseline year.

Mathematics 10

Percentage of Students Meeting Mathematics Expectations				
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
	71%	<i>Not administered</i>	71%	70%

English 10

Percentage of Students Meeting Reading Expectations				
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
	76%	<i>Not administered</i>	75%	75%

Français 10

Percentage of Students Meeting Reading Expectations				
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
	80%	<i>Not administered</i>	73%	73%

Examination: Writing

Percentage of Students Meeting Writing Expectations				
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Nova Scotia Examinations: Writing				
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Ideas	66%	<i>Not administered</i>	75%	69%
Organization	61%	<i>Not administered</i>	65%	58%
Language Use	62%	<i>Not administered</i>	67%	61%
Conventions	59%	<i>Not administered</i>	62%	56%
Examen de la Nouvelle-Écosse: écriture				
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Idées	78%	<i>Not administered</i>	85%	78%
Structure du texte	83%	<i>Not administered</i>	81%	69%
Style	74%	<i>Not administered</i>	69%	63%
Conventions de l'écrit	49%	<i>Not administered</i>	46%	42%

Where do we want to go/be in the future?

EECD has prioritized streamlining the curriculum to ensure students have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful as they move on to higher grades. The province has placed a strong focus on building the foundations of math and literacy in the early grades, which will lead to greater student success in the later grades.

To support student assessment, evaluation, and reporting, the department will refocus on 'assessment for learning' in all subjects, integrate student assessment into all revised curricula, and provide ongoing professional development to teachers and administrators in the use of assessment for student programming and intervention.

International and National Assessments

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a well-respected international instrument sponsored by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), with over 60 countries participating. Canada has participated in PISA since its inception.

PISA is conducted every three years, providing reliable measures of the performance of 15-year-old students' in reading, mathematics, and science and allows for comparison across jurisdictions. The PISA assessment is one of the measures for a desired outcome of increased student learning and achievement in literacy and mathematics.

Each assessment includes questions from all three subject areas with a primary focus on one subject area each time the assessment is administered.

Reporting on 2019-20

The 2018 PISA results are the most current data available, and indicate that statistically, in comparison to 2009, the average performance of students in Nova Scotia did not change by a significant amount in the areas of reading and science but were lower for mathematics at a statistically significant level.

PISA Results												
	Reading				Math				Science			
	2009	2012	2015	2018	2009	2012	2015	2018	2009	2012	2015	2018
NS Average	516	508	517	516	512	497	497	494	523	516	517	508
Canadian Average	524	523	527	520	527	518	516	512	529	525	528	518

OECD Average	493	496	493	487	496	494	490	489	501	501	493	489
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Compared to the OECD average, in 2018 Nova Scotia was performing on par in mathematics, and at a higher level for reading and science. Compared to the Canadian Average, Nova Scotia scored on par in reading and science below average in mathematics.

Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP)

The Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP) is an assessment instrument developed by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). It is administered every three years and provides reliable measures of student performance in reading, mathematics, and science. The target population is students in grade 8. The average score for Canada is 500.

The PCAP assessment is one of the measures for a desired outcome of increased student learning and achievement in reading, science and mathematics.

Reporting on 2019-20

Nova Scotia has seen an improvement in the 2016 assessment results over the 2010 baseline. We have seen three years of upward trending in the areas of math and science. Nova Scotia continues to perform below the Canadian average in all three subject areas.

PCAP Results	2007 Results		2010 Results*		2013 Results		2016 Results	
	NS Average	Canadian Average	NS Average	Canadian Average	NS Average	Canadian Average	NS Average	Canadian Average
Reading	483	500	489	500	488	508	498	507
Math	N/A	N/A	474	500	488	507	497	511
Science	N/A	N/A	489	500	492	500	499	508

*adjusted baseline

SchoolsPlus Expansion

The target for SchoolsPlus was for all schools to have access to support by the 2019-20 school year and this target has been met. In 2019-20, SchoolsPlus supported 372 schools through 56 hub sites, with 41 Facilitators (social workers) and 84 Community Outreach Workers. Schools Plus is serving an additional 45 schools as of September 2019.

SchoolsPlus has several service components; however, it is important to note that not of all the service components (mental health clinicians and SchoolsPlus Community Outreach Workers for HRCE) are available to all schools, based on available resources in a particular area.

54 FTE positions are funded for SchoolsPlus Mental Health Clinicians (6 new for 2019-20). They are employed by either the NSHA or the IWK and co-located in schools.

From April 1, 2019 to April 1, 2020, there were a total of 16,197 SchoolsPlus cases. The total number of parents served is 4,481 and total children served is 47,907. This represents a combined total of 52,388 group programming (some students/parents may have participated in multiple groups so may be counted more than once). A total of 4,025 service hours were provided.

Early Learning and Child Care Agreement

In January 2018, Nova Scotia signed a three-year, \$35-million child care funding agreement with the federal government to strengthen the early years system across the province. The agreement, currently in its final year, focuses on providing families more affordable, accessible, quality, and inclusive regulated child care while supporting early childhood educators to

participate in training and professional development opportunities, and enhances provincial investment in early learning and childcare.

Reporting on 2019-20

There are several measures to show progress in priority areas, these are shown in the table below. The baseline has been set as 2017-18, with targets of increasing over the baseline data for each measure.

Affordability, Accessibility, Quality and Inclusion in Child Care			
	2017-18*	2018-19	2019-20
Increase in number of licensed spaces	17,250	17,356	17,009
Increase number of new family home day care sites	254	281	216
Increase number of children benefitting from maximum subsidy rates	2551	3255	3724
Increase number of staff working in licensed child care who are engaging in course work towards a credential (Continuing Education)	145	155	196
Increase number of licensed child care centres accessing funding to build capacity for inclusion	220	264	274
Increase ECEs in licensed child care receiving inclusion training in the Pyramid Model	200	150**	756***
Increase in individuals receiving ECE training grants/bursaries from under-represented populations (Acadian/Francophone, African Nova Scotian, Indigenous, Immigrant and Newcomer)	0	32	69

* baseline

** Pyramid model training was launched with 23 demonstration sites. Training in the Pyramid Model has begun and will be ongoing for approximately 150 ECEs. In addition, 20 Professional Development Trainers have been trained and 7 Pyramid Model Coaches trained.

*** 756 participants in various Pyramid Model training sessions however there may be some duplication as ECEs may have participated in more than one training opportunity.

Pre-Primary Program

The Pre-primary Program was implemented in the 2017-18 school year. This program is available to 4-year olds the year before they enter school and will provide them with access to a quality play-based experience based on Nova Scotia's first ever Early Learning Curriculum Framework.

Phase 1 of the program saw 54 pre-primary classes in 46 school communities with over 800 four-year olds accessing Pre-primary throughout the province. Phase 2 of the program began in September 2018 and added 99 more school communities for a total of 145 school communities in 2018-19. An additional 60 school communities received access to Pre-primary for Phase 3 in September 2019 for a total of 205 school communities. The target for this measure is that all school communities will have access to the Pre-primary Program by the 2020-21 school year. Full implementation will see 253 school communities receive Pre-primary.

Pre-primary Program (100% implementation over 4 years)			
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
# of school communities with access to the Pre-primary Program (cumulative)	46	145	205
% of total school communities	18%	57%	81%

Where do we want to go/be in the future?

EECD continues to place a strong focus on supporting young children and their families. Universal early childhood opportunities like the Pre-primary Program, have the ability to improve child development outcomes, support families to participate in the labour market and reduce inequities overall. The department is committed to ensuring that all four year olds have access to a supportive environment in which every child can thrive in the early years and successfully transition to school.

Enrollment in the Pre-primary Program for 2019-20 is at 4,618 children with 276 classes in 205 school communities across Nova Scotia. By September 2020, every four-year-old in Nova Scotia will have access to the Pre-primary Program.

To increase participation in Pre-Primary, EECD introduced busing for eligible Pre-primary children in 56 schools across the province in the 2019-20 school year. In 2020-21, busing will be available for Pre-primary children in accordance with student transportation policies. The Province also expanded the Nova Scotia Before and After Program (NS-BAP), a fee-based program is delivered on-site by approved childcare, municipal recreation or recognized non-profit recreation providers. NS-BAP was piloted in 8 locations from January to June 2018 and expanded to 35 sites (including the 8 pilot sites) in 2019-20. The existing sites will be maintained in 2020-21.

Early Development Instrument (EDI)

The department participates in the Early Development Instrument (EDI) which is a teacher-completed questionnaire, that measures developmental health in populations of young children at school entry in five domains and is considered to be a reliable predictor of school success, adult health, and social outcomes. Schools, school regions, government, researchers and community partners can use this data together with other indicators to identify vulnerable populations of children and mobilize resources to support young children and their families as well as to inform planning to support populations of children as they progress through school. Nova Scotia has three cycles of EDI data – 2013, 2015, and 2018. Data collection for 2020, the fourth cycle, was collected in Spring 2020 and will be prepared for release in late fall 2020/ winter 2021.

Children who score in the lowest 10th percentile on a domain are considered “vulnerable”. Vulnerability cannot be attributed to a single cause. Healthy early developmental is complex and influenced by many factors. The target is to reduce the percentage of children who are vulnerable in each of the EDI domains by the next reporting period.

Percentage of Nova Scotia Children Vulnerable by EDI Domain			
	2012*	2015	2018
Physical Health and Well-Being	10.3%	9.8%	11.3%
Social Competence	9.9%	9.1%	11.2%
Emotional maturity	9.7%	9.0%	10.5%
Language and Cognitive Development	10.4%	10.8%	11.8%
Communication Skills and General Knowledge	10.7%	10.6%	11.7%
Vulnerable on one or more domains	25.5%	25.5%	28.8%

Note: Data is collected approximately every two years.

*Nova Scotia Baseline

Key and Interesting Facts/Initiatives

Inclusive Education: Investments have been made over the past two years to support inclusive education. These investments have helped create 364 inclusive education support staff positions. New supports, such as autism specialists and child and youth practitioners, are helping our students succeed every day. We have also hired more staff for Alternative Education Sites, more African Nova Scotia and Mi'kmaq support workers, more SchoolsPlus facilitators, and are providing more funding for professional development for teachers

School Advisory Councils (SACs): In October and November 2019, provincial conferences were held in 4 locations across the province for School Advisory Councils. The topics of the sessions included information and networking opportunities and presentations on what is new for SACs, the role of SACs in Student Success Planning, and how SACs can use their budget to support student well-being and achievement.

Skilled Trade Centres: Skilled Trades Education supports an approach that provides exposure to a wide range of careers, engages students in authentic learning in the community and immerses students in the realities of skilled trades work. In 2017, Government committed to adding 7 new Skilled Trades Centres to the 18 that already existed.

In 2019-20, government achieved that goal, and a further 5 new Skilled Trades Centres were announced. Two additional schools will receive centres by nature of being a new build, bringing the total to 32 by 2022. Three of these new centres will open in 2020-21: North Nova Education Centre, Liverpool Regional High School, and École secondaire de Par-en-Bas.

The department will continue to work to:

- Increase the number of students participating in skilled trades learning
- Increase the number of schools offering skilled trades courses
- Expand offerings in the suite of skilled trades courses

Technology Advantage Program (TAP) Pilot

The Technology Advantage Program (TAP) pilot is an experiential learning program designed to spark interest in a variety of technology jobs and fields. TAP is based on the Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools program (P-TECH) by IBM and brings together elements of high school, college, and the professional world. Participants have the opportunity to earn a high school diploma and a tuition free NSCC diploma in an information technology (IT) field, while simultaneously gaining valuable industry experience.

TAP was introduced in seven Grade 9 classrooms in September 2019. There are currently 142 students registered in the program. The department is working with St. Francis Xavier University on an ongoing evaluation of the pilot. This information will help not only to inform the pilot and any possible future cohorts but can also be effectively used to inform the public school program renewal in grades 9-12.

Early Learning and Child Care Bi-Lateral Agreement:

The current agreement ended March 31, 2020. The Government of Canada has committed to providing provincial transition year funding for 2020-21 to allow time for the negotiation of a new multi-year agreement.

Highlights of actions from the Early Learning Child Care Agreement include:

- Changes to the Child Care Subsidy Program resulting in more than 720 families benefitting from the maximum subsidy per diems and more than 600 children receiving a higher subsidy rate, saving Nova Scotian families more than \$5 million.
- The creation of new child care spaces many of which are in rural and vulnerable communities.
- Additional funding to Early Childhood Development Intervention Services to extend their reach into more Acadian and Francophone, African Nova Scotian, and Indigenous communities.
- Training eight coaches and 20 Master Cadre professional development specialists to promote social-emotional competence in infants and young children through the Pyramid Model framework.
- Development and implementation of a recognition of prior learning process for early childhood educators to receive a higher level of training classification.
- Tuition support to students in the two-year ECE diploma program at one of three private career colleges in the province to help reduce the cost of tuition.
- The creation of the First Nations Early Childhood Educators workplace learning pilot which enables Mi'kmaq educators working in First Nations communities throughout the province to participate in an ECE program delivered by a Mi'kmaq instructor, using curriculum that has been modified to reflect Mi'kmaq culture, history, and language.
- A cultural bursary program providing grants to African Nova Scotian, Acadian and Francophone, Indigenous, and newcomer communities for individuals to enroll in a two-year ECE diploma program.

Appendix 1—Disclosures of Wrongdoing received by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for the fiscal year 2019-20.

Department of Education – Disclosures of Wrongdoing	
Information Required under Section 18 of the Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act	Fiscal Year 2019-20
Number of disclosures received	1
Number of findings of wrongdoing	0
Details of each wrongdoing	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrong doing	N/A