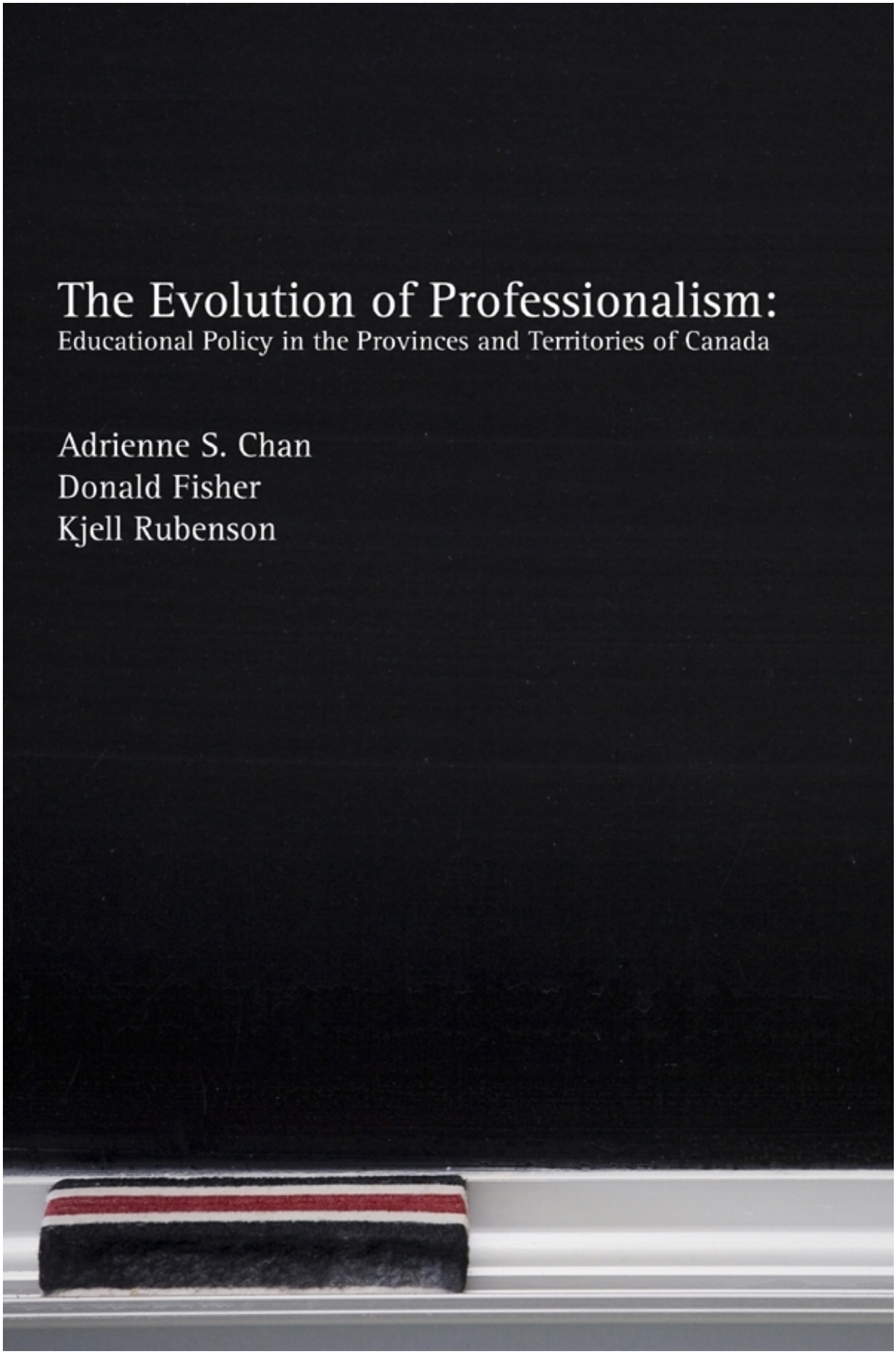
The Evolution of Professionalism:
Educational Policy in the Provinces and Territories of Canada

Adrienne S. Chan
Donald Fisher
Kjell Rubenson



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Introduction

Adrienne S. Chan, Donald Fisher, and Kjell Rubenson

This book takes a policy studies approach to documenting both regional and pan-Canadian changes in educational policy directed at schooling from the late 1980s through 2005. Our intent is to map the relation between the most important socio-political-economic-structural forces and these policies. The focus is on the production of policy within changing policy environments.

Our work began as part of larger five-year national study[1] aimed at gauging the impact of structural change on teaching in Canadian schools with the added objective of helping shape future educational policy. The larger project took as its starting point a fascination with the impact on school personnel/school agents of two important structural trends, namely, the professionalization of society, and the dominance of a political-economic imperative in the formulation of state educational policy.

The policy narratives that follow are the result of the work done within the policy sub-project. The task was to document the major educational policy themes that have been dominant in Canada over the last 15 years. Five regional teams produced narratives covering all provinces and territories. In this sense we document trans-provincial, trans-territorial themes rather than federal themes. Given the constitutional division of powers we were particularly conscious of the central role played by provincial governments is setting the tone of the policy environment. Our narratives by definition pay attention to the 'external' lives of school agents. In particular, we began by utilizing professionalization and accountability as two key sensitizing concepts. We assumed these concepts were central foundational components of the policy environment and through time critical elements in the production of policy. As will become apparent other sensitizing concepts were added at the beginning of the study and other policy themes emerged in the research process.

The Context

The history of teaching in Canada has been profoundly influenced by changes in the role of the Canadian state. The introduction of social welfare legislation based on Keynesian economics, was mirrored in social policy as the state took an active, interventionist role in the supply and training of teachers. The inclusion of education and all teacher education in the university curriculum has been informed by a broader structural societal trend toward professionalization and utilitarianism. The liberal concept of education has, in one sense, been surpassed by the advance of a culture of professionalism in Canadian universities and by the professionalization of Canadian society.

As in other industrialized societies, the aristocratic ideal of civility has been overtaken by the professional ideal, which according to Perkin is

> based on trained expertise and selection by merit...[emphasizing] human capital rather than passive or active property, highly skilled and differentiated labour rather than the simple labour theory of value, and selection by merit defined as trained and certified expertise (Perkin 1989, 4).

The predominance of this ideal in modern society is clearly linked to the emergence of the interventionist state and its emphasis on the public good. By the late 1960s, education had become a central legitimating institution in the modern Canadian state.

As in many other countries, education in Canada has been shaped by a reformist trend toward the professionalization of teaching. This policy trend addresses the training of school agents,[2] as well as the basic knowledge and competencies inherent in their work and their professional identity. The creation of professional colleges of teachers in British Columbia (1986) and Ontario (1996) are in line with this movement. Similar initiatives in other provinces (Alberta, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia) have been aimed at raising the standards in teacher-training and better control its quality through the definition of standards for training and practice (CMEC 2003). This professionalization of teaching goes beyond the training and education of school agents. This is the key issue when it comes to defining the place of these agents in school and society.

Professionalization is regarded as a process of negotiation among the different groups and organizations that share power (economic, organizational, political, and symbolic) and have access to different forms of capital in the field of education (Bourdieu, 1969 and 1988). As governments have limited the size of the public space in Canadian society, so necessarily the ideals of professionalism have come under attack. The discourse of professionalism has in some respects been co-opted by the state and transformed into government by norms. While professing to support professionalization, the substitution of credentials for professional practice serves to undermine professionalism.

The ideology of professionalism places merit and expertise at the centre of an equation connecting individuals into appropriate vocational slots (Bledstein 1976; Friedson, 1986; Clark 1987; Perkin 1989). A central and defining characteristic of professions in modern society has traditionally been their high level of relative autonomy. Professionals are expected to make decisions and come to judgements based on their command of a particular body of theoretically based knowledge. The

role of professionals in modern society, however, is undergoing profound changes (Brint 1994). The link between professional education and the opportunity structure in the labour market that was blurred during the 1980s and 1990s is once again taking on a clarity and a significance that first became prominent in the mid-1960s.

The professional status of agents has been undermined as accountability has replaced autonomy as a dominant policy theme. This trend has in turn contributed to discussions of the role of education within the state. Accountability models are embedded within the broader, ideological mechanisms, variously characterized as public sector reform, new public management and the evaluative state, that have accompanied the political-economic transition from welfare state to the global economy (Fisher and Rubenson 1998). With this has come insistence on a recognition of the dominance of market ideology. Governments press schools and school systems to be more responsive to the economy and to create alliances with the private sector.

The key element in the external life of agents in the 1990s has been government policy. The battle against federal and provincial deficits and the adoption of neo-liberal assumptions concerning the role of the state (Carroll and Shaw, 2001), lead governments to inflict considerable budget cuts on teaching systems while looking to maximize their services. Yet, while by 2000 the federal government had moved into surplus, the position of the provinces got worse.

We document in various ways how the severe limitations on public expenditures are linked to the general suspicion of public institutions and a belief in the greater efficiency of free market forces. The key policy term that is the symbol of both market and accountability is choice. A major retrenchment and restructuring occurred throughout Canada as provincial ministries drastically reduced the number of school boards through amalgamation. These changes were accompanied by a tightening of control over expenditures at the local level. Efforts to decentralize responsibility and increase the autonomy of school boards and school staffs has translated into a more significant role for parents, the development of an "in-service training" culture and the elaboration of school programs which promote the acquisition of competencies required in our new knowledge society. A school parent council structure was created in British Columbia in 2002. Similar structures were already in place in eight other provinces, including Ontario and Québec.

As we turn to the internal life of school agents the emphasis must be on linking the external social forces to the practices of being a school agent. How has the territory of being a professional school agent changed? How is the balance between different types of practice changing in relation to the global economy and, in particular, to the increasing reliance on information technology? The mediating structures of most interest include university teacher education programs, colleges of teachers, teachers unions and professional associations, and school boards. The boundary of interest for us is the one that separates teacher knowledge from other knowledge which in turn allows teachers to develop and consolidate their professional power or capital (Fisher and Edwards, 1999). The battle in British Columbia between the college of teachers, the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF), and the University of British Columbia (UBC) is an excellent example of this type of boundary work. We can thus further connect this type of

work to the different forms of capital (economic, cultural and social) that school agents both draw on and develop in their practices and thus trace the exercise of professional power and the accumulation of professional capital.

Policy Studies

Over time, researchers have approached policy studies from different perspectives. Drawing upon Roger Dale, Ozga (2000) identified three different approaches or policy projects based on the intention of the policy research. The "social administration project" refers to early work, emerging in the post-war era with the development of the welfare state and the growth of sociology. Sociologists sought to provide government decision makers with empirical data that would enable them to reform policy in the interests of the client rather than government (Ozga, 2000).

Since the 1960s, the "policy analysis project" has overtaken the field of policy studies. Here researchers are concerned with making policy more effective and efficient. The focus is more on solving policy problems than on understanding policy. Within the policy analysis project, there is a continuum of research. The range is from the "academic analysis of policy" to the "analysis for policy". The former is less engaged in practice while the latter can be advocacy oriented. The policy analysis project has been criticized for both its concern for clients and its lack of theoretical grounding (Ozga 2000). A third approach, the "social science project" is more theoretically oriented, and primarily aimed at understanding policy. This approach is less driven by a concern for clients and oriented toward the collective good.

The "social science project" aligns itself with critical policy analysis as articulated by Taylor et al. (1997). By combining critical theory with policy analysis, critical policy analysis, like the "social science project", concerns itself with understanding how things work. It no longer needs to draw on the same frame of reference used by the policy maker and draws on critical theory for insight into problems. By remaining within the policy analysis framework these understandings can be used politically and strategically. Critical policy analysis:

> cannot afford to ignore the technical issues of planning, but it must also be political and strategic. It can help expose the ways in which agendas are set and framed in favour of dominant interests, and it can identify and overcome obstacles to a democratic planning process. It can reveal the ways in which information provided for consultation might be distorted or false or misleading… It can contribute to an understanding of a policy already in place or help create pressures towards a new policy agenda. In this way, critical policy analysis can be both reactive and proactive. (Taylor et al. 1997, 20).

Policy sociology is the label used to describe the amalgam of the social science and critical approaches described above. The work upon which this book is based used policy sociology as the frame of reference. More emphasis is placed on political economy than earlier approaches and takes into account more fully the structural context and the social forces impinging on the system. Further, recent developments in the sociology of education, often with a Foucauldian influence, challenge the linear representation of policy process in the dominant literature.

Another central observation in the policy sociology literature with consequences for this study is that policy texts, policy production, and policy producers change within and across contexts. Sometimes there is little that is shared from one to another and sometimes it is actually difficult even to identify analytically what a policy is and what it is intended to achieve. Therefore policy sociologists have highlighted the need for new conceptual tools to provide a more adequate account of the discontinuities, compromises, omissions, and exceptions of policy production. This book is situated in the tradition of policy sociology that is concerned with theorizing the nature of policy and its production, and with illuminating the policy discourse (Gale 1999; 2001).

For Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992) one way to account for the variation in context is to look at a cycle of policy production and reproduction. They highlight three contexts of policy making: context of influence, policy text production, and context of practice, that is, localities within which policy is initiated, articulated and re-articulated. We define policy as the authoritarian allocation of values. Policies are the operational statements of values, statements of prescriptive intent (Kogan 1975). Defining policy and policies in this way draws our attention to the importance of power, control, and conflict in the policy-making process. Logically, we cannot divorce policies from interests, domination, and justice (Ball 1994).

In doing policy sociology we are aware that we must try to explicate the intellectual climate and the wider debates that characterize the policy context. An example we used in our discussion are Royal Commission reports. While these reports are not policy in and of themselves, they are clearly essential parts of our research if we are going to describe and analyze educational policies. Similarly, such reports are based upon the current academic research and thus usually representative of the intellectual climate. Beyond the explicit policies we must also be aware of the discontinuities, compromises, omissions and exceptions that are also part of the policy context. Similarly, a useful distinction is the one first proposed by Raymond Williams (1973; 1977) between three types of ideology, namely, the dominant, residual, and emergent. This recognises the importance of dominant ideas but also draws attention to internal contradictions and the possibilities for resistance.

Policy sociology makes use of historical methods in drawing attention to the historical context of the policy process and how the combined influences of the history, demographics, politics and economics that produce the policies have shaped the education system and the priorities assigned to it. In this context we want to stress the need to take a close look at the manner in which political institutions structure the decision making situation faced by actors in the education system and how these institutions influence trust. The idea is that institutions not only influence what political actors find to be a rational course of action seen from the standpoint of their self-interest, but also what they consider to be morally defensible behaviour (Rothstein 1999). In this sense one needs to take into account the unique properties of systems. The aim must be to link these unique properties to the broader structural trends. Further, one must situate the actors in their institutional biographies and within the social forces that press on their lives and push them in particular directions.

Equally influential is application of Bourdieu's concept of a 'critical moment' in the development of an academic field. In *Homo Academicus* (1988, 30), Bourdieu

describes May 1968 as a "historical event" when the equilibrium of the academic field in France was broken and the existing lines of fracture were made more visible. Similarly in the de4velopment of educational policy we are able to determine key moments when governments change direction. At these moments the structural forces present before and after the event are more visible and hence more amenable to analysis. The Klein Revolution is an example of such a critical moment.

Methodology and Design

At the original meeting of the Policy group of researchers, we decided on a general definition of policy and policy research. A general schematic that we thought useful was to talk about the external and the internal lives of school agents. This division takes into account both the external and internal social forces and practices that have an impact on school agents. Again at the original meeting of group, we decided on a list of sensitizing concepts or themes to guide our investigations. The list was professionalization and deprofessionalization; the dominance of a political-economic imperative in the formulation of state educational policy (accountability, privatization, market, choice, and decentralization); multiculturalism and diversity; inclusion, and violence and security. While we expected to find evidence of these themes we also assumed we find evidence of other emergent themes.

This book relies on documentary analysis. In line with our objectives and stemming from our own theoretical foundations, our project aimed at reconstructing and rendering sociologically intelligible the divergence in political, ideological, and socio-educational positions among the major social actors: governments, government departments, unions, professional associations (administrators, teachers). Each regional team was responsible for producing a policy narrative for provinces and territories, using the themes and sensitizing concepts as a guide. In each province and territory, a case study was developed with a historical policy overview.

The regional teams approached the whole of its tasks in light of the socio-political and socio-educational context in which the teaching personnel in Canada is evolving. The collection and analysis of the key documents included the period from the late 1980s through to 2005. The range of documents included Royal Commission reports, White and Green Papers, other major reports and policy documents produced by the key stakeholders, as well as secondary documents such as pamphlets and newsletters. The documentary data was examined with a thematic analysis of content based on the various preceding themes. That is, the policy narratives took into account the regional variations in the positions held by the major social actors and their evolution in time. Other indicators were also revealed, through the inductive reading of all the documentary sources.

We extended our analysis to document the differences in the policy-making process between provinces and territories. In some provinces everything was done through legislation, often without consultation. In other provinces, legislation was avoided or used sparingly and the process involved continuous and careful consultation. We were conscious of both the timing and sheer quantity of legislation introduced by some governments. The analysis of the policy-making process as

with all the themes were set within different policy environments through time as governments changed and political parties across the range of political ideologies took power.

Once the policy narrative case studies were developed, the regional team in Vancouver took responsibility for a pan-Canadian content analysis. Each instance of a theme was coded as such. In the main these instances (e.g., a word, a phrase or a sentence, or a block of text) came from specific documents. The same text could be instances of more than one theme. We avoided counting material twice that usually appeared in the introduction or a summary section of the narratives. Four collaborators jointly analyzed each narrative over a two-day period. A summary table was developed for each province and territory for all the themes, as well as a thematic table (e.g., accountability, governance) that allowed us to scan across provinces and territories. This analysis provided us with the ability to quantify the themes and document their distribution. These tables were updated as the policy narratives were updated.

Outline of the Chapters

In an effort to set our work in a relative framework, the chapters are written with comparison in mind. The regional teams attempted to make the chapters commensurable. The key pan-Canadian themes are set in time, in policy documents, and in a political context. The text is divided into sections by geographic region.

Chronology of the chapters generally follows the political-economic thrusts of the state. For example, we find a similarity of priorities such as accountability emerging across Alberta, Ontario, and British Columbia – as these are linked to political ideology and the political party in power. Each province takes on the issue of accountability with school boards differently, although some mirror and modify processes and policies from other provinces.

In addition to professionalization, accountability, and governance, other themes emerge across the provinces and territories: industrial and labour relations, Aboriginal education, francophone realities and French language, curriculum, social equity, and school choice (e.g., charter schools, private schools). Each chapter provides a chronological table documenting the political party in power, ministers of education, and legislation passed, as partial evidence of the policy priorities through time.

Throughout the text, and particularly in the conclusion, we have been aware of the difficulty in labelling any educational policy as pan-Canadian. Our Constitution makes clear that education is a provincial responsibility and in that sense we clearly have ten provincial systems. All the provinces and Québec in particular struggle to maintain their autonomy and their control of education. At the same time through their participation in international studies like PISA and through the work of the Council of the Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), the provinces recognize the need to look beyond their own boundaries. Further, the provincial political administrations are conscious of being enabled and constrained by broader social forces like globalization and the knowledge society. What we have found are clear and pronounced similarities between provinces and territories as each one

simultaneously reacts to and creates their policy environments. Clear differences also exist, housed in political and ideological continuities. So for example, the commitment to community and consensus-building in Saskatchewan emerges from and is an extension of the social democratic tradition in that province. Similarly, the commitment to egalitarianism and nation-building in Québec is located in the desire since the 1960s for that province to define itself as a distinct society.

This book is divided into five sections. Section one provides the narratives of the west: British Columbia and Alberta. The policies examined in these two provinces suggest similar political ideologies, particularly since 2001. Section two describes the prairies: Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Saskatchewan prevails as a province where community participation in policy making is a dominant theme. Section three provides the narratives from Ontario and Québec. In Ontario, we see striking similarities to Alberta and BC. Québec demonstrates the same 'exceptionalism' as we see in all public policy in that province. Section four includes the Atlantic region and the territories. Finally in Section five, we provide a conclusion and consider some of the dominant pan-Canadian themes.

Endnotes

1. SSHRCC Major Collaborative Research Initiative, 2002-2007, Evolution of School Personnel in Canada (412-01-1002).
2. Throughout the text we will use the term school agents to refer to both teachers and administrators.

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Chapter 1
Policy Narrative for British Columbia

Adrienne S. Chan, Donald Fisher, and Kjell Rubenson

Introduction

Since 1975, three different provincial political parties have formed the government in British Columbia; in this time period, the policy environment has shifted dramatically. Between 1986 and 2003, there were seven premiers and 13 different Ministers responsible for education, and each government, through the Ministry of Education, introduced amendments and revisions to educational policy. These policies and reforms signalled priorities in education and ideological responses to emerging social-educational needs. The shifts in policy priorities and responses are the focus of this chapter. We assert that school educators[1] as a professional group have experienced significant changes in their work in school systems as a result of these reforms and policy initiatives. As well, BC's proximity to pan-Asian countries, Asian migration and economic relations with the United States has influenced the wider social, political, economic, and global context of its education system. Globalization, with regard to the policy environment, translates into the increasing dominance of a political-economic imperative in the formation of provincial educational policy.

Political ideology is central to our interpretation of education and educational policies. In the case of British Columbia, we see a trend towards conservatism since 1988 and neoliberalism since 2000. As governments have limited the size of the public space in Canadian society, so too have the ideals of professionalism come under attack.

Three main acts guide the work of school agents in the education system in British Columbia: the School Act (1979; 1996), the Teaching Profession Act (1987; 1996) and the University Act (1963; 1996). The School Act guides governance, certification, and mandates for curriculum. The number of school districts has varied from a high of 75 to the current 60[2]. The Teaching Profession Act addresses the

profession of teaching, standards, and professional responsibility. This act is most closely related to the BC College of Teachers (BCCT) and their mandate for the certification of teachers. The University Act is important with respect to the ability of universities to grant degrees and diplomas in education. The University Act defines powers, responsibilities, and internal governing structures of universities in the province; teacher education programs fall under its jurisdiction.

Our policy narrative is divided into four major sections. First is a description of the policy environment through time from the 1988 Royal Commission on Education (Sullivan Commission) to the election of the current Liberal government in 2001. Second is a description of what the Liberal government has labelled the "New Era in Education". Third is the focus on two major themes that run through the narrative: professionalization and de-professionalization, and accountability. This section will also include a short discussion of the demography of school agents. Finally, we draw some brief conclusions.

The Legacy of the Sullivan Commission

This recent history of educational reforms and policies begins with the Royal Commission Report, *A Legacy for Learners* (1988) – Barry M. Sullivan QC, Commissioner. The Sullivan Commission report was based on public hearings held in locations throughout British Columbia during 1987 and 1988 and a series of voluntary and commissioned submissions. Specifically, the Commission was asked to address "educational issues to do with enhancing the quality of the system, its mechanisms for accountability, its teaching methods and curricula, its structures for governance and administration, as well as the means available for public, parental and teacher input" (1988, 3-4).

The Royal Commission Report is widely referred to as the document that set the stage for education through to the end of the 20th Century. It used terminology that has gained currency in education over the past 14 years – lifelong learning, citizenship, and social capital, were concepts guiding the analysis. References were made to a "pluralistic and diverse society", and the school as a place where "political and social ideals or values" may be operationalized. Notably, the report followed the 1982 adoption of Canada's new Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which is referenced in the report, with respect to the child, the school, and the right to education based on equality of rights.

While the Royal Commission Report did not make explicit educational policy recommendations, a key discussion point focused on the mandate of the school. The Commission articulated several key areas relevant to this overview: the preparation of teachers and teachers as professionals; fiscal accountability; and, responsible governance. The teaching profession and "teachers as professionals" were discussed in terms of their location as individual professionals and members of a professional organization. An emphasis was placed on standards and on "maintaining and improving teacher quality" (1988, 125) to meet the demands of the changing context of teaching (e.g., students with learning disabilities, increasing computer technology, the demands of English as a Second Language programs, federal policy on French programs, and greater subject specialization).

Recommendations were made with respect to teacher recruitment, teacher selection, and teacher education. All teachers would be required to complete five years of teacher education, teacher education programs were to extend the practicum portion of the programs, and teachers would be required to complete an approved undergraduate degree. These requirements set the stage for many teachers to return to university to complete their undergraduate degrees and for teacher education programs to be reviewed and revised. Teachers' need for "continual accumulation of knowledge and skills" — lifelong learning — was stressed, and the assertion that "quality teaching can be ensured only when teachers see themselves as lifelong learners" (1988, 137) became fundamental to the professional development of teachers.

Ministry of Education

In 1989, the Ministry of Education produced a report, *Policy Directions: A response to the Sullivan Royal Commission on Education by the Government of British Columbia*. This report outlined the Policy Directions of Education Minister Anthony Brumett and included a new mandate statement to guide the preparation of education policy and legislation. *Policy Directions* set the stage for the final decade of the 20th Century in education through the provision of a new mandate: "The purpose of the British Columbia school system is to enable learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy" (1989, 8). This mandate acknowledged that education had an integral relationship with the economy and was part of a societal agenda.

Policy Directions was followed by the development of the planning document, *Year 2000: A Framework for Learning* (1990). *Year 2000* suggested a number of changes to the curriculum that involved the integration of curriculum based on a number of strands. It was expected that these strands would be carried through from Kindergarten to Grade 12, with three programs: primary, intermediate, and secondary. Secondary teachers, who tended to be specialists in their disciplines, articulated their concerns about the integration of curriculum through the upper and graduation levels (Manzer, 1994). Dual entry for kindergarten children in September and January was another contentious reform that was to be implemented within a two-year period (1990-92).

In 1989, the Educational Advisory Council[3] was created to expand the work of the existing Policy Advisory Committee. The Educational Advisory Council continues to exist within the current provincial structure and provides policy advice to the Minister and the Ministry of Education. There have been periods where advice and consultation is limited – this often depends on the Minister, Deputy Minister, and composition of the Council at the time.

During the 1990s, special education teaching assistants, and training for assistants became more prominent in schools, with increasing numbers of special education students. Positions for designated teachers with the added portfolios for multiculturalism were created in a number of school districts. Community schools increased in numbers through to the end of the 1990s.

In 1991, the New Democratic Party was elected, ending a 15-year period of Social Credit government. Prior to the election, the Minister of Education, Stan Hagen, continued to move forward a number of the reforms identified in the *Year 2000* document (e.g., dual entry kindergarten, curriculum reforms). The new Minister of Education, Anita Hagen, proceeded to follow the course established by the Royal Commission Report, *Policy Directions* (1989) and *Year 2000* (1990). In 1993, the Minister of Education, Art Charbonneau conceded that some of the directions from *Year 2000* had not been successful, and would therefore be discontinued. Subsequent documents produced in 1993 and 1994 followed recommendations from the Royal Commission as well as revising recommendations.

In the document *Improving the Quality of Education in British Columbia: Changes to British Columbia's Education Policy* (1993), the Ministry identified a number of structural changes. *Education Policy* followed the Minister's concession that recommendations from the *Year 2000* document had not been totally successful. There was a return to structured written reports rather than anecdotal reports in Kindergarten to Grade 3, and a return to letter grades and written comments for Grades 8 to 12. In 1993, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour (which was responsible for postsecondary education) were merged into the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training. This merger remained in effect until 1998 when the two Ministries were separated again.

A policy and procedures manual (1993) was developed for the *BC Educational Records Link File*. The *Link* F*ile* is a data base that links Grade 12 transcripts to student information from BC's universities, colleges, and institutes. This collaborative venture by the province's educational institutions allows information to flow between schools and the postsecondary system. In the *Putting Policies into Practice Implementation Guide* (1994), the Ministry posited strategic priorities for 1994-95, included a summary of resources and support activities designed to implement policy and program changes, and discussed the responsibility of groups to work towards such implementation. The document articulated government expectations that schools would participate in district- and school-based planning; that the College of Teachers was to review requirements for certification and teacher education in relation to new programs; and that the development of partnerships between schools and school boards and the business and labour sectors would be emphasized. Provincial and professional organizations were expected to work to understand, adapt to, and implement the new policies and programs.

In 1987, the BC Principals' and Vice Principals' Association[4] (BCPVPA) was made an autonomous organization representing 95 per cent of BC's school-based administrators (e.g., approximately 2,400 people). Principals and vice-principals were considered administrators, and were no longer a part of the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF)[5]. This separation from the BCTF became law with the passage of the Industrial Relations Act, Bills 19 and 20 (1987). These bills eliminated the restriction on teachers being considered employees under the act, eliminated compulsory membership for teachers in the BCTF, and took principals and vice-principals out of the bargaining unit. Many teachers viewed the legislation as an attempt to split the BCTF and, in April 1987, BC teachers acted in solidarity with the rest of the labour movement and participated in a general strike to protest Bills 19 and 20. The legislation required

teacher locals to decide whether or not to choose the union model with the right to strike or to opt for the association model with limited access to resolution rights. Teachers in all 75 locals (districts) chose the union option.

In 1994, the provincial government introduced the Public Sector Labour Relations Act. Under this legislation the BCTF became the bargaining agent for all teachers. The act concurrently created a bargaining agency for school boards called the BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA). In 1996, the School Act was revised and the number of school boards was reduced from 75 to 59. The Teaching Profession Act and the University Act were also revised in 1996.

Policy Directions

Policy Directions (1989) included a number of recommendations to enhance the professionalization of teachers, to enhance gender equity, to deal with issues of diversity and inclusion, and to increase parental involvement. Among the recommendations on professionalization was the emphasis on principles in relation to standards of excellence (e.g., Provincial Teaching Excellence Awards). The discussion of standards was intended to raise the status of the teaching profession and of professional development activities. The Teaching Profession Act (1987) had recognized that teachers as a professional group may guide their own professional development. However, *Policy Directions* suggested that the BCCT and the BCTF were implicated in the discussions of standards and that clarification of roles was required with regard to teachers and their "individual professional development" (1989, 18).

The BCCT was created in 1988 and responsibility for the regulation of teachers moved from the Ministry to an independent agency. The College was established as the professional regulatory body overseeing the education of teachers, the issuance and review of teaching certificates, and, when necessary, the disciplining of teachers. The Teaching Profession Act guided the College, insofar as their mandate was to establish and maintain standards for the teaching profession in the province. In addition, the Ministry called on the BCCT to "review the qualifications required for admission to the teaching profession and for continuing certification" (1989, 18). The number of teachers decreased from 39,206 teacher positions in 2001-02, to 36,486 teacher positions in 2003-04[6].

From 1989 to 2003, when its mandate was changed, the College played an active role in teacher education. The Teacher Education Program Committee of the BCCT dealt with the policies and by-laws for approving teacher education programs and works with faculties of education in relation to their programs. The Committee also reviewed proposals for changes to existing programs and applications for new teacher education programs. BCCT was involved in two major court cases with universities because the Committee raised objections about their teacher education programs. The objectives, activities, and composition of the College changed in 2003 with the passage of Bill 51 (see below).

Policy Directions suggested that teacher development include learning new instructional strategies to consider diverse groups of students, and that emphasis be placed on teaching students creative thinking and problem solving. Increasingly, teachers were expected to use a number of approaches to develop resources and to

diversify their teaching skills and approaches. This trend in teacher development called on teachers to be creative and flexible in recognizing that the needs of students had changed, and that teaching had changed as a result. *Policy Directions* also recommended the expansion of teacher education programs and the development of programs to address the need for teachers in rural areas. Increased funding to universities was designed to generate more applicants for teacher education programs with the broad goal of increasing the supply of new teachers into the system. A forgivable loan program was to be implemented through a Rural Teacher Education Program Fund. A consortium of universities, colleges and school districts was invited to access a fund that was identified to "initiate and operate teacher education programs in rural areas" (1989, 17).

With regard to diversity and inclusion, *Policy Directions* acknowledged British Columbia as a multicultural province and suggested this diversity of cultures should be reflected in educational policy and programs. Issues of race, ethnicity, gender, and special education were acknowledged and put forward as they related to diversity and inclusion in education. All systems were recommended to "review their hiring and promotion practices to ensure that they are free from gender bias, ethnic or racial bias" (1989, 23-24). Systems were expected to review prospective teaching materials for gender, racial or cultural bias, to enhance student awareness of gender issues, awareness of the multicultural nature of society and of the historical foundations of society. In addition to curriculum content, *Policy Directions* raised structural questions with regard to discrimination, and it was recommended that gender equity should be reinforced through curriculum and schools.

Likewise, *Policy Directions* took the lead with respect to First Nations education. Teacher education for First Nations' educators was established in 1974 in the Native Indian Teacher Education Program (NITEP) at UBC. While the universities had acknowledged the importance of First Nations' education, it was not until after the 1988 Royal Commission Report that First Nations education was articulated as a priority by the Ministry of Education. *Policy Directions* recommended that increased support be given to what was then termed Indian Education, and there was an acknowledgement that Aboriginal children required additional resources. The Ministry suggested the need to work with Indian bands and councils in an attempt to address the retention and preservation of the cultural and linguistic heritage of Aboriginal children. In addition, the Ministry acknowledged that other (non-aboriginal) children should learn about First Nations' history and heritage.

These directions in First Nations education were, in part, brought about by the recognition of the assimilation that had occurred as a result of residential schools and the dominant societal discourses that had previously discouraged multilingualism and cultural and racial diversity in British Columbia. Targeted funds were identified for Aboriginal education, to be used in consultation with local communities. Curriculum development by First Nations peoples was also supported. Independent school boards were established (e.g., for the Nisga'a Nation). In 1999, an agreement for Aboriginal education enhancement was signed by the Chiefs' Action Committee, the provincial Minister of Education, the federal Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, and the president of the BC Teachers' Federation. The agreement established a collaborative partnership between Aboriginal communities

and school districts to engage in shared decision making and goal setting to meet the needs of Aboriginal students.

Finally, *Policy Directions* recognized and encouraged greater involvement of parents in school districts. Parent involvement was a means to generate greater community participation and to provide venues for community input. This was a strategy to accommodate more involved decision making, direction setting, and accountability at the local level, and links to the expansion of community schools referred to earlier.

An Agenda for the 1990s

In the early- to mid-1990s, the NDP government introduced a number of reforms through a series of policy documents: *Education Policy* (1993), *Policies into Practice* (1994) and *Skills Now* (1995), which collectively set the education agenda through to the end of the decade. The key issues raised were deprofessionalization and vocationalism; diversity and inclusion; accountability; and violence and security. With regard to de-professionalization and vocationalism, *Policies into Practice* (1994) suggested that "journeypersons and trades people" be allowed to teach applied curricula (1994, 12). The application of this policy initiative involved apprenticeship, work experience and partnership 'teams' working toward province-wide reform in 1995-96.

The political-economic agenda of the time put pressure on the education system to produce skilled, employable young people for the marketplace. *Policies into Practice* emphasized work experience, "skills plans" for school districts and a joint "secondary/ postsecondary / private sector career program development" (1994, 12). Partnerships with business, labour and the community were emphasized as part of an initiative to link schools to work, entitled *Skills Now* (1995). *Policies into Practice* suggested that draft policies would be provided to partners in these sectors, to involve them in consultation and what was called "responsible decision making" (1994, 20-21). These changes indicated a significant shift in the priorities of the Ministry, and the implications for professionalization and de-professionalization of teachers were at the forefront. A skills imperative was seen to be challenging the traditional priorities for learning and education.

The Royal Commission Report acknowledged cultural diversity and pluralism, although there were no recommendations to address multicultural education, English as a Second Language instruction, or cross-cultural tension (Stanley, 1989). The 1990s brought discussions of multiculturalism and cultural pluralism into sharper focus, in part due to an increased proportion of students from diverse cultural and language groups (Malatest, 1991; Nelson, 1992). Culture, language, and intellectual ability came to the forefront as policy issues. While *Policies into Practice* was being articulated, a number of initiatives and funding envelopes were created to promote inclusion, multiculturalism and diversity. Grants were made available to districts to revise and update English as a Second Language policy and to promote multiculturalism and antiracism in schools. Access to language diversity became more prominent with the recognition of multilingualism in 1995, and policy guidelines were developed for *Language Education in BC schools* in 1996, as well as the Language Education Policy in 1997. The Language Education

Policy required all students in Grades 5 to 8 to study a second language, which could include Punjabi, Mandarin, or Japanese. Aboriginal education enhancement agreements were developed in 1999. The francophone education regulation formalized the entitlement to enrol in francophone educational programs.

In 1997, the Ministry of Education made specific suggestions for the inclusion of multiculturalism and antiracism education in school curricula. An English as a Second Language policy framework was developed in 1999 and *Diversity in BC Schools: A Framework* was developed in 2001. Introductory Mandarin Chinese and Introductory Punjabi are now offered from Grades 5 to 12, and teachers have integrated resource packages for developing language skills. While suggestions for curriculum and frameworks were developed provincially, implementing these changes relied on individual school district priorities.

Special education was acknowledged in the *Royal Commission Report* (1988) and the Commission recommended that the rights of learners with special needs and their parents required clarification. As a result, *Policies into Practice* initiated a two-year guideline development process and an 18-month consultative process that resulted in a framework for special education policy (1995), with revised guidelines for practice. A number of recommendations was made by a review team for implementation in 2001, including increased measures for integration and for professional development.

Alongside these developments, we see the creation of the Francophone Education Authority (CSF: Conseil Scolaire Francophone) by the government in 1998. French education has been available to the francophone community in BC since 1979, and BC now has the fourth largest student population in French programs in Canada. A francophone school board was created in 1995 and, in 1997, the School Amendment Act (Bill 45) recognized the right to French-speaking education. In 1998, 2,860 students were enrolled in francophone education programs, of which 1,800 participated in 11 districts governed by the CSF. In 1999, CSF's jurisdiction was extended, and it was now entrusted with the management of the French-speaking school programs throughout the province. In spring 2001, the Canada/BC General Agreement on the Promotion of Official Languages was signed. The agreement provided a mandate for the provincial government to coordinate activities for the benefit of the BC francophone population. Under the three-year agreement, the federal government provided the provincial government with $1,500,000. A Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) appointment (i.e., MLA responsible for) was made to include and acknowledge the responsibility the government has for francophone affairs.

Education Policy was directed toward increasing accountability. It recommended changes to written report cards, including requirements that specific types of anecdotal as well as quantitative commentary on student progress be included in these reports. These changes were also implemented as a means to create a more meaningful dialogue between schools and parents. The *Link File* (1993) was also created. Link data provided tracking mechanisms for students in the secondary through to the postsecondary system. The *Link File* claimed to support a more efficient use of education resources, and suggested that equitable access must be provided to students to public postsecondary institutions.

Policies into Practice developed specific indicators for accreditation, annual reports and policy. The intent was to make the system more accountable through the use of more transparent categories. The Ministry's annual reports were redesigned to make them more accessible to the public. If one compares the descriptors in the three reports 1995-96, 1996-97, and 1997-98 an attempt to achieve this objective can be seen. In general, the Ministry and school districts were required to produce more evaluative information. A review of finance funding was underway and this review examined financial incentives to "encourage integration of services". This integration involved revised accounting manuals and policies and procedure manuals. Accountability and performance continued to be reflected in annual reviews and in two report card documents (an evaluation of the secondary system) produced by the Fraser Institute (1998, 1999).

The BCSTA produced a discussion paper entitled *Our Children, Our Responsibility* (1997). This paper is a framework for clarifying the roles and responsibilities of school boards and the Ministry of Education. The province has responsibility for "funding to allow students across the province to have equitable access to appropriate minimum standard of programs and services in keeping with the mandate spelled out in the legislative framework" (page 5). The paper suggests that an accountability framework for education requires further development. The recommendations are consistent with the current thrust in government policy to give boards greater independence and thereby create more local autonomy and initiative.

Finally, *Policies into Practice* emphasized safety and policies to be developed regarding at-risk children and violence in schools. A mandatory screening program was implemented for staff that would be working with children in government-funded organizations. This was the first of a number of programs designed to address school safety, prompted by the increasing visibility of violence in schools.

The most prominent initiatives were developed to address bullying. A BC safe schools initiative produced a manual, *Focus on Bullying: A Prevention Program for Elementary School Communities* in 1999. The BCTF have also supported investigations regarding violence in schools and violence directed towards teachers (Malcolmson, 1994; Lyon and Douglas, 1999). In 2003, the Minster of Education announced that the government would require new provincial standards for school codes of conduct, and that school boards will be required to report annually on the number and type of violent incidents in the schools and how these incidents have been addressed. All school boards have codes of student conduct, as required by the School Act.

The New Era in Education

After a crushing electoral defeat that left only two members of the former NDP government sitting in the Legislative Assembly, a Liberal administration assumed office on June 5, 2001, under Premier Gordon Campbell. The Liberal campaign was vague, promising to build a "new era of hope and prosperity" by cutting red tape, revitalizing investment and creating jobs. Their platform emphasized fiscal responsibility, integrity, reduced taxes, and a reduced deficit. After following through on the promise to reduce taxes, the government's budget, released February

18, 2002, reported a current deficit of $3.4 billion and projected a $4.4 billion deficit for the 2003 fiscal year, but promised to balance the budget by 2004-05, largely through privatization and deregulation. Since that time, the Minister of Education, Christy Clark, has implemented a number of sweeping reforms.

Guiding the whole process is the Budget Transparency and Accountability Act (BTAA), which was amended in 2001 to provide a legislative framework for a regular cycle of planning, reporting, and accountability. Under the BTAA, the Ministry of Education and all other Ministries are responsible for producing three-year service plans, previously called performance plans. The plans are updated yearly and there will be annual service plan reports. The amended Budget Transparency and Accountability Act took effect in the 2002-03 fiscal year.

Since May 2001, the educational system has faced a deluge of legislation. Government policy and action can be divided into three main parts: labour relations, finance and funding, and accountability. Four Bills (8, 18, 27, and 28) focus either directly or indirectly on labour relations in the system. The target has clearly been the BCTF's union activities.

Bill 8, the Protection of Parent Volunteers Act (2001) was introduced as an amendment to the School Act, and enshrined the rights of parents to volunteer in schools and to be involved in their child's school. The right to volunteer "cannot be bargained away in any collective agreement"; however, parents cannot perform services "that will result in the displacement of an employee" (Hansard, Vol.2. No. 10, comments by the Minister of Education, August 2, 2001). Bill 8 was contentious because parents and other adults have always had the opportunity to volunteer in schools. The questions arising were: why this should be enshrined in legislation, and what did "displacement" mean? Both the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) and the BCTF regarded the legislation as a means of undermining their collective agreements. An example of where conflict might arise concerns teacher aides and special education teaching assistants.

Bill 18, the Skills Development and Labour Statutes Amendment Act (2001) made education an essential service, a status it had not had since 1993. In the case of disputes, the Labour Relations Board can mediate or if necessary, arbitrate the dispute. A caveat is provided in Bill 18 so that the legislation does not take away the right to strike by teachers or other employees.

Bill 27, the Education Services Collective Agreement Act (2001) imposed a process for reaching a collective agreement between the BCTF and the BCPSEA, as a result of an ongoing labour dispute between the Federation and the employers that had reached an impasse. Teachers viewed Bill 27 as an aggressive means for the Ministry to impose a formula for the benefit of the employer and the Ministry. Prior to this legislation, 18 school districts had been amalgamated for administrative purposes into nine new units, but each of the 18 kept their teacher collective agreements. Bill 27 imposed the amalgamation of these teacher (union) agreements (e.g., Cranbrook and Fernie), which meant that some teachers lost salary because the salary grids were different between the old districts.

Bill 28, the Public Education Flexibility and Choice Act (2002), gave school districts the right to decide how they would staff their schools and give them "management flexibility" in the governance of their school districts. This bill also

set the stage for class size regulation, to give school districts the ability to determine class size, class composition, and staffing. The Class Size Regulation (Regulation 245/02, School Act, section 76.1) came into effect in 2002 with the provision of a new formula for class sizes[7]. The result of this regulation was larger class sizes in most school districts. The BCTF filed suit against the Ministry (2002), challenging the legality of Bills 27 and 28.

With regard to finance and funding, the government introduced a new funding formula and introduced legislation to give school boards more independence. During 2001 and 2002, the Ministry reduced funding to education by approximately $200 million (BCTF, 2002b). The Ministry's stated position was that funds were reallocated and no cuts had been made. In March 2002, under the guise of increasing flexibility, the Ministry introduced a new funding formula that, for the first time, separated some of the funding into the category "supplementary grants", changing the way in which per-student amounts are reported. Previously, the per-student amount was based on all operating expenditures, including ESL funding, Aboriginal education funding, and students with special needs funding, and formulas aimed at equity for geographic dispersion. The funds allocated for the above reasons are now placed in the supplementary category. School boards can now decide how this money will be spent.

Enhanced funding for Aboriginal education was revised in 2002 and 2003. Targeted funding requires school boards and local Aboriginal communities to collaborate on the development and delivery of Aboriginal education programs and services. Sections 106.3 and 106.4 of the School Act explain the funding agreement. Funding Aboriginal education programs is in addition to other programs and services for which Aboriginal students are eligible (including base funding, English as a Second Language, and special education). In 2003, the Ministry produced the document *Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements: A Guide for Success*, which included a discussion of accountability and the accountability framework to support improved education for Aboriginal students.

The Ministry provided school districts with a grant to help the transition to the new funding formula. With adjustments for inflation, provincial operating funding per pupil has remained relatively stable over the period 1990-91 to 2002-03 (See Table 1). However there are major concerns about the use of the formula, which has been criticized because supplementary grants are less accountable and less transparent. Bill 27 and 28 gives flexibility to the school boards and this includes flexibility with respect to the supplementary grants.

Similarly, Bill 34, broadly named as the *School Board Flexibility Bill* (2002) gives school boards flexibility and autonomy to make decisions about their capital funds, the use and disposal of resources, and decisions regarding joint-use agreements. In these three situations the board may make these decisions without Ministry approval, where approval was previously required. Delegation of these decision-making processes could be interpreted as a shifting of responsibility, or "downloading", from the Ministry to the boards (BCTF, 2002a). Further, Bill 34 gives schools boards the ability to become entrepreneurial, leading to possible questions of privatization. School boards may now incorporate as entrepreneurial companies and at least two school boards have already formed their own companies.

Table 1.
1990-91 to 2002-03 Operating Funding per Student, in adjusted dollars (adjusted to August, 2002)

1990-1991	1991-1992	1992-1993	1993-1994	1994-1995	1995-1996	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
6,636	6,618	6628	6,429	6,405	6,327	6,317	6,212	6,312	6,339	6,448	6,438	6,372

BCTF Brief to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services (2002). Financial information sources: Operating Grants Manual and Budget Instruction Manuals; Statistics Canada.

Bill 34 (see above) addresses accountability in a number of ways. School planning councils are proposed as a means of introducing greater accountability. However, these councils will have limited representation (i.e., the principal, one teacher, and three parents) and move boards away from broader consultation processes with their constituency groups. Parent advisory councils, established in 1989, continue to function. Bill 34 is intended to "ensure the system is accountable at every level" within a new Ministry accountability cycle. The BCTF initially denounced school planning councils.

The creation of school planning councils follows a national trend and implicates changing governance structures. As a positive trend, school councils may involve the community and parents in a way that they have not been involved before. However there are questions of representation and how that representation is determined.

The Ministry of Education has developed a service plan that reflects the intentions of the current government. The Service Plan identifies a number of current practices and the shift that took place between 2002 and 2005. Among these shifts are:

- Fewer regulations and policies by school boards;
- Accountability will be monitored through accountability contracts, a specific monitoring and public reporting process;
- School boards will be encouraged to become more entrepreneurial, particularly in marketing local resources and offshore schools. This shift opens boards up the possibility and vulnerability of financing through self-generated revenue and accessing global markets and economies; and,
- Ministry interventions are more precise and directed through the use of data, accountability contracts, and the appointment of advisors and official trustees.

In the spring of 2002, the government released a report prepared by a Select Standing Committee on Education, *A Future for Learners*. The report argued that the school system is overregulated and encumbered by collective agreements. The report criticized the role played by the BCTF in the professional development of teachers, and posited that professional development was the role of the BCCT, as provided for by the Teaching Profession Act. Further, the report argued "the system

would benefit from clearer direction, greater accountability, and more meaningful involvement of learners, parents and community members" (page 33). Among numerous recommendations, the report endorsed the establishment of a College of Educators responsible for certification, standards of practice, ethics, enforcement and professional development. The report further recommended that membership in the College of Educators would be the only one required of professionals "employed at all levels of the system, including those in management positions". This recommendation would abolish mandatory membership in the BCTF and would dramatically undermine its influence. The suggested College of Educators would replace the BCCT, thus changing the nature of 14 years of professional activity. Such a change would raise questions about the independence of the new body and would be a direct challenge to the professionalism of school agents.

In the spring of 2003, the government passed Bill 51, through the Teaching Profession Amendment Act. This changed the structure and mandate of the BC College of Teachers (instead of creating a new College of Educators). In particular, the majority of members (12) of the BCCT Governing Council are now government appointees, while the remaining eight members are elected. One of the government appointees is nominated by the Deans of Faculties of Education. Previously the council had 15 elected seats and five public appointments. This composition has made BCCT one of the few professional colleges in which government appointees outnumber elected members, moving the BCTF to protest the changes as contrary to democratic principles.

The BCCT Council appointment process requires the Minister of Education to consult with schools, principals, and superintendents about representation, in order to make the appointments to council; however, there is no required composition for the appointed council members. The Minister of Education claimed that Bill 51 would make the College more responsive to the public, and would "enhance accountability and administrative efficiency" (Ministry of Education, 2003).

Bill 51 removes the evaluation of teacher education programs and reference to programs leading to certification by the College. The College is no longer able to make by-laws with respect to the training of teachers. The changes also give greater capacity to delegate discipline to the Discipline Committee, and puts into place a mechanism for a member of the public to lodge a complaint regarding a teacher's conduct.

In December 2003, the Minister of Education made a commitment to change the composition of the College Council so that 12 of the 20 representatives would be elected, thus returning the majority of the seats to elected individuals. However, no time frame was provided for this change, and the decision is subject to the discretion of the Minister. The change was expected to take place in 2004. The struggle between the Ministry, BCCT, and the BCTF calls into question the meaning of a professional self-regulatory body, and the role of a union in such a body.

Major Themes

Professionalization or the professionalism of school agents is the terminology used to identify teachers with a particular status and stature. This status is

accompanied by acknowledged standards, competencies, and expectations. Over the past 15 years, the policy environment has changed dramatically to allow school agents to increase their professionalism. All teachers entering pre-service programs now do so with an appropriate undergraduate degree. Teacher education has become a postgraduate experience. The mean grade point average of pre-service teachers has risen steadily over the decade. The Teaching Profession Act (1987) and the BCCT (1988) were critical in developing the identity of teachers as professionals and giving them a particular legitimacy. For the first time in Canada, teachers were in control of regulating their own profession much in the same way as the more established professions of law and medicine. Furthermore, the BCTF, which has always played an active role in professional development of teachers, has extended this work and embraced the concept of lifelong learning for all school agents. Professional development has come to include programs on the inclusion of languages, cultures, and children with special needs as well as antiracist, antidiscrimination and antiviolence programs. The work of school agents in BC schools is very different in 2002 to what it was in 1987.

Concurrent with professionalization, there is an emerging discourse of de-professionalization among teachers. While professionalization raises the public awareness of the standards and status of teachers, de-professionalization calls into question who teaches and their pedagogical approaches. Inevitably the two structural trends are often in tension and rarely work in unison. Yet there are times when policies that are intended to undermine teachers as autonomous professionals actually serve that objective. The Social Credit governments of the past and the current Liberal government are ideologically opposed to unions. This opposition takes on a particular force with regard to public sector unions and in the case of the BCTF an added vehemence given the ties referred to above. In 1987 the Teacher Profession Act was designed to undermine the power of the BCTF. The BCCT was meant to, in many ways, replace the BCTF. Instead, BCTF-sponsored candidates won all of the elections for the seats on the BCCT Board reserved for teachers. At the same time, the separation of administrators and teachers has clearly undermined the solidarity of school agents.

We argue that the types and quantities of legislation since May 2001, when the Liberal government took power, has been designed, in part, to undermine the BCTF and to deprofessionalize teachers. Under the guise of creating a more flexible system and with the slogan of "putting the children first", the government has made education an essential service, created a legitimate space for parent volunteers to work in classrooms, created school planning councils that bring parents into a professional decision-making role, given more power to the school boards in labour disputes, increased class size, and redefined the powers of BCCT by changing their mandate and governance structure.

Three other trends characterize the de-professionalization of teachers: the home school movement, the expansion of independent schools, and the increasing emphasis on skills. This issue clearly overlaps with the trend toward privatization. Home schooling and independent schools took on a new significance in 1977 with the passage of Independent Schools Support Act (1977). Prior to this, BC was the only secular provincial education system in Canada. A new Independent School

Act was proclaimed in 1989, and this legislation required that all independent schools must satisfy specific basic requirements and obtain a Certificate of Group Classification. The act expanded the number of group classifications to five (from two), and then reduced the number to four, in 1993. Additional provincial services were given to independent schools and an increased level of funding was provided for some schools. At the same time, home schooling was recognized as a statutory right for parents. Professionalism has also been redefined by the continuing expansion of the role of teachers to include more non-pedagogical tasks. Teachers are expected to raise funds, organize and manage volunteers, and even fulfill the duties of a clerk.

Accountability in the education system has become a dominant theme since the 1970s (Savage, 1988) and it re-emerged prominently as it was articulated in the Royal Commission Report. Accountability has been taken to mean the assurance of particular outcomes. However, these outcomes are located within an ideology of what education is intended to achieve (e.g., skills and/or knowledge). Over time, accountability has shifted from commitment to students and communities, to the management of evaluation and the basis for continued (or discontinued) funding. The emphasis on accountability must be seen as part of the increasing dominance of a political-economic imperative in the formation of government policy. This imperative appears to cut across ideological lines separating political parties, although we would expect parties that espouse New Right philosophies to be more forthright in promoting these goals.

School accreditation was an accountability measure introduced in 1994. The creation of school planning councils and the policy on streaming are part of this trend. Accountability contracts are now in effect (2002) between the Ministry and school boards. These contracts use student achievement as the key outcome measure. Accountability contracts are not legal contracts, but they have a potentially powerful influence over the success measurements of each school district. Goals are identified and it is expected that specific outcomes are achieved.

Both accreditation and accountability contracts have been contentious with the BCTF. Questions remain about what the standards are, and what methods are used to measure achievement. A fundamental disagreement exists between the BCTF's view of accountability as "appropriateness and validity of the learning processes" (BCTF, 1997), and the Ministry's reliance on measurable outcomes and standardized tests for students. Further, the Service Plan makes it clear that accountability also involves school boards becoming more entrepreneurial and more active in educational markets.

Linked to accountability is the changing nature of governance. Since 1996, the number of school boards has been reduced by 20 per cent. At the same time, governance structures have emerged at the school level (e.g., school planning councils), and at the BC College of Teachers (e.g., role and standards). Parents have been given a larger role as stakeholders as well as a group with legitimate expertise and concerns.

Finally, the policy that has arguably had the most impact on school agents is class size regulation (2002). In one single stroke the provincial government reduced to zero the demand for teachers. In the years 1999-2000, 2000-01, and 2001-02,

the number of teachers new to the BC system that were hired was 2,207, 2,089 and 1,946 respectively. This was due in part to the exit of the baby boom generation of school agents as they reach retirement age. The situation changed in the most dramatic fashion in 2002-03. The most reliable estimate documents a decline in the size of the teacher force from somewhere over 36,000 to between 34,000 and 35,000. In 2002-03, 1,550 teachers were either laid off or left the system. This is the estimate of the number of deducted teacher certificates when we compare school districts applications in 2001-02 with 2002-03. We hypothesize that this change is having a dramatic impact on the morale of school agents, which will serve to undermine professional practice in BC schools.

Class size regulation has particularly negative implications with respect to the impact on special needs education. Special needs education has been the subject of discussion since *Policy Directions* (1989), and the Royal Commission Report (1988), where the Commission recommended that the rights of learners with special needs and their parents required clarification. The framework on special education policy (1995) was developed with revised guidelines for practice. Recommendations were made by a review team for implementation in 2001, including increased measures for integration and professional development.

Conclusion

As we examine changes in the policy environment over the last decade or so, the impression is one of turbulent change. Schools and school agents have been bombarded with so many policies that it is hard to imagine how they have maintained their stability. Yet schools, like all institutions, are robust and can withstand a great deal. Similarly, the professionalization of our society gives professional practice a place that stands beyond the particular ideologies of any government. Even so, it does appear that the BC education system is in a critical phase. The New Right ideology of the government since 2001 is having a substantial impact on school agents. The ideological perspective uses the language of flexibility, choice and accountability. We are observing a clear allocation and imposition of values on the system at every level. Reforms from 2001 to 2003 have seriously undermined the morale of teachers in the province.

Endnotes

1 School educator is used to refer to teachers and school administrators as a group.

2 There are 59 English-speaking and 1 francophone school district(s).

3 Education Advisory Council Members: Assembly of First Nations (BC Region), BCCT, BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils, BC Federation of Labour, BC Principals' and Vice Principals' Association, BC Public School Employers' Association, BC School District Secretary-Treasurers' Association, BC School Superintendents' Association, BC School Trustees Association, BC Teachers' Federation, Business Council of BC, Canadian Union of Public Employees (BC), Faculties of Education, Federation des parents francophones de Colombie-

Britannique, Federation of Independent School Associations, Conseil Scolaire Francophone de la Colombie-Britannique, and Ministry of Education.

4 The BCPVPA was established in 1958 as a provincial association.

5 The British Columbia Teachers' Federation CTF (BCTF) was established in 1917, acted as an advocate dealing with the economic professional and social concerns of teachers. In 1987, the BCTF shifted from an association model to a union model and became an autonomous organization. The BCTF currently represents 45,000 members (2002).

6 These figures are based on numbers reported on the website of the Ministry of Education. They represent figures from school district reports to the Ministry. The number includes teachers hired from teacher-on-call lists, teachers hired directly from teacher education programs, and teachers migrating from other provinces or countries.

7 Generally the average class size is determined by the formula *students/classes*, e.g. in kindergarten, students equals the total number of *students* in kindergarten in the school district as of September 30; and classes equals the total number of kindergarten *classes* in the school district as of September 30. A number of exceptions to this formula occur, including: when there is more than one grade in a class, students in adult and continuing education programs, students in distance education programs, students in provincial resource programs, students in alternate programs, students in work study programs, and classes exclusively for students with special needs.

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Chapter 2

Policy Narrative for Alberta

Adrienne S. Chan, Donald Fisher, and Kjell Rubenson

Introduction

Since 1993, the educational system in Alberta has been guided by a succession of three-year business plans. These plans provide the overall direction for educational planning and identify goals, strategies, performance measures, results, and timelines. Education in Alberta is also guided by the School Act (1935; 1999), the Teaching Profession Act (1935; 1996), the Government Accountability Act (1995), and the Government Organization Act (1995).

The School Act describes the relationship of the Minister of Education to students, parents, and school jurisdictions. It provides for the administration and financing of education in the province. The Act ultimately provides for the authority of the Minister of Education[1], also called the Minister of Learning. The Teaching Profession Act establishes rules governing the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) [2] as the teachers' professional organization. The Act is administered by the government, with respect to issues of teacher preparation, credentials, conduct and discipline.

A framework for government accountability was developed in 1994, leading to the creation of the Government Accountability Act, which establishes a framework for all Ministries to conform to a reporting mechanism that includes a consolidated fiscal plan, business plan, and annual report. In 1995, the Government Organization Act replaced the Department of Education Act, creating the Department of Education under the authority of the Minister of Education. The Act provides for the funding of education from the General Revenue Fund.

Policy, regulations, and forms necessary to guide the delivery of education are provided to school boards, public schools, school councils, and private schools by

means of a resource manual. Three areas are covered in the manual: programs and services; accountability; and information bulletins. A separate manual defines the terms and conditions under which school boards and private schools may obtain funding (Funding for School Authorities Manual, 2002).

This policy narrative is divided into four main sections. First is a short section on the Klein Revolution, the phrase used by Ralph Klein to describe his government's approach to governance when he became Premier in 1992. The second section recounts major changes in the policy environment during the 1990s. The third section discusses two policy themes – accountability and choice – that have dominated the debate during the period under study (Taylor, Schultz and Leard, 2005). The fourth section describes the policy events that took place in 2002, with a look toward the future. Finally, we draw some brief conclusions.

The Klein Revolution

The Progressive Conservative Party has formed the government in Alberta since 1971. In 1992, Ralph Klein became leader of the Progressive Conservative Party and Premier, subsequently winning provincial elections in 1993 and 1997. Succeeding Don Getty, Klein was well positioned to continue the work of his predecessors and change the Alberta education system (Kachur and Harrison 1999; Taylor, 2001). His trademark election platform, known as the Klein Revolution, was his template from changing the face of government in the Province, and contextualizes the educational policy narrative for Alberta. The Revolution made it a priority to pay down the provincial debt, downsize the public service and place greater emphasis on economic imperatives and partnerships with the private sector. Accordingly, throughout its first term, the Klein government and its Minister of Education, Halvar Jonson, introduced a significant number of documents set the stage for changes to the education system.

The education system was and is subject to the input and critiques of a number of associations, including: the Alberta School Board Association (ASBA), which represents 62 School Boards[3]; the ATA; the College of Alberta School Superintendents; The Alberta Catholic School Trustees Association; the Alberta Home and School Councils' Association (AHSCA)[4]; and the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta (PSBAA). Some of these organizations will be referred to later in this paper. The Alberta public system contains a wide range of schools (secular, Catholic/separate, francophone, charter) as well as home education and alternative education. At present, there are 64 school districts in the public school system. Alongside the public sector is a relatively small private sector of mainly religious schools and some elite secular institutions.

Changing the Policy Environment in the 1990s

Under the Klein administration, the Ministry of Education introduced major policy changes. True to the government's populist roots, its policy-making process included numerous consultations and policy documents. Priorities for policy development and implementation in Alberta Education were discussed in the document *Vision for the Nineties…A Plan for Action* (1991). This document

emphasized a results-based provincial curriculum; basic skills; a reduction of the dropout rate; the integration of students with special needs into regular classrooms; the encouragement of science programs to foster higher achievement and scientific careers; and partnerships with business and industry that highlighted science and technology.

The first and major policy objective involved financial restructuring. *Tough Choices* (1993) was the first in a series of documents to examine the fiscal challenges in education. The report was the result of consultations in 1992 with municipal leaders, school board administrators, business people, and representatives of education groups, and was the framework for workbooks used in round table discussions on education in 1993. *Measuring up* (1993) was a provincial accountability document that applied to all government departments to ensure that their goals were met. Both *Tough choices* and *Measuring Up* foreshadowed changes to be implemented in education. *Meeting the Challenge* (1993) was the mirror document to *Measuring Up*, and specifically addressed how the Ministry of Education would comply with the goals of the government.

Round table consultations were held in the fall of 1993, followed which the government released three-year business plans in each department in the spring of 1994. The round tables on education were intended to discuss future directions in education; however, education and all other government departments had already been warned to plan for funding cuts of up to 20 percent.

Concurrent with the government sponsored education round tables, the Alberta Teachers Association (ATA), and the Alberta Home and School Councils' Association (AHSCA) held separate consultations. The ATA produced its own document as a result, entitled *Challenging the View: A Public Roundtable Workbook* (1993). The ATA also developed a series of papers entitled *Trying to Teach* (1993), as a way of expressing issues facing teachers in the current political climate, and was informed by a sense that teachers had no voice in political debate (Mazurek, 1999).

Twelve percent cuts to education were announced in 1994, to be implemented over a four-year period (1993-1997). The Ministry argued that funding changes would not amount to actual cuts if other proposed changes and reforms were implemented. The government document *Meeting the Challenge: Three-Year Business Plan* (1994-1997) was pivotal in this approach, as it set in motion a number of changes in education. The plan included proposals to reduce the number of school boards, increase the role of parent councils, and transition to school-based decision-making process. Teams of Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) were established by the Minister to address the merger of school boards, redefine roles and responsibilities, develop performance measures, and improve business involvement in the school system (Taylor, 2001). The block-funding framework was to be reviewed to examine how much funding each school board received, and a cap was placed on administrative expenditures for instruction (Peters, 1999).

With the passage, in 1994, of Bill 19, the School Amendment Act regarding charter schools, Alberta became the first province in Canada to establish charter schools, autonomous public institutions that do not charge fees and cannot be affiliated with any religious faith or denomination. The creation of charter

schools followed a model already popular in the United States and added a new choice for parents within the public sector. Their establishment was the subject of contentious debate, with such terms as efficiency, accountability, and choice being used throughout government documents to describe the educational and fiscal reorganization. The Bill provided for five pilot charter schools, which opened within the year (in October, 1995).

Bill 19 revised teacher certification requirements, complaints handling, disciplinary action toward teachers, and guidelines for professional conduct. The government created the Alberta School Foundation Fund (ASFF) and required public school boards to apply for funding from this government controlled fund, while at the same time giving Catholic School Boards the option of being outside the new funding framework for education, without any loss of funding (Taylor, 2001). The Alberta School Board Association (ASBA), regarding the ASSF as a major step toward the centralization of funding and a threat to their autonomy, announced its intention to launch a court challenge over the amendments to the Act, specifically, the right of public school boards to tax locally.

Restructuring in education had begun to take place within a government discourse that predominantly emphasized accountability and choice. By September 1994, the number of school boards had been reduced from 141 to 71, and the number of school trustees from 1,000 to 435 (Matsumoto, 2002; Webber, 1995). In the same year, a five percent wage roll back was imposed on teachers. Roll backs were imposed on all educators and all public sector employees (Peters, 1999).

Accountability plans were introduced to allow the government to meet its commitment to establish a more open and accountable education system. Policy stated that "Alberta Education and authorities will use planning, reporting, and inspecting to improve further the quality of education provided to students in Alberta", and defined accountability in education as "the obligation to report on and answer for the completion of one's assigned responsibilities" (1995,1997). *Roles and Responsibilities in Education* (1995) identified specific responsibilities for education system stakeholders and constituents (i.e., students, parents, teachers, staff, superintendents, principals, school boards and school councils). *Teacher Education Reform* (1995) articulated the government's expectations of teachers in terms of attitudes, knowledge, and skills, and the link between knowledge, skills, and certification.

Accountability in Education (1995) was released as a policy framework on accountability, based on the work of an MLA implementation team on accountability in education and province-wide consultations. The framework addressed the relationship between reporting and monitoring for schools and school boards. All school boards were now required to prepare education plans and result reports that met provincial requirements. Plans would specify targets for improvement, to be met by the third year of the plan. The education plans would be aligned with the three-year plans for education in Alberta, and would be made available to the public.

In November 1995, Justice Smith held the 1995 changes to the School Act to be unconstitutional to the extent they denied public boards the same right to opt out of the ASFF that had been afforded Catholic School Boards. The decision gave all boards — public and separate — the right to opt out of the ASFF, and all school

boards regained the right to collect taxes locally and the flexibility to spend those locally collected dollars. In December 1995, Education Minister Jonson appealed this section of the judgment and, in 1998, the Alberta Court of Appeal, made up of Justices Russell, Picard and Berger, overturned Justice Smith's ruling, upholding the constitutionality of 1995 changes to the School Act that stripped the public school boards' right to tax locally and dismissing the appeal brought by Alberta School Board Association (ASBA) and the Public School Boards Association of Alberta (PSBAA). The PSBAA and the Calgary Board of Education (a party to the original appeal) appealed this decision to the Supreme Court of Canada. On October 6, 2000, the Supreme Court, in a unanimous judgment, dismissed the appeals with costs. The Alberta government was successful on the merits of the case, with the Court answering three constitutional questions in a manner favourable to the government.

In an effort to develop collaboration and partnership between parents, community, teachers, staff, and students, Parent Advisory Groups were replaced by school councils with the 1995 passing of Bill 37. Regulations were put into place and schools were given five months to establish their councils and have them operational; a handbook was developed by Alberta Education to assist schools in this task. Council membership would include a minimum of one teacher, one student, one community member, and the school principal, with the majority of members being parents or guardians of students attending the school. School councils are designed to ensure school programs and priorities reflect community needs and expectations, but have less control over administrative functions such as hiring staff (Taylor, Schultz and Leard, 2005).

Teachers and the teaching profession were directly affected by two documents in 1996. The first was the Teaching Profession Amendment Act (1996), which streamlined the discipline and appeals process for teachers. The amendments were intended to bring consistency to the discipline process, and the ATA was consulted on their content. The second document, *An Integrated Framework to Enhance the Quality of Teaching in Alberta* (1996), was released as a policy position paper, outlining a number of strategies that would affect teachers and the professionalization of teachers, including:

- updating teacher preparation and teacher certification requirements to reflect the most current understanding of effective teaching;
- establishing competencies for beginning and experienced teachers; and
- developing a coordinated approach to delivering professional development opportunities for teachers. (1996, 2)

Negotiated *Memoranda of Agreement* with the Minister of Education had to be submitted by each university delivering teacher preparation programs — Concordia University College, King's University College, University of Alberta, University of Calgary, and University of Lethbridge — before 1997. The first two institutions were the first private colleges with which the Minister was to reach an agreement regarding teacher certification. Teacher certification was changed by amendments to the Certification of Teachers Regulation, and teacher evaluation policies were henceforth reviewed and revised by each school board.

Safety and security became a priority in 1996. As part of the three-year plan for education (1996), Minister Jonson announced four projects to promote safe

and secure environments for all Alberta students. These included student-led conferences; the development of materials for students, parents, and teachers to deal with student aggression; collaborative research by Alberta's three universities; and studies on policy and program implications. The learning resource *Building Foundations for Safe and Caring Schools: Research on Disruptive Behaviour and Violence* (1999) was produced as a result of this project. The book is a collection of readings that provide insight into the dimensions of disruption and violence, and offer proactive solutions for teachers and administrators.

In 1996, Gary Mar was named Minister of Education, replacing Halvar Jonson. Accountability remained a Ministry priority, with a new policy on school authority accountability (Policy 2.1.1, 1997) combining three previous policies: school authority education plans, comprehensive audits, and annual education results report. School authority accountability was intended to ensure reporting and availability of documentation; school authority education plans were developed each year and made available to the public and the Ministry; school plans had to be consistent with province and school board requirements.

A 1997 Ministerial order raised the issue of standards into the discussion of teacher certification and implemented the teaching quality standard. The standard was applied to teacher certification, professional development, supervision, and evaluation of teachers, and was a precursor to the 1998 rewriting of the *Practice Review of Teachers Regulation* by the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards (COATS)[5]. The review was intended to address Ministry concerns about regulatory process administration and to link the standard to the knowledge, skills and attitudes of teachers and teaching practices.

In 1998, a task force was struck to examine the funding of provincially accredited private schools. The resulting *Report and Recommendations of the Private Schools Funding Task Force* (1998) recommended a funding framework whereby accredited private schools would continue to receive some public funding, providing specific conditions and standards were met, including their meeting the same requirements for teaching and the same educational standards as public schools.

Diversity and respect were addressed by Bill 20, under the School Amendment Act (1999), which built on activities initiated by the previous Minister, in 1996. The Bill emphasized educational programs and materials that reflected diversity and would promote an understanding and respect for others. School boards were made responsible for providing students with a safe and caring environment, with diversity and respect being included under the broad term 'safety'. Safety was addressed again in Bill 206, the School Amendment Act (2000), which required school boards to develop policies on student conduct (Students' Code of Conduct) in consultation with parents, students, teachers, and principals. The amendment was based on a departmental emphasis on safety and respect in the schools, its 1996 three-year plan, and 1999's Bill 20.

In the latter part of 1999, Lyle Oberg was appointed the new Minister of Education, and the Department was renamed Alberta Learning. Alberta Learning merged the two Ministries responsible for education and postsecondary education to form a 'super ministry'[6]. The Certification of Teachers Regulations were reviewed in 1999. Part of the School Act, the regulations address teacher certification, the

powers of the Registrar of the College of Teachers, and of the Minister, and are designed to create a process for handling complaints of unprofessional conduct and any ensuing investigations. The changes led to a Revised Practice Review of Teachers policy (Policy 3.3.2).

The emphasis on training and linking skills development to employment has been an important theme with the current government, as shown in the Apprenticeship and Industry Training Amendment Act, Bill 23 (2000). Bill 23 is a legislative reform that gives the Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board the authority to make orders providing for the approval, registration, or recognition of student work training programs, an authority that had previously been granted through legislation. The bill also enabled charter schools and private schools to offer student work-training programs.

A review of special education programs and services was initiated by Minister Oberg. The report *Shaping the Future for Students with Special Needs: A Review of Special Education in Alberta—Final Report* was released in November 2000, identifying key issues and making specific recommendations. One such recommendation was for an accountability framework to be developed to ensure: delivery of quality programs for students with special needs; measurement of student and program outcomes; and the active involvement of parents in the education of their children. As a result of the report, a stakeholder group was developed to explore accountability for special education at the school, school board, and provincial levels.

The approval process for charter schools changed in 2001 with Bill 16, the School Amendment Act. School boards were no longer the only administrative unit that could establish charter schools; the Minister of Learning could now do so as well, but only if the suggested program was not currently offered in the system. Bill 16 also eliminated the School Buildings Board, effectively vesting decisions on new school facilities in the Ministers of Learning and Infrastructure[7]. Bill 16 clarified the regions governing francophone education and established a process for separate school regions so that only one separate school board would act on behalf of members of a minority religious community within a region. This last change was highly contested.

Bill 16 also mandated that educational jurisdictions share information about investigations into teacher conduct. All boards and schools were required to report to the Registrar any teacher who was suspended, terminated, or who had resigned or retired in order to avoid an investigation of their suitability to hold a teaching certificate. Rather than taking into account a range of criteria, the Act limited the reporting merely to formal qualifications for certification.

Class size maximums are left to the discretion of school boards, and class size remains one of the highest education spending priorities for Alberta teachers (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2000). A University of Alberta study conducted in 2000 in conjunction with Edmonton public schools and released in 2001 reveals average class sizes in Grades 1-6 of 23.6 (22.5 for Grades 1-3 and 24.7 for Grades 4-6). The average kindergarten class size was 19.7. To address problems associated with large classes, an ATA-supported private members' bill was tabled by an opposition Liberal MLA. The School Amendment Act (218) proposed new class size targets be set at 17

from Kindergarten to Grade 3, 25 from Grades 4 to 9, and 30 from Grades 10 to 12. The Bill received first reading in November 2001, but died on the order paper.

Major Themes: School Choice and Accountability

Choice in education is a response to parents wanting more latitude to make decisions about the programs and schools in which their children would be placed. Alberta Learning lists a number of school choices for education, including public schools, Catholic schools, francophone schools, private schools, and charter schools. Home education, online/virtual schools, outreach programs and alternative programs are also options. In keeping with the choice concept, the Ministry removed attendance boundaries in all jurisdictions in 1996. The opening up of choice has created a market environment for education services, to the concern of some (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2002b).

Charter schools have now been in place in Alberta since 1995, with ten such schools in operation by 2001. Charter schools are non-profit public schools that are established to meet the needs of particular groups of students. Advocates support the schools for their higher levels parental involvement, delivery of specialized programs, and emphasis on customer satisfaction. Critics suggest they lead to the "segregation of children" and "social fragmentation" (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2002a).

Home education is recognized as a parental right under Section 23 of the School Act (1997, 2000). Home education programs are required to be supervised by a school board or an accredited private school, although it need not be the school board for the region in which the family resides. The supervising board is required to develop a home education policy that includes supervision guidelines for home education students. Home education students are guided by provincial learning outcomes and must write Provincial Achievements Tests (PATs) or their equivalents for Grades 3, 6, and 9[8]. Students may also participate in a blended program, combining programs delivered and evaluated by a teacher employed by a school board or an accredited private school with an appropriate home education program. Home schooling has become a growing choice (Wagner, 1999) for parents, particularly with the support of the Alberta Home and School Councils' Association.

The government of Alberta identifies accountability in education and learning as an obligation and a responsibility. The three-year plan originally conceived in 1994 has been revised annually as the government addresses areas for improvement. The three-year plans are linked to provincial plans and the annual report of each Ministry. Accountability reflects service (business) reporting as well as financial reporting. Alberta Learning identifies their core businesses as basic learning, adult learning, and apprenticeship and industry training. The framework for accountability identifies five key components:

- Setting measurable goals and responsibilities. The government identifies three priorities as core businesses: people, prosperity and preservation.
- Planning what needs to be done to achieve goals. Strategies are stated to achieve outcomes.

- Conducting the work and monitor progress. Operating entity plans determine funds, staffing, and compliance with the government's policy goals.
- Reporting on results. Government reports are public.
- Evaluating results and provide feedback. Evaluations and recommendations for changes and corrective actions are made (Government Accountability, 1997).

Alberta Learning's three-year plans and annual reports are expected to comply with planning and reporting guidelines set out by the framework for accountability.

An early attempt to increase accountability of schools and to increase competition between schools was the school-based management reform introduced in the mid-1980s in the Edmonton school district. School-based management is a form of decentralization, and two key processes are involved: allocations and budgeting. An indicator of decentralization is the percentage of the operating budget that is allocated on a lump sum basis to schools, which, in 1986-87, was 75 percent in Edmonton.

How resources are distributed to schools is an important feature of decentralization. Edmonton has an allocation systems that determines the total dollars to be given to each school, based on a formula that is generally supposed to ensure the same number of dollars is disbursed for each 'comparable student'. In Edmonton, the general statement guiding the program holds that: "school centred administration is a process in which school-based decisions and actions aimed at achieving specific results at the schools are made by the staff in schools" (Brown, 1990, 130).

This has resonance beyond Alberta's borders. The Superintendent of Schools in Edmonton from 1995 to 2001, Emery Dosdall, had already been a promoter of reform during his 1982-95 tenure as Superintendent of the British Columbia School District of Langley. Langley funds its schools through an allocation system much like that used in Edmonton. In 1986-87, lump sum payments accounted for 85 percent of the school operating budgets in Langley. The definition of school-based management for Langley in 1984 was as follows:

> Decentralized decision making is an educational process, which is designed to allow the most significant decisions and actions aimed at achieving specified results at the schools, to be made at the school. The essence of decentralization is that there is a marked shift of decision-making responsibility from central office to the individual school. (Brown, 1990, 130).

Dr. Dodsall was appointed Deputy Minister of Education in BC when the Liberal party took power in that province.

2002 and Beyond: Future Developments

A series of significant policy documents and bills were introduced, beginning in 2002. In 1999, Alberta Learning had entered into an agreement with the Tribal Chiefs Institute to conduct a provincial native education policy review. The review was conducted from 1999 to 2000, and included Grades K–12 and the postsecondary system; a native education policy review advisory committee was

formed to assist the government with the review and to guide a public consultation process. The *First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework* made changes to the *Policy Statement on Native Education in Alberta* (1987), based on the results of the review. The 2002 release of the framework committed Alberta Learning to proactive collaboration and consultation with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit parents and communities. One of the objectives identified was to "increase and strengthen knowledge and understanding among all Albertans of First Nations, Métis and Inuit governance, history, treaty and Aboriginal rights, lands, cultures, and languages" (page 10). The framework outlined strategies to increase learner participation, achievement, and success, and remove barriers to achievement. Working partnerships and collaborative relationships among governments, educators, community organizations, parents, learners, and professional associations were also identified.

Accountability continued to be a theme. One new document on accountability, *An Accountability Framework for the Learning and Program Outcomes of Students with Special Needs* (2002), followed the work of *Shaping the Future for Students with Special Needs: A Review of Special Education in Alberta—Final Report* (2000), proposing an open, effective, and transparent process to guide the accountability framework for students with special needs. Accountability for special education is expected to encompass a range of diverse student special needs; use multiple measures of effectiveness; include measures that are consistent across the province but provide for unique measures; include measures as part of the school board's annual three-year education plan; and address expected and actual expenditures, activities and student outcomes.

The 1999 English as a Second Language (ESL) policy was updated in 2003 to include an acknowledgement of Alberta's cultural diversity. The intent of the policy was "to facilitate the integration of the student into the regular school program" through the provision of the language program. The policy provided for programs to equip students with the necessary language skills in order to participate fully in the education system.

The accumulated dissatisfaction with government policy laid the foundation for a bitter January 2002 strike by teachers, who demanded the government increase education funding and address the issues of class size, pension liability, and working conditions. The government declared an emergency and ordered teachers back to work on February 21, 2002. Minister of Learning Lyle Oberg ended the dispute with the ATA with Bill 12, the Education Services Settlement Act, which was passed in March 2002. The Bill legislated an end to the strike, imposing a settlement process to resolve the teachers' dispute that did not allow classroom conditions to be addressed, and that eliminated previously negotiated provisions in the collective agreements regarding class size and instructional preparation. This bill was the subject of heated debate in the legislature, with opposition MLAs calling it a "travesty" and "a sad day for democracy in Alberta" (Hansard, March 13, 2002).

In response to Bill 12, the ATA withdrew voluntary services, which were not resumed until a good faith agreement was negotiated between the ATA, the ASBA, and the Minister of Learning. Under the agreement, the ATA agreed not to initiate a legal challenge to the Education Settlement Services Act, and the government

agreed to pay the teachers' unfunded pension liability for one year. The ATA stressed that the agreement was not comprehensive but was a good start, while the ASBA saw it as a means to a smoother arbitration process.

The ATA has a long history of advocating for education in Alberta and of working to improve the teaching profession. It regularly publishes position papers to increase public awareness of issues in education (e.g., *Falling Through the Cracks*, 2002). While the good faith agreement enabled teachers to resume voluntary services, a necessary dialogue has continued with the ASBA and the Ministry.

Bill 205, the School Trustee Statutes Amendment Act (2002) was also contentious. Positioned as a clarification of possible "pecuniary conflicts of interest", the Bill prohibits teachers and other employees of a school district from serving as school trustees; prior to this, teachers could serve as trustees in school jurisdictions that were not their employer. Critics have labelled it as a means to exclude teachers "from participating in one level of our democratic process", arguing that it restricts "representation of a certain segment of society" (Hansard, May 6, 2002).

The Alberta Learning Business Plan for 2002-05 stresses a system that is "responsible, flexible, accessible, and affordable" (2002, p. 2). One of the priorities of Alberta Learning for 2002-03 was the Commission on Education, which was established, and began to solicit submissions and conduct consultations, in June 2002. The commission emerged from the Alberta Future Summit (2002), where delegates recommended a comprehensive review of the education (learning) system. The government's commitment to examine the system was referenced in the Education Services Settlement Act (2002). A progress report was produced in January 2003 and the final report, *Every Child Learns, Every Child Succeeds: Report and Recommendations*, was released in October 2003.

The commission report suggested further accountability measures:

- Provincial achievement tests and diploma exams will be maintained and improved. Ongoing classroom assessment will be supported;
- There will be a means for province-wide information and accountability through ongoing information about the outcomes achieved by students;
- Reporting requirements are increased in the school, school jurisdictions, and by the province; and,
- The creation of a new Council of Education Executives to provide certification, ongoing support and professional development for principals and assistant principals, effectively removing same from the ATA (Report and Recommendations, Alberta's Commission on Learning, 2003).

The commission report recommended numerous dramatic reforms affecting teachers and school leaders:

- Establish and implement province-wide guidelines for class sizes across school jurisdictions;
- Review and improve current pre-service programs for teachers;
- Establish a permanent mechanism for ensuring closer links among faculties of education, superintendents, teachers and Alberta Learning;
- Require schools jurisdictions to adapt the first-year experience and provide effective coaching for beginning teachers;

- Develop and implement comprehensive professional development plans for every school jurisdiction and every school (at the end of 2003, this recommendation was still under review by the Ministry);
- Require all teachers to have targeted annual professional development plans that are directly linked to their schools' improvement plans;
- Ensure that policies and regulations on supervising and evaluating teachers are well understood and effectively implemented;
- Replace the current board of reference process with an arbitration process that is consistent with models in place for employees who have the right to bargain collectively in the province (at the end of 2003, this recommendation was still under review by the Ministry);
- Develop a quality practice standard and identify the knowledge, skills and attributes required for principals;
- Establish a new program to prepare and certify principals;
- Establish a Council of Education Executives to provide certification, ongoing support and professional development for principals and assistant principals;
- Develop a comprehensive, targeted program for preparing superintendents and provide ongoing professional development to support them;
- Remove the current requirement for the appointment of superintendents to be approved by the Minister of Learning (at the end of 2003, this recommendation was still under review by the Ministry).
- Reinforce the role of school councils and require principals to actively engage parents in school improvements planning (Report and Recommendations, Alberta's Commission on Learning, 2003).

Further recommendations have been made regarding funding and fiscal accountability, the most significant being a new funding framework. Due to a budget shortfall in the year 2002-03, the Commission on Learning recommended a renewed funding framework for the 2004-05 budget. $46 million is required to implement the new framework, which provides school boards with more flexibility and will allow for the redistribution of funds on an equal per-student basis, but with the proviso that the additional requirements and needs of individual school boards be assessed. For example, the Commission noted that support should be provided to children with diverse languages and cultures, including ESL, francophone, First Nations, and Métis students. Higher proportions of these students, as well as students with special needs, will receive funds in addition to base funding amounts. A series of recommendations, *Success for Every Child*, also addressed Aboriginal Education, students with special needs, and English as a second language.

Other recommendations regarding funding and the fiscal framework include:

- That the provincial government exercise fewer controls over school boards' use of funds, provided that boards meet new accountability standards and teachers and parents play a role in how boards set their funding priorities;
- That provincial policies prohibit fees to cover the costs of basic education items, detail the charges that can be levied, set caps on school fees, and allow reasonable fees for extracurricular activities;

- That funding for building and renovation of schools, and the operation and maintenance of schools be consolidated within the budget (this recommendation was ultimately not supported by the ministry);
- That school boards be allowed to requisition from local residents up to 10 percent of the amount raised through provincial education property taxes, and that potential sources of revenue be explored for the funding of education; currently, the province accounts for 64 percent and property taxes account for 36 percent of funding (this recommendation was ultimately not supported by the ministry); and,
- That shortfalls be addressed in the current budget year and on an ongoing basis.

While an identified factor in the budget shortfall for 2003 is arbitrated salary settlements, the government acknowledges that the overall financial position has been created by other costs (e.g., inflation, increasing costs for programs for children with special needs, changes in how Grade 10 students were funded in 2002-03, etc.).

The Commission also recommended the establishment of a new collective bargaining model, noting that the status quo is clearly not an option. The report identifies four components of such a model: establishing through legislation an employer bargaining association; maintaining the ATA as the single organization responsible for professional services and collective bargaining for teachers; limiting what can be bargained for collectively; and expanding teachers' professional responsibilities while maintaining their right to strike. One element of this approach is a recommendation that principals establish a separate professional organization, although they should retain their right to associate membership in the ATA. The new collective bargaining model was still under review at the end of 2003.

Minister of Learning Oberg responded to the recommendations, rejecting two regarding funding, ordering reviews of nine other recommendations, and supporting the remainder. The recommendations under review involve contentious issues:

- Establishing a new junior kindergarten program (# 2)
- Establishing a full day kindergarten program (# 3)
- Undertaking a comprehensive independent review of the postsecondary education system (# 12)
- Maintaining current limits on the number of charter schools (# 26)
- Developing and implementing professional development plans for every school jurisdiction and school (# 72)
- Replacing the current Board of Reference process with an arbitration process, consistent with other models for employees who have collective bargaining rights in the province (# 75)
- Establishing a new Council of Education Executives for principals and assistant principals (# 78)
- Removing the requirement that the Minister of Learning approve the appointment of superintendents (# 80)
- Create a new four component approach to collective bargaining (# 81).

The recommended creation of a Council of Education Executives would effectively separate out principals and assistant principals from the Alberta Teachers Association,

although principals and assistant principals would remain ATA members. Separate, parallel organizations for principals and assistant principals have been introduced in Ontario and British Columbia, with mixed results. The ATA has expressed grave concerns regarding the anticipated changes to collective bargaining, particularly as there would be new limitations on which issues would be considered in the collective bargaining process. At the same time, professional responsibilities of teachers are expected to be increased. (Note: by mid-2004, the majority of these nine recommendations had been either supported or rejected.)

Conclusion

Over the last decade, a political-economic imperative has dominated the formulation of government educational policy. The Klein government led the way in Canada, as they were the first to promote a New Right agenda. Alberta provided a model first for Ontario, and more recently for BC. Accountability has been the key term driving the development of educational policy from the start. The titles of key documents – *Measuring Up* (1993), *Three-Year Business Plan* (1994), and *Accountability in Education* (1995) – leave no doubt as to the importance of making education accountable. As in BC, the other key words driving policy are choice and flexibility. The Alberta government has also stressed from the start a commitment to openness and public access. The strains between the Alberta government and the ATA are very similar to those between the BC government and the BCTF. The Alberta government does not sympathise with professional ideals that emphasize teacher autonomy. Changes to the collective bargaining process and the membership of principals and assistant principals in the ATA invoke the acknowledgement of the relationship between professionalism and labour relations.

Endnotes

1 The Ministry has been renamed several times, with changes occurring with the amalgamation of the Kindergarten to Grade 12 system and the post secondary system. In 2004, the name of the Ministry was the Ministry of Learning.

2 The Alberta Teachers' Association was first formed as the Alberta Teachers' Alliance during the First World War. The Alberta Teachers' Association was legally established with the passage of the Teaching Profession Act in 1935. The ATA was given the right to bargain collectively in 1941and was the first teacher's union in Canada to gain that right.

3 The Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) was incorporated in 1939 and is the official organization representing all locally elected school boards in Alberta. ASBA represents all public, separate and francophone school boards.

4 The Alberta Home and School Councils' Association (AHSCA) was established in 1929 as the Alberta Home and School Federation. Their name changed in 1991. AHSCA represents over 170,000 parents and community supporters. Members work through local school councils and are active in lobbying the

government to address educational issues (e.g., funding, resources for students with special needs).

5 The Council on Alberta Teaching Standards (COATS) was established in 1985 by ministerial order. COATS provides information and advice to the Minster of Learning on matters related to teaching. COATS also receives and addresses complaints regarding teachers and plays a role in the Excellence in Teaching awards program.

6 Three divisions make up Alberta Learning: Basic Learning (K-12), Adult Learning, and the Apprenticeship and Training Division.

7 The Ministry of Infrastructure is responsible for infrastructure owned or supported by the Alberta Government. Included in this is a responsibility to manage the development of schools, health care, and water management facilities. The ministry is also responsible for highways, roads, traffic safety, and to plan construct and operate various other facilities - community, cultural, historical, and correctional.

8 The Christian home education parents group, Home Education Corporation of Alberta (HECA), was vigorously opposed to their children writing provincial achievement tests and being supervised by school boards. HECA made a presentation to the Ministry in 1998 to voice their objections to these guidelines.

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Chapter 3
Policy Narrative for Saskatchewan

Paul Newton, Dave Burgess, and Sam Robinson

Introduction

Educational policy in Saskatchewan has focused on community, local autonomy, locally determined options, and teacher autonomy. The isolation experienced by people in small farming communities, and the different educational and funding needs of rural, northern, and urban communities tend to have directed educational policy in Saskatchewan toward the recognition and acknowledgement of the importance of community. This tendency has led to flexible, community-based educational policy frameworks, and has precluded the development of provincially legislated global educational policy.

Although some jurisdictions in the United States and Canada have been directed toward education reform through the enactment of federal, state, or provincial legislation, Saskatchewan has not witnessed any significant changes to provincial legislation in the past 20 years. Rather, policy formation in Saskatchewan has occurred through collaboration and consensus among the educational partners. For the most part, educational policies have been developed and enacted by Saskatchewan Education (later called Saskatchewan Learning[1]); much trust has been placed in this branch of government and the educational partners involved in policy consultation and implementation (primarily the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF) and the Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association (SSTA), now the Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA)). A Saskatchewan Learning official stated

> In the context of changes to K-12 legislation and policies in Saskatchewan in relation to other jurisdictions in Canada that appear to be enacting legislation and implementing policies that are prescriptive in nature, Saskatchewan has not witnessed any significant changes to provincial legislation in the past 20 years... Changes in policy and program have been achieved largely through collaboration and consensus with stakeholders, within the existing legislative framework, rather than through new legislative requirements. (personal communication)

Saskatchewan's educational policies have been directed by long-standing concerns about capacity. The province's small population and the distance between communities have prompted an educational focus on locally developed options, a flexible curriculum, and flexible and innovative delivery options.

The most significant policy developments in the province over the last 20 years have been the establishment and implementation of a province-wide curriculum framework (Saskatchewan Education, 1984a), the community school movement, and the *Role of the School Report* (Tymchak, 2001). These initiatives will be dealt with in turn, but in short, they focus on a flexible curriculum framework, situated and integrated within the context of local communities.

Curriculum

In the early 1980s, the province of Saskatchewan embarked on an ambitious effort to reform its public education system. The Ministry established the Curriculum and Instruction Review Committee in 1981, which, through an extensive province-wide consultative process, formulated the *Directions* (Saskatchewan Education, 1984a) report. "*Directions* originated with a general concern by Saskatchewan educators about whether the curriculum in use at the time and students' school experiences would adequately prepare young people for life in the twenty-first century" (Thompson, 1999). The report made sixteen action recommendations to better prepare students for the future, organized into seven key areas: quality education in all schools; the needs of individual learners; unique needs of Northern and Indian/Native students; more efficient planning strategies; effective leadership; and change and improvement in the educational system (Saskatchewan Education, 1984a, pp. 44-53, passim).

For this chapter, which focuses on the lives of teachers and the evolution of the teaching profession, a highlight in *Directions* is its recommendation to establish "the concept of a K-12 core curriculum" (Action Recommendation #2). In response, Saskatchewan Learning established the Core Curriculum Policy Advisory Committee, which released an initial report in March 1987 (Saskatchewan Education, 1987b) for public consultation. A final report was released in December 1987 (Saskatchewan Education, 1987a), the major features of which are a focus on a general curriculum and a student-centred curriculum. The core curriculum would include required areas of study, Common Essential Learnings (CELs), the adaptive dimension, and locally determined options (Saskatchewan Education, 1987c, pp. 4-8).

Using the framework set forth in the *Core Curriculum Final Report* (Saskatchewan Education, 1987a), Saskatchewan Learning revised all curricula during the 1990s. For the most part, these revisions present the objectives teachers are expected to achieve for the various courses; however, they specify neither content nor methods. These remain the domain of the classroom teacher. Curricula do provide model units, and teachers have the opportunity to develop their own units. All these revised curricula are posted on Saskatchewan Learning's website, to establish the Evergreen Curriculum (Saskatchewan Learning, nd.).

Integrated Services

The Role of the School Task Force (hereafter RSTF) was charged with examining role expansion in public education and the capacity of the education system to meet the demands of emerging challenges to the public education system.

> The lobby effort to create the Role of the School Task Force…arises in the context of a growing awareness that the role that schools play in society - and the role they are expected to play - has altered dramatically. Usually this change is captured in the claim that the role has expanded. (Tymchak, 2001, p. 5)

Just prior to the release of the *RSTF Report*, Saskatchewan Learning released the *Directions for Diversity* report (Saskatchewan Education, 2000a). This foundational report provided a vision for the support of children with diverse learning needs, as the province reviewed and enhanced its focus on special education. The *RSTF Report* that followed, in 2001, supported and extended the recommendations from *Directions for Diversity*.

The *RSTF Report* identified some of the challenges facing the province and their implications for education. The report, using an earthquake metaphor, referred to these contemporary challenges as "tectonic shifts" that have the potential to change how education is delivered in the province, the nature of schools and their position within the community. The key recommendations focused on program delivery within the "tectonic shifts" taking place in the province: e.g., rural to urban migration, increases in the school aged Aboriginal population, Aboriginal education, and school-linked integrated services, among others.

Teachers often comment that they are expected to be teachers, social workers, coaches, parents, and health care providers. To help teachers deal with their complex role, the RSTF suggested that all social service institutions work cooperatively to deliver services to children and youth. The scope of the recommendations of the RSTF encompassed nearly all aspects of the public education system. Notably, the RSTF viewed the core curriculum (Saskatchewan Education, 1987a) as developed from *Directions* (Saskatchewan Education, 1984a), as sufficient to meet the educational needs of children in the province, but saw a need for a comprehensive redesign of the delivery system of all human services. The Saskatchewan Teachers Federation (2001) indicated their support for the integration of school-linked services, but cautioned "the success of these models requires a massive effort by all staff, extensive professional development, effective communications channels among service providers, and clearly articulated roles and responsibilities" (p. 5).

The defining concept of the *RSTF Final Report* is the recommendation of the adoption of the School^{PLUS} concept - key to which is the idea of school-linked, integrated services. School^{PLUS} would see health services, social services, judicial services, and education linked in some as yet unforeseen manner, and delivered to children and youth with the school as the central agency.

> The concept of public education taking place within the larger context of human services - by whatever name - is vital...As we have already made clear, by 'context' here we mean something more than a loosely connected, goodwill gathering; we are talking about a networked, truly 'integrated' agency (p. 45).

As Tymchak (2001) has noted, this concept borrows generously from the community schools philosophy (discussed in greater depth later in this chapter).

At the centre of the debate around the School^{PLUS} report is concern over the expansion of teachers' role that has taken place over the last several decades. Tymchak (2001) argues in the report that teachers need to get on with teaching. They will need to work with other social service providers, referring students to these other professionals to meet their total.

> The Task Force finds the notion inescapable that the role of the teacher must be clarified if public education is to fulfil the mission and expectations we as a society have created for it.…We believe that it is vital within this expanded environment for teachers to attend to teaching and learning….If we want teachers to do much more, then inevitably there will be less teaching and learning, and there is evidence to suggest that has already begun to happen.…Teachers will…need to confer with other professionals, parents and community service personnel, but the focus of their own efforts should be to promote learning (pp. 73-74).

The STF (2001) stated that this redefined role for teachers would not diminish their work; they would have to learn to work in different ways to meet the needs of children, in consulting and planning with others. As the STF has noted, "a re-focused professional role for teachers will not mean, however, a return to the traditional set of responsibilities…Teachers will also be expected to spend more of their time working with parents, colleagues, and professionals from other sectors" (p. 7). It is unclear how the government plans to bring about such a shift in teachers' roles. Clearly, additional or realigned funding and human service coordination will be required to relieve teachers of some of their extra-teaching responsibilities.

The *RSTF Report* argued for an expanded role for school-based administrators, a redefined role that is anything but subtle.

> Implicit within the support framework that will help teachers focus on the task of public education is a changed and expanded role for in-school administrators. The new role is nothing less than coordinating the full range of human services available to children and youth. (Tymchak, 2001, p. 75)

The STF (2001) has expressed concern about the proposed expansion of the in-school administrator's role, arguing that it has the potential to make in-school administrators more managers of social services than educators who are responsible for the learning of children and youth.

> For teachers who are principals, the changes to their current responsibilities will be, if anything, even more substantial….Much of their (principals') time will be spent on the coordination of services in their schools.…This is a very tall order for anyone to fill, especially for individuals who, as leaders in instruction and professional development, already have a full agenda. (pp. 8-10)

The government of Saskatchewan (2002) signalled its concurrence with the primary recommendations of the *RSTF Report*. In particular, the government agreed that "schools serve as centres at the community level of the delivery of appropriate social, health, recreation, culture, justice and other services for children and their families" (p. 1). Further, the government response outlined key areas for education

reform. These include government departmental collaboration; the support of School^{PLUS} through the reallocation of resources; an increased focus on assessment and evaluation; and improved access to human services at the school level to enable teachers to focus on teaching and learning. To implement the plan, the government indicated that it would establish the following committees: Saskatchewan Council on Children and Youth;[2] Strengthening Educational Capacity Forum; and an Interdepartmental Children and Family Services Integration Forum. Currently, the province has committed to "reallocating existing resources in support of the School^{PLUS} vision" (p. 9). Critics of the provincial response doubt the feasibility of such a radical change without additional funding to support its implementation throughout the province (Saskatchewan Teachers Federation, 2001).

Nevertheless, the School ^{PLUS} report has signalled a change in defining the role of schools in society. In agreeing to this report, the provincial response (Government of Saskatchewan, 2002) clearly recognized that the schools had both an educational and service function, stating that

> to educate children and youth – developing the whole child, intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically; and to support service delivery – schools serve as centres at the community level for the delivery of appropriate social, health, recreation, culture, justice and other services for children and their families. (p. 1)

Social Equity

Beginning in 1980, Saskatchewan Learning's innovative response to the challenges facing education in the province was the community school movement. Saskatchewan Learning designates schools in geographic areas where a sufficient number of children and families face barriers to success in school and life as community schools. The community school program has two significant features: the meaningful relationships developed with the community and the integration of other human services from various governmental departments into the school and its programs. "The school serves as the hub of a comprehensive, responsive, community based system of education, health, social justice and recreation services provided to meet the needs of the students and their families" (Saskatchewan Education, 1996a, p. 9).

Community schools receive additional directed funding from Saskatchewan Learning to implement and sustain their unique programs. Funding is provided for community school teacher associates, a community school coordinator, nutrition programs, the community school council, additional programs and resources (after-school programs, supplies, guest speakers, school-based clubs, and activities), and pre-kindergarten programming. This program, a prototype for school reform in Saskatchewan, has provided a backdrop for the subsequent development in educational policy in the province. At the time of writing, there were 106 designated community schools in the province, each offering a wide range of programs to meet the specific needs of students, families, and the community.

The Government of Saskatchewan identified key recommendations from the *RSTF Report* as priority areas:

- the adoption of a community school philosophy for all schools;
- the development of inter-agency responsibility for schools;
- the linking of human services to schools;
- an increase in the number of pre-kindergarten spaces;
- the implementation of a data system to track student movement;
- further focus on Aboriginal education;
- an expansion of the community school program into secondary schools;
- the establishment of a comprehensive e-learning strategy; and,
- the establishment of stronger linkages among province-wide cultural, sport and recreation associations, and school boards and schools.

The *RSTF Report* has been met with widespread support, but also some degree of cynicism, as the educational community has questioned the ability of the government to implement the community school model on a province-wide basis. The original community school program required considerable additional funding to implement programs, and it is unclear whether this program can be delivered universally through the reallocation of existing provincial funding.

The STF (2001) has expressed concern about the additional teaching and personal load placed on teachers in designated community schools. "Some teachers who have worked in designated community schools have reported very positive experiences; others have expressed concerns that the professional and personal expectations in the school philosophy or practices have been far too high" (p. 4).

Aboriginal and Métis Education

Concern about Saskatchewan's school-aged Aboriginal and Métis population has received increased attention in recent years. Saskatchewan Learning has systematically sought to address the diverse social, cultural, and learning needs of the entire student body by extending and strengthening partnerships with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) and the province's Métis Nation (Saskatchewan Learning, 2003a). Saskatchewan Learning has recognized the importance of partnering with Saskatchewan's Aboriginal governing bodies, and, since 1982, when the provincial Native Curriculum Review Committee (NCRC) was created, has actively explored benefits gained through the participation and guidance of the Aboriginal and Métis communities. The NCRC was engaged in recommending a K-12 action plan, while reviewing "curricula to determine where and how Aboriginal content might fit" (Saskatchewan Education, 1998, p. 3).

In 1984, the NCRC's first action plan was adopted, outlining several recommendations regarding the ongoing need for an Aboriginal education advisory committee, representation of Aboriginal perspectives on curriculum committees and, more important, the inclusion of First Nations content and perspectives within province-wide curricula for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, including curricula developed for French immersion and francophone schools. Similarly, *Directions* recommended that the Minister of Education "initiate the formulation of policies and procedures to ensure that the unique needs of Northern

and Indian/Native students are met" (Saskatchewan Education, 1984a, p. 50). Recommendations within *Directions* addressed the integration of Native studies and Aboriginal content into the Core Curriculum, the creation of Aboriginal language instruction and course material, and the involvement of the Aboriginal community within decision making (Saskatchewan Education, 1998).

By 1995, having been involved in a number of Aboriginal education initiatives related to curriculum and policy development over the preceding decade, Saskatchewan Learning adopted the *Indian and Métis Education Policy from Kindergarten to Grade 12 (*Saskatchewan Education, 1995*)*. The policy — outlined in four principles — was designed to guide the creation and development of all curricula for and about Aboriginal and Métis peoples. Its principles establish the important role played by Aboriginal and Métis peoples "in the planning, design and delivery and, where applicable, co-management of the education system at all levels" (online). Further, the policy recognized the differences held by Aboriginal and Métis students in learning styles and perspective, and sought to reflect these differences in all aspects of Aboriginal and Métis children's school experience.

The four principles adopted in 1995 — combined with a collection of policy guidelines developed in 1997 by the Equity in Education Forum and titled *Our Children, Our Communities and Our Future* (Saskatchewan Education, 1997) and the 1996 policy framework, *Building Communities of Hope: Best Practices for Meeting the Learning Needs of At-Risk and Indian and Métis Students* (Saskatchewan Education, 1996a) - have provided important direction to Saskatchewan Learning in more recent initiatives, including community schools and School^{PLUS}.

Despite these advancements in relationships between the Ministry and the Aboriginal and Métis communities, and the doubling of funding and programs targeted to Aboriginal students in the three years previous, Saskatchewan Learning recognized, in 2003, that "[i]n Saskatchewan, Aboriginal students are not achieving the same benefits as other students — about 50 percent who enter Grade 10 eventually graduate from Grade 12, compared to 80 percent of the overall student population" (Saskatchewan Learning, 2003b, p. 94).

In recent years, Aboriginal people, particularly those who are status Indian, have asserted not only their treaty rights but also their culture and way of life, and have begun to take control of education in order to tailor it to their cultural and communal need realities. In Saskatchewan, more and more on-reserve students enrol in federally funded schools, which are not under Ministry jurisdiction. In 2002, about 16,000 students attended First Nations-controlled schools, and about 3,000 attended federally controlled schools (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002b, p. 35).

Demographics

Saskatchewan's population in April 2004 was 995,058 (Saskatchewan Bureau of Statistics, 2004b). Although the province's population has increased slightly in the last few years, this population is aging. The number of pre-school aged children in 2003 was 60,966, while the number of children aged 15-19 was 77,656 (Saskatchewan Bureau of Statistics, 2004a). In 2002, roughly 48,000 students were of Aboriginal decent, more than 20 percent of the province's entire school-aged

population (Saskatchewan Learning, 2000b, 2003b); moreover, the Aboriginal population in Saskatchewan has been increasing. The number of pre-school aged Aboriginal children is significantly larger than the number of Aboriginal youth nearing completion of the K-12 system.

Another significant population trend is urbanization — decreases in rural populations and corresponding increases in the population of urban areas. This challenge has not gone unnoticed by Saskatchewan Learning. "As population numbers decrease in certain regions of the province, the challenge continues to provide equity of opportunity and benefit in the absence of economies of scale" (Saskatchewan Education, 2000b, p. 10). Since 1991-92, enrolments in rural school divisions have decreased, while the enrolments in urban school divisions have increased (Saskatchewan Learning, 2003b).

Since 1994-95, enrolment in the public school system has decreased, while enrolment has increased in the publicly funded separate school system. In 2001-02, there were 142,547 students enrolled in the public school divisions and 37,531 students enrolled in the separate school divisions; approximately 3,000 students were enrolled in independent schools. Some independent schools, which have entered into contractual arrangements with school divisions, are referred to as associate schools, and their enrolments are included in the enrolment figures for the publicly funded school divisions. In addition, there were 19,201 K-12 Aboriginal students living on reserves in 2001-02, 71 percent of whom attended First Nations controlled schools. Finally, 1,792 students were registered in home-based schooling during the 2001-02 school year.

In 1999-2000, there were 11,444 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers in Saskatchewan, an increase of 222 FTE from the previous year. In the same year, there was approximately one teacher aide for every four FTE teachers[3] (Saskatchewan Learning, 2000b, 2003b), and the pupil/teacher ratio was 15.3. Saskatchewan Learning (2002b, p. 44) stated that the average cost per pupil was $6,491. This figure, however, is qualified: "Per pupil expenditure on education was higher in rural and northern areas than in urban areas" (p. 44): rural, $7,050; urban, $5,999; north, $8,252; conseils scolaires, $10,908.

In 2001-02, the average class size in Saskatchewan was 20.8 pupils, with the typical rural class having five fewer pupils than an urban class. Since 1996-97, average class sizes have decreased, with an accompanying decrease in the number of large classes.

> [I]n 2001-2002, 26.2 percent of the province's classrooms had more than 25 students, down from 34.8 percent five years earlier. Rural schools were more likely to have greater numbers of very small classes (36 percent with 15 or fewer students), and urban schools were more likely to have greater numbers of large classes (39 percent above 25 students). (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002b, p. 33)

In 2001-02, there were 778 publicly funded provincial schools, 86 fewer than a existed a decade earlier (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002b, p. 38). The overall number of schools in the province has declined over the past decade as well:

> In 2001-02, there were 295 Saskatchewan schools with 150 or fewer students, down from 349 schools in 1991-92. The greatest reduction in the number of

small schools has occurred in rural Saskatchewan, yet these small schools still represent half the schools in rural areas, much as they did in 1991-92…. In 2001-02, there were 126 schools with 50 or fewer students, 100 of which were in rural school divisions. (p. 38)

Specialized Schools and Language Education

The provincial Official Minority Language Office (OMLO), a branch of Saskatchewan Learning, holds responsibility for French language instruction within the province. OMLO is charged with the development, implementation, and management of the three forms of French language education (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004c) — core French, French immersion, and Fransaskois schooling. Core French is a regular course offering within English language schools. French immersion programs employ French as a language of instruction for more that 50 percent of the school day, and are specifically designed for anglophone students from anglophone families. In Fransaskois schools, French is the language of instruction and English is taught as a regular course offering (Saskatchewan Learning, 2003b). Fransaskois schools are designated for students who have at least one francophone parent and for whom French is a language commonly used in the home.

In 2001-02, roughly 40 percent of Saskatchewan's students were registered in core French offerings – a decrease of 15 percent over the previous 10 years. French immersion enrolments were 30 percent lower in 2001-02 than ten years before, although some of this decline has been attributed to increased enrolments in Fransaskois schools (Saskatchewan Learning, 2003b).

Saskatchewan students are able to study languages other than English and French, and the number of those who do so has increased by roughly 80 percent in the past 10 years. The largest increases have been seen in registrations for courses offering Cree, Dene, Saulteaux, and Spanish, while the number of students studying German and Japanese has declined since 1992-93 (Saskatchewan Learning, 2003b). Some school divisions are considering the introduction of Cree Immersion.

The Education Act (1995) provides for the registration of independent schools seeking to provide education to Saskatchewan school-aged students. Independent schools are those where control and administration is not in the hands of a public authority, but rather a private individual or agency. Schools registered as independent are granted leave by the province to operate in accordance with the vision that most appropriately serves the interests of their particular community or group. Several categories of such independent schools exist, including historical high schools (including Protestant religious education schools), schools at which credit for courses at the Grade 10-12 level is granted, and those at which no such secondary credit is granted. Although independent schools are not by default associated with a particular school division, by 2001-02 eight of the 46 independent schools in Saskatchewan had contractual arrangements with an existing division. Each contract between an independent school and school division is distinct, but most are characterized by the employment of teachers by the school division, consultative support, professional development opportunities, and improved resources (Saskatchewan Learning, 2003b).

As has been stated elsewhere in this chapter, the number of primary school-aged Aboriginal children has increased, contrary to the trend in the province's non-Aboriginal population. In the mid-1980s, roughly 50 percent of Aboriginal students lived and attending school on reserves. By 2001-02, that number had risen to nearly 85 percent, with 95 percent of on-reserve students enrolled in First Nations schools (Saskatchewan Learning, 2003b).

Another growth area is found in the number of children being educated at home. 2001-02 data suggest that home-based education had increased by nearly 80 percent over previous seven years. Ministry data suggest that parents typically will choose to educate their children in the home for religious or philosophical reasons, and that the majority of students who are home schooled are of elementary or middle school age.

Governance and Amalgamation

Saskatchewan educators have long resisted any move toward more centralized educational governance. Langlois and Scharf (1991) produced a report for the provincial government on educational governance and finance, calling for major changes to the number and size of school divisions in the province. The response to this report from the educational community was overwhelmingly negative. "Boards maintained that a governance structure imposed on boards from the top down would fail to recognize and learn from historical experience, and, for [sic] some degree, would show disregard for Saskatchewan's citizens' confidence in and support for locally elected and accountable boards of education" (Thompson, 1993, online). In the spring of 1992, the provincial government set aside this report to focus on voluntary amalgamation and to provide support and incentives for locally initiated voluntary governance reforms.

In *Structuring Public Education* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002c), the Ministry once again outlined the need for restructuring educational boundaries. Although the report addressed a need for change, it was determined by Saskatchewan Learning (Saskatchewan Education, 1996b) at the time that the public and stakeholders "were not opposed to change as long as that change was locally determined…[and] very few suggested that Government take an approach that would impose restructured school divisions on communities" (online).

Until recently, the government of Saskatchewan continued to focus on voluntary restructuring, especially amalgamation, and offered funding to school divisions that began amalgamation discussions. However, in May 2004, Learning Minister Andrew Thomson announced the "most substantial changes to the school system since Tommy Douglas' government introduced school district reform in 1944" (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004a, online). The announcement detailed the government's response to the Boughen Commission on Financing Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education final report, titled *Finding the Balance* (Boughen, 2004). Commissioner Boughen had been charged with researching and documenting the "varied and complex issues of funding the province's education system and to provide recommendations for change" (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004b, p. i). It was generally taken as a given that the subject of amalgamation would arise as a result of

the commission's work, and recent Ministry indications suggest that the 82 public and separate school boards that existed as of spring 2004 will be reduced to "no more than 40…with no fewer than 5,000 students in each division" (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004a, online); according to the Minister, the forced amalgamation of Saskatchewan's school divisions will be completed by January 2006.

Accountability

Saskatchewan's involvement in assessment and accountability has maintained a focus on assessment for the improvement of teaching and learning. The philosophy in the province is in stark contrast to those provinces where assessment is used to evaluate the effectiveness of individual schools and teachers in delivering the educational program. This reflects Saskatchewan's reluctance to enter into assessment practices in which schools are assessed for the purposes of ranking and comparison. A Saskatchewan Learning official stated,

> Saskatchewan's philosophical approach to assessment, if I may say in a world where many folk are losing their heads, we are trying to keep ours. Which isn't to say we haven't been very involved in the assessment world...That isn't to say we are opposed to testing, we're not. We just understand that the impacts on learning are broad and multifaceted and that you need a much more sophisticated set of tools to get a picture of...areas for improvement. (personal communication)

To this end, province-wide assessment data have not been disaggregated at the school division or school level. There has been a call recently, however, for this data to be made available at division, school, and classroom level. At the time of writing, there is a pilot math assessment program in 21 school divisions, in which these types of data are being made available to school divisions.

In 1993, Saskatchewan Learning developed the Saskatchewan Education Indicators Program. The mission statement of the program articulated in the Foundation document stated:

> The purpose of establishing a set of indicators is to collect relevant and appropriate data to support decision making, planning, and policy development at all levels of the education system and to demonstrate public accountability by providing information about the education system to the education community and the public at large. (Saskatchewan Education, 1993, p. 22)

Two programs are used in the province assess curriculum effectiveness. They are

- Provincial Learning Assessment Program (PLAP) — Grade 5, 8 and 11 students are assessed in mathematics and English language arts. They are assessed in alternate years.
- School Achievement Indicators Program (SAID), Council of Ministers of Education, Canada — This is a national program that examines the achievement of Canadian 13- and 16-year-olds in selected subject areas. There have been reports published in science (1996), mathematics (1993 and 1997) and language arts (1994 and 1998). (Thompson, 1999, online)

These assessment programs are not directly aligned with Saskatchewan curriculum objectives. In the provincial PLAP program, there is a loose fit between student

tests and Saskatchewan curriculum objectives. In the national SAID program, tests are established independent of the curricula for any specific province, so there may or may not be alignment between specific tests and what Saskatchewan curricula say students should learn. (Thompson, 1999, online).

The guidelines set forth in the Indicators Foundation document point to the use of indicators to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the provincial system as a whole, and to support decision making and planning at all levels of the public education system. Saskatchewan Learning has so far resisted pressure, especially from the media, to make specific data available to the public.

In 1994, Saskatchewan Learning published the *High School Review Advisory Committee: Final Report*. Recommendation 31 called for

> direct testing by Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment... to evaluate student learning outcomes at the grade 12 level for secondary school students and for students in provincial 10-12 Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses in language arts, mathematics, science and social sciences. (Saskatchewan Education, 1994a, p. 68)

The High School Review Advisory Committee supported the notion of provincially administered examinations at the Grade 12 level. Subsequently, in the *Minister's response to the High School Advisory Committee: Final report* (Saskatchewan Education, 1994b), it was stated that the department was "not prepared to go ahead with the Committee's recommendation related to direct testing of all Grade 12 students by the province in four subject areas, at this time" (p. 18). The reasons given for this position were the cost of external testing and the need to further assess the efficacy of existing testing procedures.

The STF (2002) stated that any system of accountability should reflect the educational objectives set out by Saskatchewan Learning and also the limitations of the public education system. Further, they argued that "assessment and reporting of educational outcomes should be oriented towards the improvement of educational programs and not involve damaging or inappropriate comparisons between schools or school divisions" (p. 50).

> The results of such tests should not be used to make inappropriate comparisons between students, teachers or schools…The utilization of standardized testing instruments by teachers should be voluntary…[and] the Federation opposes implementation of compulsory machine-scored final examinations (p. 75).

All partners in education in Saskatchewan have to date concurred that, although educational accountability is crucial, explicit and public standards that involve local comparisons among students, schools, or school divisions should not be made.

In the 2002-03 school year, Saskatchewan Learning instituted a pilot math assessment program in the northwest region of the province. The focus of this pilot was to support teachers as they learned to use large-scale assessment data to improve their instruction. Saskatchewan Learning has made a concerted effort to ensure that data from this pilot project are not used for purposes other than the improvement of learning, and there have been numerous cautions to directors of education about the dangers of assessment data use:

> School divisions should be aware that under the Freedom of Information provisions of current legislation, the reports generated at the school and division level are considered public documents. Hence, these public documents are available to the media. School divisions should consider any information release and public education strategy to ensure data generated is used as intended. (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002a, p. 3)

Furthermore, the STF shares the province's concern with the possible uses of the disaggregated assessment data. An STF official noted,

> The pressures are relentless with respect to achievement testing. The need for more achievement testing and the reporting of those results…I think it would be fair to say that much of this pressure has come from school divisions... School divisions have been asking more and more for disaggregation of the data...Seven school divisions were using achievement testing and...some of these school divisions were buying the tests from Alberta and doing their own thing with them. The department is working with them now to do this achievement testing to provide the scores on a school-by-school basis and to establish the kinds of professional development that is needed for schools and communities to see how we can use this for good purposes. (personal communication)

A Saskatchewan Learning official spoke about the role of the Ministry in educating the public and the educational community about the purpose of assessment, stating

> We're not just talking about teacher's assessment literacy and their understanding of how to use data to improve instruction, how do we raise parents' assessment literacy and the public's and the media's assessment literacy? Because that is a huge problem. I mean we have made a huge shift in assessment from norm-based to criterion-referenced assessment…People haven't made the shift and so assessment literacy means a lot of work and a lot of conversations and a lot of relational work...It will fail if divisions don't take the time to engage teachers authentically and to work with teachers and empower them through the use of the data. (personal communication)

This official articulated the concern of all educational partners that assessment practices might be used for the purpose of ranking schools, teachers, and school divisions, rather than for the improvement of instruction.

Conclusion

Educators and educational administrators in Saskatchewan operate in what can only be described as a culture of collaboration. The specific origins of this culture are difficult to pinpoint, but its very existence implies a peculiarity in governance that has been dubbed by one school division director as "it's about time implementation". Such implementation may be best characterized as a model of leadership and subordination where:

a) no one is really sure who was the first to bring forward any particular policy initiative;

b) policy ideas begin as realizations regarding a need or goal and evolve through genuine collaborative consultation; and (as a consequence of a and b),
c) policy directives are never met with fear by directors or stakeholders, but rather the impatient commentary upon delivery of the policy by the ministry, "it's about time."

One school division director with whom we spoke explained the implementation of policy in Saskatchewan by dividing the process into two distinct phases: implementation and actualization. During the implementation phase, characterized by the technical analysis of policies by educators and administrators, economic considerations are made, and operational, day-to-day management issues are investigated. The actualization phase is greatly influenced by the geographic distance separating school divisions from the Ministry in Regina, as well as the geographic distance separating schools themselves in rural areas. The effect of this distance is a context where schools are left alone to "breathe life into policy". Because educators and administration are already onside, so to speak, the life they breathe into policies is very personal and community-specific, and in turn reinforces the community's role within Saskatchewan schools.

Endnotes

1 In April 2002, Saskatchewan Education was renamed Saskatchewan Learning. Throughout this paper, we have used the current designation Saskatchewan Learning, except in referencing documents that were published under the auspices of Saskatchewan Education.

2 In November 2002, the provincial government appointed a council to oversee the implementation of the recommendations in the School^{PLUS} report: The Saskatchewan Council on Children and Youth. The council is made up of 30 representatives from the various social agencies: education, social services, health, the Aboriginal community, and youth groups. The intent of the council is to allow communities themselves to decide how the various social agencies can evolve into a new type of social institution.

3. There has been a 70 percent increase in the ratio of aides to teachers since 1992-93

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Chapter 4
Policy Narrative for Manitoba

Stephanie Sutherland, Brenda St. Hilaire, and Stephen E. Anderson

Introduction

Manitoba is a geographically and ethnically diverse province of about one million people located in the centre of Canada. Approximately two-thirds of the population lives in the capital city of Winnipeg, with the remainder living in smaller cities such as Brandon and Thompson, or in small communities spread throughout the province. Manitoba has immigrant populations from many parts of the world, a strong francophone community, and contains the highest proportion of Aboriginal people in Canada.

Currently, there exist 36 divisions/districts of education in Manitoba, serving a total of 223,645 students (Manitoba Education and Training, 2003). These divisions represent elementary and secondary schools that are part of the public school system, as well as those that are independent or band operated. In the 2001-02 school year, 5,304 students were enrolled in Francais language programs, 17,134 in French immersion programs, and 71,899 in basic French courses (Manitoba Education and Training, 2003).

This Manitoba policy narrative is divided into four sections. First is a description of the policy environment under Gary Filmon's Progressive Conservative Party between 1988 and 1999. Second is a description of the New Democratic Party's educational agenda during the period 1999 to 2003. The third focuses on the dominant educational themes during the period of inquiry (1990 – 2003). Finally, some brief conclusions are presented.

The Filmon Years (1988 – 1999)

Gary Filmon and his Progressive Conservative Party squeaked into power in Manitoba in 1988, forming a minority government at a time when neo-conservative governments and policies were enjoying increased national and provincial success.

In 1990, Filmon and his party were re-elected for a second term with a narrow majority, continued to gain popularity among Manitoban voters, and were re-elected in 1995 for a third term with a slightly increased majority.

During the Filmon years, public education in Manitoba experienced a great deal of government intervention, characterized by a seemingly continuous stream of policy initiatives. During its third term, the Conservative government unveiled what it called "new directions" for education. It soon became apparent, however, that voters were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the prescriptive nature of the government's agenda. According to Levin and Wiens (2003), many of the new policies were met with increasing amounts of negativity. Educators believed that schools and teachers were being criticized unfairly and that they were being blamed for a multitude of social ills.

New Directions for the 1990s

The policy documents that shaped the province's educational agenda during the 1990s were: *Renewing Education: New Directions – A Blueprint for Action* (Manitoba Education and Training, 1994); *Renewing Education: New Directions – The Action Plan (1995)*; and 3) *Renewing Education – A Foundation for Excellence* (Manitoba Education and Training, 1995). Taken together, these three documents outlined the PC government's six priority areas for action:

- Essential learnings (the development of an outcomes-based curricula in K-S4 for all schools in the province);
- Educational standards and evaluation (the development of mandated standards tests for grades 3, 6, 9 (Senior 1), and 12 (Senior 4);
- School effectiveness (the defining of teachers' and parents' roles and rights and the requirement of all schools to produce an annual school plan);
- Parental and community involvement (establishment of advisory councils for school leadership and the widening of parental choice);
- Distance education and technology;
- Teacher education (changes in teacher education, including a five year minimum preparation for new teachers and an extended practicum for student teachers).

In 1990, the government provided support for the Manitoba School Improvement Program (MSIP) (http://www.sunvalley.ca/msip), a school-level improvement initiative supported by a non-profit, non-governmental, independent school improvement organization (Katz, Sutherland and Earl, 2002). In addition to receiving multi-year grants, MSIP schools receive professional and technical support for skills building and program evaluation. The MSIP philosophy is that thoughtful reflection, based on locally collected data, helps a school's capacity to sustain improvement efforts. As part of their involvement in MSIP, schools must produce annual evaluation reports (Lee, 1999).

From the perspective of educators, perhaps the most contentious move made by the government was its 1993-97 roll-back of provincial education funding. During this period, $100 million was taken out of education (Black and Silver, 1999), and capital funding was cut so sharply that school buildings began to deteriorate (Levin

and Wiens, 2003). As a result, the 1990's were characterized by relatively large annual increases in local school taxes (Henley and Young, 2001), and municipal taxpayers were forced to cover a significantly larger proportion of the cost of public education. At the same time, the government rolled back teachers' wages, required teachers to take unpaid days off (commonly referred to as Filmon Fridays), and legislatively limited the scope of collective bargaining. By the end of the decade, Manitoba's educators were left feeling frustrated and victimized.

School Boards and Boundaries

During the Progressive Conservative government's tenure, Manitoba's school division boundaries remained intact, despite undergoing government scrutiny in 1993. The recommendations contained in the final report of the reviewing commission strongly supported locally elected school boards, asserting that:

> … the best form of governance accountability can be achieved through democratic election of local representatives. To be effective in providing its choice of education programs within provincially approved curricula, the board should have special levy taxing powers to finance those things it fells are appropriate to its area. (Manitoba Education and Training, 1994, p. 127)

According to Henley and Young (2001), this endorsement was put forward along with a recommendation that the existing 57 school divisions be consolidated into 21 divisions. The recommendation was met with strong opposition, particularly from rural divisions, where the effect would be most felt. In 1996, the Minister of Education bowed to public pressure and announced that school boundaries would not be changed, but added that the government would work with school divisions to promote voluntary amalgamation.

Parent and Community Involvement

As in all other Canadian provinces, Manitoba in the 1990s experienced increased parental and community involvement in schools with the advent of mandatory advisory councils for school leadership. Henley and Young (2001) describe these councils as advisory bodies charged with presenting parental and community concerns and perspectives on matters related to programs, school planning, budgeting, and school management to the school's principal and staff. In *Renewing Education: New Directions – The Action Plan* (1995), advisory councils were described as providing the school with "…the view of the community at large" (p. 25).

Specifically, the mandated composition of advisory councils required that up to one-third of the representatives on the advisory council could be residents who lived within the school catchment area but did not have children in the school. One (and only one) teacher could be elected to sit on a council as a community representative with voting privileges, while the principal and one teacher representative were to serve as non-voting ex-officio members. Many in Manitoba and other provinces viewed this legislation as directly limiting teacher participation in school decision-making processes (Henley and Young, 2001).

Outcomes-based Curricula

The "New Direction" for the province's curriculum was, perhaps, the most striking divergence from past educational policy in Manitoba. For the first time in many years, a more prescriptive, demanding and tightly structured outcomes-based curriculum was presented. The third document of the trio of New Direction policies, *Renewing Education – A Foundation for Excellence* (Manitoba Education and Training, 1995), outlined ten elements to be incorporated into all curriculum documents:

- Literacy and communication;
- Problem solving;
- Differentiated instruction;
- Curriculum integration;
- Aboriginal perspectives;
- Gender and fairness;
- Appropriate age portrayal;
- Human diversity;
- Antiracist/anti-bias education;
- Sustainable development.

Many educators viewed this document as a direct attempt to enforce a top-down approach to curriculum development and implementation in the province.

Standards Tests

The issue of standards tests has long been controversial in Manitoba. In 2000, the Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS) tabled a position paper on student assessment, voicing strong opposition to the use of standards tests in the province. In particular, the paper outlined six areas of concern:

- the destructive potential of a process whereby assessment results could be published on a school-by-school basis;
- whether standards tests would be marked locally at the school level or centrally, and whether teachers would be paid for their work as markers;
- the possibility that the tests could result in "teaching to the test";
- the nature and purpose of the tests (e.g., substantive vs. diagnostic);
- the cost of such assessment practices in an era of fiscal cutbacks, and,
- whether the tests would be used as an inappropriate form of teacher assessment.

Until their defeat in 1999, and despite much opposition from educators, the Progressive Conservatives upheld the standards testing program in the province. Not surprisingly, the New Democratic Party promised, in its 1999 election platform, to review the program.

Gary Doer and the NDP Government (1999 – present)

In September of 1999 Manitoba voters replaced the Progressive Conservative government with a New Democratic Party government. The educational mandate of this new government was to rebuild the strained relations with the province's

educators. In June 2000, Minister of Education Drew Caldwell identified six priorities that formed the basis of the Manitoba Educational Agenda (Levin and Wiens, 2003). These priorities are:

1. Improving outcomes, especially for less successful learners;
2. Strengthening links among families, schools and communities;
3. Strengthening school planning and reporting;
4. Improving professional learning opportunities for educators;
5. Strengthening pathways between secondary education, postsecondary education and work; and,
6. Linking policy and practice to research and evidence. (p. 6)

The New Educational Agenda

During the 2000-01 academic year, Manitoba Education, Training and Youth organized a series of consultations on the new agenda. Regional meetings were held across the province to obtain direct feedback from educators, after which the government proceeded to turn the six priorities into specific action-oriented initiatives.

In keeping with its "softer, gentler approach", the NDP government put forward several discussion documents prior to the release of the final versions of its various new policies. For example, in May 2002, the government released two documents related specifically to *Discussion Paper: Outline for a Reporting Process on Student Outcomes in Manitoba*, and *Discussion Paper: Planning Using School-Based Indicators*. Each of these documents relays in a more precise manner the government's intentions for Priority 3, "Strengthening School Planning and Reporting". Due to the timing of the release, there was little input from practitioners until the following fall. Just before the start of the 2002-03 school year, the government released *Manitoba K-S4[1] Educational Agenda for Student Success – 2002-2006*, its new educational agenda, followed by what many Manitobans call "the province's report card", *A Profile of Student Learning: Outcomes in Manitoba – August 2002.*

The outcomes document has been labeled a success by many observers because it incited increased discussion and debate among all educational partners. The popular press was quick to put its own spin on the province's report card; on August 27, 2002, the *Winnipeg Free Press* reported that "1 in 10 students fail by Grade 8" (p. A2). More accurately, however, the article did note that the data contained in the outcomes document produced more questions than it answered.

During the early part of this decade, the government passed key legislation that has had profound effects on the lives of educators, especially teachers. In 2001, the government acted on an election promise and passed Bill 42, The Amendment of the Public Schools Act, which restored teachers' right to bargain collectively. The government also began work on reviewing the controversial Grade 3 standards test, seeking to replace it with a start-of-the-year teacher-led assessment of students (Levin and Wiens, 2003). The assessment was criticized, particularly by teachers, who claimed that it merely caused them more work.

In 2001, The Public Schools Modernization Act (Bill 14) was passed reducing the number of school divisions in the province from 54 to 36. school division amalgamation was supported by the Manitoba Teachers' Society, which noted that:

The last major alteration of school division boundaries occurred more than 40 years ago. In that time Manitoba has undergone enormous changes, changes that should have resulted in modification to our school division boundaries long before today. (2001)

Less than a year later, amalgamation was being called into question, at least by some educators. In December 2002, the *Winnipeg Free Press* ran an article titled "Teachers, Trustees May be Headed for a Showdown", which noted that 2003 was a contract negotiation year for some teachers, and that rumblings were being heard for retroactive pay in conjunction with the school board amalgamations of 2001. While many growing pains had been resolved within the newly formed school divisions by the 2003-04 school year, some issues, such as the harmonization of salary scales and employee benefit packages, remain.

Funding

For the 2002-03 school year, a new school financing model (the Funding of Schools Program (FSP)) was introduced. According to government documents (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 2002), this new funding formula provides for a simplified and more transparent calculation of instructional support and a more targeted approach respecting the equitable distribution of provincial funding. Some of the key highlights[2] of the government's new funding formula include:

- Instructional support of $1,745 per eligible pupil, replacing the former support for recognized expenditures;
- Sparsity Support to provide funding for sparsely populated school divisions, which had previously been provided through the use of differential enrolment divisors in calculating instructional units. This support recognizes the higher costs associated with sparsely populated rural and northern school divisions;
- Equalization Support replaced the former Supplementary Support and is provided through two parts. The first part is based on 50 percent of unsupported current year expenditures and a maximum assessment per pupil set at $190. The second part provides $4.7 million to specifically assist school divisions or districts that have both lower than average per -pupil assessment and higher than average tax effort;
- Level 1 Special Needs support increased to $260 per eligible pupil;
- Aboriginal Academic Achievement Grant funding increased from $5.5 to $5.6 million;
- Northern/Remoteness Allowance rates increased to $550 per pupil for divisions/districts north of the 53rd parallel and for Frontier School Division No. 48.

Throughout the reign of the NDP government, the proportion of education costs paid by the province has consistently decreased, with government support for education dropping to its lowest level ever, 56.7 percent, by 2003. In 1999, 29.9 percent of school division funding came from property taxes; by the 2003-04 school year, that proportion had risen to 36.4 percent (*Winnipeg Free Press* editorial, January 29, 2004). In April 2003, Education Minister Ron Lemieux emphasizing the

government's commitment to reducing homeowners' taxes, reduced the province-wide education support levy by 19.2 percent. However, other factors — including a 1.8 percent inflation rate and teacher salary increases of about 3 percent — had already resulted in a 4.32 percent rise in education expenses, meaning that school boards had to increase local property taxes by 7.7 percent and reduce educational services and programming in order to make up the shortfall.

Cutting the education support levy has afforded Manitoba homeowners $28 million of relief since 2001; however, funds raised through school division special levies have increased by $47 million. According to Garry Draper, President of the Manitoba Association of School Trustees (MAST), this type of school tax shell game "…doesn't really address the underfunding to the School Division's costs" (*Winnipeg Free Press*, April 16, 2003, p. B2). MTS President Brian Ardern captures the sentiments of many teachers, trustees, and tax payers in Manitoba when he states "We need a new deal. We need a different way to fund education" (*Winnipeg Free Press*, February 2, 2004, P. A2).

In early 2004, Education Minister Peter Bjornson suggested that school boards had sufficient money in their divisional surpluses to avoid hitting homeowners with higher tax bills. Trustees such as Bruce Alexander, Chair of the St. James-Assiniboia school division maintain that, while some operating reserve does exist in most School Divisions, these funds were set aside to pay for specific projects, or to "…pay for sudden hits like an arbitrator awarding teachers smaller class sizes, or the government ordering more services for students with special needs later this year" (*Winnipeg Free Press*, February 6, 2004, p. B3).

Class Size and Composition

In 2000, the government of Manitoba introduced Bill 42, amending the Public Schools Act. Among other things, the Bill required the Minister of Education, Training and Youth to establish a commission to study the issue of class size and composition, and placed a three-year moratorium on treating class size as a negotiable and arbitrable item within the collective bargaining process, in order to avoid delays in negotiating collective agreements until sufficient information regarding class size and composition became available.

In April 2001, Minister of Education Drew Caldwell appointed Dr. Glenn Nicholls to lead a Commission on Class Size and Composition. The main question the Commission was to consider was whether there should be a provincial policy on class size and composition; if so, what should be its content. The Commission was also asked to recommend whether class size should be a negotiable and arbitrable item within the collective bargaining process. In April 2002, the *Final Report of the Commission of Class Size and Composition* was distributed throughout the province.

The Commission recommended that class sizes — which are not currently public knowledge — be reported to Manitoba Education, Training and Youth twice a year, and be made public. At the time of the *Final Report*, however, no overall provincial policy or guidelines on class size and composition were defined or mandated. The *Final Report* (2002) noted a number of uncertainties concerning class size and composition that have relevance to the collective bargaining process, including:

- The availability of qualified teachers and qualified teaching assistants;
- The availability of adequate classroom space;
- The status of bargaining in amalgamating divisions and districts; and
- The future level of provincial funds.

The moratorium on including class size and composition in collective bargaining processes ended in 2003. Although there has not yet been a teachers' contract agreement in Manitoba that has actually included clauses related to class size and composition, several divisions will wrestle with these issues in their next rounds of negotiations. According to MTS Vice President Pat Isaak, the MTS believes "… teachers should be able to negotiate class size and composition in order to arrive at the best possible solution for the students" (personal communication, February 27, 2004).

Length of the School Year

In the spring of 2003, Education Minister Ron Lemieux announced that the government would experiment with having students return to classes in September 2003 after Labour Day (*Winnipeg Free Press*, January 23, 2004, p. B1); rather than in August, as had previously been done in order to ensure 200 school days (190 instructional, five professional development, and five administrative days) in the school year. Current Education Minister Peter Bjornson has stated the practice will continue for at least the next five years, due to positive feedback received from parents, students and the business community. During the next five years, the length of the school year will vary from 194 to 197 days.

The decision to resume classes after Labour Day has been welcomed by the tourism industry. In the January 23, 2004 issue of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, Manitoba Chamber of Commerce President Graham Starmer commented that businesses will "…reap millions of dollars from having an extra week in which families can take vacations and students can work part-time" (page B2). However, Carolyn Duhamel, Executive Director of MAST, argued that students require 190 instructional days in order to fully cover the curriculum. In January 2004, Education Minister Peter Bjornson announced that while school divisions must respect the five professional development days for teachers, "There's discretion up to five administration days" (*Winnipeg Free Press*, January 23, 2004, p. B1). Parent groups expressed concern about the loss of these administration days, since parent-teacher meetings generally occur then.

Diversity and Social Equity

In the document the *Manitoba Special Education Review: Final Report* (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 1999) the NDP government recommended that

> The Province of Manitoba make changes to Manitoba's legislation in order to achieve consistency with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, particularly to ensure the right to equality as it is understood in Canada and relates to the right of access to education for exceptional children (B.5.i,p. 31).

This review described the government's perspective on the requirements for appropriate educational programming for students with special needs. The requirements include the stipulations that

- Instruction must be specially designed, follow proper evaluation, offer the student an opportunity to benefit, conform with the requirements of an Individual Education Plan, and be inclusive;
- It must be in the proper education setting;
- The school must observe procedural safeguards. (Retrieved from www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4.specedu/seri/legislation, February 2004)

In response to the recommendations contained in the special education review, the NDP government drafted Bill 13, an amendment to the Public Schools Act dealing with appropriate educational programming. According to Manitoba Education and Youth (2004), this proposed legislation supports Manitoba's philosophy of inclusion, which states

> Inclusion is a way of thinking and acting that allows every individual to feel accepted, valued, and safe. An inclusive community consciously evolves to meet the changing needs of its members. Through recognition and support, an inclusive community provides equal access to the benefits of citizenship…In Manitoba, we embrace inclusion as a means of enhancing the well-being of every member of the community. By working together, we strengthen our capacity to provide the foundation for a richer future for all of us. (retrieved from www.edu.mb.ca/ks4/specedu/seri/legislation, February 2004)

Bill 13 requires school boards to provide appropriate educational programming to each pupil, and allows the Minister to establish standards and a dispute resolution process. Education Minister Peter Bjornson states that, while Bill 13 is unlikely to guarantee that the nearest school will provide everything a child with special needs wants, the Bill will give the public "…assurances that we'll make every effort we can to provide appropriate educational programming" (*Winnipeg Free Press*, November 24, 2003). He adds that the "intent is to provide for the best possible opportunities – there will be some issues around different district's ability to deliver" (*Winnipeg Free Press*, November 24, 2003).

In response to Bill 13, MAST Executive Director Carolyn Duhamel commented that "[the government] needs to do this, and certainly MAST supports a very inclusive education" (*Winnipeg Free Press*, February 18, 2004). However, she expressed concern about increased costs associated with increased special education services, and the many "…areas where expenditures exceed the funding that school boards are getting." The legislation, she opined, "…will have the effect of increasing parental expectations for more programming in an area that is already seriously underfunded" (*Winnipeg Free Press*, May 2, 2003).

MTS President Brian Ardern echoed Duhamel's concerns, noting that the "programs and services our students receive depend on the ability or willingness of School Divisions to pay for them" (*Winnipeg Free Press*, February 18, 2004).

Priority 1 among the set of six outlined by the NDP in its *Manitoba K-S4 Education Agenda for Student Success* refers to improving outcomes for all learners, especially those who are less successful. A document retrieved from the website

of Manitoba Education and Youth (www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/cur/diversity) entitled *Diversity and Equity in Education* (2004) states: "Manitoba Education and Youth recognizes that to achieve this goal we need to more effectively address the needs of our linguistically and culturally diverse students and communities" (p. 1).

To provide a basis for discussion of the government's current and future directions concerning diversity and ethnocultural equity, Manitoba Education and Youth published *Diversity and Equity in Education: An Action Plan for Ethnocultural Equity* (2003), a two-part paper that discusses concepts, provides relevant information and outlines a multi-year action plan to further ethnocultural equity in Manitoba. A series of discussion sessions were scheduled by Manitoba Education and Youth between November 2003 and February 2004 to gather the input of educators, community groups, learners and other interested stakeholders.

Major Themes

Table 2 highlights the main themes present in policy documents throughout the period under investigation. Broadly speaking, the theme of accountability pervades the majority of government documents and policies, regardless of party affiliation. Subsumed under this accountability umbrella are references to outcomes-based education, standardized testing, community/parental involvement, and diversity and social equity in education. Closely related to notions of accountability are references to teachers' collective bargaining rights. Partly in reaction to shrinking educational funding, school board amalgamation has formed a key part of the government agenda from 1990-2004.

Conclusion

The 1990s mark two distinct approaches to education policy. Although Gary Filmon's Progressive Conservatives pursued a more prescriptive course of action, the policies of the New Democratic Party were not all that dissimilar. The NDP government, while still endorsing the "accountability movement", did so in a "kinder and gentler fashion".

Informal conversations reveal that some educators (principals and teachers) across the province are of the opinion that, if the path of the previous PC government regarding an outcomes-based curricula and school planning had been followed more closely, particularly during the mid-1990s, the education system would be much further ahead. Other educators expressed relief when the NDP government adopted a more "teacher friendly" attitude towards education policy. Nonetheless, this is indeed an exciting time for educational policy in Manitoba. As one government branch director noted, "…the time is ripe for change, our educational partners are on board and what we need now is more infusion of capacity" (personal communication, 2003).

Endnotes

1. S4, (or Senior 4) is equivalent to Grade 12 in other provinces.
2. More information can be found in the document *Funding of Schools 2002/2003 School Year* (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 2002).

Table 2.
Major Themes

Policy Focus/ Theme	1990-1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	2000		2002
Accountability		x	x	x					x
Collective Bargaining				x			x		x
Outcomes-based Orientation			x						x
Parental/ Community involvement					x				
School Board Amalgamation		x					x	x	
Standardized Testing							x		
Teacher Compensation ($)				x		x			
Teacher Education/ Training				x					

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Chapter 5
Policy Narrative for Ontario

Stephen E. Anderson and Sonia Ben Jaafar

Introduction

Education policy in Ontario underwent significant change in the 1990s and the early years of the 21st century as political control shifted from David Peterson's Liberal Party (1986-90) to the New Democratic Party led by Bob Rae (1990-95), to the Conservative Party under Mike Harris (1995-2002) and his successor Ernie Eves (2002-03), then back to the Liberals and Dalton McGuinty in the Fall of 2003. Notwithstanding these changes in political leadership, however, provincial education policy has progressed, with remarkable steadiness, towards increased accountability and equitable access to provincial education funds. There has been more fluctuation in policy between governments concerning academic streaming in the secondary education program, social equity, and in the policy instruments adopted to address teacher professionalism and student success (e.g., regulation versus capacity building).

This chapter provides an overview of education policies, policy trends, and debates in Ontario from 1990 to 2004. We begin with a profile of elementary and secondary education in Ontario. Then we provide a synopsis of major policy initiatives, by party, from 1990 to 2004. This sets the context for a thematic discussion of policy trends associated with curriculum, governance, funding, and professionalism.

Profile of Ontario Education

The Ontario public education system is led by the Ministry of Education and consists of 72 district school boards and 33 school authorities clustered into six geographic regions, each with a regional office responsible for liaising between the Ministry and the school systems on education programs and facilities. In 2003-04, over two million students attended 4,010 elementary and 870 secondary schools; 73,340 elementary and 41,600 secondary teachers educated that student population (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005), at a cost of $15.3 billion (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2003b).

Policy Trends 1960-1990

During a 30-year Conservative regime spanning the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, changes in Ontario education reflected many North American education trends. In the 1960s, the government legislated a consolidation of school boards, reducing them from over 3,000 in number to about 170 and leading to the establishment of large school boards and district office bureaucracies serving many schools. Changes in federal immigration policies in the 1960s led to an increase in linguistic, racial, and cultural diversity in schools. The Toronto and York Boards of Education adopted the first multicultural policies in education in the 1970s, laying a foundation for further policy responses to this demographic change. Other education policy trends leading up to the 1990s were more specific to the Ontario context.

In 1969, the federal government introduced the Official Languages Act and related supports to promote official bilingualism (English and French) across Canada. The province responded, making Core French an obligatory curriculum component for Grades 4-10, and establishing French immersion programs in response to local parental demand. The Ontario Education Act required French language sections and three francophone trustees on all school boards. In 1991, the Liberals created the *Direction des politiques et programmes d'éducation en langue française* at the Ontario Ministry of Education to manage French language minority education.

Up to 1986, public funding for Catholic schools extended only to Grade 10. In one of its last acts, the Davis Conservative government mandated full funding for the Catholic system through secondary school. The decision was supported by the other political parties, although private schools operated by other faiths challenged the policy on the grounds of religious discrimination; the policy was ultimately upheld in the courts.

Towards the end of the 1980s, the Liberal government commissioned a report on education, focusing in particular on the problem of secondary school dropouts (Radwanski, 1988). The most controversial proposals centered on recommendations to de-stream the secondary school curriculum, to reduce the secondary program to four years with a core curriculum for all, and to implement fully funded early childhood education. These ideas were not enacted into policy by the Liberals, but they anticipated future policy initiatives.

Major Policies and Policy Initiatives under the NDP Government

Under Bob Rae's NDP government, the Ministry of Education introduced the Common Curriculum in 1995, accompanied by *Provincial Standards Language, Grades 1-9*, *Provincial Standards Mathematics, Grades 1-9*, and subject area curriculum guides. The Common Curriculum brought the concepts of core curriculum, outcomes-based learning, and curriculum integration into Ontario policy. The Curriculum integrated traditional subject matter into four broad areas — language arts, mathematics and science, arts, and self and society. All students were expected to attain common learning outcomes by Grades 3 and 6.

Transition Years (Grades 7, 8, and 9) (1992), and *Program Policy for Elementary and Secondary Education* (Policy/Program Memorandum No. 115,

1994) de-streamed the Grade 9 curriculum. Under the new policies, rather than being streamed into academic, general, and basic course of study, all Grade 9 students followed the same program and were granted eight credits towards their high school diploma. Initially, the Rae government entertained the idea of de-streaming Grade 10 as well, and eliminating the program appendage for university-bound secondary school students, commonly known as Grade 13 though reconstituted in the mid-1990s as a set of advanced academic courses called Ontario Academic Credits. However, secondary school teacher and public opposition sidelined those plans.

Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation (1993) followed a 1992 Education Act amendment that required all school boards to adopt antiracism and ethnocultural equity policies. The guidelines called for systemic policies targeting curriculum, learning materials, student assessment and placement, hiring, staffing, race relations, and community relations.

The Violence-Free Schools Act (1994) was adopted by the NDP government after several widely publicized incidents in schools in Canada and the US, and in response to a government discussion paper entitled the *Safe Schools Report*. This policy was intended to ensure that all school boards had explicit policies in place to prevent and respond to violence. The Conservative government introduced further measures in June 2000; whereas the 1994 policy simply required school boards to develop safe schools policies, the Conservative's Safe Schools Act set a common provincial Code of Conduct for students that included explicit standards of behaviour and prescribed consequences for serious infractions, including compulsory expulsion for possession of weapons, damaging school property, and swearing at or threatening teachers. Implementation has been marked by controversy over the severity of consequences, the lack of flexibility afforded principals, and claims of racial profiling and bias against students with behavioural exceptionalities (Kalinowski, 2003b; Miller, 2003; Miller, 2003).

The NDP government commissioned a review of education in Ontario in mid-1993. The *Royal Commission on Learning (RCOL)* was released in January 1995. Many of the 167 recommendations in the *RCOL* pre-figured future policy initiatives, including:

- prescription of learner outcomes in core curriculum areas;
- reform of secondary education by reinstituting the two stream (academic and general applied) program;
- a mandatory community service requirement;
- standardized report cards linked to the provincial curriculum;
- standardized testing of pupil performance on provincial curriculum expectations;
- a literacy test for high school graduation;
- establishment of an accountability agency to manage the provincial assessment system;
- creation of a College of Teachers;
- mandatory professional development and recertification of teachers;
- school-community councils; and,
- equalization of per-pupil funding.

Within six months of the Royal Commission, the Rae government was defeated. Prior to the election, however, the NDP government mandated the establishment of school councils (Policy/Program Memorandum No.122,1995), consisting of representative parents, community members other than parents, teachers and the principal. School councils were granted advisory powers in regards to school plans and budgets, but were not given the site-based decision-making power envisioned in the RCOL. The NDP Minister also set up committees to consider secondary school reform, an Ontario College of Teachers, a new education accountability system, and further school board amalgamation.

Major Policies and Policy Initiatives under the Conservative Government

After the Harris government swept into office in June 1995, it released a short document entitled *The Common Sense Revolution,* outlining the directions of the Conservative party's political agenda — reduce government bureaucracy and spending, cut taxes, eliminate the deficit, and rationalize government services.

The new Minister of Education continued several of the NDP policy initiatives, including planning for an Education Quality and Accountability Office, the Ontario College of Teachers, school board amalgamation, and education finance reform. One policy reversal concerned the equity policies enacted by the Liberal and NDP governments. The Conservatives shut down an antiracism secretariat created by the NDP and took steps to remove references to pro-equity goals (e.g., antiracism, gender) from future curriculum policy documents. The new government's most dramatic action was to announce that education grants would be cut by $400 million dollars in the final quarter of 1996 (almost $1 billion dollars over a full year). Many boards reacted by announcing teacher layoffs, cuts in programs and services, and increases in property taxes.

The Harris government established the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) as a semi-independent agency apart from the Ministry of Education. Its mandate is to develop and manage the standardized testing of elementary and secondary school pupils keyed to provincial curriculum expectations, to develop systems for evaluating the quality and improvement of education, to report to the public and the government on test results and on the quality of public school education, and to recommend improvements in the quality of education and public accountability of boards. The testing program includes annual tests of Grade 3 and Grade 6 students in reading, writing, and mathematics, of Grade 9 students in mathematics, and a Grade 10 literacy test that students must pass in order to graduate high school. The first Grade 3 and Grade 6 tests occurred in spring 1997. The Grade 10 literacy test began in 2002. The EQAO also requires schools to submit yearly improvement plans that reflect provincial test results and local data on school needs.

Bill 31 (June 1996) authorized the creation of the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT), a self-regulatory professional agency for certified elementary and secondary school teachers. The legislation specified the composition and selection process for the college's governing council, and granted authority to the OCT over accreditation of teacher education programs, teacher certification, professional standards, and

discipline. Prior to the establishment of the OCT, some of these matters were managed by the Ministry of Education (e.g., certification, continuing education), and others (e.g., professional conduct) by the teachers' federations. All certified teachers are required to be members of the college and of the teacher unions.

Two significant policy actions emerged from the College in its early years. First, was the development and adoption of *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* and *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession*. *Ethical Standards* re-codified existing regulations for professional ethics and (mis)conduct contained in the Education Act and the Teaching Professions Act. *Standards of Practice* represented the first time in Ontario policy history that any attempt had been made to specify, in operational terms, a multidimensional vision of teachers' professional knowledge and practice. The policy identifies teacher competency standards in five domains: commitment to pupils and pupil learning; professional knowledge; teaching practice; leadership and community; and ongoing professional learning. Under professional knowledge, for example, teachers must "know their subject matter, the Ontario curriculum and education-related legislation; know a variety of effective teaching and assessment practices; know a variety of effective classroom management strategies; and know how pupils learn and factors that influence pupil learning and achievement." OCT has used *Standards of Practice* as a basis for accrediting initial teacher education programs, but did not specify a use for them with practicing teachers.

The second major policy action undertaken by OCT was the development and implementation of the province's first accreditation process for all ten faculties of education between 1997 and 2000. The faculty programs were initially accredited for a period of three years, and thereafter on a five-year cycle.

Bill 104, the Fewer School Boards Act (January 1997), followed from a government committee report (Sweeney, Green, Bourdeau, and Wight, 1999) in January of 1996. It reduced the number of school boards from 129 to 72, and renamed them District School Boards. The legislation institutionalized francophone school boards as separate entities, rather than as sections within the English-medium boards (this began under the prior Liberal regime, with four French school boards established prior to Bill 104). Bill 104 cut the number of trustees per board, and capped their salaries at $5,000 per year (in urban boards trustees were being paid as much as $25,000 a year). The legislation had a powerful impact on the Toronto public school systems. It required consolidation of the six Toronto public boards into one district board serving over 300,000 students (co-terminous with the Toronto District Catholic School Board that already served the Metro area). Consolidation of school boards was supposed to reduce administrative costs and duplication of services; critics argued that it eroded community participation in school governance, and reduced teacher and student access to significant district support services that had evolved under the previous system.

Under Bill 160, the Education Quality Improvement Act (December 1997), the government centralized control over education funding and removed the power of school boards to manipulate the education portion of local property taxes. Property tax levies are now dictated by the government and funds pooled and redistributed on an equitable basis to English and French, public and Catholic School Boards.

Bill 160 mandated greater restrictions on the use of special purpose grants (e.g., special education, transportation), and more financial accountability, requiring boards and the Ministry to publish annual Financial Report Cards disclosing their spending.

Several provisions in Bill 160 had consequences for teachers' working conditions. Annual provincially funded professional activity days were reduced from nine to four, allowing the government to claim that teachers would spend more time in the classroom. The bill also legislated that class size limits, preparation time, release time, and the length of the school year would be set centrally, not through local board negotiations with teacher unions. These actions reduced the scope of collective bargaining over working conditions. The Bill led to conflict between the teacher federations and the government. Early drafts threatened teachers' collective bargaining rights and mandatory membership in the federations, and allowed for non-certified personnel to teach some subjects (e.g., arts, physical education). Ontario teachers staged a province-wide 10-day protest walk-out in the fall of 1996. Bill 160 still passed, but the government backed away from earlier threats to bargaining rights and mandatory union membership, and on use of uncertified teaching personnel.

After Bill 160, the government mandated an increase in the instructional time requirements and reduction in preparation time for high school teachers, claiming that teachers would spend more time with students. Teachers argued that the changes would increase the number of students taught and marking workload with less time to prepare. The government also declared its intent to make high school teacher contributions to extra-curricular activities mandatory. The stage was set for confrontations in contract negotiations in the fall of 1998.

The immediate financial consequences of Bill 160 were not known until September 1998. Many English public boards experienced funding reductions, while Catholic and French language boards enjoyed gains. The implications for boards that lost out in the funding equalization process were enormous (as much as 10 percent), since they could no longer raise local taxes. Layoffs, school closures, and cuts in extra-curricular programming, adult education and other areas were predicted. Ultimately, the government guaranteed three years of stable funding at the 1997-98 level, kicked in several million dollars in to help mitigate the costs of school district amalgamation, and created early retirement incentives to help the school districts generate payroll savings.

The repercussions of Bill 160 continued to be felt in the fall of 1998, when the boards entered into contract negotiations with the teacher federations. Due to provincial control over funding, boards had little flexibility to bargain higher salaries. Furthermore, increased managerial rights over teachers' working conditions significantly limited what teachers and boards could actually bargain. The 1998-99 school year was marked by work-to-rule actions (e.g., teachers cancelling extra-curricular and other voluntary services), lockouts and strikes. The conflicts were most acute for high school teachers, due to the new regulations affecting preparation time and instructional time. The government backed down on mandatory extra-curricular activities and made compromises on the preparation and teaching time requirements that satisfied the federations. School boards also

confronted the province about the impact of Bill 160. The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) announced that it would have to close 138 schools. The province responded with additional funds to meet the unique needs of TDSB during the amalgamation process based on student linguistic, cultural, and economic diversity. The impact of the new funding policies remained an ongoing focus of controversy, eventually leading to a government commissioned review of education funding (see Rozanski report further on).

Bill 74, the Education Accountability Act (2000), redefined the basis of required secondary school teacher instructional time from the average number of minutes per week per teacher (1,250) to the average course load per teacher during the school year (6.67 out of 8 periods per day, up from 6). This policy was challenged by teacher unions and by school district administrators, because the Ministry initially did not count the time teachers spend giving remedial assistance to individual students. Eventually, the government conceded to more flexible interpretations of the instructional time requirements. Bill 74 again attempted, unsuccessfully, to make teacher participation in non-instructional activities mandatory, authorizing principals to assign teachers co-instructional activities. Teachers widely opposed these provisions, not only to retain control over their voluntary contributions to student learning and school operations, but also because these are the kinds of services that teachers have traditionally withdrawn in work-to-rule situations. In the end, that part of the law was not proclaimed. Bill 74 also redefined the average class sizes (24 pupils for primary and 21 for secondary school classes).

The Conservative government continued the secondary school reform agenda set in motion by the NDP, including the establishment in 1997of a four-year rather than five-year program beginning with Grade 9, higher standards for graduation, a more common core curriculum for all students, standardization of report cards, and a literacy test requirement for high school graduation. The reform also targeted greater opportunities for work experience, community service, and counselling for all students through a teacher advisory system. The final design for reform, announced in January 1998, included decisions to re-stream and re-credit Grade 9 (reversing the program model under *The Common Curriculum*), and to restructure the curriculum from three streams (basic, general, advanced) to two (applied and academic). The same curriculum content was to be taught at differing levels of difficulty in each stream. The reform was to be phased in, starting with Grade 9 in the fall of 1999, and ending with a double cohort in 2003, when the final class of pupils under the five-year program and the first under the new system reached graduation.

In order to ensure it aligned with the new high school program, the Ministry decided to revise the elementary school curriculum. By June 1997, new Grade 1-8 curriculum documents were released for language and mathematics, and curriculum for other subjects soon followed. The Ontario Curriculum brought on several key changes — the emphasis on curriculum integration disappeared, and subject-specific learning outcomes and standards were defined at each Grade level, not by division (i.e., at the end of Grades 3, 6, and 9) as in The Common Curriculum. The new curriculum was accompanied by a standardized report card, linked to the expectations for each subject and grade, and lesson planning software to aid with curriculum implementation. Despite concerns about difficult content,

the specificity in curriculum expectations and in the reporting format evoked less negative reaction from affected school teachers than the secondary curriculum reforms.

In May 2000, the Harris government announced its intent to develop an Ontario teacher testing program in order to promote teaching excellence, including a qualifying test for teacher certification, a teacher recertification process, and provincial standards for teacher evaluation. Bill 80, the Stability and Excellence in Education Act, mandated that teachers would be required to undergo a recertification process on a five-year cycle. There would be no formal test; however, teachers would have to provide evidence of ongoing professional development activities (14 approved courses or course equivalents per cycle).

The Quality in the Classroom Act required beginning teachers to pass a standardized Ontario Teacher Qualifying Test (OTQT), in addition to their pre-service teacher education program, as a condition of certification. The test covered topics such as the Ontario curriculum, lesson planning, school law, human development, classroom management, instructional skills, student motivation, assessment, student diversity, and parent involvement (Education Testing Service, 2003). As of January 2003, passing the OTQT became a requirement for membership in the College of Teachers. Over 97 percent of teacher candidates passed the first round of implementation. The high success rate reinforced the belief that new teachers "have a solid foundation of knowledge and skills" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2003a), though it brought into question the necessity and expense of the test (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2001a; Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, 2001).

Another component of the Quality in the Classroom Act pertained to provincially mandated processes for ongoing teacher appraisal (before, teacher evaluation policies and processes had been local matters). The regulations stipulate that principals will evaluate teachers' classroom practice every three years (twice yearly for new teachers in their first two years). Boards were required to develop evaluation tools consistent with the *Standards of Practice* to assess teacher competencies. These regulations did not take effect until the 2003-04 school year.

In the spring 2001 the Conservative government passed legislation to allow parents who enrol their children in private schools to claim an income tax credit amounting to 50 percent of private school tuition up to a maximum of $3,500 per child. Bill 45, the Equity in Education Tax Credit Act responded to long-standing pressure from lobby groups within the private school sector, particularly the faith-based private school organizations, for access to some government funding for education (given the policy of fully funding the Catholic school system). Critics argued that the policy robbed funding from an already cash-starved public system (Ontario Public School Boards' Association, 2003), and pointed out that the government placed little accountability on private schools (e.g., non-certified teachers can be employed, no teacher competency evaluations are required, and there is no provincial testing requirement).

There are certain Ontario education policies that pertain uniquely to the needs of French language minority students in the 12 public and Catholic French language school boards. The 1994 policy trilogy *Politique d'aménagement*

linguistique, Investir dans l'animation culturelle and *Actualisation linguistique en français/Perfectionnement du français* was produced to support for the mandate of Franco-Ontarian schools to maintain and strengthen French language and culture within the Franco-Ontarian community. The 1994 language planning policy intended to counteract the assimilation of francophones by the anglophone majority by implementing measures to legitimize the use of French and to make the francophone community more visible within the school setting. The policy addressed the administration and organization of French language schools, as well as the involvement of parents and community organizations in the schools. In 2003, the Ministry undertook a public consultation process to update the *Politique d'aménagement linguistique*. The revised policy emphasized several areas of intervention, including students' sense of identity, instruction, excellence in teaching, and community involvement.

In keeping with its emphasis on efficiency and fiscal restraint, the Conservative government legislated amendments to the Education Act, making it illegal for school boards to operate on deficit budgets. In June 2002 three of the province's largest public school boards (Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton) defied the law, insisting that they could not maintain educational services under the existing funding formula without deficit spending. The government responded by appointing auditors to inspect the finances and operations in each of these boards and to recommend options for cutting expenditures without directly reducing the budget for classroom expenses, as defined by the province's student-focused funding policy. In response to the auditors' reports and the continued refusal of trustees in the three boards to revise their budgets, the government took over governing authority and appointed supervisors to implement and oversee budget cuts and board operations. As of September 2002, the government exercised direct control over 20 percent of the student body in Ontario.

Trustees and parents critical of the government portrayed the takeovers as an assault on local democracy (Kalinowski, 2002). Trustees were given an honorarium and required to attend meetings, but had no decision-making power, could advise the supervisors only upon request, and had no access to district services and supplies. The government and its supporters argued that it was acting responsibly in the face of inefficient management by school boards, and of the refusal of trustees to reduce administrative and other non-classroom expenditures.

While the boards' defiance was unsuccessful locally, their actions did induce the government to undertake a general review of education funding. In 2002, the Harris government commissioned a task force, led by University of Guelph President and Vice-Chancellor Mordechai Rozanski, to review six aspects of the provincial education funding formula: distribution among school boards, cost benchmarks, local expenditure flexibility, school renewal, special education, and student transportation. The Commission's report, *Investing in Public Education: Advancing the Goal of Continuous Improvement in Student Learning and Achievement* (Education Equality Task Force and Rozanski, 2002), was supposed to determine whether the funding formula met the government's stated objectives in terms of adequacy, affordability, equity, stability, flexibility, and accountability. Noting that spending benchmarks had established in the mid-1990s, the report

recommended a funding increase of $1.8 billion over a three-year period and greater local board autonomy to make expenditures to support at-risk students.

When the Rozanski report was released in December 2002, all stakeholders welcomed its recommendations. Despite the report's critique of the adequacy of education funding, Ministry of Education officials declared that the review "confirmed that the government's education funding reforms [were] sound" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2003c). The government responded to the proposals with series of funding inputs, including $676 million in additional funds to be delivered over three years for learning resources, special education, a 3 percent increase in the salary-component of the funding formula, and student transportation (Office of the Premier, 2003). By April, an additional $75 million was announced for school renewal, and $74 million for small schools disadvantaged by size under the existing formula. Teacher unions argued that the report confirmed the government was destroying the education system with inadequate funding (Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, 2003). Critics called for funding increases to exceed the Rozanski proposals, to account for inflation (Kalinowski, 2003c; Ontario Teachers' Federation, 2003a; People For Education, 2003).

In September 2002, the majority of teachers began the scholastic year working without a contract; by December little progress had been made, with 87 of 127 contracts still unrenewed. School boards were expected to find ways to fund the following years' 3 percent increase, which, according to the Ministry of Labour, was consistent with salary increases negotiated by other public sector workers (Office of the Premier, 2002). The government allocated an extra $340 million for teacher salaries for one year to avoid classroom disruptions during negotiations. Salaries, working conditions, staffing, and supervision continued to stall settlements in some boards, and local teacher groups undertook work-to-rule actions in the spring. In May, the Toronto District Catholic School Board locked out its elementary school teachers. After three weeks, the Conservative government pushed through legislation (Bill 28) to end the lockout. In addition to back-to-work orders, Bill 28 amended the Education Act to redefine teachers' duties and to extend the definition of strike action to include all actions that would have "the effect of curtailing, restricting, limiting or interfering with" normal teaching activities, as well as co-curricular activities, thereby restricting future teacher work-to-rule actions. The teacher unions interpreted Bill 28 as making extra-curricular activities mandatory, succeeding where prior bills had failed.

Shortly after the Rozanski report, OISE/UT scholars Kenneth Leithwood, Michael Fullan, and Nancy Watson published a position paper, *The Schools We Need: Recent Education Policy in Ontario and Recommendations for Moving Forward* (Leithwood, Fullan, and Watson, 2003). The document reviewed the Ontario government initiatives of the preceding seven years, was supported by its own analysis of the funding formula (Lang, 2002), and offered suggestions to improve the system. The suggestions pivoted on the notion of reducing micro-management, increasing policy coherence, and creating a high pressure/high support environment to improve the capacity and results of public education. The Liberals drew explicitly upon this document in their 2003 election campaign.

Major Policies and Policy Initiatives under the Liberal Government

Dalton McGuinty's Liberal party took power in the fall of 2003. In their first year, the Liberals embarked on a different approach to education policy and improvement, reversing several Conservative policy initiatives and restoring local governance to elected trustees in the Toronto, Hamilton, and Ottawa District School Boards. This action was celebrated by teachers and trustees as a return to democracy, and as symbolic of the new government's trust in public education (Boyle, 2004; Ontario Teachers' Federation, 2003b). Ongoing concerns about fiscal responsibility and trustee compensation, however, led the education Minister to suggest that the province might soon review the governance issue.

Midway through their first year, the Liberals announced plans to invest an additional $1.6 billion in education by 2006, echoing the Rozanski proposals. This included increases in all funding categories to better reflect inflation, as well as new money for student success initiatives. The budget increased pupil grants by 6 percent ($8,325), allowed for a 2 percent raise in teachers' salaries, and came with added reporting requirements to ensure local compliance with government priorities (e.g., class size reduction and help for students at risk). The Liberals also revoked the private school tuition tax credit policy, signalling the government's commitment to public education and providing a source of additional funds.

The Liberal government next responded to criticisms about the cost of, need for, and negative professional climate surrounding the initial certification test for new teachers, and the policy requiring recertification based on mandatory continuing education credits (COMPAS Inc., 2003; Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, 2004). Bill 82, the Professional Learning Program Cancellation Act, ended the recertification requirements (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2004b), and the teacher qualifying test was suspended soon after. These actions nullified these professionally unpopular and questionably useful policies (there was no evidence of impact on teacher quality); however, the government did not shelve the ideas of recertification and of initial certification requirements beyond the Bachelor of Education degree, and what alternatives it might consider remained uncertain.

In terms of curriculum and support for improvements in student learning, the new government's actions during its first year emphasized refinement to, and additional resources for existing policies and practices. A review of the Education Quality and Accountability Office was completed in 2004. Despite teacher criticisms of the utility and costs of the provincial testing system (Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, 2004), the government announced plans to revise the elementary testing program, rather than eliminate it. The revision plan called for shorter tests, administered later in the school year, more closely aligned to the curriculum, and offering more specific feedback on student performance (Education Quality and Accountability Office, 2004).

The major thrust of the Liberal's education agenda was increased support for improvement in student learning. In 2004, less than two thirds of Grade 3 and 6 students met the provincial standards for the literacy and numeracy tests; Ministry of Education targets called for 75 percent of students to meet the standards by 2008. To facilitate this, the Ministry created a provincial Literacy and Numeracy

Secretariat, and committed $160 million to support the appointment of 1,600 literacy coordinators in elementary schools and 1,100 new elementary teachers, to cap actual class size (rather than average class size), and to create provincial teams to assist schools that have persistently low performance (Ontario Education Excellence for All, 2004; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2004c); by comparison, the previous government had provided support for literacy initiatives on a local project basis only. The Liberal shift marked a change in scale and level of support, and a commitment to provincial goals for student results.

Concerns at the secondary school level continued to focus on student failure and dropout rates. One report (King, 2004) suggested that 60,000 students might not graduate due to failing the Grade 10 literacy test requirement (OSSLT). A group of parents filed a law suit charging that the test discriminated against ESL learners, students with learning disabilities, and applied program students (Canadian Press, 2004). While the Liberals remained committed to the literacy test, they announced plans to revise it and to provide further assistance for students, including modifications to the literacy course option for those who fail the test.

Student failure on the OSSLT was compounded by the poor performance of applied level students on the EQAO Grade 9 mathematics test (only 26 percent met the provincial standards), and by high student failure rates in compulsory Grade 9 and 10 math courses. In response, the government announced plans to expedite revision of the mathematics curriculum to make it more compatible with applied students' practical needs and career goals (Brown and Boyle, 2004; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2004a). It also allocated $100 million for an array of student success initiatives, including school support teams for academically at-risk students, more courses for workplace-bound students, increased funding for schools serving students in family circumstances often correlated with low academic success (e.g., low income, limited English proficiency), and more funding for technology. The Liberals also announced their intent to raise the school leaving age from 16 to 18, and to invest more in high school vocational programs (Brennan, 2004). These steps aimed to reduce the drop out rate by increasing the relevance of the curriculum for non-university bound students.

The Liberal government also undertook new initiatives related to health and safety in schools in its first year. In the wake of a Statistics Canada report on child obesity, the government announced plans to ban junk food from schools, issued nutritional guidelines for food and beverage sales in schools, and required school boards to report on progress to local school councils (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2004d). It also released funds to encourage inclusion of daily physical activity programs in elementary school class routines. The Ministry of Education set up a Safe Schools Action Team, and committed $9 million to review the Safe Schools Act, and to administer a plan for school safety audits, anti-bullying programs, and electronic monitoring systems to protect schools from intruders. These actions were partly in response to reports of a 40 percent increase in suspensions under the Safe Schools Act, and to allegations that minority students were targeted by school personnel implementing the Act's disciplinary measures (Bhattacharjee, 2003; Brown, 2004).

Policy Trends in Curriculum

Since 1990, the changes in Ontario's curriculum have reflected a general trend in Western education, focusing on outcomes as delineated by centralized offices, such as provincial Ministries of Education. This began with the *Common Curriculum,* which specified common learning outcomes for all students within four broad curriculum areas by the end of Grades 3, 6, and 9. The trend was more fully developed under the *Ontario Curriculum* and in curriculum documents issued for the four-year high school program, which specifies learning outcomes by subject and grade at all levels, and by program stream (academic, applied) at the secondary level. The emphasis on outcomes was expanded to provincial standards for student performance on the outcomes.

Curriculum standardization was accompanied by a policy shift around equity in student learning. The underlying ideology holds that there are core learning expectations that all students should achieve according to the same standards, and that equity is accomplished by ensuring that that happens. Flexibility and differentiation in programming and instruction should be based on evidence of student performance against the standards, not on student membership in subgroups defined by gender, racial, or socio-economic characteristics. This policy position has proven difficult to maintain, particularly at the secondary level. Cumulative evidence of difficulties in attaining the core academic expectations among certain groups of students eventually led the government to modify the applied program curriculum, and to plan more investment in vocationally focused secondary school education.

Curriculum documents now are very explicit about learning outcomes for students, but say little about how teachers should teach. This contrasts with curriculum policies prior to 1990, which were based on theories of child development and pedagogy. The outcomes-based curriculum trend aligns with an image of teachers as professionals, capable of determining what works best for students without being told what teaching methods to use. This professionalization argument is countered by increased measures that hold teachers accountable for student learning and rationalize teachers' working conditions, such as reducing preparation time and increasing instructional time.

Increased accountability for student learning is the other significant curriculum policy trend. This is manifested in the specification of subject and grade-level expectations and standards for student outcomes that create a uniform basis for assessing student performance, the coupling of the curriculum to a common report card, the establishment of the Education Quality and Accountability Office, the administration of standardized tests aligned with the curriculum, and public dissemination of test results. While schools must submit improvement plans to EQAO, as of 2004 there were no rewards or sanctions attached to school or teacher performance as measured by student results. The new accountability trends also began to hold students more accountable for their performance, beginning with the literacy test requirement for high school graduation, making it a "high stakes" test for pupils. Under the Conservatives accountability focused on schools, teachers, and students. This changed under the Liberals. By setting goals for provincial test results, the government made itself accountable to provide the direction and resources to

enable this to happen. This shift in locus of accountability was accompanied by added investment in local capacity building for improved student learning.

Policy Trends in Governance

In the 1990s, the trend in educational governance policies in Ontario was towards greater centralization and regulation, coupled with diminished support. The shift in policy after the Liberals took power in 2003 focused on strengthening the support system within the framework of standards and accountability.

Education governance in Ontario changed in the 1990s. The creation of school boards serving very large numbers of students, often over a wide geographic area, was coupled with significant funding reductions, and constraints on the spending and resource capacity of district offices to monitor and support schools. The direct ties between trustees and their constituencies also diminished. The establishment of school councils with only advisory powers and no increase in local school capacity did not offset the centralization.

As the links between district offices, boards, and schools were weakened by amalgamation, the province increased centralized control over funding and many areas of policy formerly delegated to local authorities, such as the length of the school year, teacher preparation time, and class size (Bill 160, Bill 74). The Conservative government not only mandated boards to develop policies, it also prescribed the content of those policies (e.g., Safe Schools Act consequences for student misbehaviour, Quality in the Classroom Act regulations for teacher evaluation). The intentions of these policies were to promote consistency across the province, but the by-product was increased central control.

The greatest challenge to the 150-year tradition of local governance of education was the takeover of three school boards by provincial authorities in 2002, following trustee decisions to approve deficit budgets in contravention of provincial law. The government's experiment with direct control by politically appointed administrators set a precedent with implications for the future of education governance. While the Liberals restored power to local trustees, issues of governance remained in play, particularly due to the increased role central government and its control over education funding levels and uses.

Finally, the province-wide institutionalization of French language school districts (in response to Ontario's French language community's efforts to gain more control over their children's education) represented another major change in education governance.

Policy Trends in Education Finances

The centralization, standardization, accountability and regulation of provincial education funding has been a bone of contention since the passage of Bill 160 in 1997. While some boards benefited from the change (Catholic, French language), the prohibitions on raising local funds, reductions in funding for non-classroom costs (as defined by policy), and the failure to tie funding levels to inflation, led to persistent complaints of under funding, and limited the capacity to respond to teachers' salary demands.

The funding situation stimulated the emergence of an alternative system of monitoring education funding at the local level. A parental lobby group, People for Education, was formed in the wake of Bill 160, and began carrying out annual surveys of elementary and secondary education across the province. The surveys inquires about class size, support personnel and services, school libraries, textbook availability, school budgets, the financial contributions of parents and teachers, and how these funds are used among other topics. The survey reports contradicted government claims that schools were adequately funded for required education programs and services, and revealed school-level funding inequities, such as wealthy communities having greater capacity to supplement school funds.

Policy Trends in Teacher Professionalism

The creation of the Ontario College of Teachers could be viewed as a significant step towards teacher professionalization. Perceived gains in professional autonomy and control, such as the development of *Standards of Practice* and responsibility for teacher education program accreditation, however, were offset by government policies that superseded or constrained the College's capacity to shape the nature and context of teacher professionalism (e.g., the initial certification test, recertification, and mandatory continuing education). While the Liberal government suspended the qualifying test and repealed the re-certification process adopted by the Conservatives, entry requirements beyond the B.Ed. and teacher recertification remained a focus of ongoing policy debate.

The creation of the OCT opened a rift in teacher leadership, as the College was granted powers that had been previously exercised by the teacher unions (e.g., disciplinary proceedings) and challenged the role of the unions as teachers' chief spokesperson. Now the organizations co-exist, but they do not act as partners in their dealings with teachers, school boards, and the Ministry. In terms of teacher professionalism, it is also noteworthy that non-teachers appointed by the government to the OCT governing board outnumber certified teachers elected by members of the college. The legislation governing the OCT came under review when the Liberals took power; by the end of 2004, however, it remained unclear what, if any, changes might be made to teacher representation on the governing board.

Since Bill 160, the role of the Ontario teacher federations became more restricted to labour advocacy. The Conservatives' efforts to delimit union power through more centralized control and regulation of funding and working conditions resulted in a reduction in teacher autonomy that has not been offset by the establishment of the College of Teachers. While the Liberals adopted a more cooperative approach to working with organized teacher groups, they did not relax the more centralized controls over funding, working conditions, and bargaining rights.

Conclusion

In this narrative, we have charted the major elementary and secondary education policy initiatives undertaken by successive governments in the province of Ontario from 1990-2004. In our description and analysis, we have attempted to show how certain policy trends have persisted despite changes in provincial political leadership

from Liberals, to New Democrats, to Conservatives and back to Liberals over this 14-year period. These include centralization of finances and governance, the adoption of common results-oriented standards for teaching and learning, increased regulation of teaching as a profession, increased accountability for the quality of student performance through systems of standardized testing, and attention to school safety. Notwithstanding the consistency in these trends, different governments have not necessarily taken the same approach to policy development and implementation. These differences in approach are most clearly evident in the shifts that occurred following the ascension of the Liberals after seven years of majority Conservative rule. The Conservative government emphasized the reduction and rationalization of education expenditures, increased government control over teachers' working conditions and compensation, and quality control through increased accountability for local spending and student learning outcomes in relation to centrally prescribed goals and standards. Publicly this government conveyed little regard for the opinions of teachers as to how to improve the education system, and invested more in developing a provincial accountability system than in developing the professional and material capacity of local educators to meet the provincial expectations placed upon them. The significant shift that began to take shape under the Liberal government was marked by a new willingness of government authorities to enlist education professionals in defining problems that need to be addressed and identifying solutions to those problems, to assume joint responsibility for student success, and to invest significantly in developing the capacity of education professionals, schools and school districts to achieve provincially defined goals.

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Chapter 6
Policy Narrative for Quebec

Claude Lessard, Marthe Henripin, and Mylène Larochelle.

Introduction

The study analyzes the body of educational policies and action plans for elementary and secondary education in Quebec, covering the period from 1990 to 2003. The objective is to draw out the societal stakes in education as well as the different choices successive Quebec governments have made in this area. Essentially, this study looks at how policies are formulated, which is to say how the official discourse constructs a problem out of the education situation, divides it into different themes and sub-themes and then produces, in response, various orientations, objectives, and actions judged to be priorities in order to correct this problematic situation. The study tries to situate educational policies within the dual context of the education system and the global society. Our perspective is similar to that of R. Bowe and S.J. Ball (1992), in the sense that it is important to treat the policies as orientations that, in different contexts, are reworked, interpreted and more or less modified by the people concerned.

Our analysis is divided into seven sections: the first examines the evolution of educational financing and comparing Quebec's situation over the decade studied with the United States and Canada. The second part succinctly discusses the evolution of educational policies in the decade studied, starting from the key Estates General on Education in 1995-96. In the third section, we tackle one of the specific educational policies that followed the publication of the *Report of the Commission of the Estates General on Education and Training*, concerning the core curriculum for pre-school, elementary, and secondary schools. The fourth section considers policies on governance in education, the decentralization of school administrations, imputability, and performance reporting. The fifth section looks at the professionalization of teaching, especially through training and qualifications for the teaching personnel. The sixth section examines the confessional or denominational character of the educational system and the place of religion in the

schools. Finally, the last section examines policies connected with the language of instruction and the taking into account of ethno-cultural diversity. In conclusion, we take up the question pertaining to the variability of the quality and nature of Quebec's engagement in education during the decade studied. Taking into account the large body of educational policies and our limited space, this work remains a partial but nonetheless important socio-history of recent educational policies.

The Evolution of Education Financing

For the past twenty years, Quebec has systematically spent a larger proportion of its gross domestic product (GDP) on education than have Canada or the United States. In 2001-02, Quebec's global spending relative to education was estimated as 7.5 percent of the GDP, compared to 6.4 percent in the rest of Canada and 7.4 percent in the United States. The financing was divided as follows: The provincial government accounted for 68.8 percent of global education spending, the federal government 8.3 percent, and local government 6.1 percent, while 16.8 percent came from other sources. By examining government spending in three major program areas (education; health and social Services; employment, social solidarity, and family), we may better understand the evolution of education funding.

Throughout most of the 1990s, budget cuts led to a decline in the proportion of total program spending allocated to the education sector. In 1992-93, education received 28.6 percent of total program spending; by 1998-99, that percentage had dropped to 25.2 percent. Between 1998 and 2003, the portion of program spending allocated to education varied only slightly, and was 25.1 percent in 2003-04 (a total of approximately $11.5 billion); in terms of actual dollars, however, the amount spent on education rose by $1.9 billion between 1998-99 and 2003-04, an increase of 20 percent.

Global spending on education, expressed as a percentage of GDP, decreased at all teaching levels between 1994-95 and 2001-02. The elementary and secondary levels showed the most significant drop, going from 4.8 percent of GDP in 1994-95 to 3.9 percent in 2001-02. Overall education spending for the college level went from 1.1 percent in 1994-95 to 0.9 percent in 2001-02. The university level received 1.7 percent of the GDP in overall education spending in 2001-02, compared to 1.9 percent in 1994-95. Other areas received 0.9 percent of the GDP in overall education spending in 2001-02, which represents an increase from 1994-95 (0.7 percent). In 2001-02, Quebec dedicated a similar portion of its GDP to elementary and secondary teaching (3.9 percent) as did the rest of Canada (3.7 percent) and the United States (4.5 percent). However, historically, the part of the GDP given to elementary and secondary teaching has diminished in Quebec, going from 6.6 percent in 1976-77 to 4.4 percent in 1989-90, while it has remained rather stable in the rest of Canada. The school boards' functional spending by student in 2001-02 stayed slightly higher in Quebec ($7,117) as compared to the rest of Canada ($6,870) but was lower than in the United States ($9,282).

Table 3.
Indicators of education in Quebec

Probability of obtaining a secondary school diploma	**2002-03[e]**	
Total	78.8%	
Adult sector: 20 years of age or over	13.0%	
Youth sector or before the age of 20 in the adult sector	65.8%	
Total per-student educational spending	**2001-02[e]**	
Elementary and secondary education ($)	$7,492	
Full-time and part-time enrollment	**2002-03**	
Elementary education (youth sector)	564,559 students	
Secondary education (youth sector)	455,467 students	
Elementary and secondary education (adult sector)	247,258 students	
Student-teacher ratio in school boards	**2002-03[e]**	
	15.7	
Number of private schools	**1993-94**	**2002-03**
Elementary education	134 schools	131 schools
Secondary education	121 schools	150 schools
Elementary and secondary education	55 schools	57 schools
Total	310 schools	338 schools
Number of students in private sector	**1993-94**	**2002-03**
Elementary education	24,052 students	29,462 students
(% of students in private primary schools)	(4.3%)	(5.2%)
Secondary education	77,081 students	81,672 students
(% of students in private secondary schools)	(10.7%)	(11.6%)
Number of schools in function	**1989-90**	**1999-2000**
	3,136 schools	3,218 schools

e = estimates.

The Estates General on Education: An Exercise in Participatory Democracy

In 1995, the new Parti Quebecois government established the Commission for the Estates General on Education to review the entire education situation in Quebec; the Commission was intended to conduct an extensive, 18-month consultative process and, from there, draw out perspectives on and priorities for the future. In October 1996, the Commission published its final report *The Estates General on Education 1995-1996: Renewing our Education System: Ten Priority Actions*. The report emphasized that two fundamental political principles should guide both reflections on and action for education. The first was the concept of equal opportunity, defined as providing 100 percent of young people with the qualifications necessary to enter the world both professionally and socially. The second concept reiterated the notion that school is at the heart of society, a lever for pushing forward economic, social, and cultural development and a means of creating a more just, democratic, and egalitarian society.

The Commission proposed three main education goals: to instruct, by sharing knowledge; to socialize, by transmitting foundation values (respect for institutions, common rules, and diversity); and to qualify, by ensuring the training and retraining necessary to engage in professional activities that correspond to both market needs and the interests and aptitudes of students of all ages.

The Commission identified 10 areas that made concrete the two political principles and three main education goals. In the pages that follow, we will analyze the follow-up to the Estates General in terms of curriculum, governance, professionalization, language, and religion.

The Core Curriculum for Pre-school, Elementary and Secondary Schools

The curriculum is at the heart of any education system and includes three elements: the program of study and its corollaries (subject-time allocation, evaluation of learning, certification of studies, and teaching material); the school path offered to students (including professional training); and the organization of teaching (the cycles, division of students by age, and school time).

To understand the orientations taken in the decade beginning in 1990 and following the Estates General, some historical context is necessary. Since the Quiet Revolution, Quebec's education system has undergone three major curriculum reforms: the so-called curriculum reform of the 1960s; the programs by objectives reform of the 1980s; and the competency-based program reform of 1997.

The curriculum of the 1960s was very general, contained little detail and demanded a great deal of local work and interpretation; it failed, due to the lack of time and skills teachers had to implement it. In the later part of the 1970s, the Parti Quebecois government proposed moving towards an objective-based curriculum that would be more detailed and would provide a better structure for teachers. Between 1990 and 2000, the policies modifying the core curriculum focused overall on education success.

In 1992, emphasis was placed on quantitative education success. Education Minister Pagé, of Premier Bourassa's Liberal government, put forth her action plan for education success entitled *Everyone's Responsibility* (1992). The plan aimed to bring back into schools those who had left without a diploma, and raise, within five years, the percentage of young people obtaining their high school diploma from 65 to 80. In addition, an action plan for improving the quality of written and spoken French, whether as a mother tongue or a second language, was put into place. School teams were empowered to create action plans for projects to achieve these goals; the $422 million allocated under the plan would be distributed based on these action plans. More than 6,000 projects were realized in 1992-93.

In 1993, then Education Minister Robillard emphasized the quality of success. In the document *Moving the School Forward* (1992), she imposed a more rigorous secondary school curriculum that included the following changes

- To obtain a high school diploma, students must pass a mother tongue language, a second language in the fifth year, mathematics in the fifth year, physical sciences in the fourth year, and history of Quebec and Canada in the fourth year.
- The learning goals for mother tongue French language were raised in June 1995, with the passing grade in written French in the fifth year going from 50 to 60 percent.
- The contents of the mathematics programs for the fourth and fifth years were revised and enriched.
- The requirement of learning two additional languages was reinforced.

In June 1994, the new Liberal Education Minister, Jacques Chagnon, outlined new graduation requirements in the document *Preparing Young People for the 21st Century* (the Corbo Report). This report emphasized six major training areas: methodological competencies, languages, mathematics, social sciences, science and technology, physical education, and arts education.

In 1997, then Minister Marois announced a major modification of the national curriculum that would continue until 2006. *Quebec Schools on Course: A New Direction for Success* set the goal of re-focusing schools on basics (notably French, mathematics, and history) and making school more stimulating, particularly for boys, while reducing the failure rate by integrating different teaching methods and making the second cycle of high school more diversified. Set to begin in 1999, the curriculum was built around a "by competence" approach to all subjects, and represented a profoundly modified approach to education:

- Disciplines were to be grouped into five areas: languages, mathematics, science and technology, social sciences and the arts and social development.
- In each of these domains, the competencies and essential knowledge were to be integrated with transversal competencies, defined as the intellectual, methodological, personal, social, and communication skills needed to assimilate the knowledge and to use it in real life.
- Each program was to be built around the idea of learning as an active process in which the student mobilizes his or her personal and external resources (teachers, peers, teaching materials, etc.).
- Evaluations were to be focused on competencies and be an integral part of the learning process.

In the year 2000, the Council of Ministers adopted, by decree, the *Basic School Regulation for Pre-school, Elementary and Secondary Education*, which sanctioned all the modifications to the curriculum from the 1997 reform. The originality of the new programs rests in the idea of competencies (a notion richer than that of objectives) and of ensuring that students can mobilize their knowledge to resolve problems pertinent to their current and future situations. The new programs also incorporate a reorganization of teachers' work: an emphasis on team work in the learning cycles, collective responsibility for student learning across the cycles, collective decision making by teachers on issues before school governing boards and participation in local governance.

Education Governance: Decentralization of the School Administration, Imputability and Performance Reporting

In the 1960s, the Quebec government moved towards centralization of education (financing, negotiation of collective agreements for teaching personnel, and parts of the curriculum), so as to create all the elements needed for a coherent provincial school system (creation of the Ministry of Education in 1964). While this movement was necessary, by the 1970s, a countermovement toward decentralization emerged. In 1979, Minister J-Y Morin of the Parti Quebecois laid the groundwork for an education policy focused on decentralization in the document *L'école québécoise :*

énoncé de politique et plan d'action (*Quebec Schools: Towards Policies and Action Plans*). The document gave school boards true managerial autonomy through a more precise sharing of responsibilities between them and the Ministry. The document also advanced the educational project concept, an action plan created in conjunction with the teachers, parents, students, and the school's management. In 1988, Bill 107, introduced by Minister Ryan of the Bourassa Liberal government, instituted orientation councils and did away with local school boards by regrouping them into regional school boards.

From 1991 to 1996, the question of decentralization provoked debates and a general shaking up of ideas, as it encroached on powers held by actors at various levels of the education system. In July 1998, in the midst of the work being done by the Commission on the Estates General, Minister Marois of the Parti Quebecois government submitted Bill 180, which amended the Education Act to give more powers to teaching establishments, defined as "an autonomous institution with a governing board". Every school (including professional training centres and centres for adult education) was obliged to create, by the fall of 1998, a governing board on which users had the same number of votes as school personnel, and of which the president had to be a parent.

During 2000-03, several developments emerged in the areas of imputability and performance reporting. It could be said that the new public management began working its way into the world of schools along with certain leitmotifs: efficacy, efficiency, results and control from quantitative indices, school choice, competition between establishments, special educational projects, a client-centered approach, etc. There was thus a certain tension between this and concerns, expressed by the Commission for the Estates General, about equal opportunity and educational success for all. At the same time, Parti Quebecois Education Minister Legault promoted the Ministry of Education Strategic Plan for 2002-03, which focused on performance reporting, in order to have greatest number of people achieve success in school.

At the start of the school year 2000, Minister Legault identified obtaining results based on quantitative targets as a priority. In September 2001, following a participatory and consensual model, a Ministry/School Board Directing Committee was formed to support the creation of schools' success plans. The committee was to help schools analyze, in a reflective way, their academic results and decide what actions taken or to be taken supported the greatest success for every student. In her 2001-02 report, the Auditor General of Quebec underscored the difficultly in implementing these success plans.

This new form of education governance is a "hybrid" one (Lessard 2003), including both a horizontal logic of mobilization (incorporating all school actors, local community partners, and local or regional competition for the clientele), and a vertical logic of state guidance and quality control through a new results-based national curriculum, imposed by government policy and made operational by the top of the education system's bureaucratic pyramid. Regulation or vertical governance systematically and systemically demands conformity from the system's agents, while paradoxically giving to these same agents the power to initiate actions, albeit through governing boards established within parameters defined by the higher authority. Horizontal governance, by contrast, seeks to adjust the logics

of the school establishment actors, the demands of parents and the principles of the market place and freedom of school choice.

This hybrid system has clear internal contradictions; at times, the horizontal and the vertical seem to be both pulling in the same direction, while at other times, one seem bent on limiting the other's full actualization of its potential. Nonetheless, the system seems to be holding steady. While its medium-term effects are not fully known, some are foreseeable, such as the growing gap between the establishments and the dual nature of the system on one hand, and a greater satisfaction of middle class parents on the other. (Brassard et al., 2004; Lusignan et al., 2002; Lessard, 2003).

School Personnel Training and Qualification and the Professionalization of Teaching

In Quebec, the discourse on the professionalization of teaching dates from the Quiet Revolution and the Parent Commission report, from which time teachers have been required to receive university-level training. In the fall of 1992, Minister Pagé published an action plan for recognizing and valorizing the teaching profession: *Making the Schools of Today and Tomorrow: A Major Challenge*. The plan aimed to recruit new people to the profession and to facilitate teachers taking local control of the Minister's action plan for educational success. At the same time, the Minister of Education published *La formation à l'enseignement secondaire général — Orientations et compétences attendues* (*Training for Secondary School Teaching: — Orientations and Expected Competencies*). The document was an important first step in the revival of initial training and the recognition of the aptitudes of teaching personnel. There was a movement away from specialization to more multidisciplinary training. Teaching was described as a complex activity that included three types of competencies: competencies related to the teacher's specialty (two disciplines); psycho-pedagogical competencies; and complementary competencies (supporting and guiding students, meeting with parents, collaboration with other school personnel, etc.). As well, a new and greater emphasis was placed on solid general knowledge and mastery of spoken and written language, not simply for university entrance, but also for graduation.

In 1994, a document entitled *Document d'orientation concernant les stages en classe* (*Orientation Document For Classroom Internships*) was published. These internships, which allow future teachers to gain practical experience in their profession, would henceforth last a minimum of 700 hours, spread out over the student's entire period of study, but mostly completed in the final year of study.

In 2001, Education Minister Legault, after extensive public consultation, published the *Teacher Training - Orientation and Professional Competencies*. The document included

- Two major fundamental orientations: to train professionals capable of adapting their teaching methods to the progress of each child by exercising good judgment and mobilizing knowledge; and to help teachers cultivate their knowledge related to the five main areas of learning as well as disciplinary, pedagogical and didactic knowledge.

- Twelve professional competencies were judged to be essential, the most notable being the ability to evaluate student learning progress and competency.
- Eleven exit profiles based on the learning domain and sanctioned by a four-year baccalaureate would now be asked of the universities.

It must be noted, however, that in February 2003, the creation of a professional order of teachers, asked for by the Interdisciplinary Pedagogical Council of Quebec and the Quebec Federation of Parent Committees was rejected by the Quebec's Office of Professions.

The Denominational Character of the Education System and the Place of Religion in the Schools

The British North America Act of 1867 confirmed the division of school boards by denominations, namely Catholic and Protestant. In 1964, the Ministry of Education was created at the same time as the Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation (Higher Council for Education), with a Catholic committee and a Protestant committee who guaranteed citizens' rights in terms of denominational schools and religious education. The two committees had significant powers for curriculum approval, the recognition of the denominational status of school establishments, and moral and religious teaching. In 1979, Minister J-Y Morin issued *The Quebec School,* which raised the possibility of public, non-denominational schools.

In June 1994, Minister Chagnon's document *Preparing Young People for the 21st Century* (Corbo Report) subscribed to the idea of non-denominational schools that would continue to recognize a religious and ethical dimension to the human experience. In 1996, the Commission for the Estates General on Education report advocated the abolition of denominational school boards and schools, as well as the complete separation of Church and State. In March 1997, Parti Quebecois Minister Marois announced changes that included the creation of non-denominational school boards, the maintenance of schools' denominational status while the new linguistic schools boards were being created, and the parents right to choose the nature of moral and religious education given their children.

In June 1997, Bill 109 was adopted, creating French and English school boards while reducing the total number of boards. Existing schools retained their denominational status (Catholic or Protestant), as determined by the Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation. In July 1998, following a constitutional amendment to Article 93, new linguistic school boards replaced denominational boards. In June 2000, Bill 118 was adopted, modifying various legislative provisions in education that touched on denominational status. The main provisions of the bill stated that

- All public schools in Quebec would lose their denominationalism, becoming secular, common, and open to all children from a particular territory. Public schools could no longer have a special religious vocation.
- Elementary school students and those in the first cycle of secondary had the choice of Catholic or Protestant moral and religious education (one hour per week in elementary, 25 hours a year in secondary). In the first cycle of secondary school, schools had the right to offer, when asked, a local

ecumenical program offering an overview of Christian traditions or a local program on ethics and religion. In the second cycle of secondary school, a program on ethics and religion was obligatory (two units instead of four). The Catholic and Protestant committees were replaced by a committee on religious affairs that would maintain relations with the churches and approve the content of programs on Catholic, Protestant, and ecumenical teachings.

In July 2002, the new *Basic School Regulation for Pre-school, Elementary and Secondary Education*, which had been modified in accordance with the provisions of Bill 118, came into effect. The time accorded to religious and moral education was cut in half. In 2003-04, moral and religious teaching programs for the third year of secondary school were replaced by art education. On January 13, 2003, Minister Simard noted that the province had had to invoke the Notwithstanding Clause of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in order to maintain Catholic and Protestant teaching in the public schools, and that the protection that action had afforded the schools would expire in 2005, as such waivers last only five years.

The Language of Instruction and Acknowledgment of Cultural Diversity

Throughout the period studied, the rules surrounding the language of instruction, stemming from successive changes to Bill 101, were as follows

- French is the common language of instruction in kindergarten, elementary, and secondary schools, and of private schools receiving government funding;
- The English language minority residing in Quebec in 1997 retains the right to receive instruction in English. With few exceptions, new arrivals to Quebec must attend a French language elementary or secondary school;
- Article 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms gives a child who has received most of his or her schooling in English in the rest of Canada the right to attend an English language school in Quebec. As well, any child who has a parent who received the majority of his or her elementary school education in English in Canada or any child born to Canadian citizens whose brother or sister received elementary school education in English in Canada is also admissible.

In January 1993, Minister Robillard created the Commission on English Language Education, which developed several recommendations regarding language learning in English schools, the potential benefits to the English school system, restructuring along linguistic lines, etc. In 1998, Minister Marois tabled the document *Policy Statement on Educational Integration and Intercultural Education*, which outlined three fundamental objectives: equal opportunity; education for citizenship in a democratic, pluralistic society; and proficiency in French, the language of public life.

As for Cree or Inuit children, the Bay James and Northern Quebec Convention, signed in 1975, and the 1978 North-East Quebec Convention led to the creation, in 1978, of the Cree and Kativik school boards, serving Cree and Inuit students respectively. In December 1984, the Act Regulating Language of Instruction for Children Living on an Indian Reserve was promulgated, thus giving to Cree and Inuit children the right to receive elementary school education in their mother

tongue. In 2001, as part of the implementation of Minister Marois's curriculum reform, the approximately 20 schools run by Native bands were part of an informed process and of a support council to help with the decision making. Teaching now occurs in the Native language for the first two or three years of elementary school before French is introduced for the later years (in the case of the Mohawks, English is used).

Conclusion

There has been intense political activity around education during the period studied. The Commission for the Estates General on Education crystallized a number of issues, agreeing on a collective agenda for change and opening pathways that led to the creation of numerous policies and action plans. The emphasis on consultation and the mobilization of public opinion are also characteristic of this period. Parti Quebecois governments have a tendency to embark on long and extensive public consultation processes with the various school actors. Although separated by 17 years, the consultation on the Green Book in 1978-79 and the Estates General on Education in 1995-96 bear witness to the desire to build the largest consensus possible.

We also note a certain continuity in the overarching themes and objectives for the education system, even if different elements are emphasized at different times and as a function of the different beliefs and ideologies of the political parties in power. Themes such as educational success, decentralization, the professionalization of teaching, the priority given to the teaching of French, and the move toward nondenominational schools have always been in the foreground. Often, a newly elected government will finish the work started by the previous administration, regardless of party affiliation. However, it appears that a Parti Quebecois government tends to emphasize a more systematic means of action while a Liberal government tends to pick and choose, thus working piece by piece.

Finally, the decade has been marked by important tensions, which have yet to be resolved. The Estates General proceeded from a social-democratic ideology that called for equal opportunity and educational success for all in a common and responsible school, a rich national curriculum that would ensure a high level of competency, and an educational social project to engender a democratic and pluralistic citizenry. The most recent policies of both the Parti Quebecois and the Liberals have introduced the ideas of imputability, performance reporting, efficacy and quantifiable performance, competition, and school choice, as well as the lifting of the moratorium on private schools. Combined with budget cuts, these policies run the risk of hampering the orientations formulated by the Estates General. Therefore, a tension exists that will continue to influence the dynamics and the relationships between the various players in the education system.

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Chapitre 6a
Les politiques d'éducation au Québec : 1990-2003

Claude Lessard, Marthe Henripin et M. Larochelle.

Cette étude analyse le corpus des politiques et des plans d'action portant sur l'éducation primaire et secondaire au Québec, pour la période s'étalant de l990 à 2003. Elle a pour objectif de dégager les grands enjeux de société en éducation, ainsi que les choix que les différents gouvernements québécois ont faits dans ce domaine. L'objet de ce texte porte essentiellement sur la formulation des politiques, c'est-à-dire sur le discours officiel qui tout à la fois construit une situation éducative comme problématique, la découpe en différents thèmes et sous-thèmes, et produit à propos de ceux-ci des orientations, des objectifs et des actions jugées prioritaires afin de « corriger » la situation problématique.

Nous tenterons de situer les politiques éducatives dans le double contexte du système éducatif et de la société globale. Notre perspective est voisine de celle de R. Bowe et S. J. Ball (1992), en ce sens qu'il importe de saisir les politiques comme des orientations qui sont, dans des contextes différents, retravaillées, interprétées et plus ou moins modifiées par les acteurs concernés.

Cette analyse s'articule en sept parties : la première aborde l'évolution du financement de l'éducation, en comparant la situation québécoise au cours de la décennie étudiée à celle du Canada et des États-Unis. La seconde raconte succinctement l'évolution des politiques éducatives au cours de la décennie étudiée, à partir d'un moment fort de l'activité politique, soit les États Généraux de l'Éducation de l995-l996.

Dans le troisième chapitre, nous abordons l'une des principales politiques éducatives spécifiques qui a suivi la publication du Rapport de la Commission des États Généraux de l'Éducation et de la Formation, soit celle ayant trait au curriculum de base pour le préscolaire, le primaire et le secondaire. Le quatrième considère les politiques portant sur la « gouvernance » de l'éducation, la décentralisation de l'administration scolaire, l'imputabilité et la reddition de comptes.

La cinquième section traite de la professionnalisation de l'enseignement, surtout par le biais d'actions ciblées sur la formation et la qualification du

personnel enseignant. La sixième porte sur le caractère confessionnel du système éducatif et la place de la religion dans les écoles. Enfin, la dernière partie aborde les politiques touchant la langue d'enseignement et la prise en compte de la diversité ethnoculturelle.

En conclusion, nous abordons la question ayant trait à la variabilité de la nature et la qualité de l'engagement de l'État québécois en éducation pendant la décennie étudiée. Compte tenu de l'imposant corpus de politiques éducatives et de l'espace limité, ce travail demeure partiel mais se présente néanmoins comme l'ébauche d'une sociohistoire des politiques éducatives récentes.

Première partie : l'évolution du financement de l'éducation

D'entrée de jeu, nous abordons l'aspect financier afin de bien saisir l'ampleur et la durée des compressions budgétaires en éducation au Québec pendant cette période. Depuis vingt ans, le Québec a systématiquement dépensé plus pour l'éducation que le Canada et les États-Unis, en proportion du produit intérieur brut (PIB). Ainsi, en 2001-2002, au Québec, la dépense globale relative à l'éducation[1] était estimée à 7,4 % du PIB, dans le reste du Canada, elle était à 6,3 % et aux États-Unis, à 7,2 %. Quant au financement de la dépense globale d'éducation, il se répartit comme suit : gouvernements : provincial : 69,1 %; fédéral : 8,5 %, local : 6,1 %; autres sources : 16,3 %.

Les dépenses du gouvernement

Les dépenses de programmes du gouvernement du Québec selon les quatre grands secteurs (« Éducation », « Santé et Services sociaux », « Emploi et Solidarité sociale » et « Famille, Enfance et Condition féminine ») auxquels s'ajoutent les « Autres portefeuilles » regroupant les dépenses des autres programmes, permettent de comparer l'évolution de la part relative de l'éducation par rapport aux autres grands secteurs.

Ainsi, les compressions budgétaires sont à l'origine de la chute de la part relative du secteur « Éducation » entre 1992-1993 (28,6 %) et 1998-1999 (25,2 %). Entre 1998 et 2002, le poids de l'éducation dans les dépenses du gouvernement a augmenté et se situe à 25,8 % en 2002-2003 (environ 11,1 milliards de dollars). Bien que cette hausse ne semble pas très importante, elle représente une fluctuation de 1,6 milliard de dollars entre 1998-1999 et 2002-2003, soit une augmentation de 16 %.

Les dépenses selon l'ordre d'enseignement

Au Québec, la répartition de la dépense globale en pourcentage du PIB par ordre d'enseignement indique que tous les ordres connaissent une baisse de la dépense globale d'éducation entre 1994-1995 et 2001-2002. Le primaire et le secondaire ont connu la baisse la plus importante, ils sont passés de 4,77 % du PIB en 1994-1995 à 3,94 % en 2001-2002. La part de la dépense globale d'éducation de l'ordre d'enseignement collégial passe de 1,12 % en 1994-1995 à 0,92 % en 2001-2002. L'ordre d'enseignement universitaire recueille 1,68 % du PIB de la dépense globale d'éducation en 2001-2002 par rapport à 1,91 % en 1994-1995. Les autres dépenses[2]

recueillent 0,86 % du PIB de la dépense globale d'éducation en 2001-2002, ce qui représente une part supérieure à celle de 1994-1995 (0,73 %).

Les dépenses pour l'ordre primaire et secondaire

En 2001-2002, la part du PIB du Québec consacrée à l'enseignement primaire et secondaire est à peu près la même (4,0 %) que dans le reste du Canada (3,7 %) et aux États-Unis (4,3 %). Par contre, historiquement, la part du PIB allouée à l'enseignement primaire et secondaire a diminué au Québec, passant de 6,6 % en 1976-1977 à 4,4 % en 1989-1990, alors qu'elle restait à peu près stable dans le reste du Canada.

Quant à la dépense de fonctionnement par élève des commissions scolaires en 2001-2002, elle est un peu plus élevée au Québec (7 125 $) que dans le reste du Canada (6 870 $), mais elle est plus basse qu'aux États-Unis (9 282 $).

Deuxième partie : Au cœur de la décennie, les États Généraux de l'Éducation, un exercice de démocratie participative.

En 1995, le nouveau gouvernement du Parti Québécois mandate la Commission des États généraux sur l'éducation afin de faire le point, à partir d'une large consultation, sur la situation d'ensemble de l'éducation au Québec et dégager des perspectives et des priorités pour l'avenir. Ses travaux ont duré 18 mois.

En octobre 1996 la Commission publie son rapport final intitulé *Les États Généraux sur l'Éducation 1995-1996 – Rénover notre système d'éducation : dix chantiers prioritaires.* Elle souligne que deux préoccupations politiques fondamentales doivent guider la réflexion et l'action éducatives. Une première a trait à **l'égalité des chances**, avec un objectif de **réussite pour tous** définie comme une qualification permettant à 100 % des jeunes de s'insérer professionnellement et socialement. La seconde réitère que « l'école (…) est **le cœur d'un projet de société** et un levier pour relancer le développement économique, social et culturel et contribuer à l'émergence d'une société plus juste, plus démocratique et plus égalitaire ».

La commission propose trois finalités : **instruire,** en faisant acquérir des connaissances; **socialiser,** en transmettant les valeurs qui fondent notre société démocratique (respect des institutions et des règles communes et ouverture à la diversité); et **qualifier,** en assurant la formation et le perfectionnement nécessaires à l'exercice d'une activité professionnelle correspondant à la fois aux besoins du marché du travail et aux intérêts et aptitudes des élèves jeunes ou adultes.

La commission a identifié dix chantiers venant concrétiser les deux préoccupations et les trois finalités dégagées qui ont eu une grande influence sur la plupart des politiques élaborées par la suite, tout en maintenant les acquis démocratiques réalisés avant 1995. Dans les pages qui suivent, nous analysons les suites données aux États Généraux à propos des chantiers reliés aux thèmes du curriculum, de la gouvernance, de la professionnalisation, de la langue et de la religion.

Troisième partie : le curriculum de base pour le préscolaire, le primaire et le secondaire

Le curriculum, au cœur du système d'éducation, comprend trois éléments : 1) les programmes d'études et leurs corollaires (la grille-matières, les modes d'évaluation des apprentissages, les règles de sanction des études et les matériaux didactiques); 2) les parcours ou les cheminements scolaires offerts aux élèves (incluant la formation professionnelle); et 3) l'organisation de l'enseignement (les cycles, le découpage de l'horaire des élèves et du temps scolaire).

Rappel historique

Pour comprendre les orientations prises au cours de la décennie 1990 dans la foulée des États Généraux, un rappel historique s'avère nécessaire. Depuis la Révolution tranquille, le système d'éducation québécois a connu trois réformes curriculaires importantes : celle des années soixante, dite des programmes-cadres, celle du début des années quatre-vingt, dite des programmes par objectifs, et celle de l997, dite des programmes par compétences. Les programmes-cadres des années soixante, très généraux et peu détaillés, rendaient nécessaire un important travail d'interprétation et d'élaboration locale, ce qui s'avéra un échec compte tenu de ressources trop limitées (temps et compétences) des enseignants.

Au cours de la seconde moitié des années soixante-dix, le gouvernement du Parti Québécois propose de passer des programmes-cadres à des programmes dits par objectifs, plus précis et détaillés et encadrant davantage le travail des enseignants que les premiers.

La décennie 90

Durant la décennie 1990-2000, les politiques modifiant le curriculum de base sont globalement axées sur la réussite éducative. En 1992, l'accent est mis sur la réussite éducative définie quantitativement. En effet, le ministre Pagé du gouvernement libéral de M. Bourassa dépose son Plan d'action sur la réussite éducative intitulé *Chacun ses devoirs* (l992), lequel vise à ramener à l'école ceux qui l'ont quittée sans diplôme et à faire passer de 65 % à 80 % en cinq ans, la proportion des jeunes de moins de 20 ans qui obtiennent leur diplôme d'études secondaires. En outre, un Plan d'action sur la qualité du français écrit et parlé, langue maternelle et langue seconde, est mis en œuvre. On permet aux équipes-école de définir les moyens appropriés en élaborant des plans d'action qui serviront de base à la répartition des 42 millions de dollars dégagés pour le Plan. Ainsi, plus de 6 000 projets sont réalisés en 1992-1993.

En 1993, la ministre Robillard, du même gouvernement, met l'accent sur la qualité de la réussite. Dans son document *Faire avancer l'école* (l993), elle impose une révision à la hausse du curriculum de base du secondaire dont voici les éléments significatifs :

- Pour obtenir le diplôme d'études secondaires, la réussite est désormais obligatoire en langue maternelle et en langue seconde de 5e secondaire, en mathématiques de 5e, en sciences physiques de 4e, et en histoire du Québec et du Canada en 4e secondaire.

- Le niveau d'exigences en français langue maternelle est accru : dès juin 1995, la note globale de l'épreuve de français écrit de 5e secondaire sera haussée de 50 % à 60 %.
- Le contenu des programmes de mathématiques de 4e et de 5e secondaire est revu à la hausse.
- L'apprentissage des deux langues secondes est renforcé.

En juin 1994, le nouveau ministre de l'éducation, le libéral J. Chagnon, précise des profils de sortie exigeants dans son document *Préparer les jeunes au 21e siècle* (Rapport Corbo). Ce rapport privilégie six grands domaines de formation **:** les compétences méthodologiques, la langue, les mathématiques, l'univers social, la science et la technologie, l'éducation physique et le domaine artistique.

En 1997, la ministre Marois lance une opération de modification majeure du curriculum national qui se poursuivra jusqu'en 2006. Elle publie *L'École, tout un programme : énoncé de politique éducative* (l997). Les objectifs visent à recentrer l'école sur les matières de base, (notamment le français, la mathématique et l'histoire), de la rendre plus stimulante, en particulier pour les garçons, et de réduire les parcours d'échec en pratiquant une pédagogie différenciée et en instaurant au secondaire un 2e cycle plus diversifié.

L'année 1999 marque le début de l'élaboration de nouveaux programmes d'études, construits selon une approche dite par compétences dans toutes les matières, pour le primaire et pour le secondaire, et selon une conception modifiée en profondeur :

- Les disciplines sont regroupées dans les cinq domaines d'apprentissage suivants : les langues, la mathématique, la science et la technologie, l'univers social, les arts et le développement social.
- Pour chacun de ces domaines, les compétences disciplinaires et les savoirs essentiels doivent être intégrés à des compétences transversales définies comme des habiletés intellectuelles, méthodologiques, personnelles, sociales et communicationnelles nécessaires à l'assimilation des savoirs et à leur utilisation dans la vie réelle.
- Chaque programme est bâti en fonction de l'apprentissage défini comme un processus actif par lequel l'élève mobilise ses ressources personnelles et des ressources externes (professeur, pairs, matériels didactiques, etc.).
- L'évaluation doit porter sur les compétences et est une partie intégrante de la démarche d'apprentissage.

En l'an 2000, le conseil des ministres adopte par décret le *Régime pédagogique de l'éducation préscolaire, de l'enseignement primaire et de l'enseignement secondaire*, qui sanctionne toutes les modifications apportées au curriculum par la Réforme de 1997.

L'originalité des nouveaux programmes tient à la notion de compétence, plus riche que celle d'objectif, et qui cherche à assurer la mobilisation des connaissances dans la résolution de problèmes pertinents pour l'élève et pour la vie qu'il mène et mènera. Elle tient aussi à une réorganisation du travail enseignant : davantage de concertation et de travail d'équipe dans le cadre des cycles d'apprentissage, responsabilisation collective de l'apprentissage des élèves au sein du cycle; prise de décision collective des enseignants sur les objets de délibération du conseil d'établissement et participation à cette instance de gouvernement local, etc.

Quatrième partie : La gouvernance de l'éducation : décentralisation de l'administration scolaire, imputabilité et reddition de comptes.

Centralisation et décentralisation

Rappel historique

À un mouvement nécessaire de centralisation par l'État québécois (financement de l'éducation, négociation des conventions collectives du personnel enseignant et éléments du curriculum) afin de créer de toutes pièces le système scolaire dans les années 60 (création du ministère de l'Éducation en 1964), succéda un courant de décentralisation et de participation des acteurs scolaires sur le terrain dans les années 70.

En 1979, le ministre J.-Y. Morin du gouvernement du Parti Québécois établit les premiers éléments d'une politique éducative axée sur la décentralisation dans son document *L'école québécoise : énoncé de politique et plan d'action.* Ce document marque un choix très net, d'ordre gouvernemental, de décentraliser auprès des commissions scolaires en leur donnant une véritable autonomie de gestion par un partage plus précis des responsabilités entre elles et le ministère. Le document met aussi de l'avant la notion de projet éducatif de l'école qui est un plan d'action élaboré en concertation par les enseignants, les parents, les élèves et la direction.

En 1988, la Loi 107 déposée par le ministre Ryan du gouvernement libéral de M. Bourassa instaure des Conseils d'orientation et supprime les commissions scolaires locales par regroupement de celles-ci avec les commissions scolaires régionales.

La décennie l990

De 1991 à 1996**,** la question de la décentralisation suscite de nombreux débats et un grand brassage d'idées, car elle touche aux pouvoirs des divers paliers du système éducatif. En juillet 1998, dans la foulée des travaux de la commission des États Généraux, la Loi 180 modifiant la Loi sur l'Instruction publique est déposée à l'Assemblée nationale par la ministre Marois du gouvernement du Parti Québécois. Elle attribue des pouvoirs accrus à l'établissement d'enseignement défini comme « une institution autonome ayant un Conseil d'établissement ». Les écoles (incluant les centres de formation professionnelle et les centres d'éducation des adultes) ont l'obligation de créer, dès l'automne 1998, un Conseil d'établissement où les usagers ont le même nombre de voix que le personnel et dont le président est obligatoirement un parent.

Imputabilité et reddition de comptes

Au cours des années 2000-2003, plusieurs développements en matière d'imputabilité et de reddition de comptes voient le jour. D'une certaine manière, on peut affirmer que par ce biais, le « new public management » pénètre le monde scolaire, ainsi que ses leitmotivs : l'efficacité, l'efficience, l'obligation de résultats et le contrôle à posteriori à partir d'indicateurs quantitatifs, le libre choix de l'école, la concurrence entre les établissements, les projets particuliers, l'approche-client, etc. Ce qui entre

en tension avec les préoccupations d'égalité des chances et de réussite éducative pour tous exprimées par la commission des États Généraux. Ainsi, dans le *Plan stratégique 2000-2003* du ministère de l'Éducation, l'une des orientations majeures concerne la reddition de comptes, promue par le ministre Legault du gouvernement péquiste, si l'on veut aboutir à la réussite scolaire du plus grand nombre.

À la rentrée 2000, ce ministre rend prioritaire l'obligation de résultats axée sur des cibles quantitatives. En septembre 2001, suivant le modèle dit participatif et consensuel, un Comité directeur Ministère/Commissions scolaires est créé pour encadrer la réalisation des plans de réussite. Ces derniers veulent habiliter l'équipe-école à faire une analyse réflexive sur les résultats scolaires et sur les moyens pris ou à prendre pour favoriser la réussite maximale de chaque élève. Dans son rapport 2001-2002, la Vérificatrice générale du Québec souligne les difficultés d'implantation de ces plans de réussite.

Une nouvelle régulation de l'éducation

Cette nouvelle "gouvernance" ou mode de régulation est « hybride » (Lessard 2003), comportant à la fois une logique horizontale de mobilisation des acteurs de l'établissement, de partenariats communautaires locaux et de compétition locale ou régionale pour les clientèles, et une logique verticale ou étatique de pilotage et de contrôle de la qualité par l'instauration d'un nouveau curriculum national et d'une obligation de résultats, imposée par le politique et rendue opérationnelle par le sommet de la pyramide bureaucratique du système éducatif. La régulation ou la gouvernance verticale cherche à cadrer de manière systémique et systématique les actions des agents du système auxquels on accorde par ailleurs et paradoxalement davantage de pouvoir d'initiative, notamment au sein des conseils d'établissement, mais cette initiative doit se développer à l'intérieur du corridor défini par l'instance supérieure de pilotage. Par ailleurs, la gouvernance horizontale cherche à assurer l'ajustement des logiques des acteurs de l'établissement, de la demande des parents[1], et des principes du marché et du libre choix de l'école.

Soumis à cette double logique horizontale et verticale, qui tantôt tire dans le même sens, tantôt limite la pleine actualisation du potentiel de l'une ou de l'autre, le système semble tenir la route. Avec à moyen terme des effets encore inconnus, mais prévisibles, comme l'accroissement des écarts entre les établissements et la dualisation du système d'une part, et une plus grande satisfaction des parents de classes moyennes, plus habiles que ceux des milieux populaires à tirer leur épingle du jeu scolaire (Brassard et al., 2004; Lusignan et al., 2002; Lessard, 2003).

Cinquième partie : la formation et la qualification du personnel enseignant et la professionnalisation de l'enseignement

Au Québec, le discours sur la professionnalisation de l'enseignement date de la Révolution tranquille et du rapport de la Commission Parent. Dès cette époque, on enjoint notamment les enseignants à se former davantage, et ce à l'université. Dans les faits, si les enseignants se forment dorénavant à l'université, ils sont encore considérés et se considèrent souvent eux-mêmes comme des travailleurs de l'enseignement.

À l'automne 1992, le ministre Pagé publie un Plan d'action pour la reconnaissance et la valorisation de la profession enseignante : *Faire l'école aujourd'hui et demain : un défi de maître*. Il veut ainsi renouveler la profession et faciliter la prise en charge locale, par les enseignants, de son Plan d'action sur la réussite éducative.

Également le ministère de l'Éducation publie *La formation à l'enseignement secondaire général – Orientations et compétences attendues*. Le document se veut un premier pas important vers le renouveau de la formation initiale et la reconnaissance d'aptitudes du personnel enseignant. Il s'agit de passer de la spécialisation dans une matière à une formation plus polyvalente (bidisciplinarité). L'enseignement étant décrit comme une activité complexe, les profils comprennent trois types de compétences : 1) les compétences disciplinaires relatives à la spécialité du professeur (deux disciplines); 2) les compétences psychopédagogiques; 3) les compétences complémentaires (l'encadrement et le soutien aux élèves, les rencontres avec les parents, la collaboration avec les autres membres du personnel, etc.). Aussi, les exigences concernant une solide culture générale et la maîtrise de la langue parlée et écrite seront accrues, tant pour l'admission à l'université que pour la délivrance du diplôme.

En 1994 est publié le *Document d'orientation concernant les stages en classe.* Ces stages qui permettent au futur enseignant de s'initier à la pratique de sa profession auront dorénavant une durée minimum de 700 heures réparties au long des années d'études, mais plus concentrées la dernière année.

En 2001, le ministre Legault, après une vaste consultation, publie le document officiel *La formation à l'enseignement – Les orientations – Les compétences professionnelles.* Le document comprend :

- Deux grandes orientations de base : a) former un enseignant professionnel capable d'adapter son enseignement en fonction de la progression de chacun de ses élèves grâce à l'exercice de son jugement et à la mobilisation de ses savoirs; b) former un enseignant cultivé ayant acquis différents objets de culture liés aux cinq grands domaines d'apprentissage et aux différents savoirs de nature disciplinaire, pédagogique ou didactique.
- Douze compétences professionnelles sont jugées essentielles. Ainsi, le futur enseignant devra notamment évaluer la progression des apprentissages et le degré d'acquisition des compétences des élèves pour les contenus.
- Onze profils de sortie basés sur le domaine d'apprentissage et sanctionnés par des bacs de 4 ans sont demandés aux universités.

Enfin, soulignons qu'en février 2003, la création d'un Ordre professionnel des enseignants, réclamée par le Conseil pédagogique interdisciplinaire du Québec et par la Fédération des comités de parents du Québec, est rejetée par l'Office des professions du Québec.

Sixième partie : le caractère confessionnel du système éducatif et la place de la religion dans les écoles

Rappel historique

L'Acte de l'Amérique du Nord britannique de 1867 confirme par son article

93, la division des commissions scolaires selon la confessionnalité catholique et protestante. En 1964, le ministère de l'Éducation est créé en même temps que le Conseil supérieur de l'Éducation doté d'un Comité catholique et d'un Comité protestant, lesquels sont garants des droits des citoyens en matière d'écoles confessionnelles et d'enseignement religieux. Ces deux comités ont d'importants pouvoirs concernant l'approbation du curriculum, la reconnaissance du statut confessionnel des établissements et l'enseignement moral et religieux qui y est dispensé. Dès 1979, l'énoncé de politique *L'École québécoise* du ministre J.-Y. Morin ouvre la porte à l'existence d'écoles publiques non confessionnelles.

La décennie 1990-2003

En juin 1994, le document *Préparer les jeunes au 21e siè*cle (Rapport Corbo) du ministre Chagnon souscrit à l'idée d'une école non confessionnelle qui reconnaîtrait l'existence d'une dimension religieuse et éthique dans l'expérience humaine.

En 1996, le rapport de la Commission des États Généraux sur l'Éducation prône l'abolition du statut confessionnel des commissions scolaires et celui des écoles et la finalisation de la séparation de l'Église et de l'État.

En mars 1997, la ministre Marois du gouvernement du Parti Québécois annonce les aménagements retenus : la déconfessionnalisation des commissions scolaires ; le maintien, pendant la mise en place des commissions scolaires linguistiques, du statut confessionnel des écoles avec révision de ces statuts après deux ans; le libre choix des parents entre l'enseignement moral et religieux.

En juin 1997, le projet de loi 109 est adopté. Il assure la mise en place des commissions scolaires francophones et anglophones et réduit leur nombre de moitié. Quant aux écoles existantes, elles continuent alors à avoir un statut confessionnel catholique ou protestant reconnu par règlement par les deux Comités confessionnels du Conseil supérieur de l'Éducation.

En juillet 1998, suite à un amendement constitutionnel à l'article 93, débute le fonctionnement des nouvelles commissions scolaires sur une base linguistique plutôt que confessionnelle.

En juin 2000, la Loi 118 modifiant diverses dispositions législatives dans le secteur de l'éducation concernant la confessionnalité est adoptée. Ses principales dispositions sont à l'effet que :

- Toutes les écoles publiques du Québec perdent leur statut confessionnel et deviennent laïques, communes et ouvertes à tous les enfants d'un territoire. Il ne peut y avoir d'écoles publiques à projet particulier de nature religieuse.
- Droit pour les élèves du primaire et du 1er cycle du secondaire de choisir entre un cours d'enseignement moral et religieux catholique et protestant ou un cours d'enseignement moral (1 heure/semaine au primaire, 25 heures/année au secondaire). Au 1er cycle du secondaire, autorisation à une école d'offrir, à la demande de son conseil d'établissement et après consultation des parents, un programme local à caractère œcuménique sur l'ensemble des traditions chrétiennes ou un programme local d'éthique et de culture religieuse. Au 2e cycle du secondaire, programme obligatoire d'éthique et de culture religieuse (2 unités au lieu de 4).

- Un Comité sur les affaires religieuses chargé des relations avec les Églises et de l'approbation des contenus confessionnels des programmes d'enseignement religieux catholique, protestant et œcuménique succède au Comité catholique et au Comité protestant.

Juillet 2002 voit l'entrée en vigueur du nouveau *Régime pédagogique de l'éducation préscolaire, de l'enseignement primaire et de l'enseignement secondaire* qui a été modifié en concordance avec les dispositions de la Loi 118. Le temps consacré à l'enseignement religieux ou moral a diminué de moitié. En 2003-2004, pour la 3e secondaire, les programmes d'enseignement moral ou religieux seront remplacés par l'enseignement des arts.

Le 13 janvier 2003 le ministre Simard rappelle qu'en 2005 vient à échéance la dérogation à la *Charte canadienne des droits et libertés*, qui a été nécessaire au maintien de l'enseignement confessionnel catholique et protestant dans les écoles publiques, car cette dérogation n'est valable que pour cinq ans à la fois.

Septième partie : la langue d'enseignement et la prise en compte de la diversité culturelle

Tout au long de la période étudiée, la réglementation sur la langue d'enseignement, issue des aménagements successifs à la Loi 101, est la suivante :

- Le français est la langue commune d'enseignement dans les classes maternelles, les écoles primaires et secondaires et les établissements privés reconnus pour fins de subventions.
- La minorité de langue anglaise résidant au Québec en 1977 a conservé le droit de recevoir l'enseignement en anglais. Tout nouveau venu au Québec devra fréquenter une école primaire ou secondaire de langue française, sauf exceptions.
- Mais en vertu de l'article 23 de la *Charte canadienne des droits et libertés*, un enfant est admissible à l'école anglaise au Québec s'il a reçu dans cette langue la majeure partie de son enseignement primaire ou secondaire au Canada. Est également admis tout enfant dont l'un des parents a reçu la majorité de son enseignement primaire en anglais au Canada, et tout enfant né de citoyens et citoyennes canadiens dont un frère ou une sœur a reçu ou reçoit son instruction primaire ou secondaire en anglais où que ce soit au Canada.

En janvier 1993, la ministre Robillard crée la Commission de l'éducation en langue anglaise qui formule diverses recommandations, notamment sur l'apprentissage des langues dans les écoles anglaises, les retombées prévisibles, dans le réseau scolaire anglophone, de la restructuration scolaire sur une base linguistique, etc.

En 1998, la ministre Marois dépose le document *Politique et Plan d'action en matière d'intégration scolaire et d'éducation interculturelle*. Il vise trois objectifs fondamentaux : 1) l'égalité des chances; 2) l'éducation à la citoyenneté démocratique dans un contexte pluraliste; 3) la maîtrise du français comme langue de vie commune.

En ce qui concerne les élèves autochtones des milieux amérindiens et inuit, rappelons que la signature de la *Convention de la Baie James et du Nord du Québec*

en 1975 et celle de la *Convention du Nord-Est québécois* en 1978 amènent la création, en 1978, des Commissions scolaires Crie et Kativik qui desservent les élèves cris et inuit. En décembre 1984, est promulgué le Règlement sur la langue d'enseignement des enfants qui résident ou ont résidé dans une réserve indienne qui stipule qu'Inuits et Amérindiens ont le droit de recevoir l'enseignement dans leur langue maternelle au primaire.

En 2001, pour l'implantation de la réforme curriculaire de la ministre Marois dans la vingtaine d'écoles de bande autonomes, le ministère de l'Éducation met à leur disposition de l'information et un soutien-conseil pour les aider dans leurs décisions. L'enseignement se fait dans leur langue durant les deux ou trois premières années de scolarisation, puis l'on passe au français (ou à l'anglais dans le cas des Mohawks).

En guise de conclusion : quelques considérations sur les caractéristiques des politiques de la décennie étudiée

On constate une intense activité politique autour de l'Éducation tout au long de la période étudiée. Ainsi, la Commission des États Généraux de l'éducation cristallise un certain nombre d'enjeux, convient d'un agenda collectif de changement et ouvre les multiples chantiers de politiques qui donneront lieu dans les années qui suivent à l'élaboration de plusieurs politiques et plans d'action. L'accent sur la consultation et la mobilisation de l'opinion publique est aussi caractéristique de cette période. On note cependant que les gouvernements du Parti Québécois manifestent une tendance à s'appuyer sur de longs et vastes processus de consultation publique directe auprès des différents acteurs scolaires. Par exemple, la consultation sur le Livre Vert en 1978-1979 et les États Généraux sur l'Éducation en 1995-1996, à 17 ans d'intervalle, témoignent de cette volonté de construire les consensus les plus larges possibles.

On note également une continuité dans les lignes directrices et les objectifs du système d'éducation, même si des accents différents sont mis au fil du temps en fonction des croyances et des idéologies des partis au pouvoir. Par exemple, les thèmes de la réussite éducative, de la décentralisation, de la professionnalisation de l'enseignement, de la priorité à l'enseignement du français, de la déconfessionnalisation ont régulièrement été à l'avant-scène. Souvent, un nouveau parti politique au pouvoir termine le travail commencé sous l'administration précédente. Par ailleurs, il semble qu'un gouvernement péquiste tend à privilégier un mode d'action plus systémique, alors que sous un gouvernement libéral, les politiques sont souvent plus ciblées et davantage « à la pièce ».

Enfin, la décennie demeure travaillée par des tensions importantes, à ce jour non résolues. Les États Généraux ont procédé d'une idéologie social-démocrate, axée sur l'égalité des chances et la réussite éducative pour tous, dans une école qui se voulait commune et responsable, et sur le développement d'un curriculum national riche et assurant des compétences de haut niveau, ainsi que sur un projet de société en éducation marqué au coin d'une citoyenneté démocratique pluraliste. Par ailleurs, les politiques plus récentes – tant du Parti Québécois que du gouvernement libéral – introduisent dans le champ éducatif des considérations de l'ordre de

l'imputabilité et de la reddition de comptes, de l'efficacité et de la performance quantifiée, de la concurrence et du libre choix de l'école, de la levée du moratoire sur l'enseignement privé, qui, combinées à des resserrements budgétaires, risquent de réduire considérablement la portée des orientations généreuses formulées par les États Généraux. Il y a là une tension qui continuera à influer sur la dynamique et sur les rapports entre les acteurs du système éducatif.

Les notes

1. La dépense globale d'éducation inclut la dépense de fonctionnement et la dépense d'immobilisation des établissements d'enseignement des réseaux publics et privés de tous les ordres d'enseignement, la dépense de gestion du Ministère, la contribution gouvernementale aux régimes de retraite du personnel, le coût de l'aide financière aux études et d'autres dépenses liées à l'enseignement (selon le concept défini par Statistique Canada).
2. Les autres dépenses comprennent celles financées par Développement des ressources humaines Canada de même que les dépenses pour la formation donnée dans les pénitenciers et les dépenses des écoles de métiers privées, les écoles d'art, les écoles de musique, etc.
3. Les parents, comme un peu partout en Occident, inspirés par la publication des palmarès d'établissements et par l'esprit du temps, se comportent de plus en plus comme des consommateurs avertis d'éducation.

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Chapter 7
Policy Narrative for New Brunswick

Claude Lessard and Julie Verdy

Introduction

This chapter presents the policies for elementary and secondary education in New Brunswick, covering the period from 1990 to 2003. The objective is to draw out the societal stakes in education, as well as the choices made by both the Liberal and Progressive Conservative governments of New Brunswick. It takes into account that, culturally and structurally, New Brunswick's education system has two distinct sectors: one anglophone and the other francophone. Each sector is responsible for its own curriculum and evaluations.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first examines the first half of the 1990s, looking particularly at the report issued by the Downey-Landry Commission on Excellence in Education. The second section looks at the second half of the decade, which began with the publication of *A Renewed Education System for New Brunswick*. The final section is a table presenting a synthesis of the different governments and Ministers of Education as well as the statements, policies and important events of the last decade. Finally a brief conclusion summarizes the essential elements to be drawn from this research.

The Educational Orientations for the First Half of the 1990-2000 Decade

In 1991, Premier Frank McKenna created the Commission on Excellence in Education, known as the Downey-Landry Commission after the names of its two co-presidents. These two were given a wide-ranging mandate, touching on a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the education system, the role of the

various players in the system, the links between the various actors involved as well as the goals to be attained, the means to achieve them, and the tools for following up and evaluating progress.

On May 7, 1992, the Commission published its final report, entitled *L'école à l'aube du 21e/School for a New Century* in which it underscored the need for New Brunswick to find an educational ideal. This ideal, according to the Commission, must take into account two fundamental principles: the importance of decentralization and the democratic control of the school; and accountability for schools and the personnel to whom autonomy and professionalization are accorded. The report contained 42 recommendations, grouped around the following themes: curriculum, governance in education, and the professionalization of teaching.

The Commission proposed restructuring the teaching cycles. They suggested the Ministry of Education adopt a cycle that would cover Kindergarten through Grade 8 or from Kindergarten to Grade 5 with a second intermediate cycle covering Grades 6 through 8. In this schema, the first year of high school would be the Ninth Grade. The Commission also recommended that the basic curriculum should translate the promise made about fostering the global development of the child and should include a common core of materials divided into four areas: social sciences and language (mother tongue and second language); mathematics and sciences; fine arts (music, visual arts); and practical training (physical education, technology, cooperative education). The Commission also emphasized the putting in place, from Kindergarten through Grade 8, of a common basic curriculum for all students. For the secondary schools (after Ninth Grade), the Commission wanted to ensure that all graduating students had a common knowledge base and the competencies needed to pursue their studies and professional development.

We should note that the Commission judged it appropriate to modify the school calendar to a length of 200 days, of which 190 would be spent on teaching, an increase from 182. In terms of measuring and evaluating learning, the Commission recommended establishing academic achievement norms and making the provincial exams obligatory, at least in mathematics, the sciences, and mother tongue and second languages.

The Commission suggested that efforts to bring together the various actors in the school system must be supported in order to encourage a greater participation by the private sector in the system. The Commission also recommended increasing the role and responsibilities of school boards in terms of fixing objectives, managing resources, and evaluating school achievements and that each school establish its own objectives and mission.

The Commission recommended that all teachers obtain a first cycle diploma (in arts or sciences) either before or at the same time as they obtain their bachelor's degree in education. In order to avoid having teachers teaching materials for which they have little academic preparation, the Commission also recommended that secondary school teaching certificates outline the areas for which the holder has acquired the necessary knowledge to teach.

In terms of the teaching profession, the Commission argued that internships should continue to be an integral part of the initial teacher training and that the university, the two teachers associations, and the Education Ministry should

collaborate more closely in order to select, encourage, support, and recognize teachers who were efficient, conscientious, and capable of pedagogical supervision. In terms of entering the profession, the Commission deemed it necessary that, in the first year of teaching, a teacher should have a lighter workload in terms of after-school activities, committee work, and supervision duties; that she or he should be assigned a mentor, who would be selected for her or his excellence in teaching and ability to work as a team and help colleagues; and that the new teacher be given any other support needed to allow her or him to move successfully into the teaching profession. The Commission also affirmed that, all through their careers, teachers should be offered training and that school authorities, along with interested parties, should emphasize strategies for effective teaching.

Following the recommendations laid down by the Downey-Landry Commission, the Forum on the Mission of Public Education was created and given the task of creating a mission statement for New Brunswick's public education system. In September 1993, Minister of Education Paul Duffie presented the document *The Mission of Public Education in New Brunswick*. The New Brunswick education system gave itself the mission of "guiding students in the acquisition of the qualities needed to become learners and lifelong learners in order to fully develop and to contribute to a society that is every changing, productive and democratic". According to the forum, the mission of the education system was postulated on a number of large and general ideas, notably:

- The role of the teacher is first and foremost to facilitate student learning and to create a lifelong desire to learn;
- The school program should be balanced in order to support the intellectual, physical, esthetic, moral, and social development of each person;
- Language and culture are the two principle axes around which all learning and teaching should take place.

The goals and objectives for the students were, most notably:

- To acquire the knowledge and fundamental skills necessary for understanding and expressing ideas;
- To develop attitudes that are likely to contribute to a society based on justice, peace and the respect for people and human rights;
- To acquire the necessary skills and attitudes for meeting the demands of the work world;
- To acquire the ability to adapt to change;
- To consider language and culture as the pivot points in their learning.

In 1993, the Educational Services Division (anglophone sector) published a document entitled *Education 2000 – Preparing Students for the New Century.* This document suggested that the anglophone sector take on the orientations defined by the Downey-Landry Commission report and the Forum on the Mission of Public Education and develop an action plan for the following three to five years. We will look at the same analytic parameters as above, namely the curriculum, governance, and the professionalization of teaching.

The anglophone sector announced that it would follow the recommendation of the Downey-Landry Commission in terms of dividing secondary education into two levels (intermediate or Grades 6 to 8, and secondary, or Grades 9 to 12).

The document noted that such a restructuring would require certain philosophic changes as well. The report suggested a new emphasis on developmental practices in elementary school, the adoption of a new philosophy at the intermediate level and a reform of the curriculum at the secondary level in terms of specific exit profiles. For all the levels, the favoured curriculum orientations drew from the ideas of effective schools. There is great importance placed on formulating expectations for the students, making the exit profiles explicit, the quality of school-family relationships, and putting in place performance measurements.

For the curriculum, the anglophone sector insisted the following two questions be answered: what is it that students should know and be able to do at the end of their schooling?; and how do you know when students know and can do what is expected of them? In order for the curriculum to respond to these questions, it must be based on performance (performance-based curriculum), which is very much in line with the declaration "achievement must be viewed as product rather than process".

For the primary schools, the anglophone sector proposed a 10-point exit profile. For the secondary schools, it was expected that by September 1994, at least one school in each district would embrace the practice of an in intermediate (middle) level. For high schools, the creation of exit profiles and assessments based on those profiles, and higher standards for students were supposed to improve the performance of all students, and create a strategic orientation for the future of secondary education in New Brunswick. This orientation would allow students to emphasize their future career and for schools to develop a coherent approach to the transition from school to work.

While maintaining that the Education Ministry had a responsibility to develop a central curriculum, the anglophone sector suggested that the responsibility for its implementation should be delegated to districts that had the capacity to carry it out. More fundamentally, the long term viability of school boards seemed to rest on their involvement in creating educational objectives, performance diagnostics of their schools and closer partnerships between the schools and the communities they serve. The boards should therefore reinforce their role in education by building various partnerships. Here the discourse on a certain decentralization is linked to that of partnership, and as we noted before, with that of accountability.

The quality of the relationship and the interaction between the community and the education system is crucial to effective education. This partnership will be even more solid when the system is able to be accountable to the population that has invested in education. To this end, putting in place a system of performance indicators to judge how students and the system are situated in relation to the explicit exit profiles seems necessary. Indicators should be developed in four areas (on the macro level): accessibility, effectiveness, efficiency, and pertinence. On the local level, each district should build a system of indicators with the goal of attaining two objectives: allowing district personnel to have an experience in evaluation; and creating a dozen indicators that could be used in a local or provincial level.

There was also the idea of a joint participation with the Foundation of the Maritime Provinces for a project of "expected outcomes statement" for high school graduates of the Maritimes. The priority would be given to the provincial program for evaluating learning in mathematics and English as well as French as a second language.

To improve the quality of the teaching personnel, *Education 2000* suggested most notably:

- To increase the university teacher training programs from four to five years;
- To improve the internships during training;
- To experiment with an induction program for beginning teachers;
- To ask school districts to support teacher networking and interdisciplinary professional development for teachers.

Following the publication of the report from the Commission on Excellence in Education as well as the creation of a mission statement for public education, the Educational Services Department (francophone sector) published a document in 1995 entitled *The Primary School*. The francophone sector also created a program for the renewal of secondary schooling. The document on primary schools supported the idea that for education to be a success, it was not enough to know. One had to know how to do and how to be. It is therefore necessary to give a shape to primary schools that would take advantage of the human and material resources available in order to maximize the quality of education services. It is hoped that there would be thought given to this subject: the report proposed various actions that would lead to the renewal of primary schools. This document is different from the one produced by the anglophone sector. In its principle orientations, this document appears more cognitivist and socio-constructivist. In its pedagogical conceptions, the document is clearly much more centred on the process of learning than on performance measurements from external standards and on methods that are more active, differentiated, and diverse. Finally, the document gives weight not only to summative evaluation approaches but also to approaches that are diagnostic and formative. As well, the evaluation is seen as something to be done naturally and gradually, taking into account the learning rhythm of the student rather than the rhythm of the group. As for the curriculum the report valorizes, it is essentially that proposed by the Downey-Landry Commission, including its various dispositions but with a particular emphasis on the learning of French.

In the context of a system focused around both the learner and the learning, the student's spirit of initiative, his or her autonomy, and the recognition of his or her competencies in the building of knowledge are considered essential. As for the role of the teacher, it is about creating an environment propitious to learning, arousing students' curiosity, and supporting their efforts. In the classroom, the asking of questions is considered paramount. The teacher should also highlight each person's competencies for teamwork, both for the teaching personnel, for the students and for the other partners as well as staying abreast of new research into education.

In contrast to the document produced by the anglophone sector, that of the francophone sector favours a primary school covering eight years (and not a middle school option). The advantages of keeping students together from Kindergarten through Grade 8 are: a more "family" type school that emphasizes attachment, security and a sense of continuity; teachers who have more time to get to know their students; and students who have more time to prepare for the transition from elementary to secondary school.

In March 2003, the francophone sector published a document entitled *A Renewal of Secondary Schools*. Covering a period of three years, the first changes

announced started in September 2003 and will be completed during the school year 2005-06. In terms of its philosophy, the document for the secondary schools is in line with that for the elementary schools.

The Two Axes of Policies and Government Intervention in Education

In February 1996, following the publication of its document, *A Renewed Education System for New Brunswick*, the Ministry of Education published in December its white book entitled *Proposal for New Brunswick's Education Act*. The renewal plan was based around two axes for the second half of the decade: standardization, performance, and accountability; and governance in education.

The first axis, standardization, performance, and accountability, covers the totality of questions about the curriculum, including those on objectives, the curriculum itself, and learning assessment. As part of the renewal plan, a document entitled *A Quality Education and a Renewed Education System in New Brunswick* was submitted to the principal players for consultation on three major themes: clearer objectives, higher standards, and responsibility and accountability. The following objectives were also proposed: Making reading and writing a priority; concentrating on the basics: language, mathematics, sciences, social studies; and using computers as learning tools.

In 1996, the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (APEF) published a report entitled *Essential Elements in the Student Exit Profile in Atlantic Canada*. In this document, the key elements of the exit profile were: civic responsibility, communication, technological competencies, personal development, artistic expression, problem solving, and the French language and culture. Common curricula were suggested to improve each province's curricula by using the competencies and resources of each. From 1996 onwards, curricula in public schools in Atlantic Canada were composed of the following: common curricula created on a regional level; and curricula specific to each province. In 1996, the common curricula included mathematics, science, and language programs for students in Grades 1 to 12. In 2001, they also included arts, French immersion, social sciences, and technology. The common curriculum thus became a larger and ever-growing part of the entire curriculum. We can then talk about a process of standardization and uniformity in curriculum matters specific to the Atlantic Provinces, and in a sense, a form of centralization or collaboration between the four education systems. This evolution is in the same vein as the bringing in force, in 1996, of a provincial high school diploma.

In its report, the Downey-Landry Commission thought it necessary that New Brunswick actively participate in the School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP) of the Council of Education Ministers, Canada. Taking into account the relative autonomy of the anglophone and francophone sectors, policies on the administration and use of school result evaluations were created for each of the two sectors. For the anglophone sector, according to the Provincial Evaluation Program, the students of New Brunswick would be evaluated at the provincial level in: Third Grade English (reading and writing) and mathematics, while the French immersion students would take exams in reading and writing in French and

a mathematics exam in either French or English; Fifth Grade English (reading and writing) as well as mathematics and sciences, while the French immersion students would take exams in reading and writing in English and those for mathematics and sciences in English or French; in the intermediate cycle, in mathematics, reading and writing; and, in Grade 11, in English and mathematics.

In 2002, the francophone sector updated its policies on learning assessment in a document entitled *Provincial Policy for the Learning Assessment - Evaluating for Learning*. The policy foresaw that each year in September, all students in Grades 4 to 8 would receive diagnostic evaluations in French and mathematics. These evaluations would be formative. In high school, at the end of each semester, in January and in June, 14 provincial exams (two in French, two in mathematics, two in chemistry, two in history, two in physics, two in geography, and two in English as a second language) would be administered. The exams would be obligatory for obtaining the diploma and would count for 40 per cent of a student's final grade.

We should also mention that in April 2002, the francophone sector of the Ministry of Education put into place the School Evaluation Program, which was a follow up to the school success plans. The success plan is made up of two distinct documents: the five-year planning document and the yearly improvement plan. The program aimed to equip schools with an evaluation process and tools that would allows them to better grasp their reality, to better determine their strengths, weaknesses and challenges, and to engage in an improvement process in an effective way; to help maintain a positive atmosphere in the schools; to encourage collaborative work; and to facilitate the general running of the school as well as to give to the various players in the schools data about the success of objectives set out in the school's success plan. Another major event had an impact on the two sections: the publication of the SAIP results for 2000. The political impact of this publication was as far reaching as the Plan for Quality Learning of the Lord government in 2003. Therefore, it is important to look at this episode and its political fallout.

In April 2002, in a document entitled SAIP 2000 Results for the Students of New Brunswick, the measurement and evaluation team made public the student results from the SAIP. Student performance on the international tests of knowledge was deemed by some to be inadequate. Essentially, the results in mathematics and science were below the Canadian average. Boys had the lowest reading scores in the country; they did not even reach the average for the OECD.

The publication of the SAIP results raised many questions. In response, the anglophone sector of the Ministry of Education organized a series of consultations at the ministerial and school district level. The results of these consultations were presented on July 17, 2002 in a document entitled *Minister's response to SAIP – Consultation by Anglophone Sector*. This document offered a synthesis of the consultation, proposed an improvement plan and contained specific actions to be taken.

Among the specific actions proposed, some were representative of the overall orientation favoured, for example: emphasizing early literacy by developing an action plan for Kindergarten to Grade 2 for each district and establishing literacy performance standards for Kindergarten to Grade 2; and planning for success in Kindergarten through Grade 2 by:

- creating a committee to establish performance standards for Grades 2, 5, 8, and 12;
- implementing the "School Education Review Process" (audit) in all districts within three years;
- maximizing the time given to teaching;
- identifying promising and effective practices for supporting student learning;
- training district personnel to work with the database in order to correctly use the information resulting from the exams;
- encouraging teachers to use accountability practices that would impact education; and,
- keeping parents and students informed of what students are supposed to be learning, the performance demanded of them, and the behaviour required.

New Brunswick participated in the second part of the SAIP in April 2003 and is awaiting the results.

On April 23, 2003, Premier Bernard Lord unveiled a new policy with the goal of building a quality education system for elementary and secondary schools as part of the new Quality Learning Agenda. A general goal was established: to ensure that New Brunswick would be classified third in Canada in terms of its students' scholastic achievement, awarding of postsecondary diplomas and participation by graduates in training and postsecondary studies.

For teaching at the elementary and secondary levels, five major goals associated with 71 specific measures were laid out:

- Find a way for students to attain the highest standards of excellence;
- Ensure the global development of the child;
- Promote the development of dynamic schools in engaged collectivities;
- Push for a harmonious transition to training and postsecondary studies; and,
- Ensure accountability throughout the education system.

The goal was that all students be able to read at the end of the Second Grade (90 per cent meeting this norm and 20 per cent exceeding it). Three new measures would be put in place over the next two years: each student would be assessed before starting kindergarten in order to identify children in need of help with reading; a new reading test would be created for assessment at the end of Grade 2; and measures would be put in place to meet the needs of children who have not attained the norms in grade 2. The Lord government agreed to add 125 new teaching posts each year over a period of five years.

Before exploring what the renewal plan suggested, we need to go back in time in order to describe and understand the structural changes that happened prior to 1996.

In 1992, the Downey-Landry Commission supported the idea that, in previous years, the school boards had not had real authority over their finances, the hiring of personnel, and the curriculum. The Commission suggested that the boards should have more freedom to fix objectives for their schools and to evaluate the results. However, the Commission also noted that the school boards should themselves be ready to delegate greater responsibilities for running things to school principals and their personnel. Also suggested were closer partnerships between the school boards, the schools, and the communities.

That same year, the government undertook a major reorganization of the school districts: the restructuring of these districts into large administrative units. In a document from January 1992 entitled *Consultation Meetings on the Reorganization of School Districts*, the Minister of Education and the school boards agreed that, at the time, it was necessary for all public services to participate in budget reductions and a reorganization of responsibilities. The following modifications were proposed:

- To create a provincial forum on public teaching that would emphasize collaboration and partnership so that the school boards, the education Ministry, and the different players could communicate among themselves.
- As a result of their areas becoming larger, the school boards would focus their attention on questions of a more regional nature as well as the application directives and would move away from specifically local issues. The boards would deal with questions of an educational nature rather than an administrative nature. Their main areas of focus would be the effectiveness of schools, the assessment of academic results and the creation of links between the schools and the communities.
- Because they were now larger and there was a greater distance between the schools and the boards' administrative centres, school districts would delegate certain powers to the schools. To ensure good communication between the parents, the schools, and the school boards, school advisory committees would be put into place. These committees would keep the board up to date on questions such as rules and curricula, after-school activities, cafeteria services, support services, closing of schools, and parent-teacher meetings.

According to estimates at the time, reducing the school districts from 42 to 18 saved $6.4 million.

Four years later, the Renewal Plan brought in many changes that went beyond what the Downey-Landry Commission wanted. As of March 1, 1996, the administrative entities called school boards were dissolved. Their rights, responsibilities, and obligations would be assumed by the Ministry of Education. However, the provincial government kept the 18 school districts, but put in place only eight administrations. Each administration was responsible for two or three districts. These administrations, five anglophone and three francophone, reported to the Assistant Undersecretary for Education Services (francophone or anglophone) of the Ministry of Education. In this structure, each district had an education administration as well as teaching personnel. The role of the administration was to look after pedagogical questions and the academic achievement of its district.

As of July 1, 1996, the number of school district personnel went from 469 to 346 people, with 80 percent of the positions abolished being administrative in nature and 20 per cent of a teaching nature.

The new structure was also there to allow parents a more direct participation in the school, the district, and the province. Each school created an advisory committee with a mandate to give opinions on the pedagogy. The parent representatives for each committee were elected by parents of children attending the school. In each of the 18 school districts, parent advisory committees were created for

each district as well. These committees were made up of parents from the school advisory committees and had the role of advising the administrations on district level pedagogical questions and to evaluate the progress being made. They also had the mandate to ensure communication between the parents and each school community. Finally, an elected representative from each district Parent Advisory Committee would be part of one of the two Provincial Education Commissions (anglophone and francophone). These commissions were to advise the Ministry of Education and approve spending plans.

In accordance with the principle of linguistic duality in education, two provincial commissions (one francophone, one anglophone) were established. These commissions advised the Minister of Education on all questions directly related to the school system and ensured communication between the parents in each district and in each school. The commissions were made up of a parent representative drawn from each district as well as three to five members named by the minister.

Established in 1996, this new governance structure had as an objective to push for greater accountability, to better define of the axes of responsibility, and to increase parent participation. However, in January 2000, in a document entitled *About Governing Public Education*, the Lord government invited the people of New Brunswick to offer their suggestions and comments to the Special Education Committee of the Legislative Assembly on the conception of this new structure. The principle recommendation was to create district education councils, democratically elected at the local level, and to ensure a serious participation by parents in the governance structure. This would be a return to the old school districts, abolished a few years before.

On November 29, 2000, Premier Bernard Lord and Education Minister Elvy Robichaud unveiled the new governance structure for public education. The main element in this new structure was the establishment of 14 District Education Councils (DEC) having local decision-making power. The number of school districts was reduced from 18 to 14. Each district had its own general directorate and personnel, which increased the number of administrative units from eight to 14. It was hoped that the general directorate would focus its attention on one district only and that decision makers would be more accessible to parents, students, employees, and members of the collectivity.

On July 1, 2001, An Act to Amend the Education Act came into effect. It modified the Education Act in order to include a new governance structure for public education. The act saw the redistribution of powers and responsibilities between the Ministry of Education and the District Education Councils. The latter would replace the parent advisory committees in the districts as well as the francophone and anglophone commissions. In some ways, this represents a return to the structure in place before 1996, but the school councils are now district education councils at the school.

Table 4.
Political parties and their education ministers

Premier	Political party	Years in power	Minister of Education
Frank McKenna	Liberal	1987-97	Shirley Dysart (1987-91) Paul Duffie (1991-94) Vaughan Blaney (April 28 to Sept.14, 1994) James Lockyer (1994-97)
J.Raymond Fréchette (interim)	Liberal	1997-98	Bernard Richard (July 1997 – Feb. 1998) Bernard Thériault (Feb. 1998 - May 1998)
Camille Thériault	Liberal	1997-98	Bernard Richard (May 1998 – June 1999)
Bernard Lord	Progressive Conservative	1999 -	Elvy Robichaud (June 1999 - October 2001) Dennis Furlong (October 2001 - June 2003) Madeleine Dubé (June 2003 -)

Table 5.
The Important Events and Statements from 1990 to 2003

Events	Year	Texts/policies/statements
	1990	Establishment of public kindergartens - Strategic action plan
Establishment of universal public kindergartens	1991	Interim report on education
Creation of the Commission on Excellence in Education (McKenna)		
Reorganization of school districts	1992	
	May	- Report by the Commission for Excellence in Education *School for a New Century* - Consultation meetings on school district reorganization
	1993	
Forum on the mission of public education	June	
	Sept	Statement: The Mission of Public Education in New Brunswick
	Autumn	- *Education 2000: Preparing Students for the New Century* (anglophone sector) - Schools-Orderly Places of Learning
	1994	*Best practices for inclusion*
	1995	*The elementary school* (francophone sector)
Elimination of school councils	1996	*A Renewed Education System for New Brunswick*

Continued on next page

Events	Year	Texts/policies/statements
		White book– Proposal for New Brunswick's Education Act (Education Act to replace the School Act)
Change of premier J.Raymond Fréchette (interim) – Camille Thériault	1997	
	1998	- Evaluation program for teaching personnel (francophone sector) - *High School Graduation – The New School Leaving* Age - The Findings and Recommendations of the School Leaving Age Task Force (anglophone sector)
Change of political party The Progressive Conservatives, with Bernard Lord as head, take power.	1999	- Positive Learning Environment Policy - *Evaluation program for teaching personnel* (2nd edition)
	2000	- *About Governing Public Education*
Reorganization of the education system's governance	2001	- Act Amending the Education Act - *Guidelines and standards for services for students with sensory disabilities*
	2002	- Publication of the SAIP test results - Minister's response to the SAIP - School evaluation program (francophone sector) -Provincial policy on learning assessment (francophone sector) - Guidelines and Standards – Educational Planning for Students With Exceptionalities
	2003	- Quality Learning Plan - *New Brunswick Department of Education and First Nation – Agreement on primary and secondary education*

Table 6.
Indicators of Education in New Brunswick

Probability of obtaining a secondary school diploma	**1999-2000**	
Total rate	86%	
Rate of obtaining at the usual age	73%	
Rate of obtaining after the usual age	13%	
Total per-student educational spending	**2003-04**	
Elementary and secondary education ($)	$7,196	
Numbers average students by class	**2003-04**	
Kindergarten	19.9 students	
1st at the 8th year	24.2 students	
Enrollment	**1989-90**	**1999-2000**
Elementary and secondary education	136,527 students	127,982 students
Number of schools in function	**1989-90**	**1999-2000**
	459 schools	380 schools

Conclusion

In terms of its education policies, New Brunswick reveals particular characteristics: the only officially bilingual province of Canada, its linguistic duality resonates throughout the education domain in policies that are at times shared by the two groups and at other times specific to each group

The decade of the 1990s was marked by important reflections on education, notably from the Downey-Landry Commission which, along with others that followed, sought to redefine the mission of schools in New Brunswick and attempted to ensure quality and excellence. From 1998 onwards, most likely as a result of the SAIP, the evaluative dimension took precedence over the renewal of vision in education. No doubt this corresponds to changes already moving through the other Maritime Provinces, Canada, and North America.

In terms of structures, New Brunswick radically changed its education authorities, their responsibilities and their powers more or less every four years (1992, 1996, 2001). An effort has been made to find the right balance and the future will tell us if this has happened.

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Chapter 8
Policy Narrative for Nova Scotia

Mike Corbett, Derek Copp, Alan Wright, and Marie-Jeanne Monette

Introduction

Enrolment in the Nova Scotia public school system has been in decline since the late 1970s. The total student population dropped from 185,585 in 1980-81, to 165,739 in 1990-91 and 150,599 in 2002-03; by 2006-07, that number is expected to drop to around 133,000 (NS Department of Education, 2004). Mirroring this trend, the number of teachers employed in public schools in the province declined from 10,684 in 1990-91 to 9,592 in 2002-03. While enrolment numbers have decreased, however, graduation rates[1] have climbed from 52.8 percent in 1980-81, to 67 percent in 1990-91, and 80 percent in 2001-02.

Through the 1990s, public K-12 education has been beset by a number of challenges that go beyond declining enrolments and an increasingly tight fiscal regimen. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, educational policy was a focused on multiple discourses of change at the levels of funding, governance, curriculum, accountability, parental and stakeholder involvement, inclusion practices in the schools, the nature of teacher professionalism, and teacher unionism. The early 1990s saw a succession of province-wide consultations on educational reform, beginning in 1991 with the Select Committee Hearings (essentially a Royal Commission), through a series of consultations on school governance (school board amalgamation), outcome-based curriculum, school funding, and the promotion of educational change generally.

Through the 1990s and into the current decade, the major players in the policy discourse field have been the Department of Education, the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, the seven provincial school boards and the Nova Scotia school boards Association. Other minor players include the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies and the Nova Scotia Home and Schools Federation. Despite an ongoing funding-based and ideological conflict between school boards and the NSTU, and a major School Board amalgamation process in 1996-97, the province's schools continue

to be funded by a formula that combines provincial monies with contributions from municipal units. Through the 1990s several municipalities withheld or threatened to withhold funds from school boards, and system budgeting continued to be as precarious as it had been in the 1980s. School boards have begun to exploit alternative sources of revenue, such as facility fees, continuing and adult education programming, the recruitment of foreign students, and online programming. Still, revenues from these sources amount to no more than 5 percent of total operating budgets (see Table 7).

Table 7.
School Board Funding by Source, Nova Scotia, 2002-03

	Provincial	Municipal	Board Revenue
Cape Breton - Victoria	85.9%	9.4%	3.5%
Strait	77.1%	16.0%	4.9%
Chignecto-Central	80.7%	13.6%	2.7%
Halifax	70.5%	27.3%	1.3%
Annapolis Valley	79.0%	15.4%	3.5%
Southwest	78.7%	18.1%	1.2%
CSAP (francophone)	96.1%	0%	0.7%

While the bulk of funding for the public K-12 education continues to flow from provincial coffers, Table 7 illustrates how school board funding structures continue to be markedly inequitable, reflecting the variety of economic circumstances in different parts of the province, particularly the varying ability of municipal units to fund educational services. For instance, the Halifax Regional Board (set amid a healthy urban residential tax base) receives more than one-quarter of its funding from municipal units,[3] while the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional Board receives less than one-tenth of its funds from municipal contributions. Ironically, the most recent funding review commission reporting on the problem of school funding in Nova Scotia recommended, in 2005, funding cuts to three rural School Boards and a large funding increase to the Halifax Regional school board (NS Department of Education, 2005a).

This policy narrative is supported by an analysis of Department of Education documents, including annotated bibliographies from Department of Education sources, Nova Scotia Teachers Union documents and five interviews, two with senior Department officials, two with union executive staff members, and one with a school board member and former Chair. From 1987 to 2002, the lead author of this narrative worked as a public school teacher; as such, his perspective as an ordinary participant in the reforms of the 1990s is reflected in the text.

The 1990s: The Permanent Crisis and the Debate over Teacher Professionalism

The 1990s began with a serious deterioration of labour relations in Nova Scotia's public schools, following the passage of Bill 160 (1991) by incoming Premier Donald Cameron. Arguing that the 16-year administration of Premier John

Buchanan had left the province in a desperate fiscal crisis, the Cameron government refused to negotiate with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union and used Bill 160 to freeze their salaries for three years. All other civil servants in the province, who had just finished contract negotiations, had their salaries frozen for only two years, leaving teachers to feel that they had been discriminated against.

Economic rationale has remained in the background of all educational reform through the 1990s and into the first years of the current decade. A funding review work group comprising representatives of various educational stakeholders — school boards, Nova Scotia School Boards Association (NSSBA), Department of Education and other government Departments — met from 1992-99 to make recommendations to the Minister[4], invariably calling for significant infusions of funds into the province's education system. These recommendations were just as invariably ignored, because, as one Department official argued, the work group operated from a blank sheet, making recommendations that could not be supported in the context of the province's financial constraints. The work group was replaced in 2000 by a body called the Education Consultation Forum, comprising Department representatives and school board superintendents, but without NSTU representation.

The other level of economic rationale in policy discourse in the 1990s was the pervasive call from the Department, beginning in the administration of Premier John Savage under Education Minister John MacEachern, for what it termed a "world class education system". The Minister's vision of this world class system included a shift from a curriculum that required teachers to interpret goals and objectives toward one focused on pre-specified outcomes, accompanied by an accountability system that became increasingly standardized through the late 1990s and into the present decade. These major shifts in curriculum and accountability schemes effectively redefined teacher professionalism in Nova Scotia from a system of relative autonomy and school-based (effective schools) professional development promoted in the 1980s, to one focused on outcomes and accountability in the present decade.

From the point of view of NSTU officials, Bill 160 represented a radical departure from what had been, until then, a relatively good relationship between government and teachers. Bill 160 also seems to mark the beginning of a deep-seated sense among teachers that they are the victims of an ongoing campaign that simultaneously discriminates against them and deprofessionalizes their work. Beginning in 1992, an NSTU Annual Council resolution directed teachers to withdraw from participation on all Department committees, marking a watershed in the demise of teacher input into curriculum development. At the same time, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), was developing structures to broaden standardized curriculum and mass assessment instruments. Early indications of this development surfaced in 1993 when the Eastern Canadian arm of CMEC, the Maritime Provinces Educational Foundation (renamed the Atlantic Provinces Educational Foundation (APEF) in 1995, when Newfoundland and Labrador joined the group) convened a consultation with affected provincial teacher organizations. At this meeting, provincial teacher organizations were presented with the now familiar framework for educational reform as a "fait accompli," as one NSTU official put it.

Cameron's wage freeze was followed, in 1993, by the election of the government of John Savage and another deficit fighting campaign, one that saw teachers' wages effectively rolled back 2 percent by the imposition of four days of unpaid leave (dubbed Savage Days). The fiscal crisis probably reached its lowest point with respect to teachers in 1994, when the Savage government announced a 6.4 percent cut in education funding and predicted that between 600 and 800 teaching positions would be cut from the system, before entering into contract negotiations with the province's teachers. A provincial teachers strike was probably avoided by a muddled strike vote, in which the results were confused by an unclear question and a behind-the-scenes early retirement deal negotiated just prior to the crucial stages of contract negotiations.[5]

Following the labour turmoil and rounds of consultations of the early 1990s, the middle years of the decade were marked by a series of policy documents aimed at restructuring the province's education system at the level of curriculum and governance. While there is considerable disagreement about the nature of educational change in Nova Scotia over the past decade, there is broad agreement that the 1994–96 period was a policy watershed. The Department of Education introduced a series of key restructuring documents in the mid-1990s (NS Department of Education, 1994a, 1994f, 1995a, 1995d, 1996b, 1996c), along with a new Education Act (NS Department of Education, 1995b). These changes led to a regional reorganization of curriculum with a series of APEF outcome-based foundation documents, a major school board amalgamation initiative, and the institution of a process for the implementation of school councils. One school board official called this process "change mania," while a Department of Education official admitted, in late 2002, that the Department was still in the midst of implementing the wide-ranging changes set out by these key change documents.

The Department is still in the process of setting in place the structures and processes envisioned in the restructuring documents of the mid-1990s. The government's most recent direction-setting statement, *Learning for Life* (2002), addresses a wide range of issues, including curriculum, governance, teacher education, accountability, inclusion, and health. As of 2005, the vision from *Learning for Life* has been more tightly articulated with accountability initiatives and coupled with the language of population health and active living, as well as with a discourse of social equity (Nova Scotia, 2005). Other initiatives include an increased emphasis on technology and ongoing work in school governance (mainly board restructuring and mandated participation of visible minorities in school boards). While governance restructuring initiatives have been more or less successful or are still in process, other recent changes have met with mixed success.

In an attempt to deal with its fiscal crisis, the Department engaged in a series of failed moves that skirted the edge of privatization. The first of these was Knowledge House, a private company that specialized in electronic learning, and which contracted with the Department of Education for various services. After a flurry of highly publicized announcements and futuristic visions of the electronic school through 1999 and 2000, Knowledge House, the Department's major e-learning collaborator collapsed in September of 2001. It came crashing down amidst a series of very public scandals, the most notable involving an RCMP fraud investigation

into the Strait Regional School Board's secret guarantee of a $500,000 loan to then-Superintendent Jack Sullivan (NS Department of Education, 2001f).

The second foray into privatization was the Public Private Partnership (Triple P or P-3) school idea of the late 1990s. The P-3 plan allowed for high-tech schools to be built by private contractors and leased back to the government. In the 1999 election, P-3 schools became a contested issue and, once elected, John Hamm's administration quietly discontinued the program in the midst of persistent questions about the actual contractual obligations set out in the P-3 agreements. An NSTU-led campaign called P-3 schools into question as yet another part of an emerging privatization agenda. In 2000, Education Minister Jane Purvis announced that the province's 17 new schools would not be built using the P-3 model. While the P-3 idea occasionally resurfaces in debate as the province struggles to meet the challenge of replacing and maintaining its deteriorating school infrastructure(for example in 2003-04), it does not appear that the Department is interested in moving in this direction (NS Department of Education, 2001f). In fact, in the 2005 provincial budget, P-3 lease obligations were listed as a $478 million liability, with an annual $29 million lease servicing cost. In the budget speech the Minister commented that the province would avoid this problem in the future by owning its school buildings once again.

On a more positive note, through the late 1990s the Department invested heavily in information technology initiatives, including connecting all of the province's schools to its high-speed EdNet network, and providing computers and training through the 1999 Information Economy Initiative (IEI) and the IEIE extension project announced in 2002.

The fiscal crisis of the early 1990s and subsequent cuts to the system made Nova Scotia's public K-12 education system one of the most poorly funded in the country by the end of the 1990s. By 1997-98, Nova Scotia's per-student funding for public elementary and secondary schools was the second lowest in Canada, and by 2000-01 the province reached the bottom where it remained until 2002-03, the last year for which comparative data are available as of this writing (Nault, 2004). In a climate of fiscal restraint, the province's teachers were inundated with a rapid series of curriculum and policy change documents that expanded the expectations of teachers and essentially redefined teacher working conditions and the very conditions of professionalism. One of the most significant developments was the move toward standardization of curriculum and assessment under the rubric of accountability.

Accountability

The first years of the current decade have seen a turn toward issues of accountability, and the APEF has developed standardized assessment instruments for several high school science courses and for Grade 12 English. Until 1996, the province used the Nova Scotia Achievement Tests (NSAT); the NSAT was replaced in 1997 by Department-developed program assessments in elementary mathematics and language arts, which were designed to reflect newly developed APEF curriculum documents. The Department also has in place a comprehensive

standardized testing regime, much of which was released into the public domain with little contextual or historical information to support its interpretation.

Predictably, the publication of standardized assessment results has garnered public attention. In early 2003 the Department released results from its most recent Grade 5 mathematics assessment, generating popular concern about performance of the province's mathematics programming. Recently, the Department has voiced concerns about achievement results in national and international tests, particularly in literacy and mathematics, and has subsequently focused specific attention of what it is calling "basics".[6] In May of 2002, Education Minister Jane Purvis released a new set of educational initiatives (Nova Scotia, 2002d), apparently in response to Nova Scotia's performance on national and international standardized testing, establishing her Ministry's intention to address the province's performance with back-to-basics mathematics literacy initiatives and assessment instruments.

Other new initiatives include a series of literacy programs that began in 1999 at the early elementary level, and are being worked through the system several grade levels at a time along with ongoing math program development. This brings the province's curriculum into line with the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) standards, a back-to-basics initiative that mandates compulsory time allotments for literacy and numeracy in elementary schools, a standardized report card, physical activity and healthy eating programs, a pre-primary program, and lower elementary school class size caps. These programs represent an elaboration of the curriculum direction set by the APEF documents dating from the mid-1990s.

The administration and reporting of standardized tests has remained problematic. For instance, Prince Edward Island has refused to participate in APEF standardized examinations, preferring instead to develop its own assessment regime. Nova Scotia is following the lead of several other provinces publishing league tables of school performance. Both high school and elementary results are now being published on a school-by-school basis. For example, the Department's Grade 6 literacy assessment instrument (first administered in October 2003) has replaced earlier qualitative language arts program assessment instruments. The new assessment established individual, school, and school board level literacy scores.

The Department claimed it would make every attempt to be sensitive about how the data from these tests were used, but then proceeded to release raw scores to the media on a school-by-school basis. Since many of Nova Scotia's elementary schools are very small, it is quite possible to identify individuals from these results. This Grade 6 assessment will lead to a similarly structured high-stakes Grade 9 literacy assessment that students will be required to pass in order to receive a full high school completion certificate. In 2005, the government announced that it would be expanding its literacy testing downward to Grade 3 (Nova Scotia Government, 2005).

Linked to concerns about student performance are concerns about teacher accountability, teacher professional development and teacher certification, training and retention. Beginning in 1992, the Department initiated a mandatory recertification scheme, which, according to an NSTU source, was closely wedded to the model adopted in Ontario. Recertification was said to be an important part of the MacLelland government's attempt to override contract protection and teacher

tenure with Bill 39, the original revised Education Act (Nova Scotia, 1995b). The recertification initiative survived several changes of government and a concerted union lobby, and was finally implemented in 1999, requiring teachers to complete and document 50 hours of professional development work over five years. By the beginning of the current decade, both the Department and the NSTU began to express concern about potential teacher shortages in the near future (NS Department of Education, 2001e; NSTU, 2001).

Governance, School Board Amalgamation and Boundary Questions

At the beginning of the 1990s, Nova Scotia had 22 district school boards, which roughly paralleled the geography of individual counties. In 1991, Nova Scotians were finally granted fully elected school boards, bowing to public pressure and ending a system of partly elected, partly appointed School Boards. Despite this apparent democratization, it soon became clear that an overhaul of the province's schools' governance structure was in the offing. Both the Cameron and Savage governments hinted broadly at sweeping changes to the educational system through 1992, 1993, and 1994, justified by talk of economies of scale, duplication of services (particularly administrative services), and the way in which small school boards were often unable to provide students with a wide range of educational service.

One indicator of the scope of the rhetoric came in 1993, when the Savage government established a pilot project to investigate the feasibility of site-based management. While the site-based management concept was not pursued, the pilots did serve as a model for the development of mandated school councils throughout the province, beginning in 1996. Most of the province's schools now have school councils with little or no control of funds and governing authority largely limited to internal school improvement plans[7].

In 1996, the Department amalgamated the 22 district school boards into seven regional school boards, one of which is a separate francophone board not confined to a particular geography. The newly formed Conseil Scholaire Acadien Provincial (CSAP) operates schools in various parts of the province, including a school in the metro Halifax area and schools in Clare and Isle Madame, where significant francophone populations reside. In 1996-97 these large regional boards were constituted by including all members of the former district school boards. The brief initial mandate of these boards (some which had more than 50 members) was to prepare the administrative framework and policy processes for the new regional school boards, which were, in turn, charged with the broader mandate of public school administration under the new Education Act of 1996.

The restructured boards now range in size from the the Halifax Regional School Board, which serves close to 60,000 students, to the Strait Regional School Board, with 10,000 students; the Conseil Scholaire Acadienne Provincial serves fewer than 5,000 students. The boundary review concluded that the new restructured boards were functioning well, with the exception of the Southwest Regional Board (SWRSB). This led to the SWRSB board pilot project (2000-01), and the eventual splitting of this board into two educational jurisdictions (the Tri-County and South

Shore Boards) with a centralized umbrella administrative structure (which retained the SWRSB name) responsible for all non-educational matters (e.g. maintenance, property services, and transportation). In August 2004, this structure was effectively abandoned and the Tri-County and South Shore Boards were recognized in legislation as fully responsible school boards.

Beginning in the late 1990s with the controversy surrounding the fiscally sound, but dysfunctional, SWRSB and persistent financial and budgetary problems in other school boards — culminating with the discovery of financial irregularities in the Strait District and Chignecto Central school boards (NS Department of Education, 2001f) — there have been calls for the complete dismantling of school boards[8]. The question of school governance remains in transition. From the union perspective, school boards are now forced to implement unworkable and contradictory policies. According to one source in the NSTU, school boards are now used as "heat shields" deflecting negative attention from the Department, which has devolved responsibility for policy implementation while retaining control over key areas such as curriculum, testing and financial accounting[9]. NSTU and school board sources speculate that the Department's agenda is to eliminate school boards, or at least to radically restructure them in such a way as to allow the Minister the exercise of greater centralized financial control. Sources in the Department (predictably) assert that there is no such agenda.

Curriculum Change: From Core to Outcomes

By 1991, the Department of Education was pursuing what it was calling a core program of studies. The core would become the basic educational package offered to all Nova Scotian students, particularly at the secondary level, where there continued to be wide disparities in the educational services provided in different parts of the province. The intention of the core program was to establish a funded bottom line of educational offerings that could be supplemented by local governments or by other alternative or supplementary funding arrangements worked out locally[10].

The core program discussions of the early 1990s were soon overshadowed by the movement toward educational outcomes, particularly under Education Minister John MacEachern in the early- to mid-1990s. This shift marked a fundamental reorientation of the discourse around school curriculum, changing the focus, as the Department put it, from what teachers do (the program) to what students do (the outcome). Critics saw it as an ideologically driven agenda of more or less standard outcomes dictated by the corporate lobby spreading across the country under the auspices of the CMEC. They argued that the key shift moved from equality in program offerings under the rubric of core programming, toward making the system more outcomes-driven and competitive. The Department argued that public schooling had entered a new era of global competition and public accountability where it was crucial to be clear and explicit about learning outcomes and their measurement, in order to make the province's human capital world class. The Department's accountability discourse was framed in terms of the public's right to know "how their children and their schools are doing"; without clear learning

outcomes and testing, officials argued, this would be impossible to do. In the ensuing decade, the idea of standardized testing had become entrenched to the point that Deputy Minister Dennis Cochrane could comment to a 2005 stakeholders' forum that people now ask when to test children rather than whether to test them.

Despite widespread consultation in 1994 and 1995 about which outcomes ought to be included in the province's curriculum, the 1994 APEF-produced discussion documents (NS Department of Education, 1994f) remained virtually unchanged from their earliest drafts (NSTU, 1996b). The outcomes agenda enshrined in curriculum ended up largely mirroring the skills and attitudes identified by the Conference Board of Canada (1992) and the Corporate Higher Education Forum (1992), following the US Secretary's Commission on Achieving the Necessary Skills (SCANS, 1991) project (NSTU, 1996b).

Another important shift in direction for curriculum was the introduction of regional initiatives under the APEF umbrella. The APEF's central mandate has become curriculum development and assessment across jurisdictions in the Atlantic Provinces. Very suddenly, it seemed, the APEF began to develop curriculum in language arts and secondary sciences and then in mathematics (MacKinnon 2001; NSTU, 1996). The point of departure was 1994 with the first releases from the APEF, beginning with a document outlining the structure of new Atlantic Canadian curriculum documents in an outcomes-based framework (APEF, 1994).

Through the APEF, the Atlantic Provinces pool resources and continue to create common curriculum documents and mass assessment instruments in key subject areas. By 2002, the APEF had released thirty curriculum guides and curriculum foundation documents, along with numerous supporting documents (APEF, 2002). Critics argue that the APEF has effectively stripped provincial Departments of the ability to control curricula, while supporters see it as a way to be both efficient and accountable in lean times. The APEF has not been entirely successful in standardizing curricula and assessment across the Atlantic Provinces; Prince Edward Island, for example, has maintained control of its curriculum and testing. Additionally, several of the APEF Grade 12 exit examinations have been fraught with problems, such as testing before implementation of the curriculum.

Social Equity Issues: Inclusion, Ethnicity and Social Class

Inclusion has been a political hot button for both teachers and the Nova Scotian public through the past decade. By the beginning of the 1990s, inclusion was established at the level of policy, and the rest of the decade reflects the slow and difficult development of this policy into practice. In 1996, the Department published its *Special Education Policy Manual* (NS Department of Education, 1996b), which set out the parameters for implementing inclusion in the province's schools. In 1999 and 2000, the Department conducted a thorough Special Education Implementation Review, which concluded with a 2001 report recommending a cash infusion of $20 million (NS Department of Education, 2001c). The review, which included province-wide consultations, expressed strong support for the ideals of inclusion, but cautioned that, without proper funding and support, inclusion would remain difficult to implement properly.

This finding effectively echoed teachers' persistent calls for better support for inclusion. The NSTU argued that inclusion was just one more thing piled on teachers who were already dealing with massive restructuring and curriculum change, teacher cuts that resulted in heavier workloads, a series of provincial administrations that demeaned their work and the way they in which it was done, and played power games with the collective bargaining process. For teachers, inclusion was yet another example of the way in which chronic under-funding and overextension was making the public education system increasingly vulnerable and difficult to operate. In the classroom, teachers were now expected to include more children with limited support.

The latter years of the 1990s also saw the introduction of more paraprofessionals into the classroom in support of inclusion initiatives. The NSTU saw this as a threat, fearing that, as the numbers of paraprofessionals rose and the numbers of teachers fell, the strength of the collective bargaining unit would decline and the exclusive right of professional teachers to teach would be weakened. In May 2002, the NSTU Annual Council passed a resolution that backed away from inclusion on the grounds that the government was not providing the resources necessary to support it implementation.

The report of the Special Education Implementation Review addressed special education issues clearly, but it also went well beyond narrow visions of inclusion and integration. The implementation committee report supported a broad view of inclusion, which in an increasingly ethnically diverse and economically unequal Nova Scotia, has come to mean support for opening schools up to traditionally under-serviced populations. Many critics of public education in Nova Scotia — from minority lobby groups to school boards to the NSTU — remain concerned about persistent under-funding of, and lip service support for inclusion. The question is whether recent concerns about achieving more or less uniform outcomes and standards herald a return to the kind of exclusive back-to-basics standard practices that established and justified the traditional system of exclusion in the first place. On the other hand, others argue that current neo-liberal educational initiatives, such as outcome-based practices and the publication of standardized test results, will help disadvantaged groups make a case for better services.

The 1990s saw the Department establish divisions dedicated to the promotion of education in two historically marginalized ethnic communities. In response to the recommendation of the Task Force on Mi'kmaq Education (now the Council on Mi'kmaq Education), the Department established the Division of Mi'kmaq services in 1997. The Mi'kmaq Education Act (Nova Scotia, 1998) set a basic framework at the provincial level in the context of federal legislation, for the operation of First Nations schools in Nova Scotia. Currently the province operates nine First Nations schools in seven communities. The Mi'kmaq Services Division has developed curriculum resources and courses for the public schools generally, and has supported cultural awareness programming throughout the province. The division has also supported Mi'kmaq language instruction and cultural awareness programming in First Nations schools. From the beginning of the 1990s, it appears the larger First Nations bands in Nova Scotia have made the move toward locally controlled schooling, mirroring similar trends in other Canadian jurisdictions.

In 1996, following the publication of the Black Learners Advisory Committee report (1994), the Department of Education established the African Canadian Services Division. The BLAC Report detailed the long history of marginalization of African Canadian students in the provincial school system, and identified a number of structural barriers to full participation of Black youth. The report outlined a total of 30 recommendations, including the establishment within the Department of Education of African Canadian Services Division, headed by a member of Department senior management and focussing on the specific educational needs of African Canadian students. Key problem areas identified in the report included the paucity of Black teachers and administrators; the lack of antiracist and multicultural policies, curriculum materials and teacher education; financial, cultural and school system-level barriers to post-secondary participation by Black students; the legacy of educational exclusion of parents from the system at all levels; and issues of self esteem and low expectations faced by Black students. The BLAC Report was highly critical of the legacy of racism in the province, effectively implicating the public education system in the larger processes of systemic racism.

Since 1996, the Black Learners Advisory Council has continued to be critical of the provincial education system. Racial incidents in Cole Harbour and in Digby led to investigations by Mount Saint Vincent University sociologist Blye Frank (1997, 1998). Frank confirmed that racism is a significant factor in these Nova Scotia schools, but that racism needs to be understood within a broader framework of social class, gender, and ethnic dynamics, and in the context of the historical marginalization of large segments of the white population. In 2003, the Department of Education released an implementation report detailing how it has responded to the recommendations of the BLAC report by spending bits of money on each of the specific recommendations.

As of this writing (May 2005), social equity issues appear to have been subsumed under a broadly focused social equity policy initiative called “closing the gap” (Nova Scotia, 2005a). In February 2005, the Department held a major stakeholders meeting at which Deputy Minister Dennis Cochrane and keynote speaker Doug Willms of the University of New Brunswick effectively defined “raising the bar” in terms of increased PISA scores. The Department appears at this point to be defining questions of educational equity in terms of performance and the extremity of SES gradients on standardized test scores, particularly the PISA assessments. In this way, social equity discourse appears to have been subsumed into the broader master discourse of accountability.

Conclusion

The first significant shift through the early decades of the 1990s was the way in which school-based planning — inspired by the effective schools and educational change movements of the 1980s — was articulated with the top-down accountability agenda that then dominated the policy agenda. In Nova Scotia, persistent ideas about school-based, bottom-up educational change were set within the context of the Department of Education’s increasingly tight regulatory framework. This situation represents a classic example of what Whitty et al. (1999) and Robertson (2000) call

a tight-loose policy framework, counterpoising the apparently contradictory forces of tightly controlled top-down direction with loosely organized bottom-up change initiatives that are couched in the language of empowerment and responsiveness to local conditions. In other words, school boards, local school advisory councils and school staff were given control of how they would go about achieving predetermined objectives with predetermined and inadequate resources, according to board and union sources[11]. The most significant shift through the 1990s is the movement away from the kind of bottom-up educational change initiatives that engaged teachers in thinking about how best to define, coordinate and accomplish their professional work in a collegial fashion, toward more centralized and specific top-down directives that have been handed to teachers, school boards and school advisory councils with the expectation that they will accomplish the prescribed ends.

A school board official characterized this process as what he called "conflicting discourses", which articulated, in a strange way, with the always-contradictory discourses found at the level of school board politics. For example, through the restructuring of the 1990s, rural school board members wanted to protect the schools in their jurisdictions at all costs, while also wanting to receive all of the services provided to larger, urban schools. Meanwhile, the Department was also speaking of protecting the integrity of the small rural school, while at the same time talking about high common standards, despite a funding formula that finances schools on a per capita basis, effectively leaving small, relatively isolated schools and boards containing large numbers of these schools in a precarious position. This situation represented a powerful recipe for frustration for many board and school administrators, as well as for teachers, who protested being expected to implement lofty ideals and wide-ranging change agendas with little or no new money and an inequitable funding formula. In fact, complaining about under-funding or programs has become a kind of mantra adopted by the NSTU leadership when it is asked to comment on educational problems.

At the level of curriculum, this shift followed that of most Western educational jurisdictions, with an emphasis on more or less specifically defined student learning outcomes. At the level of accountability, the shift took the form of centralized systems of financial control, while in the educational realm, a burgeoning regime of standardized quantitative assessments of both programs and individual students. Both the outcomes agenda and the testing regime are well-articulated with the collective APEF initiatives, which are in turn articulated with the CMEC pan-Canadian initiatives for curriculum coordination and accountability (SAIP). These initiatives are of course, linked to the international PISA testing initiative under the auspices of the OECD and represent a massive ideological shift in the vision for public schooling in industrialized countries[12]. This vision clearly represents a strong move to infuse public school administration and processes with a managerial ethos and quantitative accountability frameworks that allow for simple, unproblematic comparison of supposedly generic and universal educational outcomes.

Through the 1990s, the Department of Education maintained a hectic schedule of public and interest group consultations around educational change initiatives. The impact of these consultation processes, however, was not always clear to the general

public or even to so-called stakeholders. Contrasting the well-attended sessions of the Select Committee in 1991 and the reasonably well-attended consultations around the core program in 1992 and the Essential Graduation Outcomes in 1994, similar events have come to be much more poorly attended in recent years, unless the deliberations related to issues of specific local interest.

For example, by 1999 — when the School Board Boundary Commission took to the road to explore public response to school board restructuring — turnout at public hearings was extremely weak. By 2001 when the Southwest Regional Pilot Evaluation Team toured the area served by the newly constituted Tri-Counties and South Shore Regional Boards, several public meetings were so poorly attended that panellists and senior board administration outnumbered the audience. The flurry of documents, virtually unchanged by consultation processes through the mid-1990s, appears to have fatigued the public and effectively created the impression that consultations are essentially meaningless.

The reference list shows how the Department and the union have been playing "call and response" — the Department calls with a document and the union responds with a critique. This has been the pattern that has replaced the pre-1990s model, in which the Department's definition of teacher professionalism included consultation and involvement in most questions of policy, curriculum and pedagogy. According to an NSTU official, teachers and the union are now treated, not as professional collaborators and advisors to government, but as employees whose input into educational policy was at best no more valuable than any other group, and at worst self-interested, backward and obstructionist. This source went on to comment that the situation has evolved from one where bureaucrats gave direction to the politicians, to one where politicians now give direction to the bureaucrats; this direction amounts to a collective response to powerful ideologically driven political lobbies.

From the point of view of one Department official, the NSTU missed repeated opportunities to enter into the policy debate by being obstructionist and by trying to influence policy direction too forcefully. Department officials argue that the nature of teacher professionalism must operate within the larger context of the Department's policy initiatives — the role of the Department is to set policy and the role of the teachers is to implement it. In fact, one official stated clearly that his Department is responding to pressures for accountability and standards which are "bigger than just Nova Scotia" and, echoing the words of former Education Minister John MacEachern, the system must be made "world class" because of the nature of globalization and economic imperatives. They contend that the union has never really attempted to understand either the emerging economic and social context of Canadian education or the fiscal constraints within which the Department is forced to operate. The union dreams and schemes, but seldom does the difficult work of trying to make the system work with the budget it is given. This is, naturally, a bureaucratic response; indeed, what else could those working within the system and administering budgets granted by political masters say?

School board officials also felt a change in the wind in the mid-1990s. One official commented that, up until the end of the Savage administration, there was still a sense of dialogue and what he called "opportunities for conversation".

Beginning in 1995, however, the "change agenda became so strong" that any remnant of dialogue between the upper echelons of the Department of Education and grass roots educational service providers was replaced by the sense, among provincial politicians, that they unified in articulating a progressive and inevitable international wave of change emanating from the CMEC and ultimately from the OECD. As provincial politicians came to be caught up in the international accountability and restructuring discourse of the 1990s, it became increasingly difficult for lower level players to respond to particular contexts (e.g. board officials, school administrators and teachers), and for the teachers union to enter into the policy conversation. School boards and teachers have been consistently frustrated by the level of funding they receive, particularly given the amount of change they have been expected to effect.

Recent documents give little indication that the essential policy thrust of the 1990s has been rerouted. Accountability is still the driving force in the system and teacher professionalism is increasingly defined in terms of student performance on national and international standardized tests. While there is now more recognition that educational performance is complicated by social factors (eg. population health, social class, race, ethnicity, and gender), the central questions in public education policy in Nova Scotia continue to relate to how to increase measurable performance on standardized tests.

Endnotes

1 The Department of Education now calculates graduation rates by comparing the number of students enrolled in grade 9 in a given year with the number of students who graduate three years later.

2 In addition to provincial and municipal funding and board revenues, boards receive monies from the federal government to fund things like HRDC sponsored initiatives, First Nations education and minority language programs. Some boards also use monies from reserve funds to finance their operations.

3 The Halifax Regional Board also benefits from supplementary funding provided by the Halifax Regional Municipality beyond the mandatory education tax rate levied on all municipal units. No other Nova Scotian school boards receive supplementary funding.

4 The NSTU withdrew from the process in 1994.

5 This deal was ostensibly negotiated outside the collective agreement but it was used by government as a lever in both the negotiations and more importantly in the public relations work around those negotiations.

6 In one of her final very public Ministerial initiatives, Jane Purvis (appointed Minister of Health in December 2002) introduced a standardized elementary school report card, which requires teachers to furnish letter grades in lower elementary and number grades in upper elementary schools.

7 Indeed, the major criticism of the SBM Pilot Project was that each of the pilot schools was given start up money of two annual increments of $10,000

per school while the ordinary schools that followed them in forming and maintaining school councils got nothing, raising questions about whether the SBM project can actually be considered a pilot project.

8 The specific financial irregularity in the Chignecto Central Board was the expenditure of $1.7 million by board officials without the approval or knowledge of the elected board.

9 For example, Bill 20 (NS Department of Education, 2002g) eliminates discretionary funding for boards and standardizes accounting practices, effectively allowing the Department to dictate how boards spend their money, while at the same time devolving responsibility to boards for the achievement of learning outcomes and difficult initiatives such as integration.

10 Program funding in Nova Scotia is still dependant on a small but not insignificant contribution from municipal units (see Table 7). This has created inequalities in programming across the province and particularly between more urban municipalities with strong tax bases and more rural areas with relatively weak tax bases and larger geographies over which to provide service to small communities.

11 An example of this is Bill 20 (NS Department of Education, 2001f), which standardizes financial procedures for school boards. While this act in some ways responds to highly publicized and embarrassing financial irregularities in school boards, it also places boards more squarely in the position of having to do the dirty work of translating the government's high-minded ideals into practice with inadequate funds.

12 As David MacKinnon points out, there is nothing in the higher level, essential graduation learnings, general curriculum outcomes, or key stage curriculum outcomes that is specific to Atlantic Canada (2001: 128). Rather, these outcomes represent generic economic rationalism .

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Chapter 9
Policy Narrative for Newfoundland and Labrador

Alan Wright, Véronique Brunet, and Marie-Jeanne Monette

Introduction

The period 1990-2004 was one of major change and reform in the Newfoundland and Labrador school system. Most of the changes were introduced by the Liberals, who formed the government from 1989 to 2003. At the beginning of this period, the K-12 school system in Newfoundland and Labrador featured a governance system shared between the Department of Education, the major Christian churches through Denominational Education Councils at the provincial level, and 27 school boards.

The Royal Commission Report *Our Children, Our Future*, which appeared in 1992, recommended restructuring, but the process of reforming Newfoundland and Labrador's school system evolved in a climate of conflict. Referenda were held in September 1995 and September 1997 to make way for the proposed changes. The first referendum led to the adoption of Bill 8 on July 26, 1996. The Bill allowed the government to restructure and reorganize the school system under two types of schools: interdenominational and unidenominational. This first attempt to restructure the school system achieved little. A second referendum showed that the population was ready for a revamped school system: it lead to the establishment of 10 interdenominational school boards in Newfoundland and Labrador. (Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, 1997). Teachers and the general public were in favour of the overall change, although some church authorities were resistant to the change and favoured the status quo. Details of the significant school restructuring debate are found in a section below.

Demographics Driving Educational Policy

A dramatic decline in the school-age population during the period under study (1990-2004) was a major factor in determining educational reform in Newfoundland and Labrador. Although the K-12 school population increased from approximately 70,000 students in 1945 to over 162,000 students in 1971-72, enrolment has since

been falling. As of September 1995, the student population was 110,456; more recently, it has been declining by about 3 per cent per year. School enrolment for 2001-02 was 86,898 students, and in 2003-04 81,458 students were in school. The student population is predicted to decline to 60,000 by the school year 2010-11. (Gov. of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Ed., 2004).

The fact that the Newfoundland and Labrador birth rate is the lowest in Canada explains, in part, this school population decline. The other reason for the dwindling student population is that a relatively high number of people leave the province every year: inter-provincial emigration outweighs inter-provincial immigration by several thousands every year (1997-2002), while international emigration and immigration are almost equal (Dibbon, 2002).

Due to declining enrolment and the rural character of the province, many of the schools in Newfoundland and Labrador are classified as "small schools" or "very small schools". Small schools (under 200 students) represented about one half of the 472 publicly funded schools in 1995-96, while more than one quarter of the schools enrolled fewer than 100 pupils (very small schools). Since 1995-1996, school enrolment and the number of schools have declined by 23 percent and 29 percent respectively (Gov. of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Ed., 2004). In the 2001-02 school year the number of schools in Newfoundland and Labrador had dropped to 326, but efforts to consolidate meant that the percentage of very small schools (under 100 students) had decreased and the number of large schools (over 400 students) had increased. By 2003, there were only 317 schools in Newfoundland and Labrador. (Gov. of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Ed., 2003).

Newfoundland claims to have made the greatest financial commitment to education in Canada between 1990 and 1995, despite relatively limited financial resources. During those years, educational expenditures were relatively stable at about 32 per percent of per capita gross domestic product (GDP). The Department of Education Annual Report (of 2001-02) states that the trend has continued (p. 13) in that the province's investment in education has increased at a higher rate than any other province. In fact, Newfoundland and Labrador per-student expenditures increased every year from 1997 to 2004. The government reports spending $5,557 per-pupil in 1997-98, $6,090 in 2000-01, and $7,688 per-student in 2003-04 (all figures in current dollars). Other Canadian provinces and territories also increased per pupil spending during this period, however, and Newfoundland and Labrador remains below the Canadian average in per pupil spending.

While enrolments declined, the pupil-teacher ratio improved during the period examined. Government records show a ratio of 19:1 in 1979-80, compared to 14.8:1 in 1995-96. The ratio improved to 13.4:1 in 2001-02, and in 2003 the government-reported ratio was 13.5:1. Readers are reminded that these ratios are by no means a direct measure of class size (Gov. of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Ed., 2003); however, they are arguably among the most favourable among the Canadian Atlantic Provinces. The favourable overall teacher-pupil ratio may mask, on the one hand, a certain number of large classes and, on the other hand, difficult teaching loads such as multi-grade groupings, even in small schools where the ratio appears, on the surface, enviable.

The good news concerning the favourable pupil-teacher ratios is offset by the fact that overall teacher numbers in the public school system are in sharp decline. There were 7,259 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers in the 1995-96 school year, a number that dropped by about 1,000 over the next five years (although the Department of Education reported in 2001-02 that it retained its entire complement of teachers from the previous year). In 2002-03, the number of teachers dropped to 6,065 (Gov. of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Ed., 2003). A 50-year statistical review shows that the number of teachers in the province increased steadily from about 2,500 in 1951-52 to a peak of over 8,000 during the period 1983-90, and that there has been a steady decline since then. (Gov. of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Ed., 2002).

In 2001-02 the Department of Education produced an annual report for the first time during the period under study, though no legislation made such a report mandatory at the time. The overview demonstrated the need for the province to modify practices in order to be in step with other jurisdictions in the country. The Minister regarded the report as an example of increased public accountability for policies and expenditures in education. The annual report actually reviews, in some cases, five-year trends in the delivery of educational services. In that light, the report emphasizes streamlining educational administration as a direct result of cutting back from 27 boards to 11 boards, the nagging problem of underutilized school facilities due to declining enrolments and, despite school closures and consolidation, the steadily improving pupil-teacher ratio, the increase in numbers of students receiving special education services, and the increase in the provision of student assistant services. In March 2004, Education Minister Ottenheimer announced more consolidation of school boards, moving from 11 to just five for the following school year. The Minister justified the reduction based on the declining school population, saying that the reorganization of the school system aimed "to gain efficiencies in administration and ensure education resources are targeted to the classroom" (Gov. of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Ed., 2004).

The new structure includes four interdenominational schools boards offering schooling in English. The Labrador School Board remains the same with an enrolment forecast of 4,466. The creation of a Central School Board, which includes the former Baie Verte/Central/Connaigre School Board and the Lewisporte/Gander Board, forecast an enrolment of 14,752. The Northern Peninsula/Labrador South Board, the Corner Brook/Deer Lake/St. Barbe Board, and the Cormack Trail Board became the Western School Board and expected 14,800 students in the year 2004-05. The new Eastern School Board, taking in Burin, Vista, Avalon West, and Avalon East districts, foresaw an enrolment of 44,756. A fifth school board, the Conseil Scolaire Francophone Provincial, with a projected September 2004 enrolment of 204 students, had been preserved (Gov. of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Ed., 2004).

Over a period of fifteen years, policy makers attempted to improve the quality of K-12 education in Newfoundland and Labrador in a context of declining enrolments and scant provincial resources. Policy makers and educators alike had to face problems of student population decline, small school viability, meeting pupil-teacher ratio targets, diminishing numbers of teaching positions, and the reorganization of educational services. But perhaps the greatest challenge faced by

all actors in the Newfoundland and Labrador education system since 1990 was the fundamental reform of the delivery system based on denominational schools.

Denominational Schooling in Newfoundland and Labrador

The NLTA participated in the early push for provincial school board reorganization in the mid-eighties with the publication of *Exploring New Pathways*. (Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, 1986). This report, presented to Premier Brian Peckford's government of the day (1986), suggested that the province's schools suffered from isolation because of their particular denominational status in Newfoundland and Labrador. Barriers between schools were said to diminish student success and the need for openness: the quality of educational offerings was said to suffer. The fact that schools operated independently from one religious base to another meant that the province had to operate a larger number of schools than necessary and made "an ineffective use of personnel available". (Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association 1986, 19). The school systems divided children into four distinct religious groupings due to the nature of the existing school board organization.

The NTLA spoke out against the high costs and the unwieldy nature of the system in the province — Newfoundland and Labrador's rapidly declining population and rather shaky economy could ill afford to support four different school systems. In February 1990, an NTLA-organized forum to discuss alternatives to the existing system reiterated the need for a major reform. In the fall of 1990, the government included an examination of educational structures as part of an economic development review. The Williams Royal Commission examined the state of programs and educational services offered at primary, elementary, and secondary school levels in Newfoundland and Labrador. In order to affect school reform, the government organized a referendum in the fall of 1995 to amend Term 17 of the Terms of Union of Newfoundland with Canada. The amendment

> … was a major consolidation of existing school districts and all publicly funded schools became 'denominational schools'. Specifically, two types of schools were established: schools operated for children of all denominations [called interdenominational], and schools operated for children of a single denomination [called unidenominational]. While there were positive expectations with regard to this new system, unfortunately the new Term 17 and the system of education which it established proved unworkable. (Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, 1997).

Although the population of Newfoundland and Labrador voted 55 per cent in favour of the amendment, churches, in particular the Pentecostal and Roman Catholic denominations, did not agree with government plans for reform (Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, 1997). School boards attempted to reorganize by modifying structures, amalgamating, and closing schools, but the Pentecostal and Roman Catholic churches sought and received an injunction from the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador that prevented closure of Pentecostal and Roman Catholic schools without church consent. The reorganization attempts had negative consequences for certain teachers as well, as some positions were available

only to those with the appropriate religious affiliations. Many parents also found the new arrangements lacking. A second referendum was held two years later, asking the question, "do you support a single school system where all children, regardless of their religious affiliation, attend the same school where opportunities for religious education and observances are provided?" (Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, 1997).

This time the province's population voted 73 per cent in favour of the new Term 17 proposal. The amendment meant that religious affiliation was no longer relevant in the hiring of teachers. Children of various religious backgrounds found themselves in the same schools. In a UNESCO report presented to the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century, Jacques Delors identified four pillars of education, including "learning to live together". In discussing the amended Term 17, NLTA President Doyle echoed Delors' comments, stating that: "Our children must learn to live together, grow together and learn together. They must be freed from the bonds of denominational isolationism and discrimination" (Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, 1997).

Teacher Profile, Supply and Demand, and Professional Development

The status of the teacher in Newfoundland and Labrador may be examined from the points of view of demographics, provincial resources, and the constant quest to upgrade professional credentials. In terms of demographic profiles, in 1989-90 the average teacher had an annual salary slightly over $41,000, was 39 years of age, and had over 15 years teaching experience. In 2000-01, the average wage was over $48,000, teachers were, on average, almost 42 years of age with more than 16 years of teaching experience (Gov. of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Ed., 2002). For the year 2002-03, the salary average increased to $52,317, while the average age and years of teaching experience remained approximately the same (Gov. of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Ed., 2003).

In terms of provincial resources, the supply of and demand for teachers is a key issue, with isolated communities in Newfoundland and Labrador having faced teacher shortages in certain curriculum areas despite the provincial decline in student population. An advisory group, with representatives from the Department of Education, MUN, school districts, the NLSBA and the NLTA, recommended numerous ways to improve this situation. Among those eventually adopted by the government were recruitment fairs, $5,000 isolation bonuses, targeted recruitment for teacher training, inter-provincial collaboration, and an amendment to the Teacher Certification Regulation to allow school districts to hire retired teachers on one-year contracts to fill positions when boards had clearly established that no other qualified teachers were available, and increased salaries for university graduates with no teacher training hired on an emergency supply basis. (Annual Report 2001-02, 8 and 20). Steps to implement policies addressing teacher shortages have, then, been taken with input from a number of sources including representatives of the teachers themselves.

In 2002 the Department of Education formed a committee with a mandate to establish a Professional Development Alliance involving the Department,

school districts, MUN, and the NLTA. The Department appears particularly proud of its record of collaboration on, and financial support for teachers' professional development, and points to significant recent increases to support this claim. (Gov. of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Ed. 2002, 8).

The importance of professional development was stressed by Education Minister Foote when she announced a $900,000 increase in professional development funding for 2001-02:

> The Department of Education recognizes a teacher's expertise and knowledge are crucial elements in a student's education. Funding for professional development is a wise investment in a quality education for the children and youth of our province. In order to ensure teachers acquire most of the recent strategies and skills, they must have opportunities for sustained professional development. (Gov. of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Ed., 2001)

The preparation of Newfoundland and Labrador's teachers is said to compare favourably with that of their colleagues in the rest of Canada. On UNESCO-designated World Teachers Day, October 5, 2001, Minister Foote pointed to her pride in the excellence of the province's education system, and of its teachers:

> We are fortunate in Newfoundland and Labrador to have one of the most highly qualified teaching forces in the country. Most teachers have two undergraduate degrees and almost one-quarter have a Master's degree. These men and women are well-prepared to prepare our children for future success. (Gov. of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Ed., 2001)

The struggle of Newfoundland and Labrador teachers is one to maintain a status at least comparable to that of their colleagues in other Canadian jurisdictions. This brief overview indicates that, in terms of teacher preparation and professional development opportunities, they have indeed kept pace, and that their economic condition has been improving despite periodic difficulties and labour conflicts with the Department of Education.

A Flurry of Legislative Activity: 1997

A flurry of legislative activity in 1997 amended the Schools Act, the School Boards' Association Act, the Teachers' Association Act, and the Teacher Training Act. The 129-article Schools Act was divided into seven parts: Students; Parents; Schools; School Boards; French First Language Schools; General; and, Transitional Matters. Article 33 (in the Schools section) lists teachers' responsibilities as: providing instruction and fostering learning; teaching the prescribed or approved courses of study; regularly evaluating and periodically reporting on student performance; maintaining and supervising order and discipline among the students in school and during school activities; promoting cultural identity and language if working in French schools; and, carrying out other duties assigned by the principal or board (Gov. of Newfoundland and Labrador Dept. of Ed., 1997).

The School Boards' Association Act defines ten objects of the Association, from the expected "betterment of education and school administration", to the less obvious "promotion, guidance and improvement of legislation on educational and

school questions which do not infringe on the established denominational rights of School Boards" (Gov. of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Ed., 2002).

The Teachers' Association Act recognizes the continuing role of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association "as a corporation". The listed "objects" of the Association are: to promote the cause of education in the province; to elevate and unify the teaching profession; and to cooperate with other teachers' organizations having similar objects (Gov. of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Ed., 2002). The Act provides for a Disciplinary Committee to conduct a formal inquiry when a member of the Association is accused in writing of "unprofessional conduct, negligence or misconduct", or has been convicted of a criminal offence (Gov. of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Ed., 2002). Based on such an inquiry, the Committee can recommend that the Association Executive reprimand, censure, suspend from membership, or expel any Association member. It should be noted however, that while the NLTA can expel a member, it does not have the power to decertify a teacher. Membership in the NLTA and membership fee payment is automatic, and includes principals and vice principals, although there is a clause that allows individuals to opt out via a formal written procedure.

The NLTA clearly has the dual mandate, under law, to discipline its members as necessary on the one hand, and to provide legal representation to and work for the welfare of its members on the other. The NLTA must act in the traditional role of professional corporation, while fulfilling the role of a labour union in the interests of its members. Does the nature of the legislation governing the organization of teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador lead one to conclude that there would be no need to establish a separate college of teachers or similar professional body? The question is controversial and the answer debatable. At any rate, the issue of the creation of a college of teachers was not one of concern in Newfoundland and Labrador during the period under study.

Local Governance: School Councils

Following the recommendation made in *Our Children, Our Future* (1992), the report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the delivery of programs and services in primary, elementary, and secondary education, the government of Newfoundland and Labrador legislated that school councils be established by all schools in the province. In 1996, Section 26 of the Education Act (Bill 48) was adapted to describe the purpose and functions of school councils. In 2000, Professor Alice Collins of Memorial University published the results of a study on the effectiveness of school councils as seen by School Council Chairs), which noted that the role of the school council is "to develop, encourage and promote policies, practices, and activities to enhance the quality of school programs and the levels of student achievement in the school" (Collins 2000, 1). School councils play an advisory role with respect to the quality of teaching and learning, stimulate parent and community involvement in education, and advise the board on educational matters. School councils further plans for improving teaching and learning, raise funds, and contribute to the evaluation of standards in the schools. This development in Newfoundland and Labrador is seen as a parallel to site-based

management trends in other Canadian provinces, and in other countries such as the USA, the UK, New Zealand, and Australia (Collins 2000, 2). In 2000, the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils became affiliated with the Canadian Home and School Federation.

School Council Chairs (who can be either parents or teachers, but not principals) responding to a questionnaire generally expressed that their councils were working well and that the support of the school principal and the school board was helpful. In the Chairs' view, the "lack of training" of members is the greatest single barrier to council effectiveness (in these early years of the school council experience). Other barriers included the "lack of clearly defined role" and the "difficulty of getting parents to serve" (p. 7), while inducing teachers to serve on council was much less of a problem. The survey also showed that councils have had some difficulty in focusing on school and educational improvement as their main goal, as they tend to get sidetracked by relatively minor issues.

Supporting Learning

In 2000, the Ministerial Panel on Educational Delivery in the Classroom presented its report, *Supporting Learning*, which made 86 recommendations for changes to the existing system. The NLTA had made a formal submission to the Panel in December, 1999 (Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, 2000), and were, in the end, pleased to see that *Supporting Learning* reflected the spirit of many of their recommendations.

The NLTA had lobbied for full educational services for all young people in the province, early intervention for literacy and skill development, full resources to precede the implementation of an outcomes-based curriculum, a streamlined schedule for criterion-referenced testing, reform of tele-learning and distance learning, provision of resources and personnel for a full and balanced curriculum (including specialized programs), increased provision for remedial instruction and learning resources, increased teacher allocations for schools with special needs, alternate settings and support for disruptive students, and far greater professional development opportunities for teachers at all stages of their careers. Regarding curriculum development and assessment, the NLTA, echoing positions taken by the CTF elsewhere in Canada, expressed "some concerns with any introduction of high stakes testing which becomes mandatory and possibly forms part of a public accountability process" (Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association 2000, 39).

The NLTA offered to work with the Department of Education to improve "educational delivery in the classroom", and expressed the hope that the "challenging and tumultuous period in education" was now a thing of the past. The NLTA also advocated increased funding, adequate support for teaching, and more professional development opportunities for teachers (Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association 2000, 41). For its part, the Department of Education reported that "the majority of the 86 recommendations (had) been either fully implemented or initiated" as of the school year 2001-02 (Gov. of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Ed. 2002, 3).

Curriculum Development and Assessment

The period under study is characterized by increasing cooperation among the Atlantic Provinces in matters of curriculum development. The Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (APEF) developed a cooperative process whereby a Department of Education in a given province takes the lead in the development of a particular course of study, involving teachers in the design and development of materials, a practical and sensible arrangement given the resources and the population of the region. Although Newfoundland and Labrador was the last of the Atlantic Provinces to enter into the agreement, NLTA members are very active in the process. For those involved in the formal curriculum development process the professional gains are significant, but for others there may be less of a commitment to adopt and implement the proposed reforms. Teachers in some settings often have the distinct impression that the curriculum development process is distant from their classrooms, bringing the issue of ownership into play.

In March 2004, the Ministers for Education of the five Atlantic Provinces announced that the APEF would be replaced by the new Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET). This new council aims to establish better collaboration between the school system and higher education in order to improve learning for Atlantic province students. The three areas of cooperation targeted are school success, improved programs, and improved university education (Gov. of Newfoundland and Labrador Dept. of Ed., 2004).

The NLTA raised several curriculum concerns in a brief to the Department of Education and school boards, titled *Putting the Teacher Back into Teaching* (NLTA, September 2003), claiming that "the demands for change have surpassed the ability of the system to respond effectively" and that the lack of a coordinated effort by the Department of Education and the school districts has meant that teachers "are overwhelmed by the magnitude and diversity of expectations for change" (NLTA 2003, 6). The changes go beyond curriculum as they also involve assessment, student supports, and accountability.

A detailed account of assessment trends is beyond the scope of this chapter; however, the Department of Education does refer to Canada-wide and international comparisons of achievement and attainment of Newfoundland and Labrador students, pointing out that "students are generally performing at or below Canadian and international standards but above the standard ... across the Atlantic region" (Gov. of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Ed. 2002, 6). With respect to attainment, high school completion rates have climbed from 58 percent to 85 percent in 20 years, and postsecondary completion rates from 27 percent to 58 percent. Moreover, over 80 percent of high school graduates enrol in postsecondary programs (Gov. of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Ed. 2002, 6).

In 2003 the Department of Education took steps to further implement system accountability measures by publishing "Profile 2003" as a K-12 indicators report to form the basis of reports subsequent years. The Department announced its intention to publish "comparative data on all schools in the province" (Gov. of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Ed. 2002, 23), something to which the NLTA had expressed its opposition in 2000, seeing "no benefit in the public comparison

of schools", especially given the systemic inequities and diverse circumstances that affect the performance of individual schools (Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association 2000, 36). The NLTA suggested, as an alternative, that underperforming schools develop strategies for improvement within the contexts of their communities rather than under the pressure of provincially published data.

Department policy has since evolved, and in *Indicators 2004: A Report on Schools*, the Department does not rank schools, but aims to provide "a tool which can be used by an educational community to help make their school the very best it can be" (Gov. of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Ed. 2004, 2), a change teachers support. School profiles include data on school demographics including class size, teacher-pupil ratios, and teacher certification levels, as well as on attendance, performance on criterion-referenced tests, student activities, and quality of school life.

It is clear that teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador are struggling under pressures to develop and implement new outcomes-based educational programs, new assessment measures, and ensuring that their students meet the standards in this era of increasing accountability. Support for curriculum change is inadequate in the view of the Teachers' Association, and the trend to inter-provincial and international comparisons of student performance is having an impact on educational policies and programs. Teachers in the province are pleased, however, with the recently adopted policy direction of the Department of Education as the school profiling orientation aims to provide useful descriptors of an educational institution and even test results while avoiding rankings per se.

Serving Children with Special Needs and the ISSP

The 1992 Royal Commission on Education report, *Our Children, Our Future*, recommended a separate, comprehensive study of special education be undertaken, for which task Dr. Patricia Canning of Memorial University was contracted in March, 1995. *Special Matters: The Report of the Review of Special Education* (Gov. of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Ed., 1996) appeared in comprehensive (July, 1996) and summary (October, 1996) versions. The then Minister of Education (and later Premier) Roger D. Grimes described the report and its 226 recommendations as "a broad review of all aspects of special education and support services for children and youth". At the heart of the report are "early intervention services for at-risk populations and specialized interventions for students with special educational needs" (Gov. of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Ed., 1996). These recommendations led to the adoption and numbering of various "pathways" through the educational system.

A 1999 critique by the NLTA President of Pathways to Programming and Graduation (Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, 1999) deals with what the Association calls "the crisis in student support" (NLTA, 1999). The NLTA President emphasizes the impact of the special education policy and procedures for the membership, stating that "none of the changes impacting upon us has been more contentious than the introduction of policies and procedures in the delivery of student support services" (Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association,

1999). The NLTA President also recapped collaborative efforts by the Association, Department of Education, and school boards to improve the situation in the early months of 1999. By that fall, Education Minister Foote claimed that students with special needs in her province were "better resourced than ever before" (Gov. of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Ed., 1999).

In recent years progress has been made in providing for students with special needs, with the Department of Education and the NLTA cooperating in a "pathways working group" to plan for change. Teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador, like their colleagues in other jurisdictions, have been supportive of well-intentioned Department of Education measures to meet the special needs of all pupils in the province's public schools. But the difficulties in implementing the ideal of inclusion remain and the individual teachers continue to bear increased burdens resulting from educational policy change. In the fall of 2003, the NLTA expressed ongoing concern about the impact of "pathways" implementation on ever-increasing teacher workloads and the need for increased support to ensure success. In particular, the documentation involved in the ISSP process and the time needed to develop alternative curriculum programs continue to sap teacher energies.

Conclusion

The Newfoundland and Labrador education system evolved in a somewhat different context from that of many other Canadian provinces. Faced with declining enrolments, low immigration, and a struggle to maintain small rural schools, the system has struggled to provide quality educational opportunities to the province's school children and adolescents. Upheaval and structural changes in the system have demanded major, constant adjustments on the part of all actors. Over the last fifteen years, many of the themes that have dominated the education scene in other Canadian provinces have also been in evidence in Newfoundland and Labrador: a major restructuring of school boards; a rethinking of the place of religion in the organization of public schools; a radical reduction in the number of schools; a trend to accountability; national and international achievement testing; inter-provincial curriculum development; the introduction of site-based management; educational services for children with special needs; minority language education agreements with the government of Canada; and, the NLTA's efforts to successfully and credibly represent the interests, welfare, and professional development needs of teachers in debates critical to the educational futures of the young people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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Chapter 10
Policy Narrative for Prince Edward Island

Alan Wright, Véronique Brunet, and Marie-Jeanne Monette

Introduction

This chapter on educational policy in Prince Edward Island takes into account the relatively limited economic resources as well as the geographic and demographic characteristics of Canada's smallest province. The introduction provides initial insight into some of recent policy concerns and initiatives in the context of the PEI environment.

The Atlantic island province, had a population of only 137,718 as of July, 2003 (PEI Economy Progress Report 2003, 5), and is 60 percent rural (CMEC, 1997). Historically, the population has fluctuated with the ebb and flow of the provincial economy. Education has been identified as a priority for both the population and for the government, and a 1999 study on PEI's efforts to keep pace with the rest of Canada in terms of high school and higher education completion rates notes a "major improvement in access to education achieved in PEI since the 1970s and 1980s" (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed 1999c, 15). Islanders hope that highly educated people will stay in PEI and help the province to grow and prosper (Institute of Island Studies, 2000). The public education system in PEI is attempting to adapt to the demands and the needs of island society:

> In a rapidly changing society, schools have a particular role to play both in preserving that which we hold important as a society and in preparing individuals to deal with the future and with change. For every generation there are particular issues to be addressed. At present, these issues include language rights, the rights of those with special needs, gender equity, multiculturalism, the environment and the impact of technology. (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed 2001d)

In 1999, the Minister of Education presented a five-year strategic plan for educational development in PEI, making a commitment to motivate students to desire lifelong learning, make informed decisions, adapt to the realities of the global marketplace, gain an appreciation of one's heritage, learn a second language (for the vast majority, French), develop a sense of self worth, respect community values, develop their personal values, and act as responsible citizens. The Department aimed to increase satisfaction among the public, students, and education employees by emphasizing citizen opportunities to express opinions on educational policy during various panels and meetings (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 1999a). The Department of Education has adopted, then, a rhetoric of openness, together with an educational philosophy intended to produce balanced and competent citizens who will contribute to the economic and civic well-being of PEI society.

The Department of Education sees the School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP) — a nationwide assessment mechanism that evaluates the mathematics, reading and writing, and science knowledge of 13- and 16-year-olds — as a measure of how well PEI schools are meeting the needs of students and of society. The 1999 SAIP Science Assessment was administered to 1,064 students (599 13-years-olds and 465 16-years-olds), with the performance levels for both age groups comparing favorably to results for Canada as a whole — meeting or exceeding most standards (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 2001a, 11-12). At the same time, as part of a strategic planning process, the Department published results of a survey based on a random sampling of 407 residents, showing overall public satisfaction with education programs in the province.

At the same time, an annual survey showed increased satisfaction levels among Department employees; the survey had a response rate of 62.1 percent (77 of 124 employees). For 2000-01, the Department's objective was to "have 60 percent of respondents reporting that they were satisfied or very satisfied in each of the areas" measured (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 2001a, 11-12). Overall, there was a general trend toward increased employee satisfaction, with the Department meeting or exceeding its target of 65 percent in 26 of 39 areas; in 13 areas, 75 to 90 percent of respondents reported being satisfied or very satisfied. The emphasis placed on the above measures is indicative of the climate of accountability determining the direction of education policy in PEI, as the Department seeks improved performance in national student assessment programs and increased public and employee satisfaction with the quality of education in PEI.

The Department's efforts to modernize the island school system are apparent in its overall policy regarding the place of technology in the learning process. In July 1999, the Department reviewed its technical infrastructure and its ability to support the integration of information technology into the curriculum of PEI public schools. A strategic plan was developed following the review, and was launched in 2001 (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 2001b, 3). A program to facilitate computer acquisition by disadvantaged families was introduced (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 2003b), with unclear results.

The Department has also attempted to address adequately the need for increased administrative and staffing resources at the school board level. A new funding model for the provision of instructional staff, to be phased in over a six-year period,

is intended to "add teachers in key program areas and reduce class size especially in the early grades" (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 2003). The new model proposes the hiring of additional teacher assistants, as well as youth workers (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 2003c). Aspects of the funding model were formally adopted in 2004, and, according to a government source (personal communication, L. Lowther, Dept. of Ed. 2004), many new teaching assistants and youth workers have been hired. The PEI Teachers' Federation (PEITF), an advocate of maintaining staffing levels, was pleased with the government's commitment to add six to eight teachers per year to the province's total teaching staff despite declining school populations (personal communications, PEITF 2005; Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 2004h).

The issues and needs outlined above introduce the PEI policy framework for the period under study. This relatively small provincial jurisdiction seems intent on introducing elementary and secondary educational policies, programs, and practices designed to modernize the school system and to provide an educational experience at least equal to that available elsewhere in Atlantic Canada and, indeed, in the larger provinces across the country. The challenge for PEI is to muster sufficient resources to implement and sustain diverse and viable educational programs, despite having a population smaller than that of many Canadian cities.

At the same time, PEI's status as a province equal to the nine other provinces in Canada allows it to take advantage of trends and collective movements by participating in Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) deliberations and initiatives. For example, PEI has joined British Columbia in taking the lead on the CMEC School Health Initiative (personal communication with government sources, Lowther, 2004). This is an example of pan-Canadian cooperation in the making of educational policy, and of some convergence in matters of interest to educational policymakers across the country.

Atlantic Cooperation and the Standards Movement: Curriculum, Assessment, and Testing

The Maritime Provinces Education Foundation (MPEF) was established in 1982, an exercise in inter-provincial cooperation intended to allow the provinces to "develop, purchase or participate in a wide variety of activities that an individual province could not afford or support on its own" (Gov. of PEI 1994, 4). Faced with similar challenges in the public school system, the provinces' Ministers of Education recommended the development of a common core curriculum and of common assessment strategies for Atlantic Canada. In 1994, the common core curriculum was adopted after consultation with the public and with education professionals. The MPEF developed, based on the mission statement of each province, the Essential Graduation Learnings (EGLs) as a framework for curriculum development (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 1994).

In 1995, Newfoundland and Labrador became a full partner in the MPEF, and it became the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (APEF). To ensure that students attain the EGLs, the APEF developed outcomes in English language arts, mathematics, and science from a common curriculum, with Provincial Education Departments adding additional individual curriculum outcomes. Students from

Grades 1 to 12 follow the program. Each teacher of the core subjects received an APEF document including the EGLs, curriculum outcomes for that subject area, and the corresponding outcomes at key stages (Grades 3, 6, 9, and 12). Details are also included for teachers working at the various levels of schooling. The common core curriculum guides include suggestions for classroom assessment strategies. The assessment program measures the outcomes of the curriculum and, indirectly, the acquisition of the EGLs.

How has inter-provincial cooperative curriculum development in Atlantic Canada been received? In PEI, the teachers' view is generally positive (personal communication, PEITF 2005), as evidenced by the Workload Study conducted by the University of PEI (UPEI), quoted below. According to one PEI education official, the provincial government (rather than the province's three school boards) takes most responsibility for curriculum matters in PEI. The Department aims to allow for a certain amount of teacher initiative, while supporting them with enough materials to adequately deliver the curriculum (personal communication, I. Arsenault, Dept. of Ed. June 30, 2004). The PEITF is satisfied that curriculum is developed on a collaborative basis on the island — the Department, the boards, the PEITF and its members, and as well the UPEI are all involved.

In March of 2004, after meeting with her counterparts from the three other Atlantic Provinces, PEI Minister of Education Mildred Dover proudly announced the creation of the Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET). In a press release, the Minister stated that the council "will promote regional cooperation in all areas of education and training and will replace the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (APEF)" (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 2004d).

CAMET also intends to play a key role in establishing joint positions on national education issues and on matters pertaining to federal government involvement and funding. Ministers recognize that CAMET will provide them with an opportunity to advise the Council of Atlantic Premiers (CAP) on education and training matters of mutual interest. Ministers of Education and Training have identified three major areas of cooperation necessary for the support of learning in Atlantic Canada. These include improving student achievement; program implementation support to assist teachers with curriculum delivery and help students with their learning; and, postsecondary education (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 2004d). PEI Education has joined other Atlantic jurisdictions in adopting the key terms of collective educational improvement: cooperation, efficiency, and added value. Provincial educational policy in PEI has assumed a broader direction as it is now more specifically linked with training; this new direction is in turn inevitably linked to concerns surrounding employment readiness and federal funding opportunities.

Performance Indicators: National and International Testing Programs

As indicated in the introduction, PEI students regularly participate in national testing programs, and the Department of Education uses the results of these tests to evaluate academic performance. Government statements are often worded in such a way as to reassure parents and the general population that island schooling

is as good as or competitive with educational opportunities available elsewhere in Atlantic Canada, nationally, or even internationally. On March 10, 1999, for example, Education Minister Chester Gillan announced with pleasure that PEI students had fared well in terms of national standards, according to the 1998 School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP) reading and writing results:

> SAIP allows us to fill in the big picture about student achievement levels demonstrated by 13- and 16-year-olds across Canada and the extent to which skills and knowledge develop between these ages…In Prince Edward Island, the education community will use these results to plan for the future and take steps to improve reading and writing education…The 1998 SAIP results confirm that PEI's teaching methods are as effective as other provinces. It provides assurances to students that they are getting the preparation needed for entry into the work force or postsecondary institutions. (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 1999d)

A government news release from 2003 indicated that "more than 80 percent of 13-year-old students in Prince Edward Island met and surpassed writing expectations" on the 2002 SAIP.

In April, 2003, PEI announced that it had endorsed a revised national testing program for use in the province. The Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP) is designed to evaluate student performance in reading, science, and mathematics (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 2003e). The revised testing program will, no doubt, be used by PEI policy makers to monitor student performance and to make decisions designed to ensure the public that the youth of PEI keep pace with their counterparts across Canada. Believing it to be the least of a number of evils in the area of testing and assessment, PEI teachers agreed to participate in PCAP. PEI, it should be noted, is the only province in Canada without centralized high school leaving examinations (personal communication, PEITF, 2005).

In a small jurisdiction like PEI, there is a measure of satisfaction to be gained from the publication of student testing results comparable to those in the large provinces with more resources and greater wealth. The Department seems satisfied to confirm that PEI education is competitive, but what of the potential for unhealthy competition among PEI schools and the issue of under-prepared pupils? Is the work of school staffs and even individual teachers considered sub-standard by government departments when their pupils score at levels below regional and national averages? With the small number of schools offering education to teenagers in PEI it would be easy to assign responsibility for disappointing national testing results to specific teachers. An official representing PEI Education (personal communication, Lowther, 2004), however, assures the authors that the government undertakes no school ranking comparisons in the province.

Accountability and the School Act

National testing programs are not the only measures of accountability in PEI. The Department's Strategic Plan 1999-2004 reminds the public that the Department is responsible for a number of provincial statutes. One in particular, the School Act, governs a significant proportion of Department activities and describes Department and school board responsibilities. In order to ensure accountability for education

system results, the Department has identified a need to clarify and better articulate the respective roles and responsibilities of the Department and the school boards, for greater consistency in the School Act's interpretation and application, and to enforce better its provisions (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 1999a). For instance, as the Act requires schools to develop school improvement plans, the Department launched an initiative, in 2004, to assist schools with the process and to improve accountability in this regard.

Another accountability element built into the School Act is the guarantee of a baseline pupil-teacher ratio of "one position for every 19.3 full-time equivalent students, excluding foreign students who paid tuition and excluding students enrolled in authorized vocational and designed career and technology education courses as of September of the previous year" (Gov of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 2001e). However, the Department of Education can improve on the ratio under the School Act. One Department spokesperson (personal communication, Lowther 2004) notes that the new staffing model significantly lowers the pupil-teacher ratio. In 2004-05 the ratio was approximately 16:1, and is expected to improve to about 14:1 in the future.

The government has committed to ensuring that PEI is among the provinces with the most favourable pupil-teacher ratios in Canada. Premier Pat Binns and Education Minister Gillan announced, in May 2003, a new strategic plan to promote student success in PEI schools, one that involves making, over a five-year period, "major investments in island classrooms to achieve class sizes and student teacher ratios that are comparable with the best in Canada" (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 2003c). Once again, policy makers and politicians in PEI have determined that pupil-teacher ratios and class size are keys to successful school programs. From the point of view of the policymaker, accountability in PEI is at least partly shown by students' national test scores and by high-visibility resource investments to diminish class size and pupil-teacher ratios. Further issues relating to accountability and the quest for educational quality are examined below.

The Quest for Quality: Staffing and Funding Issues

In 2001, the Department of Education was directed by the Minister to review the staffing and funding program for the elementary and secondary system in PEI. Staffing and funding levels were evidently seen as key to enhancing the education system in PEI, and policy in these two areas would constitute PEI's main quest for quality. A study published by Statistics Canada indicates that PEI per-pupil spending is relatively low compared to most other provinces in Canada (Nault 2004, 27). Details, including nuances of PEI's efforts to increase educational spending over the last decade, appear below.

In 1996-97, total per-student spending for in public elementary and secondary school in Canada was $6,672. Six years later, it had reached $7,946, a 19 percent increase in current dollars (Nault, 2004, p. 11). In absolute terms, PEI's spending remained one of the lowest among Canadian provinces; however, in terms of gross domestic product (GDP), the province invested a relatively large amount of money in education from 1996 to 2003, demonstrating that education was a priority. Between

1996-97 and 2002-03, total per capita spending on education (in constant 1992 dollars) increased in PEI and every other Canadian province except Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, and Ontario (Nault 2004, 11). Because of growth in provincial economies, however, this spending nevertheless represented a lower proportion of the GDP in all jurisdictions except PEI and Saskatchewan. Nationally, spending on education represented 3.3 percent of GDP in 2002-03, down from 3.8 percent six years before. PEI, however, is among the very few Canadian provinces to have increased education spending relative to the province's GDP. When PEI's expenditure per student is expressed as a percentage of GDP, the increase is greater than the Canadian average and the percentage change from 1996-97 to 2000-03 is the highest among Canadian provinces.

While still below the national average in actual per-pupil educational expenditures, PEI has made great progress in catching up to other provinces (Nault 2004, 6-37). In PEI, total expenditures per student in public elementary and secondary schools (in 1992 constant dollars) were $4,570 in 1996-97, increasing to $5,979 by 2002-03; by comparison, average per-student spending in the rest of Canada increased from $6,300 per pupil to $6,677 over the same period. In terms of percentage change, PEI's expenditure increase, at 30 percent, was far ahead of the Canadian average of slightly more than 5 percent.

Educational policy in PEI is developed in the context of a relatively small and declining school population. In 2001, PEI had approximately 23,500 students in 69 schools; by 2008, the number of students is expected to drop to 20,004. As reported by the PEI Population Strategy '99 Panel, the province's annual number of births has "declined year after year since the early 1990s, dropping from 2,028 in 1990 to 1,565 in 1998". It is predicted that, by 2010, the student population will decrease from 1990 levels by between 5 and 26 percent, depending on the school and district; some rural schools will fall to fewer than 100 students (Institute of Island Studies 2000, 66-67).

Shrinking enrolments has lead island policymakers to look closely at declining staffing levels in general, overall staffing patterns, special needs staffing, and the status and well-being of small and rural schools. To permit small schools to continue offering quality education services, it was determined that new funding would be needed. In 2001, the school boards employed approximately 1,500 full-time equivalent instructional staff (Gar 2003), and the Minister of Education declared that, subsequent to a negotiated agreement, the total number of teachers would be maintained for the life of the teachers' collective contract. Decreases in the student population would normally have resulted in cutting 140 teachers from the provincial system, but the government further announced, in May of 2003, that all positions would be maintained due to major government investments following the release of a new staffing and funding model. Premier Binns even foresaw adding some 35 to 40 positions over a five-year period, in order to make good on his commitment to maintain pupil-teacher ratios that are among the most favourable in the country. PEI Education also announced an additional teacher for special small school (fewer than 200 students) support. Provisions for in-school administrators guaranteed a principal and a vice principal for every school and an additional vice principal for schools of more than 500 students (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 2003c).

Other improvements included the introduction of leadership programs for principals (1999) and the 2001 reinstatement of teacher sabbatical leaves, which had been suspended in 1994 (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 2001a.). The number of sabbaticals to be granted annually was reduced, however, from seven to three (personal communication, PEITF 2005).

As indicated in the introduction, the new PEI funding model for instructional staffing is meant to reduce class size and introduce more staff, including teaching assistants and youth workers, to targeted grade levels and programs (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 2003c). The government of PEI has also made efforts to respond to the physical plant needs as well as other basic expenditures of the school boards. For example, during the year 2000-01, $7 million was invested in the development of one new school and an addition to another school (Gov. of PEI., Dept. of Ed. 2001a). Further, PEI announced increases (2003) to school board operating budgets of over $750,000 to cover waste management, maintenance and insurance needs, as well as to incorporate new funding into their base budgets.

School Governance, Site-based Management, and Parent-Educator Partnerships

The role of local bodies — consisting of community, parent, staff, and sometimes student representatives — in the ongoing functioning of public schools has been a development of interest in many Canadian provinces (see, for example, the chapter on Newfoundland and Labrador). Site-based management has become a familiar term as provincial educational policies have proposed greater local participation in educational directions. PEI, which introduced provisions to establish parent-educator partnerships in the schools, is no exception. In 1995, the Department of Education, in cooperation with the Prince Edward Island Home and School Federation (PEIHSF) and the PEITF, met to structure and establish school councils.

In 1993, a new School Act paved the way for the creation of school councils, and a Ministerial directive was issued two years later. Section 66 of the School Act recognized and confirmed the right and desire of parents to be involved in the education process. Provisions of the Act stipulated that a majority of members of the school council must be parents of students attending that school and that teachers, principals, and students may also be represented. The Act provided that a local branch of the PEIHSF — a body with a long-standing presence in PEI schools — could assume the functions of a school council. What, then, is the official role of the PEIHSF? It is described as including a series of means of promoting the welfare of youth, cooperation between parents and teachers, and informed, constructive parent-educator partnerships. Whether the functions are assumed by the PEIHSF or not, school councils play a strictly advisory role to the school principal on a number of school-related matters, encourage cooperation between parents and educators, and represent the interests of all students (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 1999e).

While the potential influence of the school council is great, the power and prerogatives of the school principal remain intact. In the PEI context, the school council is most decidedly not defined as a body leading to a form of co-management of schools involving teaching professionals and parents. How do teachers, in-

school administrators, and parents work together on local educational issues? What is the nature of the partnerships regarding the establishment of institutional level educational policy and site-based management? According to the PEITF, the home and school associations have played a leadership role in the development of the councils, and are regarded as important partners in the educational process (personal communication, PEITF 2005).

School Board Prerogatives, Acadian and Francophone Education

The changing role of school boards as administrative and policy intermediaries between Departments of Education and the individual schools is an important issue in all Canadian provinces. In PEI, the small number of boards conditions the dynamics of the current K-12 education system. In 1975, the PEI legislature adopted an Act to incorporate the Prince Edward Island Association of School Boards. The purposes of the Association included the promotion of policies; the making of recommendations respecting the maintenance and improvement of the quality of education; the maintenance and strengthening of school board responsibility for education in cooperation with the Minister; the circulation of education materials to school boards; and the drafting of regulations as proposals and recommendations pursuant to the School Act for submission to the Minister (Gov. of PEI 1975).

By law, individual school boards must monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of schools in accordance with Ministry criteria, ensure the development of and approve school improvement plans, encourage good relations among schools, parents and the community, and promote family and community awareness of the importance of education. School boards should also enable teachers to assist in the development, implementation and evaluation of pilot or local programs in the schools (Gov. of PEI 1993). In 1994, the number of school boards in PEI was reduced from five to three: two English-language and one French-language. According to government sources, PEI was one of the first provinces in the country to provide for school governance by francophones in a minority setting (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 2003i).

The PEI action plan for 2000-01 to 2002-03 shows the Commission Scolaire de Langue Française as having 608 students in five schools (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 2000a). Despite the student population decline experienced by all school boards, French schooling will be maintained in the province, according to the Commission Scolaire de Langue Française in the *Report of the PEI Population Strategy '99*. To ensure that the French language is preserved and flourishes in PEI, the Commission recommends French-language programs be established in all designated Acadian and francophone areas of PEI. Both provincial and federal governments were scheduled to invest money between 2000 and 2003 for the development of educational services in French, with the provincial contribution forecast at $1,245,300 and the Federal at $2,325,000 (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 1999c).

In recent decades, a significant number of parents have also enrolled their children in French immersion programs administered by the English-language school boards; 15 percent of the province's 24,000 pupils enrolled in French immersion in PEI's 65 public schools in 1997 (CMEC 1997). Most students

participate in the early immersion program, but one board also offers mid- and late-immersion programs. In 2000-01, the Department of Education celebrated the 25th anniversary of French immersion on PEI (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 2000a).

Core French is compulsory from Grades four to nine. Programming is based on 30 minutes per day in Grades four to six and 40 minutes per day at the intermediate level. Core French credits are offered in all high schools. The number of students enrolled in second language programs in PEI has always been significant; according to Statistics Canada, the province has seen the highest increase in bilingualism among adolescents in the country, increasing from 8.7 percent in 1981 to 23.5 percent 1996 (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 2000a).

Special Education Issues: Teacher Concern and Policy Initiatives

In the early 1990s, the PEI Department of Education requested a review of special education in the province, due to changes in philosophy regarding the education of children with special needs and to a growing demand for resources to support that student population. In 1998 the PEITF challenged the review team, stating:

> The present and future of hundreds of children and youth are dependent on you to identify what needs to be done to meet the special needs they have. Do not leave them without a future by formulating a narrow definition of special needs that saves dollars, but wastes lives. (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 1998a)

In terms of special education policy development, the Department review suggested using the policies of British Columbia and Alberta, as well as the emerging policies of Manitoba and Newfoundland and Labrador, as guides for revising provincial policies. It further suggested that the Department of Education seek to emulate several other provinces thought to be more progressive in the matter of satisfying special needs in the educational setting. Another recommendation called for the standard *Handbook on Delivery of Special Education Programs and Services* to be re-titled and redefined as a guide to collaborative problem-solving using a team approach, suggesting that it could be used as a lead-in tool for a new document on pre-referral intervention. The accent, in the recommendation, was placed on encouraging various professionals to work together as problem solvers.

In order to improve the quality of services offered to at-risk students, the Binns government of 2003 announced a new instructional staffing model at an annual cost of $9 million. The plan encourages boards to increase success rates for children at risk by hiring new special education teachers, and proposes that schools access specialist services at the ratio of one teacher for every 14 high-need students and one teacher for every 500 low-need students (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 2003c).

As a result of the special education review, a new Student Services Division (2001-02) was created within the Department of Education. (Gov. of PEI 2003f, 27.). The far-ranging activities of the division mandate it to improve: accessibility of programs and services; inclusion practice; programs and services for students; resources to support learning and teaching; in-service and other professional development for educators; working relationships with all internal and external partners; and accountability (Gov. of PEI 2003f, 56-66).

Professional Voice: The PEITF

The year 1924 marked the inception of the PEI Teachers' Federation. The PEITF was preceded by the Teachers' Association of Prince Edward Island (1880-1920) and the Prince Edward Island Teachers' Union (1920-24). The Federation's Act of Incorporation was adopted in 1945, and the first PEITF offices were established in 1947. Today, the PEITF has 1,500 members (PEI Teachers' Federation 2003). Some examples of issues of current concern to organized teachers follow.

In September 2001, PEITF President Margaret Stewart voiced her disappointment that PEI teachers were the lowest paid in the country. A salary increase determined through binding arbitration was seen as inadequate, and she worried that the best teachers and administrators might be lost to other provinces. Stewart underlined that the "Memorandum of Agreement is the third consecutive one that as been arrived at though binding arbitration" (PEITF 2001).

PEI teachers were concerned that the process of negotiation as a whole was not adequately serving their interests, and wanted to find a better way to reach a fair agreement. In 1994, PEI teachers took a 7.5 percent pay cut as part of a government roll back of public servant salaries; it took teachers until 1997 to regain their 1992 salary levels (personal communication, PEITF 2005). The subsequent round of contract negotiations (2004, see below) was successful, however, thus ending a prolonged period of strained relations between the Department of Education and the PEITF.

An important 2003 study released by UPEI declared that the workload for teachers was between 48 to 52 hours a week during the school year (195 to 197 days); implementation of new curriculum, technology, student discipline, administrative tasks, and inclusion explain the increase. The PEI Workload Study also stated that the average teacher spends 37 hours during the summer preparing for the next school year. There has been a significant increase in stress levels and in dissatisfaction over salary, class sizes, and a lack of resources for new curriculum initiatives.

The difficulties are more particularly important for beginning and part-time teachers. Teachers paid on the basis of a 62 percent workload actually log 45 hours a week on average. They often have the most challenging classes, frequently outside their area of academic expertise. These part-time teachers, often less well-established in their working environments, also feel additional pressure to assume extracurricular activities and to volunteer at school (University of PEI 2003).

On a positive note, "PEI teachers have access to opportunities for professional growth and in-service [that are] almost unrivalled when compared with other provinces" (PEI Teachers' Federation 2002, 1). More than 140 teachers were working towards Master's degrees in education. Professional development is also offered through seminar series, various Federation courses, and in-service training sessions used to learn about the implementation of new curriculum (University of PEI 2003).

The fall 2003 PEITF online teachers' bulletin points out what the Federation thinks are the most significant findings of the UPEI study. The bulletin begins with the findings on weekly hours of work, emphasizing "these findings…are in line with other provincial and national findings, all of which showed teachers working

approximately 50 hours per week" (PEI Teacher's Federation 2004a). In addition, the PEITF expresses its concern that part-time teachers work nearly as many hours as their full-time counterparts, and that regular teachers spend more and more time on such tasks as curriculum change implementation, discipline, educational technology, administration, and inclusion policy implementation. Teachers perceive high levels of support for their work from colleagues and parents, but low governmental support. According to the findings, "far too many teachers feel undervalued", with stress being greatest among less-experienced and part-time teachers, while job satisfaction is highest among older teachers and those with smaller classes (PEI Teacher's Federation, 2004a).

Offsetting the many troublesome findings of the workload study, however, PEITF president Maurice Poirier had every reason to be pleased as he finished his first year of office, with teachers ratifying a collective agreement to cover July 2004 to June 2007 (PEI Teacher's Federation 2004a). A Department spokesperson (personal communication, Lowther 2004) was also happy to point out that the new contract has the potential to make PEI teachers compensation levels comparable to those of colleagues across Atlantic Canada. The new contract includes a general economic increase of two percent each year for the life of the contract, as well as salary grid adjustments that will enhance the province's ability to recruit new teachers and retain experienced teachers. The contract, which took effect July 1, 2004, also covers improved maternity, parental, and bereavement leaves, increased life insurance benefits, and additional professional development funding. Premier Binns and Education Minister Mildred Dover expressed satisfaction that the provincial government and the PEITF had reached a negotiated agreement (Gov. of PEI, Dept. of Ed. 2004c).

Conclusion

The government of Prince Edward Island and the Department of Education have been striving to modernize and reform the island school system over the past 15 years, with policies designed to bring both excellence and efficiency to school operation. The period was marked by increased collaboration with the other three provinces in Atlantic Canada; however, in this era of accountability PEI has also sought to compete with the education systems in neighbouring provinces and across Canada. This has meant efforts to ensure that professional teaching standards are in place, that schools are staffed adequately, and that the province devotes enough public funding to the educational enterprise. Finally, island educational policy strives to produce students apt to pursue their studies through higher education or to immediately establish careers on Prince Edward Island. Individual teachers have invested a great deal of time and energy to keeping pace with the increased demands of their profession and the new pressures of a changing public education system. At the same time, they have struggled, collectively, to improve both their socio-economic conditions and the teaching and learning conditions in the schools of Prince Edward Island.

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Chapter 11
Policy Narrative for the Yukon, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories

Stephen E. Anderson, Adrienne S. Chan, Richard Corteau, Donald Fisher, Sharon Gaydos, Claude Lessard, and Kjell Rubenson

Introduction

The most obvious common characteristics that tie together the Yukon, Nunavut, and the Northwest Territories are their enormous physical size and their relatively small populations. Taken together, the territories cover more than half of Canada's land mass, but are home to only 0.3 percent of its population, fewer than 100,000 people in total. In 2001, 28,525 people lived in the Yukon, 37,105 in the Northwest Territories, and 26,665 in Nunavut. The other feature that separates the territories from the rest of Canada is the high proportion of residents of Aboriginal descent; Nunavut has, by far, the largest proportion of Aboriginal residents at 86.2 percent (84.9 percent Inuit (22,625) and 1.3 percent First Nations (350)). The Northwest Territories is next with 47.2 percent (36 percent First Nations (13,375) and 11.2 percent Inuit (4,140)), followed by the Yukon at 23 percent First Nations. In Canada as a whole, by contrast, Aboriginal peoples including the Métis account for approximately 4.5 percent (1,308,550) of the total population. Inevitably, concerns about Aboriginal education are the central preoccupation in the territories.

This chapter is divided into two main sections. First is some background information on demography, political structure, and the basis of the educational systems in the territories. Second is an account of five policy themes cutting across the territories: Aboriginal education; the Western Canada Protocol; teacher training and professionalism; governance; and accountability.

The Territories

The Yukon Territory

Ethnic and language diversity and the size and distribution of population are key factors in considering the educational policy environment in the Yukon Territory. The Department of Education is responsible for the overall school operation in the Yukon, where 23 percent of students are of First Nations ancestry (2003), and French-speaking residents account for 11 percent of the total population.

The Yukon Territory is governed by a Parliament consisting 18 seats. Whitehorse, the capital city, is home to approximately 70 percent of the territory's population and 78 percent of its student population (Yukon Department of Education, 2003). The Yukon Territory has 28 publicly funded schools, half of which are located in Whitehorse. More than 5,500 families are served by the system; home schooling is also available.

The Department of Education works in consultation with First Nations to improve learning outcomes for First Nations students and to develop First Nations curriculum units. Curriculum consultants provide support to Aboriginal Language teachers and provide linkages to 14 Yukon First Nations. Linkages are made to teacher education, and the Yukon Native Language Centre provides training and certification for Aboriginal teachers.

Together, the Yukon Act and the Education Act (1990) are the guiding framework and authority for education. The Education Act provides for the establishment of school councils, school boards, and makes provisions for special education. It mandates an emphasis on First Nations' culture, and has jurisdiction over Catholic Education.

The Northwest Territories

The Northwest Territories is home to Canada's second largest concentration of Aboriginal citizens, accounting for nearly half of its population. In addition to its Aboriginal citizens and those of British ancestry, the Northwest Territories is also home to a multitude of other cultures and language groups. Approximately 25 percent of the population (9,700 people) identify themselves (and in fairly equal numbers) as French, German, or Métis. In 2000, the Northwest Territories pre-school population aged six and under was about 5,240, or 13 percent of the population. Approximately 16,000 Kindergarten to Grade 12 students (about 39 percent of the population) were enrolled in 51 public and public denominational schools, three private schools, and two francophone schools. The schools are operated and run by eight boards of education.

The government of the Northwest Territories gained control of its educational system a little over 25 years ago, and there have been significant developments since then. The schooling vision for Northwest Territory students was first articulated in the policy document *Education in the Northwest Territories* (1986) and refined in *Our Students, Our Future: An Educational Framework* (1991). The foundation of this document is that all students are unique and that the challenge of education is to provide environments where all children may learn effectively.

Holistic personal development and growth are goals and five domains are identified as essential elements — the physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual domains. The view that schooling must be meaningful and relevant for Northwest Territories students is fundamental, as is the belief that schooling should be culture-based, incorporating and shaped by the culture of individual communities. Culture-based schooling implies that decisions about educational activities at all levels are directed and driven by individuals and groups who represent the cultures of the Northwest Territories.

Nunavut

Iqaluit is the capital of Nunavut, from which the territory is governed by a Commissioner, an elected legislature, a Premier, an office of seven Ministers, and ten Representatives. The government of Nunavut is a model of decentralization, for its Ministries are located in 10 communities, and report to three regional offices in Qiliqtaalik (Baffin), Kivalliq (Keewatin) and Kitikmeot. The three administrative regions contain 41 schools. The system of education is governed by the laws on education, on Nunavut, and on public high schools. Four communities offer French programs and classes at the primary and secondary level. Nunavut has the youngest population in Canada; 61 percent of the population is 25 years of age or younger, and 53 percent of the families have children who are five years of age or younger. The official language in education is Inuktitut, and Inuinnaqtun is also recognized.

Before 1 April 1999, Nunavut was part of the Northwest Territories and subject to their education system. In 1999, the Bathurst Pinasuaqtavut Mandate was put into effect, prioritizing continuous education and training to support the development of an Aboriginal workforce. This priority supports, in spirit, the *Inuuqatigiittiarniq*, a concept that values harmony of spirit and body, spirit and environment. Other fundamental Inuit values include: the importance of the person, cooperation at all levels, the integration of actions and traditional values in innovative strategies that will contribute to the development of the Nunavut economy, and individual and collective learning as a lifelong process.

Policy Themes

Aboriginal Education

As indicated in the introduction, by far the most important policy theme in the territories is Aboriginal education, with all three emphasizing First Nations' Aboriginal culture for all students.

As part of the Western Canada Protocol Agreement, the Yukon government developed a curriculum framework for Aboriginal language instruction; curriculum development initiatives focus on priorities identified by the Department of Education and Yukon First Nations.

First Nations education is a key element in the formation of Yukon government education policy, and an emphasis on First Nations culture for all students is made explicit in legislation. The Department of Education works in consultation with First Nations to improve learning outcomes for First Nations students and

to develop First Nations curriculum units; a curriculum development project was completed in 2003. Linkages have been made with teacher education, and the Yukon Native Language Centre provides training and certification for Aboriginal teachers. The Centre delivers a three-year certificate, a follow-up two-year diploma, and develops teaching and learning materials for all the Yukon Aboriginal languages. First Nations elders play an important role in education, participating in regular activities in the schools, supporting resources for language and cultural courses, and serving on committees that shape the educational process. The Elders in the School program legitimates the role of First Nations education in the schools.

Using the 1999 Bathurst Pinasuaqtavut Mandate as a foundation, and in response to the Ministry of Education's mission statement, a five-year education development plan was finalized in Nunavut. One of the objectives focuses on the need for a revision of the curriculum that will reinforce the importance of Aboriginal culture. In 2002, Bill 1 (Education Act) affirmed the importance of the Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun languages, and knowledge of the origins of Inuit culture, history, traditions, and patrimony. Of equal importance is the recognition that there are many ways of learning, and that the placement of learning in a global context reflects an interdependent relationship between Nunavut and the world. Article 72 of the Education Act states that, when either French or English are taught in a school, Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun must be taught as well. From 1996-97, 97 percent of the communities of Nunavut offered language programs in Aboriginal languages, and Inuktitut represented the primary language of education in 76 percent of the communities.

The Official Languages Act of the Northwest Territories (1984) recognizes Chipewyan, Cree, Dogrib, English, French, Gwich'in, Inuktitut (Inuinnaqtun and Inuvialuktun), and Slavey (North and South) as official languages. The rate of Aboriginal language loss is a concern; even though 39 percent of Aboriginal people report the ability to speak an Aboriginal language, fewer than 15 percent use an Aboriginal language at home. Persons over 45 years of age make up approximately 17 percent of the population, but account for nearly 35 percent of all speakers of Aboriginal languages. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment has committed, in its strategic plan, to help communities achieve their language goals by gradually transferring resources for language activities to the community.

The Northwest Territories' schools help children and young adults learn about their culture and to learn or retain the ability to speak their own language. Aboriginal language programs are provided in 91 percent of the communities. Instructional time averages 120 minutes a week for second language programs (L2). The emphasis in language instruction is on oral traditions in the primary grades, but reading and writing are often introduced in Grades 4 to 6. Some communities and regional centres have had to limit the number of courses offered due to insufficient funding and/or low student numbers. In communities, 94 percent of students from Kindergarten to Grade 9 have access to Aboriginal language programs, while, in regional centres, virtually all students have access to Aboriginal language programs. Each regional centre has a diverse Aboriginal population, and schools are faced with the difficult task of deciding which language(s) to focus on in an academic year.

The three territories have also placed an emphasis on teacher training and the training of First Nations teachers. In Nunavut, the proportion of Aboriginal teachers

increased between 1994 and 1997, and the current government's goal is to increase this proportion to 85 percent. The policy initiative *Strategy for Teacher Education in the Northwest Territories: Past Experiences and Future Directions* (1998) outlines the goals and outcomes for teacher education between 1999 and 2005. The primary goal it identifies for the teacher education program in the Northwest Territories is to graduate sufficient Aboriginal teachers to provide each community with a teaching force that is representative of the public it serves.

Western Canada Protocol

In 1993, the governments of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia, the Yukon, and the Northwest Territories signed the Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education (WCP) from Kindergarten to Grade 12. The WCP has established common curriculum frameworks with learning outcomes in mathematics and English language arts. Beyond this general agreement, the Yukon government mandates an emphasis on First Nations' culture for all students.

As part of the WCP, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment of the Northwest Territories endeavors to develop common curriculum frameworks with learning outcomes. However, in the Northwest Territories, the movement is towards a vision of locally controlled, community- and culture-based education for all children. The Northwest Territories has experienced significant changes and continues to adjust to the transfer of power and authority caused by the move towards self-government and settlement of land claims. Hence, an increased emphasis on self-government will have a significant impact on the development of all programs and services, as more local control is encouraged, and expected to be exercised, over the design, development, and delivery of services. At the community level, local materials and local human resources are incorporated to represent the cultural and language distinctiveness. Currently, students in the Northwest Territories are required to successfully complete a minimum of 100 course credits, including approximately 25 hours of instruction in each of the courses. Students are required to achieve 74 Specified course credits[1] and 26 Unspecified course credits to graduate with a high school diploma[2] (NWT, 1993, 1 and 3).

Nunavut entered the Western Protocol in 2000. The collaboration resulted in the improvement of high school curricula in mathematics, English language arts, and French language arts in the 1990s.

Teacher's Education and Professionalism

In the Yukon, public school teachers are employees of the Department of Education and must possess or be eligible for a valid teaching certificate from a Canadian province, and must receive Yukon certification. Teachers are regulated by the Teacher Certification Regulations under the Education Act. The Teaching Profession Act (1989-90, revised 2002) outlines the establishment of the Yukon Teachers' Association, a code of ethics, disciplinary actions, and the objectives of a professional body of teachers. In 2002-03, the territory employed 408 teachers, 111 remedial tutors and educational assistants, 31 Aboriginal language teachers, and 44 school administrators. Twenty-nine of the teachers were graduates of the

Yukon Native Teacher Education Program. Teachers must belong to the Yukon Teachers' Association (YTA), the professional organization and bargaining agent for administrators and teachers.

French-speaking residents account for 11 percent of the Yukon's total population. The Commission Scolaire Francophone du Yukon (CSFY) was established as the territory's francophone school board in 1996, and has five elected members. The CSFY offers education for personal growth and cultural identity to francophone learners in the Yukon. The CSFY administers École Émilie-Tremblay, the Yukon's only French first language school. In 2002-03, approximately 110 students attended École Émilie-Tremblay, with 10 teachers and two educational assistants. A CSFY initiative entitled Community Partnership in Education focuses and directs the francophone community's interest, initiatives, and energy in education. The group has held forums, public consultations, and regular meetings to collaborate on community needs related to education. The school and the board are funded by the Secretary of State and Heritage Canada. French immersion and French second language programs are in place in most Yukon schools.

Nunavut teachers are represented by the Federation of Teachers of Nunavut, which promotes public education, defends the interests of its members, advocates for excellence and professionalism, and negotiates collective agreements. The Federation supports the establishment of partnerships in schools that promote the Qaujimajatuqangit Inuit and the quality of education for the children and young ones of the Nunavut.

Teachers in the Northwest Territories must hold a valid teaching certificate from a province or Yukon Territory and must meet the requirements set out in the Education Act (1996), which stipulates that all Northwest Territories teachers must renew their teaching certificates every five years. In addition, teachers with more than five, but fewer than 10 years of teaching experience must successfully complete a Bachelor of Education degree. In 1999, 95 percent of Yellowknife teachers, 86 percent of regional centre teachers and 75 percent of community teachers held degrees. Teachers who hold a degree must complete 120 hours of professional development over each five-year period.

The Education Act requires that all school principals either have, or must complete, a Northwest Territories four-week two-stage teaching certification programme within the first two years of their appointment; in 1996-97, 40 percent of school principals were certified.

In 1998, the Ministry of Education employed approximately 640 teachers, 15 percent of whom (95) were Aboriginal. To better service Aboriginal students between the ages of five and 19 years (91 percent in communities, 67 percent in regional centres and 30 percent in Yellowknife), Aboriginal educators must constitute 62 percent of the teaching force.

The Aurora College Teacher Education Program is training Aboriginal teachers and language specialists to facilitate community capacity. In 1999, two thirds of the Aurora College Teacher Education Program graduates were employed in education in the Northwest Territories. In 1999, 61 percent of Northwest Territories teachers had five or more years of teaching experience. In community and regional centre

schools many teachers had less than two years experience due to a high teacher turnover rate. Teacher induction, mentoring, peer coaching, and professional development are initiatives to be implemented to encourage new teachers to stay in the profession. Community-based teacher education programs have had the greatest impact on teacher retention in the smaller community schools because its graduates have come from the community, know the language, culture, and heritage, and choose to teach in their home communities.

Students can enter either the Aboriginal Language Certificate program or the Early Childhood Education Diploma program with the option of transferring into the Teacher Education Diploma program, with the potential of further transfer into university programs. In addition, graduates may enter the Principal Certification program that earns credits towards a Master of Education degree from the University of Saskatchewan.

Governance

In the Yukon Territories, the Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) of Education is responsible for school operations. Three school Superintendents and a Superintendent of Programs provide assistance to the ADM. The four Superintendents administer all of the English-speaking schools throughout the territory. The Yukon has a single elected school board that is responsible for École Émilie-Tremblay, the French-first language school. The school board does not have the authority to tax.

Given the absence of elected school boards for English-speaking schools, school councils play an important role in the operation of the schools and the system as a whole. Councils are an elected group comprising parents and community members. There are currently 27 school councils with 152 members (2002). Each council has three to seven members, including a chair. The Yukon Education Act guarantees the representation of First Nations on these councils.

School councils have a number of responsibilities and powers, including the review and approval of school objectives, plans and policies, educational spending, and effective functioning of the school; participation in the selection of school principals; establishing procedures for dispute resolution; establishing an attendance policy for students; reviewing and approving school rules; and making recommendations on the allocation of the school budget, including discretionary funds. Councils also have the ability to propose locally developed courses and give advice on the length of the school year, staffing needs, school renovations, and school programming. The work of the councils is administered by the Department of Education. The councils come together for annual conferences.

In the Northwest Territories, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is responsible for the public and private education of all children. Within the present structure of education, culture and employment programs and services, several levels of decision-making exist, including the Legislature, the Minister and Department, the Divisional Education Councils (DECs) and District Education Authorities, and the College Board of Governors. Over the past decade, authority for education has devolved to the College and the District Educational Authorities. Change is expected to continue as self-government is implemented, and regions and communities take increasing responsibilities. Non-

profit organizations are also important partners in the delivery of programs and services to northerners, and some programs work in partnership with employers in industry. The Commission Scolaire was established to administer French first language programs in November 2000.

The Northwest Territories appears to emphasize the decentralization and deregulation of government, as evidenced by a number of initiatives. First, self-government (due to the settlement of land claims) has precipitated local community involvement at all levels of decision-making, thereby impacting the design, development, and delivery of programs and services. Of particular interest, is the government's ingenuity in deferring to local control, yet continuing to support communities in their development of Aboriginal language programs that will revitalize culture and language use among young people. Second, the implementation of a community-learning network facilitates the participation of individuals and groups at the local, regional, and territorial levels.

In Nunavut, the Ministry of Education is charged with ensuring that education is based on the culture, tradition, and heritage of the people, and the language of Inuktitut. The education system is decentralized and guided by district councils. In 1996, the new School Act converted school boards into Divisional Educational Councils (DECs), as in the Northwest Territories. Today ten DECs, which consist of elected parents and community representatives, make decisions that guide and influence the functioning of the schools. The DECs are responsible for the coordination and promotion of educational programs and services in their administrative region.

Under the School Act, school administrators must collaborate with schools to develop appropriate learning environments that reflect the cultural and linguistic traits of the community. The DEC has the right to make recommendations to the Minister of Education and modify language programs in schools and jurisdictions. The School Act states that DECs must work with school principals and teaching personnel to create a learning environment that promotes Aboriginal language and culture, as well as academic excellence. Since 1999, parents and community members have had a direct influence on the policy and decision-making process.

In 1987 and 1995, four two-year training programs were established to train school-community agents to liaise between the school and the community. Twenty-two of the fifty-four graduates of this program now work in Nunavut.

Accountability

Schools in the Yukon implemented a new assessment plan in 1999-2000. Comprehensive testing focused on numeracy and literacy. The plan was part of an overall testing strategy to monitor student learning and to ensure the accountability of the Department of Education to the public.

A review of the Education Act (1990), required every ten years, was begun in 2000. The Minister of Education established a series of review processes and public consultations, at which more than 1,500 groups and individuals made comments. The Education Act Review Steering Committee made recommendations resulting in Bill 63, the Act to Amend the Education Act. Bill 63 was tabled in the Legislative

Assembly and given first reading in April, 2002. The Bill was deferred in May, in response to a request by stakeholders for more time to review the proposed amendments.

Bill 63 highlighted a number of potential changes to the operation of the education system. A major change, and one that set the tone for the entire Bill, called for the establishment of a Cabinet-appointed Education Advisory Council, which would represent a range of education groups and interests. However, in November 2002, ruling Liberals were defeated in a general election that saw the right-of-centre, populist Yukon Party swept to power. Bill 63 was a major reason for the Liberals' defeat. The proposed legislation, it was argued, centralized control of the system, provided for less representation and made government less accountable. John Edzerza was appointed as the new Minister of Education in 2002, and Bill 63 was not re-introduced. While the Yukon Party has not formally addressed the issues raised by Bill 63 and the Education Act Review, the Minister of Education maintains that the recommendations put forward by the review are still being considered (Hansard, February 2003). In April, 2003, the Government Accountability Act was repealed.

The Yukon government has an accountability plan, and the Department of Education develops an accountability plan consistent with that of the Territory. Education is intended to support the core goals for the Yukon: rebuilding the Yukon economy, developing infrastructure, addressing alcohol and drug addictions, and restoring confidence in government. The Education Accountability Plan for 2002 identified two major goals: to offer responsive and relevant learning opportunities for Kindergarten to Grade 12 students; and, to provide labour market programs and services for apprenticeship and industry training opportunities. To achieve these goals the department outlined a number of objectives and strategies.

For the first goal, the Education Accountability Plan commits the Department to fostering excellence in education through development and delivery of innovative education programs (e.g., distance learning). Student learning in general will be enhanced, and the improvement of learning outcomes for First Nation students achieved, through an increase in training opportunities for professional educators (e.g., professional development in specific areas such as reading recovery) and, in collaboration with First Nations, the completion of several territory-wide First Nation curriculum units. Further, the plan lists a number of process objectives and strategies that focus on improving school facility infrastructure, increasing parental involvement in the decision-making process through the school councils, and, in a more general sense, working to implement the Education Act.

For the second goal, the Education Accountability Plan commits the department to a number of objectives and strategies that focus on the transition from school to work, as well as adult education, training, and apprenticeship opportunities within the postsecondary system. The plan is a way of implementing parts of the broader Yukon Training Strategy and the Yukon Mobility Initiative. One of its aims is to monitor and regulate both training and certificate programs for apprentices to ensure relevance, quality, and gender equity. Another is to match such inputs as business investment and immigration to the labour market. To achieve these goals, the plan focuses on upgrading literacy skills, the provision of community-based

training, a new computer-based information system, and a framework for attracting immigrants with needed skills.

Accountability is closely connected to the public consultation processes contained in the Education Act review, which has highlighted the public's changing expectations about service delivery, accountability and involvement in decision making in education, and identified program expansion and enhancement as priorities for the future. The Department of Education stresses its commitment to accountability by making its goals relevant, measurable, and achievable. The Education Act requires that each Yukon school be evaluated every five years to improve schools and ensure accountability of publicly funded educational institutions. Schools are evaluated on a rotating basis, with some schools beginning their evaluation as others are completing the process. After evaluation, schools develop and implement school plans for improvement. Accountability was addressed through a number of mechanisms regarding achievement and educational relevancy in 2003. An Aboriginal languages survey/assessment, an adult literacy needs and skills survey, and a community education needs assessment were all launched. The community needs assessment is part of a consultation process with First Nations, school councils and local government to identify priorities. In accordance with the Western Canada Protocol, the Department of Education began to examine how changes to the BC graduation program might affect the Yukon, since Yukon secondary schools mirror the BC secondary school program.

The detailed list of vocational outcomes in the accountability plan illustrates the foundational importance of the economy. The policy environment for all elected governments inevitably emphasizes jobs and employment. Vocationalism is a central component of what it means to be accountable. Employment is the key to in-migration and, for the Yukon, the maintenance of a stable population.

First Nations education and an emphasis on fostering First Nations cultural awareness are key elements in the formation of government policy in education. First Nations representation on school councils is guaranteed in the Education Act, and the government promotes Aboriginal teacher education and facilitates employment opportunities through vocational education. Thus the economic imperative that has tended to drive the accountability movement is somewhat counterbalanced by the political necessity of giving First Nations a pre-eminent place in the policy-making process.

In Nunavut, the Superintendent conducts an annual evaluation of school principals in consultation with the school district administration. The Superintendent works with school principals and school personnel to create educational environments that facilitate learning, promote Aboriginal culture and languages, and favour academic excellence. Each school principal is responsible for the daily functioning of the school, enforcement of a code of conduct, and the integration of Qaujimaningit and Qaujimajatuqangit Inuits in the school environment. The school principal is also responsible for the general supervision of the teaching personnel, the evaluation of their progress, the approval of educational resources, and the organization and evaluation of the programs of study.

The Northwest Territories' Department of Education, Culture and Employment has established a set of standards to assure parents that their children are receiving

the best possible education and one that meets local demands and interests. A *Key Performance Indicators Reporting Manual* (2001) is used to help educational organizations identify plans and strategies, and to create specific criteria measurements to gauge success. Setting standards, monitoring and measuring actual results, and planning improvements become increasingly important as local communities take on more control, thereby assuring greater accountability on the part of educational authorities.

The *Key Performance Indicators Reporting Manual* (2001) requires divisional education councils and district education authorities to report Kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum and program initiatives annually. Other educational activities that must be reported include language, culture-based and other locally developed programs, student support, distance learning and technology initiatives and/or special projects undertaken by educational authorities during the year. Hence, DECs and District Education Authorities are not only accountable to the community they serve, but also to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

The Northwest Territories curriculum is very much community- and culture-based; however, there is movement toward higher standards in both elementary and secondary education. Standards in mathematics, language arts, and international languages in particular have been identified for each grade level from Kindergarten to Grade 12. The standards outlined are applicable to all students and are expected to be achievable by all students. Accountability for student performance is required, and student achievement results and evaluation data are reported annually. The *Western Canadian Language Arts Protocol* (1993) mandates appropriate and achievable standards at both elementary and secondary levels of education, by which all Northwest Territories students are gauged. These standards continue to regulate the baseline for student evaluation and assessment.

Conclusion

Aboriginal and First Nations language(s), culture, and ways of knowing have been and continue to dominate educational policy in the territories. The other themes identified above (Western Canada Protocol, governance, accountability, and teacher education) are for the most part sub-elements of the dominant theme. At the same time, this emphasis on language and culture carries over into an emphasis on the local community and a willingness to accommodate the needs of francophones and other minorities. The importance of teacher education is a priority that makes Aboriginal, First Nations, and Inuit culture and languages coherent to non-Aboriginal populations in education. There appears to be an emphasis in all territories towards the professionalism of teachers and links between teacher employment, education, and professional development.

Postscript

In 2006, a report by Thomas Berger, Q.C. regarding the educational system in Nunavut was released. In the report, Berger recommends developing a bilingual education system, consistent with a commitment that the federal government made in 1993 in the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. The investment and commitment

to Inuktitut, the language of the Inuit people, is significant. Language is a key element of identity and an acknowledgement of the culture. Inuktitut will be the language of instruction for such subjects as Inuit history, traditions, culture, and geography. One implication of this bilingual system is a need for teachers who can teach in both English and Inuktitut.

Endnotes

1. The Specified course credits include: 15 credits in English, 10 credits in Social Studies, 10 credits in Mathematics, 10 credits in Science, 3 credits in Fine Arts, 3 credits in Physical Education, 3 credits in Northern Studies, 5 credits in Career and Technology Studies (S.N.A.P.), 3 credits in Career and Life Management (C.A.L.M.), 1 credit in Community Service, 1 credit in Career and Program Plan, and 10 credits at the Grade 12 level.
2. Prior to the 2003–04 school year, students were not mandated to complete the Specified course credit Career and Program Plan.

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Chapter 12
Conclusion

Adrienne S. Chan, Donald Fisher, and Kjell Rubenson

The history of educational reform since the Second World War illustrates the tendency of governments, in Canada and in other western industrialized societies, to use education to legitimate current social structures or to ameliorate critical responses to underlying societal issues. The most significant change in the formation of the state over the last five decades is that education has become its most important legitimating agency.

Educational policy holds out the promise of both economic and social development. High unemployment rates and public perceptions of illiteracy have invariably been answered by governments (of all ideological stripes) with increased emphasis on curriculum accountability. Just as the emphasis on accountability (testing and standards) has historically gone in cycles, so too has the focus on what has been variously labelled core curriculum, essential learning and back to basics. The most recent incarnation of curriculum accountability occurred in the 1990s, although similar trends were observable across Canada in the 1950s and the 1970s.

In this text, we have provided a detailed account of educational policy in each province and the territories. In this final chapter, we reflect on pan-Canadian themes, the impact of those themes in the broad context of educational policy, and provide some final remarks on the policy making process.

Policy Research and the Pan-Canadian Themes

Fiscal Policies and Funding

The ideological forces that drove the Klein Revolution in Alberta and the changes in Manitoba, Ontario, and BC had, as central tenets, the reduction of public expenditures and government bureaucracy and more centralized control of funding. The 1990s saw drastic changes in fiscal policies for the first three provinces, followed

by BC in 2001. These changes, made primarily through legislation and announced with a great deal of fanfare, were internally related to other policy changes with regard to accountability, curriculum, governance, and industrial relations. While some fiscal changes did occur in the other provinces and territories, they were far less drastic and more in tune with mainstream ideological positions.

The most prominent aspect of fiscal policy change was the reduction in provincial expenditures on public K-12 schooling. The contentious 1993-97 education funding rollback by Manitoba's Conservative Filmon government (Black and Silver, 1999; Levin and Weins, 2003) resulted in relatively large annual increases in local school taxes (Henley and Young, 2001). The Klein government announced a substantial reduction in educational funding over a four-year period in 1994, (Neu, Peters and Taylor, 2002) and imposed a wage rollback on teachers and all other public sector employees (Peters, 1999).

Following in Alberta's footsteps, the Harris government in Ontario announced, in 1996, drastic cuts to school board operating grants, followed, in 1997, by reductions in the number of school board trustees, the remainder of whom had their salaries capped at $5000 per year. These changes were precursors to a drastic centralization of education funding in Ontario (Bill 160), by which the government took away local school boards' power to raise funds by manipulating the education portion of local property taxes and mandated that boards must operate within their provincially allocated annual budgets. Bill 160 resulted in major conflicts between the teacher federations and the government both before and after its passage. Ultimately, the province guaranteed three years of stable funding at the 1997-98 level for the province, provided several million dollars in "transition funds" to help mitigate the initial costs of consolidation, and created an early retirement window that enabled boards to generate savings by hiring beginning teachers. The BC Liberal Government, too, followed the course set by Alberta and Ontario, and made radical funding reforms one of its hallmarks, reducing education funding by approximately $200 million in 2001 and 2002 (BCTF, 2002).

Aside from a tendency toward centralized funding control in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, fiscal policies have remained relatively stable in other provinces and territories. Québec and Saskatchewan resisted the trend toward removing the taxation powers of local authorities. Indeed, as one examines the changes in the spending per full-time equivalent (FTE) students across Canada during the period 1996-2003 (see Table 8), one is struck by the stability of funding. No province records either a drastic increase or decrease, with the exception of New Brunswick. The Northwest Territories and Nunavut record the largest decrease while PEI and, surprisingly, Alberta record the largest increases. Overall, the spending per full-time equivalent student decreased.

For obvious geographical reasons, expenditures per FTE student in the territories are much higher than in the provinces. The gap between the provinces spending the most and those spending the least is wide. Funding is lowest in the Atlantic Provinces, particularly in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, which spent about 25 percent less per student than did Manitoba, Québec, and Ontario.

During the period 1992 to 2001, the Education Price Index in Canada (EPI) closely followed Consumer Price Index (CPI) growth for the same period (Statistics

Canada, 2003). Teachers' salaries, which account for more than 70 percent of school boards' operating expenses, increased by less than 1 percent per year from 1994 to 1998 but rose by an average of 2.5 percent per year between 1999 and 2001. The smallest increases occurred in Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Nova Scotia, while the largest increases were in Saskatchewan, Québec, and Alberta (Statistics Canada, op. cit.). During the period 1992 to 2001, the non-salary component of EPI saw twice the growth of the salary component.

Since 2000, changes in the political climate have seen significant attempts to reverse restraint-lead fiscal policies. The Manitoba NDP government introduced a new model for funding of schools in 2002, which provided a simplified and more transparent calculation for instructional support, and a more targeted approach aiming at the equitable distribution of provincial funding. Rather than emphasize that each school district receive the exact same funding per student, which has been the guiding principle in the funding formulas of Alberta, Ontario, Nova Scotia, and British Columbia, Manitoba's NDP government recognized that equal funding implies unequal support based on the local conditions and student population. Similarly, the election of a Liberal government in Ontario has marked a shift toward the political centre with respect to fiscal policy. Most surprisingly, following their re-elections, the Klein Conservatives in Alberta and the Campbell Liberals in BC have almost completely reversed the restraint funding policy that characterized their earlier approach to education.

Accountability

In the last decade and a half, accountability has come to dominate the educational policy discourse in Canada and pervade the majority of government documents and policies. Subsumed under the accountability umbrella there are references to outcomes-based education, standardized testing and community/parental involvement in education. Closely related to notions of accountability are references to teachers' professionalism and the accountability/reporting process of teachers and school administrators. Regulation is a key concept as governments attempt to make transparent their control, direct or indirect, over education systems. In this sense, accountability overlaps with governance and the tension between vertical logic (centralization, top-down decision-making) and horizontal logic (decentralization, bottom-up decision-making), as outlined in Chapter Six on Québec.

The emphasis on accountability should be seen as part of the increasing dominance of a political-economic imperative in the formation of government policy. The power of the market and the concomitant emphasis on competition appears to cut across the ideological lines separating political parties. However, while provincial governments across Canada have made accountability a priority regardless of their political party affiliation, we note qualitative differences depending on political ideology. So, for example, the 1990s marked two distinct approaches to policy in Manitoba. Gary Filmon's Progressive Conservatives embarked on a prescriptive course of action, and while the policies of the New Democratic Party were not all that dissimilar from those of their predecessor, their endorsement of the accountability movement was "kinder and gentler." A similar

change, although in the opposite direction, can be seen in BC when one compares the accountability regime of the NDP in the 1990s with that introduced in 2001 by Gordon Campbell's Liberals.

The provincial case studies speak to the fundamental impact that the Klein Revolution in Alberta came to have on accountability regimes across Canada. Set within the general movement toward neoliberalism, the Alberta revolution became a model for accountability discourses across the country. The mid-1990s represent a policy watershed as the values underlying new public management became dominant first in Alberta, then in Ontario, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and British Columbia. While these values were more pronounced in the aforementioned provinces their influence can be seen in the rest of Atlantic Canada and, to some extent, most recently in Québec. Saskatchewan was the most resistant and remained an outlier throughout this period.

The accountability approaches that emerged under the Klein regime in Alberta differ in some fundamental ways from earlier accountability systems. First and most foremost, accountability came to define the entire public policy environment in Alberta. Second, and tied directly to the first point, Alberta introduced a closer link between accountability procedures and planning. Third, the dominant feature of the regime has been a strong emphasis on student assessment and outcomes at the provincial, district, and school levels. Finally, and probably as a reflection of the populist roots of the Klein government, the role of parents was expanded through new governance procedures.

The three governments that have made accountability the defining characteristic of the policy environment and have linked these procedures to planning are Alberta, Ontario, and BC. This convergence is clearly a result of the resonance between the Klein Revolution and the allegiance to neoliberalism displayed by the Conservative and Liberal governments of Ontario and BC. Common features of the accountability movement across all provinces include increased emphasis on testing and outcome-based education, as well as the creation of school-based governing bodies that include parents. This latter development will be covered later in this chapter under the governance theme. The utilization of province-wide standardized achievement tests has historically been central to the rise of accountability movements going back as far as the 1930s. Inevitably, provincial initiatives in the Atlantic region were tied to the assessment plans put forward by the Atlantic Provinces Educational Fund (APEF), and articulated with the CMEC pan-Canadian plans, and the international OECD PISA testing program.

During the period under study, Alberta, Ontario, Nova Scotia, BC, and Manitoba, all adopted and/or extended standardized province-wide achievement tests to include the whole school system. In the first four provinces, the results were publicly available and the school increasingly became the assessment unit of analysis, thus allowing for league table analysis. In the rest of Atlantic Canada beyond Nova Scotia, developments were somewhat more complicated. First, in 1996, the APEF introduced a common outcome-based curriculum for all four provinces. It follows that, to varying degrees, each province has adopted a means of assessing these outcomes. Second, New Brunswick was particularly concerned about the results provincial students obtained on the CMEC School Achievement

Indicators Program (SAIP) in 2000. Standardized province-wide tests were introduced, but the implementation of the assessment program has varied across the anglophone and francophone sectors. The francophone sector responded by adopting a mix of formative and summative evaluation techniques where the goal was school success. From 2003, the anglophone sector was governed by the Quality Learning Agenda that set clear province-wide achievement goals and made accountability of the system the overriding aim.

Québec presents a very mixed picture. Alongside the historic commitment to equality of opportunity, the Parti Quebecois government in 2000 made quantitative performance reporting a priority. The idea of 'school success plans' was gradually converted into a formative program whose aim was the maximum success for all students. Saskatchewan, in contrast to all the other provinces, has maintained a focus on assessment for the improvement of teaching and learning. The Education Indicators Program begun in 1993 has consistently been used in a formative manner and not as a means for ranking and comparing schools.

Curriculum

Three main elements emerge under the heading of curriculum: curriculum accountability; vocationalism and training; and inclusive education. Curriculum accountability has been a prominent policy orientation during the 1990s in Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. A core or common curriculum involves the definition and standardization of province-wide expected student outcomes.

While the emphasis on accountability is often associated with governments that adopt a conservative or New Right ideology, the Ontario case illustrates how curriculum accountability cuts across party lines. In Ontario, the central emphasis of curriculum change since 1990 has been the shift towards a more outcomes-based and standards-oriented core curriculum, defined provincially, and applicable to all students.

Curriculum accountability set the agenda for curriculum reform in Alberta and Manitoba, as market ideology dominated the Klein Revolution and the Filmon years. The Klein administration introduced a results-based provincial curriculum that emphasized basic skills. Filmon brought in an outcomes-based curriculum for all schools under the heading "essential learnings". This prescriptive style extended beyond narrow outcomes to include ten general elements, such as problem solving, which had to be incorporated into all curricula. Similar trends were apparent in both Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, where core curriculum programs linked to student outcomes were developed for secondary schools. The intention was to have each school offer a standard educational package. By the mid-1990s discussions on curriculum accountability took on a regional quality in both the Atlantic and Western regions of Canada.

The cases of British Columbia, Québec, and Saskatchewan are complex. Not until 2001 and the election of the New Right Liberal government do we see in BC a policy embracing curriculum accountability. The focus has been on the upper grades in high school and graduation requirements. In Québec the discussion of standards

and a core curriculum are intimately tied to the issues of French language and culture; success was the defining objective of educational policy, with a particular emphasis on core disciplines (e.g., French, history, and mathematics). By the end of the 1990s, a competency and essential knowledge approach was extended to all disciplines in the school systems.

The clearest demonstration of the power of political ideology is the case of Saskatchewan. The language of core curriculum and essential learning is present, but they emerge from a social democratic tradition that stands in contradiction to the power of the market and of capital. These policies emerged from a collaborative process and were built on commitments to community, access, and equality. The major features of the core curriculum are a focus on a general curriculum and a student-centred curriculum. (Saskatchewan Education, 1987).

The policy direction undertaken by the Saskatchewan government marked a split with educational reform initiatives in the other parts of Canada. While politicians and policy makers in many other provinces and countries are centralizing curriculum (with a concurrent stress on content and large-scale testing) Saskatchewan Education has maintained a policy of investing in teachers as curriculum developers. Saskatchewan resists moving toward standardization and centralization of the content of the provincial curriculum. The revisions to the 'core' that took place in the 1990s did not specify content or method — these remain the domain of the classroom teacher.

In the Atlantic Provinces, the APEF took regional leadership with the 1994 development of a common core curriculum linked to outcome measures. Essential Graduate Learnings (EGLs) were identified and served as a framework for curricula development for Grades 1-12. Common core outcomes were developed in English language arts, mathematics, and science. Similarly, in 1993, the governments of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia, the Yukon, and the Northwest Territories signed the Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education (WCP) from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Nunavut signed the Protocol in 2000. All three territories have emphasized their commitment to Aboriginal education.

An important but less pronounced curriculum theme has been the emphasis on vocationalism and training, particularly in BC and Alberta. Populism drove these policies through the 1990s, as the NDP in BC and the Klein conservatives in Alberta supported secondary school programs that were linked to employment. A skills agenda in BC led to the creation of an Apprenticeship Commission, while in Alberta the Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board (2000) was given the authority to make orders providing for the approval, registration, or recognition of student work training programs. In an attempt to find training formats, Québec set up a new type of training establishment: the professional training centre for secondary school students and registered adults.

Finally, a whole range of curriculum policy initiatives have, as their objective, inclusion within the public education system. Through the 1990s, inclusion became a major policy objective for most provinces and territories. The most important sub-element in this theme was special education. The language of integration was a symbol for increasing educational opportunity for special needs and disadvantaged

students. Provinces and territories enhanced their focus on these students in a variety of ways. In BC, mainstreaming became the watchword for this policy, while Alberta created an accountability framework for, special needs at the school, school board, and provincial levels. As we have noted earlier, inclusion was a general aim in Saskatchewan, and one specifically emphasized when it came to students with special needs.

Yet, while teachers across the country agreed with the objectives of these policies, implementation was often slow and fraught with difficulties. This was particularly the case in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador. Invariably the objections raised by teachers focused on the need for appropriate levels of funding and support. A sub-theme in the general policy development in Québec, New Brunswick, the Yukon, and the Northwest Territories (NWT) has been the particular needs of Aboriginal children.

Governance

Governance is the process by which educational institutions are managed. It concerns the type of administration in schools within a school district, the geographic or regional boundaries of school districts, the hierarchical or tiered system of school district management, centralized or decentralized systems, whether the community is involved in school planning, and the degree of intervention from the state. Such administrative approaches involve processes that are advisory, consultative, and decision-making, and determine the degree to which these exist across representative groups (e.g., teachers, staff, and parents). Governance structures are closely linked to leadership structures, fiscal frameworks, labour relations, and student achievement. With the exception of commissions on education (royal or provincial), the consultative process on governance systems has, in most provinces, shifted away from broad consultation to consultative processes with specific sectors. Saskatchewan is the exception, because it has maintained a broad community consultative model throughout the past two decades.

Vocational interests, business, and industry have increasingly shaped consultations with the community. This has led to a move towards entrepreneurial forms of management and to the solicitation of corporate interests by numerous school districts and provincial governments. Political economic factors are influential, given budgetary constraints and the imperative to reduce administration costs.

Governance issues are characterized by restructuring trends that have occurred across Canada since the early 1990s. This includes the emergence of school councils, site-based management, the amalgamation of school districts, the introduction of private models, and the decentralization and centralization of decision making between government and school districts.

School Councils.

School councils or school planning councils exist in nine provinces (2002) and the Yukon. The goals of these bodies are to involve the parents and community in school-level governance and to make schools relevant to stakeholders. School councils do not replace parent advisory councils, except in Manitoba where the

school must decide between an advisory council and a parent council. The creation of councils in each province and territory has evolved differentially. In most provinces and territories, councils are advisory bodies, while in BC, Quebec, and the Yukon, councils have decision-making powers and may be viewed as a mechanism for greater accountability. School-level governance or site-based management is a model of decentralization.

The responsibilities of school councils may vary among provinces and territories, but, generally speaking, school councils provide advice and may influence decisions on academic programs, school policies, budgeting, school plans, school reviews, participation in hiring of superintendents/principals. In most instances, councils are involved in annual school planning activities. Table 9 provides an overview of school councils.

School Board Amalgamation

School board amalgamation has been a trend in Canadian provinces since the mid-1990s. All provinces have francophone school boards. Amalgamation is intended to save money by reducing the size of administration and thus increasing the number of schools/regions within one administrative body. Provincial governments have driven most of these initiatives. In conjunction with the implementation of school councils, provincial governments have argued that local decision making takes into account the effects of centralized amalgamated school districts. These amalgamations reduce the ability of local communities to participate in the governance of schools (e.g., where a school district covers a region stretching across two rural townships).

Each province has adapted to amalgamation differently. Collective agreements have been implicated, as when districts may merge and two different agreements exist; for example, BC had 75 school districts in 1996 and dropped that number to 59 in 1998, but the number of collective agreements was only reduced to 70. Two provinces initially provided for voluntary amalgamation — Saskatchewan and Manitoba, although Manitoba subsequently made amalgamation mandatory. Amalgamations in other provinces have been legislated. The Klein government in Alberta (1994) implemented a dramatic school board amalgamation as part of their accountability priority and adjustment of their fiscal framework. Subsequently, the Alberta Commission on Learning (2003) recommended that the provincial government provide incentives and support pilot projects for school boards that are interested in considering joint services or further amalgamations.

Particular anomalies have occurred in Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland and Labrador. In Ontario, Bill 104 (1997) reduced the number of trustees per board and consolidated six Toronto public boards into a single district board serving 300,000 students, the largest school district in Canada. In Newfoundland and Labrador, Bill 8 (1996) dissolved existing school boards, creating instead ten interdenominational school boards and a francophone school board. This change followed the request of the provincial government to amend Term 17 of the Canadian Constitution, and was the result of recommendations made by a Royal Commission in 1992.

In Nova Scotia, a school board boundary review in 2000 led to a pilot restructuring project, splitting one board into two educational jurisdictions with a centralized administrative structure. The pilot model separated the operational and educational functions of the school board. The parent board retained responsibility for such functions as operations, maintenance, transportation, and global budgets for the two offspring boards. A review of this structure in 2001 concluded that this model was functioning well. The Superintendent, or CEO, of the parent board reports directly to the Minister, rather than to an elected board. This model has implications for accountability and tends towards a corporate managerial system.

Perhaps the most dramatic of changes has been in the province of New Brunswick where school boards were dissolved in 1996 and replaced with a three tiered structure: two provincial boards of education (one French and one English), district parent advisory councils, and school parent committees. However, in 2000, 14 district education councils (DEC) were created. This governance restructuring was the result of a report from the Select Committee on Education (2000), which was drafted after ten months of public consultation. These DECs have authority and decision-making powers that effectively returned the province to a school board-type of structure and responsibility including hiring the district superintendent, budgeting, policy creation, the operation of schools, local curriculum, developing district education plans, and entering into agreements.

Table 10 provides an overview of the number of school boards/districts.

Industrial Relations

The 1990s were inauspicious years for teachers, as governments in Nova Scotia, PEI, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, and BC cut education funding and, in some cases, rolled back wages in the public sector. Bills 19 and 20 in BC (1987) eliminated the restriction on teachers being considered employees under the Act, ended basic bargaining rights for teachers, eliminated compulsory membership for teachers in the BCTF, and took principals and vice principals out of the bargaining unit. In PEI, there were rollbacks of government employee wages in 1994. Bill 160 in Nova Scotia (1991) froze teacher salaries for three years. The Manitoba government rolled back teachers' wages between 1993 and 1997, and teachers were required to take days off without pay. In Alberta, the stage was set for continuing acrimony between the government and teachers in 1994 when wage rollbacks were imposed on all educators and all public sector employees (Peters, 1999). In Manitoba, during 1994-95, the Progressive Conservative government took $100 million out of education. Relatively large annual increases in local school taxes characterized the 1990s, and the government imposed limits on the scope of collective bargaining.

The Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NTSU) has had difficult relations with its provincial government, characterized by the union taking steps to follow all consultation processes and to contribute formal submissions, only to have its input (in its opinion) seldom, if ever, given serious consideration. The union was often advised of changes in policy through the media and in press releases (1994-95);

thus policy was given as fait accompli by the government, rather than as a process for discussion.

In Ontario, operating grants for school boards were cut by approximately $400 million dollars for the final quarter of 1996 (almost $1 billion dollars when extended over a full year). Ontario's Bill 160, the Education Quality Improvement Act (1997), removed principals from the teachers' collective bargaining units, thereby taking away their rights to strike and to collectively bargain through the teachers' unions. Class size limits, teacher preparation time, administrative release time, and the length of the school year were also legislated by the Bill. While this assured conformity across the province, it also removed much of teacher working conditions from the collective bargaining process.

The creation of the Ontario College of Teachers created a rift in the leadership of Ontario's teachers. OCT took over powers that had been previously carried out by the teacher unions, notably control over disciplinary proceedings. The power of the unions was further eroded by changes to the provincial funding formula and by more centralized control and regulations over teacher working conditions through Bill 160. Centralization of funding and the removal of local board powers to raise additional money through property tax adjustments severely constrained the unions' capacity to bargain for increased wages and benefits. Legislation allowing the control of conditions such as class size, preparation time, instructional time, and the number of instructional days by provincial regulation, rather than by contract negotiation, has been thematic in Ontario, Alberta, and BC. This has effectively removed the ability of local teacher unions to collective bargain traditional contract content.

Between 2001 and 2003, the BC educational system faced a deluge of legislation — much of which focused on labour relations. Four Bills (8, 18, 27, and 28) focused directly or indirectly on labour relations in the system, clearly targeting the union activities of the BCTF. In 2002, the government released a report: *A Future for Learners*, which argued that the school system is overregulated and encumbered by collective agreements. The report criticized the involvement of the BCTF in the professional development of teachers, positing that that was a role for the BCCT, as provided for by the Teaching Profession Act.

In Alberta, Bill 12, the Education Services Settlement Act, was passed in March 2002 to end a bitter strike. The Bill established a legislated settlement process to resolve the teachers' dispute; however, it did not allow the process to address classroom conditions, and eliminated previously negotiated provisions in existing collective agreements regarding class size and instructional preparation. The ATA withdrew voluntary services in response.

In 2001 the president of the PEI Teachers' Federation, expressed her disappointment that PEI teachers are the lowest paid in the country. A salary increase adopted by the Education Negotiating Agency (ENA) was not considered enough and the president expressed concern that the best teachers and administrators would be lost to other provinces.

Positive labour relations have occurred in Newfoundland and Labrador, the Yukon, Saskatchewan, and Québec. A provincial advisory group in Newfoundland and Labrador brought together representatives of the Department of Education, Memorial University, school districts, and the unions to make recommendations

about teacher shortages (1997). The Yukon Education Staff Relations Act (2001) established the legal framework governing the relationship between the government of the Yukon and the Yukon Teachers Association. The legislation was separate from the Education Act to focus on employment and labour provisions. The policy-making process in Saskatchewan emphasizes consensus and collaboration between all the stakeholders including the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation. Working relations have generally been quite collaborative in Saskatchewan. In Québec, the Teachers Union of Québec has worked with the government in an attempt to collaborate. The union agreed to help support the 1992 Action Plan, although it expressed concern that funding was insufficient to deter general deterioration of services.

Choice

The emergence of choice as a theme in Canadian education involves the development of school types and formats, including independent schools, private schools, charter schools, home schooling, denominational schools, First Nations schools, and greater language choice options. The provision of choice in education reflects the spirit of two documents co-signed by Canada: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26) and the First Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights. Both documents state that parents have the right to choose an education that conforms to their religious or philosophical convictions. All provinces have policies on providing choice.

Beyond a general commitment to human rights, we contend that three overlapping policy orientations have driven provincial governments to introduce policies designed to increase choice. First is the commitment to market forces and the related desire to create a market for educational services. Second is a populist attachment to individualism. Third is an egalitarian commitment to diversity and equality of opportunity. Two completing principles underlie these three policy orientations: an orientation to neoliberal theory and practice, and an emphasis on social humanist principles. At times one of these orientations may have dominated the policy environment at the expense of the others. Furthermore, choice policies in education are, in part, a response to parents who want more decision making latitude about their children's programs and schools.

Religion and language have been criteria for choosing between public schools since Confederation. By the early 1990s, all provinces except BC and New Brunswick were providing full public funding for parallel systems of Catholic schooling. New Brunswick, like Quebec, has a system divided by language. The biggest change, one that amounted to a reduction in choice, occurred in Newfoundland and Labrador and Québec. In 1998 and 2000 respectively, these two provinces abandoned denominational education and became the only provinces with entirely secular systems.

While choice has always been available in large urban public school districts, we can observe a dramatic increase in the number and type of options. The choices range from alternate schools, home schooling, gifted/special needs schools, fine arts, year-round schooling, and home schooling.

Diversity and equality have been safeguarded and extended through curriculum design, the teaching of heritage languages and the development of programs to

combat racism. The French tradition and language have dominated educational systems in Quebec and parts of New Brunswick and Manitoba. Since the Quiet Revolution in Quebec in the 1960s and the federal adoption of a bilingual and multicultural policy in the 1970s, French culture has become part of all our educational systems. The challenge has been to privilege the founding cultures while at the same time recognize Aboriginal peoples and the vast range of other cultures that form Canadian society.

In 1970, the Official Languages in Education Program (OLEP) was established to support minority language rights in the provinces and territories. The Promotion of Official Languages in Canada (1988) operates through the federal Department of Canadian Heritage, providing financial assistance to provincial and territorial governments in order to enhance official language services. In February 2000, the Government of Canada and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) concluded a multilateral protocol on minority language education. Bilateral agreements were signed in 2001 with all of the provinces and territories, except the Yukon (which signed the agreement in 2002) and Alberta.

The two most influential decisions regarding francophone school governance and French language are the agreement for the Promotion of Official Languages in Canada and the 1990 Supreme Court of Canada decision on minority language schooling, called the Mahé decision. The Mahé decision obliged provinces to establish structures by which linguistic minorities could govern their own schools, and paved the way for the emergence of francophone schools and school boards. Between 1994 and 1998, francophone school boards were created in every province and territory except Nunavut.

Aboriginal Education

Throughout the provinces and territories Aboriginal education is a priority, with respect to retention and completion of students, curricula, professional development, and the professionalization of teachers. The policy agenda for Aboriginal education is in a process of reform, designed to establish a new basis for understanding between First Nations', Aboriginal peoples, and the various levels of government in education and other sectors. This development was strongly influenced by the 1988 Assembly of First Nations' review of the status of Aboriginal education in Canada and the 1991 Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, and is part of an increasing awareness of how past educational policy has not addressed the needs of Aboriginal people. While education is a provincial jurisdiction, Aboriginal governance and concerns are a federal responsibility, contributing to a sometimes troubled relationship regarding Aboriginal education.

The provinces and territories identify policies intended to make changes in educational systems more relevant and appropriate for Aboriginal students. For example, locally controlled band-operated schools can play a greater part in the education of students living on reserves. Also, there are an increasing number of agreements between Aboriginal peoples, the federal government, and provincial governments to affect changes in the public education provided by local school boards and its relationship to the large number of Aboriginal students living off reserves.

In British Columbia, Aboriginal education enhancement agreements were developed in 1999, and the BC Ministry of Education produced a guide for Aboriginal education enhancement agreements, intended to support and improve education for Aboriginal students, in 2003. Teacher education for First Nations' educators was first established in 1974 in the Native Indian Teacher Education Program (NITEP) at the University of British Columbia. In Alberta, the *First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework* was the result of a review of the *Policy Statement on Native Education* in Alberta (1987). The Saskatchewan government recognized the importance of Aboriginal education and established a partnership with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) and the province's Métis Nation. These partnerships actively explored benefits to be gained through the participation and guidance of the Aboriginal and Métis communities as early as 1982.

The New Brunswick Commission on Excellence in Education's Downey-Landry Report (1992) focused on equity issues related to Aboriginal students. In 1996 the *Commission des Etats Généraux* in Québec met with the Council of Education of First Nations. In Québec, Aboriginal leaders were given the right to manage schools in their communities as a result of the meetings between the federal and provincial governments, the Montagnais nation and the Mamuitun Council.

In the territories, First Nations' and Aboriginal elders play an important role in education, by participating in the schools, providing resources for language and cultural courses, and by serving on committees that shape the educational process. The government of Nunavut has a goal of increasing the number of Aboriginal teachers, something that is becoming a priority in other territories as well. In the Northwest Territories, where loss of Aboriginal language is one of many concerns, Aboriginal language programs are provided in 91 percent of the communities.

The priorities for Aboriginal educational policy appear to focus on school retention and completion and the need for additional resources for Aboriginal students. Targeted funds need to be identified for Aboriginal education (if they have not been identified already), and budget considerations should include consultation with local communities (e.g., bands and chiefs). An emphasis is now placed on students' learning about First Nations' and Aboriginal history and heritage. First Nations' and Aboriginal content and perspectives may be delivered in the context of province/territory-wide curricula for non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal students alike.

Social Equity

In spite of the strong neoliberal trends of accountability, deprofessionalization, and labour relations reform, Canadian debates in education still embrace issues of social equity, including multiculturalism, antiracism, inclusion, social justice, language policy, diversity, and a equitable education for all students. In BC, Ontario, and Québec educational policy discussions explicitly consider culture, race, ethnicity, and language demographics.

Culture, race, language, and ethnicity considerations have emerged as a range of diverse populations has become more politicized, including immigrants, refugees, and naturalized Canadians, as well as First Nations/Aboriginal peoples.

The discourse of inclusion is an attempt to reverse experiences of exclusion, disadvantage, and marginalization with regard to educational access. These disadvantages have occurred because of health, special needs, or other social factors, e.g., religion, gender. The term inclusion traditionally has evoked discussions of special education and students with disabilities, but has emerged within a framework of participation and access. Policy statements reflect philosophy and principles based on egalitarianism.

BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Quebec, Ontario, and New Brunswick have articulated specific social equity statements. These statements were more prevalent in the late 1980s and the early 1990s. The influence of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) and the federal Multiculturalism Act (1988) has been identified as somewhat influential in statements of equity.

Policies regarding disabilities and frameworks for working with students with disabilites exist across Canada. The Ontario Human Rights Commission, for example, outlines actions required of school boards and schools to provide appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities. Similarly, provinces and individual school boards identify policies for special education, such as the BC special education policy framework (1995) and the Halifax Regional School Board special education policy (2002). These policies include language about access and equitable education.

The notion of social equity is divergent as a policy framework. These policies are based on a range of intentions: some with an advocacy and social justice focus, others with a pluralistic approach. Curricular needs tend to be addressed by pluralism, while advocacy and social justice are addressed by policies that challenge educational systems to change. Social equity continues to be strongly supported in areas such as language education policy, second languages, culture (particularly Aboriginal culture), poverty, students with disabilities, and the universality of kindergarten. Across the provinces and territories, the philosophical underpinnings that support social equity issues remain intact. Québec continues to advocate strongly for social equity. However, support for and emphasis on equity considerations such as gender, antiracism, and multiculturalism has waned in most provinces. This is a trend consistent with fiscal and policy conservatism.

Professionalization and Deprofessionalization

Professionalization of school agents has been used particularly to identify the status and stature of teachers. The creation of professional colleges of teachers in British Columbia and Ontario, and similar attempts in Québec, is consistent with a trend toward the professionalization of teaching. This trend addresses the training of school agents, as well as basic knowledge and competencies inherent to their work and professional identity. Initiatives in Alberta, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia have been directed at raising the standards in teacher training and quality control through standards for training and practice (CMEC, 1996). Professional expertise and innovative practices are endorsed in an environment of professionalization.

The professionalism of teachers and school agents informs changing teacher

education programs, colleges of teachers, certification, and discipline. The nature of professionalism has been challenged by government attempts to operate school systems within tight fiscal frameworks, and the accompanying shift to mandatory involvement in extra-curricular activities, changed class size limits, reduced teacher preparation time, and reduced administrative release time.

The major policy trends across Canada have been tied directly to changes in government at the provincial level. Broadly speaking, the late 1980s through to the mid-1990s were marked by an increase in professionalization, including the creation of the BC College of Teachers (BCCT) in 1989, and the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) in 1996. In Québec, the Liberal government (2003) moved toward the creation of an Order of Teachers that would parallel the college concepts of BC and Ontario. Teachers in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Atlantic Canada were also granted more autonomy in various ways. Alberta has moved to the 'right' politically since the early 1990s, and this was the beginning of a strong trend toward de-professionalization.

While beginning from a different political standpoint, the Parti Quebecois government of the late 1990s centralized control of education in the Ministry, leaving teacher agents with reduced autonomy. School administrators in a number of provinces were systematically separated from teachers and their joint representative bodies and labelled less as pedagogues and more as managers. Quebec also identified basic orientations and professional competencies for teachers (2001).

Self-Regulating Professional Bodies

Self-regulating professional bodies have been most pronounced in BC and Ontario. The British Columbia Teaching Profession Act (1987, revised 1996) and the BC College of Teachers (1988) were critical to developing the identity of teachers as professionals, and to giving them a particular legitimacy. The Acts addressed the profession of teachers, standards and professional responsibility in BC. For the first time in Canada, teachers were in control of regulating their profession, much as were the more established professions of law and medicine. In Ontario, the foundation for the College of Teachers was put in place by the Royal Commission on Learning (1993-94). Large-scale reform, including the professionalization and continuing development of teachers, were among the Commission's recommendations. The Ontario College of Teachers was created by Bill 31 in 1996.

Teacher Education and Professional Development

From 1988 to 2003, the policy environment in BC changed dramatically to allow school agents to increase their professionalism. All teachers entering pre-service programs now do so with an appropriate undergraduate degree; teacher education became a post-graduate experience. Similarly in 1997, the University of PEI established a two-year post-Bachelor's degree training program. In Manitoba, teacher education became a priority as identified in various reports (1994-95).

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the responsibilities of teachers were identified in revisions to the Schools Act in 1997, outlining teachers' roles and responsibilities. The Teachers' Association Act, amended in 1997, recognized the continuing role

of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association in promoting the welfare of teachers through various services, including advice, assistance, and legal protection.

Deprofessionalization

Deprofessionalization is the trend towards the weakening of professional education and the utilization of people without appropriate credentials to perform the duties of teachers and other school agents. This is most typically characterized by the involvement and recruitment of paraprofessionals, parents, and volunteers to take on a range of tasks and practices that would normally be considered professional tasks and practices. While professionalization raises the public awareness of the standards and status of teachers, deprofessionalization calls into question pedagogical approaches and who teaches.

In 1987, the BC Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association[1] (BCPVPA) was made an autonomous organization, with the effect that principals and vice-principals were deemed administrators, and no longer part of the BC Teachers Federation (BCTF). The changes to the Teaching Profession Act, (Bill 51, 2003) changed the composition of the BC College of Teachers governing council. Three other trends characterize the deprofessionalization of teachers in BC: the home school movement; the expansion of independent schools; and the increasing emphasis on skills.

The Alberta government, emphasizing a discourse of accountability, has been characterized by continuing assaults on educators throughout the system. In 1994, Bill 19 (the School Amendment Act) revised teacher certification requirements, the handling of complaints and disciplinary action towards teachers, and changed the guidelines for professional conduct. Further, in 2002, Bill 12 ended a legal strike by teachers and established a legislated settlement process to resolve the teachers' dispute. This type of legislation could be seen as both adversarial and contributing towards the breakdown of teachers' professionalism and autonomy. Alberta's Commission on Learning Report (2003) recommended numerous dramatic reforms affecting teachers and school leaders.

In Ontario, Bill 160 (the Education Quality Improvement Act (1997)) focused on the centralization of education funding. Several provisions in Bill 160 had direct consequences for teachers' working conditions. The Quality in the Classroom Act (2001) required beginning teachers to successfully pass a standardized Ontario Teacher Qualifying Test (OTQT), in addition to their pre-service teacher education program, as a condition of certification. In 2003, writing and passing the Ontario Teacher Qualifying Test (OTQT) became a requirement for membership in the College of Teachers[2].

Policy-Making Process and Styles of Governance

The most striking conclusion in this study is the clear link between political ideology and governance styles. At one end of the continuum are the New Right governments of Klein in Alberta, Harris in Ontario, Campbell in BC, and more recently, Charest in Québec. The approach has been top-down, using legislation to impose fiscal and education policy. At the other end of the continuum is

Saskatchewan, which throughout the period used consultation rather than legislation and worked from the bottom up to create both fiscal and educational policy. The contrast has been between cultures of conflict and opposition on the one hand, and a culture of collaboration on the other.

Concluding Remarks

The pan-Canadian themes and policies discussed above have revealed a complex set of educational priorities, described through different documents and processes. Each province had different contexts and examples that were unique, but also salient to a broader agenda. The themes were remarkably consistent, irrespective of political party, and within an ideology shaped by the global context of neoliberalism. As in the rest of the Anglo-Saxon world, neoliberalism has come to comprise the raison d'être of Canadian politics over the last two decades (Clement and Vosko, 2003), narrowing "the discourse of political, economic, and social debate, transforming what it means to be liberal, social democratic, or even progressive conservative by asserting itself against social entitlements, rights, and citizenship" (p. viii).

Although not specifically discussed in the narratives, we see the influence of the global context of the Mulroney (Canada, 1984-93), Thatcher (United Kingdom, 1979-90), and Reagan (United States, 1981-89) governments of the late 1980s. Through their emphasis on privatization, deregulation, and the free market, these Conservative governments have had a long-term effect on education. In Canada, 20 years of ideological struggle has resulted in an acceptance of a reduced role for the state and a conceit that a globally competitive free market is the only alternatives available to Canada (Clement and Vosko, 2003; McBride 2001). In 1995, the Canadian Assistance Plan and the Established Program Financing Act were replaced by the Canadian Health and Social Transfer scheme. The new federal programs came with fewer restrictions on how the provinces could spend the money, but at much reduced funding levels. The situation was made more precarious by severe provincial cuts and changes to provincial welfare schemes. According to McKeen and Porter (2003, p. 115), this involved the privatization of many services, the introduction of workfare programs within social assistance programs, and a restructuring of education and health.

The changes in the Canadian political economy have been achieved over the last two decades through two processes: *neoliberal constitutionalism* and *disciplinary neoliberalism* (Gill, 2003). The former term refers to the legal institutionalizing of neoliberalism through supranational organizations such as the WTO or the IMF, or through free-trade agreements such as NAFTA. The latter term is used to explain the internalization of neoliberal ideology that occurs within governments and individuals. Through self-governance and self-regulation, individuals come to pursue a neoliberal agenda—even though there may be no legal requirement or policy to dictates such actions. Thus, the Canadian state cooperates with the market—not always due to coercion, but rather because of the neoliberal agendas and desires of the government involved (McBride, 2001). Rather than being hapless recipients of neoliberalism, governments "act as the midwives of globalization"

(Brodie, 1995, p. 386). Similarly, Gill (2003) has argued that neoliberalism has become disciplinary in Foucauldian terms, by embedding and internalizing self-governance and self-regulation within governments and individuals in government. The pan-Canadian themes reveal this disciplinary neoliberalism as the shifts in governance, accountability, and labour relations become part of a national agenda rather than simply provincial initiatives and priorities.

Morley and Rassool (2000) reveal how the school effectiveness paradigm, so prevalent in our case studies, reflects broader management concerns within the neoliberal state. The authors (p. 169) note that school effectiveness is a political and rhetorical device through which education can be incorporated into the overall restructuring of economic and social relations. Our case studies, particularly Alberta, Ontario, and Manitoba, illustrate how this device has been applied in the Canadian context. In this process, teachers are made accountable for effective schooling, while the state assumes primarily a regulatory and monitoring role (ibid).

The dominant school effectiveness paradigm is a threat to teachers' professionalism. The Canadian case studies reflect, similar to what has happened in other Anglo-Saxon countries, a shift from what Locke, Vulliamy, Webb and Hill (2005) have called a professional-contextualist conception of teachers towards a technocratic-reductionist conception of teachers. This change is, according to these authors, manifested in teachers facing increased constraints on their autonomy as they become far more subject to extrinsic accountability demands. This de-professionalization of teaching is at the heart of the social issues facing Canadian teachers today, and concerning their place in school and society and their training.

Endnotes

1 The BCPVPA was established in 1958 as a provincial association.

2 Technological studies, Native language (second language), and Native ancestry teachers, as well as teachers for the deaf, dance teachers and teachers for the developmentally delayed are exempt from the test.

Table 8.
Fiscal Policies and Funding

Total expenditures per student in public elementary and secondary schools, provinces and territories, 1996-97 to 2002-03 (in current dollars) (Source: Nault, 2004)

	1996-97	**1997-98**	**1998-99**	**1999-2000**	**2000-01**	**2001-02**	**2002-03** estimates
Canada	**6,672**	**6,797**	**6,975**	**7,107**	**7,368**	**7,606**	**7,946**
% change	**-0.8**	**1.9**	**2.6**	**1.9**	**3.7**	**3.2**	**4.5**
Newfoundland and Labrador	5,700	5,658	5,745	6,076	6,216	6,839	7,335
% change	2.9	-0.7	1.5	5.8	2.3	10.0	7.2
Prince Edward Island	4,808	5,234	5,513	5,859	6,223	6,513	7,038
% change	5.9	8.9	5.3	6.3	6.2	4.7	8.1
Nova Scotia	5,120	5,506	5,662	6,059	5,999	6,267	6,402
% change	-0.5	7.5	2.8	7.0	-1.0	4.5	2.2
New Brunswick	4,549	6,468	6,571	7,283	7,068	7,150	7,382
% change	-23.2	42.2	1.6	10.8	-2.9	1.2	3.2
Quebec	6,319	6,118	6,309	6,818	7,211	7,517	7.851
% change	-2.3	-3.2	3.1	8.1	5.8	4.2	4.4
Ontario	7,206	7,270	7.431	7,261	7,419	7,474	7.807
% change	0.0	0.9	2.2	-2.3	2.2	0.7	4.5
Manitoba	6,715	6,953	7,203	7,350	7,612	8,114	8,423
% change	1.0	3.5	3.6	2.0	3.6	6.6	3.8
Saskatchewan	6,059	6,337	6,386	6,705	6,973	7,618	8,161
% change	0.6	4.6	0.8	5.0	4.0	9.3	7.1
Alberta	6,279	6,763	7,058	7,210	7,806	8,263	8,775
% change	1.7	7.7	4.4	2.1	8.3	5.9	6.2
British Columbia	7,086	7,125	7,276	7,421	7,777	8,062	8,280
% change	0.1	0.6	2.1	2.0	4.8	3.7	2.7
Yukon	11,410	12,062	11.890	12,667	13,205	14,816	14,321
% change	1.3	5.7	-1.4	6.5	4.2	12.2	-3.3
Northwest Territories	10,572	11,283	10,837	10,862	11,155	11,909	12,129
% change	-4.6	6.7	-3.9	0.2	2.7	6.8	1.8

Note: Northwest Territories includes Nunavut. However starting 1999-2000, Northwest Territories excludes Nunavut. No separate statistics provided for Nunavut.

Table 9.
School Councils

Province Name of Council	Date	Legislation and background documents	Composition
BC School Planning Councils	2002	Bill 34 School Board Flexibility Bill	3 parents, 1 teacher, the principal.
Alberta School Councils	1988 1995	School Act; revised Policy 1.8.3 (2003)	1 principal, 1 or more teachers, 1 student, parents of students in the school, another parent or community member.
Saskatchewan Local School Advisory Committee, School Councils	1995 1996	Section 135, Education Act	parents, community representatives, teachers, students, and other staff
Manitoba Advisory Councils for School Leadership	1993 1995, 1996	Education Administration Act	7 members with 2/3 parents and 1/3 non parents including community members. Teachers and staff may be elected but cannot comprise more than half the membership.
OntarioSchool Councils	1995	Policy/Program Memorandum No. 122	the principal, 1 teacher, parent representatives, non-parent community members.
Québec School Governing Boards	1998	Bill 109 (1997)	Students, parents, teachers, staff and community representatives. Principal ex-officio.
Nova Scotia School Advisory Councils	1994 1996	Section 40A of the Education Act	Students, parents teachers, staff and community representatives.
PEI School Councils	1993 1995	Section 66 of the School Act	Parents, teachers and the principal. Students may also be represented.
Newfoundland and Labrador School councils	1996	Royal Commission (1992); Bill 48, Section 26 of the Education Act	
Yukon School Councils	1990	Education Act	Parent and community members. First Nations representation is guaranteed.

Table 10.
Number of school boards/ districts by province

Province	Date implemented	Legislation and background documents	Reduction	Current number
British Columbia	1996		75 to 59	60
Alberta	1994,1995		181 to 66	66
Saskatchewan	1998		119 to 100	100
Manitoba	1993, 1998, 2001	Bill 14: Public School Modernization Act	57 to 36	36
Ontario	1997	Bill 104: Fewer School Boards Act	129 to 72	72
Québec	1996, 1998		160 to 72	69
New Brunswick	1992, 1996		42 to 0	14 district councils
Nova Scotia	1996, 2000	School Board Boundary Review (2000)	22 to 7	7 regional
Prince Edward Island	1994		5 to 3	3
Newfoundland and Labrador	1996	Bill 8 (Royal Commission 1992)	27 to 11	11

Note: Numbers include francophone school boards. Numbers may have changed since the last reports by province.

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Appendices

Appendix 1.
British Columbia Provincial Ministers Responsible for Education. 1986 - 2004

Party: Premier	**Minister**	**Ministry**	**Policy/Bill/Reform/Act**
Social Credit: William Vander Zalm 1986-1991	Anthony J. Brummet 1986-1990	Education	1987: Teaching Profession Act 1988: *Royal Commission on Education* 1988: BCCT established 1989: *Policy Directions: A Response to the Sullivan Royal Commission*
	James Hewitt 1990–1991		1990: *Year 2000: A Framework for Learning*
Rita Johnston 1991	Stan Hagen 1991		
New Democratic Party: Mike Harcourt 1991-1996	Anita Hagen 1991-1993	Education	
	Art Charbonneau 1993-1996	1993– Education, Skills and Training (joint Ministry)	1993: *Improving the Quality of Education in British Columbia* 1994: *Putting Policies into Practice: Implementation Guide* 1994: Public Sector Labour Relations Act 1995: creation of Francophone Education Authority (Conseil Scolaire Francophone)

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Party: Premier	Minister	Ministry	Policy/Bill/Reform/Act
Glen Clark 1996-1999	Paul Ramsey 1996		1996: revision of the School Act 1996: revision of the Teaching Profession Act 1996: revision of the
	Moe Sihota 1996		
	Joy MacPhail 1996-1997		
	Paul Ramsey 1997-1999	1998– Education	1997: Industrial Relations Act
Dan Miller 1999-2000	Gordon Wilson 1999-2000		
Ujjal Dosanjh 2000-2001	Penny Priddy 2000		
	Joy MacPhail 2000-2001		
Liberal: Gordon Campbell 2001-present	Christy Clark 2001-2004 Tom Christian-sen 2004-2005 Shirley Bond 2005-present Deputy Minister: Emery Dosdall	Education	2001: Budget Transparency and Accountability Act amended 2001: Bill 8, Protection of Parent Volunteers 2001: Bill 18, Skills Development and Labour Statues Amendment Act 2001: Bill 27, Education Services Collective Agreement Act 2001-2002 Performance Standards Guidelines 2002: School accreditation replaced by the Accountability Framework 2002: Bill 28, Public Education Flexibility and Choice Act 2002: Bill 34, School Board Flexibility Bill 2002: *A Future for Learners* 2003: Bill 51, Teaching Profession Amendment Act 2003: Graduation Requirements Review

Appendix 2.
Alberta Provincial Ministers Responsible for Education. 1991 - 2003

Party: Premier	**Minister**	**Ministry**	**Policy/Bill/Reform/Act**
Conservative: Donald Getty1985-1992		Education	1991: *Vision for the Nineties…A Plan of Action*
Ralph Klein 1992-present	Halvar Jonson 1992-1996	Education	1993*: Meeting the Challenge, Three Year Plan* 1994: Bill 19, Charter Schools; Catholic Boards option to be out of central funding framework 1994: Reduction in number of School Boards 1995: Government Organization Act 1995: *Accountability in Education Policy Framework* 1996: *Meeting the Challenge, Three Year Plan – safety and security*
	Gary Mar 1996-1999	Education	1996: Teaching Profession Act revised 1996: *Integrated Framework to Enhance the Quality of Teaching in Alberta*/ Memoranda of Agreement to be submitted 1996: School Authority Accountability Policy 1998: Private Schools Funding 1999: Bill 20, Safety- Diversity and respect
	Lyle Oberg 1999-present Deputy-Minister: Maria David-Evans	Alberta Learning (joint ministry)	2000: Apprenticeship and Industry Training Amendment Act 2000: Bill 206, Safety – Students' Code of Conduct 2000: Special Education Review and Report 2001: Bill 16, Charter Schools process 2001: Bill 16, Teacher conduct2001: Bill 218, Class size 2002: *First Nations, Metis and Inuit Education Policy Framework* 2002: *Accountability Framework* – Students with Special Needs 2002: Bill 12, Education Services Settlement Act 2002: Bill 205, School Trustee Statutes Amendment Act 2002-2003: Commission on Education

Appendix 3.

Saskatchewan Ministers of Education 1982-2003

Party: Premier	**Minister**	**Ministry**	**Policy/Bill/Reform/Act**
New Democratic Party: Allan Emrys Blakeney 1971-1982	Gordon S. MacMurchy 1971-1975	Education	
	Edwin Laurence Tchorzewski 1975-1977		
	Donald Leonard Faris 1977-1978		
	Edward Blain Shillington 1978-1979		
	Douglas Francis MacArthur 1979-1982		1981:[Curriculum and Instruction Review Process Begins]
Conservative: Donald Grant Devine 1982-1991	Gordon Gray Currie 1982-1983	Education	
	Patricia Anne Smith 1983-1986		1984: *Directions* 1984: *A five year action plan for Native curriculum development* 1984: *Saskatchewan education: Its programs and policies*
	Lorne Henry Hepworth 1986-1989		1987: Policy direction for a core curriculum 1987: *Resource-based learning* 1987: *Core curriculum plans for implementation* 1988: *Understanding the common essential learnings*
	Raymond Harry Meiklejohn 1989-1991		1991: *Gender equity: Policy and guidelines for implementation*

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Party: Premier	Minister	Ministry	Policy/Bill/Reform/Act
New Democratic Party: Roy John Romanow 1991-2001	Carol R. Teichrob 1991-1993	Education 1991-1993	1992: *Into the classroom: Review of Directions in practice* 1992: *Into the classroom: Review of Directions in practice, Minister's response* 1993: *Saskatchewan education indicators program: A foundation document*
	Carol R. Teichrob 1993-1993	Education, Training and Employment (formerly *Education*) 1993-1995	
	Edwin Laurence Tchorzewski 1993-1993		
	Patricia Atkinson 1993-1995		1994: *High school advisory committee: Final report* 1994: *Policy directions for secondary education in Saskatchewan: Minister's response to the high school advisory committee* 1994: *Multicultural education: A policy document* 1994: *Working together to address barriers to learning*
	Patricia Atkinson 1995-1998	Education 1995-2001	1996: *Structuring public education for the new century* 1996: *Building communities of hope* 1998: *On curriculum: January 1998*
	Clay J. Serby 1998-1999		
	Jim Melenchuk 1999-2001		2000: *Directions for diversity: Enhancing supports to children and youth with diverse needs* 2000: Saskatchewan education indicators: K-12
Lorne Albert Calvert 2001-present	Jim Melenchuk 2001-2002	Education 2001-2002	2001: *Role of the school: Final report*
	Jim Melenchuk 2002-2003	Learning (formerly *Education* and *Education, Training and Employment*) 2002-2003	2002: *Provincial response: Role of the school* 2002: *Changes to the departmental examination program and accreditation* 2002: *Structuring public education*
	Judy Junor 2003-2003		
	Andrew Thomson 2003 -		

Appendix 4.

Manitoba Ministers of Education 1982-2003

Party: Premier	Minister	Ministry	Policy/Bill/Reform/Act
Progressive Conservative: Gary Filmon 1988-1999	Len Derkach 1988-1992 Rosemary Vodrey 1992-93 Clayton Manness 1993-95 Linda MacIntosh 1995-99	Education	1993 School Boundaries Review Commission 1994 *Renewing Education: New Directions – A Blueprint for Action* 1995 *Renewing Education: New Directions – The Action Plan* 1995 *Renewing Education: A Foundation for Excellence*
New Democratic Party: Gary Doer 1999– present	Drew Caldwell 1999-2000 Ron Lemieux 2000-03 Peter Bjornson 2003-present	Education	2001 Bill 42 2001 Bill 14 (Public Schools Modernization Act) 2002 *Manitoba K-S4 Educational Agenda for Student Success* 2002 Funding of Schools Program 2002 *Final Report of the Commission on Class Size and Composition* 2003 Bill 13 (Appropriate Educational Programming)

Appendix 5.

Ontario Provincial Education Authorities and Policies. 1990 – 2004

Party: Premier	Minister	Ministry	Policy/Bill/ Reform/ Act/Report
Liberal Dalton McGuinty 2003-present	Hon. Gerard Kennedy 2003-present	Ministry of Education	Bill 82, Professional Learning Program Cancellation Act, 2005 Ontario Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat, 2004 Politique d'aménagement linguistique, 2004
Progressive Conservatives Ernie L. Eves 2002-03	Hon. Elizabeth Witmer 2002-03	Ministry of Education	Bill 28 Back to School and Educational and Provincial Negotiations Act, 2003 *Investing in Public Education* (Rozanski Report), 2002
Progressive Conservatives Michael D. Harris 1995-2002	Hon. Janet Lynne Ecker 1999-2002 Hon. David Johnson 1997-99 Hon. John Snobelen 1995-97	Ministry of Education	Bill 45 Equity in Education Tax Credit, 2001 (private school tuition tax credits) Quality in the Classroom Act, 2001 (*Ontario Teacher Qualifying Test)* *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession*, 2000 *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession*, 1999 Bill 80 Stability and Excellence in Education Act, 2001 (teacher recertification continuing education policy) Bill 74 Education Accountability Act, 2000 Bill 81 Safe Schools Act, 2000 Secondary School Reform, 1999-2003 *The Ontario Curriculum (Grades 1-8)*, 1997 Bill 160 Education Quality Improvement Act, 1997 Bill 104 Fewer School Boards Act, 1997 Bill 31 Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996 Bill 30 Education Quality and Accountability Office Act, 1996 *The Common Sense Revolution.* 1995

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Party: Premier	Minister	Ministry	Policy/Bill/ Reform/ Act/Report
New Democrat Robert K. Rae 1990-1995	Hon. David Cooke 1993-95	Ministry of Education and Training	Policy/Program Memorandum No. 122 (School Councils) *The Common Curriculum*, 1995 *For the Love of Learning: Report of the Royal Commission on Learning*, 1994 Politique d'aménagement linguistique, 1994 (Language planning) Investir dans l'animation culturelle, 1994 Actualisation linguistique en français/Perfectionnement du français, 1994
	Hon. Tony Silipo 1991-93		Policy/Program Memorandum No. 115, 1994 (Destreaming of Grade 9) Violence-Free Schools Act, 1994
	Hon. Marion Boyd 1990-91		*Antiracsim and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation*, 1993 *Transition Years, Grades 7,8 and9*, 1992

Appendix 6.
Quebec Political Parties and their Ministers; the Major Bills; the Policies and Actions Proposed from 1990 to 2003

Premier Political Party	**Ministers**	**Bill/Policy/Committees**
Robert Bourassa Liberal Party 1985-94	Michel Pagé 1990-92	1990: Bill 28: School Elections for Native People. 1991:Application of three pedagogical regimes: pre-school, elementary/secondary and adult. 1992: Action plan for education 1992: Bill 141 on private schools (removal of the moratorium on the creation of new schools and an increase in state financing) 1992: Orientations and competencies expected for teaching at a general secondary school 1992: Creation of the CAPFE (*Comité d'agrément des programmes de formation à l'enseignement*) 1992: Action plan for valorizing the teaching profession
	Lucienne Robillard 1992-94	1992: Changes to the secondary school pedagogy in terms of professional training 1993: Instruction (1993-94) on professional training for the school boards. 1993: Orientation on the quality of success at the secondary level in "Moving the School Forward." 1993: Reactivation of the Orientation Committee for the Training of School Personnel 1993: Creation of the Education Commission on English Language Education 1993: Creation of services for the anglophone community
Daniel Johnson (Jr.) Liberal Party 1994	Jacques Chagnon 01-1994 to 09-1994	1994: Modification to the certification rules for the teaching program (Art. 69) 1994: Bills 102 and 118 on work relations
Jacques Parizeau Parti Québécois 1994-96	Jean Garon 1994-96	1995: Creation of the Estates General on Education 1995: Modification to the teaching program to increase access to professional training 1995: Report of the Restarting of Professional Training for Young People 1996: Experimental program on diversifying the different pathways to professional training

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Premier Political Party	Ministers	Bill/Policy/Committees
Lucien Bouchard Parti Québécois 1996-2001	Pauline Marois 1996-98	1996: Development of education services for early childhood 1996: Five-year intervention plan for school computers 1996: Cuts and changes to work conditions 1997: Bill 109 assuring the creation of linguistic school boards 1997: Declaration of the educational policy "Quebec Schools On Course" 1997: Bill 180: increased powers for teaching establishments and the creation of governing boards 1997: Creation of the Support Program for Montreal Schools 1997: Agreement to reduce workforce costs, temporary measures to encourage retirements, abolition of support personnel (4.5% of ETC) and revised work conditions, evaluation of schooling for teaching personnel 1997: New rules on authorization to teach 1998: Policy on school integration and intercultural education and an action plan 1998: Creation of the Committee on Revising the Language of Instruction
Bernard Landry Parti Québécois 2001-03	François Legault 1998-2002	1999: Policy on special education and an action plan 1999: Renewal of the collective conventions 1999: Report of the Working Group on Continuing Education 2000: Government Bill 118 on denominationalism 2000: Creation of Committee on Religious Affairs 2000: Promulgation of three pedagogical programs for pre-school, elementary and secondary schools, for professional training and for general training of adults 2000: Strategic Plan 2000-03 for the Ministry of Education 2001: Action Plan for educational success based on the obligatory results and performance reporting 2001: Creation of a Directing Committee to support the creation of the success plans 2001: Strategic Plan 2000-03 for reinvesting money in education (following the Quebec Summit and Youth Summit - reduction of ratios and the addition of new teachers and professionals) 2001: Policy on teacher training and professional competencies
	Sylvain Simard 2002-03	2002: Government policy on adult and continuing education and an action plan 2002: Modification, in accordance with Bill 118, on denominationalism, to the *Basic school regulation for pre-school, elementary and secondary education*

Appendix 6a.
Les partis politiques et les Ministres ; les principales lois, les politiques et les actions posées de 1990 à 2003

Premiers ministres Partis	**Ministres**	**Lois / Politique / Comités**
Parti Libéral Robert Bourassa 1985-1994	Michel Pagé 1990-1992	1990 : Loi 28 : Élections scolaires chez les autochtones. 1991 : Application des trois régimes pédagogiques préscolaire/primaire, secondaire, adulte. 1992 : Plan d'action sur la réussite éducative. 1992 : Loir 141 sur l'enseignement privé (levée moratoire sur ouverture nouvelles écoles et augmentation du financement de l'État). 1992 : Orientations et compétences attendues pour la formation à l'enseignement secondaire général. 1992 : Création du Comité d'agrément des programmes de formation à l'enseignement. 1992 : Plan d'action pour la valorisation de la profession enseignante.
	Lucienne Robillard 1992-1994	1992 : Modification au régime pédagogique du secondaire sur la formation professionnelle. 1993 : Instruction 1993-1994 sur la formation professionnelle dans les commissions scolaires. 1993 : Orientations sur la qualité de la réussite au secondaire dans *Faire avancer l'école*. 1993 : Réactivation du Comité d'Orientation de la formation du personnel enseignant. 1993 : Création de la Commission d'éducation en langue anglaise. 1993 : Création des services à la communauté anglophone.
Daniel Johnson (fils) 1994	Jacques Chagnon 01-1994 à 09-1994	1994 : Modification des règles de sanction dans les régimes pédagogiques (art. 69). 1994 : Lois 102 et 118 sur les relations de travail.
Parti Québécois Jacques Parizeau 1994-1996	Jean Garon 1994-1996	1995 : Création des États généraux sur l'éducation. 1995 : Modification du régime pédagogique pour accroître l'accessibilité à la formation professionnelle. 1995 : Rapport sur la Relance de la formation professionnelle chez les jeunes. 1996 : Programme expérimental de diversification des voies en formation professionnelle.

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Premiers ministres Partis	**Ministres**	**Lois / Politique / Comités**
Lucien Bouchard 1996-2001	Pauline Marois 1996-1998	1996 : Développement de services éducatifs à la petite enfance. 1996 : Plan d'intervention de 5 ans sur la microinformatique scolaire. 1996 : coupures et révision des conditions de travail. 1997 : Loi 109 assurant la mise en place des commissions scolaires linguistiques. 1997 : Énoncé de politique éducative *L'École, tout un programme*. 1997 : Loi 180 : pouvoirs accrus aux établissements d'enseignement et création du conseil d'établissement. 1997 : Création du Programme de soutien à l'École montréalaise. 1997 : Entente visant la réduction des coûts liés à la main-d'œuvre : mesures temporaires d'incitation à la retraite ; abolition de postes chez le personnel d'encadrement et de soutien (4,5 % des ETC) et révision de leurs conditions de travail ; évaluation de la scolarité du personnel enseignant. 1997 : Nouveau règlement sur l'autorisation d'enseigner. 1998 : Politique d'intégration scolaire et d'éducation interculturelle et Plan d'action. 1998 : Création du Comité de révision sur la langue d'enseignement.
Bernard Landry 2001-2003	François Legault 1998-2002	1999 : Politique de l'adaptation scolaire et Plan d'action. 1999 : Renouvellement des conventions collectives. 1999 : Rapport du Groupe de travail sur la formation continue. 2000 : Projet de loi 118 sur la confessionnalité. 2000 : Création du Comité sur les affaires religieuses. 2000 : Promulgation des trois régimes pédagogiques pour le préscolaire, le primaire et le secondaire, pour la formation professionnelle et pour la formation générale des adultes. 2000 : Plan stratégique 2000-2003 du ministère de l'Éducation. 2001 : Plan d'action sur la réussite éducative axé sur l'obligation de résultats et la reddition de comptes. 2001 : Création d'un Comité directeur pour encadrer la réalisation des « plans de réussite ». 2001 : Plan stratégique 2000-2003 de réinvestissement financier en éducation (suite au Sommet du Québec et de la jeunesse : réduction des ratios et ajout d'enseignants et de professionnels). 2001 : Politique sur la formation à l'enseignement et les compétences professionnelles.

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Premiers ministres Partis	Ministres	Lois / Politique / Comités
	Sylvain Simard 2002-2003	2002 : Politique gouvernementale d'éducation des adultes et de formation continue et Plan d'action. 2002 : Modification, en concordance avec la loi 118 sur la confessionnalité, du Régime pédagogique de l'éducation préscolaire, de l'enseignement primaire et de l'enseignement secondaire.

Appendix 7.
Premiers, Political Parties, Ministers of Education in Newfoundland and Labrador, 1989-2004

Premiers	**Political Parties**	**Year**	**Ministers of Education**	**Date of Ministerial Oath**
Danny Williams	Progressive Conservative	2003-	John Ottenheimer (2003 -)	- John Ottenheimer (6 November, 2003)
Roger Grimes	Liberal	2001-2003	Gerry Reid (2003) Judy Foote (2001)	- Gerry Reid (February 17, 2003) - Judy Foote (February 13, 2001)
Beaton Tulk	Liberal	2000-2001	Roger Grimes (2000)	- Roger Grimes
Brian Tobin	Liberal	1996-2000	Llyod Matthews (2000) Beaton Tulk (2000) Judy Foote (1998) Roger Grimes (1996-1998)	- Lloyd Matthews (October 17, 2000) - Beaton Tulk (August 31, 2000) - Judy Foote (December 15, 1998 and February 15, 1999) - Roger Grimes (March 14, 1996)
Clyde K. Wells	Liberal	1989-1996	Chris R. Decker (1992-1996) Phil Warren (1989-1992)	- Chris R. Decker (January 26, 1996: Minister of Education and Training) - Chris R. Decker (August 26, 1994: Minister of Education and Training) - Chris R. Decker (July 17, 1992) - Dr. Phil Warren (May 5, 1989)

Appendix 8.
Political Parties, Premiers, and Ministers of Education of Prince Edward Island from 1990 to 2004

Premiers	**Political Party**	**Years**	**Ministers of Education**	**Period of Office**
Patrick George Binns	Progressive Conservative Party	November 1996-(three consecutive mandates)	- Mildred A. Dover - Chester Gillan - Jeffrey E. Lantz - Chester Gillan	- October 2003 - August 2002 to October 2003 - May 2000 to August 2002 - November 1996 to May 2000
Keith Milligan	Liberal Party	1996	- Gordon MacInnis - Keith Milligan	- June 1994 to November 1996 - April 1993 to June 1994
Catherine Sophia Callbeck	Liberal Party	January 1993 to October 1996		
Joseph Atallah Ghiz	Liberal Party	May 1986 to January 1993	- Paul Connolly	- June 1989 to April 1993

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