

Chapter 1: Introduction

Change... If there was one word to describe the transformation of the educational system in Newfoundland and Labrador, this would be it. The profile of today's schools is quite different than just ten years ago with fewer students, teachers and schools in the province. However, the budget of the Department of Education has steadily grown in recent years. In 2007/08, it surpassed the one billion dollar mark for the first time in the province's history. This increased funding has allowed the department to develop and implement many new policies and initiatives, such as the expansion of the high school skills trade program and the implementation of class size maximums in Kindergarten to Grade 9.

However, focusing on the major changes occurring at the program and policy level only provides half the picture. To complete the picture, it is important to focus on the experiences and progress of the consumers and backbone of the educational system - the students and the teachers. It is the purpose of this report to do just that. It builds on the information provided in the previous reports, *Indicators 2004* and *Indicators 2005: A report on schools*, published by the department. This report has expanded the format created in these documents to provide a broader sense of how students in the province are faring. Its goal is to highlight trends and accomplishments made by students over the past six years.

To meet this goal, the report is divided into four separate sections. As a starting point, the first section will focus on describing the key players of the education system - the students, teachers and schools. Part II explores various aspects of the educational system including topics such as distance education in the province and school development. Part III focuses on the high school years and explores performance on public examination courses, graduation rates and drop-out rates. The final section examines student performance in a range of different subject areas based on information derived from the province's criterion referenced tests (CRTs), the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP).

