

## Victoria Declaration 1993

### JOINT DECLARATION

Future Directions for the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC)  
September 28, 1993 Table of Contents

### Introduction

Education in Canada is a provincial responsibility as outlined in the Constitution. This responsibility has its roots before Confederation. The evolution of our approach to education, in response to cultural and regional identities, as well as provincial realities, is one of the most vital manifestations of our democratic society. We place a high value on developing and adapting policies for our education systems to the needs of Canada and its various regions and communities, and on administering programs at the local level, close to the people served by these systems.

The fact remains, however, that all Canadians also have certain common expectations of education. While our current education systems are already attempting in many ways to meet the challenges of modern society, when faced with common problems, it is clearly in our interest to adopt a national approach in dealing with them.

We are all well aware of the challenges to the education systems posed by our rapidly changing world: globalization of the economy, openness with regard to other cultures, pressing needs for skilled labour, technological advances that are having an impact on our daily lives as well as the job market. These changes require constant adjustments to our educational practices to ensure high quality, accessibility, mobility and accountability. Across the country, Canadians are facing similar challenges and they see the need for educational goals to be set and attained in Canada, in a coherent and cooperative manner.

Canadians want access to education and credit for learning and experience to be extended more consistently on a national basis across provincial, territorial or institutional boundaries. Canadians are also concerned with promoting more flexible relationships between education and the world of work. The changes the world is currently experiencing call for readjustment of outdated linkages and relationships.

### A National Education Agenda

The Premiers, at their annual meeting in Baddeck in August 1993, adopted a clearly defined position acknowledging the CMEC's responsibility to meet these challenges. They gave their "full support to the CMEC to provide leadership for change and to provide the strong national voice for education in Canada".

The CMEC will take action in accordance with this endorsement. The ministers responsible for education hold the following beliefs in common:

We believe that education is a lifelong learning process. We also believe that the future of our society depends on informed and educated citizens who, while fulfilling their own goals of personal and professional development, contribute to the social, economic, and cultural development of their community and of the country as a whole. Beyond our borders, Canadian education should reflect the priorities of Canadians while contributing to strengthening Canada's place internationally.

We share many common educational goals and we agree to ensure greater harmonization of the ways we set about achieving them. There is already in place a vast range of educational opportunities across Canada that should be fully accessible to individual learners. We jointly want to have the highest quality education based on shared and relevant goals, and to demonstrate accountability for achieving them.

Above all, we want all citizens to have a fair and equitable opportunity in whatever educational and training endeavours they may pursue.

More specifically, CMEC's actions will focus on the following four themes, which we see as crucial in the coming years: quality of education, accountability, accessibility, and mobility.

### Action plan

Our objective, as Ministers of Education, is therefore to ensure the provision of quality education to all. This will be done by way of the collective and individual actions that we have decided to take.

We are embarking on an action plan to address education concerns now and into the next century. This plan must involve national cooperation, in the context of lifelong learning, with all of our partners -- students, parents, educators, trustees, education organizations, federations and institutions, business and labour, as well as appropriate federal departments and agencies.

The action plan will build on the many current best practices and education successes that exist across the country.

We are placing a priority on the following activities:

- establishment of a national work group to examine curriculum comparability and possible joint initiatives in curriculum development;

- The creation of two inter-provincial teams is already preparing the way for broader cooperation. The Atlantic provinces have begun to explore a regional approach to common core curriculum and the western provinces have given priority to expanding the draft Western Canadian Protocol for Curriculum Collaboration.
- continuation and expansion of the current School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP), adding science to reading, writing and mathematics;
- a new joint CMEC/Statistics Canada project to develop pan-Canadian indicators of education performance, including such measurements as completion rates for all levels of education, successful transition to work, and student, educator, and public satisfaction;
- a new Canada-wide focus on open learning and distance education, particularly in postsecondary education. We will begin with an inventory of policies and practices throughout the country in this area;
- development of new linkages and partnerships with students, parents, educators, trustees, education organizations, federations and institutions, business and labour, as well as appropriate federal departments and agencies;
- provide leadership for a pan-Canadian conference on education priorities and joint initiatives, with all partners, building on successful education practice and innovation.

This action plan will be achieved through a new national agenda in which all will participate in ways that reflect provincial and territorial priorities.

### Leadership in Education

We, the Ministers of Education of the provinces and territories, through the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, unanimously affirm our responsibility for providing national leadership in education in Canada. While individual provinces and territories remain responsible for education in their jurisdictions, there has never been a greater need for joint action. We believe that our collective will to work together will create a synergy that will benefit each province.

We are also committed to exploring with the federal government ways to achieve effective and fruitful cooperation.

We reiterate our commitment to working with all of our partners. We count on their participation and invite them to work with us in the best interests of education in Canada and our future as Canadians.