

UPDATE FOR YOUNG LIBERALS

Provided by the Community Career Centre

Resolution Related to

High School Co-operative Education Programs

The following resolution was passed by the Young Liberals of Newfoundland and Labrador at the Annual General Meeting of the Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador held in Gander on October 22-24, 1999:

WHEREAS high school students are often unsure and confused about which career paths to pursue;

WHEREAS very few successful programs exist to aid high school graduates in deciding a post-graduate plan of action;

WHEREAS many co-operative education programs have proven to be successful such as those currently present in the provincial school system;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Young Liberals of Newfoundland and Labrador encourage the Department of Education to establish partnership arrangements to further co-operative education programming as part of the required high school curriculum.

2002 UPDATE

Department of Education statistics for a five year period (September, 1996 - June 2001) show an increasing decline in the numbers and percentages of high school graduates who completed co-operative education programs. During this five year period the number of graduates who completed co-operative education programs had fallen from a high of 16% (1118 graduates) to a low of 12% (748 graduates) in June 2001 with only 19% (29/151) of schools offering high school courses being able to provide co-op programs for their students. This low occurred one year after the above resolution was passed at the 1999 AGM.

Given the preamble to the above resolution, it is also worth noting that only 28% (1611/6049) of the 2001 high school graduates completed a career planning course which focuses

on developing realistic career plans. In other provinces (Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta...) completing a career planning course as well as obtaining work experience is a "compulsory" requirement for high school graduation.

A 1999 Roper study showed that 95% of Canadian employers rated work experience during high school as valuable. Co-operative education programs, as indicated in your resolution, have proven to be successful in both rural and urban communities. One of the recommendations from an April, 2002 report, "Rural Youth Migration: Exploring the Reality Behind the Myths, A Rural Youth Discussion Paper", reiterates the importance of providing rural youth with work experience opportunities:

"Have the school districts and local employers work closely together to provide work experience opportunities for youth in local industry."

***(Strategic Option 5.3: Work Orientation/
Rural "Exposure" Programs, p.40)***

A 2001 career development survey of high school administrators, guidance counsellors, and educators indicated that 93% of respondents felt the provincial government should support and enhance co-operative education programs as a means to help students make more effective transitions to employment and/or educational opportunities.

Extensive research clearly indicates that our young people need increased support in their career development and are experiencing difficulties making the transition from high school.

A 2002 Youth in Transition Survey estimated our provincial high school drop out rate to be at 11%, that's approximately 900 young people who do not complete their high school education. In 2001-2002 school year there were 1,114 students throughout Newfoundland and Labrador registered for Level IV. These students experienced difficulties making the transition from high school and required an additional year of study.

A follow up report on high school graduates, shows approximately 64% of the 2001 high school graduates went on to some form of post secondary education...36% of 2001 graduates had **not** gone on to participate in any post secondary edu-

cational program (18%-working, 10%-unemployed, 08%-other activities).

Research also shows that those high school graduates that enter post secondary programs are dropping out in significant numbers. A 1998 Post Secondary Indicators Report showed that public college three year programs graduated fewer than 50% of students who entered from 1991 to 1997. The 1996 Census data (most recent census data not available) showed that 54% of people (36,200) who were employed in 1996 in our province and who began a university program did **not** complete their degree. Information from the MUN University Forum, 1999 shows an average drop out rate of approximately 28% of first year university students over a 5 year period.

Adding to the challenges of personal and career development are the number of children who live in poverty. In 2000, 25,330 children (0-17yrs) were living in families receiving social assistance. Our province's youth (15-24 years) unemployment rate averaged out over 20 years (from 1981 to 2000) was approximately 28%. In June 2002 it was 27%.

“One can always find fault with statistics and these figures are no different. Our intention is not to point fingers or to lay blame. We simply want to raise public awareness of the severity of this **career development crisis** and the impact it's having on our youth and on our communities. We have all contributed to this crisis and we all must play a part in resolving it. Our hope is to rally broad based community support and commitment to work together to better support our young people in their career development.”

Christine Snow,
Co-chair, Community Career Centre

What can young Liberals do?

- Become better informed about all the issues related to career development and the implications it has for our youth, for our communities, for our province, and for our country.
- Find out what's going on in your schools and in your community organizations to support young people in developing their present and future career plans and look for ways to increase that support.
- Get more actively involved in your regional economic development boards and strategic social plan regions and support their efforts to help our youth plan for their future.
- Continue to develop resolutions related to career development and remain committed to following up on their progress.
- Request and review a copy of a funding proposal submitted to HRDC, Ottawa (July 18, 2002) by the Community Career Centre titled, ***It's Time. A provincial proposal to collaboratively address the career development needs of youth, in-school and out-of-school, employed and unemployed, "at risk" and not "at risk"***. This proposal has received support from all six strategic social plan regions of our Province. We also have letters of support from Hon. Judy Foote, Hon. Sandra Kelly, and Hon. Ralph Wiseman. Yet we still have no decision.
- Approach your area's MHA and ask them to also support this proposed collaborative initiative !!

It's Time.

If you require further information and/or clarification on the information contained in this flyer, please contact the Community Career Centre at 758-2378.

“It takes an entire community to raise a child.”