



PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD EDUCATION IN CANADA

THE 2007 CANADIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (CEA) SURVEY

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Public education must serve the public and so it's important to understand public perceptions of their education systems. This is CEA's fourth such report and is based on a survey of over 2,400 Canadians between January and May 2007.

To obtain a full copy of this report, please visit CEA's website at:

www.cea-ace.ca

PUBLIC EDUCATION IN CANADA: FACTS, TRENDS AND ATTITUDES

Promoting public discussion of key educational issues

With this report, CEA provides a context for rethinking schools to drive dialogue and critical thinking about the challenges we face in educating all students to take their place in a world of dynamic social, technological and economic change.

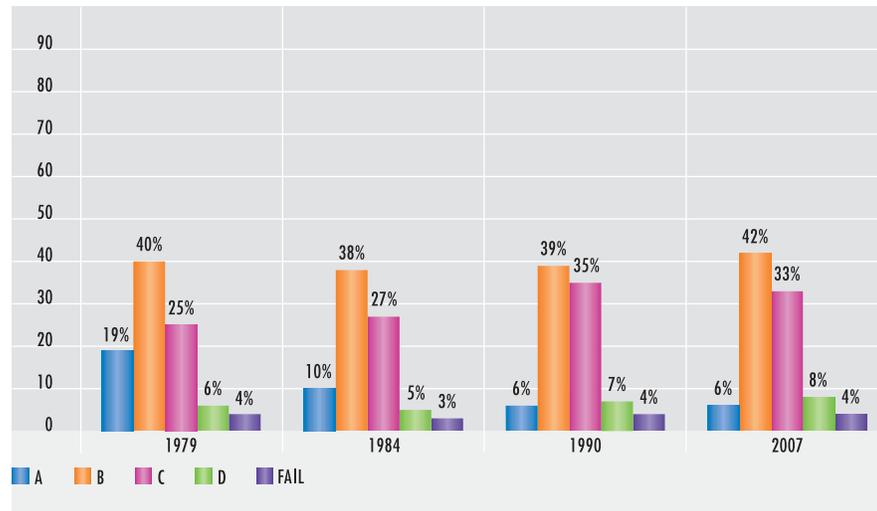
CEA encourages reflection and welcomes your feedback on the following questions:

- When it comes to education, what matters most to Canadians?
- Does Canada have a clear picture of what a good school system looks like?
- What are the goals of our education systems in the 21st century?
- Who should decide what children and youth in Canada learn?
- What ideas do people trust when it comes to education, and how do they come to trust new ideas?

1 CANADIANS ARE GENERALLY SATISFIED AND CONFIDENT WITH THEIR SCHOOLS, BUT THERE IS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT.

When Canadians were asked to grade their schools, 42% gave them a “B.”

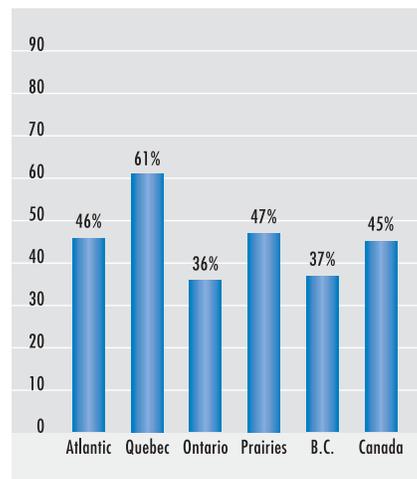
FIGURE 5: Public grading of community schools: 1979-2007 comparisons



One third of respondents felt that the quality of their elementary and secondary schools are average (a C grade) while only 6% chose A.

45% of Canadians have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in public schools.

FIGURE 6: % Canadians with a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in provincial public schools

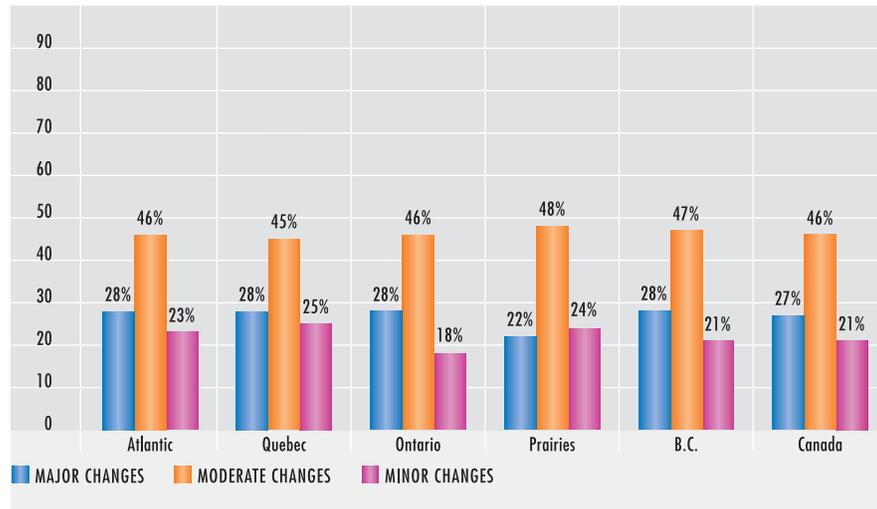


This level of public confidence fell a full 31% since 1984 when 76% of Canadians reported a great deal or fair amount of confidence. Despite this drop, support for public education remains high among Canadians in comparison to other institutions.

2 THERE IS A REMARKABLE SIMILARITY ACROSS THE COUNTRY IN THE VIEWS EXPRESSED TOWARD PUBLIC EDUCATION.

Canadians display a moderate appetite for change.

FIGURE 12: Degree of change necessary to fix educational problems by region



In views that are very consistent across the country, 46% of Canadians believe moderate changes are required to fix problems with education systems in their province and the remainder are split between support for minor (21%) and major (27%) change. Canadians in all regions are divided and often uncertain about the scale and impact of change in schools over the past ten years. In this context, it's not surprising that they expressed a strong, but temperate appetite for further change.

Canadians share a high satisfaction with teachers.

70% of Canadians share a high level of satisfaction with the jobs teachers are doing in elementary and secondary schools.

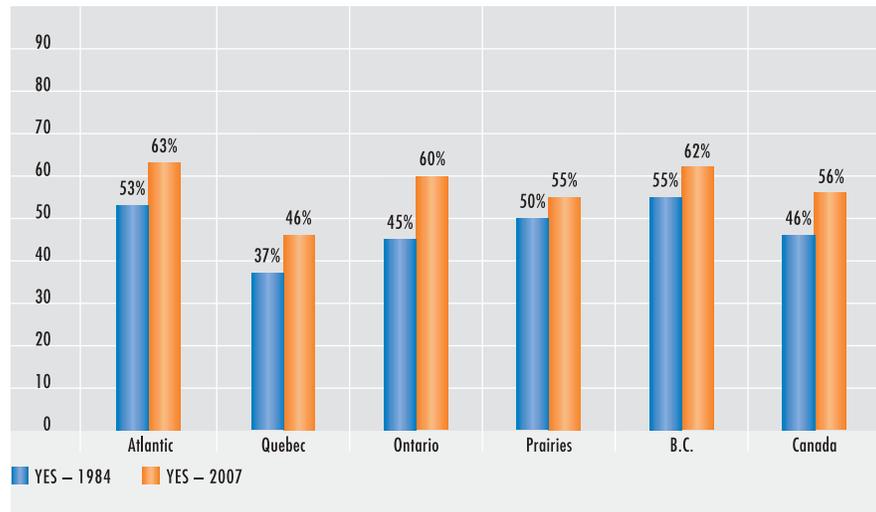
Canadians share a low confidence in the educational policy of provincial governments.

Only 19% of Canadians have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in their provincial governments when it comes to educational policy.

3 CANADIANS SHOW A STRONG COMMITMENT TOWARDS PUBLIC EDUCATION.

A majority of Canadians are willing to pay more taxes to support increased funding to schools.

FIGURE 10: Willingness to pay more taxes (% Yes): 1984-2007 comparison



This majority includes an equal number of adults with and without school aged children. From 1984 to 2007, the proportion of Canadians willing to pay more taxes for public education has increased from 46% to 56%, which is a result that challenges political claims that a majority of Canadians are in favour of tax cuts, at least as far as education is concerned.

Almost three-quarters (72%) of Canadians believe provincial governments should be directing more financial resources to public schools.

This demonstrates that there is a high level of support for increased spending on public education among adults with and without children currently enrolled in elementary and/or secondary school.

Canadians express a strong desire to have a greater say in how schools are run in all regions of the country.

In 2007, more than 60% of residents in every province feel that they have “too little” say in local education decisions. Four out of every ten (41%) Canadians also indicate that they are willing to serve on a local school council.

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