



The Institute for the
Advancement of Public Policy

Final Report

**Evaluation of the Literacy Development Council
of Newfoundland and Labrador**

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St. John's, NL**

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Executive Summary

This report provides the results of an evaluation of the Literacy Development Council of Newfoundland and Labrador conducted by *The Institute for the Advancement of Public Policy, Inc.* during the period October, 2002 and March, 2003 in response to a Request for Proposals issued by the Literacy Branch of the Department of Education.

The evaluation of the Literacy Development Council (LDC) is the first since its creation by provincial legislation in 1994. The thrust of the evaluation is to determine whether, given the current demands and challenges in the field of literacy in the province, changes are required to the roles, responsibilities and structure of the LDC. Additional elements of the evaluation have been to analyze the working relationship between the Literacy Branch and the LDC as well as to assess the appropriate role of the LDC in the implementation of the ABE Level 1 pilot project.

The consultant has relied extensively on the data provided by the Literacy Branch and the LDC in the conduct of the evaluation. Key informant interviews, a survey of community-based literacy agency representatives and other knowledgeable persons, and further consultations with community stakeholders have assisted the consultant to round-out the collection of data on which the findings, options and recommendations are based.

Overall, the consultant has observed a high level of consensus in the need for change in the future role of the LDC and in the structure of the Council. At this point in its evolution, the LDC will need to focus more on advocacy and providing advice to governments and other sectors on literacy matters. The key challenge for the Provincial Government will be to devise the most appropriate organizational mechanism to support this change. Two options are presented: (i) a government-appointed council, or (ii) a community-based provincial network of literacy service providers and other literacy stakeholders. Acceptance of these options may require either a major revision of the current LDC legislation or the repeal of the current LDC legislation.

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The consultant suggests that for any new Council (or network), members should be drawn largely from the province's literacy community. In the meantime, the Literacy Branch and the LDC will need to clarify their roles in literacy matters and clearly communicate these to the literacy community and others in the province.

A set of recommendations has been drafted for consideration, as follows:

1. That, for the present, the Provincial Government retain an arms-length agency to advise the government on the literacy development needs in the province;
2. That the current Literacy Development Council be renamed '*The Literacy Advisory Council of Newfoundland and Labrador*';
3. That the mandate of the new Literacy Advisory Council will be to:
 - ▶ advise the provincial government as well as other governments and sectors on literacy matters,
 - ▶ advocate, promote, identify and raise awareness in the province for literacy needs and literacy development,
 - ▶ partner with and support community-based literacy agencies in advancing literacy at the community level,
 - ▶ encourage community literacy capacity building across the province, including the development of literacy coalitions and/or networks of community literacy agencies
 - ▶ disseminate literacy information and provide a referral service for learners,
 - ▶ undertake applied research in support of its mandate, and
 - ▶ raise funds in support of specific literacy development events or activities;
4. That the new Literacy Advisory Council be constituted with a membership totalling 11 voting members with these members selected based on representatives nominated by the province's community-based literacy organizations for consideration for appointment to the Council by the Minister of Education, with the Minister to ensure appropriate regional representation;

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5. That the Chair of the Council be elected by a majority of the members of the Council for a two-year term (that will not be renewable) and the appointment be confirmed in writing by the Minister of Education;
6. That the Executive Director of the Literacy Branch of the Department of Education be an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Council;
7. That the Executive Director of the Council be an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Council, act as its secretary and attend all Council meetings;
8. That the Literacy Branch of the Department of Education communicate its mandate, roles and responsibilities to the province's literacy community so as to clearly distinguish them from those of the Literacy Development Council and any successor agency (as recommended herein);
9. That the Department of Education retain full program responsibility for implementing the ABE Level 1 Pilot Project with the Literacy Development Council's role to be limited to advising the Department on its implementation and supporting the community-based delivery agencies involved in the delivery of the pilot project; and
10. That the Minister of Education endorse the early establishment of a provincial network of community-based literacy agencies and other stakeholders and consider recommending to the Provincial Cabinet the abolition of the LDC, or its successor, if the network satisfies the Minister that it can satisfactorily execute the mandate attributed to the LDC's successor as recommended herein.

1.0 Introduction

This report provides the results of an evaluation of the Literacy Development Council of Newfoundland and Labrador conducted by *The Institute for the Advancement of Public Policy, Inc.* in response to a Request for Proposals issued by the Literacy Branch of the Department of Education. The period of the evaluation was from October, 2002 to March, 2003.

The initial sections of the report provide an overview of the basis for the evaluation, the consultant's research and data collection approaches, and the process employed to develop and verify the consultant's findings. A series of conclusions pertaining to the current role and activities of the Literacy Development Council (LDC) based on extensive consultation and data gathering methods employed by the consultant is provided. This section is followed by a presentation on the options available to the Department of Education to reform the LDC. The final section of the report outlines the consultant's recommendations to effect change in the future design and mandate of the LDC, and other matters that had to be addressed in the evaluation.

2.0 Purpose of the Evaluation

The evaluation of the Literacy Development Council (LDC) is the first since its creation by provincial legislation in 1994. The evaluation was conceived by the Department of Education and has had the active support of the LDC.

The thrust of the evaluation is to determine whether, given the current demands and challenges in the field of literacy in the province, changes are required to the roles, responsibilities and structure of the LDC. More specifically, this evaluation focused on five key areas of inquiry:

- i. **An analysis of the mandate** of the LDC and how it has evolved since the legislation was enacted;
- ii. **The statutory powers** creating the LDC and if these powers are appropriate and/or sufficient to meet the underlying policy goal, and whether these powers are required in legislation;

- iii. **The establishment of the Council** including the processes used to establish the initial Council and its successor Councils, and the basis of its composition to ensure appropriate representation and knowledge of literacy development needs;
- iv. **An analysis of the role of the LDC vis-a-vis the Department of Education and its Literacy Branch** including the mandates of the LDC and the Literacy Branch of the Department of Education, and their interrelationships; and
- v. **The role of the LDC in the delivery of the ABE Level 1 Pilot Project** given the current role that community-based agencies play in the delivery of basic literacy and ABE Level 1 in the province.

2.1 Limitations

This evaluation is intended to focus on legislative intent with consideration given to organizational matters that facilitate (or not) the achievement of the intended goals and objectives of the LDC. The evaluation is not intended as an operational review of the internal workings of the LDC. To the extent that operational issues have arisen that are relevant to the LDC's ability to meet its mandate, these are addressed in this report.

The consultant relied extensively on the data provided by the Literacy Branch of the Department of Education and the LDC. Key informant interviews, a survey of community-based literacy agency representatives and other knowledgeable persons, and four regional consultation sessions with literacy stakeholders assisted the consultant to round-out the collection of data on which the findings, options and recommendations are based.

3.0 Research Approach

The evaluation was conducted under the direction of a Steering Committee established specifically for this purpose. The committee is composed of the Executive Director (Chair) and the Director of Policy and Planning of the Literacy Branch, the Assistant Deputy Minister of Finance and Administration with the Department of Education, the Chair and a second member of the LDC, and the Assistant Secretary to Cabinet for the Social Policy Committee. The Steering Committee met on various occasions to review the consultant's work plan, to consider the progress being achieved in its execution, and to provide direction to the consultant on matters that arose during the course

of the evaluation.

The research approach employed by the consultant involved several activities:

- ▶ document and file reviews,
- ▶ data collection, including key informant interviews and a survey,
- ▶ analysis,
- ▶ verification of findings and options, including a series of regional consultations with literacy stakeholders, and
- ▶ reporting.

3.1 Document and File Reviews

The consultant reviewed available background documentation relating to the LDC, including the relevant legislation and agreements (e.g. Memorandum of Agreement for the Endowment Fund, the Memorandum of Understanding for the Strategic Literacy Funding Committee, etc.). The consultant sought access to documentation supporting the creation of the LDC and, subsequently, the Literacy Branch of the Department of Education.

The documents reviewed include:

- ▶ LDC legislation (see Appendix A) and other relevant legislation,
- ▶ any agreements and MOU's pertaining to the LDC,
- ▶ the Strategic Literacy Plan,
- ▶ various financial documents respecting the LDC,
- ▶ internal departmental documents concerning literacy policy, program, and organizational matters, and
- ▶ other materials the Department believed were relevant to the evaluation (e.g. Report on the Evaluation of Basic Literacy/ABE Level 1 Programs in Newfoundland and Labrador - the 'Goss Gilroy report').

Besides the documents held by the Department, there were also documents and files held by the LDC that were of interest to the consultant. As this evaluation is concerned with

LDC's legislated authorities, its organizational structures and interrelated mandates, the files of interest to this review were those that are related to those concerns. Among these are:

- ▶ the minutes of the LDC meetings and committees of Council,
- ▶ several of LDC's annual reports,
- ▶ summaries of projects funded,
- ▶ a list of stakeholders and partners, and
- ▶ other materials, including some correspondence, produced by the LDC that were relevant to the evaluation.

For both categories, the consultant solicited additional information and clarification on these documents and files from the Executive Director of the Literacy Branch and the Executive Director of the LDC, where required. The consultant was provided with the highest degree of co-operation and support from these two persons and their respective offices.

The consultant also collected information from four other provinces in Canada on the nature of community agencies and government organizations involved in literacy development and promotion in their jurisdictions. This information was collected through internet searches and telephone interviews with appropriate officials. Appendix B provides an overview of the data collected from this research.

3.2 Data Collection through Interviews

During this review, there were three distinct groups of informants interviewed to collect data to assist in the analysis of the LDC. These were:

- ▶ key informants,
- ▶ LDC Council members and staff including some former Council members and staff, and
- ▶ community-based literacy service providers and partners.

Key Informant Interviews

Key informants were identified by the Steering Committee. Fourteen (14) interviews were completed using a standardized interview protocol that demanded an interview time of one hour. Interview results were summarized and the informants provided with an opportunity to verify the interview summary. Overall, it was intended that the results of the interviews would assist the consultant to identify themes and some of the many issues of relevance to the evaluation. The interview summaries are confidential to the consultant.

Among the key informants are:

- ▶ the current Chair of the LDC,
- ▶ a second member of the LDC who is also a member of the LDC Evaluation Steering Committee,
- ▶ the Assistant Deputy Minister (Treasury Board Secretariat) who led the development of the Strategic Literacy Plan,
- ▶ three (3) former Chairs of the LDC,
- ▶ the Assistant Deputy Minister responsible for Finance & Administration (Department of Education),
- ▶ the Executive Director of the Literacy Branch (Department of Education) who is an ex-officio member of the LDC,
- ▶ the Director of Policy & Planning with the Literacy Branch (Department of Education),
- ▶ a representative of the Labrador Literacy Information and Action Network (LLIAN),
- ▶ the Assistant Secretary to Cabinet for the Social Policy Committee who is an ex-officio member of the LDC,
- ▶ the current representative (and the former representative) of the National Literacy Secretariat responsible for Newfoundland and Labrador who is an ex-officio member of the LDC, and
- ▶ the Secretary to Treasury Board (and former Deputy Minister of Education) with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

LDC Council Members and Staff (including former Members and Staff)

- ▶ Members of the LDC, including those in advisory positions who were not categorized as key informants, were interviewed. The purpose of interviewing this group was to gain some additional insights into the operations of the LDC. The focus was on having them identify the strengths and challenges presented by the current authorities and structures of the LDC that enable the LDC to respond to today's literacy needs.
- ▶ The Steering Committee asked that the consultant also interview several people who had served previously on the LDC. The consultant conducted interviews with several of these former members using the same interview protocol as was used with current members. These proved helpful to view current issues within the context of the pattern of themes and issues that have developed over time and remain evident today.
- ▶ The current and former executive directors and professional staff were also provided with an opportunity to be interviewed. All but one person in this grouping participated in an interview.
- ▶ Interviews were conducted using a standardized protocol. Each interview was at least one-half hour in duration. The data collected during the interviews was recorded for the consultant's purposes and is confidential to the consultant.
- ▶ The consultant also had a discussion with the Department of Justice solicitor who was familiar with the LDC legislation.
- ▶ In total, fourteen (14) interviews were conducted in this category.

Community-based Literacy Service Providers and Partners

- ▶ The community-based literacy service providers are responsible for the design and delivery of literacy programs and services at the local level in the province. Their perspectives on the state of literacy development in the province and the role of the LDC in supporting them in their efforts was solicited. Also included in this category were those persons independent of a literacy agency who have an interest professionally, or otherwise, in literacy.

- ▶ A list of eighty-one (81) community-based agency representatives and other persons was provided to the consultant by the LDC for the purpose of drawing a sample of 25% of this group to be interviewed. The LDC's Executive Director organized the list in accordance with the nature of the agency, e.g. an associate of Laubach, a family resource centre, an economic zone board, etc.. The consultant further selected the agency representatives on a regional basis using the Strategic Social Planning regional boundaries as a means to further develop the sample. Within each grouping and geographical region, a sample was drawn using a random number. Through this process, there was a deliberate effort by the consultant to ensure that there was a cross-representation from all agencies and regions in the province.

- ▶ Twenty (20) agencies and partners in total were identified with alternates identified in the event that the original person selected could not be contacted. A total of 21 interviews were completed using a standardized interview protocol. Each interview lasted about one-quarter hour in duration. The data collected during the interviews was recorded for the consultant's purposes and is confidential to the consultant.

3.3 Review of Financial Information

- ▶ The LDC's financial data was provided to the consultant by their accountant. The accountant presented a history of the finances of the LDC, its sources of revenues and its expenditures. This information included LDC's audited financial statements, several financial monitoring reports and budget-related documents.

- ▶ The consultant compiled data from several similar-sized organizations in order to compare operating costs. The organizations used for comparative purposes were the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women and the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council.

- ▶ The purpose of the financial assessment was to ascertain the cost-effectiveness of the LDC's operating budget in relation to similar organizations. As well, the consultant was able to measure the results of fund-raising by the LDC and the extent of funding made available annually to the LDC in direct support of literacy programs and services across the province.

3.4 Verification of Findings and Options

In December, 2002, the consultant presented a series of findings to the Steering Committee after collecting and analyzing the data from the document and file reviews, the interviews and the survey. The findings were presented in accordance with the five key issues respecting the purposes of the evaluation. _A summary of these findings is included in Appendix C.

The *findings* were reviewed with the Steering Committee and were generally endorsed by members of the committee. Some additional background information along with some editorial comments was provided to the consultant by members of the committee but the intent and substance of the findings remained intact during the next phase of the evaluation.

In February, 2003, the consultant presented a series of options for change in the goals, powers and membership of the LDC, among other matters subject to the evaluation, to the Steering Committee. This material was used as the basis of the consultant's presentation used in the regional consultation sessions.

Both the consultant's *findings* and *options* were presented to representatives of the province's literacy stakeholders in a series of four regional consultation sessions that were held in Deer Lake, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Gander and St. John's respectively during the period of March 7th - 11th, 2003. In a roundtable discussion format, participants were asked to comment on the findings and options presented by the consultant. The results of these consultations, augmented by additional communications from several of the participants and others who were unable to attend the session in their region, were used to further refine the options presented in this report.

3.5 Reporting

The consultant provided status reports in writing and verbally to the Steering Committee throughout the course of the evaluation. As noted above, a *Findings Report* was submitted in December, 2002. A preliminary draft report was presented in February, 2003, followed by a power point presentation on the consultant's findings and options that was developed for the regional consultation sessions in March, 2003. This document represents the consultant's *Final Report*, including recommendations, on the evaluation of the LDC.

4.0 Analysis

This section outlines the consultant's analysis of the data and is presented along the lines of the five areas of inquiry that had to be addressed in the evaluation. Each set of analyses is followed by a concluding statement (*in italics*).

4.1 Analysis of the Literacy Development Council's Goals

The focus of inquiry on the Literacy Development Council's (LDC's) legislative goals related to the following questions:

- ▶ *Why was it viewed as necessary for the Provincial Government to establish a separate agency for literacy development?*
- ▶ *What were the goals that were envisaged by the Legislature? Have there been variations; if so, what are these variations?*
- ▶ *What is the current view from stakeholders?*

In order to determine whether or not any changes in the LDC are required, it is important to consider the basis upon which the agency was established in the first instance followed by any related developments since then.

The rationale for the origins of the LDC is unclear as few documents are available to trace the LDC's development. Based on information from key informants, there appears to be a combination of factors that contributed to its creation.

In the early 1990s, literacy was viewed as a government priority particularly in light of the adverse economic and social impacts of the northern cod moratorium. Thousands of fishers were displaced from their livelihoods with the collapse of the northern cod fishery. Due to low literacy levels in evidence, it became clear that re-training the workforce would be a significant challenge. This resulted in the mobilization of forces, e.g., the FFAW, private colleges and others, to provide

training services that included basic literacy to those persons directly affected by the closure of the fishery. One consequence of this activity is that it brought attention to the relatively undeveloped state of literacy services available in the province at that time.

A coalition of community-based organizations involved in literacy gained the support of high profile people in the province, including the premier of the day. "Literacy" gained profile and public campaigns were sponsored in the name of literacy. Subsequently, there were concerns raised in the operation of the coalition in place at the time. This resulted in the credibility of the coalition being brought into question and it subsequently disbanded. However, a continuing need for some form of community-based literacy organization was recognized.

At the same time, the Department of Education's focus was on the institutional education system particularly as school reform was of high priority to the Provincial Government. A second government priority was the elimination of the high provincial government budget deficit. Given these and other priorities, adult literacy was accorded less attention by the Department and directly less by the Provincial Government. Again, the need for some form of external literacy organization was recognized as being required to fill this void.

Through a review of Hansard at Second Reading of Bill 28, *An Act Respecting the Literacy Development Council of Newfoundland and Labrador* in the House of Assembly, the consultant learned that the then Minister of Education, the Honourable Chris Decker, provided one explanation for the need to create the LDC. Among the reasons he cited was the lack of co-ordination among the programs available within the province. The former Minister commented further that through the creation of a literacy agency with registered charitable status, the agency could gain access to funds for literacy through private donations. Of particular note is the Minister's explanation of the creation of an arms-length agency of Government, namely:

"...this council will operate arm's length from government....If it is not arm's length from government, it will not be able to take advantage of many of the grants and much of the assistance which would be made available from other levels of government, for example, the Federal Government." (Hansard. June 7,1994. p. 2091)

The bill passed third reading without amendment. (Hansard. June 8, 1994, Vol. XL11, No. 58A, p. 2150-1)

In short, the goals of the LDC, as outlined in the legislation, may be summarized as:

- ▶ to assess and respond to literacy needs of the province as perceived by the community;
- ▶ to ensure that quality literacy programming and services are provided;
- ▶ to coordinate literacy programs and services through cooperation among community agencies and government departments; and
- ▶ to raise funds for literacy from the public.

Therefore, it can be surmised that literacy was seen as an important public issue but that the Provincial Government would only act by relying extensively on community organizations to coordinate programs and services to address literacy needs, primarily for adults, in the province. This was in the context that the Department of Education's prime concern at that time was the formal education system: K-12 and post-secondary education and training. In addition, the Government intended to depend on external financial resources to fund literacy development projects while providing core funding to the LDC. A new agency with the appropriate 'arms-length' legislative provisions was seen as essential to support this thrust and to access any available external funding, including those funds that could be made available by the federal government.

The environment for literacy has changed considerably since the pre-1994 era. The Literacy Development Council was formed and is still in operation. There is a network of community-based literacy agencies in Labrador as well as many local literacy delivery agencies on the Island. The College of the North Atlantic is active in literacy training. A provincial Strategic Literacy Plan has been developed and introduced under the leadership of the Department of Education. Finally, the Literacy Branch has been created within the Department of Education to oversee the implementation of this plan and to co-ordinate the Provincial Government's literacy policy and program agenda.

Furthermore, there is an expanded government view of 'literacy' as covering more than adult literacy. The Department of Education recognizes that literacy is a life-long activity affecting the social and economic development of individuals and the province as a whole. The Department has developed an enhanced approach to literacy development in relation to this philosophy.

The LDC continues to support both adult literacy and family literacy programs. With the creation of the Strategic Literacy Funding Committee (to be described later in this report), the LDC has tended to focus more on adult literacy initiatives and deferred to the Department of Education on early childhood and school-aged children's literacy issues.

The consensus emanating from the key informants and others as well as the survey of community-based agencies and partners is that, though it may have been visionary to establish the LDC with its broad goals of community involvement, the results have been less than satisfactory. In and of themselves, the goals are laudatory and are still relevant, however, the lack of organizational development and appropriate resourcing of the LDC has worked against the agency fulfilling these goals. In other words, the LDC has spent a considerable amount of its time having to address its organizational issues and, at the same time, it did not have sufficient core financial resources or the appropriate staff to undertake many of the powers entrusted to it in legislation.

Another key component that influenced the LDC has been the new public policy interest and bureaucratic apparatus that the Provincial Government attached to literacy in recent years. These developments support, on the surface at least, the view that the LDC's mandate has been challenged by another agency in several key endeavours for which the LDC was formed to undertake. Equally important is the view held by many community literacy stakeholders that the Provincial Government must not overlook the importance of community involvement in the literacy field. They believe strongly that the Government needs to devote more direct and related public resources to achieve its literacy objectives for this province.

Overall, it is generally recognized that the environment has changed considerably since the LDC was created. As such, there is a questioning as to the appropriate place of the LDC in literacy

development in the province by all key stakeholders: the Department, members of the LDC and the community-based literacy agencies.

The conclusion to be drawn is that the LDC needs to have its goals and legislated mandate revisited by the Provincial Government so that the LDC can be transformed from a policy and program development agency to a strong advocacy and advisory agency for literacy in the province.

4.2 Analysis of the Literacy Development Council's Statutory Powers

The focus of inquiry on the Literacy Development Council's (LDC's) statutory powers related to the following questions:

- ▶ *Are LDC's statutory powers sufficient to fulfil its goals? Were its powers exceeded? Were its powers underutilized? If so, why?*
- ▶ *Are there legislative limitations or barriers that impede the LDC from acting on its mandate?*
- ▶ *Are additional powers needed? If so, what powers and why?*
- ▶ *Does the LDC have sufficient resources to implement those powers it possesses?*

The legislation creating the LDC represents a full delegation of authority from government to an arms-length agency of its own creation. This illustrates how the Provincial Government viewed achieving solutions to literacy issues in 1994 when it sought to effectively surrender control and influence over literacy development to the LDC, subject to certain reporting requirements.

The next section examines how the LDC executed the key powers delegated to it through its legislation.

A. The development of a provincial Strategic Literacy Plan
(as a power to develop provincial policy)

The functions of policy development, such as the development of a strategic plan, are

usually assumed by a government department; in this case, the Department of Education, under the leadership and approval of the Provincial Cabinet. However, under its legislation, the LDC has responsibility for :

- ▶ the development of a strategic provincial plan for literacy, and
- ▶ the establishment of certain literacy services (such as the development of a system of transfer of courses for credit leading to a high school completion certificate and the development of evaluation, certification and program standards, policies and procedures).

In these areas, the LDC was charged with setting the direction for provincial literacy policy development. In this regard, the agency's activities were linked legislatively to the Minister of Education (and not through the Department).

Literacy is recognized provincially as a significant public policy issue. When the Bill to create the LDC was being debated in the House of Assembly, Mr. Jack Harris, M.H.A. observed that:

“ My concern would be that there is a tendency...to pass on the responsibility ...from government to this arm's length agency and to give the responsibility to them and take it away from government....I think the fundamental responsibility to ensure our people have an adequate level of literacy skills available to them still rests with government.” (Hansard. 1994, June 7. p. 2100)

With respect to the development of a strategic provincial plan for literacy development, in September, 1997, the Chair of the LDC and the then Minister of Education jointly issued a press release indicating that the LDC would develop a strategic literacy plan for the province. (News release. Retrieved September 23, 2002. <http://www.gov.nf.ca /releases/1997/edu/0908n01.htm>)

According to a subsequent statement presented in the House of Assembly on May 14, 1998, a senior public servant was seconded to work with the LDC on the development of the strategic literacy plan. Subsequently, the official was located in the Department of Education to prepare the plan. In this matter, the Department took control of an activity clearly reserved to the LDC under its legislation.

The strategic literacy plan was released by the Minister of Education on May 18, 2000. (News release . Retrieved September 23 , 2002 . <http://www.gov.nf.ca/releases/2002/edu/0518n06.htm>)

Acting independently, the LDC lacked the appropriate professional resources to have developed and adopted a strategic literacy plan for the province. It had to defer to the Department to advance such a provincial plan within government. In general, it did not have the resources or expertise to support ongoing policy development that are generally available within a government department. As an arms-length agency of the Government the LDC was not recognized as having the 'legitimate' authority to set a policy direction for the province in literacy without the tacit approval of the Minister and the Provincial Cabinet.

Eventually, as noted above, the Provincial Government assumed responsibility for the literacy plan's development and, later, its implementation. In the Strategic Literacy Plan document it is acknowledged that:

“...literacy is important to society for many reasons...increased access to employment...because it contributes to citizenship and participation in the democratic process, has an impact on health and well-being, and leads to personal fulfillment.”
(Strategic Literacy Plan. 2000. p. 3)

Through Government's direct involvement with the literacy strategy, there was an attempt to ensure literacy was linked with other policy initiatives of the Provincial Government. It has been recognized that the Strategic Literacy Plan cannot exist in isolation and must be connected to government's other strategic planning exercises, both the Strategic Social Plan and the Renewal Strategy for Jobs and Growth. Again, as noted in the literacy plan:

“ literacy is a good example of the link between social and economic development.”
(Strategic Literacy Plan. 2000. p.5)

Since 1994, the LDC has played a supportive role to the Department of Education as that Department addressed the development of literacy services that fall within the policy and program development powers of the LDC. It is recognized by most stakeholders that the ‘transfer’ of these powers to the Department has been an appropriate development in the literacy field.

B. Disbursement of Grants

The provincial funds committed to the implementation of the Strategic Literacy Plan as well as for the grants to community agencies are placed with the LDC. However, effective control now remains with the Department of Education through its chairing of the Strategic Literacy Funding Committee.

Community agencies are confused and concerned. They have to apply for LDC grant funds to the Strategic Literacy Funding Committee. Through the consultant’s findings from the survey of these agencies, it is clear that the agency representatives do not always know of or distinguish between the evolving roles of both the LDC and the funding committee in the allocation of grant funding. At times, they are not certain as to which agency is managing these funds and to whom they should address their concerns.

The consultant noted some challenges in the working relationship between the Department of Education and the LDC, and within the LDC at times. The Department of Education cannot get on with the job that it is mandated to do through the Strategic Literacy Plan. The LDC members have been and are quite concerned about their diminished role in the allocation of LDC grant funding at the same time as they are held accountable for these funds. Some members see it no other way than as interference with the authority of the LDC. In light of this and for other reasons described later in this report, many of LDC’s members as well as other persons interviewed and surveyed for the evaluation believe that the LDC should not be involved in the direct disbursement of grant funding. Though they believe that the LDC should be removed from this activity, they expect that the current amount of funding earmarked for this purpose would be retained and used

by the Department of Education to continue to support the various community agencies in the delivery of literacy services. Also, it is recognized by some stakeholders that a potential side benefit from this change would be an improved working relationship between the Department of Education and the LDC and within the LDC itself.

C. Fund-Raising

It was noted in the House of Assembly debates on the LDC legislation that there were hopes that the creation of the LDC would facilitate the raising of funds from private sources for literacy. With the exception of the small amount of funds raised through the annual Peter Gzowski golf tournaments, to this point in time there have been limited funds raised from the private sector through the efforts of the LDC. The annual golf tournament was contributing to literacy prior to the creation of the LDC and continues to do so. These funds are distributed directly to the literacy community.

The federal National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) has funds available to support projects sponsored by community-based organizations and to support coalitions of such organizations. However, these funds are not available directly to governments or their agencies. The NLS has interpreted that since the LDC is created by a provincial statute, it is not a community-based literacy coalition; as such, it is not eligible for federal funds earmarked for literacy coalitions. Funds are provided to the Labrador Literacy Information and Action Network (LLIAN).

In practice, Newfoundland and Labrador does not have a *provincial* coalition and is the only province without one. However, the NLS does transfer funds to community-based agencies in the province with these funds allocated in collaboration with the Department of Education.

In 2000, a Literacy Endowment Fund for the province was established through federal and provincial contributions of \$1M each deposited with the LDC under strict conditions outlined in a Memorandum of Agreement. The interest income earned on the fund is used to finance projects

performed by non-profit organizations in support of the Strategic Literacy Plan. Though the LDC manages the fund, allocations from the fund are made by the Strategic Literacy Funding Committee.

Recently, the Department of Education established a foundation independent of the LDC to raise \$1M through private sources. This foundation is in the process of acquiring charitable status under the Income Tax Act and is being supported by the Department until the board of directors is fully established. This effort has resulted in the creation of a structure that parallels in many ways the Literacy Endowment Fund as well as the LDC which is already designated as a charitable status organization with the mandate to raise funds for literacy from the private sector.

Overall, despite the actions of both governments, the expectation for the fund-raising component of the mandate of the LDC has not been realized.

D. The Literacy Development Council's Resources (in order to implement its powers)

On an annual basis, the Department of Education budgets an allocation to operate and support the LDC. A total of \$431K is allocated annually; \$100K for salaries and administration; \$31K for council meetings, travel, etc.; and the remaining \$300K is for grants to community agencies.

Prior to the creation of the LDC, the Department of Education had a consultant on staff who was responsible for literacy matters. With the creation of the LDC, the consultant became the agency's first executive director. As a cost-savings measure by the Department, this responsibility was shared with the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board for a short period in the late 1990's.

At present, the LDC has its own full-time executive-director, an administrative assistant and has the support of an accountant who is on contract. In the past, there was an outreach office in central Newfoundland but this was phased-out with the resignation of the staff person who resided in the area. The LDC has a rented office in St. John's.

The Provincial Government committed \$1 million towards implementation of the Strategic Literacy Plan with the funds allocated equally over the two fiscal years, 1999-2000 and 2000-2001.

This funding was provided to the LDC but is controlled by the Department of Education. As of March 31, 2003, \$564,266 remains available for the intended purpose.

The Department of Education and the National Literacy Secretariat established a \$2 million Literacy Endowment Fund in March, 2000 to be managed by the LDC. Interest income earned on the fund is used to finance projects undertaken by third parties. Approximately, \$100K is available annually for this purpose.

A separate provincial foundation has been created to raise \$1M from private sources to contribute to literacy projects in support of children and adult learners. This foundation is still in the developmental phase.

Through the National Early Childhood Development Initiative fund, approximately \$250K has been committed for early childhood literacy programs in each of five (5) years commencing in 2001.

Some NLS funds that are committed to projects that have not been completed or undertaken as originally planned remain with the LDC.

In comparison to other similarly-structured provincial agencies, the LDC's operating budget and finances are appropriate and deemed to be cost-effective. They have a minimal budget for salaries and operations. The limited funds for council activities, such as for travel, result in the Council meeting in face-to-face sessions usually only twice a year. Grant funding is set by the Provincial Cabinet through the annual budget process. The current literacy needs as expressed by community agencies in their annual applications to the Strategic Literacy Funding Committee would suggest that more funding could be made available by government(s) for front-line literacy services and special projects.

As noted above, the LDC was designed to be an arms-length agency for the reasons stated when the legislation was approved by House of Assembly. Recent developments within the Department of Education, namely the creation of the Literacy Branch, make it clear that there is a renewed commitment to literacy within the Department of Education and a will to be more active in

this area. However, the legislation stands without revision by the Provincial Government. Despite the Literacy Branch's assumption of many of the LDC's powers, these powers remain with the LDC.

One conclusion to be reached at this juncture in the LDC's development is that it will be important to formally recognize that LDC's policy and program development roles and responsibility for the implementation of the Strategic Literacy Plan are appropriately placed with the Department of Education.

Secondly, the most appropriate means of providing funding for delivery of community-based services must be considered; the Provincial Government has to either confirm or move to repeal the current LDC role to disburse grants. The general consensus for those interviewed and surveyed is that the LDC should relinquish this power to the Department (but that the LDC does have an important and necessary role to play in supporting the work of the community-based agencies in their ongoing and direct relations with learners). The amount of funds in question should be retained by the Department of Education to be used for the initial purpose, namely, to support the delivery of literacy services by community-based agencies in the province.

The fund-raising roles of the new Literacy Foundation and the LDC need to be streamlined and based in one community-led initiative.

Finally, one can conclude that the LDC's financial resources are sufficient based on the nature of the activities undertaken by the LDC currently. If the LDC expands its activities and/or exercises its full statutory powers, its current resources would not support this greater scope of activity.

4.3 Analysis of the Literacy Development Council (as a Committee of Members)

The focus of inquiry centered on the following questions:

- ▶ *What processes were used to form the Council? How is the composition of Council decided? Who has the final decision-making authority?*
- ▶ *Is the selection process fair and perceived to be fair?*
- ▶ *What are the expectations of Council members? Are the expectations of Council members reasonable in the circumstances?*
- ▶ *Are the terms of office appropriate? Too long? Too short? About right?*
- ▶ *Are four (4) meetings per year sufficient?*
- ▶ *What alternate processes and criteria could be used to form the Council?*

The ongoing selection of Council members has proven to be a source of great consternation for members of the LDC and the literacy community. Council membership was to be a combination of four representatives of business, industry and labour along with four ex-officio members, four members representing volunteer and community-based literacy delivery agencies, one member from the provincial college system, and one member to represent the public. The current active membership is not representative of these categories.

The original Council was appointed by the Minister and by its composition reflected the intent by government for the LDC to be broad-based and to engage in fund-raising activities. The initial chair was appointed by the Minister and future chairs were to be elected from among 75% of the voting members present at the meeting when elections are held.

With subsequent councils, the election and confirmation of the chair has been the source of great controversy. The requirement that the Chair be selected by 75% of voting members of the Council was set out in the legislation. When the LDC was left to apply this provision there was a great deal of confusion causing the focus of the LDC to be diverted from literacy development to

resolving leadership issues. From the information provided from those interviewed, the reason for the controversy seems to have stemmed more from personalities than the application of the provision itself.

A source of difficulty also stemmed from the fact that the LDC did not maintain a membership base of interested stakeholders. It did not have a mechanism to have member organizations nominate and/or appoint members that was perceived to be transparent. Though advertisements were placed in newspapers seeking interest from the various public organizations involved in or had an interest in literacy, new members were usually recruited by the existing members. As well, there appears to be an absence of consistently applied criteria for selection of members from among the applicants. As there were no policies adopted to address representation by region, certain regions have been over-represented while other regions are not represented at all at times. The general interests to be represented on the LDC, as specified in the legislation, have not always been present on Council either.

As a result of the selection process employed by the Council, the LDC is not representative of a broad range of skills and interests. Some key informants have suggested that individual community literacy agency interests are taking paramountcy in the Council's deliberations at the expense of focusing on a pan-provincial perspective on literacy development needs. There has been internal as well as external criticism that some Council members who are representatives of literacy delivery agencies have served to influence the disbursement of government funding to benefit their own organizations. Many of the community-based agencies that were surveyed find the LDC has grown to be less relevant to them than in the past.

There is general agreement by those interviewed and those who attended the consultation sessions that the process for Council membership selection must be changed. The by-laws which are now being developed by the LDC are intended to address this situation but may only go part way.

In addition to the LDC's executive director, there are three other ex-officio members who are included as members of the Council by legislation to provide advice to the LDC. Instead of being seen as advisors, there are some who view these members solely as government officials seeking to overly influence the LDC to a position that is favourable to the two governments' position(s). Their right to actively participate in meetings has been questioned by fellow-members.

The crux of the issue is to define the most appropriate role for community representatives in the Council and the processes by which these representatives are selected (i.e. appointed or elected) and the independence of the chair is maintained (i.e. a government appointee or one elected from the council members). There were compelling arguments presented during the consultation sessions, in particular, that support both approaches for membership and chair selection. There is some support for continuing with the current government-mandated council model. There is perhaps stronger support for having the LDC replaced with a provincial network of community literacy agency representatives similar to models that exist in other provinces.

Meetings of the Council are called based on the ability of having a quorum of the members to attend. Attendance of the federal NLS and provincial Social Policy Committee Secretariat representatives has been low. Meanwhile, these same officials question the appropriateness of continuing to have a seat on the LDC. One concern related to a potential conflict of interest given that their office funds projects proposed by the LDC; the other concern related to the lack of purpose being served by having their office represented on the LDC.

The creation of the LDC using a corporate model would suggest that there would have been efforts directed toward establishing policies to guide the governance of the organization particularly to operationalize the legislation. The legislation intended that regulations and by-laws be created to conduct LDC operations. Except for a draft internal strategic plan document prepared in 1997 and a set of draft by-laws drafted in November, 2002, there have been no other documents developed and used by Council members and staff to guide the operations. It appears that even those that were referenced in the legislation, such as conflict of interest guidelines and voting procedures, have not been developed and approved for use. The consultant believes that the adoption of governance policies, a strategic plan and annual operational plans could have assisted the LDC in avoiding some

of the organizational issues which arose since 1994 and have proven to be problematic for the LDC.

The LDC meets at least four times a year; twice in face-to-face meetings and twice by conference call. There are additional ad hoc meetings and the executive committee meets monthly. Members have suggested that additional face-to-face Council meetings are required. This would be appropriate for a provincial board with as broad a mandate and representation as that in place for the LDC.

The consultant interviewed LDC members and is impressed with the commitment of individual members to the *raison d'être* of the LDC. In the past, there have been opportunities provided LDC members to develop a common vision for the Council and its activities. Despite these efforts and most likely due, in part, to a changing Council membership over time, the consultant believes that there does not appear to be a widely-held working vision or understanding by current members of the LDC's mission. The consultant observed that some members view the LDC as existing primarily for advocacy and should be an agency intended to extend support to community-based providers. Some see the LDC as a fund-raiser for literacy. Others are focused on the community agency and other interests they represent. There are differing views and understanding of 'literacy' in evidence. There is no clear target group agreed on as to whom the LDC should focus: adults, children with learning disabilities, life-long learners, some or all of these?

As for the activities in which the LDC is engaged, on a day-to-day basis, the office endeavours to be supportive of the community-based literacy groups throughout the province. The groups are supplied with literacy resource materials, a newspaper, information and support from the St. John's office. Through a 1-800 number, the office receives calls primarily from service providers at an average of 54 per month, calls from learners at an average of 29 per month, and from the general public at an average of 5 calls per month. It responds to learners inquiries on an ad hoc basis. (Statistics of LDC, April 2001-September 2002.)

The office assists in the organization of annual fund-raising events, such as the Annual Peter Gzowski Golf Tournament and some other events. As the LDC has a small staff travel budget of \$5K per year, attendance at events outside St. John's is limited unless the sponsor agrees to cover expenses or separate funds are allocated under a specific project budget. Overall, there is a general consensus among those interviewed and surveyed of the value and effectiveness of the activities of the LDC office and its staff.

The conclusion to be reached concerning the LDC is that, overall, the support it lends to the literacy community is viewed as valuable by the community-based literacy delivery agencies. However, the Council's design, its membership selection and Chair election processes, and management of LDC 's affairs can be improved. As part of this renewal, the LDC needs to develop a strategic plan and annual operational plans to give guidance to LDC staff and to inform its stakeholders of its ongoing activities and evolving priorities. A new model, such as a provincial network of community literacy agency representatives, could be adopted in favour of a government-mandated agency once the community has developed an effective working model.

4.4 Analysis of the Relationship between the Literacy Development Council and the Literacy Branch

The focus of inquiry concerning the relationship between the two organizations was addressed through the following questions:

- ▶ *What is the mandate of the Literacy Branch vis-a-vis the LDC?*
- ▶ *Were the roles differentiated once the Literacy Branch was established?*
- ▶ *What is the LDC's understanding of the role of the Literacy Branch? And vice versa?*
- ▶ *What is the nature of the interaction between the LDC and the Literacy Branch?*
- ▶ *How are communications maintained?*

As was noted above under section 4.1 of this report, the literacy policy function of government was delegated to the LDC. However, since 1997, the Department has become actively engaged in the literacy policy development field while the LDC still retains similar powers. A decision was taken not to amend the LDC's legislation at the time the Strategic Literacy Plan was finalized despite the fact that Provincial Government took control of the literacy policy planning process.

The creation of the Literacy Branch demonstrates another case where the Provincial Government directly leads initiatives in the field of literacy as opposed to the LDC. However, the role of the Literacy Branch does not appear to have been clearly differentiated from the LDC's authority for literacy; instead, it covers a broad range of activities similar to the powers of the LDC.

According to the Department of Education:

"The mandate of the Literacy Branch is to assume overall responsibility within the Department of Education for literacy development and to coordinate the implementation of the Strategic Literacy Plan. The Branch also assumes direct responsibility for early literacy, family literacy, basic literacy, ABE Level 1 literacy and workplace literacy.

It appears to many of those interviewed that there are two parallel organizations addressing literacy and no one agency is seen as having the full scope of responsibility.

Due to the LDC's participation in the grant funding process, there have been concerns raised about conflict of interest of LDC members given that some members represent organizations that apply annually for grants. In order to ensure there was greater co-operation and co-ordination in the distribution of grants, as well as a desire by the Department of Education to advance the Strategic Literacy Plan, a Strategic Literacy Funding Committee, chaired by the Department of Education, was established. Represented on the committee is the LDC, the Literacy Branch, the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board, the College of the North Atlantic, a school district and a member-at-large. All proposals being considered for federal funding also include a representative of the NLS in the grant application review process.

A joint application for funding has been developed. Proponents send their proposals to the committee. The committee assesses these proposals and makes a recommendation to the LDC to provide funding for the successful applicants. Effectively, the LDC has a veto which it has used at times in this process. The LDC prepares the cheques and a letter is issued jointly by the LDC and the Department of Education. This has caused confusion among proponents who do not know who is in control of LDC funding. When LDC staff are questioned by applicants on the denial of LDC funding, the proponent is referred to the Literacy Branch for an explanation. There have been other concerns respecting the role of the LDC in the grant funding process and its lack of effective influence. Due to this and other reasons, in the Spring, 2002, the LDC gave notice that it would withdraw from the Memorandum of Understanding that established the committee on strategic literacy funding. The LDC has since withdrawn its notice but has removed its name from the application form; it is still a member of the funding committee.

The financial arrangements are telling in this matter. On the one hand, the LDC has possession of a considerable amount of funds committed to literacy. The funds originate with Government (provincial and federal) or the Literacy Endowment Fund. By agreement with the Department of Education, the LDC will not disperse these funds until an allocation is decided by the Strategic Literacy Funding Committee. The LDC is expected to approve the committee's recommendations if, after a designated time period, its members do not reject the committee's decisions. In effect, this system allows the committee, chaired by the Department of Education, to exert effective control of the disbursement of grants while leaving the LDC largely disempowered over its own funding.

There are tensions around the grant funding system as the LDC views these as LDC funds for which it is accountable. Officials of the Department wish to access these funds to allocate to literacy projects that meet the Strategic Literacy Plan's objectives. Though its status as an arms-length agency suggests that the LDC should be independent from Government, this is a case where many believe it to be otherwise.

A majority of those interviewed for the evaluation believe that the LDC, as it currently exists, should not be involved in distributing funds. Even if there is an LDC member on the grant committee with no affiliation with a particular service provider, a perception of conflict of interest remains due to the current composition of the Council.

From the perspective of the grant applicants, there are concerns that the community-based groups spend a large amount of their time developing proposals for funding. It is evident that certain groups have difficulty in preparing a “winning” submission and it is argued that their time would be better spent providing services. It has been suggested that the LDC could play a more constructive role in helping groups develop proposals. Acceptance of this suggestion would represent a new role for the LDC.

The inevitable conclusion is that the respective roles of the Literacy Branch and the LDC must be clarified, especially in relation to each other, and the future role and prescribed powers of the LDC revised. One specific change is that the LDC, as it currently exists, should relinquish its role in the disbursement of grants to community-based literacy organizations. This is a role to be assumed by the Literacy Branch of the Department of Education. Equally important for both organizations is for them to clearly communicate their respective roles and activities as well as the nature of their inter-organization working relationship widely to the literacy community in the province; these communications must be an ongoing activity for both organizations.

4.5 Analysis of the role of the Literacy Development Council in the ABE Level 1 Pilot Project

The focus of inquiry rested with the questions:

- ▶ *Is there a role for the LDC to play in the implementation of the ABE Level 1 pilot project? If so, what is the most appropriate role?*
- ▶ *What can be learned from the recommendations of the Goss Gilroy report?*

Based on discussions with officials in the Department of Education, the consultant is advised that there is no standardized, consistent approach to basic literacy delivery and training in the province. Efforts are underway to introduce consistency through a pilot project for ABE Level 1 being administered by the Department of Education, with the LDC participating in the ABE Level 1 working group. During this past year, transitional funds were allocated to eight projects to provide either an ABE Level I program or basic literacy program using the LDC grant funds distributed by the Strategic Literacy Funding Committee.

The Goss Gilroy report suggested that the LDC could be refocused to become a provincial literacy network and take a leadership role in advocacy, communications and fund-raising activities for basic literacy and ABE Level 1 services. Informants for this current evaluation feel that the LDC should not be involved in direct delivery and that the Provincial Government should retain responsibility for standards, training and funding for all ABE level courses.

The conclusion drawn is that there is no role for the LDC in the direct delivery of the ABE Level 1 pilot project. Its role should be confined to assist and advise the Department of Education on design and funding matters while working to support the community-based literacy agencies in the delivery of the pilot project.

5.0 Additional Public Policy Considerations

In addition to the analysis presented above, the consultant has identified a series of other public policy considerations that should be included in the development of options and recommendations as part of the evaluation of the LDC. These additional comments reflect observations noted from the key informant interviews, the survey results and from the documentation reviewed by the consultant. These statements repeat some of the intent of the conclusions contained above in Section 4. They are included here to reinforce the point that the LDC and its future have to be placed in a broader public policy context given the importance of achieving higher literacy levels in the province.

Literacy development is acknowledged to be critical to the province's socio-economic development. There remains a large societal problem with literacy. Without a literate population, the province's ability to grow socially and economically is frustrated. Clearly, it is in the public interest to foster higher literacy achievement in its population.

As it does for all significant public policies, the Provincial Government has to take the lead in policy development and establish literacy goals, develop standards for programs, training and certification, undertake research and provide funding. This is seen as the essential public policy need for advancing literacy in the province.

At the same time, the Provincial Government has to continue to foster the development of community partnerships to advance literacy development in the province. It is understood by most knowledgeable persons in the field of literacy that governments cannot solve the literacy problem alone and that community agencies cannot adequately deliver their services without government support and funding. There is also a role for other sectors to complement the activities of government and the community literacy agencies in the field of literacy development in the province.

The community-based literacy agencies have a role in continuing to advise the Provincial Government and other sectors as to the appropriate literacy and other programs and services to meet their clients' needs. At present, this role is disjointed and there is no co-ordinated approach in the province despite the presence of the LDC. Therefore, a provincial body will need to be retained to support community literacy services, to raise awareness of literacy in the community and to provide advice to both the Provincial and Federal Governments on literacy matters in the province.

Whatever the new provincial literacy organization model adopted, it should focus on the literacy needs of both children and adults with its initiatives emphasizing the prevention of illiteracy and the need to support life-long learning. To the degree possible, public and privately-raised funds should be earmarked in support of new literacy initiatives including these elements.

Finally, there is no single 'right' model to deliver literacy services. There are differing program models to be considered based on differing client needs and different approaches to the delivery of front-line literacy services across the province. Governments have to be flexible in their funding of different models of delivery based on the evidence presented in support of each model.

These statements and the conclusions as presented in Section 4 provide the direction to the consultant in identifying options for improvements in the roles and organization of the LDC.

6.0 Options

This section outlines some of the options that the consultant believes should be considered in relation to the future roles of the LDC as well as the Literacy Branch to make them more effective in the delivery of literacy services in the province.

6.1 Mandate and Powers of the LDC

Based on the consultant's findings and analysis, there are three options to consider:

- Option 1. The LDC, as a legislated literacy agency, is retained but its mandate limited to include:
- ▶ advising governments and other sectors on literacy matters,
 - ▶ undertaking advocacy, promotion and awareness-raising activities on literacy issues in the province,
 - ▶ providing and distributing literacy information;
 - ▶ acting as a referral service for learners,
 - ▶ supporting community-based literacy service providers, including community capacity development and support of their operations,
 - ▶ applied research in support of its mandate, and
 - ▶ fund-raising in support of specific community literacy events and activities.

and, this mandate **would not** include:

- ▶ funding of community-based literacy agencies for literacy projects,
- ▶ undertaking literacy policy and program development, or
- ▶ developing program and training standards or certifying literacy programs or teachers/tutors.

This option may require either a major revision of the current LDC legislation or the repeal of the current LDC legislation.

Option 2. Repeal the LDC legislation and have the Literacy Branch of the Department of Education assume full policy, program, and funding responsibilities; as well, the Department of Education would expand its activities to co-ordinate community-based activities.

As part of this option, the Literacy Branch would actively foster the development of a provincial network of community literacy agencies to advise the Provincial Government on literacy matters and advocate on behalf of community-based literacy service providers and their clients.

Option 3. Retain the status quo.

The consultant does not support retaining the status quo and believes that advocacy for literacy services and support at the community-level can be best done by an arms-length agency with representatives drawn from a broad cross-section of the province's literacy community.

During the course of the regional consultation sessions, representatives of the community-based literacy agencies and others voiced their strong support for the creation of a coalition or network of community agencies instead of a continuation of the LDC in either its current form or with

a revised mandate. Discussions have been held on possible ways to establish a literacy coalition and ways for the various literacy stakeholders in the province to work together. This form of community-based literacy organization is prevalent in other provinces and has been presented as strong evidence in support of the possibility of proceeding with this option. At the same time, there is a recognition that such an initiative has to be led by the community groups involved and not by the Provincial Government itself.

Some of the initial benefits of this approach are that there could be greater community agency buy-in of a network, and access to federal seed funding (an incremental amount of \$75K annually may be available). On the other hand, there will be some time to pass before a fully functional network can be in place; meanwhile, the LDC cannot be left in limbo. Such questions as will the network be an Island-only network or a provincial network incorporating the Labrador network will be one of the immediate issues to be addressed by those who will champion this option. As well, during the interviews for this evaluation, certain cautions were raised by stakeholders about proceeding with this approach given the poor past performance of the provincial coalition that existed in the early 1990's. Therefore, a transition plan will need to be considered to support an orderly transition from having a government-sponsored literacy agency to the eventual ascendancy of a provincial literacy network.

For the option of a re-vamped LDC, its mandate and powers would need to reflect the important but specific roles that the Provincial Government sees that it must play in promoting literacy development in the province and that these should not be duplicated by another agency. At the same time, the Provincial Government needs to ensure that the agency is adequately funded and resourced to fulfill any new mandate. In the case of a provincial network, the Government would have to adopt a 'hands-off' approach but would be expected to redirect its current operational funding for the LDC to other literacy initiatives.

6.2 The Selection of Members and their Role in the Literacy Development Council (as Council Members) or as Participants in a Provincial Network

Based on the consultant's findings and analysis, there are three options to consider:

Option 1. The selection and role of the LDC's members is revised, as follows:

A. The Council members are selected based on one of several options:

- (i) regional representation coincidental with the boundaries of the province's twenty regional economic zone boards given the close economic interest in having a more literate workforce, or
- (ii) the province's six strategic social planning regions whose planning committee members are drawn from the social sector that is closely connected professionally with the literacy and education sub-sectors in their respective regions.

Under both these options, the members are either nominated or elected to the Council from within their regions or appointed by the Minister on the recommendation of the regional board or committee in consultation with the literacy stakeholders in each region; or

- (iii) the province's community-based literacy agencies and other stakeholders develop a process to elect members to the LDC or a provincial network.

A. The Council or provincial network members will bring a 'provincial' perspective to the Council's or network's deliberations.

B. The Council will be accountable to the Provincial Government through the Minister of Education; alternatively, the provincial network will be accountable to its member agencies and the literacy community.

C. The Chair of the Council will be elected from the board members or an additional member appointed as chair by the Provincial Cabinet; alternatively, the chair of the provincial network will be elected from the members involved in the network and could be rotated at appropriate intervals.

D. The Council or provincial network will establish effective partnerships with community-based literacy agencies and other stakeholders.

- E. The Council or provincial network members will be provided adequate orientation and opportunities to meet regularly to contribute effectively in achieving the agency's or network's mandate.
- Option 2. Repeal the LDC legislation that, in turn, eliminates the requirement to select council members.

As part of this option, a provincial network may take the place of the LDC and act as an advocate for literacy development in the province.

- Option 3. Retain the status quo.

If the public interest in maximizing community involvement in literacy is to be served, at least in the short term, Option 1 is preferred as it allows the greatest opportunity for accountability by the Department and the Provincial Government. This option address the current concern about the lack of accountability inherent in the current LDC format given that substantial public funds are being expended with few results emanating from the LDC. At the same time, there is a wide expectation that the Provincial Government and the LDC should be making greater strides in literacy development in the province. As such, the consultant suggests that a new council could be formed with all its members appointed by the Provincial Government based on one of the approaches outlined above. This approach addresses some of the past difficulties with the selection of Council members and election of a chair.

If the Provincial Government is satisfied that community involvement in literacy development is best served by having the community groups take control of its own organizational design and processes, then Option 2 is appropriate. In this case, the Government would have to be prepared to either delay much-needed reforms to the LDC or undertake some or all of the reforms and give a clear commitment that it is intending to pave the way for a transition to a network model. This option would require the Government to lay-out some time frames to effect this orderly transition. In any event, it is generally agreed that since the current approach to selecting LDC members is not effective and some of LDC's powers are not currently operational changes to the LDC legislation should be enacted immediately.

6.3 Relationship between the Literacy Branch and the LDC

The consultant has identified a single option to define this relationship, as follows:

Option 1. There is a compelling need to redefine the working relationship between the Literacy Branch of the Department of Education and the LDC; roles and powers related to literacy development need to be clearly defined and distinguished as presented below:

- ▶ the Literacy Branch will have legislative responsibility for policy development, program development, research and evaluation, certification, standard-setting and monitoring of literacy programs and services and teacher/tutor training in the province;
- ▶ the Literacy Branch will be responsible for the disbursement of provincial funds for literacy services and projects delivered by community-based literacy agencies, and monitoring for results;
- ▶ the LDC will be responsible for advocacy, promotion, identification and awareness-raising of literacy needs in the province, providing advice to governments and other sectors on literacy matters, supporting community-based literacy services and community literacy capacity development, fund-raising for specific activities, distributing literacy information materials, and providing a referral service for learners;
- ▶ the LDC will be excluded from direct responsibility for funding of community-based agencies, policy and program development and standards-setting for programs and training; and
- ▶ the Executive Director of the Literacy Branch will retain ex-officio membership status on the LDC given the ongoing and necessary close working relationship between the Literacy Branch and the LDC.

In implementing this option, the Literacy Branch and the LDC need to improve their respective communications with the literacy community. At the same time, both organizations need to raise their visibility within the community and the profile of literacy issues that face the province.

6.4 Role of the Literacy Development Council in the Implementation of the ABE Level 1 Pilot Project

Again, the consultant suggests only one option to define the role of the LDC in the implementation of the ABE Level I Pilot Project, as follows:

- Option 1. Based on the consultant's findings and analysis conducted for this evaluation, the LDC will continue to play an advisory role to the Provincial Government to ensure appropriate government commitment to the pilot project. Meanwhile, the LDC will support, through the various means proposed in this report, the community-based literacy delivery agencies that are participating (or want to participate) in the delivery of the ABE Level 1 pilot project (and any successor program). At the same time, the LDC, itself, should not play a role in the direct delivery of ABE programming, at any level, in the province.

The consultant concludes that ABE Level 1 and basic literacy program delivery are a primary responsibility of the Provincial Government. The Government has to provide the appropriate funding for both components and ensure that effective program and training standards are in place that can only be monitored by government officials.

7.0 Recommendations

Based on the results of the interviews, the survey and regional consultation sessions conducted for this evaluation, the consultant noted a high level of consensus in the need for change. The recommendations address this need for change in the mandate, role and structure of the LDC and the important role to be played by the literacy community in the future activities of the LDC and any successor agency, as follows:

1. That, for the present, the Provincial Government retain an arms-length agency to advise the government on the literacy development needs in the province;
2. That the current Literacy Development Council be renamed '*The Literacy Advisory Council of Newfoundland and Labrador*';
3. That the mandate of the new Literacy Advisory Council will be to:
 - ▶ advise the provincial government as well as other governments and sectors on literacy matters,
 - ▶ advocate, promote, identify and raise awareness in the province for literacy needs and literacy development,
 - ▶ partner with and support community-based literacy agencies in advancing literacy at the community level,
 - ▶ encourage community literacy capacity building across the province, including the development of literacy coalitions and/or networks of community literacy agencies
 - ▶ disseminate literacy information and provide a referral service for learners,
 - ▶ undertake applied research in support of its mandate, and
 - ▶ raise funds in support of specific literacy development events or activities;

4. That the new Literacy Advisory Council be constituted with a membership totalling 11 voting members with these members selected based on representatives nominated by the province's community-based literacy organizations for consideration for appointment to the Council by the Minister of Education, with the Minister to ensure appropriate regional representation;
5. That the Chair of the Council be elected by a majority of the members of the Council for a two-year term (that will not be renewable) and the appointment be confirmed in writing by the Minister of Education;
6. That the Executive Director of the Literacy Branch of the Department of Education be an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Council
7. That the Executive Director of the Council be an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Council, act as its secretary and attend all Council meetings;
8. That the Literacy Branch of the Department of Education communicate its mandate, roles and responsibilities to the province's literacy community so as to clearly distinguish them from those of the Literacy Development Council and any successor agency (as recommended herein);
9. That the Department of Education retain full program responsibility for implementing the ABE Level 1 Pilot Project with the Literacy Development Council's role to be limited to advising the Department on its implementation and supporting the community-based delivery agencies involved in the delivery of the pilot project; and

10. That the Minister of Education endorse the early establishment of a provincial network of community-based literacy agencies and other stakeholders and consider recommending to the Provincial Cabinet the abolition of the LDC, or its successor, if the network satisfies the Minister that it can satisfactorily execute the new mandate attributed to the LDC's successor as recommended herein.

Appendix A

Literacy Development Council Act

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Important Information

(Includes disclaimer and copyright information and details about the availability of printed and electronic versions of the Statutes.)

SNL1994 CHAPTER L-19.1

LITERACY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL ACT

Amended:

CHAPTER L-19.1

**AN ACT RESPECTING THE LITERACY
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR**

(Assented to June 9, 1994)

Analysis

1. Short
2. Corporation
3. Goals
4. Powers
5. Charitable status
6. Council membership
7. Term of
8. Meetings, etc.
9. Quorum
10. Staff
11. 1991 c12
12. Expenses
13. Liability protection
14. Bonding

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- 15. General funds
- 16. Investments
- 17. Financial year
- 18. Expenditure
- 19. Annual budget

- 20. Financial statement
- 21. Regulations

*Be it enacted by the Lieutenant-Governor and House of Assembly in Legislative Session convened,
as follows:*

Short title

- 1.** This Act may be cited as the *Literacy Development Council Act*.

1994 cL.19.1 s1

Corporation

- 2.** The Literacy Development Council is established as a corporation.

1994 cL.19.1 s2

Goals

- 3.** The objects of the council are

(a) to exercise all of the powers and discharge all of the duties of the corporation and administer and manage its affairs;

(b) to assess and respond to the literacy needs of the people of the province as those needs are perceived by community committees, local organizations, private citizens or other groups and to ensure that quality literacy programming and services are provided;

(c) to coordinate literacy programs and services in the province, through the promotion and fostering of

(i) cooperation among agencies and organizations providing literacy programs and services, and

(ii) interdepartmental cooperation and austerity in government sponsored literacy activity; and

(d) to take steps by personal or written appeals, public meetings or otherwise that it may consider expedient for the purpose of obtaining contributions, in the form of donations or annual subscriptions or otherwise, to its funds.

1994 cL.19.1 s3

Powers

4. The powers of the council include the power

(a) to institute a strategic provincial plan for the provision of literacy programs and services and the utilization of technology for the delivery of those literacy programs and services;

1. (b) to enter into agreements with

(i) a government, government department or an agency of a government,

(ii) persons who carry on a trade, business or commercial activity, or any commercial business or industry,

(iii) educational institutions, or

(iv) a community group

for literacy programming, or the transfer of courses for credit for programs leading to a high school completion certificate or equivalent;

(c) to establish various literacy services of the council, including the development of evaluation, certification and program standards, policies and procedures;

(d) to establish committees of the council that may be necessary or desirable, and to appoint advisory and other committees necessary to achieve the purpose of the Act and to pay reasonable expenses incurred in connection with the work of the committee;

(e) to provide facilities and grants, enter into agreements for research and to conduct research related to all aspects of literacy, and to prescribe terms and conditions under which research may be conducted by, or on behalf of the council;

(f) to adopt personnel procedures which generally follow the personnel administrative procedures of the government of the province, including the development and application of conflict of interest guidelines for members of the council and employees of the council;

(g) to accept and disburse grants, gifts and bequests to the council and to fix, receive and collect payments for services and research;

(h) to accept subscriptions and donations, whether lands, buildings, money or other property and devises and bequests, for a purpose referred to in paragraphs (a) to (e) and, to sell and dispose of or to lease and accept surrenders of leases of and manage all land, buildings and other property so received and not required to be or capable of being occupied or used for the purpose of the council and generally, but subject to the approval of the minister, to manage, invest, spend and dispose of that money and property;

(i) to administer, in furtherance of the objects of the council, all funds which it may receive and to sell and dispose of or to lease and accept surrenders of leases of and manage all real property donated or devised to the council;

(j) to ensure

(i) provision for the keeping of full and accurate records of its proceedings and transactions,

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(ii) accounting for the receipts and disbursements of the council in the manner and form that are consistent with accepted accounting principles, and

(iii) all payments required to be made from the funds of the council are made by cheque or money order signed by either the person employed as Director of Finance of the council or the chairperson of the council and another person that the council may designate; and

(k) to adopt by-laws for the regulation of its proceedings and generally for the conduct of its activities, subject to the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.

1994 cL.19.1 s4

Charitable status

5. The council shall apply to be a registered charity for the purpose of the *Income Tax Act* (Canada).

1994 cL.19.1 s5

Council membership

6. (1) The first council shall be appointed by the minister and shall consist of a chairperson and not less than 7 and not more than 18 voting members.

(2) Vacancies on the first council and subsequent councils shall be filled from the membership of the various agencies represented on the council.

(3) Council membership shall consist of

(a) 3 members who shall be advisory and non-voting

(i) 1 member who shall represent the Department of Education and who shall be appointed by the minister,

(ii) 1 member who shall represent the Social Policy Committee of the Executive Council and who shall be appointed by the minister, and

(iii) 1 member who is an employee of the Government of Canada with literacy and training responsibilities and who shall be appointed by the Government of Canada;

(b) 4 members who shall represent business, industry and labour and appointed by the respective organizations or associations;

(c) 1 member at large to be appointed by the council to represent the public;

(d) 1 member who is a member of the Council of College/Institutional Presidents appointed by that organization;

(e) 4 members who shall represent volunteer and community-based literacy delivery agencies and who shall be appointed by the respective organizations or associations; and

(f) the executive director of the council who shall be advisory and non-voting

(4) Additional members, in accordance with the same terms, may be appointed by the council.

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(5) The chairperson of the council shall be appointed, initially by the minister, and subsequently by a 75% majority of the voting members of the council and where no nominee for chairperson is supported by a 75% majority of the voting members of the council the minister shall appoint 1 of the 2 candidates receiving the highest number of votes of the council.

1994 cL.19.1 s6

Term of office

7. (1) Members of the council shall serve for a 3 year term, with the exception of those members who are advisory and non-voting and who are appointed by the minister or the Government of Canada, in which case the appointment is indefinite.

(2) Subject to subsection (1), members shall not serve for more than 2 consecutive 3 year terms.

1994 cL.19.1 s7

Meetings, etc.

8. (1) The council shall hold at least 4 meetings in each year.

(2) The chairperson may call a meeting of the council at any time and shall call a meeting when requested by not less than 5 voting members of the council.

(3) The executive director shall be a member of all committees constituted by the council, and shall perform the duties and may exercise the powers that may be assigned to the executive director by the council.

1994 cL.19.1 s8

Quorum

9. A majority of the voting members of the council constitute a quorum.

1994 cL.19.1 s9

Staff

10. (1) The council may

(a) appoint, promote or remove any employees as are necessary for the proper conduct of the work of the council; and

(b) prescribe the duties of employees and prescribe the conditions of their employment.

(2) The employees of the council appointed under subsection (1) shall be paid a salary and expenses that are fixed by the council and these shall be consistent with the salary and expenses applicable to persons performing similar duties and having similar responsibilities in the public service of the province.

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(3) The council may arrange for the temporary transfer of members of the public service to its staff.

1994 cL.19.1 s10

1991 c12

11. The *Public Service Pensions Act, 1991* applies to the executive director and all persons employed under section 10.

1994 cL.19.1 s11

Expenses

12. The members of the council shall be reimbursed by the council for expenses incurred in relation to meetings and the work of the council in accordance with a scale for expenses for public employees.

1994 cL.19.1 s12

Liability protection

13. A member of the council is not personally liable for loss or damage suffered by a person because of anything done or omitted to be done by that member of the council in the execution of that member's office or under, or in the exercise of or supposed exercise of, the powers given to a member of the council.

1994 cL.19.1 s13

Bonding

14. (1) The council shall acquire and maintain a bond with a bonding or insurance company to indemnify the council against loss because of a fraudulent or criminal act of its employees.

(2) The bond required under subsection (1) shall be in the amount and contain the assurances that may be prescribed by the regulations.

(3) It is a condition of employment of a person employed by the council as Director of Finance or other officer that the council may designate that the person be bonded in the same manner that the council is required to be bonded under subsection (1) but in the amount that the council may prescribe.

1994 cL.19.1 s14

General funds

15. (1) The general funds of the council shall consist of

(a) the funds that may be appropriated by the Legislature and granted to the council;

(b) money that the council may charge and collect from users of its services or other programs or facilities;

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(c) fees received for services provided by the council; and

(d) other money received by the council for its general purpose.

(2) The council may receive gifts or bequests, which are subject to a trust, and shall invest and hold in trust the money or shall spend the money for the purpose indicated by the donor or testator and the money does not form part of the general funds of the council.

1994 cL.19.1 s15

Investments

16. The council may invest trust money and alter the investments as it thinks appropriate, subject to the general law governing trustees and the provisions of a will, trust deed or other document governing a special trust.

1994 cL.19.1 s16

Financial year

17. The financial year of the council begins on April 1 in each year and ends on March 31 in the following year.

1994 cL.19.1 s17

Expenditure

18. The council may pay all necessary expenses of its operations out of its general funds subject to the availability of funds in its approved budget.

1994 cL.19.1 s18

Annual budget

19. (1) The council shall, not later than January 31 in respect of each year, prepare and adopt a budget containing estimates of amounts required during the next financial year for the purpose of the council.

(2) In each budget prepared under subsection (1), there shall be set out the estimate of revenue and expenditures of the council in respect of a financial year for which that budget is prepared.

(3) The council shall not incur, enter upon or contract, or become liable for an expenditure or indebtedness beyond or in excess of the estimated amount of expenditure set out in the budget.

1994 cL.19.1 s19

Financial statement

20. (1) The council shall, not later than June 30 in each calendar year, prepare and submit to the minister

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- (a) a report concerning the work of the council during the financial year;
 - (b) an audited financial statement setting out the assets and liabilities of the council and its receipts and expenditures for the financial year immediately preceding that date; and
 - (c) all management letters relating to the audited financial statement required under paragraph (a).
- (2) The financial statements referred to in subsection (1) shall be signed by the chairperson and 1 other member of the council.

1994 cL.19.1 s20

Regulations

21. The Lieutenant-Governor in Council may make regulations to give effect to the provisions of this Act, including regulations for the general administration of this Act.

1994 cL.19.1 s21

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Appendix B

Comparison of the Delivery of Literacy Services in Selected Canadian Jurisdictions

For the purposes of comparison, four Canadian jurisdictions were reviewed to determine the nature of the organization of delivery of literacy services. The three Maritime provinces, due to regional proximity to this province, and Saskatchewan, due to relative comparable urban/rural population distribution, were selected.

While these jurisdictions have differing approaches to addressing literacy in comparison to Newfoundland and Labrador, there are also consistent features.

- ▶ The government department responsible has assumed a role for the development of policy and standard setting.
- ▶ There may be an advisory group present to assist in policy development or there is a coalition or network to advocate for literacy.
- ▶ Partnerships between government and other sectors is a common theme to promote literacy.
- ▶ While the provincial department has a major role in literacy policy development, there is a strong presence of volunteers in delivering literacy services.
- ▶ With respect to ABE Level 1, there are programs in place to deliver ABE Level 1 through a combination of colleges, learning centres and community-based organizations.
- ▶ The following table outlines key elements of literacy roles and responsibilities in each of the four jurisdictions studied for this evaluation.

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Province	Role of Government	Advocacy	Funding
<p>Nova Scotia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning is part of the Adult Education Division of the Department of Education. Implemented in September 2001, the school is part of a major adult learning initiative aimed at creating a more coordinated system for adults seeking to upgrade their literacy and numeracy skills and/or complete their high school or secondary education. ▶ Funding for this initiative is provided by the Department of Education, the Department of Community Services, and Human Resources ▶ Volunteer services are provided by organizations such as Laubach and Literacy Councils in regions of the province. ▶ The school also administers the new Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The Nova Scotia Provincial Literacy Coalition is the provincial advocate for literacy. ▶ It is a non-profit organization which accesses funds through various funding sources including the proceeds of the Peter Gzowski Golf Tournament as well as other sources, e.g., through HRDC to develop a website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Literacy and ABE funding: funding sources include the LMDA (2000/01- \$4.5M est.) and provincial funding for Community Learning Networks (2000/01- \$1.6M est.). The latter funding includes grants to community groups that offer services to low-level learners.

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Province	Role of Government	Advocacy	Funding
<p>New Brunswick</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ As the result of the Premier's Advisory Council on Literacy, a strategy was implemented to build partnerships between government, service providers, business and residents to advance literacy. ▶ The Department of Education sets policies and standards and works in partnership with Literacy New Brunswick and Provincial Partners in Literacy to set an overall provincial strategy. ▶ The Department of Education with other government departments has a presence throughout the province with regional literacy co-ordinators. ▶ There is reliance on community-based organizations to deliver literacy services with the assistance of volunteer tutors. ▶ There are facilitators for ABE Level 1 for delivery of a standardized curriculum in a classroom setting. Tutoring is delivered by Laubach and funded through the Department of Training and Employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provincial Partners in Literacy was established by the Minister of Education as an advisory group to assist in guiding the NB Govt's literacy strategy. ▶ The partners include four major NGOs and representatives of adult learners, colleges and a funding program for adult learners. ▶ There is no separate coalition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Literacy New Brunswick, Inc., a non-profit corporation with a private sector Board of Directors was established. It is a registered charity. ▶ It raises funds from the private sector and government (Departments of Education and Family and Community Services) for community-based literacy projects and manages the grant process. ▶ Regional Literacy Co-ordinators work with local committees to develop projects for literacy.

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Province	Role of Government	Advocacy	Funding
<p>Prince Edward Island</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ In 1996, the province developed a strategy for literacy. Prior to that, there was limited involvement in the field. ▶ The Department of Education works in partnership with the PEI Literacy Alliance and recognizes the need for input from the grass roots. ▶ The Department is not involved in direct delivery. ▶ The Department sets standards and certification for high school equivalency that is related to the high school curriculum. ▶ Basic literacy services are delivered by Laubach councils. ▶ The basic literacy/ABE Level 1 is funded through three departments (Education, Health and Social Services, and Development and Technology) with the main source the LMDA. ▶ PEI's Institute of Adult and Community Education (affiliated with Holland College) manages and delivers ABE Level 1 at its four campuses and there are also community learning centres that deliver ABE Level 1. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The PEI Literacy Alliance is a non-profit coalition with a focus on advocacy for the individual and providing workshops, e.g., plain language. ▶ Funding and support for the coalition is secured through NLS and/or other sources including the Provincial Literacy Initiative Committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provincial Literacy Initiative Committee includes representatives from the Department of Education, HRDC, NLS, UPEI, and the Francophone Association. ▶ Proposals are received from community-based organizations including the PEI Literacy Alliance, community learning centres. ▶ Government provides funding annually to Laubach Councils. Further funding is available to workplace literacy programs.

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Province	Role of Government	Advocacy	Funding
Saskatchewan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provision for Adult Literacy is included under the Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training's mandate to provide adults with access to Basic Education programs and services in Saskatchewan. ▶ Literacy programs and services are provided through Saskatchewan Regional Colleges, the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIASST), Saskatchewan Regional Libraries and literacy organizations. Educational agencies recruit students and train volunteers to provide instruction. ▶ Literacy programs are open to all adults who need increased literacy to improve their living and working conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The Saskatchewan Literacy Network is a non-profit organization founded in September 1989. ▶ It is governed by a Board of Directors of up to 15 elected members representing categories of community organizations interested in literacy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The total amount of provincial and federal direct funding provided for literacy in Saskatchewan in 2000-01 was \$1,769,050 of which the provincial government contributed \$ 1 , 0 6 4 , 0 0 0 (administered by SPSEST which supports ongoing adult literacy program delivery). The federal government's contribution of \$705,050, administered by the NLS, supports literacy project development falling under one or more of the following components: promotion/public awareness, community outreach, program development, materials development, and research and evaluation.

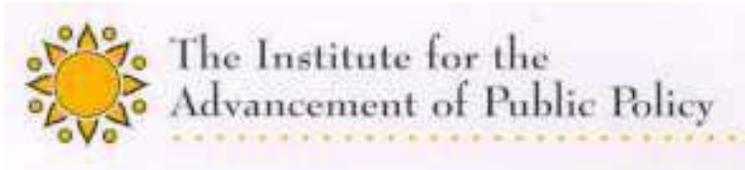
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Appendix C

Findings Report

Evaluation of the Literacy Development Council of Newfoundland and Labrador

(Summary)

**Prepared by The Institute for the Advancement of Public Policy, Inc.
St. John's, NL**

December 12th, 2002

Introduction

The Literacy Branch of the Department of Education issued a Request for Proposals to undertake an evaluation of the Literacy Development Council of Newfoundland and Labrador (LDC). As the result, ***The Institute for the Advancement of Public Policy, Inc. (the Institute)*** was engaged to undertake this evaluation. The evaluation commenced mid-October 2002 with a final report due to be submitted mid-January, 2003.

This document represents the findings based on data collected to this point in the evaluation. It also presents some of the key issues that are outstanding. It is intended that after the verification of the findings report that proposed solutions be developed that will require comment by the Department of Education, members of the LDC and their stakeholder partners including the community-based literacy organizations delivering programs throughout the province. From the outcome of the consultations, a final report will be prepared to conclude the project.

Finding 1

It appears that the Literacy Development Council Act was designed as a measure to achieve a number of ends respecting literacy, e.g., to access funds from the federal government and the private sector for literacy and to minimize the impact of a failed literacy coalition. At the time, the Department of Education was focused on delivering services for children in the regular school system, grades K-12, and the post-secondary system. The creation of an arms-length agency was viewed as a reasonable alternative to address adult literacy needs as understood at that time.

Finding 2

The *Literacy Development Act* extended broad powers to the Literacy Development Council to undertake activities associated with literacy, including policy development and fund-raising. The LDC has neither developed a clear sense of direction or focus, nor has been provided with sufficient resources to effect its legislated mandate. This lack of focus and direction has negatively impacted the progress of the LDC in addressing literacy needs in the province.

Finding 3

The LDC was established as an arms-length agency by legislation. The Department of Education has been asserting its presence in the field of literacy and is closely involved with the activities of the LDC. This is viewed by the LDC members and others as interference with and/or control of the LDC by the Department of Education. This has been, and continues to be, the source of some concern and confusion by LDC members and community agencies, such that the LDC's credibility is called into question.

Finding 4

The resources committed to the LDC are generally sufficient and are reasonable to achieve the activities in which has engaged to date. At the same time, there are available funds that remain uncommitted to undertake additional literacy development work in the province.

Finding 5

Though the initial Council was appointed by the Minister, the selection process for subsequent Council members is problematic. The selection process outlined in the *Literacy Development Act* has inherent difficulties in that the Council can be controlled by a few interests or people who can select members to serve. Further, as there is an absence of a membership base of electors, the current members select new members. Also, the Chair is elected from the members with 75% of votes. This has caused difficulties on several fronts but the most important is that there is an absence of accountability to Government.

Finding 6

The current LDC members do not share a common vision of the organization. Many of the community agencies do not know of the LDC's mandate. There is an absence of evidence of a connection with the vision and goals of the Strategic Literacy Plan. While the current Chair and Council are working to resolve some of the operational issues of the LDC, the LDC is not actively developing a plan to support the vision and goals set out in the Strategic Literacy Plan.

Finding 7

The Department of Education has taken control of the development of the Strategic Literacy Plan and grant funding. The Literacy Branch was established to implement the plan. The legislation remains so that, while government is attempting to set direction, the authority and funding remains with the LDC.

Finding 8

The Literacy Development Act placed the authority to issue grants with the LDC. Due to the way the Council has evolved, this has been the source of tension within the LDC and between the LDC and the Department. Community agencies raised this as a concern as well. The LDC, as it currently exists, should relinquish its role in the distribution of grants to community-based organizations.

Finding 9

The Literacy Branch has assumed responsibility for ABE Level I training. In this regard, there are questions as to why the Literacy Branch is assuming this role. Informants question why Level I should not be administered by those who have responsibility for Level II and Level III. The general view is that there is no role for the LDC in ABE Level I.

Next Steps

The Evaluation Steering Committee will be required to verify the findings as outlined above before the consultant prepares a draft final report to be used in further consultations to contribute to a final report.
