

Nova Central School District

2005 Framework Document
for
Restructuring School Systems

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Introduction

Following a decision of the provincial government to reform the denominational school system in 1996, two school districts (Baie Verte-Central-Connaigre School District and Lewisporte-Gander School District), each with its own elected school board, were established in the central region of the province to develop and administer a restructured system of public schools. At that time, all schools within the region were organized into thirty-nine (39) families of schools (referred to as school systems), each usually serving a cluster of local communities. Each school system consists of either a single school or a family of feeder schools for the purpose of providing the opportunity for all students to participate in the provincial curriculum for all kindergarten to senior high school programs.

In September 2004, these two school districts were merged into a single regional entity. The Nova Central School District was established and its Board assumed the mandate to organize and administer the system of schools for the central region of the province. Its jurisdiction includes all communities from Charlottetown, in the Terra Nova National Park to the Baie Verte Peninsula, Buchans, and all communities along the south coast from Rencontre East in Fortune Bay to McCallum in Hermitage Bay. Approximately fifteen thousand (15,000) students, residing in some 170 communities, currently attend the seventy-five (75) schools located throughout the region.

The range in organizational challenges across the breadth of the district is huge, and in some respects, many are non-comparable. The isolated community of Rencontre East has a school system that consists of a single small K-12 school attended by all 30 students in that community. The Lewisporte school system, at another extreme, consists of five (5) school buildings serving 1230 students from fifteen (15) different communities. The huge geographic spread of communities within this system and its large student population requires three separate school zones to ensure reasonable travel distances for younger students. The establishment of three (3) K-9 feeder schools, supporting a single senior high school, is the structure currently in place to meet the demands for this particular body of students. The bussing demands in this system, in terms of the number of students being bussed and the distances involved, are the most complex in all of Nova Central. To go to yet another completely different situation, we can look to the Grand Falls-Windsor school system, with the 3rd largest concentration of school-age children in the province (some 2300 students) predominantly residing within the borders of a single town.

The above examples demonstrate the range of variation within student populations and school and community numbers, and hint at the organizational challenges to be met when operating a school district over such a vast and diverse area. The methods used to organize school systems must be equally varied if we are to maximize appropriate learning opportunities for all students, and do so considering the requirements of the curriculum and the practicalities of maintaining schools as student populations continue to decline.

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Prior to the most recent consolidation of school districts in September 2004, both former school boards were actively examining further changes to the system, intending to build from recognized challenges within current school system configurations and also responding to ongoing enrollment declines occurring throughout the region. The new Board has continued with this task, and has been engaged in a comprehensive review of all school systems during the past several months.

This document sets out a vision of the changes needed, over a 5-year timeframe, to enable the Board to develop and maintain effective school systems throughout the district, considering the continued declines and shifts in student population, the changes in programming, the availability and use of technology, teaching and learning, the development of children at the various age stages, and the age and deterioration of school buildings. The status quo is not an option. Student numbers continue to decline at an alarming rate, with some areas having more serious and immediate implications than others. This enrollment decline brings the added challenge of declining resources to deliver programs, services and facilities. The Board is committed to develop an effective school system that provides a quality education to all our students throughout the district.

The Changing Demographic

During the past several months the Nova Central School Board has undertaken a review of all of the schools within its jurisdiction. This review has looked into a broad range of considerations, including enrollment trends, the physical condition of each building, the program offerings by school, student support services needs and student transportation requirements. Some of the findings are significant and clearly draws attention to the question ‘Is the current arrangement of schools in Nova Central the most effective means for addressing the educational needs of the students given what we know about students enrollments and their locations today and in the immediate future?’

Declining Student Enrollments

The student enrollment for the district continues to drop. Consider this, in 1996 there were 22,000 students attending schools in Nova Central; for this current school year this number has dropped to 14,700; and in five years from now, by the commencement of the 2009-10 school year, there will be another 2000 fewer students. Many smaller communities now have fewer than 5 births per year. Only about one dozen (12) of our 170 communities now have more than 20 births per year (this would be considered a reasonable number for one class per grade in a school). It should be noted that although the decline in school-age children generally applies to the whole district, there are several areas within the district where the decline is occurring at a more dramatic pace than is the case in other zones.

..... from 22,000 students to less than 13,000 students.....

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The senior high school enrollment will undergo the most significant decline during the next five years. Consider this, in 1990 there were 7,000 senior high school students in Nova Central. Going into the next school year there will be approximately 4000 high school students. Five years from now, by the commencement of the 2009-10 school year, there will be only 3200 senior high school students attending schools in this district. Furthermore, this trend will continue for several years beyond that point in time. One should note, as well, that these forecasts are made on the assumption that our high schools will not lose any students through transfers to other jurisdictions or through student dropout.

..... from 7,000 high school students to 3,200 students.....

Facility Deterioration

Most (59) of our 75 school buildings were built more than 25 years ago. 20 building were built prior to 1965 (40 years and older), with several dating back to the early 1950s. Many have major demands with respect to upgrades and preventative maintenance programs in order to continue to be secure and comfortable places where our children spend such a considerable portion of their daily lives. Some schools or a portion thereof need to be replaced. Others need to be downsized given the major declines in student numbers.

From 1997 to 2004 the government approved almost \$200,000,000 in school construction projects (new schools, extensions and upgrades) throughout the province. The funds were distributed as follows:

Eastern School District (126 schools - 46,233 students)	\$79,000,000
Western School District (82 schools- 15,256 students)	\$49,300,000
Labrador School District (16 schools- 4,604 students)	\$31,500,000
Central School District (77 schools- 15,208 students)	\$30,000,000
French School District (5 schools- 210 students)	\$ 6,000,000

..... least amount of capital funding invested on central schools.....

Program Challenges

There is a clear connection between the district's capability to offer broad-based programming and the declining enrollment. This is particularly true for the senior high school program. In order for the board to ensure that it offers the best opportunity for all senior high students to graduate, and to be able to acquire the full range of outcomes as is mandated through the provincial curriculum and the new graduation requirements, and to do so knowing where the current enrollment levels are and where they are going to be over the next five years, the Board will have to consider reducing the number of locations where a high school program can be offered.

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The demand for, and the complexity of, programming in the area of student support services continues to be a growth area within the district. Based upon data compiled to date, we can identify two trends: one leads us to the conclusion that the magnitude of needs varies amongst student populations from school system to school system; and secondly, the magnitude of the problem in several school systems requires relatively more human resources to effectively address the needs of the students.

Teacher Allocations

Fewer students means fewer teachers. From 1998 to 2005, the number of teachers in new central school district has dropped from 1257 to 995. In the last two years alone, the number of teachers was reduced by 100 units. By 2009 there will another 111 few teachers available in our schools.

..... 210 fewer teachers from 2003 to 2010.....

Student Travel

A high quality student transportation system that affords the child a safe and comfortable ride to school is, and will continue to be, an integral component in organizing school systems in this largely rural school district. Currently, the board operates schools in fifty-four (54) of the approximately 170 communities where students reside. As stated earlier, within these 54 communities, there are seventy-five (75) schools, with thirty-nine (39) offering a senior high school program. Currently, the board is generally not bussing its primary school-age students beyond 35 kilometers to attend school. With respect to senior high students, of the current 4000 students, only 145 students are currently bussed in excess of 30 kilometers.

In consideration of the location of communities where its students reside, the Board takes the view that the reality of distance and local demographics will be significant factors in consideration of how it organizes and reorganizes its schools and school systems, and as to how it allocates the resources to effectively support those schools. It also recognizes that the status quo, given the continual decline of its student population, does not provide the best opportunity to address this challenge.

The Structure of the Curriculum and Grade-Span

The core curriculum offered in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador has been planned and developed collaboratively by regional committees for the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (APEF). Guidelines for developing curriculum have been established based in the four key stages: K-3, grades 4-6, grades 7-9 and grades 10-12. Reflected in the guidelines for each key stage are considerations relating to the nature of

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learning, the range of learnings that can be expected at each key stage, the specific curriculum outcomes and learning experiences in each program area, instructional and assessment strategies, and resources.

Each program focuses on **key stage curriculum outcomes**, which establish what students are expected to know and to be able to accomplish by the end of grades 3, 6, 9 and 12, as a result of their cumulative learning experiences in that program area. All provincial curricula are designed around the key stage model. Curriculum guides have been developed for each of the four key stages, detailing the specific curricula at each grade level within the four key stages.

In Newfoundland and Labrador the provincial external assessment program is also developed within the framework of the four key stages. All students must write Criterion Referenced Tests (CRTs) at the end of each key stage in grades 3, 6 and 9. Students then write public exams at the end of the final stage in grade 12. These assessments provide common standards of student performance based upon specified outcomes, which compose the provincial curriculum at the end of each key stage. The assessment data is also intended to provide schools with a focus for program and staff development plans, aimed at improving growth in student performance at the end of each key stage block of instruction.

Twenty-two (22) of the district's seventy-five (75) schools have grade-span combinations that do not adhere to the natural grade breaks reflected in the key stage curriculum (i.e. at the end of grade 3, grade 6, grade 9, and grade 12). As stated earlier, there are a number of advantages in having students grouped according to these "grade-span clusters" determined by the focuses designed within the curriculum. In consideration of various scenarios for redesigning school systems, the Board takes the view that alignment of the particular grade-span in a school must coincide with the key stage design of the provincial curriculum, and specifically adheres to the following conditions:

- i. that the grade-span in a school would be maintained to reflect the provincial curriculum design groupings (i.e. K-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10-12). In other words, the grade-span in a school should not cause a split in any of the four curriculum key stage groupings; and
- ii. that the grade-span configuration used (i.e. K-3, K-6, K-9, K-12, etc) be applied to create the maximum opportunity for specialized program offerings and services, and to derive the most effective use of staffing allocations.

Further details relating to programming and the related instructional time requirements for each component of **Key-Stage Curriculum Outcomes** model are provided in Appendix A.

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Student Transition and Grade-Span

An equally important consideration in designing a school system is the frequency of moving students to a new school over the course of progression through the K-12 sequence. From what experience tells us, coupled with some strong empirical reviews within the educational literature, we recognize and support the position that the frequency of student transition from one school to another within a school system should be kept to a minimum.

Studies show that there is an increase in negative effects for students as the number of school transitions increases. The concerns associated with frequent school transitions include the following: achievement loss during each transition year; increased feelings of anonymity among children; self-esteem, leadership behaviors and extra-curricular participation are negatively impacted. In summary, the literature speaks to the advisability of minimizing the number of transitions. Please refer to Appendix B for more detailed information.

Twenty-six (26) of the district's thirty-nine (39) school systems consist of a single K-12 school, ranging in size from 10 students (H. L. Strong Academy) to 550 students (New World Island Academy). The K-12 school system is the predominant school type in the district, and in most cases it works well. With the exceptions of the small and small remote K-12 schools, this type of school is extremely effective in maintaining a broad range of programming. K-12 schools successfully maximize on opportunities for good role modeling by older students. Issues that are oftentimes raised by parents prior to the establishment of the K-12 setting, such as increased bullying when older students come in contact with younger students (i.e. on the busses, on school grounds and inside the building) just do not develop as anticipated. These schools are organized and managed such that these concerns do not generally manifest themselves. The experience of the many K-12 settings currently in place throughout the district demonstrates this to be the case. Obviously, in the K-12 school, concerns relating to student transition is a non-issue given that students spend their complete school-life in that single setting.

We do, however, have several school systems where the frequency of student transition is a concern, particularly in view of those schools where students attend a school for only a two-year grade-span. There are only five (5) schools in our district where this is the case, three of which are located in the Grand Falls-Windsor school system. The principals from this system have expressed much concern regarding the negative impacts of this arrangement based upon several years of experience in a three school format with each school offering a two grade-span (grades 7-8, grades 9-10 and grades 10-12). 50% of the student body turns over annually in each school, creating a very limited opportunity for a stable and connected experience for students and staff. Concern regarding the ineffectiveness of this arrangement had reached a point a year ago whereby the local school administrators made representation to the Board seeking support to extend the grade-span at the intermediate and senior levels.

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Research concerning transitions for the general student population, combined with observations of transitional challenges for students with exceptionalities, suggests very clearly that transitions between schools for students with exceptionalities should be also kept at a minimum. Each time a student has to adjust to a new school there are disadvantages for the student, and this is often more so the case for students with exceptionalities who have a host of other challenges to address when changing schools (i.e. independence in getting to school, orientation to the new school, learning new rules and structures, keeping personal possessions organized and secure, and learning where to go for help). It follows therefore, that more stability in the school setting is certainly a concept that would favor all students.

The Department of Education, Student Support Services Division, in February 2005 released a draft document entitled Transition Policy. The document contains the following observation in its introduction, “During these transitions students experience change; they need to make adjustments in all or some of the following areas: academic demands and expectations, the school rules and regulations, social/emotional adjustments, physical environments and structures, teachers and other staff members, means of transportation, and community location”. Therefore, for the student with exceptionalities who is daily presented with a variety of challenges, the additional requirement to change schools every few years presents a whole new set of additional concerns.

Reshaping School Systems

As stated earlier, the Board takes the view that the reality of distance and local demographics are significant factors in considering how it restructures its schools and school systems. Given the continual decline of the student population, and concerns relating to aligning the grade-span of a school with the key stages used in program design and teaching, as well issues surrounding the frequency of student movement from school to school, the Board recognizes that the status quo, does not provide the best opportunity to address these challenges. Being mindful of these considerations, the Board separates its schools and/or school systems into three distinctive groupings that require different approaches when considering and developing restructuring plans that best address future needs.

In the subsequent pages, the Board will outline its vision for the future restructuring of school systems within the Nova Central School District. The changes presented are viewed as realistic goals by the school year 2009-10.

The Small Isolated and Remote School Systems

A number of situations exists within Nova Central where a community cannot be reached directly by a road connection or where a community within the system is beyond a reasonable highway travel distance (50 kilometers or beyond) to the next nearest community where a school exists. The system enrollments (current and/or

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projected to 2009-10) in these settings range from 10 students to 225 students. These are generally school systems that have no option other than to exist as separate entities, as is currently the case. However, in several instances, now and in the immediate future, given the extremely small numbers of high school students, the use of the provincial student bursary program may be the only practical option to enable students to participate in a complete senior high school program.

Of the 39 school systems in Nova Central, there are currently 15 school systems that clearly fall into the category of Small Isolated and Remote School Systems, each consisting of a single K-12 school (with 2 exceptions – details noted below). These school systems include:

1. **Little Bay Islands, Notre Dame Bay** H. L. Strong Academy offers a K-12 program to the 10 students from that single community. Little Bay Islands is accessible via a 45 min ferry connection. The 2009-10 enrollment will be **10 students**, three(3) of whom will participate in the senior high school program.
2. **St. Brendan's Island, Bonavista Bay** St. Gabriel's All Grade offers a K-12 program to the 34 students from that single community. St. Brendan's Island is accessible through Burnside via a 1hr ferry connection. The 2009-10 enrollment will be **12 students**, three(3) of whom will participate in the senior high school program.
3. **McCallum, Hermitage Bay** St. Peter's All Grade offers a K-12 program to the 19 students from that single community. McCallum is accessible through Hermitage via a 1hr-30 min ferry connection. The 2009-10 enrollment will be **14 students**, two(2) of whom will participate in the senior high school program.
4. **Long Island, Notre Dame Bay** Long Island Academy offers a K-12 program to the 39 students from the communities of Beaumont and Lushes Bight. Long Island is accessible through Pilley's Island via a 5 min ferry connection. The 2009-10 enrollment will be **23 students**, twelve(12) of whom will participate in the senior high school program.
5. **Change Islands, Notre Dame Bay** A. R. Scammell Academy offers a K-12 program to the 30 students from that single community. Changes Islands is accessible through Farewell via a 20 min ferry connection. The 2009-10 enrollment will be **23 students**, eight (8) of whom will participate in the senior high school program.
6. **Rencontre East, Fortune Bay** St. Stephen's All Grade offers a K-12 program to the 30 students from that single community. Rencontre East is accessible through Pool's Cove via a 1hr-15min ferry connection. The 2009-10 enrollment will be **26 students**, six(6) of whom will participate in the senior high school program.

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7. **Gaultois, Hermitage Bay** Victoria Academy offers a K-12 program to the 46 students from that single community. Gaultois is accessible through Hermitage via a 20 min ferry connection. The 2009-10 enrollment will be **40 students**, nine(9) of whom will participate in the senior high school program.
8. **Cottrell's Cove, Notre Dame Bay** Cottrell's Cove Academy offers a K-12 program to the 49 students from the communities of Moore's Cove, Cottrell's Cove and Fortune Harbour. Fortune Harbour is located by road connection 56 kilometers from Botwood, the next nearest school system. The 2009-10 enrollment will be **35 students**, nine(9) of whom will participate in the senior high school program.
9. **Westport, White Bay** St. Peter's Academy offers a K-12 program to the 53 students from the communities of Purbeck's Cove and Westport. Purbeck's Cove is located by road connection 55 kilometers from Baie Verte, the next nearest school system. The 2009-10 enrollment will be **39 students**, ten(10) of whom will participate in the senior high school program.
10. **Buchans** Lakeside Academy offers a K-12 program to the 95 students from the communities of Buchans Junction, Millertown and Buchans. Buchans is located by road connection 105 kilometers from Grand Falls-Windsor, the next nearest school system. The 2009-10 enrollment will be **82 students**, twenty-one(21) of whom will participate in the senior high school program.
11. **Hermitage** John Watkins Academy offers a K-12 program to the 121 students from the communities of Hermitage-Sandyville and Seal Cove. Seal Cove is relocated by road connection via Hermitage 65 kilometers from Harbour Breton, the next nearest school system. The 2009-10 enrollment will be **91 students**, twenty-eight(28) of whom will participate in the senior high school program.
12. **English Harbour West, Fortune Bay** Conrad Fitzgerald Academy offers a K-12 program to the 236 students from the communities of Wreak Cove, Coombs Cove, Boxey, English Harbour West, Pool's Cove, St. Jacques and Belleoram. Belleoram is relocated by road connection 76 kilometers from Harbour Breton, the next nearest school system. The 2009-10 enrollment will be **212 students**, eighty-one(81) of whom will participate in the senior high school program.
13. **Milltown** Bay d'Espoir Academy offers a K-12 program to the 293 students from the communities of Morrisville, Milltown-Head of Bay d'Espoir, St. Veronica's, St. Joseph and St. Albans. St. Albans is located by road connection 105 kilometers from Harbour Breton, the next nearest school system. The 2009-10 enrollment will be **225 students**, seventy-one(71) of whom will participate in the senior high school program.

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Within this grouping of **Small Isolated and Remote School Systems** there are two additional systems that differ from those listed previously in that both systems consist of an additional small K-6 feeder school. These include:

14. **Point Leamington, Notre Dame Bay** Point Leamington Academy offers a K-6 program to 47 students from the community of Point Leamington and a grade 7-12 program to the remaining 111 students from the communities of Point Leamington, Leading Tickles and Glover's Harbour. There is a small K-6 feeder school at Leading Tickles, Leading Tickles Elementary, offering a K-6 program to 30 students from the communities of Leading Tickles and Glover's Harbour. The 2009-10 enrollment at Point Leamington Academy will be **105 students**, thirty-seven(37) of whom will participate in the senior high school program. At that time there will be **24 students** registered at the K-6 school at Leading Tickles.

Leading Tickles is located by road connection 60 kilometers from Botwood, the next nearest school system.

15. **Middle Arm, Green Bay** MSB Regional Academy offers a K-6 program to 51 students from the community of Middle Arm and a grade 7-12 program to the remaining 123 students from the communities of Middle Arm, Burlington and Smith's Harbour. There is a small K-6 feeder school at Burlington, M. W. Jeans Academy, offering a K-6 program to 54 students from the communities of Burlington and Smith's Harbour. The 2009-10 enrollment at MSB Regional Academy, Middle Arm will be **150 students**, sixty-one(61) of whom will participate in the senior high school program. At that time there will be **44 students** registered at the K-6 school at Burlington.

Middle Arm is located by road connection 55 kilometers from Baie Verte, the next nearest school system.

Small and Remote Primary and/or Elementary Schools

There are several situations throughout the district where a primary and/or an elementary school exists in a community that is beyond a reasonable highway travel distance (30 kilometers and beyond for students of primary school age) to the next nearest community where an elementary school exists.

Of the 20 primary/elementary schools in Nova Central, currently there are 6 schools that clearly fall into this category. These schools include:

1. **Nipper's Harbour, Notre Dame Bay** Bayview Primary offers a K-3 program to the 9 students from that single community. The 2009-10 enrollment will be **8 students**. Nipper's Harbour is located by road connection 35 kilometers from LaScie, the site of the next nearest elementary school.

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2. **Woodstock, White Bay** Deckwood Elementary offers a K-6 program to the 35 students from the communities of Pacquet and Woodstock. The 2009-10 enrollment will be **10 students**. Pacquet is located by road connection 49 kilometers from Baie Verte, the site of the next nearest elementary school.
3. **Greenspond, Bonavista Bay** Heritage Academy offers a K-6 program to the 29 students from that single community. The 2009-10 enrollment will be **15 students**. Greenspond is relocated by road connection 37 kilometers from Wesleyville, the site of the next nearest elementary school.
4. **Charlottetown, Bonavista Bay** Charlottetown Elementary offers a K-5 program to the 19 students from that single community. The 2009-10 enrollment will be **23 students**. Charlottetown is located by road connection 37 kilometers from Glovertown, the site of the next nearest elementary school.
5. **Leading Tickles, Notre Dame Bay** Leading Tickles Elementary offers a K-6 program to the 30 students from the communities of Glover's Harbour and Leading Tickles. The 2009-10 enrollment will be **24 students**. Leading Tickles is located by road connection 30 kilometers from Point Leamington, the site of the next nearest elementary school.
6. **Ladle Cove, Notre Dame Bay** Sandstone Academy offers a K-6 program to the 20 students from the communities of Aspen Cove and Ladle Cove. The 2009-10 enrollment will be **24 students**. Ladle Cove is located by road connection 37 kilometers from Carmanville, the site of the next nearest elementary school.

Non-Remote School Systems

As noted previously, within the existing 39 school systems there are 15 school systems that are either not accessible by ground transportation or are beyond a reasonable highway distance to the next nearest school system whereby daily busing would be acceptable and practical. We also recognize that there are several situations throughout the district where a primary and/or an elementary school exists in a community that is beyond a reasonable highway travel distance (30 kilometers and beyond for students of primary school age) to the next nearest community where an elementary school exists.

All other existing schools and school systems do not experience these same concerns; that is to say, the communities where these schools are located do not lack road connections or encounter travel distances in excess of 50 kilometers for high school students or 30 kilometers for primary-age students.

Of the remaining twenty-four (24) non-remote school systems there is clearly a further sub-grouping with respect to the need and options available to reorganize the current configuration of schools within and across adjoining school systems.

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First, the board has identified from this group six (6) school systems that require no adjustments in the current school structure for the foreseeable future. These systems have either been recently re-organized and/or have no major demographic and programming challenges in the 5-year timeframe of this planning exercise. At this time we take the position that these school systems do not present any major challenges from the perspective of more effective use of resources, leading to sustained or improved programming and service opportunities for students. These systems include schools in the following locations:

1. **Glenwood** The Glenwood School System consists of a single school, serving the two communities of Appleton and Glenwood. Lakewood Academy offers a K-12 program to the 207 students. By today's standards in this province a K-12 single school operation of this size can maintain a reasonably good range of programming offerings at the senior high level. The 2009-10 enrollment will be **191 students**, with no appreciable drop from the current number.
2. **Fogo Island** Fogo Island Central Academy offers a K-12 program to the 390 students from the seven(7) communities of Fogo, Tilting, Joe Batt's Arm, Deep Bay, Island Harbour, Seldom and Stag Harbour. Fogo Island is accessible through Farewell via a 45min ferry connection. The 2009-10 enrollment will be **300 students**.
3. **Gambo** The Gambo School System was restructured in 1999 resulting from the closure of the former high school and the expansion and redevelopment of the elementary school into a single school operation. Smallwood Academy offers a K-12 program to the 368 students from the community of Gambo. By today's standards in this province this would be considered a relatively large operation capable of offering a full range of programming K-12. The 2009-10 enrollment will be **301 students**.
4. **Gander Bay** Riverwood Academy, Wing's Point, offers a K-12 program to the 331 students from the communities of Gander Bay North, Clarke's Head, Wing's Point, Victoria Cove, Rogers Cove, Horwood, Stoneville and Port Albert. As a matter of interest, the Gander Bay area is one of only a few parts of the district where we have seen an increase in kindergarten enrollments during the past few years. By today's standards in this province this would be considered a relatively large operation capable of offering a full range of programming K-12. The 2009-10 enrollment will be **341 students**.
5. **Summerford** New World Island Academy offers a K-12 program to the 556 students from the 20-plus communities of New World Island. This is a new facility that was opened this year, replacing six(6) schools formerly located at different sites throughout New World Island. This is the largest K-12 school in the province and is capable of offering a full range of programming K-12. The 2009-10 enrollment will be **457 students**.

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6. **Gander** The Gander School System was restructured during the period 1995 to 1998, resulting from the closure of two schools and redesignating the remaining three buildings as an elementary school (K-6), an intermediate school (7-9) and a senior high (10-12). The Gander School System (Gander Academy, St. Paul's Intermediate and Gander Collegiate) offers a K-12 program to the 1594 students from the communities of Benton and Gander. The 2009-10 school system enrollment will be **1607 students**.

Apart from the afore mentioned Non-Remote School Systems, all other school systems are targeted for change in the Board's District 5-year Restructuring Plan (2005-09).

As mentioned previously, this plan outlines a vision for the restructuring of schools and school systems operated under the jurisdiction of the Nova Central School Board. The goal will be to arrive at the newly restructured system by the 2009-10 school year, through a series of decisions to be implemented in each of the next five(5) consecutive years. In order to accomplish the targeted outcomes in each school system, there may have to be a series of individual steps undertaken prior to full realization in some cases. In such cases, this will be obvious from the timing of the decisions outlined in each of five interim yearly steps.

The plan will result in a district setup of 34 school systems as compared to the current 39. This will result in the operation of five(5) fewer high school sites within the school district. The implementation of this plan will also redefine five(5) new school systems where currently ten(10) separate school systems exist. These new school systems will include the following:

1. **Springdale School System** (merger of the current Springdale and King's Point school systems). This new school system will comprise of three (3) schools as compared to the current five(5):
 - i. K-9 School, King's Point
 - ii. K-6 School, Springdale
 - iii. 7-12 School, Springdale

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2. **Grand Falls-Windsor School System** (merger of the current Grand Falls-Windsor and Bishop's Falls school systems). This new school system will comprise of six (6) schools as compared to the current nine (9):
 - i. K-9 School, Badger
 - ii. K-9 School, Bishop's Falls
 - iii. K-3 School, Grand Falls-Windsor
 - iv. 4-6 School, Grand Falls-Windsor
 - v. 7-9 School, Grand Falls-Windsor
 - vi. 10-12 School, Grand Falls-Windsor

3. **Glovertown School System** (merger of the current Glovertown and Eastport school systems). There will be no change in the number of schools in this new arrangement; however, there will be new grade-span offered in two schools:
 - i. K-9 School, Eastport (grade-span change)
 - ii. K-3 School, Charlottetown (grade-span change)
 - iii. K-12 School, Glovertown

4. **New-Wes-Valley School System** (merger of the current New-Wes-Valley and Lumsden school systems). This new school system will comprise of three (3) schools as compared to the current four (4):
 - i. K-9 School, Lumsden (grade-span change)
 - ii. K-3 School, Greenspond (grade-span change)
 - iii. K-12 School, Wesleyville

5. **Carmanville School System** (merger of the current Carmanville and Musgrave Harbour school systems). There will be no change in the number of schools in this new arrangement; however, there will be new grade-span offered in two schools:
 - i. K-9 School, Musgrave Harbour (grade-span change)
 - ii. K-3 School, Ladle Cove (grade-span change)
 - iii. K-12 School, Carmanville

In addition, the following changes are targeted for a number of the existing school systems:

1. **Hare Bay School System** This school system will comprise of two(2) schools as compared to the current three(3) schools:
 - i. K-9 School, Centreville (grade-span change)
 - ii. K-12 School, Hare Bay (grade-span change)

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2. **Twillingate School System** This school system will comprise of one(1) school as compared to the current two(2) schools:
 - i. K-12 School, Twillingate

3. **Lewisporte School System** This school system will comprise of four(4) schools as compared to the current five(5) schools:
 - i. K-9 School, Norris Arm
 - ii. K-9 School, Campbellton
 - iii. K-9 School, Lewisporte (grade-span change)
 - iv. 10-12 School, Lewisporte

4. **Botwood School System** This school system will comprise of two(2) schools as compared to the current three(3) schools:
 - i. K-6 School, Botwood
 - ii. 7-12 School, Botwood (grade-span change)

6. **Point Leamington School System** There will be no change in the number of school in this system; however, there will be changes in the grade structure in one school:
 - i. K-3 School, Leading Ticks (grade-span change)
 - ii. K-12 School, Point Leamington

7. **Harbour Breton School System** This school system will comprise of one(1) school as compared to the current two(2) schools:
 - i. K-12 School, Harbour Breton (grade-span change)

8. **Green Bay South School System** This school system will comprise of one(1) school as compared to the current three(3) schools:
 - i. K-12 School, Pelley's Island (grade-span change)

9. **Middle Arm School System** This school system will comprise of one(1) school as compared to the current two (2) schools:
 - i. K-12 School, Middle Arm

10. **Baie Verte School System** This school system will comprise of one(1) school as compared to the current four(4) schools:
 - i. K-12 School, Baie Verte

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11. **LaScie School System** This school system will comprise of two(2) schools as compared to the current three(3) schools:

- i. K-3 School, Nipper's Harbour
- ii. K-12 School, LaScie (grade-span change)

Key Stage Curriculum Design

The following tables provide further details relating to programming and the related instructional time requirements for each component of **Key-Stage Curriculum Outcomes** model.

Primary Programing (Grades K-3)	Time Allotments
<p>In the primary grades students achieve the outcomes of the curriculum through a combination of discrete and integrated learning experiences. This philosophy is reflected in the recommended time allotments for the primary grades.</p>	
<i>Language Arts</i>	40%
<i>Mathematics and Science</i>	30%
<i>Social Studies, Religious Education, Health, Art, Music, and Physical Education</i>	40%

Elementary Programing (Grades 4-6)	Time Allotments
<p>The elementary curriculum is a differentiated curriculum with a prescribed content. The concepts, values, and skills of the programs in English language arts, enterprise education, mathematics, science, social studies, music, art, physical education, French, health, and religious education are within the grasp of most children of nine, ten, and eleven years of age.</p>	
<i>Language Arts</i>	24%
<i>Mathematics</i>	16%
<i>French</i>	10%
<i>Social Studies</i>	10%
<i>Science</i>	8%
<i>Religious Education</i>	8%
<i>Art</i>	6%
<i>Health</i>	6%
<i>Music</i>	6%

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Intermediate Programming (Grades 7-9)	Time Allotments
<p>Students in Grades 7, 8, and 9 are enrolled in the Province's intermediate schools. The best and fullest development of young adolescents is the overall goal of the intermediate school. The concepts, values, and skills of the program in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, music, industrial arts, technology education, art, physical education, French, health, home economics, and religious education are relevant to the interests and needs of twelve- to fifteen-year-olds. The curriculum achieves balance by placing equal emphasis on the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains and by taking into consideration the wide range of individual differences in the intermediate school. Early adolescence is a time of rapid physical growth, of intense desire for autonomy, of questioning, and of searching for values.</p> <p>Young adolescents need someone with whom they can talk over problems and work out solutions. The homeroom, where students spend a substantial amount of time with the same teacher every day, provides stability.</p>	
<i>English Language Arts</i>	20%
<i>Mathematics</i>	18%
<i>Social Studies</i>	10%
<i>Science</i>	10%
<i>French</i>	10%
<i>Religious Education</i>	8%
<i>Technology Education/Industrial Arts, Home Economics**</i>	8%
<i>Physical Education</i>	6%
<i>Music and Art</i>	5%
<i>Health</i>	5%
<p>** Grade 7 Communications Technology Module and the Grade 8 Production Technology Module are to be offered. Industrial Arts may be offered at the Grade 9 level and/or where instructional time is available at the Grade 7 and 8 levels.</p>	

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Senior High Programing (Grades 10-12)

A graduation certificate will be issued to a student who acquires 36 credits in accordance with the following regulations (For those entering Level I in Sept. 2005).

Requirement Groups	Credits Required
<i>Language Arts</i>	
<i>English Language Arts</i>	6
<i>Optional Language Arts</i>	2
<i>Mathematics</i>	4
<i>Science</i>	4
<i>Social Studies</i>	
<i>World Studies</i>	2
<i>Canadian Studies</i>	2
<i>Career Education*</i>	2
<i>Fine Arts</i>	2
<i>Physical Education</i>	2
<i>Other Required Credits (Enterprise Education, French, Religious Education , Technology Education, Family Studies)**</i>	4
<i>Any Subject Area</i>	6
Total	36

* This requirement includes a community contribution component.

**Students must complete courses from any two of the categories. However, students may use four French credits to fulfill this requirement.

Notes:

1. at least 20 of the total credits must be obtained beyond Level I, and
2. at least 9 of the total credits must be beyond Level II . At least five (5) of these credits must be attained in the Newfoundland and Labrador Senior High School Program.

Literature Review – Student Transition between Schools

In recognizing any advantages for the general student body derived from minimizing the number of transitions required of students, then one must further recognize the importance of this matter with respect to students with exceptionalities.

The following is a review of the implications for students who are subjected to relocation from one school to another. In summary, the available information that speaks to implications for the general population of students and the advisability of particular grade-span configurations and is supportive of minimizing the number of transitions.

A review by the National School Boards Association of a piece of research by Craig Howley (2002) notes the author to be concluding that, "...every transition from one narrowly configured school to another disrupts the social structure in which learning takes place, lowering achievement and participation for students".

A review of grade configurations by Education World (www.education-world.com) cites a book entitled, Grade Configuration: Who Goes Where?, wherein the research on this issue is reviewed. The review quotes the co-author Jennifer Fager as saying, "I can tell you, many people feel positive about the K through 8 concept. They feel that it is good for the younger kids to have older role models in the building every day, that it gives them an understanding of the purpose and progression of education".

A 2001 review of K-8 versus more fragmented grade configurations by the Baltimore City Public School System concludes, "Results indicate positive findings for K-8 schools and support the initial recommendation ...to increase the percentage of students served in a K-8 grade configured school".

A review of grade configurations by the Clearinghouse on Early Education and Parenting (CEEP) cites four pertinent studies suggesting an increase in negative effects for students as the number of school transitions increases. Among the concerns associated with many school transitions are the following:

- ✓ Significant achievement loss during each transition year.
- ✓ Increased feelings of anonymity among children.
- ✓ Grade 6 students' academic performance negatively correlated to number of transitions.
- ✓ Self-esteem and leadership behaviors (females), extra-curricular participation (males and females), and grades (males) were more negatively impacted if school transition occurred at end of elementary grades; effects continued into high school.
- ✓ 6th grade boys experienced more suspensions in junior high school than if they remained in an elementary setting for that same grade; results are linked to transition as a contributing factor.

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Further research has identified the highest dropout rates to be in the “short grade-span schools” (ie.10-12) where students make the transition to high school at 16 years of age versus a K-12 system for example (Alspaugh, 2000).

There is clearly a substantial body of evidence that supports the concept of minimizing the number of transitions that students are required to undergo during their K-12 experience. If this is the case for students within the normal range of academic functioning, how much more so must this be true for students facing significant challenges with the curriculum for a host of reasons (i.e. cognitive limitations, learning disabilities, physical limitations, vision and hearing challenges, other medical conditions such as seizures, etc.). It is reasonable to expect that frequent transitions from school to school will affect these students in a more significant fashion.

Students With Exceptionalities

The Department of Education, Student Support Services Division, in February 2005 released a draft document entitled Transition Policy. The document contains the following observation in its introduction, “During these transitions students experience change; they need to make adjustments in all or some of the following areas: academic demands and expectations, the school rules and regulations, social/emotional adjustments, physical environments and structures, teachers and other staff members, means of transportation, and community location”. Therefore, when students with exceptionalities who are daily presented with challenges, are then required to change schools every few years, this presents to them a whole new set of challenges.

Consultation with District Student Support Services personnel indicates that there are clear reasons why the observations around grade configuration for the general student population are even more applicable to students with exceptionalities. The conclusion is that having students with exceptionalities remain in one school building for extended periods of time is the most advisable route to take. The following are issues that are associated with transitions between schools for students with exceptionalities as gleaned from the observations of District personnel:

- ✓ **Continuity of service** Children who have to transition to a new school lose some of the continuity of programming which is being delivered by persons most familiar with their exceptionality. It’s important to remember that the child who transitions to a new school also encounters a new teacher who must adjust and become familiar with schedules, routines, and best methodologies for delivery of program. The continuity is often broken for students with exceptionalities.
- ✓ **Independence for children with exceptionalities** A major programming goal for all children with exceptionalities is that they become increasingly independent to the maximum of their ability. For many children, having to adjust to new learning environments every few years creates anxieties and a tendency to regress to earlier levels of dependency on adult supports.

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- ✓ **Opportunities for group work** With more possible age groupings available within the one school building, teachers have greater opportunity for groupings, which introduce new challenges to special needs students within a familiar context. This is the sort of change and challenge that can be controlled and can lead to greater independence.
- ✓ **Opportunities for sharing of resources** ‘More staff’ equates to more resources and a richer bank of professional perspectives. In separate schools those professional experiences would still exist but the likelihood that they would be shared among teachers not resident in one school is very low.
- ✓ **Cost effective purchase and utilization of resources** Many teaching and assessment materials used by Student Support Services personnel are resident in every school building (i.e. special program resources, assessment kits, etc.). Availability is dictated by the pragmatics of being able to access a given resource when needed. However, it is simply much easier for three special education teachers in one school to coordinate the use of resources than it would be for those three teachers in three separate schools to coordinate those same resources. The three separate schools will generally require more special education resources than one school with the same population, and there is certainly a cost associated with that.
- ✓ **Physical changes to schools involved in transition** Many instances have been observed over the years wherein major physical changes were required to a school building when a student with special needs moves to a new school within the community. There is a significant cost to these renovations, and in almost all cases, the perspective of the parents has been that the physical changes within the new school could never match those in the school the child was leaving.
- ✓ **Stress on parents and students** Implied in the previous statement is the stress experienced by parents when their child has to transition to a new school setting. In many of those cases, parents have asked the other members of the ISSP Team to support them in petitioning the District to allow the student to remain at their present school. It is important to note that some of these children have a multiplicity of challenges to deal with (i.e. cognitive, physical, hearing, vision, at risk medical conditions), making them some of the most vulnerable members of our student community. Any significant changes to their routines and expectations present major stress for the child, for parents, and also for teachers. Therefore, minimizing the number of times that process takes place for that child should be a programming priority.
- ✓ **Time and focus required for implementation process** Including appendices, Transitions Policy (Department of Education) is a 30 page document addressing the various types of transitions experienced by students with exceptionalities. Section 6.3 describes the procedures to follow for transitioning a student between schools. This is a process that begins in early Spring and continues into

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the Fall of the next school year to ensure that the many concerns are adequately addressed (e.g. independence in getting to school, orientation to the new school, learning new rules and structures, keeping personal possessions organized and secure, learning where to go for help). The result is that most of the time and focus of the ISSP Team is directed to the transition process and not to other core programming areas.

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