

# Statement of Mandate 2015–2016



**Education and  
Early Childhood  
Development**



**NOVA SCOTIA**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT**  
**STATEMENT OF MANDATE 2015–16**



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## 1. MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER AND DEPUTY MINISTER

We are pleased to present the 2015–16 Statement of Mandate for the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. This is a very exciting time for education in Nova Scotia, and our Statement of Mandate outlines the strategies for the coming year that will help advance the department’s vision to support success for every child and youth, as well as advance the priorities of the provincial government.

In 2014 we asked Nova Scotians to tell us their views on education in the province. The Minister’s Panel on Education filed its comprehensive review of Nova Scotia’s Education system, *Disrupting the Status Quo: Nova Scotians Demand a Better Future for Every Student*, highlighting the need to improve and modernize our school system. In response, the department developed *Nova Scotia’s Action Plan for Education: Renew, Refocus, Rebuild*. The main priority of this department for 2015–16 will be to start putting this Plan into action. We are committed to ensuring that our students achieve better results, especially in math and literacy, and that they are better prepared to lead productive lives in our changing world. The readiness of students to enter school and their readiness to successfully graduate into a world of employment or post-secondary education are critical.

Fundamental changes are needed in our education system and the actions outlined in *Nova Scotia’s Action Plan for Education* build on four main pillars that focus on student success:

- Build a modern education system
- Create an innovative curriculum
- Promote inclusive school environments
- Advance excellence in teaching and leadership

In order to transform the education system, the overall structure must be revamped to create a firm foundation for change. To start this process, in 2015–16 we will clarify the roles and responsibilities of all partners in education for the implementation of the Action Plan. We will establish a Centre for Learning Excellence dedicated to advancing student achievement, closing the achievement gap, conducting Nova Scotian-specific school research, high-quality teaching, and strong leadership. A Minister’s Forum for Teaching Excellence will also be created to provide teachers with support, opportunities for networking, and teacher-requested professional development.

The department continues to support preschool children and their families in meeting key developmental milestones and preparing for school. In 2015–16 the department will create and distribute a growth and development guide for four-year-olds, and address the wait list for Early Childhood Development Support (previously known as Early Intervention) across the province. In addition, four new Early Years Centres (and 4 new SchoolsPlus sites) will be implemented and will continue to support our efforts to work across government departments to better coordinate services for all children and youth.

The department is committed to increased student achievement in math and literacy, based on a strong foundation in grades primary to 3. In 2015–16, for grades primary to 3, we will create a streamlined, coordinated, and innovative curriculum, and offer Early Intervention Support with direct targeted funding for math mentors. We will also administer an Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement to all grade one students starting in September. In recognition of the essential role parents and families have in the successful education of our students, the department has discontinued the use of existing homework guides and will establish new provincial homework standards.

Ensuring our students have positive classroom and learning environments is a priority for the department and we are committed to making our schools a place where teachers can teach and students can learn together. The department will develop and implement a new Provincial School Code of Conduct Policy that will outline clear, concise standards for behaviour. Additionally, we will develop a needs-based model of service delivery to support teaching and learning for all students. In order to implement the new model, we will develop provincial criteria for placing a student on an Individual Program Plan (IPP) and monitor student progress on IPPs at the school, school board, and provincial levels.

The department will continue to work with our partners to help students graduate from high school with the knowledge and skills they need to transition successfully to post-secondary institutions and/or the job market. We will create an Inter-University Chair in Research for the Achievement Gap, establish a Transition Task-Force of Public School Educators, Universities, and the Nova Scotia Community College to make recommendations to the Minister, and establish a Business-Education Council.

More than 19,000 Nova Scotians were inspired to share their views on the public education system and we have heard their demand for change. We are committed to addressing the challenges, building on existing strengths, and identifying opportunities to renew, refocus, and rebuild.

Original Signed By

**Honourable Karen Casey**  
**Minister, Education and Early Childhood**  
**Development**

Original Signed By

**Sandra McKenzie**  
**Deputy Minister, Education and Early**  
**Childhood Development**

## **2. VISION, MISSION, AND MANDATE**

### **Vision**

Every child and student is confident and proud, maximizing their potential and contributing to a thriving society.

### **Values**

In addition to the public service values of respect, integrity, diversity, accountability, and all for the public good, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development values:

- Innovation
- Equity
- Collaboration
- Responsiveness
- Excellence

### **Mission**

The Department will lead the transformation of the early years and public education system. We will do this by designing an innovative curriculum, facilitating excellence in teaching and learning, ensuring equity throughout the system, and fostering collaborative partnerships. This will provide children, students, and families with a strong foundation for success.

### **Mandate**

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has a broad mandate that includes responsibility for early childhood development and the education of children and youth through the public school system.

The department's mandate is carried out through the provision of

- child, youth, and family-centered programs and services
- early learning and care programs for children from birth to school entry
- high quality educational programs and student services in both of Canada's official languages
- strong assessment and evaluation services
- a focus on creating a more culturally-responsive education system to support inclusive student learning
- a progressive and responsive policy environment
- effective financial management, facilities planning, and comptrollership
- effective opportunities for ongoing, high-quality professional learning for teachers and principals

### 3. STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

In 2015–16, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) will begin to implement Nova Scotia’s Action Plan for Education. The four pillars outlined in the Action Plan will guide the strategic goals for the department, with priority initiatives underway to achieve each goal. Although there are many important activities and priorities, these are being highlighted as they are critically important to achieving the longer-term strategic goals and are fundamental to the success of the organization.

#### **Strategic Goal: Build a Modern System of Education and Early Childhood Development**

EECD is transforming the entire education system, starting with recreating the basic structure to become more student-centered, efficient, flexible, sustainable, and integrated with other government departments and agencies that serve children and youth. This will ensure a strong foundation is in place to support the changes that need to be made.

**Priority:** Reorganize divisions within the department to more closely align with the direction of the Action Plan.

**Priority:** Establish a Centre for Learning Excellence within the department, dedicated to advancing student achievement, Nova Scotia-specific school research, high-quality teaching, and strong leadership.

**Priority:** Create a team of representatives from the department, school boards, and post-secondary institutions to support research into student achievement in math and literacy for the implementation of a province-wide Achievement Gap initiative.

**Priority:** Increase partnership with the business community to develop entrepreneurial skills and attributes of students, including establishing a Business-Education Council and expanding the delivery of Junior Achievement.

#### **Strategic Goal: Design an Innovative Curriculum**

Significant changes will be made to our curriculum in order to build a strong foundation for success throughout their school experience, and for life after school. Nova Scotia’s Action Plan for Education is focused on improving the two most important fundamentals in education, math and literacy. There is also a strong focus on supporting pre-school children and their families to help ensure key development milestones are met and children are prepared for school.

**Priority:** Create and distribute a growth and development guide for four-year-olds.

**Priority:** Create a streamlined, coordinated, and innovative curriculum for grades primary to 3.

**Priority:** Integrate educational technology and student assessment in the new curriculum.

**Priority:** Add more Discovering Opportunities 9 programs in schools across the province.

**Priority:** Establish new homework standards through a ministerial policy.

**Priority:** Put supports in place to build a strong foundation in math, including Early Intervention Support in math and direct targeted funding for math mentors for students in grades primary to 3. A plain-language resource will also be developed for parents to help their children with homework in math.

## **Strategic Goal: Ensure Inclusive Learning Environments**

It is critical for our schools to lead the way as places of respect and tolerance, and to model the kind of society we want to be. As the centres of learning in our schools, every classroom must be a safe and positive place where teachers can teach and our students can learn.

**Priority:** Develop and implement a new Provincial School Code of Conduct Policy with clear and concise standards for behaviour.

**Priority:** Develop provincial criteria for placing a student on an Individual Program Plan (IPP), and monitor progress of students with IPPs at school, school board, and provincial levels.

**Priority:** Establish a Transition Task Force of public school educators, universities, and the NSCC to develop recommendations for the Minister.

**Priority:** Implement interagency programs and services for mental health, addiction prevention, and physical wellness in partnership with outside agencies.

**Priority:** Expand SchoolsPlus sites to provide integrated service to more children and families throughout the province.

## **Strategic Goal: Achieve Excellence in Teaching and Leadership**

The rebuilding of our education system is designed to create outstanding students and successful graduates. This will require support for teachers and administrators. As professionals, they have enormous responsibilities and face increasing demands. Teachers need support, time, and structure that will allow them to focus on student learning and student achievement.

**Priority:** Create a framework of teaching standards for Nova Scotia.

**Priority:** Establish a Minister's Forum for Teaching Excellence to provide teachers with support, opportunities for networking, and teacher-requested professional development.

#### **4. GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES**

Following the release of *Now or Never: An Urgent Call to Action for Nova Scotians—The Report of the Nova Scotia Commission on Building our Economy* (OneNS 2014), government committed to lead, support, and work with Nova Scotians to advance toward achievement of the shared goals and recommendations of the Report. In addition, as articulated in the September 2014 Speech from the Throne, government is committed to building a clear strategy based on four priorities:

- Fiscal sustainability
- Economy
- Education and skills training
- Demographics and people

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has an important role to play in helping government work toward a number of identified priorities, particularly with respect to strengthening the education system in Nova Scotia. As a result, the department has identified key policy initiatives for the 2015–16 year and will be working to align resources to meet government priorities and targets.

##### **1. BALANCED BUDGET DURING MANDATE AND ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE GOVERNMENT**

In fiscal 2015–16, the budget for EECD is \$1,244,607,000. This year’s budget represents government’s commitment to our students. The department will continue to manage and report on its resources in accordance with government policies and practices.

##### **2. CREATE CLIMATE FOR PRIVATE SECTOR AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE ECONOMIC GROWTH TO SUPPORT ONE NS ECONOMIC GOALS.**

EECD will support this government priority by implementing a number of initiatives in *Nova Scotia’s Action Plan for Education* that will address the achievement gap, strengthen the connection between business and education, and focus on student preparedness after high school.

##### **3. INCREASE WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP BY IMPROVING EARLY CHILDHOOD AND P–12 EDUCATION SYSTEMS AND CONTINUALLY IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND KNOWLEDGE THROUGH POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND APPRENTICESHIP.**

EECD will continue to work with its partners to ensure that children preparing for school and students currently in the public education system have the knowledge and skills they need to transition successfully to each stage of their education, and eventually to post-secondary institutions and/or the job market.

The department recognizes the importance of a strong foundation in the early years and the need to support preschool children and their families in meeting key developmental milestones and preparing for school. In 2015–16 EECD will create and distribute a growth and development guide for four year olds, and address the wait list for Early Childhood Development Support (previously Early Intervention) across the province.

Working in collaboration with school boards, in 2014–15 the department initiated a class-size cap for grades primary to 6 over four years. The first stage of this process introduced a class-size cap of 20 students for grades primary, 1, and 2. In 2015–16, the focus will be on capping class sizes at 25

students for grades 3 to 4. The class-size cap is flexible in order to allow schools and school boards to ensure that class sizes support the best possible delivery of the public school program.

The department recognizes that career readiness does not start in grade 12. In 2015–16, the department will focus on providing students with hands-on learning activities and community-based learning programs. This includes the expansion of Discovering Opportunities 9 in schools across the province to familiarize students with careers and education programs linked to trades, technology, and apprenticeship.

The establishment of a Centre for Learning Excellence within EECD, dedicated to advancing student achievement, Nova Scotia-specific school research, high-quality teaching, and strong leadership, is a critical initiative for the department in 2015–16.

The department will also establish a Business Education Council that will provide a forum where business can identify the skills and attributes students need to be successful in the workforce, connect students with business mentors, support teacher awareness of economic growth sectors in Nova Scotia, and enhance the work experience opportunities available to students. This will be supported by embedding entrepreneurship in the high school curriculum and updating Entrepreneurship 12 currently offered in schools.

**4. INCREASE NET INTERPROVINCIAL IN-MIGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRATION LEVELS; ENHANCE WELLNESS AND HEALTH INITIATIVES; ENHANCE WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH, OLDER WORKERS, AND MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES; AND ENHANCE COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING.**

In 2014–15, government committed to invest \$65 million into the Nova Scotian public education system over four years. The first stage of this investment included a number of direct education supports to classrooms. In 2015–16, initiatives outlined in *Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education*, in alignment with EECD's Strategic Outcomes, will continue to support this government priority.

EECD will continue to focus on working with partners to find ways to respond to bullying and cyberbullying, and to promote healthy relationships among students. An essential part of this work is the development and implementation of a new Provincial School Code of Conduct Policy with clear, concise standards for behaviour.

The department continues to provide schools with funding to support student activities through student support grants. These grants allow schools to enhance services and programming at a local level to support student success.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is committed to expanding SchoolsPlus to four new hub sites, serving an additional 32 schools, across the province in 2015–16. The co-location of services at SchoolsPlus sites helps ensure that more students and families have timely access to supports. In addition to the co-location of professional services in schools, students are supported through a strong focus on mental health education in the curriculum for grades primary to 9.

## 5. BUDGET CONTEXT

<b>Education and Early Childhood Development</b>			
<b>Program and Service Area*</b>	<b>2014–15 Estimate (\$ thousands)</b>	<b>2014–15 Forecast (\$ thousands)</b>	<b>2015–16 Estimate (\$ thousands)</b>
Senior Management	\$2,599	\$2,119	\$2,169
Strategic Policy and Research	\$1,794	\$1,688	\$2,012
Early Years	\$56,125	\$55,668	\$58,788
Centre for Learning Excellence	\$3,663	\$4,169	\$4,261
Education Innovation Programs and Services	\$18,778	\$18,106	\$17,797
Student Equity and Support Services	\$10,535	\$9,923	\$10,231
French Programs and Services	\$9,855	\$10,331	\$10,491
Finance and Operations	\$15,219	\$13,550	\$10,617
Public Education Funding	\$962,052	\$963,315	\$979,809
Learning Resources Credit Allocation	\$6,313	\$6,313	\$6,813
Teacher's Pension	\$61,911	\$63,211	\$69,428
School Capital - Amortization	\$71,183	\$70,696	\$72,191
<b>Total Education Gross Program Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,220,027</b>	<b>\$1,219,089</b>	<b>\$1,244,607</b>
Additional Information			
Education: Ordinary Revenue	0	\$540	0
Education: Fees and Other Charges	\$2,326	\$2,119	\$2,161
Education: Ordinary Recoveries	\$16,934	\$16,415	\$13,100
<b>Tangible Capital Assets (TCA) Purchase Requirements</b>	<b>\$89,900</b>	<b>\$89,900</b>	<b>\$87,900</b>
<b>Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)</b>	<b>228.8</b>	<b>203.3</b>	<b>211.8</b>

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

## 6. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Outcome <sup>1</sup>	Measure/Rationale		Data Base Year <sup>2</sup>	Target	Trends	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
Increased student learning and achievement in literacy	Nova Scotia Assessment: Reading and Writing in Grade 3, percent meeting provincial expectations in reading		76% (2012–13)	Increase over baseline (2016–17)	70% (2013–14) 68% (2014–15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement <i>Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education</i></li> <li>▪ Early Years initiatives—growth and development guide, Early Intervention</li> <li>▪ Provide provincial assessments</li> <li>▪ Early literacy support and intervention available for grades primary–3</li> <li>▪ Professional learning, resources, workshops, institutes</li> <li>▪ Provision of learning resources that are both appealing and accessible to a wider range of students, including boys and young adolescent males</li> <li>▪ Increase school board leadership capacity to support school-based professional learning communities</li> </ul>
	Nova Scotia Assessment: Reading and Writing in Grade 6, percent meeting provincial expectations in reading		76% (2012–13)	Increase over baseline (2016–17)	75% (2013–14) 74% (2014–15)	
	Nova Scotia Assessment: Reading and Writing in Grade 8, percent meeting provincial expectations in reading		70% (2012–13)	Increase over baseline (2016–17)	74% (2013–14) No data available (2014–15)	
Increased student learning and achievement in literacy	Nova Scotia Assessment: Reading and Writing in Grade 6, percent meeting provincial expectations	Writing Performance—Ideas	89% (2012–13)	Increase over baseline (2016–17)	88% (2013–14) 76% (2014–15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement <i>Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education</i></li> <li>▪ Early Years initiatives—growth and development guide, Early Intervention</li> <li>▪ Provide provincial assessments</li> <li>▪ Professional learning, resources, workshops, institutes</li> <li>▪ Provision of learning resources that are both appealing and accessible to a wider range of students, including boys and young adolescent males</li> <li>▪ Increase school board leadership capacity to support school-based professional learning communities</li> </ul>
		Writing Performance—Organization	81% (2012–13)	Increase over baseline (2016–17)	79% (2013–14) 61% (2014–15)	
		Writing Performance—Language Use	82% (2012–13)	Increase over baseline (2016–17)	79% (2013–14) 66% (2014–15)	
		Writing Performance—Conventions	73% (2012–13)	Increase over baseline (2016–17)	65% (2013–14) 58% (2014–15)	

<sup>1</sup> In the 2012–13 school year, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development implemented a revised Program of Learning Assessment in Nova Scotia (PLANS). As part of the revised PLANS, results from all provincial assessments are presented under 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. Therefore, for the purposes of the performance measures in this section, the percentage of students meeting expectations are those students performing at, or above, level 3 on the particular assessment.

<sup>2</sup> The reporting years for assessment results, Early Development Instrument data, Early Interventions data, and graduation rates in the Statement of Mandate reflect the school year.

Outcome	Measure/Rationale	Data Base Year	Target	Trends	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
Increased student learning and achievement in mathematics	Nova Scotia Assessment: Mathematics in Grade 4, percent meeting provincial expectations	74% (2013–14)	Increase over baseline (2016–17)	74% (2013-14) 74% (2014–15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement <i>Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education</i></li> <li>▪ Continue to provide new mathematics curriculum and resources for grades 7–9 and 12</li> <li>▪ Implement provincial assessment plan</li> <li>▪ Reduce paperwork for teachers so that they have more time to focus on teaching and learning</li> <li>▪ Discussion on maximizing the time students have for learning in the classroom</li> <li>▪ Study and continue to work with boards to improve the alignment of teaching assignments with teacher qualifications</li> <li>▪ Increase school board leadership capacity to support school-based professional learning communities</li> <li>▪ Early Intervention Pilot P–3 Mathematics</li> <li>▪ Targeted mentor support for mathematics instruction (P–3)</li> </ul>
	Nova Scotia Assessment: Mathematics in Grade 6, percent meeting provincial expectations	73% (2012–13)	Increase over baseline (2016–17)	73% (2013–14) 69% (2014–15)	
	Nova Scotia Assessment: Mathematics in Grade 8, percent meeting provincial expectations	54% (2012–13)	Increase over baseline (2016–17)	57% (2013–14) Data not available (2014–15)	

Outcome	Measure/Rationale	Data Base Year	Target <sup>3</sup>	Trends	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
Nova Scotia is accountable for education based on national and international comparison of assessment results <sup>4</sup>	Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results for 15-year-olds, scale score	<u>Reading</u> 516 (NS 2009) 524 (Canada 2009) 496 (OECD <sup>5</sup> 2009)  <u>Mathematics</u> 512 (NS 2009) 527 (Canada 2009) 497 (OECD 2009)  <u>Science</u> 523 (NS 2009) 529 (Canada 2009) 501 (OECD 2009)	<u>Reading</u> 516 (NS 2009)  <u>Mathematics</u> 515 (NS 2003)  <u>Science</u> 520 (NS 2006)  Target Year: 2013–14	<u>Reading</u> 505 (NS 2006) 527 (Canada 2006) 492 (OECD 2006) 516 (NS 2009) 524 (Canada 2009) 496 (OECD 2009) 508 (NS 2012) 523 (Canada 2012) 496 (OECD 2012)  <u>Mathematics</u> 506 (NS 2006) 527 (Canada 2006) 498 (OECD 2006) 512 (NS 2009) 527 (Canada 2009) 497 (OECD 2009) 497 (NS 2012) 518 (Canada 2012) 494 (OECD 2012)  <u>Science</u> 520 (NS 2006) 534 (Canada 2006) 500 (OECD 2006) 523 (NS 2009) 529 (Canada 2009) 501 (OECD 2009) 516 (NS 2012) 525 (Canada 2012) 501 (OECD 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement <i>Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education</i></li> <li>▪ Continue to provide new mathematics curriculum and resources for grades 7–9 and 12</li> <li>▪ Increase school board leadership capacity to support school-based professional learning communities</li> <li>▪ Encourage students to participate in mathematics and science competitions</li> <li>▪ Support Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) initiatives that promote the integration of innovation and problem solving across curriculum areas.</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> PISA assesses reading, mathematics, and science literacy in every assessment cycle and focuses on one domain for each PISA assessment cycle. PISA is administered every 3 years. Targets are based on the most recent year each domain was the focus of the assessment. In 2012, mathematics was the domain of focus.

<sup>4</sup> The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) measure has been removed as Nova Scotia will no longer be participating in future iterations of this study and therefore no data will be available for trends.

<sup>5</sup> Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

Outcome	Measure/Rationale	Data Base Year	Target	Trends	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
Nova Scotia is accountable for education based on national and international comparison of assessment results  (continued)	Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP) results for 13-year-olds, scale score <sup>6</sup>	<u>Reading</u> 471 (NS 2007) 500 (Canada 2007)  <u>Mathematics</u> 457 (NS 2007) 500 (Canada 2007)  <u>Science</u> 480 (NS 2007) 500 (Canada 2007)	Increase over baseline (2013–14)	<u>Reading</u> 489 (NS 2010) 500 (Canada 2010)  488 (NS 2013) 508 (Canada 2013)  <u>Mathematics</u> 474 (NS 2010) 500 (Canada 2010)  488 (NS 2013) 507 (Canada 2013)  <u>Science</u> 489 (NS 2010) 500 (Canada 2010)  492 (NS 2013) 500 (Canada 2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement <i>Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education</i></li> <li>▪ Provide Teaching in Action resources for grades primary–3, 4–6, 7–9, and 10–12</li> <li>▪ Implement new curriculum and resources for grades 7–9 and grade 12 in 2015–16</li> <li>▪ Increase board leadership capacity to support school-based professional learning communities</li> <li>▪ Encourage students to participate in mathematics and science competitions</li> <li>▪ Support outreach programs, such as Scientists and Innovators in the Schools</li> <li>▪ Nova Scotia Science Olympics</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> PCAP 2013 results are scheduled to be released in spring 2014.

Outcome	Measure/Rationale	Data Base Year	Target	Trends	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target	
Nova Scotian children have improved developmental health profiles at school entry	Early Development Instrument (EDI) <sup>7</sup>	Percent of children vulnerable in at least one EDI domain	26.8% (NS 2012–13) 25.4% (Canada 2012–13)	Decrease from baseline (2016–17)	No trend available; baseline 2012–13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased access to developmentally appropriate, play-based early learning programs</li> <li>▪ Increase partnerships with community-based providers of programs and services for young children (prenatally through to school entry) to improve supports to children and their families</li> <li>▪ Create, deliver, and secure professional learning, resources, workshops, and institutes for existing programs for four-year-olds</li> </ul>
		Percent of children vulnerable in Physical Health and Well-Being domain	13.1% (NS 2012–13) 9.7% (Canada 2012–13)	Decrease from baseline (2016–17)	No trend available; baseline 2012–13	
		Percent of children vulnerable in Social Competence domain	11.2% (NS 2012–13) 9.2% (Canada 2012–13)	Decrease from baseline (2016–17)	No trend available; baseline 2012–13	
		Percent of children vulnerable in Emotional Maturity domain	11.8% (NS 2012–13) 10.7% (Canada 2012–13)	Decrease from baseline (2016–17)	No trend available; baseline 2012–13	
		Percent of children vulnerable in Language and Cognitive Development domain	6.4% (NS 2012–13) 8.7% (Canada 2012–13)	Decrease from baseline (2016–17)	No trend available; baseline 2012–13	
		Percent of children vulnerable in Communication Skills and General Knowledge domain	10.7% (NS 2012–13) 13.0% (Canada 2012–13)	Decrease from baseline (2016–17)	No trend available; baseline 2012–13	
More Nova Scotian children have access to Early Childhood Development Support	Case load and wait list data from Early Childhood Development Support <sup>8</sup> programs	336 children on wait lists (2013–14)	Decrease from baseline (2016–17)	Number of children on waitlists: 229 (2010–11) 136 (2011–12)* 273 (2012–13) 336 (2013–14) 332 (2014–15)  *additional funding was allocated to reduce waitlists for 2011–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement recommendations of the Early Intervention Program Review</li> <li>▪ Implement, as a program standard, eligibility criteria to ensure consistency province-wide</li> <li>▪ Increase the number of Early Interventionists to reduce waitlists</li> </ul>	

<sup>7</sup> EDI data is collected provincially every two years.

<sup>8</sup> Formerly Early Intervention

Outcome	Measure/Rationale	Data Base Year	Target	Trends	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
Nova Scotians have access to safe, affordable child care	Percent of average daily subsidized child care spaces used out of total available spaces	2013–14: 97.7% of average daily subsidized child care spaces used (4,326 out of 4,427 available spaces)	Increase over baseline	No trend available; baseline 2013–14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Based on the Child Care Review, which will be complete in late spring 2015, the department will develop a policy direction and action plan to integrate approaches to early childhood development programs</li> <li>▪ Continuous monitoring of usage rates to ensure access to subsidy is maximized</li> </ul>
Better educated Nova Scotians	High school graduation rate	86.1% (2009–10)	Increase over baseline (2016–17)	88.7% (2010–11) 88.6% (2011–12) 89.6% (2012–13) 89.8% (2013–14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to support pathways toward high school graduation available to students including O2, Co-operative Education, Skilled Trades, new Personal Development Credit, Discovering Opportunities</li> <li>▪ Support strategies targeting youth including Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling services</li> <li>▪ Continue to expand SchoolsPlus to provide services and supports to students and their families</li> <li>▪ Increase focus and support for social and emotional learning and mental health education</li> <li>▪ Increase support for student transitions into and through high school</li> <li>▪ Achievement Gap Initiative and the Racial Equity Policy</li> <li>▪ Support the continued expansion of the Nova Scotia Virtual School</li> <li>▪ Expand parent/guardian workshops</li> <li>▪ Expand career development within the public school program</li> <li>▪ Increase school board leadership capacity to support school-based professional learning communities</li> </ul>