

4.0 THE HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

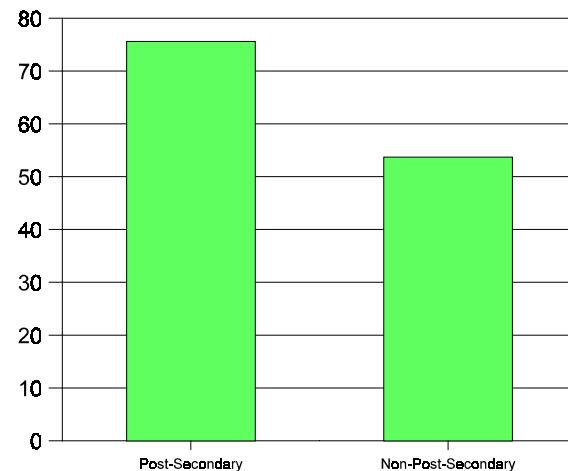
All surveyed high school graduates of June 2001, regardless of whether they were engaged in post-secondary studies or not at the time of survey, were asked a series of questions relating to their high school experience.

4.1 GRADUATE AWARENESS OF STUDENT FINANCIAL SERVICES

4.1.1 Were graduates aware of where to get information on government student loans?

Graduates, both those in a post-secondary institution and those not, were asked about their general awareness of where to get information on student loans. As shown in Table 4.1.1, two-thirds of those surveyed stated that they were aware of where to get information on student loans. Of particular note is the fact that 76% of graduates currently enrolled in post-secondary studies gave an affirmative response compared to only 54% of non-post-secondary attendees - almost half (46%) of the non-post-secondary cohort were unaware of where to get the information.

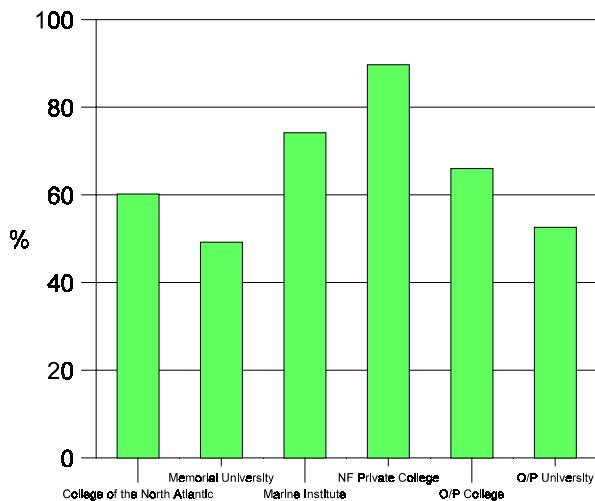
Figure 4.1.1 Graduates' Awareness of Government Student Loan Information June 2001 High School Graduates



4.1.2 Did graduates apply for a government student loan?

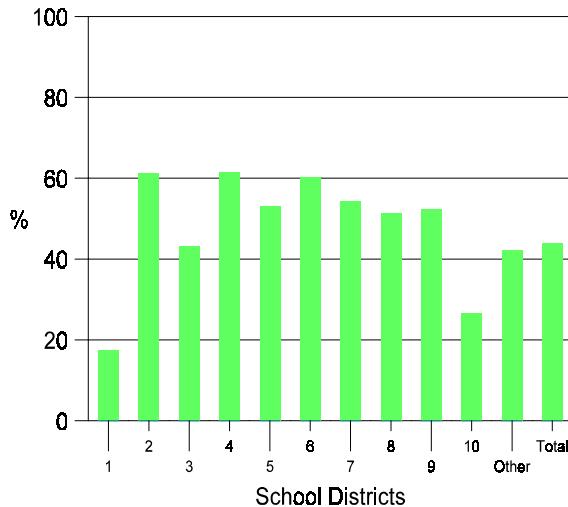
When asked if they had made application for a government student loan, almost 44% of June 2001 graduates indicated that they had done so. However, when viewed across the various post-secondary choices, almost 90% of graduates enrolled in a private college in Newfoundland and Labrador had applied for a loan whereas, in sharp contrast, only 49% of graduates attending Memorial University and 53% enrolled in out-of-province universities had made application (see Figure 4.1.2a).

Figure 4.1.2a Number of Graduates Applying for Government Student Loan by Institution June 2001 High School Graduates



Just over half (51%) of rural graduates applied for loan assistance compared to only 27% of urban graduates. As outlined in Figure 4.1.2b, School Districts 2, 4 and 6 had the largest percentage of applicants applying for a government student loan while Districts 1 and 10 had the fewest. The proximity of students from District 10 (Avalon East) to post-secondary institutions and lower post-secondary living cost coupled with greater access to employment opportunities would appear to be the main reasons for the lower uptake of student loans. In District 1 (Labrador), a combination of both native sponsorship and a high level of family support reduced student loan usage.

**4.1.2b Number of Graduates Applying for Government Student Loans by School District
June 2001 High School Graduates**



4.1.3 Who helped graduates complete their application for a government student loan?

The school environment was an important information source as almost 68% of high school graduates who applied for government student loans did so with the assistance of a guidance counsellor, teacher or principal. Rural graduates were also more inclined to use their guidance counsellor, teacher or principal (70%) than their urban counterparts (49%). While still making use of these school based sources, as parental education levels increased so did the reliance of graduates on their parents when completing student loan applications.

4.2 CAREER GOALS

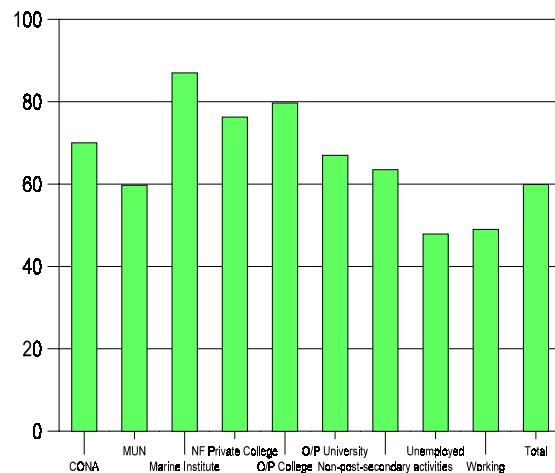
4.2.1 Have graduates made a decision on their future careers?

The June 2001 high school graduates were asked whether they had decided on a career. Overall, 60% or three in five respondents indicated that they had. Not surprisingly, those currently involved in post-secondary activities were more inclined to have chosen a career path. In particular, graduates enrolled at the Marine Institute were overwhelmingly resolved on careers with 87% stating that they know what career path they wish to follow. However, as shown in Figure 4.2.1, this decisiveness is not as evident with those enrolled at a university. In fact, just

under 60% of graduates attending Memorial and 67% of those in out of province universities had

made a firm decision on a career path.

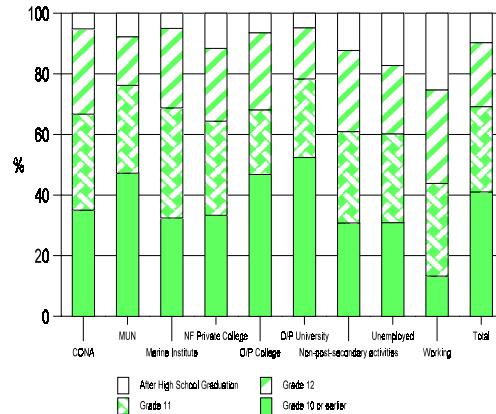
**Figure 4.2.1 Decisiveness on a Career Path
June 2001 High School Graduates**



4.2.2 When did graduates decide on a career path?

Those graduates with a chosen career path were asked when they first started thinking about career options. Overall, just over 41% stated that during grade 10 or earlier they started thinking about careers, 28% began by grade 11 and, by grade 12, 21% started thinking about their future careers. While they now have a decided career path, almost 10% waited until graduating from high school to begin exploring their career options. Females were more inclined to start thinking seriously about career options at an earlier age with almost 47% beginning by grade 10 or earlier compared to only 34% of males. When viewing the current status of the graduates, those enrolled in a university appear to make career decisions earlier during high school, although the decision may be to merely attend a university rather than a firm career choice. Over 17% of the working or unemployed graduates did not decide on career options until after high school graduation.

**Figure 4.2.2 Point in Time When Graduates Made Career Decision
June 2001 High School Graduates**



4.2.3 Where did graduates seek advice relating to post-secondary and career related information?

Graduates were asked to rank the sources they would ask for advice with respect to post-secondary and career information as being ‘very important’, ‘somewhat important’, or ‘not important at all’. The sources of advice included: parents or guardians, friends, high school teachers, high school guidance counsellors, institutional representatives, institutional websites, media, career planning centres, and career planning websites.

Overall, the most important source of advice for graduates was parents or guardians with 54% identifying them as very important. Other sources of advice ranked high by graduates are teachers

and guidance counsellors with 45% and 42%, respectively, stating that they placed great importance on their input. In contrast, only 7% of graduates placed great importance on the information provided by media while just 15% found career planning websites to be influential. Surprisingly, friends were not considered to be very important in terms of career planning as only 16% of graduates indicated their peers to be very important sources of advice.

Table 4.2.3a shows the source of advice deemed to be very important to those graduates enrolled in a post-secondary institution at the time of survey. As stated previously, the advice of parents was seen to be very important to all graduates and this did not vary by institutional sector. Graduates in all sectors, but more particularly those attending private colleges (44%) and universities (42%) also placed considerable importance on the advice of teachers. For those students engaged in studies at the College of the North Atlantic, 44% deemed the advice of guidance counselors of great importance.

Source	Memorial University	Marine Institute	College of the North Atlantic	NF Private College	Out of Province University	Out of Province College	Total Post-Secondary	Total Graduates
%								
Parents/Guardians	51.6	44.6	49.7	62.7	50.7	55.9	51.7	53.9
Friends	11.8	12.0	11.7	21.9	12.4	13.6	12.6	16.0
HS Teachers	41.7	32.6	37.4	44.4	42.2	33.9	40.6	45.1
HS Guidance Counsellors	36.4	39.1	43.8	39.6	39.4	28.8	38.3	42.4
Institutional Reps	38.0	37.0	33.4	46.7	36.2	37.3	37.4	37.0
Institutional Websites	20.9	31.5	16.8	23.1	28.0	28.8	21.6	21.9
Media	4.7	8.7	8.1	10.7	6.4	6.8	6.2	7.3
Career Planning Centres	19.3	17.4	19.2	26.0	13.1	13.6	18.8	22.2
Career Planning Websites	9.3	19.2	17.4	20.1	9.6	8.5	11.4	15.4

Note: Graduates were permitted to name multiple sources this totals may exceed 100% for each institutional sector.

Table 4.2.3a Career and Post-Secondary Advice Sources Deemed 'Very Important' by June 2001 High School Graduates Attending Post-Secondary and Total Graduates

For those graduates not pursuing post-secondary studies, their most important source of advice was their parents. In fact, 58% of non-post-secondary graduates indicated that they had turned to their parents for advice on their post-graduation activities. While it is unlikely that teachers and guidance counsellors advised students to terminate their educational endeavours after high school, 53% and 49% of graduates, respectively, indicated that they deemed the advice given by these sources as important. Friends (22%) had a greater impact on non-post-secondary graduates than those attending post-secondary (16%).

Source	Employed	Unemployed	Other ⁽¹⁾	Total Non-Post-Secondary	Total Graduates
%					
Parents/ Guardians	55.1	60.7	60.9	57.5	53.9
Friends	21.6	23.1	20.0	21.7	16.0
HS Teachers	51.7	51.4	58.7	52.7	45.1
HS Guidance Counsellors	47.6	48.1	57.0	49.2	42.4
Institutional Reps	34.5	36.8	41.7	36.2	37.0
Institutional Websites	23.2	20.8	22.2	22.4	21.9
Media	8.9	10.8	7.0	9.1	7.3
Career Planning Centres	28.7	25.8	29.1	28.	22.2
Career Planning Websites	22.6	20.6	22.2	22.0	15.4

⁽¹⁾ Other includes those students who are not attending post-secondary for personal or family reasons, have joined the military, are participating in the Linkages program or waiting for their post-secondary programs to begin, or other unspecified reasons.

**Table 4.2.3b Career and Post-Secondary Advice Sources
Deemed 'Very Important' by June 2001 High School Graduates
Not Attending Post-Secondary and Total Graduates**

Results varied considerably across school districts although overall trends were consistent. Parents and guardians were generally ranked as a very important source of post-secondary and career-related information by all graduates, regardless of school district. Graduates from Districts 5 and 8 placed guidance counsellors as a very important source of information (51% and 54%, respectively) while teachers were considered more influential in Districts 4 (53%) and 10 (45%). As shown in Table 4.2.3c for the remaining districts these two sources were, for the most part, on par with each other in ranking of importance.

Source	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total Graduates
%											
Parents /Guardians	47.5	59.3	53.8	53.7	56.3	52.9	55.3	55.2	61.8	50.1	53.9
Friends	14.1	22.0	18.2	16.2	13.7	13.2	16.8	18.4	19.6	14.0	16.0
HS Teachers	42.9	48.7	46.3	52.7	47.3	39.8	42.1	47.1	43.8	44.7	45.4
HS Guidance Counsellors	39.0	48.0	48.8	39.2	50.7	44.4	42.3	53.6	41.0	36.8	42.4
Institutional Reps	40.7	32.0	39.4	33.0	37.5	33.8	31.9	39.8	38.9	37.6	37.0
Institutional Websites	24.9	16.7	21.9	21.0	20.8	21.0	16.6	25.2	19.2	24.4	21.9
Media	7.3	8.7	9.6	7.6	7.9	8.2	4.7	9.1	7.6	6.0	7.3
Career Planning Centres	22.0	24.7	24.3	19.4	20.4	21.9	21.9	22.5	23.4	22.0	22.2
Career Planning Websites	18.1	16.0	13.7	15.4	15.5	17.3	15.5	16.5	14.8	14.3	15.4

Table 4.2.3c Career and Post-Secondary Advice Sources Deemed 'Very Important' by June 2001 High School Graduates by School District

4.2.4 Were graduates aware of the career counselling services available to them in high school and, if so, did they use them?

Graduates were asked about 9 different counselling services that would have been available to them during high school. For each of the following they were asked if they were aware of each service and if they used them: Career Information Hotline, HRDC centres, high school guidance counsellor, CHOICES computer application, WorkInfoNet, Community Career Centre website, Linkages program, Youth Services Canada project and counsellors from post-secondary institutions.

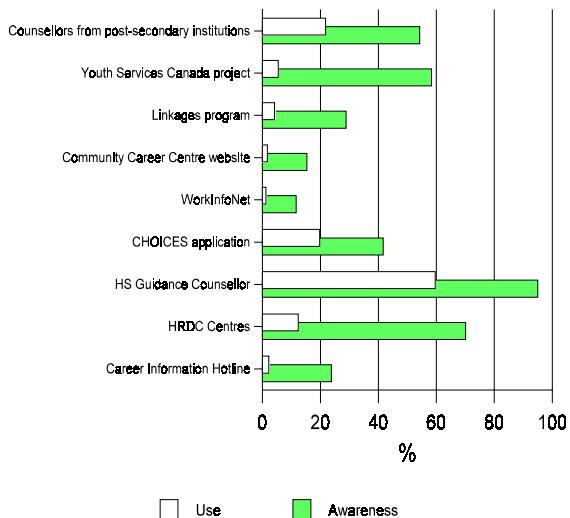
As shown in Figure 4.2.4, with almost 95% awareness, high school guidance counsellors are well known by graduates. Overall, however, only 60% of graduates reported using the services of a guidance counsellor to help plan their future with more male graduates (66%) taking advantage of the service than females (53%). Additionally, graduates from School District 8 displayed the highest usage with 73% of graduates using their services compared to 47% from District 10.

Almost three-quarters of graduates also indicated their awareness of Human Resource Development Canada (HRDC) Career Planning Centres although only 12% made use of this service. Students enrolled in the College of the North Atlantic and Marine Institute had the highest usage rates with 15% and 16%, respectively using the centres. Students from the Burin Peninsula had both the highest awareness (82%) and usage (19%) of their local HRDC centres.

With just over half of graduates aware of the service offered by counsellors from post-secondary institutions, 22% of students made use of their services during high school. Graduates attending the Marine Institute were least likely to use the services of these counsellors with less than 20% indicating they had conferred with them. Almost 25% of students from both School Districts 3 and 9 stated they had dealt with post-secondary institution counsellors to help plan their future.

It is interesting to note that while just over half of graduates indicated their awareness of the Youth Services Canada Project, which provides opportunities for out-of-school, unemployed and/or underemployed youth, between 15 and 30 years of age (inclusive), who face barriers to employment, to develop their life and employability skills through service to their community, uptake of this service was limited to only 5% of graduates overall.

Figure 4.2.4 Graduates' Awareness and Use of Career Counselling Services in High School June 2001 High School Graduates



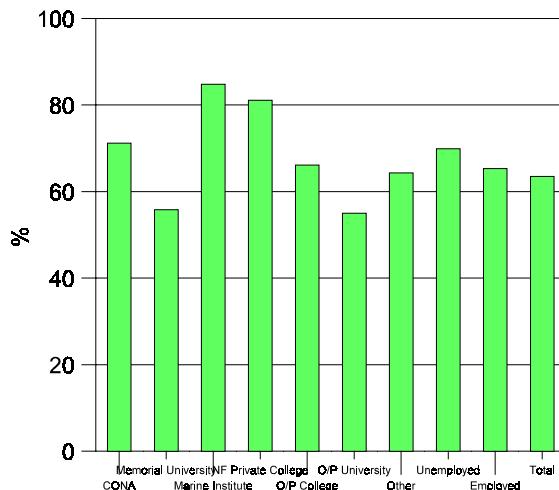
4.2.5 What prevented some graduates from deciding on a career path?

For the 40% that have not identified a career path to follow, these people were asked if there is a reason they have not done so. The primary theme dealt with the graduates being undecided on their career goals at the time of survey. “Deciding between more than one option” and “just not knowing what they want to do” are key issues with this group.

4.2.6 Did high school adequately prepare graduates for a career and, if not, why?

The opinion of graduates on whether or not high school had adequately prepared them for a career varied significantly by institutional sector and post-graduation activity. While 64% of graduates overall indicated that they were prepared to follow a career path upon graduation from high school, only 56% of graduates attending Memorial University and 55% attending out-of-province universities felt they were prepared (see Figure 4.2.6). Additionally, 69% of those graduates who were not enrolled in a post-secondary institution at the time of survey felt they were prepared to pursue a career based on their high school experience. In contrast, 85% of graduates attending the Marine Institute and 81% attending private colleges in the Province indicated that high school had readied them for a career.

Figure 4.2.6 Career Preparedness Through High School Experience June 2001 High School Graduates



Overall, 35% of graduates indicated that they were not prepared to pursue a career after graduation from high school. The common themes expressed by graduates were “high school is general studies and not specific enough”, “high school is too easy” and “a post-secondary education is required for a career”.

It is interesting to note that as parental education levels rose, the expectations of graduates with respect to building a career based on a high school education fell. In fact, only 58% of graduates whose parents had completed post-secondary felt that a high school education was adequate compared to 75% of graduates whose parent(s) had less than a high school education.

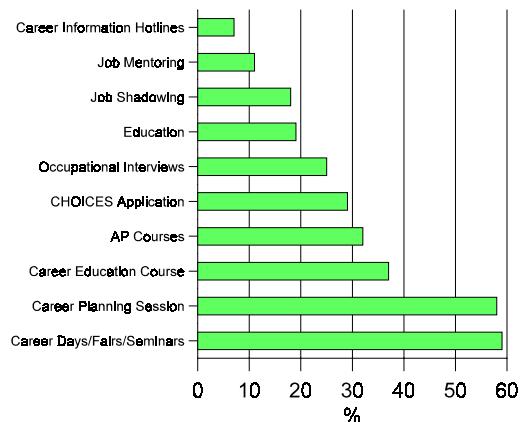
4.2.7 Did specific high school courses influence the decisions of graduates with respect to their post-secondary options?

To determine the impact of select courses and high school activities on present decisions, graduates were asked to rate the level of influence that the following had: Career Education Course, Co-op Education, Advanced Placement (AP) courses, Career Days/Fairs/Seminars, the CHOICES computer application, a career planning session with their guidance counsellor, the career information hotline, job shadowing, job mentoring, and an occupational interview held during high school. For each option they were asked whether it had a ‘great influence’, ‘some influence’, or ‘no influence’ on their present decisions or they could indicate that they did not participate in the course or activity. In considering the findings from this question, it is important to note that 100% of the June 2001 high school graduate population did not have access to these

courses/activities. Access was limited by both the availability of the course in the school as well as limited seats.

When comparing the overall responses of 'great' and 'some' influence, the top ranked activities were career days/fairs/seminars and career planning sessions with a guidance counsellor (see Figure 4.2.7). Almost 60% of graduates identified that these two separate activities provide some level of influence on their present day decisions. Conversely, 75% of graduates indicated that they did not participate in co-op education, the career information hotline, job shadowing, and job mentoring during high school.

Figure 4.2.7 High School Courses/Activities Which Influenced Post-Secondary Decisions of June 2001 High School Graduates



As shown in Table 4.2.7, the influence of a high school course and/or activity on post-secondary options varied across institutional sectors. For instance, the career education course had the greatest influence on Newfoundland private college students with 25% stating it was a great influence on their decision. Advance Placement courses, not surprisingly, had the largest impact on university students who can claim these courses as credits at the university level. In fact 29% of graduates attending Memorial University and 33% attending out-of-province universities cited AP courses as having a major impact on their decision. Career day, fairs and institutional seminars appeared to be an influential factor with both Marine Institute (29%) and Newfoundland private college students (30%). Similarly, a career planning session with a guidance counsellor was influential with those attending the College of the North Atlantic (35%), the Marine Institute (50%) and Newfoundland private colleges (37%).

It is evident that some courses and activities played a larger role in post-secondary decisions than others across school districts. Just over one-quarter (26%) of graduates from District 10 were

influenced by the availability of AP courses (26%) in high school however, this is not surprising in that a large cohort from this school district attend Memorial University and, as stated previously, these courses allow students to gain university credits. Districts 5, 7 and 8 had the largest group identify career days/fairs/seminars as highly influential on present activities with 27%, 25% and 24%, respectively, signifying this. A career planning session with a guidance counsellor ranked high in District 8 with 48% stating it was a 'great influence' while just under 19% from District 10 agreed with this.

Source	Memorial University	Marine Institute	College of the North Atlantic	NF Private College	Out of Province University	Out of Province College
%						
Career Education Course	10.5	14.1	20.3	25.4	8.2	20.3
Co-op Education	10.3	8.7	18.6	19.5	11.3	18.6
AP Courses	29.2	18.5	15.3	13.0	33.0	15.3
Career Days/Fairs/Seminar	15.3	29.3	10.2	30.2	25.2	10.2
CHOICES application	6.7	5.4	3.4	14.8	7.8	3.4
Career Planning Session with Guidance Counsellor	24.7	50.0	28.8	37.3	31.6	28.8
Career Information Hotline	1.3	1.1	1.7	5.3	1.4	1.7
Job Shadowing	7.7	6.5	10.2	12.4	9.2	10.2
Job Mentoring	3.2	2.2	3.4	7.7	4.6	3.4
Occupation Interview during High School	6.9	4.3	10.2	10.7	5.7	10.2

Note: Respondents were permitted to give multiple answers to this question so totals may not add to 100%

Table 4.2.7 High School Courses/Activities With Greatest Influence on Post-Secondary Decisions of June 2001 High School Graduates by Institutional Sector

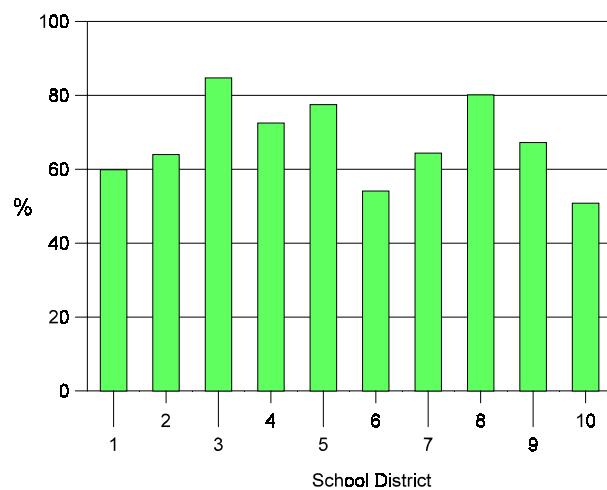
4.2.8 Would graduates be willing to move to advance their careers or to obtain employment?

When asked about willingness to move for work and career options over 90% indicated that this would be a potential option for them with no significant difference between any of the identified groups.

4.2.9 Did graduates take the Enterprise Education course in high school and, if so, have they ever considered starting their own business?

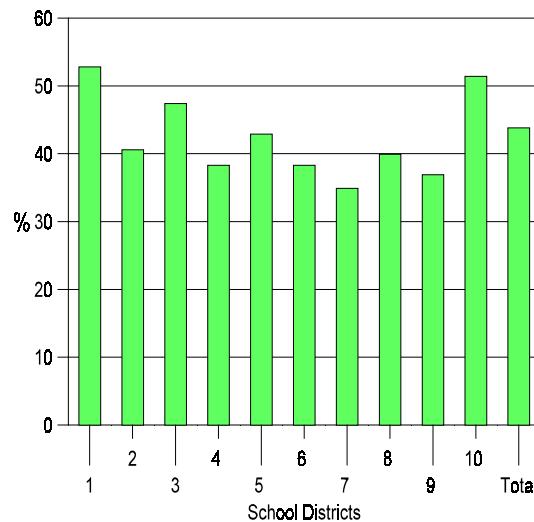
Enterprise Education is a course designed for students who wish to pursue an in-depth study of enterprise development by enabling them to formulate ideas, translate those ideas into action and follow them through to a venture. Overall, 64% of graduates indicated that they had taken the Enterprise Education course at some point during high school. A total of 109 schools across the Province offered the course. Rural students (69%) were more inclined to take part in this course than urban counterparts (51%). As seen in Table 4.2.9a, School Districts 3 and 8 had the highest participation rates in the program at 85% and 80%, respectively, however, only 50% of graduates in District 10 had participated. Across post-secondary sectors, of those graduates attending the Marine Institute and out-of-province colleges, 74% had taken the Enterprise Education course compared to only 58% of the June 2001 graduates attending Memorial University. Additionally, 67% of graduates who were working, unemployed or involved in some other non-post-secondary activity at the time of survey indicated that they had taken Enterprise Education in high school.

Figure 4.2.9a Percentage of Graduates Who Took Enterprise Education in High School by School District June 2001 High School Graduates



Those graduates who had taken Enterprise Education were asked about their interest in starting a business. Over 43% indicated that they have considered doing so with males appearing to be more entrepreneurial than females. In fact 53% of males expressed an interest in starting a business compared to just 36% of females. Urban graduates (49%) showed higher levels of interest in self-employment compared to their rural counterparts (42%) and, as shown in Figure 4.2.9b across school districts, over 50% of those in Districts 1 and 10 who had taken the course stated they have considered starting their own business. In contrast, just under 35% of those in District 7 indicated the same. While there was high participation in the course for graduates currently attending the Marine Institute, only 27% of Marine Institute graduates expressed an interest in starting a business. Entrepreneurial interest was higher among students in out-of-province colleges where just over half (52%) of those who had taken the course considered starting their own venture. Finally, entrepreneurship increased with the level of parental education as approximately 47% of graduates whose parent(s) had some post-secondary or had completed post-secondary expressed interest compared to only 35% of graduates whose parent(s) had less than high school.

Figure 4.2.9b Percentage of Graduates Having Taken Enterprise Education Considering Entrepreneurship June 2001 High School Graduates



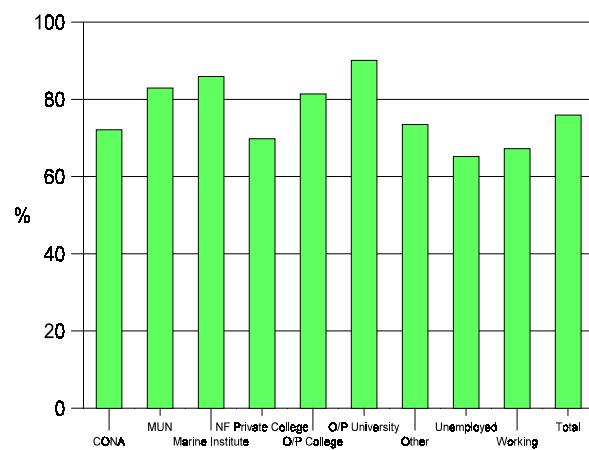
4.3 GRADUATE ACTIVITIES DURING HIGH SCHOOL

4.3.1 Were graduates involved in extracurricular activities during high school?

When asked if they participated in extracurricular activities almost 75% of graduates stated they had done so. As parental education levels increased so did the extracurricular involvement of their children. Those graduates enrolled in a post-secondary institution (81%) were more inclined to be involved with extracurricular activities during high school than graduates who never proceeded to post-secondary (68%). As outlined in Figure 4.3.1, those attending out-of-province universities reported the highest level of extracurricular involvement, followed by those attending Memorial. Graduates who were either unemployed or working at the time of survey had the least amount of involvement during high school.

When asked about the activities that they were involved with, sports was by far the most popular choice of 80% of graduates. Other areas of interest included choir and band-related activities, drama, student council, graduation and yearbook committees, 'Students Against Drunk Driving' and peer tutoring. It is evident that many graduates were involved in a variety of extracurricular activities that were either related to personal development or of personal interest. The majority (80%) indicated that their involvement was for 10 hours or less per week.

**Figure 4.3.1 Extracurricular Involvement of Graduates
During High School
June 2001 High School Graduates**



4.3.2 Did graduates work during high school and, if so, why did they work?

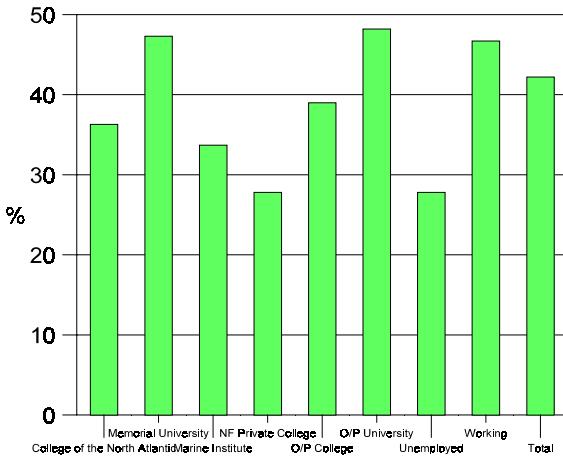
Statistics Canada's Youth in Transition Survey determined that during the last year of high school, 61.5% of Canadian youth worked for pay and males and females were equally likely to have a paid job.⁶ However, these findings contrast sharply to the findings of the Follow-up Survey of June 2001 High School Graduates where only 42% of Newfoundland and Labrador's June 2001 high school graduating class worked during high school and nearly half (47%) of male graduates were employed compared to 38% of females.

As would be expected given the increased opportunities in urban areas, more urban graduates (58%) had part-time jobs than did their rural counterparts (35%). Of interest is the fact that as parental education levels increased so did the likelihood of graduates having a job while in high school. Almost half (49%) of graduates whose parent(s) had completed post-secondary were working while also attending school compared to 27% of graduates whose parents had less than a high school education.

As shown in Figure 4.3.2, graduates engaged in university studies or working at the time of survey were the most inclined to have worked during school while those attending a private college or unemployed were the least likely. When asked what prompted them to work during high school, 93% of graduates indicated that the need for spending money as a factor in their decision. Other factors suggested by graduates were the desire to gain work experience (68%), the need to earn money for their post-secondary education (55%) or a non-post-secondary purchase (36%). A minority of graduates (17%) were required to work to supplement family finances.

⁶ Statistics Canada. At a Crossroads: First Results for the 18 to 20-Year-old Cohort of the Youth in Transition Survey, 2002.

Figure 4.3.2 Percentage of Graduates Employed During High School June 2001 High School Graduates

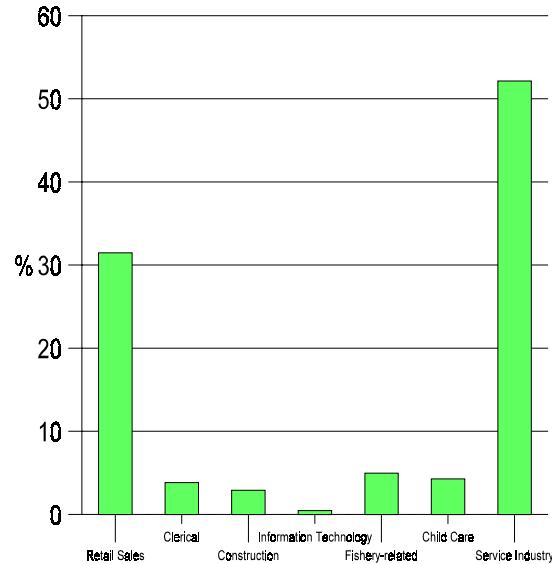


Just over 60% of graduates employed during high school reported working an average of twenty hours weekly, 20% worked 30 hours per week, 12% worked 40 hours per week and less than 5% reported working more than 40 hours weekly.

4.3.3 What types of jobs did graduates work at during high school and how many hours did they work per week?

Just over half (52%) of graduates who reported working during high school indicated that they had been employed in the service industry in positions ranging from gas bar attendant (3%) to fast food server (20%) or had obtained non-construction labour-related positions such as community grant projects workers (5%). As shown in Figure 4.3.3, the retail sales industry was the employer for another 31% of working high school students.

**4.3.3 Where Graduates Worked
During High School
June 2001 High School Graduates**



Just over 60% of graduates employed during high school reported working an average of twenty hours weekly, 20% worked 30 hours per week, 12% worked 40 hours per week and less than 5% reported working more than 40 hours weekly.