

### *Social Context*

Prince Edward Island (PEI) is the smallest province both in terms of land — 5,660 square kilometers and population — 137,800. The setting is predominantly rural; agriculture, tourism and fisheries are the major industries. The unemployment rate is above the Canadian average, and per capita income is below the Canadian average.

### *Organization of the School System*

At the time of administration of the SAIP Science Assessment, PEI had three school boards and 24,400 students enrolled in 66 public schools. In addition, there were three private schools with 200 students and one band-operated school.

The school system consists of grades 1 to 12. Students entering grade 1 must be six years of age by the end of January of their first school year. Kindergarten is not part of the public system.

Prince Edward Island 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. In addition there are two francophone schools, grades 1-12. This diversity results from demands placed on the school by the local community, the student enrolment, and existing facilities.

In grades 10 to 12, students have a choice of enrolling in academic science courses for those preparing for university, in general science courses for those not planning to attend university but who may choose to attend a community college, or in practical science courses for students with special needs.

### *Science Teaching*

PEI is working with the other Atlantic provinces to develop a common science curriculum for grades 1 to 12, described in the *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada Science Curriculum*, which parallels the pan-Canadian outcomes. This framework includes statements for essential graduation learnings, general curriculum outcomes for science, and corresponding outcomes at the end of key stages (entry to grade 3, grades 4-6, grades 7-9, and grades 10-12).

### *Science Testing*

PEI does not have large-scale provincial assessment programs. Teachers are encouraged to use a multi-faceted approach within their classrooms, to integrate assessment with instruction, and to use the collected information to inform students, parents, and other school personnel about student progress.

## Written Assessment

These charts show that Prince Edward Island students of both age groups compare favourably in levels of performance to those of Canada as a whole. The percentage of 16-year olds performing at levels 2, 3, and 4 is statistically higher than that of Canada. The percentage of 13-year-old students performing at level 5 is slightly lower than the Canadian average.

The performance of Prince Edward Island 13-year-olds and 16-year-olds each showed significant improvement between 1996 and 1999 at levels 3 and 4. Sixteen-year-olds also showed significant improvement at level 5.

CHART 72

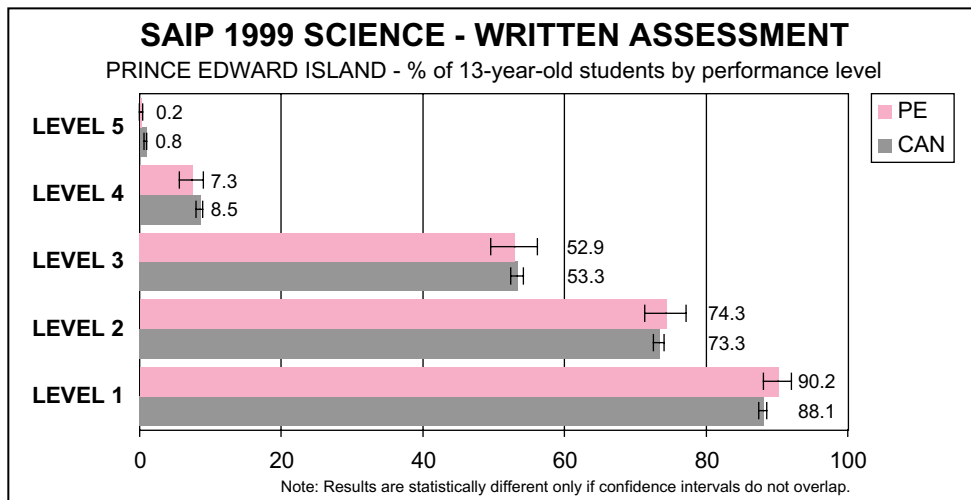


CHART 73

