

## Chapter 1: Introduction

The Department of Education is committed to meeting the needs of all students by providing a strong K-12 school system that offers students every advantage to learn in a safe and productive environment. The 2009/10 provincial budget allocated \$1.29 billion to ensure this continues. This is an increase of \$130.9 million from the previous year (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2009, p. 27). This funding has allowed the department to continue to provide quality programming. Along with this, \$121.5 million was earmarked to improve school infrastructure.

While it is important to look at the education system in terms of the existing programs, policies and initiatives, it is also important to explore the experiences and progress of the students and teachers the education system serves. It is the goal of *Indicators 2009/10* to explore the performance of the 69,665 students who attended 279 public schools across the province. The information contained will provide a snapshot of how the province's students performed in the 2009/10 school year. Where possible, information from several years will be provided to explore long term trends.

To meet this goal, *Indicators 2009/10* is divided into four parts. The first part will focus on the students, teachers and schools. Part II explores various aspects of the educational system – French as a second language programs, student support services, high school course selections, graduation rates, and early school leavers. The third part examines various high school indicators, such as graduation and drop-out rates. Finally, part IV focuses on student performance on public examination courses and provincial assessments in Grades 3, 6 and 9. While the province is still involved in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP), there is no information available to provide in this edition. These large scale assessments occur once every three years. As this information becomes available, it will be explored in subsequent versions of *Indicators*.