

Accountability Report 2014–2015

Department of Education and ◀
Early Childhood Development



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Accountability Statement	1
Message from the Minister	3
1.0 Introduction and Structure	5
2.0 Measuring Our Performance	6
Nova Scotia Assessments: Reading.....	6
Nova Scotia Assessments: Writing.....	8
Nova Scotia Assessments: Mathematics.....	10
Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).....	12
Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP)	13
Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)	14
Early Childhood Development Support (ECDS) Programs	15
Regulated Child Care Spaces.....	16
Child Care Subsidies	17
Early Development Instrument (EDI).....	18
High School Graduation Rate	19
3.0 Financial Results	20
Appendix 1—Disclosures of Wrongdoing received by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development	21

ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

The Accountability Report of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for the year ended March 31, 2015 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 Statement of Mandate for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of 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 2014–15 Statement of Mandate.

Original Signed By

Hon. Karen Casey
Minister

Original Signed By

Sandra McKenzie
Deputy Minister

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

It is my pleasure to present you with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's (EECD) fifteenth accountability report. This document reports on the department's activities as outlined in its 2014–15 *Statement of Mandate*.

In 2014, the first comprehensive review of Nova Scotia's education system in 25 years was conducted by a Minister's Panel on Education. The Panel released their report, *Disrupting the Status Quo: Nova Scotians Demand a Better Future for Every Student*, which represented the views of over 19,000 Nova Scotians. This report highlighted the need to improve and modernize our school system, and provided recommendations to make the necessary changes.

In January 2015, I responded to the report by releasing *Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education: Renew, Refocus, Rebuild*. Implementation of the Action Plan began immediately with several actions identified for September 2015. The plan has over 100 actions spanning early childhood development (the years prior to starting school), elementary, middle/junior high, through to senior high school and the transition into post-secondary education and/or the workforce.

Early learning continued to be a focus of the department. In 2014, the department conducted a review of Early Intervention programs to identify issues the programs were facing and where improvements could be made. Implementing the actions of this review will improve access and consistency of services for families, while supporting and developing the early intervention workforce. The department announced four new Early Years centres to enable more access to services and supports for young children in Nova Scotia, and support for families. We also began a review of child care in Nova Scotia, to identify how we can help make child care more accessible to families, support operators in providing high quality programs, and support the early childhood educator workforce.

In 2014–15, the department provided funding to school boards to enhance the school experience of all students. By providing additional funding to school boards we were able to cap class sizes at 20 students for grades primary to 2, with 94% of all P–2 classes within the guidelines in 2014–15. As well, schools were provided a student support grant to provide additional financial support for services and programming to improve student success and help address fundraising pressures.

In 2014–15 the department demonstrated its strong commitment to literacy and mathematics. Over the past year we continued implementation of a mathematics curriculum for grades 4 to 6 and 11 that focuses clearly on the most important things for students to learn at each grade level. We also prioritized the Comprehensive Early Literacy Support Strategy, in collaboration with school boards to support reading, writing, and oral language development in grades primary to 3.

SchoolsPlus continued to expand in 2014–15 with the addition of four sites, so that this service is now available to more than 150 schools to help prepare students for personal and academic success. The Options and Opportunities (O2) program expanded to provide more students with opportunities to explore different careers and is now offered in 63 high schools for more than 2,400 students across the province. We also opened new Skilled Trades centres, enabling more students to benefit from hands-on training as they experience skilled trades for themselves.

Our accomplishments in 2014–15 reflect our commitment to improving and modernizing our public education system and we are looking forward to building on our progress in the years ahead.

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND STRUCTURE

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development *2014–15 Accountability Report* provides information on performance measures and finances identified in the *2014–15 Statement of Mandate*. It is structured into three main sections:

- a review of the departmental performance measures for 2014–15 and accomplishments over the course of the year (section 2.0)
- a review of financial results (section 3.0)
- information on any wrongdoings disclosed in good faith, findings of those wrongdoings, and recommendations and actions taken by the department during the 2014–15 fiscal year (Appendix 1)

STUDENT ASSESSMENTS AS PERFORMANCE MEASURES

It is important to note that a revised set of provincial assessments were implemented in the 2012–13 school year to better support instructional planning and to inform decision making related to improved student achievement at the school, regional, and provincial levels. Results from all provincial assessments are categorized within four performance levels, descriptions of which vary based on the assessment. For all assessments, level 3 is the expected performance for the grade and level 4 is considered to be above expectation, though not above the grade level.

In this report, performance measures on percentage of students meeting expectations in reading, writing, and mathematics, are compared to the provincial baseline established in 2012–13. For this report, “meeting expectations” refers to those students performing at, or above, level 3 on a particular assessment.

Please note 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.

2.0 MEASURING OUR PERFORMANCE

NOVA SCOTIA ASSESSMENTS: READING

One of the department's core business areas is grades primary to 12 education. The percentage of grade 3, 6, and 8 students meeting provincial expectations in the area of reading is one of the measures for a desired outcome of increased student learning and achievement in literacy.

WHAT DOES THIS MEASURE TELL US?

These assessments measure students' reading ability in grades 3, 6, and 8. The assessments are administered in the fall for grades 3 and 6, and in the spring for grade 8. 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 in grades 6 and 8. French-language provincial assessments in reading are administered to students in grades 3, 6, and 8 who attend schools in the CSAP.

REPORTING ON 2014–15 TARGETS

The target for this measure is an increase of the percentage of students meeting expectations over the baseline by 2016–17.

Percentage of Students Meeting Reading Expectations			
Nova Scotia Assessment: Reading			
	Grade 3 ¹	Grade 6	Grade 8
2012–13*	76%	76%	70%
2013–14	70%	75%	74%
2014–15	68%	74%	N/A**
L'Évaluation de la Nouvelle-Écosse : lecture (Conseil scolaire acadien provincial)			
	Grade 3	Grade 6	Grade 8
2012–13*	---	76%	71%
2013–14	---	74%	76%
2014–15	75%	69%	N/A**

*baseline

** results not yet available; administered spring 2015

--- data not collected during this time frame

Results for the English-language Nova Scotia Assessment in Reading in grades 3 and 6 have been in decline since the baseline in 2012–13, with grade 3 seeing the more significant drop (8%) in the most recent assessment. For grade 8 there was a 4% increase in results compared to the previous year. Results for the Évaluation de la Nouvelle-Écosse : lecture (French-language assessment in reading) mirror the trends seen in the English-language provincial assessment, with a significant decline in grade 6 (7% from baseline) and a 5% increase in grade 8. This assessment has only had one administration at grade 3, therefore no trends are available.

¹ Grade 3 students in the conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) do not participate in the English-language Nova Scotia Assessment in Reading.

Elementary students who have not met provincial expectations are provided additional support through work with early literacy teachers, Reading Recovery teachers, resource teachers, and/or classroom teachers as part of Comprehensive Early Literacy Support (CELS).

WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO/BE IN THE FUTURE?

In response to a number of concerns, including the number of students meeting provincial expectations on assessments, a Minister's Panel on Education conducted an in-depth review of Nova Scotia's education system in 2014. In January 2015 *Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education* was released outlining a number of actions to improve the education system.

The *Action Plan* emphasizes the importance of building a strong foundation in literacy, including reading, to support the success of Nova Scotian students, and outlines a number of actions that will be undertaken to ensure students have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful as they move through the school system. This is accomplished through providing more time to teach literacy and mathematics, as well as enhanced assessment and intervention practices.

Starting in September 2015, a new, streamlined curriculum will be introduced in grades primary to 3. The streamlined curriculum will ensure the essential learning outcomes at each grade level are identified. In addition, an Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement will be administered to grade 1 students to provide information to teachers to support instruction to all students, and to allow for earlier identification and interventions for students requiring extra support.

NOVA SCOTIA ASSESSMENTS: WRITING

One of the department's core business areas is grades primary to 12 education. The percentage of students meeting provincial expectations in the area of writing is one of the measures for a desired outcome of increased student learning and achievement in literacy.

WHAT DOES THIS MEASURE TELL US?

These assessments measure students' writing ability in grades 3, 6, and 8. The assessments are administered in the fall for grades 3 and 6, and in the spring for grade 8. 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 Writing in grades 6 and 8. French-language provincial assessments in writing are administered to students in grades 3, 6, and 8 who attend schools in the CSAP.

REPORTING ON 2014–15 TARGETS

The assessments present results for writing according to four criteria: Ideas, Organization, Language Use, and Conventions. The target for this measure is an improvement of the percentage of students in each grade meeting expectations in the four areas, over the baseline year.

Percentage of Students Meeting Writing Expectations			
Nova Scotia Assessment: Writing			
Year	2012–13*	2013–14	2014–15
Grade 3			
Ideas	88%	88%	76%
Organization	80%	76%	60%
Language Use	83%	79%	64%
Conventions	71%	66%	53%
Grade 6			
Ideas	89%	88%	76%
Organization	81%	79%	61%
Language Use	82%	79%	66%
Conventions	73%	65%	58%
Grade 8			
Ideas	95%	86%	N/A**
Organization	88%	78%	
Language Use	89%	82%	
Conventions	80%	72%	

*baseline

** results not yet available; administered spring 2015

--- data not collected during this time frame

Percentage of Students Meeting Writing Expectations			
L'Évaluation de la Nouvelle-Écosse : écriture (Conseil scolaire acadien provincial)			
Year	2012–13*	2013–14	2014–15
Grade 3			
Ideas	---	---	65%
Organization	---	---	59%
Language Use	---	---	58%
Conventions	---	---	48%
Grade 6			
Ideas	88%	79%	71%
Organization	64%	64%	59%
Language Use	57%	59%	56%
Conventions	37%	50%	43%
Grade 8			
Ideas	86%	77%	N/A**
Organization	76%	71%	
Language Use	68%	69%	
Conventions	50%	60%	

*baseline

** results not yet available; administered spring 2015

--- data not collected during this time frame

Results for the English-language Nova Scotia Assessment in Writing show that since the baseline there have been significant decreases in the percentage of students meeting expectations in the four writing areas, for all three grade levels. Results for the Évaluation de la Nouvelle-Écosse : écriture (French-language provincial assessment in writing) are more varied, with a less significant decrease in the percentage of students meeting expectations for ideas and organization. There were also increases in the percentage of students meeting expectations for convention in writing in both grades 6 and 8. This assessment has only had one administration at grade 3, therefore no trends are available.

Elementary students who have not met provincial expectations are provided additional support through work with early literacy teachers, resource teachers, and/or classroom teachers as part of Comprehensive Early Literacy Support (CELS).

WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO/BE IN THE FUTURE?

The results from these assessments, similar to those found in the reading assessments, highlight the need for a focused effort to improve the writing ability of Nova Scotian students. In 2014–15, initiatives such as Young Writers in Action and providing early literacy support for grades primary to 3 focused on the development of both reading and writing skills in the early grades.

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 emphasis on building the foundations of math and literacy for grades primary through grade 3, ensuring the supports are in place to address the full range of students' learning strengths and needs. In addition to providing early literacy support to grades primary to 3, the department has committed to providing more time in grades 4 through 8 to reinforce writing ability across subject areas, enabling students to practice and refine the skills learned in earlier grades.

NOVA SCOTIA ASSESSMENTS: MATHEMATICS

One of the department's core business areas is grades primary to 12 education. The percentage of grade 4, 6, and 8 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.

WHAT DOES THIS MEASURE TELL US?

These assessments measure students' mathematics ability in grades 4, 6, and 8. The assessments are administered in the fall for grades 4 and 6, and in the spring for grade 8. 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) do not participate in the English-language Nova Scotia Assessment in Mathematics. Students in grades 4, 6, and 8 who attend schools in the CSAP participate in the Évaluation de la Nouvelle-Écosse : mathématiques.

REPORTING ON 2014–15 TARGETS

The target for this measure is an increase in the percentage of students meeting expectations over the baseline year. The assessment for grades 6 and 8 were first administered in 2012–13, however the assessment for grade 4 was not introduced until 2013–14, resulting in a different baseline year for grade 4.

Percentage of Students Meeting Math Expectations			
Nova Scotia Assessment: Mathematics			
	Grade 4	Grade 6	Grade 8
2012–13*	N/A**	73%	54%
2013–14	74%	73%	57%
2014–15	74%	69%	N/A**
L'Évaluation de la Nouvelle-Écosse : mathématiques (Conseil scolaire acadien provincial)			
	Grade 4	Grade 6	Grade 8
2012–13*	---	---	65%
2013–14	75%	73%	67%
2014–15	73%	65%	N/A**

*baseline

** results not yet available; administered spring 2015

--- data not collected during this time frame

The assessment results for both the Nova Scotia Assessment in Mathematics and the Évaluation de la Nouvelle-Écosse : mathématiques show that three-fourths of elementary students are developing a foundation in mathematics, but as they progress in school, more students are struggling.

WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO/BE IN THE FUTURE?

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

Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education has placed a strong focus on building the foundations of math and literacy for grades primary through grade 3, ensuring the supports are in place to address the full range of students' learning strengths and needs.

Implementation of the new curriculum, along with several other actions identified in *Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education* will ensure our students are building the strong foundation in math they need to be successful in school and in their careers. In addition to the continued implementation of the curriculum, actions outlined in the *Action Plan* for the upcoming school year include 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.

PROGRAMME FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ASSESSMENT (PISA)

One of the department's core business areas is grades primary to 12 education. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results are used to measure 15-year-old students' performance in reading, mathematics, and science and allow 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.

WHAT DOES THIS MEASURE TELL US?

PISA is a well-respected international instrument sponsored by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Every three years it provides reliable measures of 15-year-old students' performance in reading, mathematics, and science and allows us to compare students in Nova Scotia with the performance of students in other jurisdictions. Each assessment includes questions from all three subject areas with a focus on one subject area each time the assessment is administered. The major focus of the 2012 PISA assessment was mathematics and the focus for PISA 2015 will be science.

Over 60 countries participated in PISA. Results from the 2012 PISA assessment were released in December 2013. The first PISA was administered in the spring of 2000. Canada has participated in PISA since its inception.

REPORTING ON 2014–15 TARGETS

The 2012 PISA results are the most current data available, with the PISA 2015 results anticipated for release in 2016. The 2012 PISA results indicate that compared to 2009, the average performance of students in Nova Scotia did not change by a statistically significant amount in the areas of reading and science; but were statistically significantly lower for mathematics.

PISA Results				
Subject	NS Average (2009)	NS Average (2012)	Canadian Average (2012)	OECD Average (2012)
Reading	516	508	523	496
Math	512	497	518	494
Science	523	516	525	501

Compared to the OECD average, Nova Scotia is performing on par (i.e., not statistically differently) in all three areas. However, of concern is that Nova Scotian students continue to perform below the Canadian average by a statistically significant margin in all three areas.

WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO/BE IN THE FUTURE?

Nova Scotian students will continue to participate in the PISA assessment. 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.

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.

PAN-CANADIAN ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (PCAP)

One of the department's core business areas is grade primary to 12 education. The Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP) results are used to measure student performance in reading, mathematics, and science in grade 8. The PCAP assessment is one of the measures for a desired outcome of increased student learning and achievement in literacy and mathematics.

WHAT DOES THIS MEASURE TELL US?

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.

REPORTING ON 2014–15 TARGETS

The target for this measure is an increase over the 2007 baseline data by 2013–14. Based on the 2013 results, Nova Scotia has seen an improvement, compared to the 2010 assessment in the areas of math and science, however continues to perform below the Canadian average in all three subject areas.

PCAP Results	Adjusted 2007 Results ³		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

PCAP 2016 will assess reading as the primary domain, with math and science as secondary domains.

WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO/BE IN THE FUTURE?

Nova Scotia will continue to participate in the PCAP assessment. A new target has been established using PCAP 2010 as the baseline due to changes to the target population from 2007.

The Minister's Panel on Education highlighted the fact that Nova Scotian students are falling behind in math and literacy, both nationally and internationally. *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 department is also emphasizing more hands-on learning activities for students and more exposure to the basics of coding, technology, and design.

³ When first administered in 2007 the target population for the assessment was "13-year-old students." The target population was changed to "students in grade 8" in preparation for the second administration of the assessment in 2010. Results from 2007 were adjusted to account for this change in the assessment population and therefore results cannot be compared between 2007 and 2010 in the areas of mathematics and science.

PROGRESS IN INTERNATIONAL READING LITERACY STUDY (PIRLS)

One of the department's core business areas is grades primary to 12 education. The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) results are used to measure the performance of grade 4 students in reading comprehension.

WHAT DOES THIS MEASURE TELL US?

PIRLS is an international assessment of reading comprehension for grade 4. The assessment allows us to compare the performance of grade 4 students in Nova Scotia with the performance of students in other jurisdictions. PIRLS uses a fixed "international centrepoint" of 500 as a means of allowing jurisdictions to compare performance.

PIRLS is conducted every five years. The first administration of PIRLS was in 2001. Nova Scotia has participated since 2006. In 2006, a limited number of Canadian jurisdictions participated and therefore no Canadian average is available. The next administration of PIRLS will be in 2016, with results expected in December 2017.

REPORTING ON 2014–15 TARGETS

The target for this measure is an improvement in the Nova Scotia average over the 2006 baseline, and an increase in the percentage of students performing at or above the intermediate benchmark⁴ over the baseline.

PIRLS Results				
Year	NS Average	Canadian Average	NS % at or above intermediate benchmark	Canada % at or above intermediate benchmark
2006*	542	N/A	82%	N/A
2011	549	548	85%	86%

*baseline

The 2011 Nova Scotia average of 549 was a statistically significant improvement over the 2006 baseline of 542. Compared to the Canadian average, Nova Scotian students were on par. The percentage of Nova Scotian students at or above the intermediate benchmark also increased by a statistically significant amount (85% versus 82%) and remained on par with Canada.

WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO/BE IN THE FUTURE?

In an effort to prioritize the suite of assessments that students participate in, taking into consideration the amount of information obtained to inform programming for students, the department will not participate in the next administration of this assessment and therefore it will no longer be used as a measure of Nova Scotia's accountability for education on an international comparison of assessment results.

⁴ The PIRLS assessment reports the percentage of students meeting each of four international benchmarks: Advanced, High, Intermediate, or Low.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT (ECDS) PROGRAMS WAITLISTS

Early Childhood Development Support (ECDS) programs, formerly called Early Intervention programs, deliver services for young children who are diagnosed with or at risk for developmental delay. The services are designed to help both the child and the family from the time the child is born to when they are old enough to enter school. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development supports the delivery of these programs.

WHAT DOES THIS MEASURE TELL US?

Using the case load and wait list data from the ECDS programs the department can monitor and report on the number of children on waitlists for services.

REPORTING ON 2014–15 TARGETS

The target for this measure is a decrease in the number of children on a waitlist for ECDS programs, compared to the 2013–14 baseline. In 2014–15 there were 332 children on a waitlist, which represents no significant change from the previous year.

Case Load and Wait List Data from ECDS	
Year	Number of children on waitlists
2013–14*	336
2014–15	332

*baseline

WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO/BE IN THE FUTURE?

Parents of pre-school children with special needs face waitlists for early intervention services and in 2013, the government made a commitment to increase support for these programs.

In 2014, the department undertook a review of ECDS programs to explore the issues they were facing and identify improvements.

The *Statement of Mandate 2015–16: Education and Early Childhood Development* has prioritized the implementation of the review's recommendations and committed to increasing the number of early interventionists in the province in an effort to reduce the waitlists.

REGULATED CHILD CARE SPACES

Quality child care offers an ongoing opportunity for children’s learning while providing safe and reliable care that promotes socialization, health, and a child’s well-being. The availability of child care is an important resource enabling parents to enter and remain in the labour force, or to access employment training.

WHAT DOES THIS MEASURE TELL US?

The number of licensed child care spaces is a measure of the department’s ongoing commitment to the provision of programs that support the development needs of young children.

REPORTING ON 2014–15 TARGETS

The target for this measure was to have 17,000 spaces in a regulated child care setting by 2013–14. This target was surpassed in 2014–15.

WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE IN THE FUTURE?

In the 2015–16 *Statement of Mandate*, it was determined that this measure is not providing the best data for tracking progress towards the outcome of Nova Scotians having access to safe, affordable child care. This measure will be replaced with a percentage representing the average daily subsidized child care spaces used out of the total available spaces. This measure will provide monitoring of usage rates to ensure access to the child care subsidy is maximized.

Year	Number of spaces in regulated child care setting
2006–07	13,249
2007–08	13,455
2008–09	14,135
2009–10	14,485
2010–11	15,404
2011–12	16,377
2013–14	16,396
2014–15	17,027

CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES

Availability of affordable child care is a critical resource to low and moderate income families.

WHAT DOES THIS MEASURE TELL US?

The percentage of subsidized spaces is a measure of the department's ability to support eligible families with their child care costs.

REPORTING ON 2014–15 TARGETS

The target for this measure is to have 31% of all licensed child care spaces subsidized. This target has not been achieved.

WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE IN THE FUTURE?

In 2014–15 the department undertook a review of child care in Nova Scotia and the outcomes from this review will influence the system to make child care more accessible to families, to support operators in providing high quality programs that focus on child well-being and development, and to support the early childhood educator workforce.

Year	Percentage of subsidized child care spaces
2006–07*	23%
2007–08	23%
2008–09	24%
2009–10	27%
2010–11	27%
2011–12	27%
2013–14	27%
2014–15	26%

*baseline

In the 2015–16 *Statement of Mandate*, it was determined that this measure is not providing the best data for tracking the department's ability to support eligible families with their child care costs. This measure will be replaced with the percentage of average daily subsidized child care spaces used out of the total available spaces. This measure will provide monitoring of usage rates to ensure access to the child care subsidy is maximized.

EARLY DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENT (EDI)

The Early Development Instrument (EDI) is a teacher-completed questionnaire that measures children’s development in five core areas that 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.

WHAT DOES THIS MEASURE TELL US?

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. It will be administered every second year.

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

Percentage of Children Vulnerable in EDI Domain						
Year	% of Children Vulnerable					
	Physical Health and Well-Being	Social Competence	Emotional Maturity	Language and Cognitive Development	Communication Skills & General Knowledge	Vulnerable in at least one domain
2012–13*	13.1% (NS) 9.7% (Canada)	11.2% (NS) 9.2% (Canada)	11.8% (NS) 10.7% (Canada)	6.4% (NS) 8.7% (Canada)	10.7% (NS) 13.0% (Canada)	26.8% (NS) 25.4% (Canada)
2013–14	Data not collected					
2014–15	Collected early 2015—data not available					

*baseline

REPORTING ON 2014–15 TARGETS

The target is to reduce the percentage of children vulnerable in each of the EDI domains by 2016–17.

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, i.e., children are developmentally healthy. The department is committed to ensuring the right supports are in place to help every child successfully transition into school.

The *Action Plan* includes an initiative to register all children in an electronic school file at birth, with the information used to keep track of a child’s growth and development, as well as help plan services and transition plans for starting school. There is also a commitment to arrange preschool developmental screenings for children at 18 and 36 months of age, and six months before starting school.

In January 2015, the department announced that four new Early Years centres will open, so that every school board will have at least one; as well as a plan to address the wait list for Early Intervention programs across the province.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE

One of the department's core business areas is grades primary to 12 education. The high school graduation rate is one of the measures for a desired outcome of better educated Nova Scotians.

WHAT DOES THIS MEASURE TELL US?

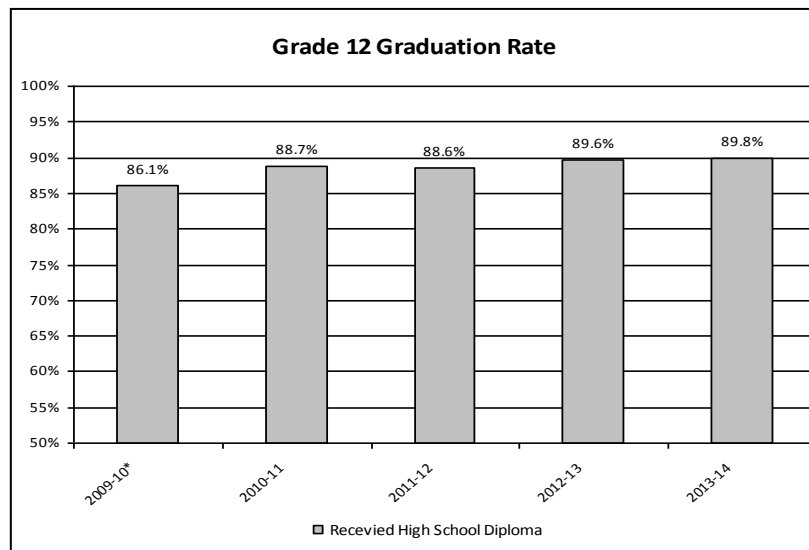
The graduation rate is the percentage of students receiving a high school graduation diploma compared with the number of students in grade 9 three years earlier.

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 2014–15 TARGETS

The target for this measure is to increase the graduation rate over the 2009–10 baseline of 86.1% by 2013–14. This target has been achieved with the 2013–14 graduation rate 3.7% over the baseline. A new target has been 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, so this performance measure represents data from the previous year.



WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO/BE IN THE FUTURE?

Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education highlights include a requirement that all high school students develop Individual Career Plans for graduation, and are provided opportunities to explore STEAM careers (science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics) and entrepreneurship. The department will implement a number of initiatives that will provide students with more hands-on learning and opportunities to explore a range of options for life after graduation.

3.0 FINANCIAL RESULTS

Education and Early Childhood Development		
	2014–15 Estimate	2014–15 Actual
Program and Service Area	(\$ thousands)	(\$ thousands)
Senior Management	2,599.0	2,052.0
Strategic Policy and Research	1,794.0	1,634.1
Early Years	56,125.0	55,339.4
Centre for Learning Excellence	3,663.0	3,966.4
Education Innovation Programs and Services	18,778.0	19,420.1
Student Equity and Support Services	10,535.0	9,876.8
French Programs and Services	9,855.0	10,271.4
Finance and Operations	15,219.0	14,013.4
Public Education Funding	962,052.0	964,490.7
Learning Resources Credit Allocation	6,313.0	7,038.1
Teachers' Pension	61,911.0	63,710.0
School Capital Amortization	71,183.0	70,581.3
Total Department of Education and Early Childhood Development	1,220,027.0	1,222,393.7

Additional Information:		
Fees and Other Charges	2,326.0	3,591.1
Ordinary Recoveries	16,934.0	16,451.4
TCA Purchase Requirements	0.0	608.8
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	246.3	216.7

* The categories under "Program and Service Area" have been updated to reflect changes to the department structure as of April 1, 2015.

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 2014–15
Number of disclosures received	0
Number of findings of wrongdoing	N/A
Details of each wrongdoing (insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrong doing	N/A