

April 4, 2017

Dear Applicant:

Re: Your request for access to information under Part II of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (Our File #: EDU/015/2017)

On March 10, 2017 the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development received your request for access to the following records/information:

"I am requesting access to all records relating to budget cuts made by the Department of Education, including but not limited to briefing notes between the dates of March 1, 2016 and December 1, 2016. Please exclude material considered to be a matter of confidence."

A decision has been made by the Deputy Minister for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) to provide access to the requested information. In accordance with your request for a copy of the records, the appropriate copies have been enclosed.

A complete listing of '**Detailed Expenditure Reductions for Budget 2016-17**', can be found at:
<http://www.budget.gov.nl.ca/budget2016/expenditure/default.htm>

You may appeal this decision and ask the Information and Privacy Commissioner to review the decision to provide partial access to the requested information, as set out in section 42 of the Act. A request to the Commissioner must be made in writing within 15 business days of the date of this letter or within a longer period that may be allowed by the Commissioner. Your appeal should identify your concerns with the request and why you are submitting the appeal.

The appeal may be addressed to the Information and Privacy Commissioner is as follows:

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner
2 Canada Drive
P. O. Box 13004, Stn. A
St. John's, NL. A1B 3V8
Telephone: (709) 729-6309
Toll-Free: 1-877-729-6309
Facsimile: (709) 729-6500

You may also appeal directly to the Supreme Court Trial Division within 15 business days after you receive the decision of the public body, pursuant to section 52 of the Act.

Please be advised that responsive records will be published following a 72 hour period after the response is sent electronically to you or five business days in the case where records are mailed to you. It is the goal to have the responsive records posted to the Completed Access to Information Requests website within one business day following the applicable period of time. Please note that requests for personal information will not be posted online.

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If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the undersigned by telephone at 709-729-1841 or by e-mail at brianevans@gov.nl.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brian Evans", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brian Evans, CIPP/C
Director of Policy and Information Management
ATIPP Coordinator

Attachment

Education and Early Childhood Development Key Messages – Budget 2016

- Over \$13 million will be provided annually to implement full-day Kindergarten in September 2016 including 142 new teaching positions and 115 extra hours-per-day for student assistants.
- \$277,000 is allocated to implement the Premier's Task Force on education which will focus on improving educational outcomes in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- We strongly believe in the democratic process and importance of having an elected school board. Budget 2016 allocates \$400,000 to hold French and English school board elections before the end of this calendar year.
- Nearly \$106 million is provided for school infrastructure including the completion of ongoing school construction projects, school extensions, repairs and maintenance.
- Over \$38 million to continue to support the child care strategy *Caring for Our Future*.

Education and Early Childhood Development Budget 2016 – Questions and Answers

Combined Grades

Q. What are combined grades?

A. A combined grade is one that includes students from two consecutive grades who work in one classroom setting.

This approach to teaching and learning is being successfully used in jurisdictions across Canada and countries throughout the world.

It is similar to multi-grade classrooms that already exist in Newfoundland and Labrador in that students from different grades share a common setting but they are different in that a multi-grade setting may have more than two grades in the setting and requires long-term planning as the multi-grade setting could span many school years.

Q. How many teaching positions will be reduced and how much will this initiative save government?

A. Implementing combined grades will see a reduction of 69 teaching units and a total annualized savings of approximately \$6.16 million.

Q. How many students provincially will be taught in a combined grade?

A. Many school systems around the world employ combined classes and 20% of Canadian students are enrolled in classes with students from more than one grade.

Based on the Department's estimates, we anticipate that combined grades will be utilized in approximately 70 schools and 135 classrooms. The school districts, however, deploys teachers to schools and will thus determine final numbers and locations.

The implementation of combined grades will mean approximately 3.6% of students in Newfoundland and Labrador being taught in combined grades, below the national average of 20%.

Q. How many students will be in a combined grade?

A. The class cap for combined grades will be capped at 18 students. This will ensure that both the students and teachers have a very manageable class size in which differentiated instruction can thrive.

Q. What is differentiated instruction?

A. Differentiated instruction is not something new to teachers as they regularly use methods of differentiated instruction to teach in any class. It involves providing different students with different avenues to learning through flexible groupings, often in the same classroom. They would employ this method so that all students within a classroom can learn effectively, regardless of differences in ability.

In every classroom setting a teacher is faced with a variety of learners who are influenced by their culture, socioeconomic status, language, gender, motivation, ability, personal interests and more.

In a combined grade setting, the use of differentiated instruction is essential to help teach curriculum and achieve outcomes when teaching a class grouping that has two grades.

Q. Are students in combined grades disadvantaged because a single teacher must teach to two separate grades and age groups?

A. Combined grades are neither better nor worse than single-grade classes, both have opportunities and challenges. They are simply one of the many ways schools meet students' academic and social development needs.

Research shows that students in combined grades do just as well academically as students in single grade classes.

Combined grades employ proven teaching methods similar to single stream classes and students will continue to receive a quality education. In fact, research supports that combined grades have a positive impact on a student's:

- socio-emotional development,
- peer interactions,
- development of social skills,
- opportunity for collaborative and independent learning,
- satisfaction with their achievement and
- opportunity to be leaders within a community of learners.

Q. How will you prepare teachers for combined grades?

A. We will be providing professional learning for teachers and administrators to help with teaching a combined grade. While this will be a new concept to some teachers it is an approach to teaching used throughout Canada and in many high quality education systems throughout the world.

Additionally, many of the teachers already in our school system who have taught in multi-grade classrooms would be familiar with the concept of teaching more than one grade of students in a single class grouping.

Q. How will you prepare parents for combined grades?

A. We will ensure that information is available to all parents who have questions about combined grades. We recognize this is a new model for Newfoundland and Labrador, but we encourage parents to utilize the resources we will provide and do their own research. I suspect that once parents get a better understanding of combined grades they will see that their children will still have every opportunity to receive a quality education.

Q. Are combined grades similar to multi-grades already being used in this province?

The English School District currently has multi-graded classes throughout the province. There are similarities between combined grades and multi-grade classrooms, however, combined grades do not necessitate a long-term multi-year programming plan for students.

Students in multi-grade classrooms tend to stay in multi-graded classes for several years. Their teachers develop a multi-year learning plan for their students to ensure they all achieve the outcomes required of their grades.

Students who are chosen to attend combined grades are unlikely to end up in a combined grade class for consecutive years and the teacher would only focus on teaching the required outcomes for that student's grade level.

Q. How prevalent are multi-graded classrooms in this province?

In September 2016, there will be approximately 170 multi-grade classes in 61 schools equating to 4.6% of our students being taught in multi-grade classrooms.

Class Caps

Q. Why are you increasing the class caps in grades 4 to 9 and changing the allocation ratio in high school?

A. Approximately 60% of the departmental budget is allocated to teachers' salaries, substitute teachers, student assistants, professional development and various services for teachers.

Any savings to government through a reduction in the teacher allocation has to be managed through adjustments to class caps. With that in mind, we worked very hard to keep the impact on students to a minimum.

Q. How many teaching units are being reduced as a result of the changes to class caps and high school ratio?

A. Due to the change in class caps and high school allocation ratio there will be an overall reduction of 97.75 teaching units which will provide a total annualized savings of up to \$8.7 million.

Q. What grades will be impacted by the class cap and ratio changes?

A. For September 2016, the changes in the class caps will be as follows:

- In Grades 4-6, class cap adjusted by 2 from 26 students to 28.
- In Grades 7-9, class cap adjusted by 2 from 29 students to 31.

In Levels I-III, a new high school allocation ratio will be implemented:

- Schools with less than 100 students per grade, the allocation ratio is 1:24.
- Schools with more than 100 students per grade, the allocation ratio is 1:29.

We remain committed to protecting education services for our children. Government will continue to maintain class size caps for students in the primary grades.

- Kindergarten will remain at 20
- Grades 1-3 will remain at 25.
- Also, multi-grade classes will remain capped at 15 for primary grades.

The changes made to the model protect the valuable early years of education where the foundations of learning are established.

Also, the small schools formula (less than 25 school population) and high schools formula with total population of less than 75 are not impacted.

Q. Will there be any changes for students with special needs?

A. Direct services to students and supports for students with special needs are not affected.

There will be no change in the allocation formula for guidance counsellors and teachers that work with students with exceptionalities.

There will be no change in the number of educational psychologists, speech language pathologists, or teachers for the deaf and hard of hearing and blind and visually impaired.

There will be no reductions in teachers who support students with Autism or those who require support for English as a second language.

Q. Will there be any changes in the allocation formula for administrators?

A. There are no reductions to the allocation formula for school administrators.

Q. Is government committed to investing in K-12 education? It seems that there are a lot of cuts and changes in this year's budget.

A. We are absolutely committed to education and seeing improvements to student outcomes. Education remains one of the highest areas of expenditure for government. With these changes to class caps, high school allocation ratio and combined grades our average class sizes will be around 20 students and the pupil teacher ratio in 2016-17 will be 12.2 students for every one teacher. These are very good indicators of the investment in our school system and students, especially when compared to jurisdictions across the country.

Q. With the many changes in the budget impacting teacher allocation, will there still be job opportunities for teachers, especially those graduating from the faculty of education?

A. We fully expect that there will still be many opportunities for existing and new teachers.

The overall reduction in teaching units when factoring in all of the budget decisions is 61 teaching units.

While there are teaching units coming out of the system, we are adding 142.5 teaching units to support full-day Kindergarten in September 2016. We are also retaining 27 units that would have been reduced due to enrollment decline.

Additionally, we expect that any loss in teaching units will be further mitigated by retirements and natural attrition in the system. An estimated 500+ teachers are eligible to retire this year. If we look at last year, approximately 200 teachers retired. We would expect to see similar trends this year.

School Infrastructure

Q. How much is government spending on school infrastructure this year? If we are in a time of fiscal restraint how come the budget has increased by \$11 million over last year?

A. Budget 2016 will allocate nearly \$106 million for school infrastructure projects including ongoing new school construction, extension projects and repairs and maintenance.

This includes approximately \$88 million to continue school construction projects and over \$16 million for repairs and maintenance.

We are in the final construction phases for several projects. It is typically in the final years of these multi-year projects where the greater costs are incurred, between now and 2017 six new schools will be completed.

Q. What school infrastructure projects do we expect to see completed in the coming years? What school projects are not moving forward?

A. Funding is provided to complete or continue construction of new schools in Conception Bay South, Gander (Grades 4-6), Paradise (Octagon Pond), Portugal Cove – St. Phillips, Torbay and Virginia Park and the extension and renovation of St. Peter's Junior High.

Funding is also provided for an extension and renovation project to St. Peter's Primary in Mount Pearl, an extension to Mobile Central High School and a modular classroom for École des Grands-Vents in St. John's.

The new intermediate and high school announced last year for Paradise are being deferred and further evaluation to determine the long-term needs for these schools will be carried out.

The plan for a new school announced last year for Witless Bay/Mobile has been changed and an extension to Mobile Central High School is approved to address the future capacity needs of the school community.

The new school announced for Coley's Point is being deferred but remains in the long-term plans for school infrastructure.

Extension projects previously announced for Riverside Elementary and Villanova Junior High are being deferred.

Q. Weren't the new schools in Paradise and Witless Bay/ Mobile announced to deal with growing capacity issues in those communities?

A. We will work with the English School District to monitor the capacity needs of these areas. In light of the changes to class caps and implementation of combined grades, the district needs to evaluate the impact this will have on capacity.

Currently the schools in Paradise are being deferred and an evaluation of the region's needs will be undertaken.

In place of a new school, an extension to Mobile Central High School has been approved to address the capacity needs of the school community.

Q. The residents in Coley's Point have been lobbying hard for a new school. This project was announced in 2013 and residents claim promises for a new school date back even further. They also claim that the school is old and outdated and they need a new one. Why aren't you moving forward with this school now?

A. Coley's Point will remain in the long-term plans for school infrastructure, but there is no funding allocated in Budget 2016 to move this project forward at this time.

While this will be disappointing news to the school community impacted by this decision, the Provincial Government remains committed to building a new school in the area.

Due to our fiscal position we have had to make difficult choices and also look very closely at how we use our limited fiscal resources. Right now, with respect to new school infrastructure projects, our focus has to remain on areas where capacity is an issue.

We will ensure that the current school continues to be maintained to meet the needs and support the delivery of quality education for all the students who attend Coley's Point Primary.

While we do recognize that Coley's Point Primary is an older school, there are currently 12 schools including Coley's Point that have been in use for nearly 60 years or longer. We are committed to maintaining the school to ensure it meets the needs of students.

Over the past number of years nearly \$1 million has been provided for repairs, renovations and maintenance to Coley's Point including:

- Roof replacement
- Electrical upgrades
- Foundation repairs

Q. Why are you not moving forward with the extension projects for Riverside Elementary and Villanova Junior High? Weren't these extensions being added to deal with capacity issues?

A. The extension projects previously announced for Riverside Elementary and Villanova Junior High are being deferred.

The capacity needs of these schools will be met through modular classrooms in the interim.

The original intent of the extensions was to add more permanent infrastructure to these schools and eventually remove the modular classrooms.

In light of our fiscal realities, it is a more prudent measure to use resources already in place and continue to address capacity requirements through the use of modular classrooms where appropriate.

Regional Library Model - Provincial Information and Library Resources Board

Q. What impact will the funding reduction to the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board have on libraries in the province?

A. The funding for the libraries board will be reduced by just over \$1million annually. While the final outcome of how this reduction will be implemented will have to be voted on and passed by the board, we based our decision on a proposed regional library model.

In making this decision we proposed the implementation of a regional library model that would see an overall reduction in the number of libraries, but a reinvestment to enhance the remaining libraries and the services they offer.

We will work with the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board to help it through its transition and transformation into a more efficient service for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Q. What are the details of the proposed model put forth by the government?

A. The Provincial Government is recommending the implementation of a regional library model.

The proposed model will ensure that over 85 per cent of the provincial population will be within a 30 minute drive to the nearest library.

The model also provides for a reinvestment into the libraries for necessary capital improvements, the provision of additional library materials and program offerings and an enhancement in eBooks and books-by-mail services.

As a part of the regional library model, the recommendation will be to close 54 libraries over the next two years while ensuring that the remaining 41 libraries are within a 30 minute drive for 85 per cent of the population.

The model is recommending that the remaining 41 libraries implement a minimum service standard and operate during a minimum of 30 hours per week.

Currently, the 54 libraries in our proposal are open on average 18 hours a week, 4 days a week.

The libraries board would keep their current library materials budget so that it may be reinvested across the remaining 41 libraries to increase eBooks and books-by-mail services.

Discontinue Lunch Time Busing

Q. Why are you eliminating lunch time busing for students?

A. Lunch time busing was offered as an additional service that was accommodated with the half-day Kindergarten program. With the implementation of full-day Kindergarten there will no longer be a school bus service required at mid-day to bus the Kindergarten students.

Lunch time busing was not a service that was offered across the entire province and it is not a requirement under the *Schools Act*. It was only available in areas where board-owned buses provided transportation services. It is also not a service offered in other provinces.

Q. How many schools will be impacted by this decision?

A. Discontinuing the service will affect 15 schools in the Central Region and 4 schools in the Eastern Region. Busing to and from school at the beginning and end of the school day will not be impacted by this policy change.

Q. How much money will government save as a result of this decision?

A. The elimination of lunch time busing will result in an annual savings of \$351,000

Q. Parents are complaining that this change means their children will not be able to come home for lunch. Some of these same parents have also been paying an annual fee so that their children can be bused home at lunch. Couldn't this service be saved if you just charged parents for the service?

A. This additional service really worked hand-in-hand with the half-day Kindergarten program. With full-day Kindergarten being implemented there is no longer the requirement to have buses at these schools during the mid-day break.

Additionally, this is not a service that was offered across the province, it was only available to 19 schools. This is an opportunity to streamline bus services.

The students in the impacted communities will have the same opportunities as all of their peers in the rest of the province to have their parents or guardians pick them up for lunch, or stay at the school during the lunch hour.

Transportation Benefit - Child Care Services Subsidy

Q. What is the transportation benefit under the Child Care Services Subsidy?

A. The Child Care Services Subsidy Program helps eligible low income families with their child care costs. The transportation benefit was an additional policy under the subsidy that helped parents or guardians with transportation costs associated with bringing their children to and from child care.

Q. Why are you eliminating the transportation benefit?

A. Newfoundland and Labrador was the only province in Canada that offered a transportation subsidy for child care as part of their child care subsidy programs.

The cost of providing transportation for this service is inconsistent across the province due to the variety of travel methods used to avail of the benefit. In some cases, the benefit is used to pay taxis to bring children to their place of child care, or the benefit is being provided to parents who are transporting their own children in their own cars to child care settings.

There is a small percentage of families approved for the Child Care Services Subsidy who also receive the transportation subsidy.

Families who avail of the Child Care Services Subsidy will still benefit from the program. It was determined that the removal of the transportation benefit to streamline it with other provinces was the best way to reduce our expenditures while still offering core services to eligible families.

Beneficiaries will receive sufficient notice so they are able to make other arrangements to bring their children to child care. These changes will come into effect on October 1, 2016.

Q. How much will government save from this initiative?

A. This will save government over \$2 million over the next three years.

Q. This decision will impact low-income families; won't this add an additional burden to their cost of living?

A. These families will continue to benefit from the child care subsidy program which pays for or helps reduce the costs associated with having a child in child care. On average there are approximately 2,400 children receiving a child care subsidy. A small percentage were also benefiting from the transportation benefit.

We had to consider several things when making this decision. This is not a program that is offered in other provinces and the cost of providing transportation was inconsistent. There were no set rates for how much a taxi company could charge. There were also parents who were receiving the transportation benefit for using their own cars to bring their children to child care.

Key Messages – GRI Submission
Elimination of the Learning in a Technology Environment (LITE) Program
April 13, 2016

- There has been a decision to eliminate the Learning in a Technology Environment (LITE) Program, an optional program offered in the Western district, effective September 2016.
- The affected schools (five) will still have the same allocation of resources by formulas as the other schools in the district.
- We have worked very hard to keep the impact on students and teachers to a minimum.
- This Government is committed to ensuring the province's education system has the resources it needs to continue to incorporate educational technology in the classroom.

**NLESD Version - Education and Early Childhood Development
Budget 2016 – Questions and Answers**

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Additionally, we expect that any loss in teaching units will be further mitigated by retirements and natural attrition in the system. An estimated 500+ teachers are eligible to retire this year. If we look at last year, approximately 200 teachers retired. We would expect to see similar trends this year.

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We will ensure that the current school continues to be maintained to meet the needs and support the delivery of quality education for all the students who attend Coley's Point Primary.

While we do recognize that Coley's Point Primary is an older school, there are currently 12 schools including Coley's Point that have been in use for nearly 60 years or longer. We are committed to maintaining the school to ensure it meets the needs of students.

Over the past number of years nearly \$1 million has been provided for repairs, renovations and maintenance to Coley's Point including:

- Roof replacement
- Electrical upgrades
- Foundation repairs

Q. Why are you not moving forward with the extension projects for Riverside Elementary and Villanova Junior High? Weren't these extensions being added to deal with capacity issues?

A. The extension projects previously announced for Riverside Elementary and Villanova Junior High are being deferred.

The capacity needs of these schools will be met through modular classrooms in the interim.

The original intent of the extensions was to add more permanent infrastructure to these schools and eventually remove the modular classrooms.

In light of our fiscal realities, it is a more prudent measure to use resources already in place and continue to address capacity requirements through the use of modular classrooms where appropriate.

Discontinue Lunch Time Busing

Q. Why are you eliminating lunch time busing for students?

A. Lunch time busing was offered as an additional service that was accommodated with the half-day Kindergarten program. With the implementation of full-day Kindergarten there will no longer be a school bus service required at mid-day to bus the Kindergarten students.

Lunch time busing was not a service that was offered across the entire province and it is not a requirement under the *Schools Act*. It was only available in areas where board-owned buses provided transportation services. It is also not a service offered in other provinces.

Q. How many schools will be impacted by this decision?

A. Discontinuing the service will affect 15 schools in the Central Region and 4 schools in the Eastern Region. Busing to and from school at the beginning and end of the school day will not be impacted by this policy change.

Q. How much money will government save as a result of this decision?

A. The elimination of lunch time busing will result in an annual savings of \$351,000

Q. Parents are complaining that this change means their children will not be able to come home for lunch. Some of these same parents have also been paying an annual fee so that their children can be bused home at lunch. Couldn't this service be saved if you just charged parents for the service?

A. This additional service really worked hand-in-hand with the half-day Kindergarten program. With full-day Kindergarten being implemented there is no longer the requirement to have buses at these schools during the mid-day break.

Additionally, this is not a service that was offered across the province, it was only available to 19 schools. This is an opportunity to streamline bus services.

The students in the impacted communities will have the same opportunities as all of their peers in the rest of the province to have their parents or guardians pick them up for lunch, or stay at the school during the lunch hour.

NLIS 1
Education and Early Childhood Development
April 27, 2016

The following is being distributed at the request of Provincial Information and Library Resources Board:

Regional Library Model to be Adopted

The Provincial Information and Library Resources Board met on Tuesday, April 26, to discuss changes to library services. Through Budget 2016 the annualized budget for the board has been reduced by \$1 million. The board voted in favour of adopting a regional library model which will see the closure of a number of libraries and a strategic reinvestment by the Provincial Government into library resources.

“The Provincial Information and Library Resources Board has voted to implement a regional library model. While it is a difficult decision to close a significant number of libraries, we do feel the implementation of the regional model, along with a strategic reinvestment back into libraries will allow residents to continue to have access to our many library resources. These changes are not easy, but we feel that in the long term they will provide an improved library system.”

- Calvin Taylor, Chair, Provincial Information and Library Resources Board

The implementation of a regional library model is a collaborative effort between the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board and Provincial Government and will occur over a two-year period resulting in:

- Over 85 per cent of residents being within a 30 minute drive to the nearest library;
- The closure of 54 libraries over two years, with 41 libraries remaining open. The Provincial Information and Library Resources Board is currently notifying impacted employees and will release the list of libraries identified for closure once this process is complete;
- A reinvestment into libraries for necessary capital improvements, additional library materials and program offerings;
- Enhancements to the eBooks and books-by-mail services;
- Implementation of a minimum service standard and operating hours of no less than 30 hours per week;
- No change to the current library materials budget so that funding may be reinvested across the remaining libraries;
- Continued access to library resources for students in schools with public libraries identified for closure; and
- Municipalities, where feasible, will be offered the opportunity to assume responsibility for libraries located in municipal buildings.

“The decisions that had to be made during Budget 2016 were difficult, but focus on the long-term goal of fiscal sustainability for our province. We recognize that the implementation of a regional library model will see changes to library services. The Provincial Government will work with the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board to help it through its transition and transformation of our library system into a more efficient one for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.”

- The Honourable Dale Kirby, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development

Through the budget process the Provincial Government identified savings of over \$1.7 million for library operations. With the implementation of the regional library model, the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board’s budget will be reduced by just over \$1 million, with approximately \$652,000 being reinvested to enhance current services.

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2016 04 27

12:00 p.m.

Key Messages

Regional Library Model – Budget 2016

April 2016

- The decisions that had to be made during Budget 2016 were difficult but focus on the long-term goal of fiscal sustainability for our province.
- We recognize that the implementation of a regional library model will see changes to library services. However, while we have reduced operational funding to the library board, we are also reinvesting savings to bolster and enhance current library services.
- As part of the Government Renewal Initiative process for Budget 2016, all departments, agencies, boards and commissions were asked to find savings to address the growing provincial deficit.
- The Provincial Information and Library Resources Board met on Tuesday, April 26 to review a proposal from government that contemplated the implementation of a regional library model and reinvestment into libraries as a means to address an annual \$1 million operational funding reduction.
- The board voted to accept the regional model.
- While these are significant changes, this has been a collaborative approach between the library board and Provincial Government and we will ensure that all residents continue to have access to library resources.
- The implementation of a regional library model will occur over a two-year period and will result in:
 - Over 85 per cent of the provincial population being within a 30 minute drive to the nearest library.
 - The closure of 54 libraries over two years, with 41 libraries remaining open.
 - A reinvestment into libraries for necessary capital improvements, additional library materials and program offerings.
 - Enhancement to the eBooks and books-by-mail services.
 - Implementation of a minimum service standard and operating hours of no less than 30 hours per week.
 - No change to current library materials budget so that funding may be reinvested across the remaining libraries.
 - Continued access to library resources for students in schools with public libraries identified for closure.
 - Municipalities, where feasible, will be offered the opportunity to assume responsibility for libraries located in municipal buildings.
- Through the Government Renewal Initiative, a savings of over \$1.7 million was identified for library operations.

- With the implementation of the regional library model, the Provincial Information Library Resources Board's budget will be reduced by just over \$1 million, with approximately \$652,000 being reinvested to enhance current services.
- The Provincial Government will work with the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board to help it through its transition and transformation into a more efficient service for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Questions and Answers
Provincial Information and Library Resources Board
April 2016

Q. The province has one of the lowest adult literacy rates in the country, the budget is adding a tax on books and now you are closing all of these libraries – how can government justify this?

A. It is obvious that we need to find a new approach to dealing with adult literacy. Even with 95 libraries in the province we still have low literacy rates.

While we are closing locations of libraries, many of which are open very few hours during the week, everyone in our province will continue to have access to the numerous resources available through the libraries online or through the books by mail service.

Ultimately we want to make a better library system for everyone, however, given our current fiscal reality, we need to approach that by enhancing services on a regional level.

We will continue our partnership with libraries to address early literacy through the “Every Child Ready to Read” program, and through our Parent Resource Kits.

Additionally, we are committed to an Adult Literacy Strategy that we believe will support the goal of increased literacy. The Department of Advanced Education and Skills will be leading this initiative. We believe that for our province’s continued success, this generation and those that follow will need strong skillsets that foster innovation, encourage new growth and bind us together.

Q. The closure of these libraries is going to impact several small communities in rural areas of the province. Is this another service that is being taken away from rural Newfoundland and Labrador?

A. Libraries have an important role in our communities. With the implementation of a regional model we are ensuring that over 85% of our population has access to a library within a 30 minute drive.

Additionally, as part of our reinvestment into the library system, there will be an enhancement to eBooks and books by mail services. These can be accessed by residents in all regions of the province.

On average, the libraries identified for closure were open approximately 18 hours a week spread over four days. Many of these operating hours fell within the regular 9 to 5 working day, with few evening or weekend operating hours.

With the regional model, we will not only see an enhancement to the library collection, the minimum operating hours of 30 hours per week will offer greater opportunities for people to use the library system.

Q. How did you come up with the number of 54 libraries to close?

A. We developed a model based on creating a regionalized service, where libraries would be within a 30 minute drive.

This model identified locations based on their ability to service the highest number of patrons in the closest proximity to the library.

Our intention was to find a model designed to serve the maximum population coverage within a minimum driving time.

Q. As a result of these closures, how many jobs will be lost?

A. Over the next two to three years, as the regional model is fully implemented, there will be a reduction of 64 positions within the library board.

Q. What communities will have their libraries closed?

A. The library board is currently notifying impacted employees. Until that notification process is complete, the board will not be issuing the list of locations. This is being done out of respect for those employees.

We know that this is not easy news for these employees and we want the board to have time to contact each individual and let them know personally before it is made public.

Q. Why wasn't this announced on Budget Day?

A. The board has the legislative authority to close libraries. It is not a decision that can be made by the government.

The board Chair and Executive Director were informed of the budget decision and proposal from government on Budget Day.

Since the board has the decision-making power over libraries, the board had to meet to consider the proposal from government that included the regional model and reinvestment.

The board met for the first time since Budget Day on Tuesday, April 26. The board voted on the model and passed it.

Q. Why did the libraries board receive a cut to its funding?

A. During the Government Renewal Initiative, all departments, boards, agencies and commissions were asked to identify ways to save money to help deal with the fiscal situation the province finds itself in.

The libraries board put forward four proposals identifying ways to save money, all of which included the closure of multiple libraries.

We felt that while there was an opportunity to save money through the closure of libraries, we recognized the need to reinvest back into the library system to enhance and strengthen the remaining libraries.

We identified \$1.7 million through the closure of 54 libraries. What we decided to do was reduce the board's budget by just over \$1 million and reinvest \$652,000 back into the remaining 41 libraries.

Q. Where did the concept of the regional model come from? How much research was conducted prior to making this decision?

A. One of reoccurring themes that came up again and again during our GRI consultation process was the idea of regionalizing services. People seemed very open to the concept and we felt it would be a good model to use for libraries.

The concept of regionalizing services takes into account the fact that many people already travel to local hub communities for groceries, banking and other services not widely available in all communities. By regionalizing libraries following this model, library resources will be available in areas that people would naturally go to for other services.

Q. Are there any libraries being closed in areas where schools have no access to "in-school library resources"? What about in-school public libraries slotted to be closed?

A. Students in schools that currently house public libraries identified for closure will continue to have access to library resources in the school. The materials from the public libraries will be left with the schools to utilize for the school library.

Q. If a municipality decides to take over a library, will they be responsible for hiring a librarian? Buying books?

A. In cases where it is feasible for a municipality to take over a library, they will have sole responsibility for staffing and resourcing the library.

Q. Does the tax on books impact libraries?

A. The HST tax being applied to book sales will not be applicable to books purchased by the public libraries.

Q. What steps are you taking to enhance the services of the remaining libraries?

A. There are a number of steps being put in place to ensure residents continue to have access to library resources. Through the regional model and reinvestment in libraries we are ensuring that:

- Over 85 per cent of the provincial population will be within a 30 minute drive to the nearest library.
- A reinvestment will be made into libraries for necessary capital improvements, additional library materials and program offerings.
- eBooks and books-by-mail services will be enhanced.
- Minimum service standards and operating hours of no less than 30 hours per week will be implemented for remaining libraries.
- There will be no change to the current library materials budget so that funding may be reinvested across the remaining libraries.
- Students in schools that currently house public libraries identified for closure will continue to have access to library resources in the school.
- Municipalities, where feasible, will be offered the opportunity to assume responsibility for libraries located in municipal buildings.

Q. What are your plans for eBooks? What about 'books by mail'? How will these services roll out?

A. eBooks and books by mail are already services available to residents of the province. The intent will be to enhance these services. This could include more titles available and additional resources to deal with increased demand for these services.

Q. You say 85 percent of the province's population will be located within 30 mins of a library...what about the other 15% - what happens with them?

A. There are approximately 270 municipalities in our province. Nearly two-thirds do not have libraries operating in their communities.

The regional model and investment into more online and mail resources will help ensure that library materials are available in all regions of our province.

Q. What about community groups and other organizations that use libraries to host activities?

A. We recognize that this decision impacts more than just library users. There could be groups that are displaced as a result of some of these closures.

Many of the needs of these groups could be accommodated through other municipal buildings or, for any programs offered to children, there is also an opportunity to utilize the more than 150 Family Resources Centres located throughout the province.