



# Department of Education and Early Childhood Development – Improving Student Performance: A New Brunswick Challenge

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## Why Is This Important?

- 98,000 students depend on the New Brunswick education system to prepare them for their future.
- Every year, over \$1 billion is spent on public school education and represents over 15% of government expenses in New Brunswick. The cost per student has increased by 25% in the last ten years.
- Student performance on provincial assessments has never met targets in the last 15 years.

## Overall Conclusions

- Frequent changes to the education system disrupt its stability and take focus away from educating students.
- The management cycle to improve student performance is not operating as intended.
- The Department sets targets, monitors and publicly reports on student performance, but does not hold school districts accountable.
- Overall, multiple complex factors affect student performance. More collaboration is needed between sectors, other departments and community-based organizations.
- Most New Brunswick students meet expectations on national tests and perform comparatively high on international tests.

## What We Found

### Education system lacks stability

- Frequent changes cause disruption in education and take focus away from educating students, for example:
  - 3 major changes to French immersion program in 10 years
  - 5 different provincial education plans in 15 years

### Accountability process required by *Education Act* not followed

- Department does not hold school districts accountable
- Instances of incomplete or missing school district education plans
- School district performance reports not always done
- The lack of teacher performance reviews can go undetected for 20 years

### Rushed changes without considering implications

- Governments have introduced priorities without providing necessary supports, for example:
  - French immersion program:
- Only one year to implement the 2017 change in entry point
- Teacher demand exceeded labour market and resulted in hiring teachers lacking required language skills

### Complex realities impact student performance

- Families experiencing difficult socioeconomic situations can lead to students with unaddressed basic needs
- Teachers are forced to focus on basic needs before teaching students
- Cases of chronic student absenteeism exist
- Some student behaviours exceed the professional training of a teacher