



Choice and Accountability in Canadian Education

Technical Report

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CHOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN CANADIAN EDUCATION (CACE)

Technical Report

Prepared by the

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Preface

Issues related to choice and accountability are increasingly recognized as central to discussions on how to improve primary and secondary education in Canada. As a means of contributing to this discussion, the Choice and Accountability in Canadian Education (CACE) Project was undertaken (a) to document the range of school choice, program choice, and accountability policies and practices in all provinces and in selected urban centres and (b) to provide a review of the policies, practices, and findings that will inform future discussions and explorations of choice and accountability in Canadian education. The products of this work are presented in four related documents: this report; the *CACE Literature Review*; the *CACE Comprehensive Appendices*; and the *Reference Guide to Choice and Accountability in Education*. This report includes a summary of research on school choice; an overview of policies and practices in all 10 provinces, 11 urban areas, and 28 urban school districts; and a discussion of critical issues and findings related to school choice, program choice, and accountability. The *CACE Literature Review* is an extensive analysis of issues and research related to school choice. The *CACE Comprehensive Appendices* include documents related to methods used in the project, as well as reports on provincial and jurisdiction policies and practices. *The Reference Guide to Choice and Accountability in Canadian Education* provides a snapshot of the state of policies and practices related to school choice, program choice, and accountability, as well as summaries of related findings and issues. Information included in all of the reports was collected in the spring of 2003. All four documents can be found at www.cup.ualberta.ca/resources_documents.html.

1.0 Choice and Accountability

In contrast to many nations, primary and secondary education in Canada fall almost entirely within the mandate of the provinces rather than with the federal government. This arrangement has allowed provincial education systems to evolve somewhat differently. One key difference is the degree to which parents and students are able to choose among different educational options as students progress through school. The freedom to choose schools, in particular, has become increasingly important in recent years for several reasons. First, school choice is often promoted as a fundamental human right. Indeed, Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, proclaimed by the United Nations in 1948, includes the proposition that “parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.” Although school choice is but one form of educational choice, the argument is often made that school choice itself should be a right, not a privilege (e.g., Hepburn & Van Belle, 2003). Second, school choice is often viewed as a means for improving educational quality by making schools responsive to the diverse needs of parents and children (e.g., Chubb & Moe, 1990; Lawton, 1995). Third, the legality of mechanisms for funding choice have become the focus of potentially important judicial decisions that may yet have a profound influence on public policy and practice (e.g., Nathan & Boyd, 2003).

A significant issue is that school choice is often described as an option beyond the public schools; as if options *within* a publicly funded system of schools do not constitute choice (e.g., Hepburn & Van Belle, 2003). This practice makes invisible the reality that choices often exist within the publicly-funded system of schools. In fact, choice within publicly funded school systems has a long tradition in Canadian history: The British North America Act specifically enabled certain religious denominations to establish schools, with public support, at least in provinces where these denominations had legal rights prior to Confederation. Much later, educational rights for linguistic minorities, whether French or English, were accorded constitutional protection. Also, Aboriginal children living on First Nations reserves have the option of attending schools on or off their reserve, and in some cases that choice is supported with federal funding.

School choice is sometimes viewed as a critical means of ensuring accountability of schools to students and parents, as if providing options were sufficient for demonstrating adequate performance. If the option to choose schools is available and if parents exercise this option, then the number of parents and students making the choice may indeed reflect parents’ judgments about the suitability and performance of schools. Other mechanisms do exist independently of school choice, of course. Schools can gather and report information from parent, student, and community satisfaction surveys, from achievement tests and from program evaluations. They may encourage parental participation in school activities and decision making, and they may undertake self-evaluations. When school choice is available, an issue is whether other measures of accountability are abandoned or whether they continue to be used to assess the performance and integrity of schools.

The concept of educational choice is anything but straightforward. One source of confusion is the array of meanings attached to the term. Whenever educational choice is discussed or implemented, specific meanings become attached to the term reflecting the local context and cultural environment in which it is discussed. The local meaning of educational choice is also influenced by any proposed project of educational choice, in particular the program’s goals and objectives.

A second source of confusion is that choice can refer to the availability of options of several kinds—choice of schools, choice of programs, and choice of courses. Having a choice does not necessarily imply having choices of each kind. If, for example, parents are able to choose which of several schools their children might attend but the schools provide identical programs, then what appears to be a high degree of choice actually would be quite limited in terms of program diversity. Similarly, students may have no choice in selecting a school but may have a rich menu of programs and courses within their school. The distinction among different forms of choice must be recognized in any careful examination of educational choice.

Support is growing for the view that choice is a fundamental right and an effective means of optimizing education, and therefore that policies and practices should be established to school choice. School choice is viewed as optimizing education by creating an environment where cost-efficient education, individual school accountability, an education system responsive to the needs of parents and students, and greater program diversity will result. School choice, program choice, and accountability are concepts that have a variety of interpretations, and each can be implemented in many different ways. In this study we review the issues associated with school and program choice and we describe the diverse ways in which choice is supported, encouraged, and implemented, or indeed discouraged, across the country. Such a review is critical for understanding the diversity of issues and practices that now exist, for informing public debate, and ultimately for providing insights that can contribute to decisions affecting educational policy and practice.

2.0 Questions and Methods

The Choice and Accountability in Education (CACE) Project was developed to investigate two overlapping and broad sets of questions.

- What do choice and accountability mean to people in the different centres across the country?
- What do we know about choice and accountability in Canada, and what do we not yet know?

The research team took two different approaches to addressing these questions, with the first directing the second. The first was to review the published literature to establish a general framework for thinking about choice and its many variations, to identify issues and questions, and to identify the various forms of school and program choice internationally. The second approach was to document the breadth of policies and practices that exist in Canada relating to school choice, program choice, and accountability by analyzing public documents and conducting interviews with administrators in provincial ministries of education and in local school jurisdictions. Specific questions were generated to guide the search for information about policies and practices at the provincial level (Table 1) and the jurisdiction level (Table 2). The information contained in this report was collected during the spring of 2003 and was derived primarily from public documents and from interviews with representatives of provincial ministries and school jurisdictions.

Table 1. Provincial Questions

Does the provincial legislation allow choice?
 Does provincial legislation require choice?
 What choices are prohibited or constrained by legislation?
 What is the percentage of students in private/independent schools?
 What is the percentage of provincial funding for students in independent/private schools? Home schools? Charter schools?
 Does provincial funding “follow the student”?
 What are the age requirements for schooling?
 Is there a mandated provincial curriculum?
 Are alternative curricula permitted?
 What are the provincial accountability measures?

Table 2. District Questions

Does district policy allow choice?
 Does district policy require the provision of choice?
 What choices are provided by district?
 Location (open boundaries)? Home schooling? Virtual/correspondence?
 Languages? Culture? Pedagogy?
 Religion? Subject Matter?
 What choices are prohibited by district?
 What are the constraints to choice faced by district?
 Does the district offer programs for those for whom provincial funding is available but who don't have the right to attend?
 How does the district measure accountability? School achievement tests? School attitude surveys? School financial statements? Student progress reports? Other?
 Does district funding “follow” the student to the district or governing authority?

Throughout this document, the terms *jurisdiction* and *district* are used interchangeably. The complete set of research questions from which the questions above were derived is contained in the *CACE Comprehensive Appendices*.

2.1 Terms

One of the first tasks was to develop a set of key terms and definitions for research interns to use to ensure a consistent approach to examining the differing education systems. Terms central to the study are presented in Table 3 and in Glossary. For the complete set, refer to the *CACE Comprehensive Appendices*.

2.2 Literature Review

This process began with a search for related and current (within 10 years) literature on school choice in library holdings, on the Internet, and in academic databases. Articles consisted primarily of empirical studies using both quantitative and qualitative methods and published in refereed journals or in books. To ensure that a breadth of findings and issues would be included in the review, research from a number of English speaking countries—Australia, Canada, England and Wales, New Zealand, and the United States—was selected. English is the predominant language in these countries, but they have distinctly different economic, historical, and political conditions.

2.3 Data Collection and Analysis

To ensure a comprehensive sample of policies and practices across Canada, data were collected from 28 school jurisdictions in 11 urban centres and 10 provinces (see Table 4). Six research interns were hired from across Canada to review and summarize provincial and jurisdiction documents, and to conduct interviews with Ministry of Education and jurisdiction representatives. The Community University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families (CUP) research team met monthly, initially to design the project and subsequently to review the reports prepared by each of the interns, and to prepare the final project reports. The interns participated in a workshop in Edmonton to prepare themselves for their tasks. Prior to any collection of data, the project was reviewed and approved by the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board.

Table 3. Terminology*

School choice: The option for parents or students to choose the school to be attended.

Program choice: The option for parents or students to choose a program other than the designated program.

Programs of choice/alternative programs: Programs developed to respond to interests. Students choose (or their parents choose for them) to attend the alternative rather than the regular program. Usually there is not the obligation for the school to offer such programs (but there may be enabling legislation) or an obligation for a student to choose the program.

Course choice: The option of choosing individual courses or series of courses, often locally developed.

Open boundaries: The policies and practices, within a school jurisdiction, that enable students to attend any school within that jurisdiction, if space is available, with minimal limitations. In jurisdictions with closed boundaries schools serve a specific geographic area exclusively and students must attend the school designated for that area. Open boundaries *between school jurisdictions* means that students can, as long as there is space, attend any school jurisdiction within the province with minimal limitations. Funding following the student is not necessarily practiced when a system of open boundaries is adopted unless provincially legislated.

Accountability: The responsibility for providing parents, school and jurisdiction personnel, and provincial education ministries with information on the performance of students, programs, and schools. Formal and informal measures may be used, including but not limited to standardized testing, satisfaction surveys, report cards, and enrolment data.

*A complete Glossary of Terms is appended to the end of this document.

For each of the provinces and school jurisdictions, the interns reviewed legislation, jurisdiction policies and procedures, and actual practices related to educational choice and accountability, including legislation, policies, and practices regulating home schooling, distance/correspondence learning, on-line/virtual learning, charter schools, band-operated schools, and private/independent schools. Special education programs are provided by all districts and are a feature of variation within districts, but they were not treated as programs of choice in this study because children attend special education programs out of necessity rather than as a preference.

To facilitate the research process, letters of introduction were sent to each provincial minister of education¹ and to superintendents or directors of over two dozen school districts in 11 urban centres. These letters provided a brief explanation of the project, introduced the research intern for the area, provided an overview of the research methodology, and requested a short interview with the appropriate person in the jurisdiction or ministry. Three school districts did not respond, and five school districts and one provincial ministry declined the opportunity to provide interviews. In these cases summaries and analyses were based entirely on public documents.

After the letters of introduction were sent, each intern reviewed and summarized information from provincial and jurisdiction documents pertaining to school choice and accountability. A document review guide (refer to the *CACE Comprehensive Appendices*) with questions similar to those in Tables 1 and 2 were used. Upon completion of the document summary, each intern contacted those people in the ministry and the jurisdiction who would be involved in the interviews. Prior to each interview, the summary report was forwarded for review. All interviewees agreed to and, when possible, signed a consent form (refer to the *CACE Comprehensive Appendices*). Interviews generally followed interview guidelines (refer to the *CACE Comprehensive Appendices*) and were recorded. Of the 35 interviews completed, 26 were conducted in person, four were conducted by telephone, and five were conducted through exchange of correspondence. All interns maintained ongoing communication with the ministry and jurisdiction representatives by e-mail, telephone, fax, or mail. Interviews ranged from 0.5 to 1.5 hours, during which time interns raised questions about attitudes, practices, and non-documented information concerning school choice, program choice and accountability within the provincial education system and the jurisdiction. Each intern also gave representatives the opportunity to clarify or modify any information contained in the document review.

All interviews were summarized and compiled with the document summary for each of the 10 provinces and 28 jurisdictions. The CACE research team then reviewed the documents and provided feedback and requests for clarification to the interns. Finally, various summaries for each province and jurisdiction were sent to appropriate representatives for review. Twenty-one of 38 representatives responded to this final verification procedure with confirmations or corrections (Table 4). For those 21 ministries and jurisdictions, the information contained within these reports is as verified by the representatives. For the remaining 17, the information was derived by the interns and is believed to accurately describe the ministry or jurisdiction.

¹ Two such letters were sent to New Brunswick, one to the Anglophone representative and one to the Francophone representative.

Province	Urban Centre	Districts
Alberta	Calgary	Calgary Catholic School District #1, Calgary School District #19
	Edmonton	Edmonton Catholic Separate School District #7, Edmonton Public Schools
British Columbia	Vancouver	School District No. 36 (Surrey), School District No. 39 (Vancouver), School District No. 43 (Coquitlam), School District No. 44 (North Vancouver), School District No. 45 (West Vancouver)
Manitoba	Winnipeg	Louis Riel School Division, Pembina Trails Division, River East Transcona School Division, Seven Oaks School Division, St. James Assiniboia School Division, Winnipeg School Division
Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's	Avalon East School District
New Brunswick	Fredericton	School District 18 – Fredericton
Nova Scotia	Halifax	Halifax Regional School Board
Ontario	Toronto	Toronto Catholic District School Board, Toronto District School Board
Prince Edward Island	Charlottetown	Eastern School District
Quebec	Montreal	Commission scolaire de Marguerite-Bourgeoys, Commission scolaire de Montréal, Commission scolaire de la Pointe-de-l'Île, English Montreal School Board, Lester B. Pearson School Board
Saskatchewan	Regina	Regina Catholic Separate School Division #81, Regina Public School District #4

Two caveats are in order. First, information was collected primarily during the spring, 2003, and in some cases policies and practices may have changed since then. Second, every effort was made to ensure accuracy, but policies and practices across the country are diverse and sometimes difficult to interpret. Consequently, although our data provide a good sense for the range of policies and practices, some of our specific descriptions may not be entirely accurate. If information about specific provinces and jurisdictions is required for personal or policy decisions, we encourage readers to consult with those provinces and jurisdictions directly.

3.0 Summary of the Literature Review

In the *CACE Literature Review*, Brigham, da Costa, and Peters examined the literature dealing with school choice from a number of perspectives. The nature of school choice itself was considered along with the various definitions of the term and how it is available or applied in different countries. The term *school choice* is most often applied to choice outside the public, government-supported and governed system of education. It is generally taken to refer to the availability of private or independent schools, charter schools, school voucher systems (in whatever form), or home schooling. Those studying school choice have not written much about the massive growth in choice within the public school systems, both in terms of program choice and choice of schools themselves, either through open boundaries within school jurisdictions or

by means of enrollment outside the jurisdiction of residence. For example, although attention is paid to the number of parents and students exercising choice outside the public school system, and to the nature of this choice, notably less attention is given to reporting on the nature of choice within the public system and the numbers availing of these choices. In general, the provision of school and program choice within public schools is not widely understood. For example, a recent report, *The Canadian Freedom Index* (Hepburn & Van Belle, 2003) failed to acknowledge choice within public districts. As more provinces and school districts are exploring and supporting schools, programs and courses of choice, any comprehensive examination of choice in education, choice both within and outside the public school systems must be considered.

The literature generally supports the view that parents and students who were able to exercise school choice appeared to be very satisfied with their schooling. However, not surprisingly, there are mixed results concerning student achievement. In many studies no notable gains for students in choice schools were found, and in those studies where gains were noted it is impossible to establish that the gains were due to the exercise of choice or selection of specific programs. Variables such as student selection, parent involvement, and home environment may also play a notable part in determining students' academic performance and maybe confounded with school choice. These cautions are emphasized in the case of some private schools, where the rigorous selection criteria could increase the likelihood of strong academic attainment.

Belfield and Levin (2002) issued a number of cautions regarding the interpretation of the choice literature. They noted the methodological difficulties in connecting measures of choice with educational outcomes, unless consideration is given to the methodological issues of *simultaneity* and *omitted-variable bias*.² Similarly, Shaddish and Haddock (1994) warn about the dangers associated with interpreting ideologically driven research. These studies are particularly prone to problems relating to sample size and the absence of randomized trials. There may also be a tendency to report only statistically significant results and omit reference to areas where no differences were found. Belfield and Levin (2002) refer to this form of selectivity as "optimistic eclecticism" (p. 294). The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (1994) warned that compelling proof of a relation between school choice and improved school effectiveness is unlikely. Given the methodological problems and the range of studies examined in this review, this admonition from the OECD is relevant.

There is a growing demand for school choice in all of the countries examined in this review. However, choice in schooling is not available to all parents to the same degree. It is evident that intervention strategies are required to manage school choice in order to reduce barriers to *real* choice faced by certain groups (e.g., difficulties related to getting information on the programs, transportation, fees and "hidden costs," admission policies, district rules, and selection criteria). It is obvious also that programs of choice are not necessarily transferable from one setting to another. A number of micro-variables, such as distance of residences from schools and family and community characteristics, affect the success for individual students. Macro factors such as the wider political, economic, and social climate of the community may also affect the outcomes of school choice programs.

Finally, a whole range of questions relating to appropriate accountability structures also emerge in the literature dealing with choice. At the most general level the question arose as to how the public at large can be educated and informed about school choice programs in general, so that citizens can make informed decisions and have informed opinions. More specifically, what accountability measures are in place for each of the programs? Among the questions that need to be addressed are the following: What measures should be put into place and why?³ How will

² Simultaneity refers to the importance of holding demand constant when examining the option of choice between a public and a private school. "When public schooling is of low quality, the demand for private schooling rises, creating a negative relationship between public school quality and private schooling enrolment" (p. 282). Omitted-variable bias may occur when a variable or a number of variables critical to a proper comparison are omitted from the examination. As examples, *resource-omission bias* can occur when higher demand for private schools reduces the taxpayer support for public schools, *ability-omission bias* can occur when private schools "cream" off the most academically able students, resulting in lower average ability and lower average test results for the students remaining in the public school, and *socio-economic omission bias* can occur when the demand for private schooling may be influenced by a community's average income and educational levels.

³ As noted in the literature review, basic questions about accountability include: Who or what is to be held accountable? What level of accountability is to be provided (under what procedures, according to whose criteria?)

student achievement be measured? How is the public informed of the program's overall achievement? How will difficulties making direct comparisons between programs/schools' accountability measures be addressed?

An appropriate accountability framework should describe clearly the roles of parents in the school's operation and governance. Similarly, the nature of the involvement of any funding agency should be clearly stated, particularly insofar as that agency might influence either program content or mode of delivery. Questions also need to be raised in regard to providing information to parents about the overall operation of the program or school. Similarly, the accountability framework should describe how the school holds staff, professional and support, accountable for the delivery of the program. It should describe how the staff is to be remunerated and assessed. It should outline the areas of responsibility for different staff members in all areas.

Descriptions of the evolution of the construct of educational choice in education in this review attest to the complexity of the issues surrounding this topic. A variety of choices are emerging in education in response to particular value changes and demands. There is an increasing demand that the market be considered as a viable means of delivering educational services and choices. There are underlying assumptions that providing choice can help improve the quality of the service that schools provide, and that more choice in education improves the overall education system. There is a pervasive view in most of the literature that the only real choice in education is one that facilitates the movement of students from the "public" to some alternative form of schooling. The available research, however, does not appear to substantiate any of these claims. Moreover, the limited understanding of choice represented in the existing literature ignores the vast majority of the population that chooses to send children to public school systems, where an increasing amount of choice, at various levels, is to be found.

4.0 Policies and Practices in Canada: Provincial Overviews

Under federal legislation, all provinces must offer a form of free public schooling to all eligible persons and allow the operation of francophone schools, band-operated schools, and schools in institutions. As is evident in Table 5, however, the educational options available to parents and students in Canada vary by province. All provinces allow home schooling programs and the operation of private schools, but the manner in which these are regulated, monitored, and supported differ greatly among provinces.⁴ Where possible, the most recent percentage of privately schooled students has been noted. Due to the differing provincial practices of accounting for home-schooled students and the lack of Statistics Canada data for the number of home schooled students by provinces, no percentages of students enrolled in home school programs have been listed. All provinces have mandated provincial curricula that are based on learner outcomes, but the provision of program choice within those curricula varies greatly. Although parent-accessible accountability measures exist across Canada, they vary in form, content, and extent of use.

The following overview (Sections 4.1 to 4.11) summarize provincial ministry provisions impacting school and program choice, and address the unique qualities of each provincial education system. The full reports for each provincial ministry are found in the *CACE Comprehensive Appendices*.

Who is expected to provide the account? To whom is the account owed? What is to be accounted for? What are the consequences for providing an account?

⁴ Virtual schooling has not been included in the following sections as it does not operate as an independent body, but is a pedagogical alternative overseen by a governing jurisdiction, private school, or home schooling program.

4.1 Alberta

<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Separate <input type="checkbox"/> Charter <input type="checkbox"/> Francophone	<p>In Alberta, approximately 94 % of the students attend public, separate, francophone, or charter schools. These categories are all classified as “public” schools because they are supported with public funding. Alberta is the only province in Canada that permits charter* schools (see Glossary of Terms). All public schools receive the same basic instruction funding but there are some differences between public/separate and charter schools with regard to transportation, operations, and maintenance, and capital funding.</p>
Private/ Independent	<p>Almost 5 % of students attend private schools. Accredited schools are funded and non-accredited private are not funded. To be accredited, a school must follow the provincial curriculum, teachers must be certificated, and students must write provincial examinations. Accredited private schools receive 60% of the basic instruction funding as well as 60% of specific funding (e.g., early literacy and teacher salary enhancement) received by public schools but they do not receive transportation, operations and maintenance or capital funding.</p>
Home Schooling	<p>Less than 1 % of students are home schooled. The funding for home schoolers ranges from 22% to 25% of the basic instruction grant and parents are entitled to half the grant for expenses related to the provision of the education program. Parents must register their children with a public, separate, francophone, charter or private school. The registering authority is responsible for monitoring the child’s educational progress. Home schoolers may follow the provincially mandated curriculum or another approved curriculum.</p>
Age Requirements	<p>Students are required to attend school from age six to 16 and are entitled to attend from age six to 18. While kindergarten is not mandated, it is funded. Thus, kindergarten, for students who are 4.5 years of age on September 1 of the school year, is broadly offered by school districts throughout the province as well as by some private operators.</p>
Mandated Curriculum	<p>There is a provincially mandated curriculum for public and accredited private schools but districts have the authority to augment curriculum and to construct locally developed courses within a provincial framework. The authority to augment curriculum and develop courses enables choice of programs and courses.</p>
Open Boundaries	<p>Provincial legislation permits, and funding practice enables, a parent to enrol a child in any school in the province providing there is an appropriate program and space available. Francophone schools are the exception: To attend these schools, an individual must have rights under Section 23 of the <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i>. School districts are funded based on student enrolment regardless of residence.</p>
Policy/Position on Choice	<p>The province encourages choice by providing enabling legislation in the <i>School Act</i>. School districts may offer alternative programs, described as “an education program that emphasizes a particular language, culture, religion or subject matter or uses a particular teaching philosophy.” Also, an application can be made to the Minister for a Charter School “if the board of the district or division in which the school is to be established refuses to establish an alternative program under Section 21 as requested by the person or society.” A Charter School cannot be affiliated with a religious faith or denomination.</p>

Accountability Measures	<p>Provincial accountability measures include (a) provincial examinations in language arts and mathematics at Grade 3, (b) provincial examinations in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies in Grades 6 and 9, and (c) Grade 12 departmental examinations. The results of these examinations are made public by district and by school. The province provides prior-level-of-achievement data indicating whether results at Grades 6 and 9 are as expected, better than expected, or lower than expected, and also high school completion rates. All the aforementioned measures enable comparisons across districts and schools. A School Council is to be established, in accordance with the regulations, for each school operated by a board. As well, districts must submit three-year educational plans and annual results reviews. These plans and reviews include provincially identified as well as locally identified goals, measures, and indicators. The province participates in national and international tests (e.g., School Achievement Indicators Program and PISA Achievement in Reading, Math and Science).</p>
Unique Features	<p>Alberta is the only province that has Charter Schools.</p> <p>*Charters are granted by the Minister of Learning to a society or a registered company. Charter schools cannot be affiliated with a religious faith or denomination. They are required to instruct the provincial curriculum and employ certificated teachers. The legislation limits the number of charters to 15 and there are currently 11.</p>

4.2 British Columbia

<input type="checkbox"/> Public Separate Charter <input type="checkbox"/> Francophone	<p>In the province of British Columbia (B.C.), public, independent, and Francophone education are provided. Religion-based schooling and charter schools are not allowed within the public education framework. Francophone education is available to those who exercise their charter rights.</p>
Private/Independent	<p>Approximately 9% of kindergarten to Grade 12 students attend independent schools. There are approximately 340 independent schools in B.C. Funding for these schools ranges from 0%-50% of public funding, depending on the category of independent school. Group 1 independent schools offer programs consistent with the B.C. curriculum, employ certified teachers, and receive 50% of public funding and include most Roman Catholic schools. Group 2 schools meet the same requirements but have higher costs, and therefore, receive 35% of public funding. Group 3 are for independent schools that do not meet these requirements and receive no public funding. Group 4 schools are for non-provincial students and they do not receive public funding.</p>
Home Schooling	<p>There are approximately 4,700 Home Schooling students in B.C. Home schooling students receive an allocation of up to \$250 (1/16th of public funding) per year for their programs. Students must be taught at home by their parents without the supervision of a teacher, but must be registered with an independent, distance education, or public school authority, or with the Ministry of Education.</p>
Age Requirements	<p>Students are required to attend school from age six to 16, and are entitled to attend publicly-funded kindergarten as of age five.</p>
Mandated Curriculum	<p>B.C. has a provincially mandated curriculum and school boards are able to develop local programs and courses. Locally developed courses are to be reported to the Ministry of Education.</p>
Open Boundaries	<p>The B.C. Ministry of Education follows a system of open boundaries. Funding of education programs primarily follows the student. That is, when students relocate to another school or school district, their funding is transferred to the receiving school or district.</p>
Policy/Position on Choice	<p>The B.C. Ministry of Education does not have a formal policy on the provision of choice but does encourage a range of educational choices for parents and students. School districts are required to provide a range of choices and they determine what educational choices are available.</p>

Accountability Measures	<p>Improved student achievement is part of the Ministry of Education's focus on accountability. Accountability measures take the form of district reviews, Accountability Contracts, Foundation Skill Assessments (FSA), Provincial Learning Assessments, Grade 12 examinations, completion rates, and national and international measures. District reviews are focused on school and district improvement. Up to 20 districts are reviewed annually. Accountability Contracts are reports that describe school boards' public commitment to improving student achievement and related concerns. FSAs are used to assess reading comprehension, writing, and numeracy skills of students in Grades 4, 7, and 10. Provincial Learning Assessments are administered to students in Grades 4, 7, and 10 on a sample basis as needed. They include subjects or cross-curricular areas not covered by the FSAs. Past assessments have included mathematics and science, communication skills, and social studies. Completion rates refer to the number of students entering Grade 8 who graduate within six years. National and international measures include School Achievement Indicators Program, Programme for International Student Assessment, and International Mathematics and Science Study.</p> <p>Independent schools are not required to undertake an accountability contract or district review; but an inspection is conducted for each independent school and students are required to write FSAs.</p> <p>School districts are required to conduct surveys and establish school planning councils for each school.</p>
Unique Features	<p>There is no explicit policy on providing choice. The provincial assessments are implemented as needed and not on an annual basis.</p>

4.3 Manitoba

<input type="checkbox"/> Public Separate Charter <input type="checkbox"/> Francophone	<p>The Ministry of Manitoba Education and Youth (MEY) encourages a range of educational choices for parents and students. These choices include public and Francophone education. School districts are required to provide a range of choices and they determine what educational choices are available.</p> <p>Charter schools are not allowed within the public education framework. Francophone education is available to those who exercise their charter rights.</p>
Private/Independent	<p>A funded independent school is any school, other than a public school, that provides a curriculum and a standard of education equivalent to that provided by the public schools. As of the Statistics Canada 1998-1999 enrolment figures, 6.3% of Manitoban students were enrolled in independent schools. Public funding is available for approved independent schools at the primary and secondary level.</p>
Home Schooling	<p>Parent(s) of any student attending a home school must give official notification, including an outline of each student's grade level and educational program. Parents are required to submit progress reports according to a schedule developed by the Ministry.</p>
Age Requirements	<p>Students are required to attend school from age seven to 16 and are entitled to attend school as of age six. Students may attend school to age 21. Children whose fifth birthday falls on or before December 31 may enter kindergarten at the opening of school in September of the same year.</p>
Mandated Curriculum	<p>Manitoba has a provincially mandated curriculum. The Ministry supports the offering of course options. Basic subject areas are broken down into those (a) developed by the department (e.g., English language arts), (b) approved by the department (e.g., special language credits other than French), (c) developed externally (e.g., International Baccalaureate Program), and (d) developed locally and registered with the department (e.g., courses developed by individual schools).</p>
Open Boundaries	<p>The MEY has a system of open boundaries. To attend a school of choice, the parent(s) of a student must submit a written application on or before May 15 to ensure enrolment in September of the same year. The receiving school board must notify the applicant of acceptance or refusal no later than June 30 of the same year. Schools enrol students in the following priority sequence: students designated to attend that school; students residing in the school division; and other Manitoba students. The student need not re-apply in successive years of enrolment until such time as there is a change of school required as they progress through grades. Funding follows the student from the home school to the school of choice.</p>
Policy/Position on Choice	<p>School choice is intended by MEY to be an avenue of flexible alternatives rather than a catalyst for competition among and schools and school divisions. Whether parents seek specific programs, school environments, or other conveniences, school choice is set up to accommodate diverse needs without undermining the community school.</p> <p>Manitoba has four school programs of choice: English, French Immersion, Français, and Technology Education. The first three are available from Kindergarten to Senior 4.⁵ Technology Education is only available at the Senior Years level.</p>

⁵ Manitoba Education and Youth divides the schooling system into Early Years (Grades 1 to 6), Middle Years (Grades 7 and 8), and Senior Years (Senior 1, 2, 3, and 4). The Senior Years are equivalent to Grades 9, 10, 11 and 12 in other provinces.

<p>Accountability Measures</p>	<p>MEY publishes annual reports that include performance statistics for Manitoba students on school, national, and international assessments, as well as high school completion rates, grade retention, and promotion.</p> <p>In the <i>Public Schools Act</i>, school boards are required to establish written procedures for collecting, storing, and retrieving student information (such as grades recorded and courses taken). Parents and students are allowed access to these evaluative records, and are entitled to reports from the school board twice per year.</p> <p>The <i>Provincial Assessment Program</i> provides for support, advice on formative assessment, and summative student assessments on provincial curricula. These data are used to track student achievement and to evaluate the Kindergarten-Senior 4 system.</p> <p>Standard tests exist for students in the programs of English, Français, and French Immersion. Results from these tests are distributed in reports to divisions and schools. Departmental tests happen at various stages and frequencies during the school year within the K-S4 system.</p> <p>In addition to testing on a provincial level, the Ministry is part of national and international testing programs.</p> <p>Specific information on the exercise of school choice is not publicly available.</p>
<p>Unique Features</p>	<p>The Ministry mandates specific and selected standards tests for specific grades and subjects each year. The Ministry also provides additional standards tests that are optional and are used at the discretion of school districts.</p>

4.4 New Brunswick

<input type="checkbox"/> Public Separate Charter <input type="checkbox"/> Francophone	<p>Public education is linguistically based—anglophone or francophone—and all persons have the right to education in either official language so long as they are proficient in the language of their chosen system, though persons with Charter rights retain those rights. All public schools must be non-denominational and Anglophone districts may not offer French first language instruction.</p>
Private/Independent	<p>Private schools, serving approximately 1% of the population, are minimally legislated by Province of New Brunswick and do not receive public funding. Unlike public schools, each private school determines its own curricula and programming and may be religiously affiliated. Privately schooled students are not eligible for the New Brunswick High School Diploma.</p>
Home Schooling	<p>Home schooling programs in New Brunswick are facilitated through districts but need to be approved by the Minister of Education. Parents together with their respective district annually negotiate the program of study, which need not follow the provincial curriculum, but must address all aspects of and be equivalent to it. Although monitored by school jurisdictions, home schooling programs do not receive public funding and home-educated students are not eligible for a New Brunswick High School diploma.</p>
Age Requirements	<p>Students are required to attend school between the ages of five and 18 and are entitled to attend school between the ages of five and 21. In New Brunswick, full-day kindergarten is considered the first year of school and attendance is mandatory.</p>
Mandated Curriculum	<p>All public schools must follow the provincially mandated curriculum. Districts may supplement this curriculum with (a) provincially designed, but not prescribed, courses or programs, (b) locally developed courses (Grades 11 and 12 only), or (c) Enrichment strategies/ Programs (all grades). The province has legislated Core French from Grades 1 through 10, and students can continue French through to Grade 12.</p>
Open Boundaries	<p>New Brunswick does not follow a system of open boundaries, though all persons may attend either French first language instruction or English first language instruction. There is little legislation providing for movement of students or funds between schools, districts or sectors, largely limiting student choices to in the district of the school designated by residency. Movement between schools and school jurisdictions is determined by individual school districts.</p>
Policy/Position on Choice	<p>New Brunswick is neutral to the issue of choice, allowing school and program choice to be developed at a district level. School districts and District Education Councils are given the freedom and responsibility to adopt policies regarding program offerings, school choice, and school and district transfers in order to meet the unique needs of their community.</p>

Accountability Measures	<p>New Brunswick has adopted the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation's <i>Essential Graduation Learnings</i> and examinations for all students. It also administers national and international examinations, surveys, school reviews (for both Francophone and Anglophone sectors) and provincial examinations. Provincial testing focuses on English, French, and mathematics, with the addition of science in elementary; Grades 2 and 4 are tested in literacy; Grade 3, 5 and 8 are tested in mathematics; Grade 7 are tested for literacy in English; Grade 9 are tested for English language proficiency; Grade 11 are tested using the English Provincial Examination and Mathematics Provincial Examination (for students enrolled in mathematics courses 113 and 111/112); and Grade 12 are tested for French oral proficiency (for all students in grade 12 French courses). Results are made public, as are high school completion and school dropout rates.</p>
Unique Features	<p>Unique in Canada, New Brunswick gives every eligible person the right to be educated in either English or French as the primary language. This choice is only restricted by a person's fluency in either language, though persons with French language rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms are eligible for French language instruction without the required fluency. Persons who speak neither French nor English may choose either language of instruction.</p>

4.5 Newfoundland and Labrador

<input type="checkbox"/> Public Separate Charter <input type="checkbox"/> Francophone	<p>Ten Anglophone school districts and one Francophone school district serve the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador. First language instruction in French may only be offered in the province-wide francophone school district (Conseil scolaire francophone provincial), and may only be accessed by people eligible under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. All eligible persons must be registered with their local school district even if they are to be home schooled or privately schooled.</p>
Private/Independent	<p>Although private schools currently serve 1.1% (4.0% as of 1998-1999) of the student population, private schools do not receive provincial funding. Private schools must receive permission to operate and must take part in all public assessment examinations outlined by the province. Although they may be religiously affiliated, private schools must follow the provincially prescribed curriculum, though they may further supplement the program with Minister-approved alternative courses and programs.</p>
Home Schooling	<p>In Newfoundland and Labrador, home schooling programs are regulated and approved by school districts, using a curriculum set by the Department of Education. Parents who wish to home school a child must negotiate the program and method of evaluation with the Anglophone school district in which the child resides. Parents must apply to home school a child on an annual basis and full-time home schooling programs do not receive provincial funding.</p>
Age Requirements	<p>Students are required to attend school between the ages of six and 16 and are entitled to attend between the ages of five and 21. Kindergarten is not compulsory in Newfoundland and Labrador, but is publicly funded and all school boards must provide the kindergarten program.</p>
Mandated Curriculum	<p>Districts are allowed to choose which non-core curricular programs are offered. Curriculum alternatives include French Immersion Programs, core French, and languages other than French. All educational options, including private schools and home schooling programs, must follow the provincially prescribed curriculum, though it may be supplemented with Minister-approved locally or independently-developed courses and programs.</p>
Open Boundaries	<p>Newfoundland and Labrador do not follow a policy of open boundaries, but students may change schools subject to the district's approval. When students transfer districts, provincial funding does follow student in the transfer year. School districts receive funding using a formula that considers enrolment and grade configuration within each school. Funding is based on the previous year's enrolment.</p>
Policy/Position on Choice	<p>Legislation in Newfoundland and Labrador provides for a wide range of choices. School choice and program choice are not provincially prescribed in Newfoundland and Labrador, but are enabled by the Schools Act, 1997.</p>

<p>Accountability Measures</p>	<p>Newfoundland and Labrador policies provide a wide range of accountability measures including provincial, national and international achievement tests, high school completion rates, and attitude surveys. Districts are required to submit financial statements and to produce an annual report, program evaluations, and student progress reports. Examinations include Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRT); Student Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP); Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA); and public examinations for graduation (World History, World Geography, Thematic Literature, Physics, Mathematics, History, Histoire Mondiale, French, Earth Systems, English, Biology, and Chemistry). Newfoundland and Labrador has adopted the APEF's curriculum-based Learning Outcomes, <i>Essential Graduation Learnings</i>, and examinations. It has also implemented a School Development/School Improvement Process in which all schools and school districts must take part.</p> <p>All students, including those privately schooled or enrolled in home-schooling programs must follow the provincial <i>Learning Outcomes</i> and <i>Essential Graduation Learnings</i>.</p> <p>All private schools must also assess their students' progress using standardized examinations, which include the Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRT), Student Achievement Indicators Program, standardized public examinations, and the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) examinations.</p> <p>Formal evaluations of home schooling programs must take place three times per year and consist of a meeting among a district evaluator, the student, and the parent to review the student's work to ensure his or her progress. To ensure progress, home schooled students in Grade 3 or higher <i>must</i> take part in the in-school standardized examinations given at the end of each school year.</p>
<p>Unique Features</p>	<p>In 1997, the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador changed its provincial legislation to abolish all denominational public schools, to replace them with non-denominational schools, to add an extensive Religious Education curriculum to the provincially prescribed curriculum, and to give parents the right to either request a religious observance or withdraw their children from the religious education curriculum and the observances held in school. Prior to this change there were no non-denominational public schools.</p> <p>Another unique feature found in Newfoundland and Labrador is that all students must be registered with a publicly funded school district even if they are to be home schooled or privately schooled.</p>

4.6 Nova Scotia

<input type="checkbox"/> Public Separate Charter <input type="checkbox"/> Francophone	<p>Nova Scotia does not offer religiously oriented public schools and only those persons with language rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms may access Francophone schools. Of the 149,460 students in Nova Scotia, 2.6% are schooled by the Francophone district, the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (Conseil acadien).</p>
Private/Independent	<p>Of the 149,460 students in Nova Scotia, 1.5% are enrolled in private schools. Private schools must be registered with the Minister of Education, but do not require a license to operate. Private schools may be religiously affiliated. As well, they determine their own curriculum and programs with the condition that the curriculum and programs they offer be equivalent to the Public School Program. Private schools may apply to the Department of Education for recognition of their programs (as equivalent to the Public School Program), so that their students may qualify for the Nova Scotia High School Diploma.</p>
Home Schooling	<p>All home schooled students must be registered with the Minister of Education, and parents individually determine the home schooling program. Once a year, parents must submit a progress report to the Minister of Education. There is no funding for home schooling programs.</p>
Age Requirements	<p>Students must attend school between the ages of six and 15 inclusive and are entitled to free public education between the ages of five and 21. Grade Primary is considered the first year of school and precedes Grade 1. Grade Primary is compulsory, though students may enter at either age 5 or 6.</p>
Mandated Curriculum	<p>Nova Scotia has a mandated curriculum. Beyond the regular program curriculum, the Department of Education requires (a) all schools to offer Core French, Mi'kmaq, or Gaelic for Grades 3-7, (b) schools to develop programs of need, and (c) that students be allowed to <i>Challenge for Credit</i> courses. Beyond the educational options described in the <i>Public Schools Program</i>, districts may also implement <i>Locally Developed Courses</i> that suit the needs of their community. To encourage this process, the Department of Education enables districts to adopt courses previously developed by other districts.</p>
Open Boundaries	<p>Nova Scotia does not have a policy of open boundaries but allows each school jurisdiction to determine its own inter- and intra-district transfer procedures.</p>
Policy/Position on Choice	<p>Nova Scotia Provincial legislation enables choice in education but does not require the provision of choice by public school boards. Furthermore, the Nova Scotia Department of Education does not promote or support school choice as it relates to financially supporting the choice of private schools within the province. Despite this philosophy, parents still have a range of educational options, with specific restrictions.</p>

<p>Accountability Measures</p>	<p>The Nova Scotia Department of Education requires that districts (a) take part in a range of standardized achievement examinations (Nova Scotia Examinations for Grade 12 and PLANS), (b) provide student progress reports, (c) submit annual reports, and (d) follow the APEF's <i>Essential Graduation Learnings and learning outcomes</i> (general or "key stage" curriculum outcome statements are assessed at Grades 3, 6, 9 and 12), but has opted not to offer the APEF-developed examinations. Nova Scotia Examinations for Grade 12 are given in Chemistry, English/ Communications, Physics, and Mathematics. PLANS is a comprehensive assessment program which includes provincial examinations in Language Arts/ English (Grades 6, 9, and 12) and Mathematics (Grades 5, 8, and 12) Chemistry (Grade 12) and Physics (Grade 12), as well as administration of the SAIP to persons aged 13 and 16, and administration of the PISA to persons aged 15. The province provides the public with the annual general, financial, and student performance reports.</p> <p>Reports must be submitted annually to the Department of Education assessing the progress of all home schooled students. Home schooled students are not required to take part in standardized assessments, but parents may request their child(ren)'s participation.</p> <p>If requested, private schools must demonstrate to the Department of Education that all students enrolled in the school are making progress. Private schools are not required to take part in standardized examinations unless requested by the Minister of Education.</p>
<p>Unique Features</p>	<p>Nova Scotia is the only province to state it does not support choice between public and private schooling, and, as a result, does not fund private schools. Furthermore, it acknowledges that neither its history, nor culture has supported educational choice beyond the public system. Despite this stance, Nova Scotia allows private schools to operate and, further, promotes alternative pedagogical options within the public system.</p>

4.7 Ontario

<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Separate Charter <input type="checkbox"/> Francophone	<p>Students may attend public English and French non-denominational schools or English and French Roman Catholic (separate) schools. These four types are considered public schools. To attend Roman Catholic schools, students must provide proof of that they are Catholic or have Catholic parents. In 2000-2001, 1,466,530 students attended public English or French schools, and 677,069 attended English or French Roman Catholic schools.</p>
Private/Independent	<p>Private schools may operate in the province of Ontario providing they annually notify the Minister of Education. Furthermore, private schools that offer credits toward the Ontario Secondary School Diploma are subject to inspection by the Minister. Statistics Canada states that as of 2000-2001 year, 5.1% of Ontario's students were enrolled in private schools. In October 2000, the total number of students attending private schools was 109,904. No provincial funding is provided to private schools.</p>
Home Schooling	<p>Parents may home school their children so long as they annually notify their local school board. No provincial funding is provided for full-time home schooling programs.</p>
Age Requirements	<p>In Ontario, students are required to attend school between the ages of six to 16. Students are entitled to attend school from age four for junior kindergarten to age 21.</p>
Mandated Curriculum	<p>All public schools in Ontario follow a provincially prescribed curriculum. Although the Ministry of Education promotes the development of locally developed courses, it does not prescribe course offerings other than those set out in the provincial curriculum. It does, however, provide choices between academic or applied courses for Grades 9 and 10 and between courses designated Workplace Preparation, University Preparation, College Preparation, or Preparation for Both University and College in Grades 11 and 12.</p>
Open Boundaries	<p>The Ontario Ministry of Education does not prescribe an open boundary policy. All students are assigned to a district school board by their residency. District school boards set policy regarding transfer between schools within district jurisdiction. Funding is student focused and is provided to district school boards based on number of students enrolled.</p>
Policy/Position on Choice	<p>Although provincial legislation in Ontario allows school choice, it does not prescribe it. Policies concerning the movement of students between schools or school jurisdictions are determined at the jurisdiction level.</p>
Accountability Measures	<p>The Minister of Education requires that all publicly supported schools follow accountability measures established by the Ministry of Education, including specialty schools and alternative schools. The prescribed accountability measures include Provincial Achievement examinations (Grades 3, 6, 9, 10, and 11), attitude surveys, district audits, and school councils.</p>
Unique Features	<p>The Province of Ontario classifies all band-operated schools that offer credits towards the Ontario Secondary School Diploma as private schools.</p>

4.8 Prince Edward Island

<input type="checkbox"/> Public Separate Charter <input type="checkbox"/> Francophone	<p>Residents of PEI are served by two Anglophone districts and one Francophone school district, all of which are non-denominational and considered public. Francophone schools are for persons with Charter Rights but may be accessed by persons not holding first language rights (see unique features). School choice is determined at the district level and parents are subject to the requirements of the district's transferring procedure.</p>
Private/Independent	<p>Private schools are required by the Department of Education to apply for a licence. In order to apply for a licence, a private school must submit a plan of operation that includes an outline of goals, a course outline by grade, and plans for staffing the school. All teachers must be eligible for a PEI Teaching Certificate and private schools must meet health, fire, and safety standards established by the province and/or the municipality. The Department of Education may provide textbooks free of charge to private schools if requested. The private school is not required to follow provincial curriculum; however, all course materials must be approved by the Minister. The Minister has no other financial obligations related to private schools. It is up to parents to contact private schools. (School Act, Section 147 3(2)). As of 1998-1999, 1.0% of students attended private schools.</p>
Home Schooling	<p>As of 2002, parents wishing to home school their child(ren) apply annually to the Department of Education. As of spring 2003, this policy has been revised and parents must only inform the Department of Education of their intent to home school a child and provide the department with a program plan. Home schooling programs are not required to follow provincial curriculum but must provide an equivalent learning experience. Parents individually develop the home schooling programs undertaken. There is no provincial funding designated to support the programs but parents are provided with textbooks by the Department of Education.</p>
Age Requirements	<p>In Prince Edward Island students are required to attend school when the student turns age seven on or before January 31 of a school year until the age of 16. Students are entitled to attend school between the ages of six and 20. Kindergarten is not mandatory, but the province has recently instituted a publicly funded kindergarten pilot project resulting in kindergarten programs provided by local school jurisdictions. As of 2002-2003, this program serves approximately 1,700 students at over 90 locations throughout the province.</p>
Mandated Curriculum	<p>Prince Edward Island has a mandated curriculum. The Minister of Education regulates all educational options, but only distance education and public schools must follow the provincially prescribed curriculum. When students undertake distance learning, home education programs, or instruction in a private school and wish to qualify for a Prince Edward Island High School Diploma, they must apply to a public school district to be granted equivalent high school credit. Further choices are established at the district level through district-wide and/or school specific locally developed courses.</p>
Open Boundaries	<p>Prince Edward Island does not have a policy on open boundaries, but it does allow districts to individually determine their inter- and intra-district policies concerning student transfers.</p>
Policy/Position on Choice	<p>School choice is not legislated in P.E.I.; however, the province does allow choice within school districts and between a specific set of educational options.</p>

Accountability Measures	<p>Various accountability measures exist in Prince Edward Island. This province does not have standardized provincial examinations; however, it participates in national and international assessments. All other forms of assessment are left to the discretion of the districts. Like the other Atlantic provinces, PEI has adopted the APEF's <i>Learning Outcomes</i> and <i>Essential Graduation Learnings</i>.</p> <p>Home schooled students are required to be assessed twice per year by a selected teacher-monitor. Participation in standardized testing is not required.</p>
Unique Features	<p>Although the Francophone school district in PEI, the Commission scolaire de langue française, serves persons with French first language rights, the Governor in Council of Prince Edward Island has opened French first language schools to persons not holding those first language rights. Parents not holding French first language rights but wishing their child educated in the system must apply to the Commission scolaire de langue française. Although the Commission scolaire does accept persons not having first language rights, it promotes itself as being expressly for persons of Acadian and Francophone roots, so that they may develop a cultural identity.</p>

4.9 Quebec

<input type="checkbox"/> Public Separate Charter <input type="checkbox"/> Francophone	<p>Previously in Quebec public school boards were religiously based but now are linguistically based. Students are only restricted by the Charter of French Language, which limits English First Language instruction to those with Charter rights.</p>
Private/Independent	<p>Students may choose to be educated in a private school (some of which receive limited government funding) but may be subject to paying tuition and fees. Private schools are required to follow the provincial curriculum but may supplement that program with additional Minister-approved courses or programs. As well, private schools may be religiously affiliated. As of the 1998-1999, Statistics Canada noted 9.1% of all students in Quebec were educated by private schools.</p>
Home Schooling	<p>Home schooling programs are district regulated and monitored, and can be used (a) as an independent program, (b) as a supplementary enrichment program, or (c) in conjunction with district-established programs of need. Parents who wish to home school a child must negotiate the program with their local school jurisdictions. There is no direct public funding for home schooling programs.</p>
Age Requirements	<p>In Quebec, students are required to attend school from age six to 16. Students are entitled to attend school between the ages of six to 19. Publicly funded full-day kindergarten is available through many of the school jurisdictions but is not compulsory. Pre-kindergarten programs are available throughout Quebec, but are generally not publicly funded. Publicly funded pre-kindergarten programs are available to persons age 4 who are disabled or who are from low-income families.</p>
Mandated Curriculum	<p>Quebec has a mandated curriculum that all schools, public or private, must follow. Furthermore, all persons choose between either religious or moral education courses throughout their schooling.</p>
Open Boundaries	<p>Students are assigned to a public district and school according to their place of residence, but the Ministry of Quebec supports open boundaries and allows student to change public school districts and schools provided that space is available. Due to the manner by which funding is distributed, when a student transfers schools or districts, no funding is directly transferred with that student.</p>
Policy/Position on Choice	<p>School choice is guaranteed to all persons (with specific restrictions). As noted above, access to Anglophone boards is determined by legislation.</p>
Accountability Measures	<p>All schools within Quebec are required to develop and publish an educational project and success plan, which are reviewed through annual reports. Quebec has various achievement examinations at various levels for both French first language and English first language students. These include examinations in (a) Language Arts (reading, writing and discourse) for French or English, (b) Oral Discourse and Written Discourse Comprehension in French or English (second language), (c) Physical Sciences, (d) Mathematics, and (e) History of Quebec and Canada. These examinations are given at both the primary and secondary levels.</p>
Unique Features	<p>The concept of CEGEPs is unique to Quebec. The CEGEPs are publicly funded and provide pre-university preparation by offering the equivalent of Grades 12 and 13, or Grade 12 and the first year of university, as well as three-year technical programs and shorter technical programs. CEGEPs are designed to prepare students either to university, college, or the workforce.</p>

4.10 Saskatchewan

<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Separate Charter <input type="checkbox"/> Francophone	<p>With a student population of just under 200,000 in 2001/02, over 90% of students attended publicly funded (Public, Separate, Francophone) schools. Almost 8% of the 200,000 attended First Nations schools.</p>
Private/Independent	<p>In Saskatchewan, private schools must be registered with Saskatchewan Learning and may provide credits to students. Although private schools are not required to follow the provincially mandated curriculum, Saskatchewan Learning must approve all programs offered by the schools. Furthermore, private schools are subject to review by Saskatchewan Learning and must evaluate students with Saskatchewan Learning-approved methods. Of the student population of 200,000, 1.5% attend Independent Schools. In Saskatchewan, private elementary schools do not receive provincial funding and only a limited number of secondary schools received 50% provincial funding.</p>
Home Schooling	<p>Home schooling programs in Saskatchewan must be registered with Anglophone or Francophone school jurisdictions or with Saskatchewan Learning directly. Programs are determined by parents and are submitted annually to Saskatchewan Learning and must follow provincial guidelines. Of the student population of 200,000, less than 1% are enrolled in Home-Based education.</p>
Age Requirements	<p>In Saskatchewan, students are required to attend school between the ages of six and 16 and are entitled to attend school between the ages of six and 22. Kindergarten is optional, but is publicly funded and various school jurisdictions provide kindergarten programming. Like kindergarten, pre-kindergarten is also optional in Saskatchewan, but is not publicly funded, though some school jurisdictions also provide this service.</p>
Mandated Curriculum	<p>All programs of study are approved through Saskatchewan Learning, though only public schools are required to follow the provincially-prescribed curriculum. The Minister of Education may (a) prescribe subjects of instruction and issue courses of study; (b) define compulsory and optional subjects and course requirements; and (c) authorize any course developed by a school to be taught either as an alternative, or in addition to any course prescribed by the Department of Education.</p>
Open Boundaries	<p>Saskatchewan Learning neither promotes nor rejects a system of open boundaries, but does allow school jurisdictions to determine their own policies concerning inter- and intra-district transfers. Furthermore, Saskatchewan Learning allows student transfers, providing the receiving and sending school jurisdictions agree to the student's choice of school. Students are normally considered to be residents of the locale in which their parents or guardians reside. It is the prerogative of the school board or conseil scolaire to determine which school the students of the school division will attend.</p>
Policy/Position on Choice	<p>Saskatchewan Learning (SL) neither encourages nor discourages choice, but describes the philosophical orientation of SL to be one that ensures that individual schools serve their community in a responsive manner. School jurisdictions are able to add or delete courses to meet the needs of particular local communities.</p>

Accountability Measures	In 1994, the Department of Education produced an accountability framework operating at two levels: the provincial level (with both student and systems goals) and the division level (using either the provincial level indicators, the division's own indicators, or a combination of the two). The results are presented to the individual schools so they can measure their performance against the aggregated data. Aggregated forms of the data are also available to the public. Each year, Saskatchewan Education also surveys the public for input on the education system.
Unique Features	<p>Overall, Saskatchewan funds 50% of education needs from its Foundation Operation Grant. The balance is raised through local taxation with jurisdictions having "rich" tax bases receiving a smaller allocation than those with "poor" tax bases. Independent elementary schools are not eligible for provincial funding and a limited number of independent secondary schools are funded to a maximum of 50% of their per pupil costs.</p> <p>In Saskatchewan, place of residence and the decreasing population, particularly in rural areas, limit the choices available.</p>