

Context Statement

Social Context

New Brunswick's population as of July 1, 2001, stood at 757,077. Serving Canada's only officially bilingual province, the New Brunswick public education system plays an important role in offering students the opportunity to learn in both French and English. The province's dual system provides a full curriculum and services in both official languages.

The Department of Education has made a considerable effort to develop a school system that will meet the needs of all students. It has put in place programs to reduce school-leaving by identifying potential dropouts, to enable physically challenged students to attend school, and to facilitate the integration into the school system of as many students as possible. As a result, the province has high rates of retention (students who stay in school) within an education system that is committed to the principles of inclusion for students with special needs.

Organization of the School System

Since 1967, the provincial government has had sole responsibility for financing public schools and is committed to equal opportunity for all students. The Minister of Education has the authority to prescribe curriculum and establish educational goals and standards.

The Province of New Brunswick became officially bilingual in 1969. In 1974, in recognition of its linguistic duality, the province established two parallel but separate education systems. Each linguistic sector of the Department of Education is responsible for its own curriculum and assessment.

The public education governance structure in New Brunswick has undergone a number of reforms in the past decade. In 1996 school boards were dissolved. Between 1996 and 2001 the province's 18 school district offices (organized in eight administrative units) held responsibility for the operation of the schools. A network of parental governance structures was established at the school, district, and provincial levels. In 2001, the number of school districts was reduced to 14 independently administered units, five French and nine English school districts. District Education Councils (DECs) were created, consisting of publicly and locally elected members. DECs are responsible for establishing the direction and priorities for the school district and for making decisions as to how the district and schools are operated. The DECs have broad policy and planning responsibilities and are ultimately responsible to the community for the performance of the schools and for meeting provincial standards.

Kindergarten through grade 12 enrolment for the 2001–02 school year totalled 122,792 (85,689 students in the anglophone sector and 37,103 students in the francophone sector). The starting age for school is five, and attendance is mandatory until the age of 18. The number of instructional days currently stands at 187 days per year.

English Language Arts Teaching

In the mid-1990s, the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation brought together experienced English Language Arts educators to develop a common curriculum. New Brunswick curriculum documents, published in 1998, articulate the intended outcomes of English Language Arts learning from kindergarten through grade 12. The resources and levels of expectation become more sophisticated as students move through the system, but the identified areas of learning are common to all. The ten general English Language Arts curriculum outcomes are divided into three strands: speaking and listening; reading and viewing; writing and representing. Support documents specific to K–3, 4–6, 6–8, and 9–12 elaborate upon the outcomes by grade. The curriculum includes choice and flexibility in classroom organization, teaching practices, resources, and school-based assessment. Teachers can organize and structure teaching and learning in a variety of ways to meet student needs.

English Language Arts Assessment

The Department of Education administers a comprehensive provincial evaluation program to monitor student achievement at particular points in the system. This provides important feedback at provincial, local, and individual levels about the knowledge and skills students have mastered.

Currently, annual assessments are administered at grades 3 and 5, testing outcomes identified in the provincial Mathematics, Science, and Language Arts curriculum documents. These are designed as program assessments with a focus on reporting group data in terms of whether or not expectations have been met.

At the middle school level, the Middle Level English Language Proficiency Assessment is administered early in grade 8. Success on this assessment is a requirement for receiving a New Brunswick high school diploma. Students have a number of additional opportunities to meet this basic literacy requirement before graduation.

Also, since 1993 the Department of Education has administered a provincial examination in English at grade 11 that counts for 30% of a student's final mark.

Results for New Brunswick (English)

There are significant differences between this jurisdiction's performance and the Canadian English performance among 13-year-olds at levels 2, 3, and 4. More than 75% of this age group demonstrate at least some control of the elements of writing with some integration and a simple meaning (level 2). Almost 35% demonstrate control with general integration and a clear perspective (level 3).

When confidence intervals are taken into account, writing results for 16-year-olds are similar to the Canadian English performance at all levels. Almost 60% demonstrate control of the elements of writing, with an integration and development that is generalized and functional (level 3). More than 15% perform at the higher levels of effective writing (levels 4 and 5).

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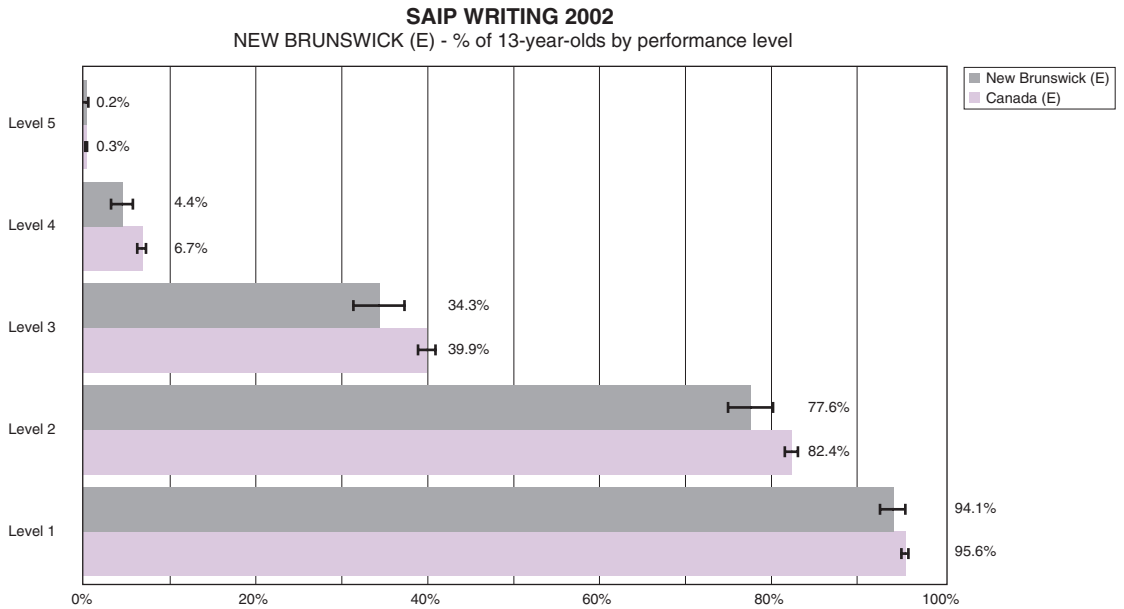
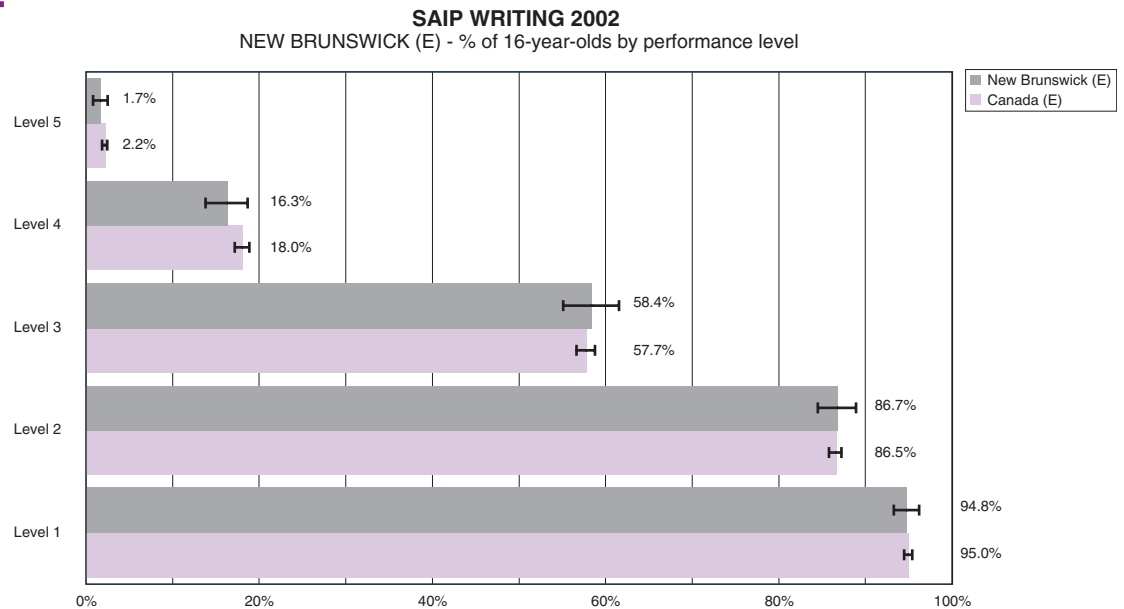


CHART NB(E)2



Context Statement

Social Context

Socioeconomic development has improved in New Brunswick over the past few years. In spite of this trend, the unemployment rate is higher than the Canadian average, especially in the francophone regions of the province. As of July 1, 2001, New Brunswick's population was 757,077. The average unemployment rate for 2001 was 11.2%, versus a Canadian rate of 7.2%. For 2001, New Brunswick reported a participation rate of 62.2% among residents 15 years old and over (work force over population of working age), and an employment to population ratio of 55.2%. Rural residents make up 49.6% of the population and urban residents 50.4%.

New Brunswick has been officially bilingual since 1969. The native language of more than one-third of its population is French. School enrolment is 122,792 students, of whom 37,103 (30.2%) attend francophone schools. Almost half of students enrolled in francophone schools live in a majority anglophone environment.

Organization of the School System

Since 1967, the provincial government has had full responsibility for funding public schools and has undertaken to provide all students with equal learning opportunities. The Minister of Education is empowered to determine the curriculum and to establish education objectives and standards.

In 1969, the province of New Brunswick became officially bilingual. In 1974, the province created an educational system composed of two parallel and distinct divisions, one for each linguistic community. The francophone section of the Department of Education is responsible for providing curriculum and assessment that respond to the needs of the francophone population.

The governance structure underwent in-depth reforms in 2001, with the number of school districts being reduced from 18 to 14, i.e. five francophone and nine anglophone.

District education councils (DECs), made up of members locally elected by the public, play an important role in the new governance structure. DECs are responsible for determining direction and making decisions about the operation of schools and districts. DECs have broad responsibilities for policy development and planning and are ultimately accountable to the community for the performance of schools and compliance with provincial standards.

The New Brunswick school system begins in kindergarten and continues to grade 12. Children are enrolled in kindergarten in the calendar year in which they reach the age of 5 by December 31. School attendance is compulsory until the end of secondary schooling or age 18. The school year includes 187 teaching days.

In recent years, considerable efforts have been made to respond to the particular needs of students and to make school accessible to all. In accordance with the New Brunswick Education Act and regulations, school administrators are required to place students with special needs in regular classrooms, providing that the educational requirements of all students are considered. Moreover, early detection programs have been put in place to discourage school-leaving. This has resulted in one of the lowest school dropout rates in Canada: for the 1999–2000 school year, francophone schools recorded a dropout rate of 3.1%.

School districts are responsible for implementing graduation requirements from grades 1 to 8. In grades 9 to 12, the minimum passing grade for credit is 55%. Since 1991, provincial secondary school examinations are given to all students at the end of their studies and count for 40% of their final grade in seven required subjects, including French in grade 12.

French Instruction

French is a core discipline in the New Brunswick system of instruction. French courses offered in the province are mandatory for all students from kindergarten to grade 12.

By the age of 13, students have received some 1,300 hours of instruction in French since their first year of schooling, and by the age of 16, approximately 500 additional hours. At the secondary level, francophone students must obtain six credits in French in order to receive a secondary school diploma.

French courses use a communicative approach in a multimedia context, based on a philosophy focusing on skill development. They promote the development of advanced language skills by students through a variety of language experiences including expressive, informative, analytical, critical, play-based, etc. The fundamental elements of the French curriculum are communication and the mechanics of language. The dimensions included in SAIP assessments are mostly covered in the curriculum, which includes the same skills, except for extrapolation.

Elementary Level

In addition to pan-Canadian (SAIP) and international (Programme for International Student Assessment, or PISA) assessments, New Brunswick has administered since 1993 a formative assessment program in elementary-level French. The assessments are administered each year in September to all students in grades 4 and 8. Results are provided to schools by mid-October and are used as indicators of students' strengths and weaknesses, while providing a snapshot of their achievement at strategic points in their educational progress. A detailed report on the performance of each student is provided to the student's parents and teacher. Students' assessment results have no impact on their school marks.

Secondary Level

At the provincial level, the francophone sector of the Department of Education has administered since 1991 a grade 12 French examination, at the end of the last compulsory French course in secondary school. This examination includes two components, written expression and written comprehension. The results of the examination make up 40% of students' final marks and are provided to schools within five days of administration. A detailed statistical report is later provided to school districts and all secondary schools.

Teachers' participation in each phase of development, administration, and scoring of these exams is crucial. In addition, teachers' participation has been found to have professional development value in respect of their assessment practices in French.

Results for New Brunswick (French)

There are significant differences between this jurisdiction's performance and the Canadian French performance for 13-year-olds at levels 2, 3, and 4 and at levels 1, 3, 4, and 5 for 16-year-olds. Almost 80% of 13-year-olds demonstrate at least some control of the elements of writing and some integration (level 2). Almost 30% perform at level 3 or better with control of the elements of writing and a clear perspective.

Over 55% of 16-year-olds demonstrate control of the elements of writing, with writing that is generally integrated, functional, and maintained throughout with a clear perspective (at least level 3). Almost 15% perform at the higher levels of effective writing (levels 4 and 5).

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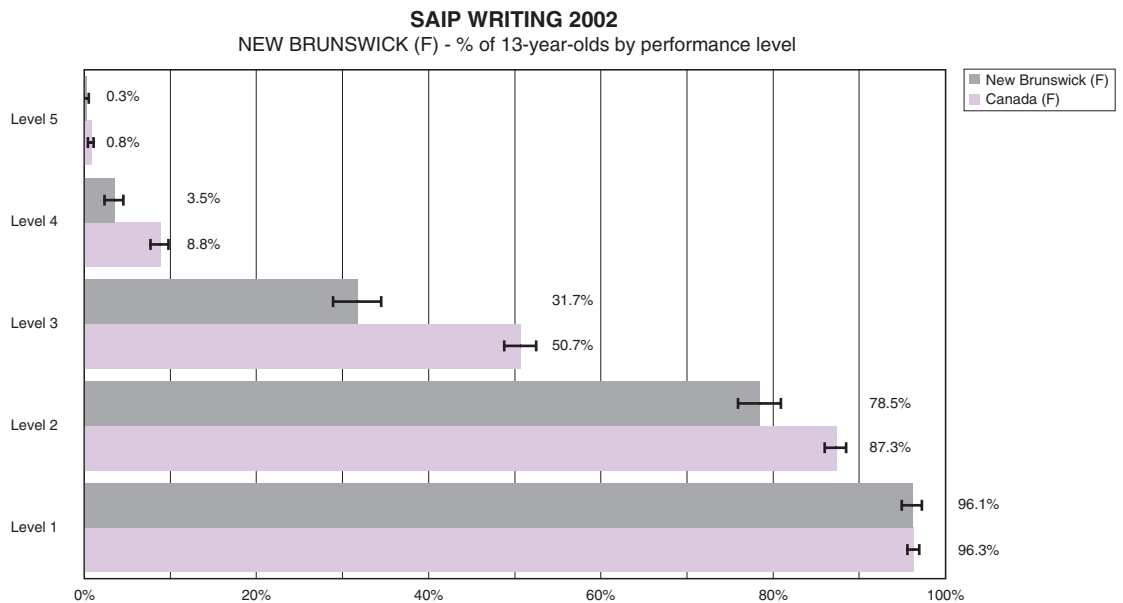
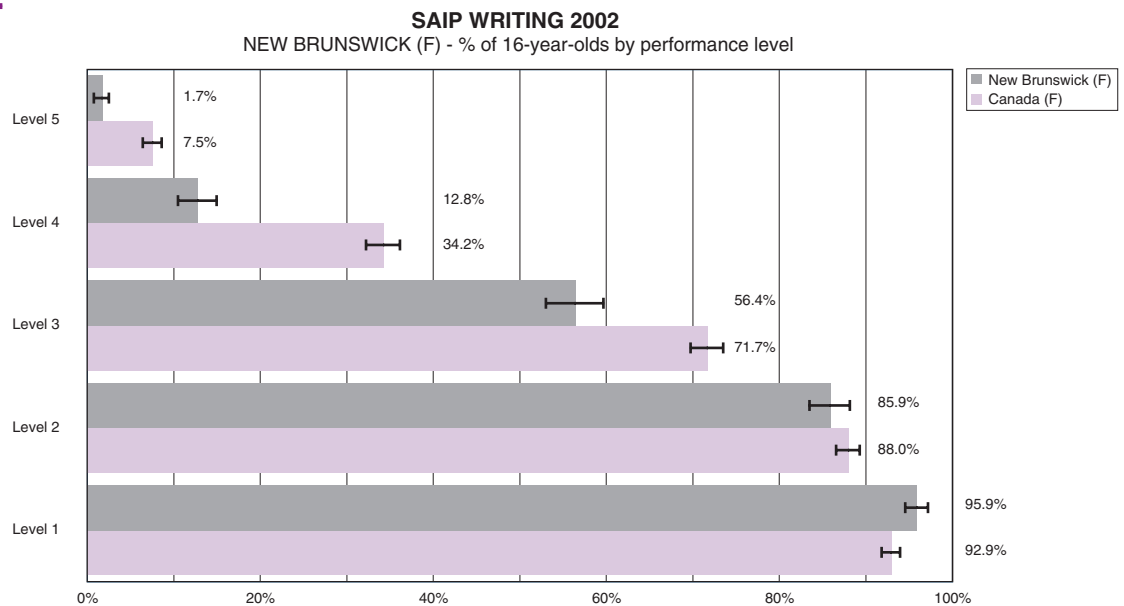


CHART NB(F)2



Context Statement

Social Context

Nova Scotia is a small province with a population of 944,765, with a higher rural population than the Canadian average. Population growth is currently about 0.5% annually. Immigration is low both in absolute numbers and compared to immigration in Canada as a whole. About 9.2% of the population speaks both French and English, or French only. Among the total population, about 2% is African-Canadian, 1.2% is Aboriginal, and about 1.2% consists of other visible minorities. Unemployment rates in Nova Scotia are typically above the Canadian average.

Organization of the School System

Nova Scotia's total school population is 153,450 from primary to grade 12. The province has a teaching force of 9,655. There are seven school boards. About 97% of the students are enrolled in anglophone school boards, and about 3% of the students are enrolled in the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial. School enrolment is expected to decrease over the next few years.

Children who are five years old on or before October 1 are admitted to public school. Students must attend school until they are 16 years old. For the most part, 13-year-old students are in grade 7 or 8, 16-year-old students are in grade 10 or 11.

Language Teaching

Implementation of the Atlantic Canada English language arts curriculum began in 1997. Key aspects of this curriculum include the following:

- knowledge of and experience with a broad range of texts
- knowledge about language strategies
- knowledge about the features and purposes of various types of text
- knowledge about the underlying systems and structures of texts
- an emphasis on the personal, social, and cultural contexts of language learning
- an expanded concept of text to describe any language event, whether oral, written, or visual
- resource-based learning environments
- English language arts classrooms as centres of inquiry where learners investigate language and language learning
- interactive learning and the use of social interactions as instructional contexts
- increased opportunities for students to use current and emerging technologies
- the integration of assessment with instruction and the use of a wide variety of assessment strategies

Nova Scotia is currently focusing implementation support on the reading components of the Atlantic Canada English language arts curriculum and has introduced an initiative called *Active Young Readers* in grades primary to 6. A similar initiative called *Writers in Action* will be introduced to support writing, language structure, and usage components of the curriculum, beginning in grades 4–6.

Writing Assessment

The Program of Learning Assessment for Nova Scotia (PLANS) includes the development of student assessments in grades 6 and 9 and Nova Scotia Examinations (NSE) in grade 12.

Language arts assessments and examinations include a writing component. Examinations are conducted in January and June of each school year and count for 30% of students' final course marks.

The results of the Program Assessment and Nova Scotia Examinations are published annually in the *Minister's Report to Parents*.

Results for Nova Scotia (English)

There are significant differences between this jurisdiction's performance and the Canadian English performance for 13-year-olds at levels 1, 2, 3, and 4 and at levels 3 and 4 for 16-year-olds. More than 75% of 13-year-olds demonstrate at least some control of the elements of writing and some integration (level 2). Furthermore, 30% perform at level 3 or better, with control of the elements of writing and a clear perspective.

Over 50% of 16-year-olds write at least with control of the elements of writing, with general integration, and the maintained development of a clear perspective (level 3).

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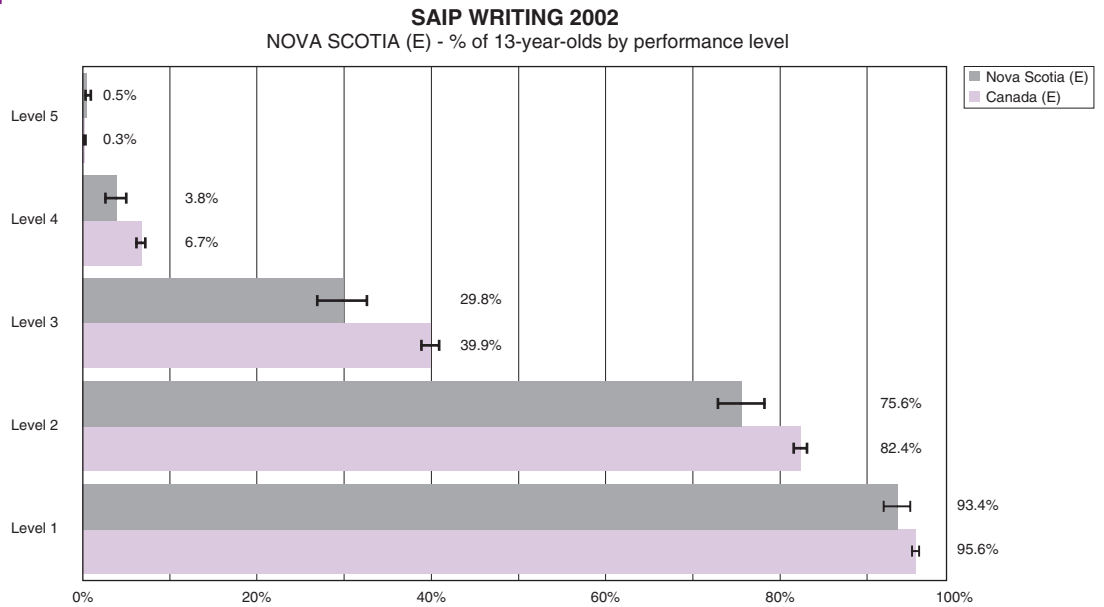
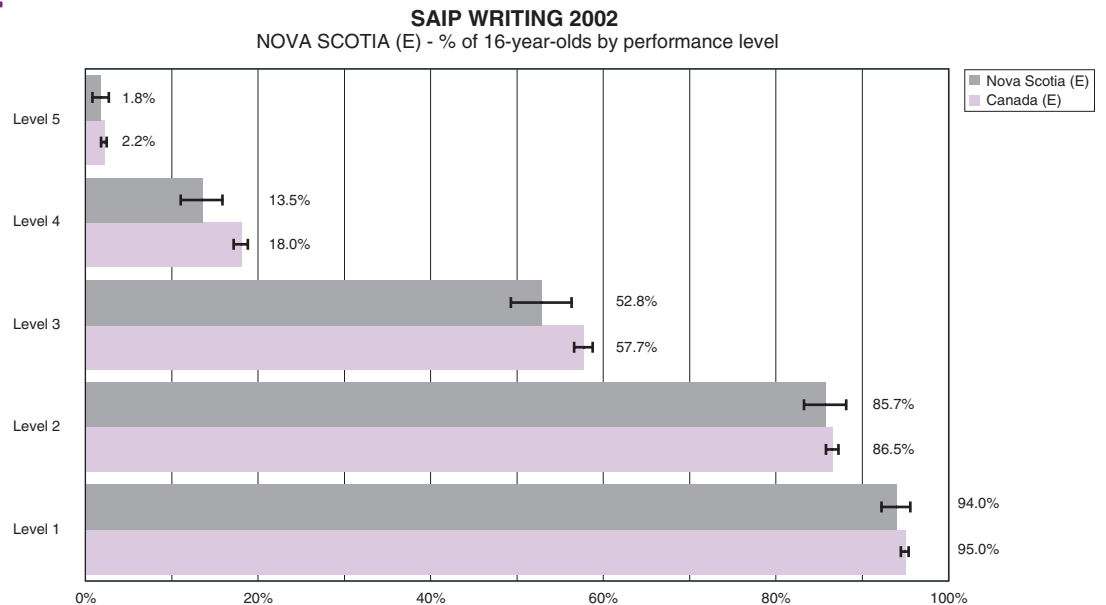


CHART NS(E)2



Context Statement

Social Context

Nova Scotia has a population of 944,765, with a higher rural population than the national average. Population growth is currently about 0.5% annually. Immigration is low both in absolute numbers and when compared to immigration in Canada as a whole. About 9.2% of the population speaks both French and English, or French only. About 2% of the population is African-Canadian, 1.2% is Aboriginal, and 1.2% consists of other visible minorities. The unemployment rate in Nova Scotia is typically above the national average.

Organization of the School System

Nova Scotia's total enrolment from primary to 12 is 153,450 students, of whom 4,109 study in French (first language). The province employs 9,655 teachers and is divided into seven school boards. School enrolment is expected to decrease slightly over the next five years. Teaching in French (first language) is the sole responsibility of the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP), which employs some 311 teachers.

In Nova Scotia, children who are five years old on or before October 1 are admitted to public school. Students must attend school up to the age of 16. Most 13 year-old students are in grade 7 or 8, while 16 year-old students are in grade 10 or 11.

Language Teaching

All teachers implement the French language arts curriculum in all schools of the CSAP from kindergarten to grade 8. For the last ten years, the development of the language curriculum has been characterized by the following key elements:

- Teaching methods have evolved to reflect a holistic appreciation of language learning.
- Curricula at each level emphasize using language to learn and to communicate, placing particular emphasis on exploring, creating, and communicating the meanings of texts.
- Programs integrate, as much as possible, the teaching of a diverse set of linguistic competencies, treating them as elements of the communication process.
- Emphasis is primarily placed on oral expression, learning in small groups, social skills, co-operative learning, and independent learning.
- Writing is considered as much a learning process as a skill.
- Greater attention is given to personal and critical response in reading.
- The program encourages students to become actively engaged in reading texts from different media and to become familiar with various information and communication technologies.
- The program calls for the use of resources taken from the press and other media, representing diverse language levels, genres, and cultures.
- Assessment is integrated with instruction.

Departmental staff, in concert with teachers from all over the province, are currently piloting the French language arts curriculum for grades 9 to 12. In addition, the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (APEF) is proceeding with the development of a common French language arts curriculum for grades 9 to 12.

Nova Scotia is currently focusing implementation support on the reading components of the French language arts curriculum and has introduced an initiative called *Active Young Readers/Jeunes lecteurs actifs* in grades primary to 6. A similar initiative called *Writers in Action/Écrivains à l'œuvre* will be introduced to support writing, language structure, and usage components of the curriculum, beginning in grades 4 to 6.

Writing Assessment

The Program of Learning Assessment for Nova Scotia (PLANS) includes the development of student assessments in grades 6 and 9 and Nova Scotia Examinations (NSE) in grade 12.

Language arts assessments and examinations include a writing component. Examinations are conducted in January and June of each school year and count for 30% of students' final course marks.

The results of the Program Assessment are published annually in the *Minister's Report to Parents*.

Results for Nova Scotia (French)

There are significant differences between this jurisdiction's performance and the Canadian French performance for 13-year-olds at levels 2, 3, and 4. The differences at levels 2 and 3 are notably less than the differences in 1998. Almost 75% of this age group demonstrate at least some control of the elements of writing and some integration (level 2). As well, almost 25% perform at level 3 or better, with control of the elements of writing and a clear perspective.

There are significant differences between this jurisdiction's performance and the Canadian French performance for 16-year-olds at levels 1, 3, 4, and 5. The differences at levels 2, 3, and 4 are notably less than the differences in 1998. Over 40% demonstrate at least some control of the elements of writing and some integration (level 2).

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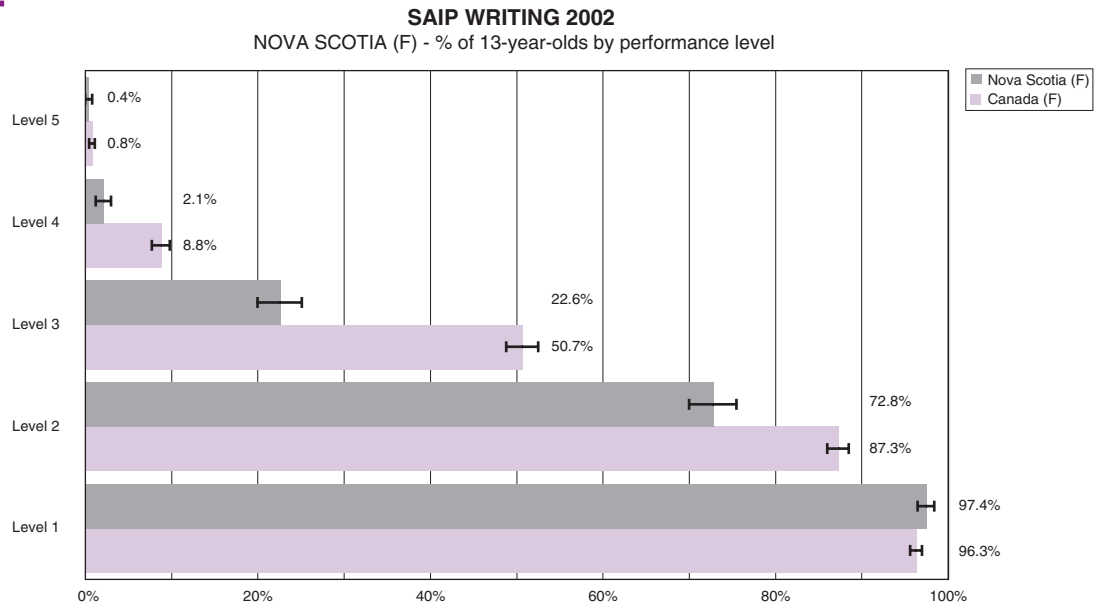
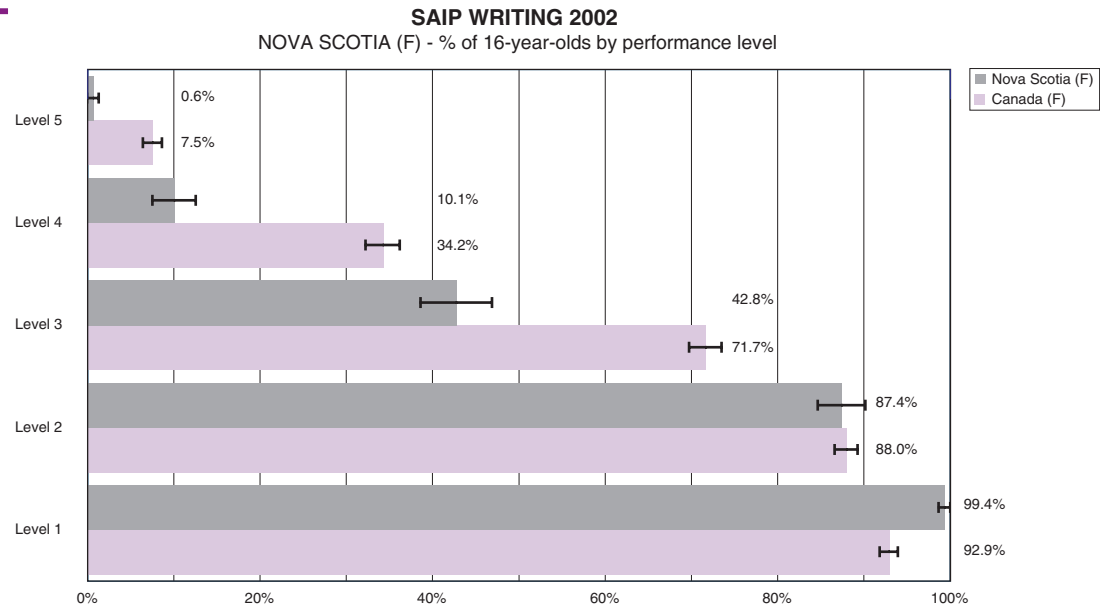


CHART NS(F)2



Context Statement

Social Context

Prince Edward Island (PEI) is the smallest province in Canada, both in terms of land (5,600 square kilometres) and population (138,500). Ninety-five per cent of the population speaks English. Sixty per cent of the population is rural, with about seven per cent living on farms. The setting is predominately rural with agriculture, tourism, and fisheries constituting the major industries. The unemployment rate is above the Canadian average, and per capita income is below the Canadian average. The Confederation Bridge, the world's longest continuous multi-span bridge, which was opened in 1997, connects this crescent-shaped island to the mainland.

Organization of the School System

At the time of the SAIP 2002 Writing III assessment, Prince Edward Island's public school system was composed of three school boards and 23,660 students enrolled in 69 public schools. The province has a teaching force of approximately 1,500 teachers employed by the school boards. Of the total student population, about 2.5% are enrolled in five French schools, and 15% are enrolled in French immersion courses. In addition, there were four private schools with 220 students and one band-operated school.

The province expects school enrolment to decrease over the next few years.

In 2001, Prince Edward Island introduced a province-wide publicly funded community-based kindergarten program, which attracts approximately 97% of the province's eligible 5-year-olds.

The school system consists of grades 1–12. Students entering grade 1 must be six years of age by the end of January of their first school year.

Prince Edward Island's students are accommodated within facilities that contain a number of grade configurations, including grades 1–3, 1–4, 1–6, 5–8, 4–6, 1–8, 1–9, 7–9, 9–12, and 10–12. This diversity results from demands placed on the school by the local community, the school enrolment, and existing facilities.

In Prince Edward Island, the 13-year-old students who participated in the SAIP Writing III assessment were for the most part in grades 7 and 8, while the 16-year-old students were in language arts programs at the grade 10 or 11 level and are required to take at least three high school level language arts courses for graduation.

Language Arts Teaching

Prince Edward Island is a place where learning is highly valued and where the equitable opportunities for lifelong learning are a priority.

The province has been working in collaboration with the other three provinces in Atlantic Canada in the development of an Atlantic Canada language arts curriculum for grades 1–12. The philosophy and outcomes of this language arts curriculum are stated in the Foundation for the Atlantic Canada Language Arts Curriculum document.

Currently, revisions to the language arts curriculum and updating of resources have taken place at most grade levels, with piloting and implementation occurring at the higher grades.

Language Arts Assessment

Prince Edward Island does not have large-scale provincial assessment programs. Classroom teachers on PEI are responsible for assessment, evaluation, and promotion of students from grade 1 through 12.

Prince Edward Island teachers are encouraged to use a variety of assessment strategies that are aligned with the curriculum outcomes and integrate assessment with instruction and to use this information to help them make decisions about their teaching practices and strategies and to inform students, parents, and other school personnel about student progress.

Results for Prince Edward Island

There are significant differences between this jurisdiction's performance and the Canadian English performance for 13-year-olds at levels 2, 3, and 4. Almost 80% of this age group demonstrate at least some control of the elements of writing with integration of some of those elements (level 2). Over 30% demonstrate control, integration, and clear perspective or better (level 3).

There are significant differences between this jurisdiction's performance and the Canadian English performance for 16-year-olds at levels 1, 2, 3, and 4. Over 50% of 16-year-olds demonstrate at least control of the elements of writing, general integration and a clear perspective (level 3).

CHART PE1

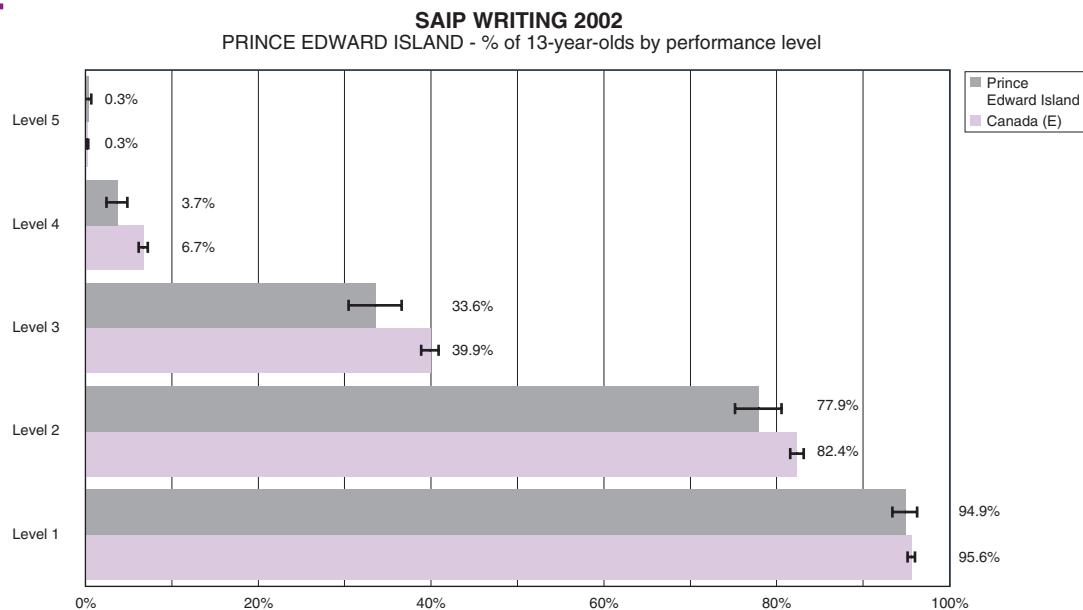
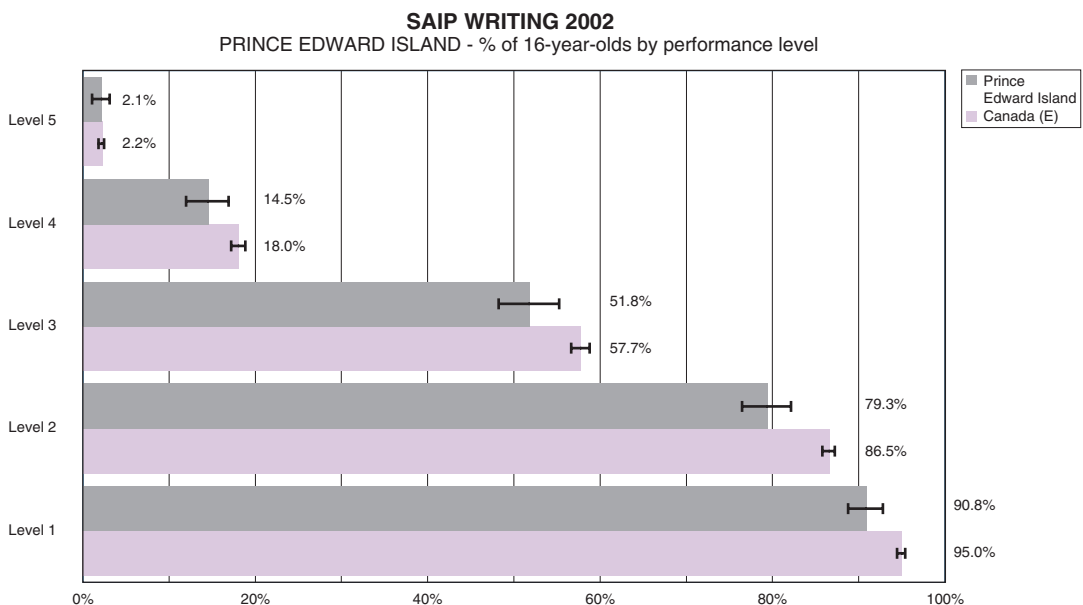


CHART PE2



Context Statement

Social Context

In Newfoundland and Labrador, there are fewer than half a million people spread over a large geographical area. The small population and large size of the province provide many challenges for the delivery of educational programs and services. The school system in the province has experienced declining enrolments since 1972, making it increasingly difficult to maintain appropriate levels of programming, particularly in rural communities. As a result of increased activity in the mining sector, growth in tourism, and increased fisheries output, the economy is expected to increase significantly with a predicted GDP growth of 4.6% by 2003. As well, employment is expected to increase by 2.1% over the next year within the province.

Organization of the School System

The province's education system is a fully public one with 11 elected school boards, including one francophone board, 326 schools with a total student enrolment of 86,898, and 6,264 school-based educators.

Even though school entry is compulsory for children of six years of age by December 31, most enter kindergarten if they are five by that date. Typically 13-year-olds are in grade 8, and 16-year-olds are in grade 11.

Writing Teaching

Students in Newfoundland and Labrador are learning language arts through the Atlantic Canada English language arts curriculum. In general, both 13-year-old and 16-year-old students experience writing as part of the language arts curriculum and are expected to

- use writing to explore, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learnings and to use their imaginations;
- create texts collaboratively and independently, using a variety of forms for a range of audiences and purposes;
- use a range of strategies to develop effective writing and to enhance their clarity, precision, and effectiveness.

High school students take a two-credit English course in each of three years of high school. Many students also study a literature course or do additional courses in writing. Approximately 20% of high school students enrol in non-academic basic English courses.

To graduate, each high school student must complete four 2-credit courses as part of their required program. Each of these courses represents a minimum of 110 instructional hours.

Writing Assessment

In recent years, there has been an increased emphasis on criterion-referenced testing. Criterion-referenced tests in writing were administered to grade 3 students in 1995, to grade 6 students in 1997, and to grade 9 students in 1996 and 1999. Beginning in 2001, the criterion-referenced tests were extended to include all strands of language arts including writing. A language arts assessment is administered annually to students in grades 3 and 6 and every three years to students in grade 9.

As of June 2001, provincial examinations for senior high school students were reinstated and administered in English literature. These examinations include a written component that assesses not only content but also the elements of writing.

Results for Newfoundland and Labrador

There are significant differences between this jurisdiction's performance and the Canadian English performance for 13-year-olds at levels 1, 2, and 3. Among 13-year-olds, 75% demonstrate at least some control of the elements of writing and the integration of some of these elements (level 2). Over 30%, at level 3 or better, write with control, integration, and a clear perspective.

There are no significant differences between this jurisdiction's performance among 16-year-olds and the Canadian English performance for this age group with the exception of level 4. Almost 60% of 16-year-olds perform at level 3 or better, demonstrating writing that is integrated and maintained throughout, expressing a clear perspective.

CHART NL1

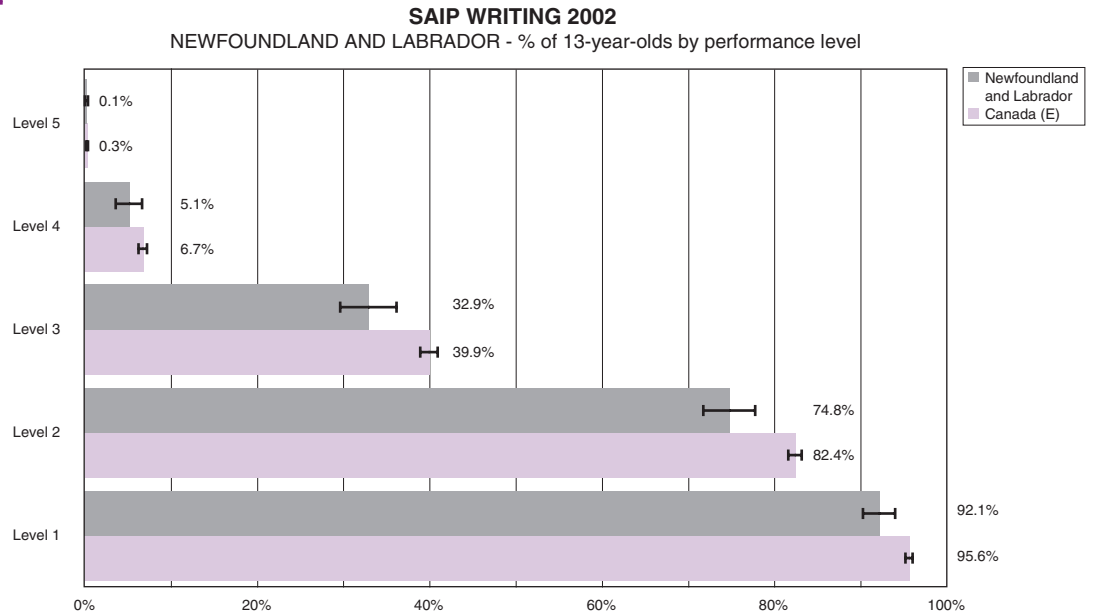


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