



Learning for Life II

Brighter Futures Together

2005–2006 Annual Report and 2006–2007 Action Plan



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2005–06 Annual Report and 2006–07 Action Plan

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Minister's Message



Dear partner in education:

Last year government introduced the new plan for education in Nova Scotia, Learning for Life II: Brighter Futures Together. In it, we promised to keep you posted on our progress, with a report on what we accomplished in 2005–06, and our plans for 2006–07. I am very pleased to present the first annual report on achieving these goals, and our plan for 2006–07.

We, as partners in education, wrote this plan together, starting with the foundation built by the first Learning for Life plan in 2002, adding the help provided by many education partners in opportunities like the Partners' Forum in February 2005, and our shared experiences this year.

This spirit of partnership is proof that we all believe our children's education is vital to Nova Scotia's future. The quality of education our children receive affects our future quality of life, because we have learned that children learn more than language arts, sciences, and math in school; they learn how to be healthy, confident, contributing members of society. We need to teach them how to make good lifestyle choices while we teach them to read and write, so they have the opportunity to reach their full potential and contribute their own passion, imagination, and energy back into their communities.

The education and health of Nova Scotia's children is this government's priority. We believe the initiatives in this plan will help our children take a significant step forward toward that brighter future. We invested \$21.4 million in new funding to support the first year of this plan's recommendations and we are investing an additional \$20.2 million in 2006–07.

Each year, we will publish this kind of summary of progress and our plan for the coming year. We believe our education partners want to have this information in a timely way. We will also post, on the department's website, the *Learning for Life II 2005–06 Annual Report and 2006–07 Action Plan, Supplementary Report* which includes additional, specific details.

In closing, this is another in many steps on a significant journey, and we believe we are headed in the right direction. Thank you for your continuing contributions and help.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Casey".

Karen Casey
Minister of Education

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Introduction

"A more comprehensive approach to looking at student success."

– Education Partner

In 2005, the Department of Education, with input from education partners, developed a new plan for public education, *Learning for Life II: Brighter Futures Together*. This four-year plan builds on the foundation of the first Learning for Life plan introduced in 2002, and incorporates the feedback from hundreds of education partners.

Brighter Futures Together continues to support long-time initiatives like smaller class sizes and special education. It also adds support for diversity, and for students in the later grades; helps students live active, healthy lives; targets resources to areas where students and teachers need more support like math and language arts; and emphasizes the importance of collaboration and partnership.

Brighter Futures Together is student-centered and based on the following belief statements:

- Students need to have a solid educational background to successfully participate in the global society and economy.
- Students' learning and achievement must be everyone's first priority.
- Public school education is a shared responsibility among government, school boards, schools, parents, teachers, students, the community, and many other education partners.
- Every student needs opportunities to attain his or her greatest potential, every student can achieve success, and all students need adequate time to learn.
- By living healthier lifestyles, students can become better, more engaged learners at school, and healthier Nova Scotians for life.

Learning for Life II is organized into six main themes, and this report follows that same structure for the initiatives included in the plan.

As well, we have added initiatives to address needs that have been identified since the plan was first published. We plan to start addressing these in coming years, and we will continue to do this where needs are newly identified, in each Annual Report.

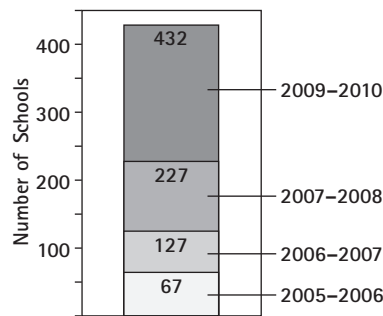
What follows is a summary of what was accomplished, and what is planned for the coming year.

Major Themes

1. Raising the Bar (additional \$1.7 million)

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. The goal is that every student reaches his or her fullest potential.

School Improvement Planning and Accreditation (5-year plan includes all schools by 2009–10)



"The role AYR has played in [creating a learning community in our school]—we have teachers sharing learning materials, a common language, and common goals—wow!"

– School Board Program Co-ordinator

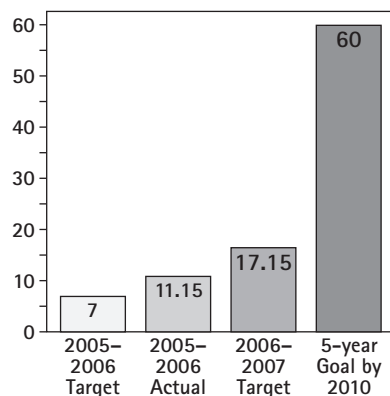
2005–06: what we have done

- 49 more schools in accreditation
- Consultations on principal leadership, teacher professional growth planning
- More mentors, curriculum, PD for Mathematics and Language Arts
- FSL needs assessments and learning resources
- 11 schools preparing for International Baccalaureate (IB) launch

2006–07: what we plan to do next

- 60 more schools in accreditation
- Pilots—principal leadership, growth planning
- Teacher education program review
- More mentors, supports for teachers of mathematics and language arts
- FSL—alternate delivery pilots, offer options to enhance linguistic capacity
- IB schools ready for launch in 2007

Number of Math Mentors (Full-time Equivalents)*



*This supplements resources that individual school boards have allocated for math mentors. The literacy mentorship program is in an earlier implementation phase.

2. Closing the Gap (additional \$9.3 million)

Closing the Gap recognizes some students are not succeeding in the regular public school system, and they need additional or different types of help. The goal is to help each student achieve success. This requires the contribution and support of many partners.

"Although there is no question that purely academic areas must be focussed on, the education we provide must still be broad and holistic so that it includes "opportunities and options."

– Education Partner

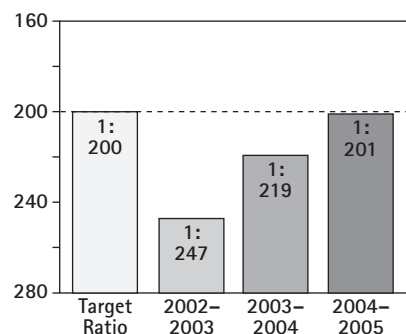
"[I'm glad to see] evaluation of best practices so they can be maintained."

– Education Partner

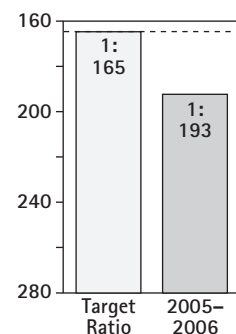
2005–06: what we have done

- ✓ First Options Et Opportunities (O₂) components, youth apprenticeship, increasing student success
- ✓ New Youth Pathways and Transitions programming
- ✓ Literacy supports in grades 7 and 8, preparations for grades 4, 5, and 6
- ✓ Mathematics supports and assessment resources grades P–2
- ✓ Programs and services to support African-Canadian learners
- ✓ Mi'kmaw learners—best practices and home-school liaison pilots, language resources
- ✓ ESL guidelines introduced, support for staff from Office of Immigration
- ✓ Parent-child literacy pilots, five regions
- ✓ Continued to add core professionals, lowered ratio for resource teachers, published four parent fact sheets
- ✓ Autism research, training
- ✓ Reading Recovery 100% implemented, and teachers trained for French Immersion
- ✓ More funds for assistive technology
- ✓ Continue new Tuition Support Program
- ✓ Extend Racial Equity Policy to junior high schools
- ✓ Technology refresh in junior high
- ✓ More books and resources to schools in addition to Textbook Credit Allocation
- ✓ Funds—school library resources, staff

Resource Teacher to Students Ratio
2002–05



Resource Teacher to Students Ratio
2005–06 and Onward

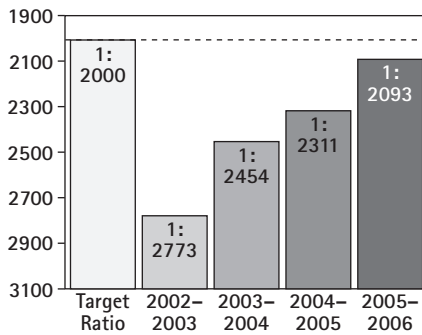


When 1:200 target ratio was achieved, the 1:165 ratio recommended in the 2001 Special Education Implementation Review Committee Report (SEIRC) was established.

"Your [school's] academy has been the only conversation that [my son] is interested in having regarding his education. This is the first time that he feels that he is part of the school!"

– Parent

Speech Language Pathologist to Students Ratio



"We received the library pack today and I wanted to take the time to tell you what a thrill it was to receive it! I know that these titles will be put to good use at our school and be used right away."

– School Board Literacy
Co-ordinator

2006–07: what we plan to do next

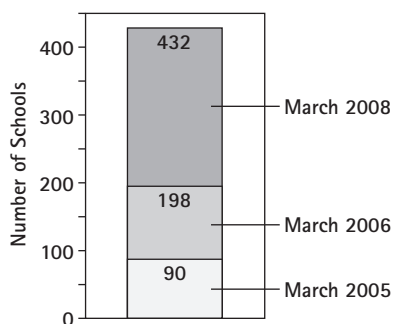
- Expand O₂ program, including co-op support, initiate Trades/Technology Academies, publish handbook for teachers
- More Youth Pathways programming, pursue more course recognitions
- Continue literacy support, extend to grade 9
- New grade 3 mathematics assessment, introduce resources and supports
- African-Canadian learner supports, positive parenting workshops
- Mi'kmaq learner supports, revise programs, evaluate pilots
- More ESL supports, co-ordination of P-12 sector ESL services
- Continue family literacy funding
- Continue adding core professionals, publish two more parent fact sheets
- Three-year plan for teacher PD—autism
- Reading Recovery—sustain, refresh, introduce in French Immersion
- Assistive technology—more resources for boards
- Continue Tuition Support Program—income supplement program
- Racial Equity Policy—four symposia at elementary, introduce to senior high
- Refresh Information and Communication Technology in grade 9, increase online seats to 100
- More books in Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Mathematics
- More funds for school libraries, provision of library resource sets
- *NEW* Ratios for guidance counsellors

3. Developing Healthy, Active Learners (additional \$0.9 million)

Developing Healthy, Active Learners recognizes schools have a role to play in promoting healthy, active living for students. The goal is to help ensure that students become better, more engaged learners at school, and healthier Nova Scotians for life. In addition to education funding, there is also an allocation from the Nova Scotia Health Promotion (now Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection, or NSHPP) budget.

*"Healthy children learn better.
Don't lose that."
– Education Partner*

PEBS Implementation
(All Schools by March 2008)



2005–06: what we have done

- New health curriculum, P–3, 4–6
- New physical education curriculum and more qualified physical education teachers, 3–6
- Consultants in boards and province
- New playground equipment fund
- Work to increase girls' activity levels
- Increase student leadership activity
- New NSHPP awards, increase physical activity outside school hours
- Healthy Foods in Schools policy drafted in consultation with partners
- Breakfast program—support, guidelines
- Positive Effective Behaviours Strategy (PEBS) in 198 schools; tracking pilots
- Create Youth Health Centre standards

2006–07: what we plan to do next

- Develop resources, PD, parent pamphlets for new curriculum
- More qualified physical education teachers
- Continue playground refresh support
- Offer workshops, provide parent information regarding girls' activity levels
- Continue support—student leadership participation, activity outside school
- Begin three-year implementation of Healthy Foods in Schools policy
- New standards for breakfast program
- PEBS—90 schools trained, tracking, receiving reports on patterns/trends
- Youth Health Centre standards to be reflected in school construction and renovations

4. Time to Teach and Time to Learn (additional \$7.8 million)

"The most basic factors that have the greatest impact on our children's education are time spent in the classroom learning, and class size."

– Education Partner

Providing Time to Teach and Time to Learn recognizes that today's youth need to know much more than ever before if they are to participate fully in a global society. To help students prepare, we can ensure they enter school ready to learn from day one, we can help them get started right with smaller class sizes in the early years so they have the attention they need from teachers, and we can take a fresh look at the way instructional time is used and structured to ensure students have more time to learn, and teachers more time to teach.

"Elementary students now get a minimum of 90 minutes of language arts instruction every single day—including at least 60 minutes focussed on reading skills. And in junior high mathematics, 50 minutes of instructional time is required every day in grades 7 and 8."

– Department Press Release

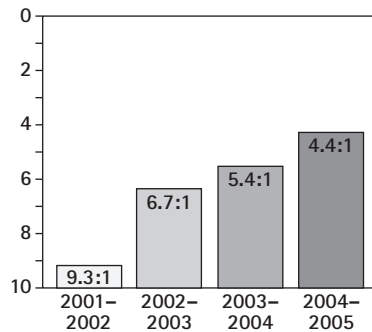
2005–06: what we have done

- Draft policy, and track use of instructional time at sample schools
- Year one, Pre-Primary pilot, 19 sites
- Continue class size caps, early grades

2006–07: what we plan to do next

- Complete time tracking, assess results, develop policy, start implementation
- Second year of Pre-Primary pilot
- Cap grade 3 at 25; P-1 and 1-2 at 20

Students to Current Computers Ratio



5. Measuring and Reporting on Success (additional \$0.4 million)

Measuring and Reporting on Success supports the importance of having more and better information so we can make sound educational decisions, and to focus on continuous improvement for students, teachers, schools, school boards, and the province in general. The annual *Minister's Report to Parents* will be expanded to include more student achievement information, so parents and students have a clearer picture of how our students are performing.

2005–06: what we have done

- Preparations for mathematics and literacy assessments grades 3, 6, 9
- Prepare classroom mathematics assessment resources
- Expand *Minister's Report to Parents*
- Reinstate Graduate Follow-up Survey
- Education quality monitoring framework being developed
- Complete design requirements for new student information system

2006–07: what we plan to do next

- Mathematics assessments: prepare for grade 3
- Literacy assessments: administer grade 9, prepare for grade 3
- Implement classroom mathematics P–3 assessment resources
- Continue *Minister's Report to Parents*
- Survey 2006 graduates
- Education quality framework—gap analysis and implementation plan
- Decisions on next steps for student information system

"Testing from 3, 6, 9, and 12 is encouraging to rural parents [because it] recognizes early childhood development."

– Education Partner

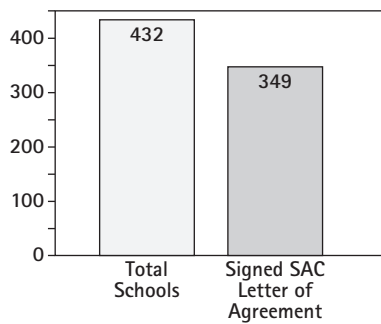
6. Strengthening Partnerships (additional \$0.1 million)

"Let's continue to break down the barriers between groups."

– Education Partner

Strengthening Partnerships recognizes public education is a shared responsibility between government, schools, parents, teachers, students, the community, and many other education partners and that success will only be achieved by working together.

School Advisory Councils with Signed Letters of Agreement (some SACs serve more than one school)



"Bring the arts—music, visual, and theatre—into the schools."

– Education Partner

2005–06: what we have done

- Develop resources, workshops to support School Advisory Councils
- More parent fact sheets and pamphlets
- Develop career resources for learners of all ages including public school age
- Community and business partnerships in support of new O₂ programming
- Strengthen government partnerships

2006–07: what we plan to do next

- SAC resources and supports in place
- Distribute print resources to parents and consult on information needs
- Expand partnerships with other education institutions, community, and business in support of expanded O₂
- Continue developing government partnerships in areas of specific need
- *NEW* Partnerships with arts community to expand Artists in Schools program

Conclusion and Next Steps

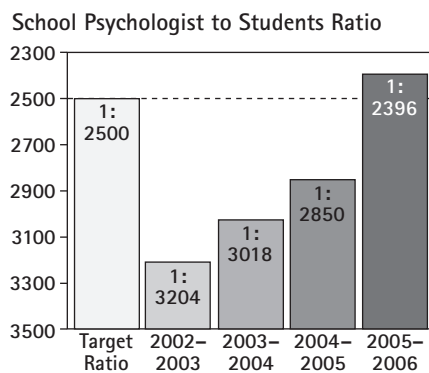
"I think the province is moving in the right direction for students. I'm pleased that the plan reflects the feedback of so many partners and the needs of the students."

– Nova Scotia Federation of Home and School Federations Spokesperson

Brighter Futures Together outlines long-term commitments that will take many years to completely fulfill, and results will become evident only over time. However, we believe it is a solid plan, based on evidence, that will improve our public education system, provided we continue to work together, with student learning and achievement as everyone's first priority.

We are committed to keeping the plan current by regular updates, and by adding new initiatives as issues arise during the life of the plan. This is the first instalment on that commitment. In addition, we provide more details in a new *Supplementary Report*, available on the department's website, <www.EDnet.ns.ca> (where the full 2005 Learning for Life II plan is also available), by e-mail <brighterfuturestogether@gov.ns.ca>, or by calling 424-0040 to receive a paper copy by mail.

In closing, we are confident that, by working together, we will improve the public education system in Nova Scotia and ensure that students graduate with the best possible preparation for a bright future.



2003 *Blueprint* Initiatives

Initiative	Initiatives Related to <i>Raising the Bar</i>
144	Expand the range of advanced high school in-class and distance education courses to include language arts, social sciences, and the arts.
147	Establish a province-wide School Accreditation Program with public reporting. Schools that need assistance will be provided with targeted resources, through the school advisory council, to support the school's improvement plan.
149	Initiate structural, administrative, and accountability changes, in consultation with teachers, school boards, and parent groups, to improve student results.
151	Continue to expand professional development opportunities for teachers in priority areas such as math and language arts.
152	Audit teachers teaching out of their field of study. Work with school boards, NSTU, and universities to identify strategies to better match teachers to their subject specialties.

Initiative	Initiatives Related to <i>Closing the Gap</i>
77	Train an additional 88 medical lab technologists, over the next four years, providing bursaries for those who agree to work in Nova Scotia (link to Pathways initiative).
137	Provide students with at least one million more books, math tools, learnware packages, and teaching resources (by year 4).
139	Use individualized test results (reading and math) and teacher assessments to identify struggling students; provide intervention and support in junior high to achieve better learning outcomes.
141	Complete the Learning for Life plan for students with special needs, including more professionals, assistive technology, Reading Recovery available to all Grade 1 classes, and individualized support for students.
142	Develop and fund a new tuition support program for special needs students and individual program plans. The program will include a faster appeal process, an ombudsman for students with special needs who will have authority to recommend options, providing funding to parents for students with IPPs attending private schools. Additional support could be offered to low-income families so ability to pay is not a barrier. As well, accountability agreements would be required with private schools.
143	Standards for all new teacher assistants and professional development for existing teacher assistants so their skills meet the needs of the children they support.
145	Add resources to support the long-term viability of isolated rural schools, including establishing minimum standards for delivering classroom and distance education.
154	Implement the recommendations of the Provincial Student Education Council report on bullying, including providing province-wide training sessions for teachers.
185	Implement the operational recommendations outlined in the <i>BLAC Report</i> .

Initiative	Initiatives Related to <i>Developing Healthy and Active Learners</i>
61	Help Nova Scotia producers maximize their market share by increasing awareness of Nova Scotia-grown agricultural products as part of Brand Nova Scotia.
91	Aggressively promote "Knowledge is the Best Medicine," an education campaign designed to prevent the over-use or mis-use of prescription drugs (this topic is included in the grades primary-6 and 8 health education curriculum).
102	Continue to work on an evidence-based strategy to reduce Nova Scotia's high rates of chronic disease. Nova Scotia's Chronic Disease Prevention Plan will include a comprehensive, multi-year approach that includes targets and time lines.
105	Implement and fund the next steps outlined in Active Kids/Healthy Kids, Nova Scotia's physical activity strategy for children and youth.
106	Dedicate additional resources to support Esteem Team: Nova Scotia athletes going to schools to speak of the value and benefits of sport and healthy living.
108	Ensure our publicly owned schools are made available to support free after-school physical activities for youth. (Education as lead, Office of Health Promotion as partner).
109	Minimum 6 hours after-class time for community groups encouraging physical activity.
111	Dedicate resource within the Office of Health Promotion, the Youth Secretariat, and the Senior Citizen's Secretariat to identify and implement new community-based approaches that encourage healthy living among the young and old.
112	Work with school boards to implement healthy eating policies as part of the healthy eating strategy for Nova Scotia; Our Healthy School in all elementary schools by year 4.
113	Increase the number of Teen Health Centres throughout the province.
116	Create Nova Scotia's first School and Workplace Health Champions Award. Winning strategies for promoting good health will be publicized and provided with a financial reward to be used to support ongoing healthy school and workplace initiatives.
117	Work with the Department of Education, NSTU, and school boards to expand health curriculum professional development opportunities.
118	Introduce additional anti-smoking programs in schools and workplaces, including "You Choose" in schools (students determine anti-smoking ads).
119	Continue to fund Nova Scotia's Comprehensive Tobacco Control Strategy with a commitment to use a portion of additional revenue from future tobacco tax revenues to support anti-smoking programs and supports (Education confirmed as partner).
121	Develop a health information referral service and interactive website to respond to information requests on government and non-government (e.g., Health Charities Network, Sport Nova Scotia) health programs, services and information.
122	Maximize the value of Nova Scotia's public health professionals (public health nurses, addictions counsellors, paramedics, nutritionists, etc.) by examining new opportunities for their involvement in schools and Family Resource Centres.

Initiative	Initiatives Related to <i>Providing Time to Teach and Time to Learn</i>
129	Pilot a new Ready to Learn voluntary, free pre-school program for 4-year-olds, developed by the departments of Community Services, Education, and Health. Curriculum will be activity-based, and emphasize socialization skills, to help children become more "ready to learn" by the time they enter school. Assessments, such as hearing and speech, will be carried out through the Ready to Learn program. The first pilots will be in areas where day care access is limited, and where school space is now available. Pilot evaluation will determine the benefits of universal availability.
132	Further reduce class sizes to provide more one-on-one teaching time.
133	Beginning in 2005, combined primary-grade 1 classes will have a maximum of 20 students, or an additional non-teaching adult in the classroom; also for Primary and Grade 1 classes with students with special needs who have an individual program plan.
134	In 2006, the criteria (combined classes/IPP students) for a 20 student maximum will extend to grades 1-2 and 2-3 classes.
135	In 2006, all grade 3 classes will have a maximum of 25 students.
136	In 2007, all grade 4 classes will have a maximum of 25 students.

Initiative	Initiatives Related to <i>Measuring and Reporting on Success</i>
138	Continue testing program, including a new grade 6 language arts test, where parents are provided, for the first time, with their child's individualized test results.
139	Use individualized test results and teacher assessments to identify struggling students; provide intervention and support to achieve better learning outcomes.

Initiative	Initiatives Related to <i>Strengthening Partnerships</i>
140	Provide parents with additional information and strategies that support at home learning; emphasis will be placed on the early years in reading, writing, and math.
146	Amend the School Advisory Council mandate to give parents a more meaningful role.
148	Launch the website to provide parents with plain language information on what students are expected to learn and achieve at different grade levels.
160	Develop a province-wide, comprehensive single-entry career development, education, and employment service. Service would include more resources and support for in-school counselling and improve information sharing between business, labour, industry and education providers. (Public schools are one of several recipients and supports).

