



Education

The Department of Education is in its third year of implementing Learning for Life—a three-year plan that focuses on students, emphasizes the basics and provides parents with more information. Building on the success of Learning for Life, the department met with hundreds of its education partners in February so they could provide input for the next wave of improvements. The department will start to implement a new plan, Learning for Life: Brighter Futures, in 2005–2006.

Learning for Life: Planning for Student Success

Through Learning for Life, the department has supported many initiatives including reduced class sizes in the early years, more than one million more books in schools, more support for students with special needs, and targeted funds to priority areas like literacy, math, and whole-school improvement.

In 2005–2006, \$5 million will be invested to meet Learning for Life commitments—specifically, more resource teachers, speech language pathologists, school psychologists and other professionals to increase support for students with special needs. Reading recovery for grade 1 students will continue and grade 2 students will benefit from smaller class sizes.

Learning for Life: Brighter Futures Together

Now, it's time to build on Learning for Life.

The new plan for education will focus on continuing to provide support for students, teachers and parents. The plan will continue to support the extension of smaller class sizes and support for children with special needs. It will target resources to areas where students and teachers need them the most, including math and literacy. In addition, the successful school improvement planning initiative will extend to more schools, coupled with supports to help principals and teachers focus even more clearly on student achievement. Programs to help students who are not succeeding in school and to support healthy lifestyles will be introduced. The current student assessment program will expand over time.

The department will invest \$21.4 million in new funding in 2005–2006 as part of this plan. Brighter Futures Together has six themes:

- Raising the Bar sets higher standards for learning and teaching and recognizes achievements both in and out of school that contribute to a student's education. Initiatives will focus on more advanced course options for students and more literacy and math mentors working with teachers and students. Funding is \$4.5 million.
- Closing the Gap recognizes that some students need additional or different support to succeed in public school. A focus will be on helping students stay in school and make more use of community resources in their education programs like co-operative work placements. Initiatives include more resource teachers and specialists for students with special needs, more textbooks, more support workers for African Nova Scotian students and new resources for Mi'kmaw students. Enhancing libraries is also part of the plan. Funding is \$9.0 million.

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- Developing Healthy and Active Learners recognizes that schools have a role to play in promoting healthy, active living for students. Working with Health Promotion and others, initiatives include support for breakfast programs, new physical education programs with more teachers and healthier eating options for students. Funding is \$1.7 million.
 - Providing Time to Teach and Time to Learn recognizes that students need to get a good start in the early years. Instructional time has to be used and structured to ensure students have more time to learn and teachers more time to teach. Initiatives will include expanding the smaller class size initiative and piloting the pre-primary program. Funding is \$4.6 million.
 - Measuring and Reporting on Success supports the importance of making sound educational decisions based on solid information and focusing on continuous improvements for students, classes, schools, school boards and as a province. Initiatives include expanding student literacy and math assessments to grades 3 and continuing to report to parents in more detail. Funding is \$1.4 million.
 - Strengthening Partnerships for Students' Benefit recognizes that schools cannot "do it all" and that others can make valuable contributions to helping students to succeed. Partners include parents, school advisory councils, community organizations, businesses, departments and agencies of government and others. The goal is to have everyone working together, with student success as their first priority. Funding is \$200,000.

Capital funding

The province has committed to carry out construction on 12 new schools. Four schools—Amherst Elementary, Cumberland Elementary, Barrington High and Hammonds Plains Elementary—will open in 2005–2006. The remaining eight schools—St. Pat's/Queen Elizabeth High, Western Halifax Regional Municipality High, Harbourside/Robert Jamieson High, Truro West Elementary, Northside Elementary, Musquodoboit High, Rankin High, and Glace Bay Junior High—will open over the subsequent two fiscal years.

For more information, contact:
Sue McKeage
Department of Education
Phone: (902) 424-8286



The Honourable Peter G. Christie
Minister of Finance