

Chapter 2: The Organization of the Educational System

On September 30, 2014, some of the responsibilities provided by the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services was moved to the Department of Education to create the new Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD). While this new department continues to be responsible for early childhood learning and development, the K-12 school system and the province's public libraries, responsibilities for child care and family resource programming are now included under the new mandate. This restructuring was made with the objective to build an educational community in Newfoundland and Labrador that fosters safe, caring and inclusive learning environments for all children and youth in early childhood settings, regulated child care and family resources centres, and pre-school to Grade 12 (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2014).

Currently, the programs and services offered by the EECD are provided through one of the following three branches:

- (1) The *K-12 Education and Early Childhood Development Branch* is responsible for distance learning and innovation, early childhood learning, evaluation and research, family and child development (including regulated child care services), program development, school services and student support services.
- (2) The *Corporate Services Branch* is responsible for strategic planning and annual reporting, budget preparation and monitoring, financial services, school busing, international education, policy development and accountability, school construction, teacher payroll services, and federal-provincial agreements.
- (3) The *Infrastructure Branch* is responsible for the administration and management of the K-12 school capital construction program which includes new construction, extensions, renovations and/or redevelopments, and all major maintenance for existing school infrastructure.



Major responsibilities

Specifically, the department's responsibilities can be grouped into nine main program and service areas. These are:

- (1) *Educational Policy and Direction* - The department sets the strategy and vision for the province's K-12 education system, early childhood learning, and child care. Decision-making is informed through reviewing and amending legislation and regulations, conducting relevant research and analysis, and providing statistical indicators and background information. The department is responsible for the certification of teachers and the administration of various articles of the teachers' collective agreement. The department also approves the certification of early childhood educators (ECEs), which is completed by the Association of Early Childhood Educators Newfoundland and Labrador (AECENL).
- (2) *Curriculum and Programs* - In the K-12 system, responsibilities include: developing and monitoring the French and English curricula and programs, creating or selecting learning resources, developing programs for improved teaching and learning, developing and supporting inclusive education initiatives, supporting safe, caring and inclusive environments, providing teacher professional learning opportunities, and collaborating with Aboriginal groups.
- (3) *Support for Children and Youth with Diverse Needs/Exceptionalities* - The department provides a broad range of support services to enhance inclusive practices in child care and learning environments for children and youth with diverse needs/exceptionalities. The Inclusion Support Program is a voluntary program that provides support to child care providers in regulated child care settings (centre-based or family child care) to help children with diverse needs (birth to 13 years) participate meaningfully in the programs. In the K-12 system, support for students with exceptionalities is provided within the inclusive education framework. The service delivery model is supported by policies and guidelines, and professional learning and is enhanced through collaboration with community partners.
- (4) *Early Childhood Learning* - The department fosters early childhood learning opportunities through cooperation with other departments and agencies. Responsibilities include: developing and implementing early childhood learning resources, developing and monitoring the KinderStart program, the provincial early childhood learning framework, evaluation activities, the provincial early childhood learning strategy, Learning from the Start, early literacy partnerships with public libraries, Parent Resource Kit partnership with regional health authorities, and the Power of Play promotional campaign.

(5) *Child Care Services and Family Resource Centres* - Responsibilities include: monitoring and licensing of regulated child care services (centre-based or family child care home) throughout the province, providing financial support for regulated child care services on behalf of eligible families, providing financial support for the development and operation of child care centres and family child care homes; providing financial assistance to help recruit and retain early childhood educators (ECEs), and supporting the operation and development of family resource centres in many areas of the province.

(6) *Student Assessment and Research* - The department collects data and manages databases for core areas such as child care services, enrolment, student support services, student achievement, and graduate outcomes. Responsibilities include: the evaluation, monitoring, test development, and certification processes for the K-12 system; administration of the General Educational Development (GED) tests; and all major functions related to education system performance, such as education statistics, planning, accountability, policy development and research.

(7) *Support to School Districts* - Areas include: school transportation; school construction, major repairs, and maintenance; monitoring compliance with codes and legislation (including Occupational Health and Safety compliance); school board operations; teacher allocation; and teacher payroll (including teachers and student assistants).

(8) *e-Learning* - Responsibilities include: the delivery of distance education programs and services to secondary level students attending schools supported by the two provincial school districts; the provision of digital learning resources to support selected intermediate course delivery; the development and delivery of online e-course review supports for public and school-based exams; the development and delivery of multimedia learning objects as learner supports for select intermediate and secondary level provincial curricula; the hosting of the provincial K-12 video-conferencing bridging services; and the negotiation, purchase, and oversight of select provincial software licensing acquisitions.

(9) *Support for Public Libraries* - Areas include: support for compliance with codes and legislation (Occupational Health and Safety, Access to Information and Protection of Privacy), early literacy, and a community Internet access youth employment program.



Provincial school districts

Two school districts oversee the daily operations of public schools across within the province: the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLESD) and Le Conseil scolaire francophone provincial de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador (CSFP). Each district is directly responsible for such things as:

- staffing,
- distributing resources, including human resources,
- evaluating, acquiring, distributing and maintaining technology resources,
- acquiring, maintaining and repairing buildings,
- transporting students, and
- developing instructional policies and practices.

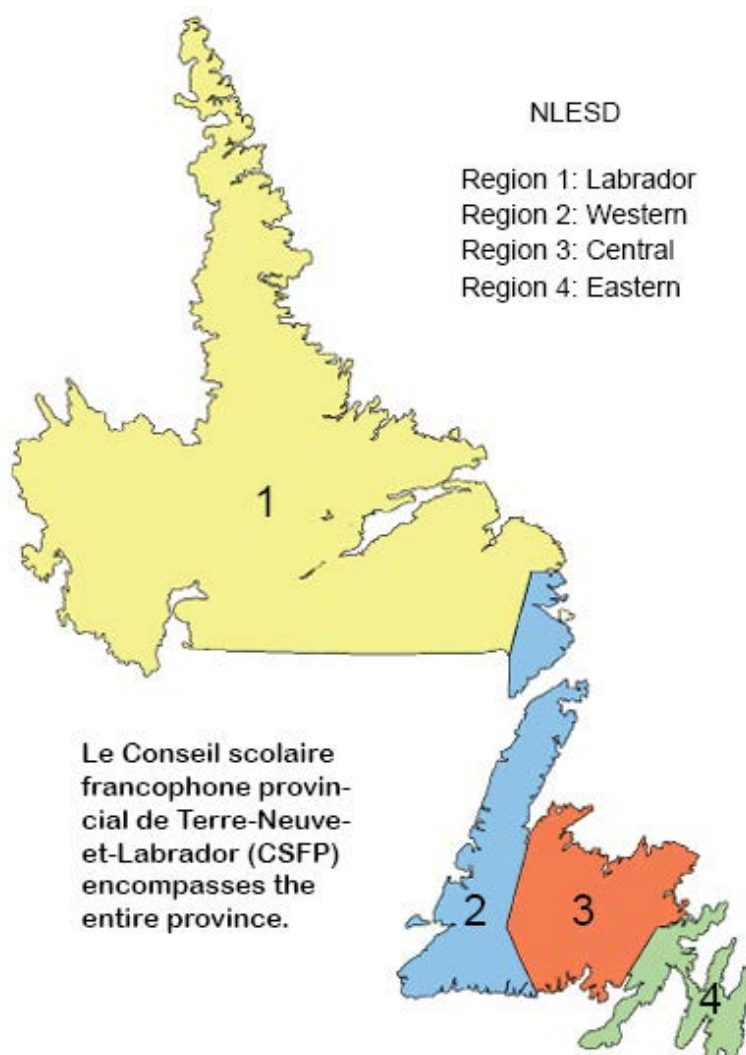
Newfoundland and Labrador English School District

On September 1, 2013, the four existing school districts were consolidated under a new provincial district, the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLESD). This district is divided into four geographic areas with each having a regional office. In total, the district is responsible for approximately 67,000 students and 257 schools in the province.

Le Conseil scolaire francophone provincial de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador

Le Conseil scolaire francophone provincial de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador (CSFP) is responsible for the delivery of educational services and French first language programs from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Currently, this district is responsible for approximately 350 students and the following five schools spread across the province:

- Centre éducatif l'ENVOL (Labrador City)
- École Boréale (Happy Valley Goose Bay)
- École des Grands-Vents (St. John's)
- École Notre-Dame du Cap (Cap Saint-Georges)
- École Sainte-Anne (La Grand'Terre (Mainland))



School councils

School councils represent a partnership among the school, family and community. Its underlying purpose is to represent the school's educational interests, advise on the quality of teaching and learning in the school, assist and encourage parent and community involvement, and to advise the school board on matters of concern.

Specifically, school councils have the following five roles:

- (1) To provide a formal structure through which all partners can come together to discuss the education of the children with the primary goal of enhancing the quality of teaching and learning, resulting in improved student achievement.
- (2) To represent the educational interests of all students collectively. Council members also represent the views of their respective groups in that parent representatives speak for the parents of children in the school, teacher representatives speak for the teachers of the school, student representatives speak for the students of the school, and community representatives speak for the community. In order to effectively represent a group, council members should regularly seek feedback from their respective groups on the teaching and learning environment of the school, and any issues that may have an impact. It is the responsibility of council members to bring these issues forward on behalf of their groups and to communicate any decisions/actions back to the groups they represent.
- (3) To encourage active participation from the school community in the teaching and learning process.
- (4) To advise on the quality of the teaching and learning in the school. To effectively carry out this function, school councils should actively participate in the school development process, including contributing to the creation of the school development plan.
- (5) To advise the board on matters of concern to the school and to the school community. In some cases, a specific communications protocol is outlined in the school council's protocol agreement with their board.

(Department of Education, 2008, p.8)

More information about school council's and the role they play can be found in "*The Building Learning Communities - A Handbook for School Councils, 2nd Edition*." This handbook is published by the EECD and available as a pdf file through the following link: <http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/publications/k12/Handbook2ndedition.pdf>