

4th Edition
January 2006

Computers for Schools

NOVA SCOTIA

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Minimum Standard of Computer for 2005/2006

Each year CFS-NS sets a minimum standard on the lowest level of CPU that it accepts to be used in the schools. The standard for 2005/2006 is a PIII. If you or your office have any PIII or larger CPUs that are not being used, in good condition and they require a new home, please call our office at (902) 424-3596.

Computer Access for Students

Computers For Schools plays an important role

Most people agree on the importance of our youth being technologically literate in order to take their place in society. To be truly literate one needs skills with words, numbers, images and the tools of this generation – computers.

Public education budgets for technology have mushroomed in the past 25 years. School budgets for instructional capital equipment in 1980 would have included an overhead projector, a 16mm film projector and perhaps a television set. Today a significant portion of school board budgets are spent on purchasing the necessary computer technology to give our students access to such powerful learning tools as the internet, instructional software as well as productivity tools such as word processors, spreadsheets and image editing software.

An enormous difficulty with computer technology, unlike the 16mm projector, is the rapid rate of obsolescence (3-4 years for a computer). A second issue is that older technologies were purchased on a one or two per school basis while computer access is discussed on a student per machine ratio. A large school may need 200 or more machines in order to approach a student to computer ratio of 5 or 4:1. These two factors combine to ensure that the public education budgets alone are not sufficient to give our students the rich access necessary to technology.

The Computers For Schools program has played a significant role in assisting schools improve the amount of student access to the tools they need to better explore their world.

Today, recycled machines from the CFS program account for approximately 50% of the computers in Nova Scotia schools. Over 30,000 machines in total, donated by businesses, government and not-for-profit groups, and refurbished by CFS, have done a great deal to improve the computer ratios in classrooms. The work of CFS is making an important contribution to the literacy of Nova Scotian students.

*Earl Rutledge -CFS
Steering Committee
Coordinator of
Technology and
Professional
Development
Nova Scotia
Teachers Union*

Second Stream Computer Equipment

The present mandate of Computers For Schools-Nova Scotia (CFS-NS) is to refurbish used, but still useable computer equipment for use in Public Schools, First Nation Schools, Libraries, Private Schools and Adult Education Learning Organizations.

As the program has evolved the standard for the used equipment which schools will accept has increased. This means there is now useable equipment for which we do not have recipients. At the same time there is a demand for computers by not-for-profit organizations. In comes the Second Stream Equipment Program.

Our Long Time Partners



After discussions with non-profit organizations in the area, the proposed "Second Stream" of refurbished equipment was suggested. After discussions concerning who, how and where took place, it was decided we would inaugurate the "second stream" and see what happened. The non-profit organizations involved in the program were Halifax Regional Development Agency (HRDA), LakeCity Employment Services and Parker Street Food and Furniture Bank. HRDA had in excess of forty requests for computers and they estimated the demand to be in the hundreds. Lake City Employment Services and Parker Street Food and Furniture Bank had forecast similar demands. We all soon knew there was going to be no problem using the below minimum standard equipment for this project.

While providing computers to people in need is the rationale for this program, of equal importance is the opportunity it provides to the people who work for the above mentioned agencies to have an opportunity to perform the required work and to receive the on-the-job-training in the IT department and finally there was the obvious benefit of diverting IT Waste from the landfills.



After the first year of the program, we all knew this was no longer a "pilot" project and it has become a regular part of our CFS-NS program. The minimum standard for the Second Stream Program is now a PII and at present we are distributing an average of 600 computers annually. The refurbishing of the machines takes place at the above organizations. Non-profits and individuals may apply to these groups for the equipment. The contact information is listed on our website at trp.edent.ns.ca



Technical Work Experience Program - TWEP

The Computers for Schools' Technical Work Experience Program (TWEP) provides youth who have demonstrated skills achievement at the post-secondary level with work experience that is related to their academic background or career aspiration. Through the TWEP program, youth acquire a variety of skills in preparation for entering the workforce; others will be encouraged to pursue further post-secondary training/education.

The Technical Work Experience Program provides CFS with invaluable resources essential to its operation. As the CFS main workforce for refurbishing computers, the youth engaged through TWEP make up the key component required to successfully meet CFS' delivery goals.

To participate in TWEP, one must be between the ages of 15 –30 years, have a diploma from a recognized IT course, be a Canadian citizen and a permanent resident, or a person who has been granted refugee status in Canada, legally entitled to work in Canada.

Since January 1994 CFS-NS has provided more than 230 youth with their first-time work experience and we are now operating a total of six (6) workshops across the province and employ on average fourteen (14) TWEP trainees annually. These young people have gone on to work for such organizations as IMP Group, Nova Scotia School Boards, Exxon Mobil and Maple Leaf Poultry.



Spotlight on Donors

Below is a list of donors who have been kind enough to donate their used but still useable computer equipment to our program. The milestones we reach and the goals we surpass would not be possible without their generous donations. Everyone at Computers for Schools-Nova Scotia thanks them for continued support.

Computers for Schools- Nova Scotia

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Milestone Reached

Computers for Schools – in August of 2005 CFS Nova Scotia was very pleased to distribute the 30,000th computer in this province since 1994 and we are pleased to report that since then we have distributed over 1,500 more computers and are now over 31,500 mark!

