



Council of Ministers of Education, Canada
Conseil des ministres de l'Éducation (Canada)

ATTRACTING, DEVELOPING, AND RETAINING EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

1. The overall purpose of this activity of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development is to provide policy makers with information and analysis to assist them in formulating and implementing teacher policies leading to quality teaching and learning at the elementary and secondary school levels.
2. The activity sought to: synthesize research on issues related to policies concerned with attracting, developing, and retaining effective teachers; identify innovative and successful policy initiatives and practices; facilitate exchanges of lessons and experiences among countries; and identify policy options.
3. In Canada, CMEC informed the provinces and territories of the activity. Quebec opted to participate in the analytical strand of the activity, which called for a background report. The analytical strand used a variety of means — including literature reviews, data analyses, commissioned papers, and consultations with partners — to analyze the context of teacher policy in OECD Member countries, the factors that shape attracting, developing, and retaining effective teachers, and the range of policy responses available.
4. What follows is an introduction to the analytical reports from Quebec to the OECD study.

INTRODUCTION

Education in Canada

5. Canada — a vast country stretching across the northern half of North America from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean and north to the Arctic Ocean — is a confederation of ten provinces and three territories. Within its federal system of shared powers, Canada's Constitution Act, 1867, provides that "[I]n and for each Province, the Legislature may exclusively make Laws in relation to Education." While there are a great many similarities in the provincial/territorial education systems across Canada, they each reflect the diversity of the region's geography, history, and culture. Responsibility for education at all levels is vested in provinces and territories.
6. The historical and cultural events, culminating in confederation in the 19th century led a century later to Canada's adoption of the Official Languages Act (1969, revised in 1988). This Act establishes French and English as the official languages of Canada and provides for special measures aimed at enhancing the vitality, and supporting the development, of English and French linguistic minority communities.
7. Across the country, according to the 2001 Census, 67 per cent of the population speak English only, 13 per cent speak French only, and 18 per cent speak both English and French. English is the mother tongue of about 59 per cent of the population, while French is the mother tongue of 23 per cent. In Quebec, 41 per cent of the population speak both languages, while another 54 per cent speak only French. In other provinces, the proportion of those who speak both languages decreases — for example, in New Brunswick, 34 per cent; in Ontario, 12 per cent; in Manitoba, 9 per cent. Education is available in either

official language in Quebec and New Brunswick, and in other provinces and territories wherever numbers warrant.

8. The federal government department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) is responsible for the elementary and secondary education of Registered Indian children living on reserves, either through First Nations-operated schools on the reserves, provincially administered schools off the reserves, or federal schools operated by INAC on the reserves. The department also provides financial assistance (through administering authorities such as First Nations councils) to eligible Registered Indian students in postsecondary education programs, and it funds some programs designed for First Nations students at both First Nations and other postsecondary institutions. Educational services for Registered Indians in the Yukon and both Registered Indians and Inuit in the Northwest Territories are provided by the respective territorial governments. Registered Indians and Inuit in northern Quebec receive educational services from Quebec under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

9. The federal government also provides education and training to those who serve in the Armed Forces and the Coast Guard, and to those inmates serving time in penitentiaries and other institutions of Correctional Service Canada.

Elementary and Secondary Education

10. Each province or territory has a ministry or department of education that is responsible for providing elementary and secondary education free until the age of 18. At the local level in all provinces and territories, members of school boards (or school districts, or school divisions, or the District Education Councils in New Brunswick) are elected by public ballot. The powers and duties of these “trustees,” defined by provincial/territorial legislatures, are fairly consistent throughout Canada. Their authority usually includes the operation and administration (including financial) of the schools within their board, staffing responsibilities, enrolment of students, implementation of the provincial/territorial curriculum, and initiation of proposals for new construction or other major capital expenditures.

11. The ages for compulsory schooling vary from one jurisdiction to another, but most require attendance in school from age 6 or 7 to age 16. All provinces and territories also offer one-year kindergartens for 5-year-olds, which are operated by local education authorities. In addition, some jurisdictions provide early childhood services, including preschool programs or junior kindergarten. In most jurisdictions, elementary schools provide the first six to eight years of compulsory schooling, after which most children/adolescents go on to the secondary level where they can choose from a variety of programs leading to apprenticeships and the job market or to further studies at colleges and universities.

12. The first two years at the secondary level usually offer a core of compulsory subjects supplemented by some optional subjects. In the final two years, there are fewer compulsory subjects so that students can choose more optional courses in specialized programs that prepare them either to enter the job market or to meet the entrance requirements of the postsecondary college, university, or institution of their choice. Students who pass the required number of both compulsory and optional courses graduate with a Secondary School Diploma. For example, in Ontario since September 1999, students must complete 30 credits during the four-year secondary school program — 18 compulsory and 12 optional courses. They must also pass the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test in order to graduate.

13. The point of transition from elementary to secondary school varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Some school boards break up the elementary-secondary continuum by grouping kindergarten to grade 5, 6, 7, or 8 in elementary schools, or grades 6–8 in middle schools, or grades 7–9 in junior highs, and the remaining grades in secondary schools or collegiates. In Quebec, general secondary education includes grades 7 to 11, and either at the beginning of grade 10 or after completing grade 11, a certain number of

students continue on in vocational education. Those who receive their secondary school diplomas can continue their studies in a public or private college (see below).

14. Most public schools accommodate special-needs students (the physically or mentally disabled or the gifted) in various ways, whether in separate programs and classrooms or in a regular classroom where they follow the regular program but receive additional support and assistance.

15. Private or independent schools provide an alternative to publicly funded schools in any province or territory, but they must meet the general standards prescribed by the ministry/department of education. In most cases, they follow closely the curriculum and diploma requirements of the ministry/department of education, except that they function independently of the public system and charge tuition fees. In Ontario and Quebec, private institutions that offer credits toward the secondary school diploma must follow the curriculum and diploma requirements of the Ministry of Education. Some provinces — Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Quebec, and Saskatchewan — provide some form of financial assistance to these schools.

Postsecondary Education

16. In the graduating year of secondary school, students may apply to a college or a university, depending on the region and on their qualifications. Quebec students must obtain a college diploma if they want to proceed to a university program. The Quebec public colleges, called “collèges d’enseignement général et professionnel” or “Cégeps,” are free to all students; they offer both general programs that lead to university admission and vocational programs that prepare students for the labour market. In all other provinces and territories, and in Quebec private colleges, students pay tuition fees for college programs and courses.

17. Postsecondary education is available in both government-supported and private institutions. Colleges such as technical and vocational institutions, community colleges, Cégeps, and others offer programs varying in length from six months to three years. These programs serve to train and develop students’ knowledge and skills for careers in business, the applied arts, technology, social services, and some of the health sciences. In general, colleges award diplomas or certificates, not academic degrees. Some colleges and technical institutions, in cooperation with business and industry partners, offer diplomas in applied arts and sciences, such as professional development services, or they offer specialized programs in high-technology areas that prepare students for employment upon graduation.

18. The British Columbia community college system allows students to complete either a diploma program or two years of academic course work toward a bachelor’s degree. Some students may decide not to continue, but others have the opportunity to complete the third and fourth years at a university-college or university to earn a degree. Only the universities may grant graduate degrees. In other provinces, students must have their completed college courses evaluated for equivalency in order to receive credit when they apply for admission to a university.

19. In Canada, most universities offer three-year or four-year programs leading to bachelor’s degrees, depending on the program. Universities, in some provinces, grant a general Bachelor of Arts (B.A) or a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degree after three years, but require a fourth year (or four years in total) of specialized study for an honours degree (H.B.A. or H.B.Sc.). Other provinces require four years of study before granting either a general or an honours degree. The larger universities offer a complete range of programs; others are more specialized and have developed specific areas of excellence. Along with some specialized institutions that are not campus-based, some offer courses and programs through distance education by correspondence or telecommunication.

20. It is possible to pursue specialized advanced studies through three levels — from the bachelor’s degree to a master’s degree and on to a doctoral degree — at those universities that offer graduate studies and degrees. To achieve a master’s degree, students pursue one or two years of further study, depending on whether their undergraduate degree was a general or honours degree. Some institutions require the student to produce a thesis or to work through a professional practicum for the master’s degree. For the doctorate, students spend three to five more years after that, usually researching, writing, presenting, and defending a thesis, in addition to attending seminars and a specified number of courses.

The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada

21. The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) was formed in 1967 by the provincial/territorial ministers of education to provide a forum in which they could discuss matters of mutual interest, undertake educational initiatives cooperatively, and represent the interests of the provinces/territories with national education organizations, the federal government, foreign governments, and international organizations. CMEC provides a national voice for education in Canada and, through CMEC, the provinces and territories work collectively on common objectives in a broad range of activities at the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels.

22. Additional information is available at the following Web sites: <http://www.cmec.ca/> , <http://www.educationcanada.cmec.ca> , and <http://www.cicic.ca> .

Structure and organization of the education systems

Levels within elementary-secondary schools, by jurisdiction

Newfoundland and Labrador	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
Prince Edward Island ¹	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
Nova Scotia	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
New Brunswick – English	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
New Brunswick – French	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
Quebec – General	P	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
Quebec – Vocational											10	11	12	13	
Ontario ²	P	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Manitoba	P	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Saskatchewan	P	P	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Alberta	P	P	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
British Columbia	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
Yukon	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
Northwest Territories	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
Nunavut	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		

P	Pre-elementary, not universally available
P	Pre-elementary, universally available
	Elementary/Primary
	Junior high/Middle
	Senior high
	Secondary

1. Prince Edward Island introduced its pre-elementary program in 2000-2001.
 2. 2002-2003 is the last year for the Ontario Academic Course (13th year of high-school).

Source: Statistics Canada and Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, *Education Indicators in Canada: Report of the Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program 2003* (Toronto, Ontario: Canadian Education Statistics Council, 2003), 172.