

RESPONSE TO SUCCEEDING AT HOME:

A Green Paper on Education in New Brunswick

Seizing the Opportunity: Preparing New Brunswick Schools and the Education System to Support a Growing Population of Immigrant Students with Diverse Ethnic, Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds.

March 2021 | New Brunswick Multicultural Council



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

In the fall of 2019, the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD), Dominic Cardy, published a paper entitled, [“Succeeding at Home: A Green Paper on Education”](#), proposing changes to improve the New Brunswick education system in the years ahead.

As the umbrella organization for the various multicultural and settlement agencies throughout the province, the New Brunswick Multicultural Council (NBMC) set out to listen to the many voices who wished to respond to these calls for community and expert input. Specifically, NBMC reached out and listened to the needs and interests of the newcomer and immigrant students and their parents who have arrived from around the world and are now becoming an increasingly vital part of our province’s education system and community.

On behalf of this group, and the many stakeholders involved in ensuring their success, the New Brunswick Multicultural Council (NBMC) respectfully submits the following recommendations to the Minister of Education for consideration in the department’s further planning.

The Why

To ensure our province continues to grow its population, economy and cultural richness, the Government of New Brunswick is actively encouraging the world to call our province home. Many of those who answer this call arrive as families; and as a result, within a decade, **1 in 4 New Brunswick school students** will have been born abroad.

As these children become part of our school system, this rapidly changing demographic is driving an imperative to fundamentally rethink what and how we teach – both to those new arrivals and to our locally born and raised children.

The How and the What

To ensure equity in education for internationally born students and their parents (hereinafter referred to as the “target group”), NBMC is recommending the education system be re-examined through the lens of three fundamental paths to inclusion:

ACCESS

The school system includes far more steps and engagements than simply what happens within a classroom. The access path examines the barriers faced by the target group in navigating the myriad of logistics, administration and procedures involved in processes, such as in enrolling students, working with school administration, and understanding school policies.

SERVICE DELIVERY

This path examines both the *how* (i.e. pedagogy) and the *what* (i.e. curriculum, content, and materials) of education delivery to ensure that internationally educated students are supported in their adaptation to their new educational environment, and that the content reflects diversity and a positive positioning of immigration and multiculturalism.

SOCIAL

The social path looks at how newly arrived students become successful, happy, well-integrated members of their school community, and through this, in their broader community as well. This lens explores the roles of extracurricular services, sports, social clubs, and peer connection as avenues for inclusion.

The Recommendations

Based on the factors driving the “why” and looking through the lens of the three Paths, NBMC has recommend a number of approaches to foster a more inclusive school system for culturally and linguistically different children.





Gathering the Voices of Expertise
to Advocate for Change:

A SNAPSHOT OF NBMC'S LEADERSHIP ON YOUTH INITIATIVES

Founded in 1983, the New Brunswick Multicultural Council (NBMC) has been the provincial voice for immigration, settlement, and multiculturalism for 37 years. NBMC exists for and through its 17 members, which include settlement agencies, multicultural and ethno-cultural associations in both Francophone, Anglophone, rural and urban communities across the province. Their services are frequented by many immigrants and newcomers to the province to access diverse support in settlement and integration, including supports in navigating the New Brunswick school systems.



NBMC works to drive systems change for a more welcoming and inclusive New Brunswick. Through the years, NBMC has become a provincial leader in matters of multiculturalism and diversity. This has been accomplished by sharing expertise on, and by advocating for best strategies that build on newcomer strengths and assets, and respond to their diverse needs across all services in the province, including in the education systems.

NBMC's leadership on this file has been demonstrated and expanded through youth-focused initiatives, including our signature youth empowerment programs, *Imagine NB* and *Skills Launch*, as well as through our participation in several committees, such as the Anglophone Sector Inclusive Education Steering Committee; the Francophone sector Professional Development Training on Intercultural Competency; the Long-Term Integration Committee and Sub-committees; NB Champions for Child Rights Committee; co-hosting Atlantic Canada's first Canadian Council for Refugees Youth Action Gathering; and more.

NBMC has received many recognitions for its leadership and is frequently invited to present at national, provincial and local conferences and events. For instance, in 2017, NBMC was granted the New Brunswick Human Rights Award for the leadership demonstrated by the sector during the Syrian Refugee Response Initiative. In 2018, NBMC presented at the “Strength through Diversity” Forum by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD). NBMC played a key role in the development of the “East Coast Shaking the Movers” report on “Defending Child Rights for Refugees and Newcomers,” published by the NB Child and Youth Advocate; and NBMC has presented three times at the Atlantic Summer Institute conference on “Building Health and Safe Communities” with a focus on promoting child and youth mental health as demonstrated through NBMC’s *Imagine NB* and *Skills Launch* programs.



In October 2019, NBMC was invited to present at the EECD Education Summit in Fredericton, and also addressed the role of schools in newcomer inclusion and retention at our annual Growing Together conference, bringing together approximately 70 individuals involved with the education system, including parents, youth, and settlement workers in schools. Most recently, in January 2020, NBMC was approved for a renewal of the *Imagine NB: Empowering Young Leaders Program* by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) extending it from a 2-year to a 5-year multi-year funding. This program prioritizes the inclusion, empowerment and retention of youth, through prioritizing mental health and wellbeing, especially of youth in underrepresented spaces and minority groups. This renewed funding allowed NBMC to collaborate once again with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) in the delivery of this program thereby reaching more youth in New Brunswick.

At the forefront, NBMC would like to acknowledge the importance of striving to “imagine better” within New Brunswick’s education structures and systems so that all students are able to thrive and reach their best potential. It is vital to embrace change in our ever-growing systems, especially in the midst of a growing immigrant population of learners from diverse ethno-cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

In creating the following recommendations, we have gathered input and advice from a wide variety of sources, included but not limited to:

CULTURALLY DIVERSE YOUTH:

First and foremost, we have engaged the voices of diverse youth throughout the province. Through focus group meetings and discussions with participants in NBMC’s Imagine NB Youth Leadership Program, we have gained true experiential insight from those who are most impacted by these recommendations.

NBMC’S INITIAL GREEN PAPER RESPONSE:

In our [initial draft response](#), NBMC made several recommendations and indicated we would expand on those at a later point. Those recommendations are now incorporated into, and greatly expanded upon, within this paper.

AD HOC NB CURRICULUM REVIEW COMMITTEE:

In March 2020, EECD approached NBMC to ask for recommendations and to participate in a provincial consultation on its K-12 History and Social Studies curricula, particularly in grades 9 and 10. The report from the committee, which can be found on the NBMC website, contains a range of recommendations specifically around curriculum design, but also touches on a range of other areas covered in the Recommendations section.

EXPERIENTIAL EXPERTS:

As the umbrella organization for multicultural associations and settlement agencies across the province, we have taken the experiential learning of front-line staff into account to ensure the practicality of the recommendations.

As the Government of New Brunswick works to improve the education system in the years ahead and as Government revisits the province’s population growth strategy in the post-covid-19 pandemic world, NBMC urges that particular attention be placed on the growing percentage of immigrant and ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse learners in the system.

NBMC’s response as outlined in this document, recommends implementing specific strategies, to address a future opportunity that is transpiring *right now*.

The Why:

THE DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

PART I

THE NUMBERS

A century ago, schools were not built with structures such as wheelchair ramps; and yet today, no school architect would dream of designing a school without ensuring the access paths they were creating would enable every child to enter the school, sit in the classroom, and then join their playmates. However, not all barriers are physical. Culturally and linguistically diverse children face challenges accessing education, not physically per say, but in navigating the logistics, the educational approaches, and the social rules that those who were born and raised here inherently understand.

We need to recognize that New Brunswick is at a tipping point in responding to the dramatic demographic and cultural shifts in our total population, and that we are seeing this directly reflected in our educational system. As such, we need to re-examine our approaches to ensure that we maximize the chance for all children, regardless of their cultural or linguistic background, to participate in every aspect of school life.

From the scent of culturally diverse lunch boxes, to hearing different languages spoken in school halls, to seeing different religions, traditions and customs, the world is stepping into New Brunswick's classrooms. NBMC adds real numbers to this picture through its 2019 report, *"Estimating the Impact of Future Immigration in New Brunswick on K-12 Student Enrolment,"* prepared in partnership with Jupia Consultants. The report stresses the importance in getting ahead when it comes to preparing New Brunswick schools and the education systems to support a growing population of immigrant students with diverse ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, needs and assets.

The numbers in this report are showing us various scenarios based on managing the growth of higher K-12 school enrollments driven primarily by newcomer families settling in New Brunswick. These projections are based on the provincial immigration targets prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the data suggest the immigrant population in New Brunswick schools could grow from roughly 6% of the total student body in 2020, to more than 18% by 2030.

This is nearly triple the number of immigrant youth school enrollments we saw in 2018.



Although the numbers were produced with the projections prior to the impacts of COVID-19 globally, including on New Brunswick's immigration data, the provincial targets remain the same in its ambitions for 7,500 newcomers per year by 2024. These numbers are important because immigration to the region has not slowed down and we are moving optimistically and rapidly into a post-pandemic world.

For a more detailed statistical analysis of this situation, refer to [Appendix 1: The Why in Detail](#).

These numbers highlight the need to better plan the allocation of future resources in the education systems throughout the province. The evolving classroom compositions, instruction and resources pose challenges to teachers as they rely on traditional texts and approaches, while simultaneously facing the pedagogical challenges involved in teaching in culturally diverse classrooms. It poses challenges to school administrators who are responsible for ensuring parents can enroll their children, understand report cards, and be notified of emergencies. And, it poses challenges for the guidance counsellors, coaches, and all of those who work on student social inclusion.



CULTURAL DIVERSITY

In addition, the importance of imbuing all students with a strong sense of embracing cultural diversity is empirically proven to have important benefits for all children, both locally- and internationally-raised. Conversely, failing to instill this positive approach to diversity means that racially or culturally diverse children and youth are often targeted as the sources of bullying, social isolation, mental health issues, extreme forms of discrimination, and even violence. These attitudes are difficult to reverse in adults, and often play out amongst school-aged children, requiring these issues to be addressed at an early age.

Many times in the past, we have fundamentally reimagined the very foundations and principles upon which our education system has been built in response to a newfound realization that children were not receiving equitable educational access due to their physical, racial, socio-economic, or neurotypical differences. It is time to do so again, this time creating paths of inclusion for culturally and linguistically different youth in our schools.

PART II

REPRESENTATION MATTERS

Representation of cultural diversity in curricula and fostering an environment where all cultures are celebrated equitably is part of the path in creating global citizens.

In the Green Paper's section on being a bilingual and multicultural province, it points out that:



Newcomers to New Brunswick must be welcomed, and their contributions to our province reflected in an ever-evolving education system where teachers are free to adapt and improvise to meet the needs of their students. Schools are where integration into Canada's multicultural society can happen, for our children. As government launches the New Beginnings population growth strategy this task becomes ever more important.

It is important that all students in New Brunswick see themselves, their histories, and connections to the land represented in all their grades of schooling. Schools have an unequivocal opportunity to foster a climate and culture of awareness, of debunking “otherness”, of acceptance, inclusion and representation. By teaching students at a young age to understand that each individual has their own culture or cultures and all cultures should be celebrated equitably, we can build a path to eradicating systemic racism in our province.

During the New Brunswick Curriculum Review Committee consultation sessions with NBMC member agencies (immigrant settlement agencies) and youth, many participants voiced that there is a dominant attitude around “fear of the unknown” in New Brunswick, and that this sentiment is present in schools. Some provided examples or anecdotes of teachers being afraid to teach and discuss complex societal subjects, including racism and Indigenous history.




Through ensuring balanced representation, we can set new expectations and core assumptions for the next generation of learners.



The How:

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CREATING AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK



PART I

DATA-DRIVEN AND COLLABORATIVE DECISION MAKING

In order to understand the timeframe, scope, and depth of the need for change, the first recommendation reiterates a recommendation from NBMC’s initial Green Paper response—that the ministry implements stronger and more effective data collection and evaluation tools to inform and drive strategies.

Data drives results, and NBMC believes that current forms of data collection about newcomer students’ interaction with the education system could be strengthened and improved to better inform and drive policies, such as those outlined in the green paper.

An aspect of data collection improvement involves adding more support staff to Welcome Centers to assist in the actual collection of data and analysis, as well as to ensure an appropriate welcome for all. The other aspect relates to the method and the tools available to carry out data collection and analysis. As the government revisits the *New Beginnings Population Growth Strategy*, having strong and reliable data collection and analysis tools becomes ever more important. This ensures we fully understand how well the system is working and how well the changes proposed are acting out.

Having an improved funding formula that factors community differences across the province and the diversity of learners’ needs, including those of immigrant students, will enable more strategic, needs-based allocation of funding resources throughout the education systems.

The recommended changes outlined in this paper can only be fully understood and implemented through a strong collaborative framework between key strategic partners. School districts, multi/ethno-cultural associations, academic experts, the settlement sector, and the multicultural and indigenous communities each have their fields of theoretical and experiential knowledge to contribute, and will all play a role in forming the approaches needed and executing them.

NBMC strongly believes that only through a formalized strategic partnership between these various parties can we truly understand the need, and then build and implement a strategy for change. After all, change is the only constant we can rely on.



PART II

CREATING PATHS OF INCLUSION

Having established a system for collecting data relevant to the demographic and cultural shift in New Brunswick schools and formed a collaborative partnership framework to examine and implement the changes needed, NBMC respectfully submits the following range of proposals.

The proposals are laid out within a framework referred to as the **Three Paths Approach**, which NBMC uses as a broader lens when looking at creating equitable paths of inclusion for culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse citizens in all aspects of our community.

THE THREE PATHS ASKS THESE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS:

- 01 ACCESS:** How do people find and access the support they need?
- 02 SERVICE:** Having navigated the access path, how do they then receive service?
- 03 SOCIAL:** How do they become socially integrated in ways that promote success, happiness, and local retention?

WHEN WE APPLY THESE QUESTIONS MORE SPECIFICALLY TO THE EDUCATION SYSTEM, THEY THEREFORE BECOME:

- 01 ACCESS:** How do parents and children access educational services and supports, and are there barriers to access specifically affecting culturally diverse parents and children?
- 02 SERVICE:** Having navigated the access path, how do we ensure that culturally diverse students receive equitable educational services?
- 03 SOCIAL:** How do students and their parents/caregivers become part of the social fabric of school life? And, what barriers to that social integration exist for culturally diverse students and parents?

Path Dimensions

In order to create paths for inclusion for culturally-different youth in New Brunswick schools, we need to identify the following dimensions:

- **Path of Inclusion:** Which of the three paths are we trying to make more inclusive? (Access to Services, Service Delivery, or Social Integration?)
- **Sphere of Influence:** Within that path, what area are we trying to create change? (Classrooms, playground, admin offices, counsellors' offices, etc.)
- **Change Management:** Who is the best fit to be change champion for each sphere within this path, and what training and resource support do they need? (School administrators, curriculum developers, app designers, teachers, counselors, etc.)
- **Depth of Change:** What is the level of the change needed? (One-off, recurring, or fundamental and transformational level of change?)

As an example, it might be identified that there is a barrier for linguistically diverse parents when notifying the school of a student absence.

The following dimensions then need to be identified:

- **Path of Inclusion:** This access issue relates, not directly to the educational service the child receives, but rather to the “wrap around” logistics of schooling.
- **Sphere of Influence:** Within that path, the logistical issue may be a language issue within the individual school administration process, or it may be that the use of an app, such as School Messenger, relies on a level of language and digital literacy beyond the scope of new language learning parents.
- **Change Management:** Depending on the sphere of influence identified, the necessary adaptation may take place at the school level or alternatively require the app developer to re-examine the tool with an eye to reducing the level of language and digital literacy required.
- **Depth of Change:** The level of the change needed may be a one-off alteration in the process that, once implemented, significantly reduces or completely eliminates the inequity.

PART III

THE THREE PATH APPROACH RECOMMENDATIONS

Access Path

The Access Path seeks to ensure that diverse youth and their parents have equity in accessing educational services through equitable and inclusive logistics, administration and processes.

In order to ensure that culturally diverse parents and students have equitable access to school services, we recommend that the following areas be reviewed in order to ensure that they are designed with an eye to the level of language used and the support and training being provided.

We therefore recommend that there be an ad hoc **Educational Access Committee**¹, for both the Anglophone and Francophone sector, established to review the path of accessing educational services in the following areas:

School Enrolment and Orientation: The process of enrolling children in school, and for children to understand the expectations of them inside and outside the classroom, has a number of linguistic and experiential knowledge components that effectively provide a barrier to educational equity. We therefore recommend a standard set of materials and orientation sessions be created to assist new parents and children from culturally diverse backgrounds. This could include understanding registration for buses/extra-curricular activities, lunch prep, finding classrooms, using lockers, purchasing supplies, cafeteria ordering, emergency contacts, notifying the school of absences, understanding learning outcomes and report cards, etc.

Understanding the Path to Higher Education/Job Market: In line with the recommendations above, we would suggest the information around the career and education counselling paths be reviewed by the committee with an eye to suitability for culturally-diverse youth.

Access to Online Services and Remote Education: The current pandemic has highlighted a sharp divide in the ability of newcomer parents (particularly those from refugee and other socio-economically challenged backgrounds) to receive home educational support and access online educational support. We recommend that a committee with suitably knowledgeable participants look into this specific aspect.

¹Strategic Partners may include: NBMC, key EECD staff, international welcome centre staff, and newcomer youth and their parents, SWIS (Settlement Worker In School) coordinators with the local settlement agencies.

Transport to School and Activities: Physically getting to youth activities can provide a significant barrier, even if it is based at school but takes place after school bus services have ended. Newcomer parents often lack personal vehicles, and are more likely to be working in irregular schedules that hamper their ability to pick up their children. We therefore recommend looking at alternative methods to support the transport needs of youth activity participants.

Parental Engagement: It is equally important that EECD increase parent-teacher supports in order to facilitate a higher engagement of immigrant student's parents in the school system and in their child's education. This will help redefine what a New Brunswick parent looks like and contribute to richer participation among parent-school groups and committees.

Intercultural Training Support: To support the relevant change makers, the Education Access module within NBMC's intercultural training program is designed to support those in the Access sphere to analyze their relevant sphere of influence for unconscious bias and linguistic barriers.

Connectivity with Local Multicultural Groups: In order to ensure they are receiving advice directly from those with deep experiential insights into the practical issues that affect culturally diverse students and their parents, then schools, teachers and districts should develop deep and formal relationships with the local settlement agencies, multi- and ethno-cultural associations, which can be found NBMC's list of the [17 member agencies](#).





Educational Service Path

This path involves creating a learning environment where the youth receives the services that are equitable in comparison to those who are part of the cultural majority, while simultaneously promoting inclusion amongst all students.

To ensure that culturally diverse students have equitable access and that educational services help promote inclusion amongst all students, we recommend a review in the following areas:

Educational Curricula: Theodore Roosevelt once said, “the more you know about the past, the better prepared you are for the future.” Newcomer and immigrant students should be familiar with, and proud about, the historical and contemporary contributions of immigration to both Canada and New Brunswick in order to foster a sense of unity and belonging to local communities. NBMC stresses the important in including the history and policy of multiculturalism in existing K-12 curriculum and education materials.

Immigration and indigenous rights are often the source of extreme forms of discrimination and even violence. These attitudes are difficult to reverse in adults, and therefore we recommend that it be addressed at a much earlier age.

To ensure that all student value diversity and understand the positive impact of immigration and multiculturalism, and that they view Canada’s settlement and colonization with an appropriate lens, we recommend reviewing the NB school curricula (with a particular focus on the Modern History and Social Studies Education Curricula from Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12)). A thorough review can ensure that content is delivered with an eye to positively framing these discussions. These issues were already the focus of study the ad NB Curriculum Review Committee, and their report on curriculum changes, teacher development materials, and other recommendations can be found [here](#) and on the NBMC website.

Pedagogical Service Delivery to Diverse Youth: The provincial government’s focus on attracting new arrivals has resulted in a significant change in the makeup of an average classroom. To respond to this, teachers need training on how to adapt their pedagogical approaches to take account of the growing diversity in the linguistic, educational, and cultural backgrounds of their pupils.

We therefore recommend that the relevant intercultural training that is being currently delivered on a response-to-request basis instead be delivered as part of a province-wide initiative within EECD’s total strategy.

Intercultural Training Support: To support the relevant change makers, the Education Service module within NBMC’s intercultural training program is designed to support those in the Service Delivery sphere to analyze their pedagogy within the context of teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students, and to look at their curricula with a view to identifying cultural bias.

Representation of Cultural Diversity in the Education System: Newcomer and immigrant youth need to see themselves represented in their community in order for them to have role models to look up to, and to reinforce beliefs such as no matter the color of their skin or religious affiliation, they too can be change makers in New Brunswick. NBMC suggests for EECD to establish departmental goals and strategies related to future hiring, including for positions of departmental leadership. Implementing actions like these can help to ensuring teachers and support staff reflect the growing cultural diversity within classrooms across the province.



I knew I was smart; I just didn’t know how to express it in that language.

— RECENT FRANCOPHONE SOUTH SCHOOL DISTRICT GRADUATE.

Enhanced supports for additional language learners: Language barriers continue to be a top challenge faced by newcomer and immigrant children and youth. Students following a curriculum in a language other than their first language face academic difficulties (i.e. during class instruction and with homework) and may often sustain added stress for holding the language responsibility of the entire family (i.e. by translating official documents and/or interpreting during doctor appointments). Language barriers can also negatively affect a student’s social inclusion and availability of friendships due to communication barriers, which may in turn lead to feelings of inferiority at school and affect a student’s wellness and mental health.

It is not uncommon to hear about cases of newcomer and immigrant youth feeling marginalized and/or stigmatized at school due to their language proficiency level. Certain proposed changes in the green paper, such as the elimination of grades, could lead to further marginalization and/or further stigmatization of newcomer and immigrant students if diverse learners are placed in classrooms based on language proficiencies that inadequately match their competencies outside of language.

NBMC highlights the importance that English as an Additional Language (EAL) and French as a Second Language (FSL) supports provide for additional language learners. Expecting a growing immigrant population in New Brunswick’s schools, NBMC recommends increasing the number of hours for intensive EAL and FSL supports to which immigrant students have access; increasing the availability of EAL and FSL teachers, tutors, and mentors; as well as their capacity building, retention and consistency across the province. This will help to ensure equitable access, consistency and growth in the language development of newcomer and immigrant students.

Diversity is similarly found among additional language learners.



Many of our families express that school is too easy for their children.

— SETTLEMENT WORKER IN SCHOOLS.

Some additional language learners who are newcomer and immigrant youth may arrive to New Brunswick with gaps in education and significant language barriers while other students may arrive with additional learning experiences and have higher academic objectives. NBMC therefore recommends that EECD consider personalization, as opposed to standardization, of learning experiences to keep students engaged and adequately challenged at school based on their individual level and pace.

As key as language development and support is to immigrant and racialized students, so is social cohesion and the feeling of belonging in their community.

Social Path

This path involves fostering a sentiment among youth whereby they see diversity as a plus to their feeling of being welcomed, included, and can take part in activities that build relationships with their peers.

We also recommend that there be an ad hoc **Intercultural Social Inclusion Committee** be established to create paths for social inclusion of youth within the school system, we recommend the following:

Leadership: Oftentimes, students belonging to minority and racialized groups do not have the same level of access to opportunities of being heard, of speaking up, and of leading preparing them to become the future decision-makers and influencers of New Brunswick. To ensure the New Brunswick education system fosters a well-prepared global citizenry, NBMC recommends the development and introduction of “active citizenship and leadership training” programs, such as [Imagine NB](#), in New Brunswick schools to provide opportunities for culturally diverse youth to play current and future leadership roles inside and outside school environments.

Identifying Barriers to Social Participation: Surveying diverse students to see what barriers exist in their participation in the variety of school activities, including analysis of acts of racism, bullying or other forms of exclusion that could more severely affect the youth’s wellbeing and relationships.

Adding Diversity to Cultural Activities: Reviewing the range of social, cultural, and sporting activities offered through the school and seeking to add additional elements of cultural diversity and depth to the current offerings, such as having multicultural celebrations or utilizing a diverse range of non-Euro-centric items in art and music classes.

Social and Mental Health Guidance and Support: Ensuring language and culture do not act as a barrier to accessing necessary support. NBMC suggests explore a range of informal and formal mental health supports and training in trauma-informed care for educators, counsellors and school administrators to be best resourced to support students with mental health challenges.



Mentorship: Introducing peer support and mentorship programs (e.g. New Buddies, where a new student is paired with a fully integrated student from the moment of their arrival in order to guide them through the various aspects of becoming logistically and socially integrated).

Creating Safe and Inclusive Spaces: Creating a connected set of Culture Clubs where local, international, and indigenous students can come together to celebrate diversity in culture.

Sharing of Culture: Using the International Culture Clubs as a conduit through which cultural presentations and education can happen in a variety of formats throughout each school.

Sense of Diverse Community: Schools should be encouraged to utilize their local resources and connections for students to meet and learn from people with lived experiences, to develop empathy skills, and to become global citizens with diverse perspectives. Many schools have developed a practice of collaborating with their local multicultural association to invite settlement staff to come in with tools, activities and presentations around diverse ethno-cultural groups, which is a positive practice. Encouraging experiential learning and connections with services and champions of cultural diversity from outside the classroom is highly recommended.



Inclusion Policy: Encouraging schools across the province to develop policy statements that declare a commitment to anti-racism and discrimination-free environments sends a strong message of inclusivity and companionship to ensure that the province creates inclusive, welcoming and equitable environments for all.

Intercultural Training Support for Staff: Ensure school staff receive intercultural training and regular refreshers (e.g. The Youth Social Integration module within NBMC’s intercultural training program is designed to support relevant staff). If possible, NBMC suggests developing a practice to assess learning and implementation of best practices.

Intercultural Training Support for Students: The Creating Cultures module is designed to ensure that **all** students understand and take ownership of their role in creating an inclusive school. Its foundational principle is to teach children the “Spiderman Rule”, i.e. that with great power comes great responsibility, and since they are the only ones who can truly make culturally diverse children feel welcome, they have the responsibility to become leaders in making their school more inclusive.

As with NBMC’s adult intercultural skills training, it is based around reducing the effects of ethnocentricity (i.e. my culture is normal, others are “strange”, resulting in the “othering” of culturally diverse children). It presents challenges to their mental status quo, e.g. a slide with foods they are used to and regard as normal, coupled with others that are routinely eaten elsewhere but would typically be rejected as “weird” here. Children are then asked to revisit why some foods are seen that way. This is repeated for multiple dimensions of culture.





CONCLUSION

As the Government of New Brunswick proposes changes to laws and regulations surrounding the improvement of classroom education for all New Brunswickers, NBMC stresses the importance to involve immigrant and newcomer lens from the outset in the design of legislative changes.



If you are not at the table, you're on the menu.

– MICHAEL ENZI, UNITED STATES SENATOR.

In order to grow and prosper, New Brunswick needs the dreams, talents, and leadership of its children and youth, and that includes immigrant and racialized students. Immigrant children, youth, and their parents/guardians often encounter barriers and challenges that prevent students from successfully being part of, and excelling in, New Brunswick. These challenges may be multiplied due to faulty structures and environments.

Therefore, NBMC recommends developing an action plan in order to implement these specific strategies summarized above and to address the unique challenges and needs of immigrant learners from diverse ethno-cultural linguistic backgrounds.

The decisions that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) needs to make ahead are both important and challenging. They include a choice between managing the challenge of closing New Brunswick schools or managing the challenge of increased enrollment in New Brunswick schools. Both decisions will have their own sets of challenges and will require change to adapt the education systems to a new reality. We hope that through this process, NBMC's suggestions prove to be useful in knowing what direction to take and that NBMC will continue to contribute the voice of the settlement and multicultural sector to make New Brunswick a more multicultural and inclusive province for all.

**Make New Brunswick
a more multicultural
and inclusive
province for all.**



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APPENDIX 1

ESTIMATING THE IMPACT OF FUTURE IMMIGRATION IN NEW BRUNSWICK ON K-12 STUDENT ENROLMENT (REVISED 2021).

REPORT PREPARED BY JUPIA CONSULTANTS

Summary of Findings

- This model was built to forecast the increase in the K-12 student population from the expected significant boost in the immigrant population in the coming years.
- There were an estimated 5,800 immigrant students and temporary international students studying K-12 in New Brunswick in the 2018-2019 school year. With the impact of new arrivals, this number increased to an estimated 7,500 by 2020-2021.

Scenario #1

IMMIGRATION RISES FROM 6,000 IN 2019 TO 7,500 IN 2021 AND BY 7% PER YEAR THEREAFTER

- Using estimates of annual provincial immigration growth, temporary international students, the age breakdown of immigrant arrivals, an expected loss from outward migration and other assumptions, **the total immigrant/intl. student population is expected to rise from 7,500 in 2020–2021 to nearly 13,700 within five years and 23,500 within 10 years.**
- **Without** the immigrant/intl. student population, total K-12 enrolment is projected to **decline by 9% over the 10 school years 2020–2021 and 2030–2031.** **With** the immigrant/intl. student population, total K-12 enrolment across the province is forecasted to **rise by more than 7%.** To put this another way, **the total student population in 2029–2030 will be over 28% higher as a result of the immigrant/intl. student population.**
- The immigrant/intl. student population in K-12 will rise by 83% from 2020–2021 to 2025–2026 (from 7,500 to 13,689) and more than triple by 2030–2031 (from 7,500 to 23,507).

Scenario #2

IMMIGRATION RISES FROM 6,000 IN 2019 TO 7,500 IN 2021 AND BY 10% PER YEAR THEREAFTER

- In this scenario the total immigrant/intl. student population is expected to rise from **7,500 in 2020–2021 to 14,300 within five years** (2025–2026) and **26,800 within 10 years** (by 2030–2031).

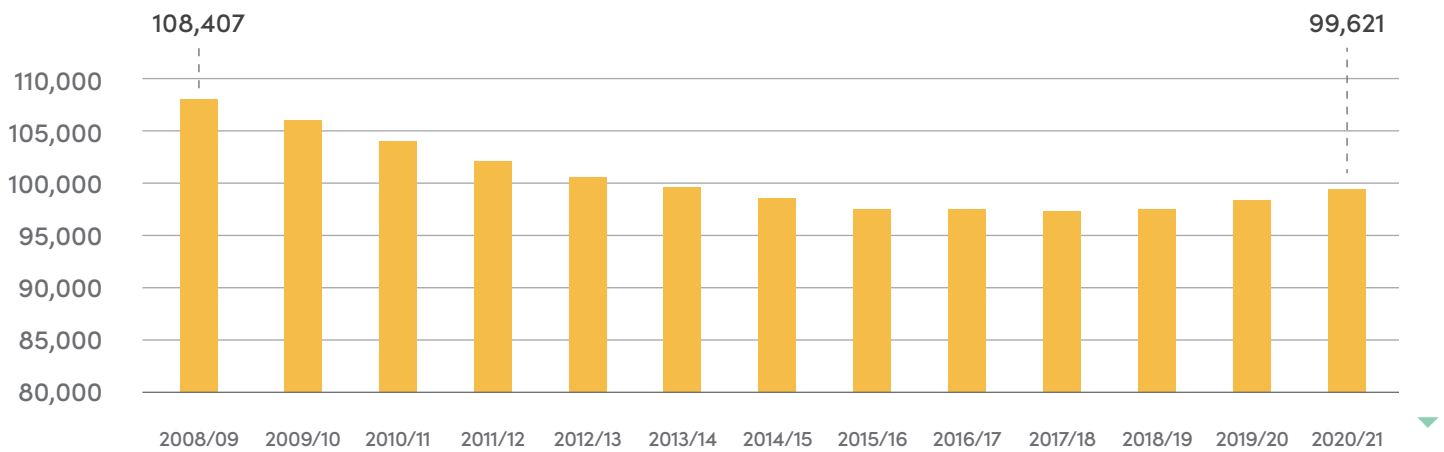
Implications for the K-12 education system

- These are preliminary projections based on the assumptions used but are a realistic view of how the immigrant/intl. K-12 student population will change over the coming decade. This is not a far out into the future challenge/opportunity. **It is happening right now.** In the last four years, the average annual population arriving in New Brunswick that is K-12 aged has risen from around 500 per year in 2015 to more than 1,300 per year – twice as many as the recent past.
- Most of the increase in K-12 immigrant students has occurred in the three large urban centres but that is changing. In 2014 there were only 380 permanent residents settling in New Brunswick outside of the urban centres of Fredericton, Moncton and Saint John. **By 2019, that number had risen nearly four-fold to 1,475.** The K-12 education system will need to accommodate a significant rise in immigrant students across most of the province in the coming years.

K-12 Enrolment Trends

K-12 enrolment in New Brunswick had been on a steady year-over-year decline since the 1990s, dropping 10 percent between 2008–2009 and 2017–2018. However, in large part as a result of the boost in immigration, the decline stopped in 2018–2019 and there was an increase in total enrolment. Growth in K-12 enrolment is occurring in the larger urban centres, notably Fredericton and Moncton (see the Fredericton example below).

FIGURE 1
ACTUAL ENROLMENT IN NEW BRUNSWICK PUBLIC K-12 SCHOOLS BY YEAR



*Note the upswing in enrolment coincided with the increase in immigration to New Brunswick.
Sources: Actual enrolment, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

PROJECTION SCENARIO #1

Immigration rises from 6,000 in 2019 to 7,500 in 2021 and by 7% per year thereafter

In this scenario, total immigration to New Brunswick rises from 6,000 in 2019 to 7,500 by 2021 and to 13,788 by 2030. This represents an immigration rate of slightly less than 1% per year in 2021 to around 1.6% per year in 2030.

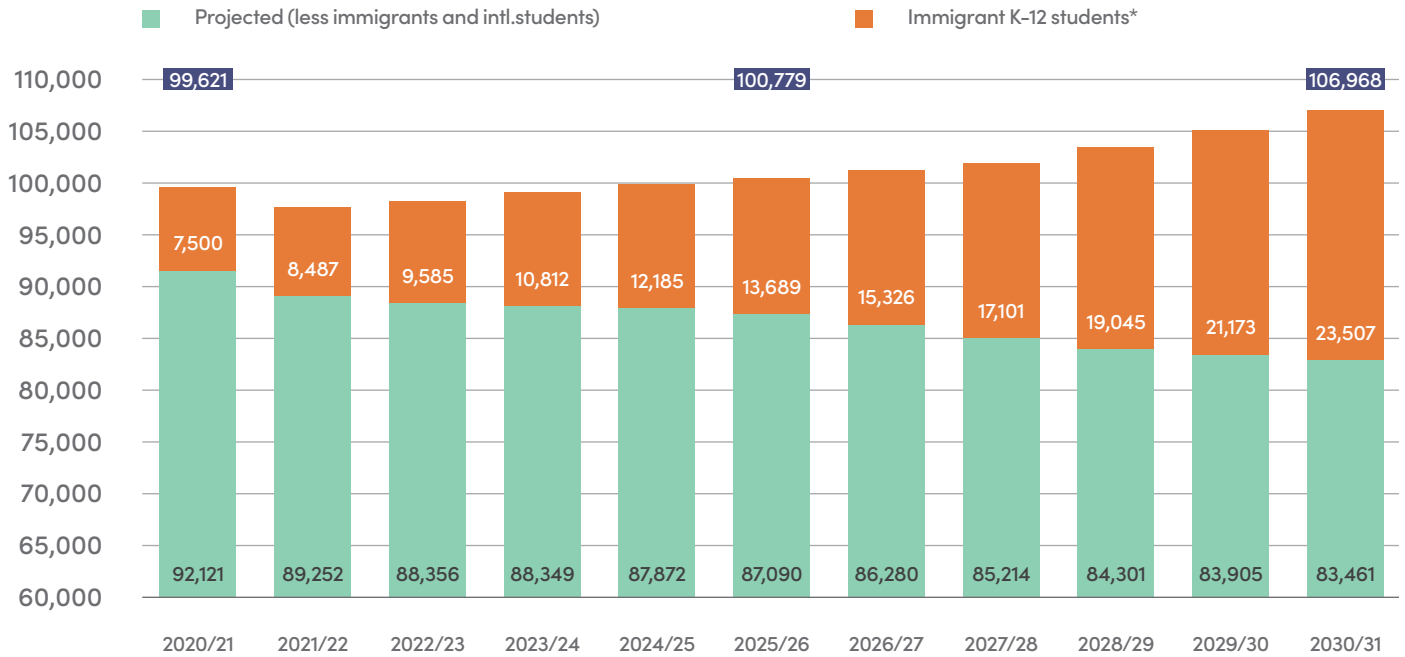
Using the K-12 population projection model summarized in Table 1, Figure 2 shows the forecasted trend in K-12 enrolment including the impact of immigrants and international students. The immigrant/ international student population in the 2020–2021 school was removed from the baseline projections to show the total impact of the current and future immigrant/international students on the K-12 education system in the years ahead.

As shown in Figure 2, the domestic (born-in-Canada) K-12 student enrolment is expected to continue declining through 2030–2031. This is based on Statistics Canada’s low growth population projection scenario which assumes only a modest decline in the school aged population over the period. However, the immigrant/international student

population is expected to rise sharply – doubling to nearly 14,000 by 2025–2026 (just five years out) and more than tripling to 23,507 by 2030–2031 (10 years out).

Without immigrants, the expected K-12 student population would have been 83,461 by 2030–2031. With immigrants it is expected to be 106,968 – a 28 percent increase over the non-immigrant student population estimates.

FIGURE 2
SCENARIO #1 - PROJECTED ENROLMENT IN NEW BRUNSWICK PUBLIC K-12 SCHOOLS BY YEAR AND SOURCE



Sources: Actual enrolment, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Projected enrolment – derived using Statistics Canada, IRCC and Jupia Consultants Inc. projections.

TABLE 1**SCENARIO #1 - POTENTIAL IMPACT ON K-12 ENROLMENT FROM A BOOST IN IMMIGRATION**

Year	Projected enrolment (less immigrants and intl. students)	Immigrant K-12 students*	Total projected enrolment	Total K-12 % increase over baseline (no immigrants/intl. students)	Immigrants/intl. students as a % of total K-12 students
2020-21	92,121	7,500	99,621	8%	8%
2021-22	89,252	8,487	97,739	10%	9%
2022-23	88,356	9,585	97,739	11%	10%
2023-24	88,349	10,812	99,161	12%	11%
2024-25	87,872	12,185	100,058	14%	12%
2025-26	87,090	13,689	100,779	16%	14%
2026-27	86,280	15,326	101,606	18%	15%
2027-28	85,214	17,101	102,315	20%	17%
2028-29	84,301	19,045	103,346	23%	18%
2029-30	83,905	21,173	105,079	25%	20%
2030-31	83,461	23,507	106,968	28%	22%
2031-32	82,626	26,052	108,678	32%	24%

*Includes 700 international students. Sources: Actual enrolment, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Projected enrolment – derived using Statistics Canada and Jupia Consultants Inc. projections.

PROJECTION SCENARIO #2

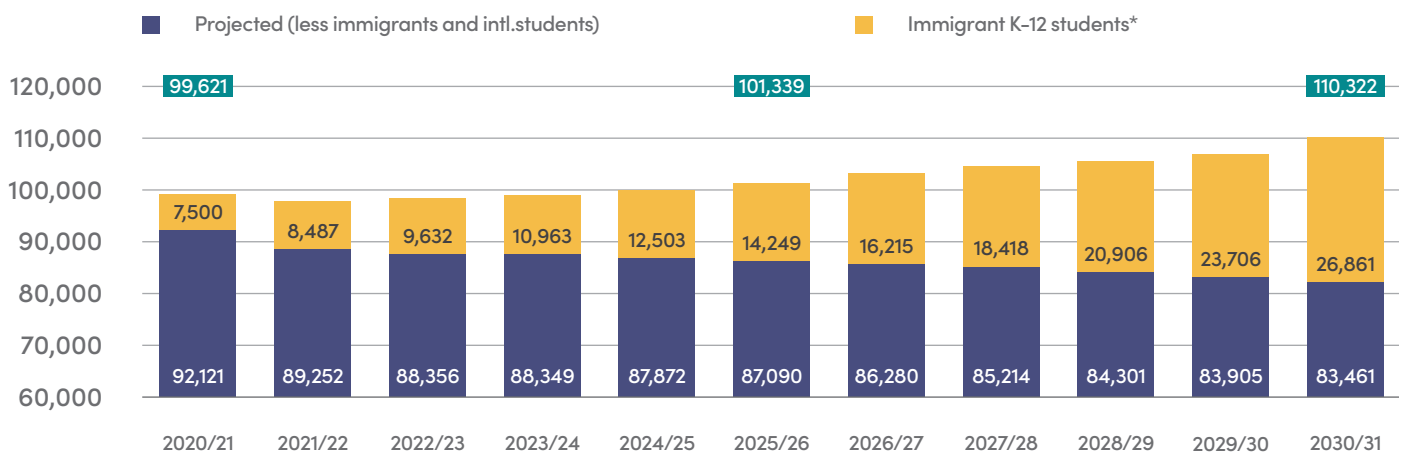
Immigration rises from 6,000 in 2019 to 7,500 in 2021 and by 10% per year thereafter

In this scenario, total immigration to New Brunswick rises from 6,000 in 2019 to 7,500 by 2021 and to 17,685 by 2030. This represents an immigration rate of slightly less than 1% per year in 2021 to around 2% per year in 2030. Please note the increase in immigration in both scenarios offsets other sources of population decline (natural decline, interprovincial migration) and the overall population is expected to grow.

The total immigrant/international student population in this scenario is expected to rise from **7,500 in 2020–2021 to 14,300 within five years** (2025–2026) and **26,800 within 10 years** (by 2030–2031).

Table 2 shows the detailed breakdown by year under scenario #2.

FIGURE 3
SCENARIO #2 - PROJECTED ENROLMENT IN NEW BRUNSWICK PUBLIC K-12 SCHOOLS BY YEAR AND SOURCE



Sources: Actual enrolment, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Projected enrolment – derived using Statistics Canada, IRCC and Jupia Consultants Inc. projections.

TABLE 2**SCENARIO #2 - POTENTIAL IMPACT ON K-12 ENROLMENT FROM A BOOST IN IMMIGRATION**

Year	Projected enrolment (less immigrants and intl. students)	Immigrant K-12 students*	Total projected enrolment	Total K-12 % increase over baseline (no immigrants/intl. students)	Immigrants/intl. students as a % of total K-12 students
2020-21	92,121	7,500	99,621	8%	8%
2021-22	89,252	8,487	97,739	10%	9%
2022-23	88,356	9,632	97,988	11%	10%
2023-24	88,349	10,963	99,312	12%	11%
2024-25	87,872	12,503	100,376	14%	12%
2025-26	87,090	14,249	101,339	16%	14%
2026-27	86,280	16,215	102,495	19%	16%
2027-28	85,214	18,418	103,633	22%	18%
2028-29	84,301	20,906	105,206	25%	20%
2029-30	83,905	23,706	107,612	28%	22%
2030-31	83,461	26,861	110,322	32%	24%
2031-32	82,626	30,397	113,024	37%	27%

*Includes 700 international students. Sources: Actual enrolment, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Projected enrolment – derived using Statistics Canada and Jupia Consultants Inc. projections.

Regional impacts

The Fredericton Example

A detailed regional forecast would require significant additional analysis. However, a look at recent boost in student population in Fredericton provides an instructive example of how a boost in immigration impacts the K-12 population. The number of immigrants attracted to the Fredericton Census Agglomeration (CA) started to grow strongly in 2011-2012 – just about the time the K-12 student population had plateaued in the region (there were 7,700 K-12 students in 2010-2011 and only 7,756 in 2011-2012 and slightly less in 2012-2013 at 7,751). Then the numbers started to increase steadily every year as the immigrant numbers increased. Between 2012 and 2013, enrollment has risen by over 2,000.

TABLE 3

TABLE 4: GROWTH IN K-12 STUDENT ENROLMENT BY YEAR, FREDERICTON*

Includes: Barker’s Point School, Bliss Carman Middle School, Connaught Street School, Devon Middle School, École Les Éclaireurs, Ecole Sainte-Anne, Forest Hill School, Fredericton High School, Garden Creek School, George Street Middle School, Gibson-Neill Memorial Elementary School, Kingsclear Consolidated School, Leo Hayes High School, McAdam Avenue School, Nashwaaksis Middle School, Nashwaaksis Memorial School, New Maryland Elementary School, and Park Street School. Source: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

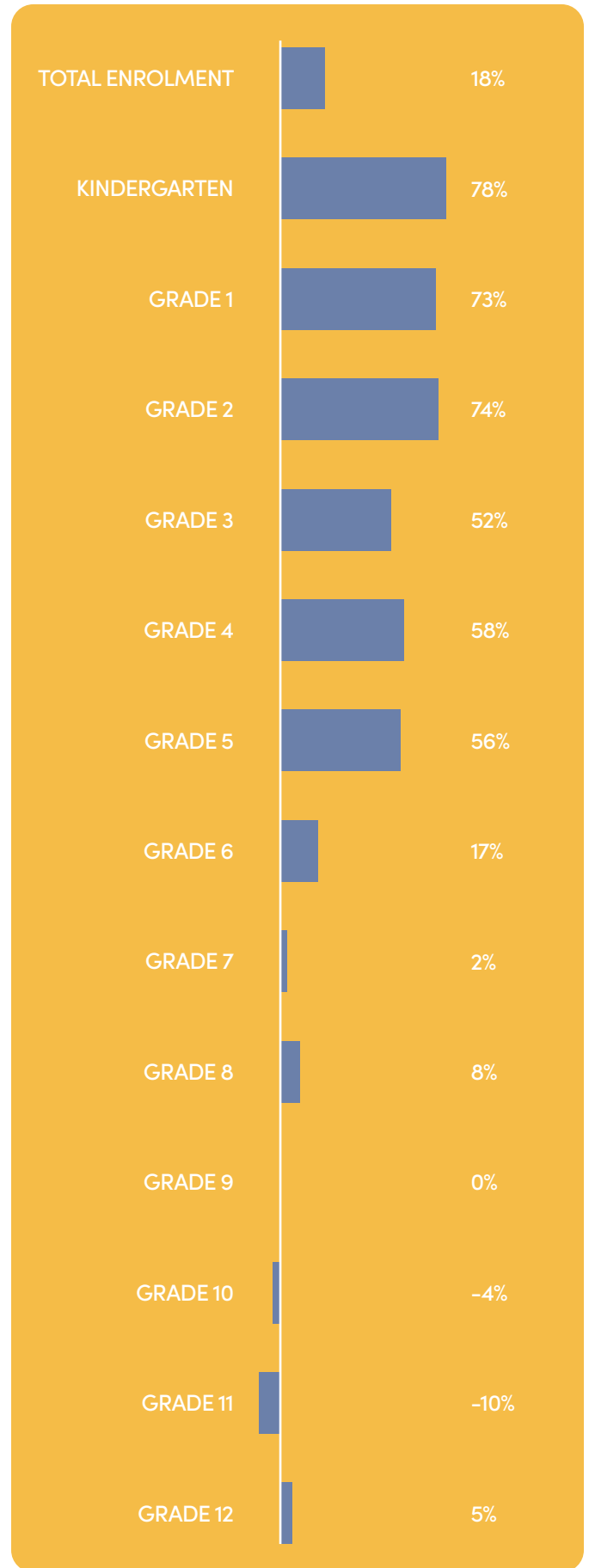
2008-09	6,892
2009-10	7,489
2010-11	7,700
2011-12	7,756
2012-13	7,751
2013-14	8,290
2014-15	8,286
2015-16	8,497
2016-17	9,570
2017-18	9,664
2018-19	9,794
Increase since 2012-13	2,043

FIGURE 4

GROWTH IN TOTAL K-12 STUDENT ENROLMENT BY GRADE LEVEL 2013-14 TO 2018-19, FREDERICTON

Enrolment source:

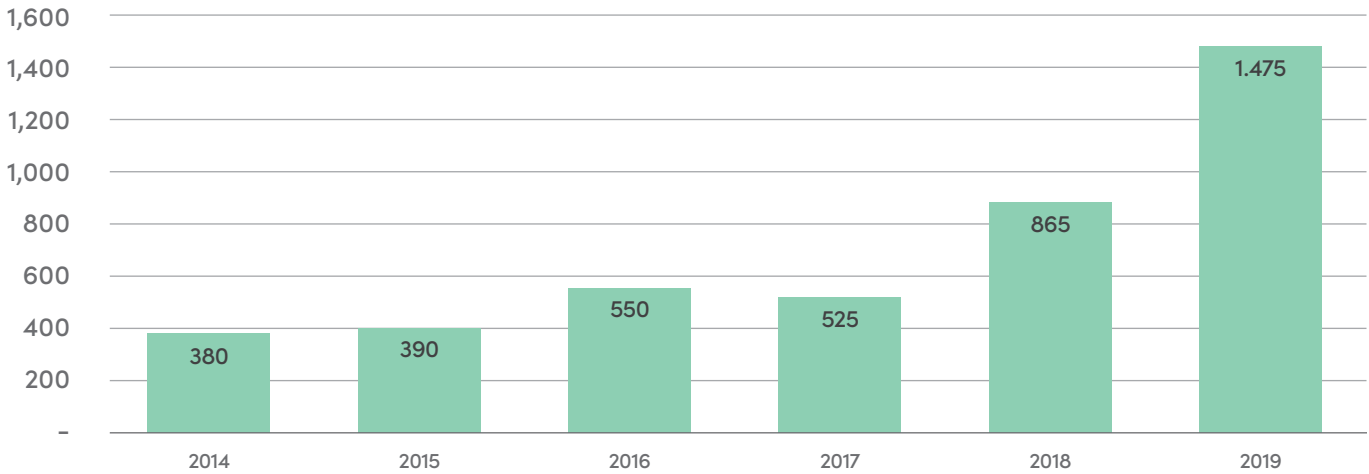
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development



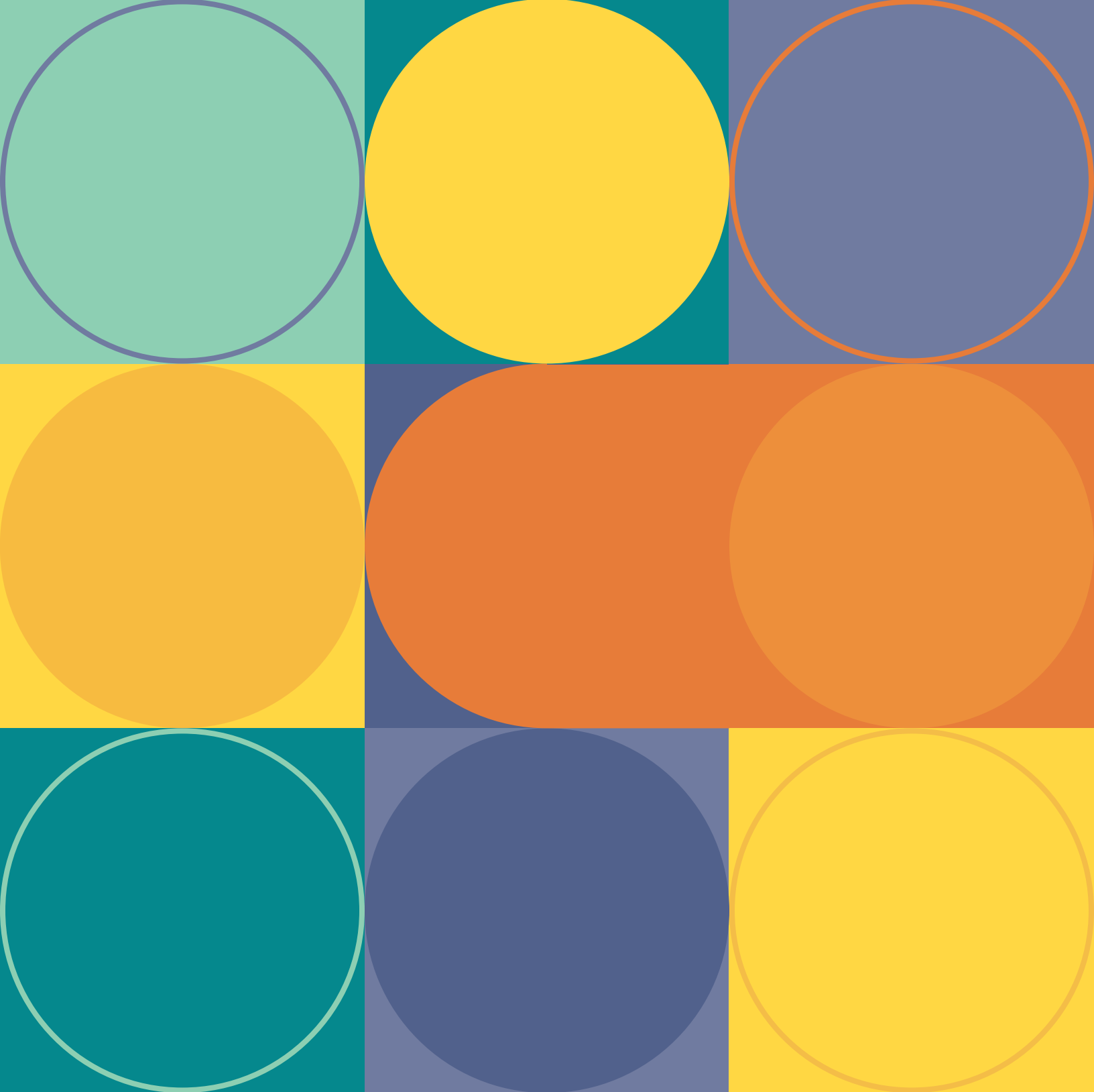
The Rise of Immigration into the Rest of New Brunswick

The increase in immigration to New Brunswick over the past few years has mostly centred on the three large urban centres. In the future, a larger number will be settling elsewhere in New Brunswick as all regions of the province are facing the impacts of the aging population on the workforce. This trend is already beginning. In 2019, there were 1,475 admissions of permanent residents into New Brunswick but outside of the Fredericton, Moncton and Saint John urban centres - up 71% compared to 2018. The K-12 education system will need to accommodate a significant rise in immigrant students across most of the province in the coming years.

FIGURE 5
INCREASE IN PERMANENT RESIDENTS IN NEW BRUNSWICK, EXCLUDING FREDERICTON,
MONCTON AND SAINT JOHN



*Source: IRCC



200-494, rue Queen Street.
Fredericton, NB, Canada, E3B 1B6
(506) 453-1091 | www.nbmc-cmnb.ca



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