



Education
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Backgrounder - Budget 2013: A Sound Plan for K-12 Education

Early Childhood Learning

Budget 2013 includes almost \$1.3 million for the third year of implementation of the province's early childhood learning strategy, Learning From the Start, which this year will see the introduction of new early literacy programming, piloted in select public library sites across the province, as well as the further development and distribution of parent resource kits containing a wealth of early learning materials for infants, toddlers, and their caregivers.

K-12 Infrastructure

The aggressive investment made in K-12 infrastructure over the past nine years will continue with Budget 2013, which provides almost \$102 million for new and ongoing school infrastructure projects to meet the immediate and long-term demands in high growth areas, while ensuring existing facilities throughout the province meet the needs of students and teachers in the 21st century.

Almost \$25 million is provided to plan for: a new school in Gander; an extension to Elizabeth Park Elementary in Paradise; long-term infrastructure needs at Coley's Point Primary; modular classrooms in Portugal Cove-St. Philip's, Torbay and Paradise while planning continues for new schools in those areas; and, priority repairs and maintenance projects throughout the province. A total of \$500,000 is also approved for detailed planning for the redevelopment of G.C. Rowe in Corner Brook, as part of a long-term K-6 reorganization plan.

Close to \$77 million has been allocated for ongoing major capital improvements, including:

- \$18.3 million to begin construction of a new west end high school, St. John's;
- \$10 million to continue construction of the new St. Teresa's school, St. John's;
- \$8 million to continue the extension and renovations at Roncalli Elementary, St. John's;
- \$6.6 million to redevelop the former Regina High, Corner Brook;
- \$4.6 million to continue construction of a new school, St. Anthony;
- \$4.2 million to begin work on the second phase of redevelopment at Exploits Valley High, Grand Falls-Windsor;
- \$4 million to begin design and site work for the new Virginia Park Elementary, St. John's;
- \$3.9 million to begin the reconstruction of William Gillett Academy, Charlottetown, Labrador;
- \$3.7 million to continue construction of a new school, Carbonear;
- \$3 million for further design and planning, and potential site acquisition for a new school, Torbay;
- \$3 million for further planning, design and potential site acquisition for a new school, Conception Bay South;
- \$3 million for further planning, design and potential site acquisition for a new school, Paradise;
- \$3 million for further planning, design and potential site acquisition of a new school, Portugal Cove-St. Philip's;
- \$300,000 to complete an extension and renovations at Holy Spirit High, Conception Bay South; and,
- \$1.4 million to finalize work on several projects throughout the province.

Since 2004 about \$620 million has been allocated for K-12 infrastructure in Newfoundland and Labrador. Nine new schools have opened; 10 more are in various stages of planning or construction; 12 major extension and renovation projects have been completed, and eight more are underway or in the planning stages. In addition, more than 1,850 repairs and maintenance projects have been completed.

Changes to Teacher Allocations

Budget 2013 provides \$537 million, almost 64 per cent of the entire education budget, for teachers' salaries, substitute teachers, student assistants, professional development, and various services for teachers.

The Provincial Government is committed to protecting priority services for student learning, and to maintaining Newfoundland and Labrador's pupil-teacher ratio as the best of any province in Canada. Budget 2013 makes provision to ensure there will be no need to reduce regular classroom teachers who deliver the required curriculum, and that direct services to students, and supports for students with special needs, will not be affected.

Reductions have been made in areas such as administration, learning resources support and district-based numeracy supports. This will result in the equivalent of 142 fewer positions assigned for the 2013-14 school year, with a further reduction of 18 positions as a direct result of enrolment decline. However, there will be more than 5,400 teaching positions

allocated to the education system in September 2013, and with about 550 teachers eligible to retire this year, there is no expectation of teacher job losses. There will be no reduction in the allocation of regular classroom teachers assigned to deliver the required curriculum as a result of this budgetary process. There will be no reduction in direct services or supports for students with special needs. There are also no changes to K-9 class size caps for the required curriculum, and there are still 265 more teachers in the system in relation to student enrolment than there were prior to implementation of the new teacher allocation model in 2008.

School Board Consolidation

In the wake of declining student enrolment, and recognizing the need to adjust the administrative structures in place to support K-12 education, Budget 2013 makes provision for two provincial school boards in Newfoundland and Labrador as of September 2013 – one English-language board and one French-language board.

Since school board administration was last consolidated in 2004, enrolment has declined by almost 14,000 students, or 17 per cent. Given that demographic reality, and the need to direct the maximum funding available into classrooms, the Provincial Government has re-examined the school board administrative structure to ensure it fits the educational system it serves.

Four current English-language school boards will see financial and administrative services amalgamated into one district office, located in St. John's. There will still be a strong regional presence in offices in Gander, Corner Brook, and Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Senior executive and managers, and itinerant supports for students and teachers, will be in place, on the ground, in all the former school districts. In addition, many staff now located in satellite offices under the current board structure (Labrador City, Lower Cove, Stephenville, Grand Falls-Windsor, Burin, Clarenville, and Spaniard's Bay), will be deployed directly into schools.

Further details of the new board structure will be provided in the coming weeks.

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