

Elementary–Secondary Education Survey for Canada, the provinces and territories, 2015/2016

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Just over 5 million students in Canada were enrolled in public elementary and secondary school programs in 2015/2016. In the same school year, close to 350,000 students graduated from public high schools.

Enrolments in French immersion programs continued to rise, up 4.6% compared with 2014/2015 to just under 430,000.

Number of public school students stable at over 5 million

The total number of students in Canada's public elementary–secondary programs has remained fairly consistent in recent years. Children in Canada are required by law to attend school from the age of 5 or 6 until the age of 16 or 18 (the ages vary depending on the province/territory), and the vast majority of them attend public school.

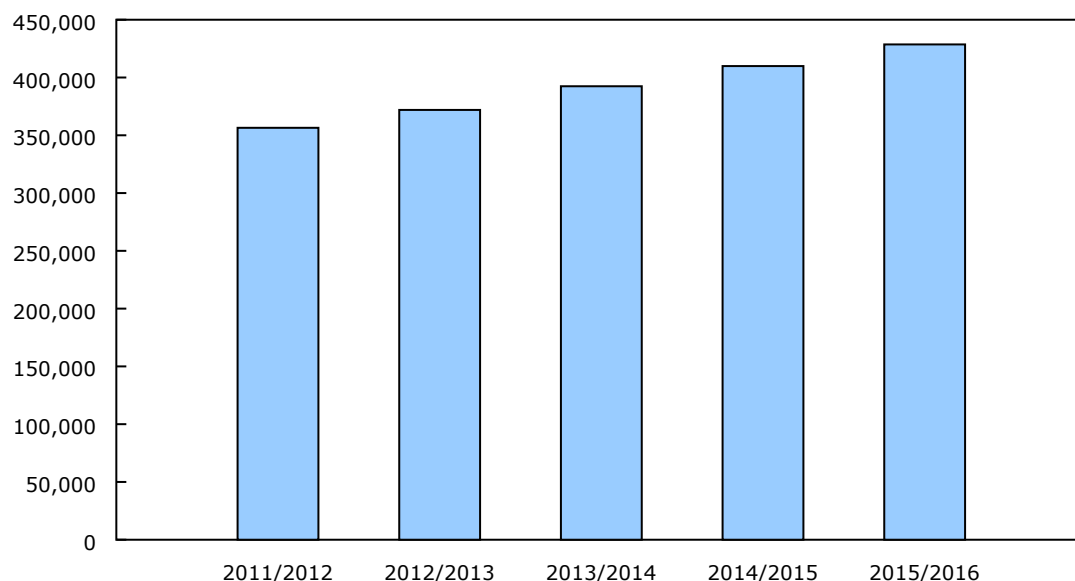
The most recent student count at the Canada level, 5,068,587 in 2015/2016, represents a 0.3% increase compared with 2014/2015. This continues a slight upward trend seen since 2011/2012, which mirrors the increase of the school-aged population over the same period.

Enrolments in French immersion programs rise again

Chart 1

Enrolments in French immersion programs, public elementary and secondary schools, Canada

number of students



Note(s): Quebec and Nunavut do not report enrolments in French immersion programs.

Source(s): CANSIM table 477-0027.



Just under half of the students in public schools across Canada (2,382,693) were learning a second official language in 2015/2016. Among these students, the majority (1,954,068) were enrolled in regular second language programs (core programs with English or French as a subject), down slightly (-0.2%) from the previous school year. The remaining 428,625 students were enrolled in French immersion programs, up 4.6% compared with the 2014/2015 school year, following a trend of similar annual increases since 2011/2012.

Overall, 11 provinces and territories reported student enrolments in both of these official languages programs. Among these, many saw decreased enrolments in core programs (ranging from declines of 1.3% to 4.0%) along with increased enrolments in French immersion programs (ranging from increases of 2.9% to 6.6%).

The types of programs offered in public schools, as well as the points at which students may enroll in them, differ by province/territory.

Little change in the number of public high school graduates

In 2015/2016, 344,295 students graduated from public high schools in Canada, down 0.8% from a year earlier. Although the number of high school graduates varied slightly from 2011/2012 to 2015/2016, around 350,000 graduates were reported for each of the five years.

As with enrolment counts, from year to year, variations in the number of graduates reflect fluctuations in the school-aged population; for example, in the size and distribution of population counts for particular age groups or grades.

Note to readers

The data presented in this release are from the Elementary–Secondary Education Survey (ESES). The ESES is an annual survey that collects aggregate data from each provincial/territorial ministry or department of education. The 2015/2016 ESES, conducted in 2017, collected data for five school years: 2011/2012 to 2015/2016.

The enrolment and graduate counts represent data for programs in Canada's public elementary and secondary schools, as provided by the provinces and territories. The number of students represents those enrolled in elementary–secondary programs at the beginning of the school year (in September or as close as possible thereafter). The number of graduates represents first-time graduates from secondary schools.

The ESES enrolment counts do not include students enrolled in: programs or schools outside the regular system; home-schooling programs; private/independent schools; or schools that are financed by federal departments (for example, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada or National Defence). Manitoba includes its students in Catholic schools under "private/independent," and Nunavut includes its counts for students in home-schooling (typically less than 10) under "public." Due to data quality concerns, the ESES does not publish data on private schools and home-schooling at this time.

Any detailed comparisons between the provinces and territories must be considered with caution because reporting by program category varies by province and territory. While all provinces and territories report enrolments and graduates in regular programs for youth, a few also report students in general programs for adults and/or vocational programs. Data on public school students enrolled in or graduating from regular programs for youth are available in CANSIM tables 477-0025, 477-0037 and 477-0026.

Enrolments in official language programs, as reported by the provinces and territories, are presented for students in: "French immersion programs", or those with French as the language of instruction for students attending English schools throughout Canada; "Regular (core) second language programs", or programs in Canada outside Quebec, where French is taught to students attending English schools as a subject in the regular course offerings, and programs in Quebec, where English is taught to students attending French schools as a subject in the regular course offerings. Information on "First official language programs for the linguistic minority" is also collected; that is, enrolments in programs for students from the official language minority of each province or territory (French outside Quebec, English in Quebec). These programs allow children in the linguistic minority to pursue their education in their first official language. Data on these language programs are available in CANSIM table 477-0027.

All numbers, including the totals, have been rounded; therefore, sums of the values for the provinces/territories may not match the total counts for Canada. Calculations were done using unrounded values. All data are subject to revision.

Table 1
Number of students in public elementary and secondary schools, Canada, provinces and territories

	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016
	number of students				
Canada	5,044,917	5,047,059	5,048,535	5,052,054	5,068,587
Newfoundland and Labrador	67,830	67,476	67,293	67,167	66,654
Prince Edward Island	20,832	20,406	20,130	19,938	19,713
Nova Scotia	125,538	122,643	121,029	119,382	118,152
New Brunswick	102,579	101,079	99,921	98,904	97,911
Quebec ¹	1,172,145	1,176,846	1,183,494	1,187,100	1,196,667
Ontario	2,043,117	2,031,195	2,015,385	2,003,238	1,993,431
Manitoba	178,917	179,292	179,109	179,736	181,023
Saskatchewan ²	166,863	169,725	171,987	174,744	177,246
Alberta	574,908	591,399	608,166	625,668	640,869
British Columbia ²	569,733	564,531	558,981	552,786	553,377
Yukon	5,037	5,049	5,139	5,184	5,220
Northwest Territories	8,511	8,328	8,175	8,319	8,301
Nunavut	8,907	9,087	9,729	9,888	10,026

1. Includes general programs for adults and vocational programs in addition to regular programs for youth.

2. Includes general programs for adults in addition to regular programs for youth.

Note(s): Counts represent the number of students enrolled in programs at the beginning of the school year (in September or as close as possible thereafter). All numbers, including the totals, have been randomly rounded; therefore, sums of the individual values may not match the totals. Data are subject to revision.

Source(s): Elementary-Secondary Education Survey (5102).

Table 2
Number of graduates from public secondary schools, Canada, provinces and territories

	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016
	number of graduates				
Canada	352,938	355,641	353,199	347,220	344,295
Newfoundland and Labrador	4,830	4,677	4,665	4,626	4,593
Prince Edward Island	1,644	1,689	1,641	1,578	1,482
Nova Scotia	9,792	9,552	9,444	9,222	9,903
New Brunswick	7,797	7,719	7,416	7,176	7,269
Quebec ¹	74,079	74,463	76,395	77,061	75,726
Ontario	149,139	151,707	149,502	145,380	142,806
Manitoba ²	12,513	12,555	12,534	11,970	12,165
Saskatchewan ²	10,932	10,929	10,824	10,650	10,758
Alberta	35,745	35,979	36,339	36,411	38,010
British Columbia ²	45,486	45,462	43,461	42,204	40,677
Yukon	336	258	309	315	291
Northwest Territories	405	438	465	417	366
Nunavut	240	216	207	207	252

1. Includes general programs for adults and vocational programs in addition to regular programs for youth.

2. Includes general programs for adults in addition to regular programs for youth.

Note(s): Counts represent the number of first-time graduates. All numbers, including the totals, have been randomly rounded; therefore, sums of the individual values may not match the totals. Data are subject to revision.

Source(s): Elementary-Secondary Education Survey (5102).

Available in CANSIM: tables [477-0025 to 477-0028](#), [477-0037](#) and [477-0039](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5102](#).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).