THE ROLE OF GUIDANCE IN POST-SECONDARY PLANNING

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1 — Background to the study ................................................................. 1

Chapter 2 — A Starting Point — Some Ideas and Findings About
Career Development Programs and Choice of Post-Secondary Education .......... 3
  2.1 The Value of Post-Secondary Education ....................................................... 3
  2.2 Choosing Post-Secondary Education ............................................................ 5
  2.3 The Provision of Financial Assistance ......................................................... 6
  2.4 The Role of Career Development Programs and Services in Student Career Decision-Making .......................................................... 7
  2.5 Implications for the Current Study .............................................................. 8

Chapter 3 — Objectives ....................................................................................... 9
  3.1 Overall Aim ................................................................................................. 9
  3.2 Specific Objectives .................................................................................... 10
  3.3 Outcomes .................................................................................................. 11

Chapter 4 — The Research Methodology .......................................................... 13
  4.1 Model of Post-Secondary Information Provision ........................................ 13
  4.2 Overview of the Methodology .................................................................. 14
  4.3 Steps in the Research ............................................................................... 15
  4.4 The Sample ............................................................................................... 16
  4.5 Survey Instruments .................................................................................. 18
  4.6 Data Collection and Sampling Procedures .............................................. 19
  4.7 Data Analysis ............................................................................................ 21

Chapter 5 — Common Findings Across the Four Provinces .............................. 23
  5.1 Guidance/Career Development Programs and Supports ......................... 24
    5.1.1 The Guidance Program as Seen by Students ....................................... 25
    5.1.2 The Guidance Program as Seen by Parents ....................................... 26
  5.2 The Impact of Post-Secondary Education, Career and Financial Information on Decision-Making .................................................. 27
    5.2.1 Post-Secondary Education Options and Opportunities ....................... 27
    5.2.2 Information on Career Pathways ....................................................... 28
    5.2.3 Information on Financial Supports Through Scholarships, Bursaries and Loans ................................................ 28
  5.3 Building Blocks for the Future ................................................................... 30
  5.4 Future Research ....................................................................................... 32
Appendix 1 — Steps in the Research Process With Outcomes ....................... 33-34

Annex A — Bibliography .............................................................................. 35-36

Annex B — Questionnaires for Interviews and Focus Groups ....................... 37
   B.1 Parent Focus Group Guide ................................................................. 37
   B.2 Student Focus Group Guide .............................................................. 41
   B.3 Survey Questionnaire — District .......................................................... 45
   B.4 Survey Questionnaire — General ....................................................... 54

Annex C — Form Letters and Directions to Field Researchers ..................... 61
   C.1 Suggested Introduction to the Telephone Interviews with Key School Contacts .................................................. 61
   C.2 Guide for Telephone Interviews on The Role of Guidance Programs and Counsellors in Promoting Opportunity in Post-Secondary Education Survey Questionnaire .................................................. 62
   C.3 Field Liaison Officers Letter .............................................................. 65

Tables
   Table 4.1 — School Participation in the Study By Province ......................... 16
   Table 4.2 — Number of Telephone Interviews by Level and Province ............ 17
   Table 4.3 — Written Questionnaires Received by Province .......................... 17
   Table 4.4 — Number of Student and Parent Focus Groups by Province .......... 17
   Table 4.5 — Urban-Rural Breakdown of Interviews and Focus Groups by Province .................................................. 17
   Table 5 — Steps in the Research with Process Outcomes ............................ 33–34
   Table 6 — Survey Questionnaire (Province/Division): The Role of Guidance programs and Counsellors in Promoting Opportunity in Post-Secondary Education .................................................. 47
   Table 7 — Grade Level and Guidance Program .......................................... 50
   Table 8 — Grade Level and Guidance Program .......................................... 55
   Table 9 — Survey Questionnaire (Province/Division): The Role of Guidance programs and Counsellors in Promoting Opportunity in Post-Secondary Education .................................................. 57
   Table 10 — Suggested Sample Sizes .......................................................... 67

Figure
   Figure 4.1 — Post-Secondary Opportunities Information Flow and Influences .... 13
CHAPTER 1 — BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation’s mandate is to create opportunities for Canadians to pursue their post-secondary education. This mandate is manifested in the Foundation’s three major programs. The first mechanism is the Millennium Bursary Program, which provides approximately $285 million each year in need-based assistance to students who have successfully completed at least 60 per cent of a year of post-secondary education. The second is the Millennium Excellence Award program, which recognizes and rewards students beginning post-secondary studies who have demonstrated a combination of academic achievement, community service, capacity for leadership and interest in innovation. The third mechanism is the Millennium Research Program, which is based on the theme of access to post-secondary education.

For the Millennium Bursary Program to be successful, it must reach students already in post-secondary studies and in financial need, as well as those in high school who are making post-secondary plans, for whom future financing is a deciding factor. For the millennium excellence awards to achieve their purpose, the program has to be well known in schools and at the community level so that a broad base of potential recipients self-identify or are identified and encouraged to apply each year.

The actual decision to pursue post-secondary opportunities must be made by students well in advance of actually coming into contact with either of the programs. Presumably, knowledge of financial support possibilities might positively influence the decisions of many to pursue further studies. Most studies suggest, however, that high school students are poorly informed about financial assistance opportunities. A recent Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation — Ipsos Reid survey (Foundation — Ipsos Reid, 2002) on this theme discovered that almost half of students surveyed said they learned about bursaries, scholarships and awards from friends and parents. A significant proportion said they would go to the “guidance office” at the school to get information on student financial assistance for post-secondary education.

Among the research issues still not fully explored are the extent to which students are aware of the availability and scope of sources of potential future financial support to assist in their planning, when and how they become aware and the influence this has on their decision-making regarding pursuing post-secondary education.

What all of this suggests is that more needs to be studied about the best communication routes for post-secondary education financial assistance information (both what and when). As well, we know too little about the role of “guidance services,” or more broadly, the role of those in the school who are part of the “guidance function,” and the existence and usefulness of support such as policies, funding and materials provided for guidance services. Those providing guidance services may be coaches, classroom teachers, principals or others who engage in personal problem-solving and decision-making with students on an individual or group basis, inside or outside the classroom. The role of parents is another area to be understood more completely.
Students and their parents do not access information about post-secondary education opportunities and financial assistance for post-secondary education in a vacuum. The decision to undertake post-secondary education or go directly into the workforce is directly related to the broader decisions students make about their careers. Indeed, the process of career planning and decision-making usually begins before the secondary school years, with important attitudes formed and crucial decisions sometimes made in the middle school years (grades 7–9). Logically, an investigation of student awareness of post-secondary opportunities and financial support options, as well as the factors and people who influence that awareness, must be framed by an understanding of the overall career development process, programs and support available to students.

Prior to undertaking the current study, several provinces had already begun research projects that, in part, began to focus attention on these questions. In New Brunswick, a Working Group on Accessibility to Post-Secondary Education was set up in 2000, and tabled a final report in 2002. Newfoundland and Labrador started studying the post-graduation activities of high school students in 1996, following them for up to two years after graduation. Interesting findings are still being published from the ongoing Newfoundland research. Manitoba undertook a Student Transitions study that investigated the post high school activities of students who finished in 1999. Saskatchewan has also been looking at the post-secondary choices and activities of its students, and the factors that influence their decisions. Not surprisingly, these four provinces were interested in participating in this current research study.
CHAPTER 2 —
A STARTING POINT — SOME IDEAS AND FINDINGS ABOUT CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND CHOICE OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

A bibliography of the sources used for this brief review is presented in annex A.

2.1 THE VALUE OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

There is clear evidence that completion of post-secondary education improves the economic prospects of most Canadians. Data available for three years (1997–1999) from the Statistics Canada Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) (Statistics Canada, 1999) show that people who have undertaken some form of post-secondary education, whether they completed it or not (representing 47% of the population age 15 and over), received over 74% of all earned income. Those with post-secondary certificates or degrees accounted for more than 63% of all earned income. Other studies, such as the New Brunswick Report of the Working Group on Accessibility to Post-Secondary Education (New Brunswick Department of Education, 2001) have shown that those with university degrees experience an unemployment rate half that of the provincial average, and their annual earnings are 56% high than the provincial average. Government of Canada projections have also suggested that 70% of future jobs will require some form of post-secondary education (New Brunswick Department of Education, 2001). In spite of the clear economic advantages of having a post-secondary education, not all people pursue it. In a background paper for a Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN) workshop, Looker and Lowe (2001) noted that a complex set of social, demographic, economic and political factors influenced post-secondary enrolment patterns in the 1990s. Overall, university participation rates and enrolment numbers showed little change in the 1990s after several decades of steady increase. Colleges experienced similar trends in part-time enrolments; full-time enrolments grew substantially.

While post-secondary participation rates vary from province to province, Manitoba has concluded that on average across Canada more than 40% of high school graduates go on to some form of post-secondary education immediately after school completion (Manitoba Education and Training, 2000). However, school-to-work-to-school transitions are not
Many work part-time or full-time for a spell after finishing high school, and then attend a post-secondary program. Findings in a Newfoundland and Labrador study reveal that up to 80% of that province’s high school graduates end up, over time, studying some form of post-secondary education (The Report of the Follow-Up of 1995 and 1996 High School Graduates — Newfoundland, 2000). Generalizing these findings to the rest of Canada cannot be justified, but the data do give us reason to suspect that over time more high school graduates end up undertaking some form of post-secondary education than is indicated by the official statistics.

It is important to note that post-secondary education includes programs offered by universities, community colleges, technical institutes, vocational schools and other private sector training. Traditionally, the larger percentage of post-secondary participants go to university. However, there has been a trend over the past several years for an increasing proportion of high school graduates to choose community college or private training programs over university (Looker and Lowe, 2001).
2.2 CHOOSING POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

The decision to go on to post-secondary education is evidently not based on a single factor. A number of studies have asked young people who have and have not gone on to some form of post-secondary education about the reasons for their choice. Highlights of the findings to date follow.

- A Manitoba study (Manitoba Education and Training, 2000) has pointed to three major influencing factors, namely:
  - Advice of parents/guardians
  - Having good grades
  - Having a personal goal of a specific job or career.

- In terms of barriers to going on to post-secondary education reported by survey respondents, the following were repeated in several different studies (Manitoba Education and Training, 2000; Looker and Lowe, 2001; Looker, 2001; Butlin, 1999):
  - Undecided about their career
  - Wanting to take some time off from study
  - Not interested in post-secondary education
  - Lack of money.

- These studies, as well as a more recent (June 2002) paper on this issue authored by Knighton and Mirza, reveal some of the key statistical correlates of post-secondary attendance that include:
  - Parent’s (particularly father’s) education
  - Family’s socio-economic status
  - Parents’ educational aspirations.

- An interesting finding is that financial barriers to post-secondary education attendance are less important over the longer term than they are when students enter the pipeline from high school to a post-secondary program (The Report of the Follow-Up of 1995 and 1996 High School Graduates — Newfoundland, 2000; Foley, 2001). Having a work interlude seems to add to the financial strength of a person intending to pursue post-secondary education at some point. On the other hand, the Newfoundland follow-up study (The Report of the Follow-Up of 1995 and 1996 High School Graduates — Newfoundland, 2000) found that having work or job prospects was one of the more frequently cited reasons for NOT attending a post-secondary program at all.

- While financial barriers are usually considered to be the primary culprit constraining the numbers of people who go on to post-secondary education, several studies (Foley, 2001; Looker, 2001) have ranked “deciding on an educational and career direction” as the primary obstacle. This demonstrates the importance of having a good career development/career planning program in place in the schools.
2.3 THE PROVISION OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The provision of financial assistance for post-secondary education has many dimensions, but two issues seem to play on the minds of both students and parents:

- Providing enough money for students to pay for school and cover living expenses
- Avoiding the accrual of debts that people believe they will have great difficulty repaying after the completion of post-secondary education (debt aversion).

Assistance consists of more than just loans, which have to be repaid once the student graduates. Bursaries, grants and various kinds of awards and scholarships are available in all provinces; there are tax incentives for participating in post-secondary education; and loan remission programs exist in every province/territory. Student loan programs appear to be the best known among students and their parents.

According to the New Brunswick Department of Education, Student Financial Services Branch, (New Brunswick Department of Education, 2001), an alarming number of Maritime university students are graduating with debt loads of more than $30,000. This amount could be smaller if bursaries, grants and awards were used more often. The issue is more about student uptake of the assistance than it is about availability of funds. This speaks to a need to better inform students and parents about student financial assistance programs.

In terms of how students learn about financial assistance for post-secondary education, a recent Foundation — Ipsos Reid study (2001) suggests that they use (in rank order of percentage of use) the following sources to get information about financial aid:

- Family (53%)
- Friends (49%)
- High school guidance counsellors (46%)
- Post-secondary institutions themselves (44%)
- Internet (43%)
- Newspapers and magazines (20%).

However, the sources students feel are the most valuable to them are:

- High school guidance counsellors (27%)
- Post-secondary institutions themselves (27%).
The Foundation — Ipsos Reid survey (2001) finding that students turn to high school guidance counsellors as a primary source of information on post-secondary school opportunities speaks to the importance of career development programs and services in student career decision-making. The impact of these programs and services, such as one-on-one information sharing between a guidance counsellor and a student, cannot be examined in isolation. As Hiebert (2001) explains:

“People are realizing that in order to optimize student learning, and prepare students for life in today’s world, it is necessary to address the whole person needs of students within a school culture that promotes personal responsibility, caring for others, and a focus on developing healthy lifestyles.”

In the words of the late Vance Peavy (1929–2002), perhaps one of Canada’s greatest thinkers and researchers in the career development field:

“Every worry and trouble, big and small, that a person can experience has an ethical-moral dimension. To ask: what kind of career is best and possible for me is to ask: ‘How should I live my life?’ We helpers should assist people to find answers to this fundamental moral and existential question.” (From: Peavy, Vance, Wisdom-Based Helping Practice, Human Science Research Conference, Victoria, B.C., June 2002)

Career and life planning occur almost naturally in schools that provide programs and activities involving collaboration with others in the community (for example, having students undertake community volunteerism for course credit). A growing body of research (Aborelius & Bremberg, 1988; DeFriese, Crossland, MacPhail-Wilcox, & Sowers, 1990; Evans & Burck, 1992; Gerler, 1990; Kane, 1994; Kolbe, 1985; Niles & Tiffany, 1990; Lapin, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997; Seffrin, 1990; Trusty & Dooley-Dickey, 1993) suggests that schools that expanded their mandate to include these kinds of programs experience, among other things:

- Increased aspirations for post-secondary education
- Students reporting their school experiences as more relevant and better at preparing them for the future.

Numerous research studies have found that students identify career/life planning as one of the most important needs they want schools to address. Worries about the future are a prominent concern of Canadian youth (Bibby & Posterski, 1992). Others (Collins & Hiebert, 1995; Hiebert, 2000; Hiebert & Huston, 1992; Hiebert, Kemeny, & Kurchak, 1998) have found consistently that students in the seventh to twelfth years of school rank career-related concerns among the top 10 of their self-expressed needs. Moreover, studies indicate that the inclusion of career education and career information components in the school curricula is important for increased academic success (Gysbers, 1995; Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997).

Another finding from research in this area that is important for the current study is that there are important differences between adult perceptions of student needs and student reports of their own needs (Collins & Angen, 1997; Collins & Hiebert, 1995; Hiebert, Collins, & Cairns, 1994). In most cases, programs and services are designed around adult perceptions. For career development services to be more effective, greater attention must be paid to students’ views of their own needs.

The impact of these programs and services, such as one-on-one information sharing between a guidance counsellor and a student, cannot be examined in isolation.
2.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CURRENT STUDY

Based on the review of previous studies and reports cited in this section, a number of decisions were made about the methodology, sample and instruments to be used in the current research:

- Although the focus of the research is on the role of guidance (career development) programs and counsellors in *promoting post-secondary education*, the study should be framed by the broader issue of the role of career development programs and staff in student career decision-making.

- A thorough understanding must be acquired of the planning and delivery context in the four participating provinces for career development programs and services, specifically for any initiatives related to the promotion of post-secondary opportunities and post-secondary education financial supports.

- To mirror the career planning and decision-making process, questions in the survey instruments directed to school (guidance) staff, students and their parents, should progress from the general career development issues to the various aspects of post-secondary education opportunities and the related financial supports for post-secondary education.

- The sample of respondents to survey questions must include those involved in career development services and the promotion of post-secondary education opportunities at all levels: in provincial departments, school boards/districts/divisions and in schools themselves.

- A key aspect of the research is the gathering of information directly from students and their parents.
CHAPTER 3 — OBJECTIVES

3.1 OVERALL AIM

This research study is one of a number of “knowledge building blocks.” The Foundation has been sponsoring studies aimed at learning more about the various factors that influence students in making decisions to undertake post-secondary education. The four provinces participating in this study have also been actively researching the same issues.

The overall aim of much of this research is to find ways of improving the flow of information to students and their parents about:

• The value and means of accessing post-secondary education opportunities

• The scope, types and mechanisms of student financial assistance available to support access to and affordability of post-secondary education opportunities.
3.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

This study was undertaken in order to learn more about:

- What, when and how students and their parents learn about:
  - Careers and the career planning process
  - Post-secondary education opportunities.

- Financial assistance for students to support post-secondary education.

- The methods preferred by students and parents for the provision of information on:
  - School programs and resources (guidance policies, guidance programs, guidance materials, guidance staff, teachers, direction and support from school and district staff)
  - Careers and the career planning process
  - Post-secondary education
  - Financial assistance for students to support post-secondary education.

- What information about careers, the career planning process, post-secondary opportunities and student financial assistance reaches those who influence students in the school (principals, guidance staff, teachers), how that information reaches them, and the method of information provision these influencers prefer to use.

- Whether information about career and career planning, post-secondary opportunities and financial assistance is equally available in a meaningful format to all students and their parents, or whether certain groups of students and parents are specifically targeted to receive this information.

- The best practices for getting career and career planning information in general, and post-secondary education opportunities and student financial assistance information in particular, to students, their parents and those in the school who influence students and parents.
3.3 OUTCOMES

- Provincial comparisons are not being made. The purpose of the research is not evaluative. Its aim is to assist the Foundation in the medium and longer term to adopt strategies and develop materials that will assist schools to better inform students about post-secondary education opportunities and student financial assistance.

- Each participating province should get a better picture of the current access by students and parents to information on careers, career planning, post-secondary education and financial assistance, the role and importance of the “guidance function” in their province in informing students about careers, career planning, post-secondary education opportunities and student financial assistance, and the key influences in communicating such information. It is hoped that the findings from this research (contained in this report) provide the MSF and the participating provinces with constructive directions that could be pursued to improve both the flow and impact of information to students and those who influence them (parents, school staff, guidance staff). Some provincial-level analysis has been done as part of the study.
The model shown in figure 4.1 provided a conceptual framework for the development of the research methodology.

**FIGURE 4.1 — POST-SECONDARY OPPORTUNITIES INFORMATION FLOW AND INFLUENCES**
4.2 OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

The design for this research study was first developed on the basis of an early review of documents and materials available to the researchers before the study was approved and funded. The design (methodology) was revised upon completion of the first step in the project (the Background Literature and Materials Review), and critical input and advice were given by the participating provinces represented on a study Advisory Group.

The findings from the background document review and the notions presented in the model of Figure 4.1 were used to determine who the sources of information on the research issues should be (the target audiences), and how to go about sampling their views (the investigative tools).

- The target audiences were determined to be:
  - Provincial Department of Education officials (specifically those involved in career development, student services, student financial aid, policy and programs, planning and research, or curriculum and instruction)
  - School district/board/division staff
  - School staff (principals, teachers)
  - School guidance staff
  - School students (grades 8–12)
  - Parents of school students.

- There were four participating provinces in the study:
  - New Brunswick
  - Newfoundland
  - Saskatchewan
  - Manitoba.

- Four types of investigative tools were used:
  - Background literature and materials research (seeing what is there)
  - Questionnaires (sent by e-mail or given out by hand)
  - Telephone interviews
  - Focus groups.
CHAPTER 4 — THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.3 STEPS IN THE RESEARCH

The basic steps in the research were as follows. (The target audience, research methods and outcomes expected for each step are outlined in Appendix 1.)

- Background literature and materials review
- Survey of provincial policies, programs and materials
- Survey of school district/board/division staff
- Contact with schools to set up surveys of staff involved in the provision of guidance services
- Surveys of school staff
- Surveys of students
- Surveys of parents
- Preparation and submission of the research report.
4.4 THE SAMPLE

Initial targets for sampling were set for:

• The number of telephone interviews at the provincial, board/district/division and school levels
• The number of student and parent focus groups to be held

It was agreed with the Foundation and with the members of a project Advisory Group that the initial numbers would have to be adjusted depending on the responses from the boards/districts/divisions and the schools. However, we tried to ensure the samples for the schools, within each province and overall, represented the rural as well as the urban setting. In the end, we managed to achieve a nearly 50/50 balance for the schools included in the sample (both within provinces and overall), and a roughly 50/50 urban-rural balance overall for the student and parent focus groups, as shown in the sampling tables. The intention was not to represent the urban and rural setting in proportion to the population distribution. Instead, we wanted to ensure that we got to hear from school staff, students and parents in the many settings where the availability of career resources and dedicated guidance staff is not as plentiful as in the large urban school areas.

Table 4.1 shows the number of districts/boards/divisions and number of schools that participated in the study.

In Table 4.2 we provide a breakdown of the number of telephone interviews (in English and French) done at the provincial department level, board/district/division level and in the schools. Table 4.3 shows the numbers of completed written questionnaires (in English and French) received from the four provinces. Table 4.4 contains the numbers of student and parent focus groups held (in English and French) and the total numbers of focus group participants (by province). Finally, we show the urban-rural breakdown for the interviews and focus groups by province in table 4.5.

We wanted to ensure that we got to hear from school staff, students and parents in the many settings where the availability of career resources and dedicated guidance staff is not as plentiful as in the large urban school areas.
### TABLE 4.2 — NUMBER OF TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS BY LEVEL AND PROVINCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>PROVINCE</th>
<th>NEWFOUNDLAND</th>
<th>NEW BRUNSWICK</th>
<th>SASKATCHEWAN</th>
<th>MANITOBA</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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</thead>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>5(E)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
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<td>8(E)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1(F)</td>
<td>9(E)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>7(F) 15(E)</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>1(F) 18(E)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>62</strong></td>
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### TABLE 4.3 — WRITTEN QUESTIONNAIRES RECEIVED BY PROVINCE

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<td>5</td>
<td>7(F)</td>
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### TABLE 4.4 — NUMBER OF STUDENT AND PARENT FOCUS GROUPS BY PROVINCE

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<th>NEW BRUNSWICK</th>
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<th>MANITOBA</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>TOTAL # GROUPS</th>
<th>TOTAL # PARTICIPANTS</th>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>3(F) 5(E)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
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<td><strong>144</strong></td>
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### TABLE 4.5 — URBAN-RURAL BREAKDOWN OF SCHOOL INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS BY PROVINCE

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<td>Urban</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
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4.5 Survey Instruments

Two types of data collection instruments were developed:

- Survey forms suitable for provincial, district/board/division and school staff telephone interviews (or written responses when convenient)
- Focus group forms for both students and parents.

The issues to be addressed through the telephone interviews (or written responses) were somewhat different for two groups of the target audiences:

- Department of Education and school board/district/division respondents
- School staff respondents.

Two versions of the telephone/written survey form were therefore developed, one for provincial and board/district/division contacts, and one for school contacts. The survey questionnaires completed in writing by school staff (almost all guidance counsellors) were the same as the telephone interview questionnaires. The Interview/written survey formats are provided at Annex B and consist of:

- Provincial/Division questionnaires in English
- Provincial/Division questionnaires in French
- School questionnaires in English
- School questionnaires in French.

Newfoundland recently distributed CareerSearch, a document that provides details of earnings and employment of post-secondary education graduates, to schools. The Province wanted to determine if school staff were familiar with the document, and felt the current research provided an avenue for finding out. As a result, a question was added to the school interview/written survey for Newfoundland. The Newfoundland school survey is presented at Annex B.

In terms of the development process for the instruments, the provincial/division questionnaires were drafted first. They were field-tested using the provincial representatives on the project Advisory Group. Once the provincial interviews were underway, the school questionnaires were drafted. These were circulated for comments and amendments to the Advisory Group, regional representatives and a number of career development practitioners. Based on the feedback obtained, the final forms were produced. At that point, both the provincial/division and the school questionnaires were translated into French. The Newfoundland version was subsequently produced.

Further along in the research process, the student and parent focus group formats were developed. The basic focus group questions were field-tested using a group of students and parents in the Ottawa area (the student and parent focus group questions were not field-tested separately). Both the parent and student questions were thoroughly reviewed by a small group consisting of some members of the Project Advisory Committee and their network of career development practitioners, as well as some of the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF) Field Liaison Officers (Regional Representatives). The Student Focus Group questions and the Parent Focus Group questions are provided at Annex B. The focus group questions were subsequently translated into French, and these forms are also provided at Annex B.
4.6 DATA COLLECTION AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

This research study has both Canada-wide and specific provincial objectives. The four participating provinces had, by the start of the current study, already begun studying the role and impact of school guidance programs and guidance staff on student career decision-making and the choice of post-secondary education. The four provinces agreed not only to participate with the Foundation in the study by providing access to its provincial, division and school staff, but also by actively assisting in its design and execution.

The provincial representatives on the study Advisory Group provided advice and direction during each step of the research process (see Appendix 1). They reviewed and approved the final research methodology, all survey instruments and some of the correspondence used to set up data collection within a province. For example, in Manitoba the Advisory Group representative had an Assistant Deputy Minister communicate the importance of the study to potential Manitoba study participants. The draft of the ADM communiqué is provided at Annex C. A similar letter of introduction and instruction to board/district/division and school participants was used in Newfoundland. The Advisory Group members also contributed to the locating of school boards/districts/divisions and some of the school contacts.

For one-on-one feedback, our survey methodology was centred on the use of telephone interviews. We set a target of 60 interviews over the three levels (provincial, district/board/division, and school). This number was based on the economics of the study and the practicality of reaching people in the study time frame. However, a few prospective interview participants said they could not be interviewed, but would be willing to answer the questions in a written questionnaire. They were given that opportunity. In other cases, the person interviewed offered to distribute the survey to some of their colleagues. Written responses were received from these referrals. We had not set a target for written respondents, so the calculation of a “response rate” has not been done.

Student focus group participants were typically identified by a teacher or guidance counsellor involved in the interviews. It could be assumed that many of the students who volunteered to participate in a focus group were among those most interested in career planning and perhaps post-secondary education issues. A random selection process was not used, so there may well be some bias in our focus group samples. However, the purpose of the study was to generate largely qualitative information that would be useful in providing a picture of the current state, and in suggesting areas for further study.

Clearly, interview participants were not selected at random. They were chosen based on their assigned role in the provincial administration, district/board/division or school. We wanted to interview those with knowledge of and involvement in career, post-secondary and/or student assistance programs and services. The participants were also those willing to contribute to this research. Study participants were, however, sought out in rural as well as urban areas. Francophone and Aboriginal participants were also specifically targeted for inclusion in the study.

Having local people interview and hold focus groups with the participants in a province was considered to be quite important. To do this, the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF) recruited “Field Liaison Officers” (FLOs — now called Regional Representatives) who collaborate
Specific direction and training were given to the focus group facilitators on how to handle the process and record the results. Facilitators (the FLOs) were not required to tape record the focus group sessions, but may have done so for their own convenience. Statements were provided on the focus group formats for the facilitators to use in explaining the presence of a tape recorder. Facilitators were directed to look for consensus in views, record this when it occurred, and to note all specific differences in opinions. The notes taken by the facilitator in response to each item on the focus group form were “cleaned up” by the facilitator who then provided them in either handwritten or electronic format to the CCDF. Facilitators also provided an overall summary of each session.

The timing of this research study was not ideal. The study began in March 2002, with the background document/literature review. Interviews with the provincial and the board/district/division contacts took place in late March and early April 2002. It was middle to late April 2002 by the time school interviews could be done. Most of the focus groups were conducted in May, although several were done in June 2002. Two final focus group sessions were held in Manitoba in September 2002.
4.7 DATA ANALYSIS

With the exception of one question on the school interview form, all of the telephone interview and focus group forms were the same for all four participating provinces. However, the findings are expected to be somewhat different across the four provinces, as each has its own approach to the school guidance function, and to the provision of post-secondary education information. The information collected in the interviews and in the focus groups was, therefore, analyzed separately at first for the four provinces. This was done even though the sample sizes are small. The data were then aggregated and analyzed at the Canadawide level. This report presents the detailed findings and lessons learned for each province, then across the four provinces.

The information collected in the interviews and focus groups is largely qualitative. The purpose of the study is not to confirm hypotheses, nor to make broad generalizations based on statistically valid sample sizes. It is to better understand the role and impact of guidance programs and staff on student career decision-making in general, and on the decision whether or not to undertake post-secondary education. As a result, the researchers looked for information in the interview and focus group reports that helped provide a clearer description of:

- The types and sources of career, post-secondary education and student financial support information that are currently available to students and their parents
- The way that information is processed by students, parents and other student influencers.

This is a descriptive study. Although some frequencies of occurrence and other such descriptive statistics are presented in this report, the bulk of the analysis is devoted to the highlighting of indicative statements made by the various respondents.

It is to better understand the role and impact of guidance programs and staff on student career decision-making in general, and on the decision whether or not to undertake post-secondary education.
CHAPTER 5 — COMMON FINDINGS ACROSS THE FOUR PROVINCES

As part of our mandate for this research, we did a detailed analysis of the responses to each question in each of the survey forms. For a few of the items in each survey, this yielded quantitative data (frequencies of response by category and most frequently chosen category). Because our research aim was primarily to provide a picture of the current state of career, post-secondary education and financial assistance information flow, use and impact, we summarized this quantitative data into qualitative findings. This was done for the four participating provinces independently. The provinces were provided with a detailed summary of findings for their jurisdiction. We then subsequently identified the common findings across the four provinces. Our objective was not to point out differences among the provinces, but to point to areas where pan-Canadian organizations, such as the Foundation, and the provinces can take common action.

In the sampling done for this study, we were careful to ensure that we heard from teachers, counsellors, students and parents in rural as well as urban settings. We also ensured that Francophones were represented in the samples for the two provinces that have official bilingualism programs (New Brunswick and Manitoba). Representation of Aboriginal Peoples was obtained. Our objective, however, was to discover common issues and solutions and not identify specific differences among population groups such as Francophones, urban/rural residents or members of equity groups such as Aboriginal Peoples. Therefore, we did not codify respondents by these population variables and did not investigate differences among population groups.

Common findings and emerging trends across the four provinces have been organized into the following three major themes:

- Guidance/career development programs and supports
- The impact of post-secondary education, career and financial information on decision making
- Building blocks for the future.

As part of our mandate for this research, we did a detailed analysis of the responses to each question in each of the survey forms.
The focus of the research study was on the role of guidance programs and counsellors in promoting post-secondary education and on the importance of financial support in the decision to pursue or not pursue post-secondary education options. The study was framed within the broader context of situating post-secondary education choices and financial assistance within a guidance/career development program that supports self-awareness, opportunity awareness, and decision making outcomes.

Guidance/career development programs appear to be in transition in the four provinces that participated in the study. Only New Brunswick reported that it has mandated a specific guidance program for the K-12 curriculum. None of the four provinces actually earmark specific funds directly dedicated to a guidance program. All of the provinces provide considerable autonomy to school boards and to individual schools to decide what to provide, how to resource the program, and the outcomes for which they are to be accountable.

At the same time, there seems to be an increased emphasis in all four provinces on the importance of a universally available guidance/career development program. This trend is being manifested in the following ways:

- All four of the provinces have adopted or are in the process of adopting a framework of learning outcomes for guidance. These frameworks currently exist as guidance/career development guidelines that are given to the schools. In two cases, the provinces have formally adopted the Blueprint for Life/Work Designs. In the other two provinces, frameworks were developed by guidance specialists and have been adopted provincially.
- Most schools in the three provinces that have not mandated guidance in the K-12 curriculum are already providing a guidance program as well as some credit courses in related areas of personal development and career planning.
- Increasingly, guidance/career education courses are being presented in the lower grades — in one province as early as grade 3. In the other provinces the courses are given between grades 6–9. In order to increase the amount of guidance/career development content and courses available in different grades, the schools are making use of creative programs such as the Real Game Series as well as a number of career development resources supported by Human Resources Development Canada.
Portfolios are being introduced across grade levels as a learning and career planning tool. No specific mention was made of the inclusion of post-secondary education financial planning within the portfolio requirements, although this may already be included in some of the portfolio models.

- Schools are increasingly making use of non-teaching and counselling staff to increase the capacity of the school to respond to individual career and educational information and the planning needs of students.

- All four provinces recognize the importance of increasing guidance services at the grade 12 level to support transition into post-secondary education. An increasing number of credit courses are being offered, but they are usually optional at this level.

- With respect to financial support information, there is an implicit assumption that scholarship, bursary and loan information is being provided to students as part of the guidance program. There is no explicit requirement to do so nor is any formal follow-up done to ensure that it has occurred. At the same time, it is interesting to note that in the province with the most comprehensive guidance program, the availability of all types of financial support information was rated very highly by students.

These trends suggest an increasing recognition of the importance of providing a comprehensive and holistic guidance program that is available to all students. The trends also show that strategic and creative steps are underway to achieve this outcome. One province has gone so far as to have guidance outcomes as part of the student universal transcript/report card.

5.1.1 The Guidance Program as Seen by Students

Guidance counsellors were consistently cited as among the first and most reliable sources of expert information on post-secondary education opportunities, financial support and assistance with decision making. With respect to “testing out career options,” students consistently cited someone in that specific career field as the most reliable source of information. With respect to learning about their personal strengths and interests, students reported learning this mainly in classrooms with classroom teachers.

However, across all four provinces students seemed to want more time from guidance specialists than was available to them. They particularly wanted one-on-one time and individualized support in career and educational planning. In the province with the strongest guidance program, grade 12 students reported receiving a great deal of individual help and rated this service highly.

Students indicated frustration with the following:

- Not enough help connecting entrance requirements and courses of study with a career direction or career path.
- A relatively narrow focus on university as the preferred option and the sense that “there are other options out there,” but their career exploration has insufficient breadth.
- The complexity of information and applications, especially for scholarships and student loans.
- The cost of post-secondary education. While most said they would somehow make it anyway, their biggest obstacle in their view was money and facing a large debt load.
5.1.2 The Guidance Program As Seen By Parents

Overall, parents have high expectations of guidance counsellors and guidance programs. They look to the guidance counsellor to help their children access, understand and apply career information. They expect counsellors to spend some one-on-one time with their children. Parents were also very positive about the school’s guidance program when it involved structured activities that included parents and that occurred more than once in a school year. When guidance counsellors are known to be interacting with the students and parents get a chance to be involved in some way, parents consistently say that the program is highly valued.

Parents see their role as encouraging the aspirations of their children and supporting them financially to the extent possible. They turn to the guidance counsellors as the expert sources of support in student decision making, information on post-secondary education opportunities and knowing future career possibilities and sources of financial support.

Parents in the focus groups in all four provinces indicated a willingness to becoming more involved in the guidance program if they had the information and coaching to do it well. Parents perceived the greatest barrier to their son/daughter moving successfully into post-secondary education opportunities to be a lack of career direction resulting in low motivation. Gaining a sense of future direction was the most important outcome they hoped to receive from guidance services.

Within all four provinces, guidance has traditionally been a fringe or add-on service. While still not mainstream in the sense of mandatory core curriculum (with the exception of New Brunswick that has a mandatory K-12 program), there are indications in these provinces of guidance becoming more prominent, more in demand and valued by students and parents. Guidance counsellors are clearly the source of expertise with respect to post-secondary education encouragement and choice, and regarding information on financial support. Career direction is recognized as important to post-secondary education decision making and success. Parents want their children to have the “personal touch” from counsellors with respect to a plan tailored to their children’s abilities and aspirations. Individual attention matters, as does assistance in gathering and understanding post-secondary education, and career and financial information.
5.2 THE IMPACT OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION, CAREER AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION ON DECISION-MAKING

In this study we looked at three types of information to determine how they are delivered and how effectively they are used. The three types are:

- Information on post-secondary education options and opportunities
- Information on career pathways
- Information on financial supports through scholarships, bursaries and loans.

Across all four provinces, the amount and effectiveness of information provided on post-secondary education options was rated highest while the amount and effectiveness of information on financial supports was rated lowest. In each province, parents seemed to be essentially left out of the loop on all three types of information. They seem to acquire information independently or directly from their children.

Strengths were reported in each area and thoughtful observations were offered.

5.2.1 Post-Secondary Education Options and Opportunities

The post-secondary institutions themselves were recognized as doing a very good job in providing information, arranging for visits to schools and arranging for student visits on-site. These visits were rated by students as the most useful method of gaining information, especially if they were followed up by planning sessions with a counsellor. Nothing substituted for personal contact, and this theme emerged consistently from students. Pamphlets and the Web were secondary sources of information that were also seen as most helpful. Career fairs were consistently rated as not effective.

Two gaps were cited:

- The information on post-secondary education focuses on programs in isolation and not on what they lead to with respect to career pathways and possibilities. Entrance requirements were seen as just that. Unless a student already had a firm career direction or at least a sense of a direction, there was a continuing sense of floundering.

- Most post-secondary education information that is available focuses on universities and colleges — there is not much on apprenticeships. Some Apprenticeship Boards are doing a good job getting information to the schools, but there is no profile given to these opportunities. Parents particularly highlighted their wish to have their children exposed to the full range of options. They consistently commented on a perceived bias toward university education. Parents felt this bias is elitist. Worse, parents see the push toward a university education as being somewhat out of touch with the real labour market. This issue is beginning to be acted upon, as at least one province was establishing a committee to work toward combining post-secondary education with more general career and labour market information.

Across all four provinces, the amount and effectiveness of information provided on post-secondary education options was rated highest while the amount and effectiveness of information on financial supports was rated lowest.
5.2.2 Information on Career Pathways

On a single rating question, three provinces indicated this information was available and only one questioned whether it was adequate. However, other indicators present a more complex picture. More infusion of career opportunities into classroom subjects was a consistent theme that suggests connections between subjects and possible futures need more attention. In addition, students cited not having explored beyond university alternatives to broader fields of work. Parents consistently noted an absence of career direction in their children despite their planning to pursue post-secondary education. For parents this was a significant concern.

In addition, the sometimes narrow work experience of educators was cited as problematic in that the more traditional careers were endorsed and promoted (teacher, lawyer, engineer). This raises the issue of specialist versus generalist guidance. Specialist guidance background requires good knowledge of the labour market. This is unrealistic to expect from subject teachers. Students and parents wanted specialists who know the labour market to be sources of expert information.

5.2.3 Information on Financial Supports Through Scholarships, Bursaries and Loans

Good financial planning and the availability of financial support were seen by students as having a significant impact on their decisions to pursue post-secondary education, as well as on when they might begin post-secondary studies. Educators shared this view, with the majority noting that money frequently was a major deterrent to post-secondary education attendance. Parents tended to see a lack of direction as the greater barrier. With respect to money, both students and parents seemed to be prepared to “forge on anyway.”

In addition to these findings, several issues were raised about financial information that are important to highlight:

- In all four provinces, information on bursaries that are available to students already in attendance at a post-secondary institution was not known or available. The Foundation funds a significant proportion of these bursaries via the provinces. Knowing about the bursaries via the provinces. Knowing about the bursaries via the provinces. Knowing about the bursaries via the provinces. Knowing about the bursaries via the provinces. Knowing about the bursaries via the provinces. Knowing about the bursaries via the provinces. Knowing about the bursaries via the provinces. Knowing about the bursaries via the provinces. Knowing about the bursaries via the provinces. Knowing about the bursaries via the provinces. Knowing about the bursaries via the provinces. Knowing about the bursaries via the provinces. Knowing about the bursaries via the provinces. Knowing about the bursaries via the provinces. Knowing about the bursaries via the provinces. Knowing about the bursaries via the provinces. 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• Lacking a coherent information strategy, it seems that those who are most “information-wise” access the information. These tend to be the already high achievers, reinforcing the notion that scholarships are for the elite and not the average-to-above-average student. The “info-wise” are predominantly university bound students. Many students simply do not think they qualify and therefore do not ask.

• Student loans were generally seen as very complex and confusing and students in particular expressed disapproval that loans were related to family income. They wanted their education to be their own financial responsibility.

• The critical role of guidance counsellors in demystifying and making financial aid more accessible was evident.
5.3 BUILDING BLOCKS FOR THE FUTURE

Our overall finding is straightforward. A majority of study respondents want to see the role of guidance strengthened in helping students to access post-secondary education and to improve equal and appropriate access to financial planning and supports for post-secondary education.

From the variety of suggestions made by study respondents, we have derived four recommendations that consistently emerged.

1. Guidance counsellors play a central and valued role in assisting students to make post-secondary education choices, provide financial pertinent information, and follow through by applying for both. Their capacity to fulfill this role needs to be increased. There are insufficient numbers of guidance counsellors dedicated to the guidance program and they are viewed by teachers, students and parents as the individuals with the appropriate expertise and responsibility. Key activities which could strengthen student awareness, planning and decision-making with reference to post-secondary education choices and accessing financial supports include:

- Follow-up and individual assistance to personalize information, particularly after post-secondary education visits
- Increased breadth of exploration of post-secondary education opportunities, especially apprenticeships
- Coordination of the dissemination and timing of financial support information
- Coaching on completion of applications for financial support.

The problem with information on both post-secondary education and financial support has less to do with the amount of information, although this could always be improved, but more with the coordination, coaching and personalizing of information. Parents and students consistently voiced a demand for the “personal touch,” and for some level of one-on-one post-secondary education, career and financial planning. The extent to which paraprofessionals can be used to provide individual help, or alternately, to assume less specialized roles in order to free counsellors for these tasks, should be more fully explored.

From the variety of suggestions made by study respondents, we have derived four recommendations that consistently emerge.
2. Image, accessibility and user-friendliness are areas where improvements are needed with respect to financial support information. Scholarships in particular have an “elite” image — reserved for the highest achievers. Most focus group students indicated that they did not think they could qualify. This is frequently not true, as is the case with the Foundation’s millennium excellence awards, whose emphasis on citizenship, community contribution as well as achievement are not well understood by parents or students. Bursaries for post-secondary education entry are generally not well known or understood. Beyond scholarships, students tended to think immediately of loans, bypassing bursaries. It is therefore likely, by default, that those applying for both scholarships and bursaries will be among the highest academic achievers, regardless of financial need.

All application processes, particularly those for student loans, were seen as confusing and complex. Whether or not the student loan application process is, in fact, too difficult for most to master, encouraging and coaching to apply is clearly needed.

Students and parents suggested that the greatest need is for a cohesive communications strategy aimed at encouraging students to apply by demystifying financial aid; educating them about scholarships, bursaries and loans; and showing them how to undertake financial planning for post-secondary education. Clearly, information is not enough — “how to” needs to be added.

3. The four provinces are making use of portfolios as career and learning planning tools. Most of the provinces use popular resources such as Career Explorer (Bridges) and the Edge magazine. There is a frequent complaint from schools that there is too much information. Therefore, the introduction of additional resources such as those recommended in point number 2 might simply add to the information overload. Providing additional new resources might have a greater impact if they were integrated within existing popular resources, rather than attempting to implement yet another new resource. The integration approach has much to offer in terms of both impact and budget.

4. Parents indicated a willingness to learn more and do more to try to help their children with the selection of a post-secondary education option, and with the planning and financing of post-secondary education. But to do this, they want to be coached and given the right resources. The parents who contributed to the focus group may already be among the most willing and involved with schools. However, the overall sense of parental isolation from the sources of expert information suggests that strategies to reach out to more parents would be highly effective.
5.4 FUTURE RESEARCH

This was a largely qualitative study involving a relatively small sample and just four of the provinces. Given the size of the sample and the short timeframe for collection of data (really from April to June 2002), it was difficult to fully address all of the “specific objectives” cited in section 3.2.

Looking at the findings in relation to the objectives, several areas surface where further research would be profitable. The areas, not presented in any order of priority, follow:

- From the present study, we get a glimpse of who is providing career development assistance in the schools of the four participating provinces. The picture, however, is incomplete even in these provinces. It is important to find out more about the specific roles of career coaches, counsellor assistants and other non-teaching staff in the provision of career development services. How much is needed of “specialist” versus “generalist” help in the career development process? The effectiveness of using these types of resources, even over the short and medium term, needs to be investigated.

- Most respondents in the present study mentioned career fairs as a primary means of providing career and post-secondary program information to students. Yet a majority also cited career fairs as being among the least effective means of providing this information. Because of the prevalence of their use, more needs to be learned about how to best use career fairs to help students plan their careers and make solid post-secondary education decisions. Some respondents offered suggestions for improving the career planning and decision-making value of career fairs. These suggestions should be further investigated.

- Newfoundland and Labrador has been engaged in a high school graduate follow-up study for more than five years. Interesting findings have surfaced that show both advantages and disadvantages of work interludes with respect to having youth go on to post-secondary education. Besides part-time work and periods of full-time employment, the Newfoundland and Labrador study reveals that some of their youth are accessing, after a period of out-of-school time, other sources of financing for various forms of post-secondary education, such as one-year community college programs. Federal money for skills development seems to be one of those sources. The contribution of Human Resources Development Canada funding for skills development to the uptake of community college or private institution post-secondary education could be looked at.

- In our surveys, we asked if career and guidance programs, and particularly efforts to improve post-secondary attendance, were targeted to any particular groups in the province. Mention was made in response of specific programs (both financial and non-financial) for Aboriginal Peoples, Francophones and immigrants (particularly the youth among newcomers to Canada). This suggests that Aboriginal youth, Francophones in provinces outside of Quebec and immigrant youth may face some different problems in accessing and using information and assistance for career development and the planning of post-secondary education. A study similar to the present one that focuses more on these, and perhaps other, population groups needs to be undertaken.

- The present study involved only four provinces. Career development services are no doubt different in content and delivery method in the other provinces. Survey respondents in the four participating provinces of the present study provided a wealth of good ideas for improving the provision and use of career, post-secondary education and financial support information and services. Replicating this study in additional provinces should add to the body of knowledge about how best to go about encouraging and facilitating increased movement of youth into post-secondary education.
## APPENDIX 1

### TABLE 5 — STEPS IN THE RESEARCH WITH PROCESS OUTCOMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP</th>
<th>TARGET AUDIENCE</th>
<th>METHODS</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Background literature and materials review</td>
<td>This was a desktop exercise</td>
<td>• Summary of information types with highlights of key content areas for the four participating provinces&lt;br&gt;• Revisions to the proposed methodology and project work plan based on the findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Survey of provincial policies, programs and materials</td>
<td>Questionnaire (sent via e-mail and post) with telephone interview follow-up</td>
<td>Summary of information covering:&lt;br&gt;• Overview of provincial policies, programs, materials and resources for provision of information on post-secondary education opportunities and student financial aid&lt;br&gt;• Overview of guidance and counselling approach, resources and materials&lt;br&gt;• Explanation of role of stakeholders&lt;br&gt;• Explanation of provincial initiatives aimed at specific target groups of students&lt;br&gt;• List of school district contacts to use in step three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Survey of school district/board/division staff</td>
<td>Questionnaire (sent by e-mail and post) with telephone interview follow-up</td>
<td>Summary of information covering:&lt;br&gt;• Overview of the guidance plan for schools in board/district/division&lt;br&gt;• Description of initiatives aimed at improving articulation of post-secondary education (including promotion of student financial assistance programs)&lt;br&gt;• Explanation of initiatives aimed at specific groups&lt;br&gt;• Explanation of roles of stakeholders&lt;br&gt;• List of secondary school principals to contact in step four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Contact with schools to set up survey of school staff involved in guidance to students</td>
<td>Questionnaire (sent by e-mail and post) with telephone interview follow-up</td>
<td>Summary of information covering:&lt;br&gt;• General information on the guidance programs of the schools&lt;br&gt;• Resources and materials aimed at provision of information on post-secondary education opportunities and guidance to students&lt;br&gt;• List of guidance counsellors and teachers to contact in step five</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## TABLE 5 — STEPS IN THE RESEARCH WITH OUTCOMES — CONTINUED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP</th>
<th>TARGET AUDIENCE</th>
<th>METHODS</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5. Survey of school staff | Guidance counsellors, subject and resource teachers in secondary schools to be sampled | Questionnaire (sent by e-mail and post) with telephone interview follow-up | Summary of information covering:  
- What information and materials are currently available on post-secondary education opportunities for use by counsellors and teachers, as well as by students and parents  
- How they prefer to receive information on post-secondary education opportunities  
- Explanation of initiatives targeted to specific groups of students  
- Description of the guidance program for post-secondary education in general and profile of students typically accessing it |
| 6. Survey of students | Sample of students in grades 8–12 | Focus groups in mostly secondary schools in four provinces consisting of students in grades 8–12, with group sizes averaging 11 | Summary of information covering:  
- How students undertake career planning and decision-making  
- Kinds of information and materials students currently use  
- Kinds of information and materials on post-secondary education opportunities currently available to students  
- How post-secondary education information is provided to students  
- How students prefer to receive information on careers, post-secondary education opportunities and financial assistance |
| 7. Survey of parents | Sample of parents of students in grades 8–12 | Focus groups of parents of students in mostly secondary schools in four provinces with group sizes averaging six | Summary of information covering:  
- Kinds of information and materials on careers they believe students find available and currently use  
- Parents’ understanding of how students undertake career planning and what influences them  
- Kinds of information and materials on post-secondary education opportunities currently available to students and parents  
- How post-secondary education information is provided to students and parents  
- How parents prefer to receive information on post-secondary education opportunities |
| 8. Final report | | | Summary of information from steps 1–7 with findings and conclusions regarding the role and impact of school guidance program and staff on student career decision-making, on the provision to students and parents of career information, post-secondary education opportunities, and information on financial assistance for post-secondary education |
ANNEX A — BIBLIOGRAPHY


Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation and Ipsos Reid (2002), unpublished at this date, Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation, Montreal, Quebec


Statistics Canada (1999), “At a Crossroads: First Results for the 18–20 Year-Old Cohort of the Youth in Transition Survey”


INTRODUCTION

OPENING

Focus group facilitators introduce themselves and ask participants to do likewise.

PURPOSE

Purpose of the focus group session is briefly explained.

• The Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation has asked the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF) to undertake research that asks the question: What are the best ways of providing information on careers, post-secondary education (apprenticeship, college, university, technical and vocational training) and sources of financial assistance for students to go on in their education?

• We are gathering information from provincial ministry and school board/division staff in different parts of the province.

• We are also talking to school guidance counsellors, cooperative education coordinators, and resource teachers in the schools.

• Focus groups are being held with school students and parents in different parts of the province. The purpose of the focus groups is to find out where students go to get career information, and information on post-secondary education (college, university, apprenticeships, technical or vocational training), what information they currently make use of and why. We also want to know what information parents need and have available to them to support their young people in making decisions.

• We want to be able to inform educators, people in government and organizations that help students finance their education how to best inform students and their parents about career opportunities and the education needed to take advantage of the opportunities.

PROCESS

The facilitator briefly explains the process that will be followed.

• The discussion will last approximately one hour

• There are no right or wrong answers — honest and different opinions are important to us

• The discussion may be audio-taped to help us prepare our notes later. Please speak clearly and loudly enough to be recorded. Nothing said will be attributed to a particular location or person. Names of participants will NOT be reported.
The Questions

1. Career Exploration and Decision-making

1a. Are your children getting opportunities at school to learn about their strengths and what they are really interested in doing as their next step after high school?

1b. What options are your children considering with respect to their next steps after high school?

1c. Have your children chosen (or think they have chosen) a field of study or kind of work they would like to do in the future?

1d. What helps you (or could help you) most in being able to explore and discuss career and post secondary choices with your children?

As examples, it could be personal contacts, the guidance program or guidance counsellor, teachers, information sessions organized by the school, information sent by mail, parent-teacher interviews.

1e. What sources of help are actually available to you now?

If yes, what do you think influenced them?

What do you think is the role of the school in helping support this?

What do you think is the role of parents?
2. Sources and Forms of Information

2a. Do you yourself obtain information on fields of work and programs of study to use in discussing options with your children?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2b. If yes, what sources of information do you commonly use?

(Note that these are prompts for the focus group leader and are not to be read as a list to participants)

- Occupational descriptions
- Forecast of job prospects
- Educational or training requirements for various fields of work
- Industry descriptions (where they could work)
- Stories about people employed in a field of work
- University, college, technical school or apprenticeship program descriptions
- Prerequisites for entry to university, college, technical school or apprenticeships
- Scholarships available
- Bursaries, grants and awards they could get
- Student loans they could get

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2b. What are your favourite sources of information?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2c. Does career and study information interest your children? Have they, for example, brought information home and/or discussed information with you?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2e. Do you think there is too much, too little or just enough information?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

If too much or too little, how could it be improved?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

3. When Information is Received

3a. At what age or grade level did your children first indicate hearing about career options and the kinds of educational programs available to them?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
3b. Do you think this is too soon, too late or just right?

4. Expectations for the Future

4a. If your children plan to go directly from secondary school to some kind of post-secondary education (university, college, technical school or an apprenticeship) do you think they will be able to find the money to do so?

4b. If yes, where will they get the money?

4c. What sources of financial support, outside of your own resources, are you aware of?

4d. How do you get information on sources of financial support?

Conclusion

Ask if anyone has specific comments they wish to add.

Advise participants that a copy of the report on the project may be made available after September 1, 2002 on the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation website. Extend sincere thanks for their time and participation.
B.2 STUDENT FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

Introduction

Opening
Focus group facilitators introduce themselves and ask participants to do likewise.

Purpose
Purpose of the focus group session is briefly explained.

- The Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation has asked the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF) to undertake research that asks the question:

  *What are the best ways of providing information on careers, post-secondary education (apprenticeship, college, university, technical and vocational training) and sources of financial assistance for students to go on in their education?*

- We are gathering information from provincial ministry and school board/division staff in different parts of the province.
- We are also talking to school guidance counsellors, cooperative education coordinators, and resource teachers in the schools.
- Focus groups are being held with school students and parents in different parts of the province. The purpose of the focus groups is to find out where students go to get career information, and information on post-secondary education (college, university, apprenticeships, technical or vocational training), what information they currently make use of and why. We also want to know what information parents need and have available to them to support their young people in making decisions.
- We want to be able to inform educators, people in government and organizations that help students finance their education how to best inform students and their parents about career opportunities and the education needed to take advantage of the opportunities.

Process
The facilitator briefly explains the process that will be followed.

- The discussion will last approximately one hour
- There are no right or wrong answers — honest and different opinions are important to us
- The discussion may be audio-taped to help us prepare our notes later. Please speak clearly and loudly enough to be recorded. Nothing said will be attributed to a particular location or person. Names of participants will NOT be reported.
The Questions

1. Career Exploration and Decision-making

1a. Are you getting opportunities at school to learn about your strengths and what you are really interested in doing as your next step after high school?

If yes, what are some of these opportunities?

1b. What options are you considering with respect to your next step after high school?

1c. What are you looking for in a career?

1d. Have you chosen (or think you have chosen) a field of study or kind of work you would like to do in the future?

If yes, why did you choose it?

1e. What helps you most in considering your future study and work? As examples, it could be personal contacts, the guidance program or guidance counsellor, teachers, information sessions, classroom sessions, workshops, presentations from industries, colleges or universities or open discussions with your parents. What is helpful and why?

1f. What sources of help are actually available to you now?

1g. Does anything hinder you in considering your future study and work?
2. Sources and Forms of Information

2a. What type of information do you use to help you understand fields of work, or programs of study, you could enter after high school?

(Note that these are prompts for the focus group leader and are not to be read as a list to participants)

- Occupational descriptions
- Forecast of job prospects
- Educational or training requirements for various fields of work
- Industry descriptions (where they could work)
- Stories about people employed in a field of work
- University, college, technical school or apprenticeship program descriptions
- Prerequisites for entry to university, college, technical school or apprenticeships
- Scholarships available
- Bursaries, grants and awards they could get
- Student loans they could get

2b. Where do you get your information?

(Note that these are prompts and not to be read as a list to participants)

- Internet
- Guidance Counsellors
- Teachers
- HRDC Offices
- Radio/TV
- Newspapers
- Site Visits
- Career Fairs

2c. What are your favourite ways to get information?

2d. Do you think there is too much, too little or just enough information?

If too little or too much, how could it be improved?
2e. Does career and study information actually interest you? Do you have suggestions about what would make it more interesting?


4b. Where will you get the money?


4c. What sources of financial support are you aware of?


4d. How do you get information on sources of financial support?


5. If you are not going directly from secondary school to post-secondary studies, what are your work, study, travel plans for the next couple of years?


Conclusion
Ask if anyone has specific comments they wish to add.


Advise participants that a copy of the report on the project may be made available after September 1, 2002 on the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation website. Extend sincere thanks for their time and participation.
B.3 SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE — DISTRICT

Purpose of the Survey
Governments, educators, business and labour leaders are interested in seeing improved access by all Canadians to post secondary education. Both financial and non-financial factors influence Canadians in their decisions to take or not take post secondary education (PSE). Information plays a key role in that decision-making — information provided to students beginning in the early high school years, and to parents, on post-secondary education prerequisites, program options, and student financial aid.

Information on PSE opportunities and student assistance comes to students and their parents from several sources. One source identified as being pivotal is the “school guidance services”.

In its broad context, school guidance services are provided by many players, including principals, resource teachers, subject teachers, guidance counsellors and career development staff, and co-operative education co-ordinators, among others. These players are sources of information on PSE, but it is not well known what they provide, when, to whom, why and how.

The aim of this research project (The Role of Guidance Programs and Counsellors in Promoting Opportunity in Post Secondary Education) is to learn more about the best communications routes for information on PSE opportunities and student financial assistance.

Who is Conducting the Survey?
The Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation has asked the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF) to undertake this research.

The Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation was created to grant awards to students who demonstrate merit, and to provide assistance for post secondary education to those who are in financial need. It is part of the Canadian Government’s economic plan to help students acquire the knowledge, skills, and qualifications needed to compete in the global economy and build a bright economic future for Canada. The Foundation has three major areas of activity: the Excellence Award Program, the Bursary Program, and a Research Program.

The Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF) is a not-for-profit, charitable foundation established to promote excellence in career development. It has been a leader in research, development, training, and consultation in the area of career development and career transitions for over two decades.

Who is Participating?
Four Provinces are participating in the survey: Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Survey results and findings will be reported by Province, as well in total across all four Provinces.

Can We Have Your Help?
Information is being gathered from Provincial education officials, school district/board staff, school staff, students and parents. Some participants are being asked to respond to written questionnaires, others are to be interviewed in person or by telephone. Students and parents will be asked to participate in focus groups.

Information gathered in the survey will not be attributed to any one individual. Your privacy is of paramount concern to the research team. Identification of a specific organization other than the Province is made for the purposes of follow up by the research team. Responses to questions will not be reported by organization name (e.g. for a specific District/Board).
The Questions

1. About You

Province: 

School District/Board Name: 

Your Position Type (by primary function): (place an X in the space where appropriate)

- [ ] Policy
- [ ] Program
- [ ] Student
- [ ] Services
- [ ] Curriculum & Instruction
- [ ] Planning & Research
- [ ] Student Financial Aid
- [ ] Other (name):

2. About Post Secondary Education (PSE) Information

a. What kind of PSE information do you think:
   1. is being provided,
   2. is not provided but is needed, or
   3. should be provided on a structured, formal basis?

   (use the table that follows to answer these questions by placing an X in the appropriate space)

b. How well is the information reaching and how well is it understood and used by the target audiences of:
   1. teachers and administrators,
   2. guidance staff,
   3. students,
   4. parents?

   (use the table that follows to answer these questions by inserting the appropriate value from the following scale)

V = very well
W = well
U = unsure
NW = not well
NVW = not very well
TABLE 6 — SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (PROVINCE/DIVISION): THE ROLE OF GUIDANCE PROGRAMS AND COUNSELLORS IN PROMOTING OPPORTUNITY IN POST SECONDARY EDUCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF INFORMATION</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>AUDIENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CURRENTLY PROVIDED</td>
<td>NOT PROVIDED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>REACHING</td>
<td>UNDERSTOOD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Post-secondary education (PSE) prerequisites & options:

- For universities
- For colleges
- For apprenticeship programs
- For other institutions

Post secondary institutions (location, specialization)

Career and occupational

Employment and income prospects for PSE graduates

Bursaries:

- For entry to PSE
- For completion of PSE

Student Loans:

- For entry to PSE
- For completion of PSE

Scholarships:

- For entry to PSE
- For completion of PSE
- Millennium Scholarship
- Excellence Awards
- Other (please name)

In the following space, we would appreciate your comments, and further explanation, on the responses you provided in the table above.
c. In what forms is PSE information typically provided? 
(Place an X beside all of the categories that apply)

- [ ] Career Fairs
- [ ] Student Visits
- [ ] PSE Visits to Schools
- [ ] Pamphlets
- [ ] CD ROM
- [ ] Books/booklets
- [ ] Complete kits
- [ ] E-mail/letters

d. In what forms is student financial aid information typically provided? 
(Place an X beside all of the categories that apply)

- [ ] Career Fairs
- [ ] Student Visits
- [ ] PSE Visits to Schools
- [ ] Pamphlets
- [ ] CD ROM
- [ ] Books/booklets
- [ ] Complete kits
- [ ] E-mail/letters

e. For both PSE and/or student financial aid information:

i. Which of the forms of provision listed above do you think are most effective?

ii. Are there other forms you would suggest?

f. Are instructions on how to treat and manage the information provided with PSE and/or student financial aid information?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Unsure

If yes, what kinds of instructions are provided?


g. Is follow-up done to find out if the information is used and is useful?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Unsure

If yes, what kinds of follow-up activities are suggested/undertaken?


h. Does the Province/District/Board have a formal policy, informal policy or guidelines on the provision of PSE information?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Unsure

If yes, what is the nature of the policy or guidelines?


i. Is there a formal policy, informal policy or guidelines on the provision of information about student financial aid?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, what is the nature of the policy or guidelines?

ii. Does the Province/District/Board have any initiatives aimed at ensuring specific groups of students receive PSE and/or student financial aid information?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, what groups are targeted?

ii. Please describe the initiative(s).

3. About Guidance/Career Development Programs

a. Does the Province/District/Board have a formal policy, informal policy or guidelines on the provision of guidance/career development programs in the schools?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, what is the nature of the policy or guidelines?

ii. Is information on PSE opportunities specifically included in the policy or guidelines?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

iii. Is information on student financial assistance specifically included in the policy or guidelines?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

b. Is there a legislated requirement for schools to provide guidance/career development programs?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, what are the minimum requirements contained in the legislation?
c. For what grade levels are guidance/career development programs available?

**TABLE 7 — GRADE LEVEL AND GUIDANCE PROGRAM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE LEVEL</th>
<th>GUIDANCE PROGRAMS ARE AVAILABLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grades 6–8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 9–11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

d. Does the guidance/career development program involve the provision of assistance to students:
   i. Individually?
      □ □ □
      Yes  No  Unsure
   ii. In classroom sessions?
        □ □ □
        Yes  No  Unsure

e. Does the guidance/career development program involve the provision of information on:
   i. Careers and occupations?
      □ □ □
      Yes  No  Unsure
   ii. Employment and income prospects?
        □ □ □
        Yes  No  Unsure

f. Has the Province/District/Board developed guidance/career development classroom curricula?
   □ □ □
   Yes  No  Unsure

If yes,
   i. What form does it take?
      __________________________________________
      __________________________________________

   ii. Is information on PSE opportunities a part of the guidance/career development classroom curriculum?
       □ □ □
       Yes  No  Unsure

   iii. Is information on student financial assistance a part of the guidance/career development classroom curriculum?
        □ □ □
        Yes  No  Unsure

g. Is there a policy (either explicit or implicit) that all students in certain grades will be introduced to PSE and/or student financial aid information as part of the guidance/career development program?
   □ □ □
   Yes  No  Unsure

If yes, what is that policy?
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
4. About Funding

Does the Province/District/Board provide funding for the development and delivery of:

a. Career and occupational information?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Unsure

b. Employment and income prospects for PSE graduates?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Unsure

c. PSE information?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Unsure

d. Student financial aid information?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Unsure

e. The guidance/career development classroom curricula?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Unsure

f. The guidance/career development program aimed at helping students individually?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Unsure

If you answered yes to any of (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) or (f) what is your estimate of how much funding is provided?

5. About Consultative Mechanisms

a. Does the Province/District/Board involve post secondary institutions (universities, colleges, apprenticeship bodies, others) in the formulation of policy, and/or the making of decisions about the provision of career, occupational, employment and income or PSE and student financial aid information?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Unsure

If yes, what kinds of consultation or involvement mechanisms are used?

b. Does the Province/District/Board involve employers, unions, community-based organizations, and parents in the formulation of policy, and/or the making of decisions about the provision of career, occupational, employment and income or PSE and student financial aid information?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Unsure

If yes, what kinds of consultation or involvement mechanisms are used?
6. Information Issues Related to PSE and Student Aid

a. Does the Province/District/Board produce and/or distribute promotional materials on PSE opportunities?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Unsure

i. What kinds of promotional materials are produced?

- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]

ii. What strategies are used to distribute the materials?

- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]

b. Does the Province/District/Board produce and/or distribute promotional materials on the availability of student financial assistance for PSE?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Unsure

If yes,

i. What kinds of promotional materials are produced?

- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]

ii. What strategies are used to distribute the materials?

- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]

c. Does the Province/District/Board (in your view) believe that students are sufficiently well informed about PSE opportunities?

- [ ] Very Well Informed
- [ ] Well Informed
- [ ] Unsure
- [ ] Not Well Informed
- [ ] Very Poorly Informed

d. Does the Province/District/Board (in your view) believe that students are sufficiently well informed about student financial assistance available for PSE?

- [ ] Very Well Informed
- [ ] Well Informed
- [ ] Unsure
- [ ] Not Well Informed
- [ ] Very Poorly Informed
e. Does the Province/District/Board (in your view) believe that students are sufficiently well informed about careers, occupations, employment and income prospects?

☐ Very Well Informed
☐ Well Informed
☐ Unsure
☐ Not Well Informed
☐ Very Poorly Informed

f. Do you think students choose NOT to go on to PSE because of an expected unmet financial need?

☐ Very Well Informed
☐ Well Informed
☐ Unsure
☐ Not Well Informed
☐ Very Poorly Informed

g. On what PSE issues do students and their parents lack information?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

h. On what PSE issues are students and their parents best informed?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

7. Additional Comments or Suggestions

Please provide us with any comments or suggestions you have.

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

Please partner with us for the next step in this research.

1. Please provide the names and contact information (telephone, fax, e-mail) of people you feel we should survey who are:

   a. District/Board staff:

      _______________________________
      _______________________________
      _______________________________

   b. School staff:

      _______________________________
      _______________________________
      _______________________________

2. Would you be willing to advise the above contacts that we will be getting in touch with them?

   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

Thank you for your time and effort in responding to this survey.
B.4 SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE — GENERAL

Purpose of the Survey
Governments, educators, business and labour leaders are interested in improving access to career information and services. They also want Canadians to have greater access to post secondary education. Both financial and non-financial factors influence Canadians in their career decisions, and choice to take or not take post secondary education (PSE — which includes university, college, technical/vocational school, apprenticeships and private training programs). Information plays a key role in that decision-making — information provided to students beginning in the early high school years, and to parents, on careers, post-secondary education prerequisites, program options, and student financial aid.

Information on careers and PSE opportunities and student assistance comes to students and their parents from several sources. One source identified as being pivotal is the “school guidance services”. In its broad context, school guidance services are provided by many players, including principals, resource teachers, subject teachers, guidance counsellors and career development staff, and co-operative education co-ordinators, among others. These players are sources of information on careers and PSE, but it is not well known what they provide, when, to whom, why and how.

The aim of this research project (*The Role of Guidance Programs and Counsellors in Promoting Opportunity in Post Secondary Education*) is to learn more about the best communications routes for information on careers, PSE opportunities and student financial assistance.

Who is Conducting the Survey?
The Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation has asked the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF) to undertake this research.

*The Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation* was created to grant awards to students who demonstrate merit, and to provide assistance for post secondary education to those who are in financial need. It is part of the Canadian Government’s economic plan to help students acquire the knowledge, skills, and qualifications needed to compete in the global economy and build a bright economic future for Canada. The Foundation has three major areas of activity: the Excellence Award Program, the Bursary Program, and a Research Program.

*The Canadian Career Development Foundation* (CCDF) is a not-for-profit, charitable foundation established to promote excellence in career development. It has been a leader in research, development, training, and consultation in the area of career development and career transitions for over two decades.
Who is Participating?
Four Provinces are participating in the survey: Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Survey results and findings will be reported by Province, as well in total across all four Provinces.

Can We Have Your Help?
Information is being gathered from Provincial education officials, school district/board/division staff, school staff, students and parents. Some participants are being asked to respond to written questionnaires, others are to be interviewed in person or by telephone. Students and parents will be asked to participate in focus groups.

Information gathered in the survey will not be attributed to any one individual. Your privacy is of paramount concern to the research team. Identification of a specific organization other than the Province is made for the purposes of follow up by the research team. Responses to questions will not be reported by organization name (e.g. for a specific district/board/division or specific school).

The Questions

1. About You

☐ Principal/Vice Principal
☐ Classroom Teacher
☐ Resource Teacher
☐ Co-op Education Coordinator
☐ Guidance Counsellor
☐ other (name):

2. About Guidance/Career Development Programs

a. Are you aware of any legislative requirements, formal policy, informal policy or guidelines on the provision of guidance/career development programs in the schools?

☐ ☐ ☐
Yes No Unsure

If yes,

i. What is the nature of the legislation, policy or guidelines?


ii. Is information on PSE opportunities specifically included in the legislation, policy or guidelines?

☐ ☐ ☐
Yes No Unsure

iii. Is information on student financial assistance specifically included in the legislation, policy or guidelines?

☐ ☐ ☐
Yes No Unsure

b. For what grade levels are guidance/career development programs available?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE LEVEL</th>
<th>GUIDANCE PROGRAMS ARE AVAILABLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below Grade 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 6–8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 9–11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
c. Does the guidance/career development program involve the provision of assistance to students:
   i. Individually?
      □ □ □
      Yes No Unsure
   ii. In classroom sessions?
      □ □ □
      Yes No Unsure

d. Does the guidance/career development program involve the provision of information on:
   i. Pathways for various careers and occupations?
      □ □ □
      Yes No Unsure
   ii. Employment and income prospects?
      □ □ □
      Yes No Unsure

e. What guidance/career development materials are used most in your school?
   Please list the names/types of materials.
   __________________________
   __________________________
   __________________________
   __________________________

f. Does your school include guidance/career development in the classroom curricula?
   □ □ □
   Yes No Unsure

   If yes,
   i. What form does it take?
      __________________________
      __________________________
      __________________________
      __________________________

   ii. Is information on PSE opportunities a part of the guidance/career development classroom curriculum?
      □ □ □
      Yes No Unsure

   iii. Is information on student financial assistance a part of the guidance/career development classroom curriculum?
      □ □ □
      Yes No Unsure

g. Is there a policy (either explicit or implicit) that all students in certain grades will be introduced to PSE and/or student financial aid information as part of the guidance/career development program?
   □ □ □
   Yes No Unsure

   If yes, what is that policy?
   __________________________
   __________________________
   __________________________
   __________________________

3. About Post Secondary Education (PSE) Information

   a. What kind of PSE information do you think:
      (1) is being provided,
      (2) is being provided but needs improvement, or
      (3) should be provided on a structured, formal basis?

      (use the table that follows to answer these questions by placing an X in the appropriate space)

   b. How well is the information reaching, and how well is it understood and used by the target audiences of:
      (1) teachers and administrators,
      (2) guidance staff,
      (3) students,
      (4) parents?
(use the table that follows to answer these questions by inserting the appropriate value from the scale shown at the bottom of the table)

Scale:
V = very well
W = well
U = unsure
NW = not well
NVW = not very well

### TABLE 9 — SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE: THE ROLE OF GUIDANCE PROGRAMS AND COUNSELLORS IN PROMOTING OPPORTUNITY IN POST SECONDARY EDUCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF INFORMATION</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>AUDIENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CURRENTLY PROVIDED</td>
<td>TEACHERS/ ADMINISTRATORS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NOT PROVIDED/BUT NEEDED</td>
<td>REACHING</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Career Information
- Pathways for careers
- Education/training required for careers

#### Post-secondary education (PSE) prerequisites & options:
- For universities
- For colleges
- For apprenticeship programs
- For other institutions

#### Bursaries:
- For entry to PSE
- For completion of PSE

#### Student Loans:
- For entry to PSE
- For completion of PSE

#### Scholarships:
- For entry to PSE
- For completion of PSE
- Millennium Scholarship
- Excellence Awards
- Other (please name)
In the following space, we would appreciate your comments, and further explanation, on the responses you provided in the table above.

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

c. In what forms is PSE information typically provided?
(please place an X beside all of the categories that apply)

☐ Career Fairs
☐ Student Visits
☐ PSE Visits to Schools
☐ Pamphlets
☐ CD ROM
☐ Books/booklets
☐ Videos
☐ Websites
☐ E-mail/letters/voicemail

d. In what forms is student financial aid information typically provided?
(please place an X beside all of the categories that apply)

☐ Career Fairs
☐ Student Visits
☐ PSE Visits to Schools
☐ Pamphlets
☐ CD ROM
☐ Books/booklets
☐ Videos
☐ Websites
☐ E-mail/letters/voicemail

e. For both PSE and/or student financial aid information:

i. Which of the forms of provision listed above do you think are most effective?

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

ii. Are there other forms you would suggest?

______________________________

______________________________

f. Are instructions on how to treat and manage the information provided with PSE and/or student financial aid information?

☐ ☐ ☐

Yes No Unsure

If yes, what kinds of instructions are provided?

______________________________

______________________________

g. Is follow-up done to find out if the information is used and is useful?

☐ ☐ ☐

Yes No Unsure
If yes, What kinds of follow-up activities are suggested/undertaken?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

h. Are you aware of any initiatives aimed at ensuring specific groups of students receive PSE and/or student financial aid information?

☐ ☐ ☐

Yes No Unsure

If yes, i. What groups are targeted?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

ii. Please describe the initiative(s).

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

4. About Consultative Mechanisms

a. Does your school consult in any formal, or informal but regular way, with parents, local employers, unions, and/or community-based organizations on the provision of career, occupational, employment and income, or PSE and student financial aid information?

☐ ☐ ☐

Yes No Unsure

If yes, what kinds of consultation or involvement mechanisms are used?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

b. Does your school consult in any formal, or informal but regular way, with the post secondary institutions (universities, colleges, apprenticeship bodies, others) on the provision of PSE information and on student financial aid information?

☐ ☐ ☐

Yes No Unsure

If yes, what kinds of consultation or involvement mechanisms are used?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

5. Overall Impressions

a. Do you believe that students are sufficiently well informed about pathways to careers and the educational and training requirements for careers?

☐ Very Well Informed

☐ Well Informed

☐ Unsure

☐ Not Well Informed

☐ Very Poorly Informed

b. Do you believe that students are sufficiently well informed about PSE opportunities?

☐ Very Well Informed

☐ Well Informed

☐ Unsure

☐ Not Well Informed

☐ Very Poorly Informed

c. Do you believe that students are sufficiently well informed about student financial assistance available for PSE?

☐ Very Well Informed

☐ Well Informed

☐ Unsure

☐ Not Well Informed

☐ Very Poorly Informed
d. Do you think students choose NOT to go on to PSE because of an expected unmet financial need?
   • Very frequently
   • Frequently
   • Unsure
   • Not frequently
   • Not very frequently

e. What other factors besides finances do you think prevents students from going on to PSE?

f. On what PSE issues do students and their parents most lack information?

6. Additional Comments or Suggestions

Please provide us with any comments or suggestions you have.

Please partner with us for the next step in this research.

1. Please provide the names and contact information (telephone, fax, e-mail) of others in your school you feel we should survey.

a. District/Board staff:

b. School staff:

2. Would you be willing to assist us in arranging for a student and/or parent focus group session on the subject of careers, PSE opportunities and student financial aid information?
   • Yes
   • No

Thank you for your time and effort in responding to this survey.
My name is ____________________________

I work with the CANADIAN CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION which is a national non-profit organization located in Ottawa. It is committed to strengthening career services for Canadians over the lifespan. We are working on a project with the Millennium Scholarship Foundation, a national Foundation located in Montreal. This Foundation grants scholarships to high school students who demonstrate excellence and also awards bursaries to students in financial need who are already studying at university or college.

In this project we are trying to find out how students and parents access information on both post-secondary opportunities and also on sources of financial support. We want to find out what systems are in place now. That is, what information is provided, how does it get to the right people and how are they helped to use it. We also want to identify any gaps and gather suggestions to improve access.

The survey has a number of questions and will take approximately 45 to 60 minutes of your time. Before we begin, may I assure you that your privacy is very important to the research team and in the report that will be published, no names or organizations will be identified. Information will be reported by province only. However in order to gather and organize the information the research team will need some identifying information which will be deleted once the data is analysed. Your willingness to give your time to participate in the survey is greatly appreciated. Do you have any questions before we begin?

CCDF
April 3, 2002

(Note: Please adjust and adapt this to sound natural for you while covering the points of course.)
C.2 GUIDE FOR TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS ON THE ROLE OF GUIDANCE PROGRAMS AND COUNSELLORS IN PROMOTING OPPORTUNITY IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Part A: School Questionnaire by Telephone — Some Tips:

1. Use the introduction piece already sent to you (also attached) or a similar one adapted to your own style.

2. Ask if the individual has had a chance to scan the survey in advance and if they have a copy of it in front of them. If they have not scanned it but have a copy to follow along, proceed with the interview (it is preferable if they have had at least a look however). If they do not have a copy in front of them, try to find a way to get one to them and invite them to at least quickly review it and reschedule the interview. If an alternate time is not available, of course go ahead but the interview will probably take longer to complete.

3. Try not to read the questions verbatim. Since they have the survey in front of them, try to adopt a more informal style such as “The first question asks about you and your position in your school”.

4. Take notes of narrative comments in the spaces provided. You will want to have extra paper with you in case of verbose interviewees. The narrative comments are often the most insightful. Point form is fine but try to capture the essence carefully.

5. Make certain you have done at least one practice/mock interview in advance (preferably 2). It is preferable if you do the rehearsal by telephone to simulate reality as much as a possible. Doing a practice round will result in you being more natural and you will save considerable time as well.

6. Make certain you cover the last section on Page 9 if you have not already done so. The telephone interviewee should be with the key contact in the school who knows the most and has the responsibility. These individuals are best positioned to identify the 1 or 2 others who should complete the written survey. You can of course if you prefer do additional telephone interviews. The written ones are intended to save you time. Try to get all contact information (telephone, fax and e-mail) for others to be contacted. Also seek their help in accessing students and/or parents for the focus groups if these are not already arranged.

7. Of course you will all do it anyway but be sure to thank them for giving generously of their time and perceptions. There will be a provincial report published as well as a report on the overall picture across the four participating provinces. The school will be advised when the report is available.
Part B: Specific Questions:

The next section relates to specific questions where a particular approach is recommended and/or where questions of clarification might be asked.

Question 3 —

This is the most complex and the longest by far. It can take close to half of the interview. It yields very good information however. Here is a suggested approach to introduce and work through Question 3:

- “This next question has several parts. It will be easier if you turn to the chart on Page 5 and follow along.
  - The question first asks you about several types of information and whether or not they are provided; the second part asks you about who actually gets the information; the third part asks you to indicate how well you think the information is understood and put to good use by those who receive it. We'll cover these areas one by one. The first part asks your views on career information in general.
  - Do you think information on the routes or career paths students can take to move towards careers is Currently provided; Provided but needs improvement; or Not provided but should be?
  - What about information on the specific education/training requirements required in order to become qualified in careers?
  - (Record the answer in the appropriate box)
  - Next, who does it reach? Do you think this information reaches Teachers/Administrators (if yes, give a check mark); Guidance Staff; Students; Parents?
  - How well do you think it reaches these various target audiences? For Teachers, would you say it reaches them. Very well; Well; Not so well or Not very well at all (Record the response). What about Guidance Staff? What about Students? Parents?
  - Finally how well do you think people understand and make good use of the information they receive. What do you think for Teachers — Very well; Well; Not so well or Not very well at all?
    (Record response)
  - What about Guidance? Students? Parents?
- The next section asks about Information on post secondary prerequisites/requirements and options for different kinds of post secondary education opportunities. The first is university.
  - In your experience, do you think information on university prerequisites is, Currently provided; Provided but needs improvement; or Not provided but should be.
  - Now the same for colleges. What category do you think is true with respect to provision of information on college prerequisites and options? “ etc…
    (Note that the next categories will go quickly with one detailed walk through and you should not need to repeat the instructions.)
  - “The last part is different again and asks about financial assistance information — bursaries, loans, scholarships. It also asks you to think about information available to students and parents to help finance starting post-secondary as well as financial support which might come available to help complete post-secondary. This could be very helpful in planning and decision making.
  - What do you think about information provided on bursaries? etc…"
Question 5:
This is close to the end of the interview and is seeking an overall impression. It is not intended to repeat the information in 2 above. A suggestion introduction follows:

• “We are coming to the end of the survey. This next part asks you to give your overall assessment of the situation.

5a. As you reflect on the questions already answered, overall what rating would you give to the extent to which students are sufficiently well informed about paths to careers and requirements to qualify for careers? Would you say overall Very well informed; Well informed; Unsure; Not well informed or Very poorly informed?

5b. Overall what would you say about being well informed on PSE opportunities so they can make the best choices possible?

5c. Overall what would you say about financial assistance?

5d. Do you think that students choose not to go on to post-secondary because of an expected unmet financial need?

5e. What other factors besides money do you think prevent students for pursuing post-secondary?

5f. Where do you think the greatest information voids for students and parents are?

5g. Where do you think the greatest information strengths are?”

Part C: Requests for Clarification:
The following are suggested answers to questions of clarification which might come up.

2f. “Instructions” might include suggested ways to distribute the information; suggested places to place the information so that it is highly visible, a lesson plan to introduce the information into a classroom, or a school assembly venue.

2h. A policy refers to a set of procedures to be followed. It often sets a quality standard as well in a specific area.

2j. Specific Groups might include attracting females or males into non-traditional occupations. It could also be persons with disabilities; socio-economically disadvantaged; Aboriginal students for example.

• A “program” refers to a number of components which are to be delivered to students in a particular subject area. In guidance a program might include a number of interviews per student; specific classroom components; visits to post-secondary institutions; a career information library; testing etc.

Revised April 11, 2002 Hope this helps and good luck!
C.3 FIELD LIASON OFFICERS LETTER

Dear FLOs

You may recall that at the meeting to discuss the Standards and Guidelines, I mentioned another project we might work on with the Millennium Scholarship Foundation of Canada. Indeed this project has come through and I am writing to you now with the permission of the Career Circuit and Edge Teams to see if you are willing and able to undertake some work on behalf of this project. If you are not personally able to it, I hope you will be kind enough to identify a very competent person you would trust in your province to undertake the tasks. I am working on the project with Ralph Kellett whom many of you may already know.

Here is the Background. The Millennium Scholarship Foundation awards a number of scholarships for overall excellence at secondary school graduation plus bursaries based on financial need, once students have already completed at least six months of post-secondary training in college or university. The Foundation is concerned that students may not receive information about the financial supports which are available to them and that this may be influencing some to not pursue post-secondary. That is putting it a little negatively. From the research, they want to find out what high school students actually do know about financial support, where they find out, who is responsible for this in the schools, how well informed these individuals are, how these individuals rate the quality and quantity of information they receive for students, their key sources of information etc.

Four provinces are participating, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick and Newfoundland. The research will try to find out how this system works by talking with persons at the provincial levels, the district levels, the key players in a number of secondary schools, and finally groups of students and parents. With students and parents, we want to find out what they know, how they find out, and how they would like to find out. All of this will provide guidance for the Millennium Scholarship Foundation to build an effective communications strategy and hopefully, more information will result in more students getting needed help and pursuing post-secondary studies. So that is it in a nutshell.

Here is how we are proceeding. We (Ralph and I) will handle the Provincial and District levels but when we get to the school levels we need to work with people locally — hence you and/or your networks! The dates we need help are from April 1 — May 3 and would include the following tasks.

Note that the project will have been announced to the schools who are participating; they will have agreed to participate already; and a letter will have gone to the principal or the person identified by those at the district level as the key persons in charge of financial information in the selected schools (perhaps the head of guidance for example). The letter will have informed the school contact that a FLO (or whoever) will be in contact with them to begin the study. With that introduction done, the following tasks are needed and are divided into three parts:
Part 1:

1. Participate with us in a telephone training session (a couple of hours) to review the interview protocol which will be used as well as the written questionnaire to be used to collect the information;

2. Contact the selected School principal or key contact and achieve the following objectives during about a 30 minute interview:
   - Introduce the project
   - Conduct the interview using the interview protocol and taking notes on the responses
   - Find out who else in the school has a role to play in helping students with post-secondary choices and financial assistance and therefore should complete the written questionnaire. Get their contact information — names, phone numbers, e-mails, other ways to contact them (i.e. staff room mailboxes). Electronic is preferable.
   - Find out how it would be possible to have a focus group with students (about 30 minutes or perhaps a class period) to get student input; the same for parents. Find out the protocols which will be necessary (we will provide them to you but sometimes it can be very easy and you can be invited to a class or to a parent meeting already organized). Feed this information to us so we can provide the support tools;
   - Request that the Principal or key contact play a co-ordinating role and collect the questionnaires from the staff who are identified. Then you would have to only liaise with this one person once the questionnaires were distributed.

Part 2:

- Send the questionnaires to those identified by the principal or key contact; we expect it will be 2–3 additional people maximum per school (again, we will provide the intro letters etc.)
- After a very few days, if they have not returned the responses, follow up with a phone call to the coordinator or the individuals and ask when they would be able to complete
- Collect the questionnaires and return to us.

Part 3:

- Participate in a training session by phone with us on the student/parent focus group protocols. Ralph and I will have tested the protocol ourselves with both students and parents.
- Organize the focus groups. If not a class period, we would hope for about 7–10 students per group, all at senior levels. With parents, 4–6 would be fine
- Conduct the focus groups. We can provide $80.00 per focus group for coffee, cookies, pizza, soft drinks — whatever it takes up to that amount to make people feel treated.
- Complete the focus group results and send to us
Here is the chart showing the numbers of schools and the numbers of focus groups we are hoping for:

### TABLE 10 — SUGGESTED SAMPLE SIZES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROVINCE</th>
<th># SCHOOL DISTRICTS</th>
<th># OF SCHOOLS</th>
<th># OF FOCUS GROUPS (STUDENTS AND PARENTS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Students = 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parents = 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newfoundland</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Students = 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parents = 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatchewan</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Students = 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parents = 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Students = 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parents = 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td>Students = 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parents = 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We estimate the number of days needed to complete the tasks as follows:

New Brunswick: 14
Newfoundland 8
Manitoba 10
Saskatchewan 10

We will reimburse you at the same rate as your current FLO contracts if you are doing the work; that fee would apply as well to whomever you might recommend. Perhaps some of you might want to consider partnering with someone and make it more fun! We also will reimburse you for travel by vehicle to focus groups, any photocopies you need, postage and communications.

Career Circuit and Edge have made it clear that this would not substitute for your work with them. It is an opportunity to do extra and be involved in what we think is an interesting and important project.

Please let me know at your earliest opportunity if you are willing to take this on, alone or with a partner. If you are unable to personally, your recommendation would be greatly appreciated as soon as possible.

The interview training by telephone will take place between April 2–4. You may have noticed that the timelines are very tight on the project. It has to do with the end of school and being unable to get any contact with schools post mid-May. For the Millennium Scholarship Foundation, waiting for another school year was not feasible. Therefore if you do agree to work with us, meeting the timelines will be critical.

I sincerely hope to be able to work with you on this and look forward to hearing from you very soon.

Best regards
Lynne Bezanson
Executive Director
Canadian Career Development Foundation