Strait
Regional Centre for Education

Strait Regional Centre for Education
Educational Business Plan 2023 – 2024

Approved November 6, 2023

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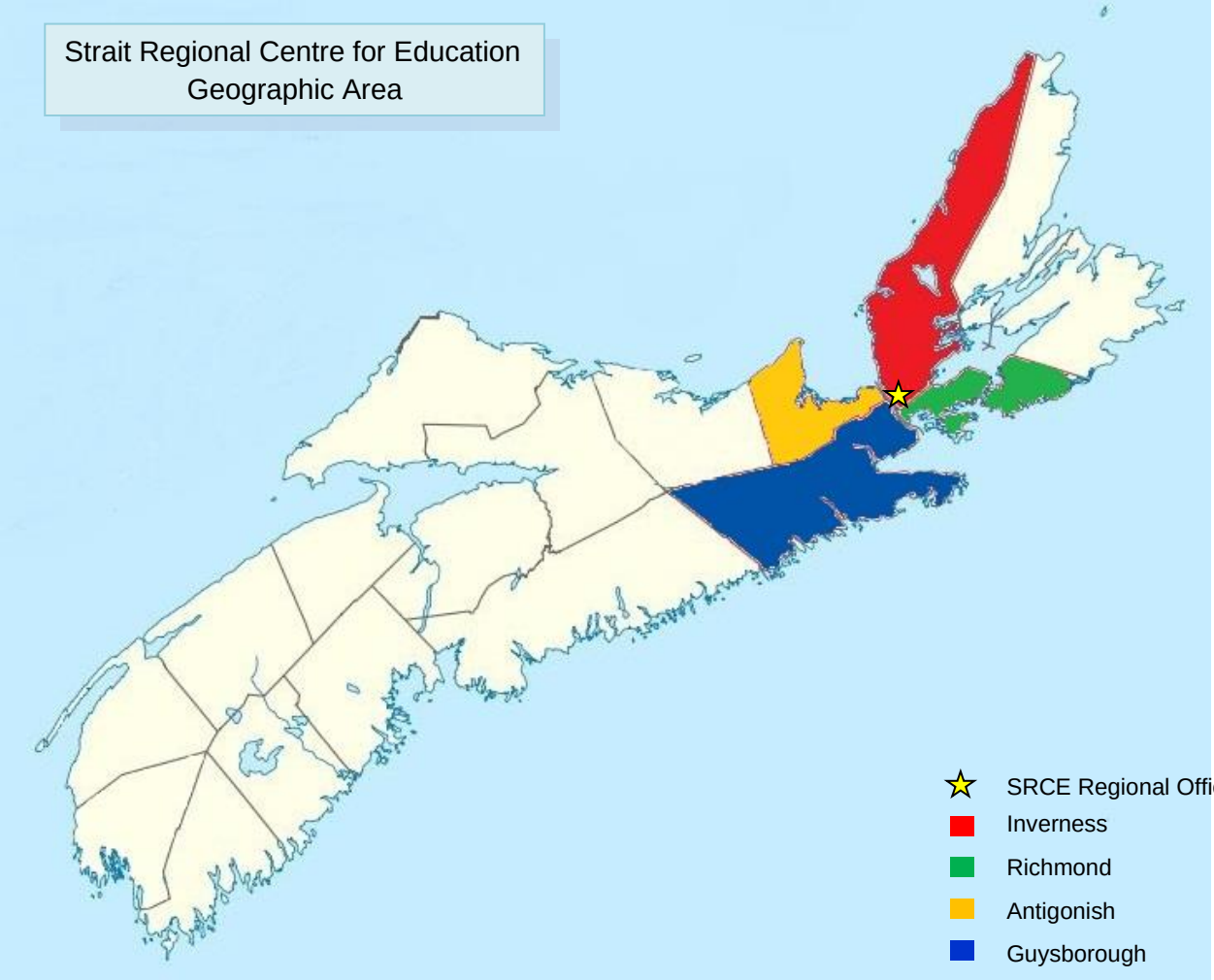
Introduction and Planning Context

Established on April 1, 2018, the Strait Regional Centre for Education is a rural school region located in the northeastern part of Nova Scotia. Its jurisdiction includes Antigonish and Guysborough Counties on the mainland of Nova Scotia and Inverness and Richmond Counties on Cape Breton Island.



Located in the northeastern part of Nova Scotia, the Strait Regional Centre for Education's jurisdiction encompasses an area of approximately 11,000 square kilometers with a population of 53,742 (Census 2021).

The Region's administrative office is located in Port Hawkesbury.

There are eight municipal units within the Regional Centre's coverage area:

1. Municipality of the County of Antigonish
2. Municipality of the District of Guysborough
3. Municipality of the County of Inverness
4. Municipality of the County of Richmond
5. Municipality of the District of St. Mary's
6. Town of Antigonish
7. Town of Mulgrave
8. Town of Port Hawkesbury

Enrolments:

During the 2022-2023 school year, there were 5,931 students enrolled in the Strait Regional Centre for Education. The enrolment in the Region for 2023-2024 is 5,954. Enrolment in the Pre-primary Program for the 2023-2024 school year is 386 children.

Employees:

The Strait Regional Centre for Education currently has approximately 1,050 employees.

School Listings by Grade:

During the 2022 – 2023 school year, the Strait Regional Centre for Education operated 20 schools.

Grades PP – 4

- Antigonish Education Centre, Antigonish
- Felix Marchand Education Centre, Louisdale

Grades PP – 6

- H. M. MacDonald Elementary School, Maryvale
- St. Andrews Consolidated School, St. Andrews

Grades P – 6

- Pleasant Bay School, Pleasant Bay

Grades PP – 8

- Bayview Education Centre, Port Hood
- East Richmond Education Centre, St. Peter's
- Tamarac Education Centre, Port Hawkesbury
- Whycocomagh Education Centre, Whycocomagh

Grades 5 – 8

- St. Andrew Junior School, Antigonish

Grades 5 – 12

- Richmond Education Centre/Academy, Louisdale

Grades 9 – 12

- Dalbrae Academy, Mabou
- Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School, Antigonish
- Strait Area Education-Recreation Centre (SAERC), Port Hawkesbury

Grades PP – 12

- Cape Breton Highlands Education Centre/Academy, Terre Noire
- Chedabucto Education Centre/Guysborough Academy, Guysborough
- East Antigonish Education Centre/Academy, Monastery
- Fanning Education Centre/Canso Academy, Hazel Hill
- Inverness Education Centre/Academy, Inverness
- St. Mary's Education Centre/Academy, Sherbrooke

System Improvement Plan 2023-2024

The Strait Regional Centre for Education Programs and Student Services team worked in consultation with principals, vice principals and teachers from across the region, who represented all grades, subject/speciality areas and years of experience, to develop a System Improvement Plan for the 2023-2024 school year. The establishment of the goals and priorities evolved from a comprehensive review of evidence of student learning, research and educational literature emphasizing the emotional, motivational and affective elements that need to be fostered in order to facilitate learning and develop the whole student.

The 2023-2024 System Improvement Plan is responsive to recent results in student achievement, as well as trends over time. It also represents an understanding of the important connection between student well-being and achievement, and the critical need to provide students with the conditions where all students feel a sense of belonging to achieve their full potential. All goals, priorities and implementation strategies have been developed through an inclusive, equitable and culturally responsive lens to ensure that all students have access to a variety of supports and services to facilitate greater success.

In addition, the System Improvement Plan aligns with the initiatives included in the 2023-2024 Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Business Plan.

For more information, please access the following links:

SRCE System Improvement Plan 2023-2024

SRCE System Improvement Plan 2023-2024 Infographic

Mission Statement

The Strait Regional Centre for Education's Mission Statement is:

- *To empower our children and youth, within safe, equitable and inclusive environments, to embrace a changing world as responsible, contributing and successful lifelong learners.*

Organizational Structure

Student achievement and success are the foundation, focus and framework for all Regional Centre endeavors. Students in the Strait Regional Centre for Education have a strong record of achievement on multiple measures of student success, at the classroom, school, regional, provincial, national and international levels. The Strait Regional Centre for Education is committed to providing high-quality learning opportunities that foster the academic achievement, personal development and citizenship of every student in healthy and active, safe and caring, and socially just learning environments.

Office of the Regional Executive Director

The Strait Regional Centre for Education is led by the Regional Executive Director who reports to the Deputy Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD).

The office of the Regional Executive Director oversees the management, development, and delivery of public education in the Strait Region and performs the duties assigned under the Education Act. The core functions of the Office of the Regional Executive Director include:

- Provide leadership of the Senior Administration Team and supervision of all employees of the Strait Regional Centre for Education.
- Provide leadership and direction and ensure that Provincial and Regional educational policies and programs are carried out.
- Oversee the operations of schools, the allocation of resources, and the implementation of policies and regulations.
- Responsible for assessing the effectiveness of educational programs, monitoring student achievement, and ensuring accountability in the education system.
- Responsible for the provision of educational programs and services to students and support for schools in the delivery of all aspects of the Public School Program.
- Fosters partnerships and communication with parents, community organizations, and other stakeholders to build a supportive and collaborative educational environment.

The following Senior Administration Team supports the work of the Regional Executive Director.

- Director of Programs and Student Services
- Director of Human Resources
- Director of Finance
- Director of Operations
- Coordinator of Communications
- Coordinator of Mi'kmaw Education Services
- Coordinator of African Canadian Education Services

The Regional Executive Director functions as the connection between the EECD and local schools, ensuring that educational goals and standards are met while addressing the unique needs of the Strait Regional Centre for Education.

Programs and Student Services

Under the leadership of the Director of Programs and Student Services, the Department's responsibilities also include:

- Student achievement and evaluation;
- Curriculum implementation and instruction;
- African Canadian and Mi'kmaw Education Services and Student Equity;
- Options and Opportunities (O2), Skilled Trades, Discovering Opportunities;
- Pre-primary and Early Years Program;
- Before and After School Program;
- Professional development;
- Student behaviour and conduct;
- Community-Based Learning;
- Health promotion;
- French Immersion, French Second language, Intensive French;
- Special Needs/Services including Speech Language and Psychology;
- International students;
- Information technology and integration;
- Records and archives;
- School Advisory Councils;
- Student Success Planning;
- School administrative support and appraisal; and
- Educational partnerships.

Finance

Under the leadership of the Director of Finance, the Department's responsibilities include:

- Financial planning, budget control and forecasting;
- Financial accounting and reporting;
- Monthly and yearly financial statements;
- Payroll processing;
- Monitor and manage accounts receivable and payables;
- Purchasing;
- Risk management/internal controls/insurance;
- Monitoring of the financial processes and reporting of school-based funds;
- Completion and filing of report to various government agencies; and
- Technology infrastructure.

Human Resources

Under the leadership of the Director of Human Resources, the Department's responsibilities include:

- Labour relations, including support of local and provincial bargaining;
- Administration and interpretation of NSTU (regional and provincial) and CUPE Collective Agreements, as well as PSAANS and Confidential, Non-union Employees Terms and Conditions of Employment;
- Performance management and growth planning;
- Foster and develop a positive and productive workplace culture;
- Non-teacher professional development, training and coordination of the board-wide professional development plan;
- Employment equity, developing a diverse and inclusive work force;
- Employee wellness, health and safety;
- Organizational development and efficiency
- Succession planning;
- Coordination of staff allocations;
- Staff recruitment and placement; and
- Principal support in the area of human resources.

Operations

Under the leadership of the Director of Operations, the Operations Department is responsible for the provision and operation of safe and efficient facilities and fleet for the students and staff of the Strait Regional Centre for Education. The Department's responsibilities include:

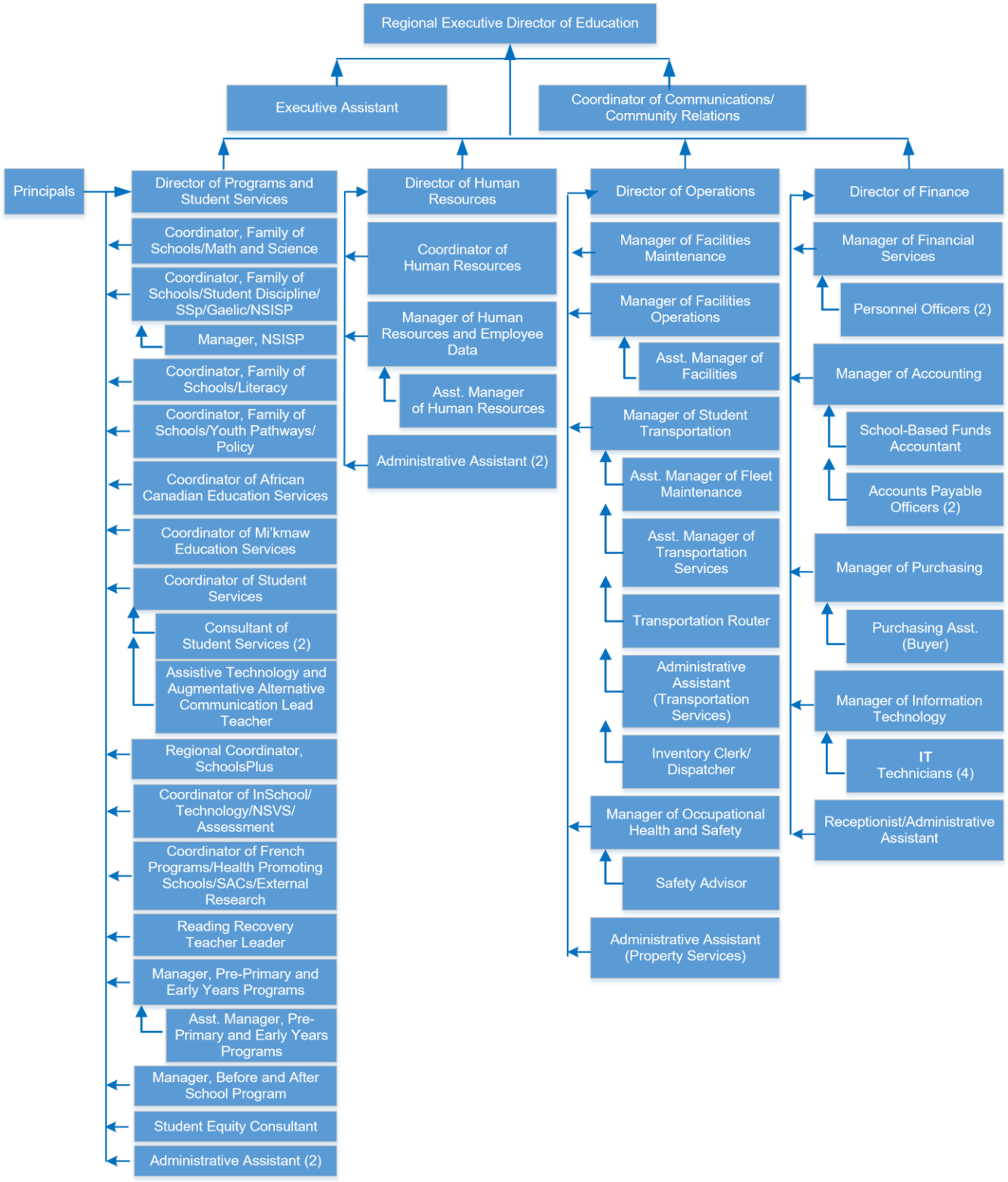
- Facilities maintenance;
- Capital planning and project management;
- Energy management programs and projects;
- Fleet operations;
- Driver training and licensing;
- Fleet maintenance;
- Health and safety program management;
- Air quality monitoring, investigations and remediation; and
- Fire safety programs administration.

The Transportation Department operates a large fleet of busses transporting approximately 95% of students over an area of 11,000 square kilometres. The system is totally owned, operated and maintained by the Regional Centre. Facilities management functions are primarily conducted utilizing Regional Centre employees including custodial services, building operations and most facility maintenance functions. Regional Centre's resources are augmented by specialty contract services. The Operations Department's core functions are centrally managed from facilities in Mulgrave.

A combination of Regional Centre and contract services is utilized to perform capital construction functions.

Strait Regional Centre for Education

Strait Regional Centre for Education
Regional Office Organizational Chart 2023-2024



Annual Report of Achievements 2022 – 2023

Goal One:

To foster student well-being through the creation of positive, safe and inclusive learning environments.

Priorities:

(a) Support social, emotional, mental, physical and spiritual wellness among students through positive relationships and the creation of equitable, safe, accessible and inclusive environments.

- Schools throughout the SRCE continue to advance the development of comprehensive school health environments, including wider access to healthy eating and increasing physical activity through the Health Promoting Schools and Active Smarter Kids initiatives.

- Active Smarter Kids (ASK) training of all school staffs to continue to implement more movement into classroom activities.

- Level of student attendance, engagement, and behaviour incidents as measured through attendance and behaviour data in PowerSchool, and observation of subject area teachers, alternative education teachers and student equity team continue to be positive.

- Schools regularly involve various support personnel at Tier 1, 2, and 3 levels to respond to student needs.

- Continued implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy with development of school-based teams and associated professional learning.

- Culturally responsive resources continue to be distributed to schools including classroom texts and the Fostering Equity and Inclusion in the Classroom resource.

- To gather feedback directly from students, there was an 85.3% response rate on the Student Success Survey and student focus groups are held regularly.

Goal Two:

To improve student achievement in literacy:

Priorities:

(a) Increase student achievement in literacy with a focus on guided, small group instruction at all grade levels.

- Increased opportunities for students to participate in guided, small group instruction.
- Analysis of Reading Recovery, Early Literacy Intervention, and Literacy Boost data at the beginning and end of intervention sessions showed consistency in achievement level from previous years.
- Explicit professional development on Pillars of Reading Instruction, strategies for supporting small-group, guided instruction, analysis level questions, and writing activities was provided to staff.

(b) Increase student achievement in literacy with a focus on a balance of daily writing, reading and speaking and listening at all grade levels and in all content areas.

- Analysis of Reading Recovery, Early Literacy Intervention, and Literacy Boost data at the beginning and end of intervention sessions showed consistency in achievement level from previous years. 68% of grade primary to two students are reading at grade level or above. 62% of Reading Recovery students made substantial or accelerated progress.
- 73% of students met reading expectations at Level 3 or above on the Grade 6 RWM Provincial Assessment.
- Increased opportunities for students to participate in daily reading and writing activities.
- Teachers implemented high impact, culturally responsive best practices for literacy instruction at Tier 1 that are relevant, accessible and meaningful for all students.
- Variety of digital resources were introduced to increase student engagement in reading and writing processes including RazKids, Troubador, and SORA.

Goal Three:

To improve student achievement in mathematics.

Priorities:

(a) Increase student achievement in mathematics with a focus on number sense activities at Pre-primary to Grade 12 using high impact strategies.

- Review of report card mathematics data shows consistent four-year achievement from 2019-2020 to 2022-2023 school year.
- Teachers were supported with implementing high impact culturally responsive, best practices for supporting student understanding of the number strand at Tier 1.
- Mathematics teachers from Grades P-12 received ongoing support with high leverage strategies in numeracy instruction.
- Focused support to advance the achievement of students of African and Indigenous decent, as well as other underrepresented or underserved students continued to be implemented.

(b) Increase student achievement in mathematics with a focus on analysis level questions at grades primary to 12.

- Review of report card mathematics data shows consistent achievement from the 2019-2020 to 2022-2023 school year.
- The Grade 6 RWM Provincial Assessment indicated that 66% of our students were at or above the expectation in mathematics.
- Explicit professional development on strategies for supporting small-group instruction and analysis level questions was provided to mathematics teachers.
- Continued to increase skill capacity in schools to provide Tier 2 and Tier 3 Mathematics support to students.
- Continued implementation of Knowledgehook in schools (program to help teachers run engaging, curriculum-aligned formative assessments and provides resources to help identify and address common gaps, errors and misconceptions) through sessions with school administrators and teachers.

Goal Four:

To promote the stewardship of resources.

Priorities:

(a) Improve the safety of staff and students and provide transparency of expectations and operations.

- The Human Resources Department reviewed and revised the following SRCE Policies.
  a) Policy & Procedures V-A-2 Recruitment, Hiring and Retention of Employees
  b) Policy & Procedures V-B-5 Staff Conflict of Interest
  c) Policy & Procedures V-A-5 Employment Equity

- The SRCE successfully negotiated a new Local 955 CUPE Collective Agreement.
- The biennial staff recognition Strait to Excellence award ceremony was held.
- An Employee Handbook was developed, and all staff were trained.

- The SRCE has continued to roll out its ridership program to assist young students in identifying the correct bus during boarding.
- An accessibility review of all schools based on Phase 1 built environment recommendations was completed.
- Outdoor learning spaces were created in SRCE elementary schools.
- Various building upgrades were completed at schools across the region.

(b) Ensure all employees have the knowledge and training to comply with policies and regulations governing the operation of the SRCE.

- The SRCE has expanded the use of Vector Solutions to the following areas.
  i) Staff onboarding
  ii) Staff training
  iii) OHS compliance and
  iv) Professional Development
  Resulting in flexibility for staff to access materials and training. Reducing the need for onsite professional development and travel.

- The SRCE delivered a number of training programs to operations staff throughout the year including standard first aid, defensive driving, arc flash, ladder safety and load securement.
- School secretaries participated in accounting / finance professional development as well as Information Access / Privacy professional development.

(c) Monitor and maintain effective internal control, timely and accurate financial reporting, strategic budgeting and forecasting, cost control, cash flow management and procurement administration.

- The HR Department implemented the Provincial Non-Union Compensation Framework.

- The SRCE HR Department initiated the staffing process for the 2023-2024 school year in early fall of 2022, putting in place several initiatives, processes, and guidelines to ensure consistency, accuracy and required personnel are in place such as:
  i) Staffing forecasting (Fall of 2023)
  ii) Casual Job Fairs
  iii) Early Hiring process
  iv) Pool Hiring
  v) Attending Education Recruitment Fairs

- An internal digital file management system was developed for the HR Department, supporting the following:
  i) Reduction in physical paperwork
  ii) Consistency in practices
  iii) Documentation of department operational procedures
  iv) Increased efficiency in the overall department

- The SRCE received a clean unqualified audit opinion for the 2022-2023 fiscal year and has produced a balanced budget for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.
- Key staff continue to support the provincial SAP Modernization Program with the rollout of SAP S4 HANA.
- The SRCE had a cyber risk assessment performed and continues to improve its network infrastructure and cybersecurity posture.

Goals for 2023 – 2024

The following goals have been developed through an inclusive, equitable and culturally response lens for the 2023 – 2024 school year.

Goals: 2023 – 2024	
Goal One	Foster Student Well Being through the Creation of Positive, Safe, Equitable, and Inclusive Learning Environments
Goal Two	Improve Student Achievement in Literacy
Goal Three	Improve Student Achievement in Mathematics
Goal Four	Stewardship of Resources

Priorities for 2023 – 2024

In order to realize its goals, the Strait Regional Centre for Education has established the following priorities:

The SRCE's goals and priorities are detailed in this year's SRCE System Improvement Plan 2023-2024

Student Well-being	
Goal One	**To foster student well-being through the creation of positive, safe, equitable, and inclusive learning environments**
Priorities:	a) Support schools to build learning environments where student physical, social, and emotional wellness is prioritized by aligning and maximizing well-being initiatives, prioritizing movement, and nutrition. b) Continue to support schools to foster strong positive relationships, promote student engagement and improve communication among students, staff, and school community.

Student Achievement	
Goal Two	**To improve student achievement in literacy**
Priorities:	(a) Focus on guided, small group instruction at all grade levels and in all content areas.
	(b) Focus on a balance of daily writing, reading, and speaking and listening at all grade levels and in all content areas.

Student Achievement	
Goal Three	**To improve student achievement in mathematics**
Priorities:	(a) Focus on building positive attitudes, confidence and ability in problem solving in grades primary to twelve.

Stewardship of Resources	
Goal Four	**To Promote the Stewardship of Resources**
Priorities:	a) Expand the hiring pool process to enhance hiring and recruitment efforts.
	b) Implementation of Provincial Non-Union Compensation Framework.
	c) Implement School Cash Online
	d) Conduct a space review of SRCE schools to identify opportunities for better utilization and maximize the effectiveness of programming spaces.
	e) Improve cybersecurity in the SRCE.
	f) Continue to implement the SAP/HANA Provincial Enterprise Resource Program (ERP) to safeguard provincial assets and marginalize resource allocations.

Finance and Operations

Key Financial Indicators:

Revenue:	2021 – 2022 Actual	2022 – 2023 Actual	2023-2024 Budget
Province of Nova Scotia	$ 86,130,321	$ 92,698,871	$ 91,815,386
Government of Canada	507,294	1,710,180	1,011,327
Local First Nations	935,839	812,068	664,943
Municipal Contributions	14,049,074	14,325,785	15,186,569
Other revenues	1,451,262	1,434,830	1,520,082
School Generated Funds	1,240,101	1,545,602	-
TOTAL REVENUE	**$ 104,313,891**	**$ 112,527,336**	**$ 110,399,964**

Key Financial Indicators:

Expenditures:	2021 – 2022 Actual	2022 – 2023 Actual	2023-2024 Budget
Board Governance	$ -	$ -	$ -
Office of the Regional Executive Director	815,280	1,064,530	983,218
Financial Services	922,630	926,001	967,820
Human Resource Services	627,716	688,007	668,493
School Services	72,638,420	76,183,553	74,860,063
Operational Services	24,909,091	28,464,592	30,063,369
Pre-primary Program	2,697,488	2,777,640	2,857,000
Interest Expense	159,801	172,830	-
School Generated Funds	1,436,737	1,782,972	-
Amortization	124,108	115,263	169,871
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	**$ 104,331,271**	**$ 112,173,388**	**$ 110,399,964**

Key Financial Indicators:

Accumulated Surplus:	2021 – 2022 Actual	2022 – 2023 Actual	2023-2024 Budget
Balance, beginning of year	$ 7,561,317	$ 7,543,937	$ 7,895,585
Centre for Education annual surplus	(17,380)	351,948	-
Balance, end of year	$ 7,543,937	$ 7,895,885	$ 7,895,585

Key Facts

Students:	**September 30, 2021**	**September 30, 2022**
Total Number of Students	5,787	5,931
Average Class Size: P – 2	17.8	19.3
Average Class Size: 3 – 6	22.0	23.2
Average Class Size: 7 – 9	21.4	22.6
Average Class Size: 10 – 12	14.7	15.4
Total Number of Classes & Sections	711	665
Staff (FTEs)	**September 30, 2021**	**September 30, 2022**
School Based Educators and Administrators	513	509
School Based Non-Teaching Support	164	180
Programming Support	29	32
Non-Teaching Programming Support	68	76
Transportation	126	127
Property Services	110	102
Administration	28	29
Technology Support	6	6
Other Programs	0	2

Technology	September 30, 2021	September 30, 2022
Student / Instructional Computer	1.08:1	1.03:1
Computer & Devices/Technician	1.978:1	1,778:1

Property Services:	2021	2022
Total School Sq. Ft.*	1,442,575	1,442,575
Sq. Ft. / Student*	249	243
Private Operator Sq. Ft.*	-	-
Operating Costs**	$13,600,724	$14,699,930
Operating Costs / Sq. Ft.**	$9.43	$10.19

Transportation:	2021	2022
Total Buses On Regular Routes*	109	110
Total Spare Buses Operated*	21	20
Total Students Transported*	5,498	5,634
Total Student Transportation Cost**	$8,544,264	$9,697,992
Total Cost / Student Transported**	$1,554	$1,721
Total Number Of Bus Runs Daily*	131	132
Average Number Of Students / Bus Run*	42	43
Cost / Unit – Contracted*	-	-
Cost / Unit – RCE**	$78,388	$88,164
Total Number Of KM Students Transported*	1,213,304	1,459,483
Total Number Of KM buses Traveled*	1,733,292	2,084,976

*As of June 30 ** As of March 31

Definitions and Calculations:

Students (all based on Sept 30th statistics):

Total Number of Students: Sept. 30th Total Enrolment (funded & unfunded)
Average Class Size P-2
Average Class Size 3-6
Average Class Size 7-9
Average Class Size 10-12
Total Number of Classes & Sections

Staff:

School based Educators and Administrators: Includes Teachers (including resource Teachers, Principals and Vice Principals), School Admin staff, Guidance, Psychologists, etc.
School based Non-Teaching Support: Includes Education or Teaching Assistants, School Secretaries, etc.
Programming Support: School Administration Supervisors, Coordinators of school programing and school services
Non- Teaching Programming Support: Secretaries, administration assistants and those positions not captured in programming support
Transportation: Bus Drivers, Mechanics, and other related administration staff
Property Services: Custodians, Maintenance and Trades staff
Administration: Superintendents, Finance Staff, Human Resources Staff, Operations Staff, and other related administration positions
Technology Support: Supervisors of School Technology, Networking Specialists, and other related IT support positions
Other Programs: FTEs connected to programs including, but not limited to, international services programs, before & after school programs, etc.

Technology:

Student/Instructional Computer: Ratio of Number of Students: Computers
Computers & Devices/Technician: Total Computers & Devices across RCE/CSAP/Technical Support FTEs

Property Service:

Total School Sq. Ft.: Total square footage of all schools operated by RCEs/CSAP (schools, P3,) excluding RCE office, bus garages, maintenance buildings.
Sq. Ft. /Student: Total square footage from above divided by Sept. 30th unaudited student count
Private Operator Sq. Ft.: Total square footage of all P3 schools excluding net/net lease P3s
Operating Costs: Custodial, maintenance and utility costs for the previous fiscal year actuals. Includes repairs and maintenance expenses funded in the annual profile sheet, does not include any major capital expenditures (TCA) funded by the RCE/CSAP or by the department (TCA Major or repair funding over $150K)

Operating Costs/Sq. Ft.: Total op cost/Sq. Ft. of all schools maintained by RCE/CSAP including net/net P3s

Transportation:

Total Buses on Regular Routes: Total units operated on a daily basis by RCE
Total Spare Buses Operated: Total number of spare buses
Total Students Transported: All students transported – includes courtesy bused and privately conveyed
Total Student Transportation Cost: Actual from previous year
Total Cost/Student Transported: Total transportation audited actuals/total students transported
Total number of bus runs daily: Total of all regularly scheduled bus runs/day
Average number of students/bus run: Average of all students/number of daily bus runs
Cost/Unit – Contracted buses: Total transportation contract cost/all buses
Cost/Unit - RCE: Total transportation cost/all buses
Total number of KM students were transported: Total KM of all regular bus run driven while transporting students on regular runs in a school year
Total number of KM buses traveled: Total KM of all regular bus runs, extra and co-curricular trips and transport of buses to and from the various stops during the school year