Council of Ministers of Education, Canada

# Quality Education for All

## Canadian Report for the UNESCO Ninth Consultation of Member States on the Implementation of the Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education

2016

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) regularly monitors the implementation of the Convention and the Recommendation against Discrimination in Education, as adopted by UNESCO's General Conference on December 14, 1960. Canada is not a signatory to the convention. This report relates to the application of the recommendation only. This ninth consultation covers the period from 2012 to 2015.

## CONTEXTUALIZING CANADA'S RESPONSE

2. Canada is a multicultural and multi-ethnic country where immigration plays a dominant role in demographic growth. As of July 1, 2015, Canada's population was estimated at 35,851,774. Canada has two official languages and more than 200 first languages reported. According to the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS), one out of five Canadians were foreign-born individuals who arrived as immigrants. Roughly 1.2 million foreign-born people immigrated to Canada between 2006 and 2011, accounting for two-thirds of the country's demographic growth. A total of 1,400,685 people identified themselves as an Indigenous person, that is, First Nation, Métis, or Inuit, representing 4 per cent of the total Canadian population. NHS 2011 enumerated over 6 million people who identified themselves as a member of the visible minority population, representing about one-fifth of the total population in Canada.

3. It is within this context of a pluralistic society that Canadian educators, government officials, nongovernmental organizations, and civil society work to eliminate discrimination and provide equitable and fair access to quality education for all.

## LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

4. Governments in Canada have established a solid legal framework that integrates a collection of laws and policies that prohibit discrimination on the grounds outlined in the convention and recommendation — race, colour, sex, language, religion, political opinion, national origin, economic condition, or birth. Education is a significant human right in Canada that is guaranteed in federal, provincial, and territorial legislation.

5. In Canada, exclusive legislative responsibility for education is granted to the provinces in Canada's *Constitution Act, 1867*. Similar responsibilities are delegated to the territories by the federal government. The education or school act in each province or territory specifies who is entitled to attend school. Although each act differs in specifics, the overall principles are consistent throughout the country. All children have the right to attend a public school if they meet the age and residency requirements. No tuition is to be charged to the student or the parent for this education.

6. The federal government shares responsibility with First Nations for the provision of education to children ordinarily residing on reserve and attending provincial, federal, or band-operated schools.

7. Within the framework of legislation and policy, students' rights to be free from discrimination encompass not only access to education, but also the quality of the educational experience. Jurisdictions in Canada are reaching beyond the idea of anti-discrimination to the concept of truly inclusive education. In inclusive

education, educational values and beliefs are centred on the best interests of the students, promoting social cohesion, belonging, equal opportunities for success, and active participation in learning.

## QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL

8. Early childhood learning and development: Every jurisdiction provides Kindergarten programs, whether full-day or half-day, mandatory or voluntary. Eight jurisdictions provide full-day Kindergarten for all five year olds. In 2014, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) released the CMEC Early Learning and Development Framework (CMEC, 2014a), which presents a pan-Canadian vision for early learning that can be adapted to the unique needs and circumstances of each province and territory. Honouring the diversity of children and families is identified as an integral component of equitable and inclusive education systems.

9. Elementary and high-school systems: In 2013–14, there were 4,706,025 enrolments in public elementary and secondary schools, representing the vast majority of the school-age population from 5 to 17 years of age (Statistics Canada, n.d.). In 2012, Canada's high school ("upper secondary") graduation rate was 85 per cent, with a 6 per cent gender disparity favouring females. (This is the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] graduation rate, and not what we usually mean by graduation rate, which would be a "completion rate" in OECD terminology.) Results from the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), 2012, suggest that Canada is one of the few PISA countries with both high performance and high equity, as is evident by a narrow gap between the scores of the highest performers and those of the lowest performers in mathematics, reading, and science. Factors such as socioeconomic status of students had less of an impact than in other countries.

10. Postsecondary education: According to "Education Indicators in Canada: An International Perspective 2015" (Statistics Canada & CMEC, 2015), over half of Canadians aged 25 to 64 in 2014 had completed a college or university education. At the college level, the Canadian proportion of graduates far exceeded the OECD average of 8 per cent, reflecting Canada's well-developed college sector. Further research indicated that the level of parental education and family income were strong determinants of student participation in postsecondary education. Indigenous populations showed much lower participation rates in and graduation rates from university than the non-Indigenous population, but had similar rates of college completion.

11. Adult learning and skills development: The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), 2012, revealed that Canadians were among the most equipped with the new skills demanded in the 21st century. Canada also had one of the most skilled and educated labour forces in the OECD. However, several sub-groups of the population had disproportionately low levels of proficiency in literacy, numeracy, and problem solving in technology-rich environments, most notably individuals who had not completed high school, immigrants, and Indigenous people.

## CONTINUING CHALLENGES

12. The statistics reviewed in this report reveal that Indigenous students are completing secondary school and graduating from postsecondary education at rates much lower than those of the non-Indigenous population. Provincial and territorial education systems provide education to Indigenous students, with the exception of those attending the schools on reserve, who are the responsibility of the federal

government. The ministers responsible for education in the provinces and territories, working together as the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), have identified Indigenous education as one of the key activity areas within their four pillars of education. In this section, the focus is on Indigenous students in public education systems, and how ministries and departments responsible for education are responding to the challenge of the achievement gap.

13. Obtaining high-quality, comparable, and accessible data about the state of education systems in Canada, and their performance and outcomes, is foundational for monitoring equity and inclusion. While great strides have been made to strengthen data collection and data dissemination across educational systems in Canada, there are existing data limitations. The need to build better data related to Indigenous learners is an essential component of the larger effort to eliminate the gap in academic achievement and graduation rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. The Canadian Education Statistics Council (CESC) continues to develop indicators and explore a methodology for Indigenous self-identification that supports pan-Canadian data collection, analysis, and dissemination of information on Indigenous students. The provinces and territories, through their ministries of education and in partnership with their Regional Indigenous Organizations (RAOs) and local communities are making progress on indicator development at a provincial/territorial policy level to best serve the needs of their Indigenous populations.

14. With a strong legislative and policy framework that prohibits discrimination in education, the education systems have moved toward widely inclusive education in which all are able to participate and succeed to the best of their abilities. Some challenges remain. Most important among these is the education, at all levels, of Indigenous populations, and working with ministries and departments of education to strengthen the success of all students, including Indigenous students. Provincial and territorial governments recognize that special attention must be paid to Indigenous students. Working in collaboration with Indigenous communities and organizations and other partners, they are making progress in closing the achievement gap to offer equality of educational opportunity.

## SECTION ONE – CONTEXTUALIZING CANADA'S RESPONSE

### THE NATURE OF THE REPORT

15. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) regularly monitors the implementation of the Convention and the Recommendation against Discrimination in Education, as adopted by UNESCO's General Conference on December 14, 1960. The convention, which has been recognized as a key pillar in the "Education for All" process, contains 19 articles that define discrimination and the goals and policies of education systems free from discrimination. The purpose of the convention and the recommendation is not only the elimination of discrimination in education but also the adoption of measures aimed at promoting equality of educational opportunity and treatment.

16. The recommendation sought to take into account the diversity of states and the capacity of all legal and political systems to ratify the convention, particularly those states, such as Canada, with a federal structure. Barring differences in wording and in legal scope, the content of the recommendation is identical to that of the convention. The substantive difference is that the convention has binding force and the states that are party to it must incorporate its provisions into the national constitution or domestic law. The recommendation, non-binding in nature, is a norm that member states are invited to apply and is intended to influence the development of national laws and practices.

17. Canada is not a signatory to the convention. This report relates to the application of the recommendation only. The provinces and territories affirm their commitment to the recommendation as best reflecting their priorities and responsibility for education in the Canadian federation.

18. UNESCO has conducted eight previous consultations of member states since the adoption of the convention and the recommendation. This ninth consultation covers the period from 2012 to 2015.

19. The definition of discrimination in the convention includes any distinction, exclusion, limitation, or preference which — being based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political opinion, national or social origin, economic condition, or birth — has the purpose of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education, in particular with regard to access, education of inferior quality, or conditions that are incompatible with human dignity. As this report shows, the legislative framework established in Canada does not permit these or any other forms of discrimination in education or any other aspect of life. For this reason, the report for Canada focuses on the promotion of equality of education opportunities and success and the provision of inclusive education, rather than documenting a struggle against discrimination.

20. Canada has 13 jurisdictions with exclusive responsibility for education, all of which are committed to the elimination of discrimination in education at all levels. This report is not intended to be inclusive of all the activity and legislation concerned with promoting equality of educational opportunity in Canada from 2012 to 2015. Instead it presents an overview and provides a portrait of the levels of access to and graduation from educational opportunities at all levels of public education. Policies, programs, and resources that address the ongoing challenge of eliminating the achievement gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students highlight how governments and educators continue to strive for true equality of educational opportunities.

21. Four reports recently completed by CMEC in cooperation with the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, offer extensive detail on the specific activities of the provincial and territorial departments and ministries of education as well as civil society's efforts to promote equality of educational opportunities:

- "Canada's Response to UNESCO Questionnaires on the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, 2005–2014: Education for Sustainable Development after 2014 and UN Decade of ESD Final Report." http://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/335/Canada-Response-UNESCO-DESD-2014-Questionnaires-1-and-2-EN.pdf

- "Promoting Equality of Educational Opportunity: Canada Report for the UNESCO Eighth Consultation of Member States on the Implementation of the Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education." http://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/289/2012.11_Promoting_Equality_of_Educational_Opportunity_EN.pdf

- "Adult Learning and Education: Canada Progress Report for the UNESCO Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE) and the End of the United Nations Literacy Decade" http://www.cmec.ca/publications/lists/publications/attachments/283/grale_en.pdf

- "Report to UNESCO and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on Human Rights Education: Report for Canada 2005–2009." http://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/267/hr-canada-report-2005-2009-en.pdf

## DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

22. Canada is a multicultural and multi-ethnic country where immigration plays a dominant role in demographic growth. As of July 1, 2015, Canada's population was estimated at 35,851,774 million. Utilizing data from the 2011 Census of Population (Census) and the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS), this report presents specific characteristics of the population to provide a context for the examination of access to and equality within education.

23. Languages: Canada has two official languages: French and English. The 2011 Census enumerated over 19 million anglophones and 7 million francophones. Illustrative of Canada's linguistic diversity, more than 200 languages were reported in response to the 2011 Census question on mother tongue. More than one-fifth of the population (roughly 6.6 million Canadians) spoke a non-official language at home, either alone or in combination with an official language. For almost 97 per cent of these individuals, the other language was an immigrant language — a language associated with immigration to Canada. Between 2006 and 2011, the population that reported speaking the Philippine-based language Tagalog most often at home reported the largest gains (+64%). There are also 12 Indigenous language groupings, made up of more than 60 distinct languages and dialects. Almost 213,500 Canadians reported an Indigenous mother tongue in the 2011 Census. In the northern territory of Nunavut, two Inuit languages, Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun, are official languages, while in Northwest Territories, there are nine Indigenous languages listed in the *Official Language Act*, meaning that government services are available in these languages, on request.

24. Immigration: One out of five (20.6%) Canadians were foreign born individuals who arrived as immigrants, according to NHS 2011. Roughly 1.2 million foreign-born people immigrated to Canada between 2006 and 2011, accounting for two-thirds of demographic growth. Canada's immigrant population reported close to 200 countries as a place of birth, while Asia (including the Middle East) remained as the largest source of immigrants between 2006 and 2011. Canada had the largest share of foreign-born individuals in 2011 of any G8 country and one of the largest of any Western country.

25. Indigenous population: According to NHS 2011, a total of 1,400,685 people identified themselves as an Indigenous person, that is, First Nation, Métis, or Inuit, representing 4.3 per cent of the total Canadian population. First Nations people represented 2.6 per cent of Canada's total population, while Métis made up 1.4 per cent, and Inuit 0.2 per cent. The Indigenous population is growing at a much faster rate than the non-Indigenous population. Of most consequence for the educational systems, children and youth aged 24 and under made up almost half (46.2%) of all Indigenous people, compared to 29.4 per cent of the non-Indigenous population.

26. Diversity: NHS 2011 enumerated over 6 million people who identified themselves as a member of the visible minority population, representing about one-fifth of the total population in Canada. The visible minority population increased from 16.2 per cent of the total population in 2006 to 19.1 per cent in 2011. This increase is largely a result of the amount of immigration to Canada from non-European countries in recent decades, with visible minorities accounting for 78 per cent of newcomers between 2006 and 2011. The three largest visible minority groups were South Asians, Chinese, and Blacks. Further, almost 3.8 million Canadians (14%) aged 15 or older reported having a disability according to the 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD). The prevalence of disability increased with age, ranging from 4 per cent among 15 to 24 year olds to 43 per cent for Canadians aged 75 years or older.

27. It is within this context of a pluralistic society that Canadian educators, government officials, nongovernmental organizations, and civil society work to eliminate discrimination and provide equitable and fair access to quality education for all.

## EDUCATION SYSTEMS IN CANADA

### RESPONSIBILITY FOR EDUCATION

28. Because education is decentralized in Canada there is no federal department of education and no integrated national system of education. Exclusive legislative responsibility for education is granted to the provinces in Canada's *Constitution Act, 1867*. As stipulated in the federal laws that created the three territories — Nunavut, Northwest Territories, and Yukon — each territory has comparable responsibility for education. In the 13 jurisdictions — 10 provinces and three territories — departments or ministries of education are responsible for the organization, delivery, and assessment of education at the elementary and secondary levels. The institutions in the postsecondary systems have varying degrees of autonomy from provincial or territorial government control. The ministers responsible for education in the provinces and territories come together as the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) to discuss matters of mutual interest, undertake educational initiatives cooperatively, and represent the education interests of the provinces and territories in Canada and internationally.

## FOUR PILLARS OF LIFELONG LEARNING

29. CMEC outlined four pillars of lifelong learning in the document "Learn Canada 2020" (CMEC, 2008b), a joint ministerial statement with commitments that parallel components of the UNESCO Recommendation:

    - Early childhood learning and development: All children should have access to high-quality early childhood education that ensures they arrive at school ready to learn.

    - Elementary and secondary schooling: All children in our elementary to high-school systems deserve learning opportunities that are inclusive and that provide them with world-class skills in literacy, numeracy, and science.

    - Postsecondary education: Canada must increase the number of students pursuing postsecondary education by increasing the quality and accessibility of postsecondary education.

    - Adult learning and skills development: Canada must develop an accessible, diversified, and integrated system of adult learning and skills development that delivers training when Canadians need it.

## REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

30. While there are a great many similarities in the provincial and territorial education systems across Canada, there are important differences that reflect the geography, history, culture, and corresponding specialized needs of the populations served. The comprehensive, diversified, and widely accessible nature of the education systems in Canada reflects the societal belief in the importance of education. More information on the educational systems in Canada can be found by consulting "Education in Canada: An Overview" (CMEC, n.d.).

## SECTION TWO – LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

31. The Recommendation against Discrimination in Education prohibits discrimination that deprives any individual or group of access to education, limits them to education of inferior quality, or provides education with conditions that are incompatible with human dignity. It states that it is necessary that discrimination be prohibited and that equality of opportunity be assured. Governments in Canada have established a solid legal framework through legislation at the federal, provincial, and territorial levels that firmly entrenches equality. Education is a significant human right in Canada. Education and school legislative acts within the jurisdictions clearly uphold the principle of equal access. Policies and resources extend this principle and support the creation of positive learning environments and inclusive curriculum.

### LEGISLATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

32. The *Canadian Human Rights Act* puts into practice the principle that all individuals should have equal opportunities. In this act, discrimination is prohibited on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability, and conviction for which a pardon has been granted. In defining discriminatory practices, the act states that it is illegal, for any of the reasons listed, to deny, or deny access to, any good, service, facility, or accommodation to any individual or to differentiate adversely in relation to any individual. Access to education is included in this prohibition.

33. The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* clearly states that "every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability." It further ensures that this guarantee of rights "does not preclude any law, program, or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability."

34. The *Citizenship Act* provides that all Canadians, whether by birth or by choice, are entitled to the same rights, powers, and privileges and are subject to the same obligations, duties, and liabilities.

35. The *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* provides that the "Government of Canada recognizes the diversity of Canadians as regards race, national or ethnic origin, colour, and religion as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society and is committed to a policy of multiculturalism designed to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians while working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural, and political life of Canada."

36. In March 2010, the Canadian government ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, an international human rights instrument of the United Nations intended to protect the rights and dignity of people with disabilities. The core obligations relate to nondiscrimination and reasonable accommodation, with specific provisions for education.

37. In November 2010, Canada joined other countries in supporting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reaffirmation of its commitment to promoting and protecting the rights of Indigenous people in Canada and around the world. The declaration sets out the individual and

collective rights of Indigenous people, as well as their rights to culture, identity, language, employment, health, education, and other needs. In May 2016, Canada became a full supporter, without qualification, of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, reaffirming Canada's commitment to adopt and implement the declaration in accordance with the Canadian constitution.

## PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL LEGISLATION

38. To guard against discrimination and foster human rights, every province and territory has its own human rights legislation and procedures, as well as a human rights commission or equivalent. The commissions promote and educate about human rights and anti-discrimination laws while working to settle claims of discrimination. Education is included in each piece of human rights legislation as a service that is subject to the law's provisions.

39. The Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Agencies (CASHRA) is the national association of Canada's 12 statutory agencies charged with administering federal, provincial, and territorial human rights legislation. Although British Columbia and Nunavut do not have human rights commissions, they do have human rights tribunals. The CASHRA web site (http://www.cashra.ca/links.html) provides links to these agencies and the legislation.

40. The human rights acts or codes provide protection from discrimination or denial of service, with variations by jurisdictions, for such reasons as age; colour; race; ancestry; ethnic or national origin; citizenship; criminal conviction; political belief; sex; sexual orientation; gender identity and gender expression; association; creed or religion; family and marital status; physical and mental disability, including addiction; and source of income. The federal and provincial/territorial legislation is inclusive in terms of individuals, businesses, and services to which they apply.

## EDUCATIONAL LEGISLATION AND POLICIES: FROM ANTI-DISCRIMINATION TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

41. The education or school act in each jurisdiction specifies who is entitled to attend school. Although each act differs in specifics, the overall principles are consistent throughout the country. All children have the right to attend a public school if they meet the age and residency requirements. No tuition is to be charged to the student or the parent for this education.

42. School systems reflect the values of the legislation cited by creating and maintaining conditions that foster success and equitable treatment for all. The education acts also address the provision of reasonable accommodations to meet the learning needs of students with special needs. Codes of conduct in some jurisdictions refer to the standards of behaviour that are expected from all members of school communities related to safe and positive learning environments and respecting the rights of others.

43. The federal government shares responsibility with First Nations for the provision of education to children ordinarily resident on reserve and attending provincial, federal, or band-operated schools.

44. Students' rights to be free from discrimination encompass not only access to education but also the quality of the educational experience itself. Educational jurisdictions in Canada are reaching beyond the idea of anti-discrimination to the concept of truly inclusive education. In inclusive education, educational

values and beliefs centre on the best interests of the students, promoting social cohesion, belonging, equal opportunities for success, and active participation in learning. What follows are selected examples of recent initiatives.

- In 2014, CMEC released the CMEC Early Learning and Development Framework (CMEC, 2014a). The framework presents a pan-Canadian vision for early learning that can be adapted to the unique needs and circumstances of each province and territory. It is designed to serve as a resource to support the development of policies and initiatives by ministries and departments of education and their partners that enhance the quality and continuity of the learning experience in the early years and beyond. Honouring the diversity of children and families is identified as an integral component of equitable and inclusive education systems.

- In 2014, Ontario revised and updated its Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, which aims to identify and remove discriminatory biases and systemic barriers to student achievement. A key focus is to help Ontario school boards review and/or continue to develop, implement, and monitor equity and inclusive education policies consistent with the guiding principles and goals set out in the strategy.

- In 2013, the Government of Canada and CMEC signed a new Protocol for Agreements for Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction. It is a multi-year, multilateral agreement between the Government of Canada and, on behalf of all provinces and territories, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). The protocol sets the key parameters for collaboration between the Government of Canada and the provincial/territorial governments on official languages in education and provides a mechanism through which the federal government provides contributions to the costs incurred by the provinces and territories in the delivery of minority-language education and second-language instruction.

45. More detail on the policies and practices of inclusive education can be found in the report "The Development of Education: Reports for Canada. Report Two: Inclusive Education in Canada: The Way of the Future" (CMEC, 2008a).

## THE ISSUE OF PARENTAL CHOICE

46. Parental choice is a central component of the education systems in Canada. According to the province or territory in which they are living, parents may have the choice of sending their children to a secular or nondenominational public school, a religion-based separate school, a French- or English- language school, or a private school that may or may not receive public funding. Parents may also choose to home-school their children. Public and separate school systems that are publicly funded serve about 93 per cent of all students in Canada (CMEC, n.d.). The legislation and practices concerning the establishment of separate educational systems and private educational institutions vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. For more information on provincial and territorial policies concerning parental choice, see pages 12–16 in "UNESCO Seventh Consultation of Member States on the Implementation of the Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education: Report for Canada 2007" (CMEC & CCU, 2007).

47. The principle of access remains paramount because each child is entitled to a free public education. It is also consistent across jurisdictions that no child attending public schools is required to take part in any

religious observance or instruction if the parent wants to have the child excused, or if the child (who in some cases has to be granted independent student status and submit a signed written request) asks to be excused.

## SECTION THREE – QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL

48. Educational systems that encompass the principles of anti-discrimination and inclusive education provide not only equality of access but also significant equality of achievement and graduation. In this report, educational indicators and data collected at the pan-Canadian and international levels highlight progress being made and ongoing challenges in achieving the vision set out in the recommendation.

### EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

49. The early years are a period characterized by the unprecedented growth of physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and communication capacities. Beyond academic achievement, experiences in the early years strongly influence the achievement of social and economic success, as well as the ability to contribute constructively to the community. Research has shown that the children who are most successful in school are those who were nurtured, encouraged, and stimulated in the early years — whether at home or in early learning and child-care settings. Being ready to learn continues to have an impact throughout a child's education, with a strong link to secondary school completion and to future employability, earnings, and life satisfaction. As of July 1, 2015, Statistics Canada estimated that there were just over 1.93 million children aged four and under in Canada, with roughly 1.95 million children between five and nine years of age.

50. In 2008, ministers responsible for education put forward an ambitious goal for early childhood learning and development in Canada — that "all children should have access to high-quality early childhood education that ensures they arrive at school ready to learn." Since that time, the education sector has witnessed rapid developments at the provincial, territorial, and pan-Canadian levels. One of the key developments across a number of jurisdictions has been the integration of education and care to provide a seamless learning experience for children until the onset of formal schooling. Provinces and territories have identified their own paths to early childhood learning and development integration, either by integrating their early childhood services under the Ministry of Education or by creating a cross-ministry coordinating mechanism to facilitate interdepartmental coordination.

51. In 2014, CMEC released the CMEC Early Learning and Development Framework (CMEC, 2014a). The framework presents a pan-Canadian vision for early learning that can be adapted to the unique needs and circumstances of each province and territory. (See paragraph 44 for details.)

52. At the pan-Canadian level, the Early Childhood Learning and Development (ECLD) Working Group was formed in 2011 in response to CMEC's commitment to the early learning pillar of education outlined in "Learn Canada 2020" (CMEC, 2008b). This working group is composed of officials from across all 13 provinces and territories. Its purpose is to expand the collective knowledge of its members on early learning in education, building on the four themes of governance, training and capacity, curriculum/quality environments, and assessment/evaluation. This group's work informs a richer discussion on the quality of early childhood programs in Canada.

53. Every jurisdiction provides Kindergarten programs, whether full-day or half-day, mandatory or voluntary. Eight jurisdictions provide full-day Kindergarten for all five year olds. Ontario offers full-day Kindergarten for all four year olds as well. Since 2008, a number of provinces and territories have expanded their Kindergarten programs to full-day offerings and increased investments and resources for the early years, in line with international trends. For example, Newfoundland and Labrador will implement a universal full-day Kindergarten program, effective September 2016. The province's March 27, 2014 budget included $35.4 million over three years to support implementation, representing the beginning of Phase II of the province's early learning strategy called Learning from the Start.

54. At the moment, the only pan-Canadian source for data on early childhood enrolments, expenditures, and educators is the Statistics Canada Elementary-Secondary Education Survey (ESES), which includes information about Kindergarten and junior Kindergarten programs. This method of reporting omits early childhood programs and services that exist outside of the formal education system (e.g., social services programs). With the goal of attaining a representative picture of early childhood programs in Canada, collaborative efforts are now underway to collect more comprehensive data and to resume reporting to the OECD. For a more detailed review, see "International Report Card on Public Education: Key Facts on Canadian Achievement and Equity" (Parkin, 2015, p. 9).

55. In Canada, the importance of being ready to learn as a foundation for later educational success has been recognized with programs established and expanded to best serve the widest number of children.

## ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLING

56. Each province and territory has established legislation, policies, programs, curricula, and practices for an elementary and secondary education system that best reflect the history, culture, and learning needs of its population. The ages for compulsory schooling vary from one jurisdiction to another, but most require attendance in school from ages 6 to 16.

57. In most jurisdictions, there are 12 years of school, with elementary school covering the first six to eight years and high school covering the final four to six years of compulsory education. In some places, junior high or middle school covers the middle years of the 12-year span. In Quebec, students move to postsecondary cégeps (roughly equivalent to colleges) after 11 years of elementary and secondary school.

58. Access to education is one measure of successful anti-discrimination policy and practice. In 2013–14, there were 4,706,025 enrolments in public elementary and secondary schools. This represents the vast majority of the school-age population from 5 to 17 years of age (Statistics Canada, n.d.).

59. As reported in "Education Indicators in Canada: An International Perspective 2015" (Statistics Canada & CMEC, 2015), Canada's high school ("upper secondary") graduation rate was 85 per cent in 2012. (This is the OECD graduation rate, and not what we usually mean by graduation rate, which would be a "completion rate" in OECD terminology.) The upper secondary graduation rate corresponds to the probability that an individual will graduate from high school during his or her lifetime. The majority of other OECD member countries also reported graduation rates of at least 80 per cent, and the comparable OECD average was 85 per cent in 2013. In Canada, the graduation rate for females was higher (88%) than that for males (82%), similar to the OECD averages.

60. One method of calculating a dropout rate is to look at the percentage of those aged 20 to 24 who are not attending school and who have not graduated from high school. In Canada, this percentage decreased steadily from 17 per cent in 1990–91 to 8 per cent in 2011–2012(ESDC, 2016). A decline was reported for both men and women, from 19 per cent for men and 14 per cent for women in 1990–91, to 10 per cent for men and 6 per cent for women in 2011–12. Although dropout rates have been consistently lower for women than for men, the gap has narrowed over time. In line with the national trend, dropout rates for all provinces declined between 1990–91 and 2011–12. Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia had the highest average percentages of dropouts in the early 1990s, while their averages between 2009–10 and 2011–12 fell by more than half. The largest decrease occurred in Newfoundland and Labrador, where dropout rates fell from 20 to 9 per cent. According to a 2010 Statistics Canada publication, "Study: Trends in Dropout Rates and the Labour Market Outcomes of Young Dropouts," dropout rates in 2009–10 were lower for young immigrant adults than for their Canadian-born counterparts. However, despite improvements throughout the country, dropout rates were persistently higher outside of big cities, in the territories, and among Indigenous youth.

61. Measures of achievement offer additional insight into issues of anti-discrimination and equality of opportunity and treatment. The OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests over half a million 15-year-old students in 65 countries and economies, including 21,000 in Canada, in science, mathematics, and reading (OECD, 2013). In the 2012 study, the emphasis was on mathematics. Canada had a mean score of 518 in mathematics, well above the OECD average of 494, suggesting that Canadian students continue to perform well in a global context. Canada was outperformed by only Korea, Japan, and Switzerland among OECD countries.

62. As well as high scores overall, the results of PISA 2012 tests for Canada revealed important indications of equity in performance:

- As a measure of equity in educational outcomes, PISA considers the difference between high-performing ($90^{th}$ percentile) and low-performing ($10^{th}$ percentile) students. In all three areas assessed (mathematics, reading, and science) by PISA, the gap between high and low achievers was smaller in Canada than in OECD countries on average. This indicates that Canada's education systems achieve a slightly greater degree of equity.

- Over 85 per cent of Canadian students reached the baseline level of mathematical proficiency, nine percentage points more than the OECD average. The proportion of Canadian students who performed at the higher levels of mathematics was higher (16%) than the OECD average (13%), while the proportion of scores at lower levels of mathematics in Canada (14%) was significantly lower than the OECD average (23%). This result indicates that 14 per cent of the students in Canada have considerable difficulty in mathematics.

- Canada stood out as having the second most equitable education system in the OECD, as measured by assessing the proportion of variation in students' PISA math scores that was explained by **socioeconomic differences** between schools. In every OECD country (except Finland), the socioeconomic status of the neighbourhood a student is born in and of the local school they attend had more of an impact on their academic performance than in Canada.

63. Consistent with previous pan-Canadian and international assessments, PISA 2012 revealed significant **gender differences** in mathematics. Across OECD countries, the average difference between boys and girls in math achievement was 11 points in favour of boys, similar to what was observed in Canada (10 points). The proportion of low achievers (below Level 2) was quite similar across gender in Canada (13% for boys vs. 14% for girls), but more boys achieved the highest levels than girls (19% for boys vs. 14% for girls). **Reading and science** were also assessed in PISA 2012, although in less detail than mathematics. As was the case in PISA 2000, girls performed significantly better than boys on the reading test in all countries. On average across OECD countries, girls outperformed boys by 38 points in PISA 2012, while in Canada this difference was 35 points. As for science, no significant gender differences were observed between boys and girls in Canada, though boys outperformed girls on average across OECD countries.

64. Comparably, a major pan-Canadian study, *PCAP — 2013: Report on the Pan-Canadian Assessment of Science, Reading, and Mathematics* (CMEC, 2014b), revealed that 91 per cent of Canadian Grade 8 (age 13) students are achieving at or above their expected level of performance in science. Comparisons were also made on the basis of gender differences in performance. Similar to the results of international studies, there were no significant differences in performance between boys and girls in science, while girls performed better than boys in reading. Unlike the results of PISA 2012, boys and girls performed similarly in mathematics.

65. PISA 2012 compared the mathematics performance of students in the **English and French school systems** for seven provinces (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, Manitoba, and British Columbia). The performance of the minority-language students — those in the English language system in Quebec and the French-language systems in the other six provinces — was compared to that of students in the majority-language system. For Canada overall, the average of students in the French school systems was higher than for students in the English systems. Students from the French system in Quebec and from the English system in Ontario achieved a higher average than their peers in the same province. When it came to measures of performance in reading and science in PISA 2012, the relative performance of students in the two systems **varied across provinces** and by domain:
    - In reading, differences in performance between students in the English and French systems across Canada were not remarkably different; however, students in majority-language school systems outperformed their counterparts in minority-language systems in four of the seven provinces.
    - In science, students in the English school systems outperformed those in the French school systems across Canada, while students in majority-language school systems outperformed their peers in minority-language systems in five of the seven provinces.

66. Of the 15-year-old students in Canada assessed in PISA 2012, around 30 per cent were individuals with an **immigrant** background — a much higher proportion than the OECD average (11%). In Canada, 13 per cent of students were first-generation immigrants (students who were born and may have received part of their education outside Canada) compared with the OECD average of 5 per cent. Among OECD countries, Canada had the second highest proportion of students who had an immigrant background and who spoke a language at home that was different from the language of the PISA assessment (14%). The comparable OECD average was 6 per cent. PISA 2012 results from three groups were compared: non-immigrant students who were born in Canada and whose parents were born in Canada; second-generation immigrant students who were born and educated in Canada but whose parents were born outside Canada; and first-generation immigrant students. There were **no significant performance differences** in mathematics between students with immigrant backgrounds, whether first or second generation, and

non-immigrant students. This is a highly positive result, particularly when compared to mathematics performance in OECD countries in general. There were, however, some significant differences across Canadian jurisdictions, with immigrant students scoring either below or above non-immigrants, depending on the province. For a more detailed review, see "Immigrants in Canada: Does Socioeconomic Background Matter?" (ESDC & CMEC, 2015).

67. While average performance is useful in assessing the overall performance of Canadian students, it can mask significant **variation between jurisdictions**. Results of PISA 2012 suggest that there are marked variations between provinces in Canada. Jurisdictions can be grouped into three clusters with respect to achievement: below the Canadian average, at the Canadian average, and above the Canadian average. In mathematics, only students in Quebec performed above the Canadian average. A summary of provincial results in mathematics, reading, and science appears in Table 1.

**Table 1: Provincial results in mathematics, reading, and science in relation to the Canadian average, PISA 2012**

| | ***Below the Canadian average*** | ***At the Canadian average*** | ***Above the Canadian average*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Mathematics** | Prince Edward Island<br>Newfoundland and Labrador<br>Nova Scotia<br>New Brunswick<br>Manitoba<br>Saskatchewan | Alberta<br>British Columbia<br>Ontario | Quebec |
| **Reading** | Newfoundland and Labrador<br>Prince Edward Island<br>Nova Scotia<br>New Brunswick<br>Manitoba<br>Saskatchewan | Alberta<br>Ontario<br>Quebec | British Columbia |
| **Science** | Newfoundland and Labrador<br>Prince Edward Island<br>Nova Scotia<br>New Brunswick<br>Quebec<br>Manitoba<br>Saskatchewan | Ontario | Alberta<br>British Columbia |

Source: CMEC (2013)

68. In comparison, results of PCAP 2013 also reveal marked variations between provinces in Canada. Quebec students had the highest achievement in mathematics, performing above the Canadian average. Students in Alberta and Ontario had achievement scores at the Canadian mean, although students in Ontario achieved higher scores than those in Alberta. Students in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New

Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador were below the Canadian mean.

69. For historical and social reasons that are discussed in more detail in the next section, **Indigenous** students have not had educational attainment at the same level as the non-Indigenous population. This educational achievement gap has been well documented. According to the National Household Survey (NHS) 2011, 29 per cent of Indigenous people (age 25 to 64) had not completed high school, compared with 12 per cent of non-Indigenous people. According to a 2011 Statistics Canada report, "Study: Trends in Dropout Rates and the Labour Market Outcomes of Young Dropouts," between 2007 and 2010, the three-year average dropout rate among First Nation people living off-reserve, Métis, and Inuit aged 20 to 24 was 23 per cent compared to 9 per cent for non-Indigenous people.

70. An important concern for education systems looking to promote equality of educational opportunity is the extent to which they serve the entire population. Striving to ensure that all students develop their full potential regardless of their societal backgrounds is a fundamental principle of public education in Canada. Canada continues to be a leader in equity and achievement. Canada is one of only a very few high-immigration countries that shows no significant achievement gap between immigrants and non-immigrants, as well as no disparities between rich and poor children. However, within the student population are groups that are not achieving at the same levels as their peers. With a focus on Indigenous students, programs and policies have been put in place to meet the ongoing challenges and ensure inclusion and success in education. These are described in Section Four — Continuing Challenges.

## TEACHING PROFESSION

71. Pre-service training of teachers is available in every province and territory and largely undertaken by the universities. In the three northern territories, the colleges provide teacher training in cooperation with a university from one of the provinces. Redesigning teacher education programs is collaborative, and involves the institutions, government, educational associations and professionals and, often, public consultations. Professional development for practising teachers is shared among the departments or ministries of education, school boards, universities, teachers' associations and unions, and nongovernmental organizations with particular expertise.

72. Data presented in *Education at a Glance 2015* (OECD, 2015a) and in a recent OECD report, "Education Policy Outlook Canada" (OECD, 2015b), paint a picture of the state of the teaching profession in Canada. Teachers had above-average teaching time, but below-average instruction time compared to other OECD countries. Teachers' salaries in Canada were higher than the OECD average across all levels of education in 2012, higher than their counterparts with similar qualifications in other sectors in Canada. The estimated class size was below average.

73. Provinces and territories continue to make great strides in enhancing instructional leadership through investments in ongoing professional learning for Canadian teachers. Here are some selected examples of recent initiatives:

- Recognizing the importance of investment in high-quality learning opportunities for its teachers as a means of improving student achievement, Prince Edward Island's (PE) "Professional Learning Report" (2013) proposed a renewed model of professional learning for teachers. The model was informed by

effective practices already in place within the PE education system, as well as evidence-based practices in the research literature. It recommended: 1) restructuring the school calendar to include professional learning days; 2) revamping the curriculum to make it easier for teachers to use and manage; and 3) promoting school-based professional learning and teachers' self-evaluation plans.

- The Nova Scotia Instructional Leadership Academy Program (NSILA, 2010) is a standards-based program that provides public school principals and other leaders with postgraduate-level training. It aims to improve the capacity for school-based instructional leadership to increase student learning and achievement in Nova Scotia public schools. Achieving the Diploma in Instructional Leadership demonstrates a high level of commitment to the field of practice, increases and validates skills and knowledge, and recognizes professionals who have met this high standard of achievement.

74. The 2015 International Summit on the Teaching Profession was hosted by CMEC and the Learning Partnership, a Canadian national education non-profit, and organized in cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Education International. The summit brought together official delegations of ministers of education, union leaders, outstanding teachers, and other education experts, as well as observers from 20 countries. The theme of the summit was "Implementing Highly Effective Teacher Policy and Practice," and three interrelated topics that are critical to the success of education systems were discussed: promoting and developing effective leadership; valuing teachers and strengthening their effectiveness; and encouraging innovation to create 21st-century learning environments. The report, "Implementing Highly Effective Teacher Policy and Practice" (Asia Society, 2015) captures these discussions.

## POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

75. Postsecondary education is available in both government-supported and private institutions, which offer degrees, diplomas, certificates, and attestations, depending on the nature of the institution and the length of the program. Universities and university colleges focus on degree programs but also offer diplomas and certificates, often in professional designations. Colleges, community colleges, and technical and vocational institutions offer diplomas and certificates, and in some cases, degree programs or two years of academic credit that can be transferred to a university. The private and public cégeps in Quebec offer a choice of two-year academic programs that are a prerequisite for university study or three-year vocational and professional programs that prepare students for the labour market.

76. This look at postsecondary education provides information on attainment and participation rates, paying particular attention to groups that have traditionally not participated or been successful in postsecondary education.

77. According to "Education Indicators in Canada: An International Perspective 2015" (Statistics Canada & CMEC, 2015), over half of Canadians aged 25 to 64 in 2014 had completed a college or university education. One-quarter of Canadians had attained a college qualification while 28 per cent had completed their education at the university level. Another 11 per cent had certificates or diplomas from vocational schools or apprenticeship training. Table 2 details the postsecondary attainment of various age groups.

| Table 2: Percentage of 25- to 64-year-old population that has attained postsecondary education by age group, Canada, 2014 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Age Group* | | | | |
| | **25 to 64** | **25 to 34** | **35 to 44** | **45 to 54** | **55 to 64** |
| **University** | 28 | 33 | 34 | 25 | 22 |
| **College** | 25 | 24 | 27 | 26 | 23 |
| **Total** | 53 | 57 | 61 | 51 | 45 |

Source: Statistics Canada & CMEC (2015)

78. At the college level, the Canadian proportion of graduates far exceeds the OECD average of 8 per cent. This number reflects Canada's well-developed college sector. At the university level, the results are closer, with 28 per cent in Canada compared to 24 per cent in other OECD countries. Between 2005 and 2014, the proportion of the Canadian population attaining postsecondary education increased by eight percentage points (from 46% to 54%).

79. While there is a difference between men's and women's attainment at the end of high school, **gender differences** become even more pronounced at the postsecondary level. At both colleges and universities, women outnumber men in both enrolment and graduation measures (Statistics Canada, 2015). The disparity in attainment is more marked at the college level (29% for women and 21% for men) than the university level (30% for women and 26% for men). At the university level, more women graduate from every field of study except science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs. For a more detailed review of the underrepresentation of women in STEM programs, see "Gender Differences in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Computer Science (STEM) Programs at University" (Statistics Canada, 2013b).

80. According to NHS 2011, nearly 671,400 adults aged 25 to 64 reported an **Indigenous** identity (First Nation, Métis, or Inuit). In 2011, almost one-half (48%) of Indigenous people had a postsecondary qualification, including 14 per cent with a trades certificate, 21 per cent with a college diploma, 4 per cent with a university certificate or diploma below the bachelor level, and 10 per cent with a university degree. By contrast, almost two-thirds (65%) of the non-Indigenous population aged 25 to 64 had a postsecondary qualification in 2011. Postsecondary educational attainment by Indigenous populations is similar to that of non-Indigenous populations at the trades and college levels, but there is a significant gap at the university level (Indigenous: 10%, non-Indigenous: 27%). There was also a marked difference in the proportion of Indigenous people with no certificate, diploma, or degree (30%) compared to non-Indigenous people in the same age group (12%). For a more detailed summary, see "The Educational Attainment of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada" (Statistics Canada, 2011c).

81. Indigenous students face many barriers to admission and to successful graduation from colleges and universities. Many Indigenous students live in remote communities and so must relocate to communities many times the size of their original ones. Some may require additional academic support to successfully transition to postsecondary education. The provinces, territories, and educational institutions, along with the Indigenous communities, have policies, programs, and collaborative arrangements to respond to the needs of Indigenous postsecondary students. For example, programs have been set up and designed

especially for Indigenous students in education, law, business, and Indigenous studies. Special support structures may provide counselling meeting places, preparatory programs, and funding.

82. A 2011 Statistics Canada report, "Postsecondary Education Participation among Underrepresented and Minority Groups" (Statistics Canada, 2011b), leveraged data from the Youth in Transition Survey (YITS) to explore the postsecondary education participation among underrepresented and minority groups. The research looked at the postsecondary participation of this cohort in 2006, when they were 21 years of age. As Table 3 shows, four factors had a significant impact on their participation: **family income**, **parental education**, **immigrant status**, **and Indigenous status**. The authors conclude that, "for the groups that historically have been underrepresented in postsecondary education, the rate of participation in university in particular was substantially lower than for other youth, whereas in every case but one (Indigenous youth being the exception), their college participation rates were somewhat higher than those of the comparison groups" (Statistics Canada, 2011b, par. 7).

**Table 3: Rates of access to college and university for underrepresented and minority groups, YITS Cohort A, 2006, all provinces**

| | ***College*** | ***University*** | ***Any*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Per cent | | |
| **All** | 33.0 | 41.7 | 74.7 |
| **Family income** | | | |
| Income below $50,000 | 34.8 | 31.4 | 66.2 |
| Income above $50,000 | 32.1 | 46.9 | 79.0 |
| **Parental education** | | | |
| No postsecondary education | 36.6 | 24.3 | 60.9 |
| At least some postsecondary education | 31.5 | 49.2 | 80.7 |
| **Immigrant status** | | | |
| First-generation immigrant | 29.6 | 57.0 | 86.6 |
| Second-generation immigrant | 30.0 | 53.0 | 83.0 |
| Non-immigrant | 34.2 | 37.0 | 71.2 |
| **Indigenous status** | | | |
| Indigenous | 28.0 | 23.1 | 51.1 |
| Non-Indigenous | 33.2 | 42.2 | 75.4 |

Source: Statistics Canada (2011b).

83. In line with these findings, a further analysis of these data was recently published in an article titled "Access and Barriers to Postsecondary Education: Evidence from the Youth in Transition Survey (Finnie, Mueller, & Wismer, 2015). The authors investigated relations between the background characteristics of Canadian youth and participation in postsecondary education in Canada. Parental education was the most important determinant of access to postsecondary education. Those whose parents had higher levels of education were more likely to have access to postsecondary education and to choose university over college. While family income was still an important indicator of access, its effect was reduced when accounting for parental education.

84. As Table 3 demonstrates, first-and second-generation children of immigrants had higher rates of participation in postsecondary education than non-immigrant youth. Considerable research has been devoted to the relationship between immigration status and educational attainment. The recent working paper, "Access and Barriers to Postsecondary Education among First and Second Generation Children of Canadian Immigrants" (Finnie, Mueller, & Wismer, 2012), utilized the YITS data set to explore postsecondary access rates among immigrant and non-immigrant Canadian youth. The following findings are noteworthy:

- Parallel to previous findings, the postsecondary participation gap among immigrant and non-immigrants students was driven by substantially higher participation rates of immigrant students at the university level.

- Not all immigrant groups were equally successful. Differences varied by source country, with more favourable outcomes for immigrants from China, Asia, and Africa, while those from the Americas (excluding the United States) had lower participation rates than the non-immigrant population.

- Factors such as province of residence, urban or rural location, parental education levels, family income levels, high-school grades, literacy scores, and high-school engagement partially accounted for the higher levels of postsecondary education among the children of immigrants. However, there also seemed to be a reflection of cultural factors, including a strong ethos for postsecondary education, among immigrant families, especially those from the three regions with highest attendance.

- The situation in Canada differs considerably (and positively) from that in Europe, where the children of immigrants appear to face substantial difficulties in terms of access to postsecondary education.

85. As this research shows, the proportion of the Canadian population attaining postsecondary education has increased dramatically in the last decade. Women have played a more significant role in narrowing this gap. However, disparities still remain because factors such as parental education, family income, and Indigenous status continue to have a significant impact on postsecondary education attainment in Canada.

## ADULT LEARNING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

86. Adult learning and skills development are increasingly recognized as essential in a knowledge-based economy where the skills required for a successful career are constantly evolving. Productivity, competitiveness, economic development, and the well-being of individuals, families, and communities are closely linked to a well-trained and adaptive workforce.

87. Provincial and territorial ministries responsible for education plan, implement, and evaluate policies for adult learning and skills development. This often involves consultation and/or partnership with organizations from other government sectors, nongovernmental organizations, or the private sector. Programs are delivered by a wide spectrum of agencies, organizations, and institutions. Provincial and territorial governments, often in cooperation with the federal government, provide much of the funding

for these programs. In all jurisdictions, the ministry (or ministries) responsible for education are responsible for ensuring the coordination of adult-learning and skills-development activities.

88. Each provincial and territorial government supports capacity building to ensure that different stakeholders are able to participate in policy and program development as well as the implementation and evaluation of adult-learning and skills-development initiatives.

89. The nature of adult-learning and skills-development opportunities varies across provinces and territories, sectors, and communities to meet the specific needs of the populations they serve. Programs are in areas such as basic skills and learning programs for adults, English or French as a second/additional language, community and volunteer-tutor adult-literacy programs, vocational education and training, apprenticeships, and workplace and workforce learning. Most jurisdictions provide these programs in both of Canada's official languages, while others provide them in English only.

90. Most provinces and territories have targeted specific learner groups in their adult-learning and skills-development policies. All include a focus on youth, Indigenous learners, the unemployed, and people with disabilities. Most focus on immigrants. Learning materials for adult education are developed in various ways by different provinces and territories. Almost all provinces and territories track learner-level information and data on learning outcomes (CMEC & CCU, 2012b).

91. Quality assurance has become increasingly important as Canada's landscape of education and training providers becomes more diverse. Each province and territory has its own approach to quality assurance and quality criteria. Ongoing professional development is also available in all provinces and territories through postsecondary institutions. Most also provide professional development through their ministry/department of education or school boards and through nongovernmental organizations.

92. In recognition of the importance of a lifelong approach to learning, a study entitled "Access and Support to Education and Training Survey" (ASETS) was conducted by Statistics Canada between June and October 2008. Comparing the results of the 2008 ASETS to the Adult Education and Training Survey undertaken in 2002 shows some encouraging changes in terms of access to training.

    In 2008, 31 per cent of working-age adult Canadians participated in job-related training, a 6 per cent increase from 2002.
    Participation was highest for those aged 35 to 44 at 36 per cent, with 25 to 34 year olds at 32 per cent, and 45 to 64 year olds at 27 per cent.
    All of these groups increased their participation rates from 2002.
    Those with less than high school education had the largest rate of increase (5.2 percentage points) but still had the lowest rate of participation in training at 11.7 percentage points.
    The proportion of job-related training activities sponsored by employers increased slightly from 88 per cent in 2002 to 90 per cent in 2008.

- The increase was most significant for training activities for workers aged 35 to 44 and 45 to 64 and for those with a high-school diploma or equivalent.

93. The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) is OECD's first-ever international study of skills needed for the economy and society of the 21st century. PIAAC measures skills in literacy, numeracy, and problem solving in technology-rich environments (PS-TRE) among adults

between the ages of 16 and 65, in 24 countries and sub-national regions. In Canada, more than 27,000 people were surveyed to allow findings at both the pan-Canadian and provincial and territorial levels as well as among off-reserve Indigenous people, immigrants, and official-language minorities. Key findings from the "Skills in Canada: First Results from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)" (Statistics Canada, ESDC, and CMEC, 2013) include:

- Skills for the 21st century. Canadians were among the most equipped with new skills demanded in the 21st century. Over four out of five Canadians were able to complete the computer-based assessment. Canadians were more likely (compared to the OECD average) to have higher levels of proficiency in the new domain of "problem solving in technology-rich environments."
- Literacy and numeracy. Canada performed at the OECD average in literacy (Canada: 273.5, OECD: 273.3) and below the OECD average in numeracy (Canada: 265.5, OECD: 269.4).
- Distribution of skills. Canada had a higher-than-average proportion of its population at both the high and low ends of the proficiency in literacy. Table 4 presents the proportion of the population at the highest and lowest proficiency levels across the three domains. A significant number of Canadians performed at low levels of proficiency. Table 5 provides further information on Canadians performing at the lowest proficiency levels.

**Table 4: Proportion of the Canadian population at the highest and lowest proficiency levels in literacy, numeracy, and PS-TRE, PIAAC 2012**

| | ***Literacy*** | | ***Numeracy*** | | ***PS-TRE*** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Highest (level 4 or 5)** | **Lowest (level 1 or below)** | **Highest (level 4 or 5)** | **Lowest (level 1 or below)** | **Highest (level 3)** | **Lowest (below level 1)** |
| | Per cent | | | | | |
| **Canada** | 14 | 17 | 13 | 23 | 7 | 15 |
| **OECD average** | 12 | 16 | 13 | 19 | 6 | 12 |

Source: Statistics Canada, ESDC, & CMEC (2013).

**Table 5: Performance at the lowest levels of proficiency, PIAAC 2012**

| | ***Literacy (level 1 and below*** | ***Numeracy (level 1 and below)*** | ***PS-TRE (below level 1)*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Per cent | | |
| **General population (16 to 65 years of age)** | 17 | 23 | 15 |
| **45 to 65 years of age** | 21 | 28 | 19 |
| **Less-than-high-school achievement** | 41 | 51 | 22 |
| **Not in labour force** | 26 | 35 | 17 |
| **Service and support occupations** | 18 | 28 | 16 |
| **Immigrant** | 27 | 33 | 19 |
| **Off-reserve Indigenous identification** | 24 | 35 | 18 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **First language is not the same as language of the test** | 27 | 33 | 19 |

Source: Statistics Canada, ESDC, & CMEC (2013).

- Educational attainment and skills. Educational attainment had a positive correlation with proficiency, with results favouring Canadians with a postsecondary education.
- Skills in the labour force. Canada had one of the most skilled and educated labour forces in the OECD. 50 per cent of workers in Canada were in managerial and professional occupations, a significantly greater proportion than the OECD average of 39 per cent. It is also noteworthy that workers with the highest scores in literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving are those with a PSE who work in managerial and professional occupations.
- Immigrants. Parallel to results presented here, Canada was one of only a few countries whose immigrant population was both proportionately larger than average and more proficient than average. Although there was a skills gap between immigrants and non-immigrants, the gap in Canada was relatively narrow; the mean score difference on the literacy sale between native- and foreign-born adults was 24 in Canada, compared to an OECD average of 29. Immigrants who received a significant portion of their education in Canada were much less likely to be at a disadvantage in terms of skills.
- Language: The proportion of the population whose mother tongue was different from the language of the assessment was higher in Canada (23%) than in any other country (OECD average: 9%), and these Canadian adults performed substantially better than their counterparts in almost all other countries. Official-language minority populations did not perform as well as official-language majority populations (except for anglophones in Quebec), but the size of the differences varied by jurisdiction.
- Indigenous people. Indigenous and non-Indigenous people with similar levels of education have similar skills proficiency, suggesting that education may be critical in eliminating the skills gap. Table 6 presents data on the skills gap in literacy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The skills gap varied by region and by type of skills assessed.

**Table 6: Average literacy scores of population aged 16 to 65 by age and off-reserve Indigenous identification, PIAAC 2012**

| | ***Age Group*** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **16 to 24** | **25 to 34** | **35 to 44** | **45 to 54** | **55 to 65** |
| **Indigenous** | 257 | 267 | 271 | 254 | 249 |
| **Non-Indigenous** | 277 | 286 | 280 | 268 | 261 |

Source: Statistics Canada, ESDC, & CMEC (2013).

94. As with postsecondary education, adult learning and skills development are becoming more inclusive in terms of the age, gender, and educational levels of those who take part. Results of PIAAC 2012 identified several groups that have disproportionately low levels of proficiency in literacy, numeracy, and PS-TRE: individuals who have not completed high school, immigrants, and Indigenous people. These findings underline the importance of continued investment in adult-learning and skills-development programs and policies that target disadvantaged learner groups.

## SUMMARY

95. For each of the four pillars of education, progress has been made in promoting equality of educational opportunities and treatment in the period covered by the report — 2012 to 2015. Access to full-day Kindergarten has expanded; Canada continues to rank high in equity and high in performance at the international level in elementary and secondary education; more students are graduating from college and university; and more Canadians are participating in adult-training and skills-development programs. Despite the overall progress, some populations, particularly Indigenous people, are not achieving at the same level as the majority of their peers. The next section looks at the policies and programs that the ministries and departments of education have developed to provide more inclusive education for Indigenous students so that all students succeed to the best of their ability.

# SECTION FOUR – CONTINUING CHALLENGES

96. Educators and educational authorities in all provinces and territories concentrate their efforts on providing equal educational opportunities and success for all students, especially those who, according to research and experience, need extra support. Many of these ongoing challenges have been outlined in the data presented earlier.

97. The legislative and policy framework firmly entrenched in Canada is one that guarantees equality of access but in practice, there are vulnerable groups in Canadian society whose access to education treatment within the system demand special attention. The legislation, the policies, and their implementation are often under negotiation, revision, and reconsideration as conditions change and new approaches are shown to be advantageous. Here, the focus is on Indigenous students in public education systems and how ministries and departments responsible for education are responding to the challenge of the achievement gap.

## RESPONDING TO INDIGENOUS EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

98. The statistics provided earlier reveal that Indigenous students are completing secondary school and graduating from postsecondary education at rates much lower than those of the non-Indigenous population. Despite many gains across provinces and territories in recent years, high school dropout rates among Indigenous youth remain high, and the transition rate from secondary school to postsecondary education remains low. An extensive overview of the historical context for the achievement levels of Indigenous students was provided in “Promoting Equality of Educational Opportunity: Canada Report for the UNESCO Eighth Consultation of Member States on the Implementation of the Convention and Recommendation Against Discrimination in Education” (CMEC & CCU, 2012a). This look at Indigenous education offers an overview of the activities of federal, provincial, and territorial governments to redress these disparities since the last consultation.

### GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

99. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was created as part of the 2007 Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement to inform all Canadians about the legacy of Indian Residential Schools and inspire a process of reconciliation and renewed relationships based on mutual understanding and respect.

In 2015, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (TRCC, 2015) was released. It summarizes the discussion and findings contained in the commission's final multi-volume report. The report includes 94 calls to action aimed at redressing the legacy of residential schools and advancing the process of reconciliation in Canada. During the release event, the prime minister reiterated the "Government of Canada's commitment to work in partnership with Indigenous communities, the provinces, territories and other vital partners, to fully implement recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, starting with the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" (Government of Canada, 2015).

100. The federal government shares responsibility with First Nations for the provision of education to children ordinarily residing on reserve and attending provincial, federal, or band-operated schools. In 2013–14, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) invested about $1.58 billion to support about 108,000 First Nation students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 living on reserve. Of that funding, $1.38 billion was dedicated to elementary and secondary instructional services, student support services, and proposal-based and targeted programs; $112 million was used to operate and maintain school facilities on reserve; and roughly $92 million supported Kindergarten to Grade 12 teachers and staff through band support funding and employee benefits related to education services. In 2014–15, INAC invested $341 million into postsecondary education for about 22,000 First Nation and Inuit students.

101. The Government of Canada has made a commitment to improving First Nation education on reserves. Two recent initiatives are worth noting:

- The Minister of INAC recently announced funding support for nine innovative projects that will result in new school facilities for over 20 First Nations communities across the country. Supported by the Innovation Fund component of INAC's Education Infrastructure Fund, the First Nation-led school facility projects will use innovative approaches to build school facilities that meet the needs of First Nation students on reserves.

- The First Nation Student Success Program (FNSSP) is designed to support First Nation educators on reserve (Kindergarten to Grade 12) in their ongoing efforts to meet students' needs and improve student and school results. The program supports activities that increase students' achievement levels in reading and writing (literacy) and mathematics (numeracy) and encourage students to remain in school (student retention). In 2011–2012 alone, 35 First Nation recipient organizations participated in the program, representing 472 First Nation schools across Canada.

## PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENTS

102. Provinces and territories are responsible for providing education to Indigenous (including First Nation) children living off reserve who are educated in the public elementary and secondary schools in their cities, towns, and communities (there are no reserves in Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut). Recognizing that many First Nation education initiatives are led by First Nation authorities, this report covers public education systems under the responsibility of provincial and territorial ministers of education.

103. The ministers responsible for education in the jurisdictions, working together as CMEC, have identified Indigenous education as one of their key activity areas within "Learn Canada 2020" (CMEC, 2008b), CMEC's framework to enhance Canada's education systems, learning opportunities, and overall education outcomes. Key activities for Indigenous education support the elimination of the gap in academic achievement and graduation rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

104. In February 2009, a summit on Indigenous education was held. The ministers discussed ways of strengthening Indigenous success in education with leaders of national and regional Indigenous organizations. In February 2011, a further meeting between ministers of education and national Indigenous organizations took place, with topics such as new initiatives and policies, data collection, and funding of Indigenous education. CMEC shared ideas on a new strategy for Indigenous education that provides for regionally appropriate work on pan-Canadian Indigenous-education data collection and research, teacher education, and knowledge transfer among all those involved in Indigenous education, as well as ongoing discussion with the federal government on Indigenous education issues.

105. In December 2011, CMEC hosted the Educators' Forum on Indigenous Education, "Sharing Evidence and Experiences in Indigenous Early-Childhood and K–12 Education: Programs, Policies, and Practices for Student Success." The forum gathered educators and researchers from across the country to engage in face-to-face dialogue, exchange ideas with their colleagues and peers, and network on Indigenous early childhood and K–12 education. The forum was participant driven and structured around a series of case-study presentations on promising programs, policies, and practices. Forum participants examined programs, policies, and practices that have been shown to be effective in improving one or more aspects of Indigenous early childhood education and/or K–12 education.

106. Most recently, in June 2015, CMEC held the CMEC Indigenous Educators' Symposium in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. The symposium provided a forum for Indigenous educators to discuss, based on their own personal experiences, how best to attract more Indigenous people to teaching careers, encourage existing Indigenous educators to remain in the profession, support Indigenous students entering the field of education, and support all Indigenous educators in their training and career development. A delegation of six Indigenous educators and one Indigenous Elder from each province and territory were invited to participate. Education ministers joined the proceedings to hear participants' thoughts on teacher recruitment, training, and retention in the context of Indigenous education in Canada.

107. Education ministers are currently implementing the CMEC Indigenous Education Plan 2015–2017, which is currently under review to ensure that it responds appropriately to recent developments such as the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. It provides practical tools and opportunities for interested jurisdictions to use in their respective efforts to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous citizens. Currently, the plan includes work in four specific areas:

    - supporting the professional development of Indigenous students interested in pursuing teaching as a career: considering teacher-training needs, sharing knowledge, and initiating dialogue among Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators;

    - developing curriculum and teaching resources focused on Canadian history and the legacy of Indian Residential Schools for use in Bachelor of Education and teacher-education programs across Canada;

- sharing resources and promising practices in Indigenous education; and

- continuing to promote and encourage the development of resources that address the legacy and history of Indian Residential Schools within all K–12 education systems in Canada.

108. Provincial/territorial initiatives across the four pillars of education have encompassed all aspects of the systems: legislative, policy, funding, partnerships and collaboration, programs, and curriculum. What follows are selected examples highlighting recent achievements across provinces and territories.

109. In 2011, the Government of Saskatchewan and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) signed a historic agreement to establish a Joint Task Force on Indigenous Education and Employment. To ensure that the perspectives of Métis people were represented in the work of the Joint Task Force, a partnership was established with the Métis Nation—Saskatchewan (MN-S). Key goals were identified as part of this work, including improved early childhood outcomes and transition to school; increased high-school and postsecondary completion rates; improved participation in the labour force and employment; and greater quality of life and enhanced self-sufficiency. The joint task force issued its final report on improving education and employment outcomes for First Nations and Métis people, called "Voice, Vision and Leadership: A Place for All," in 2013. The report included 25 recommendations, two of which were overarching: the recognition of First Nations and Métis languages and a holistic approach to actions and outcomes.

110. Alberta's Education Business Plan 2015–18 recognizes that "targeted supports and close collaboration with partners in education are required to realize the vision that all First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students in Alberta, including students residing on-reserve, achieve or exceed the educational outcomes set for Alberta students." Five priority initiatives are devoted to eliminating the achievement gap between First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students and all other students:

    - Support teachers and system leaders to learn about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives and experiences, the history and legacy of residential schools, and the treaties.

    - Forge a partnership with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit leaders and collaborate to develop Alberta's Curriculum for Reconciliation, incorporating a variety of perspectives and experiences on the history and legacy of residential schools and the treaties.

    - Collaborate with stakeholders to increase the number of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit professionals in education.

    - Support the development of collaborative plans between provincial school authorities and First Nations and Métis communities.

    - Implement new provincial standards for Education Services Agreements for First Nations students.

111. In 2013, Ontario's Ministry of Education released "A Solid Foundation: Second Progress Report on the Implementation of the Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013). The report provided an overview of progress made on the Ministry of

Education's Indigenous Education Strategy (2007), including Ontario's first baseline data on First Nation, Métis, and Inuit student achievement, "based on voluntary, confidential Indigenous student self-identification" (p. 4) for the 2011–2012 school year. The report also highlighted key priorities for the ministry, successes to date, and next steps for advancing the goals of Ontario's Indigenous Education Strategy.

112. In 2014, Ontario's Ministry of Education released the Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework Implementation Plan (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014a) to build on the Indigenous Education Strategy and to guide the work of the ministry and school boards through to 2016. Specifically, the ministry committed to continuing to engage with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit partners to:

- share information on progress made in improving the achievement and well-being of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students in closing the gap;
- explore opportunities for reciprocal data sharing to support a shared understanding of student demographics and the successes and challenges experienced by Indigenous learners;
- identify opportunities for collaboration and capacity building;
- support the ongoing review and revision of curriculum policy documents to embed First Nation, Métis, and Inuit perspectives and provide training in the implementation of the new curriculum; and
- help identify promising practices and targeted initiatives to improve student achievement.

113. In 2015, the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (TCU) released "Achieving Results through Partnership: First Progress Report on the Implementation of the Ontario Indigenous Postsecondary Education and Training Policy Framework" (Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2015). In this first progress report on the implementation of Ontario's Indigenous Postsecondary Education and Training Policy Framework, 2011 (the framework), the ministry committed to releasing a provincial Framework Implementation Plan to build on the current Indigenous Education Strategy and framework implementation. This plan will be released in 2016.

114. An Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreement in British Columbia is a commitment made by each school district — involving all local Indigenous communities and the Ministry of Education — to work together to improve the success of all Indigenous students. The agreements are based on mutual respect and trust and represent a five-year vision of success for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students in each school district. Enhancement agreements establish programs that reflect the culture of local Indigenous people and increase knowledge and respect for that culture among all students and staff. They emphasize the integral nature of traditional culture, language, and history to Indigenous student development and success. Decision making is based on collaboration and consensus reached through continuous dialogue, respecting the shared ownership of the agreement. Assessment is continuous and includes input from all the partners. An annual report from the Ministry of Education, entitled "Indigenous Report — How Are We Doing?" provides detail on all aspects of Indigenous educational achievement. In the 2015 report, the six-year completion rate for Indigenous students has shown a small but consistent improvement from 2010–11 to 2014–15.

115. Within Nunavut's Department of Education, the Adult Learning and Educational Initiatives division is responsible for research, policy development, and strategic planning regarding the Nunavut Adult Learning Strategy (NALS). Recognizing that Nunavummiut adults face barriers to further education, training, and employment, the NALS recommended increased career development and educational services for Nunavut adult learners. In response, the Pathway to Adult Secondary School graduation (PASS) program was launched in November 2013 by Nunavut Arctic College, in partnership with the Department of Education in Nunavut. PASS gives adult learners a new route to earn the same Nunavut Secondary School Diploma (commonly known as the Grade 12 Diploma). The program targets adult students over the age of 19 who have not met the high-school-graduation requirements. Course content is delivered over distance using the Internet, with in-person support at local community learning centres.

116. The Northwest Territories' Indigenous Student Achievement (ASA) Education Plan identifies strategic actions to eliminate the achievement gap between Indigenous and other students, which outlines 91 actions to be taken to improve Indigenous students' education achievement. The plan was developed by an ASA Working Group, informed by six regional forums, further developed by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE), and endorsed by Indigenous and educational leaders. Its priorities include early childhood development and child care; family and student support; Indigenous language and culture curriculum and resource development; and literacy. In 2013, the ASA Status Report documented the investment of over $4.5 million into ASA initiatives from 2009–10 to 2012–13. It also delineated actions taken on the priorities identified in the ASA Education Plan; current ASA projects and initiatives, including renewal of the Early Childhood Development Framework and new Kindergarten curriculum; and activities of the ASA community working groups.

117. Ministers of education recognize that greater educational success will enable Indigenous people to be active participants in their communities, strengthen their attachment to the labour force, and enable them to be better prepared for an increasingly knowledge-based economy. The examples described here illustrate the scope of initiatives undertaken by the provinces and territories to address the critical challenge to inclusive education in Canada — the elimination of the gap in academic achievement and graduation rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Much has been achieved, but much work also lies ahead.

## MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING(S) WITH VARIOUS PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATIONS (PTO)

118. On April 9, 2013, Canada, Ontario, and the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) committing the parties to work together to improve the educational outcomes for First Nation students in First-Nation-operated and provincially funded schools. The MOU identifies five priority areas for collaboration: student support services, curriculum, governance and administration, human resources, and parental participation.

119. In December 2015, the Ministry of Education renewed its MOU with the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) to strengthen activities initiated in previous agreements and to promote understanding of Métis perspectives within provincially funded schools.
    a. The purpose is to: improve the well-being of Métis children, families, and communities while working to protect and promote the distinct culture, identity, and heritage of Métis people;

address the unique education needs of the Métis people; and improve Ontario's Métis student achievement levels and learning outcomes.

b. The agreement will help ensure equity in student achievement and increase the confidence of Métis parents and partners in the education system.

120. Ontario and the Anishinabek Nation signed the Master Education Framework Agreement in November, 2015. The agreement outlines the topics to be negotiated in a Master Education Agreement (MEA).

- Building on the 2009 MOU, Ontario and the Anishinabek Nation have strengthened their partnership and will continue to work collaboratively to establish the Anishinabek Education System.

- The Master Education Agreement is intended to establish practical arrangements for ongoing collaboration on strategies to promote Anishinaabe student success and well-being and to support transitions between Anishinabek First Nations' schools and Ontario Schools.

121. On October 1, 2015, the province signed an MOU with the First Nations Chiefs of Nova Scotia as well as Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey (MK—on-reserve education authority). One aspect of this MOU is the commitment to integrate aspects of treaty education in all provincial curricula, at all grade levels. Treaty education is a broad term referring to the education of all Nova Scotians on historic treaties, their significance as the building blocks of NS, as well as contemporary issues related to current Mi'kmaw language, culture, spirituality, and world views, all of which are underrepresented in their public school program. Nova Scotia is building on the lessons learned from engagement with treaty commissions in both Saskatchewan and Manitoba, both of which were excited and most willing to support the uptake of this work in another part of Canada.

## RESPONDING TO THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION OF CANADA

122. In Ontario in 2016–17, all boards will receive a minimum amount of funding to establish a First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Lead, dedicated to supporting the implementation of the Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework.

123. The Ontario government is committed to supporting greater awareness and knowledge in provincially funded schools about the history and legacy of residential schools because this is critical to ongoing reconciliation.

124. Ontario is taking steps to ensure that mandatory learning about residential schools, treaties, and the role of Indigenous people in its history and society is included in the curriculum, in an age- and grade-appropriate manner.

125. In response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recommendations (#62 and #63), the Ontario government is making a three-year annual investment (2016–17 to 2018–19) of $5M. In collaboration with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit partners, this investment will support targeted resource development and educator capacity building to enhance (age- and grade-appropriate) learning and teaching of the history and legacy of residential schools, treaties, and the *Indian Act (1876)*.

126. Through meaningful collaboration with Indigenous communities and organizations, key education stakeholders, and school boards, the Ontario Ministry of Education is committed to increasing knowledge and awareness of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit cultures, histories, traditions, and perspectives (including

residential schools and treaties), through culturally appropriate pedagogy, curriculum, and professional development opportunities.

127. In the spirit of reconciliation, and in response to the TRC's calls to action, the Government of Alberta has committed to ensuring that all students and teachers will learn about the history and legacy of residential schools, treaties, and the historical and contemporary perspectives and experiences of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people. Alberta is implementing Curriculum Standard 3, which requires First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) content in all subject areas. This will provide all students with opportunities to increase intercultural understanding and diverse perspectives and experiences of the FNMI people living in Alberta. Alberta collaborates with FNMI Elders, knowledge keepers, and educators to support the development of Education for Reconciliation, FNMI pedagogy, and language and culture programs.

128. In the winter of 2016, the British Columbia Ministry of Education conducted research into existing racism on a province-wide strategy to address it. At the same time, the ministry conducted research into developing recommendations on systemic change to improve the success of Indigenous students and Indigenous education enhancement agreements. The recommendations from the anti-racism research indicate that no single province-wide strategy will address the various forms of racism and anti-racism practices across the 60 school districts in BC. School districts need to self-assess their own status regarding racism. The ministry and its education partners will develop an assessment tool for use by school districts. The results of this assessment will be the foundation for developing plans to address various forms of racism.

129. In British Columbia, the newly redesigned K–9 curriculum and the 10–12 curriculum has integrated relevant, authentic content regarding Indigenous culture, language, and history into all subjects at all grade and age levels. Regional dialogues throughout BC were held with Indigenous educators and community members on ways to encourage and share new teaching strategies and commitment from all educators to embrace the "if not here, where?" mindset. This was a call to action to sustain the conversation and to ensure that Indigenous voices are heard. The resource identifies characteristics of Indigenous world views and perspectives and how they can be implemented in educational settings. The ministry is currently undergoing a curriculum redesign process. During this process, the ministry ensured that there was Indigenous expertise on each of the subject area development teams to embed Indigenous perspectives and knowledge throughout the redesigned curriculum.

130. In December 2015, the Manitoba Collaborative Indigenous Education Blueprint was signed by Manitoba's postsecondary institutions and the Manitoba School Boards Association. Signatories committed to collaborate, within the unique context of each institution, in the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies, procedures, and practices to advance Indigenous education and reconciliation.

## STRENGTHENING PAN-CANADIAN DATA AND EVIDENCE IN INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

131. Obtaining high-quality, comparable, and accessible data about the state of education systems in Canada, and their performance and outcomes, is foundational for monitoring equity and inclusion. Collecting and reporting relevant, meaningful information in a standardized way across Canada allows leaders in education to measure and address gaps, trends, and progress; proactively identify opportunities for improvement and growth; and improve the quality of evidence-based decision making. Establishing an accurate baseline of data and ongoing input of new data are necessary for informed policy and program planning that benefits Canadians in every jurisdiction and from every background.

132. Although there is no single agency or institution responsible for evaluation and assessment of the education system as a whole in Canada, assessment is a key component of each provincial and territorial education system and a key area of collaboration through CMEC. CMEC coordinates and participates in a number of key data and research activities and studies that provide indicators concerning education in Canada and respond to research objectives and priorities. Many of the activities are initiated through the Canadian Education Statistics Council (CESC), a partnership between CMEC and Statistics Canada. CESC was established in 1989 to improve the quality and comparability of Canadian education data and to provide information that can inform policy development in education.

133. In 2010, CMEC and Statistics Canada released A Framework for Statistics on Learning and Education in Canada to enable a strategic approach to data collection for monitoring, evaluation, and accountability in Canada's education systems. This framework is an essential tool in the process of deciding the information priorities of the Canadian Education Statistics Program (CESP). It profiles the diverse interests of users while ensuring that gaps are avoided and overlaps are identified. The framework addresses the scope of "Learn Canada 2020," which is based on the vision of quality lifelong learning opportunities for all Canadians.

134. While great strides have been made to enhance data collection and dissemination across educational systems in Canada, there are existing data limitations. This section discusses the need to build better data related to Indigenous learners as an essential component of the larger effort to eliminate the gap in academic achievement and graduation rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

135. In 2012, a CMEC publication, "Key Policy Issues in Aboriginal Education: An Evidence-based Approach" (CMEC, 2012), examined how better data and evidence can be developed to support jurisdictions' efforts to improve the academic achievement and attainment of Indigenous students in provincial and territorial elementary and secondary schools. The report identified data and evidence gaps through informant interviews with National and Regional Indigenous Organizations (NAOs and RAOs) and provincial and territorial departments or ministries of education and outlined concrete, cost-effective steps that jurisdictions could take to address these data and evidence gaps by leveraging available administrative and assessment data.

136. The initiatives highlighted earlier reflect Canada's commitment to strengthening existing partnerships and working to improve the available data about and for Indigenous students. CESC continues to develop indicators and explore a methodology for Indigenous self-identification that supports pan-Canadian data collection, analysis, and dissemination of information on Indigenous students. The provinces and territories, through their ministries of education and in partnership with their RAOs and local communities, are making progress on indicator development at a provincial/territorial policy level to best serve the needs of their Indigenous populations.

## SECTION FIVE – CONCLUSION

This ninth consultation on the Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education covers the period from 2012 to 2015 and provides an overview of participation and graduation rates in early childhood, elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education, as well as adult learning and skills development in Canada. With a strong legislative and policy framework that prohibits discrimination in education, the education systems have moved toward widely inclusive education in which all are able to participate and succeed to the best of their abilities. Some challenges remain. Most important among these is the education, at all levels, of Indigenous populations, and working with ministries and departments of education to strengthen the success of all students, including Indigenous students. Provincial and territorial governments recognize that special attention must be paid to Indigenous students. Working in collaboration with Indigenous communities and organizations and other partners, they are making progress in closing the achievement gap to offer quality education to Canadians in every jurisdiction and from every background.

## APPENDIX A – SOURCES

Canadian Commission for UNESCO
http://www.unesco.ca/

Council of Ministers of Education, Canada
http://www.cmec.ca/

Statistics Canada
http://www.statcan.gc.ca/start-debut-eng.html

## EDUCATION WEB SITES

Alberta Enterprise and Advanced Education
http://eae.alberta.ca/

Alberta Education
http://education.alberta.ca/

Alberta Ministry of Human Services
http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/

Arctic College, Nunavut
http://www.arcticcollege.ca/

British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education
http://www.gov.bc.ca/aved/

British Columbia Ministry of Education
http://www.gov.bc.ca/bced/

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada
https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100010002/1100100010021

Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning
http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ald/index.html

Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport du Québec
http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/

Ministère de la Famille du Québec
https://www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca/fr/Pages/index.aspx

New Brunswick Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
http://www.gnb.ca/0000/index-e.asp44

New Brunswick Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour
http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/post-secondary_education_training_and_labour.html

Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Advanced Education and Skills
http://www.hrle.gov.nl.ca/hrle/

Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
http://www.gov.nl.ca/edu/

Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment
http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/

Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
http://www.ednet.ns.ca

Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education
http://www.gov.ns.ca/lwd/

Nunavut Department of Education
http://www.edu.gov.nu.ca/

Ontario Ministry of Education
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca

Ontario Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/tcu/

Prince Edward Island Department of Education, Early Learning and Culture
http://www.gov.pe.ca/education/

Prince Edward Island Department of Workforce and Advanced Learning
http://www.gov.pe.ca/ial/

Saskatchewan Ministry of Advanced Education
https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/government-structure/ministries/advanced-education

Saskatchewan Ministry of Education
http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/government-structure/ministries/education

Yukon Department of Education
http://www.education.gov.yk.ca

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Canada. *Citizenship Act*. 1985. Retrieved March 13, 2015, from http://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-29/

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http://www.cashra.ca/links.html

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