



BUSINESS PLAN

2024-25

Education and Early
Childhood Development

© Crown copyright, Province of Nova Scotia, 2024

Budget 2024-25: Business Plan
February 2024
ISBN 978-1-77448-569-9

Education and Early Childhood Development

2024-25 Priority Actions in Support of Government's Business Plan

Introduction

The success of our province relies on the important role of child care, early learning, and a strong pre-primary to grade 12 education system to prepare future generations to become active contributors to society. In 2024-25, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) will continue to support government's priority of strengthening healthy communities by: working with key partners, including Regional Centres for Education (RCEs), and the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP); investing in the Nova Scotia public education system; building a quality, affordable, accessible and inclusive early learning and child care system; and implementing policies and administer programs to serve children, students and families in Nova Scotia.

Inclusive Education

To support the ongoing implementation of inclusive education, in 2024-25 EECD will:

- Review and update the Special Education Policy.
- Continue to invest in Assistive Technology Supports in classrooms.
- Continue to work with the Accessibility Directorate to advance work related to the *Accessibility Act* and Accessibility Standards in Education.
- Release updated guidelines for Mi'kmaw/Indigenous Student Support Workers and Native Student Advisors, and African Nova Scotian Student Support Workers.

Student Well-Being and Achievement

To improve school programs, services, and policies to support students' well-being and academic achievement, in 2024-25 EECD will:

- Implement Nova Scotia Educational Leadership Standards for school administrators and other educational leaders. The standards will create cohesion across the province, improve performance, and will develop and support leaders.
- Launch an Education Leadership Growth and Assessment Policy and an associated tool for school-based leaders.
- Develop a program to support teachers entering our school system for the first time, in response to feedback heard through the Substitute Survey, Ideas for Education, and practicum committee.
- Launch a new fund that will provide application-based grants of up to \$10,000 to School Advisory Councils (SACs) to implement innovative projects supporting student well-being and achievement.
- Host an annual conference for all SAC chairs to provide policy input and advise on common school challenges and opportunities.
- Release the updated School Food and Nutrition Policy for implementation in September 2024.
- Begin implementing a school lunch program.
- Review and update the School Code of Conduct.
- Administer the next [Student Success Survey](#) in spring 2024 (grades 4 to 12) to help EECD and RCEs/CSAP plan for and improve student well-being and achievement at school.
- Revitalize the 'Network Schools' initiative, which supports research related to implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy and encourages the sharing of best practices and ideas among educators, teachers, administrators, and support staff.
- Complete an evaluation of the Tuition Support Program, which provides funding for eligible students to access specialized programming and services outside the framework of the Nova Scotia public school system.

Education and Early Childhood Development

2024-25 Priority Actions in Support of Government's Business Plan

- Monitor the effectiveness of revised Nova Scotia Bachelor of Education programs.

Public School Program

To continuously review and update curriculum, particularly in environmental stewardship and education on Residential Schools, in 2024-25 EECD will:

- Introduce an Environmental Stewardship course called Netukulimk 12.
- Continue to monitor and expand pilots of the Life 11 and Contemporary Canadian Studies 11 courses that were introduced in September 2023.
- Introduce new Literacy and Mathematics Strategies.
- Provide continuous support with the implementation of Treaty Education in all RCEs/CSAP, and continue to develop specific Treaty Education programs and services for the education system.
- Deliver grade specific Treaty Education professional learning for teachers. Resources will be available in French and English.

To enhance students' engagement in career-focused skilled trades and practical life skills, EECD will:

- Expand the High Skills Major Program in 2024-25, which engages students in career exploration and community-based learning with a focus on sector-related knowledge and skills.

Early Years

To continue to take steps to implement the Canada-Nova Scotia Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (the "Agreement") and make early learning and child care accessible, affordable, and inclusive for all families, in 2024-25 EECD will:

- Add more child care spaces in provincially licensed and funded early learning and child care centres and family homes, and in the Nova Scotia Before-and-After School program, continuing towards our commitment of creating 9,500 new spaces over the duration of the Agreement.
- Partner with the Department of Health and Wellness, Nova Scotia Health and the IWK, Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care, and not-for-profit service providers to create flexible early learning and child care options that meet the needs of Nova Scotia's workforce and support recruitment and retention in priority areas, such as health care.
- Pilot revised quality assessment and improvement tools as part of the revitalization of the Quality Matters initiative.
- Continue to recognize and value the Early Childhood Educator (ECE) workforce, which will include implementing group benefits and a defined benefit pension plan for all ECEs and support staff working in provincially licensed and funded early learning and child-care centres and family home child care agencies.
- Develop a workforce strategy to address labour market needs and increase the number of qualified ECEs working in the sector, with a focus on opportunities for those who identify as Mi'kmaw, African Nova Scotian, Acadian or francophone, and newcomers.
- Increase the number of early learning and child care centres that participate in the Pyramid Model and professional learning opportunities related to culturally responsive practice, and receive Inclusion Support funding.
- Make progress towards an operational funding model for the early learning and child care sector that will improve overall system sustainability.

Education and Early Childhood Development 2024-25 Priority Actions in Support of Government's Business Plan

Departmental Financial Summary

Departmental Expenses Summary (\$ thousands)			
Programs and Services	2023-2024 Estimate	2023-2024 Forecast	2024-2025 Estimate
Senior Management	1,156	1,103	1,170
Strategic Policy, RCE Liaison and Research	4,441	4,567	5,851
Early Learning	218,025	180,292	333,067
Childcare and Licensing*	58,437	55,604	-
Centre for Equity in Achievement and Well-Being	3,807	3,882	4,030
Education Innovation Programs and Services	84,246	79,330	85,775
Student Services and Equity	2,293	2,240	2,430
African Canadian Services	6,314	6,257	6,524
Mi'kmaq Services	1,389	1,462	1,441
French Programs and Services	16,938	17,749	17,080
Corporate Services	5,144	4,958	3,485
Public Education Funding	1,289,106	1,334,291	1,337,765
Teachers' Pension	101,151	106,600	103,403
School Capital – Amortization	81,058	79,188	97,159
Total - Departmental Expenses	1,873,505	1,877,523	1,999,180
Ordinary Recoveries	183,898	161,576	226,175
Funded Staff (# of FTEs)			
Department Funded Staff	211.8	198.6	212.8

Note:
 * Childcare and Licensing branch combined with the Early Learning branch
 For Ordinary Revenues, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 2
 For TCA Purchase Requirements, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 1