

Accountability Report

2016–2017

Department of Education
and Early Childhood Development
July 2017

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Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for the year ended March 31, 2017 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 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 2016-17 Business Plan.

Original signed by

Hon. Zach Churchill
Minister

Original signed by

Sandra McKenzie
Deputy Minister

Message from the Minister

It is my pleasure to present the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's (EECD) seventeenth accountability report. This document reports on the department's activities as outlined in our 2016 -17 Business Plan.

In 2016 -17, government has 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. While there were many accomplishments in the last year, a labour disruption impacted the department's ability to complete work towards some of our goals. As a result, some initiatives have been carried over into the 2017-18 fiscal year, and others have been held back, to allow for meaningful consultation.

The Council to Improve Classroom Conditions has been established to identify the concerns of teachers and to make recommendations to the department and school boards to improve the teaching and learning environment.

The Council to Improve Classroom Conditions met in April, May, and June of 2017, resulting in recommendations related to class size, complex classrooms, assessment and evaluation, and engagement with teachers. As part of its recommendations, the Council allocated \$9.3M of its total year one funding of \$10M to put junior high and high school class caps in place, hire 139 new teachers, and create a \$2M grant fund for 40 priority schools.

In addition, a Commission on Inclusive Education has been established to examine the current status of inclusive education in public schools in Nova Scotia. The Commission's interim report released in June 2017, outlines plans for consultations with stakeholders in the Fall of 2017. This is an important step in understanding all perspectives and ensuring that Nova Scotia's education system is one where all students can succeed.

It is an exciting time for the education system in Nova Scotia. A renewed and shared vision between EECD and the dedicated teachers of Nova Scotia, guided by the action plan, and the work and recommendations from the Council to Improve Classroom Conditions, and the Commission on Inclusive Education, creates a strong sense of optimism as we move forward in 2017-18.

Original signed by

Hon. Zach Churchill
Minister, Education and Early Childhood Development

Introduction and Structure

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2016 -17 Accountability Report provides information on performance measures and finances identified in the 2016 -17 Business Plan.

Student Assessments as Performance Measures¹

Performance measures related to student assessments are reported as the percentage of students meeting expectations in reading, writing, and mathematics. For this report, “meeting expectations” refers to students performing at, or above, level 3 on a particular assessment.

Ongoing improvements to student assessment and evaluation are a priority for the department. Since the implementation of *Nova Scotia’s Action Plan for Education* in 2015, the department has taken strides to improve student achievement in literacy and math, and enhance current assessment practices.

The department is continuing work to improve student assessment and evaluation, this includes conducting a review of all provincial and board-level assessments with the goal of streamlining them to decrease the administrative burden on teachers and students.

Following implementation of the Action Plan, a decision was made to reset the baseline year for provincial assessments to 2015 -16, to enable measurement against initiatives implemented through the plan. It will take time to see the effects of the changes the department is putting in place. It is anticipated that assessments in 2020 will show measurable success with students performing at or above expectations as measured by the provincial assessments.

To improve student performance in provincial, national, and international assessments, teachers need access to programs, professional development, and continuing service education that will have a direct impact on improving student achievement. The department is working with teachers, school boards, and universities on the development of new teaching standards in Nova Scotia, with teacher education and professional development based on these standards to follow.

¹ 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.

Financial Results

2016-17 Accountability Report: Financial Table

| | 2016-17 Estimate | 2016-17 Actual | 2016-17 Variance |
|--|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Program and Service Area | (\$ thousands) | | |
| Departmental Expenses: | | | |
| Senior Management | \$2,679 | \$2,461 | (\$218) |
| Strategic Policy and Research | \$2,684 | \$2,201 | (\$483) |
| Early Years | \$65,796 | \$64,848 | (\$948) |
| Centre for Learning Excellence | \$4,547 | \$4,065 | (\$482) |
| Education Innovation Programs and Services | \$14,837 | \$13,959 | (\$878) |
| Student Equity and Support Services | \$11,306 | \$10,901 | (\$405) |
| French Programs and Services | \$10,318 | \$10,819 | \$501 |
| Corporate Services | \$4,894 | \$4,985 | \$91 |
| Public Education Funding | \$1,001,693 | \$998,742 | (\$2,951) |
| Credit Allocation | \$7,313 | \$7,313 | \$- |
| Teachers' Pension | \$81,751 | \$81,714 | (\$37) |
| School Capital Amortization | \$71,714 | \$72,114 | \$400 |
| Total: Departmental Expenses | \$1,279,532 | \$1,274,122 | (\$5,410) |
| Additional Information: | | | |
| Ordinary Revenue | 0 | (\$1,150) | (\$1,150) |
| Fees and Other Charges | (\$1,735) | (\$2,429) | (\$694) |
| Ordinary Recoveries | (\$13,922) | (\$14,963) | (\$1,041) |
| Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries | (\$15,657) | (\$18,542) | (\$2,885) |
| | | | |
| TCA Purchase Requirements | 87,900 | 92,925 | 5,025 |
| Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) | 200.8 | 182.0 | (18.8) |

Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:

\$5.3 million decrease in action plan initiatives (impacted by NSTU work to rule job action), \$1.7 million in decrease in transition funding supplement reduction to school boards, \$1.7 million in vacancy savings and \$1.3 million in class cap funding. These are partially offset by \$2.7 million in increased costs related to NSTU long-term-disability rate increase and \$2.1 million in NSTU health and dental premiums increase.

Revenue, Fees, and Recoveries Variance Explanation:

Revenues and recoveries connected to funding agreements with the federal government that were finalized during the year were greater than budgeted, and greater than anticipated recoveries on inspection costs from agents for international schools.

TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:

Over budget as a result of P3 lease extensions and CPA parking lot (which were not budgeted), as well as overages in A&A projects and capital repairs.

Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:

Variances exist as a result of delays in filling vacancies throughout the year.

Measuring Our Performance

Driven by the Action Plan for Education, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's (EECD) 2016 -17 Business Plan identified a number of priority initiatives to advance improvements to the early years and public education systems in Nova Scotia.

Outcome: Improve early childhood and P-12 education

Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education, released in January 2015, has guided and supported continuous improvement in our province's education system. In the second year of the action plan implementation, many advances were made in improving and modernizing the P-12 education system. A new literacy strategy for grades P-12 was implemented, streamlining of the curriculum continued and was completed for grades 4-6, and out-of-School Learning grants were provided to ensure that extra supports and enrichment were available for students who needed them. Additionally, grants were provided to community researchers through the Inter-University Network in Research (IURN) to support Nova Scotia based research to address the achievement gap, and new teaching standards were developed with plans for implementation in the 2017-18 school year.

2016-17 saw the creation of the Council to Improve Classroom Conditions, and the Commission on Inclusive Education. Moving forward, EECD, the Council, and the Commission will continue to partner to carry out recommendations put forth by the Council, and to further future work outlined in the Commission's interim report, released in June 2017.

In 2016-17, EECD continued to support the province's eight Early Years Centres, which provide spaces to bring together programs and services delivered to families and young children. The

department further continue to support the early years through the *Affordable, Quality Child Care: A Great Place to Grow!* Report, which was released in June 2016. This report is the guiding document for changes that will take place to improve early childhood education over the next four years.

Performance Measures

Nova Scotia Assessments: Reading and Writing

The percentage of grades 3 and 6 students meeting 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 and 6. The assessments are administered in the fall, and 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.

Students in the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) participate in the English-language Nova Scotia Assessment in Reading and Writing in grade 6. French-language provincial assessments in reading and writing are also administered to students in grades 3 and 6 who attend schools in the CSAP.

Reporting on 2016-17

Results for the English-language Nova Scotia Assessment in Reading and Writing in grades 3 and 6 have generally not increased. Initiatives from the Action Plan are being implemented to improve student achievement in literacy.

Going forward, the target goal will be an increase of 8 per cent in the percentage of students who perform at or above expectations on these assessments by 2020.

| Percentage of Students Meeting Reading Expectations | | | |
|---|---------|---------|---------|
| Nova Scotia Assessment: Reading | | | |
| | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 |
| Grade 3 | 68% | 67% | 68% |
| Grade 6 | 74% | 73% | 73% |
| L'Évaluation de la Nouvelle-Écosse : lecture (Conseil scolaire acadien provincial) | | | |
| Grade 3 | 75% | 70% | 68% |
| Grade 6 | 69% | 72% | 71% |
| Percentage of Students Meeting Writing Expectations | | | |
| Nova Scotia Assessment: Writing | | | |
| | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 |
| Grade 3 | | | |
| Ideas | 76% | 73% | 73% |
| Organization | 60% | 59% | 58% |
| Language Use | 64% | 63% | 63% |
| Conventions | 53% | 51% | 53% |
| Grade 6 | | | |
| Ideas | 76% | 78% | 72% |
| Organization | 61% | 62% | 57% |
| Language Use | 66% | 67% | 63% |
| Conventions | 58% | 61% | 53% |
| L'Évaluation de la Nouvelle-Écosse : écriture (Conseil scolaire acadien provincial) | | | |
| Grade 3 | | | |
| Ideas | 65% | 67% | 68% |
| Organization | 59% | 58% | 60% |
| Language Use | 58% | 59% | 55% |
| Conventions | 48% | 51% | 46% |
| Grade 6 | | | |
| Ideas | 71% | 75% | 73% |
| Organization | 59% | 67% | 59% |
| Language Use | 56% | 61% | 60% |
| Conventions | 43% | 47% | 44% |

Nova Scotia Examination: English 10

This examination is used to measure student learning and achievement in literacy for students enrolled in English 10, with results contributing to the students' final grade.

| Percentage of Students Meeting English 10 Expectations | | 2014-15* | 2015-16 |
|--|--------------|----------|---------|
| <i>Reading</i> | | 76% | 76% |
| <i>Writing</i> | Ideas | 67% | 66% |
| | Organization | 61% | 61% |
| | Language Use | 62% | 62% |
| | Conventions | 61% | 59% |

Note: The English 10 exam is administered annually in January or June of that school year. The 2016-17 results are not yet available.

*baseline

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

On May 20, 2016, the department released the province's first P-12 Provincial Literacy Strategy, which increases the focus on teaching reading and writing, and on developing oral communication skills. There will be consistent monitoring of specific measures through a Literacy Steering Committee and a Literacy Working Group. This will include reviewing results from Reading Recovery, early literacy instruction, mentors, and achievement data. Monitoring the measures will also inform provincial intervention, support, and implementation strategies.

The department continues to work closely with teachers to create a new model of curriculum design that is more streamlined, coordinated, and innovative. The revised grade 4 to 6 curriculum was implemented in September 2016, with the curriculum renewal process for grades 7 and 8 beginning in 2017-18, along with the renewal of the grades 4 to 8 health curriculum.

Nova Scotia Assessments: Mathematics

The percentage of grades 4 and 6 students meeting provincial expectations in the area of mathematics is one of the measures for a desired outcome of increased student learning and achievement in mathematics.

These assessments are administered in the fall and measure the mathematics ability of students in grades 4 and 6. 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.

In 2015-16 the Nova Scotia English language math curriculum and the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) math curriculum were aligned to ensure that math instruction received by Nova Scotia students was the same in both French and English. Following this, math assessments in both languages were revised to ensure they reflect the common curriculum.

Reporting on 2016-17

Similar to results for assessments in reading and writing, the percentage of students meeting expectations in mathematics have not greatly increased.

| Percentage of Students Meeting Math Expectations | | |
|--|----------|---------|
| Nova Scotia Assessment: Mathematics | | |
| | 2015-16* | 2016-17 |
| Grade 4 | 76% | 77% |
| Grade 6 | 68% | 70% |

* Baseline.

Implementation of a new provincial mathematics curriculum for grades primary to 3 and for grade 10 began in September 2013². It continued for grades 4 to 6 and grade 11 in 2014-15; and in the final year of implementation in 2015-16 with grades 7 to 9, and grade 12. This curriculum reflects research on how students best learn mathematics and focuses on the most important things to learn at each grade level.

Nova Scotia Examination: Mathematics 10 and Mathematics at Work

These examinations are used to measure a student's learning and achievement in math for the Mathematics 10 and Mathematics at Work courses, with results contributing to the student's final grade.

During the labour disruption in 2016 -17, school boards were given the option to administer Mathematics 10 and Mathematics at Work Exams. As exams were not written consistently across all school boards in 2016-17, results for this year are not available. The exams will resume in 2017-18, with results being made available in September 2018.

| Percentage of Students Meeting Math Expectations | | | |
|--|----------|---------|---------|
| | 2014-15* | 2015-16 | 2016-17 |
| <i>Mathematics 10</i> | 67% | 71% | N/A |
| <i>Mathematics at Work</i> | 56% | 59% | N/A |

Note: The exam for Mathematics 10 is administered annually in June, and the exam for Mathematics at Work is administered in January or June of that school year.

*Baseline

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

Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education 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 provide targeted funding to school boards for math mentors and early intervention support in math for students in grades primary to 3.

² *Nova Scotia Assessment: Mathematics in Grade 4* consists of questions that are common to the previous and current program in order to ensure that results are comparable across years.

An extended Mathematics 11 course was introduced in 9 schools in 2016 -17 with further implementation planned for the 2017-18 school year. This course provides students with the opportunity to engage in extended work in statistics and data and learn more about careers that require mathematics.

A draft Mathematics Strategy has been developed in consultation with the boards with the aim to ensure that Nova Scotia students achieve at high levels in mathematics so that they can thrive in school and beyond. Similar to literacy, it is anticipated that the initiatives implemented now will require time to show measurable success. The long-term target will be established through the updated strategy.

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 focus on one subject area each time the assessment is administered.

Reporting on 2016-17

The 2015 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 | 2009 | 2012 | 2015 | 2009 | 2012 | 2015 |
| NS Average | 516 | 508 | 517 | 512 | 497 | 497 | 523 | 516 | 517 |
| Canadian Average | 524 | 523 | 527 | 527 | 518 | 516 | 529 | 525 | 528 |
| OECD Average | 493 | 496 | 493 | 496 | 494 | 490 | 501 | 501 | 493 |

Compared to the OECD average, Nova Scotia is performing on par in mathematics, and at a higher level for reading and science.

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 literacy and mathematics.

Reporting on 2016-17

Based on the 2013 results, Nova Scotia has seen an improvement over the 2010 assessment in the areas of math and science, however Nova Scotia continues to perform below the Canadian average in all three subject areas. PCAP 2016 was administered in Nova Scotia between April 25 and May 20, 2016, to assess reading as the primary domain, with math and science as secondary domains.

A new target has been established using PCAP 2010 as the baseline. This is the result of changes in the target population from 2007. It is anticipated that the 2016 PCAP results will be available in Fall 2017.

| PCAP Results | 2007 Results | | 2010 Results* | | 2013 Results | |
|----------------|--------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|
| | NS Average | Canadian Average | NS Average | Canadian Average | NS Average | Canadian Average |
| Reading | 483 | 500 | 489 | 500 | 488 | 508 |
| Math | N/A | N/A | 474 | 500 | 488 | 507 |
| Science | N/A | N/A | 489 | 500 | 492 | 500 |

*adjusted baseline

Note: Results of PCAP 2016 is anticipated in fall 2017.

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

Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education 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.

Nova Scotia students will continue to participate in both the PCAP and PISA assessments.

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.

Outcome: Nova Scotia's population is growing, productive, and thriving

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is committed to working with its partners to ensure that students have the knowledge and skills they need to transition successfully through each stage of their education, and eventually to post-secondary institutions and/or the labour market. Recognizing that career readiness does not start in grade 12, the department will continue to offer positive, productive career exploration opportunities and experiences for all students. This includes providing hands-on learning opportunities designed to develop creativity, innovation, and problem-solving skills.

Performance Measures

Early Childhood Development Intervention Services Waitlists

Early Childhood Development Intervention Services delivers programs for young children diagnosed with, or at risk for, developmental delay. The programs are designed to help both the child and the family from the time the child is born to when they enter school.

Using caseload and wait-list data from Early Childhood Development Intervention Services programs the department can monitor and report on the number of children waiting for services.

Reporting on 2016-17

Leading up to 2015-16, more than 300 families were on waiting lists for intervention programs. As a result, a new governance structure was established in October 2015. This structure has enabled Early Childhood Development Intervention Services (ECDIS) to reach all families on the waitlist identified in spring 2015, and to maintain a zero waitlist since this date.

| Number of children on waitlists | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------|-------------|-------------|
| 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 |
| 336 | 332 | No waitlist | No waitlist |

The target for this measure is to maintain the waitlist at zero, with new families who are seeking services being seen within one month of referral.

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

A review of Early Childhood Development Intervention programs explored the issues these parents were facing and identified improvements. In 2015-16, the department prioritized the implementation of the review's recommendations and increased the number of early interventionists in the province to eliminate the waitlists. Ensuring that no child has to wait for intervention services remained a priority for EECD for 2016-17. Work with partners to ensure that children received services required in a timely manner has continued. The Commission on Inclusive Education, whose mandate includes reforming inclusive education in the Nova Scotia education system, released their interim report in June 2017. Work to be carried out by the Commission in partnership with EECD in the coming year, will ensure that children in the early

years who have identified special needs, will be entering an inclusive and effective P-12 system that is ready to meet their needs and ensure their success.

Early Development Instrument (EDI)

The Early Development Instrument (EDI) is a teacher-completed questionnaire that measures the development of children in five core areas, each of which are reliable predictors of adult health, education, and social outcomes. Schools, school boards, and community partners can use this data to identify vulnerable populations of children, and mobilize resources to support young children and their families where it is most needed.

The EDI provides teachers, school boards, and department staff with reliable information on five core domains: Physical Health and Well-Being, Social Competence, Emotional Maturity, Language and Cognitive Development, and Communication Skills and General Knowledge. The EDI questionnaire was first administered to grade primary students across the province in 2012–13, and again in 2014–15 with the goal of administration occurring every 2 years. The EDI was suspended during the 2016-17 year, but will be administered in the fall of 2017.

EDI data allows educators to identify vulnerability rates by geographic area (e.g., provincial, regional, and neighborhood/school). This information allows teachers, school boards, and the province to direct targeted support where it is most needed, resulting in children’s developmental health and long-term outcomes improving over time.

The target for this performance measure is to reduce the percentage of children vulnerable in each of the EDI domains compared to the baseline.

EDI Reporting on 2016-17

| Percentage of Children Vulnerable in EDI Domains | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| | 2012–13 | 2014–15 |
| Physical Health and Well-Being | 10.3% | 9.8% |
| Social Competence | 9.9% | 9.1% |
| Emotional maturity | 9.7% | 9.0% |
| Language and Cognitive Development | 10.4% | 10.8% |
| Communication Skills and General Knowledge | 10.7% | 10.6% |
| At least one domain | 25.5% | 25.5% |

Note: Data is collected every two years.

The percentage of children vulnerable in the EDI domains for 2014-15 remains unchanged.

It should be noted that the 2012–13 baseline percentages were originally calculated using the national cut-point³, which is largely populated by children living in Ontario and British Columbia. A

³ Cut-point is the value that marks the boundary for the lowest 10th percentile in the distribution. For 2012–13, cut-points specific to the Nova Scotia distribution were used to create a Nova Scotia baseline. Ongoing reporting of EDI results will use this method.

cut-point specific to Nova Scotia results has been used to re-calculate the EDI results to more accurately report on, and track, the province's EDI results. Therefore, the 2012–13 percentages as noted in this report will not correspond to the results contained in the department's previous accountability reports.

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

Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education includes a strong focus on supporting preschool-aged children and their families to help ensure key developmental milestones are met, e.g. children are developmentally healthy. The department is committed to ensuring the right supports are in place to help every child successfully transition into school.

In June 2016, the report *Affordable, Quality Childcare; A Great Place to Grow* was released. This report provides recommendations based on 2015-16 review of child care which included extensive consultation with the child care sector, key stakeholders and families.

Recommendations from the review are currently being implemented and this report will continue to act as the guiding document in fulfilling Nova Scotia's commitment to improving the early childhood education system in Nova Scotia.

In addition, Nova Scotia has signed on to the multilateral framework for early childhood education which sets the foundation for federal, provincial, and territorial governments to work towards a shared long term vision for early learning and child care. Federal investments related to this framework, will be invested to further support recommendations from the report, including increasing accessibility of child care for families.

High School Graduation Rate

The high school graduation rate is one of the measures for a desired outcome of better educated Nova Scotians. The high school graduation rate is the percentage of students receiving a high school graduation diploma compared with the number of students that were in grade 9 three years earlier.

Education is a key variable in improved employment prospects and higher earnings. The successful pursuit of further education is strongly connected to high school graduation. This is the foundation upon which an individual's future success is built.

Reporting on 2016-17

The target for this measure is to increase the graduation rate over the 2009–10 baseline, by 2013–14. This target was achieved with the 2013–14 graduation rate at 3.7 per cent over the baseline. A new target was set to further increase the graduation rate by 2016–17.

Graduation rates are not available until after the conclusion of the school year in June.

| High School Graduation Rate | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 2009–10* | 2010–11 | 2011–12 | 2012–13 | 2013–14 | 2014–15 | 2015–16 | 2016-17 |
| 86.1% | 88.7% | 88.6% | 89.6% | 89.8% | 92.5% | 90.7% | N/A |

*baseline

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

Although the graduation rate is strong in Nova Scotia, the department understands that there are students who still require support as they transition to post-secondary training or the workforce. *Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education* includes a number of initiatives that will provide students with more hands-on learning, opportunities to explore a range of career options, and will support their transition out of high school.

Actions implemented in 2016-17 include providing more hands-on learning activities to develop strong technology skills, the introduction of more math and literacy supports, and continued work with the transition task force which consists of educators, community college representatives and entrepreneurs specifically tasked with identifying the challenges faced by high school students as they transition from high school.

Outcome: Nova Scotia has a strong and globally competitive economy and a sustainable, modern government

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is committed to strengthening the connection between business and education, with a focus on student preparedness for life after high school. The department recognizes the importance of entrepreneurship, as well as the value of entrepreneurial attributes such as innovation, creativity, problem-solving skills, initiative, and teamwork, which can all be applied to any career path a student may choose.

In 2016-17 several programs were initiated or expanded to support students in their transition from high school to post-secondary education, training or the work-force.

A Transition Task Force was established to identify and address challenges faced by students as they move from high school, Discovering Opportunities 9 and Options and Opportunities programs were expanded to give students more opportunities to take part in hands-on career exploration. In addition, the number of skilled trade centres increased, allowing more students to explore skilled trades as a potential career. There was also an increased focus on developing entrepreneurial skills and opportunities for students. Consultations between EECD and 4 universities took place during 2016 to revise the course Entrepreneurship 12. Implementation of the revised course will be piloted in 5 schools in fall 2017.

Performance Measures

Participation Rate for Community-Based Learning Programs

The performance measure for this outcome consists of the number of students participating in each of the community-based learning programs offered throughout the province. These programs place students with community hosts/employers to explore career interests, discover the skills required for success in the workplace, and recognize the connections between their school-based learning and community/ workplace, all of which contribute to increasing student engagement. The target for this measure is to increase the number of students who have access to community-based learning programs over the next two years.

| Initiative | Number of students participating | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 |
| Co-op Education | 2,988 | 3,032 | 3,437 | 3,165 |
| Options and Opportunities | 2,320 | 2,540 | 2,669 | 2,815 |
| Skilled Trades* | 681 | 983 | 1,328 | 1,054 |

*Until 2016-17, participation in the Skilled Trades was measured by number of credits earned (these numbers are reflected in the 2013-14 to 2015-16 data). 2016-17 data shows the number of students enrolled in Skilled Trades courses. The drop from 2015-16 to 2016-17 is due to the fact that students may earn multiple Skilled Trades credits in one year.

The decline in the number of students participating in Co-op Education in 2016-17, compared to the previous year is largely due to the labour disruption. As a result of the NSTU work to rule job action, fewer teachers volunteered extra time to support Co-op Education.

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

Focus on ensuring students have the skills required to thrive as they transition from high school to post-secondary education, training or the work-force will remain a priority for EECD in 2017-18. Work of the Transition Task Force will continue, as will several initiatives aimed at providing students with hands-on learning activities that develop strong technology, critical thinking and problem solving skills. Partnerships with programs such as Brilliant Labs, STEAM Olympics, and Hour of Code will provide students with opportunities to gain technological skills.

Appendix 1—Disclosures of Wrongdoing received by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

| Department of Education – Disclosures of Wrongdoing | |
|---|---------------------|
| Information Required under Section 18 of the Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act | Fiscal Year 2016-17 |
| Number of disclosures received | 0 |
| Number of findings of wrongdoing | N/A |
| Details of each wrongdoing | N/A |
| Recommendations and actions taken on each wrong doing | N/A |