

# Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority Annual Report 2021-22





Chair and Board of Directors  
Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority

In accordance with Regulation 43 of the APSEA Act, I submit herewith this report on the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) for the school year ending 31 July 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Doucet". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L".

Lisa Doucet  
Superintendent

# ABOUT APSEA

## Mission

APSEA, in collaboration with our partners, provides culturally and linguistically responsive, inclusive, equitable, and accessible educational services and supports to children and youth who are blind or visually impaired and/ or Deaf or hard of hearing and their families.

## Vision

The children and youth that we support reach their highest potential for an independent, self-sufficient, and fulfilling life.

## Guiding Principles

APSEA is child-focused, family-centred, research-based, collaborative, and inclusive.



# Message from the Superintendent

Hello Friends of APSEA,



As your partner in education and on behalf of Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA), I am proud to share with the 2021/22 Annual Report. This past year marks the second full year of operating in the context of a global pandemic. These have been challenging times and I am impressed by the strength and resilience that learners and families have demonstrated in the face of these challenges. I also extend my gratitude for the dedication APSEA employees showed in their nimble and innovative responses to the needs of learners.

Since 1975 APSEA has been operating as an inter-provincial co-operative agency by joint agreement among the Ministers of Education of New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. We work collaboratively with families, school teams and education and community partners, and this report shares some highlights of the past year.

In the past year we completed our Review of Service Delivery model and in the 2022/23 year we work towards implementing the recommendations. We are proud of our achievements and optimistic about the redesign work underway on the current service delivery model which will further strengthen our ability to provide responsive, inclusive, equitable and accessible programs, services and supports.

I would like to thank our dedicated employees for APSEA's accomplishments over the past year and thank our Board of Directors for its support and guidance as we work to help children and youth reach their highest potential for an independent, self-sufficient, and fulfilling life.

My best to you all,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Doucet". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lisa Doucet, Superintendent

# PROGRAMS & SERVICES

## Children and Youth Who Receive APSEA Services (2021-2022) Provincial Totals

	BVI	DHH	Total
New Brunswick	112	289	401
Newfoundland and Labrador	23	5*	28
Nova Scotia	262	568	830
Prince Edward Island	52	4*	56
<b>Total</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>866</b>	<b>1315</b>

### Overview By Region

\*In Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island children and youth who are Deaf or hard of hearing receive support from school district employees. These numbers reflect learners who received services from APSEA ASL specialists, Deaf Mentors, Mentors for Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired, Speech Language Pathologist, and/ or participated in the APSEA Virtual Learning Series in 2021-2022.



## Early Learning

APSEA's early learning programming is designed to serve the individual needs of children who are Deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired and their families during the critical development years of birth to age five.

Through regular home visits and support in preschool or daycare settings, APSEA employees work with family members, care givers and other support professionals to create a program plan for learning and skill development for each child, including preparing for the transition to school.



## School-Age Children

APSEA provides students who are Deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired with either consultative or direct service, depending on student and programming needs.



# AUTISM IN EDUCATION

Autism in Education (AIE) works to promote and develop collaborative initiatives that support province-based services for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) through dissemination of information and professional learning, training, and capacity-building for educational professionals who support learners with ASD across Atlantic Canada.

AIE continued to support educators with engaging and timely professional learning throughout the 2021-22 school year. The fall kick-off was the 2021 AIE Virtual Symposium, which brought together nearly 300 educators, for a 3-day workshop on the Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS). Dr. Elizabeth Laugeson, Founder and Director of the UCLA PEERS Clinic, facilitated the online training from October 5 - 7, 2021. As part of this training initiative, AIE also received permission from Dr. Laugeson to translate the PEERS Manual for School-Based Professionals into French. The translation will be complete early in 2023, and will be available to educators in French boards, districts, and schools throughout Atlantic Canada.

AIE continued its professional learning offerings throughout the year, with an annual webinar series that included the following topics and presenters:

- Supporting Learners who Engage in School Refusal, Dr. Christopher Kearney, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
- Supporting Increased Independence in Activities of Daily Living for Children with Autism, Victoria Cernjak, Coordinator, IWK Children's Rehabilitation Team
- Trauma-Informed Behavioural Intervention - 3-part series, Sandra Bishop, CEO & Clinical Director, BASICS ABA Therapy
- Peer Awareness and Understanding in Inclusive Classrooms, Sam Drazin, Founder & Executive Director, Changing Perspectives

AIE continues to grow and expand its suite of professional learning opportunities for educational personnel across Atlantic Canada, while at the same time, maintaining the focus on key activities, such as the online interprovincial ASD & Behavioural Interventions course, AIE Information Papers, and support to provincial ASD consultants and specialists. Our continued goal is to provide educators with professional learning on important and timely topics.

# VIRTUAL LEARNING SERIES & APSEA CONNECT



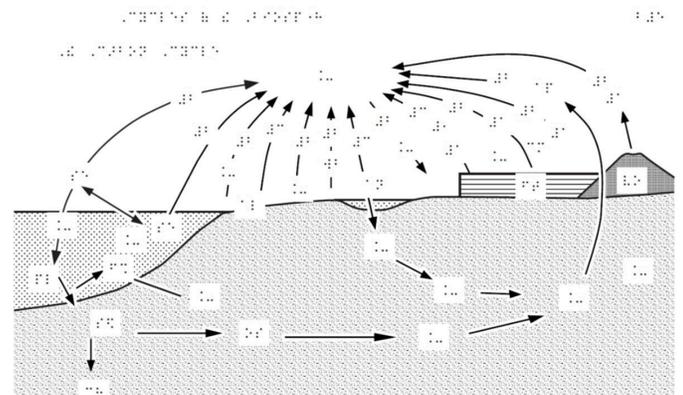
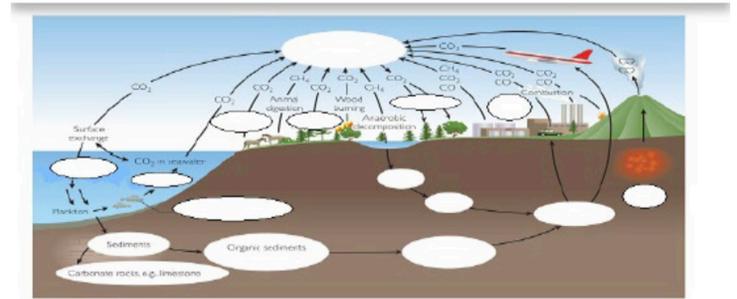
With culturally and linguistically responsive, inclusive, equitable, and accessible programs designed to target areas of the DHH and BVI Expanded Core Curriculums, Virtual Learning Series (VLS) reached students of all ages across all four Atlantic provinces in the 2021-2022 school year. Programs covered a wide range of topics and were offered in both ASL and English. Rethinking the learning environment and moving to an online platform has allowed a breakdown of urban and rural divides to bring peer connections and the best expertise to students regardless of their geographic location.

APSEA Connect is an online resource for families, APSEA staff, educational and community partners. Such participants were invited to join online presentations, discussions and forums introducing professional and community agencies, as well as highlights of supports available to children and youth who receive APSEA services.

## PRODUCTION & LIBRARY SERVICES

Production and Library Services (PALS) support the instructional needs of learners on the APSEA caseload by providing curriculum material in accessible formats. They also maintain a collection of professional resources available to APSEA employees.

*An example of a print visual that has been produced using raised surfaces, enabling the learner to access the information in a tactile format.*





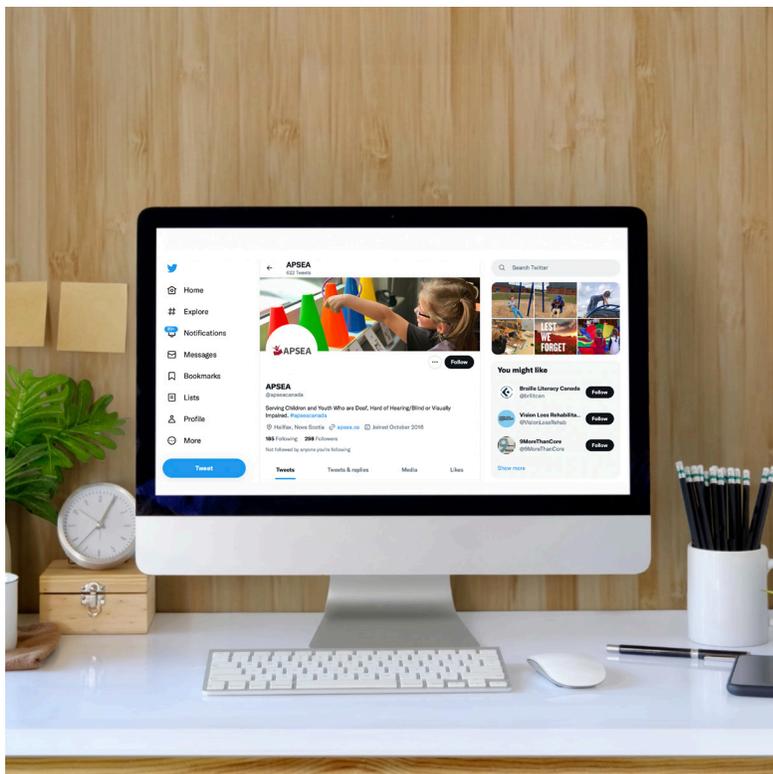
# BRIGADOON VILLAGE

Brigadoon Village once again hosted Camp See-Ya and Camp Whatcha Say in summer 2022. During these one-week camps, campers took part in a wide range of activities (which are adapted to be accessible to them and ensure they can be successful). Brigadoon Village provides a rich learning and social experience giving campers the opportunity to make meaningful connections and friendships while building skills that will last a lifetime.



# SOCIAL MEDIA

APSEA continues to have an active social media community where families, employees, key stakeholders, and the public regularly engage with posts and follow for useful information. APSEA utilizes Facebook and Twitter and can be found @APSEACANADA. We have an engaged and growing community that allows us to share highlights from within APSEA, promote community events and virtual learning opportunities and aid in recruitment of employees with sharing job opportunities.



# RETIREMENT & LONG-TERM SERVICE

In June, APSEA held its annual retirement and long-term service celebration. APSEA employees from across Atlantic Canada gathered virtually to congratulate and acknowledge the honourees on great service and wonderful careers.

2022 retirees are: Nancy Bradley, David Clarke, Lisa Norwood Smith, Christine Purcell, Lynn Seymour Lalonde, Ann Slaunwhite, Linda Worley-Bell. Twenty-five-year employees are: Heather Churchill and Patrick Daley.

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

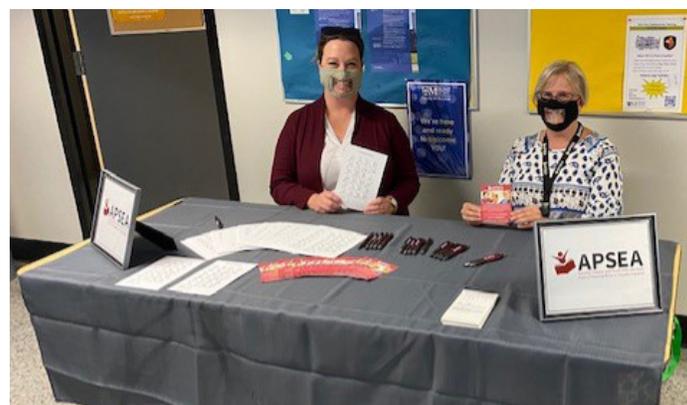
Across Atlantic Canada, our learners, families and team members work collaboratively to find creative and engaging ways to learn and teach. Learning, sharing, and growing happen every day and this overview offers a quick snapshot of some of the fantastic happenings across the region.

- To kick off the 2021-22 school year APSEA BVI New Brunswick staff met in Fredericton with Simon Richard, Parasport NB Program Coordinator for a Goal Ball Clinic. Team members had the opportunity to experience Goalball, a Paralympic sport and having Simon who is a Paralympian from NB lead the session was a great learning opportunity. Goalball is played under blindfold which puts players on an equal playing field, whether they are blind partially sighted or fully sighted. As a community opportunity, anyone can play or be a member of a team as the blindfolds provide all with an equal advantage in competition. Following play, Simon and Executive Director Sally Hutt discussed opportunities and strategized with APSEA staff on how to engage students in sport in school and extracurricular around the province, making inclusive physical education a priority.



- APSEA staff Dana MacLeod and Nellie VanKlei participated in Mount Saint Vincent University's Com-

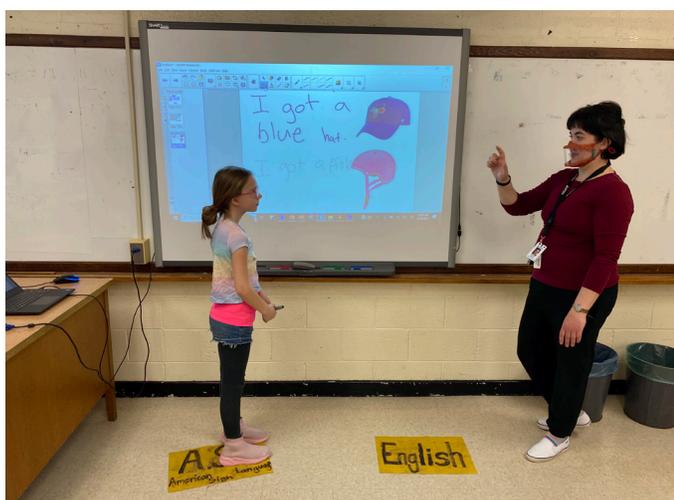
munity Placement Fair in the Fall which gives 2nd year Bachelor of Education students the opportunity to learn about educational placements outside of a traditional classroom.



- Two Bachelor of Education students from Mount Saint Vincent University completed their community placement with Nova Scotia BVI and DHH itinerants. This was an opportunity to learn more about teaching students who are blind or visually impaired, or Deaf or hard of hearing. In addition, they gained an understanding of future career possibilities. The students greatly appreciated the experience.
- The Nova Scotia BVI team participated Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) professional learning presented by Dr. Christine Roman-Lantzy. By expanding their understanding of CVI they will be better equipped to support children and youth on their caseloads. This training led to a collaboration group which developed resources and practical suggestions for colleagues and families which will enhance learning opportunities for all children and youth with CVI.
- Nova Scotia BVI and Orientation and Mobility staff organized a professional learning opportunity focused on supporting learners with CVI to develop their orientation and mobility skills.
- APSEA Employees Christine Muise, Hannah Wade,

Heather Limpert and Jax Warner were recipients of Nova Scotia Education Week Awards in 2022.

- APSEA hosted several Early Learning Playdates in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick for DHH and BVI learners. Families gathered for these welcome in-person events enjoying making connections and having fun participating in activities such as playing with bubbles, participating in basketball, and enjoying games. At one Halifax event, families got to hear from two high school students and learn about their experience and love of Brigadoon Village's "Camp Whatcha Say". These gatherings will continue and be expanded to other regions.
- The Bedrock Literacy Curriculum was used as a resource by several APSEA staff in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. This resource is designed to support students who use American Sign Language (ASL) to develop English literacy skills. The Bedrock Curriculum uses visually based strategies that are grounded in building concepts first and applying language second. One of the core activities around reading involves students reading a sentence to themselves in English while standing on their "English" mat. They then move over to the "ASL" mat to explain in ASL what the meaning of the sentence is.



- APSEA's Assistive Technology (AT) team hosted an "AT Cafe" at the Halifax Regional Centre for Education. APSEA staff ran stations showcasing the equipment they support and explaining its use for students, with a goal of empowering AT Support

Workers when they work with students who are blind, visually impaired, Deaf, or hard of hearing.



- APSEA held online Family Focused Sign Language Immersion programs in the Fall and Spring of 2021-22. Many APSEA employees and families participated in these learning opportunities.

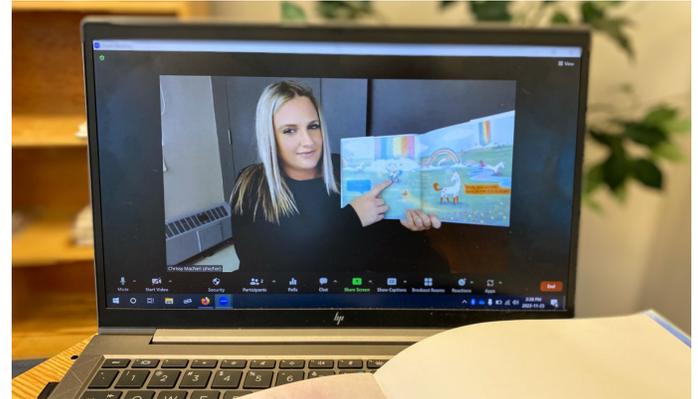


- Assessment and Short-term program staff worked regularly with several other APSEA departments and collaborated with 12 community partners organizations to offer both in-person and online opportunities.
- Assistive Technology, Audiology, and Speech Language Pathologist collaborated regularly with colleagues including counsellors, early learning specialists, orientation and mobility, and itinerant teachers. This team approach led to the facilitation of gatherings for early learners, the provision of educational support for students through Zoom sessions with itinerants, the creation of information sheets highlighting cross-departmental specialties, discussions

of strategies for device rejection and transition, facilitation of an APSEA/Nova Scotia Hearing and Speech shared education event, collaboration with the Ocean School Project with a focus on screen reader accessibility, and a sharing of expertise through virtual programs.

- Driven by the goal of fostering collaboration and empowerment amongst students, staff, and families across the four Atlantic provinces, and guided by the strategic plan, APSEA's online programs showcased a fresh approach in reducing geographic barriers and establishing interprovincial teamwork. The 2021 - 2022 school year saw participants from every Atlantic province taking part in programs, many repeatedly, learning with each other while accessing the expertise of a diverse range of APSEA and partner specialists.
- New Virtual Learning Series programs were introduced during this school year, such as the APSEA Mentorship Program and APSEA Recreational Clubs. They were designed around modern best practices in pedagogy including responsive teaching and student-led inquiry. Other new additions such as ASL Cohorts and Circle Time, provided ongoing program time that allowed students to develop consistent and sustained relationships over the course of a full school year.
- APSEA Connect hosted several partners, including Independent Living Nova Scotia, Canada Revenue Agency, Employment and Social Development Canada, and CNIB amongst others. With a focus on collaboration and empowerment, these sessions leveraged the collective expertise of 40 facilitators with 43 programs offered and welcomed participants including school teams members, family members, community partners, and APSEA employees.
- The 2021 - 2022 school year saw the introduction of APSEA's BVI and DHH mentors. Bringing diverse professional backgrounds, the mentors represent a lived experience that can be shared with families and school teams. This perspective was integral in supporting student success, with mentors designing and facilitating several programs to support student growth and empowerment, from ASL Storytime, which welcomed those interested in learning more about American Sign Language to meet members of the Deaf community and practice ASL, to BVI so-

cial groups, which brought students together to talk about living with vision loss and engaging in social, recreational, and independent activities.

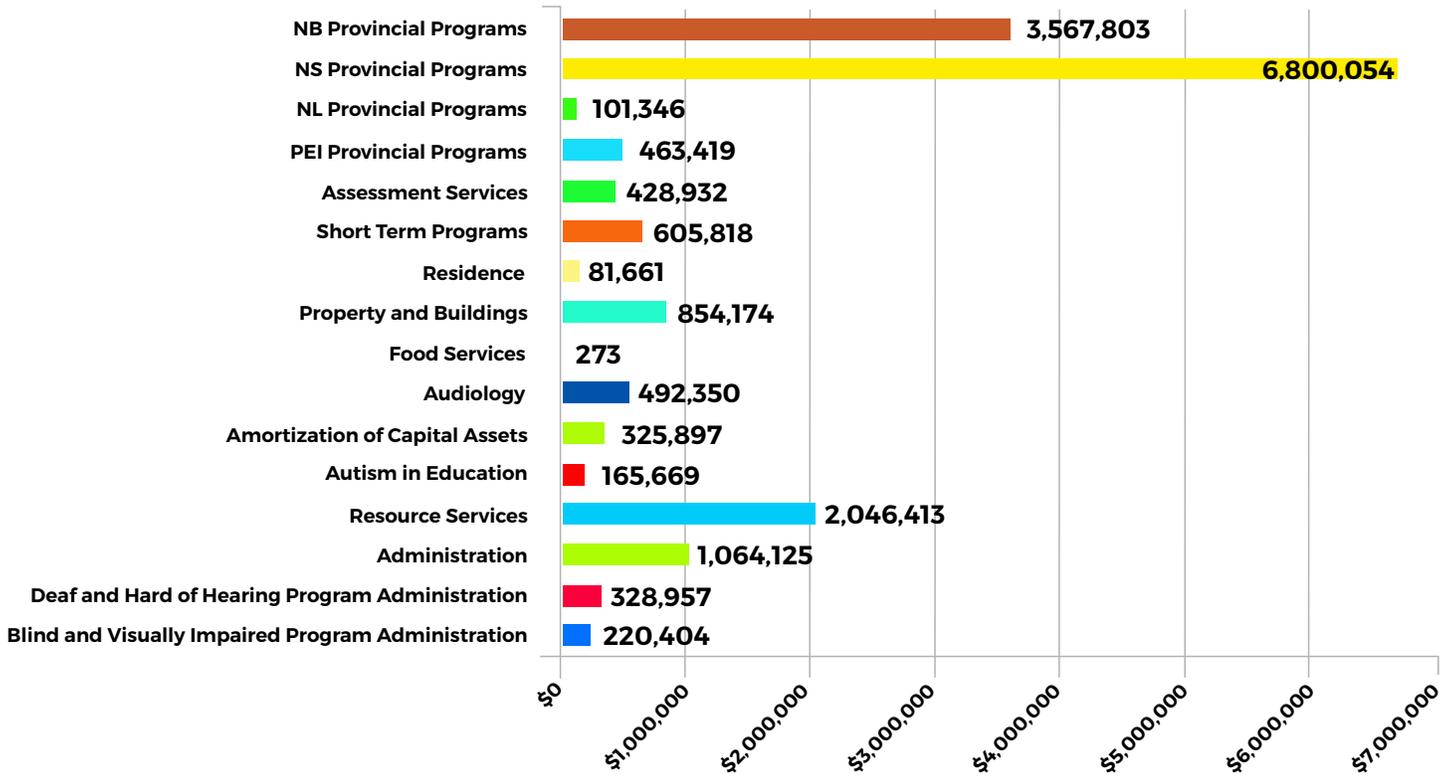


- Acknowledging the importance of socialization and working with families as key partners in their child's education, APSEA partnered with Camp Canak in New Brunswick to host a weekend getaway designed to empower both learners and their parents. With a mix of structured activities and downtime, participants had opportunities to meet other families, chat with the Deaf mentors, and build connections. Camp was a resounding success, as summed up by one parent: *"I want to say thank you for this wonderful opportunity. My daughter loved it so much and if there are more camp opportunities she would like to go back. Meeting all of you was amazing. Especially for me as a mom, I loved being able to talk to you as mentors, but I also loved being able to chat with other parents about how they were doing and ask them questions. Camp Canak has amazing staff that are very special - it was well organized, and the activities were perfect. Thanks a million for this amazing weekend. My daughter loved meeting all of you very much and she hopes to see you again."*

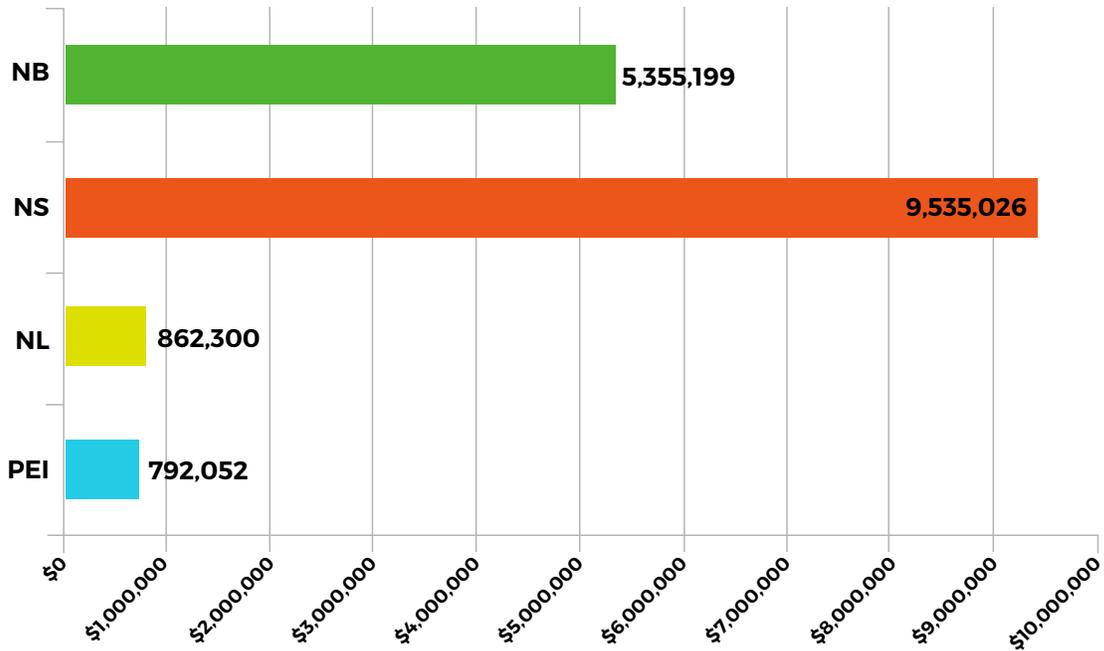


# REVENUE & EXPENDITURE

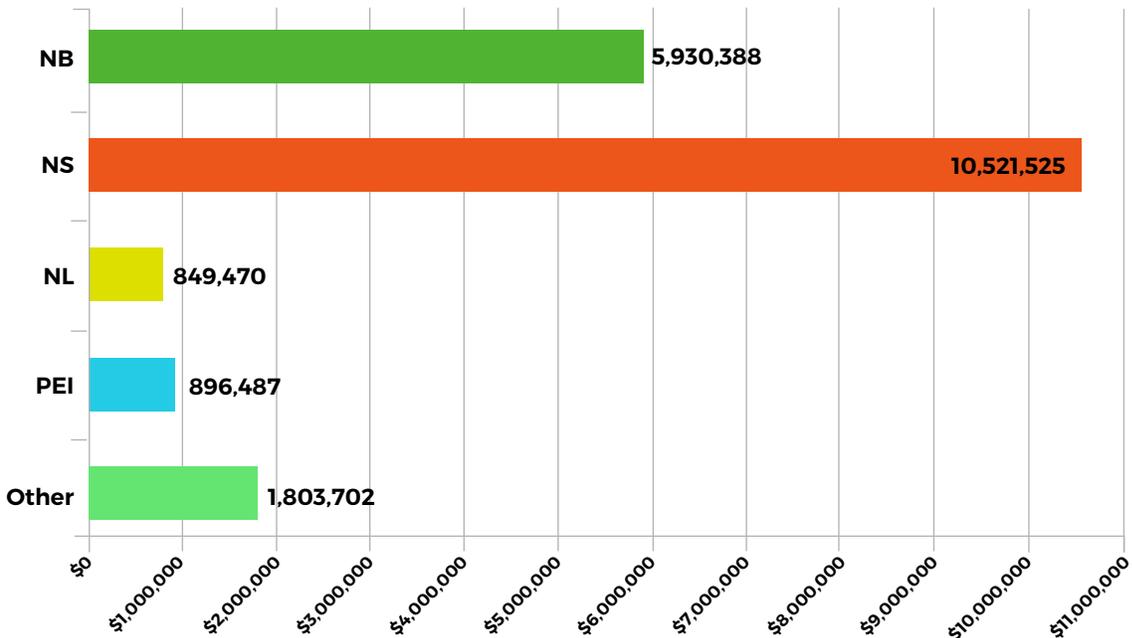
## Operating Expenses



## Expenditure by Province



## Operating Revenue



## **Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority**

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