

EDUCATION

Budget 2014–2015 will support a new direction for our education system. The first full education review in 25 years will lay out a plan to improve learning outcomes and better prepare the next generation for success in the workplace.

Limits on how many children can be in a single class will give teachers the time they need to help students individually and provide extra support to those with special needs. Wait times for early intervention programs will be reduced, reading recovery will be re-introduced, new approaches to math and literacy will be taken, and more support for students with special needs will be provided to ensure that children get the help they need when it makes the greatest difference.

Less fundraising pressure, Virtual Schools, and the expansion of SchoolsPlus will help communities better align local programs with local needs.

Funding for 2014–2015 represents \$18.6 million of a \$65 million, four-year investment.

Early Years

- Reduce wait lists for community-based Early Intervention Programs (\$1.3 million)

Primary to 12

- Cap class sizes for grades primary to 2 to give students the attention they need to succeed when they most need it (\$7.2 million)—the grade 3 cap also remains
- Help students succeed in math by providing supports for teachers and a bridging program to ensure students complete math in grade 10 (\$2.4 million)

- Help communities tailor school programming to local needs, enrich the educational experience, and reduce pressure to fundraise through increases to Student Support Grants (\$2.2 million in total: \$5,000/school plus \$1/student)
- Re-introduce Reading Recovery for grade 1 students as part of suite of support for children in grades primary to 3 comprising an Early Literacy Framework (\$3.5 million)
- Open the door to new opportunities for Nova Scotia students, especially those in small rural schools, by providing a wide variety of courses via Virtual Schools (\$1.2 million)
- Reduce the student-to-counselor ratio and ensure equal access across the province by hiring 17 new guidance counsellors in the Halifax, Annapolis Valley, and Chignecto Central School Boards (\$907,000)
- Adjust the tuition support agreements, allowing students with special needs to stay in the tuition support program beyond four years (\$200,000)
- Ensure that high-needs students are supported by increasing funding for special education (\$1.5 million)
- Expand SchoolsPlus into four schools (includes the two locations previously announced)—SchoolsPlus brings a range of mental health services and other health programs together with mentoring, homework support, social work, and justice services into schools where children, youth, and families can easily access them (\$500,000)