

Canada RTEI Profile

Canada RTEI Results

The RTEI Questionnaire investigated education policies and education outcomes in Canada. Given that the Canadian education system is decentralized and managed by each province and territory, some questions were difficult to answer or there was not enough data to provide a response representative at a national level.

Canada's overall index score was 84, in a rating system from 0 to 100 with 100 being the ideal. The survey was broken into five themes – Governance, Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability and Adaptability – which were scored based on the results of their subthemes. The individual scores are seen in the table above.

Canada Index Score – 84

Themes and Subthemes	Governance	76	Accessibility	82
	International Framework	61	Free Education	83
	Domestic Law	71	Discrimination	79
	Plan of Action	100	Participation	83
	Monitoring and Reporting	75	Acceptability	82
	Financing	72	Aims of Education	95
	Data availability	75	Learning Environment	92
	Availability	97	Learning Outcomes	59
	Classrooms	92	Adaptability	84
	Sanitation	100	Children with Disabilities	100
	Teachers	100	Children of Minorities	68
	Textbooks	No data	Out of School Education	100
			Out of School Children	69
Cross-Cutting Themes Scores	Alignment of education aims			100
	Children with Disabilities	Overall State of Education for Children with Disabilities		88
	Content of education			53
		Overall state of girls' education		87
	Girls' Education	Discriminatory environment		80
		Relative state of girls' education		106
	Indigenous and Minority Populations	Discriminatory environment		84
	Monitoring and Accountability	Strength of monitoring and accountability		84
	National Normative Framework	National Normative Framework		81
	Direct and Indirect Costs	Legal restrictions		50
		Practice environment		75
	Private education	Status of private education		80
	Regional disparities			No data
		4.1 Free and equitable		62
		4.3 Beyond K-12		70
		4.5 Inequality and inaccessibility		93
	SDG 4	4.6 Adult literacy and lifelong learning		90
		4.7 Sustainability		71
		4.a Safe learning environment		100
		4.c Qualified teachers		66
	Overall		79	
	Effect of teaching		100	
Teachers	Content of teacher training		100	
	Overall teaching framework		94	
Focus Areas	Theme:	Governance		
	Subtheme:	Learning Outcomes, International Framework		
	Cross-Cutting Theme:	Direct and indirect costs, Content of education		

High Scores

Canada scored high in many subthemes of the questionnaire. Subthemes such as legislation to ensure free and compulsory education, sanitation of schools, availability and training of teachers, safe learning environments, learning opportunities for children with disabilities and for those who are out of school, all scored 100.

Low Scores

Some of the lower scoring subthemes include international framework, discrimination, and learning outcomes.

The **International Framework subtheme** reviewed the international agreements which Canada has or has not signed. Given that Canada has not signed the UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education nor the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, the score in this section was lower.

The **Discrimination subtheme** was based on the existence of specific policies that protect students from all forms of discrimination. Canadian legislation includes the right to education and laws against discrimination; however, specific wording was missing to ensure that there is no discrimination based on property, economic or social status, and place of residence (detailed in Question 3.2.1). Although the wording is not present in legislation, in practice these types of discrimination are overcome by many local programs that exist in communities of need. Support to low income families such as breakfast programs and the provision of warm winter clothes, in addition to the free, compulsory education policy from the government, ensure all children attend school, and students often have access to breakfast at school or appropriate winter clothing for outdoor periods of the school day. To ensure that discrimination based on place of residence does not take place, schools boards may provide bus transportation if students live too far to walk, including students with disabilities who may attend special schools. This is managed by each province or territory; one example is found in the Ontario Education Act in Section 190 (1).¹ Although the purpose of this subtheme was to review how discrimination is avoided through policy and legislation, discrimination still exists in the Canadian education context, specifically in regards to the education of Canada's indigenous populations on reserves. These issues are further analyzed in the Key Issues section.

The **Learning Outcomes subtheme** surveyed if national exams were conducted to assess a list of specific areas of learning. Given the decentralized education system in Canada, assessments and curriculum vary by province and territory. The learning subjects in the survey are included in most of Canada's curriculums and are therefore, assessed in the classroom, in different ways. However, the assessment process for these learning outcomes is not regulated at a national or provincial level, and without this process standardized, the score was lower for these questions.

Outside of the specific RTEI scores, the research to complete this survey highlighted areas in the Canadian education context that require further attention from the government, most of which have been championed for some time in the country. Some of the most significant issues in Canadian education are the academic outcomes of Canada's indigenous populations, the quality of infrastructure in on reserve schools, and the monitoring of private and home schooling across the country.

Key Issue 1: Disparities in Education for Indigenous people

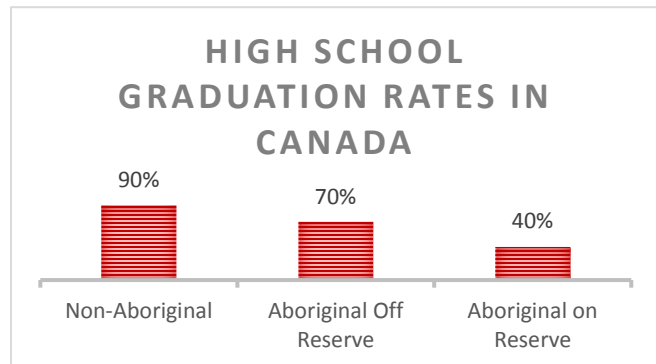
Subtheme 3 – Accessibility – includes questions to measure and compare the rate of Canadians completing various levels of education. There was a significant lack of data in this area, reducing the number of conclusions that could be drawn from this section. Regardless, the research conducted to complete this area of the questionnaire highlighted a significant challenge in Canada: disparities in the education of Indigenous people.

¹ See <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90e02#BK170>

From the most recent national census in 2011, Indigenous people, often referred to as Aboriginal peoples, consist of 4.3% of Canada's overall population² and as such may not significantly impact national education statistics. However, the high school graduation rate is substantially lower amongst Aboriginal peoples in Canada, and the country's lowest rates are within the Inuit population.

A 2016 report from Canadian think tank C.D. Howe Institute found that non-Aboriginal students graduate from secondary school at a rate of 9 in 10. Seven in ten Aboriginal students who are attending school off-reserve graduate from high school and only four in 10 aboriginal students living on reserve have finished high school.³

Although Aboriginal people do not represent a large segment of the Canadian population, the blatant disparities in academic achievement suggest that reforms are needed. This is not new information, and there have been movements to demand more funding and resources for Aboriginal education and basic services in Canada for many years.



Key Issue 2: Inequality in Infrastructure and Sanitation

The RTEI surveyed if schools met minimum building codes and sanitation standards. Data availability on the status of buildings and number of toilets is limited in Canada. Nevertheless, this is not a significant concern as there are regional codes for buildings and sanitation as well as regular inspections. However, as in Key Issue 1, the exception is for Aboriginal communities and on reserve schools. Canada's score for sanitation in the RTEI is 100 based on the available data, however, many indigenous communities lack access to potable water and adequate schools but the specific data on Canada-wide rates was not available.

A 2012 report on education by the Assembly of First Nations stated that 47% of First Nations communities needed a new school, and 32% of schools had an issue with clean drinking water.⁴

In September 2016, there were 93 drinking water advisories in First Nations communities across Canada, not including British Columbia.⁵ An investigation on this issue led by Canadian news company, CBC, found that 400 of 618 First Nations communities in Canada have had some type of water safety problem between 2004 and 2014.⁶

The data available makes it difficult to calculate the exact rate of schools without potable water; however it is evident that First Nations communities are disproportionately at risk of water contamination. There are no reports found about a lack of potable water in schools which are not in indigenous communities.

Key Issue 3: Minimum Education Standards and Monitoring Education

Each province and territory has minimum education standards for all public schools which are set out in their respective education legislation. In ten provinces/territories these standards apply to private schools. In Ontario and Saskatchewan, private schools are inspected but the language does not specifically say what the inspection includes, for example, if it is only the physical building or also the educational program that are being assessed. In

² See <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-011-x/99-011-x2011001-eng.cfm>

³ See <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/low-graduation-rates-at-reserve-schools-put-aboriginals-in-jeopardy-report/article28427544/> and https://www.cdhowe.org/sites/default/files/attachments/research_papers/mixed/Commentary_444_0.pdf_page_4

⁴ See <http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/1-fact-sheet-a-portrait-of-first-nations-and-education.pdf>

⁵ See <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/promotion/public-publique/water-dwa-eau-aqep-eng.php>

⁶ See <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/bad-water-third-world-conditions-on-first-nations-in-canada-1.3269500>

New Brunswick there are no policies to ensure that the Ministry of Education monitors private schools (supporting documents and information are available in the survey for Question 1.4.1.). Without standardization and monitoring, they cannot ensure the learning outcomes or level of education being achieved or certified by these schools.

Home school regulations are also set by the province or territory. In four provinces, British Columbia, Ontario, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador, the only requirement is that the parents notify the education authorities that their children will be home schooled (pg 17)⁷ but further assessment of the academic program are not required. Only in five of 13 provinces are home school programs inspected or certified and only in three provinces is the program monitored by the public school board or a private school (pg 20).

On-reserve schools are well monitored as they are required to have provincially certified teachers and match provincial education standards. Schools are assessed every five years.⁸

Data Availability

A challenge in this type of survey is the availability of data and the disaggregation of data to appropriately respond to the questions. Canada scored 75 in data availability. This is due to the extensive legislation for education in each province and territory. The main areas that lacked data were ones that were comparing disaggregated statistics, such as primary school completion rates based on location, disability and income quintile.

In addition, although much of the data was available, many of the statistics are from 5 to 10 years ago. The last published national census was in 2011, and while there was another census conducted in 2016, the results have not yet been released. The challenge of finding specific and recent data is also a result of the decentralized education system, as different indicators are collected by the various bodies who manage education in their region.

Recommendations

The research for this survey as well as the index scores have indicated the areas in which Canada can improve the opportunities and outcomes of the education system.

1. International Frameworks: Canada should sign on to the UNESCO Conventional against Discrimination in Education and the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention.
2. Regional Disparities: Education outcomes should be comparable for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, particularly those who live on reserve or in rural areas such as the Inuit. This is not necessarily a problem of creating education standards; this is more likely an issue of resources. All schools need to have adequate, qualified teachers and support staff such as social workers and mental health workers. In addition, adequate resources such as books and technical assistive devices need to be available that reflect the language and culture of the people.
3. Monitoring: Schools and programs need to be monitored against set standards. Home school and private school programs should be assessed with provincial standards. Schools need to meet provincial or regional building and sanitation codes, particularly those on reserve.

⁷ See <https://www.fraserinstitute.org/sites/default/files/home-schooling-in-canada-2015-rev2.pdf>.

⁸ See <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1450708959037/1450709026045>