



cmec

Council of
Ministers
of Education,
Canada

Conseil des
ministres
de l'Éducation
(Canada)

**Education World Forum
“Planning for 2015 — Policy-making catalyst for a decade ahead:
measurement, reach and enterprise”**

London, United Kingdom
January 19 to 22, 2014



Report of the Canadian Delegation

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1. Introduction

The Education World Forum (EWF) first originated in 2004 as a ministerial seminar called Moving Young Minds (MYM), with the objective of sharing and discussing national experiences about information and communication technology (ICT) and e-learning. MYM evolved into the Learning and Technology World Forum in 2009, which then became the Education World Forum in 2011. EWF is supported by the United Kingdom's Department for Education, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the British Council, and is sponsored by leading private-sector companies such as Intel, Microsoft, HP, Pearson, Promethean, and other key industry partners. EWF is recognized as one of the leading international events focused on the development of ICT for learning.

The 2014 EWF, held in London from January 19 to 22, 2014, gathered more than 90 education ministers, as well as officials and industry partners, representing over 200 countries and jurisdictions. Under the theme "Planning for 2015: policy-making catalyst for a decade ahead — measurement, reach and enterprise," participants addressed the challenges and opportunities facing education during this time of enormous social and technological change.

2. Canadian delegation

The Honourable J. Alan McIsaac, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, Prince Edward Island, was nominated by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), to represent Canada as head of the delegation. The delegation also included Dr. Alexander MacDonald, Deputy Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, Prince Edward Island, and Sylvie Duong, Analyst, International, CMEC Secretariat.

3. Main issues discussed that are relevant to CMEC

- The digital revolution of the last decades has changed how people all over the world live and learn. Technology has enabled learning to take place anytime, anywhere. It has the potential to empower everyone in education systems to teach and learn better.
- Technological advances, together with a better understanding of systems and pedagogy, combine to present an opportunity for great improvements in education.
- While technology can facilitate better teaching and learning, it cannot be a substitute for good pedagogy. Teacher training is now more complex and important than ever.
- Not only do teachers need an excellent pedagogical foundation, they must also be trained to use technology well from the outset so that they are able to embrace new IT advances and weave these into their teaching. It is no longer an option not to include IT in the classroom.
- Teachers need encouragement and licence to innovate and to flourish, and need to be recognized and celebrated when they do.
- The teaching profession has become much more challenging. Recruitment, training, and professional development all need to be enhanced to produce, retain, and promote the best teachers possible.

- Children’s facility for and excitement about technology should be harnessed to create learning situations that are dynamic and engaging. Teachers should be prepared to create two-way learning environments with their students, especially when it comes to IT.
- Assessment and data are of critical importance to improving education systems and monitoring global progress, as well as helping to align education with labour-market needs.
- Both learning and assessment should be personalized and ongoing.
- Current assessments are not measuring what they should — that is, higher-level, 21st-century skills rather than relatively low-level cognitive skills. New assessments need to be developed that are valid for deeper cognitive capacities and that are coherent across students and schools, and within systems.
- Continuous learning involves parents and the wider community. While some parents might resist change, they can become engaged when they see collaborative work between their children and teachers. Students’ excitement about learning will engage their parents.
- Globally, while the focus since 2000 has been on expanding access to education, we must now focus on the quality of education. Although access has expanded, many children still are not learning — 300 million children worldwide, especially girls in poor rural areas, are still illiterate. More education has not resulted in better education.
- Good education systems can no longer be reserved for elites only. All citizens of all countries need and deserve the best education possible.
- The 21st century brings with it the opportunity to raise educational outcomes for all students, predicated the combination of:
 - a belief in everyone’s potential;
 - equitable access;
 - sound pedagogy;
 - professionalism; and
 - personalization.
- To take advantage of this opportunity, a whole-system approach must be implemented, encompassing:
 - high expectations;
 - accountability;
 - capacity building;
 - assessment; and
 - evidence-based policies and strategies.

4. Main messages conveyed by CMEC representatives

- Education in Canada is decentralized, coming under the jurisdiction of provinces and territories. CMEC is the forum through which jurisdictions take action on issues of common interest and learn from one another.

- In Canada, technology is used to improve classroom learning, address demographic and geographical challenges (distance, remoteness, diverse populations and educational contexts, small schools), and offer a wider range of options to learners.
- Provinces and territories have numerous technology-related initiatives in place to serve the above goals, including: the Yukon Education Student Network; Quebec’s Remote School Network; British Columbia’s Open Textbook Project; and Alberta’s Athabasca University. These initiatives use learner-centred learning models and technology-based instructional channels and contexts.
- Prince Edward Island is committed to improving IT infrastructure and access for both students and teachers.
- In addition to IT enhancements, Prince Edward Island is working on school leadership (following the model established in Ontario), to raise teacher competencies and ensure students’ seamless transition between high school and postsecondary education or the workforce.

5. Other relevant events

The Canadian delegation attended four other sessions held on the margins of the forum:

- “New Pedagogies for Deep Learning”: The project brings together 10 clusters of 100 schools each (1,000 schools in total) in several countries to implement the findings and strategies of “deep learning” — learning that is more interactive and dynamic between teachers and students and requires leadership at all levels. The research and project are led by Michael Fullan, Professor Emeritus at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.
- “Education Fast Forward”: A live debate held across nine cities around the world explored the role of curiosity in education.
- “The English Education System”: Officials from the departments of education, postsecondary education, and business and innovation outlined the major reforms that England is implementing in its education system, from Kindergarten to university, to vocational education and training.
- “Education Leaders’ Briefing”: The British Council and Microsoft presented some of their initiatives to bring technology to students and teachers in developing countries, and to connect students in the U.K. with those in other countries to facilitate cross-cultural learning and real-life problem solving.

In addition, EWF is held to coincide with the annual BETT (British Educational Training and Technology) Show, one of the world’s leading education and technology events. Delegates attended the opening of BETT 2014 and visited the exhibition, which featured hundreds of the latest innovations in educational technology.

6. Follow-up for CMEC

With the digital revolution continuing apace, advances in technology continue to have a strong impact on education and education systems. With its focus on the role of technology in learning, EWF provides an opportunity for participants to follow these advances and explore their implications and to discuss the ways in which technology can support change in the education sector. EWF also provides an opportunity to highlight Canada's education systems and initiatives on the international scene. It is an important networking venue, allowing delegates to meet officials from across the globe to learn from one another.

With the attendance of representatives from over 200 countries and jurisdictions, EWF provides an excellent opportunity to discuss common issues and challenges, understand different education systems, spread understanding of Canada's diversified education system, and share our experiences and expertise.

The information and outcomes arising from the forum will be shared by Minister McIsaac at the CMEC table so that all jurisdictions can benefit from Canada's participation in the event. The CMEC Secretariat will continue to provide provinces and territories with information about emerging trends in education that are discussed and presented at these meetings.