

2023-2026

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## Education



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## MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

As Minister of Education, and in accordance with my responsibilities under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, I am pleased to present the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan for the Department of Education covering April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2026.

As a category one Provincial Government entity, the Department of Education is responsible for outcomes respecting early childhood development, the K-12 education system, and the post-secondary education system. The goals and objectives included in this Strategic Plan were prepared in consideration of the strategic directions detailed in Annex A.

The Department of Education has identified three strategic issues that will guide its work over the next three years: Early Learning and Child Care, K-12 Education, and Post-Secondary Education. I look forward to working with the department's staff and entities to implement these initiatives over the 2023-26 planning period.

My signature below is indicative of my accountability for the preparation of this plan and the achievement of the identified goals and objectives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. Howell". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light grey rectangular background.

Hon. Krista Lynn Howell  
Minister of Education

## Overview

The Department of Education was established under the **Executive Council Act**. It is a category one Provincial Government entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act** and is responsible for achieving outcomes with respect to early learning and child development, the K-12 education system, and post-secondary education.

The programs and services are provided through five branches of the department:

### Early Learning Branch

This branch includes the divisions of Early Childhood Learning; and Child Development.

### Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education Branch

This branch includes the divisions of Evaluation and Research; and Programs and Services.

### Post-Secondary Education Branch

This branch includes the divisions of Literacy and Institutional Services; and Student Financial Services.

### Corporate Services Branch

This branch includes the divisions of Financial Services; and Policy and Information Management.

### Education Transformation Branch

This branch was newly established in May 2023, and the structure of this branch is underway.

The main offices of the Department of Education are located in the West Block of the Confederation Building in St. John's. The Learning Resources Distribution Centre is located in Pleasantville, St. John's and Student Aid Offices are located at Coughlan

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College, Memorial University. Early learning and child care services are provided throughout the province in offices located in St. John's, Whitbourne, Harbour Grace, Clarenville, Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor, Springdale, Corner Brook, Stephenville, Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Labrador City.

Additional information on the Department of Education can be found at <https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/>.

**Budget**

Branch	# of Employees	Budget
Executive Services*	10	\$1,344,900
Corporate Services	16	\$4,743,700
Early Learning	86	\$66,679,100
K-12 Education	75	\$816,374,700
Post-Secondary Education	40	\$391,363,300
<b>Total</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>\$1,280,505,700</b>

\* This number includes communications and executive support staff.

**Staff Distribution**

Location	# of Employees
St. John's	191
Whitbourne	1
Harbour Grace	6
Clarenville	1
Gander	4
Grand Falls-Windsor	7
Springdale	1
Corner Brook	11
Stephenville	1
Happy Valley-Goose Bay	3
Labrador City	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>227</b>

## Mandate

The Minister of Education is responsible for all matters relating to a high-quality educational system in the province, from early learning and child care to K-12 education and post-secondary education.

The mandate for the department is primarily established under the Departmental Notices under the **Executive Council Act**, and other pieces of legislation that support the mandate are as follows:

- **Child Care Act;**
- **Child Care Regulations;**
- **College Act, 1996;**
- **Council on Higher Education Act;**
- **Degree Granting Act;**
- **Memorial University Act;**
- **Memorial University Pensions Act;**
- **Private Training Institutions Act;**
- **Public Libraries Act;**
- **Schools Act, 1997;**
- **Student Financial Assistance Act, 2019;**
- **Teacher Training Act;** and
- **Teachers' Association Act.**

## Lines of Business

Our programs and services enable a high-quality learning environment from early learning to K-12 to post-secondary education, focused on ensuring all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have a bright start in life and continued opportunities for learning.

**What we do:**

**Early Learning and Child Care:**

- Develop and monitor policies and programs to support child care and early years programs.
- Provide financial support for the development and operation of child care centres, family child care homes, family child care agencies and community agencies such as family resource centres.
- Support early learners with diverse learning needs.
- License, monitor, and inspect child care services.
- Evaluate the child care system through data collection, analysis, planning and research.
- Support children's transition from child care to the K-12 education system.
- Provide parent resources and supports such as the child care subsidy.

**K-12 Education:**

- Oversee K-12 educational policies, legislation and regulations.
- Fund and support Conseil scolaire francophone provincial de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador.
- Fund and support the interim board of the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District until it is fully integrated into the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Develop and monitor English and French curricula and programs.
- Create and/or select curriculum documents and teaching resources.
- Evaluate curriculum and assess outcomes.
- Support students with diverse learning needs.
- Monitor education system performance through data collection and analysis, planning and research.



- Set requirements for student diplomas and certificates.
- Set requirements for teacher development and certification.
- Fund and support public libraries.

**Post-Secondary Education:**

- Support the delivery of post-secondary education through Memorial University of Newfoundland, College of the North Atlantic and private training institutions.
- Fund public post-secondary institutions.
- Regulate and monitor private training institutions.
- Administer the student financial assistance programs.
- Provide programs and services for adult learning.

**Primary Clients**

The Department of Education's primary clients are child care service providers, early learning professionals, educators, learners and their families, school boards, post-secondary educational institutions, and other departments/agencies.

**Vision**

Effective and modern learning environments that foster inclusive and healthy communities for all learners in the province.

## Strategic Issues

### Strategic Issue 1 - Early Learning and Child Care

The Department of Education is responsible for supporting children's learning from birth through school leaving. The department is dedicated to promoting early learning and child care throughout the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. This goal is accomplished by implementing significant measures to improve early learning, supporting the developmental potential of children, supporting parents/caregivers and early learning professionals, supporting child care operations and family resource centres, providing more available and affordable regulated childcare services, and facilitating a seamless transition into the K-12 education system.

The experiences that children have in their early years can significantly influence their lifelong learning journey. The department continues to devote itself to making progress on initiatives related to high-quality early learning and child care programs and services.

#### Goal

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Education will have an accessible, high-quality, affordable, flexible and inclusive early learning and child care system.

#### Goal Indicator

- Increased capacity to ensure all who need child care can access spaces with flexible times available to meet demand.
- Responsive, play-based learning opportunities in inclusive environments provided to children by qualified early learning professionals.
- Families and communities are provided resources and support to develop optimal learning environments for children.

## Objective 2023-2024

By March 31, 2024, the Department of Education will have improved programs and services within the early learning and child care system.

### Objective Indicator

- Publicly released the Early Learning Action Plan and implemented actions to improve programs and services.
- Reviewed and modernized the child care Operating Grant Program to support child care operations and enhance services.
- Reviewed the inclusion program and made required changes to policy.
- Increased the number of pre-kindergarten sites and enhanced KinderStart.
- Implemented a new information management system inclusive of a parent portal.
- Developed and implemented Early Childhood Education workforce strategies to increase the number of trained professionals in child care.
- Reviewed parent supports and family resource programs.

## Objective 2024-2025

By March 31, 2025, the Department of Education will have implemented initiatives to better support high-quality early learning and child care programs and services.

## Objective 2025-2026

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Education will have increased resources and support to improve access to regulated child care services and to create more early learning opportunities for children.

## Strategic Issue 2 - K-12 Education

One of the top priorities for the Department of Education is to ensure that every child in Newfoundland and Labrador has access to a safe, inclusive and healthy school environment and an education system that is responsive to students' strengths and needs. Modernizing the K-12 education programs and services will enhance support to assist students in their learning journey, prepare them for future education and career prospects, and encourage their involvement in their communities and society.

During the 2023-26 planning period, changes will occur within the K-12 education system due to the integration of the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLESD) into the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Department of Education is dedicated to supporting the ongoing transformation of our K-12 education system and collaborating with its stakeholders to pursue a seamless transition for students, teachers, services and systems.

### Goal

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Education will modernize the K-12 system towards improved learning outcomes for students.

### Goal Indicator

- Enhanced educational programs.
- Enhanced assessment measurements for K-12.
- Updated the **Schools Act, 1997**.
- Continued support of Responsive Teaching and Learning.

## **Objective 2023-2024**

By March 31, 2024, the Department of Education will have continued with the integration of NLESD into government.

### **Objective Indicator**

- Created a joint partnership of district program specialists and department program consultants.
- Created a seamless transition for students and teachers of the NLESD into government.
- Introduced earlier teacher allocations for deployment.

## **Objective 2024-2025**

By March 31, 2025, the Department of Education will have implemented a modernized assessment and evaluation practice.

## **Objective 2025-2026**

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Education will have commenced implementation of an interactive and integrated curriculum.

## Strategic Issue 3 - Post-Secondary Education

The Department of Education is focused on the development of a high-quality, relevant, accountable and sustainable post-secondary education system. The department is committed to supporting students and collaborating with post-secondary institutions and other partners to establish a brighter future and a stronger economic foundation for Newfoundland and Labrador. Through modernization, the post-secondary education system will be better positioned to align with changing provincial needs, including increasing access to responsive programming, microcredentials and life-long learning opportunities that will directly contribute towards meeting labour market demands, increasing innovation and achieving better social and economic outcomes.

### Goal

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Education will have supported the development of a robust and responsive post-secondary system that is foundational to economic diversity and innovation.

### Goal Indicator

- Increased collaboration with post-secondary institutions on provincial priorities for social and economic development.
- Improved accountability and evaluation mechanisms for post-secondary education.
- Increased services to targeted adult literacy groups.
- Ensured responsiveness of student financial assistance programming in addressing accessibility to post-secondary education.
- Initiated development of a data system to better monitor outcomes for students and graduates of post-secondary institutions in the province.

## Objective 2023-2024

By March 31, 2024, the Department of Education will have assessed and updated financial supports provided to post-secondary students and adult literacy program providers.

### Objective Indicator

- Ensured the student financial assistance program continues to address financial barriers to attending post-secondary education.
- Updated agreement process for Adult Basic Education providers with re-structured funding formula for the training of vulnerable groups and support for student transitions.
- Increased accountability and focus on results for adult literacy projects.

## Objective 2024-2025

By March 31, 2025, the Department of Education will have supported sector alignment with labour market priorities and increased accountability and evaluation measures.

## Objective 2025-2026

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Education will have strengthened the foundations of the post-secondary education system.

## Annex A: Strategic Directions

Strategic directions are the articulation of desired physical, social, or economic outcomes that normally require action by, or involvement of, more than one government entity. Provincial Government generally communicates these directions through platform documents, throne and budget speeches, and policy documents. These themes should be considered, as appropriate and applicable, to each government entity in the development of the entity's plan. The **Transparency and Accountability Act** requires government entities to consider these strategic directions in the preparation of their performance-based plans. This facilitates the integration of planning practices across Government and ensures entities are moving forward on key commitments.

The strategic directions related to the Minister of Education are identified for the 2023-2026 planning cycle.

### **Strategic Direction #1: Early Learning and Child Care**

**Outcome:** Accessible and sustainable early learning and child care environment throughout the province.

This outcome supports the policy direction of the Department of Education and will require focus in the following areas:

- Accessible and sustainable early learning and child care programming.
- Development of Pre-Kindergarten programming.
- Sustainable child care funding model.
- Stability of early childhood educator workforce.
- Inclusive early learning and child care model.



**Strategic Direction #2: K-12 Education**

**Outcome:** Modernization of the K-12 education system towards improved learning outcomes for students.

This outcome supports the policy direction of the Department of Education and will require focus in the following areas:

- Assessment and evaluation practices.
- Responsive teaching and learning support.
- Interactive and inclusive curriculums.
- Learning environment that supports student health and wellness.

**Strategic Direction #3: Post-Secondary Education**

**Outcome:** Optimized contribution that the post-secondary system makes to the social, cultural, and economic development of the province.

This outcome supports the policy direction of the Department of Education and will require focus in the following areas:

- Modernize legislative and regulatory structures for post-secondary institutions in the province.
- Responsive student financial aid programming.
- Innovation and technology development.
- Responsive programming.
- Evidence-based and responsive adult literacy programming that addresses needs of vulnerable groups.