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# strengthening pathways to education for youth at risk in Saint John

*A Discussion Paper*



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Prepared under the direction of the Education to Employment Working Group of the Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative. The report was authored by Kathryn Asher, researcher with the Human Development Council, and funded by Vibrant Communities Saint John.

Human Development Council  
3<sup>rd</sup> floor, City Market, 47 Charlotte Street  
PO Box 6125, Station A  
Saint John, New Brunswick E2L 4R6  
506.634.1673  
info@sjhdc.ca



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# Executive Summary

The purpose of this discussion paper is to identify the personal and community impact of early school leaving, and to provide a foundation for strategic community actions that will help more children succeed in life.

The Saint John community wants all our youth to achieve their high school diploma and to be prepared to pursue their next step in life. Regrettably, a number of Saint John's young residents are missing this milestone. This report is a step in understanding the complexity of the issue of high school non-completion. It does so by drawing on current research and local education statistics as well as by seeking the opinions of local stakeholders and youth.

The discussion paper details the fiscal implications of high school non-completion. These costs span many areas from health and crime to economic productivity and social services. These, all told, add up to an annual cost of close to \$20,000 per early school leaver.

When considering the high rate of poverty in Saint John, it may be surprising that the rate of high school non-completion in Saint John is slightly below the provincial average and lower than the rates for Fredericton and Moncton. Despite the presence of many of the factors that have been shown to prevent students from completing high school, we are comparatively holding our own. Further, a smaller proportion of young adults are without their high school certificate (15% of 20 to 34 year-olds) than their parents' generation (32.5% of 44 to 64 year-olds). While this is good news, the number of youth who do not complete school is unacceptably high. In the 2007-2008 school year, 147 young Saint Johners left school prior to graduation in School District 8.

While poverty is rarely named as the explicit reason why youth are at risk of leaving school early, the impact of inadequate incomes and social marginalization is woven throughout this report. Our stakeholders identified addictions, a lack of family support, and parenting/pregnancy as the primary reasons young people leave school. Other reasons they identified include: a lack of interest, poor academic performance and literacy, social issues, homelessness, mental health issues, employment, trouble with the law, the age-grade gap, a difficult transition to high school, and being asked to leave/discipline in school. Department of Education statistics reveal that the proportion of students who leave because of employment opportunities and academic problems is higher in Saint John than at the provincial level.

There are a number of reasons that those who have left school opt to return to their studies. Our interviewees identified the following: a desire to improve their labour force experience, because they have come to recognize the value of education, or because they are bored or have been encouraged.

Programs and interventions that can address high school non-completion need to respond to the reasons young people leave. Some prominent recommendations in the literature and our interviews include: 1) encouraging young people to stay in school; 2) enabling young people to stay in school through the removal of barriers; and 3) offering additional programs that enhance opportunities for school completion. Another finding is that responses need to be sensitive to gender differences. The report draws special attention to the following cohorts: 1) youth living in poverty/priority neighbourhoods; 2) young males; 3) youth with

substance abuse problems; 4) pregnant and parenting youth; 5) homeless youth; and 6) young offenders.

In bringing attention to this issue we acknowledge the efforts of organizations and individuals who work to improve high school completion rates. At the same time, we hope to encourage a discussion and prompt collaborative action among community stakeholders to further address this issue.

## Introduction

Saint John has a long tradition of helping community members in need. Numerous partners and organizations have made strong efforts to tackle the challenges of poverty and disparity in our city. Collaborations such as the Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative (BCAPI) and Vibrant Communities Saint John have played an important role in raising awareness and developing a Greater Saint John Poverty Reduction Strategy (See Appendix I). The strategy is built on the premise that poverty in Saint John will be reduced significantly if, as a community, we can: 1) reduce the concentration of poverty in neighbourhoods; 2) support single parents who are vulnerable with only one income; 3) connect adults with rewarding employment; and 4) provide children and youth with the opportunities they need to succeed academically and in life. Clearly, attaining our objective to reduce poverty falls beyond the mandate or scope of one organization or sector. Government departments, the business community, nonprofit organizations, and citizens must agree upon a plan of action and coordinate efforts and resources to realize this dream. Together we can improve the prospects for our youth-at-risk.

The concerted efforts of business leaders and School District 8 have resulted in additional supports to elementary and middle school children through the Partners Assisting Local Schools (PALS) program and Community Schools. More recently, three provincial departments (Social Development, Education, and Health), nonprofit organizations, and the business community have collaborated to establish an early learning centre in the South End to meet the needs of families in this priority neighbourhood.

Saint John has begun to take strides to meet the needs of children. As a community we must make efforts to respond collaboratively to ensure adequate and appropriate supports are in place and potential barriers are addressed so that our young people have every opportunity to complete high school.

**“Your parents say it’s supposed to be the best years of your life, and sometimes it’s really not, it’s the worst.” - Youth Interviewee**

Local, national, and international researchers agree that education is essential for all youth. It is also agreed that the challenges many youth face in completing their high school education are complex and interconnected. Individuals, families, communities and society as a whole all lose when young people do not complete high school. For some who have dropped out, this means a future of tenuous labour force attachment in low paying jobs. For others, it can be a future which includes health struggles, a reliance on social support systems, or encounters with our justice system.

The reasons young people leave school without graduating are numerous. This discussion paper includes a review of current research and a presentation of provincial and local data. As well, 35 individuals—18 local stakeholders and 17 youth from First Steps Housing Project Inc., The Resource Centre for Youth (TRC), and

Youth Choices—were interviewed in-person as part of the research for this report. The list of interviewees is found in Appendix II.

Some of this discussion paper’s findings are encouraging and indicate that many educators and community groups have had an impact on student retention and success. However, there continues to be a need for further measures to improve high school graduation rates. In the last 10 years, more than 2,000 students in School District 8 have been recorded as having dropped out. In addition, on average about a third of Saint John’s 9<sup>th</sup> graders do not graduate with their class four years later, although many ultimately acquire their diploma.

## I - Implications of High School Non-Completion

The literature has shown that there are many consequences of high school non-completion, both for the individual and the community. As the Canadian Council on Learning explains, “efforts spent to encourage high school completion pay lifelong dividends.”<sup>1</sup> Research has shown the many negative consequences of a young person’s decision to leave school, including: poverty, teen pregnancy/parenting, compromised health, crime, and labour force participation, as well as significant societal costs through public services and subsidies, lost tax revenue and employment insurance.

There are considerable economic costs of high school non-completion in Canada, both to the individual and society. These costs have been outlined in a 2008 report by Olena Hankivsky, commissioned by the Canadian Council on Learning. They include tangible costs in the areas of health, social assistance, crime, and labour and employment as well as intangible costs (or non-market effects) such as pain, suffering and reduced quality of life.<sup>2</sup> Table 1.A outlines the tangible public and private costs.

**Table 1.A - Estimated annual tangible costs of high school non-completion in Canada<sup>3</sup>**

<b>Tangible costs</b>	<b>Type of cost</b>	<b>Estimated annual cost per leaver (2008 dollars)</b>
<b>Health</b>	private	\$8,098
<b>Social Assistance</b>	public	\$4,230
<b>Crime</b>	public	\$224
<b>Earning loss</b>	private	\$3,491
<b>Tax revenue loss</b>	public	\$226
<b>Revenue loss in employment insurance premium</b>	public	\$68
<b>Employment insurance cost</b>	public	\$2,767
		<b>\$19,104</b>

<sup>1</sup> Canadian Council on Learning, “Good News,” 2.  
<sup>2</sup> Hankivsky, *Cost Estimates of Dropping Out of High School in Canada*, 5-6.  
<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 7.

## 1.1 - Increased Dependence on Public Services and Subsidies

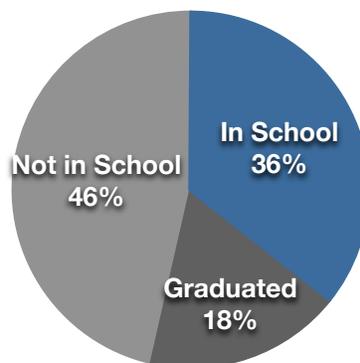
According to Marni Brownell et al., high school non-completion is a significant predictor of poverty.<sup>4</sup>

Hankivsky recounts that high school leavers are twice as likely as completers to find themselves living in poverty, which, she says, “often leads to a reliance on a host of state supports for survival.”<sup>5</sup> Vibrant Communities Saint John’s Education to Employment Working Group explains that, “education increases one’s chances of moving out of poverty. Without a high school education, individuals and families are often trapped in high-poverty neighbourhoods.”<sup>6</sup> Brownell et al., note that high school non-completion is a significant indicator of reliance on social assistance.<sup>7</sup> Hankivsky’s research shows that high school leavers are more likely to rely on public services and subsidies costing over \$4,000 per year per individual.<sup>8</sup>

For Saint John’s 147 early school leavers in 2007-2008 alone, Hankivsky’s cost estimates would work out to almost \$100 million over their lifetime (assuming a very conservative 35-year span).

In the Saint John area, including Grand Bay-Westfield, Quispamsis, and Rothesay, there are 56 youth aged 16 to 18 who live outside the parental home on social assistance. Of these 56, 20 were in school last year and were expected to return for this year; 10 graduated. This leaves 26 young people (close to half) who are not in school. All 56 cases are managed by one case manager, who specializes in this population (Chart 1.B).

**Chart 1.B - Education status of 16-18 year olds living outside the parental home on social assistance, Saint John area.**



## 1.2 - Increased Crime

High school non-graduates are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system. According to Correctional Services Canada, “grade 7 is the average education level of newly admitted offenders who are

<sup>4</sup> Brownell, et al., “Equal Opportunity for All?”, 14.

<sup>5</sup> Hankivsky, *Cost Estimates of Dropping Out of High School in Canada*, 27.

<sup>6</sup> Education to Employment Working Group. *Education to Employment*, 9.

<sup>7</sup> Brownell, et al., “Equal Opportunity for All?”, 14.

<sup>8</sup> Canadian Council on Learning, “No ‘Drop’ in the Bucket.”

serving sentences of two years or more.”<sup>9</sup> Another Canadian study affirms that while high school non-completers make up 34% of the Canadian population, they represent 74% of the prison population.<sup>10</sup>

Hankivsky reports that in the run of a year, an early school leaver costs the criminal justice system on average \$220.

### 1.3 - Negative Health Outcomes

According to Hankivsky, high school leavers have \$8,000 more a year in health related costs than their peers who finish high school. She also states that those who have left school without graduating enjoy fewer years at a reasonable quality of life. Evidence suggests strong correlations, “between education and health across a range of illnesses including coronary heart disease, high blood cholesterol, cancers, Alzheimer’s, some mental illnesses, diabetes, depression, stress, lung capacity, and obesity.”<sup>11</sup> Perhaps the most common health issue associated with failure to complete school is substance abuse.

### 1.4 - Increased Teen Pregnancy and Parenting Rates

Brownell et al., have found that high school non-completion is a considerable predictor of teen motherhood.<sup>12</sup> In addition, the “lack of education among young mothers has been linked to repeat births in adolescents, increased dependence on government support, increased infant mortality, low birth weight, premature births and developmental disabilities.”<sup>13</sup>

### 1.5 - Decreased Labour Force Participation

According to Brownell et al., high school non-completion is a significant predictor of unemployment,<sup>14</sup> which is supported by New Brunswick labour statistics. A report by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada and Statistics Canada notes that the 2004 unemployment rate for Canadians aged 25 to 29, who did not complete high school, was more than double that of university graduates (15% and 7% respectively).<sup>15</sup> The unemployment rate in New Brunswick for those in that age group with less than a high school education was notably higher at 27% (second only to Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island).<sup>16</sup>

As Geoff Bowlby explains, the labour market in Canada rewards those with an education, which is reflected in their earnings and long-term prospects.<sup>17</sup> E. Dianne Looker and Victor Thiessen say that high school leavers are less likely to be employed, while those who are employed are less likely to secure “good jobs” and are apt to have lower wages and less job security.<sup>18</sup> The Canadian Council on Learning explains that

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<sup>9</sup> Hankivsky, *Cost Estimates of Dropping Out of High School in Canada*, 34.

<sup>10</sup> Ungerleider and Burns, 2002.

<sup>11</sup> Canadian Council on Learning, “No ‘Drop’ in the Bucket.”

<sup>12</sup> Brownell, et al., “Equal Opportunity for All?”, 14.

<sup>13</sup> First Steps Housing Project Inc., Pregnancy Centre.

<sup>14</sup> Brownell, et al., “Equal Opportunity for All?”, 14.

<sup>15</sup> Council of Ministers of Education, Canada and Statistics Canada, *Education Indicators in Canada*, xvi.

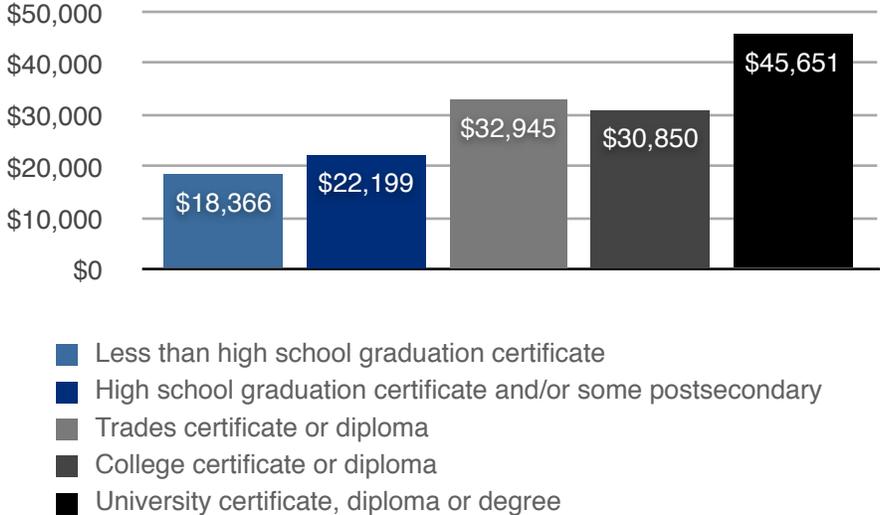
<sup>16</sup> *Council of Ministers of Education, Canada and Statistics Canada, Education Indicators in Canada*, 91. See Table E2.2. Note: The unemployment data for New Brunswick’s university graduates was suppressed to meet confidentiality requirements.

<sup>17</sup> Bowlby, “Provincial Drop-out rates.”

<sup>18</sup> Looker and Thiessen, *The Second Chance System*, 3.

the initial economic benefits of leaving school to work are offset over time by the limited job prospects for high school leavers.<sup>19</sup> Hankivsky calculated that a high school non-completer in Canada can expect to earn close to \$3,500 less a year than those with a diploma (but who do not have post-secondary education).<sup>20</sup> Again, this trend holds true locally. As Table 1.C shows, high school leavers in the Saint John CMA (Census Metropolitan Area, which includes School District 6 and 8,) earn on average \$3,833 less than those with a high school education. They earn less than \$20,000 annually.

**Table 1.C - Average earnings of population 15 years and over by highest level of schooling in the Saint John CMA, 2001 Census<sup>21</sup>**



**1.6 - Reduced Tax Contributions and Increased Employment Insurance Payments**

The public purse loses revenue when our youth drop off the graduation path. Hankivsky found that the cost of employment insurance payments combined with the loss of income-tax revenue and employment insurance premiums represent a \$3,000 annual public cost per leaver.<sup>22</sup>

**II - Measuring Early School Leavers**

The Department of Education considers a student to have dropped out if they were attending school on September 30<sup>th</sup> and were not attending the following September 30<sup>th</sup> (without having met the requirements for graduation). The department’s tracking is province-wide and takes into account students who leave one school and return to another.<sup>23</sup> In contrast, many interviewees consider youth to have left school early once they stop attending.

<sup>19</sup> Canadian Council on Learning, “The Rural-Urban Gap in Education,” 6.

<sup>20</sup> Canadian Council on Learning, “No ‘Drop’ in the Bucket.”

<sup>21</sup> Statistics Canada, Average Earnings of the Population 15 Years and Over by Highest Level of Schooling, by Census Metropolitan Area (2001 Census).

<sup>22</sup> Canadian Council on Learning, “No ‘Drop’ in the Bucket.”

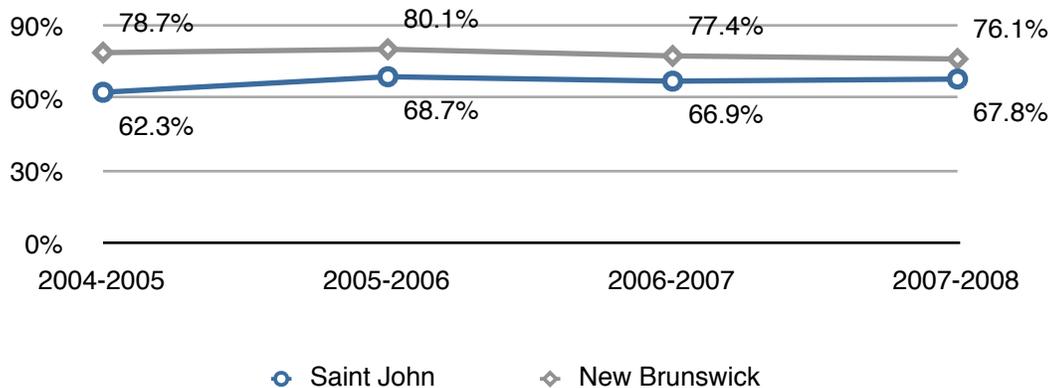
<sup>23</sup> Email correspondence with the Department of Education, September 30, 2009.

Some interviewees think that the Department's definition does not capture all youth who are not attending school. For instance, it overlooks those who drop out and return in a given year—for example if they leave in November and return in March. Interviewees say it is not uncommon to see youth leave one semester and return the next. Under the Department's definition, a student could leave shortly after the cut off in October and return only for the month of September the following year and not be considered to have left school early. Some local stakeholders are concerned that youth who attend school an hour a day are considered active. Students with sporadic and occasional attendance—who are known to many of our local service providers—are not captured in the available data.

The Department of Education calculates their dropout rate by comparing the number of students who left school early to the total number of students enrolled in grades 7 to 12. According to one American study, this calculation does not tell the whole story. *Grad Nation* notes: “When graduation and dropout rates are calculated by following groups of first time 9<sup>th</sup> graders and tracking how many graduate and drop out over four- to six-year periods, a much more severe picture of the dropout problem often emerges.”<sup>24</sup>

Chart 2.A shows Saint John’s<sup>25</sup> on time graduation rates by comparing enrollment in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade to the graduation rate four years later. For example, in the 2004-2005 school year, 1,312 students enrolled in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade in Saint John. Four years later, in 2007-2008, 889 students graduated. This means 68% graduated with their cohort, leaving almost a third behind, compared to approximately a quarter provincially.<sup>26</sup>

**Chart 2.A - On-time graduation rates in Saint John and NB, '04-'05 to '07-'08<sup>27</sup>**



Students with learning challenges, or mental and physical health problems, may require an additional semester or year. Further, some students seeking admission to a particular post-secondary program may continue their studies beyond the point of graduation requirements in order to meet the entrance requirements of their desired program.

<sup>24</sup> Balfanz, *Grad Nation*, 18.

<sup>25</sup> In this section, statistics for “Saint John” are for School District 8.

<sup>26</sup> This figure is an approximation because it looks at all those enrolled in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade as opposed to just the entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade group and does not account for transfers in and out of schools.

<sup>27</sup> Department of Education, *Summary Statistics: School Year 2008-2009*, 35-36. Ibid., *School Year 2007-2008*, 35-36. Ibid., *School Year 2006-2007*, 35-36. Ibid., *School Year 2005-2006*, 35-36. Ibid., *School Year 2004-2005*, 11. Ibid., *School Year 2003-2004*, 11. Ibid., *School Year 2002-2003*, 9. Ibid., *School Year 2001-2002*, 9.

The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada and Statistics Canada divide graduation rates into two groups: typical and after-typical. The typical-age graduation rate is made up of those who graduated at the typical age or younger, whereas the after-typical rate takes into account those who graduated after the typical age. They note that New Brunswick’s students are more likely to graduate on time compared to the national average. In 2002-2003, New Brunswick’s typical-age graduation rate was 71% compared to 67% nationally.<sup>28</sup>

**2.1 - How many youth are dropping out?**

According to the Department of Education, 147 young people dropped out of a Saint John District 8 school in the 2007-2008 academic year. In other words, 147 students who were attending school in September 2006 were not attending one year later. This number represents 2.3% of youth in grades 7 to 12. The cumulative result is more than 2,000 early school leavers in the past 10 years (Table 2.B). It is important to note that this figure does not identify individual students, as some may have returned only to dropout again.

**Table 2.B - Number of those who have dropped out in Saint John, 10-year trend<sup>29</sup>**

# Dropping Out	'98-'99	'99-'00	'00-'01	'01-'02	'02-'03	'03-'04	'04-'05	'05-'06	'06-'07	'07-'08	10-Year Total
Saint John	272	211	214	236	225	246	159	146	155	147	2,011

In 2007-2008, 88% of the School District’s 12<sup>th</sup> graders graduated, leaving behind 127 of their classmates. School rates varied from a low of 82% at one local high school to a high of 95% at another.<sup>30</sup> The differences in high school graduation rates will be influenced, among other factors, by the demographics of the students enrolled at that school. Parental involvement, parent education levels, and the socio-economic status of the feeder neighbourhoods are known to affect academic achievement; as will efforts of school staff to increase student achievement and retention.

**2.2 - What has changed with dropout rates over time?**

As Chart 2.C shows, Saint John’s dropout rate has increased slightly since 1992-1993, but has decreased in the last decade. In the last few years it has remained close to the provincial average.

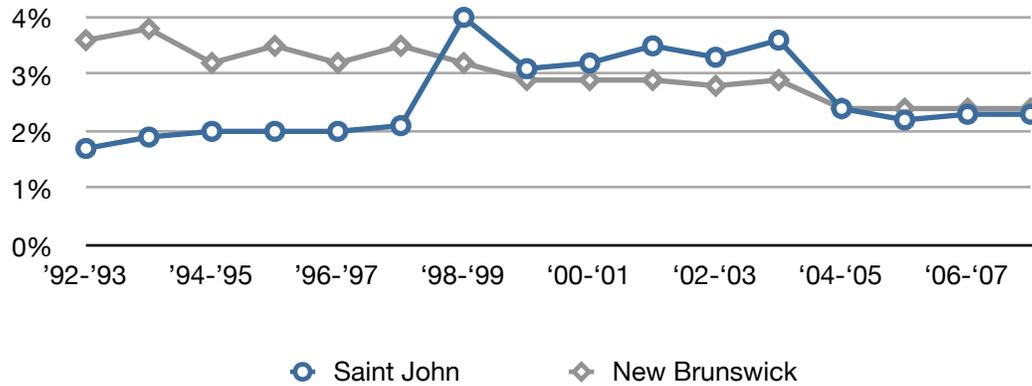
<sup>28</sup> Council of Ministers of Education, Canada and Statistics Canada, *Education Indicators in Canada*, 53. See Table C5.2. Note: this trend is not available for Saint John.

<sup>29</sup> Department of Education, *Education Dropout Statistics: September 30, 2007 to September 30, 2008*, 5.

<sup>30</sup> Department of Education, *Summary Statistics: School Year 2007-2008*, 69.

Department of Education, *Summary Statistics: School Year 2008-2009*, 35.

Chart 2.C - Dropout rates in Saint John and NB, 16-year trend<sup>31</sup>



### 2.3 - How do males and females differ?

The majority (62%) of Saint John youth who drop out are young men (Table 2.D). Male students also tend to drop out earlier than female students. The dropout rate for male students was 2.7%, compared to 1.8% for their female classmates.

The provincial definition of youth who have dropped out precludes capturing a more accurate picture of school engagement at the middle years level. Interviewees providing services to youth affirm the existence of more non-attending youth than this data would indicate.

Table 2.D - Dropout rates in Saint John by sex and grade, 2007-2008<sup>32</sup>

Saint John	Grade 8 (#, %)		Grade 9 (#, %)		Grade 10 (#, %)		Grade 11 (#, %)		Grade 12 (#, %)		Total 7-12 (#, %)	
<b>Male</b>	8	62%	16	70%	23	66%	32	64%	12	48%	91	62%
<b>Female</b>	5	38%	7	30%	12	34%	18	36%	13	52%	56	38%

In addition to leaving school at different times, young men and women have different reasons for leaving.<sup>33</sup> Bowlby says that according to Human Resources Development Canada and Statistics Canada’s Youth in Transition Survey (YITS):

young men were less likely to be engaged in school than young women and were more likely to report wanting to work/earn money as a reason for dropping out of high school. In contrast, teenage pregnancy plays a larger role in the decision to drop out of high school for young women. According to the Youth in Transition Survey,

“When I first found out I was pregnant I didn’t cry because I was pregnant, I cried because I knew I wouldn’t graduate on time.” - First Steps Mom

<sup>31</sup> Department of Education, *Education Dropout Statistics: September 30, 2007 to September 30, 2008*, 6.

Department of Education, “Number of Dropouts and Dropout Rate by School District Grades 7-12,” 5.

<sup>32</sup> Department of Education, *Education Dropout Statistics: September 30, 2007 to September 30, 2008*, 7 - 8.

<sup>33</sup> Looker and Thiessen, *The Second Chance System*, 4.

15.9% of female drop-outs left school because they were pregnant or because they needed to tend to their child.<sup>34</sup>

Kathryn McMullen adds to this analysis by outlining the many ways female leavers differed from the males in the YITS:

Unlike male dropouts, female dropouts perceived postsecondary education quite positively at age 15 and a higher proportion of them aspired to college or university and thought that they would enjoy it. In addition, more female dropouts (56%) than male dropouts (44%) reported that their parents thought a postsecondary education was very important.

Female dropouts were also less likely to report having been in trouble at school and compared to male dropouts, lower proportions of female dropouts had close friends with reputations for causing trouble or who encouraged negative behaviour. In addition, female dropouts had better grades, were more academically engaged in school and had higher average reading scores than male dropouts.<sup>35</sup>

The YITS showed that females were more likely to report, “getting along with teachers, finishing their homework on time and being interested in what they were learning in class. They were less likely than males to think that school was a waste of time.”<sup>36</sup>

McMullen explains that male students are falling behind their female counterparts on a number of key indicators of educational achievement. Young men are less engaged in school and standardized testing shows that their literacy levels are below those of female students. McMullen says literacy is an important measurement because:

the concept of ‘reading literacy’ encompasses a wide range of skills and abilities used in everyday life, at school, at work, and at play [...]. Having strong literacy skills is essential for success in school. That in turn is a key determinant of the range and type of options available at the end of high school, including access to postsecondary institutions and to programs of one’s choice. Without strong literacy skills, labour market choices are limited.<sup>37</sup>

While a greater proportion of those who drop out are male, Robert Balfanz et al., note that the economic consequences of leaving school are much worse for females.<sup>38</sup>

## 2.4 - When are youth dropping out?

In keeping with the provincial trend, youth in Saint John are more likely to drop out of school during the 11<sup>th</sup> grade (Table 2.E). More than a third of all early school leavers in 2007-2008 left school at this time. Over half of those who dropped out left in grades 10 and 11. Saint John’s dropout rates by grade were, for the most part, consistent with the provincial average except in grade 8 where the proportion of leavers was notably higher in Saint John.

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<sup>34</sup> Bowlby, “Provincial Drop-out rates.” Note: The YITS is a longitudinal survey. It arose out of a partnership between Human Resources Development Canada and Statistics Canada.

<sup>35</sup> McMullen, “Early Indicators of Students at Risk of Dropping Out of High School.”

<sup>36</sup> McMullen, “The Gap in Achievement Between Boys and Girls.”

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Balfanz, *Grad Nation*, 13.

**Table 2.E - Dropout rates in Saint John and NB by grade, 2007-2008<sup>39</sup>**

	<b>SJ leavers #</b>	<b>% of total leavers</b>	<b>NB leavers #</b>	<b>% of total leavers</b>
<b>Grade 7</b>	1	0.7	9	0.7
<b>Grade 8</b>	13	8.8	33	2.4
<b>Grade 9</b>	23	15.6	181	13.3
<b>Grade 10</b>	35	23.8	324	23.7
<b>Grade 11</b>	50	34.0	454	33.3
<b>Grade 12</b>	25	17.0	364	26.7
	<b>147</b>		<b>1,365</b>	

## 2.5 - How old are early school leavers?

In 2000, New Brunswick’s school leaving age was increased to 18, but our stakeholders say this regulation has little enforcement. Without enforcement, they say, youth know this is a harmless threat. Table 2.F shows that in 2007-2008 over three-quarters of Saint John’s young people who dropped out were 18 years or older. It must again be noted that the available data is incomplete and so does not provide a true picture of youth who are not in school in Saint John.

**Table 2.F - Leavers by age in Saint John, 2007-2008<sup>40</sup>**

<b>Age as of Dec 31, 2008</b>	<b># SJ</b>	<b>% SJ</b>
15	3	2.0
16	12	8.2
17	18	12.2
18	49	33.3
19	40	27.2
20	20	13.6
21	5	3.4
	<b>147</b>	

Statistics Canada reports that a smaller proportion of young adults are without their high school certificate (15% of 20 to 34 year-olds) than their parents’ generation (32.5% of 44 to 64 year-olds).<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Department of Education, *Education Dropout Statistics: September 30, 2007 to September 30, 2008*, 9.

<sup>40</sup> Email correspondence with the Department of Education, September 30, 2009. Note: We were unable to obtain statistics that correlate grade with age.

<sup>41</sup> Statistics Canada, “Saint John Community Profiles.”

## 2.6 - How does our high school non-completion rate compare to other districts and the province?

Table 2.G shows that Saint John's dropout rate (2.3%) is slightly below the provincial average of New Brunswick's 14 school districts (2.4%). Saint John's rate is somewhat better than the rates for the two other comparable cities, Fredericton (2.6%) and Moncton (2.9%).

**Table 2.G - Dropout rates in NB by district, 2007-2008<sup>42</sup>**

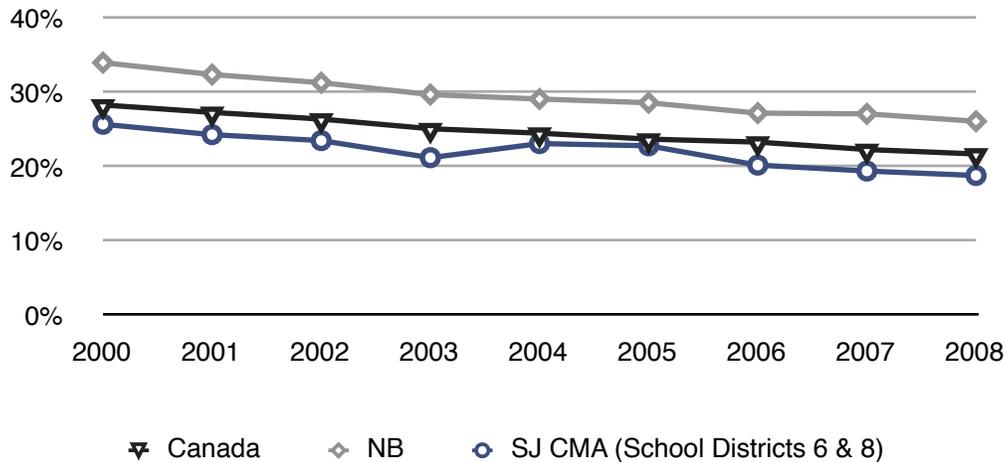
School District	Dropout Rate %	# Dropping Out
15 - Dalhousie	3.5	74
09 - Tracadie-Sheila	3.2	119
03 - Edmundston	3.0	98
02 - Moncton	2.9	239
16 - Miramichi	2.8	92
18 - Fredericton	2.6	160
11 - Richibouctou	2.6	73
<b>08 - Saint John</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>147</b>
17 - Oromocto	2.1	56
10 - St. Stephen	1.9	40
06 - Rothesay	1.8	96
05 - Campbellton	1.8	52
14 - Woodstock	1.6	66
01 - Dieppe	1.6	53
<b>New Brunswick</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>1,365</b>

## 2.7 - How are we doing on the national scene?

The national, provincial, and Saint John high school non-completion rates have been declining over the last decade. Historically we have had better high school completion rates than the provincial and national averages. As Chart 2.H shows, the Saint John CMA had lower high school non-completion rates than the Canadian and New Brunswick averages for every year since 2000. The Saint John CMA has seen a decline in the proportion of residents who do not finish high school, down 7% since 2000.

<sup>42</sup> Department of Education, *Education Dropout Statistics: September 30, 2007 to September 30, 2008*, 5.

Chart 2.H - Population 15 years and over that have not completed high school<sup>43</sup>



New Brunswick is faring relatively well on the national scene, as Table 2.1 shows. Our province had the fourth lowest rate of high school non-completion among Canada’s 10 provinces. In New Brunswick, 9.2% of our 20-to-24-year-olds are without a high school diploma and not in school, compared to 10.1% nationally.

Table 2.1 - Population 20-to-24 years without a high school diploma and not in school, '02-'03/'04-'05<sup>44</sup>

	Dropout rate (%)
Manitoba	13.0
Alberta	12.0
Quebec	11.9
Saskatchewan	10.7
Canada	10.1
Prince Edward Island	9.7
Nova Scotia	9.3
New Brunswick	9.2
Ontario	9.1
Newfoundland and Labrador	8.0
British Columbia	7.5

National dropout rates have fallen considerably over the years. Statistics Canada reports that the dropout rate for 20-to-24-year-olds fell from 16.7% during the 1990-1991 school year to 9.8% in 2004-2005. This

<sup>43</sup> Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey by special request.

<sup>44</sup> Bowlby, “Provincial Drop-out rates.” Note: Data was not available for the territories. Statistics Canada explains: “Since the Labour Force Survey is a sample survey subject to some inherent error, particularly among smaller geographies, provincial drop-out rates are averaged over three-year periods. This is done to improve the confidence in the trend.” These numbers are for 2002-2003 to 2004-2005.

decline has been observed throughout Canada but was the most evident in Atlantic Canada. Despite progress, there are still over 200,000 young people in Canada who have dropped out of school.<sup>45</sup>

## 2.8 - How are we doing on the global scene?

On the world stage, Canada is doing relatively well. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reports that 85% of Canadian adults (aged 25 to 64) have completed high school. This is in comparison to an average of two-thirds for the OECD countries. Canada ranked fourth out of 29 countries after the Czech Republic, the United States, and the Slovak Republic.<sup>46</sup>

While New Brunswick has among the lowest scores in national assessment results of reading and mathematics, it must be noted that Canada as a whole (including New Brunswick) ranks third among 29 OECD countries in reading achievement (2003). The United States ranks 15<sup>th</sup>. In mathematics levels, Canada ranks 5<sup>th</sup> while the United States ranks 25<sup>th</sup> out of 30 countries.<sup>47</sup>

## III - Understanding Why Youth Do Not Complete School

The literature, the Department of Education, and stakeholders identify many reasons why youth leave school. While poverty is rarely named as the explicit reason for leaving, it is often the root of the problem. Our stakeholders identified addictions, a lack of family support, and parenting/pregnancy as the primary reasons young people drop out. Other reasons they listed include: a lack of interest, poor academic performance and literacy, social issues, homelessness, mental health issues, employment, trouble with the law, the age-grade gap, a difficult transition to high school, and being asked to leave/discipline in school. Our interviewees indicate that some youth leave for multiple reasons and others drop out and no one knows why. Some youth leave and return several times, which makes understanding the extent of high school non-completion in Saint John difficult.

According to the Department of Education (Table 3.A), close to half of Saint John's early school leavers in 2007-2008 left for personal reasons. This is lower than the provincial rate of almost three-quarters. The proportion who leave because of employment opportunities and academic problems is higher in Saint John.

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<sup>45</sup> Bowlby, "Provincial Drop-out rates."

<sup>46</sup> OECD. *Education at a Glance 2007*, 37. Note: there are 30 OECD countries but Japan was not included in this calculation.

<sup>47</sup> National Governors Association, *Benchmarking for Success*.

**Table 3.A - Reasons for dropping out in SJ and NB, 2007-2008<sup>48</sup>**

	# SJ	% SJ	% NB
<b>Personal problems</b>	66	44.9	74.9
<b>Employment</b>	40	27.2	13.0
<b>Academic problems</b>	32	21.8	8.9
<b>Suspension</b>	7	4.8	1.9
<b>Registered to return later</b>	2	1.4	1.1
<b>Financial problems</b>	-	0	0.2
<b>Alternate education</b>	-	0	0
	<b>147</b>		

*Note: Personal problems include reasons such as: lack of interest in school, failure to attend classes, pregnancy, lack of child care, and family problems. Alternate education includes any training institution which does not provide a high school diploma such as a business college. Registered to return later refers to students who are not in school on September 30, but are registered to take classes at a later date.*

### 3.1 - The Role of Poverty

Poverty plays a role in why young people do not complete school.<sup>49</sup> Vibrant Communities Saint John’s most recent statistical profile on poverty in Saint John (*Poverty and Plenty II*) shows that while the city’s rate has been improving, it is still high. In the 2006 Census, slightly more than one in five Saint John residents (20.8%) were living in poverty. This represents 13,743 individuals and ranks above the provincial and national averages. In our city, one in four families is headed by a lone parent; an estimated 60 percent of which live in poverty. As a result, Saint John has one of the highest child poverty rates in Canada, with 34% of our children under 6 years of age falling below the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO).<sup>50</sup>

The importance of neighbourhoods—the context in which a child develops—has been identified as a relevant factor in understanding why youth leave school early.<sup>51</sup> Poverty in Saint John is concentrated in specific, geographically defined neighbourhoods: Crescent Valley, Lower West Side, Old North End, South End, and Waterloo Village.<sup>52</sup> While our surrounding suburbs are counted among the wealthiest communities in the province, these five priority neighbourhoods, in our city’s core, have some of the highest rates of poverty in all of Canada.<sup>53</sup> These neighbourhoods have become central to the overall poverty reduction strategy for Saint John.

**“Unless you get the chance to see the poverty, to go to see their homes, to see what they’re living with, then you don’t realize that for them just showing up is a major accomplishment.” - Local Stakeholder**

<sup>48</sup> Department of Education, *Education Dropout Statistics: September 30, 2007 to September 30, 2008*, 4, and email correspondence with the Department of Education, September 30, 2009.

<sup>49</sup> Canadian Council on Social Development, *Age, Gender and Family*, 18.

<sup>50</sup> Asher, *Poverty and Plenty II*, 47.

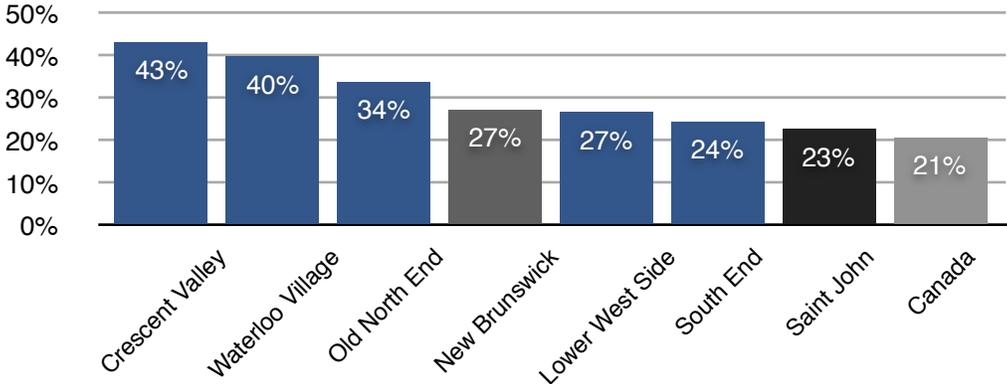
<sup>51</sup> Audas and Wilms, *Engagement and Dropping Out of School*, 45.

<sup>52</sup> Asher, *Poverty and Plenty II*, 3.

<sup>53</sup> Peacock, *Poverty and Plenty*.

As Chart 3.B shows, in the 2006 Census all of our priority neighbourhoods had a higher rate of high-school non-completion than the city's average, with Crescent Valley's almost double the city's at 43%. Two neighbourhoods however, the Lower West Side and the South End, had rates at or below the provincial average. Close to a quarter of Saint John residents 25 years and over have not completed high school, representing over 10,000 individuals.<sup>54</sup>

**Chart 3.B - High school non-completion for those 25 years and over, 2006 Census.<sup>55</sup>**



### 3.2 - The Impact of Addictions

Addictions to drugs or alcohol seem to play a large role in many young people's decision to leave school. Loraine Townsend, et al., conducted a meta analysis of cross sectional studies which revealed, "conclusive evidence of higher rates of cigarette, alcohol, marijuana and other drug use among dropouts and students-at-risk for dropping out compared to in-school students or graduates."<sup>56</sup>

One interviewee notes that those who get heavily involved, for the most part, do not continue school. As another interviewee notes, "they find it more fun to get high" and as a result their marks drop and they become discouraged because they are so far behind. One young interviewee explains, "we all [get high], like on breaks, we'll go get high at lunch, before school, after school, skip class just to go do it." Others, one respondent says, leave because they need money to buy drugs and school does not pay. The list of substances that Saint John youth use is a long one, with alcohol and marijuana topping the list. One respondent says many young people get into drugs as a result of getting into the "wrong crowd." Another says many abuse substances as a coping mechanism.

**"[Outside school] it's just one big cloud of smoke going around, with kids running around asking, 'hey, does anybody want to buy some weed?'" - Youth Interviewee**

<sup>54</sup> Asher, *Poverty and Plenty II*, 74. Note: these figures cannot be compared to those in the 2001 Census because the indicators changed.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Townsend, et al., "A Systematic Review of the Relationship between High School Dropout and Substance Use."

### 3.3 - Lack of Family Support

According to John M. Bridgeland, et al., a lack of parental involvement and support at home contributes to a youth's decision not to continue school.<sup>57</sup> This observation was echoed by our local stakeholders, who believe issues in the family home play a very large role in why youth do not complete school. Some pointed to parents' addictions or abuse, while others identified the near-absence of a family life. As one interviewee says, "they're raising themselves." Saint John has a large number of lone-parent families headed by women and the lack of father figures was felt by one respondent to play a significant role. The educational level of parents (the mother in particular) has been found to have a great influence on the academic success of their children.<sup>58</sup>

The lack of parental involvement and valuing education were identified by interviewees as a factor in dropping out. This, our stakeholders say, is most often missing if the parents themselves have not completed school. It is not uncommon for some youth to have no family who have completed school, including parents, siblings, cousins, aunts, uncles, and in many instances, this extends to their entire neighbourhood. According to one interviewee, it is rare to see a young person drop out who is from a stable home, where there is food to eat, whose parents are educated and employed, and who drop them off for school every day. Parents who themselves have had negative school experiences often find it very difficult to engage with the school in order to support their child's education, which may give educators the impression that the parents are not supportive.

**"So many parents have had trouble with the school system themselves and so they don't have the strength to do it again." - Local Stakeholder**

McMullen notes that the early school leavers in the Youth in Transition Survey (YITS) were more likely than their peers who stayed in school to come from a lone-parent family, as well as a lower income household, and less likely to have parents with a post-secondary education.<sup>59</sup> McMullen explains that a higher proportion of those who have dropped out in the YITS had been "kicked out of school," missed classes at least once a week, or visited the principal three or more times during the year for problem behaviour. These negative behaviours, she says, were present in their home life too, with a greater proportion having broken rules at home, such as staying out later than permitted.<sup>60</sup>

### 3.4 - Youth Pregnancy and Parenting

Expectant moms find it difficult to stay in school. Socially, it can be very difficult for pregnant students. It is also logistically very challenging. One First Steps youth says she planned to go back to school shortly after having her baby but the constant nursing made that too difficult. Another First Steps mom says, "I didn't want to go back to high school because it's just awkward when you have a baby. It's not like it used to be."

Being a parent not only forces youth to drop out but also can prevent them from returning, and it is not only the mothers who face this issue. One young man says, "my biggest problem going back now is I got a one month old kid."

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<sup>57</sup> Bridgeland, et al., *On The Front Lines of Schools*, 3.

<sup>58</sup> Hoddinott, *Is History Destiny?*

<sup>59</sup> McMullen, "Early Indicators of Students at Risk of Dropping Out of High School."

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

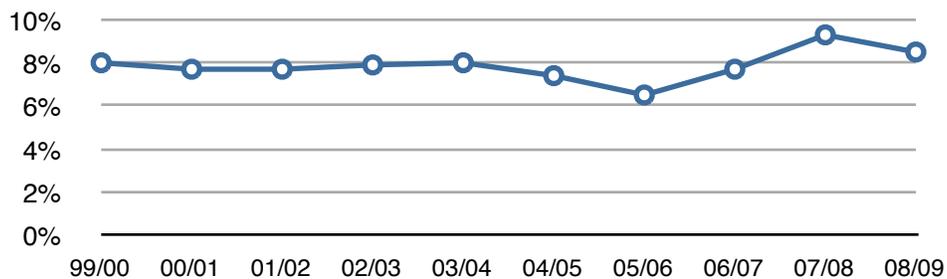
Parenting youth often struggle to stay in school because of a general lack of consistent and quality childcare in Saint John. Some centres are said to have a three-year wait-list. One First Steps mom recalled, “I remember calling about my child when I first found out I was going to be coming back to school and they were telling me that the slots are so booked and people have spots scheduled for after they have their babies!” One interviewee says for those lucky enough to find care the arrangement will often fall through, forcing the young parent to stay at home. Even if their arrangement is reliable, a sick child often forces them to put their studies aside, added another.

**“It is easier at First Steps because we have all been through the same thing. No one’s judging you.” - First Steps Mom**

Bowlby reports that nationally almost four in ten young females who dropped out in 2004-2005 had children and were heading a household—encouragingly this rate is down from what it was in the 1990s. He says this trend was highest in Atlantic Canada and Saskatchewan.<sup>61</sup>

On a local level, we know that Saint John has one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in Canada.<sup>62</sup> This increases the risk of our female youth leaving school. Our health authority, Horizon Health Network, reports that 8.5% of the births in Saint John (Zone 2) in 2008-2009 were to teenagers, representing 150 teens (Table 3.C). Although the city has 39% of the Zone’s population, it accounts for 58% of the teen births. In Saint John, one third of teenage births are to those 17 years of age or younger. Over the past decade the rate of births to teens in the Zone has not changed dramatically. Encouragingly it is down slightly this year from the rate in 2007-2008 (9.3%).

**Table 3.C - Teen births, Saint John Zone<sup>63</sup>**



### 3.5 - A Lack of Interest

Another factor identified by our interviewees about why youth leave school is a general lack of interest in school or apathy towards life in general. They say youth often do not see school’s relevance or are simply not enjoying it. McMullen found that those who dropped out were much less likely to be engaged with their school (both socially and academically) or in extracurricular activities.<sup>64</sup> One interviewee reports that a lack of involvement in extracurricular activities may also play a role, because without this youth do not have that extra incentive to go to school.

<sup>61</sup> Bowlby, “Provincial Drop-out rates.”

<sup>62</sup> First Steps Housing Project Inc., About Us.

<sup>63</sup> Received by email correspondence July 28, 2009 from Pat McGill, Horizon Health Network.

<sup>64</sup> McMullen, “Early Indicators of Students at Risk of Dropping Out of High School.”

**“You don’t think about your future when you’re a kid, you just think about now.” - Youth Informant**

One’s aspirations also play a role. McMullen explains that while a comparatively high percent of those who dropped out in the YITS had high educational aspirations (aspiring to post-secondary education), a much larger proportion of early school leavers than those who stayed in school aspired only to a high school diploma or less. In addition, she notes that in comparison to their peers, school leavers tended to minimize the importance their parents placed on their education. Compared to their counterparts who stayed in school, McMullen says those who dropped out had less confidence in their ability to succeed in post-secondary education and were also less likely to recognize the role of education in attaining their career goals.<sup>65</sup> According to McMullen, early school leavers in the YITS were more likely to report that their friends had lower educational aspirations and engaged in negative behaviours than those who stayed in school. Those who dropped out were also more likely to have had someone who had dropped out in their circle of friends compared to those who stayed in school.<sup>66</sup> Looker and Thiessen’s review of the YITS points to a similar trend. They say peer influence has been linked to dropping out, with those who do not value education exerting a negative influence on their peers.<sup>67</sup> One interviewee says some youth feel that, “school doesn’t matter, that nothing matters,” which often comes with the drug culture. Another says some simply feel that living on social assistance is good enough. Others, says one interviewee, have lost sight of their dreams.

### 3.6 - Poor Academic Performance and Literacy

Poor academic success is a factor in some students’ decision to leave. One stakeholder says many students would rather drop out than stay and do poorly. Many who struggle stop attending regularly. A few of our respondents say it is a chicken and the egg situation in that it is hard to tell what comes first, academic struggles or a loss of interest/attendance issues.

**“The reason why I loved school so much in grade 10 was because of the teacher. [...] If someone had a problem he would stay on that topic until we got it.” - Youth Interviewee**

Failure in school, for whatever reason, can alienate youth and can also prevent them from coming back. The negative experience, together with the fear of failing again, prevents them from returning. One youth put it this way: “I’ve lived at the Salvation Army, I’ve been on the streets. I know what it’s like but at the same time it’s hard to go back when you know you’re just probably not going to make it anyway.”

Low grades, however, are not always a precursor to dropping out. McMullen explains that on average those in the YITS who left school had much lower marks than their counterparts who stayed in school, yet even so, a third of these early school leavers had grades that would have kept them on the path to graduation.<sup>68</sup> Looker and Thiessen note a strong correlation between having to repeat a grade and dropping out in the YITS.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>65</sup> McMullen, “Early Indicators of Students at Risk of Dropping Out of High School.”

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Looker and Thiessen, *The Second Chance System*, 5.

<sup>68</sup> McMullen, “Early Indicators of Students at Risk of Dropping Out of High School.”

<sup>69</sup> Looker and Thiessen, *The Second Chance System*, 5.

The YITS revealed that early school leavers ranked, on average, a full reading proficiency level below their peers who stayed in school.<sup>70</sup> National and provincial assessments of youth literacy identified that the low level of reading achievement in New Brunswick contributes to lowered student success rates. New Brunswick has been identified in the analysis of international and national assessments of 13 year olds as having one of the lowest reading achievement scores in Canada. A national assessment in 2007 indicated some improvement, though New Brunswick youth literacy levels were still significantly below the Canadian average.<sup>71</sup> In 2006, YITS data confirmed reading levels for 15 year olds in New Brunswick were among the lowest in the country.<sup>72</sup> The New Brunswick Department of Education has embarked on a number of initiatives intended to address this critical educational deficit in the provincial outcomes. There are some positive trends to be found in the latest New Brunswick Education Report Card released in early October.<sup>73</sup>

### 3.7 - Social Issues, Including Bullying

The youth we interviewed cited “cliques,” gossiping, or in the extreme, bullying, as factors contributing to a decision to drop out. One young person explains the dynamic as follows: “in the regular school system everybody likes to fight. It’s a horrible place to go unless you’re beautiful and you have enough money and you’re involved in school.”

**“I don’t think that they understand the seriousness of [bullying] because people will do horrific things and they need to stop the bullying, somebody’s going to die.” - Youth Interviewee**

Bullying affects the likelihood of school completion of the victim but also the perpetrator. Young people who bully are more likely than those who do not bully to skip school and drop out. They are also more likely to smoke, drink alcohol, and get into fights.<sup>74</sup>

Addressing bullying is a complicated task. Encouragingly, one interviewee believes the school system’s bullying programs have made a significant difference. Indeed, many schools have introduced bullying programs that build on the Department of Education’s Positive Learning Environment Policy.

### 3.8 - Homelessness

It is a sad reality that many school-aged Saint Johners have had to seek refuge from their home life. As a result, they are homeless or at risk of being homeless. For these youth, paying their room and board wins over school almost every time. One young person says, “I’ve been living by myself since I was 16 and couldn’t really afford to [stay in school].” Another shares:

I was pretty good in school until I was 15 and my dad kicked me out; then after that I just didn’t care. I just sort of like shut down in school. The first month I wasn’t living anywhere. I spent 3 weeks like actually on the streets and I stopped going to school. [...] I was too far behind and I realized I can’t do this right now.

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<sup>70</sup> McMullen, “Early Indicators of Students at Risk of Dropping Out of High School.”

<sup>71</sup> Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, *Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP)-13 2007*.

<sup>72</sup> Hoddinott, *Is History Destiny?*

<sup>73</sup> Department of Education, *Report on Achievement 2008-2009*.

<sup>74</sup> Nansel, et al., “Bullying Behaviors Among US Youth,” and Olweus, “Bully/Victim Problems Among Schoolchildren.”

### 3.9 - Mental Health Issues

Young people's struggle with mental health issues can pull them away from school. Depression and anxiety, particularly social anxiety, appear to be the primary mental health issues that contribute to leaving school early. For those who suffer with this disease, says one stakeholder, large classrooms will induce anxiety. Another says instances of social anxiety seem to be on the rise and for many students just going from the parking lot to the front door is a major effort. There are a variety of opinions. One respondent notes that

**“Coming in the door and walking down the hall is a huge thing with so many students now. Some can't even go from the parking lot to the front door.” - Local Stakeholder**

some students have had success with anti-anxiety medications and/or interventions through their family doctor. However, another feels that young people are being put on antidepressants too quickly rather than addressing the underlying issues. A few interviewees also identified a lack of coping skills as a factor.

Hankivsky also points to psychological variables, such as aggression, as risk factors for non-completion.<sup>75</sup> Other issues, outside mental health, can also be a factor. Looker and Thiessen, and Hankivsky, say that although research is limited, it appears that those with physical and other disabilities are more likely to leave school.<sup>76</sup>

### 3.10 - Employment

Youth may leave school to pursue work. According to one interviewee, there are two different types of young workers: those who work out of necessity to support themselves or their family, and those who are working because they enjoy the money and it becomes more important to them than school. One respondent explains that some are drawn to work because they are tremendously successful there.

According to Hankivsky, students who work more than 20 hours while in school are at risk for non-completion.<sup>77</sup> McMullen agrees. She explains that there are both positive and negative outcomes to labour market participation by students. What is generally thought to tip the scales is the number of hours worked. She says the Youth in Transition Survey found that students who worked, “a moderate number of hours (up to 19 hours per week) were least likely to drop out, while those at the two extremes, working either 20 hours or more or not at all, were more likely to do so.”<sup>78</sup>

**“[With hectic work schedules] students don't have time to just be kids, to do the stuff that normal teens should do.” - Local Stakeholder**

One stakeholder claims that local students are increasingly working more hours, some 35 to 40 hours a week and that they do not like to turn down work for fear of losing their job. Another notes that some youth, particularly those at call centres, are working late shifts, until 11 p.m. or midnight, four to five nights a week, while others are closing fast food drive-thrus at 2 a.m.

<sup>75</sup> Hankivsky, *Cost Estimates of Dropping Out of High School in Canada*, 12.

<sup>76</sup> Looker and Thiessen, *The Second Chance System*, 5, and Hankivsky, *Cost Estimates of Dropping Out of High School in Canada*, 12.

<sup>77</sup> Hankivsky, *Cost Estimates of Dropping Out of High School in Canada*, 12.

<sup>78</sup> McMullen, “Early Indicators of Students at Risk of Dropping Out of High School.”

Labour market conditions are also thought to influence graduation rates. The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada and Statistics Canada says that a strong labour market with an abundance of jobs may draw away those young people who are past the age for compulsory attendance who have yet to graduate. This, they say, is one reason why New Brunswick has instituted compulsory school attendance until age 18.<sup>79</sup>

### 3.11 - Trouble with the Law

According to our stakeholders, those who have had trouble with the law are more likely to leave school early. One interviewee notes that a significant proportion of Saint John youth who are in conflict with the law

**“You can get in a lot of trouble here. I figured that out the hard way. [...] Getting drunk, walking around, skipping school, and getting in fights with the cops.”  
- Youth Interviewee**

have dropped out—some participate in criminal activity and then drop out, or vice versa. Increased education is thought to produce reductions in crime. Enrico Moretti postulates that, “a one-year increase in the population’s overall level of schooling reduces murder and assault by almost 30%, motor vehicle theft by 20%, arson by 13%, and burglary and larceny by approximately 6%.”<sup>80</sup>

According to our interviewees, some students, many of whom are on probation, are attending tutorial centres. They are only in class a handful of hours each week. This leaves them with idle time, which can be spent on criminal activity. The irony was not lost on our interviewees—these youth need the most education, but are getting the least.

### 3.12 - The Age-Grade Gap

Many youth leave school because they are no longer at an age appropriate level and they feel out of place. One early school leaver shares, “a lot of the kids are, like 14 and 15 in grade 10, and I was 20 years old. So I really didn’t want to be sitting up there with a bunch of little kids.”

While feeling too old is a reason some leave, it is also a reason many do not return. To complicate the matter, one respondent explains that youth often mature quicker when they are out of school and so the age difference is often magnified.

**“It’s hard once you get older to go back and sit in a classroom with a bunch of little kids. You feel more mature and different. You don’t want to be a part of the gossiping anymore.” - Youth Interviewee**

### 3.13 - Difficult Transition to High School

Grade 9 was overwhelmingly identified by our stakeholders as the time when youth struggle the most, and, in many cases, leave school. This transition year is when students move from smaller middle schools to a larger high school setting. Interviewees report that many repeat grade 9, some multiple times. One respondent explains that many parents say it was during grade 9 when their child was put on probation or

<sup>79</sup> Council of Ministers of Education, Canada and Statistics Canada, *Education Indicators in Canada*, 51.

<sup>80</sup> Moretti, *Does Education Reduce Participation in Criminal Activities?*, 6.

started hanging out with the “wrong crowd.” Another notes that many youth start using drugs during the grade 8 to 9 transition.

**“I spent four years in grade 9 because people bullied me and I just didn’t want to go. I wouldn’t. I’d go to my first class and that’d be it. I’d be at Brunswick Square all day.” - Youth Interviewee**

Local stakeholders identified a number of systemic issues that could pose a challenge during grade 9. For instance, standardized curriculum can limit students who may excel in electives or specialty courses such as art, physical education, and music. In addition, beginning in grade 11 students can choose from a range of levels of difficulty for their classes. A few respondents note that this lack of choice in grade 9 and 10 can be difficult for a student who is struggling and would do better in a lower level class.

One interviewee shares that up until grade 9, some students used to be promoted to maintain an age-appropriate, though not grade-appropriate, setting (this has since been phased out except for those on a Special Education Plan). Learning supports may be available at the elementary and middle years that are not accessible when they get to high school, where students may find they cannot complete the work.

**“You know what I’m doing right now? I’m sitting back watching all my friends go higher and higher. All my friends are in grade 12. Where am I? Still in grade 9.” - Youth Interviewee**

Interviewees indicate students are also more likely to drop out at a particular time of year, specifically November and April.

### **3.14 - Being Asked to Leave and Discipline in School**

The literature reveals that discipline is not always administered uniformly. Children who are suspended are often from a population that is the least likely to have supervision at home. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, “children growing up in homes near or below the poverty level are more likely to be expelled.”<sup>81</sup> A study by Jeffrey L. Jordan and Anil Bulent found low-income youth were more than eight times more likely to be referred for discipline.<sup>82</sup> Further, “children with single parents are between 2 and 4 times as likely to be suspended or expelled from school as are children with both parents at home, even when controlling for other social and demographic factors.”<sup>83</sup> McMullen notes that early school leavers saw their school environment more negatively than their counterparts who stayed in school. They were also more likely to feel that discipline was handled unfairly, that their school was an unfriendly place, and that students were not respected.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> American Academy of Pediatrics. “Policy Statement.”

<sup>82</sup> Jordan and Bulent. “Race, Gender, School Discipline, and Human Capital Effects.”

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> McMullen, “Early Indicators of Students at Risk of Dropping Out of High School.”

Respondents report that some youth leave because they have been encouraged to. One interviewee says Saint John is a small city and the school system is hesitant to take back problem students. Another shares that upon return some may be told they are too old, their behaviour or attendance issues are a problem, they do not live in the right district, or that the school is full. One interviewee explains that those who are labeled as “trouble” have a harder time because teachers know who they are and they feel they are disciplined more frequently and severely.

**“I don’t think they’d take me back. I’ve been kicked out twice and dropped out two times.”  
- Youth Interviewee**

## IV - Deciding to Return

The choice to leave school is not always final thanks to “second chance” programs. Some school leavers enter a program specifically designed as a second chance option (those that target early school leavers or those at risk of dropping out). Others return to the high school system or pursue post-secondary options.<sup>85</sup> Looker and Thiessen believe the availability of these second chance options is one of the reasons why Canadians are more likely to complete high school than those in many other OECD countries.<sup>86</sup>

Tracey Bushnik et al., examine participation in the second chance system, one where those who dropped out return to their high school studies. They found that 14% of 18-to-20 year-old early school leavers went back to high school by 20-to-22 years of age; 8% had graduated, while 6% were still students.<sup>87</sup> In New Brunswick, 11% of youth in this age group returned to their studies.<sup>88</sup> In another report about the second chance system, Looker and Thiessen claim that those early school leavers most in need of further education, for instance those with lower levels of education, are the least likely to return and that many of the same factors that play into the choice to drop out in the first place are related to returning.<sup>89</sup>

### 4.1 - Employment Goals

Many who return do so because they have specific employment goals in mind that require a high school education (and often times post-secondary studies). Some youth who already have careers return because they want to advance and cannot do so without an education, says one respondent. Other early school leavers, one interviewee notes, may have spent the summer in a job they disliked and do not like being faced with that prospect for the rest of their lives. One youth explains, “work at a fast food joint for longer than two months and it’s going to drive you nuts!” A few youth say they were able to secure jobs as labourers without their diploma but only for smaller companies. However, they say, it was not steady work. One explains, “it’s all under the table and you can easily get ripped off.” Bowlby suspects that the take up of second chance programs, “is influenced in part by the early labour-market experiences of young

**“When [you’re working] under the table they treat you pretty much any way they want because you can’t really say any differently.” - Youth Interviewee**

<sup>85</sup> Looker and Thiessen, *The Second Chance System*, 7.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>87</sup> Bushnik, et al. *In and Out of High School*, 18.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>89</sup> Looker and Thiessen, *The Second Chance System*, 6.

drop-outs who find they face real difficulties in securing stable, long-term employment that actually pays a decent wage.”<sup>90</sup> In some instances non-graduates are not able to find a job at all, says one respondent.

## 4.2 - Recognition that Education is Necessary

Many respondents say youth return simply because they recognize it is necessary because of the difficulties of getting through life. One youth interviewee explains, “I need [an education], you just do, one way or another. Not even just to know the things that are there but to have that certificate. It means a lot.” A number of the First Steps moms indicate that they realized they needed an education when they became parents.

**“I came to find out that you have to have your high school in order to go anywhere in life. It’s not about you no more. It’s about that baby. And you need that education in order to give your child a life.” - First Steps Mom**

## 4.3 - Encouragement by Others

Some youth come back because someone in their life encouraged them. Some, one interviewee says, return when someone from a community organization tells them they can do it and that they will work with their specific needs. In other cases a co-worker will take an interest in a fellow employee who has dropped out.

**“I always told youth they have so much potential and the only way to get out of this cycle is if you have an education. - Local Stakeholder**

Our interviewees highlighted a host of other reasons why youth come back. One youth says having that high school experience is reason enough, while another explains that she returned because she loves to learn. A First Steps mom says she came back for the break it gives her, noting, “I feel like I’m myself, I feel like I’m not a mom, I’m just me.” Some return because it’s their goal and they are determined, or because they promised someone in their life. Others are able to return once their life stabilizes. Some hit rock bottom and that convinces them. Others are not just after that piece of paper but the skills it brings, especially those who are illiterate. In fact, one youth says it would be good to go back merely to increase his vocabulary. Some youth mature and that’s what brings them back. Some return because they heard about an alternative program. Others do so simply to prove people wrong. One First Steps mom, who is attending their school, recalled that the people in her life said, “you’re never going to amount to nothing, you’re life’s ruined, you have a baby.” But, she says, “I can change it for the better.” Others come back because of the stigma. As one interviewee explains, “nobody likes to be referred to as a dropout.” A few even come back not out of choice but because it is a condition of their probation. In short, there are many reasons why youth do not complete school and there are also many reasons why they choose to return.

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<sup>90</sup> Bowlby, “Provincial Drop-out rates.”

## 4.4 - They Are Bored

“It’s so boring just sitting there knowing all your friends are in the classroom and they’re going to get somewhere in life and you’re not.” - Youth Interviewee

A number of stakeholders say youth often return simply because they are bored. This, one says, is especially true for the younger leavers who may have thought it seemed attractive at the time. One interviewee says when their friends go back to school in the fall they soon realize it is not as fun anymore.

## V - What is Needed?

Stakeholders described significant work at the local level to support youth, but felt more investments and changes are required to help young people complete school.

There are three ways to support high school completion:

1. encourage young people to stay in school,
2. enable young people to stay in school through the removal of barriers, and
3. offer additional programs that enhance opportunities for school completion.<sup>91</sup>

Potential courses of action identified in the literature and through our interviews include:

### 5.1 - Encourage Young People to Stay in School

#### Early Intervention

Important steps needed to curb the incidence of early school leavers should start well before high school. The Canadian Council on Social Development reports that investing in high-quality early childhood education will increase the likelihood of high school completion.<sup>92</sup> Bushnik et al., note that while the Youth in Transition Survey shows that indicators of dropping out can be identified at age 15, the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth shows that they are apparent as early as age 10.<sup>93</sup> They say that dropping out of high school has been, “shown to be related to many events, experiences, and choices that take place throughout a young person’s life, in addition to those that take place during high school.”<sup>94</sup> Human Resources and Skills Development Canada reports that the process of dropping out of school begins at birth.<sup>95</sup>

Saint John has invested in models to strengthen early development and school experiences through quality early learning and care. Partnerships with the business community have provided volunteers to elementary and middle school students through the Partners Assisting Local Schools (PALS).

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<sup>91</sup> It is important to note that #2 and 3 often happen simultaneously.

<sup>92</sup> Coffey, “Count business in...,” 11,

<sup>93</sup> Bushnik, et al. *In and Out of High School*, 19.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>95</sup> Audas and Willms, *Engagement and Dropping Out of School*, 41.

## 5.2 - Enable Young People to Stay in School Through the Removal of Barriers

### Target Subgroups

Looker and Thiessen say there is value in programs that are aimed specifically at particular groups of youth.<sup>96</sup> The Canadian Council on Learning agrees, noting that progress in tackling high school non-completion depends largely on the success of reaching those sub-groups that experience above average dropout rates.<sup>97</sup> The report draws special attention to the following cohorts: 1) youth living in poverty/priority neighbourhoods; 2) young males; 3) youth with substance abuse problems; 4) pregnant and parenting youth; 5) homeless youth; and 6) young offenders.

#### *Youth Living in Poverty*

Significant energy has been generated in Saint John to target poverty reduction efforts at the five priority neighbourhoods. Larry E. and Virginia A. Decker speak to the need to embed interventions within a community. They note:

Current school reform efforts place a strong emphasis on strengthening schools so that every child can succeed academically. However, there's more to success than academics, and schools cannot be solely responsible for the education of students – all community players, including families, must work together to provide a total educational experience for youth. Regrettably, in too many neighborhoods there is a real disconnect between schools and their surrounding communities – especially in low-income areas where such partnerships may be needed the most, and during the afterschool hours – a time of day when they are needed the most.<sup>98</sup>

Youth living in low income neighbourhoods face additional challenges that require attention. Interventions, where possible, should target youth from priority neighbourhoods and should do so in their communities. One approach is to provide services and supports within the neighbourhood to create new norms that counter the detrimental effect of pervasive poverty.

There is a need to strengthen neighbourhood schools. One interviewee claims that school size makes little difference for students of middle and upper class backgrounds, but it makes a significant difference for inner city youth from low socio-economic backgrounds. This stakeholder also feels that wrap around services—where school, family, and community are dealt with in a coordinated way—are of particular value for youth living in poverty.

#### *Young Males*

The Canadian Council on Learning says male students need to see a direct link between their education and employment prospects in the near future, which can be achieved through school-to-work programs like apprenticeships and co-operative education where high school students receive skilled worker training.<sup>99</sup> In Saint John the Carpenters Training Centre offers a Construction Career Awareness Program for young people in school.

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<sup>96</sup> Looker and Thiessen, *The Second Chance System*, 7.

<sup>97</sup> Canadian Council on Learning, "Good News," 7.

<sup>98</sup> Decker and Decker, *Engaging Families and Communities*.

<sup>99</sup> Canadian Council on Learning, "Good News," 7.

### *Youth with Substance Abuse and Mental Health Problems*

Substance use and abuse and mental health issues are contributing factors to school leaving. Some respondents would like to see more support for Saint John's mental health programming. Others are calling for a crackdown on drugs in schools with the help of the police as well as more drug awareness.

### *Pregnant and Parenting Youth*

The Canadian Council on Learning highlights the need to support programs that allow young mothers to stay in school, particularly those with an affordable, high-quality child care component that help build parenting skills.<sup>100</sup> A few interviewees suggest reducing teen pregnancies by offering more education around contraception and the economic consequences of raising a child, while at the same time earmarking more childcare spaces for parenting youth and providing childcare in the schools.

**“If the schools offered some sort of on-site daycare for the students then that would make it a lot easier because then they could just bring their kids, they wouldn't have to travel all over the city.” - First Steps Mom**

Locally, Saint John's First Steps program is believed to be working very well for this target group. First Steps has had 21 graduates in three and a half years. These women self-identified that they would otherwise not have completed their education and that they were not aware of their full potential. The First Steps youth agreed that the program is a success. One mom shares: “[the First Steps classroom] is fun and we still get the work done and it makes it better. I am happy. When I go home after school I'm happy, I look forward to coming.” However, many interviewees lament the fact that it has a waiting list (as of this writing there were 11 young women on the list).

### *Homeless Youth*

There is a need for more supportive housing for youth in Saint John who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. One stakeholder shares that there is a gap in the provincial government's services because there are a number of youth 16 to 18 years old on the social assistance caseload who are in need of subsidized housing but will not qualify until they are 19. This interviewee said that at \$333 a month these youth cannot afford to live on own, nor should they be on their own, but, rather, in some type of a supportive environment. See Appendix III for a list of local offerings for homeless youth.

### *Young Offenders*

One respondent is calling for a Partners in Alternative Learning Strategies (PALS) program for School District 8 similar to that in District 6. *Note: this program differs from Partners Assisting Local Schools (PALS).* PALS describes themselves as:

an alternative learning site found in Sussex and Hampton that addresses the academic, social, and emotional needs of its clients. Students need to be referred to the site by their home school or case worker to be considered for a placement. Individual programs are designed for the participants based on the requirements for graduation.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Canadian Council on Learning, “Good news,” 7.

<sup>101</sup> Received by email correspondence October 28, 2009 from Pamela Miller, PALS.

PALS, the stakeholder says, would be of particular benefit for youth on probation who are struggling academically as opposed to socially. According to this respondent, Saint John has the highest offender risk rate in the province—at any given time half of the young people at the New Brunswick Youth Centre are from Saint John—and the offenses are more serious.

It is worth noting that neighbourhood-based summer programming for youth in the Old North End significantly reduced the incidence of youth-related crimes in 2008.

### **Changes in the School System**

Our interviewees provided suggestions on improving the school experience for at-risk youth. Overwhelmingly our interviewees voiced the need to bring the trades back into the schools—courses like financial management, culinary, home economics, shop, business, life skills, and more work-experience/co-op spaces—because, they say, the traditional curriculum does not work for everyone. As one stakeholder shares, “many of my clients are not academically inclined, but mechanically and artistically they are exceptional.” Because a high school diploma is, in most cases, a prerequisite for entering the trades, many suited to this vocation, but not academics, become discouraged along the way. Locally, the Carpenters Training Centre, in partnership with Hazen-White-St. Francis School, will be providing training to at-risk youth and youth not attending school, to ensure early exposure to the trades.

Our respondents also stressed the need for smaller classes for some groups. One interviewee explains that while larger classes of 30 students works well for topics like calculus and the Advanced Placement (AP) program, smaller classes of around 20 are needed for those who are struggling. Another notes the need for more individualized planning and hands on learning.

One stakeholder would like to see a credit system implemented for grades 9 and 10 so students can reach back to get courses they missed instead of having to repeat the entire grade. Another is calling for schools to be given more autonomy and flexibility so they can implement programs that work for their students. There was also a call for more assessments to identify behavioural problems and learning disabilities, which often go undiagnosed.

To reduce bullying, our young interviewees would like more teacher supervision in the halls and outside during breaks and lunch hour, because, as one youth says, “that 5 minute break can be the longest part of [your] day.” Some would like to see school uniforms because, as one young person explains, a lot of people, “get bullied because they shop at Frenchy’s.”

Other stakeholder suggestions include: 1) implement incentives in the schools to reduce the number of leavers; 2) provide more classes for students with learning disabilities; 3) offer the Partners Assisting Local Schools (PALS) program at the high school level; 4) explore an in-school Big Brothers Big Sisters program to address the lack of father figures in many early school leavers’ lives; 5) bring guest speakers into the classroom who have struggled without their high school education to show students what they may face if they drop out; and 6) offer a mentoring program where those who have dropped out or are at risk of leaving can get advice from someone who has completed school despite multiple barriers.

The school system needs to continue to develop initiatives that would further improve the literacy levels of New Brunswick youth. Individual high schools recognize the transition problem and a variety of initiatives have been developed at school sites.

### **Balance Education and Employment**

Our interviewees are calling for measures that will help prevent working youth from dropping out as well as strategies that will help working early school leavers return. For the former, one stakeholder would like to

**“How do you quit pumping gas to go back to school? How is it affordable even for most people? This is why we have to look at accessibility.” - Local Stakeholder**

see a move to enforce a limit on the number of hours students are permitted to work—the ideal is no more than 15 hours per week, with the majority of that time on weekends. For the latter, one interviewee would like to see more workplace programs that encourage early school leavers to complete high school similar to the way employers encourage post-secondary studies. There is also a need to ensure local programs have flexible hours that allow youth to keep their job while working towards their diploma (one example is Youth Choices’ GED program).

Our interviewees were asked why some leavers return to complete their education (whether to the regular school system or alternatives). The main reasons identified were: 1) employment; 2) they recognized it is necessary; 3) they are bored; and 4) they had encouragement. One interviewee indicates that most of those who leave with the intention of returning do, in fact, come back.

## **5.3 Offer Additional Programs that Enhance Opportunities for School Completion**

### **Alternative Settings**

Alternative learning environments provide a pathway for students who are not succeeding in the traditional high schools. Woodlawn Learning Centre provides this service in School District 8. The facility was overwhelmingly identified by our stakeholders as something that is working extremely well. It is thought to be because: 1) it is a smaller school, which gives it more of a community-feel; 2) it has smaller classes; 3) it has reduced hours; 4) it focuses on the basic curriculum with more individualized programming and the ability to fast-track; and 5) it has phenomenal teachers who are suited to working with at-risk youth. It is, however, difficult to get into Woodlawn, and many local stakeholders are calling for more offerings like it.

One interviewee would like to see more awareness about the GED program, especially when it can be written and what it provides, because many of her/his clients do not realize its limitations. This stakeholder says there is also a need to take away the stigma around the GED, especially with employers. Another respondent would like to see alternative settings work to instill life skills by taking students on cultural outings. This is especially useful for those whose home life has not provided them with these experiences.

Looker and Thiessen say that the opportunity to pursue post-secondary education—whether trades, community college, or to a lesser extent university—is an incentive for many to return to get their diploma

and thus there is value in co-locating GED courses on community college campuses and encouraging post-secondary education institutions to admit those with their GED.<sup>102</sup>

In implementing more alternative programs, one interviewee cautions that it is important to ensure that these programs are as close to the requirements of the regular school system as possible so graduates are able to move on to post-secondary education if they choose. This respondent says it is also important that alternatives take into account students' life skills and experience so it does not take too long for them to graduate.

Vibrant Communities Saint John's Education to Employment Working Group notes that those with a General Education Development diploma (GED) are considered to have met high school graduation requirements for the purposes of employment and further education. The GED tests knowledge in five areas: language arts and writing, mathematics, reading, science, and social studies. Those 19 years and over are eligible to write the GED test (it is designed for adults) at a cost of \$40, which can be subsidized. Completing a GED, however, is a challenge for many in Saint John. Fewer than 50% of those who write pass the exam.<sup>103</sup>

### **Leisure Pursuits and Youth Engagement**

Youth who participate in quality leisure activities have shown better academic outcomes in high school and college, less truancy,<sup>104</sup> and fewer behavioural challenges.<sup>105</sup> Conversely, teens who do not participate are nearly three times more likely to skip classes and to use drugs than their counterparts in this type of programming. They are also more apt to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, and engage in sexual activity.<sup>106</sup>

Youth living in poverty who experience limited academic success can build skills and confidence in leisure programming designed to meet their unique needs. Programs with a youth engagement philosophy are intended to capture the imagination of youth, build on their assets, and provide experiences they may miss out on otherwise. Youth engagement programs evolve to meet the changing needs of the particular youth they serve. In addition, building youth leadership is a central tenant of youth engagement. There are two examples of neighbourhood-based youth engagement programming in Saint John, in Crescent Valley and the Old North End.

### **Support and Connect Existing Resources**

Our community is fortunate to have a number of resources, but they need increased support. Our interviewees were asked what is working locally to ensure youth complete high school. They highlighted a number of programs and services (see Appendix II and III for a list of Saint John resources). Programs that have been proven to be effective through program evaluations should be supported by the Greater Saint John community and be eligible for Department of Education and other government funding. One stakeholder is calling for a better awareness and understanding of community services because many teachers and administrators are not aware of what is offered.

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<sup>102</sup> Looker and Thiessen, *The Second Chance System*, 9.

<sup>103</sup> Education to Employment Working Group. *Education to Employment*, 18.

<sup>104</sup> American Youth Policy Forum. *Helping Youth Succeed Through Out-of-School Time Programs*.

<sup>105</sup> Vandell. *Outcomes Linked to High-Quality Afterschool Programs*.

<sup>106</sup> YMCA of the USA. *After School for America's Teens*.

Leaving school early is a process, not a decision made at one point in time. The literature and local stakeholders affirm there are many contributing factors to leaving school and to school success. To address the complex nature of this challenge, many sectors of the community must work together to develop an integrated response that takes into account gender differences, our socio-economic reality, addictions and mental health, and social isolation. In Saint John, we are familiar with innovative responses to complex social issues. District 8's PALS program, which engages local businesses to volunteer with and support schools, is one illustration.

In addition to the above-mentioned actions, further research on best practices is desirable. Better tracking of our early school leavers and a more comprehensive definition also deserve more study. Our community, its neighbourhoods and service providers, together with parents, students, and educators, need to focus on the issue together. We hope this discussion paper provides a foundation piece for further debate and discussion among stakeholders. With increased awareness of youth who are at risk of leaving school early, we will be able to develop strategic actions and programs to encourage and retain youth so that they may experience success.

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# APPENDIX I - Greater Saint John's Poverty Reduction Strategy

## GREATER SAINT JOHN'S POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

*NEW WAYS OF WORKING TOGETHER TO BREAK THE POVERTY CYCLE*

### Strategy Elements

#### Neighbourhood Revitalization

- \* Resident mobilization and training
- \* Housing Strategy
- \* Social, physical, and economic improvements
- \* Mixed Income Neighbourhoods

#### Single Parents

- Comprehensive programs and supports:
  - \* Adequate and Affordable Housing Strategy
  - \* Childcare
  - \* School completion
  - \* Parenting
  - \* Health and Wellness

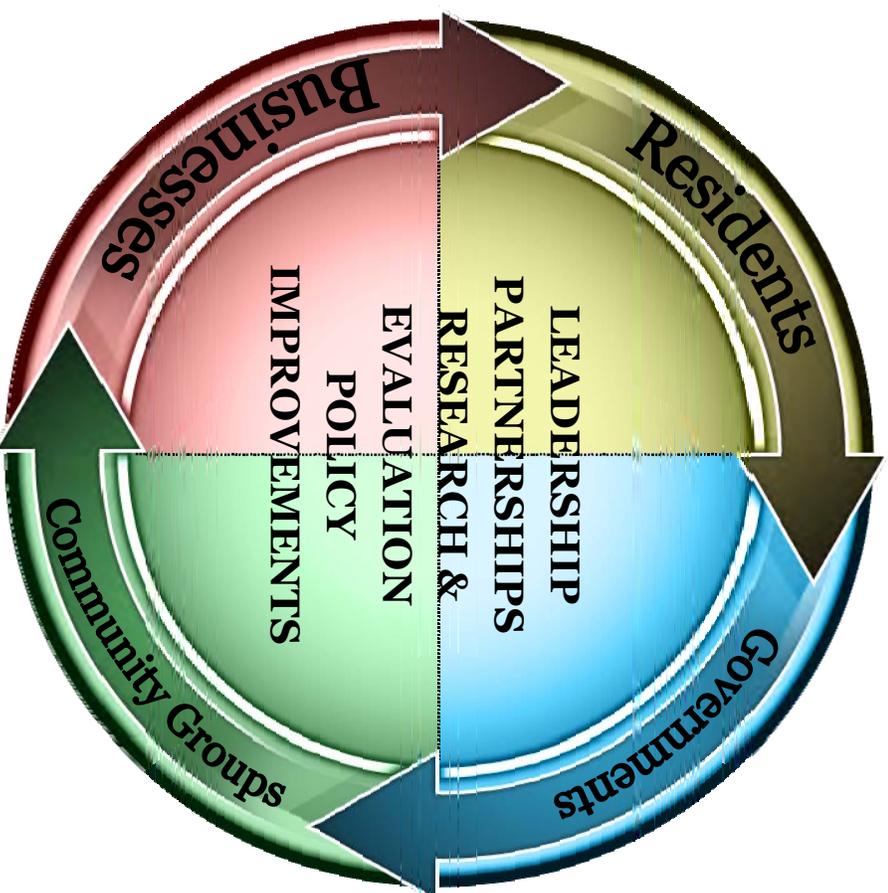
#### Children and Youth

- Level the playing field:
  - \* Early Learning Centres
  - \* School Supports / Community Schools
  - \* Youth Programs / Engagement / Leadership
  - \* Coordination of Services

#### Workforce Participation

- \* Multiple Pathways and supports
- \* Remove barriers: childcare, transportation, health insurance, tuition
- \* Employer Leadership
- \* Living wage replaces minimum wage

How we do it!



## APPENDIX II - Community Profiles

Table A.1 - Interviewees

	Organization	Affiliation
<b>Sharon Amirault</b>	First Steps Housing Project Inc.	Executive Director
<b>Marijke Blok</b>	Saint John High School	Principal
<b>Karen Casey</b>	John Howard Society	Reconnect Program Coordinator
<b>Scott Crawford</b>	The Resource Centre for Youth (TRC)	Community Developer
<b>Nancy Cusack, Alyson Maxwell &amp; Mary Snow</b>	Youth Choices	Staff
<b>Brian Donavon</b>	Saint John Police Force	Youth Justice Coordinator
<b>Willow Edwards</b>	Ridgewood Addiction Services, Adolescent Program	Social Worker
<b>Patrick Grannan</b>	Department of Public Safety	Probation Officer
<b>Penny Higdon</b>	Sexual Health Centre	Public Health Nurse
<b>Beth Horgan</b>	St. Malachy's Memorial High School	Principal
<b>Jill Knee</b>	Crown Prosecutor's Office	Designated Youth Crown
<b>Judith Mackin</b>	Host of CBC Radio's <i>Alien Nation</i> & Parent	-
<b>Gene Shave &amp; Cynthia Smith</b>	Harbour View High School	Guidance Counsellors
<b>Cathy Wright</b>	Vibrant Communities Saint John	Social Planner
-	Department of Social Development	Case Manager
<b>First Steps Youth (8 individuals)</b>	Dr. Christine Davies Education Centre, First Steps	-
<b>TRC Youth (4 individuals)</b>	The Resource Centre for Youth (TRC)	-
<b>Youth Choices Youth (5 individuals)</b>	Youth Choices	-

Interviewees have provided write-ups on their programs to help spread the word about what services they offer local youth to help them complete high school.

## • Boys and Girls Club's Youth Choices •



*Youth Choices staff (left to right): Nancy Bourque, Alyson Maxwell, Nancy Cusack & Mary Snow.*

Youth Choices' mission is to provide a safe, supportive place where children and youth can experience new opportunities, overcome barriers, build positive relationships and develop confidence and skills for life.

Our core values are: 1) inclusion and opportunity, 2) respect and belonging, 3) empowerment, 4) collaboration, and 5) speaking out. The foundations of all Youth Choices programs are based on the principles and practices of choice theory/reality therapy.

Programs offered include: self esteem, socialization, relationship building, decision making, résumés, anti-bullying, goal setting and implementation, challenging faulty cognitions, community connections, drug and alcohol awareness, interventions with schools, choice theory, sex education, anger management, coping skills, life skills, and liaison with schools.

We provide: 1) personal, educational and career coaching services for youth; 2) consulting services for youth and their parents; 3) intervention services; 4) advocating services to help meet the needs of individual child or youth; 5) referring youth to appropriate community and government agencies; 6) job readiness training; 7) résumé writing; 8) transportation benefits to help fulfill action plans; 9) academic support services; and 10) employment support services.

The children and youth are referred by their family's case manager, school guidance counsellor, social worker, probation officer, or other referring agencies within the community.

## • Department of Public Safety, Probation •

The Department of Public Safety does not offer any programs/services directly to help you complete school, however we do contribute financially to various community partners who are able to provide programs and services that support our youth in completing their education, as well as skills they need to be successful in their homes and communities. Some of these programs are Anger Management, Family Nurturing, Change, FOCUS, Reconnect as well as programs at Ridgewood, Mental Health, Portage and individual counseling. The Department of Public Safety is also helping the youth who are in conflict with the law complete their education by advocating on their behalf in dealing with the school district and individual schools.



*Patrick Grannan, Probation Officer, Public Safety*

## • Department of Social Development, Youth Policy •

The Department of Social Development-HRD (SD) provides financial support to at risk youth that are both in school and working towards a return to school. Supports include monthly financial assistance, daycare and childcare subsidies, transportation assistance, money for school supplies, and assistance for various emergency situations. Medical coverage is also provided including optical, dental, and prescription coverage. Another service that SD may be able to provide is help with finding affordable housing through various subsidized housing programs. SD also provides

case management services to youth as needed. Services can include crisis counselling, budgeting, career and guidance counselling. The Department works closely with school boards, guidance counsellors, and individual schools to develop plans to help keep kids in school and to facilitate their return. We also work with various service providers to deliver free educational opportunities to youth. Some of the more common services include Youth Choices, the Saint John Learning Exchange, First Steps, and the John Howard Reconnect Program. For those youth that are living on their own, Social Development social workers meet with them to ensure a safe and secure living environment.

### • Dr. Christine Davies Education Centre - First Steps •

First Steps Housing Project Inc. (First Steps) is a multi-service centre (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> stage housing, school, day care, and outreach) for pregnant and parenting young women who have no safe place to live. First Steps recognizes the importance of education for all and the benefits of educating this population in particular. Educating a young mother will likely have a positive effect on the quality of life for the young mom and will certainly affect positively the chances of these mothers' children being educated as well. Education is key to ending the cycle of poverty.



*First Steps residents (and their children) who are Dr. Christine Davies Education Centre students.*

When a young mother comes to live at First Steps, staff explore options for the women who do not have their high school diploma. Due to barriers such as child care, transportation, lack of supports, mental health, addictions, age, and so on, the public school system is rarely the path that residents choose to follow. First Steps recognizes the benefits of public high school and certainly explores this option with their residents. Due to the poor success rate of reintegration into a local high school and the desire for this diploma (rather than a G.E.D. which is certainly chosen by some of the women), First Steps opened an on site school called the Dr. Christine Davies Education Centre. This school is for women who live or have lived at First Steps. The success of this school has been tremendous, graduating 21 women in three and a half years; all women who personally state they would not have graduated without this service.

### • Office of the Attorney General, Crown Prosecutor's Office •

Being a crown prosecutor who primarily deals with youths and the Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA) puts me in the position of dealing with many youthful offenders who are having educational difficulties or who have dropped out of school. The main focus of the YCJA is rehabilitation and reintegration of youth back into being productive members of society. In our work, we regularly deal with crafting dispositions for the youths that focus on what needs and issues they face personally. The vast majority of the dispositions have an educational component, as education is a real deficit for these kids. The reality is that many of the youth in court have significant drug problems; mental or physical disabilities; come from a poverty background; or have undiagnosed learning disabilities. Having the youth be properly assessed and complete their education, through a regular program or a program that is properly suited to them (for example PALS or Woodlawn), is the only way they are going to be able to take that next step towards being



*Jill Knee, Designated Youth Crown, Crown Prosecutor's Office*

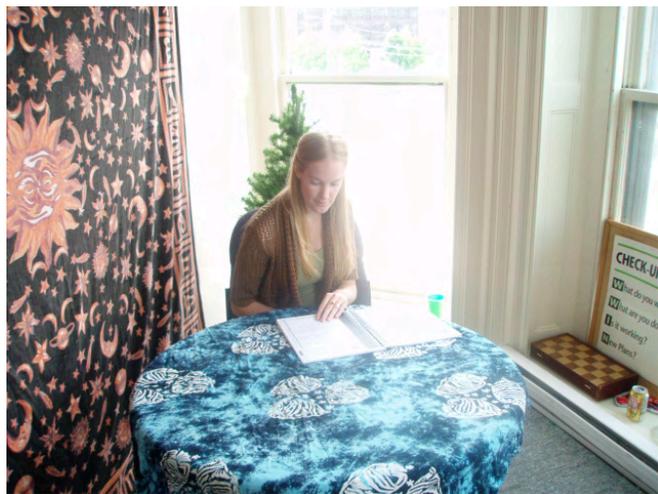
productive members of society. They need to have the skills to further their education, secure a job, and be able to reach some sort of financial security. Unfortunately, there are a lot of gaps in the system that allow these young people to fall through and to not get the education they need or deserve. By having all of the players involved in the Youth Criminal Justice System (judges, crowns, defense counsel, probation, and social workers) work together to assess the needs of that individual youth we have a better likelihood of seeing them be directed to the right educational program and, hopefully, avoid further involvement with the Criminal Justice System.

### • ONE L.I.F.E. •

ONE LIFE (Living Independently for Education) provides housing, counseling, mentoring, support services, and life skills to homeless at-risk youth between the ages of 16 and 21. A Case Manager helps the youth find suitable housing, encourages them to enroll in school and complete their secondary education, and provides them guidance in all aspects of life. This enables the youth to complete high school, and to make a successful transition to work or to post-secondary education. ONE LIFE is an innovative program that is the only one of its kind in Canada, attempts to meet the housing needs and basic requirements of youth from 16 to 21 years of age. The program is necessary as there are large gaps in government services for this age group and a lack of safe, affordable housing options for youth. The structure of this program involves youth being referred to a case manager where an assessment will be conducted to determine suitability for acceptance. Each referral is also required to participate in an eight-week independent living course focusing on budgeting, apartment hunting, nutrition, hygiene, and shopping on a budget, etc. The case manager provides further support and advocacy for each client. The young person is responsible for 30 percent of the rent while ONE Change covers additional costs as long as the youth is involved in educational pursuits. Clients generally are entitled to \$323 of social assistance a month and will manage food, transportation, entertainment, etc., from that amount. The ONE LIFE Coordinator encourages the youth to seek part-time employment as long as it does not interfere with school.

### • Reconnect Program, John Howard Society •

Reconnect is an intensive learning centre that is supported by School District 8 that focuses on: cognitive learning, program development, social skills, academic assistance, community involvement, school connect, wrap around services, and self-esteem



*Karen Casey, Reconnect Program Coordinator, John Howard Society*

Philosophy: 1) our programs will highlight the fact that youth need to accept that they have patterns of behavior that must be modified; 2) our program will address the youth's individual needs and assist them in developing the internal resources required to initiate a change in attitude and negative patterns of behavior; 3) accommodate the educational needs of out-of school youth who are not presently involved in mainstream schooling; and 4) an environment that promotes academic success and social learning.

Goals: 1) provide social skills training, 2) provide academic support, 3) provide job readiness skills and community connections, 4) provide interpersonal skills training to help modify behavior, 5) establish positive learning experiences, 6) prepare and support those who return to mainstream school, and 7) gain a positive self image and tools in avoiding and dealing with conflict.

Supports: 1) emergency aid, 2) youth & family interventions, 3) resiliency centre programming (youth & family centered social skills), 4) needs specific supplies, 5) transportation assistance, and 6) in school counselor support.

## • Ridgewood's Youth Treatment Programme •

Ridgewood's Youth Treatment programme helps kids remain in school or return to school by providing counseling and treatment in relation to drug and alcohol use. Substance abuse can become a significant factor in regards to impeding a youth's school progress. If s/he becomes involved in drug or alcohol use on a regular basis, attendance, the ability to learn and participate effectively in class, and overall academic performance are likely to be negatively impacted.

Offering counseling to address substance use issues creates an opportunity for the youth to both deal with the negative aspects of his/her alcohol or drug use, and also to avert further problems in the school setting. Students typically note an improvement in attendance and academic performance when they significantly reduce or eliminate their involvement with substances. Outpatient counseling also opens the door for young people to explore other issues which may be negatively affecting their school experience—such as alienation and low self-esteem, family concerns, or lack of meaningful leisure activities. Services are provided primarily to high school age youth, but also to middle school students as required.



*Willow Edwards, Social Worker, Ridgewood Addiction Services, Adolescent Program*

In addition, Ridgewood also offers supportive counseling to children and youth who are being impacted by a family member's substance abuse/dependency. Assisting young people to cope with difficult family situations plays a role in enabling them to more successfully navigate the school system and attain high school completion.

## • Saint John High School •



*Marijke Blok, Principal, Saint John High School*

Since September of 2008, we have been using two key strategies to retain our yearly dropouts (that is, students who repeatedly begin the year, then finally withdraw due to poor attendance/success). In the long run, we hope that this will prevent permanent dropouts.

Because attendance and success are inextricably linked, we identified a number of poor attenders early on. We established two PLC committees – one to identify students at-risk because of poor attendance and the other to deal with students who were misbehaving in class. In each case, students were referred to administration, who then established contact with both students and their homes. The Attendance PLC became responsible for the issuing of mandatory attendance slips, while administrators policed those who habitually failed to pick up forms and have them signed. This process, along with our traditional attendance

policy, was quite labour intensive, but did yield some success.

At the same time as we addressed the issue of poor attendance, we also recognized that some students drop out because of poor success, while others exhibit disruptive behaviour for the same reason. Almost invariably the students

who were becoming angry and defiant were also students who were in classes with others who were two or more years younger. We determined that we would attempt to “fast-track” some of these students, who were perhaps sitting in Grade 9 classes for the third time. By giving them the opportunity to take credit courses in areas where they might prove successful, we enabled several students to move forward so that they were in sight of graduation in another one to two years.

Of the two efforts, the second strategy proved most effective in our first year.

In re-examining our efforts, to make them more streamlined, we decided that this year the Attendance Committee would intervene more quickly – after five absences, that a suspension warning-letter would be sent at ten, and that suspension requiring a parental meeting would occur automatically at twelve absences.

In terms of our second strategy, we identified a larger number of students in June who would benefit from some acceleration in their courses. Thus far, students are experiencing good success.

A new strategy we have introduced this year is aimed at engaging Grade 9's. We have established a Grade 9 Intramural program in the hope of making more Grade 9's want to come to school and feel connected to their community. With the third week of intramurals starting, it is difficult as yet to assess what impact the program might have.

We believe we have seen enough success in our first two strategies to merit the intensive time and energy which they require.

#### • **Sexual Health Program, Public Health** •

One of the goals of the Sexual Health Program is to foster healthy sexuality in N.B. Youth., which would include but is not limited to decreasing the rate of unplanned teen pregnancy. The factors that contribute to teen pregnancy are complicated and cannot be addressed in solidarity by any one organization. It is well documented in the literature that teen pregnancy often leads to school drop out. The Sexual Health Program provides comprehensive sexual health services which would include access to contraceptives, free condoms, clinical services, education and counseling. The nurses have a presence in all of the high schools in Region 2 offering individual counseling at the school and providing education in the classroom to all grade 9 students. These presentations focus on safe sex, decision making, healthy relationships, teen pregnancy, STI's (sexually transmitted infection), and birth control. The nurses often will refer students to other agencies such as addictions, mental health, TRC, or family services as appropriate.



*Sexual Health Centre staff (left to right): Brenda Gale, Linda Smith, Susan Carr & Penny Higdon.*

The Public Health nurses recognize and address the needs, challenges and issues that youth are faced with today. The issues are intertwined and complex and require all of the community partners to work together for youth to reach their goals and potential in life.

#### • **Switch 180, The Resource Centre for Youth (TRC)** •

Mission Statement - Our Mission is to assist youth with developing their own goals and aspirations, and support and empower them through the steps to reach their goals and become a contributing member of the community. We believe that self determined youth with support and access to the right services can achieve great things.

Criteria - Youth ages 16-24 in the greater Saint John area, who are not receiving comparable services, who are not meeting their full potential, and who are motivated to make positive changes in their lives, but lack the resources and direction to do so.



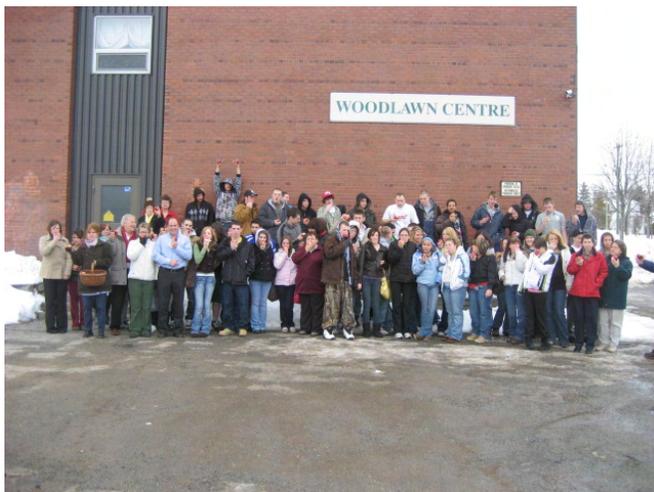
*Tanya Moriarty (Case Manager) & Scott Crawford (Community Developer), TRC.*

Program Description - The Case Management program works with youth to meet needs in four dimensions: basic, personal, education, and employment. We believe in empowering the youth to make healthy choices that will benefit themselves as well as society as a whole. Youth in this program are encouraged to look at which of the areas listed above are most relevant for them and begin to set realistic goals. Once the youth has determined what areas they wish to make changes in, the case manager will work with them to find the resources needed to assist in the change.

Areas of Focus: 1) Goal setting, 2) Resource identification, 3) Intervention planning, 4) Linking to community, 5) Personal support, 6) Progress review, and 7) Advocacy.

## • Woodlawn Learning Centre •

It is the mission of the Woodlawn Learning Centre to rekindle hope and promote attitudes that encourage each student to acquire personal, social and life-long learning skills in a nurturing environment. The main purpose of the Woodlawn Learning Centre is to address the issues that prevent students from being successful in the traditional high school. To do that, it is imperative that students recognize what is preventing both academic and personal success in their life.



The student's decision to become part of the Woodlawn family demonstrates their commitment to bring about some positive changes in their academic and personal life. The only one who can guarantee their success is themselves. By taking advantage of their time at Woodlawn and what it has to offer, they will begin a journey along a path headed for academic and personal success. The Centre's motto, "Individually Spirited United in Learning," accurately describes students who attend Woodlawn. Many "at risk" students have a spirit towards life that sets them apart from their peers. United in Learning means students have accepted responsibility for their past and are willing to unite with others to accomplish their goals in school and life.

Woodlawn offers the following programs:

- **Grade 9 - 10 Upgrading** – This program focuses on upgrading skills necessary for students to enter graduation years. Most students in this program are 16 – 18 years of age. In most cases, students have failed more than one year during their time in school. Our goal is to see that the majority of these students successfully return to their home high school.
- **Credit Program** – The credit program offers students the opportunity to complete a number of high school credits compulsory for graduation. These credits are English 113, Mathematics 113, Environmental Science 120, Law 120, Outdoor Pursuits 120 and Modern History 113. Other regular credits are offered depending on students' needs.

Cooperative Education is available to a number of students. Students in this program are 16 – 20 years of age and have successfully completed the 9 - 10 foundation years.

- **Employability Program** – Students in this program are 16 - 21 years of age and have repeated more than one year at the high school level. In most cases, they would have successfully completed very few if any credits towards high school graduation. This program is designed to meet the individual academic and social needs of each student. Students who successfully complete the necessary requirements will graduate with a Province of New Brunswick High School Diploma. The main goal of this program is to prepare students for the workplace by developing employability skills that will allow them to be successful and productive citizens. The Adult Diploma Service is provided to some students who have an identified career goal and are 19 years of age or older with limited credits.
- **D-8 Tutorial** – This program which is housed at the Centre offers students an opportunity to upgrade their academic and social skills. Most students have been out of school for a significant length of time. Students from this program will return to their home school or move into one of the programs offered at Woodlawn.

Woodlawn also offers guidance and counseling services as well as health services (drug and alcohol counselors through Ridgewood Addiction Services).

### • YouthBuild •

A number of partners are working on the development of a YouthBuild-style program in Saint John. Although the specific Saint John program is still in development, YouthBuild describes itself as follows:

- **An alternative school**, in which young people attend a YouthBuild school full-time on alternate weeks, studying for their GEDs or high school diplomas. Classes are small, allowing one-on-one attention to students.
- **A community service program**, in which young people build housing for homeless and other low-income people, providing a valuable and visible commodity for their hard-pressed communities.
- **A job training and pre-apprenticeship program**, in which young people get close supervision and training in construction skills full-time on alternate weeks from qualified instructors.
- **A leadership development and civic engagement program**, in which young people share in the governance of their own program through an elected policy committee and participate actively in community affairs, learning the values and the life-long commitment needed to be effective and ethical community leaders.
- **A youth development program**, in which young people participate in personal counseling, peer support groups, and life planning processes that assist them in healing from past hurts, overcoming negative habits and attitudes, and pursuing achievable goals that will establish a productive life.
- **A long-term mini-community**, in which young people make new friends committed to a positive lifestyle, pursue cultural and recreational activities together, and can continue to participate for years through the YouthBuild Alumni Association.
- **A community development program**, in which community-based organizations obtain the resources to tackle several key community issues at once, strengthening their capacity to build and manage housing for their residents, educate and inspire their youth, prevent crime, create leadership for the future, and generally take responsibility for their neighborhoods.

### • Youth Inclusion Program •

The ONE Change, working in Saint John's North End, is initiating a major program funded by the National Crime Prevention Centre. The Youth Inclusion Program, aimed at middle school aged youth will provide a holistic program designed to encompass all aspects of the child's life. Up to 50 youth rated as most at-risk for school exclusion, criminal activity/anti-social behavior, and most in need of multi-agency response will be provided 250-500 hours of combined intervention per year. The program provides for an: 1) in-school academic case worker - a certified teacher operating alternative classes as part of school staff; 2) community case worker - tasked with working with families and youth not in school; 3) program worker - a professional designing social, recreational, and educational activities; and 4) manager - overseeing operations of all programming. Each youth will have an individualized case plan outlining their unique challenges and interventions to provide the greatest chance for success. The programs will be open to all youth, avoiding stigma and allowing for positive peer relations.

# APPENDIX III - Surviving the Streets

Surviving the Streets is a Human Development Council directory for homeless/at-risk youth.

<b>Mental Health</b>	Community Mental Health Services: Crisis (24/7) ..... 1-888-811-3664 Saint John ..... 658-3737 Sussex Area ..... 432-2090
<b>Needle Exchange</b>	AIDS Saint John ..... 652-2437
<b>Other</b>	Birth Certificate ..... 1-888-762-8600 Employment Insurance Info ..... 1-800-206-7218 GST Credit (cheques) ..... 1-800-959-1953 Income Tax Assistance: Salvation Army ..... 634-1633 Volunteer Income Tax Service ..... 1-877-987-8600 Medicare Card ..... 1-888-762-8600 Rentalman ..... 658-2512 Saint John Transit ..... 658-4700 School District 6 ..... 847-6262 School District 8 ..... 658-5300 Social Insurance Number (telephone application) ..... 1-888-428-0888
<b>Pregnancy</b>	First Steps ..... 693-2229 Fundy Crisis Pregnancy Center ..... 634-1867 Public Health ..... 658-2454 Sexual Health Centre ..... 658-3998 Public Health (Sussex) ..... 432-2003 / 1-800-545-8008 Sussex Pregnancy Care Centre ..... 432-4006
<b>Abuse / Assault</b>	<b>911</b> Domestic Violence Outreach ..... 632-5616 Hestia House (for females) ..... 634-7571 RCMP ..... 1-800-665-6663 Rothesay Police ..... 847-6300 Saint John Police ..... 648-3333 Social Development NB ..... 1-866-441-4340 Sussex Vale Transition House (for females) ..... 433-1649
<b>Addictions</b>	Alcoholics Anonymous ..... 650-3114 Coverdale Centre ..... 634-1649 Gambling Help Line ..... 1-800-461-1234 Narcotics Anonymous ..... 658-0779 / 1-888-436-2929 PMSACE ..... 642-4035 Portage ..... 1-888-735-9800 Ridgewood Addiction Services ..... 674-4300 / 674-4333 / 432-3428 Sophia Recovery Centre (for females) ..... 633-8783
<b>AIDS / HIV</b>	AIDS Saint John ..... 652-2437 Public Health Office ..... 643-7404 / 1-877-784-1010
<b>Birth Control / Condoms / Sexual Health</b>	AIDS Saint John ..... 652-2437 Public Health / Sexual Health Centre Saint John ..... 658-3998 Sussex ..... 432-2691 / 1-800-784-1010 STI Information Line ..... 1-877-784-1010

VON Healthy Baby & Me: Saint John ..... 672-9647 Sussex ..... 433-6336	<b>Prostitution</b> Are you a female sex trade worker? Need help? Coverdale Centre ..... 634-1649
<b>Support Services</b>	Cheap Hair Cuts: Academy of Hair Design ..... 633-8292 Coverdale Centre ..... 634-1649 Drop-in: Salvation Army ..... 634-1633 Drop-in: TRC -The Resource Centre for Youth ..... 632-5615 John Howard Society ..... 657-5547 Main Street Baptist Church Outreach Programs ..... 642-8060 Saint John Community Chaplaincy ..... 634-8218 Shower, Laundry, Hygiene Supplies (soap, shampoo etc.): TRC - The Resource Centre for Youth ..... 632-5659 Shower (males only): Salvation Army Booth Centre St. Joseph's Community Health Centre ..... 634-7021 TRC -The Resource Centre for Youth Youth Choices ..... 632-5615 / 632-5765 Sexual Orientation / Gender Identity PFLAG Canada ..... 652-3995
<b>Clothing / Food / Meals</b>	Caring Closet (clothing) ..... 635-8000 Community Food Basket of Saint John (food bank) Fredy's New Frenchy's ..... 658-1299 Guy's Frenchy's ..... 635-8944 Hampton Food & Clothing Bank ..... 832-4340 Kennebecasis Valley Food Basket ..... (leave message) 847-5854 Lakewood Headstart (food bank & clothing) ..... 696-6164 Main Street Baptist Church (meal) ..... 642-8060 North End Food Bank ..... 634-7403 River Road Food Bank ..... 468-1087 River Valley Food Bank ..... 738-2088 Romero House (meal & clothing) ..... 642-7447 Saint John East Food Bank ..... 633-8298 Saint John Vineyard Church (meal & clothing) ..... 648-0998 Salvation Army (meal) ..... 634-1633 Salvation Army Sussex (food bank & clothing) ..... 433-3302 Salvation Army Thrift Stores Lansdowne Avenue ..... 632-8391 Parkway Mall ..... 634-8330 St. Andrew & St. David Church (meal) ..... 634-3092 St. Luke's Church (meal & clothing) ..... 693-4152 St. Vincent de Paul (clothing) ..... 634-3097 Super Frenchy's ..... 652-8786 Sussex Sharing Club (food bank & clothing) ..... 433-6047

Need information on community services? Call the Community Information Centre for confidential and anonymous referrals to health, social, government and community services.

633-JINFO(4636)  
1-877-322-4636 (no charge)  
www.sainjinfo.ca / www.rhinfo.ca

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**Human Development Council**  
3rd Floor, City Market, 47 Charlotte St.  
Saint John, NB E2L 4R6  
Ph: 506-634-1673 • Fx: 506-636-8543  
hdc@hndc.ca  
www.humandevelopmentcouncil.nb.ca

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TRC -The Resource Centre for Youth (meal & clothing) ..... 632-5659 West Side Food Bank ..... 635-1060 United Church Clothing Dept. .... 657-3150 Value Village ..... 696-5301	<b>Emergency (Police / Fire / Ambulance) ..... 911</b> Computer Access Centres ..... 1-877-444-0510 Coverdale Centre ..... 634-1649 GED Information: Saint John ..... 658-6701 Sussex ..... 433-6109 Job Bank: Saint John ..... 643-7258 Sussex ..... 432-2110 John Howard Society ..... 657-5547 Options Outreach Employment Inc. .... 652-3997 Post-Secondary Training Education & Labour: Saint John ..... 643-7258 Sussex ..... 432-2110 Saint John Learning Exchange ..... 648-0202 Service Canada ..... 1-800-206-7218 St. Joseph's Community Health Centre - Access Centre ..... 632-5545 Sussex Outreach Employment ..... 432-7503 TRC -The Resource Centre for Youth ..... 632-5765 YMCA ..... 634-7720 Youth Choices ..... 634-0788
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**SURVIVING THE STREETS**  
*Where to go when you need help*

2008

<b>Financial Assistance / Welfare</b>	Social Development NB ..... 1-866-441-4340 Student loans ..... 1-800-667-5626
<b>Health Clinics / Hospitals</b>	Campbell Drive Medical Clinic ..... 847-5988 Crown Street Medical Clinic ..... 635-2273 KV Medical Clinic ..... 849-2273 Romero House ..... 642-7447 Saint John Regional Hospital (24/7) ..... 648-6000 St. Joseph's Hospital, Walk-In/Urgent Care ..... 632-5511 Telecare Nurses (24/7) ..... 1-800-244-8353 West Side Medical Clinic ..... 693-2273
<b>Help Lines</b>	CHIMW Suicide Crisis Line (24/7) ..... 1-800-667-5005 Federiction Sexual Assault Crisis Centre (24/7) (Call collect) ..... 0-506-454-0437 Fundy Crisis Pregnancy Center ..... 634-1867 Kids Help Phone (24/7) ..... 1-800-668-6868 Mobile Mental Health Crisis Service (24/7) ..... 1-888-811-3664 Sussex Pregnancy Care Centre ..... 432-4006
<b>Housing / Shelter</b>	Coverdale Centre ..... 672-6285 Gateway to Hope Transition House (for females) ..... 672-5177 / 672-4878 John Howard Society Hart House ..... 643-2013 Salvation Army Booth Center (males only) ..... 634-7021 Social Development NB ..... 1-866-441-4340

