



**Nova Scotia
School Boards Association
Association des conseils
scolaires de la Nouvelle-Écosse**

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NOVA SCOTIA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION
Nova Scotia Report
to the CSBA Board of Directors
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1) **FUNDING:**

School Boards in Nova Scotia received their budget targets for the 2012-13 year on February 10, 2012. While all boards will see a reduction in provincial funding, the overall impact of funding reductions to the system for the last two years will be \$65-70 million. Boards are currently going through their budgeting exercise and will likely see some major reductions to programs offered in our schools in Nova Scotia as well as job eliminations.

The provincial government has also announced revisions to the Hogg Formula, which will be phased in beginning this year and the balance of changes over the next 3-5 years.

2) **ADVOCACY/GOVERNMENT RELATIONS:**

In December 2011, Nova Scotia's Education Partners held a press conference to raise awareness of the impact of potential funding reductions. The press conference was well attended by local media and received wide-spread coverage. In follow-up, the NSSBA also placed an opinion editorial in the Chronicle Herald and other provincial newspapers explaining how additional funding reductions will impact the system and students.

The NSSBA is also in the implementation phase of its communications strategy, Our children, our future - Make public education a priority. The strategy, which was approved by the NSSBA Board of Directors, aims to raise awareness of the impact funding reductions will have on our education system. School boards have been equipped with communications tools including an information sheet, a video posted on YouTube, and a facebook page that was developed to spread the word and start dialogue about this issue. These pieces are also available on the NSSBA website www.nssba.ca.

The NSSBA has also encouraged boards to conduct public information sessions in their communities to raise awareness of the impact of funding reductions.

Long term plans for this issue are to develop a multi-year campaign that will aim to raise awareness of the importance of public education in Nova Scotia and the need for a long term vision.

3) **EDUCATION INITIATIVES:**

Education Plan:

Also in February 2012, the province released its education plan, Kids and Learning First. While some of the initiatives in the plan are commendable, it does represent a short term work plan, rather than a long-term vision for education in our province. NSSBA president, Vic Fleury completed a series of interviews with local and provincial media responding to the release of the plan. It is the NSSBA's hope that the provincial government will be open to

reconvening the Visioning process and building on the education plan to develop a long term vision for education in Nova Scotia (see below).

Visioning Committee:

In 2010, the NSSBA, in partnership with the Department of Education lead the development of a Visioning Committee aimed at creating a long term vision for public education in Nova Scotia. The committee was put on hold pending the release of the province's education plan. We expect to have a position from DOE shortly sharing their views on the future of the vision committee. The DOE has been pushing to have the committee incorporate the implementation of the province's education plan as part of the mandate.

Report and recommendations on Learning Needs of Boys:

In 2010, the NSSBA Education Committee appointed the Learning Needs of Boys sub-committee to investigate the perceived problem of the learning needs of boys. The committee was also mandated to review Nova Scotia assessment results, to investigate possible reasons why boys and girls perform differently and to report recommended possibilities for change to the Education Committee of the NSSBA.

The sub-committee took on a number of initiatives to investigate this topic. Most recently, Dr. Jim Gunn of Gunn's Leadership Consulting Services was retained to prepare a summary of the committee's findings and to provide recommendations on next steps. Dr. Gunn's report noted the need for further investigation into this area.

The NSSBA has since shared this report with stakeholders across the province including school board members, research departments at universities and the Department of Education. The NSSBA is hopeful the department will take the lead on this issue and conduct an in-depth study into the learning needs of boys.

Analysis of PCAP and PISA results for Nova Scotia students:

The NSSBA recently commissioned Penny Milton, former CEO of the Canadian Education Association to conduct an independent analysis of the PCAP and PISA results as they pertain to Nova Scotia. *Student Performance in Nova Scotia: A compilation of results from National and International Assessments*, has been shared with school board members across the province for their information.

4) COMMUNICATIONS INITIATIVES:

The NSSBA will be embarking on a number of initiatives to improve communication with its members. This will include a rebranding of the Association and redesign of the NSSBA website.

5) PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

AGM:

The NSSBA Annual General Meeting will be held May 31-June 2, 2012 at the Best Western Hotel in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. This year's theme is Driving Change - Transforming the Classroom. Penny Milton, former CEO of the Canadian Education Association, will join us as keynote speaker, and the weekend will also include a panel discussion with experts on creating a vision for 21st Century Learning.

School Board elections:

Plans are underway to begin the development of a program to raise awareness of the upcoming school board elections. This will also include an orientation program that will educate potential candidates on what it takes to be a school board member, with particular focus on the role of the board chair.