

**Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Board**



**Youth Decision Survey Report 2004**

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***Acknowledgments***

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# Executive Summary

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The results of the Provincial Apprenticeship Board's Youth Decision Survey 2004 are in, and they reflect a lack of awareness of apprenticeship and skilled trades across the province. Results of the 2004 survey indicate there is still work to be done to educate Nova Scotia's youth, as well as their parents and teachers/guidance counsellors, about careers in the skilled trades.

Most students (93%) said they believe skilled trades offer good job opportunities, yet they are not considering a career in that area and are not aware of the training required to get a job in a skilled trade.

The majority of teachers/guidance counsellors and parents believe that skilled trades are career options for all students, regardless of their academic success. Most also believe that skilled trades are important to industry and offer an interesting, challenging, and well-paid career. Despite these beliefs, only around 15 percent of parents felt that apprenticeship was appropriate for their child.

Among students, parents and teachers/guidance counsellors, university is still seen as the preferred path for young Nova Scotians. Fewer than 2 percent of students think their parents would most like them to pursue a skilled trade, and fewer than 3 percent of the parents polled identified apprenticeship in a trade as the preferred option for their child.

The majority (73%) of students say they know what an apprentice is, but only about one-third of students know what a journeyperson is, and fewer than 40 percent believed apprentices need to be employed. These results demonstrate the lack of knowledge around apprenticeship and its requirements.

Students turn to the Internet most often for information on post-secondary career options. Other sources of career information included family members, guidance counsellors, and teachers. Less than half of students said they had seen information on skilled trades and apprenticeship at school. This is particularly significant considering 85 percent of the students had taken, or were taking, the Career and Life Management course in school.

The Youth Decision Survey was conducted between January and April 2004 at nine high schools across Nova Scotia. There were 1,257 student respondents, consistent across grades 10, 11, and 12 and balanced across genders. In addition, 170 parents and 106 teachers/guidance counsellors participated.

# Introduction

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## Addressing the Skills Shortage

Nova Scotia faces an imbalance in the supply and demand for skilled trades. While the provincial workforce ages and birth rate declines, the economy is subject to technological change and globalization, increasing demand for skilled workers. At the same time, the supply of young people to fill this demand is falling due to out-migration and limited awareness of the range of training and career options in the skilled trades. In the search to find skilled workers, youth are an untapped and increasingly scarce resource.

The young people who do stay in the province are not currently drawn to careers in the skilled trades because of negative perceptions and widespread pressure to attend university. Students making career decisions need to be aware of the wide range of opportunities available. They should be aware of their personal interests and skills and should know how to access and use labour market information to explore the careers that pique their interest.

Despite this need for career information, the survey indicates that most students, and the adults who help them make career decisions, have not been exposed to information about the skilled trades. There is a lack of awareness about the abilities required, the level of technology involved, and the training paths available, and students and their parents do not seem to have a concept of the standard of living, the entrepreneurial opportunities, or advancement possibilities in the skilled trades. On the whole, Nova Scotians do not recognize the level of expertise and training required of a skilled tradesperson and how this contributes to the economy.

## University vs. Trades

In addition to the lack of information, there has also been a tendency to encourage less academically successful students to get involved with skilled trades. The assumption, often incorrect, is that the non-academic students will, by default, have the interest and ability to be successful in the skilled trades. Meanwhile, academically successful students are discouraged from skilled trades and encouraged to proceed to university, and often they do not even consider apprenticeship in a skilled trade as a career training path. For those who do proceed to university, almost 20 percent of first-year university students do not return to the second year of their program. Perhaps one reason for this attrition rate lies with the fact that students were unaware of other options and selected university by default.

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The 2004 Youth Decision Survey results reinforce the parental pressures young people feel when considering a career path. The majority of parents want their children to attend university because they believe this is the only path to successful employment. During a presentation at the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum in Halifax in 2004, Dr. John Walsh, Associate Dean of the Faculty of Management at the University of Guelph, indicated there are approximately 20 percent fewer students attending university and college than parents who want their kids to attend. This statistic demonstrates that parents need to be further educated about careers in the skilled trades.

## 2000 Youth Decision Survey: Call for Action

In 2000, the Nova Scotia Provincial Apprenticeship Board (PAB) initiated the Youth Decision Survey to determine high school students' level of knowledge about apprenticeship and to identify the factors contributing to their post-secondary destination decision. The results of the survey were not surprising. The percentage of students who were aware of apprenticeship and skilled trade opportunities was limited.

These findings were analysed on a national level when the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum addressed the question, Why aren't young Nova Scotians considering and choosing careers in skilled trades? in its 2004 report *Accessing and Completing Apprenticeship Training in Canada, Perceptions of Barriers*. The report identified a prevailing negative attitude to apprenticeship (skilled trades) among youth, parents, and employers. It also pointed to a lack of information and awareness about apprenticeship and limited support for skilled trades in schools.

These findings prompted a renewed effort to encourage Nova Scotia's youth to consider a career in a skilled trade. The Provincial Apprenticeship Board and the Apprenticeship Training and Skill Development Division of the Department of Education introduced a newsletter, annual apprenticeship celebration events, and a marketing strategy to boost awareness of skilled trades. The division presented trades and apprenticeship information to community groups, students, and educators. Industry and labour organizations continued to help create awareness initiatives and apprenticeship opportunities.

After the results of the 2000 survey, the Provincial Apprenticeship Board committed to conducting ongoing surveys to gauge changes in apprenticeship awareness and interest among Nova Scotia's youth. The board repeated the Youth Decision Survey in 2004, and this time included questions to capture the perceptions of parents and teachers/guidance counsellors.



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## Skills for Success

The results of the 2004 Youth Decision Survey are similar to those from 2000. Apprenticeship and skilled trades remain relatively unknown, unconsidered, or unattractive to high school students. Personal interest and financial security remain major factors in choosing a career path, and students believe that when it comes to personal strengths, they are weakest in mechanical skills.

The Youth Decision Survey captured perceptions of high school students, but it is interesting to note that as many as 10 percent of students do not complete high school in Nova Scotia, often because they are bored or not interested in the curriculum. If these students could explore skilled trades through work-based experience, they might find relevance in high school and be motivated to return to class.

The survey results underline the need to engage Nova Scotia's youth with compelling information that demonstrates the range of skilled trades available, the expertise required, and the potential for a secure future. It is especially important to counter the negative perceptions that lead people away from potentially rewarding and stable futures in the skilled trades.

The Provincial Apprenticeship Board provides advice to the Minister of Education on apprenticeship issues; serves as a link between government, business, and industry; makes recommendations on the designations of new trades and occupations; and engages in promotional and educational initiatives to inform and encourage Nova Scotians to consider careers in skilled trades.

In 2002, the board developed a three-year action plan to enhance its ability to meet these responsibilities. The plan included marketing initiatives to promote the benefits of apprenticeship and increase youth participation.

## Methodology

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The Youth Decision Survey was conducted between January and April 2004 at the following schools (the same schools were involved in the 2000 survey):

- Amherst High School
- Avon View High School
- Cobequid Educational Centre
- Digby Regional High School
- Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional School
- Eastern Shore District High School
- École NDA
- École Beau-Port
- École secondaire de Par-en-Bas
- École du Carrefour
- Glace Bay High School
- Holy Angels High School
- Memorial High School
- Millwood High School
- Sir John A. MacDonald High School
- St. Patrick's High School
- Strait Area Education-Recreation Centre
- Sydney Academy
- West Kings District High School
- Yarmouth Consolidated Memorial High

There were 1,257 student respondents, consistent across grades 10, 11, and 12 and balanced across genders. In addition, 170 parents and 106 teachers/guidance counsellors participated.

The results of the survey are included in this report. The following section identifies each question and provides the data captured from the student surveys, and some generalities regarding responses.

# Questions

## Self-Identified Strengths

### Question 1

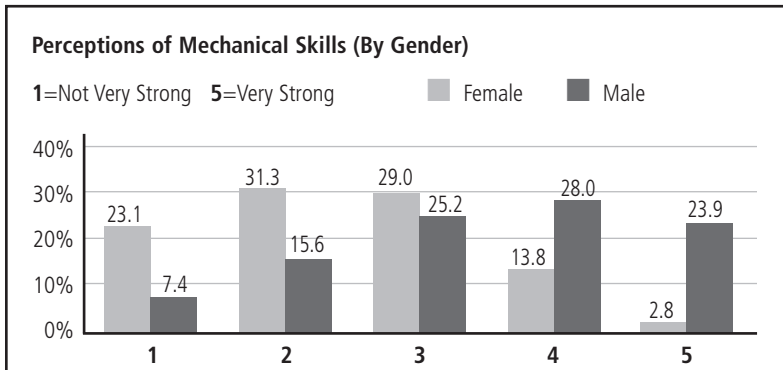
Students, particularly young women, do not believe they have mechanical skills.

**How strong are you in each of the following areas? Score yourself as you think you really are compared with all others your own age.**

1=Not Very Strong 5=Very Strong

%

Strength	1	2	3	4	5
Mathematics	10.2	17.0	34.7	26.7	11.4
Science	3.8	12.4	37.9	33.0	12.9
English	4.0	10.8	26.8	38.9	19.5
Communication	1.8	6.3	25.6	42.3	24.0
Technology	2.9	11.0	30.9	34.4	20.7
Business	5.7	18.7	38.5	26.5	10.5
Art & Music	7.3	14.5	21.8	29.8	26.6
Social Science	4.6	13.7	38.6	31.8	11.3
Computer Science	6.8	18.5	32.3	28.3	14.0
Mechanical Skills	15.1	23.3	27.0	21.0	13.5



Students perceive their strengths to be in communication, english, and art and music. Parents believe their own strengths are communication, english, and mathematics; while teachers/guidance counsellors who were polled identified their strengths as english, communication, and social science.

Students identified their weak areas as mechanical skills and mathematics. Young women rated their mechanical skills lower than young men did.

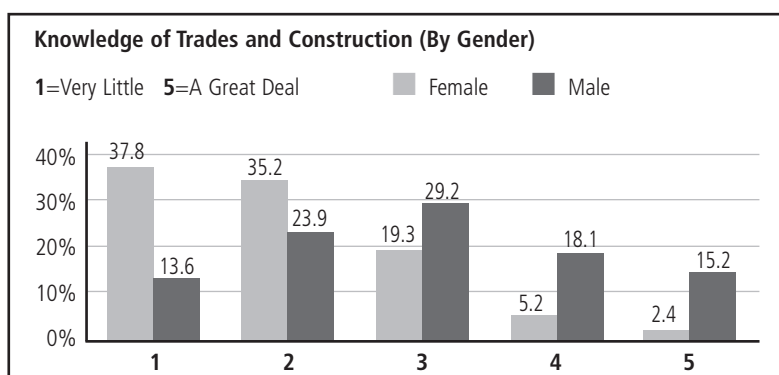
Parents identified their weak areas as computer science and mechanical skills; while teachers/guidance counsellors described art and music and mechanical skills as their areas of weakness.

# Career Knowledge

## Question 2

Area	How much do you know about jobs in each of the following areas?				
	1=Very Little 5=A Great Deal				
	%				
	1	2	3	4	5
Agriculture (farming, ranching, working with plants or animals, inspecting, marketing, etc.)	19.7	30.6	29.2	13.0	7.5
Business Services (financial, information, administration, distribution services, etc.)	16.3	35.9	29.8	13.5	4.4
Education (teaching, employee, job, personal development, etc.)	8.9	18.8	37.8	25.7	8.8
Energy (alternative energy, hydro-electric and nuclear energy, etc.)	29.2	33.8	23.5	9.6	3.9
Entertainment (art & design, dance, radio, film, television, music, theatre, writing, etc.)	6.2	13.1	26.6	31.1	23.1
Environment (impact assessment, policy and protection, research and development, etc.)	18.3	34.2	32.8	10.0	4.7
Fine Arts & Crafts (art & design, clay, wood, metal, fabric production, etc.)	14.5	26.7	27.4	21.1	10.3
Forestry & Paper Products (logging, saw mills, pulp & paper, manufacturing, etc.)	29.4	32.7	23.1	10.8	4.1
Health (acute, long-term, preventative and alternative care, biotechnology, research, etc.)	15.0	27.1	31.9	19.8	6.1
Information Technology (computers, networks, software, programming, etc.)	13.5	26.6	29.3	21.5	9.1
Logistics (inventory management, traffic & transportation, warehouse & distribution, etc.)	28.3	34.1	26.9	7.6	3.1
Manufacturing & Processing (chemicals, food & beverage production, metals, material production etc.)	23.1	33.6	26.9	12.1	4.4
Personal Services (child care, home-based business, cleaning, image & well-being, etc.)	13.3	21.4	29.4	23.9	12.0
Pharmaceuticals (Production, distribution, research, development, sales, marketing, etc.)	26.2	33.6	27.5	9.2	3.5
Public/Community Services (culture & recreation, protection & safety, etc.)	15.8	25.4	32.9	19.3	6.6
Retail Services (department stores, specialty shops, grocery, independent business, etc.)	12.5	23.7	31.2	22.0	10.6
Telecommunications (service providers, user organizations, manufacturing, etc.)	23.6	34.1	28.2	10.7	3.4
Tourism (transportation, food & beverage, attractions, accommodations, events, etc.)	13.9	23.9	32.7	21.6	7.9
Trades & Construction (mechanical, electrical, site preparation, etc.)	25.6	29.5	24.3	11.7	8.9
Transportation (air, marine, railroad, road, space transport, etc.)	18.4	26.3	30.4	18.0	6.9

Nova Scotia's students, parents, and teachers/guidance counsellors all identified a lack of knowledge about career opportunities in the field of trades and construction – more than 55 percent of students said they knew either very little or little about this area. This reflects the same responses as those from the 2000 survey. Almost six in 10 parents and seven in 10 teachers/guidance counsellors indicated they knew very little/little about trades & construction opportunities.



Students appear to have little knowledge about job opportunities in skilled trades.

Students predominately believe they know more about opportunities in entertainment than in any other field, followed by personal services, retail services, and fine arts and crafts.

As for parents' knowledge about career opportunities, personal services led the way followed by education and retail service. Pharmaceuticals and energy scored poorly. Not surprisingly, teachers/guidance counsellors generally indicated they knew more about education than any other field.

## Knowledge of Apprenticeship

### Question 3

<b>How much do you know about jobs in each of the following areas?</b>		
Please respond to each of the following by answering Yes or No.		
	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>%</b>	
Do you know what an "apprentice" is?	26.7	73.3
Do you know what a "journeyman" is?	64.7	35.3
Do you have a part-time job?	50.7	49.3
Have you had a summer job?	25.1	74.9
Do you know what job you want when you leave school?	39.2	60.8
Most adults in my family have been to university.	53.6	46.4
Do you have a close family member in skilled trades?	38.4	61.6
I rely on family members for advice on my education/career.	43.5	56.5
I rely on teachers for advice on my education/career.	52.0	48.0
I rely on guidance counsellors for advice on my education/career.	61.4	38.6
I rely on my friends for advice on my education/career.	59.5	40.5
I generally make my own decisions on my education/career.	10.7	89.3
I know people who are apprentices.	62.8	37.2
People who have jobs in the skilled trades are successful.	14.9	85.1
You have to go to university to get a good job.	65.3	34.7
Grade 12 is required to become an apprentice.	33.9	66.1
You must be employed to become an apprentice.	61.2	38.8
An apprenticeship is required to work in a skilled trade.	36.9	63.1
Attending college is required to work in a skilled trade.	50.1	49.9
There are good job opportunities in skilled trades.	7.1	92.9
I expect to do the same kind of work as my friends.	90.1	9.9
Females are encouraged to pursue careers in skilled trades.	42.9	57.1
I have seen information on skilled trades and apprenticeship at school.	53.8	46.2

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Most students say skilled trades offer good job opportunities, but they are not familiar with the training path toward a career in a trade (apprenticeship) and are not considering a career in the skilled trades.

Most students said they knew what an apprentice is, but responses to related questions suggest that this may not be the case. For example, someone with knowledge of apprenticeship would understand that a journeyman – someone who has completed an apprenticeship, is certified to work in a trade and mentors apprentices – is an integral part of the apprenticeship process. Yet, only about one-third of the students said they knew what a journeyman is, and less than 40 percent knew that they had to be employed to be apprentices.

There has been an increase in the percentage of students who say they know what an apprentice is since the 2000 survey was conducted. One likely explanation is the recent debut and popularity of the reality television program *The Apprentice*, which would also explain, in part, the fact that students are unfamiliar with other aspects of apprenticeship and skilled trades.

Parents and teachers/guidance counsellors appeared to have only slightly more awareness of apprenticeship than students do. Half the parents and over 60 percent of teachers/guidance counsellors were unaware that employment is mandatory for an apprenticeship.

Almost all respondents in each category believed that there are good opportunities in skilled trades. While over half of the students polled believe that females are encouraged to pursue careers in skilled trades, an even higher percentage of teachers/guidance counsellors (68%) and parents (79%) believed this to be true.

Less than half of the students said they had seen information on skilled trades and apprenticeship at school. This is particularly significant considering that 85 percent of the students had taken or were taking the Career and Life Management course in school.

As for the perceived importance of university, only 19 percent of parents and 35 percent of students agreed that “you have to go to university to get a good job.” Given that teachers/guidance counsellors have all attended university, it is surprising that only 9 percent of them agreed that university was important to get a good job. These results contrast with anecdotal evidence suggesting that parents, teachers/guidance counsellors, and students all continue to see university as a requirement for career success.

When it comes to choosing a path for post-secondary education or career, most (61%) high school students said they have decided which job they want – despite responses to other survey questions that suggest otherwise. They also indicated they generally make their own decisions about education/career, with some reliance on family, teachers, guidance counsellors, and friends. Interestingly, only one in 10 students expected to do the same work as their friends. And most parents said they let their children make their own education/career decisions.

## Attitudes Towards Apprenticeship and Trades

### Question 4

<b>How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?</b>					
1=Strongly Disagree 3=Undecided/Don't Know 5=Strongly Agree					
	%				
	1	2	3	4	5
Apprentices are paid low wages.	9.9	12.7	65.5	8.4	3.5
An apprenticeship is too difficult for me.	26.9	20.2	46.0	4.1	2.7
Apprenticeship programs are too long.	15.1	16.5	60.7	5.0	2.3
Apprenticeship programs are too expensive.	14.9	12.8	63.8	5.1	3.5
I will probably choose a job in a skilled trade.	25.6	13.3	31.9	14.8	14.5
Skilled trade careers are well paid.	5.7	18.7	38.5	26.5	10.5
Skilled trade careers are dirty.	22.1	20.4	41.4	10.8	5.2
Skilled trade careers are interesting and challenging.	3.6	7.3	37.3	32.1	19.7
People would think it unusual if I become an apprentice.	19.7	14.7	45.9	9.7	10.1
New technology makes skilled trades less important.	19.7	19.7	39.8	15.7	5.2
People employed in skilled trades are satisfied with their jobs.	3.2	7.5	54.3	25.6	9.5
Skilled tradespeople are often unemployed.	14.9	22.5	52.4	7.2	3.0
An office job is better than a skilled trade job.	24.8	16.6	40.4	10.5	7.8
Skilled tradespeople often start their own business.	3.4	7.3	52.4	26.3	10.6
Skilled trades jobs are important in industry.	3.1	4.5	34.1	29.8	28.5
Women are capable of working in skilled trades.	3.9	3.6	18.1	20.7	53.7
I know what I need to study to become an apprentice.	14.7	9.1	58.2	8.8	9.2
There is a big demand for skilled tradespeople.	2.6	3.5	54.1	19.2	20.6
I have thought about becoming an apprentice.	34.8	14.5	33.2	8.9	8.6
Apprenticeship is not for me.	13.3	8.6	45.2	11.0	21.8
I do not know much about apprenticeship programs.	9.7	9.7	24.3	18.6	37.7
People in skilled trade jobs rarely get promoted.	11.4	13.7	64.4	6.5	4.0
I believe good students do not go into skilled trades.	28.3	18.0	39.6	8.1	6.0
Apprenticeship is an option for less academically inclined students.	19.7	12.6	49.1	12.1	6.5
Skilled trades and apprenticeship information is available at school.	7.4	7.6	53.1	16.7	15.3

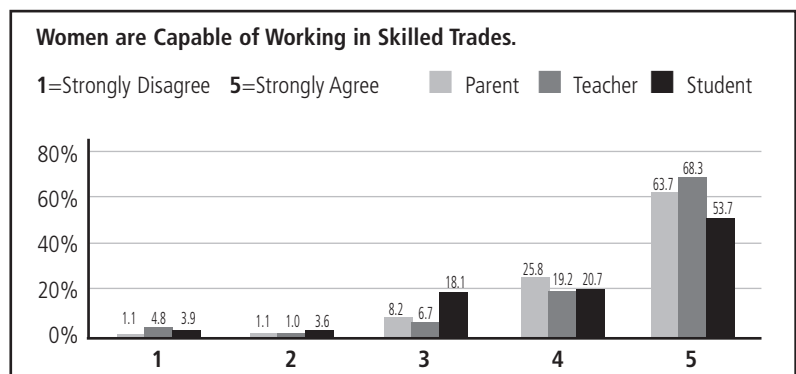
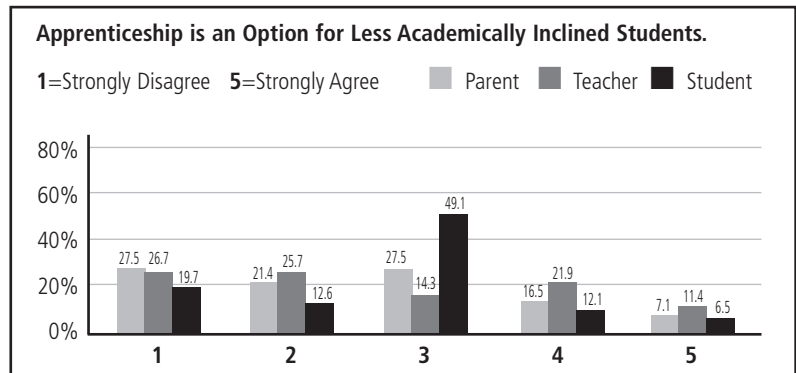
Students, more than teachers/guidance counsellors, or parents, were undecided or didn't know about many statements regarding trades and apprenticeship.

They didn't know:

- wages
- cost of apprenticeship programs
- what they needed to study to become an apprentice
- level of job satisfaction of people in skilled trades
- entrepreneurial opportunities
- opportunities for promotion
- demand for skilled tradespeople

There is a difference between teachers/guidance counsellors' and students' perceptions of information about skilled trades and apprenticeship available at school. Thirty-two percent of students and 50 percent of teachers/guidance counsellors agreed or strongly agreed that adequate information is available.

Teachers/guidance counsellors and parents, for the most part, believe that skilled trades (and apprenticeship) are options for both "good students" and less academically inclined students, that skilled trades are important to industry, and that skilled trades are interesting, challenging, and well paid. And yet, just over 15 percent of parents felt that apprenticeship was appropriate for their child.



*Students know little about apprenticeship or skilled trades, and what they do know suggests they see skilled trades targeting students with lower academic success.*



## Potential Career Selection

### Question 5

*Students have a clearer idea of what area they are NOT likely to pursue than they do of areas they are likely to pursue. Trades are more unpopular than popular.*

<b>Consider your own abilities and interests. How likely is it that you will work in the following areas when your education is complete?</b>					
1=Not Likely 3=Undecided 5=Very Likely					
	%				
	1	2	3	4	5
Agriculture	55.3	16.6	17.6	7.0	3.5
Business Services	28.5	15.8	27.8	20.2	7.7
Education	29.6	15.6	24.8	17.6	12.5
Energy	44.8	17.3	23.2	10.8	3.9
Entertainment	27.2	13.7	23.7	22.0	13.4
Environment	37.3	20.4	22.9	14.3	5.1
Fine Arts and Crafts	44.2	16.8	18.8	11.9	8.4
Forestry and Paper Products	54.0	17.9	17.3	6.9	3.8
Health	31.7	15.8	23.0	16.0	13.5
Information Technology	36.9	19.6	25.7	12.3	5.6
Manufacturing and Processing	45.0	19.3	22.0	9.7	4.1
Personal Services	32.5	16.9	27.0	15.4	8.2
Pharmaceuticals	41.9	15.0	24.7	11.7	6.8
Public/Community Services	36.1	17.6	23.6	14.9	7.8
Retail Services	38.7	20.0	24.7	11.9	4.7
Telecommunications	44.5	19.3	24.2	8.2	3.8
Tourism	39.9	17.4	23.6	13.4	5.7
Trades and Construction	42.5	14.6	18.2	10.9	13.8
Transportation	41.5	16.7	21.8	11.0	9.0

When it comes to careers, students are more likely to know what they don't want to do than what they do want to do. For example, although trades and construction ranked fifth as the field in which they say they are very likely or likely to work, the numbers paled when compared with the percentage who indicated they were not likely to pick a career in this field.

The areas in which students identified as being likely or very likely to work were ranked in the following order: entertainment, education, health, and business services.

## Resources for Career Planning

### Question 6

**To help you decide what to do when you leave high school, what sources of information and advice do you find to be the most useful?**

1=Not Useful 5=Very Useful

	% 1      2      3      4      5					Rank (4 and 5 combined)
University/College Calendars	11.3	10.0	22.1	23.6	33.0	5
Friends	8.2	13.3	26.2	29.3	23.0	7
TV, Radio, and Magazines	14.4	17.5	28.7	22.0	17.4	11
Internet	5.4	6.0	16.3	31.7	40.7	1
Family Members	5.1	5.7	18.3	32.4	38.5	2
Teachers	8.1	7.3	19.7	30.7	34.2	3
Guidance Counsellors	10.9	8.3	18.1	27.0	35.7	4
Career Fairs	10.4	10.4	26.7	24.8	27.7	6
Brochures/Posters	10.2	15.1	27.2	23.6	23.9	10
Employer	12.8	12.2	26.7	24.6	23.7	9
Other	12.3	6.4	31.4	15.9	34.1	8

*Students draw on a variety of sources for information, with the Internet gaining popularity as a primary destination. Information to assist post-secondary decision making needs to be weighted towards teachers and guidance counsellors.*

For students, the most useful sources of information when deciding what to do after leaving high school were the Internet, family members, guidance counsellors, and teachers. Information supplied by university/college calendars was identified as very useful by 33 percent of respondents. Results indicated that the Internet is more useful than it was in 2000. The least useful source of information was traditional media (television, radio, and magazines).

Parents found the most useful information and advice to help their children were teachers, guidance counsellors, and career fairs.

Teachers/guidance counsellors identified the most useful sources of information to help students make post-secondary destination decisions as teachers, guidance counsellors, university/college calendars and employers.

## Decision Making

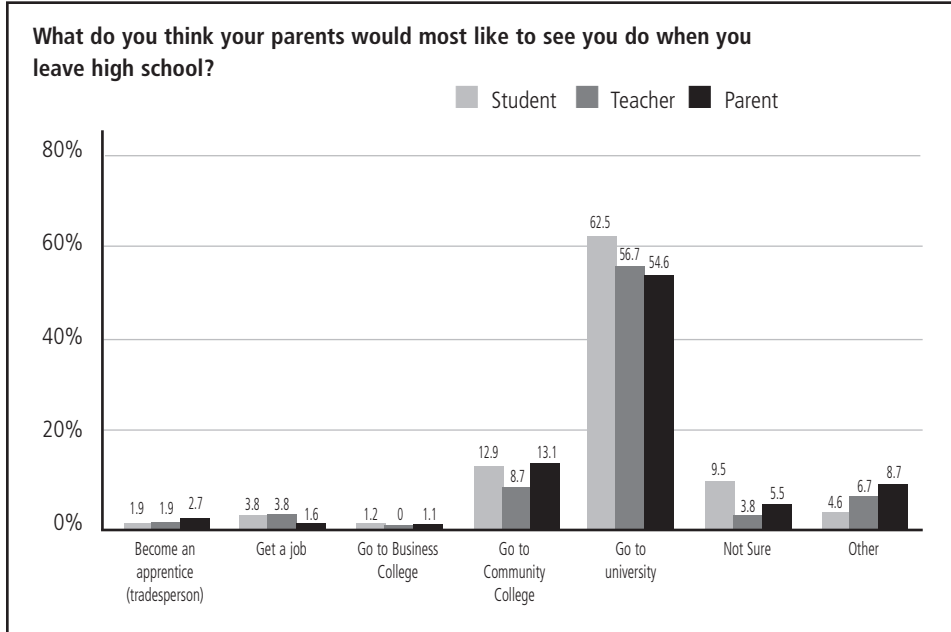
### Question 7

*When it comes to deciding what students will do after leaving high school, the primary factors, in order, are personal likes and interests, potential future income, secure future, and natural skills/aptitudes.*

<b>When considering what you will do after leaving high school, how important are the following issues?</b>						
1=Not Important 5=Very Important						
	%					Rank (4 and 5 combined)
	1	2	3	4	5	
Immediate Income/Earnings	5.5	7.5	24.1	25.3	37.7	5
Potential Future Income/Earnings	3.0	4.3	16.5	29.5	46.8	2
Location (Stay at home vs. move away)	10.0	7.6	21.3	26.4	34.8	6
Decisions of Friends	21.3	20.2	31.3	14.5	12.7	13
Advice/Opinions of Friends	13.4	17.9	32.5	21.3	14.8	11
Advice/Opinions of Family	10.1	11.1	31.2	28.4	19.2	10
Teacher's Opinion	23.9	20.8	29.9	16.5	8.9	14
Guidance Counsellor's Opinion	24.7	17.6	29.1	16.9	11.7	12
Length of Commitment (2- vs. 4- year program, etc.)	14.2	11.5	26.4	25.4	22.6	9
Natural Skills/Aptitudes	4.7	8.1	22.6	34.9	29.7	4
Secure Future	5.5	4.7	20.4	27.0	42.4	3
Challenging Work	5.6	9.7	28.6	31.1	25.0	7
Personal Likes and Interests	2.3	3.0	12.9	24.9	56.9	1
Predictions of Future Job Market Conditions	6.4	8.1	34.9	26.2	24.4	8

# Parental Attitudes

## Question 8



*Among students, parents, and teachers/guidance counsellors, university is still seen as the preferred path for young Nova Scotians to follow to enjoy a successful career. Fewer than 2 percent of students think their parents would most like to see them pursue a trade.*

Students and teachers/guidance counsellors assumed correctly that parents wanted their children to go to university. They also recognized that parents do not see apprenticeship or business college as preferred options. In fact, less than 3 percent of the parents polled identified apprenticeship in a skilled trade as the preferred option for their child.

# The Future

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There has been little change in the perceptions of, or interest in, apprenticeship among Nova Scotia's youth since they were surveyed in 2000. While some young people have heard of apprenticeship, it is clear that any knowledge they have is at a cursory level, given the high percentage of "undecided/don't know" answers to basic apprenticeship questions and statements.

Personal likes and interests are very important to students as they consider post-secondary destinations, so it is important that they be exposed to information and opportunities to discover skilled trades. Students continue to indicate a lack of information on apprenticeship and skilled trades available in the schools, and parents assume that the information is available there. Students do not have confidence that they have mechanical skills, probably because they have few opportunities to learn and explore them.

Parents act as career coaches for their children, and they are placing an emphasis on university without knowing the opportunities available and skills involved in careers in trades. Providing this information to parents will help students explore skilled trades as an option.

Teachers' career paths generally take them from high school to university, without exposing them to other training options. They need to be exposed to information about the skilled trades so that they can promote them as viable career opportunities.

All youth should be exposed to information about and experiences in a wide range of career options.

The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Board and the Apprenticeship Training and Skill Development Division are committed to promoting trades as viable careers through a number of initiatives intended to

- celebrate apprentices, journeypersons, and employers
- advertise careers in skilled trades
- provide information through a youth-friendly, interactive website
- design and deliver interactive presentations
- provide career awareness information to parents
- provide resources to educators
- develop a system to register youth as apprentices while they gain high school credits

