

## 4.2 Elementary and secondary schools

### 4.2.1 Administration and organization

Each province has a department of education headed by a minister who is an elected member of the provincial cabinet or, in the case of the Yukon and Northwest Territories, a councillor.

While the education minister has general authority, day-to-day operation of the department is carried out by a deputy minister who advises the minister and supervises all functions of the department. These functions include: supervision and inspection of elementary and secondary schools; provision of curriculum and school organization guidelines; approval of new courses and textbooks; production of curriculum material; finance; teacher certification; prescription of regulations for trustees and teachers; research; and support services such as libraries, health and transportation.

In most provinces, responsibility for teacher training has been transferred from teachers' colleges to universities. Increasingly, an elementary teacher must have a bachelor's degree. The Nova Scotia Teachers' College is the only remaining institution of its kind.

Schools in all provinces are established under a public school act and operated by local authorities answering to the provincial government and resident ratepayers. Provincial authorities delineate school board areas and the responsibilities of boards. With the growth of cities and towns, and of educational facilities and requirements, small local boards have been consolidated into central, regional or county units with jurisdiction over both elementary and secondary schools in a wider area. The boards, composed of elected or appointed trustees or commissioners, are responsible for school management. Their powers, determined and delegated by the legislature or education departments, vary from province to province. Generally, they handle the business aspects of education — establishment and maintenance of schools, appointment of teachers, purchase of supplies and equipment, details of school construction, and budget preparation. Boards are authorized to levy taxes or to requisition taxes from municipal governments and manage grants from the department.

At the elementary and secondary levels, schools are classified according to the nature of control: public, private or federal. Public schools, including Protestant and Roman Catholic separate schools, are operated by local education authorities according to public school

acts of the provinces. Private schools are operated and administered by individuals or groups. Schools for the handicapped, most under direct provincial government administration, provide special facilities and training. Federal schools are administered directly by the federal government.

One obvious difference among provincial education systems is provision for separate schools. Some provinces allow religious groups to establish schools under the authority of the education department. They must conform to department regulations on curriculum, textbooks and teacher certification. As legal corporations, separate school boards can levy taxes and receive government grants.

About 5% of all elementary-secondary students attend schools that are run independently of the public systems. Provincial policies vary from direct operating grants to minimum provincial support.

A number of strategies have been developed to educate children with special needs or abilities, an estimated 5% to 10% of all students. They may be accommodated in separate institutions (public or private) or in special or integrated classes in regular schools. For academically gifted students there are enriched and accelerated programs. Schools for the blind and deaf are generally administered directly by a province, sometimes by interprovincial agreement. Many local systems provide special schools or classes for children with learning disabilities.

Although education is primarily a provincial responsibility, the federal government has assumed direct control over the education of persons beyond the bounds of provincial jurisdiction: native people, armed forces personnel and their families, and the inmates of federal penal institutions.

Education of registered Indian and Inuit children is an obligation of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. The Minister of the department is authorized to maintain schools for these children directly or provide access to educational services in public or private schools.

In 1984-85, the federal government owned and operated 159 schools on Indian reserves. In addition, native band councils managed 209 schools, although the Minister makes regulations on matters such as curriculum, buildings, inspection and teaching.

In the Yukon and Northwest Territories, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs