MOVING ON

SECONDARY TO POST-SECONDARY TRANSITION

A REPORT TO THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, SKILLS AND TRAINING

Submitted by:
Secondary to Post-Secondary Transition Review Team

February 1997
February 1997

Honourable Paul Ramsey  
Minister of Education, Skills, and Training  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, British Columbia V8V 1X4

Dear Minister:

I am submitting this report and its recommendations on behalf of the Secondary to Post-Secondary Transition Review Team. Our task was to investigate two issues:

What are the real and perceived barriers that reduce opportunities for secondary school students to make the transition to post-secondary education and training?

What can we do to address these barriers and the variations in transition rates among schools?

The Team included representatives from several partner groups who brought a wide range of experience and views to the discussion on issues of transition. What became clear as we worked is that we all share a common goal – to encourage secondary school students to move on to post-secondary education and training.

To achieve this common goal, we need to actively address the barriers to transition. Our recommendations identify actions that provide opportunities for several partner groups to collaborate while moving the province toward better integration of the education and training system.

We hope that our work assists the Ministry in its efforts to support all students in their search for further education, a prosperous life, and a place in building our future society.

Yours truly,

[Signature]

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Secondary to Post-Secondary Transition Review Team
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REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

The Minister of Education, Skills and Training established the Secondary to Post-Secondary Transition Review Team (the Team) to investigate barriers to transition for students as they move from secondary school to post-secondary education and training. Following the investigation, the Team’s task was to identify ways to reduce barriers and to address variation in transition rates among schools.

HIGHLIGHTS OF FINDINGS

The Team’s findings identified issues related to:

- **Information**
  Students and parents have difficulty accessing necessary information about post-secondary education and work options.
  Some students and parents are overwhelmed by the volume and complexity of the information they receive about post-secondary institutions, programs, and financial assistance.

- **Finance**
  The cost of education and debt loads incurred during post-secondary studies are road blocks for many students.

- **Students’ Personal Lives**
  Students’ expectations for their futures can influence the choices they make, suggesting the need for education institutions at all levels to promote the values and benefits of post-secondary education to all students, particularly those from equity groups.
  Students benefit from support received from their community, family, peers, and school personnel.

- **Program**
  The variety of education and career choices and programs, and the complexity of admission standards and requirements confuses or daunts some students.

- **Data**
  Current data collection processes do not provide adequate information to assess variations in transition rates among schools.

As the Team considered its findings, five themes emerged:

- **Information Issues**: there is a need to improve the access, timeliness, and quality of information that students and parents receive about post-secondary institutions and program options, labour market or career options, and financial assistance for students.

- **Financial Issues**: there is a need to address concerns about the costs of pursuing post-secondary education and the subsequent debt that students incur.

- **Personal Issues**: there is a need to find ways to better support and encourage students to move on to pursue a post-secondary education.

- **Program Issues**: there is a need to identify ways to bridge the gaps in the PSE systems and establish closer ties between the educational institutions and their communities.

- **Data Issues**: there is a need to improve the ability of the province to track the variations in transition rates among schools.
The recommendations of the Team are aimed at reducing the barriers for students as they move through the Kindergarten to post-secondary school system. The recommendations have implications for many education partners, including public schools, school districts, public post-secondary institutions, and other educational institutions.

**RECOMMENDATIONS IN BRIEF**

The “Findings and Recommendations” section of this report contains a full listing of the Team’s recommendations. It also includes some strategies suggested to implement many of the recommendations.

**Information**

**Short-term**

- Include in Career and Personal Planning (CAPP) information about post-secondary options and career and labour markets.
- Provide resources to enhance the financial planning for post-secondary education and training aspects in CAPP.
- Establish a clearing house for information about post-secondary opportunities, labour market and career options, availability of financial assistance for students and the articulation of courses and programs.
- Develop strategies with schools, school districts, and post-secondary institutions to ensure that the quality of information to students is consistent and relevant.
- Encourage schools to develop plans to involve parents in career and personal planning activities of their children.

**Long-term**

- Direct the development and implementation of a comprehensive, multi-level strategy to deliver age-appropriate information that ensures easy access to good information by all students and parents.

**Financial Issues**

**Short-term**

- Include parents on the Standing Committee on Student Financial Assistance and continue to support institutional compliance with the principles negotiated in the Risk Sharing Agreement with various financial institutions.
- Work with the federal government to develop a federal loan remission program.
- Work with post-secondary institutions and school districts to provide support to students including ensuring that Financial Aid Officers and school counsellors have adequate training in financial assistance, promote programs and work options to help students finance post-secondary education and training, and work with relevant institutions to provide debt counseling and other financial support services.
**Long-term**

- Review overall education costs in the long-term including direct costs to students, student loan interest, student debt loads, and tax breaks and credits for education costs.

- Review the Passport to Education program to ensure that funds are used effectively.

- Conduct an analysis to identify systemic barriers to students from families living in poverty and other equity groups similar to the Gender Impact Analysis.

**Personal**

**Short-term**

- Encourage schools and community to develop and supplement mentorship, community liaison, and other such programs to foster support relationships among students, school personnel, and communities.

- Encourage school districts and post-secondary institutions to jointly expand initiatives to orient secondary school students to the post-secondary environment.

**Program Issues**

**Short-term**

- Encourage development of opportunities for transition to post-secondary education and training through flexible and portable assessment policies (challenge, equivalency, and other forms of Prior Learning Assessment).

- Encourage post-secondary institutions to give students opportunities for preferred entry into post-secondary school programs or receive credit toward post-secondary coursework.

- Continue to begin career planning in earlier grades.

- Encourage school districts and business to increase the number of industry work experience placements for teachers and counsellors.

**Long-term**

- Work with post-secondary institutions to review admission procedures and practices to expand admission criteria.

- Support a full range of program options through alternate delivery options.

- Co-ordinate the efforts of all learning organizations to increase the articulation of their courses and programs.

- Encourage school districts to give greater consideration to the needs of students from equity groups.
• Develop a comprehensive strategy to provide adequate training and support for school personnel to meet the career exploration needs of all students.

• Encourage the BC College of Teachers to establish a Personal Planning and CAPP as components of teacher education programs and to allow student teachers to receive credit for appropriate work experience.

Variations in Transition Rates Among Schools

Long-term

• Gather information on transition rates to assist school districts in setting transition rate targets and strategies for improvement.

• Conduct survey to trace pathways of youths who do not immediately pursue post-secondary education and training to identify their transition patterns.

• Mandate the use of Personal Education Numbers (PENs) for all schools and institutions to enable the connecting of K-12 and post-secondary records.

• Design a means of tracking those students who attend out-of-province and private post-secondary institutions.
The reasons for encouraging young people to undertake post-secondary education are evident considering the anticipated changes in employment patterns in the province. Over the next ten years, the employment picture in British Columbia is expected to change, and the level of skills and training required for employment will increase. Between 1993 and 2005, 67 percent of the job openings in BC will require completion of a post-secondary program. In 1994, only 48 percent of the employed work force had these qualifications.\(^1\) With more jobs requiring increased skill levels, it is in the students' best interests to continue with post-secondary studies.

Finding ways to increase student's opportunities to pursue post-secondary studies was the central focus of the work of the Secondary to Post-Secondary Transition Review Team (the Team) as they developed this report. The Team noted that this study, Moving On, should not be seen as a final report on transitions. Rather, they saw their efforts as an attempt to evaluate an issue that is of growing importance to students, parents, and the economic well-being of our province. As education options become more numerous, and as transition options become more complex, further study of this issue will be necessary.

**Mandate of the Team**

The Minister of Education, Skills and Training formed the Secondary to Post-Secondary Transition Review Team in September 1996. The Team’s mandate was to investigate barriers to transition and find ways to reduce barriers and variations in transition rates among schools. To achieve this mandate, the Team focused on transitions of Grade 8 students in public schools through high school graduation to successful enrollment in some form of public post-secondary education.

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The Team met for four one-day meetings to do the work. In their investigations, the Team:

- reviewed transition data for Grade 8 students to post-secondary education and university eligibility.
- gave emphasis to gathering information about direct transition, where students enter the post-secondary system immediately following high school graduation.
- recognized the importance of, but gave less emphasis to, indirect transition, where high school graduates spend one or more years travelling, working, or raising families prior to enrolling in post-secondary education.
- considered issues of quality and smoothness of transition to post-secondary, including how students made choices of programs and career paths, whether support at the Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) and beyond was integrated, and whether equity groups were receiving sufficient support to make transitions throughout the system.
- analyzed available data on various populations of students to identify patterns of participation and success.

The Team was asked to recommend ways to address their findings about factors that influence barriers and variations in transition rates. The Team did not look for factors that affect post-secondary success rates or for barriers that impede successful completion of post-secondary studies, deeming these issues outside their mandate.

The Team drew upon many background information sources in the course of this review. Particularly helpful was the twelve focus group meetings held in various locations in the province. Quotations from the focus group meetings conducted by Viewpoints Research are included in the section "Challenges to Successful Transitions".

Throughout their discussions, the Team held the view that education is valuable and worthwhile at many levels. Education prepares people for work. It develops the knowledge and skills necessary to deal successfully with others and equips people to participate fully in the life of their communities. For communities, education contributes to civic and cultural development. For society at large, education provides skilled and competent citizens and workers.

LIMITATIONS OF THE DATA

From the outset, the work of the Team was constrained by the data available. The most recent statistics related specifically to secondary to post-secondary transition rates were from 1993/94, the last year the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training (the Ministry) collected data in those areas. While the Team was assured that many trends

2 The Ministry's decision to stop collecting transition data was made in 1993/94, when financial restraints required that the Ministry explore internal cost-cutting measures. In discussions with partner groups, it was decided that if data were not being used directly they should not be collected. Since secondary to post-secondary rates were not being used, data collection in these areas was halted.
were upward, members determined that 1993/94 data should be reported, since these are the most recent statistics available.

Further examination of transitions could be broader if:

- current data specific to transition rates were collected.
- a broader range of student outcome data were available within the framework of social and economic issues that could impact education.

**TRANSITIONS AND BARRIERS**

It is government’s responsibility to minimize barriers that hinder students’ successful transition from secondary to post-secondary studies. Anything that hinders students from successful or smooth transitions can be considered barriers. When barriers are removed, all high school students have equal opportunities to attend post-secondary institutions and are better prepared for life, including future employment and advancement in the labour market.

To make successful direct transitions from secondary to post-secondary studies, students must

- graduate with a Dogwood Diploma.
- graduate with grades and courses that make a student eligible for post-secondary admission.
- enrol directly in a post-secondary program.

Barriers to successful transition, either real or perceived, include:

- difficulty of access to information about post-secondary education and other job-related information.
- the costs associated with post-secondary study.
- personal and/or family issues arising from the pursuit of post-secondary studies.
- program issues, including program availability, variations in entrance requirements, and learning outcomes.

The Team did not attempt to draw any conclusions about the impact of barriers faced by students when they make transitions at their schools or how differences among schools affect transition rates. An initial review of Link File data indicates that many schools with high transition rates are in areas with high socio-economic factors, i.e., areas with high median income and areas with low rates of social assistance.
**TRENDS**

**Overview of the K-12 and Post-Secondary Education Systems**

In the K-12 system, the number of schools and students in 1995/96 were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PUBLIC K-12 SCHOOLS</th>
<th>INDEPENDENT K-12 SCHOOLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NO. OF SCHOOLS</td>
<td>1,697</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO. OF STUDENTS</td>
<td>594,800</td>
<td>54,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the same year, the headcount enrollment for the public Post-Secondary Education (PSE) system were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UNIVERSITIES</th>
<th>COLLEGES, INSTITUTES AND OPEN LEARNING AGENCY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HEADCOUNT ENROLLMENT</td>
<td>68,000</td>
<td>96,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The five university colleges, 11 colleges, and five institutes in BC offer post-secondary level courses on a total of 112 sites across the province. Additional post-secondary education and training is available through 1,020 private post-secondary institutions (of which only 300 are eligible for student financial assistance), 16 Community Skills Centres (five more being developed), continuing education programs through public schools and post-secondary institutions, and many non-profit education providers.

**High School Completion Patterns and Trends**

**General Trends**

The BC high school completion rate for 1995/96 was 79.9 percent. This is an increase from 76.2 percent in 1993/94, and 77.6 percent in 1994/95. The school completion rate is derived from the number of Dogwood Diplomas, Adult Dogwood Diplomas, General Educational Development (GED), Letters of Assessment issued by the Ministry, and Provincial Certificates issued by colleges as part of the Adult Basic Education Program.\(^4\)

Data from Statistics Canada\(^5\) (1991 census) indicate that 79 percent of BC residents aged 20-24 claimed to have at least high school graduation.

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\(^3\) Figures reflect actual headcount enrollment (full- and part-time) in non-vocational programs. Actual headcount enrollment in vocational programs is not available.

\(^4\) Not included in these rates are students with special needs, who may receive special diplomas or certificates. Note that the 20.1 percent of students who do not receive high school credentials includes an unknown number of college and university graduates who were admitted without high school graduation.

When only the standard form of graduation (the Dogwood Diploma) is counted, the high school completion rate is 71.5 percent for 1995/96, up from the 1993/94 rate of 66.3 percent and the 1994/95 rate of 68.6 percent.

**School Completion Rates by School District**

High school completion rates (Dogwood Diploma only) vary widely between school districts. In 1993/94, 13 school districts had completion rates below 50 percent, while five districts had rates higher than 80 percent.

Based on 1993/94 information, rates of school completion (Dogwood Diploma only) have risen five percent in the past two years.

**University Eligibility by School and District**

Of those students who complete a Dogwood Diploma, many do not meet estimated eligibility requirements for admission to the province’s publicly funded universities. These estimated requirements, which stipulate a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.5 or better, may be below university entrance levels. District data for 1993/94 suggest that between 15 and 55 percent of students in 71 districts were deemed eligible for university entrance.

When the same criteria are applied at the school level, the percentage of graduates in each school who meet the requirements for university eligibility ranges from zero to 94 percent. The provincial average for those graduating with university eligibility was 43 percent in 1993/94.

The Team stressed, that there are limitations in the data, including those on school completion rates and university eligibility:

- Eligibility requirements are theoretical and based on university entrance requirements. These requirements may not apply to colleges and other post-secondary institutions.

- School district level data are available for students making the transition to BC public post-secondary education only.

- There have been upward trends in completion rates since the data presented here were collected in 1993/94.

While trends may be upward, the transition prospects faced by many students in many of our schools and districts remain a matter of concern. The Team urged that there be further study in these areas.
**Equity Trends**

**Aboriginal students**

Aboriginal students do not share the academic participation and success of their age cohort:

- In 1995, children of Aboriginal descent comprised approximately 8.4 percent of the BC school-aged population but only 5.9 percent of the total public K-12 student population.\(^6\)
- Strikingly fewer students of Aboriginal ancestry completed Grade 12 with a Dogwood Diploma: out of every 100 Aboriginal students who entered Grade 8 in 1990, only 31 had graduated by 1996. This compares to 71 percent of non-Aboriginal students graduating from the same cohort.
- A greater proportion of Aboriginal students leave school prior to Grade 12: 47 percent have left by Grade 12, compared to 18 percent of non-Aboriginal students.
- Aboriginal student performance in other measurable areas (e.g., final marks in provincially examinable subjects) remains below that of non-Aboriginal learners.

**Visible minority students**

Data concerning visible minority students in the K-12 system are not available.

**Minority home language students**

Data are collected about minority home language students — students whose language spoken at home has been identified. In this case, the criterion for selection is that each selected language group must have more than 150 students in the 1990 grade 8 cohort.

Examination of Dogwood Diploma completion rates based on language spoken at home indicates that:

- Students whose home languages are Vietnamese, Italian, French, Punjabi, and Chinese exceeded the completion rate of their grade 8 cohort.
- Students speaking English, Hindi, and Spanish showed lower completion rates than their grade 8 cohort.

\(^6\) The total public K-12 student population does not include all Band schools, but does include those that are registered as independent schools.
Gender

Data collected about differences between the performance of male and female students indicate that:

- Female participation in Grade 12 mathematics and science courses has increased, but remains below male participation rates in mathematics and physics. The gap between male and female participation in these courses has narrowed.

- Female participation in Grade 12 chemistry courses surpassed male participation for the first time in 1995/96, while remaining higher in biology.

- When averaged across all examinable areas, female students outperform male students by from one to four percent in school marks, examination marks, and final marks.

- Female students show lower rates of attrition from Grade 8 to Grade 12, and higher rates of school completion with a Dogwood Diploma (73 percent versus 64 percent).

- Despite high achievement and narrowing gaps in enrollment, traditional gender breakdowns in career expectations are still found in the jobs that students expect to obtain. Females tend to choose careers in the social sciences, for example, while males look to the trades and applied sciences.

Students with disabilities

Prior to 1996, the Ministry did not collect student level data about students with disabilities. As a result, there is no performance information for students included in this equity group.

In 1994/95, students with disabilities represented seven percent of the student population, based on funding for special education services. In the 1994 In-School Survey of Students, slightly fewer students identified themselves as having disabilities, based on a definition of special needs as “having trouble walking, seeing, hearing, or learning certain things.”

Given the self-reporting factor and other limitations inherent in such a survey, information gained through the In-School Survey must be interpreted with caution. The survey indicated that:

- Students with disabilities are less likely than other students to expect to go on to post-secondary education.

- Significantly fewer students with disabilities feel their schools are preparing them well for going on to college or university.

- Students with disabilities tend to have different occupational aspirations than students without disabilities.
Students living in poverty

The Ministry does not collect student level data on poverty. However, income tax data mapped onto school enrollment areas indicated that as the percentage of people receiving social assistance and unemployment insurance increased, the percentage of students meeting university eligibility requirements decreased.

Transition Patterns and Trends

Direct Transitions

The most recent data available (1993/94) showed that 47 percent of that year's high school graduates were enrolled in BC public post-secondary programs in the fall of 1994. The distribution of these graduates was as follows:

- Immediate transitions from secondary to post-secondary studies increased by six percentage points from 1990 to 1994. A further seven percent of graduates was estimated to have enrolled in university or college outside British Columbia or a private post-secondary institution in the province.

- Almost 21 percent of high school graduates entered directly into college academic programs, six percent to college career technical programs, and 17 percent to universities (see Table 1). Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island graduates were more likely to enrol directly in university, while Interior graduates were more likely to enter directly into college academic programs.

TABLE 1: DIRECT TRANSITION OF GRADE 8 COHORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESTINATION OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF GRADE 8 COHORT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College - Academic</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College - Career/Technical</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College - Vocational and ABE/ESL</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Forty-four percent of students who left school in 1993/94, but did not obtain a Dogwood Diploma, enrolled in some form of schooling within the following year. Almost 94 percent of these returning students were enrolled in high school completion and upgrading programs, while less than six percent went directly into college, university, vocational, and apprenticeship programs.

Transition Rates by District

Data sources are not sufficient to offer transition rate comparisons by school from Grade 8. District level data for 1993/94 suggest that few districts have 35 percent or more of their Grade 8 enrollment graduate from secondary school and make a direct transition to post-secondary education.

The Team stressed that these numbers describe a very specific group of students who have made a direct transition to post-secondary studies at a British Columbia public post-secondary institution.

In other words, the numbers do not capture students who:
- may undertake post-secondary education outside the province.
- have chosen to enter a private institution for post-secondary studies.
- have chosen not to make a direct transition to post-secondary studies.

If data were available to account for all Grade 8 students who enter all post-secondary programs directly, it is estimated that the numbers would improve by about nine percent.

Indirect Transitions

Many post-secondary school students do not follow a direct path from secondary to post-secondary to the labour force. Many people spend one or more years in activities such as travelling, working, and raising families before entering or re-entering the post-secondary education system. There are at least four indicators of that trend:
- 40 percent of university students and 45 percent of college and institute students are aged 25 or older.
- A greater percentage of students aged 25 or older in post-secondary education are in part-time studies. In 1993/94, 27 percent of full-time students and 55 percent of part-time students in colleges and institutes were aged 25 or older, while 32 percent of full-time students and 56 percent of part-time students in universities were in this age group.

Age Distribution of Students Enrolled in BC Post-Secondary Institutions, 1993-94

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University Enrollments</th>
<th>College Enrollments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40 &amp; over</td>
<td>40 &amp; over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>35-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>30-34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>25-29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: College enrollment figures are for college and institutes only. Students enrolled in vocational programs are excluded.

Source: Post-Secondary Education Division, MOEST; Statistics Canada Publication. The Universities, Enrollment and Degrees. Table 14. Catalogue No. 87-204, 1993/94.
While the number of high school graduates in 1988 who participated in post-secondary education decreased every year after 1988, there were new students enrolling from that cohort in each of the next three years. Forty-four percent of 1988 graduates made a direct transition to BC public post-secondary education and an additional 12 percent enrolled within the next three years.

Available data indicate that there were an estimated 40,000 Adult Basic Education (ABE) students enrolled in public continuing education or college ABE courses in 1995/96.

**Equity Transitions**

Direct and indirect transition data are not collected for all equity groups. As a result, transition rates can in most instances only be inferred from other indicators (e.g., see High School Completion Patterns and Trends, above). Other data also make certain comparisons possible. However, the Team cautioned that direct comparisons of participation of the general population with that of equity groups are best seen as tentative.

**Aboriginal students**

A large proportion of Aboriginal students are not making successful transition to post-secondary education:

- In 1995, Aboriginal learners represented only 1.5 percent of all public university students, 2.3 percent of students in college academic programs, and 3.2 percent of students in career or technical and vocational studies, despite comprising 5.7 percent of the population between the ages of 20 and 39.

**Visible minority students**

Direct and indirect transition rates to post-secondary education for visible minority students are currently unavailable. However, there are indicators that the transition to post-secondary education is occurring at higher rates for visible minority students than for the general population. Ministry data indicate that:

- Students who are of a visible minority are slightly over-represented in academic programs and are about even with the rest of the population in career technical and vocational programs. For example, people from visible minorities represented about 17.2 percent of the BC population aged 20-39 in 1993, but comprised 19.4 percent of 1993 university graduates, 18.8 percent of students exiting college academic programs, and 16.5 percent of students exiting college career or technical and vocational programs.

- More students from visible minorities identified that getting a degree as the main reason for enrolling in college programs (32 percent vs. 24 percent for other students). This finding was accentuated among former students in college academic programs, where more visible minority people indicated that they
attended school to get a degree (67 percent vs. 56 percent) while fewer indicated they attended to obtain job skills (17 percent vs. 25 percent).

Gender
Transition rates for males and females suggest that women are making the transition to post-secondary studies at a steadily increasing rate. At the same time, female and male career choices tend to follow traditional gender lines. Recent data indicate that:

- Female post-secondary enrollment has increased by 60 percent and male enrollments by 24 percent since 1984/85. Female students now represent more than half of the post-secondary student population.
- Female students have consistently had higher direct transition rates to post-secondary education than male students.
- Over 61 percent of part-time and 52 percent of full-time students enrolled in post-secondary institutions are female.
- Female students continue to be under-represented in the sciences. In 1993/94, female students comprised 16 percent of those exiting applied sciences and 43 percent of those exiting the sciences.
- Enrollment of female students in the trades is very low and is declining, and females who choose to enter training in traditionally male-dominated trades have a lower completion rate than their male counterparts.

Students with disabilities
The Ministry does not collect data that specifically target transition rates for students with disabilities. At the post-secondary level, enrollment figures for students with disabilities are collected annually for colleges and institutions, and are estimated for universities. Some performance information at the post-secondary level is gathered through a self-reporting survey.

While transition rates cannot be determined from these data, the following information is available:

- Compared to a seven percent participation rate in K-12, students with disabilities are estimated to make up three percent of the post-secondary population.

These figures suggest that students with disabilities may be under-represented in post-secondary education. Because the comparability of the two groups of students with disabilities is questionable, caution is needed when drawing firm conclusions.
Direct Post-Secondary Institution Transition Rate, based on Percentage of Families Receiving UI or IA in BC Secondary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Families Receiving UI or IA</th>
<th>Percentage of Families Entering Post-Secondary Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-20%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-30%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-100%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each bar represents the direct entrance rate to BC public post-secondary institutions from BC secondary schools with a given percentage of families receiving Unemployment Insurance (UI) or Income Assistance (IA) in 1994.

Enrollment area is defined by the postal codes of students in that school, and may not be identical to the catchment area.

Source: Link File, Evaluation and Accountability Branch, MOEST; Statistics Canada, Small Area and Administrative Data Division. Family Table 6, 1994.

Students living in poverty

Students living in poverty may be more limited in their ability to make the transition to post-secondary education than those in the general student population. Reasons for this may include:

- lack of financial support from family.
- lack of support or encouragement in the school setting, and from peers.
- lack of support for post-secondary education arising from socio-economic factors in the neighbourhood or community.
- nutritional and health problems.

As stated earlier, the Ministry does not collect student level data based on poverty. Using one indicator of poverty — the level of income assistance from unemployment insurance and social assistance — it appears that as the percentage of people receiving social assistance and unemployment insurance in a particular school area increases, the percentage of students making a direct transition to post-secondary education decreases.
Many individuals find the transition from one condition to another to be stressful. Students are no exception. Many find it stressful during major transitions, such as moving from elementary to secondary school or moving from secondary school to a post-secondary institution.

Particularly stressful is the transition from secondary to post-secondary education:

- Pursuing a post-secondary education is voluntary: there is a strong element of choice in making this transition.
- This decision determines the direction of a student’s adult life.
- The decision to pursue a post-secondary education often includes major disruptions to student, family, and friends, such as a move.
- The financial decisions made during this transition can affect both student and parents.

The challenges implicit in the transition from secondary to post-secondary education are intensified when additional burdens and pressures are added, such as those experienced by members of equity groups.

To acknowledge these challenges, the government has recently introduced a number of initiatives and strategies to minimize the impact of the transition. A list of initiatives that affect secondary and post-secondary school students is given in Appendix 1. The employment of these initiatives can make the transition to post-secondary education easier for students. Nevertheless, barriers remain.

**Barriers to Transition**

The Team identified factors that create barriers to student transition and organized them into four broad categories: information, finance, personal, and programs. Factors from all four of these categories may impact a student, or none may do so. While individual students may face different combinations of factors, the Team identified information and financial issues as priorities for action, as they represent the barriers that affect the most students in the most...
significant way. However, any one of these factors could halt the transition process and the Team determined that the four categories should therefore be seen as interconnected.

Information

Information about post-secondary institutions and program options, the labour market and career opportunities, and financial assistance

Information about post-secondary institutions and programs, the labour market and career opportunities, and financial assistance comes from various sources, including post-secondary institutions, school districts, and the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training (the Ministry). This information is delivered in many different formats: various kinds of activities, print, and electronic (see Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRODUCER/SOURCE</th>
<th>TYPE OF INFORMATION</th>
<th>MEANS OF DELIVERY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-sec. institution</td>
<td>Opportunities Programs/ Financial Aid</td>
<td>Career days; open houses; public information and orientation sessions; mail-outs; media advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School districts</td>
<td>Opportunities Programs/ Financial Aid</td>
<td>School counselling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour Market</td>
<td></td>
<td>Course selection programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry agencies</td>
<td>Opportunities and Programs</td>
<td>Ministry publications: Opportunities in Post-Secondary Education and Training, Work Futures, Career Paths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour market</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ministry publication: Work Futures, Career Paths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial aid</td>
<td>Ministry staff attend career fairs and information sessions; mail-outs on request</td>
<td>BC Graduates Guide, Financial Opportunities of Students; BCSAP Application Package; brochures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal HRD</td>
<td>Labour market</td>
<td>Occupational Outlook (quarterly)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is no central body responsible for organizing available information to make it coherent for secondary school students, although some school and career counsellors do organize the information for their students. Nor is there a regional plan to disseminate information locally. As a result, the amount and quality of information accessible to students varies from school to school.

The Team found that many students:

- are unaware of the availability of information.
- do not know how to access or do not have access to necessary information.
- are overwhelmed by the amount of information available from different sources.
- find the language used in the information too difficult or unfamiliar to be useful.

The Team also found that:

- much of the information is not available in languages for immigrant students and their families or in alternate formats for students with disabilities.
- some information contains stereotypes of the career capacity of equity groups, and displays a lack of knowledge about minorities (including Aboriginal cultures), which may result in the giving of inappropriate career or educational advice.
- apart from Career and Personal Planning (CAPP), there is no adequate direction about where and how to find information.
- information about support services (e.g., campus child care, support for students with disabilities, supports for Aboriginal students) is not consistently available through the usual sources (e.g., post-secondary calendars).

**Information for parents**

It is important for parents or family members to have access to information about post-secondary, labour market, and career opportunities so that they can provide support and advice.

Many information sources directed to students are also available to parents and other interested parties. In addition, many secondary schools and post-secondary institutions have information or recruitment activities targeted at parents.8

Despite the availability of these opportunities, some parents do not attend information sessions for various reasons. The Team found that many parents want different levels of information at different times (depending on where their child is in the education system) and that many parents prefer sessions to be arranged for after-school hours.

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8 Sixteen of 19 responding institutions target recruitment activities at parents. Informal recruitment activities survey carried out in October 1996, by the Access and Health Programs Branch, MOEST.
Financial Issues

Costs of pursuing post-secondary education and training

Students pursuing post-secondary education and training face significant expenses. For many students, these costs are a barrier to achieving their education goals. Costs fall into two categories:

- Program costs (tuition, books, supplies).

  The sample cost to students for programs at public post-secondary institutions ranges from $310 per month for a certificate program to $440 per month for an undergraduate degree program at a university.\(^9\) Tuition fees in British Columbia are frozen for the 1996/97 and 1997/98 academic years at 1995/96 levels.

- Living costs.

  Living costs range from $830 per month for a single student living away from home to $2,100 per month for married students with children or other dependents.\(^10\)

Students who leave their communities, support dependants, or those from certain equity groups (e.g., students with disabilities) may face additional financial pressures.

Financial support

For many students, lack of financial support appears to be a significant barrier to pursuing a post-secondary education.

The primary sources of financial support for students are their parents and their personal incomes. Students’ savings and incomes are often inadequate to meet the costs of undertaking a post-secondary education.

Another source of financial support is the BC Student Assistance Program (BCSAP). The BCSAP covers full-time programs and is available to students who meet eligibility criteria.\(^11\) In 1995/96 about 46,400 students made 55,000 applications to receive financial assistance under BCSAP for studies at public, private and out-of-province post-secondary institutions. (Students can apply for assistance for more than one study term or period within an academic year.) Of all students enrolled in full-time programs at public post-secondary institutions, about 33 percent receive financial assistance.\(^12\)

BCSAP also offers Special Programs awards. Each of these awards has separate criteria for eligibility and provides funding for part-time

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\(^9\) Sample of program costs, Student Services Branch, MOEST

\(^10\) Federal Government Policy: Moderate Standard of Living

\(^11\) The figures and calculations relating to BCSAP recipients, awards, debt loads, etc., for particular cohorts of students, in this report, are best estimates based on the BCSAP database.

\(^12\) 35,000 BCSAP recipients in public in-province institutions out of 104,700 full-time vocational and non-vocational (academic and career/technical) enrollment. This figure is derived from actual full-time non-vocational enrollment (81,620) and a best estimate of full-time vocational enrollment (23,053).
studies, upgrading programs, and students with disabilities. Appendix 2 provides a list of other funds available to students (page 46).

Students and parents need accurate, timely, and sound information about financial support programs to assist them in assessing the financial implications of their education decisions.

**Student debt**

For BC students who have completed the fourth year of a four year program with financial assistance through BCSAP, the average debt load in 1995/96 was $17,200 after loan remission. Of that debt, 75 percent is the federal Canada Student Loan (CSL). Prior to loan remission, the average student debt is $19,600.

Some students may be discouraged by the prospect of the large financial burden of loans and may abandon or postpone plans to further their education. The benefits of post-secondary education should be made clear to students to provide strong incentives for them to undertake post-secondary studies.

**Personal Issues**

*Value and relevance of education*

Education is valuable and worthwhile at many levels. Education prepares people for work. It develops the knowledge and skills necessary to deal successfully with others and equips people to participate fully in the life of their communities. For communities, education contributes to civic and cultural development. For society at large, education provides skilled and competent citizens and workers.

In general, an education is expected to enable individuals to take advantage of the economic opportunities available: in the eyes of most people, a better education equals a better life. Consequently, many students feel enormous pressures from parents and teachers to go on to post-secondary education.

Secondary school students who recognize and accept the value of education often experience increased pressure, increased anxiety, and/or increased motivation. As well, students sometimes feel resentful toward parents and teachers for “harping” on the value of education.

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13 Student Services Branch, MOEST
14 Student Services Branch, MOEST
15 In 1995/96 average student debt loads for study programs of various lengths—before loan remissions—were as follows:
   - after completing first year of a one-year program: $7,356
   - after completing second year of a two-year program: $12,947
   - after completing third year of a three-year program: $20,460
   - after completing fourth year of a four-year program: $19,575
   - after completing fifth year of a five-year program: $25,133
   Source: Student Services Branch, MOEST
Local labour markets can play a part in influencing students' attitudes toward further education. Where possibilities for immediate long-term employment and steady advancement are high, a student's desire or need to begin to work may overshadow the value he or she places on post-secondary education and training.

The Team suggests that schools and teachers should be encouraged to make greater efforts to emphasize the value and relevance of further education. This should be done within the context of the student's personal experiences, talents and expectations, and community.

**Support from family, peers, and school personnel**

Research suggests that student performance is enhanced when parents are involved in the education of their children. Helping with home work, visiting school, staying informed, and becoming involved in committees and meetings are ways that parents demonstrate their involvement. For a number of reasons such as hours they work or their difficulty in speaking English, parents may be unwilling or unable to become involved.

Although schools provide opportunities to involve parents by organizing particular events, parent participation at the secondary school level is often low. A number of factors may account for this, including:

- lack of desire by secondary school students to have parents involved in their schooling.
- the recognition by parents of the desire by older students to have increased responsibility.
- participation in school activities not being seen by parents as a vital kind of parent involvement at this level.

The values, attitudes, and experiences of family, friends, and community members can influence the perceptions and beliefs of students. If these are negative toward post-secondary education and training, the student's academic achievement and interest in pursuing further learning may be diminished. At the same time, if students have experiences in school that are negative or reflect low expectations, it is possible that they too will not complete or continue their education and training.

The Team noted with concern that Aboriginal students and students with disabilities are less positive than the majority of students about their school experiences and are more likely to perceive post-secondary institutions as hostile and unwelcoming.
**Student expectations**

The Team found that secondary school students' expectations for their futures can influence the choices they make about a post-secondary education. Available data suggest that:

- Female students' expectations and plans continue to exclude some traditionally male careers, such as engineering.
- Students with special needs generally aspire to jobs requiring less education, and only 44 percent expect to go to college or university.
- Career information may reflect stereotypes that influence and limit students' expectations or choices.
- A lack of positive role models for equity groups within the school system may limit the likelihood of these students having optimistic expectations about careers or education.

**Program Issues**

**Course and program options**

Access to full education services in the Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) and Post-Secondary Education (PSE) systems is not available in all regions of the province. In Grades 11 and 12 in particular, the range of courses available to students (including programming for learners with unique needs) varies from school to school, and from district to district. For example, large urban schools can offer a fuller, richer, more diverse curriculum than small rural schools. This means that some students, especially those in small rural areas, are limited in their choice of courses and programs that are readily available to others.

At the post-secondary level, course and program offerings also vary from institution to institution, and campus to campus. It is not uncommon to have fewer course options at smaller campuses, because their enrollment is too low to support a range of options or qualified instructors are not available on a part-time basis.

Efforts to improve the access to services in the Kindergarten to Post-Secondary Education (K-PSE) system have focused on increasing the use of computer technologies. While these efforts have met with some success, the use of computer technologies has introduced new issues (e.g., students have no or limited access to computers, particularly those students who are living in poverty).
Post-secondary standards and entrance issues

Entrance requirements for post-secondary education vary from institution to institution, and from program to program within institutions. For example, the University of British Columbia generally requires Grade 12 graduation with four examinable subjects, including English 12, while the University of Northern British Columbia requires Grade 12 graduation with English 12, and three other Grade 12 subjects, but not necessarily examinable ones. Students must be mindful of differences in entrance requirements when choosing courses and programs in Grades 11 and 12.

As well, new applied secondary level courses such as Technical and Professional Communications 12, Information Technology 11 and 12, Applications of Mathematics 9 to 12 and Applications of Physics 11 and 12 have yet to be endorsed by all post-secondary institutions. Until they are endorsed, grades obtained for these courses may not count for admission purposes. This could lead students to not select these courses.

Most post-secondary institutions use grade point average (GPA) to determine admission requirements. Many post-secondary institutions vary the cut-off mark from year to year to fill available seats. The Team expressed concern about inconsistent standards of assessment across classrooms and schools in the province and the use of marks as the only determining factor for admission to an institution.

The K-12 and PSE systems have separate processes for developing curriculum and programs. The two separate systems are not aligned. In effect, it is possible for there to be overlaps or gaps between what students learn in the first year of post-secondary studies and what they learn in Grade 12 courses.

Initiatives to facilitate a smoother transition between the two systems include the making of joint curriculum and articulation agreements between the two systems. These agreements allow students to take courses in high school that are equivalent to first year courses at participating institutions.

Focus on course, career options and personal exploration at earlier grades

In a complex society, schools are expected to:

- provide custodial care of the young.
- encourage socialization in children.
- train for basic skills.
- stimulate creativity and thinking skills.
- widen horizons intellectually, socially, and culturally.
- help the young develop their sense of self-worth.
- prepare youth for employment and the future.16

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In September 1995, the Ministry of Education distributed the *K-12 Education Plan*, which includes the successful completion of CAPP 11 and 12 as a graduation requirement. CAPP became a required area of study for students in grades 8 to 10 in September 1996. In the same year, Personal Planning became a required area of study for students in Kindergarten to Grade 7.

The curriculum components of the CAPP Integrated Resource Package include: the planning process (Student Learning Plan), personal development, career development, and work experience (grades 11 and 12). A student is required to maintain a Student Learning Plan from Grade 9 to graduation. This allows students to focus on career paths based on their interests and aptitudes.

Other career programs include career preparation programs, co-operative education programs, and secondary school apprenticeships. Each of these is designed to provide experiential learning, involving a combination of school courses and work experience, to help students pursue their chosen career paths.

Although these programs exist, the Team felt that transition would be improved if:

- career planning started earlier to allow students to better match course options at the secondary level to meet post-secondary requirements.

- more consideration were given to equity group members who face more difficult transitions than others.

**Level of teacher/school personnel support with career assistance at schools**

There is an increased emphasis on practical applications of learning in provincial curriculum. As well career programs are being put into place in the K-12 system. These changes are appreciated but there is a need to improve the level of support and training for school personnel. The inadequacy of training and other support impacts the level of support that school personnel can provide to students.

**Orientation to post-secondary education**

For some secondary school students, particularly those who have no older siblings or friends who have gone before them, the thought of undertaking post-secondary studies can be daunting. Many secondary school students have voiced the need to visit or experience what it is like to attend a post-secondary institution.

Initiatives to orient secondary school students to a post-secondary environment include open houses, shadowing a post-secondary student, and mentoring by a post-secondary co-operative student.

My brother tells me some things — he’s there right now — and my parents, from their experiences, but that’s changed a lot since then.

Grade 11-12 student
Viewpoints Research
focus groups
Variations Among Schools

Internal and External Factors

All schools in the province are committed to providing their students with the best possible education. Nevertheless, the Team found that not all schools are equally successful in helping students achieve successful transitions. This is demonstrated in part by school and district comparisons noted earlier in this report.

Many factors can affect the variation in transition rates between schools. Some of these factors are school-centred, and include:
- the quality of teaching and counselling resources available.
- availability of resources.
- the relevance of programs offered by the schools.
- the feelings of trust and caring.

Other factors are external to the school, including:
- community and parental expectations and support.
- economic factors in the community, including average income and the extent of poverty.
- urbanization and other social factors.
- geographical location.
- educational requirements for jobs/work available in the community.
- community resources, including post-secondary institutions.

Many of these internal and external factors are intangible and are very difficult to measure reliably (e.g., feelings of trust and caring). Some factors can be measured reliably, but are complex and difficult, if not impossible, to change (e.g., parental expectations). Internal or external factors can have a decided impact on student performance, which, in turn, influences post-secondary eligibility and rates of transition from secondary schools to the PSE system.

It is possible to analyze schools' transition rates by comparing their secondary to post-secondary transition success against socio-economic factors. An initial review of Link File data indicates that many schools with high transition rates are in areas with high socio-economic factors.

Some schools located in areas with low socio-economic factors, however, have high transition rates. This suggests that critical contributing factors should be identified and that valuable information may be gathered about best practices from these schools.17

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17 The Exemplary Schools Project was a co-operative venture of the Canadian Education, the Department of Human Resources Development Canada and several universities. The project identifies secondary schools across Canada that have a reputation for success. The characteristics of two BC secondary schools included in the project are summarized in Appendix 3. See Gaskell, Jane, Secondary Schools in Canada. The National Report of the Exemplary Schools Project. (Toronto: Canadian Education Association, 1995).
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Within the time limitations and the constraints of available data, the Team studied the Kindergarten to Post-Secondary Education system carefully to identify those aspects that needed to be improved. The Team felt it was important to point out that they also found many aspects of the education and training system that are working well. The Team wishes to stress that their focus on what needs improvement in the system was not intended to be negative, but was a sincere attempt to support the removal of impediments to a smooth transition for students in all levels of the system.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Barriers to Transition

Information

The following summarizes the findings of the Team about issues related to information about post-secondary institutions and program options, the labour market and career opportunities, and financial assistance for students:

- Much of the information available is not accessible to students and their families, and there is inadequate direction on how to find it.
- There is no central body responsible to sort and present information for secondary school students.
- There is no regional plan for organizing and providing information at the local level.
- Some students might be confused by the range and variety of information available from many sources, unless assistance is available from a knowledgeable person.
- The terminology and level of writing may be too difficult for individuals with low English fluency, low literacy, or learning disabilities.
- Little information is available in alternate languages for minority language students and their families, or in alternate formats for students with disabilities.
Information about support services at post-secondary institutions is not consistently available through the usual sources, such as calendars from institutions.

Career information may contain stereotypes about career prospects and minority culture, which may result in the giving of inappropriate advice.

Despite information activities targeted at parents, much of the information does not reach them.

**Financial Issues**

The Team’s findings about the costs of pursuing post-secondary education and training and potential debts include:

- The costs of pursuing post-secondary education and training are a significant barrier for many students. Costs can be higher for students who have children and other dependants, who relocate out of their communities, and who need additional support such as child care, special services, and transportation.

- Equity groups such as students with disabilities and Aboriginal students face additional possible difficulties because of a complex system of funding sources, each with different policies and procedures.

- Students find the accumulated debt from student loans burdensome.

- The prospect of debt stops some students from considering a post-secondary education and training. In particular students from a background of poverty, who are less optimistic about their ability to repay student loans and about eventual employment opportunities.

**Personal Issues**

The Team’s findings on the relationships among students’ values, perceptions of themselves, and the relevance of education and training to students and parents include the following:

- The way messages are conveyed to students about the value and relevance of education and training does not always relate to student’s personal and community experiences.

- The lack of a supportive environment (support from family, peers, and mentors) can negatively influence students’ academic achievement and interest in completing or continuing their studies.

- Some parents may find it difficult to provide the type of support their children need.

- Secondary school students’ low expectations can lead to low achievements.

- Students’ expectations and career information that reflect stereotypes can affect students’ career choices.
**Program Issues**

Specifically, the Team found that:

- The range of courses and programs varies among schools and post-secondary institutions, which impacts students' choices and their abilities to gain access to certain courses and programs.

- The use of computer technologies can address problems of access and can provide alternative pathways for students; however, they can also create problems, such as low access to computers, and lack of computer infrastructure for some secondary school students, including low literacy students, and youths living in poverty.

- The different entrance requirements among post-secondary institutions compels students to be mindful of the differences when selecting courses and programs, especially in Grades 11 and 12.

- Admission criteria (e.g., Grade Point Average [GPAs] and cut-off marks) differ from one post-secondary institution to another, and among program areas within an institution. These criteria are not always indicative of a student's abilities.

- There could be an overlap or a gap between the learning outcomes in the first year of post-secondary studies and those acquired in Grade 12.

- Students in early grades need but do not consistently have adequate preparation for career and personal exploration and course selection.

- There are limited planning activities to support students with disabilities; such activities are even more limited for other equity group students who face difficult transitions.

- In some schools, the level of support and inservice training for teacher/school personnel in the area of career programs is inadequate.

- Secondary school students may experience fears and anxieties about post-secondary education and training.

**Variations in Transition Rates Among Schools**

**Data Issues**

Currently the Ministry has a lack of data on transition rates. As the Team gathered information for their investigation, it became evident that in order to develop strategies to monitor transition rates, the Ministry needs to begin to collect relevant data. The Team noted that:

- Current data collection processes do not adequately cover the range of data needs. Data systems are not adequately integrated to provide the information necessary to monitor and evaluate secondary to post-secondary transitions, including variations in transition rates among schools.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Within the time limitations and the constraints of available data, the Team studied the system carefully and offered the following recommendations and conclusions, in hopes that these efforts will improve secondary school to post-secondary transition rates.

The recommendations are organized under the following categories:

- **Information**: includes recommendations to improve the access, timeliness, and quality of information that students and parents receive about post-secondary institutions and program options, labour market or career options, and financial assistance for students.

- **Financial Issues**: includes recommendations to address concerns about the costs of pursuing post-secondary education and the subsequent debt that students incur.

- **Personal Issues**: includes recommendations about ways to better support and encourage students to move on to pursue a post-secondary education.

- **Program Issues**: includes recommendations about ways to bridge the gaps between the K-12 and PSE systems and about establishing closer ties between education institutions and their communities.

- **Data Issues**: includes recommendations to improve the ability of the province to track the variations in transition rates among schools.

Within each of the categories described above, the recommendations are divided into two sub-categories: short- or long-term recommendations. The Team made this determination by assuming that those recommendations placed in the short-term category could be completed within one year, while long-term recommendations would take longer to implement.
Barriers to Transition

Information

Although there is much information about post-secondary education available from various institutions, it is not reaching or not understood by its intended audiences – students, parents, and teachers. There is a need to simplify this information to make it less overwhelming and to deliver it using a multi-faceted approach. The following recommendations address the need for the Ministry to develop an overall communication plan for transition.

Short-term Recommendations

1. The Ministry is currently updating the curriculum for Career and Personal Planning (CAPP). The Team recommends that the Ministry include information about the following in the update and make it accessible to students and parents:
   - post-secondary options
   - career and labour markets

2. The Team recommends that the Ministry clarify specific learning outcomes and provide resources to enhance the financial planning for post-secondary education aspects of the updated CAPP curriculum (i.e., assist students and parents to develop plans to finance post-secondary education).

3. The Team recommends that the Ministry assign responsibility to an internal or external agency to act as a clearing house for information about post-secondary opportunities, labour market and career options, availability of financial assistance for students, and the articulation of courses and programs. The clearing house could organize, publicize, market, and deliver timely, consistent, and precise information in a variety of formats (e.g., on-line assistance through Provincial Learning Network, Knowledge Network and satellite sites).

4. So that the quality of information in schools is consistent and relevant across the regions, the Team recommends that the Ministry develop strategies with schools, school districts, and post-secondary institutions to:
   - co-ordinate high school career counselling and post-secondary recruitment activities at the regional level.
   - include post-secondary students in presentations to high school students.
   - ensure that current admission policies are communicated to teachers and secondary school students in a timely fashion.

Implementation Strategies

- Ensure that equity group representatives are involved in the development and review of all CAPP materials and other K-12 post-secondary career advising materials.
- Involve students in the development of CAPP modules.
- Deliver Personal Planning/CAPP in a manner that will strongly encourage parental involvement while leaving the student responsible for the learning experiences.
- Teach students to take responsibility for obtaining the necessary information to make good education and career-related decisions and get the best value for their money.

- Encourage secondary school students to explore non-stereotypical and/or non-traditional occupations.
- Encourage the participation of a broad spectrum of speakers representing a range of occupations, as well as select speakers who are able to link education to success.
Implementation Strategies

- Use existing and develop additional active partnerships between education and industry to demonstrate to parents the value and relevance of education.

- Encourage schools to work with parent advisory councils in all parental activities such as community forums.

- Provide information packages targeted for students in grades 8 to 12, their parents, and out-of-school youths who are considering returning to school. The packages should contain analyses of the labour market and future work opportunities as well as provide information to help students evaluate career options and make plans for post-secondary studies. These materials would include information about career paths and work opportunities, supply and demand projections for occupations, income earning potential of career opportunities, courses offered by post-secondary institutions, summaries of support services by those institutions, total cost of programs and attendance at post-secondary education institutions, student financial assistance, student debt that might be incurred, student loan remission policies, financial management, employment standards, and employability skills.

- Each package should be designed to meet the needs of a range of student interests and abilities, be written in plain language, take a marketing approach, and meet the special learning, language, and cultural needs of equity groups. It should also contain directions on how to access further information.

- Explore relationships with industry sectors to encourage them to play a greater role in providing and validating information regarding labour market and work opportunities.

- Partner with external agencies, libraries, and industry to increase access to career information.

5. The Team recommends that schools develop plans to become more effective in informing and involving parents in career and personal planning activities. The Ministry should assist by evaluating existing practices and reporting effective practices.

Long-term Recommendation

6. The Team recommends that the Ministry direct the development and implementation of a comprehensive, multi-level strategy to deliver age-appropriate information that ensures easy access to good information by all students and their families.

Financial Issues

The cost of pursuing post-secondary education and the debt load that often accompanies post-secondary studies is a significant barrier for many students and may present additional burdens for students who are disadvantaged. The following recommendations address the need for various agencies and families to work together.

Short-term Recommendations

7. The Team recommends that the Standing Committee on Student Financial Assistance include parents in order to recognize parents as stakeholders in this issue and continue to support institutional compliance with the principles negotiated in the Risk Sharing Agreement with various financial institutions.
8. To assist students in managing student loan debt, the Team recommends that the Ministry work with the federal government to develop a federal loan remission program.

9. The Team recommends that the Ministry, post-secondary institutions, and school districts work together to develop plans to:

   - ensure that Financial Aid Officers and school counsellors have adequate training in financial assistance and education and training opportunities for the diversity of student needs, including needs of students from equity groups.

   - promote program and work options including co-op programs, summer work programs, and other work opportunities to help students finance post-secondary education.

   - encourage lending and education institutions to provide debt counselling and other financial support services for all students.

Long-term Recommendations

10. The Team recommends that the Ministry review overall education costs with the purpose of reducing costs as a barrier to access. This review should include but not be limited to: direct cost to students; student loan interest, student debt loads, and tax breaks and credits for tuition fees, books, travel, and allowable costs.

11. The Team recommends that the Ministry review the Passport to Education program to ensure that funds are used effectively for student financial assistance.

12. To identify systemic barriers, the Team recommends that the Ministry conduct an analysis of financial aid barriers to students from families living in poverty and other equity groups, similar to the Gender Impact Analysis.

Implementation Strategy

- Publicize widely the BC Loan Remission Program, including how to apply and qualify for loan remission.
Implementation Strategies

- Encourage schools to implement programs like TAG (Teacher Advisory Group) and peer counselling to enable students to build a stable, friendly and supportive base comprising peers and at least one teacher within the school from Grade 8 to Grade 12 to address career and academic issues.
- Encourage the development of inclusive student networks to provide emotional and other support for peers.
- Encourage schools to establish community liaison groups with representatives in the Aboriginal and ethno-cultural communities to encourage culturally sensitive approaches to joint problem solving and support.
- Encourage schools to establish community liaison groups with representatives from groups with disabilities to develop and implement strategies to provide support to students with disabilities.
- Encourage all post-secondary institutions to adopt “shadowing” programs for teachers and students.
- Encourage K-PSE initiatives to implement mentorship programs linking a high school student to a post-secondary student (mentor) who can encourage the high school student by example to pursue post-secondary education.

Personal

Factors in students’ everyday lives bring pressures and influences that affect the value they place on education and their confidence to pursue higher learning. The following recommendations address the need to better support and encourage secondary school students.

Short-term Recommendations

13. To foster supportive relationships among school personnel, students, and the community, the Team recommends that the Ministry encourage schools and communities to develop and supplement mentorship, community liaison, and other such programs.

Program Issues

The following recommendations address the need to bridge the gaps between the K-12 and PSE systems and to establish closer ties between education institutions and their communities.

Short-term Recommendations

15. To increase opportunities for transition to post-secondary education and training, the Team recommends that the Ministry ensure that:
   - credits earned by students through flexible assessment policies are portable between institutions throughout the K-PSE system (e.g., challenge, equivalency, and other forms of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)).
secondary schools have increased opportunities for preferred entry into post-secondary programs and/or receive credit toward post-secondary course work.

career planning continues to begin in earlier grades to allow students to better match course options at the secondary level to meet post-secondary requirements.

school districts and businesses are encouraged to increase the number of industry work experience placements for teachers and counsellors in order to provide more inservice training, support, and professional development opportunities outside the education system.

Long-term Recommendations

16. The Ministry should develop strategies to encourage K-12 and post-secondary institutions to provide education and training that is relevant to current and future work opportunities. Specifically, the Team recommends that the Ministry:

work with post-secondary institutions to review admission procedures and practices to expand admission criteria.

support a full range of program options including co-op, career programs, apprenticeship training, and work place/work training private sector models through alternative delivery options.

co-ordinate the efforts of all learning organizations (including K-12 schools, post-secondary institutions, community skills centres, and continuing education centres) to increase the articulation of their courses and programs.

encourage school districts to give greater consideration to the needs of students from equity groups who face specific difficulties with transitions.

develop a comprehensive strategy with its education partners to provide adequate training and support to school personnel in order to meet the career exploration needs of all students.

17. The Team recommends that the Ministry should encourage the British Columbia College of Teachers to:

establish the teaching of Personal Planning/CAPP as a component of teacher education programs.

review teacher education to provide options for teachers-in-training to receive credit for appropriate work experience.

Implementation Strategies

Use more effectively distance education opportunities in K-PSE so that students may pursue their education in their own communities.

Ensure flexibility in scheduling to accommodate a wide variety of learners in K-PSE.

Develop strategies to enable individuals outside the education system to access courses to continue their education.
Implementation Strategies

- Adapt K-12 and post-secondary student level records as necessary to ensure data for analysis.

- Ensure that the resources of PENs will meet increased and future demands.

Variations in Transition Rates among Schools

Currently the Ministry has a lack of data on transition. In order to develop strategies to improve and monitor transition rates, the Ministry needs to begin to collect relevant data.

Long-term Recommendations

18. The Team recommends that the Ministry assist school districts to gather information on transition rates in order to set transition rate targets and strategies for improvement.

19. To better understand transition patterns, the Team recommends that the Ministry:

- conduct a transition survey to trace the pathways of youths between the education, labour, and social assistance systems in the years following their leaving secondary school.
- mandate the use of Personal Education Numbers (PENs) for all schools and institutions to ensure that K-12 level student records can be connected to post-secondary level student records.
- design a means of tracking those students who attend out-of-province and private post-secondary institutions.

Follow-up to “Moving On”

The Team recognizes the initiatives of the Ministry and notes that many participants in focus groups commissioned for the Team feel that the education and training system in British Columbia is effective when it comes to preparing young people for today's world. At the same time, the Team found that many of the initiatives have not been effective in easing all the challenges students face or in alleviating all the barriers, real or perceived, that are associated with transition questions.

The Team commends the Ministry and the education community for realizing that there is a need to investigate transition. It notes that the transition issue is much broader and more complex than that covered by this report, and notes the need for more comprehensive, more recent data than are presently available, to undertake full study of the transition rates of students in the K-FSE system.

The Team noted that Moving On should not be seen as a final report on transitions. Rather, the members saw their efforts as an attempt to evaluate an issue that is of growing importance to students, parents, and the economic well-being of our province. As the recommendations of this report are considered, as education options become more numerous, and as transition options become more complex, further study of this issue will be necessary.
APPENDIX 1

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES IN EDUCATION

Student Spaces

To meet growing enrollments, BC has created more than 40,000 new spaces and invested $1.7 billion in expanding and upgrading facilities in the Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) system over the past four years. Similarly, the capacity in the Post-Secondary Education (PSE) system has been increased by 8,100 under the Skills Now initiative in 1994/95 and 1995/96 and by 7,000 seats under 1996/97 initiatives. Between 1992 and 1996, new buildings have been constructed on campuses of many post-secondary institutions across the province.

Apart from expanding system capacities, there are many other separate and joint initiatives in place in both the K-12 and PSE systems to improve access and enhance the transition from secondary to post-secondary education and training.

Access and Relevance: Kindergarten to Grade 12 Initiatives

Initiatives to enhance access and relevance in the public schools include:

Distance Education

- New Directions in Distance Learning provides distance learners with access to teachers and students in a course delivered via information technology. Over 30 schools are providing 20 Grade 11 and 12 courses to meet the needs of 400 students. The 1996/97 target is access for 1,000 students.

- Distance Education Schools — 25,000 secondary course enrollments provide school-aged, home-based learners with provincially authorized courses that prepare students for provincial examinations. An additional 10,000 adults take secondary courses at home for Dogwood Diploma or upgrading to meet entry requirements for post-secondary education programs. Further, 10,000 correspondence courses are purchased by secondary schools to provide additional course options for in-school students. Regional service, provided by nine schools, resulted in significant enrollment growth from 1990 to 1995.
Annual enrollment growth over the past five years has been 10 percent per year.

- Technology access via partnerships between school districts and industry related to technology planning – the Province established in May 1995 a five year, $100 million technology program designed to improve the ratio of computers to students to one computer to every three secondary students and one computer to every six elementary students by the turn of the century. Prior to 1995, the computer ratio stood at one computer for every 10 students. Since then, the ratio has improved to one computer to every eight students. For 1996/97, BC schools will receive more than $20 million in direct funding. To receive funding, all school districts are required to submit technology proposals outlining how grant money will be expended.

Program/Curriculum

- Applied Academic courses, including Technical and Professional Communications 12, Information Technology 11 and 12, Applications of Mathematics 9 to 12, and Application of Physics 11 and 12, provide options for students who prefer college technical and trades programs.

- Career programs to increase personal relevance for high school students and help them focus on a career path. Examples of career programs include Career and Personal Planning, career preparation programs, and co-operative education programs. The development of a career portfolio for all career programs is currently under review by the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training (the Ministry) and the Association for co-operative education. The portfolio would house individual student learning logs, work experience learning, outcomes, employability skills profile, credentials, and credits earned in career programs.

- Information technology curriculum to prepare students to meet the demands of an information society.

Access, Relevance and Transition: Kindergarten to Post-Secondary Initiatives

Initiatives to enhance access relevance and transition to post-secondary education and training include:

Admission

- Post-secondary Application Service of British Columbia (PASBC) to provide electronic services to students to apply for admission to post-secondary institutions.

- Enrollment Management Committee to monitor application and enrollment trends to ensure that students who are unsuccessful in gaining admission to an institution of first choice are made aware of other opportunities in the province.

- Career days and open houses by post-secondary institutions to recruit students from high schools.
Technology

- Provincial Learning Network to provide a common telecommunications network for education and training organizations, including schools, school districts, post-secondary institutions, community skills centres, Open Learning Agency sites, libraries, museums, and science and cultural sites.

- New Directions in Distance Learning is offered in co-operation with the Open Learning Agency to allow students to begin their post-secondary studies while still in high school.

- Learning Highway Fund and Technology Innovation Fund allocated to increase access through use of educational technology and innovative delivery methods.

Program/Curriculum

- Challenge/equivalency to enable secondary school students to obtain credit for non-formal education and education obtained in other jurisdictions.

- Secondary School Apprenticeship (SSA) to enable secondary school students to register as apprentices while attending secondary school.

- Development of core curriculum for articulated programs between the K-12 and the PSE systems.

- Career bridges mechanism to allow a student who has graduated from a secondary school career program to gain preferred entry to a post-secondary co-op education program and complete eight weeks of paid employment.

- Orientation programs to provide opportunities for Grade 11 and 12 students to try out college level trades and career programs while earning high school graduation credit.

Financial Assistance

- Tuition has been frozen for 1996/97 and 1997/98 at 1995/96 levels.

- BC Student Assistance Program provides both repayable and non-repayable funding to help meet the costs of post-secondary education. The maximum eligible award for students without dependants is $260 per week; the maximum for students with dependants is $385 per week. BCSAP is also complemented by a variety of special programs including Work Study Program, Adult Basic Education Student Assistance Program, Assistance Program for Students with Disabilities, Student Society Emergency Aid Fund, United World Scholarships, and Premier’s Excellence Awards.

- Financial assistance is available to Status Aboriginal students who qualify for enrollment in college entrance preparation and university-professional training programs offered by BC post-secondary institutions.
Apprenticeship Awards valued at $1000 each will be given to graduating students who are registered as secondary school apprenticeship students while in high school and who can confirm their continued employment as an apprentice. Two hundred apprenticeship awards will be offered by the provincial and federal governments in 1997.

Post-secondary co-operative education program students work for academic credit while gaining valuable job experience in the workplace. Generally, co-op students alternate a number of work terms with as many study terms as are necessary to complete their degree and earn a salary. The program helps fund students’ post-secondary education.

Student Summer Works ‘96 created summer jobs for post-secondary students to work in mostly high tech industry throughout the summer.

Vocational and technical scholarships are available to students interested in technical, trades or vocational training. These scholarships are offered by regional and community colleges and often cover most of the cost of tuition and fees.

University and college entrance scholarships are awarded to first year students, based on academic or extra-curricular excellence.

Local scholarships and awards are available from community businesses and organizations to graduating high school students.

Bursaries are available to students in need of financial assistance who have maintained a satisfactory academic record. Many bursaries are also available to students preparing for technical, trades, and vocational schools.

Passports to Education can be used to offset post-secondary tuition fees to a maximum of $800. At the end of the school year, Passport stamps are awarded to secondary school students who have met the criteria developed by their school within the Ministry guidelines. The stamps must be redeemed within five years after graduation from high school.

Provincial scholarships worth $1,000 are awarded to secondary school students who demonstrate academic excellence on their provincial exams. To qualify, a student must write at least three provincial exams and must achieve a Standard Ministry Score (SMS) of at least 475 on each examination, with a total of at least 1700. The 20 students with the highest total SMS will receive awards of $2,000. In addition, students who achieve an SMS of 800 on each of three exams will also be awarded an academic medal of excellence.

District scholarships are awarded to graduating high school students who have excelled in fields other than academic. Requirements are determined by the local District Scholarship Committee. Students awarded a scholarship receive a $500 cheque and a $500 scholarship voucher that can be redeemed when they enrol at a recognized post-secondary institution or approved apprenticeship program.

Indirect Transition

The following initiatives deal specifically with indirect transition:

- BC Benefits (Youth Works and Institution-Based Training) to help youth on welfare access post-secondary education and training or jobs.
- Adult Basic Education through school districts and colleges to allow adults over 19 years of age to upgrade their basic skills or take prerequisite courses for entry to further training and/or employment and Grade 12 completion.
- Prior Learning Assessment to enable students to gain credit in a post-secondary course or program for their non-formal education or life experience.

Other Initiatives

The following initiatives deal with issues related to transitions from school to the world outside the school system:

- Access to on-line career counsellors.
- BC Life Skills to teach key life skills to students.

Equity Groups and Youths Living in Poverty: Ministry Initiatives

Initiatives to assist participation for equity groups and youths living in poverty include:

Students with disabilities

- Post-secondary funding to support successful transitions into post-secondary institutions and transitions from post-secondary training to employment.
- The 18-month pilot strategy for Co-ordinating Disability Issues was announced in 1995, to co-ordinate disability policy issues and give people with disabilities opportunities to influence government decisions that affect them.
- A revised K-12 Special Education policy, distributed in 1995, outlines a vision for inclusive education and mandates individualized planning, including transition planning, for all special education students. It is recommended that transition planning begin two to three years before school leaving.
- A commitment has been made to professional development related to inclusive education: funding has been provided to school districts for teacher, paraprofessional, and administrator training (approximately 20 summer institutes for teachers have
been offered annually), and a 1-800 support line has been expanded to include parents and the public as well as educators.

- Intake transition activities, funded since 1985, continue with renewed effort to work in partnership with school districts and other agencies.

- Skills Now! funding to develop more vocationally-oriented supports and programs (such as exit transition workers to assist with job placement) is continuing for a third year. A resource guide related to exit transitions has been produced, and professional development is provided for staff.

- Support service funding to institutions has remained relatively constant, but funding to three additional institutions has been added (the Justice Institute, Emily Carr Institute for Art and Design, and Nicola Valley Institute for Technology), and provincial supports and services (such as an extension of the K-12 adaptive equipment loan bank for adults, new financial assistance initiatives, and a provincial consultant on sign language interpreting for deaf students) have been enhanced.

- Targeted annual funding for capital renovations to improve access has been available to the colleges/institutes since 1988 and to the universities since 1994.

**Aboriginal students**

- Two new Aboriginal public post-secondary institutions have been established: the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology and the Institute of Indigenous Government.

- The Aboriginal post-secondary education and training program budget of $8.2 million for 1996/97 funds an array of programs delivered by public institutions, and private institutions in partnership with public institutions. These programs range from adult basic education programs to degree programs in First Nations studies and language teacher education.

- Increased Aboriginal post-secondary program funding by $3.5 million under Skills Now! to strengthen co-ordinator positions at all colleges, fund increased partnerships between private Aboriginal institutions and organizations and the public system, and provide direct funding to the two new Aboriginal institutions.

- The Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy framework to improve access for Aboriginal learners to BC’s post-secondary education system has been approved and is being implemented.

- The Synala Program is a six-week summer orientation to post-secondary education for promising Aboriginal high school students in Grade 11.
**Female students**

- Curriculum and projects have been initiated in the K-12 and PSE systems to address issues of gender inequity.
- Availability of on-site child care has been expanded at both schools and post-secondary campuses.
- Summer camps, orientation programs, and other activities have been initiated to promote girls' participation in trade and technology programs.
- Young parent child care programs – Ministry of Women’s Equality is developing a vision and implementation strategy for young parent programs that provide child care and support to teen parents attempting to complete secondary school.
- The K-12 Gender Equity Program administered a grant program in 1994/95 that supported the following initiatives: research and awareness, curriculum development, girls and women in math, science and technology, learning resources, policy development, professional development, sexual harassment and violence prevention, and women in leadership.
- A number of curriculum projects are being carried out, including:
  - Inclusive curriculum: guidelines for developing inclusive curriculum for all equity groups.
  - Gender and diversity: a curriculum for introducing staff, faculty, and administrators to diversity issues. A train-the-trainer manual has also been developed.
  - Orientation to trades and technology: a curriculum guide and resource book with special emphasis on the needs of women – updating and revision to bring the publication up to the Women in Trades and Technology (WITT) standards.
  - Refitting the Classroom, Working with Diversity – training resources for a workshop targeting male instructors in areas historically non-traditional for women.
- Safer Campuses initiative – provides support to post-secondary institutions to ensure that there are effective action plans to address campus violence and in particular to promote safer campuses for women.

**Visible minority/minority language students**

- Funding is provided annually for K-12 English as a Second Language (ESL) and adult English Language Training (ELT).
- Several school districts have implemented career planning for ESL students and a variety of new programs combining language and skill training have been introduced in colleges.
**Students living in poverty**

- BC Benefits initiative is providing $80 Million for job readiness and training programs with priority access for youth aged 19-24.

- Recent K-12 initiatives focus on supports to families living in poverty, including the Inner City Schools Program, School Meals, and the Kids at Risk initiative.

- New financial assistance programs are available to assist students without financial resources to participate in post-secondary education, including Training Assistance Benefits for income assistance recipients in upgrading programs, the High Needs Part-Time Program for students whose situation only allows them to attend part-time, and the Interface Conversion Program to ensure that single parent students who are moving from income assistance to student financial assistance and who are in the middle of their education and training are not disadvantaged by the new BC Benefits policies.
BRITISH COLUMBIA STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (BCSAP)

Student Financial Support

The Province supplements the student/family contribution to a student's education through the British Columbia Student Assistance Program (BCSAP). The program is based on student financial need: the greater a student's need, the more assistance awarded. BCSAP awards are a combination of federal and provincial funds. Under the basic cost-sharing formula, 60 percent of a student's eligible need is borne by the federal government, up to a weekly maximum of $165, while the balance is paid by the Province. However, when the federal maximum is reached — when students have dependants, for example — BC’s share increases, because it must cover the remainder of the eligible need (up to a combined federal/provincial maximum of $260 per week for students without dependants, and $385 per week for students with dependants).

To encourage transition to post-secondary studies, the BC portion of the award is in the form of a non-repayable grant for the first two years. British Columbia is now the only province giving out front-end grant assistance. At the completion of their post-secondary studies, students may also qualify for loan remission under BCSAP regulations (see below).

In 1996/97, the Province will award more than $100 million in British Columbia Student Loans and more than $40 million in grants, and will administer the distribution of about $220 million in Canada Student Loans (CSL). Some of the costs of delivering these loans and grants are shown in the table on the following page.
A comparison of tuition costs at post-secondary level, BCSAP awards, and starting salaries for graduates (in constant 1995 dollars, i.e., after removing the factor of inflation) shows that during the period from 1984/85 to 1995/96:

* tuition has risen by 46 percent at public colleges and 33 percent at universities.
* the average BCSAP award has risen 31 percent from about $5,000 to about $6,500 (see Table on page 48).
* salaries for certificate holders (in constant dollars) rose 12.5 percent from 1984 to 1995. For diploma holders salaries are virtually unchanged, though they were higher in 1992 than in either 1984 or 1995. The increases in starting salaries for graduates with bachelor degrees is difficult to determine from the data at hand, but would appear to be five percent or more over the same period.

As well as BCSAP awards, there are other funds available to students. Scholarships, bursaries and other financial support programs offered by the private sector, post-secondary institutions and the province to support students with financial need include:

* provincial apprenticeship awards ($60,000 for 60 students).
* co-operative education programs ($3.3 million contributed by the Province for 8,800 co-op students).
* vocational and technical scholarships.
* university and college entrance scholarships.
* community or local awards.
* bursaries of various types.
* First Citizen Fund Bursary ($130,000 for 135 students).
* Provincial Passport to Education Program ($9.6 million for 60,000 students).
* district scholarships ($500,000 for 500 students).
* provincial scholarships ($3.4 million for 3,000 students).
Programs such as these can provide financial support for students moving from secondary to post-secondary education.

Loan Remission

The BC Loan Remission Program eases to some degree the burden of student debt for eligible students. The program was designed to ensure that students do not graduate with unmanageable debt. Upon successful completion of a program of study, the outstanding indebtedness of eligible students is reduced to a certain ceiling for each level of education completed. For those who met eligibility requirements in 1995/96, the average amount remitted was $7,920 for female students and $7,390 for male students. \(^\text{16}\) $21 million has been set aside for the program for 1996/97.

To be eligible for loan remission, students must satisfy “timely completion” and “personal responsibility” criteria. These criteria provide extra time for all students, but in particular those with dependants or those with disabilities. At present:

- Timely completion is defined as graduation within the normal length of the program plus an additional program year. For example, students enrolled in a two-year program must complete the program in three years or less to be eligible for full loan remission.

  In effect, students have an extra year in which to complete their studies while still qualifying for loan remission. In addition, students with disabilities are likely to be exempted from the timely completion factor, and can have their entire CSL debt forgiven.

- Personal responsibility requires students to work, study, volunteer, or care for their children in a four-month period immediately preceding each period of study (pre-study).

Gender Impact Analysis (GIA)

The Ministry recently conducted a review to determine whether BCSAP policies and procedures had a differential impact on women. This analysis was carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Women’s Equality and Treasury Board.

The review indicates that BCSAP policies and procedures do not, in general, disadvantage women. However, there was some differential impact on single parent students who may take longer to complete their studies because of family commitments and thus be ineligible for loan remission under existing eligibility criteria. Policy changes to further extend these students eligibility for loan remission are being considered as a result of this review.

\(^\text{16}\) Gender Impact Analysis, MOEST
### Tuition Costs, Average BCSAP Awards, Starting Salaries (in 1995 constant dollars)

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2. Non-vocational programs.
3. Undergraduate Arts and Sciences.
4. CSL, BCSL and BC Grant combined. There was no BC Grant in 1984/85.
5. Monthly salaries for full-time employment. (For sources, see footnotes 6-8).
APPENDIX 3

THE EXEMPLARY SCHOOLS PROJECT

The Exemplary Schools Project was a co-operative venture of the Canadian Education Association, the Department of Human Resources Development Canada, and several universities. Its aims were to identify, analyse, and suggest policy implications. The project identifies secondary schools across Canada that have a reputation for success.

One of the schools identified is Vancouver Technical Secondary School. Characteristics of the school contributing to its success include:

- diversified programs expanding beyond its former technical focus to include academic subjects.

- the Tumanos ("Guardian Spirit" in Coast Salish) Program for First Nations students across Vancouver, which aims to graduate more First Nations students from high school and send them on to post-secondary education while preserving and nurturing their traditions and beliefs. At present, it enrols students, including students at risk, in grades 8 to 10, offering an academic program with emphasis on the history, cultural beliefs, and practices of Aboriginal peoples.

- emphasis on the school as a shared community and on creating small communities within it. The staff stresses the importance of self-worth, leadership, citizenship, and respect for others.

- staff who "care about kids" dances, breakfasts, Hat Day, camping trips, and retreats are part of the program. Students recognize the commitment their teachers make and appreciate their dedication.

- directed classroom discussion of racism and cultural differences, that recognizes and encourages pride in cultural differences while battling the effects of racial or cultural stereotypes.

- a personalized, caring environment using small programs, aimed at helping students who are not succeeding in regular classrooms and giving potential dropouts a sense of belonging.

- integration across subject areas in smaller programs and for younger students.

REPORT OF THE SECONDARY TO POST-SECONDARY TRANSITION REVIEW TEAM
Another BC school identified was Langley Fine Arts School. The school is small and is located in a relatively well-off community where almost everyone speaks English.

One strong feature of this school is parental involvement. Teachers do not get a high turnout for parent-teacher nights, where student progress is discussed. Parent involvement takes other directions:

- there is a formal parent advisory committee.
- a parental group discusses budget, admissions, curriculum, discipline, and the mission of the school.
- parents are prepared to meet with the superintendent or with Ministry officials when they have a concern.
- parents lobby for the school and raise its profile in many ways.
GLOSSARY

Adult Basic Education (ABE)
Programs that provide adult learners with: basic life skills, literacy skills, high school equivalency, and/or prerequisites for entry to post-secondary education or the job market. These programs are offered by both colleges and school districts.

Adult Basic Education Provincial Diploma
An alternative high school completion certificate, issued by the post-secondary education system.

Adult Dogwood
Officially known as the Adult Graduation Program Certificate. An alternative high school completion certificate, issued by the K-12 system.

Alternative High School Completion Certificate
Certificates of high school level attainment that are alternatives to obtaining a Dogwood Diploma. These include: Adult Dogwood (Adult Graduation Program Certificate), General Educational Development Certificate (GED), Adult Basic Education (ABE) Provincial Diploma, and Letters of Assessment. These certificates may be recognized in place of a Dogwood Diploma at the option of post-secondary institutions and employers.

Articulation
Formal agreements that enable transfer credit for equivalent courses and programs within and between post-secondary institutions, and between secondary and post-secondary institutions. Previously referred to as laddering for progression within a program.

BC Loan Remission Program
A major component of the BC Student Assistance Program that reduces the repayable debt for students fulfilling certain eligibility criteria. See also Appendix 2.

British Columbia Student Assistance Program (BCSAP)
A comprehensive set of financial assistance programs designed to assist post-secondary students who demonstrate financial need.

Canada Student Loan Program (CSL)
The federally-funded portion of student financial assistance, integrated with and administered through the BCSAP.

Career
In this document, generally refers to job/occupational paths and educational pursuits after high school.

Career and Personal Planning (CAPP)
These courses, for grades 8-12, complement academic and vocationally oriented courses by focusing on students' personal growth. There are three interrelated elements: the planning process to help students develop goals, personal development to encourage healthy living and mental well-being, and career development to explore the workplace and prepare for work. There is also a work-experience component for Grades 11 and 12.

Career Bridges, Career Ladders
Programs allowing secondary students enrolled in Career Preparation programs to receive post-secondary credit for work experience obtained as a secondary student.

Career Mentor
In this document, refers to a mentoring relationship between a student and a community member. See Career and Mentor.

Career Preparation Program
An educational program that includes a work experience component designed to prepare a student, in relation to a specific career sector, for entry into the work force, continued studies in school, or further study in a post-secondary institution. The Education and Career Planning Program in Adult Basic Education within the PSE system is equivalent to the Career Preparation Program in secondary schools.
Career Program
An education program focusing on a career or career sector and combining related subjects with a work experience component and includes a career preparation program, co-operative education program, or a secondary school apprenticeship program.

Challenge
In the K-12 system, the process of receiving credit for a Ministry-authorized or locally developed Grade 11 or 12 course through an assessment of a student's undocumented prior learning.

Cohort
A group of people with a common characteristic, such as all students entering Grade 8 in BC in 1990.

Community Skills Centres
Centres designed to serve as focal points for training in communities around the province, enhancing existing programs and using technology to make additional programs available within the community.

Continuing Education
In the K-12 system, refers to adult education programs offered by school districts, leading to either high school completion or the upgrading of a current graduation certificate (sometimes referred to as ABE). In the PSE system, refers to ongoing post-secondary level education and general interest courses, with or without credit (as distinct from ABE).

Co-operative Education Program
An education program, a primary component of which is work experience, designed to provide a student with opportunities to explore one or more careers, and includes a program of study emphasizing generic employment skills and work experience. Designed to bridge the gap between the K-12 system, post-secondary education, and the world of work, co-operative programs exist at both the secondary and post-secondary levels.

Credit Bank
A central registry of post-secondary credits maintained by the Open Learning Agency. The Credit Bank provides students with an opportunity to accumulate transfer credit for formal courses and programs taken at public education institutions.

Direct Transition Rate
See Immediate Transition Rate.

Distance Learning
Course work that takes place without a requirement for the learner to be physically present in a traditional classroom setting. Distance education programs include correspondence programs, courses delivered or supported via teleconference or video-conference, and other technologies.

Dogwood Diploma
Officially known as the British Columbia Certificate of Graduation, it is granted to a student who meets high school graduation requirements.

English as a Second Language (ESL) Programs
Programs in both the K-12 and post-secondary systems designed to improve the English skills of non-native speakers. Also referred to as English Language Training (ELT) programs within the PSE system.

English Language Training (ELT) Programs
See English as a Second Language (ESL) programs.

Equity Groups
Groups who face unusually strong difficulties in achieving education, career, and economic success in society. Officially recognized equity groups are Aboriginal peoples, women, visible minorities, and people with disabilities. In this report, minority home language students, and students living in poverty are also discussed under Equity sections.

Equivalency
The process of receiving credit for a Ministry authorized or locally developed grade 11 or 12 course based on documentation that shows that the student has achieved the learning outcomes of an existing course at an outside (often out-of-province) educational institution.

Examination Marks
Refers to those results obtained by students on the provincial Grade 12 examinations in the examinable courses. The examination mark comprises 40 percent of the final course mark.
Final Marks
In Grade 12, final marks for courses with provincial examinations are based on 60 percent of the school marks and 40 percent of the provincial examination marks. All other courses are based on 100 percent of the school marks. See also Examination Marks and School Marks.

Gender Impact Analysis (GIA)
A review of BCSAP policies and procedures conducted in 1996 by the Ministry in cooperation with the Ministry of Women's Equality and Treasury Board to evaluate whether there was a differential impact on women. See Appendix 2.

General Education Development Certificate (GED)
See Alternative High School Completion Certificate. The GED is an assessment program; it does not offer instruction.

Grade Point Average (GPA)
A weighted average of a student's performance in credit courses. In the secondary system, GPA is based upon the following scale in credit courses in Grade 11 and 12: A = 4; B = 3; C+ = 2.5; C = 2; C- = 1. Calculation of GPA for admission to post-secondary education varies by receiving institution. GPA in the FSE system is also a weighted average, but the scale may vary by institution. See also Final Marks.

Immediate Transition Rate
Also referred to as Direct Transition Rate. As used for the Link File, the percentage of all Grade 12 students entering the FSE system in the fall after graduation. Students who delay their post-secondary studies (starting after the immediate fall) are not included in the immediate transition rate. See also Link File.

Job Shadowing
Career exploration in which a student learns about a particular career by observing a person, for a short period of time, perform duties related to that career.

Kindergarten-Grade 12 (K-12) System (British Columbia School System)
Refers to public and independent schools in BC from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

Kindergarten to Post-Secondary Education (K-PSE) System
Includes the K-12 system and the FSE system.

Knowledge Network
The Knowledge Network is the education television service of the Open Learning Agency. In addition to its general education programming, the Knowledge Network broadcasts an average of 65.5 hours a week of curriculum-based programming for students in Kindergarten to Grade 12, post-secondary students, teachers, parents, and industry.

Laddering
Development of courses, learning outcomes and/or basic competencies to provide a seamless transition from one level of education to the next by reduction of overlap or gaps between programs of study in each level. See also Articulation.

Learning Outcomes
The measurable knowledge, skills, and values attained by graduates through participation in an education and training program.

Letter of Assessment
See Alternative High School Completion Certificate. Letters of Assessment for secondary education were issued by the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training through August 1996. The program has now been incorporated into the International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES) operated by the Open Learning Agency, which provides education evaluation services to clients who have completed secondary and post-secondary studies outside BC.

Link File
A relational computer database containing high school records of all students who graduated in BC and their BC post-secondary records. The database is used to report on student transition rates and enrollment trends in post-secondary institutions.

Mentor
An influential or powerful person who guides and counsels someone to assume more responsibilities and/or skills, and thereby helps that person's advancement.

Ministry Accepted Certificates for External Courses
Ministry recognition of valid educational experiences at the grade 11 or 12 level that may not be equivalent in terms of learning outcomes, but are equivalent in terms of depth and rigor. See also Equivalency.
Ministry of Education, Skills and Training (MOEST)
The Ministry, created in January 1996, responsible for the K-12 and PSE systems and skills development.

Open Learning Agency
A unique, publicly funded education agency providing a wide range of formal and informal education and training opportunities for learners around the world by using various technologies, and by working in partnership with other organizations.

Peer Counseling
The activity in which one person counsels another member of their cohort, especially students counseling students.

Personal Education Number (PEN)
A permanent, unique identification number for every student in the K-12 system – and increasingly being used in the PSE system – used to generate statistics about student movements and transitions between grades, districts, and systems.

Portability
Ability to transfer credit for courses or programs from one institution to another throughout the province.

Post-secondary Application Service of British Columbia (PASBC)
Agency providing centralized information and admission procedures to BC post-secondary education institutions.

Post-Secondary Education (PSE)
In this report, refers to education and training provided at the post-secondary education level. This includes training at colleges, institutes, and universities (i.e., vocational as well as academic programs).

Post-Secondary Education (PSE) System
In this report, refers to the publicly-funded system of universities, community colleges, university colleges, provincial institutes, and the Open Learning Agency that delivers public post-secondary education and training in British Columbia.

Preferred Entry
In this report, refers to reservation of seats in post-secondary education programs for students who have completed a secondary career program or have met criteria specified in articulation agreements between secondary and post-secondary institutions in the K-PSE systems.

Prior learning assessment (PLA)
"Assessment" by some valid and reliable means, by a qualified specialist, of what has been learned through non-formal education/training or experience, that is worthy of credit in a course or program offered by the institution providing credit. See also Challenge and Equivalency.

Provincial Examination Program
A program established to measure student performance in selected Grade 12 academic courses.

Provincial Learning Network
A common telecommunications network for education and cultural institutions, communities, and individuals. The Network provides affordable access to a variety of telecommunications services such as Internet and video conferencing.

Risk-Sharing Agreement
A financial agreement between the Bank of Nova Scotia, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, and the Royal Bank under which the lending institutions negotiate, monitor, and set repayment arrangements and accept overall responsibility for student loan accounts under the Canada and BC Student Loan Programs. Under this Agreement, lending institutions become fully responsible for each student loan including repayment and collection activities.

School Completion Rate
Calculated by summing the percentage of Grade 8 students from five years earlier who have obtained, or will obtain, a Dogwood Diploma or an alternative high school completion certificate. It is the best available annual estimate of high school level completion; however, it fails to account for mature students without secondary school credentials who achieved post-secondary graduation. See also Alternative High School Completion Certificate.

School Completion Rate (Dogwood)
An estimate of the proportion of students who started Grade 8 in a BC school who have graduated or will graduate with a Dogwood Diploma. This rate is adjusted for population changes over time.

School District
A geographic area constituted as a district under the School Act. The number of school districts in the province was reduced to 59 from 75 in December 1996.
School Marks
Refers to those results obtained by students for Grade 12 course work completed in the classroom. For courses with provincial examinations, the school marks comprise 60 percent of the final course marks. See also Final Marks.

Secondary School
A school offering graded and ungraded education programs for students enrolled in Grades 8–12.

Secondary School Apprenticeship Program
A program, jointly administered and approved by the Minister of Education, Skills and Training, and the Minister of Labour, that registers high school students as apprentices in an apprenticeable occupation. (Apprenticeships are generally available only to out-of-school candidates.)

Shadowing
Observing for the purpose of learning in a number of different contexts such as job shadowing on worksites or shadowing a student at a post-secondary institution. See Job Shadowing.

Skills Now!
A $200 million investment in skills training with four broad themes: opening more doors to colleges and universities, retraining workers in their communities, moving people from welfare to the work force, and linking high school to the workplace. In the K-12 system, Skills Now focuses on preparing students for a changing workplace and facilitating transitions to post-secondary education.

Structural Unemployment
Unemployment arising out of a mismatch between the skills required in new job/work openings and the skills of job/work seekers.

Students with Disabilities
Students with physical, sensory, emotional, or other learning needs that must be met in order for them to benefit from an education program. It does not normally refer to gifted students. This phrase is commonly used in the PSE system.

Students with Special Needs
Students with special intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional, behavioural, or learning needs that must be met in order for them to benefit from an education program, including students who are gifted. This phrase is commonly used in the K-12 system.

Teacher Advisory Groups (TAG)
Also known as a home room. Students grouped either homogeneously or heterogeneously by age or grade and assigned to a teacher for the purposes of activities related to course, career, personal advisement, and/or counselling.

Transition Rate
See Immediate Transition Rate.

University Eligibility (as defined by the Link File)
Graduation with a Grade Point Average (GPA) calculated by averaging English 12 and the three other highest-graded Grade 12 academic courses. An artificial construct used by Link File to estimate the minimum admission requirement for BC universities; students minimally meeting this requirement would not generally be admitted to a university. See Grade Point Average.

Viewpoints Research focus groups
Viewpoints Research conducted a research study for the Evaluation and Accountability Branch of the Ministry in support of the Team. The researchers conducted focus groups of secondary students, out of school youth, parents and teachers in three locations (Vancouver, Kamloops and Campbell River).

Vocational Programs
Generally refers to trade-oriented programs of less than 12 months’ duration, usually leading to a certificate. Does not include apprenticeship programs.