

**Model Schools in NB**  
**by Kaye Lister**  
**Credit: Mae Ward: Student Curator 2023, School Days Museum**

Flashback to the 1960's! I remember one Monday morning in my classroom at Fredericton's Montgomery St. School, looking over my Grade Five/Six class of thirty students and thinking, "Please behave; please ask thought-provoking questions; please know the correct answers; please don't notice that I'm nervous." Why all this? Because in a few moments several university students will enter the classroom to spend some time watching me teach these students, while hoping to learn how to become a teacher. What a massive undertaking! Actually it was an example of the most recent attempt of the province at providing an off-shoot of what was once known as a Model School.

How did it all begin? In 1847 the Education Committee of the NB Legislative Assembly presented a bill providing provincial teacher training and the establishment of model schools. The following year the Saint John Normal School opened, including a model school on its premises. A number of years later a Provincial Normal School was opened in Fredericton in 1877 also featuring a model school. Then in 1914 an annex was built onto the Fredericton Normal School, providing a new up-to-date home for its model school.

You may ask, "What is a model school?" The Fredericton Model School consisted of four classrooms where students in grades one to eight were taught by a selected staff of elementary school teachers. It was in these classrooms where the student teachers from the Normal School observed those classroom teachers as they demonstrated the best known techniques of instruction. In time the student teachers had their turn at instructing the students while the regular classroom teacher and the superintendent observed them, later critiquing each lesson taught.

By 1956 another change took place when the student teachers were no longer trained in the model school but were placed in regular classrooms in schools around the city. Thus the Model School method of teacher training was phased out and instead the students were each assigned to a particular school. There they spent a portion of their university year learning everything from instructional methods to how to use a classroom register, keeping order in a class of students, and even playground supervision.

It is interesting to note that the 'School Days Museum' is now located in three of the former Model School classrooms: Education coming full circle!