

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the late fall of 2001 and early winter of 2002, the high school graduates of June 2001 were involved in a study, conducted by the Department of Youth Services and Post-Secondary Education, to determine their post-graduation activities. Surveys were conducted on a significant sample of the graduate population while the whereabouts of the remainder were determined through a linkage with the post-secondary enrolment databases. The survey was successful in tracking 90% of the June 2001 graduating class (621 or 10% of graduates could not be tracked due mainly to poor contact information).

Of those graduates surveyed, the questions posed to them determined whether or not they were attending a post-secondary institution and what had prompted their decision. Those graduates not attending post-secondary were also asked to indicate if they had future post-secondary plans. External factors which can ultimately affect the pursuit of a post-secondary education such as the availability of required financial support, the ability to meet entrance requirements and personal or family issues were also examined.

Key Findings

The Post-Secondary Cohort

- ❑ At the time of survey, that is between November 2001 and March 2002, 71% or 3,808 of the 5,371 June 2001 high school graduates who were tracked through the survey, were engaged in post-secondary studies. Although the actual number of students enrolling in post-secondary has decreased over the period since 1996 as a result of a declining secondary school population, there was a slight increase (1%) in the proportion of high school graduates entering post-secondary immediately out of high school.
- ❑ Of the June 2001 graduating class who were not engaged in post-secondary studies at the time of survey, 9% (n=141) had returned to school to upgrade their marks. It can be expected that these graduates will eventually enter post-secondary.
- ❑ Memorial University accounted for 56% of the June 2001 high school graduates attending post-secondary institutions, up from 1996 when 53% attended Memorial.

- ❑ The percentage of high school graduates in the post-secondary cohort that were in attendance at the College of the North Atlantic increased from 17% in 1996 to 25% in 2001.
- ❑ Private colleges in Newfoundland and Labrador were attended by only 6% of the June 2001 high school graduates attending post-secondary, down from 18% in 1996.
- ❑ In 2001, the percentage of the post-secondary cohort attending out-of-province post-secondary institutions decreased from 13% in 1996 to 11% in 2001.

The Non-Post-Secondary Cohort

- ❑ The reasons most cited by graduates for not pursuing post-secondary studies in the fall after graduation was the inability to decide on a career path (42%), inadequate entrance grades (22%) and insufficient finances (19%).
- ❑ Of those graduates from 2001 whose post-graduation activities were determined through the survey, 17% were working and employed predominantly in the retail sales and service industries while another 8% were unemployed. Almost half indicated they were working to finance their future post-secondary studies.
- ❑ The vast majority (93%) of June 2001 graduates not engaged in post-secondary studies at the time of survey expressed a desire to do so in the future. The institution of choice for the largest group of these students (30%) was the College of the North Atlantic. A government student loan was cited as the means by which almost half (48%) of graduates will pay for their future post-secondary studies.

The High School Experience

- ❑ Overall, 60% of June 2001 high school graduates indicated they had chosen a career path; of these graduates, 41% had made their career choice prior to or during Grade 10.
- ❑ Graduates cited parents or guardians (54%), teachers (45%) and guidance counsellors (42%) as important sources of career advice.

- ☐ While graduates were aware of the in-school career counselling services available to them in high school, only 60% reported using the services of a guidance counsellor to help plan their future.
- ☐ Graduates attending post-secondary (81%) were more inclined to be involved with extracurricular activities during high school than those who never proceeded to post-secondary (68%).
- ☐ Overall, 42% of the June 2001 graduating class worked during high school, prompted generally by a need for spending money.