



Accountability Report

2018–2019

Education & Early Childhood Development



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Accountability Report 2018–2019

ISBN 978-1-55457-983-9

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Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for the year ended March 31, 2019 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 Business Plan for the fiscal year that just ended. The reporting of the 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 department's 2018-19 Business Plan.

Hon. Zach Churchill
Minister

Cathy Montreuil
Deputy Minister

Message from the Minister

It is with pleasure that I present the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's (EECD) 2018-19 Accountability Report. This document reports on the department's activities as outlined in EECD's 2018-19 Business Plan.

In 2018-19, the department continued to invest in the Nova Scotia public education system so that students, families, and educators get the resources and support they need to succeed. The department continues to advance improvements to the early years and public education systems in Nova Scotia, following the priority to implement recommendations stemming from the review of the province's education administrative system and the Commission on Inclusive Education.

The Glaze report highlighted the need to take immediate action to ensure that all students have equitable access to high quality education, no matter where they live. The EECD budget has increased by nearly \$300 million. This increased investment helped to create over 1,300 additional teaching and student support positions. New supports in the system, such as autism specialists and child and youth practitioners, are helping our kids succeed every day.

In 2018-19, year one of a five year roll out of changes for inclusive education, EECD invested \$15 million to hire an additional 191 non-teaching supports across the province; including Autism Specialists, Behavioral Specialists, EAs and Parent Navigators. We also provided additional training and resources for teachers to help them cope with complex classrooms. Additional investments have been made for the 2019-20 school year.

The department has continued to implement play-based pre-primary programming in many schools across Nova Scotia. This program is available to 4 year olds, providing them with access to high-quality early learning programs based on Nova Scotia's first ever Early Learning Curriculum Framework. Total enrolment numbers for 2018-19, as of Feb 1, 2019, were 3060 children in 185 classrooms in 145 school communities. Hundreds of additional families across the province will have access to pre-primary when the program expands to 56 new schools this September. The expansion will see 84 new classrooms and based on Grade Primary enrolment data it is anticipated about 1,400 four- year-olds could access the program.

Access to regulated early learning and childcare is critical for child development. Children and families will have improved access to child care from a \$2.4 million investment that will create more than 750 new spaces. Funding for these spaces and other investments come from a three-year, \$35 million early learning and childcare funding agreement with the federal government that was signed in January 2018.

By working together, we have the ability to make a positive difference in the lives of all students while supporting student achievement and well-being. It is a time of change for the education system in Nova Scotia, and we are nowhere near finished. Change is a process, and we will continue to work to ensure our students have the help they need to succeed. I look forward to the continued collaboration with our regional centers for education, Conseil scolaire acadien provincial, and education partners to ensure all students and children succeed.

Hon. Zach Churchill
Minister, Education and Early Childhood Development

Introduction and Structure

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2018-19 Accountability Report provides information on performance measures and finances identified in the 2018-19 Business Plan.

Student Assessments as Performance Measures¹

Performance measures related to student assessments are reported as the percentage of students performing at or above provincial expectations (Level 3 or 4) in reading, writing, and mathematics.

Ongoing improvements to student assessment and evaluation are a priority for the department. In 2018-19, the Council to Improve Classroom Conditions conducted a review of all provincial and board-level assessments with the goal of streamlining them to decrease the administrative workload for teachers and students and ensure the value of assessments administered.

In 2015, the baseline year for provincial assessments was reset to 2015-16, to enable measurement against initiatives implemented through Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education. It will take time to see the effects of the changes the department is putting in place. It is anticipated that assessments in 2020 will show measurable success with students performing at or above expectations as measured by the provincial assessments.

¹ 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.

Financial Results

2018-19 Accountability Report: Financial Table

	2018-19 Estimate	2018-19 Actual	2018-19 Variance
Program and Service Area	(\$ thousands)		
Departmental Expenses:			
Senior Management	\$1,165	\$1,074	(\$91)
Strategic Policy and Research	\$3,678	\$3,482	(\$196)
Early Learning	\$26,030	\$25,233	(\$797)
Childcare and Licensing	\$83,193	\$80,534	(\$2,659)
Centre for Equity in Achievement and Well-Being	\$4,374	\$4,185	(\$189)
Education Innovation Programs and Services	\$16,662	\$16,701	\$39
Student Services and Equity	\$4,822	\$4,192	(\$630)
African Canadian Services	\$5,926	\$5,906	(\$20)
Mi'kmaq Services	\$992	\$928	(\$64)
French Programs and Services	\$9,980	\$10,992	\$1,012
Corporate Services	\$5,389	\$6,845	\$1,456
Public Education Funding	\$1,068,078	\$1,079,079	\$11,001
Teachers' Pension	\$91,160	\$91,465	\$305
School Capital Amortization	\$76,333	\$76,454	\$121
Total: Departmental Expenses	\$1,397,782	\$1,407,070	\$9,288
Additional Information:			
Ordinary Revenue	(\$630)	(\$1,479)	(\$849)
Fees and Other Charges	(\$1,920)	(\$2,118)	(\$198)
Ordinary Recoveries	(\$28,592)	(\$31,000)	(\$2,408)
Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries	(\$31,142)	(\$34,597)	(\$3,455)
TCA Purchase Requirements	\$107,910	\$101,662	(\$6,248)
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	205.8	193.5	(12.3)

Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development expenses were \$9.3 million or 0.7 per cent higher than estimate primarily due to increased spending of \$7.7 million related to the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU) Arbitration Award for Drake University, \$1.7 million in additional funding to the Halifax Regional Centre for Education (HRCE) for bussing, \$1.2 million for French Complimentary Projects which is fully recoverable from Federal funding and \$0.7 million in net operational expenses. These increases were partially offset by a \$2.0 million underspend caused by lower utilization for Early Years Subsidy.

Revenue, Fees, and Recoveries Variance Explanation:

Ordinary Revenue exceeded budget by \$0.8M related Federal funding for an Early Years IT system; Ordinary Recoveries were over budget mainly due to French Language Grant funding and French Complimentary Projects funding from the Federal Government that were received or committed during the year.

TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:

Under budget primarily as a result of New School Projects. There were construction delays at Eastern District P-12, Tatamagouche P-12, and Yarmouth Elementary resulting in underspends of \$11M; Offset partially land purchase for Bedford Ravines of \$5M.

Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:

Salary variance due to staff turnover and refilling vacancies throughout the year.

NOTE:

For Ordinary Revenues, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 2

For TCA Purchase Requirements, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 1

Measuring Our Performance

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's (EECD) 2018-19 Business Plan identified several priority initiatives to advance improvements to the early years and public education systems in Nova Scotia.

Outcome: Improve Early Childhood and P-12 Education

Performance Measures

In 2016-17 changes to the provincial assessment schedule were made as a result of work through the Council to Improve Classroom Conditions. This means, some measurements for 2017-18 were not available and denoted as 'N/A'.

Nova Scotia Assessments: Mathematics

The following changes have occurred to the Program of Learning Assessment for Nova Scotia:

- Reading and Writing in Grade 3 (RW3), Évaluation de la Nouvelle-Écosse: lecture et écriture en 3e année and Mathematics/Mathématiques in Grade 4 (M4) assessments were not administered in 2017–2018. They were re-introduced in 2018–19 as the Nova Scotia Assessment: Literacy and Mathematics in Grade 3 (LM3) and Évaluation de la Nouvelle-Écosse: littératie et mathématiques en 3e année (LM3-FR) and were administered in spring 2019.

The percentage of grades 4 and 6 students performing at or above provincial expectations in mathematics is one of the measures for a desired outcome of increased student learning and achievement in mathematics.

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.

Reporting on 2018-19

Results for assessments in mathematics, have remained consistent since the base year of 2015-16.

Percentage of Students Meeting Math Expectations				
Nova Scotia Assessment: Mathematics				
	2015-16*	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Grade 4	76%	77%	N/A**	N/A**
Grade 6	68%	70%	70%	71%

* Baseline.

** Mathematics in Grade 4 and mathématiques en 4e année were not administered in 2017-18, and 2018-19 school year.

Where do we want to go/be in the future?

EECD has placed a strong focus on building the foundations of math and literacy for grades primary to 3, ensuring the supports are in place to address the full range of students' learning strengths and needs.

As highlighted in *Raise the Bar*, mathematics has continued to be a priority area for public education with 2018-19 seeing an increase in math supports for students and teachers. A Mathematics Learning Specialist, grades 7-12, was seconded in 2018-19 to assist with the strategy and with the development of additional supports for teachers and for student learning at these grades.

EECD's goal is for Nova Scotia Students to achieve at high levels in mathematics so that they can thrive in school and beyond. To meet this goal, the department and its partners are focusing on helping teachers develop their instructional strategies so that students will learn how to solve problems, make connections, and represent their mathematical thinking in a variety of ways. Math supports are being coordinated through the provincial mathematics team.

Nova Scotia Assessments: Reading and Writing

The percentage of grades 3 and 6 students performing at or above provincial expectations in reading and/or writing is measured for a desired outcome of increased student learning and achievement in literacy.

These assessments measure students' reading and writing ability in grades 3 and 6. The assessment results 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.

In addition to the French-language provincial assessments in reading and writing in grades 3 and 6 students in the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) participate in the English-language provincial assessments in reading and writing in grade 6.

Reporting on 2018-19

Results for the English-language Nova Scotia Assessment in Reading and Writing in grades 3 and 6 have remained consistent since the baseline year of 2015-16. EECD continues to prioritize literacy with a focus on improving outcomes in this area.

The target for this measure, as outlined in the Provincial Literacy Strategy, will be an increase of 8 per cent in the percentage of students who perform at or above expectations on these assessments by 2020.

Assessments in literacy at the grade 3 level were not administered in 2017-18. This assessment was re-introduced in 2018-19 as the Nova Scotia Assessment: Literacy and Mathematics in

Grade 3 (LM3) and Évaluation de la Nouvelle-Écosse: littératie et mathématiques en 3e année (LM3-FR) which was administered in spring 2019.

Percentage of Students Meeting Reading Expectations					
Nova Scotia Assessment: Reading					
	2014-15*	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Grade 3	68%	67%	68%	N/A	N/A
Grade 6	74%	73%	73%	74%	74%
L'Évaluation de la Nouvelle-Écosse: lecture (Conseil scolaire acadien provincial)					
Grade 3	75%	70%	68%	N/A	N/A
Grade 6	69%	72%	71%	69%	73%
Percentage of Students Meeting Writing Expectations					
Nova Scotia Assessment: Writing					
	2014-15*	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Grade 3					
Ideas	76%	73%	73%	N/A	N/A
Organization	60%	59%	58%	N/A	N/A
Language Use	64%	63%	63%	N/A	N/A
Conventions	53%	51%	53%	N/A	N/A
Grade 6					
Ideas	76%	78%	72%	74%	70%
Organization	61%	62%	57%	59%	55%
Language Use	66%	67%	63%	64%	59%
Conventions	58%	61%	53%	57%	53%
L'Évaluation de la Nouvelle-Écosse : écriture (Conseil scolaire acadien provincial)					
Grade 3					
Ideas	65%	67%	68%	N/A	N/A
Organization	59%	58%	60%	N/A	N/A
Language Use	58%	59%	55%	N/A	N/A
Conventions	48%	51%	46%	N/A	N/A
Grade 6					
Ideas	71%	75%	73%	72%	69%
Organization	59%	67%	59%	65%	56%
Language Use	56%	61%	60%	59%	51%
Conventions	43%	47%	44%	42%	38%

* Baseline.

** Reading and Writing in Grade 3 and Lecture et écriture en 3e année were not administered in the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school year.

Where do we want to go/be in the future?

In the Literacy Strategy P-12, the goal is for Nova Scotia Students to achieve a high level of literacy so that they can thrive in school and beyond. The Literacy Strategy is being implemented by the Literacy Steering Committee and a Literacy Working Group, using a research-based approach to implementation. To meet the goal, we will continue to focus on phonemic awareness, reading and fluency, and comprehension, and on writing skills in all grades to support the development of these skills.

EECD continued to invest in the literacy strategy in 2018-19, to provide more direct supports for students and support for teachers to strengthen literacy learning in all subjects and grades. The department funded two new Teacher Leaders for the province with an additional investment of \$200,000 for 2018-19. Literacy will continue to be a priority area for public education in 2019-20.

Reading Recovery

In 2017-18 there were 192 schools with Reading Recovery. In 2018-19, 247 schools had Reading Recovery programs. The target of this measure is to have full implementation of Reading Recovery by the 2019-20 school year.

International and National Assessments

The following assessments are administered every three years, thus there is no new update for the 2018-19 Accountability Report.

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a well-respected international instrument sponsored by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), with over 60 countries participating. Canada has participated in PISA since its inception.

PISA is conducted every three years, providing reliable measures of the performance of 15-year-old students' in reading, mathematics, and science and allows 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.

Each assessment includes questions from all three subject areas with a primary focus on one subject area each time the assessment is administered.

Reporting on 2018-19

The 2015 PISA results are the most current data available, and indicate that statistically, in comparison to 2009, the average performance of students in Nova Scotia did not change by a significant amount in the areas of reading and science but were lower for mathematics at a statistically significant level.

PISA Results									
	Reading			Math			Science		
	2009	2012	2015	2009	2012	2015	2009	2012	2015
NS Average	516	508	517	512	497	497	523	516	517
Canadian Average	524	523	527	527	518	516	529	525	528
OECD Average	493	496	493	496	494	490	501	501	493

Compared to the OECD average, in 2015 Nova Scotia was performing on par in mathematics, and at a higher level for reading and science. Compared to the Canadian Average, Nova Scotia scored below average in all three categories.

Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP)

The Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (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.

The PCAP assessment is one of the measures for a desired outcome of increased student learning and achievement in reading, science and mathematics.

Reporting on 2018-19

Compared to the 2013 results, Nova Scotia has seen an improvement over the 2010 assessment in the areas of math and science. Nova Scotia continues to perform below the Canadian average in all three subject areas.

PCAP Results	2007 Results		2010 Results*		2013 Results		2016 Results	
	NS Average	Canadian Average	NS Average	Canadian Average	NS Average	Canadian Average	NS Average	Canadian Average
Reading	483	500	489	500	488	508	498	507
Math	N/A	N/A	474	500	488	507	497	511
Science	N/A	N/A	489	500	492	500	499	508

*adjusted baseline

Where do we want to go/be in the future?

EECD 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.

Nova Scotia students will continue to participate in both the PCAP and PISA assessments. Nova Scotia students participated in PISA 2018 and results will be available in late 2019.

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.

High School Graduation Rate

The high school graduation rate is one of the measures for a desired outcome of better educated Nova Scotians. The high school graduation rate, from 2009-10 until 2016-17, is the percentage of students receiving a high school graduation diploma compared with the number of students that were in grade 9 three years earlier.

For many years EECD has been calculating graduation rates using a consistent methodology, which takes the number of students in the current graduating cohort and divides this by the Grade 9 enrollment from 3 years earlier. This approach does not take into account student movement in and out of the school system. An updated approach is being developed to ensure a more precise measure of graduation rates in Nova Scotia. EECD is currently reviewing the graduation rate formula and aligning it with sector best practices, therefore a graduation rate for the 2017-18 school year is not currently available.

Reporting on 2018-19

Graduation rates in Nova Scotia have been steadily increasing since the baseline year of 2009-10. In 2016-17 the department made the commitment to further increase graduation rates. This goal was achieved with graduation rates increasing by 1.6% in 2016-17 over the previous year.

High School Graduation Rate								
2009–10*	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016-17	2017-18
86.1%	88.7%	88.6%	89.6%	89.8%	92.5%	90.7%	92.3%	N/A

*baseline

Where do we want to go/be in the future?

Although the graduation rate is strong in Nova Scotia, there are students who still require support as they transition to post-secondary training or the workforce. In response, EECD has introduced a number of initiatives that will provide students with more hands-on learning, opportunities to explore a range of career options, and will support their transition out of high school.

SchoolsPlus Expansion

In the 2018-19 school year SchoolsPlus supported 327 schools through 43 hub sites, in every county, with 32 Facilitators, 61 Community Outreach Workers and 48 Mental Health Clinicians. SchoolsPlus delivered a range of services to individual students and families. As well they worked with multiple partners across community and systems to increase collocated services, and collaborations to further develop services for children youth and their families. In the 2018-19 school year, SchoolsPlus Facilitators carried an average caseload of 834 cases per month; while working with their Community Outreach Workers and partners, they provided a wide range of group programming for 5680 participants (students, parents/caregivers) and provided a total of 3,111 extended hours.

In addition, SchoolsPlus provided mental health services and support through the collocation of SchoolsPlus Mental Health Clinicians, through an ongoing partnership with the NSHA and IWK. This enabled students to receive mental health supports at their school location, while strengthening the continuum of supports and access in the community and tertiary mental health systems.

Skilled Trade Centers

In 2018-19, EECD expanded the number of Skills Trade Centers to provide more high school students with access to learning that will help them prepare for careers. Four new centers were added in 2018-19, bringing the total to twenty-two centers.

Early Learning and Child Care Agreement

On January 10, 2018 Nova Scotia signed a three-year, \$35-million agreement that will make regulated child care more affordable, accessible and inclusive for children and families.

Reporting on 2018-19

In 2018-19, investments were focused on the following priority areas:

- Making child care more accessible and affordable for Nova Scotia families;
- Supporting quality through workforce development; and
- Imbedding inclusion in early learning and child care environments.

There are several measures to show progress in priority areas, these are shown in the table below. The baseline has been set as 2017-18, with targets of increasing over the baseline data for each measure.

Affordability, Accessibility, Quality and Inclusion in Child Care		
	2017-18*	2018-19
Increase in number of licensed spaces	17,250	17,356
Increase number of new family home day care sites	254	281
Increase number of children benefitting from maximum subsidy rates	2551	3255
Increase number of staff working in licensed child care who are engaging in course work towards a credential (Continuing Education)	145	155
Increase number of licensed child care centers accessing funding to build capacity for inclusion	220	264
Increase ECEs in licensed child care receiving inclusion training in the Pyramid Model	0	150**
Increase in individuals receiving ECE training grants/bursaries from underrepresented populations (Acadian/Francophone, African Nova Scotian, Indigenous, Immigrant and Newcomer)	0	32

*baseline

- *Increase number of new family home day care sites* – the number has increased to 254 for 2017-18, as the number 228 in the 2018-19 Business Plan was taken from a 2016-17 annual report.
- 2017-18 data for *Increase number of children benefitting from maximum subsidy rates* [previously *More families benefitting from subsidy enhancement*] and *Increase number of staff working in licensed child care who are engaging in course work towards a credential (Continuing Education)* [previously *more families benefitting from subsidy enhancement*] differ from those published in the 2018-19 Business Plan because of a change in the criteria of these measures.
- *Increase ECEs in licensed child care receiving inclusion training in the Pyramid Model* 2017-18 data has been changed to 0 as the previous 200 (as published in the 2018-19 Business Plan) was a target number, not a baseline.

** Pyramid model training was launched with 23 demonstration sites. Training in the Pyramid Model has begun and will be ongoing for approximately 150 ECEs. In addition, 20 Professional Development Trainers have been trained and 7 Pyramid Model Coaches trained.

Early Development Instrument (EDI)

The Early Development Instrument (EDI) is a population health tool, completed by Primary teachers, that measures developmental change in populations of young children at school entry in five domains and is considered to be a reliable predictor of future education, health and social outcomes. Schools, school regions, government, researchers and community partners use this data together with other indicators to understand vulnerable populations of children and mobilize resources to support young children and their families where it is most needed.

The EDI has been collected province-wide in 2013, 2015, and 2018.

Children who score in the lowest 10th percentile on a domain are considered “vulnerable”. Vulnerability cannot be attributed to a single cause. Healthy early developmental is complex and influenced by many factors. The target is to reduce the percentage of children who are vulnerable in each of the EDI domains by the next reporting period.

EDI Reporting

Percentage of Children Vulnerable by EDI Domain				
	2012–13*	2014–15	2016-17	2017-18
Physical Health and Well-Being	10.3%	9.8%	N/A	11.3%
Social Competence	9.9%	9.1%	N/A	11.2%
Emotional maturity	9.7%	9.0%	N/A	10.5%
Language and Cognitive Development	10.4%	10.8%	N/A	11.8%
Communication Skills and General Knowledge	10.7%	10.6%	N/A	11.7%
Vulnerable on one or more domains	25.5%	25.5%	N/A	28.8%

Note: Data is collected every two years.

*Nova Scotia Baseline

It should be noted that originally, the 2012-13 EDI results were calculated using the national normative vulnerability cut-offs², which were largely based on the population of children living in Ontario and British Columbia. Since then, the lowest 10th percentile of scores in the Nova Scotia 2012-13 EDI were used to set Nova Scotia vulnerability cut-offs and create a Nova Scotia baseline, allowing us to measure Nova Scotia children with Nova Scotia children over time, which reflects their reality. Therefore, the 2012-13 EDI results as noted in this report may not correspond to the results contained in the department’s previous accountability reports.

Where do we want to go/be in the future?

EECD continues to place a strong focus on supporting young children and their families to help ensure key developmental milestones are met, e.g. children are developmentally healthy. The department is committed to ensuring the right supports are in place to help every child thrive in the early years and successfully transition into school.

² Cut-offs are the actual scores marking the 10th percentile; vulnerable children are those who fell below this mark.

Current enrollment in the Pre-primary Program is at 3,060 children with 185 classes in 145 school communities across Nova Scotia. By September 2020, every four-year-old in Nova Scotia will have access to the Pre-primary Program in their own community.

Interesting Facts

- **Inclusive Education:** In year one of a five year roll out, EECD invested \$15 million to hire an additional 191 non-teaching supports across the province; including Autism Specialists, Behavioral Specialists, EAs and Parent Navigators. We're also providing additional training and resources for teachers to help them cope with complex classrooms.
- **Provincial Advisory Council on Education (PACE):** PACE is an advisory group who provide advice to the Minister on matters that impact our education system. Items brought before PACE and other advisory groups are focused on improving the achievement and well-being of students. PACE has been meeting regularly since fall 2018 and has brought forward valuable advice on the needs, challenges, and opportunities that exist in regions and communities across the province.
- **Public School Program Review:** EECD continues to review of the Public School Program (PSP) in Nova Scotia to ensure the PSP is meeting the needs of all students and supporting student success.
- **Pre-Primary:** Total enrolment numbers for 2018-19, as of Feb 1, 2019, was 3060 children in 185 classrooms in 145 school communities. This program provides Nova Scotia families with access to a free play-based, early learning experience for four-year-olds that supports young children's development and lays the foundation for school success and lifelong learning. EECD plans to provide access to the pre-primary program for every 4-year-old in the province by 2020.
- **School Advisory Councils (SACs):** EECD has given parents and the school community an enhanced role to ensure they have the tools and budgets they need to support their schools, while also providing valuable advice on regional and provincial education policy development. Each SAC has been provided with a budget of \$5,000 + \$1 per student to spend during the 2018-19 school year. Funding guidelines were released in the October 2018 and reviewed during the regional meetings. SACs have been asked to provide feedback on draft policies including a school extracurricular supervision policy, student assessment policy, and student transportation policy.
- **Skilled Trades Centers:** In 2018-19, EECD expanded the number of Skills Trade Centers to provide more high school students with access to learning that will help them prepare for careers. 4 new centers were added in 2018-19, bringing the total to 22 centers. The centers provide students with hands-on opportunities to make links between classroom learning and the world of work and build their skills and awareness of what they need to be successful in the trades. The government plans to have 25 Skilled Trades Centers across the province by 2019-20.
- **Early Learning and Child Care Bi-Lateral Agreement:** In January 2018, the governments of Canada and Nova Scotia signed the Canada-Nova Scotia Early Learning and Child Care

Agreement. Through this bilateral agreement, the Government of Nova Scotia will receive over \$35 million, over three years. As per the agreement, Nova Scotia has committed to use this funding ensuring that children from birth to school entry, and their families, have increased access to affordable, integrated, high quality and inclusive early childhood development programs, resources and supports for healthy early childhood development and improved outcomes for all children.

Appendix 1 –Disclosures of Wrongdoing received by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for the fiscal year 2018-19.

Department of Education – Disclosures of Wrongdoing	
Information Required under Section 18 of the Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act	Fiscal Year 2018-19
Number of disclosures received	0
Number of findings of wrongdoing	N/A
Details of each wrongdoing	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrong doing	N/A