

# Learning in a Time of Change

Report of Teacher  
Allocation Review Committee  
2022



# Submission Letter

September 12, 2022

Honourable Dr. John Haggie  
Minister of Education  
West Block, Confederation Building  
P.O. Box 8700  
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

Dear Dr. Haggie:

As members of the Teacher Allocation Review Committee, we are pleased to present to you our final report, *Learning in a Time of Change*.

This report reflects the knowledge gained from previous provincial educational reviews, jurisdictional reviews and current research. The feedback from educators, students, parents, and the public has influenced the report and its recommendations.

It has been a privilege to carry out this review. We now submit its report for your consideration and attention.

Respectfully submitted,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Marian Fushell, Chairperson

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
David Brown

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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# **The Teacher Allocation Review Committee**

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**2022**



## Acknowledgements

The Teacher Allocation Review Committee acknowledges each of the government departments, organizations, and groups that supported our work. Additionally, the Committee acknowledges the participation of educators, school administrators, parents/guardians, students, and the public, who made a substantial contribution to the information gathering process.

We extend special thanks to:

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Eldred Barnes  
Sharon Whalen  
Joanne Hogan  
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Scott Rideout  
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We extend sincere appreciation to Jinnong (Jennie) Xie and Mark Barter. The contribution that each made to the review was outstanding. It was a pleasure to work with them.



## Preface

Through their voices, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee (The Committee) heard the commitment of teachers, specialists, administrators, and the many other groups consulted. These “communities of practice” at the various professional levels, including senior administrators at the districts and the Department, provide the foundation for growth and excellence in education in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Committee also heard the need for a greater connectedness and coherence among these communities of practice – a need for clearer connection and communication between teachers and other professionals, schools and school districts, district program staff and senior administration, and school districts and the Department of Education.

The Committee heard that the school system is challenged in its instructional efforts by increased pressures of student behaviour, student mental health, and inconsistent supports.

The Committee recommends increases in teacher allocation resource levels and the continuation of resource supports implemented through the Education Action Plan. These class size caps and other resources are comparable to those in other Canadian provinces and will provide crucial support in improving learning for all students.

The Committee’s recommendations put emphasis on improvements in the management of those resources. These include improvements in the teacher allocation, deployment, and hiring processes so that teachers are placed in schools based on merit and with a focus on the most appropriate “fit” for student learning and school growth. This focus extends to early and effective recruitment for “hard-to-fill” positions in northern and rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

In addition to effective human resource management, a coherent instructional focus and direction at every level of the school system is required to maximize teacher expertise and well-being. The Committee recommends a focus on foundational and deep learning, driven by research-based insight, and integrated into the context of provincial programs and assessments, as well as instructional approaches in reading consistent with the recommendations of the Premier’s Task Force and research in the science of reading. It also recommends the development of a technology strategy that can help expand teaching pedagogy and better prepare students to lead the technology and innovation sectors in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Teaching is a process of life-long growth and commitment. Expert and caring teachers foster the growth of individual students, and of the society and economy to which our young people will contribute. To increase teacher expertise, the Committee makes recommendations to support and improve initial teacher education consistent with the current initiatives of Memorial University’s Faculty of Education and research in clinical models of education. These models involve increased and well-organized clinical

experiences, trained mentors, collaborative assessment of teaching practices, and the development of university schools. The Committee also recommends continued professional learning opportunities, grounded in classroom practice in the school, and drawing on in-person and virtual resources from other schools, the school districts, the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, the Department of Education, and the broader educational world.

In summary, the recommendations from this review of teacher allocations are about change. They include a change in class sizes but that is not the main one. The most important change is approach. The recommendations speak to a change in methodologies and practices, a change in how teachers use their expertise individually and collectively, a change in how the system is managed, and a change in how students learn.

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## Introduction

On December 21, 2021, the Minister of Education, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, announced that Dr. Marian Fushell (Chair), Mr. David Brown and Dr. Ross Elliott (members) had been appointed to the Teacher Allocation Review Committee. The Committee was asked to:

1. review the roles and responsibilities of various teaching resource roles within the provincial K-12 education system (e.g., instructional resource teachers (IRTs), learning resource teachers (LRTs), guidance counsellors, student assistants);
2. review how teaching resources are currently allocated and deployed in the K-12 system;
3. undertake consultations with key stakeholders, including parents, students, teachers, and groups such as the provincial school districts and the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association; and
4. submit a report with recommendations regarding class size, allocations of classroom teachers, specialist teachers, school administrators and other resources, and appropriate ways to meet unexpected or emerging needs each school year.

### Previous Teacher Allocation Models

The challenge of implementing appropriate models for allocating teachers is an ongoing issue as the K – 12 system continually evolves to meet student needs with both policy changes and fiscal realities contributing to the complexity. The simplest teacher allocation model is based almost entirely on student-teacher ratios and was used in this province prior to *The Ministerial Panel on Delivery of Education in the Classroom, 2000*. It used the formula of one teacher per twenty-three students based on the previous year's enrolment with additional allocations for guidance, learning resource teachers, administration, and small schools.

The *Panel* was tasked with, among other matters, proposing a new model for teacher allocations. The new model was program-based. It proposed greater access to program areas, regardless of school size and location, and that schools offer the prescribed provincial program allowing students the opportunity to graduate. The model continued to use a student-teacher ratio; however, it was based on school-level rather than district-level enrolments, and like the previous model, included additional allocations for guidance, learning resource, special education, and administration. One noteworthy development from the *Panel* that realized greater access to educational programs in small and isolated communities was the establishment of the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI).

In March 2006 the Minister of Education announced that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador would undertake a review of the 2000 Teacher Allocation Model, stating "The realities of the classroom are different today than they were six years ago when the current model was implemented. Continuing declining enrolment, along with a dramatic shift from rural to urban and suburban areas, makes it necessary to review the model to ensure it will continue to meet the needs of students and teachers in both rural and urban areas of the province" (NL Department of Education, 2006).

This model, implemented in September 2008, moved from a numeric formula using student-teacher ratios to a needs-based model with maximum class sizes for Grades K – 9 and the provision of allocations determined by the needs of individual schools. The model also introduced district-level senior administrative supports for schools.

## Methodology

The Committee used various communication strategies to advise students, teachers, parents, organizations, and the public on its work and to seek input into the process. Prior to consultations, the Harris Centre of Memorial University set up a webpage link on the Department of Education's website with information about the Committee's mandate and how people could provide input. Other communications strategies included media releases from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and announcements through the Department of Education's social media feeds, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Letters of invitations were sent to organizational stakeholders including the school districts, the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association (NLTA), the Newfoundland Association of Public and Private Employees (NAPE), district-level program staff, and school-based staff.

Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed for this review. Academic literature reviews on class size and class composition were completed as well as a pan-Canadian study of allocation practices. The Committee also examined previous education reports from Newfoundland and Labrador, relevant policy, legislation and regulations, and current provincial initiatives.

The terms of reference required the Committee to review the roles and responsibilities of fifteen teaching resources (excluding classroom teachers and school administrators) working at either the district level or school level. A survey using a frequency scale was developed, field-tested and administered to each group. All employees in each group were included in the survey. Each question provided a task or an activity, and the respondent indicated the frequency for completing the task or activity. The scale ranged from daily to never. For district-level staff, the survey was sent to everyone directly using their email addresses as provided on the districts' websites. For school-level staff, the survey was sent to school principals, asking that the survey be forwarded to the appropriate individual.

In addition to the surveys, there was a focus group meeting scheduled for each group. Similar to the surveys for district-level staff, the invitation was sent directly to them and all individuals in that position were asked to attend. For school-level staff, a sample based on school size and region was selected for a sample size of fifteen. For groups with a NLTA Special Interest Council, the president and other members of the council were invited and then others from the regions were selected to maintain the sample size.

The information gathered from the focus groups was based on the following questions:

1. How effective do you feel in your work?
2. What barriers prevent you from being as effective as you would like? What are the biggest or most pressing challenges you are facing?

3. What changes would you like to see?
4. Which of these changes do you think could be the solution to overcome the most pressing challenges you face?

In addition to gathering information from identified groups of professionals in the K – 12 system, the Committee also sought input from the broader community. On March 31, 2022, a media release was issued inviting students, parents, teachers, and the public to participate in the process through surveys, public consultations, and written submissions. The Committee developed surveys to gather information regarding perspectives and opinions on class size and composition. Different surveys for students, teachers, school administrators, and parents/public were developed and posted on the Teacher Allocation Review webpage in collaboration with Memorial University's Harris Centre. These surveys used Likert scale items and open-ended questions. There were also virtual consultations, organized through the Harris Centre, with teachers, school administrators, student assistants and students. The questions for all consultation sessions focused on class size and composition and are provided below:

1. What are the class sizes in your school? Is class size a significant issue for you? How important is class size compared to other issues in your school?
2. Describe class composition in your school. Is class composition a significant issue for you or the teachers in your school? How important is class composition compared to other issues in your school? Do the current resources (student assistants, teaching and learning assistants, instructional resource teachers, reading specialists) address class composition concerns?
3. What solutions might you propose to any of the challenges/issues that may have been raised in this meeting?

## Call for Change

Since 2008 when the current teacher allocation model was implemented, the governance structure for the delivery of educational programs and services has altered, policy changes have occurred, and the fiscal realities of the province are different. In addition, March 2020 saw the beginning of a global pandemic that continues today and has transformed the K – 12 education system with a yet to be fully understood impact on student learning and their mental health. Below is an outline of some of these major changes.

1. 2009 – The Department of Education began implementing an inclusive education policy.
2. 2011 – The Newfoundland School for the Deaf closed and students who are Deaf or hard of hearing were integrated into regular classrooms with the needed supports.
3. 2013 – The four English school boards were consolidated into one provincial English school board.
4. 2013 onwards – Budgets reduced allocations through increases in class size maximums, reduction in administrative units and changes in student-teacher ratios for library resource teachers and specialist teachers.

5. 2016 – Full day Kindergarten was introduced in all schools.
6. 2016 – Combined classes in Grades 1 – 6 were introduced.
7. 2016 – The Premier’s Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes was announced.
8. 2017 – Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI) was moved from the Department of Education to Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLES).
9. 2017 – The Department of Education eliminated the Division of School Services, which had responsibility for teacher allocations.
10. 2018 – In response to the recommendations of the Premier’s Task Force, the Department of Education developed an Education Action Plan, introducing reading specialists and teaching and learning assistants into K – 6 classrooms and increasing the number of learning resource teachers.
11. 2021 – Government announced that the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District will be absorbed into the Department of Education.

A ten-year review of student enrolment (Table 1) indicates an overall decrease; however, 2021-22 saw a small increase from the previous year.

**Table 1:**  
**Student Enrolment 2012-13 to 2021-22**

Year	Enrolment
2012 – 2013	67,604
2013 – 2014	67,436
2014 – 2015	67,293
2015 – 2016	66,800
2016 – 2017	66,323
2017 – 2018	65,401
2018 – 2019	64,336
2019 – 2020	63,722
2020 – 2021	63,510
2021 – 2022	63,534
<b>Difference</b>	<b>4,070</b>

Source: Annual General Return, Department of Education, September 30, 2021

While there has been a decrease of 4,070 in student enrolment over the past ten years, there continues to be a need for student support services with more than 11,000 students requiring supports from instructional resource teachers, student assistants and other special education specialists.

A summary of class sizes for Grades K – 9 is presented below. The cap sizes in this table are the official class size maximum numbers, often referred to as the ‘soft’ cap and are as follows: K – 20; Grades 1-3 – 25; Grades 4-6 – 28; and Grades 7-9 – 31. For French immersion classes,

the cap sizes are higher in elementary and intermediate: Grades 4-6 – 30; Grades 7-9 – 32. The 2007 teacher allocation review stated that these class size maximums “may be increased by not more than two students” (p. 88). Adding two students beyond the class size maximum is known as the ‘hard’ cap.

**Table 2:**  
**Class Size, K – 9, 2021–22 (48,278 students)**

Class Size	K		1-3		4-6		7-9		All K – 9 <sup>1</sup>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<15	163	49.7	191	25.0	164	22.0	115	16.3	551	22.6
15 – 19	139	42.4	179	23.5	177	23.7	117	16.5	589	24.2
20 – 24	26	7.9	272	35.6	213	28.6	170	24.0	680	27.9
25 – 29	0	0	121	15.9	181	24.3	197	27.9	499	20.5
30 – 34	0	0	0	0	11	1.5	105	14.9	116	4.8
35 +	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0.4	3	0.1
<hr/>										
At cap	11	3.4	47	6.2	32	4.3	29	4.1	119	4.9
Above cap	15	4.6	74	9.7	29	3.9	33	4.7	151	6.2
FI at cap <sup>2</sup>	0	0	6	5.7	1	1.1	2	1.4	9	2.3
FI above cap	0	0	24	21.8	0	0	2	1.4	26	6.6
Multi <sup>3</sup>	48	14.6	110	14.4	93	12.5	67	9.5	226	9.3
Combined	0	0	39	5.1	40	5.4	0	0	65	2.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>328</b>		<b>763</b>		<b>746</b>		<b>707</b>		<b>2,438</b>	
<b>#Students</b>	<b>4,427</b>		<b>13,707</b>		<b>14,283</b>		<b>15,599</b>		<b>48,016<sup>4</sup></b>	

Source: Department of Education Enrolment Data, February 2022

Overall, few classes (6.2%) in Grades K – 9 exceed the class size maximums. It is in the primary grades that the number above the class size maximum is highest, 9.7%. It is noted that the one consistent research finding regarding class size is its effect at the primary grades. The 2007 teacher allocation review (Government of NL, 2007) commissioned a study of class size and in the report stated: “There was compelling evidence to support lower class size at the primary grade level when examining student achievement” (p. 45).

There are 393 French immersion classes in Grades K – 9. Like the English classes, few are at or above the class size maximum except for the primary grades, which has 21.8% above the cap.

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<sup>1</sup> The values in this column may not be an exact total of the previous columns because the multi-grade and combined may be counted in more than one category. For example, a Grade 3/4 class is in both 1 – 3 data and 4 – 6 data. For ‘All K – 9’, the class is only counted once.

<sup>2</sup> The percentages for FI at cap and FI above cap are the percentages of French immersion classes

<sup>3</sup> Some schools have different multi-grade configurations for different subjects. The most common arrangement was used for this data set.

<sup>4</sup> This number includes students in regular classes but not challenging needs classes. Total enrolment is 48,278.

Recognizing there are added challenges when teaching in a classroom with more than one grade, the class size maximums for multi-grade classrooms and combined classrooms are lower than those for single grade classes. The caps for multi-grades classes vary across the grade configurations; for combined classes, the cap is 18. These caps were considered in the analysis below. Note that a multi-grade classroom is typically in a small, rural school and most have two (148) or three (59) grades. However, there are examples of classes with more than three grades. A combined class has two adjacent grades and is generally applied in a large urban school.

**Table 3:**  
**Multi- and Combined-Grade Classes at and above Caps**

Class Size	K		1 – 3		4 – 6		7 – 9		All K – 9 <sup>5</sup>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Multi<sup>6</sup></b>	48		110		93		67		226	
at cap	1	2.1	6	5.5	6	6.5	0	0	10	4.4
above cap	7	14.6	11	10.0	6	6.5	3	4.5	17	7.5
<b>Combined</b>	0	0	39	5.1	40	5.4	0	0	65	2.7
at cap	0	0	22	56.4	25	62.5	0	0	39	60.0
above cap	0	0	7	17.9	3	7.5	0	0	8	12.3

Of the 238 schools with K – 9 enrolments, 123 (51.7%) have at least one combined- or multi-grade class. Some smaller schools use multi-grading flexibly by changing these configurations for different courses – slightly larger classes for some subjects (typically ‘non-core’ courses, and to take advantage of limited availability of specialist music and physical education teachers) and slightly smaller classes for other subjects (e.g., English language arts, mathematics). Compared to single grade classes, a similar percentage of multi-grade classes are at the class size maximums (4.4%), while a slightly higher percentage are above the maximums (7.5%). Of these 27 classes, over half (17) occur in Grades 1-3. In contrast, combined-grade classes are more commonly at (60.0%) or above (12.3%) the maximum of 18.

A comparison over time indicates a change in the distribution of students in K – 9. As shown in the Table 2, 23% of all K – 9 classes have fewer than 15 students compared with approximately 15% of all K – 9 classes in 2000 (Government of NL, 2000). Less than five percent of classes in Grades K – 9 have 30 or more students and only three classes in the province have 35 or more students. This is a slight decrease from 2000 when 6.5% of classes had at least 30 students. Over that same period, the number of multi-grade/combined classes in K – 9 remained stable at approximately 12%.

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<sup>5</sup> The values in this column may not be an exact total of the previous columns because the multi-grade and combined may be counted in more than one category. For example, a Grade 3/4 class is in both 1 – 3 data and 4 – 6 data. For ‘All K – 9’, the class is only counted once.

<sup>6</sup> Some schools have different multi-grade configurations for different subjects. The most common arrangement was used for this data set.

For high school, 120 schools deliver courses to 15,345 students.

**Table 4:**  
**Class Size, Grades 10 – 12, 2021 – 22 (15,345 students) by Region**

Class Size	Province		Metro		Avalon <sup>*7</sup>		Central		Western		Labrador		CSFP	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<15	1017	25.0	53	4.7	69	12.9	396	33.6	321	37.0	152	46.8	26	89.7
15 – 19	567	13.9	76	6.7	84	15.7	203	17.2	154	17.8	47	14.5	3	10.3
20 – 24	748	18.4	198	17.5	132	24.7	217	18.4	156	18.0	45	13.8	0	0
25 – 29	760	18.7	281	24.8	122	22.8	179	15.2	140	16.1	38	11.7	0	0
30 – 34	738	18.1	414	36.5	90	16.8	127	10.8	70	8.1	37	11.4	0	0
35 +	240	5.9	112	9.9	38	7.1	58	4.9	26	3.0	6	1.1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4070</b>	-	<b>1134</b>	-	<b>535</b>	-	<b>1180</b>	-	<b>867</b>	-	<b>325</b>	-	<b>29</b>	-

The number of high school classes with less than 15 remains relatively stable with 25% in 2021 – 22 compared with approximately 23% in 2000. As shown in the table, high school classes with more than 30 is common, especially in urban schools. In the Metro area, almost half of the classes have at least 30 students and in every region of NLES, examples of classes with at least 30 students exist.

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<sup>7</sup> Schools in the Avalon region and outside Metro are in Avalon West and on the Southern Shore.



## Chapter 1

# Previous Education Reports (1967 - Present)

The Committee was tasked to review “relevant educational reports from the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador (1967 - Present)” (Terms of Reference). In so doing, the Committee focused on those aspects of reports that relate to our recommendations. These include the allocation of human resources and the development and management of those resources.

### Royal Commission (1967 - 68)

*The Report of the Royal Commission on Education and Youth* (1967-68), frequently referred to as the Warren report, was the first major study and public consultation on education since Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) became a province of Canada in 1949.

The 1960s saw an increased emphasis on education in North America and beyond, coinciding with a renewed interest in science and industry. Educational expenditure in Canada and in NL saw a dramatic increase to match these new sentiments. From 1960 to 1970, total Canadian expenditures in education increased from \$1,705,986 (\$389 per student) to \$7,676,049 (\$1,207 per student) (Leacy, 1983, in Davies & Guppy, 2018).

The Warren report, in its content and recommendations, embodied these characteristics – “modern” education for science and industry, an equity focus, increased funding, and experimentation. With very small schools spread across a vast geography, the Commission Report recognized an overall disadvantage in the province’s education system and recommended organizational and professional changes to address it.

The Royal Commission made recommendations regarding teacher quality, the importance of developing expert teachers, especially for hard-to-fill positions, the challenges of isolated regions of the province, consolidation of schools, teacher retention, teacher education, management of human resources, class size, improving reading, guidance, teacher librarians, experiential learning, and alternate education.

Recommendations relevant to this review include:

1. The Department of Education take the necessary steps to attract and retain a sufficient number of highly qualified staff.
2. Educational opportunities and services made possible by larger schools be made available to every youth of the province, either through consolidation of schools or, where consolidation is impossible, through the provision of special facilities and services.
3. In isolated areas of the province where reorganization is not feasible, the provincial Government provide adequate funds and services to guarantee a basic minimum program for children.
4. Every possible effort be made to recruit potential candidates for teaching.

5. An increased emphasis be placed on retention of qualified teachers by (1) providing inducements for them to advance to degree level, (2) improving their living and working conditions, (3) developing adequate salary scales, (4) providing advancement opportunities, and (5) providing housing for those living in rural areas.
6. Teacher preparation:
  - a. A Board of Teacher Education with representatives from each of the Department of Education, Memorial University, and the Newfoundland Teachers' Association to advise the President of the University on matters relating to teacher education programs be established;
  - b. The Board of Teacher Education review the type of practicums – student teaching, internship, apprenticeship, field service – to be associated with the pre-service teacher education programs of Memorial University;
  - c. Increased efforts be made to involve Memorial University's Faculty of Education staff in leadership roles in various aspects of Newfoundland education, such as curriculum development, in-service activities, school administration, and educational planning;
  - d. A study of the principles that guide teacher education in Newfoundland be made from time to time by a committee representing the Department of Education, the Newfoundland Teachers' Association, and Memorial University; and
  - e. Provision be made at Memorial University, through the Faculty of Education, for research studies related to various aspects of teacher recruitment, selection, preparation, placement and proficiency.
7. The maximum enrolment in a kindergarten class be twenty-five. In other primary classes the enrolment should not exceed thirty.
8. A “determined effort...to improve reading...” be made and grants to enable persons to travel abroad to train as reading consultants be provided.
9. One full-time guidance specialist for every 300 high school or junior high school students be provided. In the elementary school, one specialist may serve more students.
10. Each school with 250 pupils or more appoint a full-time librarian who has had some professional training and that each school with fewer than 250 pupils appoint a part-time teacher-librarian.
11. Science education be based on observation and experimentation, and that understanding rather than the memorization of facts be emphasized.
12. Consideration be given to development of a terminal course in the high schools such as vocational education and be offered in co-operation with vocational schools or in selected schools to serve all children in the area.

## Leaving Early (1984)

As education progressed in Canada, more value was placed on completing high school. By the mid-1960s, almost every child born in Canada completed Grade 8 (Davies & Guppy, 2018). Gradually, high school graduation became the new expectation. The term “high school dropout” came to define “a new symbol of deviance” (Davies & Guppy, 2018, pp. 62-63).

In the late 70s and early 80s, educators and policy makers in Newfoundland and Labrador became increasingly concerned about the large numbers of students who were not graduating from high school. *Leaving Early* (Government of NL, 1984) drew attention to the fact that a high percentage of students in the province who began school in kindergarten did not graduate from high school.

In the early 1980s, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador began implementing the reorganized high school with the addition of Grade 12. With the reorganized high school, many additional courses were added, with a focus on ensuring that there were sufficient courses and graduation routes to engage “at risk” students who might otherwise be inclined to drop out of school. As in the rest of Canada, the numbers of students graduating at this time increased substantially (Powell et al., 1985). Over time, however, many educators and policy makers came to believe that schools were reducing requirements with the increase in course choice.

## Our Children, Our Future (1992)

*Our Children, Our Future* (1992) (subtitled The Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education) gave Government the impetus to move beyond the denominational education system in Newfoundland and made many recommendations that both reflected and helped shape the educational context of the time.

By the 1990s, there was a global trend towards accountability for learning. Many parents and parent groups were concerned that their children, while having many and possibly diverse educational experiences, were not achieving at an acceptable level. In Newfoundland and Labrador, underachievement on measures such as the Canadian Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) fueled the belief that our students were not performing as well as they should. Across the country and in the US, provincial/state student assessments were being introduced at various grade levels to measure learning and to promote accountability. Like the Warren report, this Commission made recommendations regarding academic programming, the role of the Department of Education, accountability, teacher preparation, teacher hiring, guidance and career counselling, student behaviour, multi-grading, and school consolidations.

The recommendations relevant to this Committee can be summarized as follows:

1. While some choice in course selection is beneficial, students be guided toward a program which is as academic and rigorous as they are capable of handling.
2. The Department of Education take on primary responsibility for the following roles:
  - a. establishing and maintaining the legal framework;
  - b. setting provincial education goals and standards, and ensuring they are met;
  - c. establishing the means to assess the effectiveness of the system;
  - d. providing the appropriate resources to the system; and
  - e. seeing that the allocated resources, both human and financial, are effectively and efficiently utilized.
3. School boards initiate a comprehensive assessment of each school every five years.

4. School boards establish teams of educators to devise improvement plans for schools which have been underachieving.
5. Teacher Certification be changed to establish renewable certification.
6. School boards, in their hiring practices for Grades 7-9, give preference to those who have undertaken programs and/or in-service training for teaching junior high.
7. The Faculty of Education:
  - a. undertake research into the school contexts in which first year teachers are placed and design programs to better prepare the prospective teachers for the learning context of the schools and classrooms;
  - b. designate selected schools as university schools to prepare teachers for the demands of the role and to enable the Faculty to experiment with innovative teaching ideas and practices; and
  - c. establish an external advisory council of teachers, administrators, and Department of Education personnel to advise on the appropriateness and relevance of teacher education programs, facilitate collaboration in research and innovation in the school system, and establish mechanisms to enable teachers to work with the Faculty of Education, and Faculty members to work with the school system.
8. A review of the current method of allocating guidance personnel and that appropriate guidance and career counselling services be provided at all levels of the school system.
9. The Newfoundland Teachers' Association, in collaboration with the Department of Education and school boards, and other youth-serving agencies undertake an analysis of the status of classroom teaching in the province with particular emphasis on the problems resulting from classroom management (e.g., discipline, attendance, non-academic needs of students) and convene jointly a provincial symposium on student discipline and attendance.
10. School consolidation where students were within reasonable distance of a larger school.

## Supporting Learning (2000)

*Supporting Learning: Report of the Ministerial Panel on Education Delivery in the Classroom* (Government of NL, 2000) provided the foundation for teacher allocations in Newfoundland and Labrador until 2007. It allocated teachers on a student-teacher ratio and specified allocation formulas for district offices, small, mid-sized and large schools, administration, rural areas, special education, learning resource teachers, guidance counsellors, specialty program areas, Indigenous schools, and program specialists for reading and early literacy. The Report also recommended that the Department of Education and school districts, through the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI), “employ distance learning technologies to the fullest extent to ensure courses in music and art are available to all students” (Recommendation 17).

The Report focused on multi-grade classes, with recommendations on the planning and delivery of multi-level classes, teacher and student resources, curriculum development, development of a teacher resource handbook, and pre-service and in-service education for teachers.

Like previous reports, the 2000 report recommended that an advisory group to review teacher training initiatives and examine teacher supply and demand be established with representatives from Memorial University's Faculty of Education, the Newfoundland and Labrador School Boards' Association and the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. Other recommendations relevant to this review are:

1. The role of student assistants be reviewed with a view to redefining a number of these positions as school-based teacher assistants with educational training and qualifications who can serve a range of educational and individual needs.
2. Schools be staffed with full-time teachers.
3. The province re-commit to the development of a provincial assessment program incorporating a comprehensive test with sub-tests in at least the subject areas of language, mathematics, science and social studies.

## Education and Our Future (2007)

In 2007, the Department of Education commissioned a review of teacher allocations. Its report, *Education and Our Future: A Roadmap to Innovation and Excellence* (Government of NL, 2007), provided the foundation for the current method of teacher allocations. While the Government did not accept all the recommendations for specific class size caps, it did adopt the class size caps concept as a method of allocation for K-9 grades. This marked a shift in teacher allocation practice, consistent with approaches in various jurisdictions and in some, but not all, Canadian provinces.

The recommendations included the specifics of class caps and teacher allocations for K-12, multi-grade schools, small schools, mid-size high schools, student resource teachers, specialists, learning resource teachers, guidance counsellors, ESL teachers, school administrators, and professional and administrative staff at the district level.

The 2007 Teacher Allocation Review also identified a concern with the compressed time frame for teacher allocation and teacher hiring, and recruitment and retention issues. They also highlighted the importance of a comprehensive instructional focus at both school and district-level. The Commission recommended:

1. The Government make three-year planning commitments to each district, subject to provincial budget decisions and financial policy.
2. The Department of Education develop five-year school performance and demographic data planning modules to assist in the three-year planning commitments made to each school district.
3. The Government develop a student loan debt-relief plan to encourage recruitment and retention of teachers to isolated areas.
4. The Government assist school districts with the development and ongoing support of a comprehensive district-wide instructional focus to be built within each school.

## Now is the Time (2017)

The Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes was noteworthy because of its focus on teaching and learning. The report, *Now is the Time: The Next Chapter in Education in Newfoundland and Labrador (2017)*, provides the foundation for educational initiatives in NL today. In keeping with the terms of reference, the report focused on issues relevant in NL and across the country. These issues include inclusive education, student mental health and wellness, mathematics, reading, Indigenous education, multi-cultural education, early learning, career and cooperative education, and teacher education and professional development.

The Task Force recommended many changes in teaching and learning including establishing teaching and learning assistants and reading specialists, increasing learning resource allocations, and implementing instructional models such as Responsive Teaching and Learning and Universal Design for Learning. From this Report, the Department of Education developed an Education Action Plan which articulates and guides these initiatives as described in the next chapter of this report.

## Chapter 2

# Current Provincial Initiatives

In his April 15, 2021 mandate letter to the Minister of Education, the Premier of NL stated his priorities for education as follows: modernizing the education system, fostering healthy schools, implementing restorative justice practices, and providing opportunities for programs in technology and entrepreneurship. These priorities are consistent with *Rising to the Challenge* (Liberal Platform Document, 2021), which outlines the Premier's priorities for the province, including those in education.

A key expectation in the Minister's mandate letter is "to continue with the implementation of the Education Action Plan", released in June 2018, in response to the Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes. Its initiatives have set out short term, medium term, and long-term strategies for implementing the recommendations of the Task Force Report. The implementation and progress of these initiatives as well as other initiatives in *Rising to the Challenge* (2020) are described below.

### Education Action Plan

The Education Action Plan addresses the nine categories addressed in the Task Force Report. In addition, the Education Action Plan Update (June 2021) includes a section entitled "Additional Focus – Technology", which reflects the general direction of *Rising to the Challenge* (2021) as expressed in technology initiatives in education.

Under each of the categories, progress was reported as follows:

#### **1. Inclusive Education**

In keeping with the Task Force recommendations on inclusive education, the Education Action Plan adopted "a new student services policy, responsive teaching and learning, (RTL) in all schools with a K-6 student population" (Education Action Plan update, 2021). RTL is based on the principles of responsive teaching, in which needs are identified and addressed in a structured way through the various human resources in the school. The RTL framework emphasizes early identification, structured approaches through intervention, and teacher collaboration to determine and assess interventions. The policy also encompasses the Universal Design for Learning, social and emotional learning, access to assistive technologies, endorsement of an integrated child health model, and a Special Education Case Management System. (Education Plan Update, 2021). To support the RTL model, a new resource, teaching and learning assistants, was added to the system. In addition, the Faculty of Education, Memorial University provides mandatory courses in exceptionalities for undergraduate students.

## **2. Student Mental Health and Wellness**

The Task Force Report highlighted student mental health and wellness as a concern. In response, the Education Action Plan relied on the Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health, “a partnership of provincial and territorial governments working across the health and education sectors” and implemented its Comprehensive School Health Framework. Actions to date have included professional learning for K-6 teachers and administrators on social and emotional learning, the development of a foundational document to guide the embedding of social and emotional learning in the curriculum, a healthy eating policy pilot, physical activity policy development, initiatives in collaboration with the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate to address absenteeism and student dropout, and a model to monitor the progress of children in care. Additionally, the Comprehensive Assessment Policy to clarify the responsibilities of guidance counsellors and other school and district professionals in providing testing and wellness supports is under revision.

## **3. Mathematics**

The Premier’s Task Force identified student achievement in mathematics as a continuing concern and challenged the system to ensure achievement in mathematics is comparable to “the highest achieving Canadian jurisdictions”. The Education Action Plan addresses curriculum, teacher expertise, and assessment as important components of achieving success. It has resulted in a Provincial Mathematics Assessment Framework, standards for teaching mathematics that apply to both teacher education and program implementation, a mathematics bursary program to encourage upgrading by primary and elementary teachers, and the allocation of six district-level mathematics specialists to support mathematics teachers and provide leadership and oversight on numeracy initiatives.

## **4. Reading**

The Task Force identified achievement challenges in reading among students of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Report illustrated that students who struggle in reading in the primary grades have challenges in other subjects and continue to struggle as they progress through school. The Education Action Plan has resulted in a Provincial Reading Assessment Framework, a comprehensive approach to early identification and intervention, an early assessment tool for Grade 1, 104 school-based reading specialists, five district-based reading specialists, graduate level specialization programs in reading at the Faculty of Education, a reading bursary program to encourage teachers to upgrade their qualifications, 38.5 additional learning resource teachers/teacher librarians, and an annual allocation of library learning commons resources to schools.

## **5. Indigenous Education**

The Education Action Plan initiatives related to Indigenous Education align with the Indigenous Education Plan of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). These initiatives include a framework for Indigenous education through an Indigenous Education Advisory Committee, a new Indigenous Local Course Policy, and the infusion of appropriate knowledge and learning experiences in teacher education programs at the Faculty of Education for teaching Indigenous students and for teaching all students about Indigenous populations.

## **6. Multicultural Education**

The Education Action Plan Update (2021) states: “Collectively, government, the school districts and partner agencies are making a sustained effort to ensure schools are welcoming places for newcomers.”

The Education Action Plan includes a framework document to enable a broad and meaningful response to the educational needs of newcomers and students of diverse cultural backgrounds, an improved pupil-teacher ratio of English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, revisions to the Literacy Enrichment and Academic Readiness for Newcomers (LEARN) program, and the development of new standards for ESL and LEARN teachers.

## **7. Early Years**

The Premier's Task Force Report emphasized that children's experiences in the early years are crucial to their educational success. To date, the Education Action Plan has resulted in the expansion of early learning and childcare programs, incentives and opportunities for early childhood educators to improve their education levels, and a reduction in the cost of regulated childcare. In 2022-23, a pilot pre-kindergarten program begins in more than thirty locations providing more opportunities for early learning.

## **8. Career and Co-operative Education**

The Education Action Plan endorses experiential learning to support student engagement and provide an opportunity for career exploration. It has increased collaboration with other Atlantic Canada education partners and used the Council's Atlantic Career Development Framework for Education as a foundational document to plan career and co-operative education initiatives from kindergarten to Grade 12. The Department of Education has developed partnerships with Skills Canada, Brilliant Labs, and the College of the North Atlantic (CNA) to develop and deliver experiential learning opportunities at intermediate and high schools. It has also created a new Career Education course for senior high school students that includes knowledge and skills in personal financial management, time management, and health and wellness as it relates to careers, as well as opportunities for job shadowing and mentoring.

## **9. Teacher Education and Professional Development**

The Education Action Plan recognizes the strong connection between student learning and teacher expertise. Accordingly, the plan focuses on teacher education and professional development, with a view to aligning teacher education initiatives with the needs of the school system. Initiatives that are completed or ongoing include a review of teacher preparation programs and certification policies across Canada, the establishment of a Professional Development Alliance, and a committee to work on aligning teacher education programs with the needs of the education system.

### **Additional Focus – Technology**

The Education Action Plan initiatives include harnessing available technologies to open up the provincial curriculum to students, expand available learning resources and instructional methods, enhance web-based opportunities for teacher professional learning, and enhance opportunities for students to develop skills in digital technology and pursue careers in technology.

## Broader Provincial Initiatives

*Rising to the Challenge (2021)* is organized around the main goals of promoting a healthy Newfoundland and Labrador, driving meaningful opportunities, fostering inclusive growth, modernizing education and childcare, and building strong partnerships. This combination of economic and social goals provides the context for educational initiatives in NL.

## Careers and the Economy

*Rising to the Challenge (2021)* places a focus on the technology sector, growth and innovation in this sector and on entrepreneurship including expectations for K – 12 schools. Provincial programs have focused on experiential learning opportunities at the intermediate and high school levels to introduce students to possible career options and to better engage students in learning. For example, the Technology Career Pathway (TCP) program selected a sample of high schools in which students entered a pathway for technology growth, including funding for post-secondary continuation of their studies.

## Multicultural and Equity Focus

The Government has a goal to increase immigration in the province. This focus is a response to the province's shortage of skilled workers in different areas, including aquaculture, health, and the service industries, and to humanitarian initiatives through which NL has welcomed families and individuals from other countries (e.g., Afghanistan and Ukraine). Government has endorsed initiatives to encourage acceptance of new cultures and respect for minorities. It has also placed a focus on celebrating Indigenous peoples including school programs, and led equity initiatives for women, the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and differently abled individuals.

## Early Childhood Education

Based on research evidence and consistent with initiatives throughout Canada, the Government is engaged in or has implemented different early childhood education initiatives, including the introduction of pre-kindergarten and the reduction of the cost of regulated childcare. These initiatives are part of federal-provincial initiatives in childcare and education. Other provincial initiatives are new policies on childcare subsidies, salary increases for early childcare educators, increased capacity for post-secondary early childcare programs, needs-based grants for early childhood education students, a bursary program, and a pilot pre-kindergarten program in 2022-23 that will increase the number of regulated childcare spaces throughout the province.

## Health

One of the education goals in *Rising to the Challenge (2021)* is updating the health curriculum. In addition, the *Health Accord Report (2022)* outlines health concerns including those for children. The most named mental health issues in the Health Accord consultations were stress, COVID-19, and family issues, followed by drug use and addiction.

The following recommendations in the Health Accord apply to K – 12 education:

1. Implement a Prevention and Early Intervention Plan focusing on fostering resilience in children and families.
2. Invest in universal access to early childhood education, prioritizing children in under-served families.
3. Review and update all public health early childhood programs.
4. Implement early childhood health and education programs accessible to all children in Newfoundland and Labrador.
5. Implement health promoting initiatives in all schools, including the revised school health curriculum, and food literacy and physical activity programs using the *Comprehensive School Health (CSH) Framework*.
6. Implement a renewed governance structure for *Healthy Students, Healthy Schools* to facilitate the use of the CSH Framework in schools (*Health Accord Report, 2022*).

## (Re)Organizing Public Systems

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is not alone in assessing, and in some cases changing, the norms around which we organize our efforts for maximum effectiveness. *The Big Reset: The Report of the Premier's Economic Recovery Team* (Government of NL, 2021) recognized the need to reorganize public services in light of changing realities and economic necessity. The Government has encouraged municipal integration and, more recently, announced the integration of health boards in the province. In Budget 2021, the Government also announced the elimination of the Newfoundland and Labrador English School Board, and the absorption of the Board into the Department of Education. These centralizing trends will influence education and other services, as we move forward in the economic and social life of the province. The department-school board merger may be expected to impact the organizational structures through which educational service is provided.



## Chapter 3

# Class Size and Composition

Class size and composition are important components of the teacher allocation review. In its terms of reference, the Committee is directed to “Recommend appropriate class sizes for K-12 classes that considers small schools, multi-grades/combined grades, and French Immersion.” In 2007, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador made a commitment to determine teacher allocation using a class size maximum allocation model for Grades K – 9 single grade and multi-grade classes. In the 2007 review of teacher allocations, Government accepted the recommendations for class size maximums with variations as follows:

**Table 5:**  
**Class Size Maximums, Single Grade and Multi-grade, 2007**

2007 Recommendation as Varied		
	Single Grade	Multi-grade
Kindergarten	20	K + 1 grade – 15 K + 2 grades – 12 K + 3 grades – 10
Grades 1 – 3	25	Two primary – 15 Three or more primary – 14
Grades 4 – 6	25	15
Grades 7 – 9	27	15
Level I – III	Current pupil-teacher ratios	15

These class caps were phased in over a four-year period, with full implementation of capped class sizes in Grades K-9 in 2010 – 2011 (Budget, 2007; Budget, 2008; Budget, 2009; Budget, 2010). As noted earlier, the class caps are called soft caps and are the official class size maximums. According to the 2007 recommendations, the districts could add two students to a class (known as hard caps) to address emerging local issues. No additional allocations were provided to a school unless class enrolments exceeded the hard cap.

Budget 2016 and Budget 2017 introduced an increase in some of these class caps. With the increase in class size maximums and the introduction of combined classes, issues regarding large classes began to emerge. Overlaying the changes to class size are changes to the class composition. With Government’s commitment to inclusive education, students who have special needs spend more time in the regular classroom and have reduced learning time in an alternate setting. Supports, including instructional resource teachers and increased numbers of student assistants have been added to the system almost every year since 2013 (Budget, 2014; Budget, 2015; Budget, 2017; Budget 2019; and Budget, 2020). However, schools continue to be challenged with meeting the needs of students who have complex needs and/or severe behavioural needs. Another change affecting class composition is Government’s immigration policy that has resulted in more students in our schools who have experienced trauma and for whom English is not their first language. One other change that has affected student learning and student mental health is the disruption due to COVID-19. Since March 2020, health and

safety measures required schools to switch back and forth between in-person learning and remote learning.

## Research Findings

The Committee undertook three separate research pieces, a literature review on class size, another on the effects of class composition on student learning and a pan-Canadian review of teacher allocation practices.

### Literature Review

For the 2007 review of teacher allocations, the Commission engaged Dr. Bruce Sheppard, from Memorial University's Faculty of Education, to conduct a scholarly literature review on class size and student achievement. Since the findings of the Sheppard (2006) review on class size are still relevant, the Committee conducted a literature review of studies that have been completed since 2006 to identify any new evidence that supports these findings or evidence that presents different conclusions than earlier studies on class size.

Sheppard (2006) began and ended his review by cautioning that class size was only one of many possible variables that might influence student achievement. Drawing from a large number of researchers, Sheppard drew attention to some of these variables, including teacher quality/expertise, instructional approaches, and school effectiveness.

Sheppard writes:

In light of the ... complexities surrounding student learning that have been recognized by practitioners and researchers, caution must be exercised in interpreting the results of research focused on just class size. Any conclusions must be assessed within the context of the entire range of factors that have been found to impact student learning, and policy makers must maintain a balance to ensure that emphasis on one or several of the factors do not come at the expense of others (Finn, 2000; Johnson, 2000; Mitchell & Mitchell, 2003) (Sheppard, 2006).

Research findings since 2006 corroborate and extend upon these points. Using 2009 PISA results, Hattie (2015) illustrates that the greatest variability in student achievement is not between schools, between regions, or between small classes and large classes, but among teachers in the same school. Hattie (2015a) writes:

There are many causes of this variance within schools, but one of the more important (and one that we have some influence to reduce) is the variability in the effectiveness of teachers. ... Nearly all teachers, school leaders, students and parents know about this variability – although it is too often absent in discussions about policy, teaching and schools. (p. 2)

Many other researchers in Canada (e.g., Maynes & Hatt, 2011, 2013; Hatt et al., 2015) and beyond (e.g., Pedder, 2006; Mason & Schroeder, 2010, 2012) have provided evidence of the importance of teacher quality/effectiveness. Teacher effectiveness is influenced by initial teacher education (e.g., Klassen & Kim, 2019), teacher professional learning, and the overall organization and culture of the school. In their ongoing meta-analysis of effects on student

achievement, Hattie and Hamilton (2020) rank teacher collective efficacy as a determinant of teacher effectiveness and student learning:

To achieve collective efficacy, teachers work collaboratively to plan and work together to critique their expectations, evaluate their impact on students, and decide where best to go next in light of their impact. (p. 22)

School systems that are organized to hire the most effective teachers, and to hire those who are the most appropriate “fit” for a particular classroom, can have further impact on student learning. Mason and Schroeder (2010, 2012) write, “[W]hen one considers the potential impact of a succession of excellent or a succession of poor teachers, the gravity of hiring excellent teachers increases” (p. 67).

This literature suggests that for class size interventions to have an impact on student learning, they must be accompanied by other conditions and interventions such as exemplary teacher education, sophisticated hiring practices, and collective engagement in teaching and learning. Class size interventions would appear to depend not as much on the class size reduction itself as on the accompanying instructional changes that are made (or not made) to maximize class size conditions (Hattie, 2015; Blatchford & Russell, 2020).

## **Class Size**

Despite conflicting conclusions about class size in the literature, Sheppard (2006) was able to make several significant assertions. These were summarized in the report as follows:

There was compelling evidence to support lower class size at the primary grade level when examining student achievement. This was particularly true of students at risk, students from lower socio-economic status or students from ethnic minorities. Much of the research focused on small class size at the primary grade level and found that small class size at this level helped prepare students for larger classes later on. There was little research to date on the effects of small class size in junior high and high school settings.

...Class size is only one of the factors which affect student achievement and conclusions must be made in the context of all others. (Government of NL, 2007, pp. 45-46)

Sheppard's review (2006), supported by later research (e.g., Konstantopoulos & Chung, 2009; Watson et al., 2013; Frederiksson et al., 2013) also concluded that smaller class sizes in the primary grades could foster success in learning that continues into later grades. Additionally, research indicates that the greatest and longest lasting impact on learning occurs when students are in small classes for a number of years. One year of small class size (in kindergarten or Grade 1) can produce early gains but does not have lasting effects (Konstantopoulos & Chung, 2009; Bressoux et al., 2019).

Research supports smaller class sizes in the early years but demonstrates that evidence beyond those grades is inconsistent, with some studies showing small effects and others no effect (Han & Ryu, 2017; Konstantopoulos, 2008; Li, 2016). For example, Frederiksson et al. (2013) found that smaller classes are beneficial for cognitive and non-cognitive test scores at age 13; and

Nandrup's 2016 review of Danish national reading and math test results suggests that students in Grades 2 and 6 may benefit from reduced class size but not Grade 8s.

A review by Laitsch et al. (2021) indicates a weak link between class size and student achievement at the secondary level. A number of studies on the effect of class size for high school students has a focus on low attaining students or those undecided about career choice. These students tend to show more off-task behaviour as class size increases (Blatchford & Russell, 2020). A study in Denmark (Krassel & Heinesen, 2014) found small but statistically significant class-size effects on academic achievement, measured by GPA of examination marks, in an optional tenth grade of lower secondary school, aimed at youth who are academically weak.

### **Class Size and Classroom Processes**

Recent research on class size is concerned with pedagogical changes needed to make the most of class size reductions (Blatchford & Russell, 2019). They conducted research illustrating that class size, class groupings, and classroom management interact in complex ways and found that classroom management, student characteristics and the minute-by-minute decisions teachers make affect the quality of teaching and learning.

Laitsch et al. (2021) draw on Anderson (2002), who noted that "small classes would not, in and of themselves, solve all educational problems. What teachers do in those classes is what matters" (Anderson, 2002, as cited by Laitsch et al., 2021, p. 91). Small classes may indeed make it easier to use certain teaching/learning approaches, but teachers often do not teach differently than in larger classrooms. Watson et al. (2013) also maintain that it is not class size that increases student academic performance but, rather, the teaching practice or pedagogy that a reduction in class size facilitates. They challenge policy makers "...to spend far less money to achieve improved student performance by providing professional learning opportunities for teachers to learn how to teach in a more student-focused way" (p. 83).

### **Class Composition**

Classroom processes, as noted above, are very much influenced by class composition. Recent research on class size incorporates the notion of class composition with the number of students in the class and argues that the benefits of smaller class size relate to classroom management with larger classes negatively affecting the quality of teaching and learning (Blatchford & Russell, 2019).

The Committee retained Dr. Margaret Wakeham from Memorial University's Faculty of Education to conduct a scholarly research review on class size and class composition. Wakeham (2022) looked at the impact of a commitment to inclusion and equity in schools on teachers in classrooms and teachers' increasingly complex role.

Blatchford and Russell (2020), in an analysis of class size studies in the United Kingdom, report that "as class sizes go up, the diversity of needs within classrooms increases, teachers spend more time addressing behaviour problems, and have less time to differentiate and individualize instruction for learners" (Wakeham, 2022, p. 2). They also observed that achievement for special

needs and low achieving students fall off in large classes, and students engage less with the teacher and their peers (Wakeham, 2022).

Finn (2019) contends that “a particular class of 30 may outperform a class of 20 in some subjects or some settings or a small class with difficult-to-teach students may perform poorly with any teacher” (p. 125) (Finn, 2019 as cited in Wakeham, 2022, p.2). Smaller classrooms, however, offer better opportunities to improve educational outcomes such as student behaviour.

Education systems in Canada and elsewhere support inclusive education policies for students with special needs. These inclusive practices in schools must be considered as part of class size and composition discussions. In a review of several studies on the effect of inclusion on children, Kart and Kart (2021) state that the children without special needs “mostly benefitted from being in inclusion classrooms [and exhibited more] acceptance, understanding, and tolerance of individual differences” (p. 10). They further state that inclusive practices work best in younger grades with one teacher interacting with the same children during the day and engaging more regularly with special service teachers. In higher grades, the special education teachers may not have content expertise and the subject teacher may not have special education expertise (Wakeham, 2022).

Like many provinces, Newfoundland and Labrador has increased supports in the classroom, specifically student assistants and, in K – 6, teaching and learning assistants to support inclusion. Researchers (e.g., Blatchford & Russell, 2020; Finn, 2019) caution that such supports may not improve achievement for special needs students or low achieving students in large classes, and that increasing the number of teacher assistants may not offset the impact of large classes. When teacher assistants are present, special needs children are increasingly isolated from their peers and have reduced contact with their teachers. In large classes, children in most need experience less overall teaching and individual attention (Blatchford et al., 2011) (Wakeham, 2022).

In a report on the contextual influences across Canada during a round of pan-Canadian testing in mathematics in 2019 (PCAP, 2019), principals of participating schools cite class composition as second only to student absenteeism as an impediment to student learning in their schools. In the assessment, “students from classrooms with complex class compositions, such as a range of abilities, assistance from teacher aides, diverse backgrounds, or disruptive behaviour score low on mathematics assessments” (Wakeham, 2022, p. 10).

Inclusive education policies also focus on equity and diversity. Beyond students with special needs, today’s classroom represents a diverse population with Indigenous students, students of colour, multi-cultural students, and 2SLGBTQIA+ students. Each of these groups has its unique perspective and learning needs. This gives rise to setting expectations for teachers to recognize and understand the varying needs so that they can respond appropriately. Research studies related to each group suggest that the school system needs to do more. In her review, Wakeham summarizes these calls to actions as follows:

- Campbell (2020) states that teachers need to engage in continuing professional learning to ensure that their teaching demonstrates knowledge and strategies appropriate for Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners.

- Lopez and Jean-Marie (2020) insist that changes must occur to contest and upend “the manifestations and impact of anti-Black racism in education and schooling” (p. 52). Teachers can create positive change and address racism in their classrooms but reflection regarding their own possible biases and professional learning are required to improve their teaching of Black students and students of colour (George et al., 2020).
- While many positive initiatives for 2SLGBTQIA+ students have occurred at all levels in multiple jurisdictions, Bain and Podmore (2019) conclude that “much work remains to be done to alter school culture, curricula and pedagogy” (p. 1242). (Wakeham, 2022).

Anderson and Sheppard (2015) report that insufficient attention is being paid to instances of violent and anti-social behaviour and recommend a cap for class sizes when the composition of “special and challenging needs” (p. 4) exceeds 10% of the class. British Columbia’s Teachers’ Federation (BCTF) 2019-2022 collective agreement includes a letter of understanding regarding the composition and size of classes and has a series of agreements which serve to modify conditions according to local conditions (Wakeham, 2022).

Another factor that affects the composition of classrooms is location. OECD (2018) reports that on average, rural students do not achieve as well as their urban counterparts. Rural schools have smaller class sizes but more multi-grading. Teachers are often required to teach outside their subject area expertise, and rural schools cannot always maintain specialized services for students with special needs or provide support for students with mental health issues. OECD also notes that pre-service teacher preparation lacks the necessary preparation for teaching in multi-grade settings in rural schools (Wakeham, 2022).

## Pan-Canadian Allocation Practice

### Class Size

Teacher allocation in Canada and in other countries is based on student enrolment. Since there are various ways to do this, it is useful to examine some of the methods, and the vocabulary which describes these various methods before looking at practices in specific provinces.

**Student-teacher ratio** refers to the ratio of teachers to students in a school, district, province, or country. It can include specialists, administrators, instructional resource teachers, reading specialists, and other professionals who are outside the classroom or work in a particular classroom periodically.

**Average class size** is the total number of students in a grade or category divided by the number of classes for those students. Average class size bases its measure on actual class size; however, has limitations on the information it provides because of the possible range of individual class sizes. Accountability through average class size does ensure a certain level of resourcing, while providing flexibility at the local level to have some classes larger or smaller than others.

**Class size caps** place limits on the size of any class. Class size caps provide maximum class sizes for different grade levels, often with lower caps for variations such as combined grades in a class. These frameworks often have a soft cap and a hard cap. A soft cap is the stated cap in

the formula to which schools are expected to adhere. A hard cap is the absolute maximum that a school can allow in a class even when there are some extenuating circumstances.

Class size caps ensure a maximum class size according to grade level or other factors; however, it does not indicate the presence (or absence) of other supports in the classroom, such as instructional resource teachers, teacher assistants, and student assistants. Advocates of class size caps point to the advantages of a clear standard and clear accountability while its critics argue that this approach reduces district and school flexibility in allocating resources.

**Class size targets** are used in some provinces in Canada. These tend to be more “aspirational” without the accountability associated with class size caps.

## Provinces with Class Size Caps

Currently, seven provinces and one territory in Canada have class size caps for at least one grade level. These jurisdictions are Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Ontario, British Columbia, and Yukon. Differences exist in the caps themselves and the grade level(s) at which they apply. For example, PEI has hard cap in kindergarten only. Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, and Yukon have class size caps from kindergarten to the end of high school. Table 6 indicates the current class size caps for all jurisdictions in Canada that use this approach. This table does not include class size averages or class size targets, which are used in some provinces.

**Table 6:**  
**Class Size Caps in Canada**

<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>NL</b>	<b>NS</b>	<b>NB</b>	<b>PEI</b>	<b>PQ</b>	<b>ON</b>	<b>BC<sup>8</sup></b>	<b>YK</b>
Preschool/ Junior Kindergarten					17	29(32) <sup>9</sup>		
Kindergarten	20(22)	20(22)	21	18	19	29(32)	20	18
1	25(27)	20(22)	21		22	20(23)	22	22
2	25(27)	20(22)	21		24	20(23)	22	22
3	25(27)	25(27)	26(27)		26	20(23)	22	22
4	28(30)	25(27)	28(29)		26		30	25
5	28(30)	25(27)	28(29)		26		30	25
6	28(30)	25(27)	28(29)		26		30	25
7	31(33)	28(30)	29		28		30	25
8	31(33)	28(30)	29		29		30	26
9	31(33)	28(30)	29		32		30	26
10		32(34)	29		32		30	28
11		32(34)	29		32		30	28
12		32(34)	29				30	28

### Newfoundland and Labrador

As noted earlier, class size caps for Grades K-9 in NL were introduced in 2007 (K – 20; Grades 1-3 – 25, Grades 4-6 – 25, and Grades 7-9 – 27). In Budget 2016, Grades 4-6 was increased to 26 (28) and Grades 7-9 to 29 (31). In Budget 2017, Grades 4-6 was increased to 28 (30) and Grades 7-9 to 31 (33), and deployment caps for French Immersion 4-9 were increased as follows: Grades 4-6 to 30 (32), and Grades 7-9 to 32 (34).

The current class size caps for Newfoundland and Labrador are as follows:

Kindergarten	20 (22)		
Grades 1 - 3	25 (27)		
Grades 4 - 6	28 (30)	Fl: 30 (32)	
Grades 7 - 9	31 (33)	Fl: 32 (34)	

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<sup>8</sup> The numbers here from K-3 are from the BCTF Collective Agreement; the BC School Act uses higher numbers for K-3 (22, 24, 24, 24). The Grades 4-12 numbers are from the School Act. Negotiations at the local level may sometimes provide for caps lower than those presented here.

<sup>9</sup> The first number is the soft cap; the numbers in parenthesis are the hard caps.

### **Multi-Grades/Combined Grades in NL**

Most jurisdictions provide lower cap sizes for multi-grade classes, and in Newfoundland and Labrador the class size caps are lower than the other provinces.

K with one other grade – 15

K with 2 other grades – 12

K with 3 or more other grades – 10

Any 2 primary – 15

Any 3 primary – 14

Any 2 P/E – 15

Any 3 P/E – 15

Any 2 E/I – 18

Any 3 E/I – 15

Multi-grade classes occur in small schools, due to necessity. Combined grades occur in larger schools by combining two adjacent grades. The combined grades apply to Grades 1-6 and have a class size cap of 18.

### **Nova Scotia**

In 2017, the Nova Scotia legislature introduced Bill 78 *The School Class Sizes Limitation Act: An Act to Limit Class Sizes in Nova Scotia* (Government of NS, 2017) that provides for the following soft and hard caps:

Kindergarten-2: 20 (22)

Grades 3-6: 25 (27)

Grades 7-9: 28 (30)

Grades 10-12: 32 (34)

### **Multi-grades/Combined Grades in NS**

Schools can use combined classes or multi-age groupings to meet this cap. These combined classes receive a small adjustment in class size for Grades 3-4, 6-7, and 9-10 combinations as the cap for the lowest grade level applies to the combined class cap. The caps presented above apply to multi-grades/combined grades.

Each school is required to provide a Class Caps Compliant Report at the end of September each year and they are available to the public. These reports must provide a rationale for any classes that exceed the hard cap. The most common rationales are an additional enrolment in late September or the desire to avoid combined classes.

### **New Brunswick**

In New Brunswick, class sizes are addressed in the *New Brunswick Teachers' Federation Collective Agreement, 2016-2021* and are as follows:

Grades Kindergarten-2: 21

Grade 3: 26 (27)

Grades 4-6: 28 (29)

Grades 7-12: 29

### Combined Grades in NB

Class sizes are smaller for combined classes and are as follows:

Kindergarten (with any other grades):	16
Grades 1-3:	16 (18)
Grades 3-5:	23 (25)
Grades 5-12:	24 (26)

### Prince Edward Island

PEI has class size targets rather than class size caps except for kindergarten. According to the *Minister's Directive NO. MD. 2021 – 02*, (Government of PEI, 2021), the Department of Education will provide additional staffing if a kindergarten class size exceeds 18 students. The class size targets, as well as the class size cap for kindergarten are as follows:

Kindergarten	15 (18)
Grades 1-3	22
Grades 4-6	25
Grades 7-9	28
Grades 10-12	30

### Québec

Class size caps for schools in Québec are outlined in the *Québec Provincial Association of Teachers (QPAT) Collective Agreement, 2020-2023*. The agreement does not provide for soft caps but uses class averages. However, it does outline maximum class size caps, which are equivalent to the “hard caps” in other jurisdictions. The average class sizes and maximum caps for regular classes are:

Pre-school students (4-year-olds)	14 (17)
Pre-school students (5-year-olds)	17 (19)
Grade 1	20 (22)
Grade 2	22 (24)
Grades 3 - 6	24 (26)
Grade 7	26 (28)
Grade 8	27 (29)
Grades 9 - 11	30 (32)

While these maximums constitute a hard cap in most situations, there are provisions to exceed the maximum due to lack of space in the school, limited number of groups, a shortage of qualified available personnel or the geographic location of the school.

### Multi-grades/Combined Grades in PQ

There are no firm cap adjustments for combining two grades. There are regulations, however, around classes with three grades at the primary/elementary level. The class size caps for these multi-grade classes are:

- 18, if there are one or more grade 1 students
- 20, if there are no grade 1 students but one or more grade 2 students
- 21, if there are one or more grade 3 students
- 23, if there are only grade 4, 5 or 6 students in the class

## Ontario

*Ontario Regulation 132/12* (Government of Ontario, 2020) outlines average class sizes and class size caps for the province.

For full day Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten, the average class size cannot exceed 26 and the class size maximum is 29. Within any school board, 10% or less of the classes may have a class size that exceeds 29 but does not exceed 32. This would only apply in extenuating situations such as a lack of space. There is a provision for a teacher to be paired with an early childhood educator.

For Grades 1, 2, and 3 in Ontario, the soft cap is 20 students; however, this soft cap is strengthened by the regulation that “at least 90 per cent of the classes... shall have 20 or fewer pupils” (Section 5(2)). The hard cap for Grades 1, 2, and 3 is 23.

Grades 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 in Ontario have a class size average (24.5) rather than class size caps, however, it varies across school boards. Regulation 132/12 specifies the required average class sizes for the English public boards.

For Grades 9-12 in Ontario, “the average class size in a given school year of a board’s secondary school classes shall not exceed 23” (Section 12), and “average size in a school year of a board’s online learning classes shall not exceed 30”(Section 14.1).

In 2019, the current Government of Ontario engaged in a consultation process in which the Government proposed an average class size of 28 for Grades 9-12. This proposal met with considerable opposition from teachers’ unions and some members of the public. Discussions on class sizes in Ontario continue in the educational and political arenas.

## Multi-grade/Combined Grades in ON

Ontario appears to make no provision beyond the regular caps or averages for combined grades solely within the primary (1, 2, 3) or elementary (4, 5, 6, 7, 8) divisions. Combined grades of primary and elementary (Grades 3 and 4 or a three-grade combination) would have a maximum of 23, the same as the hard cap in primary. The Regulation makes clear that this does not apply to junior kindergarten or kindergarten.

## British Columbia

In British Columbia, the *British Columbia Teachers’ Federation (BCTF) Provincial Collective Agreement, 2019-2022* contains a letter of understanding, entitled *Agreement Regarding Restoration of Class Size, Composition, Ratios and Ancillary Language*, outlining the current class size caps. Additionally, the School Act for British Columbia outlines the class size maximums for K-12. The numbers from K-3 are from the BCTF Collective Agreement; the BC School Act uses higher numbers for K-3 (22, 24, 24, 24). The Grades 4-12 numbers are from the School Act. Negotiations at the local level may sometimes provide for caps lower than those presented here.

Kindergarten	20
Grades 1-3	22
Grades 4-12	30

### Combined Grades in BC

The Letter of Understanding also stipulates class size maximums for combined grades, “Where there is more than one primary grade in any class with primary students, the class size maximum for the lower grade shall apply.” The caps for combined grades in the primary are:

Kindergarten and Grade 1	20
Grades 1, 2, and 3	22

Provisions for class combinations are reduced as the grade levels increase. Schedule A, Item A of the BCTF Provincial Collective Agreement states, “Where there is a combined primary/intermediate class, an average of the maximum class size of the lowest involved primary grade and the maximum class size of the lowest involved intermediate grade will apply.”

### Yukon

In Yukon, class size caps are outlined in the *Yukon Association of Education Professionals Collective Agreement, 2021-2024*. Maximum sizes for regular classes are:

Kindergarten	18
Grades 1 - 3	22
Grades 4 - 7	25
Grades 8 - 9	26
Grades 10 - 12	28
I.E. or Home Ec.	16

(Article 35.02)

In addition to these caps, “Where safety is a factor, the number of pupils in a laboratory, shop, or other specialized classroom shall not exceed the number for which the facilities were designed” (Article 35.03).

These numbers appear to be “hard caps”; however, when a school has a class exceeding the cap, additional school staff may be provided following consultation with the teacher, principal, and school-based team.

### Provinces without Class Size Caps

Some provinces (NL, PEI and ON) have caps at some grade levels, and not at others. NL, for example, does not have class size caps at the high school level. PEI has a class size cap only in kindergarten, and ON has class size averages rather than class size caps from Grades 4-12.

Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan have no class size caps at any grade level. Alberta has class size targets and Manitoba and Saskatchewan have no specified limitations.

### Alberta

Alberta’s Commission on Learning established class size targets in 2003 (Government of Alberta, 2003). The Government of Alberta, the teachers’ union and the auditor general agree that these targets have never been achieved, despite, according to the government, an expenditure of \$3.4 billion to reduce class sizes (Government of Alberta, Class Size Initiative Review, 2019).

The targets were as follows:

Kindergarten - Grade 3	17
Grades 4-6	23
Grades 7-9	25
Grades 10-12	27

The Class Size Initiative Review (Government of Alberta, 2019) reported that the initiative failed because school jurisdictions prefer to have autonomy in funding allocations for educational resources and viewed the initiative as reducing school and district flexibility. The review provides an example of the current debate on class size caps, and the position of jurisdictions declining to implement caps:

Across Canadian provinces, policy makers have provided sizeable funding to implement smaller class sizes. Some provinces have made class size reduction a priority, but there is heated debate regarding smaller class sizes. On one side, it is argued that smaller class sizes can improve student achievement; on the other, there are arguments that the effectiveness of class size reduction is uncertain and there are more cost-effective strategies for improving education standards. Classroom complexity and teacher quality are two such areas. Teacher quality, for instance, has been shown to have a greater impact on student learning and should be explored further to improve student outcomes. (p.4)

### **Manitoba**

There are currently no class size caps in Manitoba. In the 2015-16 legislature, the Government of Manitoba (2016) introduced *Bill 2, The Public School Amendment Act (Small Classes for K-3)* as a way to introduce a class cap for kindergarten and primary grades. In March 2017, a new Manitoba government withdrew the legislation citing lack of evidence that it was effective, based on provincial scores in reading and numeracy assessment and that the prescriptive class size cap approach was not suitable to every situation.

### **Saskatchewan**

In November 2019, the Saskatchewan government announced the formation of the Provincial Committee on Class Size and Composition to develop a framework on class size and composition. The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF) declined to participate in the committee, claiming that the committee was an attempt to sidestep the collective bargaining process since STF had raised class size and composition as important issues at the bargaining table. The Saskatchewan government declined to make class size and composition a core bargaining issue. Following initial service disruption on the issue, STF signed a new collective agreement not addressing class size and composition, citing COVID interruptions as a factor in the decision to defer the issue to another day.

### **Class Composition**

In current times, class composition generally refers to the number of special needs students in a class. Inclusion policies potentially impact the dynamics of the classroom because special needs students may require additional academic and/or behavioural support. Policy responses include (a) providing student assistants, teacher assistants, or other personnel for additional

classroom support, (b) limiting the number of special needs students in any one class, (c) linking class size caps to class composition, and/or (d) adjusting inclusion policies so that some students receive some instruction outside the regular class.

In Canada, the most common intervention for special needs students is to provide additional classroom support. In NL, for example, instructional resource teachers and student assistants provide additional classroom supports. As to limiting the number of special needs students in a class or linking class size to class composition, policy responses vary from the general (e.g., Nova Scotia) to more detailed regulations (e.g., Quebec) linking class size caps to the socio-economic description of a particular region. Policy and practice connecting class size caps to class composition are outlined below, according to province.

### **Newfoundland and Labrador**

Although there are additional personnel allocated for individual students in particular classroom, there are no specific class size caps related to class composition.

### **Nova Scotia**

*The School Class Sizes Limitation Act: An Act to Limit Class Sizes* states that the presence of special needs students should be considered when establishing class sizes but provides no specific formula.

### **New Brunswick**

*The New Brunswick Teachers' Federation Collective Agreement, 2016-2021*, states that the presence of special needs students should be considered but provides no specific formula. However, in a Letter of Agreement (Schedule O), the government has provided additional teaching units to support class composition needs as follows:

- education support teachers (EST) such as resource and guidance teachers
  - opportunities to split classrooms with challenging composition
  - school-based teachers for literacy and numeracy, particularly at the K-2 level
  - school-based teachers for student behaviour
  - school-based teachers to assist with gifted and talented students
- (Collective Agreement, Letter of the Agreement, Schedule O)

### **Québec**

*The Québec Provincial Association of Teachers' (QPAT) Collective Agreement, 2020-2023*, includes a framework to address the influence of class composition on class size caps. It uses census data to identify schools in economically disadvantaged areas and provides reduced class sizes to these schools. The class size averages and caps for schools/areas in these areas are as follows:

- 13(16) for preschool 4-year-old students (as compared to 14(17) for regular classes)
- 16(18) for preschool 5-year-old students (as compared to 17(19) for regular classes)
- 18(20) for elementary school students from grades 1-6 (as compared to regular class sizes in Table 1 of this document)

### **Yukon**

The Yukon Association of Education Professionals Collective Agreement, 2021-2024, (Article 35) does not refer to classroom composition, however, there is a letter of understanding requiring the establishing of a Positive Behaviour Intervention Support and Classroom Diversity Committee, co-chaired by the President of the YTA and the Deputy Minister of Education or designates. This committee, among other duties, reviews the number and types of behavioural support plans, safety plans, individual education plans, and student learning plans. The committee is also expected to review the allocation of employees and the administration of Article 35.

### **Alberta**

Alberta's Commission on Learning (Government of Alberta, 2003) recommended that students with high needs should be in smaller than average classes. However, Alberta does not have specific guidelines on this matter.



## Chapter 4

# Review of Teaching Resources

The Committee was tasked with reviewing the roles and responsibilities of all teaching resources other than classroom teachers and school administrators at both the district and school level. For this review, the Committee administered surveys and conducted focus group discussions. The response rates for the surveys were satisfactory and provided information regarding the work that each group undertakes. The survey results showed that, generally, people attend to their roles as outlined in their position descriptions and/or standards of practice. They also revealed that many groups are doing work that is outside their role. For some groups, the results indicate that certain tasks are not getting done at all or are seldom completed.

The focus group discussions provided opportunity for the Committee to probe further on the results of the surveys. These discussions offered different perspectives of the work that educators at the schools and districts do on a regular basis. The participants spoke of their effectiveness and their challenges and offered their ideas for improvement. The common issues emerging from the focus group discussions are a lack of clarity on their roles and responsibilities, a lack of coherence, and a lack of oversight. Repeatedly, the Committee heard of confusion among the educators and in the system about duplication, about ‘who is responsible for what’, that no one is ‘managing us’, that there is no priority setting, and that there’s an expectation that ‘everyone can do everything’. For many, time, travel and geography are challenges.

This chapter presents the results of the surveys and focus group discussions for each group.

### Educational Psychologists

The allocation for educational psychologists is 43. For the 2021 – 22 school year, thirty-nine worked with NLES and there were four vacancies; 26 (67%) completed the survey. Each educational psychologist supports, on average, seven schools with a range of four to eleven and travel an average of four and one-half hours each week, with their times varying from one hour to 15.5 hours. Approximately 40% of the educational psychologists reported having to travel more than 60 minutes to visit a school at least once a week. Most reported that the distances to their schools does not require an overnight stay in a community.

The survey results indicate that educational psychologists spend most of their time consulting and completing assessments. At least 75% of them reported that they consult with families, teachers, guidance counsellors, and administrators on a broad range of topics including: social emotional learning, behaviour, classroom management, assessment results, interventions strategies, and students’ learning profiles.

Respondents (73%) reported participating in assessment activities including administering Level C standardized assessment tools at least once a week. They administer an average of twenty-five assessments a year with some doing as few as eight and others as many as fifty. They also

engage in programming with approximately 80% indicating that at least twice a month, they make referrals to appropriate professionals, recommend community-based supports and resources available for students, and participate in both program planning meetings and interagency coordination of services for children and youth.

In addition to the survey, educational psychologists participated in a focus group discussion to share their challenges and their thoughts and ideas regarding possible changes and solutions. They identified time, lack of resources, geography, and workload as their biggest challenges, as well as increased student and school needs. They spend a lot of time dealing with assessment needs and crisis situations, “putting out fires”. The schools understand that to be their role, to be called in when an assessment is required or when there is a crisis.

Educational psychologists believe that, at all levels of the system, there is a lack of clarity of their role as well as a lack of coherence. They noted that, often their role is confused with that of guidance counsellors and that the boundaries in the respective roles are blurred. Additionally, with no supervision by a senior psychologist, each has been left on their own. To improve their effectiveness, a greater focus on programming and prevention is needed. They believe that many issues such as mental health can be addressed before they reach a crisis point. They also think their work can be made more efficient by having confidential files available online, using virtual platforms to connect with each other and with their schools, and providing additional resources at the school level to follow through on their recommendations.

## Directors of Schools

There are fifteen directors of schools in the province, 14 employed by Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLES) and one by Le Conseil scolaire francophone provincial de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador (CSFP). These are senior management positions with principals in their families of schools reporting to them. Six (40%) completed the survey; however, not all regions of the province participated. While the results of the respondents are reported, generalizations across the full group of directors of schools is not possible. According to the results, the average number of schools that each director is responsible for is 19 with a range 15 – 24. They travel an average of four and one-half hours each week, with their times varying from two to six hours. One-half of the respondents reported having to travel more than 60 minutes to visit a school at least once a week.

At least two-thirds of the directors reported visiting each school at least twice a year, reviewing school achievement data, collaborating with the principal to develop an action plan based on the data review, reviewing the school development plan, meeting with school staff, reviewing the master teaching schedule, reviewing school operations, monitoring implementation of the Department’s Education Action Plan, assisting with and monitoring the implementation of teacher and administrator professional growth and appraisal plans, providing professional learning to school staffs, and updating school staffs on the district’s strategic plan. More frequently, they meet with their school administrators virtually. They also work with human resource staff and principals to short-list candidates for permanent positions and interview teachers for both replacement and permanent positions. At least once a week, they respond to

unanticipated school situations and complete paperwork (e.g., records of document reviews, minutes of meetings, and travel claims).

The Committee met with just over one-half of the directors, with all regions represented. Similar to the survey results, the Directors said that their role is primarily working with administrators on school development, achievement, assessment practices, and student engagement, and they feel most effective when they have these focused learning and planning conversations. Too often, they are taken away from these duties as they have become the go-to person for all school issues including parent issues, operational issues (e.g., broken furnace), transportation issues, human resource issues (e.g., teacher recruitment for permanent positions, hiring for a difficult-to-fill position such as a DHH itinerant teacher, guidance counsellor or staff concerns), and individual student issues (including dealing with the aftermath of social media postings).

The directors expressed concern about the lack of leadership interest in school development, the expectations of their role from within the district as well as the schools, and the lack of clarity about their role. As one director stated, “I’m not sure if all branches (IT, facilities, finance) of NLES defence understand that our focus is student programming.” This lack of clarity became problematic when their title changed from Instructional Education Officer to Director of Schools. For the Directors, their most pressing issue is the multitude of other duties that distract from what they believe is their role. To address this issue, the directors propose that their role be defined and communicated to all levels of the organization, that the district delineate the responsibilities of staff in each division to schools.

While their work is similar in many ways, the directors encounter different situations as determined by the needs of each school. Stress and anxiety have increased in teachers, students, and families resulting in more people on leave, more counselling needs, and increased recruitment efforts. Geography makes a difference. The job is sometimes different depending on the geographic region, the number of schools, and the school size. The experience of the principal also matters. A small school with an inexperienced administrator requires more support than a seasoned administrator in a similar school and community.

## Program Specialists

There are fifty-five program specialists in the province, 51 at NLES defence, and four at CSFP with one vacancy. Thirty-three (61%) completed the survey. The program specialists are responsible for the various curriculum areas and different grade levels, providing direct support to teachers and administrators in professional learning, student support services and other provincial and district initiatives. On average, each program specialist supports forty-one schools. This number varies from 17 to 77. They travel an average of 14 hours each month, their times varying from 3 hours to 50 hours with more than 75% of them reporting that they travel more than 60 minutes to a school at least once a week or at least twice a month. Many are responsible for multiple disciplines with most respondents identifying K – 6 literacy and mathematics, English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science or Social Studies as primary areas. On a weekly basis, the program specialists support, on average twelve teachers/administrators face-to-face at the school and 40 online.

The survey results indicate that the program specialists spend a portion of each day responding to emails from teachers in their region and from Directors of Schools. At least once a week, they respond to a demonstrated need at an individual school, set up subject or topic specific learning groups for teachers, liaise with other program specialists or district staff, update shared resources (e.g., Google groups), and provide and/or promote resources that are inclusive and culturally responsive.

Their primary responsibility is professional learning and at least 75% of respondents stated that on a weekly or biweekly basis, they provide one-on-one professional learning to teachers through school visits or online on effective pedagogical practices, sound assessment practices or using assessment information to guide instruction. They also model effective pedagogical practices, engage with individual school professional learning communities, provide professional reading titles and/or links for teachers, and meet with individual principals and/or department heads on program issues.

At least twice a year, program specialists facilitate professional learning for new curriculum to all teachers responsible for its initial implementation and to those who missed the initial implementation sessions or are new to that grade or curriculum. They also provide online professional learning sessions to groups of teachers, and they avail of the Department of Education professional learning website for professional learning opportunities for teachers working in isolated communities.

Program specialists also work with Department consultants with 55% saying they meet with them online at least twice a month and 42% reported that this occurred at least twice a year. They receive information about new provincial initiatives at varying frequencies, with 55% reporting this occurred at least twice a year and 40% at least twice a month. For other department activities, planning curriculum implementation rollouts and meeting face-to-face with Department consultants, 67% and 60% respectively reported these occurring at least twice a year. Thirty percent of the program specialists said they never meet with Department consultants.

Other tasks that program specialists complete include: contributing to the development of the district's strategic plan and policies and practices, providing information sessions to new teachers on district policies, and carrying out administration support duties (e.g., photocopying, picking up supplies for a professional learning session), responding to requests from the Department of Education, engaging in administrative meetings/planning at the district level, and interviewing potential candidates for teaching positions.

In a focus group discussion, the program specialists expressed concern about the lack of strategic planning and identification of priorities for their work and any clear direction from leadership. As a programs division, they feel disconnected and question their role. Specific examples include: limited involvement with the Education Action Plan group or conversations related to professional learning planning, working groups in name only, members who are not part of any development but presented final documents, little opportunity to have input into resources for schools, overlap in the roles for French program specialists with no oversight, and the location of student services in a different site on the Avalon. They also expressed the view that the lack of coherence extends to the relationship with the Department of Education as it

relates to priorities and initiatives. They proposed the development of standards for their work, improved communication within their organizations and between the districts and the Department, and dedicated time each year for planning and team building.

The priority for program specialists is curriculum implementation; however, in recent years much of their work has become reactionary. There are different demands, at both the student level and the school level. With the implementation of the responsive teaching and learning policy, meeting the schools' needs in addition to the curriculum and committee work is challenging. For student services program specialists, the purpose of their school visits often changes once they are on site as they are asked to address multiple emerging issues. Other issues that affect their work are the current professional learning model, substitute teacher availability, curriculum documents, responsibility for technology integration, and geography.

Lack of funding for curriculum implementation beyond year one creates difficulty for providing professional learning to teachers new to the curriculum area. There are limited opportunities for ongoing sustained professional learning with availability of substitute time and delays for approval of substitute time contributing to the limitations. A comprehensive plan for the provision of virtual professional learning opportunities has the potential to provide a more equitable professional learning model; however, official release time to allow teachers to connect with other teachers is necessary.

Technology integration seems to be everyone's responsibility. A system-wide technology strategy with dedicated individuals/mentors working in schools with teachers is needed. Currently, there is one program specialist and a train-the-trainer model but no release time for the trainer to provide professional learning to others. There are technology itinerants at NLES, two responsible for PowerSchool and two for coding, but they are often pulled away from their work to support the Google tools or give pedagogical support to teachers.

The number and size of the curriculum documents leaves new teachers struggling and feeling overwhelmed, especially those in small schools with multi-grading. This issue and recommendations to address the challenges of teaching and learning in multi-grade classroom were put forth in the Ministerial Panel Report (Government of NL, 2000). Program specialists expressed concern that not enough has been done and that teachers in these small schools, many of whom are inexperienced, need greater supports. Further to that, they proposed that leadership in this area is lacking and that a program specialist be assigned small schools as a sole responsibility.

## Program Itinerants

There are ten program itinerants for safe and inclusive schools and five completed the survey. They provide support for social emotional learning and the overall well-being of students. On average, each program itinerant supports thirty-three schools. This number varies from 20 to 63. They travel an average of 22.5 hours each month, their times varying from 15 to 40 hours with all of them reporting that they travel more than 60 minutes to a school at least once a week (17%) or at least twice a month (83%). On a weekly basis, the program itinerants for safe and inclusive

schools support, on average eleven teachers/administrators face-to-face at the school and thirteen online.

In addition to communicating with teachers and other school staff through email and social media, more than 80% of program itinerants for safe and inclusive schools respond to a demonstrated need at individual schools daily. At least once a week or biweekly, they deliver professional learning to individual teachers or a group of teachers both in the classroom and online, update shared resources (e.g., Google groups), provide and/or promote resources that are inclusive and culturally responsive, and help address student transportation issues. The itinerants also address parent and school concerns as they are identified, meet with their counterparts at the Department, collaborate with third-party organizations on program issues, and liaise with other agencies regarding support services programs and issues. At least twice a year, program itinerants for safe and inclusive schools facilitate crisis response teams and plans in response to traumatic/critical incidents involving students and/or staff.

Fourteen program itinerants including those for safe and inclusive schools participated in a focus group discussion. They indicated having a strong relationship with the schools they visit regularly but the number of schools and the geography prevents them from working closely with all. The time between school visits can be as much as eight weeks, making the necessary follow-up almost meaningless. They noted that the needs at their schools have become more diverse and complex (e.g., mental health, social concerns, and home situations), making it challenging to meet them all. It was suggested that a planned approach to virtual service delivery can be done effectively and would be more efficient. The itinerants also raised concerns about the curriculum, saying that many subject areas (e.g., Health, Social Studies, and English Language Arts) are outdated, incongruent with provincial Safe, Caring and Inclusive Policy, and not reflective of current understandings about residential schools and 2SLGBTQ+ groups.

The program itinerants expressed concern about their role and how priorities for their work are determined. They stated that clarification is needed, and that schools need clear communication about how different groups provide different supports. They also proposed that a person in a leadership role monitor their work.

## Speech Language Pathologists

There are forty-five speech language pathologists (SLPs) in the province, providing support to over 3,700 students. NLESĐ employs forty-four and CSFP one and 32 (71%) completed the survey. They typically work with primary/elementary students supporting, on average, five schools. This number varies from two to ten. They travel an average of three hours each week, their times varying from 15 minutes to 7.5 hours with approximately one-third of them reporting that they travel more than 60 minutes to visit a school. Five SLPs reported that they stay overnight at least twice a year.

SLPs provide direct and consultative services. Caseloads vary with SLPs providing direct service to 55 students, on average, with a range of 30 to 97, and consultative service to 27 students, on average, with a range of 5 to 74. Some SLPs also provide services to a smaller number of

students (average of nine) for augmentative and alternative communication. Daily, SLPs work with an average of 13 students face-to-face at the school and two online.

The results indicate that the SLPs (97%) spend most of their daily time providing direct service to individual students outside the classroom, implementing students' intervention plans, monitoring progress, adapting or redesigning the intervention plans, and collaborating and consulting with teachers. SLP services to individual students are seldom provided in the classroom or online. Approximately 80% provide direct service to a small group of students outside the classroom at least once a week.

Work related to assessments and programming is completed either weekly or biweekly. In addition to the administration, related tasks include selecting appropriate assessment tools, consulting with teachers and parents, interpreting and explaining the results, diagnosing speech and/or language disorders, and providing conclusions that inform program planning team decisions. They also collaborate and consult with program planning and service delivery teams.

The Committee met with 24 SLPs. They stated that their role has changed over time. Consulting with teachers was their primary role but now they have more direct interaction with students. The profile of the students has also changed with an increased number having complex and communication needs, and behavioural issues. The use of augmented and alternative communication (AAC) devices has also increased. With large caseloads, there is concern that the most vulnerable students are not getting the support they need.

The SLPs noted recent changes in policy and practice has affected their work. It is harder to get instructional resource teacher (IRT) support for their students with the responsive teaching and learning (RTL) model. The RTL policy has also affected their workload in large schools. Teachers can intervene with those who have less severe needs, but they are struggling with how to intervene. The reading specialist support is limited due to the large student enrolment, so SLPs fill the gap for oral language. An unintended consequence of this is that students with milder needs may not receive sufficient support.

The SLPs expressed concerns about the language development of children entering the school system. During Kinderstart, overall delay in speech and language skills is observed. Many are not demonstrating basic skills and are coming into kindergarten without a strong foundation in oral language. The kindergarten teachers deliver the English Language Arts curriculum outcomes to students who may not be ready. The SLPs propose placing a greater focus on oral language development in the kindergarten curriculum and providing professional learning for kindergarten and primary teachers in oral language development. Furthermore, they propose that curriculum outcomes for reading instruction apply the science of reading.

The SLPs are of the view that, with advances in technology, services for students with communication needs have improved. At the same time, students with speech and language delays receive less service. They suggested differentiating roles based on needs (e.g., communication, speech and language). Overall, they want greater clarity on their various roles. There is a vast scope of practice and there are different expectations of the role. Greater collaboration between SLPs and reading specialists would help build capacity in the system to

take care of oral language in young students. Finally, they proposed different service delivery models including virtual delivery. The SLPs also spoke of workload issues as well as their caseloads. The Speech-Language & Audiology Canada (SAC) proposes that SLPs working in schools should adopt a workload rather than a caseload approach. This approach recognizes that SLPs must have a manageable workload and at the same time, all students have the support they need for their success (SAC, 2022).

## English as a Second Language (ESL) Teachers

There are 31 English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, 17 itinerant, 4.5 school-based and 9.5 Literacy Enrichment and Academic Readiness for Newcomers Program (LEARN) teachers, all school-based and 20 (65%) completed the survey. Most of the school-based teachers work in high schools, teaching on average, four classes a day, with approximately seventeen students over the course of the day. Their classes are small groups or one-on-one instruction. The itinerant teachers work mainly in K – 9 schools, and are responsible, on average, for five schools, although this number varies from two to sixteen. Most teaching is face-to-face with 85% of respondents saying they do not work with students online. They travel an average of two hours each week, their times varying from 15 minutes to 7.5 hours.

Most ESL itinerant teachers reported that they spend 70% of their time monitoring student performance and 30% actively teaching. In addition, 80% of them reported providing support to classroom teachers each day. All reported that they do actively teach the outcomes in the ESL curriculum and/or ESL guidelines and reinforce students' skill development in literacy learning daily. If not daily, at least once a week, all respondents reported that they support language development from a social and cultural perspective, prepare course materials that cover reading, writing, speaking and listening, and monitor students' academic and linguistic development and progress in second-language acquisition.

Respondents reported teaching language, literacy and numeracy skills and concepts outside the classroom with 55% reporting this activity as daily and an additional 30% at least once a week. Less frequently (55 – 60%), this occurs in the classroom. Most ESL teachers (75%) also reported assessing students' English language learning competencies and evaluating their acquisition of English either daily or at least once a week. At least twice a month, the teachers reported that they help classroom teachers incorporate ESL approaches and strategies into their instruction.

The respondents are divided on their level of engagement with adapting instructional strategies and modifying assessment strategies with 60% reporting they adapt instructional strategies daily and 25% reporting they never adapt instructional strategies. Similarly, 50% of respondents modify assessment strategies daily and 25% never modify assessment strategies. For teachers working with students in Grades K – 6, they reported that they collaborate with the teaching and learning teams at least twice a month.

The general view of ESL teachers is that the program is growing faster than the required staffing levels and they are struggling to keep up. Many students have high needs and come from traumatic backgrounds. It is a diverse population of students with different languages, different

needs and all coming from a different place. Outside Metro, the schools are spread across large geographic regions, making it difficult for students to receive sufficient instruction and support.

The ESL teachers identified other challenges that affect their work. The language in the textbooks is often beyond what the students can read, yet the availability of other resources is limited and the purchasing process for approved resources is slow. Teachers reported that, in the absence of authorized resources, they seek out available trade books and purchase them at their own expense. A more effective system is required. Students who require ESL are often in large classes, they are usually quiet, and their needs go unnoticed as the classroom teacher attends to the other students. ESL teachers working with high school students spoke of the lack of access to ESL credit courses. In many schools, lack of dedicated space takes away from instructional time and presents a derisory experience for the students. ESL teachers spoke of the need for consistency and routine, and an area where students can feel a sense of belonging.

The LEARN teachers also expressed concerns. There is no student-teacher ratio, so no additional units are provided when class size increases. Large classes with students at different levels of their learning and language proficiency make it difficult to do whole class instruction and time to work with a student one-on-one is reduced. LEARN teachers support students in Grades 7 – 9 with their literacy development but more support is required for mathematics and science and other subject areas; and for students in Grades 4 – 6 to support their language skills, reading and writing.

The teachers advocated for comprehensive programs in identified schools rather than increasing the number of schools offering ESL programs. That would reduce the travel time, allowing more time for student support, provide an opportunity to build a library of resources, and improve access to student services and guidance support. This model also allows for committed student services (e.g., IRT, BVI and DHH) for ESL students with exceptionalities. It is understood that job security may be at risk as students transfer in/out of schools and that the itinerant model would need to continue for rural communities. A clear process for school-based and itinerant positions, with thresholds based on student numbers and geography is required. Additionally, offering ESL virtually for those who have not experienced trauma or has prior formal education must be considered.

### **Teachers of Students Who are Blind/have Vision Loss (BVI)**

During 2021-22, 135 students with vision loss received programming and supports from seven itinerant teachers. Five (71.4%) completed the survey. The average number of schools the teachers work in is thirteen with a range of five to 18. They travel an average of seven and one-half hours each week, their times varying from five hours to ten. Two teachers reported travelling more than one hour to visit a school at least once a week and having to stay overnight in a community due to travel time and distance at least twice a month.

Caseloads vary. Direct services are provided to a minimum of five students up to eighteen and similarly, the number of students who receive consult services varies from four to 21. Most services are provided face-to-face with approximately three students receiving direct services

each day and five receiving consult services. The teachers also provide direct and consult services to pre-schoolers, on average, three children and their families.

Daily, the itinerant teachers for BVI students provide targeted interventions for individual students with vision loss both in the classroom and outside the classroom, adapt instructional strategies, materials and technology, model instructional strategies for classroom teachers, adapt assessment procedures, develop learning outcomes based on the Expanded Core Curriculum for students with vision loss, and monitor students' use of appropriate alternate formats.

At least once a week, the teachers conduct informal assessments of functional vision and learning modalities and interpret the results to inform program planning team decisions. Formal assessments are conducted at least twice a year. The respondents also stated that they collaborate and consult with the orientation and mobility specialist, teaching and learning teams, program planning teams and classroom teachers, model strategies for parents for home programs, implement social skills training, participate in transition planning, and request/apply for alternate format materials, and at least twice a year provide professional learning on vision loss and its impact on learning to classroom teachers and others.

The challenges for BVI teachers are their caseload or the geographic region they service. Travel is a major issue for many with long distances, uncertain weather, and travel expenses. Some also commented on the lack of professional learning specific to their role.

They noted that their service delivery model needs to be revised. The classroom teacher can provide more support to the low-vision students but needs professional learning. Some programming can be delivered virtually but the infrastructure such as a learning space, student supervision, and supports for the student must be established in the school. Partial allocations are difficult to fill. The BVI itinerants suggest that the school districts consider pairing partial units (e.g., a partial instructional resource teacher (IRT) allocation with a partial allocation for BVI) and then providing professional learning and training through APSEA (Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority). Finally, they would welcome a supervisor who is qualified in BVI to oversee their work and provide leadership.

Building capacity with schools and communities would lessen travel time for BVI itinerants, reduce the interruption in student learning, and allow BVI itinerants to focus their time on working with students who require one-on-one in person support, assessing specific skills and goals in the expanded core curriculum for students with vision loss, and providing sustained professional learning for teachers.

At one time, the Department of Education gave students high school credit for some of the expanded core curriculum (ECC) areas recognizing the value of the learning of the specific skills. The outcomes in the ECC can fit with physical education, healthy living, language arts (Braille), or technology. This practice was discontinued, and the Department no longer gives credit for these courses. High school students with vision loss miss course time in their core curriculum areas to do the ECC curriculum, yet these skills are necessary for the students to access the course material.

## Teachers of Students Who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH)

During 2021-22, 316 DHH students received programming and supports from 22 DHH teachers including 18 itinerant teachers. Seven (38.8%) itinerant teachers completed the survey. On average, teachers work in nine schools with a range of five to 12. They travel an average of six hours each week, their times varying from three hours to ten. Teachers' caseloads vary in number and in language. Some students are oral, and others use sign language; 57% of the teachers reported that they communicate using American Sign Language (ASL) at least twice a month. Direct services are provided to a minimum of five students up to a maximum of 10. Almost all services are provided face-to-face with approximately four students receiving direct services each day. The number of pre-schoolers requiring services varies from one year to another.

Daily, the itinerant teachers for DHH students provide targeted interventions for individual students with hearing loss outside the classroom, audiological information to classroom teachers, and language enriched experiences (e.g., field trips, group activities in the classroom) to foster language and literacy development. They also model and adapt instructional strategies and assessment procedures, model appropriate interaction to teachers and peers of students with hearing loss, conduct formal and informal assessments, teach independence and self-advocacy skills to students with hearing loss, and collaborate with classroom teachers. The teachers reported that they collaborate and consult with service delivery teams and program planning teams at least once a week and with APSEA and community support agencies biweekly. They also work with classroom teachers to develop individual education program (IEP) goals and participate in transition planning.

In a focus group discussion, the DHH itinerants reported that meeting the needs of their students is challenging. More students have high needs and in recent years, some of their students also require ESL services. Other challenges are travel, lack of sign language interpreters, and partial allocations.

Access to ASL for children who are born deaf is an issue. Under the current model, the itinerant teachers provide this service, but the available time and the intensity of instruction are not enough for the students to become immersed in the language. For the student who is Deaf and requires ASL, to be included in the classroom requires the teacher to have fluency in ASL and to teach other students how to sign.

The DHH itinerants reported that personal FM systems that amplify sound and support hard of hearing students are inadequate. Sound field systems that amplify sound through a speaker would be a more effective system and should be in all classrooms. The sound field system would help not only students with hearing loss but also those with other exceptionalities and languages.

Like the BVI itinerants, DHH itinerants stated that changes to the current service delivery model are required. A closer analysis of the needs of individual students and their situation can inform allocations and caseloads and help determine the required services including supports other than itinerant services. Suggested changes include increased access to language development, a partnership with Newfoundland and Labrador Association of the Deaf, which offers sign language classes, and a family communications home program.

## Teacher Librarians (Learning Resource Teachers)

The teacher librarian allocation for the current school year is 101.5. With partial deployments, there are 182 teachers who work as teacher librarians and 133 (73%) completed the survey. The number of respondents from each region reflects the distribution of schools across the four regions of NLESND as well as CSFP. The largest group of respondents work in primary/elementary schools (54.2%) followed by K-12 schools (24.1%), a reasonable representation of the province's schools. Some respondents (11%) reported that there was a public library in their school with 80% of those sharing space with the school's library commons. The allocations within schools vary with 18% reporting that they have a full-time allocation, 32% a half-time position, and 50% less than a half-time allocation.

Most respondents (80%) with less than 50% allocation reported that their other responsibility was classroom teacher. Others reported administration, technology support, reading specialist, instructional resource teacher, guidance, and student success teacher.

Approximately 50% of the teacher librarians reported that for part of each day, they assist staff and students in finding books, articles and other resources, complete library learning commons (LLC) related administrative tasks, (e.g., cataloguing, circulation), differentiate instruction to meet the learning needs of all students, use current technologies to facilitate learning, use the LLC to support universal instruction, and provide support to students and staff in using education technology (e.g., whiteboards, iPads, Chromebooks). The frequency by which the library learning commons is open for students to drop by varies with 75% of respondents reported that it is open daily, 15% at least twice a month, and 10% indicating that it is either not open to students or open several times a year.

The respondents reported that either weekly or biweekly, they engage students in using critical thinking and digital literacy, develop learning experiences that develop creativity and innovation, support universal instruction through co-teaching and working with classroom teachers, plan and facilitate cross-curricular learning experiences, design the LLC space to facilitate learning opportunities and spontaneous groupings, assist students as they navigate technology from basic to advanced skills, provide support to staff and students in using library technology, teach research and inquiry skills, and update books, digital collections and other resources.

Other tasks completed by more than two-thirds of the teacher librarians at least twice a year include developing long- and short-term goals for the library learning commons, building partnerships with individuals, organizations and/or other agencies from the community, involving parents and the community in a culture of literacy, updating print and digital collections that represent diversity, and participating in on-going professional learning opportunities.

In a focus group discussion, most teacher librarians said that they have teaching duties and limited time to dedicate to their teacher librarian tasks and responsibilities (e.g., supporting class project work). They are often expected to maintain technology devices and to fill in for other positions such as administration. They feel that many administrators do not have a good understanding of their role or its importance, hence the assignment of other duties and lack of professional learning opportunities. Some of them reported that they were hired for their

technology expertise not their understanding of school library services. No one at the district or department has library as their primary role, so opportunities for professional learning are limited and they have no voice at those levels. Many cited the school culture as the biggest variable to how the library learning commons and the teacher librarian are viewed. To run an effective program, more time dedicated to the library learning commons is required. Like others, they want better direction, oversight, and support from the district and department.

## Guidance Counsellors

There were 174 guidance counsellors for 2021-22 school year and 140 (80%) completed a survey. The number of respondents from each region reflects the distribution of schools across the four regions of NLESF as well as CSFP. Different school configurations and size were well represented with 50% of respondents working in a school with student enrolment between 400 and 700, 32% below 400 and 18% above 700. The allocations within schools vary with 69% reporting that they have a full-time allocation, 21% a half-time position, and 10% less than a half-time allocation. Of the 30% who are not full-time guidance counsellors, 59% are instructional resource teachers and another 18% classroom teachers.

Most guidance counsellors reported that they provide individual counselling and support to students with social/emotional needs, with personal growth and development, with school related challenges and to those who present with mental health concerns on a daily basis. At least once a week almost all respondents consult with teachers about individual students, 71% reported that they support a student who has been removed from class for disruptive behaviour, and approximately 63% provide interventions in social emotional learning (SEL). Other tasks that the respondents complete weekly or biweekly relate to student support and programs such as attending service delivery team meetings and program planning meetings, contributing to the development of Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and making referrals to appropriate professionals.

The respondents are divided on how often they administer assessments, with approximately one-half reporting that they complete assessments at least twice a month and the same percentage at least twice a year. At least twice a year, 82% of guidance counsellors reported that they monitor the comprehensive school guidance plan and two-thirds of them meet with teachers about the plan.

One area of responsibility that guidance counsellors reported never completing relates to career guidance. Other than collaborating with educators and other agencies to promote successful transitions (88% at least twice a year), one-half of the respondents said they never administer interest inventories, help students with applications for post-secondary and scholarships, collaborate with government and other relevant agencies to identify and promote opportunities to learn about careers, coordinate career guidance learning opportunities with outside guests, help students plan and prepare for post-secondary education, or assist students with career planning.

There are several roles outside the guidance counsellors' standards of practice or position description that they report undertaking. The results indicate that 73% of respondents perform

non-guidance administrative duties with almost 40% reporting that this occurs either daily or at least once a week. Almost 20% report filling in for the principal or assistant principal for them to attend meetings at least twice a month. Over 80% of respondents also reported doing supervision duties (early morning, lunch, bus, etc.) with 56% doing duty daily and 25% at least twice a week. Guidance counsellors reported that they help students with their medications with 20% performing this task daily and another 16% at least twice a week. The results also reveal that 73% of respondents administer achievement tests to students who require an accommodation.

Most respondents (92%) reported participating in guidance related professional learning that supports evidence-based practice at least twice a year; and 80% reported that they provide professional learning and information sharing opportunities for teachers and others at least twice a year.

In a focus group discussion, guidance counsellors reported that most of their time is spent dealing with mental health issues and reacting to behavioural issues, neither of which match well with the 2014 Standards of Practice. They often fulfill roles typically associated with other professionals (e.g., mental health counsellor, psychologist, occupational therapist, nurse, and social worker). A lack of clarity in their role and that of the student services department head impacts their work especially as it relates to the responsive teaching and learning policy. Partial positions are also an issue. Some have a split position within a school and others are split across schools. Both situations take away from their guidance responsibilities.

To address some of these issues, they suggested reducing or eliminating psycho-educational assessments from their role, coordinating their work more closely with student services, avoiding, to the extent possible, deploying a guidance counsellor to more than one school, creating partnerships with other professionals such as social workers and mental health workers, assigning the school nurse to medical issues, vision and hearing screening, and mediation with family doctors, and using a different ratio for different levels of school and/or different geographical areas. They also suggested that re-structuring the junior high curriculum for those who struggle and having smaller classes for all would help behaviour management and decrease such issues.

## Teaching and Learning Assistants

The teaching and learning assistant allocation for the current school year is 186 and 86 (46%) completed the survey. Teaching and learning assistants from the Avalon, Western and Labrador regions only completed the survey and therefore the results are representative of these regions. However, since the roles and responsibilities are provincial, there is no reason to hypothesize that the results of Central would differ from those of other regions.

Two-thirds of the respondents work in schools with student enrolments ranging from 250 – 549 and one-quarter in schools with fewer than 250 students. Most teaching and learning assistants work in one school and, on average, with four teachers. Daily, 76% of respondents reported that they assist more than one teacher at the same grade level and 64% reported assisting more

than one teacher at different grade levels. Approximately 70% of respondents reported that there is more than one teaching learning assistant in their school.

Three-quarters of the respondents reported that daily, they reinforce skill development in literary, numeracy and social emotional learning, review previously taught concepts or skills, assist the teacher establish and maintain classroom routines, and reinforce instruction with a small group of students while the teacher provides whole class instruction.

On a weekly or biweekly basis, they reinforce instruction with an individual student or a small group of students while the classroom teacher works with the rest of the students. They assist with targeted interventions, preparing learning materials, collecting information on student learning to inform instruction and for evaluation purposes, reviewing evidence of student learning, supporting students who have additional challenges, the provision of accommodations, and discipline issues.

Teaching and learning assistants reported that they perform several activities that are outside their established roles and responsibilities. Approximately one-third reported teaching new skills and concepts, independently planning learning opportunities, and setting up groups for instruction. Two-thirds of the respondent said that they provide targeted interventions daily or at least once a week and almost 50% reported providing intensive interventions daily or at least once a week. Fifteen percent report completing duties normally assigned a student assistant daily or at least once a week.

In a focus group discussion, the teaching and learning assistants said that their role is not clearly defined, and their effectiveness depends on the teacher they are working with. Larger classes are more challenging due to the class size and the available physical space. They suggested that the allocation formula should consider different allocations for different size schools and a needs-based approach. The Committee also heard that they are sometimes asked to substitute for a classroom teacher but then their duties are not covered. This was never part of their role, and they are of the view that it should be discontinued.

The teaching and learning assistants feel that they are left on their own with little support. They are often excluded from teaching and learning team meetings and do not have access to the Review 360 system, which tracks student behavioural and disciplinary information. There is no one at school district or the Department providing oversight. They have received little professional learning. Further to that, the classroom teachers need professional learning on how to effectively use teaching and learning assistants.

## Reading Specialists

Reading specialists from all regions of NLES and from CSFP completed the survey and the numbers are representative of the regions. The reading specialists reported working in one school either full-time or half-time.

The most frequently reported task that reading specialists complete each day is working with students who have reading difficulties (85%) and reinforcing students' skill development in

literacy learning (80%). At least once a week, over 75% of the respondents reported that they collaborate with teachers to support reading instruction, provide focused instruction to individual students and to small groups of students in a learning space outside the classroom, work with all students to help develop reading skills and concepts, use Levelled Literacy Intervention or other authorized resources, provide reading support to students, provide intensive and targeted intervention in a learning space outside the classroom, instruct students during a literacy block, and support a small group of students during universal instruction.

At least once a week or at least twice a month, reading specialists engage in teaching and learning team meetings (80%), lead teaching and learning team meetings (71%), and provide information to instructional resource teachers about individual students who may require reading interventions. How often they attend program planning team meetings or service delivery team meetings varies, with some reporting at twice a month (29%) and others never (28%). A similar pattern exists for consulting with the district reading specialist, 52% meet at least twice a month and 42% at least twice a year. Two-thirds of respondents provide mentorship to teachers daily (31%) or at least once a week (36%).

They also perform several activities that are outside their established roles and responsibilities. Approximately 62% reported that they assume the duties for a classroom teacher with 10% saying this occurs daily or at least once a week. Over 40% of the respondents said that they cover classes for another teacher to attend a meeting at least twice a month (14%) or at least twice a year (28%). A smaller number of reading specialists report completing duties of a student assistant with 15% reported this occurs at least twice a month and (25%) at least twice a year.

The focus group for the reading specialists had low participation making it difficult to generalize the results. The attendees felt there was ambiguity in their role and that not all teachers understood how to use the reading specialists effectively. Issues similar to those identified by other groups were noted: weak foundational skills in literacy; implementation of responsive teaching and learning; number of meetings; available physical space; lack of clarity of their role, and need for stronger direction, support, and oversight at the district and department level; and professional learning for teachers and reading specialists in reading instruction incorporating the best parts of Levelled Literacy Intervention and the science of reading.

## Instructional Resource Teachers

There were 778.5 instructional resource teachers (IRTs) in the 2021-2022 school year and 445 (57.2%) completed the survey. IRTs from all regions of NLES and from CSFP participated. Almost all of them work in one school (97.5%) with approximately 80% in schools with K – 9 students. Most schools have more than one IRT, with 70% of the respondents working with a team of three to eight and an additional 15% with a team of nine or more. About one-third of them have a partial allocation and most of these are also a classroom teacher or a teacher librarian or have no other assignment.

On average, the IRTs teach thirty-two students with 49.3% teaching between one and fifteen students. Across the regions, the number of students taught varies from a low of 21 in Western

region to a high of 42 in the Avalon region. Some teachers distinguished the number of students they teach from the number of classes or individuals they support.

Their roles and responsibilities vary based on whether they work with K – 6 students or with those in Grades 7 – 12. For both groups, the most frequently reported daily task is the provision of intensive interventions outside the classroom as directed by the program planning team or the service delivery team. For those working in K – 6, they also provide intensive intervention as directed by the teaching and learning team. The delivery of intensive and targeted interventions for K – 6 students is usually provided outside the classroom, with approximately one-third of respondents stating they never do this inside the classroom. One-half of the respondents reported that they provide targeted intervention daily or at least once a week. In addition to the provision of intensive and targeted interventions, 62% of the respondents reported that, daily, they provide instruction for alternate courses/programs and alternate curriculum outside the classroom, and 50% also complete student assessment and evaluation for alternate courses/program and curriculum either daily or at least once a week.

On a weekly or biweekly basis, over one-half of the IRTs reported that they collaborate with classroom teachers regarding the learning environment for program delivery, students' individualized programming, implementing specific accommodations, and specific outcomes for alternate courses/programs delivered in the classroom. At least twice a year, IRTs review Individual Education Plans (IEPs) (80.6%) and collaborate in decisions regarding the development of alternate courses/programs below grade level and alternate curriculum (60.7%).

In a focus group discussion, the IRTs said the responsive teaching and learning policy provides greater access to services, but the services are spread thin. The expectations, roles and responsibilities have changed, and are not clearly defined. Additionally, they are often pulled out of class to do student assistant duties or deal with behavioural issues. Students who need academic support are left without assistance.

Other issues raised by the IRTs are: (1) Student need is greater than ever; (2) More kindergarten children are further behind developmentally; (3) More students in the class require IRT support; (4) Students receiving support with the responsive teaching and learning model in K – 6 may not qualify for support under the diagnostic model in junior and senior high; (5) The school districts' process to move a student to a modified program or to get alternate technology approved is lengthy; and (6) Partial positions are hard to fill especially in rural communities.

To improve the system, the IRTs suggested a needs-based allocation model with different caps for different needs developed in collaboration with them, the availability of professional learning specific to their role, clear descriptions of their roles and responsibilities, a transition plan for students moving from K – 6 to junior high, and a review of junior high curriculum to provide support and/or a program for students who are on track to do the general program in high school. They also think that student assistants need training related to trauma and behaviour and to be able to enter reports in Review 360.

## Student Success Teachers (Positive Action for Student Success)

The allocation for student success teachers in 2021-22 was 30 teaching units with 55 teachers working either full time or part time in that role. Forty-seven (85%) completed the survey. Student success teachers from all regions of NLESND participated and the survey numbers are representative of the regions. Most student success teachers reported working in one school (89.4%). The allocations vary with 48.9% working as a student success teacher full-time, 40.4% half-time and 10.6% working less than half-time.

Thirty-four schools offered credit rescue with, on average, 52 students participating and credit recovery with, on average, 24 students. Over the past four years, the number of schools offering credit rescue has increased from 10 to 34 with a corresponding increase in student participation. In the same period, the number of schools offering credit recovery also increased from 10 to 34; however, the average number of students did not experience growth.

The respondents stated that courses offered through credit recovery/rescue maintain the course integrity and that the program was effective at the school level and evaluated several indicators as a measure of this effectiveness. The results are in Table 7 below.

**Table 7:**  
**Responses for Change in Student Behaviours,**  
**Positive Action for Student Success (PASS) Program**

Behaviour	It's better (%)	It's the same (%)
Drop out rate	74.5	25.5
Graduation rate	72.3	27.7
Student achievement	91.5	8.5
Class attendance	74.5	21.3 (4.3% reported it's worse.)
Course take-up	63.8	36.2
Credit accumulation	74.5	25.5
Student retention	87.2	12.8

To determine these indicators, the respondents used the following accountability measures: reviewing student data, monitoring completion of tasks in learning plans, monitoring achievement, tracking attendance, reporting progress to parents, and planning alternate strategies for individual students.

Over 90% of the respondents agreed with the following statements regarding student behaviours: fewer students are falling through the cracks; students are motivated to complete a course through credit rescue or credit recovery; most students follow their learning plans; most students successfully complete their course(s); students are staying in school to get the courses needed for graduation; and there are fewer early leavers.

The most frequently reported daily tasks for student success teachers are to provide instruction to individual students or to a small group of students, and to advocate for the students they support. In addition, approximately 80% reported that either daily or at least once a week, they monitor student progress, track achievement data, and assess the needs of students deemed

to be at risk of not graduating or moving to the next grade level; and 55% reported that they implement programs/initiatives targeted at retaining or re-engaging students. Thirty-four percent of respondents reported that they spent too much time chasing after students to complete work.

At least twice a month, many student success teachers complete outreach activities such as engaging in transition planning, sharing information regarding available services and programs with parents and youth, making linkages between youth and service providers, building and enhancing community partnerships, and coordinating services available to youth and their parents.

In a focus group discussion, student success teachers explained how the program differs in senior high and junior high. For both, there is a focus on attendance. In senior high, the emphasis is credit recovery and rescue and for junior high students, it is the transition from Grade 9 to 10. The teachers feel that administrators and teachers have a poor understanding of the program. Students in the PASS program in junior high may move to senior high where there is no PASS program and consequently have no support. Different teachers may be assigned the role from year to year, creating inconsistencies and interrupting already formed relations with students. There are inconsistencies in what teachers accept as make-up work and alternate assessments. Often, they have no dedicated learning space.

They expressed concern that there is no oversight of the PASS program at the district or department level. The program can vary from school to school and an individual at the district or department level can provide leadership and a common direction. They also noted that partial positions are hard to fill.

The Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI) has developed content for a suite of courses designed for students in the PASS program to be used asynchronously; however, the students are challenged to access the material with the current delivery interface. Other identified issues are: restrictive graduation requirements, limited indicators used to measure student success, and the junior high program.

## Student Assistants

The Department of Education database indicates that there were 737 student assistants in 2021-2022 and 381 (51.7%) completed the survey. Most work in one school with 53.8% working in a primary/elementary school, 21.3% working in a K – 12 school and 24% in an intermediate or senior high school. Student assistants in the Avalon region work with five students on average compared to four students in other regions of NLES and two students in CSFP. This number varies from one student to as many as twenty.

Daily, the student assistants provide support to students during recess and lunch breaks, play times and other unstructured activities. Most (93.4%) accompany the same student(s) for part of the day with 76.6% accompanying the same student(s) for the entire day. Their primary tasks each day include providing support for students with behavioural needs that may threaten the safety of themselves or others. Also daily, they help students with basic personal hygiene and toileting needs and provide support to students with limited communication needs.

Approximately two-thirds of the respondents reported that they use assistive technology as well as alternative and/or augmentative communication tools to assist students with school-related activities, provide support for students who have physical accessibility needs including lifting and moving objects as required. The student assistants also reported that they assist teachers with daily classroom routines and as a situation arises, and 50% reported that they accompany students who use alternate transportation to and from school. Less than one-quarter of the respondents said that they help students with medications or special medical procedures/equipment. Approximately 10% reported supporting students who use ASL and a few reported that they provide support to students who use Braille. Almost one-half of the respondents reported keeping records of student progress at least once a week.

The student assistants reported that they receive little professional learning with 11.3% indicating they participate in district provided professional learning and 21% said they participate in their own self-directed professional learning.

The Committee met with one student assistant who offered similar comments to those provided in the survey.

## Chapter 5

# Survey and Consultation Findings

To obtain different perspectives on class size and composition in schools in Newfoundland and Labrador, the Committee administered surveys and held public consultations for students, teachers, school administrators and parents/public. The surveys contained statements for which respondents indicated agreement or disagreement, as well as open-ended questions. The consultations focused on issues related to class size and composition as well as possible solutions. Approximately three-quarters of the survey respondents answered at least one open-ended question with the responses ranging from a couple of words to paragraphs, referencing both class size and composition.

### Teachers

Approximately one-quarter of teachers responded to the survey, with 35.9% in K-6, and 20% in each of 7-9 and 10-12, representing all regions in proportion to the number of teachers. Two-thirds of the respondents were classroom teachers, approximately 17% were instructional resource teachers, and the remaining 16% included specialists, Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI) teachers, and substitutes.

Teachers at all grade levels indicated that their class sizes affect teaching and learning (90+%) and 67% feel that their class sizes are not conducive to student learning. Teachers are confident in their knowledge of curriculum (95%) and in their abilities to explain it in different ways so that most/all students understand (90%). There was, however, some concern at the K-9 levels in teaching the curriculum in the prescribed time (67%) and less than 50% of teachers are confident that they are meeting the needs of advanced students. Teachers reported that they engage students in group work when appropriate (91-97%); and that they and their students use various technologies in teaching and learning (80+%). Many K-6 teachers (65%) feel they have enough time in their classes to use a variety of activities and to provide help to students during class time, as compared to 50% for intermediate and high school. More than one-half of all teachers are available during the day or after school to help their students; however, only 30% of K-9 teachers indicated that they could give students the extra help when they need it.

A large majority of teachers (90%) believe that students enjoy their classes, are interested in things that are done in class (72-92% - noticeably higher in K-6) and feel comfortable asking questions in class (93%). There is also a strong sense that teachers provide a safe learning environment for their students, effectively manage disruptive classes (82+%), provide support to upset students (76%), and assist students who are being bullied (62-75%, highest in K-6). There are times when teachers require help from other staff members when a student is disruptive (64-84%, highest in K-6).

Teachers were asked to comment on the composition of their classes. Teachers in K-6 classes reported that, on average, there are 6-7 students (4 for K) in their classes who require

instructional resource teacher (IRT) support and another three who need student assistant support in single-grade classes. For perspective, the average class size of respondents was 17 in K, and 20-23 in Grades 1-6. Multi-grade classes have a lower average number of students (16), but the need for IRT (4 students) and student assistants (1 student) support is proportional to that of single-grade classes.

In Grades 7-9, in single grade classes, there are on average 5-7 students who require IRT support. This number is lower in music and physical education classes (2-3 students). Although the number of students who require IRT support in Grades 7-9 is comparable to those in Grades K-6, there are fewer students who require student assistant support. Exceptions are home economics and visual art. These teachers indicated that 3-4 students in their classes require student assistant support. For multi-grade classes, the need for IRT support is slightly lower at around 3-5 students. Student assistant support is consistent at 1-2 students.

The need for IRT support in high school courses varies widely depending on both the subject area and the course type (i.e., general, academic, advanced). The greatest needs for resources are in English, Math, and Social Studies – around five students in academic courses and twelve in general courses. General science courses also have a high need with about nine students who require IRT support. For most other courses, the need for support is three students or fewer. There is relatively less need for student assistant support in high school classes with none for many courses, but up to three students for Art, Entrepreneurship, English, and Social Studies. Teachers at all grade levels indicated that IRT support is not always available (74-80%); K-9 teachers reported that student assistant support was not always available (70%); and K-6 teachers responded that teaching and learning assistants are not available to assist students (66%). Additionally, 30-50% of teachers indicated that they have students who require EAL/ESL support (higher in higher grades).

Most teachers (88%) feel that they keep up with new ideas and teaching strategies but are dissatisfied with the quality of professional learning in which they have participated (66-69%). Approximately 40% of teachers agreed that the district provided them clear direction: 35.7-40.1% on learning priorities, with Grades 7-9 teachers having the lowest percentage of agreement and those in K-6 the highest; 32-42.5% on instruction, with K-6 teachers having the highest percentage; and 30.8-38.5% on student assessment with, again, K-6 teachers expressing the most agreement.

Themes emerging from the teachers' responses to the open-ended questions and the consultations are class composition, class size, and the need for more resources in the classroom. More respondents expressed concern about class needs (58.0%) than class size (42.1%). Teachers reported that they struggle to meet the wide range of needs in their classroom and to provide support to students struggling with the material and those who would benefit from enrichment activities. This is made more difficult with the number of disruptive and/or special needs students who also need support.

Many teachers stated that the allocation of resources and class size caps cannot be based on numbers alone but must reflect student needs. For example, a class of 30 students with similar needs may need fewer resources as compared to a class of 15 students with diverse needs.

Many stated there was not enough support in their classrooms with approximately 40% calling for more instructional resource teachers and 20% for more student assistants. Few teachers identified another teacher, teaching and learning assistant, or reading specialist as possible sources of support. What is also clear from the teachers who commented is their level of frustration. Some teachers described the challenges of trying to balance large classes, disruptive students, and other issues while trying to cover the curriculum. Most teachers reported that the hard cap maximum is too large and that the hard cap, rather than the lower soft cap, is used frequently in some schools. Teachers indicated that large class sizes influence instruction and learning as follows: (1) The number of students in a science laboratory course jeopardizes lab safety; (2) Fewer students ask questions when class sizes are large; (3) Teachers have less time to circulate around the classroom to help those in need; (4) Students with a learning disability who are capable of achieving the outcomes are not getting the necessary supports due to the demands on the IRTs for higher needs students; and (5) The ability to cover the curriculum is reduced, especially in schools with semesterization.

One teacher said, “building authentic relationships with students, which is at the core of our work, is very difficult with high class sizes.” Another teacher noted that “with big class sizes, [it’s hard to] give each student a turn...and [this] leaves students out.” Other teachers illustrated how the challenges of large class sizes are compounded by class composition.

In small schools, the pressure is with the number of courses and grades for which a teacher is responsible. The availability of substitutes for teachers and student assistants is more pronounced in rural areas. Due to distance and accessibility, district office supports are reduced.

Classroom composition is a major concern in most schools. Teachers describe many behavioural problems, to the point that managing student behaviour is “taking over” as a priority, making it more difficult to address instructional and learning concerns. The absence of one resource such as a student assistant on a particular day creates a cascading effect in that the work of other professionals must be reassigned to address the immediate need. Teachers describe an increase in student anxiety and learning challenges, especially during COVID. In any class, there may be students who cannot read, students with exceptionalities (e.g., a learning disability or autism), students with behavioural issues, or students who do not speak English. Larger classes also have more discipline issues, which impacts learning for the whole class.

Grades 7-12 teachers cited large class sizes in both French immersion and the English stream, often noting the physical size of the room as too small for such a group. Many expressed concerns about reaching all students, especially those who are shy and not speaking up. Other concerns related to French immersion include challenges with providing instruction in a second language, lack of additional support (e.g., IRT or student assistant support), and a larger cap size than English.

A number of teachers said they find it difficult to separate class-size from the class composition issue. One teacher reports class size of 32 with “runners” and no student assistant support. Another said: “I’ve had a class of 30 with 15 students requiring student services [but] ‘it feels like’ IRT allocation has gone down in intermediate.” A science teacher reported having 14 students

in one class who require special services: “In a 14-day cycle I get one class of support. Behavioural issues in the class are unbearable (even though) I am very organized and constantly have work and activities for students.... In one period I had to show five students everything step-by-step, while there were others with their hands up as well.... Some students had their hands up for a long time and finally gave up and started acting out.”

Teachers reported that large class sizes at the high school and intermediate levels reduce teacher effectiveness and that additional supports are needed. Teachers in small schools reported that multi-course classes in senior high are very difficult for teacher preparation and for reaching all the students.

Other issues raised in the consultation sessions are partial positions, the loss of specialists (e.g., music) in larger schools; and the difficulty in providing music and other non-core courses in small schools.

## Administrators

One hundred thirty-three administrators completed the survey, with roughly equal representation at each grade level (primary/elementary, intermediate and high school). The distribution of the responses indicates that all regions of NLES and CSFP were represented as well as schools with English only classes and French immersion classes.

Administrators reported various class size data for single stream and multi-grade classes that mirror data obtained from the Department of Education. Of the 65 schools that reported Grades 10-12 courses, 74% offer courses through CDLI. Analysis of the reported allocations of non-classroom teachers shows the percentage of schools that have these various positions as follows: music – at least 50% of schools; physical education – over 70% of schools; core French – 40-53%; teacher librarian – 40-47%; IRTs – 92-96% of schools (lowest number in 10-12); reading specialists – 79% (K-6 only); and TLAs – 70% (K-6 only).

Administrators at all grade levels are divided on whether class sizes are conducive to learning (roughly 48% agree, 52% disagree). They are confident that teachers are highly competent in their instructional practice (92% +); however, they reported issues with completing curriculum in the prescribed time – 60% in K-6, 50% in 7-9, and 40% in 10-12. They also reported (94%) that parents are generally supportive of their school.

Approximately 50% of the administrators indicated that they had input in hiring teachers and other personnel. However, 63-71% (higher in K-6) felt that the hiring process does not allow them to build the staff that they need to maximize student learning. A majority (92%+) reported that they have difficulty finding qualified substitute teachers. In scheduling classes, administrators (80%) can assign teachers based on their academic credentials but there appears to be little flexibility for scheduling collaboration or mentoring opportunities with approximately 25% of principals reporting that they can build in common time to allow teachers with success and experience in a particular topic to coach and mentor others. Most (85-89%) are comfortable appraising teacher performance and offering feedback with 71-82% also reporting that they work directly with teachers to improve instruction. A collaborative approach to teacher appraisals with

their Director of Schools is a common practice (68%). Fewer administrators (54-61% -- lowest in 7-12) meet one-on-one with teachers to review professional growth plans. Other issues take their time (e.g., budget (75-82%) and parent concerns (83-86%)), with 72-78% of the view that expectations for paperwork, proposals, and reports are unreasonable.

From the administrators' perspective, student behaviour is well managed with 90% reporting that students follow the rules. When behavioural issues arise, 75-80% of administrators indicate they are available to help staff members. The incidences of students sent to the office is larger in Grades 7-9 than in either Grades K-6 or 10-12. Almost all (90-95%) schools have an active safe and inclusive school policy and 80-86% have procedures to address respectful workplace issues.

Administrators are of the view that their school district provides support and assistance (75-85%) and clear direction on learning priorities (71-81%). There was less agreement that the district provides clear direction on instruction (56-68% -- lowest in 7-9) and student assessment (58-66% -- lowest in 7-9).

Almost three-quarters of the administrators in Grades 10-12 feel professionally satisfied. This number is lower in Grades 7-9 (59%) and K-6 (55%). Many administrators pursue professional learning opportunities (87-89%); however, a little more than half of them in K-9 felt satisfied with these professional learning opportunities and the quality of professional learning available. For those in Grades 10 – 12, the level of dissatisfaction was higher (67%). Furthermore, only 52-57% of administrators agreed that teachers have multiple professional learning opportunities regarding instructional and assessment practices.

Approximately 75% of the administrators responded to the open-ended questions with 50% saying that large class sizes and the diversity of student needs were big issues in their schools. These administrators felt that too many students in classes make it difficult for teachers to meet everyone's learning needs and it is more complicated when disruptive, challenging, or special needs students are included in the classroom. Dealing with disruptive students takes time away from the rest of the class. The needs of students must be considered when determining class sizes or allocating resources. They also said that class composition needs to be a priority when determining teacher allocations. With no streaming in the intermediate grades, classes have huge variances in learning ability, and then student behaviours and learning needs add to the complexity. Classes with many diverse needs present more challenges than large classes with few accommodations.

In the consultation sessions, school administrators in larger schools identified class size as a concern. A primary school administrator reported Grade 2 classes of 26–27, and said teachers were not able to implement responsive teaching and learning properly. A Grade 10-12 school principal reported 15 classes with 35+ students and 18 classes with 30-34. Several administrators mentioned problems in bringing large numbers of students to a science lab. Reducing classes for safety reasons (e.g., skilled trades) or academic reasons (e.g., basic courses where students need additional help) increases class size in other courses.

A principal of a large junior high school reported that this year a minimum of 32 was enforced in late French immersion and felt this “doesn’t make sense” for language acquisition. English classes were 30–32. Several administrators saw the current hard cap of 33 for intermediate as “way too high.”

Administrators at very small schools indicated that class size was less of an issue than the number of grades and subjects. One full time teaching principal with 5 students (Grades 1-6) reported teaching 40 courses and doing administrative work after school. A principal/sole-charge teacher in a Grades 3-12 school with 6 students reports teaching full-time (35 courses) with no breaks, becoming familiar with numerous curriculum guides, helping CDLI students with technical issues, and answering the telephone (except for a few hours in the morning when there is secretarial support). An administrator in a K-12 school of 55 students (7 with pervasive needs) reported that teachers could be teaching up to 10 courses: “Preparation time is immense.”

Despite the class-size issue, most principals saw class composition as an even greater challenge in schools. Principals described cohorts of students with exceptionalities, refugees with education and language gaps, and emotional regulation issues. In kindergarten classes, a lot of unknown needs are surfacing. The students are coming in “with no experience leaving their homes, no socialization, major social anxiety, separation anxiety, no social skills.” Physical aggression was reported as more and more common.

Some principals expressed the desire for guidance counsellors to be able to connect with social workers and medical specialists for critical information to help students, while others expressed the need for social workers in schools. They described mental health and behavioural challenges as beyond the current capacity of schools. Many schools are operating in a reactive mode. This is interfering with the school’s mission to address learning challenges. Principals expressed frustration that they are unable to provide the instructional leadership to which they are committed because of the daily demands and their intensity. Current supports (e.g., student assistants, IRTs, and guidance counsellors) are insufficient to allow schools to regain a proactive mode. PASS teachers were endorsed as having a positive impact at the high school and intermediate levels. Teaching and learning assistants, while not mentioned frequently, were described as positive supports.

In addition to the level of resourcing, principals expressed concerns about the overall recruitment and management of resources, especially student assistants. They reported frequent absenteeism, lateness in hiring and placing, and their ability to transfer to other positions during the school year. The administrators felt that these transfers impact the most vulnerable students as there is time required to orient the new student assistant. It is also difficult to find replacements for student assistants or to get student assistant substitutes.

The allocation of partial teaching positions was also seen as problematic. Often there were difficulties in filling these positions, especially in more rural areas. Additionally, there is a general challenge in filling positions in some rural areas, with some unfilled for weeks and a shortage of substitute teachers.

Some principals also noted a delay in addressing emerging needs. Sometimes classes may be split late in the year or there may be a lag between the identification of additional student assistant need and the actual allocation of the resource. A few administrators suggested that schools be given a budget to respond to their school's individual needs, with more autonomy to assign resources and with accountability for results.

Principals of small schools describe what they felt to be an overloaded curriculum which is impractical for the demands of teaching in small schools. Several principals expressed the need to review the curriculum to determine essential learnings with an appropriate and reasonable number of outcomes and expectations. To assist small schools, one suggestion was to have CDLI available to junior high students.

School administrators indicated that they themselves needed more time to address the many issues and to provide the instructional leadership to which they were committed.

## Parents

Parent surveys were completed by 1,238 parents, mostly from those with children in K – 6. The results for class size and composition are presented in the table below:

**Table 8:**  
**Parent Survey Results Percentages**

Comments	10 – 12	7 – 9	4 – 6	K – 3
Satisfied with standard of education	43%	50%	55%	64%
Enjoys school	54%	57%	72%	83%
Class sizes too large	82%	76%	72%	63%
Teacher clarifies material during instruction	58%	64%	68%	74%
Use of technology to help with learning	68%	76%	78%	73%
Comfortable asking questions	61%	56%	65%	69%
Teachers show how to improve work	60%	60%	68%	71%
Feel that students follow the rules	40%	39%	39%	42%
Difficult to get help	64%	58%	56%	44%
Disruptive students	88%	89%	91%	85%

As shown in Table 8, parents' level of satisfaction with their school decreases as their children move from primary grades to high school, and there is a large drop-off in enjoyment of school (15%) from elementary to intermediate. Most feel that the classes are too large. However, there seems to be a level of satisfaction with the teachers' classroom practices such as clarifying class materials and use of technology. Likewise, over half the parents (56 – 69%) feel that their children are comfortable asking questions in class and that the teachers help them to improve (60 – 71%).

In the open-ended questions on the survey, parents said their child's class was too big and had too many needs, making it difficult for their child to succeed. Parents often felt that their child's classroom contained such a wide variety of students, it is practically impossible for a teacher to meet their diverse needs. This, combined with the fact that many teachers spend a great deal of

time during the day dealing with disruptive students, leaves little time for such things as providing help to individual students, ensuring quiet and shy students are not overlooked, and/or providing enrichment activities for students looking for something more challenging. They stressed the importance of not exceeding these maximum class sizes and often referenced the impact of class composition when talking about class size.

A common theme among parents was class size in the primary grades. French immersion parents reported small classes in kindergarten that doubled in primary. One parent described the experience for her Grade 1 child in a class of 26 students “rarely gets to speak to the teacher during the day” and “feels lost, overwhelmed, distraught.” Another parent described her daughter in Grade 1, who is having difficulties but has not been assessed yet. Nor can her daughter get any additional support in the classroom because there are 27 students in the class and there is never enough time with needy students in Grade 1. There is little support for students other than those with the highest needs. Another reflected on the distribution of resources, indicating that a school 8 km away has 5 students in Grade 3 while her school has 26.

Some parents felt that the Department of Education should examine the curriculum, especially as it relates to reading. They propose a more structured approach based on the science of reading.

## Students

One hundred eighty-five students in Grades 4-12 completed a survey. Approximately 70% of students in elementary and high school say there is just the right number of students either sometimes or all the time; the number for intermediate is lower at 63%. Most students (~90%) reported that the teacher answers questions while teaching and asks questions to make sure students understand, gives extra help when needed, and in Grades 4 – 9 classrooms, explains the material in a different way when students have problems with understanding. Only 62% of high school students said this was a practice in their classrooms. Students (90+%) say their teachers explain what they have to do and tell them how they can improve their work. Many students in Grades 7 – 12 (70%) also said their teachers were available after school to give extra help. Students in all grades say that the use of technology is part of their learning.

Almost all students reported that there are some students who interrupt their classes either all the time or sometimes. Students’ enjoyment of school diminishes as they advance through their schooling with 20% of elementary students saying they hardly ever enjoy school, 24% of intermediate students, and 33% of high school students. Correspondingly, more students feel left out or made fun of either all the time or sometimes as they move from elementary to intermediate and on to high school.

Three focus groups were held with Grades 7 – 12 students, representing very small K – 12 schools to very large junior and senior high schools. On the issue of class size, students in multi-grade classes in small schools presented different concerns than those in larger schools. Some reported difficulties with the number of grades in a classroom (as opposed to the total class size). One student described Grades 10-12 Math (8 students total) in the same room and felt that

students needed to be very independent and “if you don’t understand, you need to wait until the teacher is finished teaching other grades.”

The students in small schools prefer this arrangement to CDLI, where they found it more difficult to concentrate, especially in more difficult courses. Another student in a small school had single grades throughout (10 in Grade 10, 14 in Grade 11, 16 in Grade 12) and found it easy to get help.

Some students reported class sizes of approximately 25, and generally did not see this as a concern. In one single stream K-12 school, a Grade 9 and a Grade 10 student said they were satisfied with all aspects of their education, and received lots of help from teachers, administrators, and specialty personnel.

Some students in larger junior high and high schools reported that large class sizes distracted from their learning. One Grade 9 student said that classes were “around 30” and “quite loud”; and she had to wait a long time to get questions answered. A high school student reported classes of 30+ in core subjects such as math and science. In this environment, said the student, the teachers can only answer general short questions from the whole class, students can’t get one-on-one time with the teacher, and the teacher doesn’t get to “know our learning styles.” A Grade 12 student in another high school reported that all his classes this year were 30+ and some 35+, with one class of 39 (French). Except for the class of 39, this student felt that the numbers did not affect his learning: “I’m ok with 30-35.”

Some students in two of the three focus groups saw class composition as affecting learning. One Grade 7 student said that sometimes people act out and “it affects my learning... teachers pull them out of class for a minute, but it doesn’t really make a difference. They keep doing it.” A Grade 9 student in classes of “about 30” reported “a lot of yelling and jumping around in my class.” In some of these instances there did not appear to be additional support in the classroom (other than sending students to the principal). In other instances, student assistants or IRTs might be assigned to individual students, but these students might not be the ones causing disruption.

In one of the focus groups, high school students were asked, having seen both sides of the picture, whether the intermediate or the high school was most in need of further support. These students said that they had a more difficult time in the intermediate because of disruption and a greater diversity of students in the same class. In contrast, they felt the high school separation into different course routes alleviated some of these class composition concerns.

In one large high school, reportedly with two guidance counselors, a student reported a lot of mental health issues not being dealt with because so many students need to be seen each day. A Grade 9 student in an intermediate school said that the guidance counselor has a lot of meetings, and it is “hard to reach them if you have mental health issues. So you end up having worse days. Sometimes you don’t get to see somebody for a week or so - that’s really hard on some people.” The Committee noted as well the absence or limited availability of guidance counselor services in small schools.

Students in small schools were appreciative of the efforts made by school administrators and teachers. They liked their schools and valued the small family environment. Nevertheless, some students also recognized the challenges of getting an education in a very small school. One student said that she would like the opportunity to be in a larger setting with more students to become more confident in her speaking and social interaction prior to post-secondary.

## Summary

Overall, similar themes are present in all survey responses. Class sizes are large and should be reduced if teachers are to fulfill their role effectively. In addition, class composition must be considered when determining class size caps and allocating positions. More resources are needed to meet the diverse needs in the classroom.

Public consultations painted a complex picture of the current school system in NL. For example, some parents reported an excellent experience for one of their children, and serious concerns about the other. Student viewpoints ranged from professing to be very satisfied in their school to experiences of bullying, receiving limited attention in large classes, and limited access to guidance support.

In a few instances, the results from public consultation sessions appeared to be at odds with survey results. For example, 82% of teachers said they could effectively manage disruptive classes, and 90% of school administrators indicated that students in their school followed the rules. However, teachers and administrators in consultation sessions expressed concern about student behaviour and the capacity of schools to manage the behaviour.

Like all public consultations, the composition of the groups themselves influence the main themes expressed. For the groups consulted, some common themes that emerged are:

- All groups support a reduction in class size. This advocacy was most consistent in K-3 based on the importance of a learning foundation in the early grades, and an increase in multiple needs of children entering the system.
- Class composition was a major concern. There was much discussion about student anxiety and mental health and an increase in behavioural issues, and how it impacts negatively on classroom instruction. Participants expressed the need for more resources.
- Concerns were also expressed about the overall recruitment and management of resources.
- Parents, teachers, and some principals questioned the hard class size caps, the different hard class size caps for French immersion, and a lack of resource support for French immersion.
- Some participants, especially from small schools, described the curriculum as overcrowded and suggested a review of the curriculum to identify essential learnings. Additionally, several groups identified a review of the intermediate program as a priority.

## Chapter 6

# The Management of Resources

Providing additional resources to reduce class size or to provide support is by itself insufficient to foster changes in student success. The impact of human resources is largely determined by how the system is organized, how roles are defined, and how the various resources fit together to produce results. Poorly organized systems do not make the best use of human resources. In contrast, other systems may acquire an “added value” by the cohesiveness, communication, and shared commitment within the system.

Teacher salaries comprise up to 80% of the education budget, the largest single expenditure in education. Also, quality teachers are the single greatest determinant of student success. In the past, there has been a great deal of attention to providing resources to the system, but less focus on determining how these resources should be managed and how we evaluate the impact of the current or added resources.

The management of human resources includes how teachers are educated, certified, hired, assigned, and evaluated in schools. It encompasses, as well, the support that they receive in school, including program resources for teaching and learning. It includes how human resource problems are addressed in the system - problems such as recruiting for hard-to-fill positions or ensuring that we are competitive with other provinces in attracting expert teachers, including our own graduates.

These considerations involve the development and interpretation of legislation, the negotiation and interpretation of collective agreements, and overall leadership, insight, and vision in the management of human resources in our school system.

### Timeliness of Allocations

Teacher allocations in Newfoundland and Labrador have traditionally been tied to the provincial budget. This has created challenges for some time, exacerbated now by teacher shortages and hard-to-fill positions. This late allocation date “creates a compressed timeframe for the district to complete the redundancies and reassignment process” (District Submission, p.3) before the May 7th deadline, after which vacant positions are identified and advertised. As a result, other provinces/jurisdictions organized in more effective ways can recruit and hire teachers from this province and others before our province can even begin recruitment. Recruitment in Newfoundland and Labrador can continue into late summer, sometimes leaving teachers and communities in a state of uncertainty close to school opening.

This issue is not new. The last review of teacher allocations (Government of NL, 2007) recommended that the Provincial Government make three-year resource commitments to school districts:

For the purpose of enabling more comprehensive human resource development planning, retirement/replacement transitioning, and wellness planning the Commission recommends that...

- #3. the Provincial Government make three-year planning commitments to each district, subject to provincial budget decisions and financial policy.

School performance and demographic data would also be considered in this planning. Since the bulk of this data already exists, five-year data planning modules could be made accessible to assist in the process. (p 76)

In their submissions to the teacher allocation review committee, both the NLES defence and NLTA urge changes in the current timelines so that school districts know their human resource allocations much earlier.

The complexity of teacher reassignment, transfer, and recruitment may not be clearly understood at all levels. It cannot be done piecemeal. School districts must have the complete picture of available allocations before they can determine the number of teachers for each school. Only then can it be determined if school staff must be reduced (causing reassignment out) or increased (causing reassignment in, or a new vacancy). Precision matters. The district cannot proceed with the process with only a general notion of the number and fractions of teaching units available to assign to a school.

The magnitude of this process may also be poorly understood. NLES defence reports that it engages in approximately 2,000 competitions for educators each year. This occurs in a very restricted time frame and too late to compete with other provinces in attracting potentially promising candidates from Memorial University and throughout the country.

This appears to the Committee to be a mismanagement of the most costly and important item in the education budget – teachers.

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

- 1. Necessary timeline revisions occur so that information about resource allocations can be provided to school districts no later than December of the school year prior to that for which the allocations apply.**

## Staff Deployment and Program Excellence

The Committee has noted some consistency in teacher allocation and class size; there are also some notable inconsistencies. For example, two high schools with nearly identical numbers of students and courses, and with the same number of teachers, have average class sizes of 26 and 31.5. This has caused the Committee to consider some of the variables that might possibly explain this difference – school cycle (e.g., 5-day, 7-day), school administrator time, scheduling, teacher preparation time, or other factors.

Principals are the instructional leaders in a school. How they organize the school to provide the most appropriate and most challenging program in an optimal learning environment for students is possibly the most important decision they will make. Staff deployment and school organization to deliver the program reveal most clearly the school priorities and expectations for students. Currently, the school districts provide the deployment numbers to the schools and based on the units deployed to the schools, the principals develop their school programs.

To give school principals the opportunity to have input into the district deployment to their school, the Committee recommends standardizing the input of information and giving transparency to the staff deployment process whereby critical information can be provided to the districts. Such information would include details such as the following: program offerings, number of students at each grade level, the proposed number of groups and any multi-age grouping, the number of students with special needs, staff assignment according to appropriate qualifications, percentage of preparation time for staff, and the total amount of administration time assigned. Access to this information is critical so that the districts can make fair and equitable deployments to schools and show accountability for staff deployment.

### **School Cycle for Program Delivery**

The cycle chosen to timetable the school is an important factor in the range and quality of the program offered. Some cycles may be more efficient than others; some cycles may be more advantageous to student learning.

Given that students and teachers have developed a level of expertise in technology such that courses may be delivered in remote settings, it may be timely to explore the possibility of having all schools adopt the same cycle. This would be done with a view to advantages such as having students in smaller schools access the program in larger schools and offering a program more efficiently. For example, rather than offering an advanced course at the high school level in multiple schools, one or several schools may be designated to offer it. Students from anywhere in the province could then select it if they wished to do so.

The Committee acknowledges that the school cycle is tied into the beginning and end of the school day, the times for recess and lunch, and student bussing. This varies from school to school and from community to community; however, the advantages of rationalizing the system, where possible, is worth exploring.

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

- 2. School districts develop a program planning process that provides:**
  - a. data on course offerings, teacher assignment, and class size;**
  - b. transparent communication between the school and the school district;**
  - c. consistency among similar schools in teacher planning time, school administrator time, and other variables that affect class size; and**
  - d. accountability for staff deployment and assignment.**
- 3. The Department of Education, in conjunction with the school districts, examine:**
  - a. the most advantageous and efficient cycle for delivery of programs;**
  - b. the feasibility of a common cycle in all or most schools in the province; and**

- c. the school schedule and cycle most suitable for effective teacher deployment in schools, including high schools with semesterization.

## Teacher Hiring

In 2019, the following addition was made to Article 6.11(a) of the Collective Agreement:

When filling permanent positions only, if more than one such teacher makes a request for the same permanent teaching position, all of whom are assessed as competent, suitable and qualified, preference shall be given to the teacher with the greatest seniority as defined in Clause 9.01(a).

The Committee heard several groups refer to this change of hiring and transferring teachers by seniority. Some called it “the new approach to hiring.” NLES defence notes, “recently the staffing of schools has become more complex due [to] the addition of seniority for teachers in the hiring process” (p.3). Prior to this change in the collective agreement, NLES and NLTA were already informing new teachers graduating from MUN that getting hired by the school district required a series of steps determined largely by seniority.

These changes in the hiring process in NL occur at the same time as many jurisdictions continue to hire based mainly on merit, and other jurisdictions (e.g., Ontario) have replaced seniority hiring with merit-driven approaches.

Hiring by seniority presents serious challenges to the appropriate management of the system, and to the professional status of teachers as outlined below:

1. It can create some questionable fits between the teacher hired and the needs of the school/district.
2. Schools may have more challenges in carefully building an expert and cohesive staff suitable to the values and priorities of the school. School principals have reported that they felt “thrown under the bus” by the acceptance of seniority as the core principle of hiring. Furthermore, 63-71% (highest in K-6) of school administrators felt that the hiring process does not allow them to build the staff they need to maximize student learning.
3. Exemplary teachers wishing to compete for new positions must “bide their time” until they have the required number of years. This is discouraging for those teachers who excel, and it removes some of the incentive for improvement among those who do not excel, since they will proceed to desired positions anyway in the course of time.
4. Newly graduated teachers in whom the province has made a considerable investment are placed in a “holding pattern” along the steps to being hired. Many of the graduates, possibly some of our most promising candidates, move on to other provinces/countries.

The change to a seniority driven hiring approach was made without clear communication to the parents/guardians and the public. Communication from the school district and the NLTA referred to “stream-lining the hiring process” and similar phrases. Parents may be unaware that new teachers for their school are hired based on seniority rather than through a careful process to choose the best teacher for the students.

Dr. Noel Hurley, Professor at the Faculty of Education, Memorial University, expressed concern about the changes. Butler (2019) quotes Hurley as follows:

The danger is that you can now no longer hire somebody based on them being the most qualified and most excellent person for this position. And it encourages people to just punch the clock, if you like.... I hear a lot from teachers, and it's best to say that there's not much happiness either with principals or with teachers with this new collective agreement clause....Principals have stated that it ties their hands completely. They're really upset about it. (Hurley, as quoted in Butler, 2019, n.p.)

### **The Collective Agreement**

The Committee identified three areas in which the collective agreement, or the current interpretation of it, is detrimental to providing children with the most qualified and suitable teacher to support their learning. These areas relate to teacher redundancy/layoffs (Articles 9.03 & 9.04), teacher transfers (Article 6.03 & 6.11a) and hiring new teachers (Articles 6.03 & 6.11b).

### **Teacher Layoff**

Teacher layoff is addressed in the following articles:

9.02 Where it is determined by the School Board that a teaching position within a school has become redundant, the senior teachers of that school shall be reassigned to the remaining positions within the school which they are capable of fulfilling.

9.04 a. A teacher, who is not reassigned in accordance with Clause 9.02, shall have priority, based upon seniority, subject to capability to perform the job function required, to vacant teaching positions and teaching positions held by junior teachers, in the following order of priority:

- (i) within the community;
- (ii) within the nearest community, within the school district, where such a position exists.

According to the articles above, seniority will apply, subject to capability, in determining who will be kept in a school when there is a redundancy. Seniority will also apply, subject to capability, in determining which of the redundant teachers in the district will be placed in other schools.

“Capability” is currently interpreted as a lower bar than “competence, suitability, and qualifications” (Article 6.03). A common interpretation has been that if you have taught a course in a subject area before, then you are “capable”. Given the nature of teaching in NL, many teachers must teach outside their subject area from time to time. If “capability” is defined in this way, then many teachers are deemed “capable” of teaching in areas for which they have fewer qualifications than other teachers who may be junior to them. The school district works diligently to avoid the most extreme examples; however, considerable compromises in retaining the most qualified and suitable teachers occur at the layoff stage. With initial layoffs, followed by subsequent bumping and reassignment, the NLES defence estimates that Articles 9.02 and 9.04a are utilized 150-175 times in any given school year, each time assigning teachers according to capability rather than determining the most competent, suitable, and qualified teachers.

Students learn best from teachers who are the most competent, qualified, and suitable. Research by Kraft (2015) provides support for this position. In the United States, a number of state governments passed legislation to ensure that teachers remaining in the system during layoff scenarios do so based on merit. Kraft's study found that students were more successful on a number of achievement indicators in schools where teachers were retained on merit rather than seniority.

### **Teacher Hiring (Transfers)**

The Committee submits that misinterpretations regarding seniority, along with the recent change in the collective agreement, has led to compromises in teacher hiring that undermine the province's ability to select the most effective teacher for each classroom.

The relevant collective agreement articles are presented below, with the most recent change in italics:

- 6.03 (a) The basic criteria for the selection of teachers shall be competence, suitability and qualifications as assessed by the School Board.
- 6.11 In filling vacant teaching positions in accordance with Clause 6.03(a), the Board shall:
  - (a) make reasonable effort to accommodate requests from teachers already employed with the Board in a continuing contract. *When filling permanent positions only, if more than one such teacher makes a request for the same permanent teaching position, all of whom are assessed as competent, suitable and qualified, preference shall be given to the teacher with the greatest seniority as defined in Clause 9.01(a).*
  - (b) subject to Clause 6.11(a), give consideration to applications from teachers who have served in replacement and/or substitute teaching positions with the Board before applications from teachers with no previous experience with the Board.

Article 6.03(a) provides the guiding framework for teacher hiring in NL, ensuring hiring by merit rather than seniority or other factors. While competence may be enhanced by experience, it is noteworthy that the word experience is not mentioned in 6.03(a). It is also clear that 6.03(a) envisions assessing competence, suitability, and qualifications in a comparative rather than absolute manner. The Board assesses that one candidate is more competent, more suitable, and/or more qualified than another. This is supported both by logic and in arbitral precedent.

Article 6.11 also pertains to teacher hiring. The first words of this article are “In filling vacant positions in accordance with clause 6.03(a)...” This indicates clearly that the overall basic principle of hiring according to the degree of competence, suitability, and qualifications cannot be overruled.

Article 6.11(a) requires the Board, but “in accordance with clause 6.03(a)”, to “make reasonable effort to accommodate requests from teachers already employed with the Board in a continuing contract.” This is generally referred to as teacher transfers.

While “reasonable effort” in 6.11(a) may imply a greater obligation than “consideration”, “reasonable effort” has its limitations as determined by the Board and does not imply preference. In *Lewisporte/Gander School District No. 6 and NLTA* (2004), arbitrator Alcock writes:

On balance, I accept that the Employer's obligation under Article 6.12(a) [now 6.11(a)] to make reasonable effort to accommodate is always subject to the Employer's right under Article 6.03 to assess competence, suitability and qualifications. (*Lewisporte/Gander School District No. 6 and NLTA*, 2004, p. 83)

Alcock further writes that this process “must be performed within the context of a job competition” (p. 84) in which other candidates are also assessed. There is no provision for Boards to create a “transfer round” that excludes candidates who do not have a continuing contract with the Board.

It appears that the districts interpret the 2019 addition as supporting widespread hiring during a ‘transfer round’ based entirely on seniority. According to the collective agreement, the entirety of article 6.11(a) must be administered “in accordance with clause 6.03(a)”, which, as shown, speaks to the Board’s assessment of applicants according to their degree of competence, suitability, and qualifications. The relevant findings of this Committee are that 6.11(a) is being interpreted in this manner, and that such reliance on seniority impedes school districts in their efforts to hire the most competent, qualified, and suitable teachers for our students.

### **Article 6.11(b)**

Article 6.11(b) requires the Board to “give consideration to applications from teachers who have served in replacement and/or substitute teaching positions with the Board before applications from teachers with no previous experience with the Board.” Arbitrations have indicated that the obligation to consider is different than the obligation to hire. Yet, over time, the message has penetrated to MUN graduates without experience that they “won’t even get looked at” if there are substitute teachers or teachers in term positions “ahead of them”. This is a misinterpretation of the collective agreement and applies another level of seniority. In *Eastern School District and NLTA* (2005), Alcock addressed a circumstance in which a Board had hired an external candidate over those who had term experience with the Board. Alcock interpreted the collective agreement as speaking entirely to the sequence of consideration as opposed to preference. A selection of those with experience would be assessed and given full consideration, and after that the selection panel would be free to consider outside applicants. After teachers from both groups had been considered, the Board would then compare all candidates on the basis of competence, suitability, and qualifications, and select the best candidate.

Arbitrators have also given weight to the phrase “as assessed by the School Board” in Article 6.03. In *Eastern School District and NLTA* (2011), arbitrator Oakley draws on *Terra Nova Integrated School Board and NLTA* (1987) to illustrate that the language of 6.03 gives the school board “a subjective right to determine qualifications and suitability” (*Eastern School District and NLTA*, 2011, p. 16).

Alcock’s decision in *Lewisporte/Gander School District No. 6 and NLTA* (2004) visualizes a series of pools including teachers with permanent contracts, teachers in term positions or with experience as substitutes, and teachers who have no prior experience with the Board. Having

determined the teachers from each of the pools who demonstrated the greatest competence, qualifications and suitability, the district would then compare the surviving candidates from each pool and decide who, among all of them, demonstrated the greatest competence, suitability, and qualifications for the position. This process, as outlined by Alcock, protected the integrity of Article 6.03 and demonstrated that a teacher from either of the pools could be the successful applicant. This approach can be time-consuming, and hiring committees tend to do only the first part of the process and not examine subsequent pools, even though the collective agreement requires them to do so. The result is that either by collective agreement interpretations, or by “wearing down” the system with complicated requirements, seniority has come to rule the day in teacher hiring in NL.

### **Seniority in Other Jurisdictions**

Some jurisdictions do rely on seniority for teacher hiring, but very few to the extent of the current practice in Newfoundland and Labrador. For example, the collective agreement for teachers in Winnipeg, Manitoba states:

The Association recognizes the sole right of the Division to assign teachers employed by the Division to schools under its jurisdiction.

#### **27.01 Voluntary Transfers**

- (a) Teachers interested in a transfer shall indicate their interest in writing on or before March 31<sup>st</sup> of the school year prior to the school year for which the transfer is to be effective. The Division shall make reasonable efforts to accommodate requests for transfer.
- (c) Whenever possible, teachers who have ten (10) or more years of service in one (1) school shall be granted an interview when applying for a bulletined position for which they are qualified. (Winnipeg Teachers’ Association Collective Agreement, 2018-2022, p. 40)

There is no obligation for the district to grant transfers according to seniority, and the only consideration given for teachers with 10 or more years of service in one school is that they be granted an interview.

Prince Edward Island has a transfer process prior to other hiring, but not based on seniority. Following the placement of redundant teachers, the collective agreement says that the employer agrees that

4. All remaining permanent teaching positions shall then be posted for the purpose of enabling all existing permanent and probationary teachers to apply for transfer opportunities in accordance with Section 28:03.

- 28:03 (a) A Teacher may initiate a request to transfer to any position posted in accordance with Subsection 26:01 of this Agreement.
- (b) The decision of the Employer with respect to the request initiated under Subsection 28:03
  - (a) shall be based upon the qualifications, ability and suitability to fill the requirements of the position to which the teacher has requested to transfer. In the event the qualifications, ability and suitability of two or more teachers are determined by the

Employer to be equal, the teacher with the greatest amount of Seniority with the Employer shall be granted the transfer. (Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation Memorandum of Agreement, 2018-2021, p. 55)

The reliance on seniority is only in the case of a “tie”, with the focus on “qualifications, ability and suitability”.

Ontario introduced a regulation in 2012 stating that nearly all hiring was to be done based on seniority. New teachers were required to follow a multistep process, to become an occasional teacher and then progress to other positions (Pollock, 2015). This regulation was met with concern by the public as well as the Principals’ Association. In 2019, the current government of Ontario engaged in a consultation process to examine the influence of seniority in teacher hiring. Concerns similar to those heard by this Committee were raised. In 2020, the Government of Ontario revoked the regulation on hiring by seniority and moved to hiring based on merit, stating:

Our government is fully committed to standing up for students and parents who deserve the best, most qualified, and reflective educator [in] the classroom. That means, when it comes to hiring educators, principals should be able to hire the best teacher for the job - not necessarily the one who has been in line the longest....

For too many years, our newer and younger educators have been left behind, and they deserve equal opportunity for progression. (Ontario Government, n.p.)

The Committee values experience in the system. Experience, that is associated with innovation and continuous professional learning, will often ensure that senior candidates will be the most competent, suitable, and qualified for any position. However, the Committee feels that teacher hiring must emanate from the principles of Article 6.03. The Committee is of the view that teacher hiring must be for the benefit of student learning and the needs of schools.

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

- 4. Through agreement or legislation, Government provide a new policy for the placement and hiring of teachers and teaching and learning assistants (TLAs) based on merit rather than seniority. Specifically, the Committee recommends that through agreement or legislation:**
  - a. in layoff scenarios teachers/TLAs are retained in a school or in the school district based on competence, qualifications, and suitability rather than seniority;**
  - b. that competence, qualifications, and suitability (rather than seniority) become the sole criteria for teacher/TLA hiring;**
  - c. that in all stages of the hiring process, all applicants (teachers/TLAs with no experience with the district, with substitute or term experience, and in continuing contracts) be shortlisted and considered at the same time on the basis of competence, qualifications, and suitability rather than by designated pools; and**

- d. that the practice of dividing and selecting teachers/TLAs according to “pools” be discontinued in all stages of the hiring process.

## Clarity in Hiring

Throughout the review, the Committee heard of a lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities. A review of available position descriptions and job postings reveals that many contain professional standards of practice and the required knowledge, skills and abilities but do not describe any duties. Standards of practice are not a replacement for a list of duties to be assigned to a job but rather set out expectations and descriptors against which one can evaluate performance. Without a clear description of duties, district- and school-level staff can make their own interpretations of what their job entails.

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

5. Job advertisements be developed using Public Service Commission protocols and procedures and include clear duties associated for the role in addition to the qualifications and the required knowledge, skills and abilities.

## Managing Support Positions

### Student Assistants

The Committee heard from multiple groups of concerns regarding student assistants. The *Student Assistants Collective Agreement* (Government of NL, 2016) allows employees to apply for and move to other positions during the school year. In some cases, student assistants move to positions with more hours, but these employees can also move to positions in other schools with the same number of hours or with fewer hours. The collective agreement allows this movement to occur anytime in the school year and success in moving to other positions is dependent on seniority. Human resource records at NLES indicate that more than 1,000 student assistant positions were posted in 2021-22. This situation is quite different than that of teachers and teaching and learning assistants, who, once they have accepted a position, must remain committed to that position for the school year.

Student assistant movement is disruptive to the school, and it impacts negatively on some of our most vulnerable student population. Some participants in the consultations reported that it can take up to eight weeks to fill a student assistant position. The school must then orient the new individual to the school and, in some cases, may even lose that new individual before consistency in the position is established. In the meantime, students with emotional or physical needs are left without consistent support.

A second concern raised at the consultation sessions, especially with school administrators, is the frequent absences of student assistants and the difficulty in finding student assistant substitutes when this occurs. A review of sick leave records shows high absences, confirming what we heard from the principals. On average, student assistants are absent 5,598 hours per month with September reporting the lowest number of hours at 3,184 up to a high of 7,868 in March. For the 2021-22 school year, NLES records show that there were 22,756 shifts where

the student assistant was absent. Examining these data from the individual student assistant perspective further illustrates the challenges that schools encounter regarding student assistants. Based on 190 instructional days over the year, these numbers indicate that, for every school day there were, on average, 120 student assistants absent. Further analysis is required to determine which student assistants are using their leave and the underlying causes (e.g., salary, job satisfaction, motivation to work, alternate work opportunities).

Whether through changes in student assistant staff, or the absence of a student assistant on a particular day, serious organizational and instructional concerns arise when other staff have to assume student assistant duties. Student assistants usually work with students of the highest needs, so attending to these students must be prioritized by other staff when student assistants are absent. This means that instructional resource teachers, teaching and learning assistants, guidance counselors, and school administrators are taken away from their other priorities in order to fill the immediate needs. This has been described by teachers, various specialists, and school administrators as seriously detrimental to the instructional focus of the school.

These issues are not new. The 2000 Ministerial Panel on Educational Delivery in the Classroom heard “of the need for fundamental change in the student assistant model” (p. 27).

There is a strong view that in many cases learning would be better enabled if classroom teachers had the support of teaching assistants instead of student assistants. ... Student assistants were originally intended to provide support for the severely physically and mentally challenged. These supports are still required but there is a need to re-examine the support system and consider alternatives such as school-based teacher assistants with educational training and qualifications who can serve a range of educational and individual needs. (p. 27)

The 2007 ISSP and Pathways Commission also noted discontent in the system with student assistants. At that time, one of the main issues was access to service with student assistants assigned to individual students rather than schools.

While the Commission is cautious in creating another professional designation within schools, it does recognize significant support, local and global, for a broader mandate than that currently provided by student assistants. The Commission suggests the development of careful reviews and planning, including pilots, of such initiatives.

Subsequently, the Commission recommends that:

**52.** The Department of Education establish a committee to redefine and expand the role of student assistants into that of teacher assistants.

In 2017, the Premier’s Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes again re-enforced the notion of instructional assistants.

Instructional assistants would support the classroom teacher with individualized/small group teaching, a diverse group of students to meet the curriculum goals. They would also help deliver programming to students with severe developmental needs and this would allow the most specialized teachers to work with larger groups of students. (p. 17-18)

The Task Force also heard about issues related to calling in substitute student assistants.

Schools would benefit from a protocol allowing them to call in replacement assistants who are familiar with their school and the needs of the students, similar to the practice for calling substitute teachers. Doubling the budget for student assistants has not addressed the issues. (p. 17)

The Task Force recommended:

**6.** The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development develop a new model of student assistants which would: a) allow flexibility and suitability in calling replacement assistants based on their familiarity with the students; and b) assign student assistants to the school and not to individual students.

**7.** The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development develop a model and a plan to introduce a second level of student assistants as ‘instructional assistants’ with levels of post-secondary education appropriate to the role. (p. 23)

The current provision for student assistant mobility during the school year must be addressed. A model comparable to that which applies to teachers and teaching and learning assistants would help to address these concerns. This would mean that, as with a teacher, a student assistant who accepts a particular position in September would not be eligible to move to another position until the end of the school year. Where possible, the district should attempt to create positions with sufficient hours such that the desire to move to another position would be reduced. Care must be taken, however, to ensure that the school still has some flexibility in the somewhat difficult challenge of scheduling their student assistant time. A review of student assistant hours for 2021-22 shows that almost 90% of the student assistants were assigned at least four hours per day and almost 80% with five hours or more per day.

**Table 9:  
Student Assistants, 2021 – 2022**

# Hours per day	# Student Assistants	Percentage of Student Assistants
< 3	38	5.2
3 – 3.75	38	5.2
4 – 4.75	69	9.4
5 – 5.75	319	43.3
6 – 6.75	238	32.3
7	30	4.1

Source: Department of Education, June 2022

Student transportation is also an issue related to the student assistant position. Student assistants who have bus duty are required to meet the student at his/her house in the morning and accompany the student on the bus ride to school. At the end of the school day, the process is reversed. The student assistants leave their personal vehicles unattended for the school day at personal risks for accidents, vandalism and tow-aways during snow-clearing.

The scarcity of student assistant substitutes also received considerable discussion. It was felt that in some communities the small number of hours available to student assistant substitutes did not make worthwhile.

### **Teaching and Learning Assistants**

In response to these Task Force recommendation, the Department of Education under the Education Action Plan, created a new position, Teaching and Learning Assistant (TLA). These positions are intended to offer instructional support to students under the guidance of the classroom teacher in Grades K – 6 classrooms. The total allocation for this resource is 200 teaching units and is based on K – 6 enrolments by school as follows:

$< 100 - 0$ ;  $100 - 249 - 1$ ;  $250 - 399 - 2$ ;  $400 - 549 - 3$ ; and  $\geq 550 - 4$ .

Records from NLES indicate that in February 2022, 186 teaching and learning assistants were deployed to schools in the NLES.

The Task Force stated that at least part of the role of the teaching and learning assistant was to “help deliver programming to students with severe developmental needs.” In Recommendation 7, it envisioned a second level of student assistants as ‘instructional assistants’. There is no evidence that the teaching and learning assistants currently deployed in K – 6 classrooms have relieved any of the pressure schools experience with increasingly high needs of students who have either exceptionalities or severe behavioural issues. Nor is it clear that the provision of the teaching and learning assistants has helped resolve the two issues with the current student assistant model – mobility during the school year and high incidence of absences. According to the results of the survey, 45.3% support students who have additional challenges, 60.5% assist with targeted interventions, and 32.6% assist with intensive interventions. Two-thirds reported never assisting one-on-one a student who has an alternate curriculum.

Unfortunately, no measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching and learning assistants are available. Attention to how the addition of the teaching and learning assistant resource can address the issue of class composition or the issues associated with the student assistant model should be included in an evaluation of the effectiveness of the resource.

The concerns outlined above present a serious challenge to the management of student behaviour, the provision of supports for vulnerable students, and the instructional focus in schools.

### **Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

- 6. The 2021-22 allocation for student assistants be maintained pending the outcome of a full analysis of current situation (student assistant absences, the underlying reasons, and the implications for schools) and implementation of the recommended changes below.**
  - a. Through agreement, regulations or legislation, student assistant positions be assigned as a year-long appointment, without the option to move to other schools during the year.**

- b. Where possible, and with consideration of school flexibility and of having these positions competitive with other employers, student assistant positions be designed with at least 90% having a minimum of four-hour days.
- 7. The alternate transportation policy and guidelines requiring a student assistant to accompany the student to and from school be reviewed and new guidelines be implemented by September, 2023.
- 8. The role of teaching and learning assistants and their effectiveness be evaluated using such measures as student achievement that demonstrate changes in reading levels and numeracy proficiency, and standard indicators for growth in social and emotional learning and changes in behaviour. This evaluation should be undertaken in the 2022-23 school year.
  - a. The 2021-22 allocation for teaching and learning assistants be maintained until the evaluation has been done. The results of the evaluation should inform future direction. The Department of Education allocate teaching and learning assistants as follows:

Number of Students	Teaching and Learning Assistants
< 100	0
100 – 249	1.0
250 – 399	2.0
400 – 549	3.0
≥550	4.0

## School Closures

Many schools have been closed in Newfoundland and Labrador over the years. Schools require sufficient human resources to effectively deliver programs and provide supports to students who need them. The Committee heard from students in extremely small schools that they miss some of the socialization and communication opportunities that even slightly larger schools can provide.

The Committee recognizes that many schools are in geographic locations that make consolidation with other schools unfeasible; however, there are a number for which consolidation with other schools is possible. Some of these schools are quite close to each other, and in some cases, children are already bussed to school, with consolidation requiring only a slightly longer bus ride. The Committee is of the view that human resources allocated to the school system in NL need to be organized in a manner that has a positive influence on student learning, and that the consolidation of some schools would enhance those learning opportunities.

As indicated, many schools have already been closed in NL, although there has been a minimal number of school closures during the life of the NLES. This places the province in a situation where considerable work needs to be accomplished in school consolidation. The Committee proposes that the Department of Education prioritize the development of a school closure process, and that considerations around school closures be accompanied by a measure of political will or by an independent body.

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

9. **The Department of Education develop a process for school closures in Newfoundland and Labrador, to ensure the most favourable organization of human and physical resources for the student learning and success.**
10. **The Department of Education conduct (or commission) a study of school organization/location in Newfoundland and Labrador, to identify schools for possible closure, redistribution of grade levels among schools, and other features of organizational effectiveness.**

## Purchasing of Resources

The Committee heard from some teacher groups (e.g., ESL teachers, DHH teachers) that acquiring appropriate resources in a timely manner to support learning was a concern. The concern seemed to be less with the provision of funds than with the time it took between ordering and the actual processing of budgets and receiving the resources. Several teachers expressed a lack of confidence in the process, indicating that it was easier to purchase resources themselves than to rely on the district purchasing process. While the Committee is of the view that appropriate purchasing procedures and financial management are necessary and important, it appears that the current system is unable to meet ongoing needs.

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

11. **The Department of Education/School Districts review the purchasing process for program resources and other expenditures, with a view to more timely responses to help teachers intervene promptly to support student learning.**

## Collective Bargaining

A number of items in this section draws attention to the collective bargaining process as it relates to education employees. Collective bargaining in NL has traditionally been done with Treasury Board, the Department of Education, school boards, and the NLTA/NAPE at the table. During the collective bargaining process, school boards have sometimes felt that clauses in collective agreements that have to do with the management of the system for effective student learning take a lower level of priority than items such as salary. The Committee is of the view that clauses in the collective agreement dealing with ongoing operational relationships between management and unions are important. Inattention to these clauses can be costly financially and for student learning, if what is negotiated (or not renegotiated) impedes the effective operation of the system. Examples of these clauses relate to teacher hiring and consistency of student assistants in their positions.

Collective bargaining is a process that recognizes the legitimate needs and aspirations of employees as well as the legitimate arrangements that will allow the functioning of the system for student support and learning. Likewise, how human resources are placed and organized within the system must be responsive to the overall mission of student support and student success. Some of these parameters are set out in legislation (e.g., The School's Act, Teacher

Training Act), but collective bargaining is also a process that should give attention, not only to issues of compensation, but also to the finer points of the mutual relationships which contribute to the effectiveness of the education system.

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

- 12. Government review the collective bargaining process from the management perspective, with a view to effectively representing the management and organizational needs of the system, the welfare of students, the smooth functioning of schools, and the avoidance of costly human resources error.**

## Challenges in Recruitment and Retention

The Committee heard of hiring challenges from both NLES and CSFP. Teacher shortages are most prevalent in northern Labrador and remote communities, while substitute teacher shortages are a reality in most parts of the province. A shortage of substitute teachers is an indicator of a potentially larger teacher shortage. Teacher shortages also occur in some specialty or subject areas such as French Immersion, guidance counselors, blind and visually impaired itinerants, Deaf and hard of hearing itinerants, and educational psychologists.

Sutcher et al. (2019) emphasize the importance of teacher quality as well as supply and demand. The challenge, they write, is not to provide “enough warm bodies to enter teaching” (p. 1), but to ensure that well qualified and committed teachers are available for all positions and locations. Such planning must include attracting, developing, but also retaining, expert teachers in hard-to-fill positions. In some instances, this requires policy interventions to ensure that all students in all schools are taught by excellent teachers.

Solutions for hiring and retaining teachers for hard-to-fill positions fall into several categories – financial or in-kind incentives, working conditions, access to professional learning and growth, integration into the community, and methods of recruitment. Evidence tends to show that financial incentives are not as important as some of the other categories in attracting and retaining teachers. Success in hiring and retention generally relies on multiple factors and can also be quite individual and unique according to context (Podolsky et al., 2019).

Financial incentives include increased salary and bonuses, and free or subsided housing (Kitchenham & Chasteauneuf, 2010). The most effective hiring incentives include bonuses after a set time period, thereby encouraging retention (Brandon, 2015; Podolsky et al., 2019). Some financial incentives have focused on funding teacher education programs and providing alternative paths to teacher certification. These paths might include part time education programs while the prospective teacher is also working and employed in a school. Podolsky et al. (2019) suggest scholarship and loan-forgiveness programs in exchange for a number of years of service in hard-to-fill positions.

Opportunities for professional learning have been rated highly as motivation for teachers to assume hard-to-fill positions. This seems to be especially true for northern and rural teachers in Canada (Kitchenham & Chasteauneuf, 2010). Teachers in rural and northern areas spoke of the

need to have easier access to university programs through a blended approach, using e-learning as well as face-to-face opportunities.

Some school districts in isolated areas have focused on supporting local individuals who might be interested in teaching. This “grow your own” approach is focused not only on teacher hiring, but also assumes that local residents have a greater likelihood of staying longer in the school. Possible candidates include high school students who might be encouraged to become teachers in their own community, student assistants and other paraprofessionals, and local individuals in other professions who might wish to become teachers if appropriate pathways are provided. Nova Scotia, for example, is offering part time teacher education programs for local adults working in other careers, but aspiring to become teachers (CBC News, Nova Scotia, 2019).

Brandon (2015) describes how the Government of Alberta launched an initiative to ensure that an effective teacher was in every classroom in the province. Brandon illustrates how districts in northern Alberta partnered with universities and the Ministry of Education to address teacher recruitment and retention in the North. Strategies included multiple virtual as well as face-to-face interviews and careful reference checks to assess who might be suitable to live and work in rural and isolated regions. Along with these efforts, a community-based teacher education program (CBTEP) focused on developing teachers in their home communities and encouraging high school students and non-teaching school employees to enter local teacher education programs. In referring to recruitment from southern regions, recruiters emphasized that “we are very selective and don’t settle” (Brandon, p. 159), reversing previous inclinations to settle for less than the best. The school districts also worked to promote their organizations as caring, attentive to practical needs, and valuing professional learning.

Teachers of Indigenous descent or from visible/cultural minorities have a positive impact on the engagement and learning habits of minority and marginalized students (Jack & Ryan, 2015; Ingersoll et al., 2019). Landertinger et al. (2021) outline a number of strategies for increasing the number of Indigenous teacher candidates. These include providing teacher education opportunities in the local area, removing financial barriers, and providing alternative pathways to admission and certification. They recommend creating Indigenous cohorts in teacher education, providing Indigenous-centric curriculum and program design, drawing from Indigenous pedagogies, and hiring Indigenous faculty and educators. Memorial University has made important moves in this direction, with a focus on Indigenous education and hiring Indigenous faculty. The Faculty of Education partnered with the Government of Nunatsiavut to deliver an Inuit Bachelor of Education (IBED) program in Labrador to a cohort of teacher education students.

The Committee is of the view that developing excellent teachers for northern and rural schools in Newfoundland and Labrador can be addressed through a number of related and coordinated efforts. These efforts include local teacher development, various incentives for hiring and retention, and effective recruitment. As with the Alberta initiative, such initiatives in NL have the best chance of working if they are joint efforts involving the Department of Education, the Faculty of Education, and local communities.

The Committee also recognizes that current challenges in education may impact teacher retention. The Committee's recommendations are designed to improve student learning and to foster the conditions within which teachers can be most effective and feel that they are making a difference. These recommendations relate to appropriate resources and to the management of these resources.

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

- 13. The Department of Education continue to work with Memorial University**
  - a. to assess teacher shortages in particular subject areas and specialties;**
  - b. to adjust teacher education efforts to address these shortages; and**
  - c. to develop and publicize a plan to attract and educate teachers for northern communities and for rural locations.**
- 14. The Department of Education engage with Indigenous communities to attract individuals of Indigenous descent to consider teaching as a profession.**
  - a. The Department of Education and Memorial University work with Nunatsiavut Government to offer a teacher education program for a second cohort of prospective teachers, informed by best practices from previous experiences of the Faculty of Education and of other jurisdictions (e.g., Alberta's CBTEP).**
- 15. The Department of Education and the school districts develop appropriate incentives to attract and retain teachers in rural communities.**

## Department of Education Oversight

Throughout its review, the Committee encountered a number of barriers as it gathered the information needed for the work as described in the Terms of Reference. In 2017, the Department of Education eliminated the Division of School Services and since then, there has not been a lead person with primary responsibility for teacher allocations or who works with the school districts to address their teaching resource needs. The responsibilities are shared across Evaluation and Research Division and Financial Services Division. For the 2021-22 school year, Government invested almost \$800 million in K – 12 education, most of which was the cost of teaching salaries and student assistants. Yet, there is no educational leader in the Department to advise the Minister of Education and Cabinet on the management of these resources.

In addition, the program used to determine teacher allocations was developed in 2000 with updates in 2007. It does not have the capacity to provide the information that the Department of Education needs to effectively manage the teacher allocation system. In recent years, many resource allocations have been manually calculated and recorded.

Following the 2007 Teacher Allocation Review, a two-facet model for teacher allocations was implemented, a formula using either class size maximums or pupil-teacher-ratio and a needs-based component. When Government accepted the recommendations, it was envisioned that the school districts would prepare a report outlining its teaching needs over and above what the formula provided. This component also captured the allocations for small schools with enrolment

less than 25 students. Since that time, the accountability for the deployment and assignment of these units has eroded. With changes in education since 2007, this ‘identified needs’ bank has become the source for allocating teachers for different programs such as CDLI and full day kindergarten which should be allocated using the formula than this portion of units. With one provincial English school district, these teaching units have been passed onto the district without any requirement for a report on the deployment of the units. The Auditor-General (2016) noted the lack of accountability regarding teacher allocations and recommended that the NLES defence submit an annual report on teacher deployment to the Department. Action related to this recommendation is under investigation.

With the 2022 proposed teacher allocation model, a needs-based component is still required. These needs are based on four separate areas: small schools with student enrolments < 25; the provision of teaching support for newcomer students, who require English as an additional/second language, as they arrive and enter the K – 12 system or an unanticipated influx of students from another province or other English-speaking jurisdiction; support for a teaching unit or a partial teaching unit in schools that offer the positive action in student success (PASS) program; and changes to the number of special needs students including those with vision or hearing loss or who require speech language pathology services. Since these allocations are based on changing or emerging needs, the predictions are imprecise but informed by past allocations, (e.g., in 2021 -22, 33 teaching units were used to staff small schools and 30 teaching units were deployed for the PASS program). How many ESL students register for school or the number of students who are identified for student services are harder to predict.

Gaps in data and information and/or long delays in obtaining the necessary information exist within the Department. The Committee sought the current teacher allocation numbers provincially and by school, changes in allocations resulting from different Budget decisions over time, allocation formulas for new and changed positions, position descriptions, enrolment data, class size data, and payroll information. It appears that most of this information was also given to the district to be managed through PowerSchool. Eventually, between the districts and the Department, the Committee did receive all the information it required. However, the Committee is of the view that such data should reside within the Department of Education, readily available to the Minister, the public or ATIPPA requests.

Another issue raised during the consultations was the lack of supervision, oversight and leadership for positions at the district-level, and for lack of oversight and leadership for some school-level positions. This was a common theme from all groups. They spoke of the need for management and a leader in their field to whom they could report or check in with, a person who could facilitate professional learning or trouble-shoot when needed. Some positions do have a director in place, namely, for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Indigenous Education and Multiculturalism and others have a provincial lead. This seems to be a relatively new approach for NLES defence and therefore, some of the identified challenges may be resolved with these provincial leads. A similar situation was raised by school-based staff, not a supervisory role but a leader who has full understanding of their roles and responsibilities and who can work with them to improve their practice.

Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:

16. The Department of Education create a position of Teaching Services Director to provide leadership and management for teacher allocations, collective agreements and other related matters.
  - a. The qualifications for the Teaching Services Director include a Master of Education in Leadership and experience in school/district administration or senior management in the public service.
17. The Department of Education through the Teaching Services Director:
  - a. Develop a modern, up-to-date system/program for determining teacher allocations, robust enough to capture all current resources including needs-based teaching units and the ability to add resources as future changes require. The Teaching Services Director would work with the Evaluation and Research Director to develop this system.
  - b. Administer the needs-based allocation of teaching units.
18. The Department of Education in collaboration with the school districts establish a management and leadership plan for district-level staff.
  - a. A Department consultant in the appropriate discipline be assigned responsibilities for liaising with teacher librarians, PASS teachers, and guidance counsellors.

## Chapter 7

# Teacher Education and Professional Learning

In the United States, Australia, and the U.K., federal and national governments have established expectations and priorities for the restructuring of teacher education. These priorities have focused on initial selection of student teachers, increasing the length and quality of internships, strengthening school-university partnerships, and vigorously assessing and supporting the progress of teacher candidates. This has resulted in new standards for the accreditation of teacher education programs, with, in some cases, faculties of education scrambling to respond to state and government expectations.

As illustrated in an earlier section of this report, research has identified teacher quality as a determinant of student learning. Preparation of new teachers is therefore a crucial component of student learning and school improvement. The Committee therefore turned its attention to teacher education, with a particular focus on clinical models of teacher education as practiced in many jurisdictions.

### Teacher Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen a growing concern regarding the quality of teacher education (e.g., Hattie, 2009; Hattie et al., 2015; National Council on Teacher Quality, 2014; Maynes & Hatt, 2011; Hirschhorn et al., 2013). This concern has been combined with a sense that teacher education as a major determinant of student learning has been overlooked.

The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) in the U.S. wrote that “teacher preparation has been largely side-lined as an issue, even though the broader issue of teacher quality has been the ‘hot’ topic in education reform for much of the decade” (2014, p. 7).

To complicate matters, some teacher educators at that time did not believe that they should be accountable for teacher performance:

For their part, a substantial portion of teacher educators believe it to be professionally irresponsible to use the time spent in preservice preparation to prepare the novice teacher for a seamless transition from student teacher to teacher of record....or to suggest that there is a right (or wrong) way to teach..... Anything that appears to be focused on training is perceived to increase the risk of a school of education being seen as a vocational entity. (NCTG, 2014, pp. 13-14)

In Canada, Maynes and Hatt (2011) observed that an increased focus on faculty research roles “may draw focus away from the quality of the teacher preparation program unless that program is guided by a conceptual framework that embeds its principles and implies its practices” (p. 161).

Many universities and teacher educators in Canada today support stronger conceptual frameworks “grounded in a focus on student learning” (Maynes & Hatt, 2011, p.61). In other jurisdictions, e.g., the U.K., government legislation has removed the near monopoly of universities on teacher education, and the associated funding, by allowing preparation to occur in K-12 schools or other training centres (Beauchamp et al., 2015).

Hattie’s (2009) review of meta-analyses found a low effect size of teacher education on student achievement. In addition, transition shock (Hattie et al., 2015) as candidates move from teacher education institutions to their own classrooms, has been well documented for decades. Transition shock is increased when new teachers are placed in school settings (e.g., rural, urban, multi-grade, high-needs) for which their teacher education programs did not prepare them.

## Clinical Models of Teacher Education

Research in the 21<sup>st</sup> century supports the belief that education should and can be improved. Linda Darling-Hammond’s work has established the foundation for understanding exemplary teacher education programs. Her research has provided the foundation for clinical models of teacher education.

Darling-Hammond (2006 a, b) and her colleagues studied “seven exemplary teacher education programs—public and private, undergraduate and graduate, large and small—that produce graduates who are well prepared from their first days in the classroom” (2006a, p. 305). Darling-Hammond provides a well-regarded and widely quoted list of the ideal features of teacher education programs identified in the study. Despite outward differences, the programs had common features, including:

1. ***Coherence***, based on a common, clear vision of good teaching grounded in an understanding of learning, permeates all coursework and clinical experiences;
2. ***A strong core curriculum***, taught in the context of practice, grounded in knowledge of child and adolescent development, learning in social and cultural contexts, curriculum, assessment and subject-matter pedagogy;
3. ***Extensive, connected clinical experiences*** that are carefully developed to support the ideas and practices presented in simultaneous, closely interwoven course work;
4. ***Well-defined standards of professional knowledge and practice*** are used to guide and evaluate course work and clinical work;
5. ***Explicit strategies*** that help students (1) confront their own deep-seated beliefs and assumptions about learning and students and (2) learn about the experiences of people different from themselves;
6. ***An inquiry approach that connects theory and practice***, including regular use of case methods, analyses of teaching and learning, and teacher research applying learning to real problems of practice and developing teachers as reflective practitioners;

7. **Strong school-university partnerships** that develop common knowledge and shared beliefs among school-and university-based faculty, allowing candidates to learn to teach in professional communities modeling state-of-the-art practice for diverse learners and collegial learning for adults; and
8. **Assessment based on professional standards** that evaluates teaching through demonstration of critical skills and abilities using performance assessments and portfolios that support the development of 'adaptive expertise' (Darling-Hammond, 2006b, p. 276).

Researchers in teacher education express the need for a strong relationship between the university and the school "so that the kind of practice that's very student-centered, that really takes into account how students learn and how different students learn differently, is something that can be worked on while you're also learning about the many knowledge bases that have come together to produce that" (Darling-Hammond, 2001, p.1).

Hattie et al. (2015) indicate that "there needs to be 'intentional' partnerships between teacher education programs and schools with oversight on candidate selection and placement" (p.5). They advocate for "shared decision making, a focus on candidate performance and impact on student achievement, professional accountability and knowledge of best practices" (p.5). This relationship can include schools taking the lead, so that practicing teachers in their school setting become the instructors for teacher candidates, and expert teachers are hired as important members of the university staff.

The clinical practice model of teacher education has been implemented in many jurisdictions in the US, Australia and the UK (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), 2010:ii); Hattie et al., 2015; Mclean-Davies et al., 2013). In describing the Masters of Teaching at the University of Melbourne, McLean-Davies et al. describe teachers as "interventionist practitioners" (p. 93):

- "Teacher candidates ...attend university for three days per week for academic classes, and spend the remaining two days of each week during semester in a partnership school..."(McLean-Davies et al., 2013, p.96).
- Assessment of [K-12] student work as evidence of learning is at the core of teacher candidate learning in the Masters of Teaching: "With a data-driven, evidence-based approach to teaching and learning, teachers can manipulate the learning environment and scaffold learning for each student, regardless of the student's development or intellectual capacity" (McLean-Davies et al., p.98).
- "As teaching fellows and clinical specialists work closely with teacher candidates, mentor teachers and other school staff (including administrators), they play a key role in articulating this understanding of evidence-based clinical practice to the university's partnership institutions and organizations and other key stakeholders.

A key feature of the programme, as it has developed, is the emergence of a shared language – a metalanguage – for talking about teaching as clinical practice" (McLean-Davies et al., p.98).

The organization of clinical experience varies with different teacher education programs. In some instances in the US, teachers spend five days a week in school from the very beginning of their program, with academic classes in the evening. In the UK, some teachers do their entire teacher education programs in schools that have been accredited for teacher education.

### **Teacher Candidate Selection**

Research on teacher education has placed a high priority on the initial selection of students to teacher education programs. In a recent report, the Initial Teacher Education Quality Assessment Expert Panel (ITEQAEP) (2022) in Australia writes, “Lifting student outcomes begin with attracting and selecting the right people to lead classrooms” (p. 8). Increasingly, high performing countries have employed more rigorous approaches in selecting students for teacher education programs. Some of these characteristics that best correlate with effective teaching are as follows:

- High overall literacy and numeracy skills (recommended top 30%)
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills
- Willingness to learn
- Motivation to teach
- Placement in the top third of high school graduation
- Participation in community activities involving working with young people (may supplement the above characteristics). (Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group, 2014; ITEQAEP, 2022; Goss & Sonnemman, 2019a)

While a passion for working with children is critical, high academic achievers who possess this passion will have a greater impact on student results. Goss & Sonnemman (2019a) report that academic achievement is a stronger predictor of teacher quality than a non-academic trait. Policy makers in various jurisdictions are attempting to raise the positive profile of teaching to attract academically proficient students into teaching.

Klassen and Kim (2019) draw on research to show that initial selection of teacher candidates can have long-lasting impacts on K-12 students:

Although almost all new teachers and teacher education candidates will become more effective as they gain experience (e.g., Harris & Rutledge, 2010; Staiger & Rockoff, 2010); it is also true that the ‘effectiveness starting point’ may be important, with the gap between higher- and lower-performing teachers showing stability over time. Atteberry et al. (2015) found that the initial performance of new teachers was reliably predictive of later performance, suggesting that early identification, i.e., selection, of the most effective teachers pays long-term dividends.... Predictable variation in teacher effectiveness (Atteberry et al., 2015). (Klassen & Kim, 2019, Section 1.3)

### **Training of Teacher Mentors**

The quality of school experience for teacher candidates is strongly linked to the quality and expertise of the supervisory or co-operation teacher. The Advisory Group in Australia writes:

...International benchmarking of best practice has identified that staff leading and supervising professional experience in schools should be exemplary teachers who have undertaken focused training for their roles.

...[B]est practice for effective delivery of professional experience involves partnerships between higher education providers, schools and supervisors that establish a common understanding of what constitutes highly effective teaching practice and operate through seamless integration of the work of staff in the two settings. (2014, pp. 31-32)

### **Provisional Accreditation**

The notion of “provisional accreditation” relates to the possible checks and balances that may contribute to greater accountability of the provider and the teacher candidate. Ingvarson et al. (2014) write:

An important aspect of ensuring the quality of those who become registered/accredited as teachers is to employ ‘filters’ at different points before people are fully admitted to practice. High-performing education systems have rigorous ‘filters’ at different stages, particularly at entry to teacher education programs. (2014, p. 50)

These filters include entry to the profession, evaluation of practical experience requirement, exit from the teacher education program, certification, hiring, evaluation of the induction period, evaluation of professional development, and evaluation of the probation period (for tenure) (Ingvarson et al., 2014).

Provisional accreditation is consistent with the rigorous assessment of teacher candidate progress throughout the duration of the teacher education program, ensuring that standards reflect the knowledge, skills, and capabilities beginning teachers need for the classroom.

### **Initiatives in Teacher Education in NL**

Canada is organized differently than countries such as Australia, UK, and the US. There is no federal ministry of education, and teacher education, as well as K-12 education, is the prerogative of each province. It is the responsibility of the province, then, to set any expectations that may go beyond those that are developed internally within a faculty of education.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, Memorial University’s Faculty of Education has taken considerable initiatives towards improving teacher education in line with clinical practice and recent research on teacher preparation. Over the last number of years, it has revised several teacher education programs, ensuring earlier and longer internships and an increased focus on school experiences. These, and similar innovations, have been pioneered by faculty members with research backgrounds in teacher education, as well as experience in schools, and have been supported by successive faculty administrations.

The Faculty has also responded to requests from the Department of Education for more education in special education and student exceptionalities. Most recently, in response to the Premier’s Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes, it has developed new graduate programs in reading, built upon the most current methods in the science of reading. During the

2021-22 school year, the Department of Education, NLESND and the Faculty of Education collaborated on an initiative to help address substitute teacher shortages in the province. Student interns, under the supervision of their cooperating teacher, were employed as substitute teachers in their assigned school.

The Committee proposes a number of initiatives to be jointly pursued by the Department of Education and the Faculty of Education. We do so with an appreciation of the Faculty's advances in teacher education, and the capacity and commitment of the Faculty in moving forward. These proposed innovations relate to applying educational research in teacher candidate selection, enhancing clinical practice, training teacher mentors, and vigorously assessing and supporting teacher candidate development.

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

- 19. The Department of Education work with the Faculty of Education in the selection of teacher candidates in undergraduate and graduate programs, with a view to:**
  - a. selecting teacher candidates in accordance with research on selection; and**
  - b. adjusting cohort numbers and characteristics to meet provincial need.**
- 20. The Department of Education engage with the Faculty of Education to plan the nature and duration of clinical internships in undergraduate programs. Such engagement should include training for teacher mentors in schools, the identification of exemplary schools for teacher learning, the establishment of university schools for teacher education, and a coordinated process for the continuous assessment and support of teacher candidates in the field.**
  - a. Building on the success of employing student interns as substitute teachers in 2021-22, develop a plan for continued opportunities for teacher candidates to help address the substitute teacher shortage.**
- 21. The Department of Education adopt the principle of provisional accreditation reflecting teacher success in the teacher education program, induction, evaluation and tenure, continued professional learning, and success in fostering student achievement.**

The Premier's Task Force on Improving Education Outcomes recommended stronger collaboration between the Faculty of Education and the Department of Education. As a result of the Education Action Plan, a committee has been established "comprised of leaders from the two provincial school districts, the Department of Education, and the Faculty of Education, to work at aligning teacher education programs with the needs of the education system" (Education Action Plan Update, 2021, p.9). The Education Action Plan Update indicated that recent meetings have focused on enhancing student enrolments to address the need for more teachers in some subject areas as well as the number of available substitutes. These initiatives are in line with the concerns and recommendations in this current report.

The Committee envisions a more comprehensive partnership between Government and the University in teacher education to support an enhanced focus on teacher expertise. In so doing, the Committee is influenced by the precedent of previous Royal Commissions (Warren Commission, Williams Commission) in which Government is viewed as playing a crucial

leadership role in teacher education. The Committee therefore recommends a more extensive level of dialogue between Government and the University, and specific joint planning and implementation guided by overall government initiatives, supported by mutual funding, and giving more opportunities for Faculty members to provide leadership in the school system.

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

- 22. In keeping with the importance and scope of this initiative, higher level discussions among the Premier of NL, the Minister of Education, the President of MUN, and the Dean of Education establish the parameters and expectations for continued innovation in teacher education.**

## Teacher Professional Learning

Like other jurisdictions, the province has an extensive system of district-level supports, some providing direct support to students, and others providing support to teachers and administrators. The Committee heard that many program specialists, itinerants and others have worked mainly on their own or within their own group over recent years, without the important connections to other groups and to the senior administration. Some participants in the focus groups also reported insufficient coherence, planning, priority setting, oversight, and supervision. They are committed to their work but want to have better direction and support from the districts and the department. School administrators and teachers require professional learning, and a better understanding of each role and how they support and interact with school-based resources. Some suggested a comprehensive communications plan for schools, teachers, and parents outlining the roles and responsibilities of the various district office supports.

Most district-level staff are required to visit schools and therefore travel on a daily or weekly basis. The Committee heard from itinerant teachers and others that the number of hours travelled each week is extensive and travel records from NLES defence confirm this. Records from NLES defence for the 2018-2019 school year reveal that program specialists (39) travelled a total of 150,057 km for an average of 3,848 km. The travel records for the program itinerants are combined with other itinerants making it impossible to determine an exact figure, but the average distance travelled for all itinerants is 8,723 km.

Many district office staff report using technology effectively to support students and teachers. However, there is a long-standing practice and belief that district support is best achieved through school visits. It is useful to look more closely at these practices and beliefs to have a better understanding of the extent to which the current model fits the needs of the K-12 system. While virtual program delivery is, more than ever, a viable option and can reduce the number of school visits and associated travel, it is underutilized. Technology has advanced and with COVID the technological tools and platforms have become acceptable ways to hold meetings, learn new skills and languages, do presentations, teach, co-teach, collaborate, coach and mentor. It is today's way of working in education and other sectors.

The overall number of positions supporting professional learning at the school district level in NL appears to be comparable to that in other jurisdictions in Canada. However, the Department of Education and the school districts tend to retain existing areas of responsibilities as new areas are added. When program staff are hired to address identified areas, it is reasonable to assume

that, over time, the needs are addressed to some extent and therefore the level of support can diminish as the initiative becomes a part of everyday practice or operation of the school under the leadership of the principal.

For other initiatives, the change in priority at the district can have negative and unintended consequences. One example was broadening the role of the behaviour support specialists to safe and inclusive schools' itinerants. In expanding their mandate, the purpose and focus of the behaviour support specialists became lost as other responsibilities detracted from that previous position.

The district "expert" model developed in the 1970s and 1980s was based on program staff visiting schools to monitor instruction and bring new ideas and strategies. It was implemented at a time when there were approximately 35 school districts distributed across the province, each with a relatively small geographical region. District staff had ready access to the schools. The province now has provincial boards and district staff support schools over vast geographical areas.

Much has also changed in teacher preparation since that time. The 1968 Royal Commission on education recommended that the province increase standards for teacher qualifications, so that by 1980 all elementary teachers would have completed a four-year university program and all high-school teachers a five-year program. In 1964-65, only 13.4% of teachers had a university degree. Government accepted this recommendation and the process of increasing the qualifications for the province's teaching workforce began.

The qualifications of today's teachers are quite different with almost two-thirds of them holding a Certification Level 7, usually awarded upon successful completion of a Masters degree, another one-quarter a Certification Level 6, usually awarded upon successful completion of six years of university, and others a Certification Level 5, usually awarded upon successful completion of five years of university studies. Virtually all teachers have five or more years of university studies and more than 70% have ten or more years of teaching experience.

At the same time as teachers' qualifications have increased, so has the complexity of the classroom. These complexities have been illustrated in other sections of this report and teachers and administrators described them well during our consultation sessions. Also, through research and practice, our understanding of effective pedagogies has increased considerably. Many of these advances in research and practice have occurred since most teachers completed their undergraduate or graduate degrees.

An analysis of different categories of program staff with some responsibility for professional learning can inform possible future direction. A review of the current listing of program directors, program specialists, and program itinerants working at the district level indicates that many are responsible for the various subject areas – for example, English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and French. These positions, along with program specialists' positions in student support services, are standard in comparable or greater numbers across the country. More recently, other positions of subject area responsibilities have been appointed. Reading and mathematics program specialists were appointed in response to recommendations of the 2017

Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes. The Task Force was explicit in its recommendations regarding these positions.

39/47. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development allocate...permanent program specialists...to provide leadership and curriculum support...

- b) A protocol to ensure the roles and responsibilities for K – 6 mathematics / reading program specialists are sustained over time should be developed. (pp. 59 and 77)

Other program areas, e.g., technology, and school health, have been added in response to emerging needs, and previous recommendations.

Some program specialists are generalists who are responsible mainly for primary/elementary grades. On the NLES'D website, the position requirements as described in the job postings include: a thorough understanding of K-6 pedagogy, 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills and practices that support learning (e.g., assessment, responsive teaching and interventions), and a systems approach in responding to teacher learning needs and creating a learning culture. In NL, these positions have usually been filled by individuals with a subject area specialty, most commonly in English Language Arts. This specialty provides a greater likelihood that the program specialist will have a more effective pedagogical influence in this learning area.

The Committee recognizes that program specialists have other leadership roles that go beyond professional learning. These include working with Department of Education consultants on program initiatives, providing teacher hiring support in specific subject areas, identifying and purchasing resources, and taking a lead role in organizing student events at the regional or district levels (e.g., drama festivals, heritage fairs, science fairs, public speaking in French and English, and other public celebrations of learning).

The third group of program staff that have some responsibility for teacher professional learning and support to school are the five directors of programs – Multiculturalism, Indigenous Education, Learning, Educational Programs, and Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Two of these, Learning and Educational Programs have responsibilities for the implementation of the Education Action Plan, and the others are as their titles suggest. Since these directors are part of the management team, they would also participate in policy discussions at NLES'D.

According to the results of the teacher survey, 88% of teachers feel that they keep up with new ideas and teaching strategies; however, they are dissatisfied with the quality of professional learning in which they have participated (66-69%). Relatively small percentages of teachers indicated that the district provides clear direction on learning priorities (35.7-40.1%), instruction (32-42.5%), and assessment (30.8-38.5%), with K-6 teachers having the highest agreement.

School administrators also weighed in on teacher professional learning with approximately 50% of survey respondents stating that teachers have multiple opportunities for professional learning in instructional practices, student assessment and learning styles. For their own professional learning, 57-67% of school administrators said that the district provided them opportunities.

Different groups of teachers must be considered in any review of the exact nature of support required. As noted earlier, all teachers need professional learning and support to continuously improve their teaching practice. Those of greatest need are likely teachers new to the profession and teachers new to a particular program, curriculum, or grade level. Beyond these, support is generally required when a new provincial or district initiative or policy is introduced, when new curriculum is implemented, or when emerging issues have a considerable impact on teaching and learning. Advances in pedagogy and increased complexities in the classroom are examples of such emerging issues. Ongoing professional learning is required for continued teacher expertise, teacher efficacy, and student learning in every school.

The purpose of professional learning is to improve teacher effectiveness and student learning for all at the various grade levels and in the various content/subject areas. The focus is growth and improvement in pedagogy, utilizing best teaching strategies established through research and practice. Many teachers endeavour to improve practice in the context of student needs and behavioural concerns, and approach pedagogical changes and address student concerns in the context of new technologies for which much support is required.

Pedagogical/instructional improvement occurs primarily within a content and subject-based context. For this reason, subject area teacher mentors and subject area program specialists are crucial supports in the professional growth of teachers. Jeschke et al. (2021) illustrate how expert pedagogy in a subject area is closely connected to the features of the discipline itself: “teaching a subject requires not only subject-specific knowledge but a subject-specific ability to apply knowledge” (p.7). Wiliam (2014) shows how concepts such as critical thinking are quite different when applied to social studies as compared to mathematics.

These understandings help shape the role of subject area and other program specialists. Some teachers (e.g., those teaching outside their content area in rural communities) may need assistance in content knowledge, but this is not the main professional learning need of teachers. The role of program specialists is to help teachers improve in what research refers to as *pedagogical content knowledge* (applying the best instructional practices for the content or subject they are teaching); to collaborate with teachers as they develop and improve pedagogical content knowledge; and to help teachers develop a broad repertoire of technological resources to improve pedagogy in their subject areas.

### **A Teacher-Centred, School-Based Model of PL**

The Committee proposes a teacher-centred school-based model of professional learning. This approach utilizes district supports but inverts the traditional conceptual model so that it is teacher- and school-centric rather than district-centric. This culture shift would incorporate professional learning into the teachers’ work rather than keeping it outside as an extra. Professional learning must be part of what schools do and the structures of the Department of Education and districts need to be designed to build capacity at the school level. Within this model, the principal is the instructional leader in the school and responsible for establishing a culture of teacher learning. The teachers as articulated in Article 28.01 (a)(ii) of the Collective Agreement identify their own learning needs. This perspective still requires the content and pedagogical experiences of the district program specialists to help teachers improve their practice.

This teacher-centred school-based model must operate within the context of a larger district and provincial culture that encourages teacher learning, is responsive to teacher voice in determining what they need to learn, and uses virtual as well as face-to-face opportunities for communication, sharing of resources, and dialogue about instructional practices. The model includes coaching and practice in a collaborative environment supporting teacher expertise and student learning. Within this context, the teachers' Individual Learning Plan frames the dialogue between the principal and teacher in identifying and implementing teacher learning goals. The Committee notes that only 54-61% (lowest in 7-12) of school administrators meet one-on-one with teachers to review their learning plan and is of the view that every principal should follow this practice. The Individual Learning Plan should reflect teacher interest, the learning needs of the school, and overall needs and strategies as identified in the strategic plan of the district and the province.

Within a context of learning opportunities, the first level of professional learning occurs with the individual teacher. This relates to a mindset of reflection, inquiry, and understanding that the change can only begin with the individual.

The second level of professional learning is between and among teachers in a school. Organized and consistent collaboration of this nature, led by the principal and focused on improving student learning, comprises what we have come to know as a professional learning community.

The third level of professional learning occurs through virtual or in person collaboration with those outside the school. An effective school district is one in which the professional learning community extends further to embrace input and expertise from other teachers, district office staff, and, by digital access, to the provincial, national, and international education community.

Accessing district supports and external collaboration is assisted by structure and procedure. The Committee offers a view as to how this should be done, realizing that the step-by-step approach outlined here for purposes of clarity may need to be varied in some circumstances:

1. Prompted by teacher requests or by their own observations, the principal identifies a teacher learning need in the school and, seeing no immediate solution within the school itself, works through the Director of Schools to identify appropriate support. At that point, the Director of Schools, along with the principal, identifies an appropriate program specialist in a subject area, grade level area, or other specialty (e.g., program specialist for student support services, SLP) to work collaboratively with the teacher in the school. Such collaboration could be in person or virtual, according to the nature of the need.
2. A program specialist who has contact with teachers in a school (through professional development, committees, and other avenues) may recognize that assistance is needed. Communication and coordination are essential so that the Director of Schools, Program Specialist, and Principal are working together. It is noted that, within the collective agreement, the Program Specialist is an administrator of programs with responsibility to ensure that the effective teaching of the programs occurs within a specified geographical jurisdiction.
3. The need for professional learning and collaboration in a particular school or family of schools may be greater than program specialists and other district specialists can accommodate. Directors of Schools, with the assistance of the program specialists, can

identify exemplary teachers in other schools who can collaborate with a teacher to improve teaching in a subject area, or to improve a generic aspect of teaching (e.g., classroom management, multi-grade teaching). Such mentoring opportunities require, in some instances, release time and substitute teacher expenditure for the mentor. The Committee is mindful of the current substitute teacher availability and of the potential disruption to the classes of the teacher who is serving as a mentor for another teacher in another school. In some situations, mentoring opportunities may occur outside the instructional day.

Families of schools might benefit from continuity, where possible, with specific program specialists within a region. However, the overall guiding principle should be the assigning/intervention of a program specialist or other support according to the need. The Committee is of the view that district office supports change over time to reflect the need. Pedagogical growth will always be necessary and desired by teachers, and external support is an important part of that. With teacher turnover, new teachers, teachers taking on new courses, and the continuous strive for innovation and excellence, collaboration and support at every level will continue to be essential.

The school-based professional learning model is comprised of the following elements:

1. The principal as the instructional leader
2. Professional learning for school administrators as a priority
3. Professional standards for teacher professional learning and professional learning opportunities (which are already in development of part of the Education Action Plan)
4. Mentoring/coaching by other teachers, school administrators, and program specialists to allow teachers to build expertise
5. Release time, availability of substitute teachers and/or monetary supports for mentoring and coaching
6. Active engagement of subject area and other program specialists in mentoring/coaching to build teacher expertise in pedagogical content knowledge/implementation
7. Active engagement of program specialists and Directors of Schools in the development and implementation of teacher professional development opportunities
8. Use of technology for both informal and formal professional learning with synchronous and asynchronous components (through the Department's professional learning website as well as CDLI)
9. Community members with expertise in areas such as emerging technologies to engage in teacher professional learning as recommended in *The Big Reset* (Government of NL, 2021)
10. A focus on emerging needs as identified by the Department, the school districts, and the schools (e.g., mental health, ESL, and technology integration)
11. Teacher professional learning and expectations for instruction include adjustments to teaching and to classroom processes made possible by smaller class size.

For school-based professional learning, the principal is the instructional leader, and the principal and assistant principal must manage the school. For this model to be most effective, school administrators are outside the teachers' collective bargaining unit. Other provinces have taken similar steps in recent years (e.g., Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, and British Columbia). *The Big Reset* (Government of NL, 2021) recommended that principals and other management not be part of the union that represents all teachers. As members of the same union, administrators may be in conflict with the people they supervise, making it difficult to address issues among their staff and students. As part of the senior management team, school administrators can provide instructional leadership and manage their schools without fear of conflict.

The Committee heard that various professional groups, including program specialists, feel somewhat disconnected from the senior administration. The Committee is of the view that program specialists, in particular, must be tightly connected to the senior administrative initiatives of the school district. This would be mutually beneficial – allowing program specialists to be aligned with district initiatives and ensuring that senior administrators receive the full benefit of the pedagogical knowledge of program specialists, lending more depth and insight to administrative initiatives. Given the recognized role of program specialists as administrators of programs within the system, their positioning as inside or outside of the union should also be examined.

In addition to the issues associated with the roles and responsibilities of district-level program staff, the Committee also heard calls for greater oversight from the Department of Education. More than one group suggested that the districts and the Department seemed to have different priorities, creating conflict for their work, and that better communication between the two organizations is desirable. With these points in mind, the Committee considered the program staff at the Department of Education.

While it has been noted earlier that some curriculum areas need renewal, others are relatively new and further development in these subject areas will likely be minimal for the next three to five years. In either case, activity in curriculum development is low and may remain at this level for several years. A current priority for the Department of Education is to digitalize curriculum documents and other resources, suggesting that the curriculum renewal schedule may be on hold as the digital presence evolves into a new development model. This slowdown has the potential to engage program development specialists in related work to help ensure successful implementation of existing programs. With the development and implementation of the Education Action Plan (2018), the Department of Education is already involved in the creation of professional standards of practice for teacher librarians, as well as work related to reading specialists, teaching and learning assistants, and English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers.

The Committee envisions a multidimensional approach with Department of Education consultants and district program specialists working together with the schools' professional learning efforts, providing support and assistance with implementing school development plans, and focusing on the needs of teachers as it relates to curriculum, instruction and assessment. While the Department consultants continue to have provincial responsibilities for curriculum

development, test development, policy development, and other provincial initiatives, they will work more closely with district program staff to develop and implement professional learning.

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

- 23. The Department of Education, in collaboration with the school districts, develop a Teacher-Centred, School-Based Professional Learning Model as outlined in this report.**
  - a. The Department of Education develop a support plan for a Teacher-Centred, School-Based Professional Learning Model that outlines clear procedures and lines of responsibilities for the provision and use of resources to support professional learning communities and teacher mentors.**
  - b. A program specialist from those who are currently responsible for K – 6/K – 12 programs be deployed to a family of schools to support the professional learning in each school and to coordinate learning opportunities for teachers.**
  - c. Subject area program specialists continue to work with teachers in a region, or multiple families of schools, with a continued, increased focus on classroom pedagogical excellence in each of the subject areas.**
- 24. The program specialists' positions responsible for mathematics and reading for the implementation of the Education Action Plan continue over the next three years at which time a formal evaluation of the effectiveness of these positions to build capacity at the school level is carried out. The outcomes of the evaluation will inform future direction for teacher professional learning in reading and mathematics.**
- 25. As key drivers of instructional change, program specialists be aligned more effectively with, and engage in regular dialogue with, the senior administration.**
- 26. The Department of Education, in collaboration with NLES, conduct an evaluation of the roles and responsibilities and effectiveness of the program itinerants for student support services.**
- 27. Department consultants responsible for areas of identified needs within a particular discipline collaborate with subject area program specialists to provide teacher professional learning. Some of this already occurs, e.g., teacher librarians, ESL, and reading.**

## Chapter 8 Instructional Focus

An earlier teacher allocation review (Government of NL, 2007) addressed the necessity of a coherent instructional focus at the school and district level, and of educational leadership to ensure this focus. It drew on the work of Fullan (2001) and Childress et al. (2006) to illustrate how district and school leadership, and coherent instructional guidance can foster improvement in teaching and learning. The Committee endorses this analysis and finds it relevant and important today. More recent research adds to our understanding of what comprises exemplary teaching and how we create the expectation, support, and conditions for such teaching to occur in every classroom.

### Active Focused Teaching

There is an emerging consensus, based on research evidence, around what constitutes effective teaching. Most notably, Hattie and his colleagues have synthesized over 1,600 meta-analyses relating to influences on student achievement and continues to expand that database with further analysis (e.g., Hattie & Hamilton, 2020; Hamilton & Hattie, 2021). These studies, and others, indicate that “active focused teaching” (Hattie, 2009, p. 243) is more effective than unguided or less guided models.

The methods that work best, as identified from the synthesis of meta-analyses, lead to a very active, direct involvement, and high sense of agency, in the learning and teaching process. Such teaching leads to higher levels of learning, autonomy, and self-regulation on behalf of the learner (whether student or teacher). (Hattie, 2009, pp. 243-244)

Hattie (2009, 2012) uses the term visible teaching and learning to describe the most effective approaches:

Visible teaching and learning occurs when learning is the explicit goal, when it is appropriately challenging, when the teacher and the student both (in their various ways) seek to ascertain whether and to what degree the challenging goal is attained, when there is deliberate practice aimed at attaining mastery of the goal, when there is feedback given and sought, and when there are active, passionate and engaging people (teacher, student peers, and so on) participating in the act of learning. (Hattie, 2009, p. 32)

### High Leverage Strategies

High leverage teaching strategies include clarity of learning intentions and success criteria and involving students in establishing these intentions and criteria. Other strategies include deliberate practice, group work, and various levels of feedback. Teaching metacognitive strategies to students helps them become more deliberate in applying and monitoring their own learning processes (Marzano et al., 2001; Hattie, 2009, 2012; Hattie & Yates, 2014; Hamilton & Hattie, 2021).

Experiential learning opportunities and the use of technology to engage in real world problems also contribute to student engagement and success. Hattie and Hamilton (2020) point to a school's collective efficacy as the strongest determinant of student learning. Collective efficacy is established by effective collaboration among teachers, along the lines of what other researchers refer to as professional learning communities.

Hattie (2015a, b, c) and his associates emphasize using data to make effective interventions in learning. Hattie recommends teacher or standardized assessments to determine what students are learning and how to best assist and challenge them in moving forward. Teacher interventions play an important role in effective teaching and learning. Of effective teachers, Hattie (2009) writes:

The act of teaching requires deliberate interventions to ensure that there is cognitive change in the student: thus the key ingredients are awareness of the learning intentions, knowing when a student is unsuccessful in attaining those intentions, having sufficient understanding as he or she comes to the task, and knowing enough about the content to provide meaningful and challenging experiences in some sort of progressive development. It involves an experienced teacher who knows a range of learning strategies to provide the student when they seem not to understand, to provide direction and re-direction in terms of the content being understood and thus maximize the power of feedback, and having the skill to “get out of the way” when learning is progressing towards the success criteria. (Hattie, 2009, p. 3)

## Surface, Deep, and Transfer Learning

Hattie (2015b, c) distinguishes among surface, deep, and transfer learning. The learner's task is to develop sufficient surface or foundational knowledge to move to deeper learning in order to transfer learning. The challenge is knowing when and how to move students from foundational learning to deeper learning. Some educational movements have attempted to introduce deeper learning without a sufficient foundational base. Hattie and Donoghue (2016) maintain, for example, that one cannot teach generic thinking skills – thinking depends on the content and subject context. Prior to critical thinking, one must have something to critique. Initially, students may need overt instruction, practice, and mastery of concepts so that they can apply these foundational skills automatically in problem-solving and eventual discovery. Deeper knowledge and transfer are built on the surface knowledge.

Hattie and Hamilton (2020) illustrate “structuring for deep on top of surface learning” (p. 23):

When teachers have developed the learning sequence in such a way that students first develop relevant and needed surface knowledge (the content or ideas) and then go on to develop deeper understandings (relate and extend these ideas), this combination of surface to deep learning can have a significant impact on improving student learning outcome. (Hattie & Hamilton, 2020, p. 23)

## New Pedagogies Using Technology

Fullan and his colleagues (e.g., Fullan et al., 2018; Quinn et al., 2020) have focused on deep learning in their research and global initiatives. They are at the centre of a global partnership committed to implementing change across several countries, including Canada. The global partnership is called New Pedagogies for Deep Learning and works with clusters of schools in many countries to identify new pedagogies and technologies to improve instruction, and to leverage educational change.

Fullan and his team are partnering with NLES, using a number of research materials and tools (e.g., Quinn et al., 2020) to implement deep learning strategies in schools in NL. The Deep Learning framework is based on the global competencies for deep learning as well as the four elements of learning design: learning partnerships, learning environments, leveraging digital, and pedagogical practices. Students are intended to progress in deep learning in each of the six global competencies: character, citizenship, collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking. A major focus of this initiative is to build school and district capacity for deep learning.

Technology facilitates and provides easier access to new pedagogies and approaches to teaching/learning. Fullan and Langworthy (2014) predict that these technologies and pedagogies will be driven in part by students themselves as they search for more engagement and relevance in their learning.

Fullan and Langworthy envision “a new model of learning partnerships between and among students and teachers, aiming towards deep learning goals enabled by pervasive digital access” (p.2). In addition to learning with students, teachers can use technology to provide more immediate feedback. Students can use technology to research new information and solutions, and to extend learning to outside the classroom. Fullan and Langworthy write:

In the past, what most educators meant by the term “applying knowledge” was working on tasks or solving problems to demonstrate mastery of concepts. But the solutions remained within the boundaries of textbooks, classrooms, and schools. Digital access makes it possible for students to apply their solutions to real-world problems with authentic audiences well beyond the boundaries of their schools. This is the real potential of technology to affect learning - not to facilitate the delivery and consumption of knowledge, but to enable students to use their knowledge in the world. (2014, p.4)

## Instructional Focus in NL

Principals indicated in the teacher allocation review surveys that the school districts provide support and assistance (76-85%) as well as clear direction on learning priorities (71-81%). There was somewhat less agreement that the district provides clear direction on instruction (56-68% - lowest in Grades 7-9) and student assessment (58-66% - lowest in Grades 7-9).

In the teacher surveys, only 35.7-40.1% agree that the districts provide clear direction on learning priorities, with Grades 7-9 teachers having the lowest percentage of agreement and Grades K-6 the highest; 32-42.5% of teachers said that the districts provide clear direction on

instruction, with Grades K-6 teachers having the highest percentage; and 30.8-38.5% agreed that the districts provide clear direction on student assessment with, again, Grades K-6 teachers expressing the most agreement.

The Committee recognizes the leadership of the Department of Education and the school districts in their instructional initiatives. However, the Committee is of the view that the instructional focus in NL should be clearly communicated and consistent with the curriculum and assessment initiatives of the province as well as relevant research findings.

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

**28. The Department of Education:**

- a. through the curriculum, emphasize the importance of both foundational and deep learning, and provide practical strategies for implementation; and
- b. in collaboration with the school districts, communicate clearly on the importance of the continuum of learning, the necessity of foundational/surface learning and deep learning, and that learning strategies are best developed within a particular program and subject context.

**29. Professional learning opportunities for teachers:**

- a. focus on high leverage strategies for surface and deep learning in the context of particular programs and subjects; and
- b. emphasize and model how deep learning can/should be implemented within regular programs and subject areas, and in concert with surface/foundational learning.

**30. Technology be promoted and supported as a means to improve teaching and learning in all programs and subjects.**

## Technology Support for Learning

New pedagogies using technology are only possible when supported by appropriate technology supports in the system. Technology teachers and their roles and responsibilities vary and in many instances are ill-defined. In Grades 7 – 12, technology teachers teach the prescribed technology and skilled trades curriculum. Across the subject areas and grade levels, many teachers employ the use of technology as a pedagogical tool. A third group of teachers who have in-depth understanding and capability with technology perform the duties of a technology technician. While they have no official role, they provide support to the school network, maintain school websites and repair hardware for students and teachers. NLES defence has 31 computer support positions, including some vacancies, responsible for supporting schools with each position assigned to a family of schools. In the absence of such support, some schools have assigned teaching allocations to complete these tasks.

During its consultations, the Committee heard of both the successes and challenges that teachers and students encountered during the pandemic and the subsequent switch to remote learning. The move to virtual delivery required teachers to learn different pedagogical methods, and to support their students in learning through online platforms. Teacher professional learning to integrate technology into their teaching was minimal as the staff at the districts and schools

worked together to prepare for the switch to remote learning. The Committee heard from many teachers across all disciplines that they felt unprepared for such a departure from in-person teaching but confidence grew with time; and teachers built their own community of learners in technology with an improved system of teachers helping teachers. It is now recognized that the employment of technology is part of teachers' instructional practice.

The Department of Education through its Education Action Plan and other initiatives has made a substantial commitment to technology in our schools. An investment of \$20 million provided approximately 30,000 Chromebooks to students in Grades 7 – 12 and Windows 10 laptops to teachers and advanced the system closer to a digital learning environment. The Department has also formed different partnerships – the College of the North Atlantic for the Technology Career Pathway (TCP) program; Skills Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador; and Brilliant Labs, an Atlantic Canadian-based organization with a focus on developing students' coding and digital skills. The technology component of the Education Action Plan also has a focus on teacher professional learning with efforts to provide web-based learning opportunities both in school and at home.

The range and breadth of programs and initiatives is considerable. To ensure that efforts continue to grow and succeed, a strategic approach with appropriate staffing levels is warranted. The lessons learned from the disruptions to teaching and learning during the pandemic create an opportunity for change. Both school districts have technology specialists in their programs divisions. CSFP has one IT manager and NLES has three program specialists with some responsibilities for technology integration. The technology itinerants with NLES are responsible for coding or Power School. While many areas of technology exist, the system would be well served with more cohesion, and the Committee heard a call for a system-wide technology strategy. There have been many technology plans and strategies at the Department, district, and school levels. Each plan has outlived itself since technology is developing so rapidly. This is an opportune time to review comprehensively where we are with technology and to develop strategies for the future, with a focus on supporting new pedagogies through technology.

In its consultations, the Premier's Economic Recovery Team (PERT) heard concerns raised by employers and parents regarding a lack of computer skills among teachers and a lack of entrepreneurial spirit in graduating students.

The province's education system must help students acquire technology and adaptive skills, as well as the ability and expectation to continue to learn skills that will fire the new economy. As highlighted by the World Economic Forum, the labour market will require that workers adapt quickly to new technologies, be innovative and creative, and have a strong foundation in math and science. The education system, both in its curriculum and teaching methods, must foster these skills and knowledge. (Government of NL, 2021, p. 146)

Further to that, PERT recommended:

Adapt the curriculum to better prepare children for the advanced technological economy, provide them with needed skills in math, science, reading and computer science, and promote self-managed learning and entrepreneurship. (Government of NL, 2021, p. 148)

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

31. **The Department of Education in collaboration with school districts develop a technology integration framework that incorporates content, pedagogy, different learning models (e.g., remote, hybrid), the necessary enabling technology to influence pedagogy, replenishment plans for student and teacher equipment, maintenance of the school computer labs, protocols on administrative rights to school servers, partnerships with industry and other agencies, and specialized technologies such as augmentative communication devices.**
32. **The Department of Education investigate why the available computer support for schools is not having its intended effect and take the necessary steps to remediate the lack of computer support schools currently receive.**
33. **The Department of Education work with the school districts to extend the Help Desk to include a 1-800 Hotline that schools can use to receive a timely response and the technical support required.**

## **Student Assessment**

The Committee regards student assessment to be extremely important from at least two perspectives.

1. As Hattie and others point out, measuring student learning allows the teacher to adjust instruction. Hattie (2015c) illustrates how teachers can use school assessment and evaluation tools to assist in diagnoses and interventions at the school level. Teachers and schools are encouraged to compute effect sizes for their own student's learning based on the comparison of two or more sets of student achievement data over time. Data from teacher assessments or standardized assessments could be used for these purposes at the school level.
2. Student assessment is crucial in determining the improvement and success of the system. Government may add resources to the system, for the improvement of reading or for some other initiative or a school may strive to implement a particular approach to learning, again with great human effort and financial expense. Data on student success are required to measure the impact of such initiatives. Student assessment includes in-class, in-school, provincial, and international assessment.

The Department of Education has released the Provincial Reading and Mathematics Assessment (PRMA) Framework outlining the purposes and procedures for testing at the end of Grades 3, 6, and 9. This document states that the PRMA is “an assessment which provides only provincial level data” and is not “an assessment which provides school or individual student level data” (p. 2). This approach will be less useful than it could be. While assessing the general achievement level in the province, these tests fail to provide schools with data that could be used at the school and regional levels for analysis and intervention. In addition, these data could be useful in adjusting resources and efforts of the Department of Education to meet the needs of particular schools, regions, or category of students.

NLESĐ appears to have taken the position that provincial assessment is somehow detrimental to teaching and learning. In its position paper entitled “Reimagining Learning”, the school district asserts that the elimination of public exams during COVID has allowed teaching that is more engaging and successful, and that public exams should be discontinued into the future.

The Committee offers this view.

1. We do not see accountability in some way the opponent of creativity, critical thinking, or any of the other important competencies that students should attain. On the contrary, innovative and engaging teaching is the best route to student learning as demonstrated in many ways, including through appropriate provincial assessments. Similarly, appropriate assessments ensure that innovative approaches to teaching are indeed well structured and successful in grounding the student in both foundational skills and deep learning competencies.
2. The province should seek to avoid a long educational history, in this jurisdiction and many others, of innovations that have failed because their proponents have resisted the use of evidence to determine success.

The Government is enhancing its focus on student career development, and on providing opportunities for students in the economic and social development of the province. For this, the province needs to be guided by data measuring success. Currently, the province lacks sufficient data on where our students go, or what they do, after they finish Grade 12. This is a gap in assessing the success of the school system and planning for the economic and social development of the province. The capacity of students to transition to further education, apprenticeships, or the workforce is a measure of success. At the moment, there are significant resource efforts to provide appropriate pathways for students without measuring the ultimate impact.

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

34. **The Department of Education, in its strategic plan, state its position on the relationship between teacher innovation and accountability, foundational and deep learning, and provincial assessment and student learning.**
35. **End of level assessments (Grades 3, 6, and 9) be designed to provide individual school data for purposes of school analysis and improvement, and for the assessment and improvement of program and human resource initiatives in the system.**
36. **The Department of Education continue to conduct provincial assessments at the high school level.**
37. **Data be collected in the year(s) following student graduation to assess student progress towards further education or employment. This initiative should provide regional data, analysis according to vocation/profession, and other metrics, to assist in provincial initiatives, school initiatives, and the welfare of individual students and categories of students.**

## Graduation Process

Thirty student success teachers were allocated in 2021-22 with 55 teachers working either full time or part time with students in the PASS (Positive Action for Student Success) program. Those at the high school level described their many efforts and successes in helping students who have trouble with school attendance and academic achievement. The Evaluation and Research Division, Department of Education has been collecting data on the program for high school students since its beginning and the indicators also show that it is effective in supporting students. Most of them work in one school and provide support to students through credit rescue and/or recovery. Others work in junior high schools where the focus is the transition from Grade 9 to 10. This program is one offered in schools based on the learning needs of at-risk students. During our focus group session with student success teachers, it was clear that the high school teachers knew what they were doing, but that for some of the junior high teachers, their role was not as clear. The established high school student success teachers felt that the program had expanded to junior high without sufficient preparation, definition, and support for the new intermediate student success teachers.

These teachers at all grades provide instruction to individual students or to a small group of students and monitor student progress. They also engage in transition planning, information sharing, and building community partnerships. The teachers feel that there is not a good understanding about the program. For example, the PASS program may exist in a feeder school but not the senior high where the student is enrolled which means the student has lost the support. There is a large turnover of teachers assigned to the program from year to year, creating inconsistencies. Like other groups, concerns regarding a lack of oversight at the district or department level and partial positions were raised.

As the program continues to grow, more teaching resources will be needed. CDLI has already developed content for a suite of courses designed for students in the program to be used asynchronously and is part of the solution for a sustained program. It has the infrastructure and the course content, and it already has one student success teacher on staff.

The need for the PASS program and its ongoing success speak to other issues at the junior high level. There is no option in junior high for students who struggle with the regular curriculum. This creates challenges for students who will likely avail of the general program in high school. The current program does not work for them. The Committee also heard from teachers and school administrators that the intermediate program is not working. A single program, outdated curriculum, large class sizes and multiple learning needs were some of the identified issues.

More flexibility might be desirable in providing appropriate pathways for students disengaged from the school system and interested in vocational careers. As an example, New Brunswick has introduced an initiative in which some teacher time is spent linking students to appropriate apprenticeships or vocational courses for which the students receive high school credit. The intent of this program is not to replace the high school teacher, but to redistribute a part of the high school teacher's time to linking students to other appropriate avenues and institutions. This is not to diminish the value of the current high school courses, but to welcome opportunities in

which experiences external to the high school may be more beneficial and engaging for some students. The Premier's Economic Recovery Team also recognized the effectiveness of the PASS teachers to support students who are at risk of leaving schools and recommended:

Formalize an approach for community-based partners to work with youth to offer alternative education settings for 16- to 19-year-olds who are struggling in the traditional classroom. (p. 148)

The Committee recognizes that the arrangement described above may have more applicability to some urban areas where post-secondary vocational training is available. Considerable thought and planning would have to be applied, not only to those circumstances, but also to more rural areas where external educational opportunities might be more limited. Nevertheless, the Committee recommends that such avenues should be provided for those geographic areas where they are available.

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

- 38. The Department of Education allocate student success teachers for schools with Grades 7 – 12 based on student learning needs.**
  - a. The Department of Education establish a protocol and application process for schools to access the program.
  - b. The PASS program for high school be updated outlining criteria and eligibility for program offering.
  - c. The PASS program for junior high be developed outlining course design, timelines, protocols for maintaining the integrity and validity of the curriculum and for student assessment and evaluation.
- 39. The Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation**
  - a. further develop content for the PASS program and implement an interface that is accessible to PASS students and teachers; and
  - b. extend its program offerings to PASS students in schools below the threshold for 0.25 teaching unit as determined through the needs-based analysis with the Teaching Services Director.
- 40. The Evaluation and Research Division through the Manager of High School Certification assume a lead role for managing the PASS program.**
- 41. The Department of Education undertake a review of junior high program that includes but is not limited to: the curriculum, supports for students to achieve success in the program, instructional cycles, learning spaces and settings, modes of instruction, use of technology, and transition to high school.**
- 42. The Department of Education examine the New Brunswick model, as well as similar models elsewhere, to further determine the feasibility of providing more appropriate vocational and apprenticeship pathways that are also credited for high school graduation.**

## Reading

The Premier's Task Force Report (2017) identified reading as a challenge for students in Newfoundland and Labrador. The authors of that report reviewed frameworks and approaches adopted by Ministries of Education across Canada at that time. They wrote:

The common elements of these programs are: collaboration between the classroom teacher and reading specialists for planning and instructional delivery; clear expectations for reading at the end of each grade level; varying intensity based on the learning needs of the child; a focus on phonics/decoding, comprehension and fluency; opportunities to learn in small groups or individually on a daily basis, located either inside or outside the regular classroom; and, monitoring of progress. (p.64)

In recommending the assigning of reading specialists to schools and school districts, the Task Force recognized that many teachers and some program specialists needed professional learning and education in current research-based approaches to reading. The Task Force recommended:

48. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development explore options with Memorial University's Faculty of Education or another Canadian university for a graduate level specialization program to prepare reading specialists. (p.77)

From our consultations, the Committee has concluded that there is not a clear, instructional message in the school system regarding the teaching of reading. Speech language pathologists, reading specialists and some parents and other stakeholders spoke of the need for greater application of explicit research-based approaches in reading instruction.

Based on consultations, the Committee is of the view that the addition of reading specialists to schools has been a positive move; however, there is yet no evidence on the impact of this investment. As part of the Education Action Plan (2018), 104 reading specialists were introduced into the province's K – 6 classrooms over a three-year period. Additionally, district-level reading specialists were put in place, one for each region to oversee the work of the school-based reading specialists and provide leadership and professional learning. In consultations with K-6 teachers and the reading specialists themselves, the Committee was told that their success depends very much on the school and the classroom. The reading specialists felt that there is ambiguity in their roles and that not all teachers understood how to use the reading specialists effectively.

The Committee also believes that the implementation of graduate programs in reading at Memorial University is a positive step and recognizes that it takes time to shift approaches. However, the apparent lack of alignment and coherence on philosophy and strategies relating to reading is a concern given the importance of reading to overall student achievement, and the resources provided to the system following the Task Force Report.

The Committee recognizes that reading proficiency is closely connected to development in writing and in oral language. Writing reinforces vocabulary, story structure, organization, and other aspects of reading, and vice versa. In addition, oral language is the foundation of language learning. When the Kindergarten English Language Arts curriculum was implemented in 2014, a huge emphasis was placed on the importance of oral language during the professional learning sessions. Videos focusing on the importance of storytelling, rhymes, chants and songs were developed and made available on the professional learning site. Emphasis was placed on the importance of developing receptive and expressive skills through intentional teaching.

Oral language development was a subject of discussion in the consultations. Added to the overall concern regarding oral language development, students who entered kindergarten in 2019-20 have been wearing masks for three years and that has slowed down their language development. Unable to see mouth formation when speaking and hearing sounds, experiencing fewer social interactions, and having limited access to resources as many materials were removed from the kindergarten classrooms affected oral language development for these cohorts of students. While the English language arts curriculum in kindergarten does not specify time allotments for oral language versus reading and writing, oral language development should have the most substantial time. Without strong oral language skills, it is difficult to develop readers and writers.

The speech language pathologists expressed concern about the language development of children entering the school system. During Kinderstart, they observe overall delay in speech and language skills. Many children are coming into kindergarten without a strong foundation in oral language and may not be ready for the reading and writing curriculum outcomes. They propose a greater focus on oral language development in the kindergarten year and that professional learning for kindergarten and primary teachers in oral language development be provided.

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

**43. The Department of Education undertake a formal evaluation of the school-based reading specialists' initiative to determine the effectiveness of the program. This evaluation must include student achievement measures that can be obtained through a full census administration of the reading component of the Provincial Reading and Mathematics Assessment, and a review of district-based and school-based reading specialists. This evaluation should be undertaken in the 2022-23 school year.**

**a. The 2021-22 allocation for reading specialists be maintained until the evaluation has been done. The results of the evaluation should inform future direction. The Department of Education allocate reading specialists as follows:**

Number of Students	Reading Specialists
< 51	0.25
51 – 200	0.50
>200	1.0

44. The Department of Education and the school districts articulate the importance of systematic and explicit instruction in all reading components in its curriculum documents and other communications.
45. Reading program specialists and school-based reading specialists be required to have ongoing professional learning through, or consistent with, MUN's graduate programs in reading.
46. Classroom teachers be encouraged to acquire professional learning through, or consistent with, MUN's graduate programs in reading.
47. The Department of Education emphasize oral language development in English Language Arts instructional time for kindergarten children and recommend that at least 50% of the kindergarten English Language Arts instructional time be dedicated to oral language development.
48. The Department of Education, in collaboration with the school districts, develop a 'catch-up' plan in oral language and reading and writing development for the cohort of primary children affected by the global pandemic.

## Chapter 9

# Proposed Teacher Allocation Model

Based on the research findings related to class size and composition, a pan-Canadian jurisdictional review of allocation models, what the committee heard through its surveys and consultations, and in response to recently identified student needs, the Committee proposes a teacher allocation model built on the following guiding principles and contingent conditions:

1. The teacher allocation model considers both class size and composition.
2. Class size maximums continue to be the standard for teacher allocations in Grades K-9.
3. The teacher allocation model recognizes the different needs of small schools and medium/large schools.
4. The teacher allocation model recognizes that Le Conseil scolaire francophone provincial de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador (CSFP) has unique needs and require some flexibility for its teacher allocations for teaching units other than those for classroom teachers.
5. The class size maximums for classrooms in Newfoundland and Labrador fall in line with those in other Canadian provinces.
6. The Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends the proposed teacher allocation model, subject to the following changes and initiatives in human resource management:
  - a. Changes in teacher hiring practices, as recommended in this Report
  - b. Other improvements in human resources management, as recommended in this Report.

### Class Size and Composition

The Committee has reviewed the teacher allocation practices of other provinces and examined scholarly research on both class size and composition. It heard from teachers, administrators, parents and other stakeholders that class size is an issue in large schools and in French immersion classes, that it is particularly problematic in primary grades, and that the numbers in some intermediate grades are unmanageable. The data show that 6.2% of K – 9 classes are above the class cap, with 3.9% at elementary, 4.7% at intermediate, and almost 10% in primary classes.

The Committee also heard how the composition of the classrooms affects teaching and learning and that classroom teachers, instructional resource teachers, student assistants and others struggled daily to manage disruptive behaviour and to meet the needs of all learners.

Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:

49. The Department of Education set the class size maximum for K – 9 classes as outlined below:

**Class Size Maximums Grades K – 9**

Grade Level	Class Size Maximum
Kindergarten	18
Grades 1 & 2	20
Grade 3	22
Grade 4	26
Grades 5 and 6	27
Grades 7 to 9	29

50. The Lieutenant-Governor in Council make regulations as authorized under The Schools Act (1997), Sec. 118. (1) (a) pertaining to teacher allocations to guarantee year over year stability to the school system. These regulations include but not be limited to:
- The recommended class size maximums be maintained until there is sufficient research-based evidence about the effectiveness of the class size maximum initiative to warrant change.
  - To provide Government evidence of the impact of class size maximums, the Department of Education regularly evaluates student achievement and progress as well as student behaviour.
  - School districts can have no more than 10% of the classes in a particular school exceed the class size maximum.
  - In extenuating circumstances (e.g., an unanticipated influx of students including ESL students or considering contextual factors within a community), exceptions can be made through consultations with the Department of Education.
  - The number of students scheduled in a laboratory, shop, or other specialized classroom shall consider the capacity of the learning environment to ensure student safety.
  - These class size maximums apply to English only classes and French immersion classes.
  - School districts use combined classes to meet these caps.
51. The Department of Education discontinue the practice of allowing the cap to exceed by two students.
52. Class sizes for Grades 10 – 12 will continue to be determined using a student-teacher ratio.
- The class size maximum for any high school class is 32 unless the school demonstrates that extending beyond the class cap improves learning opportunities for students (e.g., participation in a band program).

- 53. Any classroom that has 25% or more of its students with a recognized/documentedExceptionality that impacts on whole class learning/classroom management or documented severe behavioural issues, the classroom shall be split for that school year.**
- a. **At the end of each school year, an evaluation of the composition of the classes in the schools is carried out to inform future planning that minimizes the need to split classes.**

### Multi-Grades

The student enrolment for the 2021-2022 school year was 63,534 (NL Department of Education, 2022). These students receive their educational programs in 257 schools across the province, 251 with NLES and six with CSFP. School size varies greatly from very small schools with fewer than 50 students to large with 400 or more students as shown in the table below:

**Table 9:  
School Size<sup>10</sup>**

	<50	50 – 99	100 – 199	200 – 299	300 – 399	400 +
Number of schools	43	34	48	48	26	60
Percentage of schools	16.7	13.2	18.7	18.7	10.1	23.3

For the <50 category, 20 schools have fewer than 25 students including nine with fewer than 10 students. For these small schools, multi-grading and using CDLI for high school offerings is not only common but necessary. To illustrate the challenges of delivering programs in these small schools, it is useful to examine the distribution of student enrolment across grades in the smallest of these schools.

**Table 10:  
Small School Enrolment, Student Enrolment < 10**

School	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
1		2												2
2		1				2								3
3		1								1		1		3
4		1	1			2								4
5							1	1	1	1				4
6	1		1				1		1			1		5
7					5		1		1			1		5
8				1	1		1		1			2		6
9		1	2			1	4							8

<sup>10</sup> Based on September 30, 2021 Annual General Return Department of Education

Overall, 238 schools offer Grades K – 9 with 83 of them using multi-grade classes and 40 with combined grades. The multi-grade classes are found in small schools where student enrolments by grade level fall below a reasonable threshold for single grades as shown in the table above. With the global trend to urbanization and centralization of systems, jurisdictions worldwide are seeking solutions to the provision of effective educational opportunities for students in rural areas. Across Canada, many small rural schools are limited on how many subjects/programs they can offer. Since COVID, both students and teachers are more familiar with virtual learning and can form part of the solution for small rural schools that have challenges to recruit teachers and offer curriculum/programs. Here is a summary of some of the solutions for rural education in Canadian and other jurisdictions.

*British Columbia's Rural Education Report* (2017) outlines strategies such as developing local partnerships to improve learning opportunities for students in rural schools. *Australia's Country Education Strategy, 2021 – 2028*, envisions increased flexibility for program delivery, enhanced tele-practice for student services, and local participation in country schools. In Finland, small rural schools have responsibility for developing their own curricula based on national guidelines and the national core curriculum. This model allows schools to focus on their own educational aims and school improvement strategies (Kalaoja & Pietarinen, 2009).

New Zealand (NZ Government, 2022) has a national policy that places control of curriculum development and implementation in the hands of schools themselves. The curriculum sets the direction for teaching and learning, the principals set the direction for student learning and provide guidance for their schools. This provides flexibility for the development of a school curriculum that may best meet the needs of their students and may promote collaboration and engagement between school personnel and rural communities, which may lead to a more successful school curriculum.

In Alberta, teachers deliver the same curriculum to students in all schools, but school authorities have the flexibility to use resources and various delivery methods as long as the curriculum outcomes are covered. Alberta Education's *Rural and Remote Education Report* (2010) indicated that some school divisions plan alternative school curriculum with their rural schools through consultations with the community members and develop local curriculum reflecting the culture and community goals. In Alberta Education's *Impact of Schools on Rural Communities Study Report* (2017), it shows that rural community and school leaders have implemented varied strategies to sustain their schools for adaptability and innovation including developing expertise in virtual course delivery, literacy and metacognition initiatives, and core curriculum focus.

As noted earlier in this report, the Ministerial Panel on Educational Delivery in the Classroom (2000) made several recommendations on multi-level classes including: developing policies and procedures to guide the planning and delivery of multi-level classes, providing specific suggestions and concrete illustrations in the curriculum for its delivery in classrooms with two or more grades, providing resources to teachers and students in multi-level settings, and developing a teacher resource handbook. More than twenty years later, there is no clear evidence that these were acted upon. Additionally, it made recommendations related to pre-service preparation and professional learning on multi-level teaching. Memorial University's

Faculty of Education does offer a course on effective teaching strategies for multi-grade/multi-age classrooms for Grades K – 9 pre-service teachers; however, this is an optional course.

Students attending small rural schools who participated in a consultation session with the Committee reported a high level of satisfaction with school. They receive lots of help from teachers and administrators and form positive relationships. Some did express concern with the number of grades in a classroom and said that they need to be independent. Sometimes, “If you don’t understand, you need to wait until the teacher is finished teaching other grades.”

Teachers working in small schools reported that managing the multiple curriculum areas across different grades is difficult. They are responsible for delivering the entire curriculum. The curriculum documents are substantial with approximately 200 pages on average and some exceeding 300 pages. A review of a sample of these documents reveals that they lack supports for delivery in a multi-grade classroom. As shown in Table 13, teachers may have small student numbers, but the class can have up to five or six different grades. For schools with high school grades, the students and teachers receive support from CDLI. The students who spoke to the Committee stated that they have success with the courses they complete through CDLI but prefer having in-person classes. Teachers also view CDLI favourably and some proposed introducing courses at the intermediate grades, stating it would provide some relief with the number of courses/programs they had to deliver.

School administrators in small rural schools also expressed concern and frustration with their workload. They are teaching principals with almost all of them teaching full time, and in the smallest schools, only one teaching unit is allocated. Administration responsibilities are typically completed after school. Not having adequate student services, guidance services, or other specialists add to the challenges. The allocation for these programs and services are insufficient to receive a unit. In some instances, the school district will post a partial position, but these are most often unsuccessful as they are neither financially feasible nor attractive to potential candidates.

The provincial Francophone School Board of Newfoundland and Labrador (CSFP) is responsible for teaching in French as a first language the K – 12 programs of the Department of Education. It has six schools and in 2021-22 student enrolment was 370. With such a small system, it is challenging for the school board to deploy the allocations for teaching services over and above the classroom teacher allocations. Based on the current model, the allocations for guidance services, instructional resource teacher, teacher-librarian and reading specialist are partial units and difficult to fill positions. Recruitment for partial units is a challenge in general but for CSFP, attracting a Francophone to a rural community for a partial position is an extra complexity.

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

- 54. The Department of Education maintain the current class size maximum for multi-grade classes.**

<b>Grades</b>	<b>Class Size Maximum</b>
<b>K</b>	<b>K + 1 other grade – 15</b> <b>K + 2 other grades – 12</b> <b>K + 3 other grades – 10</b>
<b>Grades 1 – 3</b>	<b>Any two primary grades – 15</b> <b>Three or more primary grades – 14</b>
<b>Grades 4 – 6</b>	<b>Any 2 or more primary/elementary grades – 15</b>
<b>Grades 7 – 9</b>	<b>Any 2 elementary/intermediate grades – 18</b> <b>Any three or more elementary/intermediate grades – 15</b>
<b>Level I – III</b>	<b>Pupil-Teacher-Ratio</b>

- 55. Extend the mandate of the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation to provide support for small schools that have multi-grading as follows:**
- Develop courses for Grades 7 – 9 in mathematics, science and French.**
- 56. Increase school secretarial time for small schools to provide additional administrative support as it relates to paperwork, correspondence, and communication with parents, school districts and the Department of Education.**
- Share the school secretary position with a student assistant position.**
- 57. Using online platforms, create a model of co-teaching and instructional resource teacher support, as well as professional dialogue.**
- 58. Introduce policy to allow flexibility in curriculum planning and delivery for small schools with multi-grade classes.**
- To support teachers in this work, re-visit the development of a Teacher Resource Handbook.**
  - Develop indicators, including academic achievement measures to ensure that a flexible approach to program delivery has its intended effect.**
- 59. Round up partial units for CSFP as follows: < .50 round up to .50 and > .50 round up to 1.00.**

### School-based Staff

The teacher allocation model determines the number of teaching units for all teaching positions in the school. Teaching units for classroom teachers are based on student enrolments and class size maximums for Grades K – 9 and student-teacher ratios for Grades 10 – 12. Teaching units are also allocated for teachers who do not have specific classroom assignments. These generally fall into two groups, those who have specific teaching duties for all students in the school (i.e., music teachers, physical education teachers, fine arts teachers, French teachers). The allocation for these units is a ‘specialist teacher’ unit and is a ratio over and above the regular teacher allocation. The second group (i.e., teacher librarians, guidance counsellors, instructional resource teachers, reading specialists, teaching and learning assistants, PASS

teachers) has a more variable assignment as they respond to students' learning needs and support regular classroom teachers in curriculum delivery. A separate allocation for school administrators is based on the school enrolment.

The second group of teachers (i.e., those with variable assignments), told the Committee that clarity and better understanding of their various roles, and how they support and interact with classroom teachers is required. In addition, without exception, they are calling for explicit direction, oversight and support from the school district and the department.

Many of these teachers feel challenged to meet the needs of all students in their care or on their caseload. Students who have the greatest needs and who often have a student assistant must receive the care they need and deserve. In the absence of a student assistant, the Committee heard repeatedly that others perform the duties of a student assistant. Each time, an instructional resource teacher, a reading specialist, a teaching and learning assistant, or a guidance counsellor perform the duties of a student assistant, their own work falls off.

Another area of concern, also common to all school-based positions is the practice of allocating partial positions and sharing positions between schools. The Committee heard that these partial positions are hard to fill, especially in rural communities, and often go unfilled. And the smaller the unit, the more difficult it is to fill. In some instances, this means that the allocation for a particular position is lost. If an allocation is too low to be of any practical use that portion is combined with another partial allocation and the position is absorbed into another one.

### **Teacher Librarians**

The teacher librarian (also referred to as the learning resource teacher) allocation for the 2021-22 school year was 101.5. With partial deployments, there were 182 teachers who worked as teacher librarians. Approximately 50% are assigned less than half-time. For many, their other job is a classroom teacher. For others, it can be administration, technology support, reading specialist, instructional resource teacher, guidance, and student success teacher. The frequency by which the library learning commons (LLC) is open for students to drop by varies according to the teacher librarian allocation and other assigned responsibilities

As noted earlier in this report, they feel that many administrators do not have good understanding of their role or its importance and that has contributed to the assignment of other duties. They also noted that no one at the school districts or department has the library learning commons as their primary role, so they have no voice at those levels. Many cited the school culture as the biggest variable to how the library learning commons and the teacher librarian are viewed.

They argue that more teacher librarian time is needed to run an effective program and to deal with the administrative tasks such as organizing books and updating collections. The Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes (2017) recommended:

52. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development increase the capacity of school libraries and teacher-librarians to support the curriculum by ensuring provision of sufficient library resources and personnel. (p. 87)

In the implementation of this recommendation through the Education Action Plan, 38.5 additional teacher-librarians were added to the system.

Like other groups of teachers, the teacher-librarians want better direction, oversight, support from the district and department, and they want consistency and equity across schools regarding allocations and access to resources. They require support to develop their teaching practice and to better engage in technology-related initiatives. Many who have been hired in recent years have little professional training as teacher librarians. Currently there is no teacher librarian program specialist. As part of the Education Action Plan, a program development specialist worked with the teacher librarians to support the modernization and, for some schools, the development of the library learning commons.

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

- 60. The Department of Education maintain the 2021- 2022 resource level and allocation formula for teacher-librarians as follows:**

K – 6	1:500
7 – 9	1:750
10 – 12	1:1000
- a. The deployment of teacher librarians to schools be used as intended, allowing more teacher librarian time to run an effective program.**
- 61. The Department of Education continue the one-time grant to schools, for the purpose of modernizing the library learning commons, and ensure all schools receive such funding through the Education Action Plan.**
  - a. The Department of Education personnel who facilitated the library learning commons renewal process for the Education Action Plan be assigned to carry out a similar process for the secondary schools.**
- 62. The Department of Education assign the role of teacher librarian provincial lead to a program development specialist with the interest and understanding of a library learning commons program.**
- 63. The Newfoundland and Labrador English School District assign a program specialist for teacher librarians.**

### **Specialist Teachers**

Specialist teachers for music, fine arts, physical education, and French have long existed in the province's school system. More recently, specialists in technology and skilled trades have been included. These programs are essential to a well-rounded and complete educational experience for students and therefore, every effort should be made to ensure their delivery in all schools regardless of size. Over time, there have been changes in how these programs are delivered affecting the allocation of these specialist units. For example, in Grades K – 6 classes, the classroom teacher often delivers the core French program and the visual arts program. The specialist allocation supports music and physical education only. There seems to be a general level of satisfaction with visual arts and physical education program in the system. However, the Committee heard much frustration as it relates to music in our schools and that many classroom teachers are unprepared to teach core French.

For schools that have a French specialist teacher for core French, the qualifications include a French major and a French language proficiency as measured by a DELF B2 test. This situation sets up a two-tiered system, schools with a French teacher and those with a classroom teacher without the French credentials. Schools that offer French immersion programs or intensive core French may have opportunity to assign core French classes to these teachers. Students' acquisition of a second language and their understanding of Canada's linguistic diversity require a qualified French teacher, one who can engage in conversations with students and motivate them to speak and listen in a second language. Having unqualified teachers deliver French in Grades 4 – 9 affects student learning in French and their motivation to learn French. With this experience, many students choose not to continue French studies in high school. Student enrolment for high school core French courses in 2021-22, was 2,531 compared with 15,366 students (approximately 16%) who completed a high school English language arts course.

Teachers with degrees in music and education are the most qualified and best suited to teach music at all levels of the K – 12 system. Teacher payroll records indicate that more than 700 teachers have music credentials. This is in stark contrast to the number of fine arts teachers which has dwindled over time to 23. Teachers with these music qualifications can teach both the core classroom music education programs and instrumental and choral music programs.

The Department of Education provides recommended time allotments for various subject areas as shown in the table below:

**Table 15:**  
**Time Allotments, Specialist Areas**

Grade Levels	Subjects	Percentage	Time (minutes per week based on 5 hour instructional day)
Grades K – 3	Visual Art Health Music Physical Education Religious Education Social Studies	30% <sup>11</sup>	450
Grades 4 – 6	French Music Physical Education Visual Art	10% 6% 6% 6%	150 90 90 90
Grades 7 – 9	French Music and Visual Art Physical Education Technology Education	10% 5% 6% 4%	150 75 90 60

Source: Program of Studies 2021-22, NL Department of Education

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<sup>11</sup> An integrated curriculum approach is used in primary (i.e., a single learning activity may be designed to meet curriculum outcomes in multiple curriculum areas).

These recommended allotments show that for Grades 4 – 6, music, physical education and visual arts each have 90 minutes per week or equal instructional time on whatever schedule exists in a school. There is less time at intermediate for music and visual arts, presumably to provide time for other curriculum areas (e.g., technology and home economics). For French, 10% (150 minutes/week) is the recommended allotted time.

The districts deploy specialist teachers to their schools based on the school's student enrolment and using a student-teacher ratio. Under current practice, principals are given their specialist allocation in the Spring for the following school year, and they determine the assignment of specialist resources across the subject areas. It is noted that it is the responsibility of school principals to plan school programs using the province's Program of Studies. Current practice has resulted in inequitable distribution of specialist resources. For example, in the 2021-22 school year, all schools with Grades 7 – 9 offered physical education and 77.2% of the schools offered music. For high school grades, 120 schools had students in Grades 10-12. Of the 120, 44 (36.7%) offered music courses locally, 26 (21.6%) schools offered music courses through CDLI, and 50 (41.7%) schools did not offer any music courses. There were 49 music teachers in the high schools with four schools having more than one teacher.

The Committee heard from music teachers about different practices that occur in the school which diminish the school's music programs and consequently reduces the deployment of music teachers. The music allocation is used to enhance another program area (e.g., physical education or French immersion). Classes of the same grade or groups of students from different grades are combined for music, creating large classes that are above the class size caps. Multiple grades and classes are combined for choir, replacing grade level classroom music. Music is not available to all students in Grades 7 – 9 in a single school, some receive music classes while others do not.

The Committee has also noticed a trend in job postings for the recruitment of music educators in small, rural schools of advertising partial positions. In some instances, these partial positions are too small to entice teachers to apply. A similar trend exists in urban schools with at least one school advertising for a small partial position. The Committee was also told of multiple partial music positions in the same school. In some schools, the music program has been reduced and the teacher reassigned to regular classroom duties.

When schools were shut down due to the pandemic in 2020, all music instruction and performances ceased for the remaining school year. The Committee also heard from elementary music teachers that when the schools were closed to in-person learning that teaching instrumental and choral music online was difficult for the teacher and frustrating, especially for beginning band and choral students. Such student frustration has resulted in high attrition rates in the music program in some schools where instrumental and choral experience were still being offered.

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

- 64. The Newfoundland and Labrador English School District improve teacher quality for core French programs, Grades 4 – 9 by:**
  - a. Actively recruiting qualified French teachers for Grades 4 – 9.**

- b. Assigning classes in core French, where possible, to qualified French teachers already deployed in schools to deliver French immersion or intensive core French programs.
- 65. The deployment and assignment of specialist allocations in Grades 4 – 9 exercise equity and fairness. Specifically, for music education, it is recommended that
  - a. Music education (both classroom music programs and choral/band programs) be available as recommended in the Department of Education's Program of Studies.
  - b. Where possible, partial music specialists' positions in a school be supplemented with other appropriate teaching duties in the same school, or the music teacher be assigned another school that is in close proximity.
  - c. For schools that have an allocation too small to create a music teacher position in the school, the Centre for Distance Learning Innovation will develop and deliver (synchronously) a music program for students Grades 4 – 9.

### **Guidance**

The information from surveys completed by guidance counsellors shows that the allocations vary from full time (69%) to half-time (21%) or less (10%). Most guidance counsellors without a full-time position are instructional resource teachers or classroom teachers. The Committee heard from different stakeholders that more guidance time was needed. To help in its determination of whether the current allocation overall was meeting student needs, the Committee reviewed their roles and responsibilities. This review revealed the one area of their work that few attend to is career guidance, however, as noted earlier, it is a common occurrence for guidance counsellors to engage in work outside their roles and responsibilities. One counsellor summed it up as: "I am used in the classroom as a student assistant, I supervise students who are not able to be in the classroom because of disruptive behaviour, I supervise students who are emotionally dysregulated, I complete paperwork related to SA work and alternate transportation application."

One other issue that relates to allocations and the work of guidance counsellors is the practice of deploying partial positions and the provision of guidance services in small rural schools. Approximately one-third of the guidance counsellors have a split position within a school or are split across schools. For positions split within a school, the other role matters. For example, if a guidance counsellor is 50% guidance and 50% classroom teacher, the teaching duties take priority over guidance duties. If there is a situation that needs immediate attention from the guidance counsellor, it becomes a wait and see approach. Additionally, guidance counsellors who are not fulltime have their bonus adjusted downwards. For example, in a school of 250 students, 0.50 unit is allocated, and the guidance bonus is based on that allocation. Because the position is 50%, the bonus is cut in half. For large schools with two fulltime guidance positions, each receives the full bonus.

Guidance services for small schools means that a guidance counsellor may visit a school once a week or less. A small number of schools in Western and Labrador receive guidance services virtually. For small rural schools, this model can increase students' access to the school's guidance counsellor and allow the school to have a comprehensive school guidance plan. At the same time, it reduces travel for the guidance counsellor.

In its 2017 report, the Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes recommended that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development revise the Guidelines for Comprehensive Assessment to decrease the number of assessments guidance counsellors must conduct, reduce guidance counsellors' involvement in special education management, and limit guidance counsellors' role with testing to cognitive ability instruments only. According to the Education Action Plan Update (2021), revisions to the provincial Comprehensive Assessment Policy are scheduled for implementation in September 2022.

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

- 66. To the extent possible, all guidance counsellors be deployed to guidance services only, including career guidance.**
  - a. The guidance counsellor, in collaboration with the principal, lead a whole-school program of career guidance based on experiential learning, career mentoring, and other research based approaches to career development.
- 67. The allocation of guidance counsellors be based on a range like the method used to allocate school administrators according to the following formula:**

#### **Guidance Counsellor Allocation**

<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Guidance Counsellor Allocation</b>
<25	Needs-based
25 – 100	0.25
101 – 200	0.50
201 – 300	0.75
301 – 400	1.0
401 – 500	1.25
501 – 600	1.50
601 – 700	1.75
701 – 800	2.0
>800	2.5

- 68. The deployment of guidance counsellors in schools with partial positions assign the unused portion to schools that have virtual guidance services or to another school.**
- 69. To enhance the school guidance services and provide additional support to students with mental health issues, the Department of Education review current virtual counselling programs for children and youth available through Health and Community Services and identify opportunities for collaboration.**

#### **Instructional Resource Teachers**

The Department of Education's inclusive education policies are built on the belief that all students have a right to attend school with their peers, and to receive appropriate and quality programming through a continuum of supports and services in their classroom or other learning environment. The model is premised on using a three-tiered model moving from universal instruction to targeted interventions to intensive interventions, and to assume a safe, caring, and inclusive school environment. These principles apply to all members of the school community

and recognize that classrooms and schools are diverse. They are actualized through a Service Delivery Model for Students with Exceptionalities and a Responsive Teaching and Learning Model for Grades K – 6. These models reflect standards of practice for identification, assessment, program planning and collaboration among members of program planning teams, service delivery teams and teaching and learning teams. Under the Responsive Teaching and Learning Model, students are provided the necessary learning supports in literacy, numeracy and social emotional learning based on the information gathered as teachers monitor student progress.

Students with individual education plans have an exceptionality identified through a comprehensive assessment. In 2021-22, 18.6% of students in the province were identified with at least one exceptionality, a slight decrease from previous years, reflecting the responsive teaching and learning approach to service delivery. To support students with these identified needs, in addition to the classroom teachers, the Department of Education allocates instructional resource teachers and student assistants to the schools. In 2021-2022, 778.5 instructional resource teachers were allocated to support these students.

The Instructional Resource Teacher (IRT) is a special education specialist that supports the teaching and learning of specific special education programming and who has, as a minimum, a Bachelor of Special Education. Their role is to apply the knowledge of the foundations of special education to the development and learning of the students they support. In their role, the instructional resource teacher uses a variety of assessment strategies to support the development of students, plans instruction based on each student's strengths and needs, and delivers instruction (NL Department of Education, 2014).

Most instructional resource teachers reported working in one school (97.5%) with approximately 80% working in schools with K – 9 students and 49.3% teaching between one and fifteen students. Their roles and responsibilities vary based on whether they work with K – 6 students or with those in Grades 7 – 12. For both groups, their main task is to provide intensive interventions usually outside the classroom as directed by the program planning team or the service delivery team with 62% of them also providing instruction for alternate courses/programs and alternate curriculum outside the classroom.

Their biggest challenge is meeting the needs of students who need IRT support. Some classes have many students who require IRT support and there is not enough support for them. More kindergarten children are further behind developmentally. Under the responsive teaching and learning policy, there is greater access to services, but services are more spread out. The expectations, roles and responsibilities have changed but are not clearly defined. They are often pulled out of class to do student assistant duties or deal with behavioural issues and then students who need academic support are left without assistance. Other assigned tasks outside their role include: assisting the classroom teacher, providing accommodations such as scribing or reading of print material, writing modified prescribed courses, teaching high school general courses, and performing administrative duties.

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

**70. The Department of Education allocate instructional resource teachers as follows:**

**Instructional Resource Teacher Allocation**

<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Instructional Resource Teacher Allocation</b>
< 25	<b>Needs-based</b>
25 – 59	<b>0.50</b>
60 – 79	<b>0.75</b>
80 – 99	<b>1.0</b>
100 +	<b>0.25 for every 20 students</b>

- a. The deployment of instructional resource teachers must consider school needs and the other available resources (e.g., reading specialists, teaching and learning assistants) in determining the most effective use of the resource. Some schools may need fewer units than their allocation and others may need more.
- b. The instructional resource teachers use their expertise and provide programs and services to students who have an identified exceptionality or require intensive interventions in either the regular classroom or in an alternate learning environment.
- c. The instructional resource teachers, as highly qualified special education specialists, be assigned only duties that apply to this expertise and their primary role.

**Positive Behaviour Support Specialists**

Behaviour continues to be an issue. The Committee heard repeatedly about disruptive student behaviour, of violent incidents, and of unreasonable noise levels in the classroom. On the extreme end of the continuum, some students require intensive intervention to assist with their behaviour management. Throughout the system, it is a serious issue that affects teaching and learning, and while the solutions may be complex, the Committee contends that it must be addressed.

There was a focus on behaviour in the early 2000s. Behaviour Support Specialists (BSS) with professional development in functional behaviour analysis and support were added to each region. Over time, the role of the position extended to safe and caring schools and eventually the safe and caring schools itinerant replaced the behaviour support specialist. The focus on behaviour was lost. Goss Gilroy conducted an evaluation of the Safe and Caring Schools Policy (2006) in 2012. In the report, it states:

There was general consensus from Department and district informants, as well as some school informants, that there needs to be a renewed focus on PBS: it has to be an integral component of SD plans and a significant focus for professional development. As some informants described, PBS is more than a code of conduct and visual signage, although these are critical elements. Effective PBS implementation requires ongoing reinforcement and promotion including modeling of positive behaviours. (p. 55)

Building on the recommendations of this report, in its revised Safe and Caring Schools Policy (2013), the Department of Education emphasized positive behaviour supports. The 2013 policy outlines the responsibilities of districts and schools to implement effective positive behaviour support practices. The implementation of these supports has been limited due to a lack of expertise and a lack of focus at both the Department of Education and the school districts. For example, the job postings at NLES defence requires a Bachelor of Education or Master of Education and teaching experience but does not require experience with behavioural therapies. In their job description, safe and inclusive itinerants may provide teacher professional learning on school-wide positive behaviour interventions and supports (PBIS) Tier 1 and 2 but it is not a requirement. For students requiring Tier 3 behavioural supports, the individual program planning process is used and requires a functional behavioural analysis and a written behaviour management plan as outlined in the Department of Education documents (NL Department of Education, 2017). For this level of intervention, applied behaviour expertise is required.

In addition to the behavioural specialist and the safe and inclusive itinerants, autism itinerants work in each region as an additional support. This is a highly qualified position with a Bachelor of Special Education and a graduate degree listed as minimum requirements. The autism itinerant position has responsibility for behaviour management plans and functional behaviour assessments for students who have autism, and for providing training and support. Since a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder is often accompanied by social challenges, there is overlap in their roles and responsibilities and others who work in behavioural supports. The autism itinerants receive professional learning and training support from APSEA (Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority) allowing them to be current in their understanding and approach to behaviour therapy.

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

- 71. The Department of Education develop a comprehensive framework for a combined behaviour management/autism strategic direction. This framework should include but not be limited to:**
  - a. Pre-determined three-year targets for Tiers 1 and 2 interventions.**
  - b. Sustained department-led professional learning on responding to student behaviour, using school-based initiatives, summer institutes and online learning opportunities, parent involvement and community partnerships.**
  - c. Engagement with APSEA for initial and advanced levels of professional learning in applied behaviour therapy.**
- 72. To support the implementation of the behaviour management/autism framework, the Department of Education allocate fifteen permanent behaviour support program specialists with qualifications in applied behaviour therapy. The implementation may require a phased-in approach as a pool of potential behaviour support program specialists are identified and provided the necessary training.**
  - a. The program specialists work together to develop teacher professional learning modules on different components of applied behaviour therapy that can be delivered virtually to individuals or school staffs.**

- b. The program specialists be deployed using the number of schools and the number of students as criteria to ensure an equitable distribution of the resources.
  - c. The program specialists be in place for five years at which time, an evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the behaviour management/autism strategy shall be carried out and its results used to inform future direction.
73. School principals in collaboration with the program specialist take the lead in building a culture of positive behaviours with students and teachers.
74. School principals in collaboration with the Director of Schools assign the school-wide positive behaviour support lead role.
75. Student assistants receive training in behaviour management.
76. The Department of Education eliminate the Safe and Inclusive Schools Itinerant and the Autism Itinerant positions.

### School Administrators

Administrators at all grade levels are divided on the issue of class size and its effect on learning. For principals in large schools, class size is an issue. For those in smaller schools, it is less of an issue. Generally, all of them feel their teachers are competent in their instructional practice and that parents are generally supportive of their school. However, many feel that the hiring process impedes their ability to build the staff that they need to maximize student learning and there is limited flexibility with scheduling to allow for teacher collaboration or mentoring. They appraise teacher performance and offer feedback but few meet one-on-one with teachers to review professional growth plans due to time constraints and competing duties, (e.g., budget, parent concerns, paperwork). Many of them expressed concern with the amount of clerical and paperwork they are required to complete.

In addition to the level of resourcing, principals also expressed concerns about the overall recruitment and management of resources. These issues have already been described under Managing Resources. School administrators indicated that they themselves needed more time to address the many issues and to provide the instructional leadership to which they are committed. During the pandemic, Government allocated an additional 15 units for school administrators with the understanding that NLES defence would match that from their existing allocations. This initiative returned the allocation levels to what was recommended in the 2007 Teacher Allocation Review Report (Government of NL, 2007).

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

- 77. The Department of Education allocate school administrators according to the following formula.**

**School Administrator Allocation**

<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>School Administrator Allocation</b>
<b>≤ 25</b>	<b>Needs-based</b>
<b>26 – 74</b>	<b>0.50</b>
<b>75 – 174</b>	<b>1.0</b>
<b>175 – 249</b>	<b>1.25</b>
<b>250 – 399</b>	<b>1.50</b>
<b>400 – 549</b>	<b>1.75</b>
<b>550 – 699</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<b>700 – 849</b>	<b>2.50</b>
<b>850+</b>	<b>3.0</b>

**Itinerant Student Services**

Itinerant services are available for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH) or Blind/Visually Impaired (BVI), and for students who required speech language pathology (SLP) or English as an Additional (Second) Language (EAL/ESL). These itinerants deliver essential services and programs to students who would otherwise have difficulty accessing the curriculum. The caseloads for the different itinerants vary both within the groups and across groups. For SLPs, the provincial average total caseload is 83 with a range of 37 to 139; for BVIs, the provincial average is 19 with a range of 9 to 34; for DHHs, the provincial average is 18 with a range of 4 to 28; and for ESL itinerants, the provincial average is 44 with a range of 12 to 86. Speech-Language & Audiology Canada (SAC) Position Paper on Speech-Language Pathology Caseload and Workload Issues in Schools (May 2022) recommends a workload approach that recognizes the full range of services and activities rather than a caseload approach be used to manage their work. This approach considers the type of service delivery model, use of virtual service delivery, and scheduling.

The Committee heard from all four itinerant groups that their service delivery models can be improved. Two strategies for improvement are reduced travel and increased capacity at the school level. In the surveys, the itinerant teachers reported on their travel times (See Chapter 4) and records from NLESF for 2018-2019 indicate the distances travelled as follows:

**Table 11:  
Travel Time per Itinerant Student Services**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Total Kilometres</b>	<b>Average Kilometres</b>
Speech Language Pathologists (36)	205,696	5,714
ESL	6,204	1,240
Program Itinerants (31) <sup>12</sup>	270,401	8,723

<sup>12</sup> Includes DHH, BVI, ASL Immersion, Safe & Inclusive Schools, Student Services, Technology/PowerSchool

National bodies that provide leadership and guidance to the professionals who provide itinerant services support the use of virtual delivery as a viable alternative. They recognize and acknowledge the challenges of travel and weather and that, with today's advances in technology, virtual sessions with students and virtual meetings with school teams can be an integral part of program and service delivery. In its 2015 position paper, *The Use of Telepractice for SAC S-LPs and Audiologists*, the Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (CASLPA) "endorsed the use of telepractice in both speech-language pathology and audiology as a means of improving access to services provided by fully qualified professionals." (p. 1).

Both BVI and DHH itinerants reported that the move to a combined model of in-person instruction and virtual was not only possible but also appropriate for meeting student needs. It would give them more time for direct service with students, allow more regular and frequent consults with classroom teachers and school teams, and increase their ability to participate in program planning or service delivery meetings. The adaptations for virtual learning made during the pandemic made them aware of the potential for online service delivery and they view its addition to their programming as progressive. The Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA), an active partner with BVI and DHH teachers, supports online delivery of programs for students with vision loss and/or hearing loss and continues to build virtual programs for students.

As noted in earlier in this report, most ESL itinerant teachers reported three main activities, actively teaching, monitoring student performance and providing support to classroom teachers with the least time spent teaching. Each of these functions can be effectively accomplished using virtual platforms. The Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation does not offer any English as an additional language course at present; however, this is an area to be explored. The high school ESL for credit course can be adapted for delivery, increasing access to these courses to students in schools with small ESL enrolments. The Association for New Canadians (ANC) noted in their submission to the Committee that increased programming at a small number of schools can help alleviate issues with available housing and student bussing and facilitate the provision of guidance and special needs services.

The second area for improvement is the capacity at the school. The teachers say that students require more support at the school level than they can provide or that they themselves necessarily need to provide. The itinerant teachers and the SLPs participate in program planning meetings for their students and contribute to their students' individual education plans. Many of the interventions put in place for the students require practice and ongoing support that classroom teachers can and must provide. For example, a student with low vision needs specific skills to access the curriculum and the classroom teachers ought to understand how to help the student develop these skills and use them in the classroom. Specific release time for classroom teachers who have a student with low vision, hearing loss, stuttering, or other speech and language delays is necessary so that the itinerants or SLPs can provide the necessary mentoring and professional learning to the classroom teachers and other members of the school planning teams.

The third area for improvement is dedicated space at the schools. All four groups reported that, upon arriving at the schools, their first task is to find a suitable learning space to work with their students. Many schools simply do not have extra classrooms or other learning spaces available. Other than the itinerant teachers and the SLPs, teachers within the schools do not have assigned space (e.g., reading specialists, student success teachers) making the competition for available rooms more challenging. An added complexity for the itinerants and SLPs for virtual service delivery is that the students need to have space with the required technology in place for instruction and programming to be delivered, and consideration must be given to supervision.

For the SLPs, there is an added component. Their work in language development aligns with the primary curriculum and instructional practice in the primary years. A greater focus on oral language development in the kindergarten curriculum together with professional learning for kindergarten and primary teachers in oral language development would free up time for speech language pathologists to provide direct service to the students on their caseloads with the greatest needs while also providing needed services to all students.

Teacher allocations for EAL/ESL need to respond to emerging needs during the school year. The predictability of student numbers is challenging as newcomers to the province are affected by global events, government-sponsored programs, and the ability of the province to attract immigrants. However, the K – 12 system needs to be prepared as the number of ESL students might double. In February 2022, records indicate that there were 815 students across 83 schools. Currently, ESL teachers collect and record ESL student data but there are no guidelines for ESL teachers/itinerants and school administrators to follow. The deployment model is based on school enrolment numbers of ESL students. Before the children enter the school system, an assessment must be completed to determine students' English level and whether they require other services besides ESL. ESL or LEARN teachers are doing the assessment of English language learning and literacy competencies after the ESL students are in the schools, which is causing delay and inefficiency in placing them in proper classes which impacts their learning progression. In the St. John's area, the deployment and the roles and responsibilities for some ESL teachers/itinerants and LEARN teachers are similar to classroom teachers. They are assigned to a single school and are responsible for teaching classes/courses in the regular school schedule. Outside of St. John's areas, it is an itinerant model. The teacher's schedule may vary according to the students' levels of English proficiency and geographical location. The LEARN teachers are school-based and are available in several intermediate and high schools in the Metro area.

Allocations for BVI and DHH itinerant teachers and SLPs must be based on need. The allocations for each have been constant for many years. Recommendations in this report, using a virtual service delivery model, providing teacher professional learning to classroom teachers on the specific skills that the students who receive services from the itinerant teachers and SLPs require to access the curriculum, and clearly defining the roles of the itinerant teachers are intended to create a more effective model for program delivery and relieve many of the stress points identified. In addition to these actions, the Committee has also recommended a renewed focus on oral language development for kindergarten children including teacher professional learning. These initiatives, together with a workload/caseload analysis based on the number of students requiring programs and services have a direct impact on the allocations.

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

78. The Department of Education maintain the current allocation of teaching units for blind and visually impaired, Deaf and hard of hearing, and speech language pathology for 2022-23 school year to allow time to develop a different service delivery model based on other recommendations in this report. These allocations are as follows:

**Teaching Units for Blind and Visually Impaired, Deaf and Hard of Hearing,  
and Speech Language Pathology**

Position	Teaching Units
<b>Blind and Visually Impaired</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Deaf and Hard of Hearing (itinerant teachers, teachers of the Deaf and audio-verbal therapist)</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Speech Language Pathologists</b>	<b>45</b>

- a. With the new service delivery model which should be implemented in the 2023-24 school year, the allocations for BVI itinerants, DHH itinerants and SLPs be based on student need.
79. The itinerant teachers (BVI, DHH, ESL/EAL) and SLPs review their programs and services and develop a plan that:
- a. Incorporates face-to-face and virtual sessions with students receiving direct service.
  - b. Uses virtual platforms as the main mechanism for consult services and/or monitoring progress.
  - c. Uses virtual platforms to participate in program planning and service delivery meetings, and in mentoring/coaching classroom teachers and other school-based staff.
  - d. Reduces their travel time by a pre-determined target established jointly by the itinerant teacher/SLP, their supervisor, and the Department of Education.
80. The itinerant teachers (BVI, DHH, ESL/EAL) and SLPs in collaboration with classroom teachers and other relevant staff in their schools develop a professional learning plan for school-based staff that increases their understanding and application of the supports their students require to access the curriculum.
- a. The professional learning plan include tentative schedules for delivery to facilitate the provision of appropriate resources.
  - b. The Department of Education develop a support model for the professional learning plans for school-based staff that outlines clear procedures and lines of responsibilities for the provision and use of resources.
  - c. The Department monitor and evaluate the impact of the professional learning.
81. The Department of Education conduct a learning space assessment of all schools to determine:
- a. The extent to which the schools can provide learning spaces for reading specialists, student success teachers, teaching and learning assistants,

- itinerant teachers, speech language pathologists and educational psychologists.
- b. The capacity of schools to deliver virtual programs to BVI, DHH, ESL students and students who receive support from SLPs.
82. The Department of Education develop an ESL/EAL/LEARN Student Registration System for collecting and recording student enrolments, (ESL, EAL and LEARN) with a protocol for principals to use for this purpose.
83. The Department of Education use the ESL/EAL/LEARN student numbers as captured in the Student Registration System as of April 30 of the previous school year to allocate ESL/EAL/LEARN teachers as follows:
- a. For school-based ESL/EAL high school teachers, use the ratio 1:29 based on the ESL student numbers.
  - b. For itinerant ESL/EAL teachers, use the ratio 1:29.
  - c. Allocate LEARN teachers for Grades 4 – 9, based on the number of LEARN students in the ESL/EAL/LEARN Registration System, using the class size maximums for Grades 4 – 6 and 7 – 9.
  - d. When the number of students in these programs exceed the capacity of the allocation for any one school year to provide services to ESL/EAL/LEARN students, the Department will use its discretionary allocation through a needs-based system to provide the additional support.
84. The Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation engage in ESL programs as follows:
- a. Develop/adapt content for ESL 1205, 2205 and 3205.
  - b. Develop a format that ensures course access for students who are English language learners and respects cultural and linguistic diversity.
  - c. Explore the feasibility of developing ESL/EAL programs for intermediate grades.

### Educational Psychologists

For 2021-22, the Department of Education reported an allocation of 43 educational psychologists in the province, all with NLESD. Four of these positions were vacant. Each educational psychologist supports, on average, seven schools with a range of four to eleven and travel an average of four and one-half hours each week, their times varying from one hour to 15.5 hours. A report from NLESD on travel for 30 educational psychologists during the 2018-2019 school year reveals that they travelled 138,164 km in total for an average distance of 4,605 km.

Like other groups, educational psychologists believe that there is a lack of clarity of their role and a lack of coherence. Each is left on their own with no supervision. This situation together with increased student and school needs, lack of resources and the geographical regions they serve has increased their workload.

With the changes in the Comprehensive Assessment Policy (NL Department of Education, 2021) in September 2022, the guidance counsellors' participation in assessments will lessen. This necessitates increased involvement in comprehensive assessments for the educational psychologists. In their submission to the Committee, the NLTA Psychologists in Education (PIE)

Special Interest Council noted they have the expertise and license to administer and diagnose psychological disorders, and that not all guidance counsellors have training required for administration and interpretation of many of the assessments. Furthermore, PIE submitted that the Department of Education explore partnership with the Newfoundland and Labrador Psychology Board in the creation of a new position for graduate level trained individuals licensed to practice psychological assessment tasks. NB Department of Education has already embarked on a similar model with candidates actively working towards acquisition of the identified qualifications.

Recruitment for educational psychologists is a major challenge. Many of the current educational psychologists are eligible to retire within five years. There is a shortage of educational psychologists and there is limited availability for university programming in this area. The alternate is a critical look at the most appropriate service delivery model for educational psychologists.

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

- 85. The Department of Education in collaboration with the school districts and the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association revise the service delivery model for educational psychologists to state that their primary role is the administration, interpretation and reporting of comprehensive assessments.**
  - a. The model include but not be limited to: their areas of expertise, standards of practices and clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
  - b. The model address solutions, including virtual services to overcome the challenges of meeting students' needs.
  - c. The model implement a team of professionals approach (guidance counsellors, instructional resource teachers, behaviour support specialists).
  - d. The model of service delivery must be clearly communicated to the school system.
- 86. The Department of Education in collaboration with the school districts, the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, Memorial University and the Newfoundland and Labrador Psychology Board seek opportunities and/or develop programs for teachers to complete graduate work in all psychoeducational assessments.**

### **Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI)**

The Department of Education established the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI) in December 2000 with the first courses delivered in September 2001 (Saqlain, 2015). Over the past 21 years, CDLI has expanded its range of course offerings to 42 high school courses, continuing the mandate to provide programming to students in rural and remote areas of the province.

The Committee heard about the potential of CDLI to be the flagship for K – 12 education in this province. It has demonstrated competence in content and course development and taken an innovative approach to the delivery of courses beyond the original group of advanced level

courses. The structure inside CDLI has made much of this work possible with both teaching and technical expertise as well as the equipment and software to do the developmental work. The Centre has evolved and can assume a much broader role not only for distance education but also for the delivery of educational services and leadership across the system.

As the needs of schools and students in the province have changed, so too have the services provided by CDLI. The list of courses has increased and now covers more curriculum areas, including music, fine arts and skilled trades. In 2021-22, CDLI was available in more than 110 schools. For several years, CDLI has also provided the laboratory components of the high school science courses using a travelling lab/itinerant model. During the past school year, it offered French programs to students in Grades 4 – 9. CDLI has also provided teacher professional learning modules and multi-media learning objects for student tutorials. Some of this work has been for asynchronous delivery and therefore, is available to all teachers and students in the province. Furthermore, CDLI has provided learning opportunities to students who are not able to attend regular schools on a full-time basis, for various reasons, such as those who are supported by PASS programs or those who are immunocompromised.

The ability of CDLI to evolve and adapt to emerging needs has proven vital in supporting the needs of students in our province. Over the past two years, health concerns related to the risk of COVID have made it problematic for some students to attend regular classes. In September 2020, Government introduced the Remote Learning Initiative to meet the needs of students who are severely immunocompromised and unable to attend school in-class. NLESĐ managed this initiative through CDLI, and CDLI provided synchronous instruction and asynchronous support in mathematics, English language arts and other subjects to students in Grades K – 9 using the Google platform. Although more students have returned to schools, the Committee heard of a continued need for this support.

While there are still some areas of the high school curriculum where CDLI can potentially expand, the Committee heard from various focus groups that there is also a need for CDLI in the intermediate grades. One of the lessons learned from two and a half years of remote learning during the pandemic is that intermediate students are well prepared for distance learning. A look at national trends in virtual learning also supports the move to instruction for younger students.

A number of principals with teaching duties, including those in sole charge schools, expressed the difficulties they face in delivering the curriculum across many subject areas to relatively few students. Both teacher training/certification and the junior high curriculum focus on specific academic areas increasing the need for more support through CDLI teachers. For example, mathematics and science may benefit some small schools when expertise at the junior high level is not readily available. Specialist teachers in subjects such as art, music and core French are often harder to staff in smaller schools. CDLI has great potential to deliver courses in these areas as had already been demonstrated with Grades 4 – 9 core French.

Across Canada, all provinces and territories offer online learning courses to students in grades 10-12. Some provinces (e.g., ON, MB, SK, BC) also include Grade 9 course offerings. In *State of the Nation: K-12 e-Learning in Canada* (Barbour et al, 2021), it is reported that approximately 7.3% of K-12 students in Canada avail of online learning opportunities. Some western provinces

have higher numbers (12-13%), offering online learning to a broader range of grade levels (e.g., SK – K-8,9-12; AB – K-9, 10-12; BC – K-7, 8-12). Online learning options for younger students in these provinces vary from homeschool support to full-time instruction in the prescribed provincial curriculum.

During the global pandemic, schools in Newfoundland and Labrador and jurisdictions around the world were closed for many weeks. When this happened, schools immediately switched to some form of remote learning using different virtual platforms such as Google Meet and with time, teachers and students were able to engage in active learning. In its terms of reference, the Committee has been asked to consider approaches to the continued delivery of educational services in the event of a major shutdown.

Developing resources for online learning takes considerable time, expertise and innovation. Through focus groups discussions, the Committee heard that CDLI teachers had less time available for content development and innovation in recent years due to an increase in teaching duties. The general practice in recent years is to operate on a course-by-course basis and hire a teacher on a separate contact to complete the development work for the identified course. Alternately, a teacher has a reduced teaching assignment to provide time for development.

Another area of possible participation for CDLI is EAL (ESL) programming. With Government's immigration policies, there has been an increase in the number of families with school-aged children arriving in the province. This has increased the need for EAL (ESL) instruction at all grade levels and this need extends to all regions of the province. The Committee heard from ESL teachers who work outside the Metro of the challenges with travel and geography. They also identified problems with offering the high school EAL (ESL) credit courses in small schools.

While the availability of CDLI resources has been helpful to a broad range of teachers and students, some focus group participants expressed concerns that the current online delivery platform requires a learning curve and that some students have challenges using it without guidance. This need will grow as the profiles of students using CDLI change. Younger students, students for whom English is an additional language, and students who struggle in school do not necessarily have the skills to successfully maneuver their way through the nuances of CDLI.

CDLI's current delivery model, synchronous instruction, supported by asynchronous materials has long been seen as one of its greatest strengths. While face-to-face instruction is often the preference of many students, synchronous instruction is the best way to recreate this in an online environment. However, there are some students for whom a primarily asynchronous mode of instruction may be beneficial. For various reasons, some students are not able to attend school during regular hours. There are other students who may wish to study a particular course, but their school schedule of course offerings does not allow them to fit it into their program.

Finally, some consideration regarding class sizes for online learning is warranted. Both teachers and students told the Committee that they are not able to interact in quite the same way as in a regular classroom and it is more difficult with larger groups. Video cameras and conferencing tools make this easier; however, there are still occasions when this is not possible, such as in areas with low bandwidth capabilities.

Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:

87. The Department of Education establish the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation as a Centre of Excellence with responsibility for developing and implementing a continuity plan for the school system in preparation for future significant events similar to but not necessarily of the same scope as the 2020 – 22 global pandemic; establishing the infrastructure to enable the K – 12 system to provide virtual service delivery for all services provided by itinerant teachers, speech language pathologists and educational psychologists in conjunction with the continuation of in-person programs and services; and creating and applying a system of administrative supports for teaching principals to remove, to the extent possible, the daily paperwork allowing them to focus on the more complex components of a school leader.
  - a. The Department of Education appoint an educational leader as Director of the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation.
88. The Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation develop a strategy for content and resource development including but not limited to:
  - a. New areas of high school curriculum, laboratory components of science courses, positive action for student success (PASS) program, advanced placement courses, intermediate curriculum including music, fine arts, core French, and EAL (ESL) programs.
  - b. Student services and programs for those unable to attend regular school.
  - c. Support to give students and teachers ease of access to programs and the current delivery platform.
  - d. Innovative approaches to program delivery, new technologies and ways of teaching/learning.
  - e. Enhanced asynchronous options to supplement synchronous programs.
  - f. Teacher professional learning.
  - g. Dissemination of details and up-to-date information on all asynchronous resources to all teachers and students of the province as new materials are released.
89. The Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation hold consultations with students and teachers including those from PASS programs to identify and develop solutions for any existing barriers (e.g., access to Brightspace, class size) and to identify unmet learning needs.



## Chapter 10 Implementation

Education reports that have been successfully implemented had educational leaders and other staff assigned to the planning and implementation process. An Associate Deputy Minister was appointed along with other staff in what was referred to as the Secretariat to implement the recommendations in the report, *Our Children, Our Future* (1992). For the implementation of *Supporting Learning* (2000), the panel recommended, and government supported, the creation of a number of positions at the Department of Education to implement the recommendations. More recently, the 2017 Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes recommended, and government approved, the appointment of an educational leader reporting directly to the Clerk of Executive Council, and at the level of Associate Deputy Minister.

The Committee is cognizant of the magnitude of the recommendations in this report. It was tasked to examine previous education reports, educational research, pan-Canadian developments, innovation in education, current provincial initiatives, and legislation, regulations, and policy. The report recommends significant human resource and organizational changes, embracing the entire spectrum of the development and management of human resources in education in NL. The Committee believes that these changes are essential for program initiatives and the allocation of current and additional resources to achieve their intended purpose.

The initiatives require an action/implementation plan and leadership in implementation and accountability, and an assessment of impact. For example, changes in school closures, teacher hiring practices, and in working arrangements for student assistants require policy development and possibly legislative change. Others such as changes in priorities, role definitions, virtual service delivery models, and resource allocation require planning and communication. Leadership in teacher education requires consultation and joint planning with the University as well as establishing new provincial frameworks and practices, including trained mentors, enhanced clinical practice, and university schools. A clear instructional focus and new pedagogies made possible by technology require further articulation. Some recommendations, such as altering the timelines for teacher allocations, are interdepartmental in nature.

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

- 90. The Minister of Education, in consultation with the Premier, appoint an educational leader, directly accountable to the Minister and the Clerk of the Executive Council, to lead the implementation of the recommendations in this report.**



## Conclusion

Each period in education in NL has brought its own challenges and possibilities, and each has been met with courage and vision appropriate to the times. Today we have new challenges and new possibilities. These possibilities reside in our students with their curiosity, their immersion in the digital society, and their capacity for outstanding achievement, and in our teachers for their expertise, their caring, and their commitment to the learning for all students. Leadership at every level is essential to realize the possibilities of education, for the individual development of students and the social and economic development of the province.

This report of the teacher allocation review presents a much broader picture of our K – 12 school system than the number of teachers, specialists, administrators, and others needed to have an effective, well managed system.

The terms of reference asked the Committee to look beyond allocation numbers and formulas and examine previous investigations, current initiatives, and possibilities for the future. That was our challenge and one we aspired to meet. In doing so, we discovered that many issues in today's system were identified in previous reports, as far back as the 1968 Royal Commission and some of these issues have been repeated in other reports but never addressed. These issues and possible solutions have been clearly articulated in this report.

Through its research and consultations, the Committee has also concluded that the Department of Education, the school districts, the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association and the Faculty of Education must be unrelenting in their efforts to maintain integrity in our system, to ensure the highest quality teaching and the best possible learning for all students, and to effectively manage resources. Collectively students, parents and teachers strive for high standards, professionalism, and a system where all partners work towards a common goal.

The recommendations in this report call upon government to exercise its financial and legislative powers, and visionary leadership, in the interests of improving education for all students and advancing social and economic growth in Newfoundland and Labrador.



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## **Appendices**



## Appendix 1

### List of Recommendations

#### **Chapter 6: The Management of Resources**

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

1. Necessary timeline revisions occur so that information about resource allocations can be provided to school districts no later than December of the school year prior to that for which the allocations apply.
2. School districts develop a program planning process that provides:
  - a. data on course offerings, teacher assignment, and class size;
  - b. transparent communication between the school and the school district;
  - c. consistency among similar schools in teacher planning time, school administrator time, and other variables that affect class size; and
  - d. accountability for staff deployment and assignment.
3. The Department of Education, in conjunction with the school districts, examine:
  - a. the most advantageous and efficient cycle for delivery of programs;
  - b. the feasibility of a common cycle in all or most schools in the province; and
  - c. the school schedule and cycle most suitable for effective teacher deployment in schools, including high schools with semesterization.
4. Through agreement or legislation, Government provide a new policy for the placement and hiring of teachers and teaching and learning assistants (TLAs) based on merit rather than seniority. Specifically, the Committee recommends that through agreement or legislation:
  - a. in layoff scenarios teachers/TLAs are retained in a school or in the school district based on competence, qualifications, and suitability rather than seniority;
  - b. that competence, qualifications, and suitability (rather than seniority) become the sole criteria for teacher/TLA hiring;
  - c. that in all stages of the hiring process, all applicants (teachers/TLAs with no experience with the district, with substitute or term experience, and in continuing contracts) be shortlisted and considered at the same time on the basis of competence, qualifications, and suitability rather than by designated pools; and
  - d. that the practice of dividing and selecting teachers/TLAs according to “pools” be discontinued in all stages of the hiring process.
5. Job advertisements be developed using Public Service Commission protocols and procedures and include clear duties associated for the role in addition to the qualifications and the required knowledge, skills and abilities.

6. The 2021-22 allocation for student assistants be maintained pending the outcome of a full analysis of current situation (student assistant absences, the underlying reasons, and the implications for schools) and implementation of the recommended changes below.
  - a. Through agreement, regulations or legislation, student assistant positions be assigned as a year-long appointment, without the option to move to other schools during the year.
  - b. Where possible, and with consideration of school flexibility and of having these positions competitive with other employers, student assistant positions be designed with at least 90% having a minimum of four-hour days.
7. The alternate transportation policy and guidelines requiring a student assistant to accompany the student to and from school be reviewed and new guidelines be implemented by September, 2023.
8. The role of teaching and learning assistants and their effectiveness be evaluated using such measures as student achievement that demonstrate changes in reading levels and numeracy proficiency, and standard indicators for growth in social and emotional learning and changes in behaviour. This evaluation should be undertaken in the 2022-23 school year.
  - a. The 2021-22 allocation for teaching and learning assistants be maintained until the evaluation has been done. The results of the evaluation should inform future direction. The Department of Education allocate teaching and learning assistants as follows:

<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Teaching and Learning Assistants</b>
< 100	0
100 – 249	1.0
250 – 399	2.0
400 – 549	3.0
≥550	4.0

9. The Department of Education develop a process for school closures in Newfoundland and Labrador, to ensure the most favourable organization of human and physical resources for the student learning and success.
10. The Department of Education conduct (or commission) a study of school organization/location in Newfoundland and Labrador, to identify schools for possible closure, redistribution of grade levels among schools, and other features of organizational effectiveness.
11. The Department of Education/School Districts review the purchasing process for program resources and other expenditures, with a view to more timely responses to help teachers intervene promptly to support student learning.

12. Government review the collective bargaining process from the management perspective, with a view to effectively representing the management and organizational needs of the system, the welfare of students, the smooth functioning of schools, and the avoidance of costly human resources errors.
13. The Department of Education continue to work with Memorial University:
  - a. to assess teacher shortages in particular subject areas and specialties;
  - b. to adjust teacher education efforts to address these shortages; and
  - c. to develop and publicize a plan to attract and educate teachers for northern communities and for rural locations.
14. The Department of Education engage with Indigenous communities to attract individuals of Indigenous descent to consider teaching as a profession.
  - a. The Department of Education and Memorial University work with Nunatsiavut Government to offer a teacher education program for a second cohort of prospective teachers, informed by best practices from previous experiences of the Faculty of Education and of other jurisdictions (e.g., Alberta's CBTEP).
15. The Department of Education and the school districts develop appropriate incentives to attract and retain teachers in rural communities.
16. The Department of Education create a position of Teaching Services Director to provide leadership and management for teacher allocations, collective agreements and other related matters.
  - a. The qualifications for the Teaching Services Director include a Master of Education in Leadership and experience in school/district administration or senior management in the public service.
17. The Department of Education through the Teaching Services Director:
  - a. Develop a modern, up-to-date system/program for determining teacher allocations, robust enough to capture all current resources including needs-based teaching units and the ability to add resources as future changes require. The Teaching Services Director would work with the Evaluation and Research Director to develop this system.
  - b. Administer the needs-based allocation of teaching units.
18. The Department of Education in collaboration with the school districts establish a management and leadership plan for district-level staff.
  - a. A Department consultant in the appropriate discipline be assigned responsibilities for liaising with teacher librarians, PASS teachers, and guidance counsellors.

## **Chapter 7: Teacher Education and Professional Learning**

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

- 19.** The Department of Education work with the Faculty of Education in the selection of teacher candidates in undergraduate and graduate programs, with a view to:
  - a.** selecting teacher candidates in accordance with research on selection; and
  - b.** adjusting cohort numbers and characteristics to meet provincial need.
- 20.** The Department of Education engage with the Faculty of Education to plan the nature and duration of clinical internships in undergraduate programs. Such engagement should include the implementation of training for teacher mentors in schools, the identification of exemplary schools for teacher learning, the establishment of university schools for teacher education, and a coordinated process for the continuous assessment and support of teacher candidates in the field.
  - a.** Building on the success of employing student interns as substitute teachers in 2021-22, develop a plan for continued opportunities for teacher candidates to help address the substitute teacher shortage.
- 21.** The Department of Education adopt the principle of provisional accreditation reflecting teacher success in the teacher education program, induction, evaluation and tenure, continued professional learning, and success in fostering student achievement.
- 22.** In keeping with the importance and scope of this initiative, higher level discussions among the Premier of NL, the Minister of Education, the President of MUN, and the Dean of Education establish the parameters and expectations for continued innovation in teacher education.
- 23.** The Department of Education, in collaboration with the school districts, develop a Teacher-Centred, School-Based Professional Learning Model as outlined in this report.
  - a.** The Department of Education develop a support plan for a Teacher-Centred, School-Based Professional Learning Model that outlines clear procedures and lines of responsibilities for the provision and use of resources to support professional learning communities and teacher mentors.
  - b.** A program specialist from those who are currently responsible for K – 6/K – 12 programs be deployed to a family of schools to support the professional learning in each school and to coordinate learning opportunities for teachers.
  - c.** Subject area program specialists continue to work with teachers in a region, or multiple families of schools, with a continued, increased focus on classroom pedagogical excellence in each of the subject areas.
- 24.** The program specialists' positions responsible for mathematics and reading for the implementation of the Education Action Plan continue over the next three years at which time a formal evaluation of the effectiveness of these positions to build capacity at the school level is carried out. The outcomes of the evaluation will inform future direction for teacher professional learning in reading and mathematics.

25. As key drivers of instructional change, program specialists be aligned more effectively with, and engage in regular dialogue with, the senior administration.
26. The Department of Education, in collaboration with NLES, conduct an evaluation of the roles and responsibilities and effectiveness of the program itinerants for student support services.
27. Department consultants responsible for areas of identified needs within a particular discipline collaborate with subject area program specialists to provide teacher professional learning. Some of this already occurs, e.g., teacher librarians, ESL, and reading.

## **Chapter 8: Instructional Focus**

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

28. The Department of Education:
  - a. through the curriculum, emphasize the importance of both foundational and deep learning, and provide practical strategies for implementation; and
  - b. in collaboration with the school districts, communicate clearly on the importance of the continuum of learning, the necessity of foundational/surface learning and deep learning, and that learning strategies are best developed within a particular program and subject context.
29. Professional learning opportunities for teachers:
  - a. focus on high leverage strategies for surface and deep learning in the context of particular programs and subjects; and
  - b. emphasize and model how deep learning can/should be implemented within regular programs and subject areas, and in concert with surface/foundational learning.
30. Technology be promoted and supported as a means to improve teaching and learning in all programs and subjects.
31. The Department of Education in collaboration with school districts develop a technology integration framework that incorporates content, pedagogy, different learning models (e.g., remote, hybrid), the necessary enabling technology to influence pedagogy, replenishment plans for student and teacher equipment, maintenance of the school computer labs, protocols on administrative rights to school servers, partnerships with industry and other agencies, and specialized technologies such as augmentative communication devices.
32. The Department of Education investigate why the available computer support for schools is not having its intended effect and take the necessary steps to remediate the lack of computer support schools currently receive.

33. The Department of Education work with the school districts to extend the Help Desk to include a 1-800 Hotline that schools can use to receive a timely response and the technical support required.
34. The Department of Education, in its strategic plan, state its position on the relationship between teacher innovation and accountability, foundational and deep learning, and provincial assessment and student learning.
35. End of level assessments (Grades 3, 6, and 9) be designed to provide individual school data for purposes of school analysis and improvement, and for the assessment and improvement of program and human resource initiatives in the system.
36. The Department of Education continue to conduct provincial assessments at the high school level.
37. Data be collected in the year(s) following student graduation to assess student progress towards further education or employment. This initiative should provide regional data, analysis according to vocation/profession, and other metrics, to assist in provincial initiatives, school initiatives, and the welfare of individual students and categories of students.
38. The Department of Education allocate student success teachers for schools with Grades 7 – 12 based on student learning needs.
  - a. The Department of Education establish a protocol and application process for schools to access the program.
  - b. The PASS program for high school be updated outlining criteria and eligibility for program offering.
  - c. The PASS program for junior high be developed outlining course design, timelines, protocols for maintaining the integrity and validity of the curriculum and for student assessment and evaluation.
39. The Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation:
  - a. further develop content for the PASS program and implement an interface that is accessible to PASS students and teachers; and
  - b. extend its program offerings to PASS students in schools below the threshold for 0.25 teaching unit as determined through the needs-based analysis with the Teaching Services Director.
40. The Evaluation and Research Division through the Manager of High School Certification assume a lead role for managing the PASS program.
41. The Department of Education undertake a review of junior high program that includes but is not limited to: the curriculum, supports for students to achieve success in the program, instructional cycles, learning spaces and settings, modes of instruction, use of technology, and transition to high school.

42. The Department of Education examine the New Brunswick model, as well as similar models elsewhere, to further determine the feasibility of providing more appropriate vocational and apprenticeship pathways that are also credited for high school graduation.
43. The Department of Education undertake a formal evaluation of the school-based reading specialists' initiative to determine the effectiveness of the program. This evaluation must include student achievement measures that can be obtained through a full census administration of the reading component of the Provincial Reading and Mathematics Assessment, and a review of district-based and school-based reading specialists. This evaluation should be undertaken in the 2022-23 school year.
  - a. The 2021-22 allocation for reading specialists be maintained until the evaluation has been done. The results of the evaluation should inform future direction. The Department of Education allocate reading specialists as follows:

Number of Students	Reading Specialists
< 51	0.25
51 – 200	0.50
>200	1.0

44. The Department of Education and the school districts articulate the importance of systematic and explicit instruction in all reading components in its curriculum documents and other communications.
45. Reading program specialists and school-based reading specialists be required to have ongoing professional learning through, or consistent with, MUN's graduate programs in reading.
46. Classroom teachers be encouraged to acquire professional learning through, or consistent with, MUN's graduate programs in reading.
47. The Department of Education emphasize oral language development in English Language Arts instructional time for kindergarten children and recommend that at least 50% of the kindergarten English Language Arts instruction time be dedicated to oral language development.
48. The Department of Education, in collaboration with the school districts, develop a 'catch-up' plan in oral language and reading and writing development for the cohort of primary children affected by the global pandemic.

## **Chapter 9: Proposed Teacher Allocation Model**

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

49. The Department of Education set the class size maximum for K – 9 classes as outlined below:

**Class Size Maximums Grades K – 9**

Grade Level	Class Size Maximum
Kindergarten	18
Grades 1 & 2	20
Grade 3	22
Grade 4	26
Grades 5 and 6	27
Grades 7 to 9	29

50. The Lieutenant-Governor in Council make regulations as authorized under The Schools Act (1997), Sec. 118. (1) (a) pertaining to teacher allocations to guarantee year over year stability to the school system. These regulations include but not be limited to:
- a. The recommended class size maximums be maintained until there is sufficient research-based evidence about the effectiveness of the class size maximum initiative to warrant change.
  - b. To provide Government evidence of the impact of class size maximums, the Department of Education regularly evaluates student achievement and progress as well as student behaviour.
  - c. School districts can have no more than 10% of the classes in a particular school exceed the class size maximum.
  - d. In extenuating circumstances (e.g., an unanticipated influx of students including ESL students or considering contextual factors within a community), exceptions can be made through consultations with the Department of Education.
  - e. The number of students scheduled in a laboratory, shop, or other specialized classroom shall consider the capacity of the learning environment to ensure student safety.
  - f. These class size maximums apply to English only classes and French immersion classes.
  - g. School districts use combined classes to meet these caps.
51. The Department of Education discontinue the practice of allowing the cap to exceed by two students.

- 52. Class sizes for Grades 10 – 12 will continue to be determined using a student-teacher ratio.
  - a. The class size maximum for any high school class is 32 unless the school demonstrates that extending beyond the class cap improves learning opportunities for students (e.g., participation in a band program).
- 53. Any classroom that has 25% or more of its students with a recognized/documentedExceptionality that impacts on whole class learning/classroom management or documented severe behavioural issues, the classroom shall be split for that school year.
  - a. At the end of each school year, an evaluation of the composition of the classes in the schools is carried out to inform future planning that minimizes the need to split classes.
- 54. The Department of Education maintain the current class size maximum for multi-grade classes.

**Maximum Class Size**

<b>Grades</b>	<b>Class Size Maximum</b>
K	K + 1 other grade – 15 K + 2 other grades – 12 K + 3 other grades – 10
Grades 1 – 3	Any two primary grades – 15 Three or more primary grades – 14
Grades 4 – 6	Any 2 or more primary/elementary grades – 15
Grades 7 – 9	Any 2 elementary/intermediate grades – 18 Any three or more elementary/intermediate grades – 15
Level I – III	Pupil-Teacher-Ratio

- 55. Extend the mandate of the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation to provide support for small schools that have multi-grading as follows:
  - a. Develop courses for Grades 7 – 9 in mathematics, science and French.
- 56. Increase school secretarial time for small schools to provide additional administrative support as it relates to paperwork, correspondence, and communication with parents, school districts and the Department of Education.
  - a. Share the school secretary position with a student assistant position.
- 57. Using online platforms, create a model of co-teaching and instructional resource teacher support, as well as professional dialogue.
- 58. Introduce policy to allow flexibility in curriculum planning and delivery for small schools with multi-grade classes.
  - a. To support teachers in this work, re-visit the development of a Teacher Resource Handbook.
  - b. Develop indicators, including academic achievement measures to ensure that a flexible approach to program delivery has its intended effect.

59. Round up partial units for CSFP as follows: < .50 round up to .50 and > .50 round up to 1.00.
60. The Department of Education maintain the 2021- 2022 resource level and allocation formula for teacher-librarians as follows:
- |         |        |
|---------|--------|
| K – 6   | 1:500  |
| 7 – 9   | 1:750  |
| 10 – 12 | 1:1000 |
- a. The deployment of teacher librarians to schools be used as intended, allowing more teacher librarian time to run an effective program.
61. The Department of Education continue the one-time grant to schools, for the purpose of modernizing the library learning commons, and ensure all schools receive such funding through the Education Action Plan.
- a. The Department of Education personnel who facilitated the library learning commons renewal process for the Education Action Plan be assigned to carry out a similar process for the secondary schools.
62. The Department of Education assign the role of teacher librarian provincial lead to a program development specialist with the interest and understanding of a library learning commons program.
63. The Newfoundland and Labrador English School District assign a program specialist for teacher librarians.
64. The Newfoundland and Labrador English School District improve teacher quality for core French programs, Grades 4 – 9 by:
- a. Actively recruiting qualified French teachers for Grades 4 – 9.
- b. Assigning classes in core French, where possible, to qualified French teachers already deployed in schools to deliver French immersion or intensive core French programs.
65. The deployment and assignment of specialist allocations in Grades 4 – 9 exercise equity and fairness. Specifically, for music education, it is recommended that:
- a. Music education (both classroom music programs and choral/band programs) be available as recommended in the Department of Education's Program of Studies.
- b. Where possible, partial music specialists' positions in a school be supplemented with other appropriate teaching duties in the same school, or the music teacher be assigned another school that is in close proximity.
- c. For schools that have an allocation too small to create a music teacher position in the school, the Centre for Distance Learning Innovation will develop and deliver (synchronously) a music program for students Grades 4 – 9.

66. To the extent possible, all guidance counsellors be deployed to guidance services only, including career guidance.
  - a. The guidance counsellor, in collaboration with the principal, lead a whole-school program of career guidance based on experiential learning, career mentoring, and other research based approaches to career development.
67. The allocation of guidance counsellors be based on a range like the method used to allocate school administrators according to the following formula:

**Guidance Counsellor Allocation**

<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Guidance Counsellor Allocation</b>
<25	Needs-based
25 – 100	0.25
101 – 200	0.50
201 – 300	0.75
301 – 400	1.0
401 – 500	1.25
501 – 600	1.50
601 – 700	1.75
701 – 800	2.0
>800	2.5

68. The deployment of guidance counsellors in schools with partial positions assign the unused portion to schools that have virtual guidance services or to another school.
69. To enhance the school guidance services and provide additional support to students with mental health issues, the Department of Education review current virtual counselling programs for children and youth available through Health and Community Services and identify opportunities for collaboration.
70. The Department of Education allocate instructional resource teachers as follows:

**Instructional Resource Teacher Allocation**

<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Instructional Resource Teacher Allocation</b>
< 25	Needs-based
25 – 59	0.50
60 – 79	0.75
80 – 99	1.0
100 +	or every 20 students

- a. The deployment of instructional resource teachers must consider school needs and the other available resources (e.g., reading specialists, teaching and learning assistants) in determining the most effective use of the resource. Some schools may need fewer units than their allocation and others may need more.

- b. The instructional resource teachers use their expertise and provide programs and services to students who have an identified exceptionality or require intensive interventions in either the regular classroom or in an alternate learning environment.
  - c. The instructional resource teachers, as highly qualified special education specialists, be assigned only duties that apply to this expertise and their primary role.
- 71. The Department of Education develop a comprehensive framework for a combined behaviour management/autism strategic direction. This framework should include but not be limited to:
  - a. Pre-determined three-year targets for Tiers 1 and 2 interventions.
  - b. Sustained department-led professional learning on responding to student behaviour, using school-based initiatives, summer institutes and online learning opportunities, parent involvement and community partnerships.
  - c. Engagement with APSEA for initial and advanced levels of professional learning in applied behaviour therapy.
- 72. To support the implementation of the behaviour management/autism framework, the Department of Education allocate fifteen permanent behaviour support program specialists with qualifications in applied behaviour therapy. The implementation may require a phased-in approach as a pool of potential behaviour support program specialists are identified and provided the necessary training.
  - a. The program specialists work together to develop teacher professional learning modules on different components of applied behaviour therapy that can be delivered virtually to individuals or school staffs.
  - b. The program specialists be deployed using the number of schools and the number of students as criteria to ensure an equitable distribution of the resources.
  - c. The program specialists shall be in place for five years at which time, an evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the behaviour management/autism strategy shall be carried out and its results used to inform future direction.
- 73. School principals in collaboration with the program specialist take the lead in building a culture of positive behaviours with students and teachers.
- 74. School principals in collaboration with the Director of Schools assign the school-wide positive behaviour support lead role.
- 75. Student assistants receive training in behaviour management.
- 76. The Department of Education eliminate the Safe and Inclusive Schools Itinerant and the Autism Itinerant positions.

- 77.** The Department of Education allocate school administrators according to the following formula.

**School Administration Allocation**

Number of Students	School Administration Allocation
≤ 25	Needs based
26 – 74	0.50
75 – 174	1.0
175 – 249	1.25
250 – 399	1.50
400 – 549	1.75
550 – 699	2.0
700 – 849	2.50
850+	3.0

- 78.** The Department of Education maintain the current allocation of teaching units for blind and visually impaired, Deaf and hard of hearing, and speech language pathology for 2022-23 school year to allow time to develop a different service delivery model based on other recommendations in this report. These allocations are as follows:

**Teaching Units for Blind and Visually Impaired, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and Speech Language Pathology**

Position	Teaching Units
Blind and Visually Impaired	7
Deaf and Hard of Hearing (itinerant teachers, teachers of the Deaf and audio-verbal therapist)	22
Speech Language Pathologists	45

- a.** With the new service delivery model which should be implemented in the 2023-24 school year, the allocations for BVI itinerants, DHH itinerants and SLPs be based on student need.
- 79.** The itinerant teachers (BVI, DHH, ESL/EAL) and SLPs review their programs and services and develop a plan that:
- a.** Incorporates face-to-face and virtual sessions with students receiving direct service.
  - b.** Uses virtual platforms as the main mechanism for consult services and/or monitoring progress.
  - c.** Uses virtual platforms to participate in program planning and service delivery meetings, and in mentoring/coaching classroom teachers and other school-based staff.
  - d.** Reduces their travel time by a pre-determined target established jointly by the itinerant teacher/SLP, their supervisor, and the Department of Education.

80. The itinerant teachers (BVI, DHH, ESL/EAL) and SLPs in collaboration with classroom teachers and other relevant staff in their schools develop a professional learning plan for school-based staff that increases their understanding and application of the supports their students require to access the curriculum.
- a. The professional learning plan include tentative schedules for delivery to facilitate the provision of appropriate resources.
  - b. The Department of Education develop a support model for the professional learning plans for school-based staff that outlines clear procedures and lines of responsibilities for the provision and use of resources.
  - c. The Department monitor and evaluate the impact of the professional learning.
81. The Department of Education conduct a learning space assessment of all schools to determine:
- a. The extent to which the schools can provide learning spaces for reading specialists, student success teachers, teaching and learning assistants, itinerant teachers, speech language pathologists and educational psychologists.
  - b. The capacity of schools to deliver virtual programs to BVI, DHH, ESL students and students who receive support from SLPs.
82. The Department of Education develop an ESL/EAL/LEARN Student Registration System for collecting and recording student enrolments, (ESL, EAL and LEARN) with a protocol for principals to use for this purpose.
83. The Department of Education use the ESL/EAL/LEARN student numbers as captured in the Student Registration System as of April 30 of the previous school year to allocate ESL/EAL/LEARN teachers as follows:
- a. For school-based ESL/EAL high school teachers, use the ratio 1:29 based on the ESL student numbers.
  - b. For itinerant ESL/EAL teachers, use the ratio 1:29.
  - c. Allocate LEARN teachers for Grades 4 – 9, based on the number of LEARN students in the ESL/EAL/LEARN Registration System, using the class size maximums for Grades 4 – 6 and 7 – 9.
  - d. When the number of students in these programs exceed the capacity of the allocation for any one school year to provide services to ESL/EAL/LEARN students, the Department will use its discretionary allocation through a needs-based system to provide the additional support.
84. The Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation engage in ESL programs as follows:
- a. Develop/adapt content for ESL 1205, 2205 and 3205.
  - b. Develop a format that ensures course access for students who are English language learners and respects cultural and linguistic diversity.
  - c. Explore the feasibility of developing ESL/EAL programs for intermediate grades.

85. The Department of Education in collaboration with the school districts and the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association revise the service delivery model for educational psychologists to state that their primary role is the administration, interpretation and reporting of comprehensive assessments.
- a. The model include but not be limited to: their areas of expertise, standards of practices and clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
  - b. The model address solutions, including virtual services to overcome the challenges of meeting students' needs.
  - c. The model implement a team of professionals approach (guidance counsellors, instructional resource teachers, behaviour support specialists).
  - d. The model of service delivery must be clearly communicated to the school system.
86. The Department of Education in collaboration with the school districts, the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, Memorial University and the Newfoundland and Labrador Psychology Board seek opportunities and/or develop programs for teachers to complete graduate work in all psychoeducational assessments.
87. The Department of Education establish the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation as a Centre of Excellence with responsibility for developing and implementing a continuity plan for the school system in preparation for future significant events similar to but not necessarily of the same scope as the 2020 – 22 global pandemic; establishing the infrastructure to enable the K – 12 system to provide virtual service delivery for all services provided by itinerant teachers, speech language pathologists and educational psychologists in conjunction with the continuation of in-person programs and services; and creating and applying a system of administrative supports for teaching principals to remove, to the extent possible, the daily paperwork allowing them to focus on the more complex components of a school leader.
- a. The Department of Education appoint an educational leader as Director of the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation.
88. The Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation develop a strategy for content and resource development including but not limited to:
- a. New areas of high school curriculum, laboratory components of science courses, positive action for student success (PASS) program, advanced placement courses, intermediate curriculum including music, fine arts, core French, and EAL (ESL) programs.
  - b. Student services and programs for those unable to attend regular school.
  - c. Support to give students and teachers ease of access to programs and the current delivery platform.
  - d. Innovative approaches to program delivery, new technologies and ways of teaching/learning.
  - e. Enhanced asynchronous options to supplement synchronous programs.
  - f. Teacher professional learning.
  - g. Dissemination of details and up-to-date information on all asynchronous resources to all teachers and students of the province as new materials are released.

89. The Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation hold consultations with students and teachers including those from PASS programs to identify and develop solutions for any existing barriers (e.g., access to Brightspace, class size) and to identify unmet learning needs.

## **Chapter 10: Implementation**

**Accordingly, the Teacher Allocation Review Committee recommends that:**

90. The Minister of Education, in consultation with the Premier, appoint an educational leader, directly accountable to the Minister and the Clerk of the Executive Council, to lead the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

## Appendix 2

### Terms of Reference – Teacher Allocation Review 2022

- Review the roles and responsibilities of the following resources, prior to determining the appropriate allocation of teaching resources:
  - Guidance Counsellors;
  - Educational Psychologists;
  - Speech Language Pathologists;
  - Itinerant Teachers for Deaf/Hard of Hearing;
  - Itinerant Teachers for Blind/Visually Impaired;
  - Instructional Resource Teachers;
  - Learning Resource Teachers;
  - Positive Action for Student Success (PASS) Teachers;
  - Student Support Services Itinerants (including those for safe and caring schools);
  - Program Specialists;
  - English as a Second Language (ESL) Teachers;
  - Teaching and Learning Assistants;
  - Reading Specialists; and
  - Student Assistants.
- Review how the resources listed above are allocated, and subsequently deployed, to the K-12 system.
  - Note: Allocation happens at the Department of Education (i.e., government provides school districts with the total allocation of resources for each area) whereas deployment occurs at the district level (i.e., the districts deploy the resources to individual schools). Those resources listed above are in addition to the allocation of classroom teachers, specialist teachers and administration (i.e., principal/vice-principal). Classroom and specialist teachers have the direct responsibility of delivering the curriculum to students, whereas those resources listed above provide various supports to students to complement classroom teaching and ensure all students receive the appropriate services to meet their needs.
- Recommend appropriate allocations of the above-noted resources.
- Recommend appropriate class sizes for K-12 classes that considers small schools, multi-grades/combined grades, and French Immersion.
- Recommend allocations of:
  - Classroom teachers;
  - Specialist teachers; and
  - School administrators (i.e., principal and vice-principal).

- Consider innovative approaches to delivery of education services, including a review of the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation, as well as the Good at Learning, Good at Life virtual school used by the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLESĐ) during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Recommend appropriate ways to meet unexpected or emerging needs each school year.
  - As part of the process of determining appropriate allocations, undertake a review of the following:
    - Allocation models and reports from other Canadian provinces;
    - Relevant education reports from the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador (1967 - present);
    - Scholarly research;
    - Current provincial initiatives; and
    - Relevant legislation, regulations, and policy frameworks.
- Consult with key stakeholders including:
  - Parents;
  - Students;
  - Teachers, including teaching and learning assistants (and all identified groups listed above);
  - School administrators;
  - Student assistants;
  - Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association;
  - Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees;
  - Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils;
  - Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLESĐ);
  - Conseil Scolaire Francophone Provincial de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador (CSFP);
  - NLESĐ and CSFP trustees;
  - Representatives of Indigenous groups; and
  - Other stakeholder groups including, but not limited to; Newfoundland and Labrador Association for the Deaf, Canadian Hard of Hearing Association – NL, Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Learning Disabilities Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, Autism Society of Newfoundland and Labrador, Association for New Canadians.

## Appendix 3

### Key Stakeholders

Association for New Canadians of Newfoundland and Labrador

Conseil Scolaire Francophone Provincial de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador

Learning Disabilities Association of Newfoundland and Labrador

Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association

Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils

Newfoundland and Labrador English School District

Newfoundland and Labrador English School District Trustees

Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees

Newfoundland and Labrador Stuttering Association

Representatives of Nunatsiavut Government

Representatives of Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees



## Appendix 4

### Key Informants

NL Special Interest Council - Council of Special Services

NL Special Interest Council - English Language Arts

NL Special Interest Council - Math/Science

NL Special Interest Council - Music Educators' Association

NL Special Interest Council - President of School Administrators Council

NL Special Interest Council - Psychologists in Education

NL Special Interest Council - Technology in Education

NL Special Interest Council - Speech Language Pathologists

NL Special Interest Council - Teacher Librarians

Representatives of Faculty of Education, Memorial University

Representatives of Newfoundland and Labrador English School District

Representatives of Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees

The Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills



## Appendix 5

### Consultation Sessions

Teacher Allocation Review Committee held the consultation sessions through virtual facilitated meetings.

#### Consultation Sessions with Stakeholders

<b>Group</b>	<b>Consultation Date</b>
Nunatsiavut Government	March 15, 2022
Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils	March 24, 2022
Learning Disabilities Association of Newfoundland and Labrador	March 28, 2022
Newfoundland and Labrador English School District Trustees	March 29, 2022
Newfoundland and Labrador English School District	March 29, 2022
Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association	March 30, 2022
Association for New Canadians of Newfoundland and Labrador	March 30, 2022
Conseil Scolaire Francophone Provincial de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador	March 31, 2022
Newfoundland and Labrador Stuttering Association	May 16, 2022
The Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills	May 20, 2022
NL Association of Public and Private Employees	July 5, 2022
Memorial University, the Faculty of Education	July 6, 2022

#### Public Consultation Sessions

<b>Group</b>	<b>Consultation Date</b>
Student Assistants	May 2, 2022
Teachers of Kindergarten to Grade 6	May 3, 2022
Parents and/or General Public members	May 3, 2022
Teachers of Grade 7 to Grade 12	May 4, 2022
School Administrators	May 5, 2022
Teaching School Administrators	May 11, 2022
Students from Central Region	May 9, 2022
Students from Western and Labrador Regions	May 10, 2022
Students from Avalon Region	May 11, 2022

**Focus Group Sessions:**

<b>Focus Group</b>	<b>Consultation Date</b>
Program Itinerants	April 27, 2022
Educational Psychologists	May 2, 2022
Speech Language Pathologists	May 3, 2022
Directors of Schools	May 4, 2022
Teachers of Deaf and Hard Hearing Students	May 5, 2022
Teachers of Blind and Visually Impairment Students	May 5, 2022
English as Second Language Teachers	May 6, 2022
Program Specialists	May 6, 2022
Guidance Counsellors	May 9, 2022
Teacher Librarians	May 10, 2022
Instructional Resource Teachers	May 12, 2022
Reading Specialists	May 16, 2022
Teaching and Learning Assistants	May 17, 2022
Student Success Teachers	May 18, 2022
Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation Specialists	May 20, 2022
Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation Teachers	May 30, 2022

## Appendix 6

### Written Submissions

#### Individuals

Thirty-four individuals and fifteen organizations submitted a written brief to the Teacher Allocation Review Committee.

The following twenty-five individuals agreed to be acknowledged in this report:

Andrew Mercer	Lindsy Hutchings
Andrea S.	Matthew Sheppard
Catherine Dinn	Marie Louise Willett
Catherine Hoven	Megan Kinsella
Frank Humber	Mike Hochwald
Geoff Bartlett	Nancy Barry
Gina Evoy	Nancy Miller
Janette Martin	Paula Luby-Coughlan
Jenny-Rachel Lind	Peter Burt
John Goldsworthy	Penny Gale-Pittman
Kelly Harris	Sandy Crowley
Kerry Pope	Susan Clarke
Kirsten Wallace	

## Organizations

Newfoundland and Labrador English School District  
Newfoundland and Labrador Learning Disabilities Association  
Newfoundland and Labrador Stuttering Association  
Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association  
Special Interest Council - Council of Special Services (COSS)  
Special Interest Council - English Language Arts (Grades 7-12)  
Special Interest Council - NL Music Educators' Association  
Special Interest Council - Math/Science  
Special Interest Council - Physical Education  
Special Interest Council - President of School Administrators Council  
Special Interest Council - Psychologists in Education  
Special Interest Council - Second Languages Council  
Special Interest Council - Speech Language Pathologists  
Special Interest Council - Teacher Librarians  
Special Interest Council - Technology in Education