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# Building a better education system

AN ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING THE  
LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEW  
BRUNSWICK'S ANGLOPHONE EDUCATION  
SYSTEM

APRIL 2024

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# Co-Chair Message

As co-chairs of the Executive Steering Committee, we are honoured to present this report, which outlines several strategic recommendations for the long-term improvement of English Prime and French language learning classrooms in anglophone schools across New Brunswick.

We wish to express our sincere appreciation to the large number of individuals who generously shared their insights and expertise. Without their invaluable contributions, this report and its recommendations would not have been possible.

We truly appreciate the committed members of the working groups who collaborated tirelessly with various education stakeholders to gather input aimed at strengthening these programs. These groups were established with a focus on long-term vision, ensuring robust engagement and the formulation of comprehensive recommendations that align with our collective goals.

The deep insights garnered from these groups have been instrumental in shaping the ways in which the recommendations are being actioned through this report. We are proud to present the strategic roadmap for implementation, highlighting important steps aimed at addressing the challenges and opportunities that will pave the way for enduring improvement.

We eagerly anticipate continued dialogue and collaborative efforts to advance public education in New Brunswick over the long term. With the continued guidance and active participation of these individuals and organizations, we are confident in our ability to navigate the path toward lasting positive change.

Ardith Shirley,  
Executive Director, New Brunswick Teachers' Association

Dr. Tiffany Bastin,  
Assistant Deputy Minister, Educational Services – Anglophone Sector, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

# Introduction

Over the past year, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) has been working collaboratively with educators, students, parents, school districts, district education councils, and other stakeholders and rights holders on ways to improve the anglophone education sector.

The collective goal underpinning this work is to have an anglophone education sector in New Brunswick that embodies innovation, inclusivity, and excellence. Creating a dynamic learning environment where every student thrives will ensure future success. With a focus on accountability and continuous improvement, the work will foster student success, empower communities, and instill pride in our education system.

In April 2023, the department announced that it had created an executive steering committee tasked with identifying improvements for both English Prime and French language learning classrooms, including the French immersion program. The committee is jointly chaired by the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Educational Services Division (anglophone) and the Executive Director of the New Brunswick Teachers' Association (NBTA).

In pursuit of its mandate, the committee established two distinct working groups; one that focused on improvements to English Prime classrooms, while the other concentrated on enhancing French language education. Both working groups were entrusted with the responsibility of engaging extensively with stakeholders to collect input and formulate recommendations, which would subsequently be presented to the steering committee.

In July, the committee publicly released its near-term recommendations, which were formulated to be implemented for the upcoming school year. Immediately following that report's release, the committee and its working groups began working on identifying more long-term improvements to the system.

In November 2023, the committee tabled its second report outlining ways that could strengthen the system and improve teaching and learning outcomes over the next five years. This report responds to the recommendation to "create, with partners where appropriate, a detailed scope and implementation plan as well as an accountability framework for each of the recommendations included in this document no later than March 31, 2024."

This report will outline how EECD and its partners in education will implement the 11 long-term recommendations. Each section will identify why the successful implementation of the recommendation is important, how the implementation will be undertaken, how success will be measured, and the timeline that will guide the implementation.

While there are a number of specific action items identified in the document, it is by no means a complete list of steps. There are many things that need to be done by EECD, school districts, and within the schools themselves, all of which will continue to require stakeholder engagement and support.

We are not starting from scratch. There have been, and continue to be, many examples of, tremendous, innovative work being done in classrooms, schools, districts, and within the department itself. There have been many accomplishments to date, and the professionalism of teachers, support staff, administrators, and public servants at every level is to be commended and recognized. Their commitment to excellence every day has never been in question. Together with parents, stakeholders, students, and communities, the system is being improved to serve students now and in the classrooms of the future.

# Create Environments Where Learners Thrive



## **RECOMMENDATION:**

*Move to address the emerging critical concern of chronic absenteeism and reinforce a culture of learning by working with school districts and stakeholders to draft a provincial action plan on school attendance.*

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## **OBJECTIVE:**

*Reduce chronic absenteeism across all age groups in the school system.*

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## **OUTCOME:**

*A province-wide approach that reduces chronic absenteeism.*

## **WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

A growing number of children are not attending school on a regular basis. Chronic absenteeism is when a child misses more than 10 percent of scheduled school days, which is approximately the equivalent of four weeks over the school year. In the 2022-2023 school year, just over 37 percent of New Brunswick children in grades K-5 were considered chronically absent, and more than 45 percent in middle and high school.

Regular attendance in school is crucial for several reasons. First, there is a strong link between being in school and academic success. It is difficult to grasp the material being taught when the child is not there to participate, this often leads to poor performance and a failure to complete the required coursework.

While learning curriculum is important, school also helps children with necessary skills development, like critical thinking, problem-solving, and social-emotional learning through social interaction. These skills are embedded in the curriculum and are practised daily. These are all essential life skills shaped during these formative learning years.

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The consequences of chronic absenteeism on student outcomes are numerous and severe. Elementary-aged children who regularly miss school experience major losses in the development foundational skills which can result in a cascading effect on future educational outcomes (Childs & Grooms, 2018; Durán-Narucki, 2008; Kearney & Graczyk, 2014). Furthermore, absenteeism is “most prominently linked” to eventual school dropout (Childs & Grooms, 2018; Kearney & Graczyk, 2014). Lastly, time spent outside of school can be spent on other unproductive and sometimes harmful or delinquent activities (Cole, 2011, as cited in Childs & Grooms, 2018). For example, rates of chronic absenteeism have been associated with “substance abuse, violence, suicide attempt, risky sexual behaviour, pregnancy, delinquency-related behaviours, injury, and illness” (Kearney & Graczyk, 2014). In sum, absenteeism is associated with a host of negative outcomes for students, making it a critical issue for schools and policymakers to address.” (Leighton, 2024)

It is well understood that school is the primary place for social development, allowing children to interact with their peers and teachers, building strong social skills and friendships. It also plays an important part of emotional development, positive mental health, and a sense of discipline reinforced by a structured routine that will carry children into adulthood and their professional lives.

Consistent attendance in school can help teachers and support staff identify academic and interpersonal matters more quickly. This includes learning challenges, behavioural issues, or family contexts that may impact the child's performance.

Almost as important as regular attendance is the necessity of punctuality and being ready to learn. There is a strong link between being constantly late for school and chronic absenteeism. Habitually late students may develop poor time management, while a lack of routine and missing out on learning can adversely affect academic performance.

Quite simply, regular, on-time school attendance is key for a child's success in school and in life.

## OUR PATH FORWARD

Chronic absenteeism is a problem throughout every school district and age group in New Brunswick. To ensure we effectively address this province-wide problem, we need a province-wide solution.

The anglophone education sector will adopt a consistent approach, in collaboration with school districts, to address chronic absenteeism which will include a *provincial protocol for expectations, measuring and reporting on school attendance*.

An *Absence Intervention Model* will be developed, which will help schools respond to children who are identified as at-risk for increased absences. This model will identify specific actions that will be, taken at specific intervals, to ensure children are in school when at all possible.

Somewhere along the way, society stopped valuing the importance of being in school. It is crucial for children today and for society tomorrow. As such, a public awareness campaign on the significance of school attendance will be developed and executed. This campaign will be bolstered by the publication of school-based attendance data, enabling stakeholders to tailor local strategies and circumstances to enhance outcomes.

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These absences have consequences, research shows. By third grade, chronically absent students are less likely to read on grade level. By sixth grade, chronic absence becomes an early warning sign that a student may drop out of high school. By ninth grade, it's a better indicator than eighth-grade test scores”.

(Childs & Grooms, 2018)

## WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

A decrease in the number of chronically absent students across all grade levels indicating the effectiveness of interventions implemented by the province, districts, and individual schools.

TIMELINE	2024-2025				2025-2026				2026-2027				2027-2028			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Standard Protocol																
Tracking and Reporting																
Absence Intervention Model																
Awareness Campaign																

**RECOMMENDATION:**

*Develop a new classroom composition model and a reasonable timeline to implement an improved inclusive and equitable system.*

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**OBJECTIVE:**

*Ensure the right balance of students-to-teachers-to-support staff in classrooms to enable student success.*

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**OUTCOME:**

*Classrooms are structured in a manner that meets the needs of students through appropriate allocation of staff based on those needs.*

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

It has been said that the only constant in life is change. There have been several changes over the years in the education system. Some have worked, and some have had their challenges. One area that needs changing is the way in which classrooms are filled and structured.

Classrooms tend to vary in size depending on the grade level and can range from 21-29 learners. This structure is defined in the collective agreement between the provincial government and the New Brunswick Teachers' Federation (NBTF). This "classroom maximum-focused" formula has been in place for years. While the formula works as a quantitative way to determine how many teachers are required in each school at each grade level, it does not take the individual needs of children into account, nor does it account for the other support professionals in that classroom. Too many adults in the classroom can also pose a challenge.

The formula needs to be reviewed to determine what the optimal classroom composition should be to ensure children are in the best environment to learn.



[Student-based budgeting (SBB)] —with its emphasis on equitably and transparently distributing funds to schools based on need and its emphasis on providing school leaders with the flexibility and support they need to strategically manage their budgets and staffing—can be an enabling condition that allows more of those research-proven instructional strategies to occur in schools, which in turn, should lead to improved student outcomes.”

*(Education Resource Strategy, 2018, p 10)*

The primary goal of the education system is to provide a high-quality, inclusive education that equips **all** children with the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to be successful in life. This enables them to contribute to society and continue learning throughout their lives. Each child learns differently, and a responsive system that recognizes and adapts to suit the learning needs of the child is needed.

Today's classrooms are a mix of different learning needs. Some children move through the system with few needs, while others require in-class and in-school support services. This needs to be considered when structuring individual classrooms. If one child requires twice as much support as another child, this should be considered when determining the classroom composition, to ensure all students have the supports they need to succeed.



## OUR PATH FORWARD

A review of the current structures and policies in the anglophone sector will be undertaken, to ensure they support schools in their ability to respond to the needs of the child. This will include assessing policies for the flexibility to implement innovative and personalized approaches that are not simply a one-size-fits-all. This will also require looking at what adjustments need to be made to the school day and school calendar to use staff and/or funding more effectively.

A new classroom composition model will be created using a multi-step approach. Pilot projects will be undertaken in schools to encourage them to try new class and staff configurations, and to track and report the results of these new models to their school district. These results will be collated provincially over the next two school years.

Concurrently, the province will work with the New Brunswick Teachers Association to *conduct a whole-of-system review of the resources available to support student learning* and ensure that the right resources are available to respond to the needs of students. This will include reviewing collective agreements and working with associated unions to determine if there are ways to be more responsive to student needs. Where student needs are greater, solutions like flexible groupings, team teaching, and fewer students in some classrooms will be explored to ensure classrooms are adapted in a manner that is more responsive than the current realities may allow. This could be supported by a school-wide, team-based approach to student learning.

This work will be completed by the *development of a new school funding model* that supports greater flexibility in ensuring resources are in place to support children in the most responsive way. This will include looking at weighting the funding formula and taking into account various socio-demographic factors. Partnerships will also be explored to leverage supports and community services to address student needs

## WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Success will be measured on the outcomes of pilot or research projects over the next two years that test flexible approaches to classroom composition. A focus will be placed on ensuring schools are utilizing their flexibility to experiment with new configurations while tracking outcomes and reporting them to their districts, who will then report them to the department within a specific timeframe.

In the longer-term, success will be measured by the percentage of learners meeting grade level outcomes in literacy and numeracy.

TIMELINE	2024-2025				2025-2026				2026-2027				2027-2028			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Flexibility: Policies, Structures and School Leaders																
School-Wide Approach to Learning																
Classroom Composition Pilots																
Funding Model																
Develop new Classroom Composition Model																
Classroom Composition Model Implementation																



**RECOMMENDATION:**

*Leverage technology to enhance learning and personalization.*



**OBJECTIVE:**

*Provide curriculum options that use modern digital learning tools and provide additional methods for teaching and learning.*



**OUTCOME:**

*Personalized student learning meeting their needs and interests resulting in increased student achievement, including efficient use of technology, that incorporates artificial intelligence.*

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

Technology continues to revolutionize virtually every industry, including education, from access to information to distance and/or virtual learning to personalized digital learning plans, teacher training and professional development. The use of technology in education will continue to evolve at a fast pace.



When implemented appropriately, technological advances can support a range of instructional strategies that align with developing future ready skills. It is one of the tools that can support students to become more empowered learners, responsible digital citizens, innovators, communicators, and global collaborators.”

*(International Society for Technology in Education, 2020)*

While New Brunswick’s education system has made investments in technology over the years, the offerings of digital instruction and evaluation continue to evolve and need to be leveraged. The anglophone education sector finds itself in a situation where students often know more about technology and how it can be used than their teachers and other support staff. This is getting further complicated with the rapid advancements in artificial intelligence (AI). However, the benefits of these technologies to the education system far outweigh the negatives if they are leveraged appropriately. It is important that education stakeholders work quickly to establish a unified approach to managing and leveraging technology in the system.

As we increase the use of technology in our schools, it is also important to be aware of the safety, security, and privacy concerns for students, teachers, and schools themselves. Cyber security and the potential for cyber threats are critical issues that need to be managed appropriately. Students must also understand their responsibilities toward others in the digital world through the recently released digital literacy framework.



Over half of teachers felt that technology saved time for collaborating and sharing resources with others (63%), supporting remote teaching and learning (59%) and planning lessons/ curriculum content (53%).”

*(IFF Research for UK department for Education, 2023)*

## OUR PATH FORWARD

A provincial technology plan that reflects the technology expectations from K-to-Grade 12 will be developed and released. To do so, work will be undertaken to address the technology gap by providing teachers with the knowledge and skills required to fully implement technology-based learning. The plan will also include an AI strategy aimed at appropriate integration of the technology in our education system, to be used for content creation, evaluations, curriculum development, etc.

The department will ensure learners have access to the basic technological tools to foster a more dynamic, inclusive, and future-ready learning environment that will equip students with essential digital literacy skills while also preparing them to succeed in an increasingly technology-driven world.

The *Computers for Schools program* will be improved, and other innovative options will be used to ensure students have access to technology, up-to-date software, and other tools to support their learning.

Technology will also be used to deliver more personalized learning, improve learner independence, and optimize time for teaching and learning. This will include expanding the *New Brunswick Virtual Learning Centre (NBVLC)* to increase online learning options to include all age groups, in particular, middle-level literacy and numeracy.

Comprehensive cybersecurity protocols and measures will be developed and implemented. These may include regular assessments and training for students and staff while also integrating digital civics programming into the curriculum to foster responsible and ethical digital behaviour, thereby addressing safety, security, and privacy concerns effectively.

## WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Performance indicators that measure technological proficiency, expanded educational opportunities, improved academic achievement, and ensuring compliance with cybersecurity will be established and regularly evaluated.

A declining trend in reported technology skill gaps among educators and leaders at the provincial, district and school-level.

An increase in the overall number of online courses offered by the NBVLC, specifically the number that are beyond Grades 9-12, and the number of learners taking and successfully completing these courses.

A comprehensive technology plan that defines the details of success as it relates to pressing safety, security, and privacy concerns, along with AI integration will be developed and more appropriate measures of success will be established and implemented following its completion.

TIMELINE	2024-2025				2025-2026				2026-2027				2027-2028			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Technology Plan	■	■	■													
Address Accessibility							■	■	■	■						
Informed and Skilled Staff		■	■	■	■	■	■									
Online Learning and Technology in Curriculum							■	■	■	■	■	■	■			

# A Focus on Learning



## **RECOMMENDATION:**

*Place a focus on middle school learners aged 11-14, by working to identify actions and programs to improve academic engagement, achievement, and well-being.*

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## **OBJECTIVE:**

*Have students in grades 6-8 more engaged in school, community, and their own education success.*

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## **OUTCOME:**

*Students who are motivated, engaged and value learning. They have the foundational knowledge and the social competencies to succeed in high school.*

## **WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

Growing up is hard, and some days it seems to be getting harder, especially for those aged 11-14. This age marks a pivotal stage in a young person's personal development and educational journey. Enhancing academic engagement is key as it fosters a deeper connection with learning and develops skills like critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. Engaged students tend to be more motivated and involved, leading to meaningful learning experiences. One of the ways this can be achieved is through experiential learning which involves actively participating in hands-on experiences or activities to acquire knowledge, build skills, and enhance comprehension. This makes learning more fun and interesting because the student is actively involved.

Academic achievement during these formative years is crucial, as it sets the stage for future success in high school and beyond. It's not just about grades, but about understanding the value of education and building a solid foundation for lifelong learning. This is a critical time for students to develop self-esteem and confidence through positive learning experiences. Educators and parents play a vital role in this by recognizing achievements, setting appropriate challenges, and providing consistent support and guidance.

Our education system must address the issue of social promotion, the practice of advancing students to the next grade regardless of their academic achievement. This is particularly critical for the 11-14 age group, where aligning academic progression with actual learning and understanding is essential. A solid academic foundation is imperative, and advancing students who have not mastered the content can hinder their future learning. Ensuring students genuinely understand the material before progression reinforces the value of real learning over the appearance of progress. It also helps identify and address learning gaps, which is crucial for establishing a strong educational foundation.



Adolescent development also involves profound changes in social contexts, social roles, and social responsibilities. Importantly, there are complex interactions between and among these levels of change. Indeed, learning and brain development are inextricably intertwined throughout this period as learning affects brain development, and maturational changes in the brain in turn affect learning and motivation.”

*(Dahl et al., 2018, p 3)*

During adolescence, significant emotional development takes place, and experiences during this period impact mental and emotional health. Creating an environment that supports well-being can lead to less stress, better social relationships, and increased happiness. Schools and caregivers should focus on the physical, emotional, and social needs of these young learners, offering resources and support to help them handle their challenges. Counseling services, wellness programs, and extracurricular activities are vital in promoting well-being and aiding students in effectively navigating the complexities of adolescence.

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There is now strong evidence which suggests that adolescence provides a second window of opportunity to influence developmental trajectories (including growth and cognitive development) and make up for some poor childhood experiences. Neuroscience evidence indicates that the second decade of life is a period of substantial neurological development, second only to early childhood, during which significant and rapid neural and physiological changes occur and when billions of neural networks that affect emotional skills and physical and mental abilities are reorganized.”

(UNICEF, 2018, p 7)

## OUR PATH FORWARD

EECD will work with agencies, other government departments, local partners, and community organizations to ensure more adolescents have the opportunity to participate in after school, extracurricular, and community experiences and activities.

The use of career and educational tools used by middle level learners will be increased. This will be achieved through focused school-based efforts to use tools like myBlueprint to track the student’s portfolio of accomplishments and help connect their learning and their activities to planning for their future.

Student promotion will be clearly tied to meeting learning expectations. This will be supported by establishing *a standard protocol for supporting students working below educational benchmarks* and ensuring support resources are available.

To ensure all students benefit from these meaningful experiences, instructional time for experiential learning will be increased.

## WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Success will be determined by identifying the number of students at the beginning of the year who are not meeting critical outcomes in literacy and/or numeracy and comparing their end of year results in the same areas.

TIMELINE	2024-2025				2025-2026				2026-2027				2027-2028			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Academic Promotion Practices and Prioritize Intervention Framework																
Experiential and Community-Based Learning																
Online Learning Options																
Middle-School Philosophy																

**RECOMMENDATION:**

*Establish a clear plan (benchmarks/goals) for strengthening French language learning in New Brunswick's anglophone K-12 system, including expanding course options and opportunities for high school students, and exploring options for students entering French immersion with greater flexibility based on readiness.*

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**OBJECTIVE:**

*Increase the number of students graduating from high school with conversational French skills.*

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**OUTCOME:**

*A higher percentage of students finishing high school with proficient conversational French skills.*

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

New Brunswick is Canada's only officially bilingual province, yet for too long we haven't been producing enough high school graduates in the anglophone sector that are proficient in conversational French skills; despite numerous efforts aimed at achieving this outcome. Language skills are globally desired and sought after because they open many educational, social, cultural, and economic doors. However, many young people are missing out on this opportunity because we have not figured out a way to make French language learning engaging and practical.

We have learned a lot through a selection of innovative pilot projects developed through the Language Learning Opportunities sites throughout New Brunswick. We know that from an early age, we can motivate language learning with experiences, technology, partnerships, and a culture of bilingualism in the learning environment. We have a growing population that has clearly said they want the opportunity to learn French so that they further embrace the uniquely bilingual nature of being a New Brunswicker.

A stronger, more stable French language learning program will help us recruit and retain qualified teachers who will be there to strengthen and enhance the curriculum to help deliver more consistent outcomes and linguistic success.

**OUR PATH FORWARD**

*Expand French course offerings, explore the potential for implementing a French curriculum in K-3 English Prime classrooms and increase the number of high school course offerings to give students the opportunity to continue building French language skills through graduation.*

*Allow students to enter the French Immersion program after moving into a community if the student meets specific criteria.*

*Implement a standardized system-wide measure for tracking French oral language proficiency on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) scale. This will enable learners and their teachers to determine the student's current language level and appropriate next steps for instruction.*

## WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Expanded course offerings in French and more flexible options for entry to French Immersion. This will occur while remaining focused on improving the number of high school graduates in the anglophone sector that are proficient in conversational French.

Increased or stable enrollment in French Immersion coupled with improved retention rates will indicate a positive commitment to linguistic proficiency within the anglophone community.

In the short-term, success of the French Immersion program is indicated by the percentage of learners meeting grade level outcomes in literacy and numeracy.

In the long-term, success of the French Immersion program will be measured by the percentage of learners reaching the B1.1 proficiency level on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) by Grade 10. A higher percentage reflects positively on the program’s teaching methods, curriculum design and overall educational quality demonstrating success in fostering language proficiency among students within the specified timeframe.

TIMELINE	2024-2025				2025-2026				2026-2027				2027-2028			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Three-Year Plan																
Modernize Policy 309																
Expand Offerings																
Standardized Screener																

# Engaging our Communities



## **RECOMMENDATION:**

*Encourage movement and getting outside, including embedding 30 minutes of physical education for K-8 daily in addition to outdoor education opportunities.*

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## **OBJECTIVE:**

*Have more outdoor learning and establish a minimum amount of physical education time daily.*

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## **OUTCOME:**

*Children developing healthy habits, are in a better physical and mental state, leading to improved learning outcomes.*

## **WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

Regular physical education and activity at an early age creates habits that will have lifelong health benefits in addition to improving a child's physical, mental, and social development.

Regular physical education and activity helps encourage healthy development of bones and muscles in children, in addition to improving cardiovascular fitness, enhanced motor skills, and coordination. It also helps reduce the risk of childhood obesity, and improves cognitive development, positively impacting concentration, memory, and classroom behaviour. It helps reduce stress, and helps promote and regulate better sleep.

The social impacts are equally as significant. Participating in sports or other non-traditional physical activities can help enhance social skills, improve self-esteem, and helps children learn teamwork and discipline; all critical skills that are important, not just as children, but throughout their life.

Outdoor learning promotes physical activity and adds many other benefits. Encouraging children to connect with nature helps develop an appreciation and respect for the environment, encourages curiosity, and helps cultivate a love for learning. Learning outdoors provides a rich sensory experience as children get to see, hear, smell, and touch natural elements which greatly contributes to sensory development. Time outdoors helps children develop their imaginations, and nurtures their creativity, in addition to cultivating resilience and problem-solving skills. This personal growth experienced outdoors is reflected in their time indoors, as a result.



In New Brunswick, 63.0 per cent of adults aged 18 and older (an estimated 351,400 individuals) and 24.0 per cent of children and youth aged 12-17 (10,700 individuals) are overweight or obese, based on height and weight data. [Collected in the 2009-10 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS)]”

*(As cited by NB Office of Chief Medical Officer of Health, 2012)*



## OUR PATH FORWARD

Create the conditions for schools to offer quality physical education, by ensuring the resources (time and staff) are available to implement the required minutes of physical education time for grades K-8, with a goal for yearly improvements over the next three years, until 30 minutes of daily physical education is achieved.

Leverage community spaces and school infrastructure for community groups to offer opportunities for children to participate in physical and outdoor activities. Additionally, there will be promotion of school-based planning for improvements in movement, physical education, and outdoor learning.

Leverage the Centre of Excellence for Health to encourage increased movement as part of the curriculum, and to develop indicators to gauge physical and outdoor education.



Children who aren't active enough are at a higher risk of developing chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and other cardiovascular illnesses."

(NB Office of Chief Medical Officer of Health, 2012)

## WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

In a 2023-2024 survey of K-8 anglophone schools, at least 137 of the 179 K-8 schools do not currently offer 30 minutes of physical education daily to their students. Success will be measured by the percentage of schools offering the required amount of physical education minutes daily, each year. An increase in this percentage would indicate that the province, district, and schools have collectively created the conditions required, including resources (time and staff), community engagement and collaboration.

Targets will be set once a provincial baseline has been established.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION AT ANGLOPHONE SECTOR SCHOOLS IN 2023-24



### ANGLOPHONE SCHOOL DISTRICT WEST



**53/62**  
SCHOOLS RESPONDED.

$6/53 = 11.3\%$  or  $6/62 = 9.7\%$   
are currently receiving at least 30 minutes of physical education per day.



### ANGLOPHONE SCHOOL DISTRICT SOUTH



**59/60**  
SCHOOLS RESPONDED.

$10/59 = 16.9\%$  or  $10/60 = 16.7\%$   
are currently receiving at least 30 minutes of physical education per day.



### ANGLOPHONE SCHOOL DISTRICT EAST



**29/33**  
SCHOOLS RESPONDED.

$3/29 = 10.3\%$  or  $3/33 = 9.1\%$   
are currently receiving at least 30 minutes of physical education per day.



### ANGLOPHONE SCHOOL DISTRICT NORTH



**22/24**  
SCHOOLS RESPONDED.

$7/22 = 31.8\%$  or  $7/24 = 29.2\%$   
are currently receiving at least 30 minutes of physical education per day.

# TIMELINE

	2024-2025				2025-2026				2026-2027				2027-2028			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
School Improvement Process																
Professional Learning for Physical Education Teachers																
Risk Guidelines and Professional Learning for Outdoor Learning																
Awareness and Support Schools																

**RECOMMENDATION:**

*Have the recently announced Centre of Excellence for Language Learning develop a communication plan and support plan to help families and communities assist children in their success in French immersion.*

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**OBJECTIVE:**

*More engaged parents supporting their children learn French.*

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**OUTCOME:**

*More community and private sector involvement, creating more authentic learning experiences for students.*

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

Learning in a language other than one's maternal language can be challenging for some children, and it can be harder for families that don't know how or do not feel confident in supporting children in French language learning. This hesitancy and lack of confidence can discourage parents from choosing to enrol their children in French Immersion or other French language programs.

The importance of French language learning for the province has already been discussed, but there are more ways to encourage students to pursue learning French. There are things that can be done to help parents and families. Parents who are more engaged and have access to proper resources will be able to take on a more active role in supporting their children to learn in French and complete French Immersion.

**OUR PATH FORWARD**

*Develop a promotional campaign* to increase the awareness of parents and students of the benefits of bilingualism and the immersion program.

*Provide parent-friendly information* to support their understanding of the French Immersion program, including outlining practical and effective practices that can be delivered by parents in support of their children. This will include online resources with accessible, downloadable materials.

*Develop partnerships with afterschool, community, and enrichment providers* to expand opportunities for learning French and use the Centre of Excellence for French Language Learning as the primary resource hub for parents and families

**WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?**

The goal is to have more parents engaged in supporting their children learn French, and success will be measured by the change in percent of parental participation in sessions specifically focused on supporting children's language learning. An increase will measure the effectiveness of parent-friendly information, indicating the extent to which parents are gaining a better understanding of the program and feeling confident in supporting their children's French language education.

A further goal is to have more community and private sector involvement, to provide more authentic learning experiences to students to enrich the learning experience. Success will be measured by the number of partnerships established. Overall success of these partnerships will be measured by the number of participants that attend each opportunity. These measures will indicate the extent to which expanded learning opportunities are being successfully implemented to support children’s French language acquisition beyond traditional classroom settings.

TIMELINE	2024-2025				2025-2026				2026-2027				2027-2028			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Engagement Initiatives																
Information for Parents																

# Ensuring the Right Expertise in our Classrooms



## **RECOMMENDATION:**

*Improve retention and recruitment of qualified teachers and specialized health service professionals in education.*

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## **OBJECTIVE:**

*Create a culture within the sector that encourage and supports professional educators and specialized health professionals to choose to work and stay working in the anglophone sector in New Brunswick.*

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## **OUTCOME:**

*More teachers and health professionals entering the anglophone education system and retaining those who are in the system beyond the first five years.*

## **WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

The education system is at a crossroads. We do not have enough qualified teachers coming into the system to replace the ones that are at or near retirement age - this is something that needs to be collectively addressed before a tipping point is reached.

Qualified teachers have a Bachelor of Education degree from a university program recognized by the Office of Teacher Certification. It is the goal of the system to have every teaching position filled by a qualified, professional teacher, but when that is not possible, school districts can hire an individual on a local permit. The requirements for local permits vary by school district, but generally require some amount of post-secondary education. Equally important is the retention of our current educators.

Improvements in school learning environments are interwoven through these recommendations. Through this intentional focus, our teachers will be more likely to stay in the teaching profession.

To ensure children are meeting their full potential there needs more qualified teachers in New Brunswick classrooms. But that is not the only area in the education sector where there is a shortage. There is also a need for specialized health service professionals, like psychologists, speech language pathologists, and occupational therapists to support students. These professionals are key to ensuring that children are supported in the most appropriate way to help them be successful in school as not every child learns the same way nor develops at the same pace.



*A longstanding problem in the teacher workforce, internationally and in the UK, is the continuing and substantial numbers of qualified teachers who leave the profession within five years”*

*(Perryman, & Calvert, 2020, p 3)*



*Director-general of UNESCO, called on governments around the world to step up their support for teachers, warning that the profession is struggling to retain its workforce and attract new talent. Worldwide, 69 million teachers are needed to reach universal basic education by 2030 [...] Lack of training, unattractive working conditions and inadequate funding all undermine the teaching profession and aggravate the global learning crisis. UNESCO has always placed teachers at the heart of the fight for the right to inclusive and quality education. There is an urgent need to better recognise this profession on which the future of our children depends.”*

*(UNESCO, 2022)*

## **OUR PATH FORWARD**

*Remove roadblocks for qualified applicants, coming to New Brunswick with teaching degrees, to be employed in classrooms in the province which means accelerating efforts to recognize credentials from other jurisdictions.*

*Undertake a formal research project to understand why fewer people are choosing to become teachers. We need to understand if it is a choice about the profession, or something entirely different.*

*Develop a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy aimed at increasing the number of qualified teachers and specialized health service professionals and keeping them in the system.*

*Explore alternative service delivery models that could be used to support children throughout the system.*

*Make the profession more appealing to a new generation of teachers through efforts to address classroom composition, and a commitment to explore team teaching models.*

## **WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?**

Efforts must be taken to carefully develop a forecasting model that estimates the projected demand for and supply of educators on a yearly basis. This model must enable recruiters to identify and implement targeted actions to bridge the gap. Success to improve recruitment and retention will be measured by the number of fully certified teachers hired annually against a specified target.

The number of local teaching permits issued annually compared to the previous year will also be monitored.

Success in retention efforts will be reflected by measuring the retention rate: the number of teachers continuing in their positions within a specified period compared to the total number of employed teachers. A higher retention rate indicates greater stability and effectiveness in retaining teachers, contributing to a more resilient and sustainable teaching workforce.

Other measures of success will be established as the strategic plan is developed.

With the goal of reducing health professional vacancies; school psychologists, speech language pathologists, and social workers need to be hired within the fiscal year. Monitoring and recording the filled vacancies will serve as a key measure. It is anticipated that once filled, these professionals will improve the access to essential health services for students, enhanced support for their mental health and academic needs, and ultimately contribute to a more dependable learning environment.

Success in exploring alternative service delivery models to support children within the system involves identifying and implementing innovative approaches that effectively address the diverse needs of students. Success will be measured by the number of students accessing the services.

# TIMELINE

	2024-2025				2025-2026				2026-2027				2027-2028			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Recruitment and Retention Strategic Plan		■	■													
Credential Recognition			■	■												
Create Central Recruitment Team	■	■														
Implementation of Strategic Plan				■	■	■	■	■	■							
Recruitment for Health Vacancies			■	■	■	■										



### **RECOMMENDATION:**

*Support educational assistants in receiving dedicated training, professional learning, and opportunities to further collaborate with teachers.*

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### **OBJECTIVE:**

*Ensure the right supports are in place to help those who support learners with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, behavioural challenges, among other diverse needs of students.*

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### **OUTCOME:**

*A multi-year professional learning plan for educational assistants, including a new approach to those who assist with medical needs. Educational Assistants work assignments and learning plans are aligned with their roles and responsibilities. Additional services are provided by appropriate expertise to support individual learner needs.*

## **WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

Educational assistants are an integral part of the education system, and they have a key role in supporting children to learn in a manner that is best suited for them. Since being introduced into the system this role has evolved. To best meet the student's support needs and achieve the best results, there needs to be a strong, collaborative working relationship with the educator.

It is important to ensure that educational assistants have the capabilities to support diverse needs of children they are assigned to. Children's needs evolve throughout the year, and methods used to support them need to be adapted to help continue their successful learning journey. Training and resource allocation should be tailored to enhance the capabilities of educational assistants in meeting these diverse needs effectively.

It is also important to understand the role of educational assistants. Increasingly this role is being assigned to support class composition when another resource may be better suited. This needs to be reviewed and opportunities are needed to enhance the school support network, putting in place the most appropriate resources to ensure student success



TAs help ease workload and stress, reduce classroom disruption and allow teachers more time to teach.”

*(Evidence for Learning, 2019, p 7)*



...a New Zealand Ministry of Education study found that some TAs report they did not have adequate knowledge and skills to work effectively with students with additional needs, particularly students with behaviour that was very challenging, and reported being “thrown in the deep end” with some students (Ministry of Education 2011, p.9). This implies TAs need [professional learning development] in the area of behaviour management.”

*(Leslie 2018, p 49)*



## OUR PATH FORWARD

Work with partners in Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) 2745 to develop and align roles and responsibilities, training, and work assignments for educational assistants. This will require a review of the roles and responsibilities of educational assistants, the creation of position descriptions and training requirements to support job assignments. Tailored training programs and resource allocation to equip educational assistants with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively support diverse student needs and support specific job assignments will need to be developed.

Update the parameters for matching paraprofessionals and professionals to fulfil the needs of learners who require support and ensure an appropriate role for the educational assistant.

Developing onboarding packages to build capacity for educational assistants to work effectively as a valued member of the classroom and school team with core information for transitions and career success.

## WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Having a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of educational assistants within the educational setting, including identifying specific tasks, duties, and expectations associated with the role to provide clarity for other support positions.

After roles and responsibilities are established, the knowledge, abilities, and qualifications necessary to perform the role will have been identified, which will lead to a training framework that includes objectives and learning content. Overall, success will be measured by the educational assistant’s ability to apply the acquired skills to their roles and contribute to student success.

Accurately assessing learner needs and aligning them with skilled professional and paraprofessional. This ensures appropriate assignments for educational assistants, leading to enhanced support and improved outcomes for students.

TIMELINE	2024-2025				2025-2026				2026-2027				2027-2028			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Roles and Responsibilities																
Training and Onboarding																
Protocol for Support Services																

**RECOMMENDATION:**

*Ensure teachers who work with early readers have specific training designed to maximize the development and outcomes of these students.*

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**OBJECTIVE:**

*Teachers assigned to teach early reading skills complete the modules of the Building Blocks of Reading or have completed an equivalent reading theory course.*

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**OUTCOME:**

*Teachers assigned to teach early reading skills have a solid understanding of research-based effective practices.*

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

Learning to read during the foundational years of school (K-3) is of utmost importance, as it is one of the first and most important skills that is learned in a child's educational journey. This critical period is often when children transition from learning to read to reading to learn. Early reading proficiency is essential because it forms the basis for acquiring more complex skills and knowledge. It is in these early years that children develop sound-based awareness, learn to recognize letters, and understand the relationship between letters and sounds. Developing these fundamental skills enables children to decode words, which is essential for reading fluency and comprehension. When students become proficient readers by the end of third grade, they are more likely to succeed academically in later grades because they can efficiently access and process the information presented in their courses and educational materials.

Additionally, learning to read during these early years has a significant impact on a child's self-esteem and motivation for learning. Children who struggle with reading often experience frustration, which can lead to a lack of confidence in their academic abilities. This, in turn, can affect their overall attitude towards school and learning.

The skills acquired in early reading instruction plays a vital role in a child's overall development, life opportunities, and their future literacy. Reading skills are fundamental for effective communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving in everyday life. The ability to read and understand complex texts takes years of practice and is essential in navigating the information-rich and text-heavy world.

Prioritizing reading instruction in the K-3 years is not just an educational imperative but a crucial investment in the holistic development of young individuals and their future contributions to society.

**OUR PATH FORWARD**

Ensure all K-3 early reading and elementary resource teachers who are expected to teach children to read, have *experience or training in reading theory*.

*Prepare complementary materials* to support the Building Blocks of Reading modules for key audiences. This will include materials to support French Immersion teachers.

*Develop onboarding materials* for K-3 and resource teachers, and literacy leaders to ensure they have a firm understanding of the program.



*If education leaders are serious about making sure scientifically based reading instruction reaches every classroom..., they need to establish robust teacher preparation standards, support teacher prep programs as they implement them—and then hold those programs accountable.”*

*(National Council on Teacher Quality, 2024)*

## WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Teachers assigned to teach K-3 English Prime and 1-3 French Immersion have completed the “Building Blocks of Reading” training or have completed an acceptable Reading Theory course ensuring that educators are equipped with essential skills and strategies to effectively teach reading, laying a strong foundation for student literacy development.

Directly impact the percentage of learners meeting grade level outcomes in literacy through full participation in the “Building Blocks of Reading” training. This will be measured by the percentage of K-3 (English Prime) and 1-3 (French Immersion) learners meeting expectations at each reporting period in the following areas: phonological awareness, phonics fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. A baseline for this measure is being established in the 2023-2024 school year.

TIMELINE	2024-2025				2025-2026				2026-2027				2027-2028			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Policy or Standard of Practice																
Materials for FI 1-3 Teachers																
Materials for Resource Teachers and School Leaders																

**RECOMMENDATION:**

*Develop and implement equitable access to professional learning for educators in resources, strategies, and interventions to best support each learner in English Prime and French language classrooms.*

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**OBJECTIVE:**

*Ensure professional learning focuses on quality research-informed instruction that provides effective strategies and interventions required to meet the needs of diverse learners.*

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**OUTCOME:**

*All teachers will have the tools necessary to improve student achievement and manage classroom behaviour.*

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

Over the years a considerable amount of time has been spent focusing on how to address some of the classroom composition and behaviour challenges in English Prime classrooms, however this particular focus has resulted in not directing enough attention to similar challenges in French language classrooms. Resource strategies and interventions that have been successfully used in English Prime classrooms could be deployed throughout schools to address issues in other classrooms and allow more students to stay in French Immersion.



Professional learning and development is at the heart of an effective and continuously growing teaching profession.”

*(Fullan and Hargreaves, 2016)*

The fact is all teachers, regardless of the type of classroom, should have access to the best strategies and interventions that will allow them to equally support the children in their classroom. By enhancing strategies and approaches for teachers, in all but specifically those in French language classrooms, teachers can continue to grow as professional educators, improve the retention of students in French Immersion programs, especially those that are on a personal learning plan.

**OUR PATH FORWARD**

Partner with the New Brunswick Teacher’s Association to outline the expectations for continuous professional learning and explore the idea of having specific learning or credentials to maintain certain positions within the system. This will include creating a professional learning framework and other tools that assist teachers to easily understand system needs and longer-term expectations and opportunities, as well as tools to easily track and showcase their professional growth over their career.

“

Renewal of the teaching profession and improvements in the quality of teaching and learning through the provision of high quality professional development (PD) for teachers have been forefront of the educational agenda of many countries including members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for quite some time. Teachers are faced increasingly with the need to enact reforms, keep pace with rapidly developing fields of knowledge and technologies, and at the same time cater for an ever widening range of students in their classrooms with diverse interests, aptitudes and abilities (OECD, 2004).”

(Yates, 2007)

This vision will require the system to provide flexible and accessible pathways for teachers to align with the framework for continuous learning. Professional learning expectations will reflect adult education principles and provide access to learning that supports each teacher’s professional growth journey.

### WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

A more equitable educational system where all teachers, regardless of their language of instruction, have the resources and support they need to foster student success and retention in English and French Immersion programs. This could be specifically measured by resource availability and participation rates in professional learning sessions.

Tangible improvements in learning, classroom dynamics, and reduced attrition from French Immersion to English Prime.

Positive impacts on the percentage of students meeting grade level outcomes in literacy and numeracy.

Reducing the number of students on personal learning plans leaving French Immersion for English Prime classrooms.

TIMELINE	2024-2025				2025-2026				2026-2027				2027-2028			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Framework																
Learning Packages																
Tracking																

# Conclusion

As stated previously, the collective goal underpinning this work is to have an anglophone education sector in New Brunswick that embodies innovation, inclusivity, and excellence. Creating a dynamic learning environment where every student thrives will ensure future success. With a focus on accountability and continuous improvement, the system will be improved to foster student success, empower communities, and instill pride in our system.

It is in this spirit that we will continue to work on the implementation of these important recommendations. We will do so with the utmost transparency, accountability, and in the same collaborative way they were developed. We will provide updates on the implementation of these recommendations at periodic intervals and will continue to seek out innovative ways to strengthen our anglophone education system.

# References

A complete list of references is available online <https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/education/k12/content/references.html>