

Best graduation rate in Canada

## More students receive high school diploma

**M**ore New Brunswick students are finishing school with a high school diploma than ever before, according to a report on student flow indicators, released by the Department of Education in February.

As of June 1992, the New Brunswick graduation rate was 85.6 per cent, up from 78 per cent in the 1988-89 school year. This means the rate at which students are leaving school without a high school diploma has dropped to 14.4 per cent, from 22 per cent three years ago. New Brunswick's graduation rate is the best in the country.

To calculate the dropout rate, all active students were counted on Sept. 30, 1991, and the movement of these students was followed through to Sept. 30, 1992.

The provincial dropout rate for students from Grades 7 to 12 was 3.4 per cent or 2,300 students the year the data was collected. The dropout rate for students from Grades 10 to 12 was 5.4 per cent.

For 62 per cent of dropouts, the main cause is personal problems. These have been defined as events or circumstances arising in their home, school or social life. The next significant reason is academic problems (16 per

cent) followed closely by going to work (13 per cent).

The Department of Education offers several programs and services to help students deal with the pressures placed upon them to leave school. In the mentorship programs, staff and volunteers act as student liaisons with parents, counsellors, teachers, administrators and community agencies to help students cope with regular attendance in school. Tutors are hired to provide remedial instruction, and, in some districts, peer tutoring programs have been introduced. In the summer, students in Grades 6, 7 and 8, at risk of missing a grade, can attend a Summer Enhancement Program to keep them on track. Many of the programs targeted at youth from ages 12 to 18 are made possible through the federal/provincial Youth Strategy and the Stay-in School initiative.

Of the \$61.1 million the government has committed over the next four years under the Excellence in Education initiatives, \$14 million is targeted to strengthen programs aimed at keeping students in school and to allow the addition of new programs for gifted and talented students, those requiring remedial assistance and those with learning disabilities and behavior disorders.



Last year, the New Brunswick graduation rate for high school students was 85.6 per cent.

## Our biggest resource — people

**T**he dictionary describes the word "resource" as something that is part of the country's wealth. Certainly, Canada is one of the richest countries in the world when it comes to the resources found here in their natural form—in field, forest, oceans and underground.

But, we have other resources, too. Nowadays, you'll also hear a lot of talk about a new wealth we are discovering—the human resource. Quite simply, it means the people of this country and their abilities to contribute to the betterment of Canada. Increasingly, we are realizing the most important thing we have to do for our future is develop that human resource.

New Brunswickers have always been hard-working. But, today, unfortunately, it's not

enough just to work hard. Computers and other technology have changed our world forever. If New Brunswickers are going to be able to run successful businesses and industries, they have to learn more than they've ever learned before. It's not enough just to finish high school anymore. And, even adults who have been out in the workforce for years are discovering they have to start learning again.

The governments of Canada and New Brunswick saw a huge need to train our workforce for the modern world of technology. But, that takes money and special programs. That's why they've worked together to come up with a written agreement on training.

The Canada/New Brunswick Cooperation Agreement on En-

trepreneurship and Human Resource Development is an agreement between the federal Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), Employment and Immigration Canada, the provincial Department of Advanced Education and Labour and the New Brunswick Regional Development Corporation.

Over the next five years, \$25.8 million will be spent to help New Brunswickers become better entrepreneurs — which means opening and running their own businesses—and increase the ways in which they can increase their skills through such things as distance education and accreditation.

Computers will play a big part in how such training is made available throughout the province. Distance education means that through computer links, could be living in a town in north-

ern New Brunswick and still take a course, through computer, from a community college in southern New Brunswick.

An accreditation system being developed under the Agreement will streamline the training process in a number of ways. It will allow people to have prior learning and work experience recognized and applied to shorten formal training time. As well, credits between educational institutions will become more readily transferrable.

Computer literacy is another vital link to jobs, and that learning must begin at an early age. A goal of the agreement is to get more computers in New Brunswick schools.

Business owners will be encouraged to become more involved in the education system

and to form strong links with schools in their area. The aim is to make sure students are getting the kind of education that will turn them into skilled employees one day and to inspire young people to start their own businesses.

This agreement will help New Brunswick develop its human resources, and ultimately help make the province more competitive. It will position the province to play a bigger part in today's global economy. All of this will happen because New Brunswick will have plenty of the most important resource in the world today... skilled people!

If you'd like to find out more about this agreement, you can phone the co-ordinator, Agreement Secretariat, tel.: 444-4124.