



# Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority

Annual Report 2012-2013



**TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT**

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# Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles

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## **MISSION**

We provide educational services, in collaboration with our partners, to support children and youth from birth to 21 who are blind/visually impaired (BVI) and/or deaf/hard of hearing (DHH).

## **VISION**

We support families and the public school system in the education of children and youth who are blind/visually impaired (BVI) and/or deaf/hard of hearing (DHH). Our professional commitment focuses on providing comprehensive educational opportunities, which lead to the highest potential for independence, self-sufficiency and productive, fulfilling lives.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

Key organizational principles guide the design, implementation and evaluation of educational services. We are:

- child-focused and family-centered
- collaborative, involving the student, family, teachers and other professionals
- supportive of independence and self-advocacy
- committed to equality of educational opportunity
- research and evidence-based
- accountable for learning outcomes
- guided by provincial policies, procedures and guidelines
- future-oriented, flexible and innovative



**Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority**  
**Commission de l'enseignement spécial**  
**de provinces de l'Atlantique**  
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August 1, 2013

Chair and Board of Directors  
Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority

In accordance with the Regulation 43 of the *APSEA Act*, I submit herewith this report on the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) for the school year ending July 31, 2013.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Bertram Tulk'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a horizontal line.

Bertram Tulk, EdD  
Superintendent

*Serving Children and Youth who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, Blind or Visually Impaired*

# Board and Committees

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## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **New Brunswick**

Wendy McLeod-MacKnight (Aug/12 – Mar/13)  
Deputy Minister of Education and Early  
Childhood Development

John McLaughlin (April – July 2013)  
Acting Deputy Minister

John McLaughlin  
Assistant Deputy Minister

Pam Gagnon  
Parent Representative

### **Nova Scotia**

Frank Dunn (August 2012)  
Deputy Minister of Education

Carole Olsen (appointed September 2012)  
Deputy Minister of Education

Don Glover  
Director, Student Services  
Department of Education

Vacant

### **Newfoundland and Labrador**

Darrin Pike (August - October 2012)  
Deputy Minister of Education

Janet Vivian-Walsh (appointed Nov 2012)  
Deputy Minister of Education

Dan Goodyear (retired February 2013)  
Director, Student Support Services Division

Bob Gardiner  
Director, School Services Division

### **Prince Edward Island**

Dr. Alex (Sandy) MacDonald, Chair  
Deputy Minister of Education and Early  
Childhood Development

Julia Gaudet  
Director, Student Services  
English Language School Board

Brenda Millar  
Leader, Student Services Department  
English Language School Board

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

### **New Brunswick**

Wendy McLeod-MacKnight, Treasurer  
Deputy Minister of Education and Early  
Childhood Development (Aug/12 - Mar/13)

John McLaughlin, Treasurer (April-July 2013)  
Acting Deputy Minister of Education  
and Early Childhood Development

### **Nova Scotia**

Frank Dunn, Vice-Chair (August 2012)  
Acting Deputy Minister of Education

Carole Olsen, Vice-Chair (appointed Sept. 2012)  
Deputy Minister of Education

### **Newfoundland and Labrador**

Darrin Pike, Secretary (August – October 2012)  
Deputy Minister of Education

Janet Vivian-Walsh, Secretary (appointed  
November 2012)  
Deputy Minister of Education

### **Prince Edward Island**

Dr. Alex (Sandy) MacDonald, Chair  
Deputy Minister of Education and Early  
Childhood Development

## **PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **New Brunswick**

Brian Kelly  
Director, Student Services

### **Nova Scotia**

Don Glover  
Director, Student Services

Ross Lloyd  
Parent Representative - BVI

### **Newfoundland and Labrador**

Dan Goodyear  
Director, Student Support Services

### **Prince Edward Island**

Adrian Smith, Chair  
Director, Student Services Department  
English Language School Board

## **FINANCIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **New Brunswick**

Michel Pitre  
Acting Director of Financial Services

### **Nova Scotia**

Joe MacEachern  
Director, Finance Branch

### **Newfoundland and Labrador**

Don Stapleton  
Departmental Controller

### **Prince Edward Island**

Terry Keefe, Chair  
Director, Finance and Operations

**TRUST FUND COMMITTEE FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE DEAF, HARD OF HEARING OR DEAFBLIND**

Eve Tupper, Chair

Lori Moore, Director  
Programs for Students who are Deaf, Hard of  
Hearing, or Deafblind

Heather Conrad  
Director, Finance and Administration

**TRUST FUND COMMITTEE FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE BLIND OR VISUALLY IMPAIRED**

Heather Macpherson, Chair

Glenda Parsons, Director  
Programs for Students who are Blind or  
Visually Impaired

Heather Conrad  
Director, Finance and Administration

**SENIOR MANAGEMENT**

**Superintendent**

Dr. Bertram Tulk

**Director, Finance and Administration**

Heather Conrad

**Director, Programs for Students who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or Deafblind**

Lori Moore

**Director, Programs for Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired**

Glenda Parsons

**Director, Assessment and Resource Services**

Ann Power

# Board and Committee Meetings

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## Board of Directors

The annual meeting of the APSEA Board of Directors was held on June 7, 2013. In addition to the annual meeting, the Board of Directors held the following meetings:

November 30, 2012  
June 7, 2013

The committees listed below also met during the 2012-2013 school year:

## Executive Committee

October 2, 2012  
November 29, 2012  
May 6, 2013  
June 6, 2013

## Program Advisory Committee

October 30, 2012  
February 14, 2012  
June 6, 2013

## Financial Advisory Committee

December 20, 2012  
June 6, 2013

## Trust Fund Committee - DHH

October 12, 2012  
May 15, 2013

## Trust Fund Committee - BVI

May 17, 2013



# History and Organizational Structure

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The Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) is an interprovincial co-operative agency established in 1975 by joint agreement among the Ministers of Education of New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island.

The *Agreement* provided for the creation of the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority and authorized it to provide educational services, programs, and opportunities for persons from birth to 21 years of age with low incidence sensory impairments. This includes children and youth who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, blind, or visually impaired who are residents of Atlantic Canada.

The *Agreement* is the only one of its kind in Canada and, as such, may serve as a model for service delivery at a regional level. Operational costs are shared among the four provinces.

## Organizational Structure

### **Board of Directors**

APSEA is governed by a Board of Directors of twelve persons, three from each province. A Deputy Minister of Education from each province is a permanent member of the Board. The two additional members from each province are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council for two-year terms. The Board is responsible for overall planning and policy development for the organization.

### **Standing Committees of the Board**

- **Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors is made up of the four Deputy Ministers of Education in Atlantic Canada and is responsible for the consideration and presentation of recommendations to the Board on major matters having an overall impact on the management and operation of APSEA.

- **Program Advisory Committee**

The Program Advisory Committee, comprised of the provincial Directors of Student Services and government-appointed members from each province, is responsible for advising the Board on matters relating to programs and services for children and youth who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, blind or visually impaired.

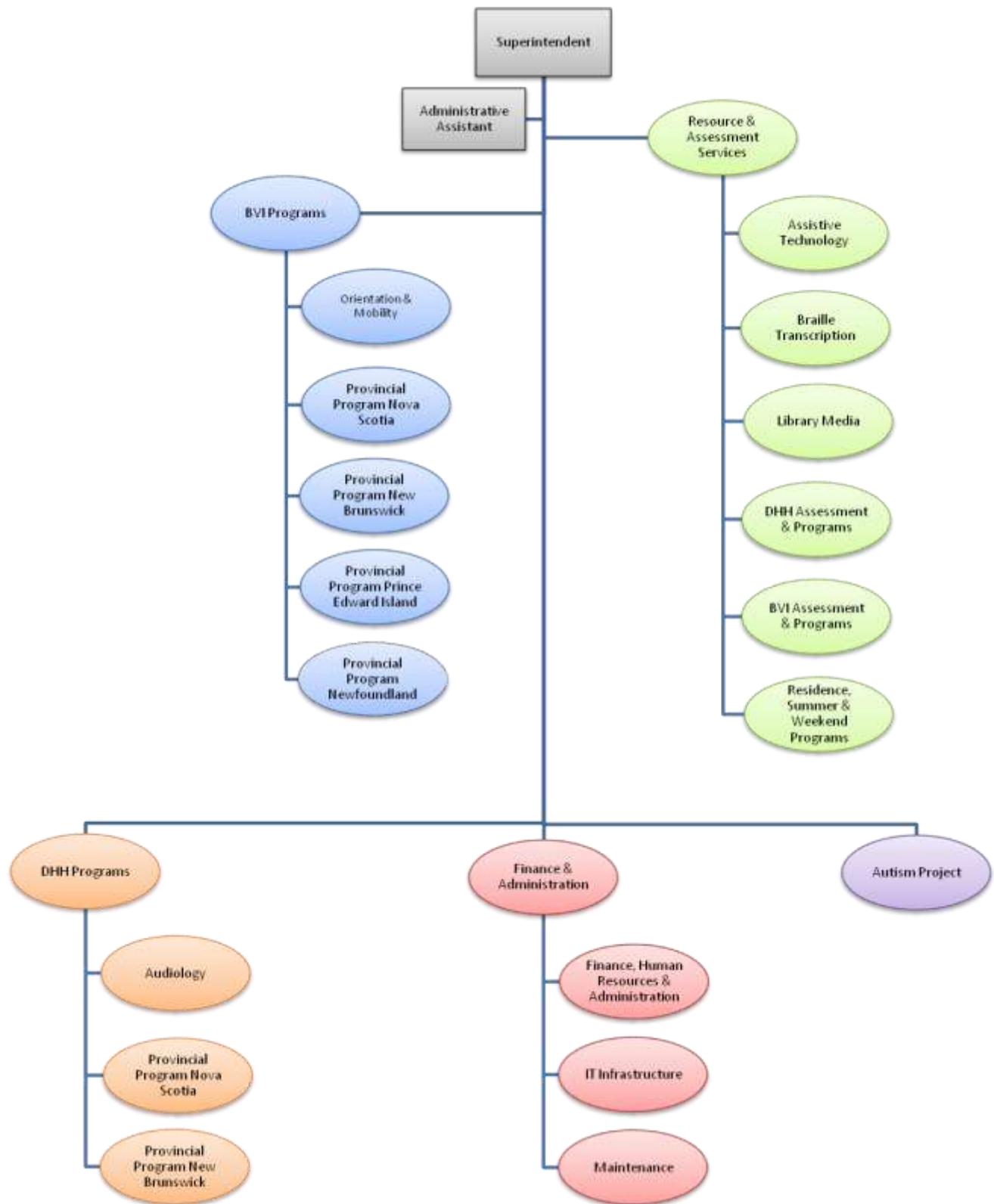
- **Financial Advisory Committee**

The Financial Advisory Committee, comprised of the Director of Finance from each Department of Education, is responsible for providing expertise and support, through the Executive Committee, to the Board of Directors in the financial management of APSEA.

- **Trust Fund Committees**

There are two Trust Fund Committees which determine how monies for scholarships, awards, or special projects will be distributed; one committee for the trust funds for children who are blind or visually impaired and one committee for the trust funds for children who are deaf, hard of hearing or deafblind. Each committee consists of three members; the Program Director, the Director of Finance and Administration, and an individual from the community. The APSEA Board of Directors is the final authority for the administration of trust funds.

# Organizational Chart



# Children and Youth Served by APSEA

<b>Children and Youth Served by APSEA 2012-2013</b>			
<b>Children and Youth who are Blind or Visually Impaired (BVI)</b>			
	Preschool Age	School Age	Total
<b>New Brunswick</b>	27	108	135
<b>Newfoundland and Labrador</b>	12	122	134
<b>Nova Scotia</b>	68	342	410
<b>Prince Edward Island</b>	15	33	48
<b>Total</b>	122	605	727
<b>Children and Youth who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH)</b>			
<b>New Brunswick</b>	39	299	338
<b>Newfoundland and Labrador</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Nova Scotia</b>	74	441	515
<b>Prince Edward Island</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>	113	740	853

<b>Provincial Totals (2012-2013)</b>			
	<b>BVI</b>	<b>DHH</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>New Brunswick</b>	135	338	473
<b>Newfoundland and Labrador</b>	134	N/A	134
<b>Nova Scotia</b>	410	515	925
<b>Prince Edward Island</b>	48	N/A	48

# Programs and Services

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## **Preschool Children**

APSEA provided a preschool/parent education program designed to serve the individual needs of children who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, blind or visually impaired and their families during the critical development years of birth to age five. Weekly service typically began for this population as soon as the child was diagnosed with hearing or vision loss.

Through regular home visits and support in preschool or kindergarten settings, APSEA teachers worked with the family members, care givers and other professionals to create a program plan for learning and skill development for each child.

## **School-Age Children**

Students with a diagnosed hearing loss or a diagnosed vision loss may receive either consultative or direct service, depending upon the severity of the loss and the educational implications. For all students, the itinerant teacher collaborates with the school team regarding strategies and accommodations to maximize the student's environment. Students receiving direct service also work with an itinerant teacher, typically one-to-one, up to five hours each week for students who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) and up to ten hours each week for students who are blind or visually impaired (BVI) for intensive support based upon outcomes outlined in the APSEA service plan.

### **DHH Itinerant Teachers – Direct Service**

In collaboration with school personnel, APSEA itinerant teachers provided service to students in inclusive settings to promote development in the following areas: language/communication development; auditory-verbal communication skills; critical thinking skills; academic skill building strategies; social and/or emotional development; and self-advocacy skill building.

### **DHH Itinerant Teachers – Consultation Service**

Consultation continued to be a critical component of the itinerant teacher service. Consultation to school personnel included: the provision of information about program modifications; review of, and suggestions to improve, the acoustic environment of their classrooms; and teaching techniques to use with students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

In collaboration with the school-based team, the itinerant teacher monitored the student's progress, ensured the student's classroom amplification equipment was well maintained and used appropriately, and attended case conferences when appropriate.

This consultation support ensured students received the necessary support at the appropriate time, in order to prevent more intensive intervention at a later date.

## BVI Itinerant Teachers – Direct Service

The itinerant teacher is a member of the school-based team and worked in collaboration with all individuals to establish the necessary adaptations or strategies ensuring students can fully participate in all aspects of the Core Curriculum. Children and youth who are blind or visually impaired also require direct instruction from a teacher of students who are blind or visually impaired to address areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) as identified through formal and informal assessments.

The ECC is the body of knowledge and skills that are necessary for students who are blind or visually impaired to support success from birth through adulthood. These include: Orientation and Mobility, Compensatory or Functional Academic Skills, Social Interaction Skills, Recreation and Leisure Skills, Functional Living Skills, Career Education, Assistive Technology, Sensory Efficiency Skills and Self-Determination. This curriculum will ensure students can access the core academic curriculum of the public school system and develop other skills that are critical in promoting independence. The extent to which individuals who are blind or visually impaired are empowered to become independent and active in society is correlated to the success of identifying and addressing their unique educational needs.

## BVI Itinerant Teachers – Consultation Service

Consultative services from an itinerant teacher provided support to the school team to ensure the appropriate accommodations and adaptations are in place for a student. The itinerant teacher may work with parents, guardians, school personnel, and other service providers to provide useful information about the child's visual impairment, the availability of specialized services, and implement strategies to support outcomes and ways parents can prepare their children to live more independently.

### Children and Youth on the APSEA Registry

Nova Scotia Children and Youth on the APSEA Registry								
	Preschool		School-Age Direct		School-Age Consultation		Total	
	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI
2010-2011	53	73	151	121	375	142	597	336
2011-2012	48	77	155	133	357	120	560	330
2012-2013	74	68	146	81	295	261	515	410

New Brunswick Children and Youth on the APSEA Registry								
	Preschool		School-Age Direct		School-Age Consultation		Total	
	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI
2010-2011	33	26	93	57	196	61	322	144
2011-2012	34	36	85	44	210	82	329	162
2012-2013	39	27	101	38	198	70	338	135

Prince Edward Island Children and Youth on the APSEA Registry								
	Preschool		School-Age Direct		School-Age Consultation		Total	
	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI
2010-2011	N/A	15	N/A	25	N/A	26	N/A	66
2011-2012	N/A	15	N/A	14	N/A	25	N/A	54
2012-2013	N/A	15	N/A	11	N/A	22	N/A	48

Newfoundland and Labrador Children and Youth on the APSEA Registry								
	Preschool		School-Age Direct		School-Age Consultation		Total	
	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI
2010-2011	N/A	12	N/A	49	N/A	66	N/A	127
2011-2012	N/A	24	N/A	50	N/A	59	N/A	133
2012-2013	N/A	12	N/A	50	N/A	72	N/A	134

### Transition Services

APSEA offers transition support to students during the period of transition from school to community. The service is highly individualized and disability specific. Transition consultation and planning provided to students who are blind, visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing begins in grade nine. APSEA Transition Planning Facilitators work collaboratively with student support teams (including students) to augment curriculum-based occupational planning with disability specific and individualized outcomes in order to maximize preparation for successful post secondary, employment, and independent living.

Nova Scotia Youth Receiving Transition Services		
	DHH	BVI
2010-2011	51	88
2011-2012	8*	78
2012-2013	47	75

New Brunswick Youth Receiving Transition Services		
	DHH	BVI
2010-2011	29	20
2011-2012	22	38
2012-2013	28	35

Prince Edward Island Youth Receiving Transition Services		
	DHH	BVI
2010-2011	N/A	9
2011-2012	N/A	17
2012-2013	N/A	15

Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Receiving Transition Services		
	DHH	BVI
2010-2011	N/A	NA
2011-2012	N/A	NA
2012-2013	N/A	NA

\* In Nova Scotia 51 DHH students were eligible for transition services in 2011-2012, however, due to staff illness, only 8 received service.

# Additions to the APSEA Registry

Referrals for service were made through schools or health agencies. Eye reports were required for referrals for children and youth who are blind or visually impaired and audiograms were required for service for children and youth who are deaf or hard of hearing. Once referrals for service were received at the APSEA Centre and approved by the Director of Programs as meeting APSEA criteria for service, the provincial supervisors worked with itinerant teachers to determine whether the service would be direct or consultative based upon observations and assessments. The degree of hearing loss and level of vision loss would be a critical factor in determining the level and type of service students would receive.

(statistics for DHH are from June 2013; for BVI are to May 27, 2013)

New Referrals to APSEA – Nova Scotia								
	Preschool		School-Age Direct		School-Age Consultation		Total	
	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI
2010-2011	23	29	7	4	34	7	64	40
2011-2012	17	18	9	2	38	1	64	21
2012-2013	24	19	6	2	33	4	63	25

New Referrals to APSEA – New Brunswick								
	Preschool		School-Age Direct		School-Age Consultation		Total	
	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI
2010-2011	10	7	5	1	19	3	34	11
2011-2012	13	10	2	5	25	1	40	16
2012-2013	14	8	15	1	10	4	39	13

New Referrals to APSEA - Prince Edward Island								
	Preschool		School-Age Direct		School-Age Consultation		Total	
	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI
2010-2011	N/A	5	N/A	1	N/A	3	N/A	9
2011-2012	N/A	1	N/A	1	N/A	1	N/A	3
2012-2013	N/A	3	N/A	0	N/A	2	N/A	5

New referrals to APSEA -Newfoundland and Labrador								
	Preschool		School-Age Direct		School-Age Consultation		Total	
	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI
2010-2011	N/A	5	N/A	1	N/A	1	N/A	7
2011-2012	N/A	5	N/A	3	N/A	3	N/A	11
2012-2013	N/A	1	N/A	0	N/A	1	N/A	2



# Professional Learning

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## Annual Interpreter Workshop

Building upon the work achieved in the previous year, communication and team-building were key areas of focus at the August 2012 interpreters' inservice. Replacing an ill keynote speaker, Noni Warner spoke on the interpreters' role of being an ally in the classroom and supporting students' independence. Paul LeDrew presented on conceptually accurate signs that support English language development; this session was especially well-received by those who attended. Continuing the work in explaining the role of Language Acquisition Support Workers, Sharon Robertson, Sheryl Eatmon, Harry Purney and Sue Purney led roundtable sessions. Staff also learned about the process behind creating and implementing APSEA Service Plans, and their role in supporting these.

Sessions on health and wellness included acupuncture to reduce repetitive strain injuries often experienced by interpreters. Michael MacDonald, consultant with Shepellfgi, gave an overview of the different services available to staff through the Employee Assistance Program. Wrapping up with a question and answer session, it is clear that communication and team-building continue to be a priority in providing the best service possible for our students, regardless of language or communication method.

## DHH Teachers

The professional development 2012-2013 inservice sessions for teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing had a primary focus in the areas of parent education and innovations in technology:

- ♦ Working with the 0-2 Population and Complex Language Learners; Collaboration, Assessment, Goal Setting, and Implementation
- ♦ Organizational Change and its Impact on the Individual
- ♦ Technology: Portable Audiometry; FM Data Logging
- ♦ Amplification Technology
- ♦ Next Generation of Wireless Listening Systems for Students with Hearing Loss
- ♦ Frequency Compression Hearing Aids and Wireless Technology
- ♦ Setting the Stage for the Relationship with the Parent/Child: Expectations for Caregivers
- ♦ Expectations of an Informed Parent
- ♦ Using the Audiogram for Diagnostic Teaching
- ♦ Teaching Adults... Wait, I Didn't Sign Up for That!
- ♦ Thinking on the Spot

The sessions included presentations of new content and application of current knowledge in collaborative and case study formats.

The level of expertise within the APSEA organization is outstanding, and was quite prominent during this in-service, with most sessions being presented by APSEA staff.

## **BVI Teachers**

Professional development 2012-2013 inservice sessions for teachers of students who are blind or visually impaired were designed to develop competencies in areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum. This included a session with a keynote speaker, Dr. Frances Mary D'Andrea who addressed the topic: **Literacy Success for Students with Visual Impairments**. Specific topics included:

- ♦ What do good readers do?
- ♦ Challenges and Issues for Students with Visual Impairments
- ♦ Reading Assessment that Informs Instruction
- ♦ Informal Reading Inventories
- ♦ Strategies for Students with Specific Reading Problems
- ♦ The Importance of Collaboration

Frances Mary D'Andrea, Ph.D. is an instructor at the University of Pittsburgh, Florida State University and North Carolina Central University and an independent contractor specializing in literacy issues related to students with visual impairments. She completed the reading specialist program at University of Pittsburgh and supervises reading interns for the university. Dr. D'Andrea has co-authored the books *Assistive Technology for Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired: A Guide to Assessment, Instructional Strategies for Braille Literacy, Looking to Learn: Promoting Literacy for Students with Low Vision*, and *The Braille Trail* books. Dr. D'Andrea has conducted numerous workshops and presentations both nationally and internationally. She is currently Chair of the Braille Authority of North America (BANA) and has served as the American Foundation for the Blind's representative to BANA since 1998.

Other sessions included:

- ♦ Hands on training; JAWS, Braille Notetakers, Nemeth and Abacus, making an iBook
- ♦ IPAD Café and Bistro
- ♦ Orientation and Mobility blindfold training
- ♦ Visual Distance Efficiency
- ♦ Preschool Orientation and Mobility
- ♦ Physical Literacy
- ♦ Compassion Fatigue
- ♦ What's New in Assistive Technology
- ♦ Unified English Braille Code: What's Happening in Canada?

These sessions were presented by APSEA staff who demonstrated an exceptional ability to share knowledge and expertise to their colleagues.

## **Mentoring and Coaching for Itinerant Teachers**

A group of BVI and DHH itinerant teachers who have been actively engaged in supporting colleagues in the field participated in the Mentoring and Coaching module offered by Nova Scotia Educational Leadership Consortium.

This training will enhance their practice in working with new teachers of students who are deaf/hard of hearing or blind/visually impaired, classroom teachers, resource teachers and student support staff. The training offered teachers an opportunity to “gain a deeper understanding about the nature and dynamics of successful mentoring and coaching relationships, and to understand how these relationships provide critical support for people engaged in the change process” through exploring “the multiple roles of mentors, myths and truths about mentoring, characteristics of successful mentors, and the key factors that create and sustain positive mentoring relationships.” Participants also increased their knowledge about coaching and engaged in hands-on learning activities focused on practicing and refining their coaching skills (NSEL Module 12: Mentoring and Coaching Participant Guide).

## Parent Workshop

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“PARENT POWER” was the theme of the annual APSEA Parent Workshop which was held at the APSEA Centre in Halifax on April 19-20, 2013. Parents and family members spent the day in sessions that reinforced the importance of empowerment for other parents and children, while the children enjoyed an exciting program of activities.

The workshop began on Friday evening with an “Ask the Expert” Café. Parents had the opportunity to speak informally with professionals and parents who provided answers to any questions they had about:

### **Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired      Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| ➤ APSEA Transition Services             | ➤ APSEA Transition Services            |
| ➤ Braille                               | ➤ Hearing Aids                         |
| ➤ Social Skills                         | ➤ Cochlear Implants                    |
| ➤ Self-Determination                    | ➤ Assistive Listening Devices          |
| ➤ Compensatory Skills                   | ➤ Speech                               |
| ➤ Functional Living Skills              | ➤ Audition                             |
| ➤ Recreation, Social and Leisure Skills | ➤ Language                             |
| ➤ Orientation and Mobility              | ➤ i-Devices For DHH Kids And Teens     |
| ➤ Assistive Technology                  | ➤ Raising a Deaf/Hard of Hearing Child |
|   | ➤ Raising a Deaf/Hard of Hearing Teen  |

Sessions scheduled throughout the day on Saturday, April 20 provided parents and family members with useful information regarding: APSEA Transition Services, Parental Empowerment, Financial Empowerment, Child Empowerment and Self-Empowerment. Participants were actively engaged and gathered more information and strategies for their parenting toolbox. The day ended with a family barbecue, a tremendous opportunity for parents to network and share while their children enjoyed time with their APSEA friends, new and old.

# Interpreters

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## **Educational Interpreters (EI/OI)**

In collaboration with the classroom teacher, and under the direction of the APSEA itinerant teacher, the educational interpreter provided oral/sign interpretation between students who are deaf and persons who are hearing. Educational interpreters also provided tutorial support.

## **Language Acquisition Support Workers (LASW)**

A small number of students had started school, but had not developed the language or communication competencies that would allow them to access the provincial curriculum. These children required intense intervention to facilitate language acquisition. Therefore, the role of the LASW is to facilitate language acquisition in the student through discussion and questions in the educational environment. The LASW strives to increase the student's vocabulary, syntax and critical thinking as it relates to language by bringing classroom activities and discourse to the student's linguistic level and building on this foundation. LASWs facilitate communication for the student during educational opportunities which happen outside the classroom. They interact with the student to focus his/her attention on relevant information, guide appropriate responses, advise the student of social expectations as they relate to language, including but not limited to turn taking, vocalization and how language is influenced by social distance. The LASW provided educational tutorial support in collaboration with the classroom teacher and the itinerant teacher.

## **Educational Interpreter/Student Assistant (EISA)**

In some cases, children required the support of an educational interpreter for communication and a student assistant for personal care, behavioural management or support for the instructional program. In these cases, the EISA fulfills the roles of both educational interpreter and student assistant.

## **Communication Facilitator**

When a qualified educational interpreter is not available a communication facilitator who is a fluent user of sign language works with students to provide sign interpretation between students who are deaf and persons who are hearing. They also provided tutorial support.

Nova Scotia Children and Youth Receiving Interpreter Services						
	<b>EI</b>	<b>OI</b>	<b>LASW</b>	<b>CF</b>	<b>EISA</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2010-2011</b>	11	8	0	1	5	25
<b>2011-2012</b>	11	3	9	1	3	27
<b>2012-2013</b>	11	2	8	0	2	23

New Brunswick Children and Youth Receiving Interpreter Services						
	EI	OI	LASW	CF	EISA	Total
2010-2011	11	6	2	0	0	19
2011-2012	7	3	6	0	0	16
2012-2013	5	3	5	1	0	14

## Sign Language Proficiency

To access interpreting services, individuals require a level of proficiency in receptive and expressive sign language. Developed at the Rochester Institute of Technology, the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) is a sign language assessment that allows us to determine a student's sign language ability and level of access to the interpreted message. An information tool rather than a pass/fail test, the SLPI provides feedback that allows the educational team to address areas of students' sign language development that may require further work. Two successful re-training sessions were held with six assessors from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in November 2012 and June 2013.

The focus for 2012-2013 was to establish baselines for all students receiving interpreting services, and share this information with itinerants and interpreters. To date, 12 students in Nova Scotia, 9 in New Brunswick, and 1 in Newfoundland and Labrador, and 1 in Prince Edward Island have been assessed. It is anticipated that students will be evaluated several times during their formative years to monitor the progress of their sign language communication.

## Trust Funds

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There are two Trust Fund Committees which determine how much money from various trust funds are to be distributed using specific criteria. Trust funds are used for student awards and scholarships, research, and staff development.

### DHH Trust Funds

The Interprovincial School Development Association (ISDA) Committee meets twice each year. The Committee's mandate is to distribute monies from the trust fund to eligible candidates. The Committee members are Eve Tupper (Chair), Heather Conrad and Lori Moore.

## BVI Trust Funds

The APSEA Trust Funds for students who are blind or visually impaired operate on a continuous intake process with an in-person meeting of the committee in the spring of each year. This committee considers various requests that can support academic needs as well as social, recreation and leisure activities. The Committee members are Heather MacPherson (Chair), Heather Conrad and Glenda Parsons.

Nova Scotia Trust Funds				
	Less than \$500.00		More than \$500.00	
	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI
2010-2011	37	38	16	3
2011-2012	32	47	20	3
2012-2013	28	20	24	0

New Brunswick Trust Funds						
	Less than \$500.00			More than \$500.00		
	DHH	BVI		DHH	BVI	
		Anglophone	Francophone		Anglophone	Francophone
2010-2011	16	12	32	10	0	2
2011-2012	22	14	31	11	1	3
2012-2013	21	14	22	11	1	1

Prince Edward Island Trust Funds				
	Less than \$500.00		More than \$500.00	
	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI
2010-2011	2	7	0	2
2011-2012	4	20	0	1
2012-2013	5	18	3	0

Newfoundland and Labrador Trust Funds				
	Less than \$500.00		More than \$500.00	
	DHH	BVI	DHH	BVI
2010-2011	0	35	0	2
2011-2012	0	21	0	1
2012-2013	0	25	1	2

# Resource and Assessment Services

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The Resource and Assessment Services Division is comprised of six sections: DHH and BVI Assessment and Short-Term Programs, Residence, Summer and Weekend Programs, Assistive Technology, Alternate Format and Library Services. We welcomed two new staff this year - a Supervisor of DHH Short Term Programs and Assessment and a DHH Short Term Programs teacher.

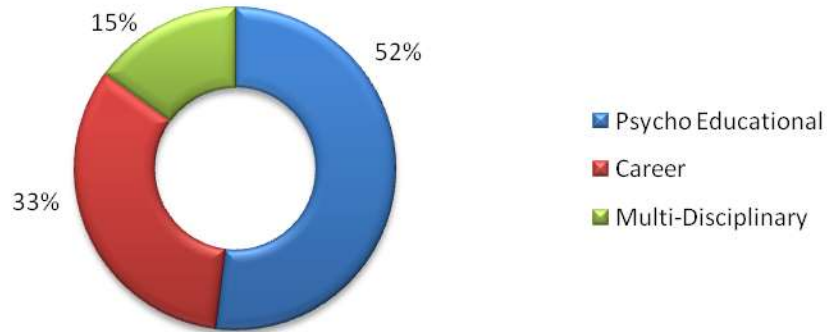
## Assessment Service

APSEA has two assessment teams based at the Centre in Halifax. One team provides assessments for students who are blind or visually impaired, while the other provides services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The assessment team for students who are blind or visually impaired provides assessments for students from each of the four Atlantic Provinces. The teams work collaboratively when assessing students who have dual sensory impairments.

During 2012-2013 school year, the assessment team for students who are blind or visually impaired (BVI) completed 27 assessments. The total number assessed included; 14 students from Nova Scotia, 4 students from New Brunswick, 2 students from Prince Edward Island and 7 from Newfoundland and Labrador (NL). The following types of assessments were provided; 9 Career Planning, 4 Multi-disciplinary, and 14 Psycho-educational assessments.

<b>CENTRE-BASED ASSESSMENTS BY PROVINCE (BVI)</b>					
<b>Year</b>	<b>NS</b>	<b>NB</b>	<b>PE</b>	<b>NL</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2008-2009</b>	12	7	2	0	<b>21</b>
<b>2009-2010</b>	14	4	1	1	<b>20</b>
<b>2010-2011</b>	8	9	4	1	<b>22</b>
<b>2011-2012</b>	20	7	5	4	<b>36</b>
<b>2012-2013</b>	14	4	2	7	<b>27</b>

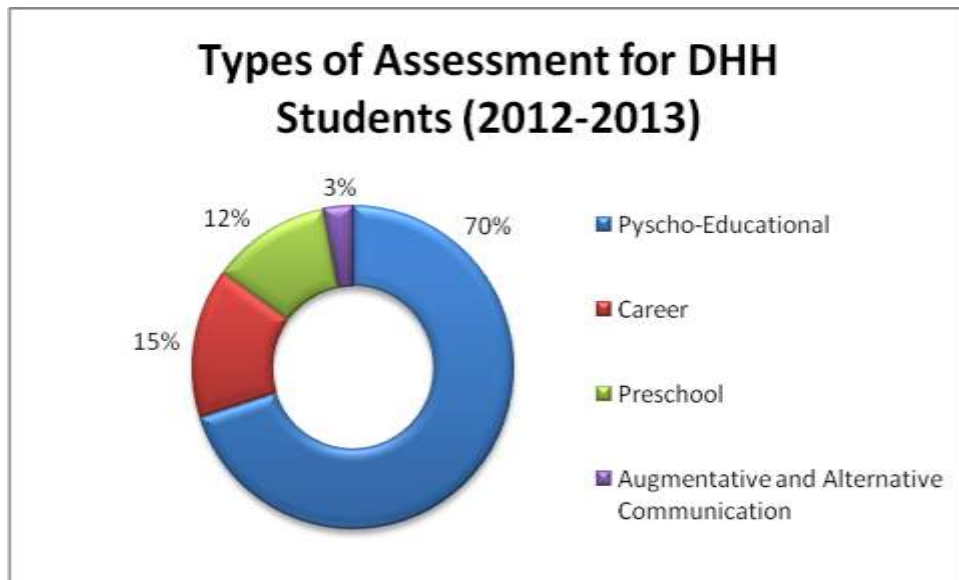
## Types of Assessments for BVI Students (2012-2013)



During 2012-2013 school year, the assessment team for students who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) completed 40 assessments. The total number assessed included; 21 from NS, 15 students from NB, and 1 student from PE, 2 from NL and 1 from Innu Education Board. The following types of assessments were provided; 5 preschool, 6 Career Planning, 1 Augmentative and Alternative Communication and 28 Psycho-educational assessments.

<b>CENTRE-BASED ASSESSMENTS BY PROVINCE (DHH)</b>						
<b>Year</b>	<b>NS</b>	<b>NB</b>	<b>PEI</b>	<b>NL</b>	<b>Innu/NU</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2008-2009*</b>	22	12	1	0	0	<b>35</b>
<b>2009-2010</b>	34	14	3	0	0	<b>51</b>
<b>2010-2011</b>	33	14	3	0	1	<b>50</b>
<b>2011-2012</b>	30	25	1	0	0	<b>56</b>
<b>2012-2013</b>	21	15	1	2	1	<b>40</b>





### Multi-Disciplinary Assessments

The BVI Assessment Team assessed four students with multiple exceptionalities during the 2012-2013 academic year.

These can be very challenging assessments, particularly if children are assessed in unfamiliar environments. The multi-disciplinary assessment framework is specifically intended/designed to be “front loaded” on observation, either in real-time or through video, so as to observe the student in their familiar environments of home/school/community; thereby learning about individual strengths and learning preferences prior to the actual assessment.

The structure and shape of the assessment is determined on a case-by-case basis, using a team approach to address specific assessment questions regarding visual preferences/abilities, developmental level, communication strengths/needs, access to technology, etc. A brochure has been developed outlining the steps involved to assist school teams, staff and parents in understanding the process. Communication, receipt of reports from outside agencies and scheduling are challenges and we will continue to refine our process and procedures to address these over the coming year.

# Short-Term Programs

APSEA short-term programs are developed to provide intense, individualized programming to meet each student's identified needs. Referrals are received from school-based teams in October and May of each school year. Teleconference meetings are held with each school team to discuss specific outcomes which are relevant, measurable and achievable. This collaborative process involves extensive pre-planning and discussion to address the individual outcomes identified in the Referral for Centre-Based Services.

## Short-Term Programs Developed and Implemented (BVI/DHH) 2008 to 2013

Individualized programs are developed based on referred needs and can range from one student to small groups of students. They vary in duration from 2 to 5 days per week.

Short-Term Programs: 2008-2013		
Year	BVI	DHH
2008-2009	157	27
2009-2010	99	25
2010-2011	49	6
2011-2012	56	30
2012-2013	81	107



## BVI Short-Term Programs

During 2012-2013, 34 students who are blind or visually impaired from the 4 Atlantic Provinces participated in a total of 81 short-term programs to address needs in orientation and mobility, career exploration, assistive technology, braille, and functional life skills. Length of programs was generally one week in duration.



Braille Challenge - January 2013

Sixty-two percent (62%) of these students (21 individuals) were enrolled in two or more short-term programs during the school year. Two students received outreach services from STP teachers; one student received instruction in Braille Music and one student received Assistive Technology via distance education.

The “implementation dip” experienced when the new outcomes-based referral and reporting process was introduced can be seen on the bar graph; however, the referrals for both assessments and short term programs have increased as we have addressed concerns with the procedures and the comfort level and understanding of this process has increased. Decreasing student population also needs to be taken into account in any longitudinal analysis of the statistics.



Remembrance Day Ceremony - November 2012

### **DHH Short-Term Programs**

During 2012-2013, 38 students who are deaf or hard of hearing from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, 2 students from Nunavut and 1 from the Innu Education District, participated in short-term programs to address needs in intensive language, self-advocacy, functional living skills, career exploration, alternative and augmentative communication and cochlear implant technology.



The length of short-term programs was generally one to four weeks in duration. Of the 38 students, 39% (15 individuals) were enrolled in two or more short-term programs during the school year.

# Summer Camps

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## APSEA/Elks Camp Magaguadavic

Forty-nine (49) campers and junior counselors took part in a very successful camp during the week of August 5 - 9, 2012. The camp provided an opportunity for children and youth (7-15 years) who are deaf or hard of hearing to be together in a natural and supportive environment with other children facing similar challenges.

APSEA/Elks Camp 2012 Campers and Junior Counselors			
	Boys	Girls	Total
New Brunswick	6	9	15
Nova Scotia	8	9	17
Prince Edward Island	3	0	3
Newfoundland and Labrador	8	5	13
Innu/Nunavut	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>49</b>



While at camp, 45 campers completed surveys. Ratings in almost all areas were in the “good” to “great” range. One hundred percent (100%) of campers indicated they had made a new friend, had fun and felt understood by camp counselors and staff. Unfortunately, only 3 of 51 parent surveys were returned. The response from the three parents indicated the quality of programming was good to excellent. Regarding the camp facility, responses were split and it is recognized that Camp Magaguadavic is an older facility that has not recently been upgraded. It should be noted the overall experience for their child was rated as excellent by all parents.

## APSEA/Brigadoon Camp

During the week of June 30 – July 5, 2013, APSEA BVI students had an opportunity to participate in a summer camp held at Camp Brigadoon Village in the Annapolis Valley, NS.



Twenty-nine (29) campers aged 8-17 participated. Campers participated in activities such as archery, canoeing, visual and performing arts, swimming, environmental education, cooperative games and camp fires. The campers also had opportunities to develop specific skills during pursuit (choice) activities and were able to share their talents with the camp during a talent show.

A new Leadership in Training (LIT) program was introduced to campers aged 16-18. These campers had an opportunity to learn about leadership; what it means to be a team player, how to set goals, and the importance of giving back to their community by volunteering. Campers also had an opportunity to experience an overnight campout where they used skills they learned.

While at camp, 23 campers completed surveys. Ratings in almost all areas were in the “good” to “great” range. One hundred percent (100%) of campers indicated they had made a new friend, had fun and felt understood by camp counselors and staff. Surveys will be sent out to the parents for their input on this year’s camp.

APSEA/Brigadoon Camp 2013			
	Boys	Girls	Total
New Brunswick	4	3	7
Nova Scotia	7	10	17
Prince Edward Island	0	1	1
Newfoundland and Labrador	1	3	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>29</b>

*“I really liked boating, evening programs and campfire! Boating was a new experience. I got to swamp the canoe, which I had never done before, I really liked it! Camp is important to meet other people who are blind and visually impaired so they know they’re not the only ones. I am coming back next year. It was great to see old friends again. Camp has programs that involve helping people and getting to know each other which is different than just meeting them at school. I felt comfortable and could participate in everything. I’m going to miss being on the lake, boating and swimming. I enjoyed it a lot!”*

- Gabrielle Close, Age 11 (Camper)



# Assistive Technology

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The Assistive Technology (AT) section completed its second operational year as a department.

The AT section provides services to students and staff when they are both on and off campus. The delivery of AT and Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) service to the assessment and short-term programs and outreach/consultative services off campus was more clearly defined over the course of the year.

The SET3 (Student, Environment, Tasks, Tools, Training) protocol and the Structured Interview form was implemented with the Nova Scotia, PEI and New Brunswick BVI staff. This helped to individualize the student's assistive technology according to their specific educational tasks and needs. The SET3 protocol also enabled AT/AAC staff to refine the strategies and devices the student required and to better track equipment the student is using. The AT Loan Policy was drafted and will be implemented next year.

On campus, the AT section worked closely with the assessment and short-term program team to develop outcomes, plan programming and participate in programs and assessments at the Centre. The opportunity to see students through outreach at their home schools, and during their intensive sessions at the Centre, allowed for further insight into the student's level of skill and personal learning styles.

As part of the mandate to develop rapport with our partners, staff participated as team members with the IWK, Stan Cassidy, school board/district, AT/AAC consultations, and stakeholder forums.

Training for staff continued to be a priority for the AT Section. The section presented to staff at both the fall and spring in-services at the Centre and iPad/AT Café sessions for the PAC and APSEA Board members. Online iPad sessions were held with four itinerant teachers from Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as a one-to-one session for the iPad with a teacher and student in Northern New Brunswick. Online "afterschool iPad" sessions for some of the academic high school students were held as a way to share their experiences using the devices at school.

Following the fast-paced developments in technology was also a challenge for the AT section. Through the SET3 protocol, the diverse and unique needs of each student were identified, and a variety of devices, software, or applications recommended. The strength of the AT section was the specialization of skills of each member, from augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), to low vision, braille and multi-needs technology. The AT section will continue to further develop teacher training sessions and online service delivery to teachers and students in remote areas in the coming year.

# Library and Resource Services

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Resource services are coordinated through the library services unit. All requests for books, kits and other materials to support students served by APSEA are processed by the library staff. If the title requested is in the APSEA collection, the item is packaged and shipped to the APSEA teacher who requested it. If the item is not currently available at APSEA, a search is conducted to determine if the item is available from other Canadian Associations of Educational Resource Centres for Alternate Format Materials (CAER). If available, the item will be borrowed from a resource centre through the interlibrary loan agreement and made available to the student. When the item is unavailable through interlibrary loan an additional search is conducted to determine whether the item is commercially available in the preferred alternate format. The purchase or production of student materials is facilitated by the library staff. Once an item has been purchased or produced, a record in the library database is created following cataloguing standards and loaned to the teacher who requested it.

The library is a first point of contact for the provision of alternate format materials. It begins with a consultation between the APSEA itinerant teacher and the classroom teacher. Together they identify the materials and the alternate format required for the student. The list of required materials and the desired format are forwarded to the APSEA library. The consultation, request for materials process and processing of the requests continues throughout the year.

## **Publisher Files and PDFs**

The creation of a digital repository of core curriculum materials in alternate format, through the acquisition of publisher files (accessible PDFs), is necessary for the efficient and effective operation of our library and alternate format services. Changes made to procedures for requesting accessible PDFs and large print permissions have produced significant improvements and the library continued to build this part of the collection. In addition, most CAER members now share publisher files which help all CAER members in their mutual goal of building digital repositories for core curriculum materials.

There has been a notable increase in the use of PDFs as an alternate format for students over the past year. Improvements in AT combined with an increased number of students using iPads or AT that are compatible with accessible PDFs are factors that contributed to this shift. The goal of growing the accessible PDF collection is even more important with the growing use of accessible PDFs as a final format.

## **Improved Access**

Library staff members provide reference services to APSEA teachers and staff. This involves reference queries, assistance in locating appropriate resources, facilitating production of materials in the required format, and assistance navigating the library database. In the past year library staff continued to work on improving access to library materials by delivering a customer service centered reference service.

Teachers contact the library using the method that works best for them. This change was in response to requests by itinerant teachers and has improved access to library materials and has resulted in increased library use.

A library section has been added to the APSEA website with the goal of providing assistance and guidance to library services. “How to” guides for the library’s most frequently asked questions are posted here where they can be easily accessed.

### **Large Print**

In response to feedback from teachers and students about the large print titles in the APSEA library collection, new additions to the large print collection are being produced so they resemble the print original. The front cover of the book is reproduced in colour with a clear plastic cover so the cover looks like a larger version of the print copy being read by the student’s peers.

### **French Braille Files**

Over 1,000 records for French language materials in an electronic format (braille files and etext) translated by Braille Édition & Transcription Inc., New Brunswick, have been added to the library database through an electronic import of records. These materials can now be searched along with all other titles in the library collection, dramatically increasing the number of French language titles in the APSEA collection. The French braille files contracted and developed for Francophone students in New Brunswick have been shared with APSEA since 2011. The addition of these files is a great resource for students served by APSEA who are studying in French.

### **Alternate Format Production**

The provision of educational materials in an accessible format is a crucial support for students who are blind or visually impaired. Educational materials required in braille or e-text and unavailable through interlibrary loan are produced in the braille production unit.

The library and braille departments collaborate in the production of alternate formats. The library acts as the production coordinator for the braille department which is responsible for producing alternate formats that include braille, braille files, etext, DAISY and PDFs.

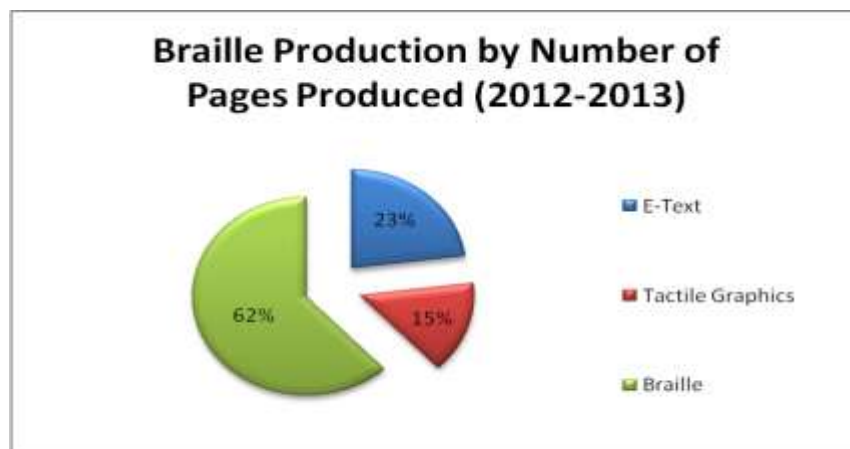
After reviewing past practices and identifying ways to create more efficient practices, several changes were made. New work orders were designed based on consultations with library staff and the alternate format division. The new work order system created a more efficient process for library staff in their role as production coordinators and increased tracking and monitoring capabilities. In addition, a tracking mechanism to provide complete and accurate information about the alternate formats in production was drafted in consultation with directors. The tracker has been used to track and monitor production and has created the ability to produce accurate data and reports on all production jobs coordinated by library staff.



Year	Braille Production	E-Text	Daisy	Tactile Graphics
2008-2009	19488	5283	200	1674
2009-2010	24949	6420	1128	3257
2010-2011	21194	5251	1972	3400
2011-2012	17625	5744	0	3940
2012-2013	16737	6126	0	4147

### Braille/E-Text/Tactile Production

In the 2012-2013 school year 16,737 braille pages, 6126 pages of e-text and 4147 original tactile graphics were produced from 27,751 original print pages. As all materials are proofread before leaving the department, the Alternate Format Production unit has collectively proofread 27,010 pages of alternate formats.



Although electronic text can be provided by simply scanning a document, or by using a publisher file, true e-text requires additional standardized formatting of the word processing file, adding tags that identify text changes, and page and chapter sequencing as they appear in the printed format. APSEA follows the e-text guidelines set by the Canadian Braille Authority (CBA). E-text provides students portability and flexibility and is being extensively used for post-secondary students with print disabilities.

### Consumable Production

Consumable braille/E-text is a term used to refer to unique classroom material (usually created by the classroom teacher) that is used by students in the classroom. The materials include teacher notes, assignments, tests, etc. The Braille Department makes an effort to have a short turn-around time. Building on the alternate format production tracker, we are currently exploring more efficient ways to manage the production of consumable requests and to track their production.

In 2012-2013, there were 288 consumable braille requests which produced 4946 braille pages and 1993 tactiles. In addition there were 28 consumable e-text requests consisting of 652 print pages and 119 tactiles.

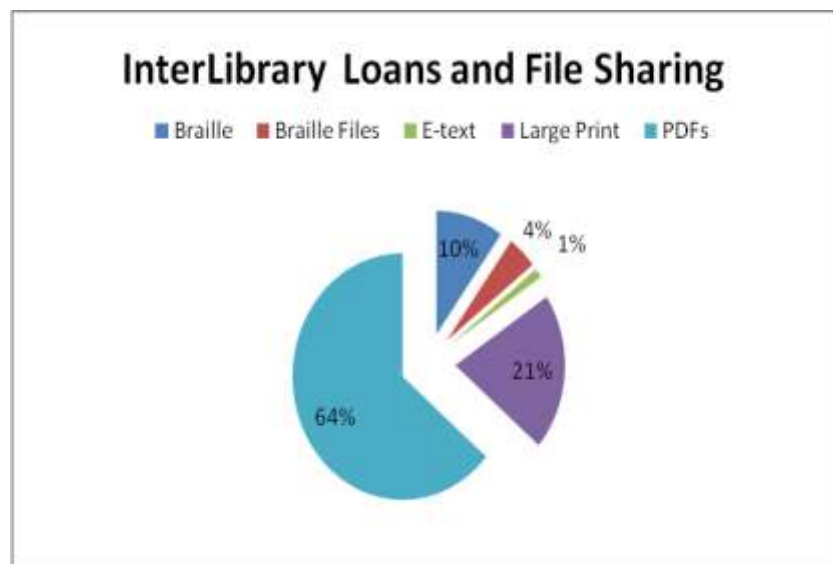
### **New Program**

This past year a library/story time program was piloted during DHH short-term programs. Children visited the library for library story time programming which supported language outcomes in a different context from the APSEA classroom. The objective was to create an experience parallel to children’s experience in library class in their public school, with the goal of helping students develop the skills required to participate in library sessions and select appropriate materials to borrow.

### **Canadian Association of Educational Resource Centres (CAER)**

Each region of Canada has a resource centre that provides alternate format materials to blind and visually impaired students (and in some cases to print-disabled students). Together these centres form a network of alternate format producers called the Canadian Association of Educational Resource Centres for the Provision of Alternate format materials (CAER). The primary function of CAER is to share resources and approaches between resource centres to ensure the needs of students using alternate format materials are met efficiently.

There were approximately 160 titles loaned or shared with APSEA from other CAER libraries during the past fiscal year. There was a significant rise this year in the number of PDFs. PDFs become permanent additions to our growing digital collection. As we add to the collection, our ability to satisfy requests for materials through our own collection increases. Currently the number of pages is not part of the information captured in loan data. Interlibrary loans (ILL) savings have been calculated using an average page count of 200 for the 160 ILL titles borrowed at a cost of \$6/page. The estimated savings for APSEA derived from ILL for the past year is \$192,000.



# Autism Project

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With the mandate of advancing and disseminating knowledge of Autism Spectrum Disorder in the area of educational instruction and practices, Autism in Education continued to build upon initiatives designed to:

- Consolidate a community of practice and evolve the related website to increasing relevance and usefulness.
- Expand the project's impact to a greater scale by extending information to a broad range of educators and related professionals through its website and professional development opportunities.
- Initiate and build connections with other professional groups and stakeholders that impact and/or are involved with the education of children with ASD.

## Autism Speaks Canada Family Services Community Grant

In December 2012 Autism Speaks Canada awarded a 2012 Family Services Community Grant (\$22,500.00) to Autism in Education to host advanced training session(s) for provincial and district autism specialists/itinerants in the Atlantic Provinces. Approximately 50% of the funding was used this year to host three advanced training events.

- A two day forum, *Advancing Capacity through Collaborative Learning* (April 10-11) was held at APSEA for approximately fifty (50) district and board autism itinerants/specialists. Dr. Cathy Pratt, keynote speaker, presented a full day session on *Translating Research into Practice: Applying Evidence-Based Practices to Address Challenging Behaviors in Schools*.
- Two webinars: (1) *Current research in early diagnosis, developmental pathways, and genetics in ASD: Implications for diagnostic and clinical practice* in December 2012 with Dr. Susan Bryson (Dalhousie, IWK), Dr. Isabel Smith (Dalhousie, IWK) and Dr. Wendy Roberts (University of Toronto, Hospital for Sick Children), and (2) *Observational Learning* with Dr. Bridget Taylor in May 2013.

**Note:** APSEA – Autism in Education is certified as an Approved Continuing Education (ACE) provider, which grants the organization the ability to arrange and oversee Type 2 continuing education events for BACB certificants. Marlene Breitenbach is the designated ACE Coordinator for the agency. APSEA was able to grant CEUs to eligible candidates at both the forum and webinars.

## Information Papers

The third Information Paper, *Sensory Differences and Autism Spectrum Disorder* was released in both languages in the spring of 2013. The Directors of Student Services distributed the paper within their respective provinces and it was posted on the Autism in Education website. Special thanks are extended to external contributors, Allison Eustace and Liz McDonnell, occupational therapists from NL and NB respectively. Their input was invaluable and clearly demonstrated their strong commitment to evidence-supported practice in the field of autism.

## Website (Community of Practice)

The website continues to evolve. There are approximately 350 registered users, with 50 registrants from outside of the Atlantic Provinces. The number of visits to the site is steadily increasing; however, having educators actively contribute to the site remains challenging. There has been some success in having Atlantic researchers contribute to the site. Dr. Sharon Penney, Faculty of Education, Memorial University and Dr. Isabel Smith/Dr. Susan Bryson, Dalhousie University/IWK have contributed their research papers to the website; *Autism and mental health: Experiences of parents and individuals with autism spectrum disorders*, and *Effectiveness of a Novel Community-Based Early Intervention Model for Children With Autistic Spectrum Disorder*, respectively.

## National ASD Surveillance Program

Work continues with the **National Expert Autism Spectrum Disorders Advisory Committee (ASD-AC)**. The environmental scan of surveillance activities across Canada has been completed and a series of pilot and feasibility studies (one of which conducted by two school boards in Nova Scotia) are being implemented in several provinces and territories. The pilots are designed to further explore optimal surveillance option(s) and to define standards such as a surveillance case definition, a minimum dataset and processes to ensure data quality, standardization and security. In June 2013, 'Letters of Invitation' were sent to key stakeholders/partners in each province to establish Collaborative Surveillance Agreements (CSAs). These agreements will focus on providing 'seed' funding and support to engage the necessary resources required to develop a proposal for full project implementation.

Les Mery, Manager, Developmental Disorders Surveillance Unit, Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) presented on this initiative to the Atlantic Provinces Deputy Ministers of Education and the Autism Advisory Committee on June 6, 2013 to provide a brief overview and current status of the National Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) surveillance program and to discuss opportunities for participation and implementation in the Atlantic region.

## **Promoting Training and Professional Development**

Department and school districts determine their professional development and training requirements. Although there are notable differences in the training delivery models across the four provinces, each has identified the need for a general training curriculum that reaches a broad range of educators and is highly accessible, economically viable and sustainable. Over the past several months, the planning committee has explored a number of on-line training formats and curricula that could provide a component of this training. A brief report outlining the findings of this preliminary review was presented to the Autism Advisory Committee. The report provides a perspective on e-learning and a brief description of the most commonly referenced on-line learning resources that potentially could assist districts/provinces in delivering on-line foundational training to a broad range of educational groups i.e. teachers, paraprofessionals and administrators. This information should serve useful as the provinces consider the recent recommendation made by the Council of Atlantic Deputy Ministers of Education and Training (CADMET) to explore a partnership in the development of an autism training program. The New Brunswick model offers a very interesting and exciting alternative to the programs highlighted in the above mentioned report.

### **2013-14 Business Plan**

The 2013-14 business plan was submitted in April 2013. The mandate of the project continues to be relevant and allows the four provinces to consider and act upon issues that are critical and of high interest to all provinces, while respecting the differences that exist across the region.

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