In the fall of 1992, the Maritime Provinces Education Foundation (MPEF) appointed a task group to establish a regional database, consistent with the efforts being undertaken by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada and Statistics Canada. The task group, made up of representatives from regional departments of education, produced a report recommending the development of a basic set of commonly agreed upon performance indicators. Newfoundland and Labrador joined the regional effort in 1994 and MPEF eventually became the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (APEF) in 1995.

**What is an Indicator?**

Indicators are statistics which can be used for comparative purposes. They provide answers to questions related to how well an education system is functioning. Indicators allow us to make a comparison over time, among jurisdictions, or against some predetermined standard or set of criteria. Indicators describe the characteristics and the performance of educational jurisdictions relative to goals and objectives. Obviously, education indicators do not tell everything about education systems. Instead, like economic or health indicators, they provide a “snapshot” of current conditions.

**Defining the Concept**

An Education Performance Indicators Forum/Workshop with participants from the four Atlantic provinces, representing several branches within each department of education, school boards and teachers’ organizations was held in June 1993. The purpose of the event was to develop an understanding of the concept of educational performance indicators from a broad social and economic perspective, and to identify key educational issues around which performance indicators might be organized.

**A Regional Set of Performance Indicators**

The task group found considerable similarities in the mission and goal or commitment statements of each Atlantic province. For instance, they all identified common concerns for lifelong learning, the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes, personal growth and fulfilment, and the contribution of individuals to society. A framework for measuring and reporting the extent to which provinces meet their statements about education was then developed. The framework identified different types of indicators related to goals for the student and goals for the system as
a whole. Some were designed to measure performance while others simply presented or described the context within which the performance occurred.

**Performance & Descriptive Indicators**

The report contains information on both performance and descriptive indicators. *Performance indicators* are grouped into student-based (achievement and attainment and participation) and system-based indicators (cost of education and satisfaction with education system).

*Descriptive indicators* measure aspects of the system that are useful in analysing performance. They supply information on the inputs and context of education and provide background information required to get a more complete picture of our education system. Descriptive indicators include the conditions of schooling, community support, and lifelong learning.

**The Project is Released for Consultation**

In March 1994, a paper on Education Performance Indicators for the Atlantic region was released for consultation. Response from educators in all provinces was very positive. In the fall of 1994, a meeting of the Atlantic Ministers of Education was held with education stakeholders. In the spring of 1995, a revised project plan was sent out for final comment.

**A Final Report**

After much collaboration among the Atlantic provinces, the first Education Indicators for Atlantic Canada report is released on September 26, 1996.
Report Highlights for Prince Edward Island

- High school graduation rates for Prince Edward Island were above the Canadian average in 1990-91 and 1992-93. (Note: Canadian statistics are not available for the years following 1992-93.) Refer to page 16.

- The high school graduation rates for Prince Edward Island were higher than the graduation rates for Nova Scotia and Newfoundland from 1990-91 to 1994-95. Refer to page 16.

- Graduation rates for females were consistently higher than those for male students. The rate for females increased to 86 per cent in 1994-95 from 77 per cent in 1990-91. The rate for males increased to 75 per cent from 71 per cent in the same period of time. Refer to page 17.

- Prince Edward Island students compared favorably with the national average in mathematics and reading and writing assessments conducted with 13- and 16-year olds across Canada as part of the School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP). Refer to pages 20-24.

- From 1981 to 1991, the percentage of the population aged 20-34 with high school completion or higher has increased to 71 per cent from 61 per cent. In 1991-92, the completion rate on Prince Edward Island was comparable to the completion rate for the rest of Canada. Refer to page 27.

- Prince Edward Island had the second lowest annual drop out rate among the Atlantic provinces. The rate for male students is higher than for female students. Refer to page 31.

- More students in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick participate in French immersion programs as compared to Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. Refer to page 35.
There is a noticeable decrease for Prince Edward Island in the percentage of high school graduates enrolling in university in the academic year following high school graduation. The rate decreased to 36 per cent in 1993-94 from 46 per cent in 1991-92. Refer to page 36.

In Prince Edward Island, more female high school graduates than male enter university immediately following graduation. Refer to page 37.

In 1993-94, Prince Edward Island spent more per student than Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. The total expenditure per student in 1993-94 was $5,567. Refer to page 39.

The expenditure to graduate a student from the school system in Prince Edward Island is the second highest of the Atlantic provinces at $85,256. Refer to page 40.

The percentage of income spent on education for the 1993-94 year was 28.4 per cent. This is the second highest in the region and 3.9 per cent above the Canadian average. Refer to page 44.

Grade 8 students in Prince Edward Island gave high marks to their quality of school life. The survey conducted in November of 1995 asked students’ opinions on their school, teachers and day to day experiences. Female rankings were consistently higher than those by males in Island schools. Refer to page 45.

In 1994-95, the class size distributions for grades 1-9 were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class size</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-16</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-24</td>
<td>47.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-32</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33+</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures compare favorably with the other Atlantic Provinces. Refer to page 48.
Between 1989-90 and 1994-95, there has been a slight increase in the percentage of school-based educators and a slight decrease in the percentage of educators based in board offices in Prince Edward Island. Refer to page 50.

The student/educator ratio, however, has remained relatively unchanged during that same period. The student/educator ratio was 16.8:1 in 1989-90 and 17:1 in 1994-95. Refer to page 49.

Student/support staff ratios for Prince Edward Island decreased between 1993-94 and 1994-95. This means the number of support staff members per student in the areas of property maintenance, transportation and teacher assistance, has increased. Refer to page 52.

Prince Edward Island has the highest percentage of teachers with university degrees compared to the other three Atlantic provinces. In fact, the number of Island educators with Masters degrees increased to 18 per cent in 1994-95 from 14 per cent in 1989-90. Refer to page 53.

Twice as many male teachers have Master degrees as do their female counterparts. Refer to page 54.

According to Statistics Canada, Islanders spend more money per household on reading materials when compared with the other three Atlantic provinces. Refer to page 60.

In all age groups between ages 2 to 34, Islanders watch more hours of TV each week than do Canadians in general. Refer to page 61.