Council of Ministers of Education, Canada
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UNESCO Seventh Consultation of Member States on the Implementation of the Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education

Report for Canada

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Introduction

The Nature of the Report

1.   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 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.

2.   The *Recommendation* sought to take into account the difficulties that certain States might experience in ratifying 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 which is intended to influence the development of national laws and practices.

3.   Canada, with its federal structure, is not a signatory to the *Convention*, and this report relates to the application of the *Recommendation* only. In a recent consultation with the provinces and territories, they re-affirmed their commitment to the *Recommendation* as best reflecting their priorities and responsibility for education in the Canadian federation.

4.   UNESCO has conducted six previous consultations of Member States since the adoption of the *Convention* and the *Recommendation*. This seventh consultation covers the period from 2000 to 2005. UNESCO has provided guidelines and general indications for the emphasis to be given in the document to assist Member States in the preparation of their report. For each of the six main Articles of the *Convention* and the *Recommendation*, UNESCO has prepared specific questions that probe the application of each of the Articles.

   • The chapters of this paper that respond to the questions on the first three Articles focus on educational laws, legislative texts, and policies that prohibit discrimination in education and promote equal educational opportunities, and how these laws and policy conform to the *Convention* and the *Recommendation*. The issues include: free and equitable access to elementary and secondary education; the establishment and quality control of public, separate, and private school systems, especially concerning parental choice of education and freedom of religious choice; access of foreign nationals to the school system and credential recognition; public school funding; and postsecondary access and student financial support.

   • The chapter on the fourth Article looks at "reaching the un-reached" and the policy measures and programs that enable disadvantaged and vulnerable groups to have

access to basic education. To reflect the pan-Canadian context, the groups that have been included in the paper include Aboriginal students, children of immigrants, visible minority students, and special-needs children. The affirmative action and positive efforts are highlighted as well as the current realities, difficulties, results, and ongoing issues.

- The chapter on Article Five probes the issues of human values education and national minority education, specifically national minority-language education.

- In the chapter of this report corresponding to the questions asked about Article Seven, an overview of the results and obstacles is presented along with a review of the main issues to be addressed in the ongoing fight against discrimination in education.

- The activities of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO in raising awareness concerning discrimination in education are highlighted in the next chapter.

5. Canada has 13 educational jurisdictions, all of which are committed to the elimination of discrimination in education at all levels. Given these 13 educational jurisdictions plus the activities of the nongovernmental organizations, the voluntary sector, and the federal government, only limited examples of legislation, policies, and programs related to discrimination in education can be included. This report is not intended to be inclusive of all the activity and legislation concerned with discrimination in education in Canada from 2000 to 2005. Selected examples are provided to give an overview of the numerous, varied, and high-quality activities focused on eliminating discrimination in education in all parts of Canada; they have been chosen on the basis of geographic representation, client groups, types of initiatives, and to illustrate the widespread nature of the fight against educational discrimination.

6. Much more can be learned by visiting the Web sites of the provincial and territorial departments and ministries responsible for education and of the nongovernmental organizations listed in Appendix A, as well as by consulting the source documents listed there.

Responsibility for Education

7. In Canada, there is no federal department of education and no integrated national system of education. Within the federal system of shared power, Canada's Constitution Act of 1867 provides that "[I]n and for each province, the legislature may exclusively make Laws in relation to 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 system have varying degrees of autonomy from provincial or territorial government control. In some jurisdictions, separate departments or ministries are responsible for elementary-secondary education and for postsecondary education and skills

training. Appendix B, "Education in Canada," provides more extensive information on the structure, funding, and functioning of education in Canada.

A Demographic Overview

8. A brief look at the population of Canada provides some context for the information on anti-discrimination activities in education. Canada, with a current population of about 32,500,000, is a multicultural and multiethnic country where immigration plays a dominant role in demographic growth. Canadians reported more than 200 ethnic origins in response to the 2001 census question on the ethnic or cultural groups to which their ancestors belonged. This is an increase of 25 per cent over the 1996 census. Moreover, the proportion of Canada's population that was born outside the country reached a 70-year high of 18.4 per cent. From 1994 to 2004, Canada had the highest net international migration rate of any country in the G8.

9. Nearly four million people in Canada identified themselves as members of visible minority groups, accounting for 13.4 per cent of the population overall. The three largest visible minority groups are Chinese, South Asians, and Blacks. They comprise two-thirds of the visible minority population and are followed by Filipinos, Arabs and West Asians, Latin Americans, Southeast Asians, Koreans, and Japanese.

10. Nearly three-quarters of immigrants who arrived in the 1990s lived in three census metropolitan areas — Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal. Ontario and British Columbia were the two provinces with the highest proportion of people born outside the country. In Ontario, more than three million people were born outside the country, representing 27 per cent of the population; in British Columbia, one million people were born abroad, representing 26 per cent of the total population.

11. According to the 2001 census, a total of 976,300 people identified themselves as a member of at least one of the three Aboriginal groups — North American Indians, Métis, or Inuit, representing 3.3 per cent of the population. Children aged 14 and under represent about one-third of the Aboriginal population, which is much higher than the corresponding proportion among the non-Aboriginal population. Aboriginal children account for 5.6 per cent of all children in Canada.

12. Canadians reported more than 100 languages in response to the census question on mother tongue. The list includes languages that have long been associated with immigration to Canada, such as German, Italian, Ukrainian, Dutch, and Polish. However, from 1996 to 2001, language groups from Asia and the Middle East posted the highest increases. In 2001, nearly five and a half million people — approximately one in six — were allophones, meaning that they reported mother tongues other than Canada's two official languages of French and English.

13. It is within this context of a pluralistic society that Canadian educators, government officials, nongovernmental organizations, and civil society tackle the ongoing challenges of discrimination in education.

Article One — Legislation Concerning Discrimination and Equality

14. Article One of 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. In line with these principles, legislators and educational authorities in Canada have created responses that reach throughout society and education. Through legislation at the federal, provincial, and territorial levels that guarantees equal rights and through Human Rights Acts and Commissions that provide protection mechanisms, legislation, and policy, a legal framework is established to firmly entrench equality. Education and school legislative acts in the jurisdictions clearly uphold the principle of equal access. Policies and resources extend this principle and support the creation of positive learning environments and curriculum.

Legislation of the Government of Canada

15. Governments in Canada have established a solid legal framework that integrates a collection of laws and policies that prohibit discrimination. The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* clearly states that "[e]very 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."

16. 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.

17. 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."

18. The *Canadian Human Rights Act* was put in place to give effect to 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 the discriminatory practices in the provision of goods, services,

facilities, or accommodation, the *Act* states that it is illegal to deny, or deny access to, any such 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.

19.   In a 2003 visit to Canada, the UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Forms of Discrimination praised Canadians for embracing diversity and for having strong mechanisms to protect citizens from discrimination. He encouraged Canada to do more, however, through an action plan to combat racism. In 2005, the Government of Canada released *A Canada for All: Canada's Action Plan Against Racism*. The Plan has six key priorities:

- assisting victims and groups vulnerable to racism and related forms of discrimination
- developing forward-looking approaches to promote diversity and combat racism
- strengthening the role of civil society
- strengthening regional and international cooperation
- educating children and youth on diversity and anti-racism
- countering hate and bias

The government is working with civil society, employers, associations, and the justice system to deliver results reported on in the *Annual Report on the Operation of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act*.

Provincial and Territorial Legislation

20.   Every jurisdiction has a Human Rights Commission or Fair Practices Office, with its own legislation and procedures. For example, in Prince Edward Island, the *Human Rights Act* defines the grounds of discrimination as being age, colour, race, ethnic or national origin, criminal conviction, having laid a complaint or given evidence/assistance under the *Human Rights Act*, political belief, sexual orientation, association, creed or religion, family and marital status, physical and mental disability including addiction, sex including sexual harassment and pregnancy, and source of income. The protected areas include services and facilities available to the public, such as attending school.

21.   Quebec's *Charte des droits et libertés de la personne* (*Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*) recognizes not only the rights of all those living in Quebec, but also explicitly refers to the rights of children and adolescents, including the right to education. The Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse (Commission for Human Rights and Youth Protection) is also responsible for the *Loi sur le système de justice pénale pour les adolescents (Young Criminal Justice Act)*, which guarantees that youth who are accused of committing a crime are entitled to adequate educational, health, and social services.

22.   The Web site for the Human Rights Research and Education Centre provides links to all of the Human Rights Commissions in Canada, as well as databases and publications. The

Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Agencies (CASHRA) is the national association of the government agencies in Canada charged with administering provincial and territorial human right legislation. CASHRA's goals include fostering collaboration among its members and serving as a national voice on human right issues of common concern.

Educational Legislation and Policies

23.   The education act 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. The 2002 *Education Act* for Yukon provides an example. It affirms that all are entitled to receive an elementary and secondary school education program free of charge that is appropriate to their needs in accordance with the provision of this act, provided they meet the age requirements of being between 5 years 8 months old and 18 years of age as of September 1 of a specific year and that they meet residency requirements. This applies to Canadian citizens, those lawfully admitted to Canada for temporary or permanent residence, a child of a Canadian citizen, or a child of an individual who is lawfully admitted to Canada for permanent or temporary status. It is required that school boards provide every school-age person who resides in its education area an educational program consistent with the requirements of the *Education Act* and its regulations. The deputy minister responsible for secondary and elementary education must provide the same to every other school-age person resident in Yukon. No tuition fees are to be charged to the student or the parent for this education.

24.   In Nova Scotia, all children have the right to attend a public school and parents have a duty to ensure that they attend or have some other acceptable method of schooling. A parent need only provide the child's birth certificate and proof of residence, such as a utility bill or driver's licence, to enrol the child in a public school. These two examples demonstrate how legislation protects against discrimination in education and provides free, universal access to elementary and secondary education for all. Information on education for foreign nationals is provided in the chapter on Article Three.

25.   Attention is paid to the issue of the diversity and ensuring that the education provided is fair and equitable in order to avoid inflicting, as the *Convention* states, "conditions which are incompatible with the dignity of man." The policy document *Diversity in B.C. Schools: A Framework*, revised in 2004, helps the British Columbia school boards and schools meet their obligations under the legislation that addresses human rights and discrimination. The *Framework* provides guidelines for establishing policies, strategies, and initiatives to honour diversity and promote human rights; prevent discrimination, harassment and violence; and respond to incidents of discrimination, harassment, or violence as they occur. The conditions that the school system works to create are:

- equitable access to and equitable participation in quality education for all students
- school cultures that value diversity and respond to the diverse social and cultural needs of the communities they serve
- school cultures that promote understanding of others and respect for all

- learning and working environments that are safe and welcoming, free from discrimination, harassment and violence
- decision making processes that give a voice to all the members of the school community
- policies and practices that promote fair and equitable treatment

26.   A 2001 *Positive Learning Environment Policy* in New Brunswick also provides a framework for activities of the Department of Education, school districts, and schools to create positive learning and working environments in the public education system. The core of the Policy is that all are to be treated with respect and have the right to work and learn in safe, orderly, productive, respectful, and harassment-free environments. Each school community develops a *School Positive Learning Environment Plan* as a cooperative effort involving all the educators, as well as students, parents, school bus drivers, resource and support staff, and volunteers. The Plan must include strategies for intervention in cases of harassment, intimidation, or violence; of discrimination for any reason; or of the dissemination of hate propaganda.

27.   In Nova Scotia, the Department of Education launched a Protection of Students initiative in 2002 that resulted in the introduction of the document *Model Framework – Protection for Child Abuse, Discrimination, and Sexual Harassment*. It states that any form of discrimination, abuse, or harassment will not be tolerated, and it applies to all school community members. A number of documents in both French and English are available to support this initiative; they explain the relevant laws, rights, and responsibilities; how to recognize child abuse, discrimination, and harassment; and what to do about it.

Applications in the Classroom

28.   Curriculum documents in Manitoba have been developed to incorporate a number of basic components into all learning, including Aboriginal perspectives, human diversity, gender fairness, and anti-racist/anti-bias education. Aboriginal perspectives are included to enhance learning for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students with information about the accomplishments, cultural heritage, and experiences since before European settlement. Human diversity learning reflects the mosaic of people in Manitoba and fosters intercultural understanding and harmony. Teaching, learning, assessment, and resources support gender fairness by being accessible, relevant, interesting, appropriate, and challenging to both male and female students. An anti-bias and anti-racism educational approach is characterized as critical so that students can experience learning in a safe environment that welcomes diversity and challenges discrimination and bias.

29.   The Ontario College of Teachers has prepared *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* as a vision of professional practice to inspire and guide teachers. The ethical standards include care, trust, integrity, and respect. Under the heading of "Respect," the *Standards* state that teachers honour human dignity, emotional wellness, and cognitive development. In their professional practice, they model respect for spiritual and cultural values, social justice, confidentiality, freedom, democracy, and the environment.

30.   Through the legislation, policies, and initiatives outlined above and a multiplicity of other examples not cited in this report, government officials and educators in Canada work against discrimination in educational access to find unique solutions that meet their local circumstances. In the years from 2000 to 2005, much has been achieved, as will be demonstrated in greater detail in the following chapters. However, discrimination in education still presents numerous challenges because some groups who have been traditionally disadvantaged fall behind in educational access and attainment. Federal, provincial, and territorial governments, the nongovernmental and volunteer sectors, and the members of the disadvantaged groups continue to work to address these issues. The chapters on Articles Three, Four, and Five provide specific examples of this work.

Article Two — Parental Choice and the Provision of Separate and Private Education

31.   Under Article Two of the *Recommendation*, the provision of separate educational systems for gender, religious, or linguistic reasons is not seen as discriminatory if these other systems maintain the standards of the public system, are optional according to the parents' wishes, and are not meant to exclude certain groups but to extend options to the public system. The key questions posed by the UNESCO guidelines for the preparation of this report concern parental choice and the realization of that choice through the provision of linguistic and religious educational options and the level of public funding for those options.

Public, Separate, and Private Education

32.   In Canada, parents in different jurisdictions may have the choice of sending their children to a secular or non-denominational public school, a religion-based separate school, a French- or an English-language school, or a private school that may or not receive public funding. Public and separate school systems that are publicly funded serve about 93 per cent of all students in Canada. The legislation and practices concerning the establishment of separate educational systems and private educational institutions vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Alberta provide for tax-supported public and separate school systems that include both elementary and secondary education. The separate school systems allow religious minorities to receive education in accordance with the tenets of their faiths, especially Roman Catholics and Protestants, some of whom have constitutionally protected rights in this area. Quebec provides for elementary and secondary private, rather than separate schools, a concept that does not exist. In addition to the protestant minority, other communities are represented: Jewish, Arab, Orthodox, etc.

33.   Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, the Northwest Territories, and British Columbia fund private schools if certain criteria, which vary among jurisdictions, are met. No funding for private schools is provided in the other jurisdictions, although they still may be regulated.   The UNESCO questions on this issue concern the regulatory framework that is in place to ensure the quality of separate and private education.

34.   The great majority of public, separate, and private schools are equally accessible to boys and girls; only a very few private schools are restricted by sex. There were slightly more males than females enrolled in Canadian public schools in 2003–04 (the term "public" encompasses both the public and separate school systems where both are publicly funded). Just over 51 per cent of the enrolments consisted of males. This ratio was generally constant over the 1997–98 to 2003–04 time period across all provinces and territories of Canada, and was also consistent with population estimates of the school-age population. Girls are not discriminated against in terms of access to education in Canada.

35.   Examples from the jurisdictions illustrate the choices that are open to parents in terms of separate or private institutions and the issue of religious education. The following

examples are not intended to be comprehensive but to give a flavour of the differences and emphases of the legislation and practices in each jurisdiction.

The Separate School Systems

36.   As stated above, Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Alberta provide for tax-supported public and separate school systems that provide both elementary and secondary education.

37.   Saskatchewan funds the public and separate school systems through a network of 28 school divisions. Within these divisions, a minority of electors in a school district, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, may establish a separate school district, if they successfully follow the prescribed process that includes a poll of others of the same minority faith in the proposed school district boundaries. At the secondary school level, parents may enrol their children in either the public or separate school division, if both exist within the city. Catholic schools admit non-Catholic students, if the parents wish their children to have a Catholic education. Religious instruction is permitted in both public and separate schools in Saskatchewan for not more than two and one-half hours a week, and the school day may begin with a reading of the Lord's Prayer or a passage from the Bible. Parents or guardians may request that their child be excused from participating in the opening ceremonies and the religious instruction, in which case the student is provided with suitable alternative studies

38.   According to the *School Act* in Alberta, a separate school board must be established if those of the minority faith, either Protestant or Roman Catholic, vote to establish a separate school jurisdiction. Both public and separate schools are supported through the publicly funded education system, which includes 42 public school districts, 17 separate school districts, as well as 5 francophone regional authorities, and 13 charter schools.

39.   In Quebec, school financing is linked to the status of the school as a public or private educational institution. The public school system is secular. Private schools may or may not be denominational, but this has no impact on the various requirements for funding. The denominational status of all public elementary and secondary educational institutions was repealed in 2000, shortly after the creation of school boards defined along linguistic (French and English) lines. The educational vision of each school must respect the freedom of conscience and religion of the students, the parents, and the members of the staff. A public school cannot adopt a particular vision or outlook of a religious nature, no matter what the religion. Starting at the beginning of the school year in 2008, a program in ethics and religious and moral culture will be offered to all students at the elementary and secondary levels, replacing the current Roman Catholic, Protestant, and moral education programs. To that end, on June 15, 2005, the Quebec National Assembly amended the statutes with the adoption of the *Loi modifiant diverses dispositions législatives de nature confessionnelle dans le domaine de l'éducation (Act to amend various legislative provisions respecting education as regards denominational matters)*.

40.   Ontario's publicly funded school system offers quality English-language education to residents through public schools and through separate schools for Roman Catholic

residents. The publicly funded school system also offers French-language education to residents who have constitutionally protected French-language education rights and to others through public schools and through separate schools for Roman Catholics. Non-Catholic residents may attend separate secondary schools without being required to take religious instruction. In 2005, there were 72 district school boards in Ontario, including 31 English-language public school boards, 29 English-language Roman Catholic separate school boards, 4 French-language public school boards, and 8 French-language Roman Catholic separate school Boards. There were also 24 very small school authorities, most of which are school boards serving one or two schools located in remote areas of Ontario.

41.   In the Northwest Territories, the *Education Act* provides for separate denominational schools and a Roman Catholic system in the capital city of Yellowknife. Private schools are funded by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment at 40 per cent of the adjusted school funding formula in the district in which they operate. There are 3 private schools and 2 fully funded francophone schools.

Legislating Private Education with Public Funding

42.   Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Northwest Territories, and British Columbia fund private schools if certain criteria, which vary among jurisdictions, are met. Alberta policy states that parents have the right to choose a private school for their children and that the province has a compelling interest in the education of all children and a responsibility to assess that the knowledge, skills, and attitudes being taught are sufficient and the achievement of the students meets standards acceptable to the Minister of Education. Provincial support in Alberta is given to private schools that provide an acceptable standard of education and that employ teachers who have certificates and teach either the provincial curriculum or one approved by the Minister of Education. The accredited private schools receive approximately 60 per cent of the per student instructional grant that is given to the public school system.

43.   Manitoba differentiates between two kinds of independent schools — Funded Independent Schools and Non-Funded Independent Schools. Funded Independent Schools receive grants from the province because they use the public school curriculum and hire provincially certified teachers. These schools include Roman Catholic, Ukrainian Catholic, Jewish, Mennonite, Lutheran, Islamic, and Christian schools. These schools may also charge tuition. The Non-Funded Independent Schools do not use the provincial curriculum and the teachers in these schools do not necessarily have a valid Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth teaching certificate. The province does not support these schools financially, except for a $50 per student textbook grant given once a year. Although the communities that run the Non-Funded Independent Schools have the right to teach what they want to their children in the manner they see fit, and by whom they see fit, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth ensures that the children in these schools receive an education which is at least equivalent in quality to that provided in a public school.

44. In 2004–05, over 350 independent schools in British Columbia (BC) enrolled about 10 per cent of the elementary and secondary school population. The government strongly supports a public system of education that provides a publicly funded quality education for all, but also recognizes that parents have the right to choose from various educational alternatives for the education of their children. These choices reflect the goals, educational pedagogy, culture, religion, and values that the parents desire for their children. British Columbia has four classifications of Independent Schools that receive varied levels of provincial funding. The largest groups, Group One and Group Two schools, receive 50 per cent and 35 per cent of their local school district's per student operating grant respectively, and these schools offer a curriculum consistent with ministerial orders, employ BC-certified teachers, and meet other pedagogical and administrative requirements. Group Three and Four schools do not receive funding because they do not employ BC-certified teachers nor provide educational programs consistent with ministerial requirements, or else they cater predominantly to non-provincial students. Independent schools are operated by Catholic, Christian, Jewish, Mennonite, Muslim, Seventh-day Adventist, Sikh, and other communities.

45. Private teaching establishments in Quebec, whether francophone, anglophone, or known through another designation, must have permission from the Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports to offer educational services with the principal goal of developing students' competencies in programs at the elementary, secondary, college, or university level. Before granting the permit, the Ministry assesses the quality of the educational and pedagogical structures of the school, the criteria used to select the teaching and administrative personnel, the nature of the need to which the school is responding, and the participation of parents in the life of the school.

Legislating Private Education without Public Funding

46. Yukon has 31 public schools, of which 3 are Roman Catholic, but there is no separate school system. Several independent schools, including some operated by religious denominations, operate within the territory. They do not receive public funding although there is a formal system for accreditation of their educational programs. Nunavut has a single public school system.

47. In Newfoundland and Labrador, there is a school system of inter-denominational school boards. Religious education courses are provided at all grade levels, but principals must excuse students from religious instruction and observations when requested by the parent or the student. Private schools may be established, but the minister must approve the course of instruction and the teachers must be licensed under the *Teacher Training Act*. They receive no public funding.

48. All public schools are non-sectarian and no legislative provision has been made for a separate or dual school system in Prince Edward Island. The *Private Training Schools Act* specifies that these schools must apply for certification of registration, employ approved instructors, and be subject to inspection at any time concerning methods of instruction and

other factors. These schools operate at the postsecondary level with no direct public funding.

49.   There is no separate school system in Nova Scotia. A small number of non-funded independent schools operate within the province, but with no formal system of accreditation of the educational programs. The September 2002 *Act Respecting Education* specifies that the Minister may order an assessment of a private school, its teachers, programs, educational materials, and facilities and that the Minister may also recognize the school's program of studies as meeting the requirements for a provincial secondary school-leaving certificate. A private school may offer a religion-based curriculum. In New Brunswick, the public education system is non-sectarian and based on linguistic duality. Depending on their linguistic capacity and/or the mother tongues of their parents, students may attend schools in which the language of instruction is either French or English.

50.   The range of choices available to parents and the amount of public funding related to that choice vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Despite this, the principle of access remains paramount because each child is entitled to a free, public education. It is also consistent across the jurisdictions that no child is required to take part in any religious observance or instruction if the parent wants to have the child excused, or if the child asks to be excused.

Article Three — Access, Funding, and Positive Discrimination

51.   Article Three of the *Recommendation* probes more deeply into some specific questions of access to and treatment within elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education. This chapter responds to the guidelines by providing information on

- access to education by foreign nationals
- recognition of foreign credentials
- school funding policies to support disadvantaged groups as a form of positive discrimination
- access to postsecondary education, with particular attention to students from lower-income families
- financial support and assistance programs for postsecondary students

Access to Education for Foreign Nationals

52.   In the chapter on Article One, the basic requirement for access to elementary and secondary education of all Canadian citizens and permanent residents between 6 and 18 years of age (with some jurisdictional variation) is presented as residence in the province or territory. Legislation has also been put in place to facilitate the access of those newly arrived, whether refugees or temporary residents. For example in Alberta, children of individuals who are lawfully admitted to Canada for permanent or temporary residence are entitled to have access to basic education. Those who have "temporary residence" include individuals who have filed a refugee claim with the Immigration and Refugee Board within the past year and have received an official acknowledgment. In Ontario, the children of parents who are in Canada without legal status may attend school as long as they meet other admission criteria such as age and residence.

53.   In Saskatchewan, the legislation allows boards of education to collect tuition fees for a student when neither the student nor either of his or her parents is a Canadian citizen or permanent resident. In practice, since the number of immigrants with no status is small, school divisions invariably waive any tuition fees they have a legal right to impose. In the Northwest Territories, residence is seen as likely to be sufficient for children of immigrants to register for school in the territory.

54.   In March 2003, Manitoba released a new policy on educational funding for dependent children of temporary residents. Effective in the 2003–04 school year, educational funding was extended to children whose parents are temporary residents for a variety of reasons, such as study permit, work permits, visiting forces personnel, and individuals involved in the Refugee Determination Process. In May 2005, the Ontario Legislature passed changes to the *Education Act* that extended exemptions on paying fees to allow more children of temporary residents in Canada to attend school in Ontario without charge. Newly exempted are children whose parents have applied for permanent resident status or a work permit and plan to stay in Canada, children accompanying their parent(s) who are authorized to work by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and children whose parents

are studying full time at a publicly funded university or college. Before the passage of this legislation, school boards were required to charge fees of up to $10,000 a year per child.

55.   In 2004, Ontario also extended student loans for postsecondary education to protected persons, for example, persons found to be Convention refugees or persons in need of protection by the Immigration and Refugee Board. Quebec also amended its *Act Respecting Financial Assistance for Education* to extend access (since January 2005) to financial assistance for professional training and postsecondary education beyond Canadian citizens and permanent residents to recognized refugees and persons in need of protection according to the legislation on immigration and the protection of refugees. The federally funded Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation has extended eligibility for its scholarships and bursaries to individuals considered to be protected persons such as Convention refugees.

56.   In a revised 2001 policy, New Brunswick addressed the issue of an "international student" who is defined as a person who entered the province from outside Canada with a student visa for the purpose of attending school, and is charged tuition fees at the elementary and secondary level. Exemptions from this are similar to those of the other jurisdictions noted above, including children of those in New Brunswick on student or working visas and those claiming refugee status. In New Brunswick, as well as in the other jurisdictions in Canada, foreign or international students as defined above are usually charged tuition fees as determined by the government or the school board. In Alberta, foreign students or international students are defined as those whose parents are citizens of and reside in another country. These students are usually charged tuition fees, the amount being determined by the school board.

Recognition of Foreign Credentials

57.   For permanent and temporary residents and those immigrating to Canada, the assessment of their educational credits and professional or trade qualifications is of crucial importance. For secondary education, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada publishes *Secondary Education in Canada: A Student Transfer Guide*, which provides information on secondary education in each province and territory to assist schools in receiving and placing transfer students.

58.   In Canada, each university and college sets its own admission requirements and its own criteria for recognizing academic qualifications obtained outside the country. The evaluation of course credit transfers is part of the quality assurance mechanisms that each institution has in place. There are credential assessment services in most jurisdictions that advise immigrants on how their credentials compare to those in each province or territory, but this is an advisory service only and does not guarantee recognition.

59.   Those who wish to enter directly into the labour force also need to know the value of the education, training, and experience they have already acquired. Making this process more complicated than in many other countries is the reality of 13 provincial and territorial

jurisdictions in Canada — and the fact that the recognition process is different in each province and territory and for each profession and trade.

60.   If an immigrant has prior qualifications in one of the regulated occupations, such as medical doctor, engineer, electrician, or plumber, it is the provincial regulatory body governing the profession or trade that sets requirements and assesses credentials. Assessments are conducted by examinations and interviews, so immigrants must be in Canada for this process — their credentials cannot be assessed before arrival. It can be a costly and time-consuming process.

61.   For non-regulated occupations, employing about 80 per cent of Canadians, the decisions regarding experience and training are usually at the discretion of the individual employer. Immigrants can get advice on the applicability of their personal qualifications from evaluation services, and these assessments can in turn also be helpful to employers in making decisions.

62.   Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition, or PLAR, provides another pathway for immigrants to have their skills and knowledge measured and recognized. In this process, adults demonstrate the learning they have acquired outside of formal education. In Canada, there are colleges, universities, and secondary schools that recognize PLAR in some programs, as do a few licensing and certification bodies such as dental technicians and optometrists. Prior learning can be assessed through demonstrations, interviews, presentations, written tests, or the development of an individual portfolio. In some cases, this process can be started before arriving in Canada. As with the credential assessments, the decisions and processes are the responsibility of the educational institution, certification body, or employer.

63.   The assessment and recognition of foreign credentials for both education and employment represents a challenge for immigrants in terms of the multiplicity of jurisdictions, institutions, and regulatory associations. One of the best sources of information for those wanting to have their credentials assessed is the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials, a part of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. Known by the acronym CICIC, it was established after Canada ratified the *UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees concerning Higher Education in the States belonging to the European Region* in 1990 to assist Canada in carrying out its obligations under the terms of this Convention. The Convention promotes international mobility by advocating wider recognition of higher education and professional qualifications. CICIC fosters nation-wide consultation to assist Canadian authorities in their consideration of the implications of new international agreements such as the *Joint Council of Europe and UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications related to Higher Education in the European Region*, known as the Lisbon Convention, and the *UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education*.

64.   CICIC acts as a national clearinghouse and referral service to support the recognition and portability of Canadian and international education and occupational qualifications. Its Web site features detailed information on assessment processes and on all recognized

educational institutions in Canada, occupations, and evaluation and assessment services. CICIC does not grant equivalences or assess credentials, but it is a key information source and referral centre.

School Funding Formula and Positive Discrimination

65.   School funding formulas differ in detail from jurisdiction to jurisdiction but they all have provisions for providing special funding for services for those who have special needs. This is a form of positive discrimination that supports equity and equality of access and treatment within the school system — rather than discriminating against any group, support is provided to expand their access to quality learning.

66.   The *Funding of Schools* document for Manitoba for school year 2005–06 outlines both the base support and the categorical support that is available to schools on a per student basis. In addition to the support for instruction, curricular materials, and other basic items, support is provided for an extensive list of special students and services including special needs, English as a Second Language, Aboriginal Academic Achievement, Heritage Languages, French Language programs, students at risk, small and northern schools, early behaviour intervention, early childhood development, and early literacy and numeracy.

67.   For example, the *Manitoba Aboriginal Academic Achievement Grant* supports a variety of programs that target the academic needs of Aboriginal students. In the grant applications, school boards must delineate the nature of the programming and the outcomes to be achieved, the evaluation process for the outcomes, and the extent to which the plan has been discussed and supported by families and other community partners. Schools can also receive grants to develop specialized programming for newcomer youth from war-affected or refugee backgrounds who have English as an additional language and literacy needs as a result of significantly disrupted schooling.

68.   A flexible funding framework that recognizes the unique needs and priorities of school boards was put in place in 2004 in Alberta. Although urban school boards are more likely to have a large mix of students with special needs, rural boards have challenges of geography, transportation, and declining enrolment. The new framework provides base funding according to general enrolment, plus differential funding for special-needs students, English-as-a-Second-Language students, Aboriginal students, students of low socioeconomic status, boards with large enrolment growth or decline, northern allowances for jurisdictions, necessary small schools, geographically large jurisdictions, and the cost of living in various parts of the province. School boards have increased flexibility to respond to their communities' realities, along with enhanced accountability requirements. In this way, the school boards can apply the funding to their own particular challenges in achieving equal access and services for students within their schools.

69.   Enhanced support services for students with special needs are a feature of education in all jurisdictions. The Ministry of Education in Newfoundland and Labrador funds a full range of personnel to support children with special needs, including classroom teachers, special education teachers, guidance counsellors, educational psychologists, speech and language

pathologists, and student assistants as well as professional development consultants to work with the teachers. Specialized technology and transportation are also available.

70.   Although public education is provided free of charge, other costs must be assumed by the parents. The Quebec National Assembly adopted legislation in June 2004 that obliges school boards to develop policies related to the costs they require parents to assume, policies that maintain the accessibility of public schools. Individual school boards may determine the principles under which parents are charged for school supplies such as exercise books and writing materials.

71.   The above-mentioned examples show how the funding provided by ministries and departments of education ensures that elementary and secondary education is free to all and that those in need of extra services do not suffer from discrimination whether in access to education or in opportunity to achieve and succeed. In all jurisdictions, the needs are multiple and the resources are limited. The jurisdictions respond with policies and programs that reflect their regional needs and realities. In the chapter on Article Four, more information is provided on the programs and services that are made available through this funding as well as some of the achievements and ongoing challenges.

Access to Postsecondary Education

72.   In all jurisdictions, postsecondary educational institutions charge tuition fees. For universities, these fees varied in 2004–05 from about $1,688 in Quebec to almost $6,000 in Nova Scotia, with an average of about $4,200, which is almost triple the average tuition in 1990–91. For colleges, tuition ranged from about $1,300 to $3,000. (Instruction in public colleges in Quebec is free of charge for students with Quebec resident status.)

73.   Studies done on those who have attended postsecondary education reveal influences of gender, family income, and parental education. The 2002 Statistics Canada *Postsecondary Education Participation Survey* showed that an estimated 1.6 million young Canadians aged from 18 to 24 (17 to 24 in Quebec) had taken some form of postsecondary education (PSE) after leaving secondary school. Two-thirds of young women (67 per cent) pursued education beyond secondary school, compared to 57 per cent of young men.

74.   In 2003–04, at the university undergraduate level, women accounted for 59 per cent of all registrants. Some fields of study had shown strong increases in enrolment since the 1997–98 study. For example, 2003–04 registration in physical and life sciences and technology was 20 per cent higher than in 1997–98, partly due to the increased participation of women. Women accounted for 56 per cent of all students in this field; in the social and behavioural sciences, women represented 66 per cent of the student population. The broad fields of study in which male students outnumbered females were mathematics, computer and information science, architecture, engineering, and related technologies. Women students had a very slight majority of 52 per cent at the master's level. Men outnumbered women in doctoral programs, where men accounted for 54 per cent of the registrations.

75.   Participation in PSE rises with family income. Those with estimated family earnings of $80,000 or higher were most likely (83 per cent) to pursue PSE, compared to about 66 per cent of those with family incomes between $55,000 and $80,000, and just over half of those with family incomes below $55,000. These numbers have remained relatively stable for the last decade, with some reduction in the number of students from middle-class families. Participation in PSE, especially in university education, is also influenced by the educational background of parents; 70 per cent of those 18- to 24-year-olds whose parents had some postsecondary education also enrolled in postsecondary education as opposed to 57 per cent of those whose parents had no education at the postsecondary level. Parental education is not as strong an influence for college students. At this level, family income has more impact — 40 per cent of youth from low-income families participate in college compared to 60 per cent of those from high-income families.

76.   Along with savings, earnings from employment, and support from families, many students use student loans, bursaries, and scholarships to pay for PSE costs. In the 2001–02 academic year, 26 per cent of students used repayable student loans and 29 per cent of students received non-repayable grants or scholarships. Not all students require a loan every year so that, over the three or four years of their undergraduate education, about 50 per cent of students overall receive a loan at some time. In the graduating class of 2000, about one-half of college graduates and university graduates with bachelor degrees left school owing money for their education. On average, bachelor degree graduates with student debt owed about $20,000, and college graduates owed almost $13,000, both owing their debt mostly to government student loan programs. The provinces and territories, working with the federal government, have all developed extensive student support mechanisms to provide increased access to higher education to those least able to pay and to reduce student debt on graduation.

Financial Assistance Programs for Postsecondary Students

77.   All jurisdictions in Canada offer a combination of loans, bursaries, scholarships, grants, and other assistance to students. To use the example of Prince Edward Island, students have access to the Canada Student Loan Program (CSLP), the Prince Edward Island Student Loan program, and student loans for part-time students. In addition, there are Island Student Awards, interest relief programs, debt reduction grants, community service bursaries, and bursaries from the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation (CMSF). In addition to providing loans to 350,000 students annually and paying the interest while they are in school, the Government of Canada provides non-repayable study grants for PSE students with permanent disabilities, part-time students, women in certain doctoral programs, and students with dependents.

78.   Similar packages of support are offered in each jurisdiction, and the provinces and territories supplement these programs through a variety of initiatives. The Government of Nunavut has established *Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students* to ensure that financial need is not a barrier to postsecondary education. For qualified Nunavut residents, the Government provides a basic grant to cover tuition and fees, plus a travel grant to the location of the program. (Nunavut is the large territory west of Hudson Bay in northern

Canada, and its postsecondary students attend programs in the southern provinces.) Inuit students may also receive allowances for monthly living expenses and learning materials. The Department of Education provides student loans to be repaid after graduation at an interest rate set below the prime interest rate.

79.   In its 2005 budget, Newfoundland and Labrador continued their tuition freeze until 2008, giving them one of the lowest tuition rates in Canada — 40 per cent lower than the national average. As the result of a four-year joint initiative by the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, students from low-income families receive non-repayable bursaries to attend PSE. The Foundation is conducting follow-up studies on the challenges facing low-income students and the effectiveness of different forms of financial assistance.

80.   Saskatchewan also put a tuition freeze in place and has set up a review of postsecondary education accessibility and affordability. The review focuses on issues such as student financial assistance programs and removing financial barriers for students and their families. In 2004, Nova Scotia also implemented a three-year cap on tuition fee increases, which will avert an average of $1,300 in fees by the third year of the agreement. In Quebec, university tuition has not increased since 1995, and instruction in colleges is free of charge to residents of the province. In cases of tuition fee caps and freezes, the governments provide funds to the institutions to make up for the shortfall in revenue, so that the institutions and the students are not disadvantaged by a reduction in funds.

81.   Increasing access by rural and northern students is the goal of a 2005 Manitoba initiative that provides students from rural and northern communities with bursaries and scholarships to attend PSE.   Manitoba also introduced a tuition freeze in 2000 as a way of ensuring postsecondary education is accessible and affordable.

82.   New Brunswick has announced a one-time non-taxable grant of $2,000 for every full-time, first-year New Brunswick resident attending a provincial university, and it has removed the assessment of parental and spousal income from the calculation of provincial postsecondary financial assistance. Starting in tax year 2006, former students can benefit from the New Brunswick Tuition Tax Cash Back program, a tuition tax rebate equivalent to 50 per cent of eligible postsecondary tuition costs incurred after January 1, 2005, for individuals who have attended approved educational institutions. The tax rebate has an annual maximum of $2,000 and a lifetime maximum of $10,000.

83.   As part of its commitment to add 25,000 new seats to the public postsecondary education system by 2010, British Columbia created 3,400 new seats in 2004. This has allowed universities, such as the University of Victoria, to reduce the grade cut-off for acceptance to their institutions, thereby allowing more students to have access to PSE.   The Government also introduced a loan-reduction program by which students can have their loans reduced by successfully completing their studies. For high-demand professions such as doctors and nurses, the loans can be forgiven if they agree to practise in under-served areas.

84.   Ontario has also brought forward a number of programs to enhance access to postsecondary institutions. A student access guarantee has been introduced to ensure that all qualified students in need have access to the resources necessary for their tuition, books, and mandatory fees.   The program is targeted at students from working families so that they have access based on their ability to learn and not their ability to pay. In 2005, Ontario began a five-year investment to help postsecondary institutions deliver programs that improve access to and success in PSE for under-represented groups — francophones, people with disabilities, Aboriginal peoples, and students who are striving to become the first in their families to attend a university or college. The funding for Aboriginal access includes outreach and networking to recruit more students, targeted programs in health, Aboriginal education, and other professional disciplines, community-based delivery, and strategies for Aboriginal student retention including counselling and support from Elders.

85.   In Quebec, students benefit from a program of loans and bursaries made available through the Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports. The portion of the aid that is a loan is guaranteed by the government, which also pays the loan interest while the student is enrolled in full-time studies. In 2005–06, there were 133,000 program recipients, of whom 81,000 received a bursary. The Program has various approaches to supporting students with dual responsibilities for studies and families. Particular attention is paid to students who are single parents, who have pre-school-aged children, who are at least 20 weeks pregnant, and to those who give birth during their studies. Special measures are also in place to help those with major disabilities, according to their particular needs. This assistance supports these students during their studies in order to avoid their dropping out. The program has recently been upgraded to better respond to student needs through a reconsideration of the financing rules, upgrades to the on-line and information systems, and increased autonomy for the partner educational institutions. These changes reduced the average waiting time for financial aid from three weeks in 2001–02 to one week in 2005–06. In 2005–06, 87 per cent of requests for financial aid were made on line, compared to 31 per cent in 2001–02.

86.   The financial barriers to postsecondary education that still exist particularly affect those from lower socioeconomic family backgrounds. A recent study from the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), *The Fiscal Reality of PSE Costs for Low-Income Families*, highlighted the effect of increased tuition fees on low- and modest-income families. CAUT tracked the reduction in the per cent of university income from governments and the increases in tuition fees since 1990, especially the proportion of after-tax income that poorer families have to devote to tuition fees. Differences in the provinces were revealed, with Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec ranking at the top of the equity scale and Nova Scotia and British Columbia at the bottom in 2004.

87.   Particular concerns that CAUT expressed in the study were that the poorer students were less able to afford the up-front costs and that loans did not lessen the cost of postsecondary education but only deferred it until after graduation. Lower-income students were more likely to have to work throughout their education and were also more vulnerable to financial crises. All of these factors created barriers to pursuing and completing postsecondary education. Some of the provincial and territorial initiatives to address these

challenge have been outlined above. CAUT concluded that the lower percentage of students from lower-income families demonstrated that even more support to educational institutions and non-repayable financial aid to students are necessary.

Article Four — Education For All

88. The guidelines supplied by UNESCO for reporting on Article Four are particularly extensive. The information requested includes the education laws, policy, strategies, and programs developed and implemented to fulfil the right of everyone to education without discrimination or exclusion and to ensure equality of educational opportunities — in short, education for all. Specific questions are posed in the guidelines about elementary and secondary education, postsecondary education, adult basic education and literacy, and teacher training. As well, information is requested on the educational efforts for equality of the poor, economically and socially marginalized, and vulnerable groups, including difficulties, goals, and benchmarks. The chapter on Article Three looked at the issue of postsecondary access for students from lower-income families. The groups reported on in this chapter include Aboriginal students, children of immigrants, visible minority students, and special-needs children.

Access to Elementary and Secondary Education

89. The precise concern of the questions in the guidelines pertaining to elementary and secondary education is free, universal access. Article One provided information on the legislation and policies that protect the Canada-wide principle of free public education for all. In effect, every jurisdiction has legislation similar to that of Nova Scotia, which states that all public schools established under the *Education Act* are free and that every person over the age of 5 years and under the age of 21 years has the right to attend a public school serving the school district or school region in which that person resides. Other jurisdictions have different age inclusions in their legislation.

90. According to the *Summary Public School Indicators for the Provinces and Territories, 1997–1998 to 2003–2004* published by Statistics Canada, the school-age population between 5 and 17 years of age in 2003–04 was 5,328,417; headcount enrolment in public elementary and secondary schools in 2003–04 was 5,289,031. The enrolment figures do not include private school, independent school, and distance education students, or students enrolled in schools financed by the federal government. The small differences between the size of the population and the enrolment numbers indicate that the overall enrolment rate in elementary and secondary schools is very high. Up to age 16, it is always well over 90 per cent.

Gender Issues in Elementary and Secondary Education

91. The guidelines request information on measures and actions to eliminate gender disparity in education, with a focus on girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality. As presented in Article Two, overall enrolment according to gender in elementary and secondary schools slightly favours boys, but this reflects the demographic realities. The school population is 51.6 per cent male across all provinces and territories, which is consistent with estimates of school-age populations.

92.   According to the *Report of the Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program 2005*, the pan-Canadian graduation rate from secondary school in 2001 was 75 per cent, with 80 per cent of girls graduating and 71 per cent of boys.   In 2002–03, the proportions were 78 per cent of females and 70 per cent of males.   Graduation rates were higher for females in every jurisdiction.

93.   Gender equality has a legislative base in Canada; the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the Human Rights Codes of the provinces and territories prohibit discrimination in education and employment on the basis of gender.   Gender equality policies were developed in the 1990s and have been implemented through a variety of projects, guidelines, training, and other initiatives.

94.   The *Gender Equity Policy and Guidelines for Implementation* document from Saskatchewan Learning (formerly Saskatchewan Education) begins with a statement of the basic principles — that all students have the right to a learning environment that is gender-equitable, that the different ways that males and females learn should be respected equally, that language is important for including both genders and giving them equal status, and that achieving gender equity requires cooperation among students, teachers, educational organizations, and communities.

95.   To underline that gender equity must be an integral part of all aspects of the educational system, the Saskatchewan directives include guidelines and policies for curriculum development and resource materials, for instructional and assessment practices, for the school environment, and for monitoring progress toward gender equity goals.   This policy statement is included as part of each curriculum outline.

96.   Prince Edward Island encompasses the gender equity policy within the broader realm of diversity, an approach that is used by other jurisdictions.   Diversity and equity education are seen as fostering understanding of the diversity within communities and society, that is, diversity of age, ability, ethnicity, gender, language, lifestyles, religion and spiritual beliefs, class, sexual orientation, and values.   Education focused on diversity and equity promotes commitment to and engagement in equity through raising awareness, critical analysis, and actions designed to challenge prejudice, discrimination, and other abuses of human rights, either by individuals or institutions.

97.   British Columbia (BC) provides an example of the integration of gender equity into curriculum, teaching, and resources.   The Ministry of Education developed *Cross-Curricular Outlines* to encourage education that is relevant, equitable, and accessible to all learners.   The *Outlines* are part of each and every integrated resource package for all subjects in the BC curriculum, and they guide school and classroom organization, planning, and practice.

98.   The BC *Cross-Curricular Outline on Gender Equity* stresses the inclusion of the experiences, perceptions, and perspectives of girls and women as well as of boys and men. The initial focus is on girls to redress historic inequities with the understanding that the inclusive strategies, which promote the participation of girls, will also reach the boys who

are excluded by more traditional teaching styles and curriculum content. Both principles and strategies for gender-equitable education are presented. For example, teachers are encouraged to choose a variety of instructional strategies and lessons that explore many perspectives, use different sources of information, and refer to both male and female experts. Other strategies outline the use of inclusive, parallel, and gender-sensitive language and the modelling of non-biased behaviour.

99. Through both government policy and an action plan, Quebec has laid out clear directions for attaining equality between women and men, including the promotion of equity models and behaviours. One of the objectives relates to providing youth with a socialization that avoids gender and sexual stereotypes. The Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports, in collaboration with stakeholders, is coordinating current efforts to offer professional development for teachers and to contribute to the development of tools promoting equality between the sexes.

Achievement and Gender-Related Programming

100. Both pan-Canadian and international testing have revealed gender differences in achievement. While tests revealed small differences between the genders in science and mathematics, the Canadian results on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) *Programme for International Student Assessment* (PISA) 2000, which focused on reading, showed that 15-year-old females performed better than their male counterparts in all jurisdictions. The 2002 pan-Canadian *Student Achievement Indicators Program* (SAIP) assessment of writing skills confirmed the PISA results. Girls consistently performed better than boys at almost all levels in both tested age groups of 13-year-olds and 15-year-olds.

101. These assessments confirm what is now recognized as an international phenomenon in many cultures and languages, namely that girls demonstrate reading and writing skills at a significantly higher level than boys. Educators are facing the challenge of improving the literacy skills of boys overall. Many efforts are being made at the elementary levels with early intervention programs, such as the 2003 New Brunswick commitment to provide specialized training in reading to all elementary teachers, strategies to improve achievement of boys, and increased funding for the purchase of reading materials for elementary schools. Ontario released the report of the Expert Panel on Students at Risk in Ontario, entitled *Think Literacy Success*. This focused on adolescents from grade 7 to grade 12 (ages 13 to 18) and provides a framework for embedding high literacy standards and effective literacy standards across the curriculum. A companion document outlines instructional strategies.

102. In 2004, the Ministry of Education in Quebec issued *Boys' Academic Achievement: Putting the Findings into Perspective*. The research presents three indicators of the achievement levels of boys — academic delay, success in learning the language of instruction, and the secondary school graduation rate. More boys than girls experience delays in beginning secondary school. In 2001–02, among those registered in their final year of secondary school, 70 per cent of the boys, as compared to 81 per cent of the girls,

received their diploma. The gaps between the achievement levels of boys and girls vary considerably according to socioeconomic background.

103.　Girls tend to stay in school longer than boys and graduate in greater numbers in all the Canadian provinces and territories. The Quebec research showed a pattern of dropping out explained by personal and academic choices and events dependent on social class and gender. Three factors emerge from the study. First of all, the gap that appears between boys and girls is less important than the gap related to socioeconomic background. The gap between the performances of boys and girls is greater for those with lower socioeconomic backgrounds and is reduced at higher socioeconomic levels. As well, socioeconomic level has a greater impact on boys than girls. Girls are more likely than boys to state that they enjoy school and girls demonstrate attitudes that better respond to the demands of the school environment. The effects of stereotypes and peer influence are also key points in explaining the lower achievement levels of boys.

104.　In Quebec, several communities have experimented with different types of intervention to improve the success of boys. It must be noted, however, that these interventions have not been subjected to any rigorous assessment. At present, a number of Quebec schools are experimenting with single-sex classes and single-sex student groups for one or more subjects, although the results from this are ambiguous. Adapting educational approaches so that the various learning needs and styles of boys and girls are incorporated has proven successful. An emphasis on learning projects offering concrete experiences, different settings, and greater commitment are successful in engaging some boys. The personality of the teacher and the nature of the relationships that the teacher establishes with the students have a marked influence on motivation. Other measures include greater involvement by fathers in their sons' education and supplementary activities that respond to the more energetic nature of some boys. In many provinces and territories, additional attention and funding are being given to literacy intervention at all levels of elementary and secondary education and boys are benefiting from the additional help and encouragement. Nevertheless, various measures have also been put in place to foster success of all students rather than creating programs specifically for boys.

Access to Postsecondary Education

105.　The questions in the UNESCO guidelines about higher education dealt with student access based on individual capacity rather than restricted by discriminatory practices or the costs of attendance. These issues were addressed in Article Three above, especially as concerns access by students from lower-income families and the variety of government financial support programs.

Basic Education and Literacy Needs

106.　International, national, regional, and local instruments are all used to track literacy levels of the various populations and to provide long-term data so that both improvements and continuing challenges can be assessed. The 2003 international survey, the *Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey*, revealed that 58 per cent of adults in Canada aged from 16 to 65

possess literacy skills that indicate they could meet most everyday reading requirements. This leaves 42 per cent of adults with low levels of literacy skills, and those with lower levels of literacy also were shown to have lower levels of employment and lower earnings. The results varied among the provinces and territories across the country, but even in the top performing jurisdictions, at least three out of ten adults aged 16 and over performed at the lower levels in prose and document literacy.

107. In a study of the youth population, Canadian results on OECD's *Programme for International Student Assessment* (PISA), administered to 15-year-olds in 2003, were among the highest in the world in the literacy domains of reading, science, problem solving, and mathematics. PISA also revealed that Canada has one of the highest levels of equity in achievement. However, PISA did show that there are differing literacy levels across the country that can be attributed, in part, to socioeconomic status, gender, and language.

108. The provinces and territories use a variety of approaches and mechanisms to collect their own numbers on enrolments in their community-based, workplace, and other literacy programs. Given UNESCO's emphasis on gender equality and equity, one particularly interesting finding of many of their studies is that women are the majority of adult learners in every jurisdiction providing this statistic. Women represented 56 to 65 per cent of those registered in the various classes reported and, on average, 80 per cent or more of the learners were between 20 and 50 years of age. Access to further education and training was the main reason given for attending adult literacy classes.

Responding to Basic Education and Literacy Needs

109. Each adult learner has different literacy needs. The multiplicity of literacy programs available across Canada is a response to the recognition that the closer the program is to the adult's needs and life situation the more likely it is to be successful. The provinces and territories, working closely with the federal government and the nongovernmental sector, have developed programs that reach a wide variety of literacy learners and provide them with the skills they most need. It is not possible for the few examples included in this report to convey the wide variety of programs available to literacy learners. However, literacy demands always outpace the capacity of the system and more funding is needed to continue to reach the multiple groups that require literacy upgrading.

110. The Government of Canada plays an important role in promoting and supporting literacy development in Canada. The National Literacy Program (NLP) has been a focal point for the Government of Canada's overall literacy interests and has functioned as a primary mechanism for implementing the lead role of the Department of Human Resources and Social Development within the Government of Canada for supporting literacy development. Since its inception in 1988, the NLP has funded over 7,000 innovative projects in support of partnership development and liaison, project development and consultation, support of promotion and awareness materials and events, research, policy analysis, and symposia and consultative meetings.

111. Each of the jurisdictions has developed programs and projects that reflect the priorities of their populations, using community-based delivery as the most successful model for meeting learners' needs. Extra investment in literacy by the Government of the Northwest Territories (NWT) through the Department of Education, Culture and Employment has resulted in the introduction of a number of programs to fill the gaps in existing services for identified target groups in the adult population. The community-based Adult Literacy and Basic Education (ALBE) programming through the community college was expanded to allow delivery in every community in NWT. The Correctional Centre Literacy Program through the Department of Justice has enhanced ALBE programs and career services to inmates of three correctional centres and three young offender facilities. A seniors' literacy program has been administered through a partnership with Literacy Support for Seniors.

112. Because most low literacy adults in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories are in the workforce, it is crucial to develop a consolidated framework for the delivery of workplace literacy programs. The two territories are collaborating to develop a comprehensive workplace literacy consortium that includes governments, colleges, industries, Aboriginal governments, and the multiple community and other stakeholders in the literacy councils.

113. In 2000, the Alberta government launched the *Parent-Child Literacy Strategy* to focus on intergenerational educational approaches that integrate adult literacy instruction and early oral language development for children from birth to age 6 for economically and socially disadvantaged families. In addition to improving the language, literacy, and social interaction skills of children, the basic literacy skills of parents, and the level of parental involvement in their children's education, the program worked to enhance community-based partnerships that support literacy skills. Each year, the program is evaluated to track participation, training, tools, promotion, and funding. The progress report for 2003–04 showed that over 14,000 parents and children participated in the Parent-Child literacy programs in 124 communities around Alberta.

114. The Adult Learning and Literacy Branch of the Manitoba Department of Advanced Education and Training funds and coordinates the development and delivery of community-based adult and family literacy programs in cooperation with community groups, organizations, and institutions providing literacy programming in northern, urban, rural, Aboriginal, francophone, and multicultural settings. In 2004–05, there were 34 separate community-based programs of which 13 also provided family literacy. The Branch supports the programs through professional development training for literacy practitioners, including a literary practitioner/tutor certificate program, and assistance in the development and acquisition of appropriate learning resources.

115. The New Brunswick Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour funds and coordinates the delivery of community-based adult literacy programs in partnership with the non-profit organization, Literacy New Brunswick Inc., and 12 Regional Literacy committees around the province. Literacy training is provided free of charge in English and French in over 60 communities. In 2006–07, 120 classes were funded — 61 provided training in English, 55 in French, and 4 in both languages — with about 1,700 adults

attending. The Department also provides support with curriculum content, academic assessment tools, professional educational expertise, and professional development training for literacy teachers through its educational consultants and regional literacy coordinators.

116. Key components of pan-Canadian literacy capacity are the seven national literacy organizations operating in Canada: the National Adult Literacy Database, ABC Canada, the Movement for Canadian Literacy, La Fédération canadienne d'alphabétisation en français, the National Indigenous Literacy Association, Laubach Literacy of Canada, and Frontier College. Literacy coalitions have been established in every province and territory to serve as the voice of literacy in their region, to support literacy providers, and to develop resources, services, and practices. These coalitions bring together the numerous local organizations and groups addressing the literacy needs in their communities.

Access to Teacher Education

117. In focusing attention on teachers, the UNESCO Guidelines request information on discrimination in the training for the teaching profession, the comparison of teaching salaries to that of other civil servants, and information on the professional conditions of teaching staff. Discrimination against candidates for teacher education programs is prohibited by the legislation as described in Article One and by the universities themselves. Because teachers are trained at universities, the information in Article Three concerning access to and the cost of university education is relevant to student teachers as well.

118. A 2003 Quebec study, *Attracting, Developing and Retaining Teachers,* highlighted a gender concern about the teaching profession. In 2000 in Quebec, fully 79 per cent of the graduates of initial teacher-training programs were female, with only 21 per cent male. In every category — elementary, secondary, vocational training, and special education — female graduates outnumbered male. All of the partners to the study, including the teachers' unions, school principals' association, government officials, university instructors, and school board human resource directors concurred that some of the main challenges facing education were improving the image of the teaching profession overall so as to attract more capable individuals to the teaching profession and the need to attract more men into teaching, especially at the elementary level.

Educator Salaries

119. In 2003–04, there were slightly fewer than 310,000 educators in Canadian public schools. The *Summary Public School Indicators* from Statistics Canada reported on their salaries. The average remuneration per educator in public elementary and secondary schools in 2003–04 was $61,482. The term "educator" includes all employees in the public school system who are required to have teaching certificates. In addition to teachers, the term comprises principals, vice-principals, pedagogical consultants, guidance counsellors, and special education teachers.

120. The *Indicators* study also compared average educators' salaries to the average earnings of a full-time worker in Canada. The educator's average of $61,482 exceeded by about $15,000 the average income of a full-time worker with an average salary of $46,500. This comparison does not make any allowances for educational requirements of the positions, levels of responsibilities, and other factors.

Working Conditions of Teachers

121. A 2005 pan-Canadian study by the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) revealed that, compared to 2001, teachers were working longer hours and the conditions under which they worked were making it increasingly difficult to maintain high quality learning environments for students. In addition to longer hours and higher workloads, over half of the teachers reported that their class sizes had grown and that there had been an increase in the number of special-needs students in their classes in the past two years. The CTF expressed concern with the implications of these factors for the quality of children's learning conditions.

122. In the same year, the Ontario College of Teachers conducted its third annual survey of the profession to gauge teachers' assessments of the state of teaching and education in the province. Almost one-third of teachers reported that large class size was the biggest problem that confronted schools, while another 16 per cent stated that the integration of at-risk, immigrant, and special-needs students into classrooms was the biggest problem. The major problem cited by 14 per cent was student discipline and the same percentage stated lack of support staff.   Only one per cent chose teachers' salaries as the biggest problem.   In terms of initiatives most likely to improve student learning, teachers chose smaller classes, more literacy and numeracy programs, and increased assistance for at-risk, immigrant, and special-needs students.

123. The ministries responsible for elementary and secondary education have been implementing funding and program initiatives to address each of these challenges. The *Public School Indicators* provides details of government spending on education, with total spending having increased 22 per cent in the seven years from 1997–98 to 2003–04 to reach $34.5 billion. (Inflation rose 14 per cent in the same time period.) Some specific policies and programs are detailed below.

Academic Staff at Universities

124. In March 2006, the Canadian Association of University Teachers published a study on women in the academic work force. The research found that, despite some notable gains in recent years, women continued to be under-represented within the ranks of academic staff. In 2003–04, women made up slightly less than 32 per cent of the full-time academic workforce. This represents a strong improvement from the beginning of the 1990s when just 20 per cent of full-time faculty were women. However, women remained particularly under-represented in the most senior academic ranks where just 18 per cent are full professors. In Canada, over 70 per cent of all male academics have tenure and another 18 per cent are in positions leading to tenure. Of all female faculty, fewer than 40 per cent

have tenure and 25 per cent are on the tenure track. The gender gap in pay has been narrowing, and in 2003–04, salaries of female academic staff were 86.6 per cent of the male salaries.

Aboriginal Educational Levels

125.   Historical discrimination against Aboriginals and policies of assimilation and forced attendance at residential schools have left a deep legacy of mistrust, resentment, and a population that continues to struggle with academic achievement. The provinces and territories have worked with the Aboriginal communities to develop innovative solutions and programs and some progress has been made. However, the educational attainment of Aboriginal students remains one of the greatest challenges in education across Canada. A brief picture of Aboriginal educational levels is followed by a few examples of programs and new directions to address this challenge.

126.   There are three groups who comprise the Aboriginal peoples in Canada — North American Indians, Métis, and Inuit. The North American Indians may live on or off reserve. Only status Indians, those registered under the Indian Act, may live on reserve, where the schools are funded and controlled by the federal government. About 30 per cent of the Aboriginal population live on reserve. Students who live off reserve attend schools run by the provincial and territorial governments. Métis are of mixed Aboriginal and European race and live mostly in the West of Canada.   Inuit are the majority population in Nunavut.

127.   A recent study by the Caledon Institute of Public Policy, *Aboriginal Peoples and Postsecondary Education in Canada*, provided a statistical overview of the highest level of schooling achieved by Aboriginals and by the total population aged 15 and older, based on the 2001 census.

Table One Highest Level of Schooling – 15 and older	Less than secondary school	Secondary school graduation	Some PSE No certificate	Non-university postsecondary education	University postsecondary education
Total Population 2001	31%	14%	11%	28%	15%
Aboriginal Population 2001	48%	10%	13%	25%	4%

The statistics concerning highest level of education achieved were also provided for those aged 20 to 24.

Table Two Highest Level of Schooling – 20 to 24	Less than secondary school	Secondary school graduation	Some PSE No certificate	Non-university postsecondary education	University postsecondary education
Total Population 2001	16%	15%	29%	28%	11%
Aboriginal Population 2001	43%	16%	21%	17%	2%

128. The key message of these numbers is that, in both age groups, a very high percentage of Aboriginal students are not completing secondary school, almost half of the population over 15 years of age and over 40 per cent of those aged between 20 and 24. On the more positive side, the percentage of the Aboriginal population over 15 with secondary school completion is very close to that of the total population and it is higher for those aged between 20 and 24. For non-university postsecondary education, which includes technical schools, colleges, and trade schools, the percentages are similar for those in the total population and the Aboriginal populations over 15 years of age, but lower for Aboriginals in the 20 to 24 age group.

129. University completion rates are low for both age groups of Aboriginal students. The author of the study suggests that this may indicate that Aboriginal students aged between 20 and 24 are taking longer to complete their postsecondary education and so have not graduated by age 24. With higher education so important in the knowledge economy, the low rates for university completion and especially the high rates for non-completion of secondary school are extremely troubling. A 2000 study by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, *Unequal Access: A Canadian Profile of Racial Differences in Education, Employment and Income*, drew attention to the issue of secondary school non-completion rates for Aboriginal students, highlighting that these rates exceeded those for visible minority youth and young people who are neither Aboriginals nor visible minority.

130. At a 2005 meeting of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, the ministers of education from the provinces and territories established Aboriginal education as one of their three priorities (along with literacy and postsecondary capacity) and developed a *Council of Ministers of Education, Canada Action Plan on Aboriginal Education.* Working closely with local Aboriginal leadership and communities, as well as with the federal government, the ministers' goal is to identify a range of strategies that inspire Aboriginal students to achieve their educational potential. As first steps under the *Action Plan*, they will share best practices, develop and improve data collection, and develop a framework on teacher training.

Responding to Aboriginal Educational Needs in the Western Provinces

131. This initiative by the ministers of education reflects many of the actions that have proven to be most successful in improving Aboriginal student achievement: involving the Aboriginal communities in the planning and implementation of education; reflecting the values, histories, cultures, languages, social structures, and other components of Aboriginal life in the curriculum, resources, and teaching; providing special support to

Aboriginal students through counselling, financial aid, and other services; and offering education in the community. Because the Aboriginal populations in the West and the North of Canada have more significant percentages of their population, the policies and programs for these regions are presented in the following paragraphs along with those for Quebec and Ontario.

132. British Columbia has tracked the secondary school completion rates of Aboriginal students and, from school year 2000–01 to 2004–05, the rate increased 6 per cent to 48 per cent. Students have also improved their performance in reading and numeracy tests. A historic agreement was signed in 2006 by the governments of Canada and British Columbia, the First Nations Education Steering Committee, and the Chief Negotiator that recognizes the jurisdiction by First Nations over education on First Nations' reserves in British Columbia. This agreement is the first of its kind in Canada and requires legislative change at both the federal and provincial levels. Following six years of negotiations, the First Nations have gained control over teacher certification, school certification, and the establishment of curriculum and examination standards. The graduates of these schools will receive both the BC provincial graduation certificate and the graduation certificate of the First Nations. The agreement is for on-reserve elementary and secondary schools; early childhood development and postsecondary education will be negotiated in the future. The Government of Canada has been responsible for all schools on reserves to date, although the majority of them have been administered by First Nations.

133. In 1999, Alberta Learning (now Alberta Education) initiated an extensive public consultation process, involving over 5,000 participants, which set the foundation for the development of the *First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework* released in 2002. In this document, Alberta Education committed to proactive collaboration and consultation with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit parents and communities, and other key education, government, and community stakeholders to implement learner-focused strategies that would increase the knowledge and understanding of all Albertans about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit history and Aboriginal rights, and cultures, and provide First Nations, Métis, and Inuit learners with access to culturally relevant learning opportunities and quality support services.

134. Since the development of the Framework in 2002, Alberta Education has met regularly with a First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education Advisory Committee to monitor progress and developments on the Framework. Four Cree Language and Culture programs of study and a locally-developed Blackfoot Studies Program have been developed along with teaching and learning resources and authorized for use in Alberta schools. The first provincial program in Aboriginal Studies, developed in partnership with Elders, educators, and Ministry staff, was made available to teachers in 2005. Aboriginal perspectives are being infused into curriculum and resources for students from kindergarten to the end of secondary school. As part of Alberta Education's funding framework, school jurisdictions receive a First Nations, Métis, and Inuit funding allocation to assist schools in providing programs and supports that improve the educational achievement of Aboriginal learners. Alberta Education has also implemented an Aboriginal Learner Data Collection Initiative to measure the effectiveness of the learning systems and programs for Aboriginal students.

In 2005, Alberta Education funded the development of a First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Community Liaison Certificate Program to ensure that Aboriginal home-school liaison staff members are well trained to support Aboriginal families and learners. A two-day Aboriginal Awareness workshop was developed for Alberta Education staff to improve knowledge, awareness, and understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit history and cultures, as well as current issues in Aboriginal education. Professional development and the Aboriginal Awareness sessions are provided for teachers upon request.

135. In Saskatchewan, the Aboriginal Education Provincial Advisory Committee released its *Action Plan for 2000–2005*. The *Action Plan* recognized that efforts were still necessary to ensure that increased numbers of Aboriginal students completed grade 12 and went on to postsecondary studies. One of the key messages in the Plan was that a more equitable system and widespread knowledge of Aboriginal peoples and their history and culture would benefit all Saskatchewan students, not just the schools with substantial Aboriginal populations. The Government of Saskatchewan believes in strong partnerships with First Nations and Métis peoples in educational planning and decision-making at all levels of the education system. For example, Saskatchewan Learning signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations in 2003 and this has led to the establishment of the Shared Standards and Capacity Building Council, which provides additional opportunities for collaboration on the many dimensions of learning, including supports, services, and instructional practices.

136. To serve the Aboriginal population in Manitoba, the 2004–07 *Aboriginal Education Action Plan* was approved by the Aboriginal Issues Committee of Cabinet of the provincial government. The educational objectives were to increase secondary school graduation rates, increase access to and completion of postsecondary education, and improve the research base for Aboriginal education and employment. Among the priority actions were the improvement of the kindergarten to secondary school system by improved pedagogy, increased parent and community involvement, and adding more Aboriginal teachers. Recent accomplishments have included the integration of Aboriginal perspectives into the elementary and secondary school curriculum and the offering of locally developed programs that target academic success for Aboriginal students.

Responding to Aboriginal Educational Needs in the Territories

137. Nunavut, a territory created in 1999 as a separate jurisdiction from the Northwest Territories, has the largest percentage of people reporting an Aboriginal identity. According to the 2001 census, of the 29,000 people located in the 25 communities scattered across two million square kilometres in northern Canada, 22,000 are Inuit, that is, 83 per cent of the population. Retention rates for secondary school completion are about 50 per cent, with a 25 per cent graduation rate. However, the number of secondary school graduates has been improving over the last ten years. The grade extension program in which community schools have been gradually expanded to include grade 12 has been successful, and an increasing number of students have recognized the importance of obtaining a diploma. The tracking of the ages of secondary school graduates has indicated that the average age is being reduced. Transition and student support programs have been

particularly effective in reducing dropouts and preparing students for education beyond the secondary level, which has meant that many of the graduates attend institutions in the south of Canada. However, the secondary school graduation rate of about 25 per cent remains a major social and educational challenge.

138. Geography has had an enormous influence also in the remainder of the Northwest Territories, whose land mass of 1.2 million square kilometres has only 32 communities. Those reporting Aboriginal identity in 2001 numbered 18,725 people, which is just over 50 per cent of the population. Recognizing that 60 per cent of students did not complete secondary school, NWT extended its offerings of secondary school courses to 95 per cent of the communities so that the students can continue to study and graduate without leaving friends and family. On-line learning is being implemented as part of this initiative. Because the highest dropout occurs at the grade 10 level, new curricula were developed to focus on the applications of science and mathematics to the trades and occupations in addition to the academic stream.

139. Yukon's population of 30,000 lives in one urban and 16 rural communities. The traditional territories of 14 First Nations lie within Yukon's boundaries, and the First Nations population of 6,540 represents 23 per cent of the population. The Yukon Native Language Centre (YNLC) is a training and research facility that provides a range of linguistic and education services to Yukon First Nations and to the general public. YNLC offers training and certification for Yukon's Aboriginal teachers, with staff and Elders developing and teaching the courses. In addition, YNLC develops instructional and learning materials for all Yukon Aboriginal groups. Working with Elders, the Centre documents Yukon native traditions, oral history, and personal and place names. The *Resource Book for Yukon Teachers, 2003–2004*, prepared by Yukon Education, supported the inclusion of First Nations perspectives to benefit all students in a multicultural society. As well as using teaching strategies that built upon the knowledge, culture, learning styles, and strengths that First Nations students possessed, teachers used curriculum that concentrated on positive images of First Nation people, reinforced their beliefs and values, and included both current and historical issues.

Responding to Aboriginal Educational Needs in Quebec and Ontario

140. Over the last three decades, the educational services offered to Aboriginals in Quebec have been transformed and now support the educational autonomy of Aboriginals. The three Treaty Nations — the Cree, Inuit, and Naskapi — have full control of their schools in which they offer pre-school, elementary, secondary, and adult education services based on the programs used in Quebec. The non-Treaty Nations also manage their Band schools, with financial aid from the federal government, offering services that respond to the needs of their communities. The government of Quebec supports Aboriginal education by financing part of the educational services offered by the Treaty Nations. Since the First Nations Socio-Economic Forum in October 2006, Quebec has worked to establish partnerships with non-Treaty Nations, with the priority on projects emphasizing enhanced discussions, the identification of common challenges, and the educational success of Aboriginal learners. Among the initiatives are the construction of a First Nations

University Pavilion, pilot projects for college-level teaching, and the increase of financial aid for Quebec educational institutions that enrol Aboriginal students.

141. The Ontario government is dedicated to excellence in publicly funded education for all students and recognizes the need to develop specific strategies to meet the needs of Ontario's First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students in provincially funded schools. The new Aboriginal Education Strategy supports learning and achievement for Aboriginal students and helps to raise awareness about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples' cultures, histories, and perspectives in schools. The *First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework*, released in January 2007 by Ontario's Ministry of Education, provides the strategic policy context within which the ministry, school boards, and schools work together to improve the academic achievement of Aboriginal students. The framework includes a vision, policy statement, and four guiding principles, outlining strategies and 10 performance measures to be assessed every three years.

142. The Ontario Ministry of Education has also made a commitment in the area of curriculum, with curriculum policy documents developed for teaching Native Studies in grades 9 to 12 and Native Languages in grades 1 to 12. Support documents have been developed for teaching language patterns for six languages. In 2003, the Ministry established a five-year cycle of curriculum review designed to ensure that the curriculum remains current, relevant, and age appropriate. The process also involves the review and revision of elementary and secondary curriculum to incorporate Aboriginal perspectives in overall and specific expectations where relevant, based on consultations with Aboriginal organizations. The Ministry of Education also supports the Alternative Secondary Schools in Native Friendship Centres Program, established in 1990 as a working partnership between eight native friendship centres and the relevant public school boards. The Ministry provides annual funding to the friendship centres for additional supports for students, such as cultural programs, Elders, and counselling. A review of the Program in 2001 showed it as a successful initiative in addressing the learning and cultural needs of Aboriginal youth who are at risk of dropping out or who have already dropped out of the secondary school system.

Aboriginal Postsecondary Education

143. Postsecondary education graduation rates for Aboriginal students have been presented above and present an area of concern as well. According to a recent report prepared for the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation, Aboriginal students face many barriers to admission at, and successful graduation from, colleges and universities:
   - Many students live in remote and isolated areas and so must relocate to attend postsecondary education.
   - Most Aboriginal students lack the resources to fund their own education and live away from home.
   - Many Aboriginal student are not academically prepared for postsecondary education and need upgrading and support.

- Some postsecondary institutions are many times larger than the populations of the regions in which the students live and are located in urban environments, all of which students can find alienating and isolating.
- There is little or no Aboriginal input into the governance of most Canadian postsecondary institutions.

144. Because universities are autonomous from governments in their management, they develop their own programs to help Aboriginal students gain admission and succeed. The provincial governments provide financial support for many of these programs. Colleges also receive funding for Aboriginal access and achievement programs. Many universities and colleges have set up programs especially designed for Aboriginal students in education, Aboriginal business, Aboriginal law, and Aboriginal Studies. Special support infrastructures may provide counselling, meeting places, and preparatory programs and some institutions are considering the allocation of a limited number of seats in certain programs to Aboriginal students.

145. To overcome the relocation and isolation challenges, universities and colleges have set up community-based programs for people in larger Aboriginal communities and have used technology to offer on-line or television-based courses and programs. In an example from Quebec, the First Nations Education Council (FNEC), which includes 22 communities, worked with the federal government to put a videoconferencing network in place in its communities. The FNEC has worked with two universities to develop accredited distance education programs that respond to local needs. The FNEC stresses the necessity of autonomy in First Nations education.

146. In 2003, Manitoba launched the University College of the North (UCN) to provide an increased range of education and training opportunities for Aboriginal and Northern residents. UCN is learner- and community-centred and seeks to be characterized by a culture of openness, inclusiveness, and tolerance, and to be respectful of Aboriginal and northern values and beliefs. Recognizing that Elders in Aboriginal communities have a unique role in fostering that environment, Elders play an important role in the management of UCN and its programming.

147. The Consortium of the Aboriginal Institutes of Higher Education prepared a report in 2005 that was published by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation on *The Struggle for the Education of Aboriginal Students, Control of Indigenous Knowledge, and Recognition of Aboriginal Institutions*. This document argues against the federal and provincial policies of attempting to accommodate the special needs of Aboriginal students attending colleges and universities by making funding available to these institutions to provide Aboriginal-specific programs and services. Instead Aboriginal postsecondary institutions should be formally recognized in federal or provincial law in the same manner as provincial colleges and universities and receive comparable funding support. The main concern is that Aboriginal postsecondary institutions in most provinces must be aligned with a "mainstream" institution in order to validate their program and grant diplomas and certificates. The lack of supporting legislation, policy, and funding is seen by the Aboriginal Institutes' consortium as systemic racism.

148. Overcoming decades of discriminatory social, economic, and educational policies is a hard struggle. Aboriginal communities are committed to finding educational solutions so that their children may succeed. The agreement in British Columbia is seen as a very positive sign for schools on reserves so that First Nations can control their own education. The ongoing work of all provincial and territorial governments as they work with Aboriginal leaders and communities to improve and expand educational opportunities and achievement for Aboriginal students is showing some results. Clearly more effort, more funding, and more solutions must be found before the effects of long-term discrimination are ameliorated.

Children of Immigrants

149. According to the 2001 census, Canada is becoming a more multicultural and multilingual society, having absorbed thousands of immigrants whose mother tongue is neither English nor French. In 2001, almost 5,335,000 individuals, that is, one of every six people, reported a mother tongue other than English or French. Between 1996 and 2001, more than 1.2 million immigrants came to Canada, and almost half of them settled in Toronto. Three Canadian cities — Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal — received 75 per cent of the immigrants. Overall, in response to the census question on mother tongue, Canadians reported more than one hundred languages.

150. The Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) has developed an overview of some of the special issues related to integrating the children of immigrants into schools:

   - The children arrive with an array of previous educational experiences — ranging from regular attendance and literacy in their first language to no schooling and no literacy in any language.
   - Students arriving in Canada, especially older youth, sometimes have difficulty acquiring adequate English/French language skills, which may affect future employment and educational opportunities.
   - Cultural differences in expectations between schools and families, misunderstandings arising from language and customs, and the myriad problems that arise simply from relocating to a new country, let alone from the trauma of what they may have encountered in their previous homeland.

   The CTF points out the range of services required both for teachers and for the families, including translation and interpretation, counselling, and techniques for including the newly arrived parents in the education of their children.

151. Integrating immigrant children into the existing education systems of the provinces and territories involves establishing policies embodying the principles of diversity, equity, and multicultural education as part of the daily classroom and school environment, as well as adapting the curriculum and providing teacher supports that address students' real needs, especially for language learning.

152.   The Nova Scotia *Guidelines for English as a Second Language (ESL) Programming and Services*, issued in April 2003, described the reality for many provinces. Nova Scotia, like other Canadian jurisdictions, is a diverse society with people from all parts of the world contributing to its social, cultural, economic, and linguistic fabric. This diversity is reflected in the school population, both in the contributions made and the needs that must be met. More students are coming from homes where languages other than English are spoken. Many students are not familiar with the Roman alphabet or with Western traditions and cultural biases, history, and lifestyles. In consequence, services must include an orientation to society in addition to the teaching of English. The arrival of refugees also increases the need for psychological and counselling support for personal, educational, or career issues to assist their integration into the school and the community.

153.   The purpose of ESL programming and services in Nova Scotia is to provide students who require assistance in achieving English language fluency with educational opportunities that will enable them to develop their individual abilities. Providing these opportunities requires schools to address the many issues that challenge students in acquiring English language proficiency and achieving designated outcomes across the curriculum.

154.   In terms of curriculum, the Nova Scotia Department of Education works with the education departments of New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador in the Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training. In such documents as *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum for High School* and *Foundation for the Atlantic Arts Education Curriculum*, the inclusion of ethnicity and diversity and the teaching of English as a second language are integral parts of the curriculum. Newly arrived immigrant students are given intensive language education. As soon as they have reached the appropriate level, they are included in mainstream classrooms where they learn English as well as the subject matter. For this reason, all teachers are encouraged to be aware of the needs of the immigrant students and to use teaching strategies, resources, and practices that respond to the diversity of the classroom.

155.   In October 2003*, Diversity and Equity in Education: An Action Plan for Ethno-cultural Equity* was released in Manitoba as a discussion document. This proposed action plan was part of a commitment to reduce inequities in educational outcomes for students of diverse origins and socioeconomic status. Coupled with this specific goal for social inclusion was the wider context — living in a diverse and pluralistic society means that students of all origins must experience their schooling in a way that is culturally appropriate and relevant, that encourages social caring, and that challenges prejudice and discrimination. In May of 2005, the document *Kindergarten to Senior 4 ESL Action Plan 2005-2008* was released by the Manitoba government. The ESL Action Plan focuses on capacity building and improving the quality of and access to ESL programming. Highlights include increased funding for ESL programming, development of a K–12 (kindergarten through secondary school) curriculum support document and provincial guidelines, assessment and monitoring of ESL learners, development of specialized secondary school ESL courses, and a number of initiatives related to addressing the needs of adolescent and young adult refugee students whose schooling background has been disrupted or affected by war.

156. Heritage (international) languages are important for the immigrant students as well as for the school population as a whole. The policies and practices for diversity in education point out that respecting the mother tongue languages, original cultures, and traditions of all students is essential to the self-image and the educational success of the students. The knowledge of additional languages is also an asset to every student. For example, the *Heritage Language Education Policy* in Saskatchewan underlines that, through teaching heritage languages in the regular education system, students receive a powerful message about the value and worth of heritage languages in Saskatchewan society.

157. In Quebec, the Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports introduced numerous initiatives to support the integration of immigrants students into the education system. The 1998 *Policy of School Integration and Intercultural Education*, which was accompanied by a Plan of Action, included programs and various financial resources to improve the services for immigrant students. Among the key features were the focus on French learning; innovations in welcoming students and integrating them into schools; special aid for those who arrived faced with serious delays in their educational progress; partnerships among the schools, the families, and the communities; and intercultural exchange and respect in order to learn to live together in a pluralistic society. The Ministry allocated additional funds to school commissions that welcomed a large number of immigrant children in order to ensure organizational and pedagogical capacity, through such activities as professional development for teachers and the development of tools for teaching and assessment. Funding was also allocated to the program for the teaching of heritage languages so that the students could improve their knowledge of the languages and cultures of their countries of origin. Seventeen languages were taught as part of this program in 2006–07. Under the Ethnic Language Program, the Ministry awards credits for approved studies by students who take language courses offered by ethnic associations.

Measuring Immigrant Student Success

158. International, pan-Canadian, and provincial tests have looked at the educational achievement levels of children of immigrants. The 2003 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) analyzed performance in mathematics by status — differentiating between native-born populations for all 17 participating countries in the OECD study, compared to that of second-generation and first-generation immigrants, all at 15 years of age.

Table 3 – Performance in Mathematics – Aged 15	Native-born	Second-generation Immigrants	First-generation Immigrants
	Mean Score	Mean Score	Mean Score
Canada	537	543	530
Average for 17 OECD countries	523	483	475

159. These scores indicate that second-generation students are out-performing native-born students and that first-generation immigrants are performing at almost the same level, and

that all three groups are out-performing the average for the 17 OECD countries in the study.

160. British Columbia, especially the city of Vancouver, attracts a large percentage of immigrants to Canada. In 2001 for example, more than one in four young people between the ages of 5 and 24 living in Vancouver (as in Toronto, Ontario) had immigrated to Canada in the 1990s, and about one in five of these young people spoke a language other than French or English at home. Consequently, the children of immigrants form a large proportion of English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) students. BC tracked graduation rates of ESL students compared to those of non-ESL students from 2000–01 until 2004–05. In each year, the graduation rate of the ESL students exceeded that of the non-ESL students, reaching 83 per cent in 2004–05 for ESL students as compared to 78 per cent for non-ESL students.

161. In an October 2004 report, Statistics Canada reported on the performance of the children of immigrants in schools. Although Canadian-born children of immigrants were more likely to start school with less-developed reading, writing, and mathematics skills than their classmates with Canadian-born parents, the gap between the two groups disappeared before the end of elementary school. Statistics Canada attributed this positive outcome to the efforts of school communities, the children of immigrant parents, and their parents.

Visible Minority Students

162. As has been stated, Canada is a multicultural society whose ethnic makeup has been shaped over time by different waves of immigrants and their descendants, as well as by the Aboriginal people. A 2002 study by Statistics Canada, the *Ethnic Diversity Study*, examined the population 15 years of age and older. Of this population, nearly one-half (46 per cent) reported only British Isles, French, and/or Canadian ethnic or cultural origins. The next largest proportion of Canada's population, 19 per cent, was comprised of the descendants of other Europeans (aside from British and French). People of non-European descent, most frequently Chinese and South Asian, accounted for 13 per cent of the population aged 15 and older. About 22 per cent reported other mixed ethnic heritages.

163. Visible minorities are defined as persons, other than the Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race and non-white in colour. In 2002, Canada's three million people who were part of a visible minority represented 13 per cent of the non-Aboriginal population aged 15 and over. The majority, 84 per cent, of people in visible minorities were first-generation Canadians. However, it is important to note that many visible minorities have been part of Canadian society for many generations.

164. The 2002 *Ethnic Diversity Study* looked at experiences of discrimination or unfair treatment because of ethnicity, culture, race, skin colour, language, accent, or religion in the five years before the survey. The vast majority (93 per cent) of Canadians aged 15 and older said they had never, or rarely, experienced discrimination in the past five years because of their ethno-cultural characteristics. However, 7 per cent had experienced discrimination sometimes or often. One in five people aged 15 and over (20 per cent) who

were part of a visible minority said that they had experienced discrimination; only 5 per cent of those not part of a visible minority reported having experienced discrimination. The percentage (20 per cent) of the visible minority population who reported experiencing discrimination or unfair treatment often or sometimes in the previous five years remained constant, whether they were first-, second-, or third-generation Canadian, or of even older families in Canada. Of the groups included in the visible minority population, Blacks were most likely to report being discriminated against or treated badly, with nearly 32 per cent reporting these experiences, compared with 21 per cent of the South Asians and 18 per cent of the Chinese.

165. Looking at the school-age population in 2001in the major cities of Vancouver and Toronto, over 40 per cent were visible minorities, 25 per cent were immigrants, and close to 20 per cent had a home language other than English.

166. Using data from the Statistics Canada *Youth in Transition Survey*, the University of Alberta Research Data Centre looked at the educational goals set by visible minority students and found that 79 per cent of visible-minority immigrant youth aspired to obtain at least one university degree, compared with 57 per cent of Canadian-born, non-visible minority students. Visible-minority immigrant students also tended to report higher grades and had higher levels of school engagement than Canadian-born students. These goals and achievements were linked to the educational values promoted within their families, where the parents had higher levels of education and expressed higher aspirations for their children than their Canadian-born counterparts.

167. However not all visible-minority students, whether children of immigrants or Canadian-born, are achieving at these high levels and the departments of education in the provinces and territories have developed specific educational responses to their needs and situations. In Nova Scotia, for example, the Department of Education has set up the Council on African-Canadian Education as part of the *Education Act* to promote the rights and interests of African-Nova Scotians by providing recommendations to the Minister on programs and services in public schools and on adult education. Nova Scotia has had a Black population since the 1780s when about 3,000 Black persons came to Nova Scotia as a direct result of the American Revolution. Research has shown that some of the needs of the more recent African-Canadian immigrants differ from those of the communities of long historical vintage. To explore this more fully, the Department of Education commissioned a series of research studies, one of which probed the education and training needs of African Canadian immigrants in Nova Scotia. The recommendations included greater collaboration between the established population and the immigrant groups. Recently, university scholarships and postsecondary awards have been increased for African-Nova Scotians to improve postsecondary accessibility and opportunity.

168. In 2004–05, the Quebec Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports collaborated on a large study on the academic success of secondary school youth from Black communities. The study resulted in the identification of particular sub-groups at risk. Projects were developed with the cooperation of the school commissions concerned and with various community organizations to encourage educational success for the students in these sub-

groups. In addition, the Ministry supported the implementation of several experimental projects encouraging the academic perseverance of youth between 16 and 24 years of age from visible minority and cultural communities.

169.   In 2005, the Ontario Ministry of Education commissioned the Community Health Systems Resource Group at the Hospital for Sick Children to look at early school-leavers. The main finding from the research is that young people who are struggling with a multitude of risk factors are at the same time determined to make better lives for themselves. The major factors contributing to students leaving school are disconnection and disengagement from the school culture and school community, not their personal and family circumstances. The factors that were found to be the best protection against early school-leaving for visible minority youth included strong familial involvement in the lives of youth, supportive and non-racist school personnel, inclusive school environments free of racism, and curriculum that is more reflective of the lived realities of its diverse populations.

170.   In order to provide support to schools and boards, the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat was established by the Ontario Ministry of Education to raise the bar in student achievement and close the gap in outcomes for students in junior kindergarten to grade six. The Secretariat is implementing a range of strategies and supports to mobilize the system to provide equity of outcome. Supports include additional student learning resources, teacher training, leadership development, tutoring for students who need additional support, after-school learning programs, webcasts, research on successful practices, and the development of teacher support materials. Teachers and principals from every school in the province were provided with training in differentiating instruction in order to meet the range of student learning needs within each classroom. A series of webcasts has been developed to share research-based strategies and support teachers in raising achievement for all students. Webcasts are supported by additional resources and interactive Web conferences hosted by national experts in literacy and numeracy. Titles include:

- *Differentiating instruction*
- *Teaching and learning in multi-lingual Ontario*
- *Successful practices in the education of Black students*
- *All students can achieve: A focus on equity of outcome*

Webcasts explore strategies that work, the research behind the strategies, and what successful practice looks like. Chief among the strategies for success are teachers' high expectations for students so that they expect and teach more rather than less, mentorship, connection to the community, and curricular relevance. There is a focus on providing supports for specific student groups, such as boys, Black students, Portuguese students, and students in special education programs in order to close gaps in achievement. Equity of outcome continues to be a major focus of the work of the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat.

Safe School Initiatives

171. Children of immigrant and of visible minority parents are succeeding in the school systems in Canada. However, they do face challenges in school because they can be the victims of harassment, of racial slurs, and of bullying. While they are not the only victims, they often are particular targets. In a 2000 study, the Canadian Council on Social Development reported what was learned through focus group research about the experiences of immigrant youth. They heard that school was at the centre of these young peoples' lives, with the regular trials and tribulations of secondary school magnified for them. Most reported experiencing some ostracism and bullying; the experience of racism and bigotry was more common for visible minority youth.

172. To ensure that schools are safe for all children, provinces and territories have embarked on Safe School initiatives. In 2001, the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education began the implementation of a *Safe and Caring Schools Initiative* to develop curriculum and programs aimed at early intervention and education on violence protection and to create safe and caring environments in schools. In 2006, the *Safe and Caring School Policy* was released to act as a framework for district and school policies and action plans to address racism and bullying. The guiding principles underlined the belief that an inclusive curriculum, positive social behaviours, pro-active disciplinary practices, and involvement of the whole school community are the cornerstones of a safe and caring learning environment. Manitoba has also initiated a Safe and Caring Schools initiative that resulted in the *Safe School Charter*, which requires all schools to have appropriate and current safety policies that include a code of conduct and an emergency response plan. Related legislation, the *Appropriate Educational Programming Act*, includes regulations that affect the discipline and safety of students.

173. The Ontario government has launched a series of safe schools initiatives to help ensure that students feel safe at school and on school grounds. These include funding for schools to purchase bullying-prevention programs and resources, the establishment of a Safe Schools Implementation Co-ordinator position in the Ministry of Education to encourage the sharing of best practices, and an ongoing partnership with the Kids Help Phone that provides counselling to kids dealing with bullying but who want to remain anonymous. A parent resource pamphlet on bullying prevention was distributed in September 2006, describing different forms of bullying, how parents can spot the signs of bullying, tips on dealing with a child who is being bullied or bullying others, and ways for a student to get help outside the school. The pamphlet is available in French and English, with plans to release it in 20 international and Aboriginal languages. More than 3,400 School Safety Audits have been completed to help schools and communities assess both the physical safety and the social climate of the school. School boards were encouraged to establish Safe School Teams to help determine local needs and to address school and student safety, bullying prevention, and promotion of a positive school environment.

174. In partnership with the three provincial Principals' Associations, the Ontario Ministry funded the development and delivery of training materials on bullying prevention for principals and vice-principals. The principals' training materials addressed bullying and

school climate in the context of racism, homophobia, and students with special needs. Teacher training on bullying prevention is offered in partnership with the Ontario Teachers' Federation and its affiliates, with over 25,000 teachers being trained through workshops and an e-learning module available in English and French. In 2004, the government appointed a Safe Schools Action Team to advise on the development of a comprehensive and coordinated approach to address physical and social safety issues. Included in its mandate was the task of reviewing the safe schools provisions of the *Education Act* and its policies and regulations. The Action Team has released two major reports — *Shaping Safer Schools: A Bullying Prevention Action Plan* in November 2005 and *Safe Schools Policy and Practice: An Agenda for Action* in June 2006.

175. Building on the Caring and Respectful Schools Initiative announced in 2002 and the Anti-Bullying Strategy in 2005, Saskatchewan Learning has developed *Caring and Respectful Schools: Bullying Prevention: A Model Policy* to assist schools, school divisions, and communities in developing local policies and to work toward a common approach to the reduction and prevention of bullying. It was distributed widely to the learning sector in Saskatchewan in 2006. Other jurisdictions have instituted programs that are equally far-reaching and address their unique concerns with bullying. Because immigrant and visible minority children are often the victims of bullying, these programs pay particular attention to attacks based on racial, ethnic, and religious differences.

Special-Needs Students

176. Inclusion of special-needs students in regular classrooms is, to varying degrees, part of the educational policy in every jurisdiction in Canada, along with provision for support of their needs and capabilities. The belief that every child can learn and that every child should have the best possible opportunity to learn to the greatest extent of his or her abilities is the basis for this practice. Departments and ministries of education, school boards, schools, and, most of all, teachers work to make inclusion a positive experience for all learners. Inclusion in the regular classrooms and/or the designing of particular programs that meet the needs and capacities of special-needs students demonstrate the best efforts of all to ensure that these students are not discriminated against in their education. The greatest challenge is that the provision of supports is not always adequate to the complexity and the scope of the needs.

177. Inclusion and special-needs education was the topic of a lengthy discussion among the ministers responsible for education at the March 2004 meeting of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. A Statistics Canada presentation outlined the disability types that are included in special needs.

Physical disabilities:
- Difficulties with hearing, seeing, speech, mobility, dexterity
- Asthma or severe allergies, heart condition or disease, kidney condition or disease, cancer, epilepsy, cerebral palsy, Spina Bifida, Cystic Fibrosis, and Muscular Dystrophy

Cognitive/emotional disabilities:

- Difficulty learning (e.g., Attention Deficit Disorder, hyperactivity)
- Developmental difficulties (e.g., Down syndrome, autism)
- Other emotional, psychological, behavioural conditions

As with the other vulnerable groups outlined above, legislation, policy, programs, resources, and partnerships all contribute to providing the best possible educational services for special-needs students.

Educating Special-Needs Students

178. In Yukon, students with special needs are educated, as far as is practicable, in the least restrictive and most enabling environment. In practice, this means that these students are educated in the regular classrooms with appropriate program modifications to meet their needs. The Department of Education provides leadership and support through policy development, teacher resources, and block funding to schools and the school board. Yukon schools develop school-based programs to address the educational needs of all students. When inclusion is not possible, a small number of specialized resource programs provide alternative environments for students who are unable to profit from education in more traditional settings, including the following:

- resource programs for students with intellectual impairments such that life-skills programming is required
- programs for students with multiple handicaps
- resource programs for students with severe emotional/behavioural difficulties
- the educational component for students in the Young Offenders Facility operated by Youth Services for young people in secure custody

Additional funding was provided and greater collaboration among government departments was encouraged so that all students at risk of not succeeding could be served.

179. The Alberta government implemented Student Health (formerly known as the Student Health Initiative) in 1999. Student Health is a province-wide joint endeavour of Alberta Education, Health and Wellness, and Children's Services. These provincial government partners work collaboratively to support local partnerships to strengthen the province's collective capacity to assist students registered in school programs who have special health needs, including physical disabilities, developmental disabilities, neurological disorders, sensory impairments, medical conditions, and/or emotional and behavioural disabilities. Through the Student Health initiative, school authorities, regional health authorities, child and family service authorities, and other stakeholders are better able to more effectively support these students and enable them to be successful in the school system; they offer such services as occupational, physical, respiratory or speech language therapy, nursing services, audiology, or emotional and behavioural services at school. Students, teachers, and parents have seen the benefits of this integrated system with its enhanced funding and

focus on innovative delivery of services to students learning and living across the province.

180. The team approach to supporting students with special needs is used in every jurisdiction. In Newfoundland and Labrador, the Department of Education has implemented two interrelated models for the development and delivery of supports and services to children with special needs. The *Model for Coordination of Service to Children and Youth* involves the government departments of Education, Health and Community Services, Human Resources and Employment, and Justice to ensure that services are coordinated. A key element of the *Model* is the Individual Support Services Planning (ISSP) process. When a child is identified as having a need or being at risk, the ISSP process brings the child/youth, parents, and all other service providers together to ensure seamless planning and delivery of service in school, at home, and in the community. The second component of the model, *Pathways to Programming and Graduation*, provides the framework for an ISSP team to implement the accommodations and supports that a student needs and to describe the curriculum modifications and any additional programming required. Implemented first at the senior secondary level, the *Pathways* model has resulted in an increased comfort level for teachers in providing programming for all youth, including those with special needs, and an increased clarity for parents and awareness about the specifics of their children's programs. A database of information on those receiving supports or identified as at risk, gathered through individual child/youth profiles, enables analysis of the province-wide capacity to address these needs and identifies gaps in service provision on a regional basis.

181. Within Ontario, as elsewhere, the provision of special education programs and services for children and youth rests within a legal framework that provides comprehensive procedures for the identification of exceptional students, for the placement of those pupils in educational settings where the educational programs and services appropriate to their needs can be delivered, and for the review of this identification and placement. The 2001 publication *Special Education: A Guide for Educators* provides information about legislation, regulations, policies, program planning, and resources pertaining to the education of special-needs students for the use of school board staff, teachers, consultants, and parents.

182. Manitoba's Healthy Child Manitoba (HCM) is the government's long-term, cross-departmental strategy to support healthy child and adolescent development. The HCM initiative has a strong preventative focus that seeks to improve the educational outcomes, health, and life-chances of young children from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds. Several HCM programs focus on early childhood education and effective parenting. These programs include Parent-Child Centred Approach, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Health Baby, Families First, and the Triple P — Positive Parenting Program. The Healthy Schools Program promotes healthy lifestyles and lifelong wellness, including a strong focus on good nutrition and increased opportunities for physical activity for students, school staff, parents, families, and their local neighbourhoods. The Healthy Adolescent Development Strategy is another important component of HCM. It supports healthy adolescent development, including pregnancy prevention initiatives, supports to

teen parents and their babies, mentoring programs, culturally appropriate and youth directed programs, and public awareness and health-related services. In addition, Manitoba has emphasized early literacy and numeracy programs in its schools and provides school boards with additional resources for such initiatives.

183. The last few years have seen an increase in the inclusion of special-needs students in classrooms, in the provision of differentiated programming with options for delivery of curriculum, in the allocation of resources as more flexible block funding, in the inclusion of parents and students in the planning and decision making, and in improvements in the academic performance of special-needs students. However, the challenges also remain significant. More students are being diagnosed as having special needs, and the calls for increased resources are escalating. Recruiting and retaining qualified staff are ongoing problems, especially in rural and isolated schools. Teachers continue to struggle with the demands of inclusive classrooms and the extra demands this makes on their attention and time. Providing consistent programs and formats for tracking progress, focusing on the needs of the students and their education rather than the disabilities, and responding to the expectations of parents and caregivers are major issues that the provinces and territories face in the delivery of education for special-needs students.

Article Five — Human Values Education and National Minority Education

184. Article Five emphasizes human values education and national minority education. The UNESCO guidelines for report preparation ask about efforts that are made for directing education toward the objectives of strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, promoting understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations and racial and religious groups, and furthering the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. In terms of national minorities, the guidelines request information on the legal and policy frameworks relating to educational standards in educational institutions run by minorities. In the Canadian context, these questions were answered in relation to national minority language education in French and English. Additional questions under Article Five that related to parental choice and the support and quality of schools outside of the public system have been addressed under Article Two.

Human Values Education

185. Instruction in human values, so that students develop a greater capacity for tolerance and intercultural dialogue, has long been a component of education. In these days of global tension, of corporate mismanagement, and of political disaffection on the part of youth, the messages of citizenship, mutual respect, and justice are even more important. While education increasingly emphasizes readiness for employment, human values education brings the message of wider social responsibility.

186. The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada in collaboration with the Canadian Commission for UNESCO prepared an extensive report in 2001, detailing the citizenship, peace, human rights, and global education initiatives of the provinces and territories, the government of Canada, the universities, colleges, and nongovernmental organizations. *Education for Peace, Human Rights, Democracy, International Understanding and Tolerance: Report of Canada prepared in reply to the request of the Director-General of UNESCO for information on steps taken to apply the Declaration and the Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1995* also outlines how these values are promoted within the practices of educational institutions, responses to school violence that have been put in place, exemplary educational materials, and teacher training projects. Chapters of the 2001 report looked at the education of vulnerable groups and education by, for, and about Aboriginal people in Canada and it remains a core reference for information on these initiatives.

187. In addition, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO have been collaborating on the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. Recent activities at the federal, provincial, and territorial levels, as well as by nongovernmental organizations, postsecondary institutions, schools, and school boards have been documented in the March 2006 publication *United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014): Canada's Response to the UNESCO Questionnaire*. The Decade emphasizes human rights and intercultural understanding.

188. Integration of human values education into schools is being addressed across Canada, accompanied by detailed curriculum documents and extensive resources. In the *Foundation Document for the Development of the Common Curriculum Framework for Social Studies Kindergarten to Grade 12* completed by the Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education in 2000, the role of social studies is defined in part as "to help students…to become active and responsible citizens, engaged in the practice of democratic ideals." Specific goals emphasize that students must understand their rights and responsibilities in order to participate fully in society, value the diversity, respect the dignity, and support the equality of all human beings, and develop a sense of social compassion, fairness, and justice. The principles and goals of the *Framework* were used as the basis of curriculum development, teacher training, and the provision of resources and tools specific to student needs at different levels in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.

189. The *Atlantic Canada Education Foundation Essential Graduation Learnings* document explicitly includes citizenship as an area in which secondary school graduates must demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to assess social, cultural, economic, and environmental interdependence in a local and global context, with special attention to human rights, discrimination, and sustainable development. This document is prepared by the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation, which has Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island as members. Citizenship education is also a component of the *Foundation for Atlantic Canada Social Studies Curriculum*.

190. In 2002, the Quebec Ministry of Education adopted strategies for the internationalization of Quebec education, *Pour réussir l'internationalisation de l'éducation…une stratégie mutuellement avantageuse*. Based on collaboration and partnerships, the strategy fosters the integration of human and democratic values into the content and teaching activities, and aims to improve and facilitate student exchanges and the exchange of knowledge. In the broader reform of education, training programs were revised in order to include an intercultural and international component in as many courses as possible. Special emphasis was put on language training, with more teaching of second and even third languages as an additional option, and on geography, history, and citizenship education.

191. Teacher education programs are especially important for preparing teachers to integrate human values education into the curriculum and classroom practice. Because tolerance, democracy, and equality are part of all subjects/disciplines and are conveyed through behaviour, language, and personal values, teachers are given guidance and models to follow in their pre-service training. For example, York University's Faculty of Education states that the principles and themes that infuse its programs include equity, diversity, community, collaboration, interdisciplinarity, environmental issues, and social justice, and that the Faculty seeks to address these themes in all of its programs.

192. A number of nongovernmental organizations have also been important providers of human values resources. The Canadian Teachers' Federation believes that more can be done to

enhance the worth of human values education to students. The perception of educational success is often narrowly based on subject matter that is easily measured. The challenge is to find ways to value curriculum that goes beyond that category. To this end, the theme of the CTF 2007 conference is *Education for Social Justice*. The presentations and workshops focus on learning about social justice, living social justice, advocating for social justice, and working together for social justice.

193. Resource materials for the teaching of human values come from a wide variety of sources and the Web site *Diversity Learning: A Gateway to Lesson Plans and Learning Activities* makes them accessible. The Web site has been developed by teachers and school-based administrators from the Canadian Association of Principals and the Canadian Teachers' Federation for teachers and others who work with schools to eliminate racism and support diversity.

194. The Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre, through its *Human Rights Education Project*, provides teaching materials that can be used in several subjects and levels, as well as an annotated on-line bibliography of Web sites for engaging students in social responsibility. The Quebec Resource Centre for Security and the Prevention of Crime supports local communities in the development of strategies to increase security and decrease crime in order to establish environments of social cohesion and peace. In addition, the school authorities and the teachers' associations, as part of their priorities, have multiple strategies and tools to promote common values in the fight against all forms of violence, including discrimination. Quebec also has a government policy, Making Equality Before the Law Equality in Fact, that aims to end discrimination against women. The Educating for Peace Web site provides resources on conflict resolution, rights and responsibilities, and world issues for school use.

195. Equitas was established in Canada to advance democracy, human development, peace, and social justice through educational programs. Since June 2003, Equitas has been working closely with the City of Montreal's Bureau des affaires interculturelles (Intercultural Affairs Office) to promote human rights values and intercultural harmony in the city's summer day camps to fight against various forms of discrimination. Building on this success, Equitas has begun to work with municipalities and community-based organizations across Canada to integrate learning about human rights, anti-discrimination, multiculturalism, and peaceful conflict resolution into existing programs for children and youth. As part of this initiative, Equitas undertook research to assess the human rights needs of Montreal day camp programs and to develop human right educational materials for targeted city employees and to integrate this material into the programs for youth and children attending the summer day camps.

196. Education plays a crucial role in developing understanding, tolerance, and respect. Every jurisdiction has developed curriculum, resources, and teaching strategies to support human values education, but the challenges of today's world often outpace the best efforts of the educators.

National Minority-Language Education

197. Canada has two official languages — French and English — and accordingly they have equal status, rights, and privileges in their usage in the institutions of Parliament and the government of Canada. Legal protection for national minority education rights are constructed along linguistic lines and apply to the English-speaking minority in Quebec and the French-speaking minorities in the 12 other provinces and territories. Education is the responsibility of the provinces and territories. However, Section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, part of the Canadian Constitution passed in 1982, guarantees Canadian citizens in the French or English linguistic minority populations in each jurisdiction the right to have their children educated in their own language in elementary and secondary school, subject to specific requirements, and to have the education supported from public funds "where numbers warrant."

Minority French-Language Education

198. For a child to have the right to attend a French-language school outside Quebec, the child's mother or father must be a Canadian citizen, must have learned French as her or his first language and still have the capacity to understand it, must have received her/his elementary school education in Canada in French or have another child or other children already being educated or currently enrolled in a French-language school in Canada. These same requirements apply to the right to attend English-language schools in Quebec. The local authorities governing the minority language schools can make exceptions to these rules.

199. In the 2001 census, 68 per cent of the students with a right to attend French-language schools outside Quebec were enrolled in francophone schools outside Quebec, an increase from 56 per cent in 1986. In 2003, the Government of Canada issued *The Next Act: New Momentum for Canada's Linguistic Duality: The Action Plan for Official Languages*. The objective of the *Action Plan* was to bring the proportion of eligible students enrolled in French schools to 80 per cent within ten years. The federal plan provided an overview of the current situation and challenges of minority language education. About 680 French schools and a network of 19 francophone colleges and universities serve about 150,000 francophone students outside Quebec. A distance-learning network for postsecondary education has also been established and many of the jurisdictions offer courses at a distance in French.

200. The minority-language schools are funded through governments and are part of both the public and, where established, the separate school systems. The schools offering minority-language education are subject to the same criteria and requirements as all schools in their jurisdictions. However, minority French-language education is facing major challenges, particularly regarding recruitment and retention of eligible school populations. Parents enrol their children in English or immersion schools if there is no French language school that is convenient. In many regions, there are very few French secondary schools and access to postsecondary education in French is limited, so that students are reluctant to complete their education in a French-language environment. With

limited registration, funding becomes an issue, especially for small schools, because grants to publicly funded schools are calculated on a per-student basis.

201. The *Action Plan* also outlines concerns about educational quality. In some pan-Canadian measures of student achievement, students in French minority schools did not perform as well as their anglophone counterparts. Adding to this challenge is the projected dearth of qualified teachers when a large number of teachers become eligible for retirement in the next 10 years. It is also recognized that parents with very young children need additional assistance as they are thinking about their educational choices and preparing their child for a French-language education. The federal government, the provinces and territories, and many nongovernmental and community organizations have been turning their attention to these challenges.

202. Having developed this analysis of the current reality and issues in French language minority education and its goal to increase registration to 80 per cent of eligible students, the federal government has renewed its multi-year *Protocol for Agreements for Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction* with the provinces and territories for the years 2005–06 until 2008–09. In line with the objectives set out in the *Action Plan*, the federal government encourages and assists the provincial and territorial governments to consolidate and improve the quality of existing programs in minority education and increase participation in these programs. In the *Action Plan* itself, new funding was announced for quality improvement in school programs, special support for at-risk students, a focus on retention especially as students move into secondary school, providing access to day care and kindergartens in community schools, and teacher recruitment, training, and development. These funds are made available to the provinces and territories.

203. In 2005, the government of Canada undertook a midterm analysis on where the new money had been applied by the jurisdictions. From 2003 to 2005, in Newfoundland and Labrador, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories, demographic studies and recruitment and promotion campaigns have been launched. Prince Edward Island, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta created or improved their kindergarten programs and support of the parents of young students through resources and outreach. In Nova Scotia, Yukon, Nunavut, and Alberta, emphasis was placed on the "francisation" (enhancing the francophone environment and content) of kindergarten and facilitating the transition from preschool to elementary school. In Alberta, federal funds continue to be applied toward professional development opportunities for Francophone teachers and the development and acquisition of French-language learning and teaching resources. The Northwest Territories introduced incentives for choosing French education at the secondary level. In many jurisdictions, new programs were added or adapted, cultural workers coordinated activities between the community and the school, and distance education was introduced or expanded to broaden course offerings in smaller schools. Teacher recruitment and the integration of new technologies were also funded through the *Action Plan* Funds.

204. Postsecondary institutions also received funding to develop new programs, to support student transition, and to improve distance learning resources and infrastructure. Several francophone postsecondary institutions and some institutions that offer degree programs in both languages broadened their French course offerings, and the provinces of Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Alberta, and Nova Scotia developed strategies for distance education or increasing access through more on-line courses and improved technology.

205. In 2004, Ontario introduced *Politique d'aménagement linguistique de l'Ontario*, a language planning policy for French-language schools and the francophone community which sets the guidelines for the school boards, authorities, and the 400 schools in Ontario providing French-language education. Each school board, with parental and community consultation, is to develop a local aménagement linguistique policy to promote the fulfillment of the French-language school's mandate and increase the educational system's capacity to create teaching and learning conditions that foster the development of the French language and culture so as to ensure the academic achievement of every student. The objectives of the policy include the following:

   - Delivering high-quality education that reflects the unique nature of the francophone community in a minority context
   - Increasing the capacity of learning communities which includes school staff, students, and parents to support students' linguistic, educational, and cultural development that fosters lifelong learning
   - Expanding and enriching the francophone environment through solid partnerships among the school, the families, and the community
   - Increasing the vitality of educational institutions by focusing on student retention and increased enrolment

206. In addition to the activity undertaken by the individual jurisdictions, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) has undertaken initiatives linked to minority language education. It is through the Council that the protocol agreements for the transfer of federal government funds to the provincial and territorial governments for minority and second language education have been negotiated. In response to the results that showed that students studying in French-language schools in minority settings were not performing as well as their English-language counterparts, a consortium of provinces and territories worked through CMEC to produce a teaching kit for use with young francophone students outside Quebec to bring them closer to their mother tongue and to enhance their learning environments.

207. The Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) has expressed concern that inadequate minority French-language early childhood care and early education are major obstacles to the full and successful integration of eligible children into French-language schools. This lack of early education has a serious impact in the later recruitment and retention of students in French-language education and so undermines the vitality of francophone communities across the country. The CTF is committed to supporting the right of francophones to a quality education in their language. As part of their support, the Federation maintains a

directory of francophone schools and a bank of on-line French-language teaching resources on their Web site. CTF researches the status of minority language education to identify the best conditions for teaching and learning in a francophone environment. Their recent study of early childhood care and education services led to the preparation of a Grade One entry profile for francophone students from a linguistic and cultural perspective and a kit entitled *An Invitation to Success in French-Language School* to guide their development.

Minority English-Language Education

208.   English-language minority education is offered in Quebec through more than 350 elementary and secondary schools, eight colleges, and three universities. Close to 121,000 Quebec elementary and secondary students are being educated in English. About 90 per cent of the population of English students who are eligible according to the Constitution of Canada are enrolled in publicly financed English-language schools. The students in the English school system perform as well as their counterparts in the French language majority system. At the postsecondary level in Quebec, all students are eligible to attend any of the dozen English-language colleges and universities, which enrol about 90,000 students. In addition, in order to improve the services offered to these students throughout Quebec, the government has established a multi-year action plan, as part of the Canada-Quebec Agreement Relative to Minority Language Education and the Teaching of Second Languages, which includes the development of a strategy for distance education to serve students studying in English. Quebec has never restricted the access to English-language education to situations "where numbers warrant," as stipulated in the Constitution, but has provided an English-language educational system from pre-school to postsecondary for the English-speaking minority for many years.

209.   The challenges of English minority-language education are outlined in the federal *Action Plan* as well and are different from the recruitment and quality concern in French minority-language education. Rather, the main issue is serving the heterogeneous population enrolled in the schools, including francophones and English-speakers from a wide variety of backgrounds. Another concern is that the number of small schools with less than 200 students scattered around Quebec makes it difficult to provide the full range of curriculum offerings, and so distance education is being used as a solution. The *Action Plan* outlines the federal priorities to address these challenges by offering support, through its partnership with the government of Quebec, for expanding the options for students outside Montreal through distance education and establishing community education centres in the schools. At the time of the interim review of the *Action Plan*, Quebec was developing a strategy to add new programs to meet the needs of smaller English-language schools.

210.   The guidelines for reviewing the implementation of Article Five questioned the legal and policy frameworks for the protection of national minority educational rights and the standards in the educational institutions run by minorities. As has been seen, the educational rights of the language minority groups are enshrined in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and have been legislated and implemented in each province and territory.

The French-language minority system is experiencing challenges related to student recruitment and retention and the quality of the education in the schools and of the French minority-language early childhood education programs. The English-language minority system is dealing with its heterogeneous population. Both systems have the problem of small and scattered schools. With the aid of federal funding, all jurisdictions are dedicating funds and developing innovative responses to enhance the quality of minority-language education.

Article Seven — Results, Obstacles, and Issues

211. The main issues raised in this consultation on the *Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education* are access to education and treatment within education. The guidelines for the preparation of this report ask for information on results achieved and obstacles encountered in addressing each of the articles of the recommendation. In assessing both the achievements and shortcomings, the issues to be addressed for promoting equality of educational opportunities are highlighted.

212. In the provinces and territories of Canada, access to elementary and secondary education is free for students from 5 or 6 years of age to 18 or 21, depending on the jurisdiction. These public school systems enrol 93 per cent of the population in the age range. Postsecondary education is also widely available, but most postsecondary educational institutions charge tuition, except for Quebec residents attending public colleges in their province. The following statistics illustrate the levels of access on a pan-Canadian basis.

213. In 2002, of the Canadian population aged between 25 and 64 years of age, 22 per cent had completed college and 21 per cent had completed university. This overall total of 43 per cent of the population with postsecondary education is the highest among the OECD countries.

214. Limited access to education by girls and women is one of the major concerns of UNESCO. Statistics show that this is not the case in Canada.

  - There were slightly more males than females enrolled in public schools in 2003–04, with 51.6 per cent of the enrolment being males. This ratio is generally consistent across all the provinces and territories and with the estimates of school-aged populations.
  - In 2002–03, the graduation rate from secondary school was 74 per cent, comprising 78 per cent of girls and 70 per cent of boys.
  - Of the 635,639 students registered in universities in 2001–02, 56.5 per cent were female.
  - Of the 177,974 university graduates in 2001, 59 per cent were female.

215. *Educational Indicators in Canada: Report of the Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program 2005*, a joint publication of Statistics Canada and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada provides an overview of the participation rate, by education level and age for 2003-2004.

Table 4 – Participation Rates in per cent

Age	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
2003–04											
Secondary	95	92	76	31	9	3	1	1	1	1	0
College and trades	1	1	11	23	27	21	17	13	12	8	6
University	0	0	1	17	25	28	28	26	18	14	10
Total	**96**	**93**	**88**	**71**	**61**	**52**	**46**	**40**	**31**	**23**	**16**

Up to the age of 21, over 50 per cent of the population attends secondary or postsecondary education.

216. The legislative and policy framework firmly entrenched in Canada is one that guarantees equality of access but, in practice, there are many vulnerable groups in Canadian society whose access to education as well as their 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.

217. Funding is a major concern because a lack of resources hampers many efforts to address issues of access and equitable treatment for disadvantaged groups. From 2000 to 2005, governments of all provinces and territories have increased the funding that they allocate to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. Improvements in programs, resources, staffing, services, partnerships, and pedagogy have been achieved. Examples of these efforts are described in this report. But the needs outstrip the resources and certain groups are still struggling to achieve equality of educational access and treatment. The groups that have been highlighted in this paper include students from low-income families, those requiring literacy and basic education, Aboriginal students, children of immigrants, special needs students, and minority language students.

Postsecondary Education and Lower-Income Students

218. The rapid rise in tuition fees for universities and colleges in most jurisdictions over the last decade has disadvantaged those from lower- and middle-income families. The number of students attending university from middle-income families has declined slightly in the past few years, but the percentage remains higher than that of youth from lower-income families. Potential students from rural and northern communities are also disadvantaged, as they do not have the option of attending postsecondary education in their own communities. Consequently, they have the added burden of living expenses and travel, plus the social challenges that a large institution can present. To address this and other situations of need, student loans are available through the federal, provincial, and territorial governments. While these loans are essential for many students to complete their postsecondary studies, graduates are then faced with large debts.

219. Both the reduced enrolment of students from lower-income families and the graduates leaving with large debt loads cause concern for all of those involved with postsecondary education. Governments have been introducing new programs that favour the students who most need help, often with non-repayable grants to subsidize their tuition and living costs. Loan programs are expanding to make them more accessible and to raise the limits of borrowing. Some jurisdictions have instituted tuition freezes; others have devised debt forgiveness and debt reduction programs. Institutions have emergency funds available to students who have exhausted their resources. A longer-term solution recommended by the Canadian Association of University Teachers is an increase in public funding to postsecondary institutions that will allow them to reduce their tuition fees. Increased support for postsecondary education is now at the top of the agenda in the discussions between the federal and the provincial and territorial governments.

220. Research is also essential to better understand how lower-income and other vulnerable groups can best be supported throughout their postsecondary education. Tuition is only a portion of a student's costs, so the provision of additional funds for other costs is important. Equally critical is understanding all the factors, aside from the economic, that prevent youth from lower-income families from participating in postsecondary education. Social, academic, and familial factors may be impediments, as well as self-image and self-confidence. Counselling, recruitment, on-campus support, and other responses need to further tested and developed into cohesive programs that both bring disadvantaged groups to campuses and support them until graduation.

Literacy and Basic Education

221. The need for adult literacy and basic education is evident in the results of the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey that showed 42 per cent of the population in Canada is not reading at a level necessary for everyday use. Both the Council of the Federation, which brings together the premiers and government leaders of all the jurisdictions, and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada have placed literacy high on their agenda. Literacy is being positioned as part of labour and community development strategies, and family literacy is reaching out to parents and children to enhance school readiness and parental reading capacity.

222. Literacy and basic education are offered through non-governmental, community, and voluntary organizations by colleges and schools boards and, in some cases, by employers, unions, and associations. One of the great strengths of literacy programming is this wide range of delivery — but it can also be a weakness when the limited resources are spread very thinly. Literacy needs are different for each individual, which makes programs difficult to design and deliver. Individual tutoring is a successful model, but it is dependent on unpaid volunteers. The knowledge economy demands advanced literacy capacity, but some literacy funding has either been re-allocated to other programs, cancelled, or available only on a short-term or project-by-project basis. Those who most need literacy training are also those who are most silent and reticent about making demands. Literacy benchmarks and progress assessments are still being refined so as to measure the effectiveness and results of programs. For all of these reasons, literacy does

not receive the funding that is necessary to mount a far-reaching, long-term, and successful educational response to the evident needs.

Aboriginal Education

223. Aboriginal educational attainment concerns not only Aboriginal peoples, but also governments and educators because completion rates for Aboriginal students from secondary school and university are far below the average, especially in the northern territories. Historical discriminatory educational practices have been recognized as a central cause, but solutions are still being developed and negotiated. The jurisdictions have been introducing new approaches that include the involvement of the Aboriginal community in the design of the learning, resources, and services and the development of curriculum and materials on Aboriginal cultures, languages, histories, land claims, rights, and their special place in Canadian society. New teaching practices, distance education, expanded educational opportunities in communities, Aboriginal teachers and counsellors, special programs, services, and assessments, and increased interaction with parents and community leaders are among the initiatives that the provinces and territories have taken to address this problem. Especially for students in schools not on reserve, some progress has been made as a result of these changes in the structure and content of their education. Better measures are being developed to track success and share best practices.

224. Some jurisdictions have agreements by which the Aboriginal communities are clearly integrated in the administration of schools; the agreement in British Columbia has led to First Nations' control of the schools on reserves. Many Aboriginal organizations believe that Aboriginal control is critical to the success of their children in education. Rather than supporting mainstream educational institutions to provide education for Aboriginal students, their preference would be the support of Aboriginal schools. This is an ongoing negotiation. One exception to this is Nunavut, where 83 per cent of the students are Inuit. In this vast territory, the challenges faced include the provision of bilingual education in Innu and English, the huge distances and isolation, and the enormous costs of providing quality education in the small, scattered communities.

Children of Immigrants and Visible Minorities

225. As shown in this report, students who are the children of immigrants are "behind" their Canadian-born counterparts when they start in the school system, but within in a few years they generally catch up to and even exceed them. The issues concern the integration of many of these children into the school systems and classrooms. For some, it is their first experience of school, for others it is their first experience in a Western English- or French-speaking country, and for all of them it is a big challenge of integration and acceptance. Heritage language teaching is essential as are special attention and supports — but in this report the section on teachers highlighted their concern about the growing demands of dealing with immigrant children, special-needs students, and at-risk students in their classrooms. Teachers asked for more classroom support, more literacy and numeracy programs, and smaller classes so that they can provide each student with what she or he needs to succeed.

226. About 84 per cent of the visible minority students in Canadian schools are immigrants. Visible minority immigrant students often have educational aspirations and achievement levels that exceed those of their Canadian-born non-visible minority counterparts. However, as not all visible minority students are succeeding at this same level, the jurisdictions have developed special programs and supports to respond to their particular needs and situations.

227. While not all immigrant students are visible minorities and not all visible minorities are immigrants, visible minority immigrant students are often the victims of bullying, harassment, racism, and discrimination because they are "different" and vulnerable. Safe School programs are in place across the country to counteract the possibilities and the effects of bullying and to provide students, teachers, and education officials with resources and protection.

Special Education Students

228. Special education covers a wide range of children including those with physical disabilities, behavioural disorders, and cognitive challenges. The dominant educational philosophy is that every child can learn and should be supported in learning in order to succeed to the best of her or his abilities.

229. The best approach is considered to be the "inclusive classroom" so that the student is part of the central community of the school. Many of the students require individual help and attention in the classroom, which may, in some cases, be provided by a teaching assistant or other specially trained professional. More often, this responsibility falls on the teachers. In all cases, it adds to classroom management challenges, teacher preparation time, classroom time, and physical and space requirements. Jurisdictions have recognized that these extra responsibilities are placed on teachers and have developed teacher training, resources, curriculum aids, and other supports. However, teachers still find the inclusive classroom one of the biggest challenges that they face on an ongoing basis. Additional funding can address some of these concerns, especially through smaller class sizes and increased classroom staff.

230. Related to this is child-centred education, in which the child and not the disability is to be the focus. This implies an equality of education that many parents are demanding and that jurisdictions are striving to provide. The challenge is the frequent mismatch between the expectations and demands of the parents and the capacity or concurrence of the jurisdiction to meet these demands. The extent of the services provided by each jurisdiction is under negotiation, or occasionally judicial review, to determine the exact parameters of the inclusiveness provided.

Minority-Language Education

231. The right to French- and English minority-language education is enshrined in the Canadian Constitution and is subsidized by the federal government. Within defined eligibility

criteria, French minority-language students outside Quebec and eligible English minority-language students in Quebec are entitled to receive their education in their mother tongue. Both systems are facing challenges. In the French minority-language schools, only 68 per cent of the eligible students are enrolled, which results in lower funding and a number of small schools that struggle to offer a full program. The students are not performing as well as their counterparts in the English-language system and the early childhood education programs are not adequately preparing the students for a French-language education. In the English minority-language education offered in Quebec, the populations enrolled come from extremely diverse language and/or cultural backgrounds and, outside of Montreal, the system faces the problem of small and isolated schools .

232.   With expanded federal funding, the other provinces and territories are implementing responses to these difficulties, including, for the French minority-language system, the improvement of French-language early childhood education, recruitment, and promotion for the school system, increased focus on the retention of the students leading to successful completion, more distance education, and senior secondary and postsecondary programs and courses in French. The English minority-language school system in Quebec is reaching outside Montreal with more distance education programs .

233.   In reaching out to disadvantaged groups, educators, officials, and citizens in Canada strive to create educational systems that are accessible by all and provide equal opportunities to all. Much has been accomplished and prodigious efforts, funding, and creativity have been and continue to be dedicated to these challenges. The disadvantages, the vulnerabilities, and the discrimination faced by some groups have been recognized and special funds and programs have been dedicated to redressing them. However, the work continues and many of the challenges remain.

Raising Awareness – The Activities of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO and its Partners

234. The final point in the guidelines concerning the preparation of this national report on the implementation of the *Recommendation* brings forward the issue of raising awareness. Specifically it asks about the activities of the National Commissions for UNESCO in promoting non-discrimination and equality of educational opportunities and for raising debate on critical issues, recognizing these principles as important aspects of the right to education. The Canadian Commission for UNESCO has been active in raising awareness about the challenges and solutions to discrimination and racism in education, and has integrated this theme into many of its key activities.

235. The Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCU) issued a call for a Canadian Coalition of Municipalities against Racism and Discrimination in 2005 as part of the International Coalition of Cities Against Racism Initiative. The initiative seeks to encourage municipalities in their commitment to fight racism and in the development of strategies and actions to combat it in all parts of municipal life. The CCU leads a Pan-Canadian Working Group, which has proposed a declaration of *Common Commitments* with sample actions. The CCU also holds workshops and consultations with a wide range of stakeholders — including communities, institutions, and various local, provincial, territorial, and federal government bodies — to seek their support and input on the initiative. One of the *Common Commitments* that members of the Coalition would make refers to education: "Support measures to challenge racism and discrimination and promote diversity and equal opportunity in the education sector and in other forms of learning." The CCU has received the support of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, which encourages its members to join. To date, more than 50 municipalities have expressed interest in the coalition.

236. Education For All, which UNESCO coordinates internationally, promotes equal access to education for all children and adults. One of the ways that the Canadian Commission for UNESCO has supported Education For All is through International Learners' Week in Canada. With a focus on adult education and literacy, the Week promotes education as a fundamental human right. International Adult Learners' Week (IALW) was celebrated for the third time in Canada from September 8 to 14, 2005, with the date of the launch coinciding with International Literacy Day.

237. Building on the success of the two previous celebrations, IALW 2005 focused on strengthening and expanding partnerships among governments, agencies, nongovernmental and professional organizations, and community groups across the country that are engaged in and committed to adult learning. The key objectives for the Week reflected many of the principles of the *Recommendation against Discrimination in Education*:

   - Increase the visibility of adult learning and promote learning throughout life, both among the public and in various learning environments.

- Give a voice to learners, promote learning, and stress its potential for transformation and development in every sphere of personal, professional, political, economic, social, and cultural life.
- Reach out to adults, potential learners, and marginalized groups to promote learning throughout life.
- Increase the number of adults involved in training activities and encourage adults to express their learning needs.
- Demonstrate the linkages between adult learning and building sustainable communities that value diversity and human rights.

238. Forty partners were actively involved with the Canadian Commission for UNESCO for IALW 2005, comprising the departments and ministries responsible for education in every province and territory, representatives of national non-governmental adult literacy organization, and partners from workplace training, continuing education, education for sustainable development, and education for human rights.

239. The IALW 2005 strategy had four key components: a widely-distributed Information Kit; a pan-Canadian communications plan; an IALW Web page on the Canadian Commission for UNESCO site; and local events by the partner organizations. The materials were in both official languages. The information sheets in the Kit were built around the four pillars of learning from the Delors Report on *Learning for the 21st Century* — learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together. Twenty-five thousand copies of the Kit were distributed. Over 100 local events in celebration of IALW and Literacy Day were held across the country, including literacy lunches, workshops, award presentations, and open houses.

240. A third CCU project that raises awareness and encourages action about racism and discrimination is the Associated Schools Project Network, as part of the wider UNESCO ASPnet. Children, youth, and staff in schools took part in pilot projects that helped them become more aware of vital world issues including xenophobia, human rights abuses, poverty, and cultural diversity. Since 2001, the Network in Canada has doubled in size and, in 2005, after a two-year pilot project, the Commission officially designated the first ASPnet schools in Canada. The schools raised money for tsunami relief in Asia and to combat local poverty; as well, they worked to integrate awareness and knowledge of human rights issues into their curriculum.

241. On an on-going basis, the Commission works with its many partners and members of the Sectoral Commissions to promote UNESCO's *Convention*, recommendations, and projects throughout Canadian society. Through meetings, conference presentations, workshops, and other communication strategies, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO works at all levels of government and civil society to introduce and garner support for UNESCO and its strong stand against racism and discrimination in education.

Conclusion

242. This seventh consultation on the *Convention* and *Recommendation against Discrimination in Education* covers the period from 2000 to 2005 and responds to the guidelines from UNESCO for the preparation of this report. Canada, as a federal state, is not a signatory to the *Convention*.

243. Education in Canada is the responsibility of the 13 provinces and territories, all of which are committed to the elimination of discrimination in education. This paper contains only a small selection of the variety of policies and initiatives that the jurisdictions have in place to ensure equality of access to and treatment within the education systems.

244. The legislative and policy infrastructure against discrimination in education, as referred to in Article One of the *Recommendation*, is firmly in place. The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* is the cornerstone that prohibits "discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability." The *Citizenship Act*, *Multicultural Act*, and *Human Rights Act* all reinforce and extend the principle of freedom from discrimination. Provincial and territorial governments also have legislation, including *Human Rights Acts*, which prohibit discrimination. In terms of access to free, universal elementary and secondary schools, all jurisdictions provide this as a basic right guaranteed through the Education or Schools Act, subject to the age and residence requirements previously discussed. In addition, policies and resources support the integration of diversity and human rights as part of the educational culture, the curriculum, teaching practices, and learning materials.

245. In Article Two, parental choice is a key component of freedom from discrimination to ensure that children have access to quality education and maintain freedom of religion. Educational options offered in various regions of Canada include religious and linguistic choices. In some jurisdictions, Roman Catholic schools receive full government funding as part of the provincial school system; in others, they may receive funding as private schools. The majority of private schools maintain some link with the ministry or department of education of their jurisdiction; they may offer the provincial curriculum and graduation certificate, employ provincially or territorially certified teachers, or be subject to inspections and ministerial overview. Enrolling a child in a private school is always a matter of parental choice.

246. Access and funding issues comprise the core of Article Three. Foreign nationals may have access to free elementary and secondary education if they meet criteria such as being children of permanent or temporary residents, or of refugees and other protected persons. The recognition of foreign credentials is complicated by the reality of 13 educational jurisdictions and the individual approaches that the postsecondary institutions have concerning their admission and credit transfer criteria. Professional credentials must be assessed by professional or licensing regulatory bodies or by employers. It is a complicated and difficult process, although there are services that can provide information, guidance, and preliminary assessments.

247. Article Three also looks at access to postsecondary education. Research has shown that family income and parental education are major factors in who attends postsecondary institutions. Those with higher family incomes and with parents who have attended postsecondary education are more likely to enrol. About half of college and university graduates have debt upon graduation. All jurisdictions in cooperation with the federal government offer bursaries, scholarships, support programs, and loans to postsecondary students. Some supplement this with tuition freezes and special grants for groups of traditionally disadvantaged students such as Aboriginal and rural students.

248. Article Four raises a number of issues concerning groups that may need special attention to ensure equality of access and treatment in education. Girls and women are a particular concern for UNESCO; in Canada, they are graduating in higher numbers than males from both secondary school and university. Basic education and literacy needs are still apparent in the *Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey* results that showed that 42 per cent of adults have low literacy skills that impede them in meeting everyday reading requirements. Provincial, territorial, and federal governments are working with non-governmental organizations and the voluntary sector to deliver programs and services to meet these needs, but the demand continues to outstrip supply.

249. In the response to Article Four, Aboriginal students, children of immigrants, visible minority students, and special-needs students are examined in terms of their needs and the programs and services that are available to them. For historical reasons, Aboriginal students are not achieving educational success, as 48 per cent of the population over 15 years of age has not completed secondary school. Although they graduate from college at comparable levels to that of the total population, the number of Aboriginal university graduates is significantly lower. All jurisdictions are working to address this challenge, particularly through closer collaboration with the Aboriginal population in planning, delivering, and assessing the education. A new agreement in British Columbia has resulted in Aboriginal control of their own schools on reserves, which is considered a positive signpost. However, the low achievement of Aboriginal students is a serious challenge.

250. As Canada becomes more multicultural and multiethnic through the arrival of immigrants from a growing number of countries, the schools, especially in the major cities, reflect this new population. The students often require English or French as a second language education, as well as an understanding of the culture and society of Canada. Although research has shown that immigrant students are successful in Canadian schools, there are issues of discrimination and bullying, especially for those of visible minorities. For this reason, jurisdictions have launched Safe School Initiatives to foster respect and combat racism and harassment.

251. The wide variety of special-needs students are taught in the regular classrooms whenever possible in many jurisdictions. Special programs, teaching aids and resources, qualified and adequate staff, and extensive partnerships so that all the students' needs can be addressed require extensive funding. While all jurisdictions have increased their

allocations to special-needs students, more funding is necessary to adequately meet all of the demands.

252. Human values education is a component of Article Five and is addressed in the curriculum, the resources, the teaching practices and the learning environments in each jurisdiction. Minority language educational rights are guaranteed in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, so that the French-speaking minorities outside Quebec and the English-speaking minority in Quebec have the right to have their children educated in the minority language, within certain criteria. Both systems face challenges that reflect their eligible populations.

253. Educators and legislators in Canada have achieved much in the delivery of quality elementary and secondary education that does not discriminate against or condemn any student to a second-class system based on who they are or where they come from. Access to postsecondary education still favours those with higher income and better-educated parents but numerous programs are in place to support all students. Challenges still remain in the access and achievement of traditionally disadvantaged groups, especially Aboriginal students. Provincial and territorial ministries and departments of education have recognized the needs of the vulnerable groups and are working in partnerships and collaboration to provide equal educational opportunities for all.

Appendix A — Sources used for the Preparation of the Progress Report

Provincial and Territorial Education Department and Ministry Web Sites

Alberta Advanced Education and Technology
http://www.advancededucation.gov.ab.ca/

Alberta Education
http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/

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

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

Manitoba Department of Advanced Education and Literacy
http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/

Manitoba Department of Education, Citizenship and Youth
http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/

New Brunswick Department of Education
http://www.gnb.ca/0000/index-e.asp

New Brunswick Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour
http://www.gnb.ca/0105/index-e.asp

Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education
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
http://www.ednet.ns.ca/

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

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

Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/

Prince Edward Island Department of Education
http://www.gov.pe.ca/education/

Quebec Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports
http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/

Saskatchewan Advanced Education and Employment
http://www.aee.gov.sk.ca

Saskatchewan Learning
http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/

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

Pan-Canadian Links

Council of Ministers of Education, Canada
www.cmec.ca

Canadian Commission for UNESCO
www.unesco.ca

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Appendix B — Education in Canada

Canada is the second largest country in the world — almost 10 million square kilometres (3.8 million square miles) — with a population density of 3.3 people per square kilometre, one of the lowest in the world, and a per capita GDP in 2003 of C$38,495. A very large portion of the population of 32.1 million lives in four major urban centres and within 300 kilometres of the southern border with the United States. One of the major challenges to the provision of quality educational opportunities for all Canadians is meeting the needs of both urban students and those in small remote communities as well as those in Aboriginal communities.

Responsibility for Education

Responsibility: In Canada, there is no federal department of education and no integrated national system of education. Within the federal system of shared powers, Canada's Constitution Act of 1867 provides that "[I]n and for each province, the legislature may exclusively make Laws in relation to Education." In the 13 jurisdictions — 10 provinces and 3 territories, departments or ministries of education are responsible for the organization, delivery, and assessment of education at the elementary and secondary levels within their boundaries. In some jurisdictions, separate departments or ministries are responsible for elementary-secondary education and for postsecondary education and skills training. The institutions in the postsecondary system have varying degrees of autonomy from direct provincial government control.

Regional Differences: 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 reflect the societal belief in the importance of education.

Elementary and Secondary Education

Government Role: Public education is provided free to all Canadians meeting various age and residence requirements. Each province and territory has one or two departments/ministries of education, headed by a minister who is an elected member of the legislature and appointed to the position by the government leader of the jurisdiction. Deputy ministers, who belong to the civil service, are responsible for the operation of the departments. The ministries and departments provide educational, administrative, and financial management and school support functions, and they define both the educational services to be provided and the policy and legislative framework. Their responsibilities include curriculum development, assessment, teachers' working conditions, funding formulas, equity, and technological innovation.

Local Governance: Local governance of education is usually entrusted to school boards, school districts, school divisions, or district education councils. Their members are elected by public ballot. The power delegated to the local authorities is at the discretion of the provincial and territorial governments and generally consists of the operation and administration (including

financial) of the group of schools within their board or division, curriculum implementation, responsibility for personnel, enrolment of students, and initiation of proposals for new construction or other major capital expenditures. There are approximately 15,500 schools in Canada — 10,100 elementary, 3,400 secondary, and 2,000 mixed elementary and secondary — with an overall average of 351 students per school. In 2002–03, provinces and territories reported that there were 5 million students attending public elementary and secondary schools. Because Canada is a bilingual (French-English) country, each province and territory (except Quebec) has established French-language school boards to manage the network of French-language schools within their jurisdiction that serve the French-speaking minority populations. In Quebec, the same structure applies to education in English-first-language schools.

Funding: Public funding for education comes either directly from the provincial or territorial government or through a mix of provincial transfers and local taxes collected either by the local government or by the boards with taxing powers. Provincial and territorial regulations, revised yearly, provide the grant structure that sets the level of funding for each school board in their jurisdiction, based on factors such as the number of students, special needs, and location. In 2002–03, almost $40 billion was spent on public elementary and secondary education in Canada, breaking down to an expenditure of about $7,950 per student. Expenditures on public elementary and secondary schools were 13.4 per cent of the total combined expenditures by provincial, territorial, and local governments in 2002–03, representing 3.3 per cent of GDP.

Teachers: In 2000–01, Canada's elementary and secondary school systems employed close to 310,000 educators, most of whom had four or five years of postsecondary study. This total for educators is primarily teachers, but includes principals, vice-principals, consultants, and counsellors. They are licensed by the provincial and territorial departments or ministries of education. Most secondary school teachers have a subject speciality in the courses they teach. Some school boards and districts are encountering shortages of secondary teachers specialized in such areas as science, technology, and mathematics.

Pre-elementary Education: Most provinces and territories provide kindergartens, operated by the local education authorities and offering one year of pre-first-grade, non-compulsory education for five-year-olds. In one province, kindergarten is compulsory; in others, pre-school classes are available from age four or even earlier. At a pan-Canadian level, 95 per cent of five-year-olds attend pre-elementary or elementary school, and over 40 per cent of four-year-olds are enrolled in junior kindergarten, with large variations among the jurisdictions. The intensity of the programs also varies, with full-day and half-day programs, depending on the school board.

Elementary Education: The ages for compulsory schooling vary from one jurisdiction to another, but most require attendance in school from age 6 to age 16. In some cases, compulsory schooling starts at 5, and in others it extends to age 18 or graduation from secondary school. In most jurisdictions, elementary schools cover six to eight years of schooling, which can be followed by a middle school or junior high before moving on to secondary school (see Figure 1). The elementary school curriculum emphasizes the basic subjects of language, mathematics, social studies, science, and introductory arts, while some jurisdictions include second-language learning. In many provinces and territories, increased attention is being paid to literacy, especially in the case of boys whose test results have shown that their performance is falling
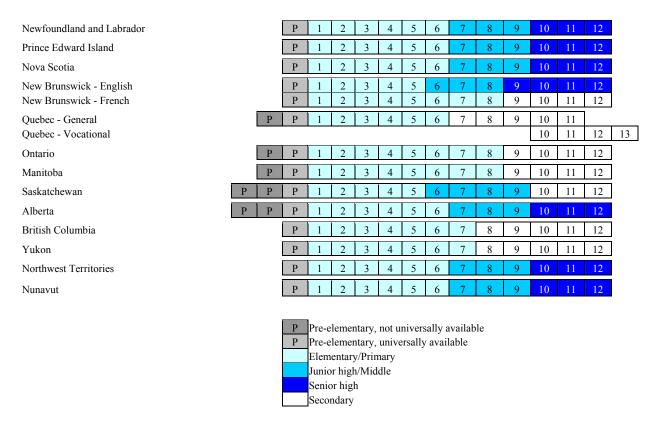
behind that of girls in language. Almost 98 per cent of elementary students go on to the secondary level.

Secondary Education: Secondary school covers the final four to six years of compulsory education. In the first years, students take mostly compulsory courses, with some options. The proportion of options increases in the later years so that students may take specialized courses to prepare for the job market or to meet the differing entrance requirements of postsecondary institutions. Secondary school diplomas are awarded to students who complete the requisite number of compulsory and optional courses. In most cases, vocational and academic programs are offered within the same secondary schools, with some shorter non-diploma programs for students interested in specific trades. Enrolment at age 16, the final year of compulsory schooling in many jurisdictions, was above 90 per cent in the 1999–2000 school year. The secondary school completion rate in 2003 was 75.6 per cent, with 81 per cent of girls and 70 per cent of boys graduating. (Because of a change in the structure of senior secondary school in Ontario, a double group of students graduated in 2003, and these graduates are not reflected in the above numbers.   Graduates from Ontario generally represent about 37 per cent of all graduates in Canada.) The overall graduation rate has remained relatively stable during the past five years.

Private: Private or independent schools provide an alternative to publicly funded schools in many provinces and territories; some of these schools meet the general standards prescribed by the ministry or department of education. They usually charge tuition fees and have a great variety of options based on interest, religion, language, or academic status. While the public system is coeducational, several of the private schools offer education for boys or girls only. In some cases, these schools receive partial funding from the province or territory.

Figure 1: Organization and Structure of Elementary and Secondary Schools

Levels within elementary-secondary schools, by jurisdiction

Jurisdiction			Grades

	P (not univ.)	P (univ.)	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Newfoundland and Labrador			P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Prince Edward Island			P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Nova Scotia			P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
New Brunswick - English			P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
New Brunswick - French			P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Quebec - General		P	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
Quebec - Vocational													10	11	12	13
Ontario		P	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Manitoba		P	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Saskatchewan	P	P	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Alberta	P	P	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
British Columbia			P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Yukon			P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Northwest Territories			P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Nunavut			P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	

Legend:
- P Pre-elementary, not universally available
- P Pre-elementary, universally available
- Elementary/Primary
- Junior high/Middle
- Senior high
- Secondary

Source: Statistics Canada and Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. Education Indicators in Canada: Report of the Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program 2003 (Toronto, Ontario: Canadian Education Statistics Council, 2003), 172.

Postsecondary Education

Range of Institutions: 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. The non-degree-granting institutions, such as colleges, community colleges, and technical and vocational institutions, offer diplomas, certificates, and, in some cases, two years of academic credit that can be transferred to the university level. The public and private colleges in Quebec offer a choice of two-year academic programs that are prerequisite for university study or three-year vocational and professional programs that prepare students for the labour market. All "recognized" postsecondary institutions in Canada have been given the authority to grant academic credentials by their provincial or territorial government through their charters or legislation that ensure mechanisms for assessing the quality of the institution and its programs. Distance education, which provides extensive on-line, media, and print-based programs, is

available from traditional institutions, universities dedicated to distance learning, and college networks.

Governance: Universities are largely autonomous; they set their own admissions standards and degree requirements and have considerable flexibility in the management of their financial affairs and program offerings. Government intervention is generally limited to funding, fee structures, and the introduction of new programs.

In colleges, however, government involvement can extend to admissions policies, program approval, curricula, institutional planning, and working conditions. Most colleges have boards of governors appointed by the provincial or territorial government, with representation from the public, students, and instructors. Program planning incorporates input from business, industry, and labour representatives on college advisory committees.

Funding: Revenue for Canada's universities and colleges in 2004–05 was $27.7 billion. Federal, provincial, and municipal government funding, including funding for research, accounted for 55.6 per cent of the revenue, although this ranged from 43.6 per cent in Nova Scotia to 86.4 per cent for the public colleges in Quebec. Student fees accounted for over 20 per cent of the total, with bequests, donations, non-governmental grants, and sales of products and services bringing in another 24.2 per cent. University and college expenditures in 2004–05 were more than $27.9 billion. Canada has 157 public universities and degree-granting institutions and over 175 recognized public colleges and institutions. Tuition costs at universities averaged $4,172 in 2004–05, with international student fees for an undergraduate program averaging about $12,000 annually. At colleges (outside Quebec), the average tuition was $2,133 (instruction in public colleges in Quebec is free for students with Quebec residency status). Education is also funded through the money that governments transfer to individual students through loans, grants, and education tax credits. In 2003, federal and provincial government spending on all forms of student assistance was about $4.4 billion.

Attendance and Graduation: In 2004–05, there were 785,000 full-time university students (an increase of nearly 130,000 in the previous three years), as well as 270,000 part-time students. In 2004, Canadian universities awarded an estimated 135,000 bachelor's degrees, 26,000 master's degrees, and 4,000 doctoral degrees. In 2003, Canadian colleges had over 736,000 full- and part-time students enrolled. Participation in postsecondary education has grown significantly in the past few years, whether measured by numbers of enrolments or by the proportion of the population in any given age group who are attending college or university. While women continue to make up the majority of students on both university and college campuses, they are still in the minority in the skilled trades.

University Activities: Degree-granting institutions in Canada focus on teaching and research. In 2004–05, Canadian universities performed $9.3 billion worth of research and development, 35 per cent of the national total. Teaching is the key function, whether at the small liberal arts colleges that grant only undergraduate degrees or at the large, comprehensive institutions. Registration varies from about 2,000 students at some institutions to a full-time enrolment of almost 60,000 at the University of Toronto, Canada's largest university. There are more than 10,000 undergraduate and graduate degree programs offered in Canadian universities, as well as

professional degree programs and certificates. Most institutions provide instruction in either English or French; others offer instruction in both official languages. In 2003–04, Canadian universities employed 37,000 full-time faculty members.

University Degrees: University degrees are offered at three consecutive levels. Students enter at the bachelor's level after having successfully completed secondary school or the two-year cégep program in Quebec. Most universities also have special entrance requirements and paths for mature students. Bachelor's degrees normally require three or four years of full-time study, depending on the province and whether the program is general or specialized. An honours bachelor's degree involves an additional year of study. A master's degree typically requires two years of study after the bachelor's or honours degree. For a doctoral degree, three to five years of additional study and research and a dissertation are the normal requirements. In regulated professions, such as medicine, law, education, and social work, an internship is generally required in order to obtain a licence to practise. University colleges provide three- and four-year bachelor's degrees.

College Activities: At the college level, the focus is on teaching, but applied research is taking on greater importance. Public colleges, specialized institutes, community colleges, institutes of technology, and private colleges offer a range of vocation-oriented programs in a wide variety of professional and technical fields, which may include business, health, applied arts, technology, and social services. These programs range from six months to three years in duration, with some institutes offering postgraduate diplomas as well. Some of the institutions are specialized and provide training in a single field such as fisheries, arts, paramedical technology, and agriculture. Colleges also provide the majority of the literacy and academic upgrading programs, pre-employment and pre-apprenticeship programs, and the in-class portions of registered apprenticeship programs. As well, a wide variety of workshops, short programs, and upgrades for skilled workers and professionals are made available.

College Recognition and Cooperation: Diplomas are generally awarded for successful completion of two- and three-year college programs, while certificate programs usually take up to one year. In Quebec, attestations d'études collégiales (AEC) are awarded as the equivalent of certificates. University degrees and applied degrees are offered in some colleges and institutes, and others provide university transfer programs. Colleges work very closely with business, industry, labour, and the public service sectors to provide professional development services and specialized programs and, on a wider basis, with their communities to design programs reflecting local needs. Most colleges in Canada also recognize Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) in at least some of their programs. Some universities also recognize it, and a growing number of provinces offer PLAR to adults at the secondary school level. PLAR is a process that helps adults demonstrate and gain recognition for learning they have acquired outside of formal education settings.

Adult Education

Participation: One out of every three adult workers, 35 per cent, participated in some type of formal, job-related training in 2002, accessing opportunities to continue learning and to upgrade their skills. The participants received an average of 150 hours of training. Twenty-five per cent

of adult workers reported taking employer-supported training programs, support that might include payment for training, flexible hours, or transportation to training. Participants are more likely to be in management and professional occupations than in blue collar or clerical occupations. Utilities, educational services, and public administration are the industries with the highest rates of participation. Those with higher levels of literacy and education are also more likely to participate in adult education. Self-directed learning, in which workers learn on their own through observation, study, and learning from other workers, was almost as common as formal training. When asked by researchers, 33 per cent of working adults stated that they had engaged in some sort of self-directed, informal learning related to their jobs during the preceding four-week period.

Providers: Colleges are the primary vehicle for adult education and training for the labour force; universities supply a smaller portion. Community-based groups, largely funded by the provincial, territorial, or federal governments, address special needs such as literacy and serve groups such as the rural poor, the Aboriginal communities, immigrants, displaced workers, and those with low levels of literacy or education. Apprenticeship is an industry-based learning system that combines on-the-job experience with technical training and leads to certification in a skilled trade. Provincial and territorial governments are responsible for apprenticeship training, and much of the classroom learning is done in the college system. Apprenticeship in Canada is largely an adult program. Registration in apprenticeship training programs reached almost 250,000 in 2003, an increase of 39.8 percent from 1998 and 45.9 per cent from 1993. Gains occurred in every major trade group, especially the building construction trades.

Activities of the Government of Canada

The Federal Contribution: The federal government of Canada provides financial support for postsecondary education and the teaching of the two official languages.   In addition, the federal government is responsible for the education of Registered Indian people on reserve, personnel in the armed forces and the coast guard, and inmates in federal correctional facilities.

Aboriginal Education: 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. In 2004–05, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada supported the education of 120,000 First Nations K–12 students living on reserve across Canada. Band-operated schools located on reserve educate approximately 60 per cent of these students.

The three northern territories, Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut, provide education services for their Registered Indian and/or Inuit populations. First Nations children living off reserve are educated in the public elementary and secondary schools in their cities, towns, and communities, with the provinces and territories providing the majority of educational services for Aboriginal students.

Funding is also provided for postsecondary assistance and programs for Registered Indian students residing on or off reserve. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada supports approximately 23,000 students annually for tuition, books, living allowances, and the like for First Nations and Inuit postsecondary education. The department also provides support for the development and

delivery of college- and university-level courses designed to enhance the postsecondary educational achievement of First Nations and Inuit students.

Postsecondary Education: In addition to providing revenue for universities and colleges through transfer payments, the federal government offers direct student support. Every year, the Canada Student Loans Program and related provincial and territorial programs provide loans and interest forgiveness to over 350,000 postsecondary students. The Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation awards $285 million in bursaries and scholarships each year to about 100,000 students throughout Canada. For parents, the Canada Education Savings Grant program supplements their savings for postsecondary education. These programs are designed to make postsecondary education more widely accessible and to reduce student debt.

Language Education: Reflecting its history and culture, Canada adopted the Official Languages Act (first passed in 1969 and revised in 1988), which established both French and English as the official languages of Canada and provided for the support of English and French minority populations. According to the 2001 Census, 67 per cent of the population speak English only, 13 per cent speak French only, and 18 per cent speak both French and English. The French-speaking population is concentrated in Quebec, while each of the other provinces and territories has a French-speaking minority population; Quebec has an English-speaking minority population. The federal government's official-language policy and funding programs include making contributions to two education-related components — minority-language education and second-language education. Through the Official Languages in Education Program, the federal government transfers funding for these activities to the provinces and territories based on bilateral and general agreements that respect areas of responsibility and the unique needs of each jurisdiction. The bilateral agreements related to these contributions are negotiated under a protocol worked out through the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). Two national federally funded programs, coordinated by CMEC, provide youth with opportunities for exchange and summer study to enhance their second-language skills.

The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada

Role of CMEC: The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) was formed in 1967 by the provincial and territorial ministers responsible for education to provide a forum in which they could discuss matters of mutual interest, undertake educational initiatives cooperatively, and represent the interests of the provinces and territories with national educational organizations, the federal government, foreign governments, and international organizations. CMEC is the national voice for education in Canada and, through CMEC, the provinces and territories work collectively on common objectives in a broad range of activities at the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels.

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