

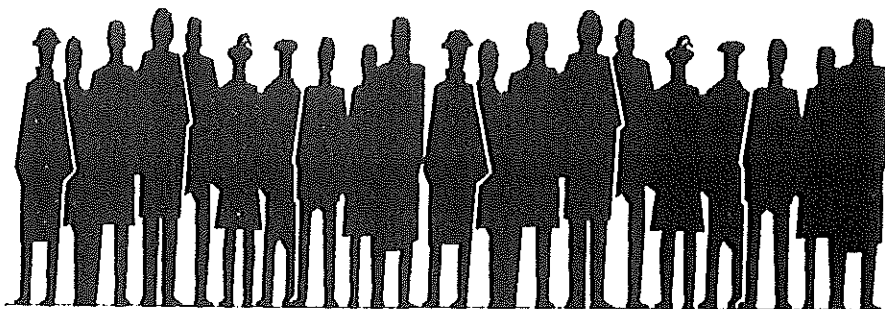


GOVERNMENT OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



**MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION POLICY:**  
**Responding to Societal Needs**

**March 1992**



## Preamble

The multiculturalism policy of the Department of Education is based on the following international, national, and provincial commitments:

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial and religious groups...

United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 Article 26 (2).

Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982. 15 (1).

The Government of Canada recognizes the diversity of Canadians as regards race, national or ethnic origin, colour and religion as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society and is committed to a policy of multiculturalism designed to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians while working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada....

Canadian Multiculturalism Act, 1988

... This legislature ... desires to reaffirm its faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and has determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

The Human Rights Code, 1988. (Newfoundland) Introduction.

... To help pupils appreciate their privileges and responsibilities as members of their families and the wider community and so live in harmony with others.

The Aims of Public Education for Newfoundland and Labrador

## **Policy Statement**

***According to the policy of multiculturalism officially adopted by all Canadians, our diversity is a unique characteristic of our identity.***

***The Department of Education is committed to the promotion of multiculturalism including a recognition of the unique position of the aboriginal peoples.***

***The Department of Education defines multicultural education as education that promotes cultural understanding and facilitates cultural accommodations. The outcome of multicultural education should be an increased knowledge about other cultures, an appreciation of other ways of life, and cross-cultural social and communication skills.***

All educational institutions should help students and educators to understand and respect our cultural differences by:

- Helping all students and educators achieve their physical, intellectual, emotional, cultural, social, and moral potential.
- Guaranteeing the right of all people to be proud of their cultural background.
- Promoting respect for all cultural groups.
- Ensuring that curriculum and instruction reflect the multicultural nature of Canada and highlight the contributions made by Canadians from different cultural backgrounds.
- Being proactive to the changing needs of individuals in society.

## *Implementation Guidelines*

The Department of Education believes that the spirit of multiculturalism should permeate the whole educational system - education policies, curriculum, teaching methods, resource materials, and evaluation procedures. It should also be reflected in attitudes and expectations of educators and students and in interactions with students, parents, and the community. Policies, programs, and services that contribute towards the establishment of cooperative relations among all members of the educational community must be nurtured for everyone - native Newfoundlanders and newcomers to our Province. The following principles should help realize these goals by moving us closer to an equal, excellent, and efficient educational system.

### **1. Helping all students and educators achieve their physical, intellectual, emotional, cultural, social, and moral potential.**

- 1.1 To achieve one's potential requires the ability to communicate in the language of one's neighbours and fellow Canadians. To function in a shrinking world, the mastery of a second or heritage language is important. Through collaboration, the Department of Education will work to facilitate expanded and improved teaching of French, English, heritage, and aboriginal languages.
- 1.2 The Department of Education recognizes that to facilitate full and equal participation by all Canadians, it is imperative that core groups of ESL (English as a Second Language) and FSL (French as a Second Language) teachers be trained. In addition, preservice and inservice teacher training programs should prepare teachers to instruct ESL/FSL students.
- 1.3 The Department of Education will ensure that full exposure to the principles of multiculturalism becomes a part of teacher training programs under its jurisdiction. Furthermore, in light of the changing societal needs, the Department of Education will encourage the Memorial University as the teacher training institution to include courses on multicultural education.
- 1.4 The Department of Education recognizes the need for highlighting multiculturalism in its policy statements and to encourage policy makers, administrators, and teachers to participate in workshops on cross-cultural understanding and human rights.

- 1.5 The Department of Education recognizes the need to collaborate with outside agencies such as the recently established Race Relations Foundation and the International Centre for Human Rights, in promoting the spirit of multiculturalism in the school system.

## **2. Guaranteeing the right of all people to be proud of their cultural background.**

- 2.1 The Department of Education encourages all school boards to develop policies for the full expression of our multicultural character. Dress codes must be flexible. Students and staff members should be allowed to wear symbols, clothing, head coverings, or hairstyles dictated by religious affiliation or cultural background. Attention should also be given to such things as non-Christian religious holidays and the inability of some students to participate in nonacademic events, such as certain physical activities, because of religious or cultural taboos.
- 2.2 The Department of Education encourages school board professional staff to acquire a knowledge and an appreciation of other religions, especially if non-Christian students are in attendance.

## **3. Promoting respect for all cultural groups.**

- 3.1 The Department of Education recommends that school boards organize school visits by members of different cultural groups, to expose students to various aspects of multiculturalism.
- 3.2 The Department of Education and other educational institutions will be encouraged to develop, acquire, and promote the use of relevant resources for multiculturalism.
- 3.3 The Department of Education recognizes the need for schools to observe United Nations Day (October 24), Human Rights Day (December 10), and International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March 21); these special days should be focal points for classroom activities and projects on multiculturalism.

**4. Ensuring that curriculum and instruction reflect the multicultural nature of Canada and highlight the contributions made by Canadians from different cultural backgrounds.**

- 4.1 In order to ensure a school curriculum free of cultural bias and stereo-typing, the Department of Education will review, during the normal curriculum development process, all educational materials.
- 4.2 In view of the pressures on teachers to meet curriculum goals and objectives, the Department of Education recognizes that it is important to integrate the principles of multiculturalism into the core curriculum.
- 4.3 Where appropriate, the Department of Education will promote the use of specific resources that highlight the contributions made by individual Canadians from different cultural backgrounds.
- 4.4 To support the development and evaluation of an appropriate curriculum, the Department of Education will encourage Memorial University to establish a Centre of Native and Multicultural Studies.
- 4.5 The Department of Education will make special efforts to encourage school boards to establish teacher and student exchange programs with other cultural groups.
- 4.6 The Department of Education will encourage educators and students to recognize that they are part of a community and that they must work with community groups to promote human rights and multicultural programs.

**5. Being proactive to the changing needs of individuals in society.**

- 5.1 The Department of Education will undertake periodic evaluation of all policies to respond to the changing cultural diversity in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- 5.2 The Department of Education will encourage members of other cultural groups to continue working with the Department to promote multicultural education.



## Responding to Societal Needs

