Elementary and secondary education: Rising student numbers drive record enrolment in Canadian schools, 2023/2024

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Student enrolments continue to climb alongside record population growth

From 2022/2023 to 2023/2024, enrolment in public schools grew by 125,200 in Canada (+2.3%), the largest annual increase since the compilation of student enrolment statistics began in 1997/1998. In 2023/2024, students in Canadian public schools totalled 5.5 million.

Alberta (+3.6%) and New Brunswick (+3.4%) recorded the strongest growth in public school enrolments in 2023/2024. This increase coincided with substantial growth in their school-aged populations (4 to 17 years); school-aged populations rose by 3.4% in Alberta and by 4.0% in New Brunswick.

These results mirror significant demographic shifts over the same period. In 2023, Canada's population grew by 3.2%, the fastest rate since 1957, reaching 40.8 million by January 1, 2024. Nearly all (97.6%) of this growth came from international migration, including 471,771 permanent residents and more than 800,000 non-permanent residents, such as workers and students as well as their families.

Interprovincial migration also played a role in shaping enrolment patterns in 2023/2024. For the third consecutive year, more than 300,000 Canadians relocated across provincial or territorial borders. Nationally, Alberta experienced the largest gain in interprovincial migration since comparable data became available in 1972, adding 55,107 people to their population in 2023/2024. This influx has contributed to the rapid increase in school-aged children in the province and the corresponding growth in public school enrolment. In contrast, Ontario recorded the largest net loss of over 36,000 people, which offset some of the enrolment growth driven by the record net flow of non-permanent residents during the same period.

Educator workforce growing, with educators aged 55 years and older making up a larger share

In 2023/2024, Canada's public elementary and secondary schools employed just over 422,000 educators, continuing a steady upward trend that has accompanied growth in student enrolments. Compared with five years earlier (2018/2019), the educator workforce rose by 5.2% in 2023/2024.

The evolving age profile of teachers is among the most notable changes in this workforce. Educators aged 55 years and older represented 13.8% of the national teaching force in 2023/2024, up from 12.9% five years earlier. This trend mirrors broader shifts in Canada's labour market, in which the number of Canadians aged 55 years and older in the labour force has grown by 178% since 2000, more than doubling its share of the labour force from 10.4% in 2000 to 21.2% in 2023.

Downward trend in French immersion and minority language enrolments extends into 2023/2024

In 2023/2024, enrolments in French immersion programs as a share of total enrolments fell to 11.6%, extending the declines that began after the peak of 12.3% in 2020/2021. While the pace of decline varied across provinces and territories, almost all continued reporting decreases, apart from the Northwest Territories, where the share of enrolments in French immersion rose from 11.8% in 2022/2023 to 12.4% in 2023/2024.

Minority official language programs, distinct from immersion programs, also saw their share of student enrolments shrink. Outside Quebec, enrolments declined slightly to 4.3% of total enrolments in 2023/2024, down from a peak of 4.4% in 2020/2021. In Quebec, the share of students in minority official language programs declined for the second consecutive year, falling from a peak of 11.1% in the early 2000s to 8.2% in 2023/2024, reaching an all-time low.

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Note to readers

The data in this release are from the Elementary-Secondary Education Survey (ESES). Conducted each year, the ESES collects aggregate information from the education ministries or departments across all provinces and territories.

The enrolment counts represent data for programs in Canada's public and private or independent elementary and secondary schools, as well as for homeschooled students, as provided by the provinces and territories. The number of students represents those enrolled in elementary and secondary programs at the beginning of the school year (in September or as close as possible thereafter).

Any detailed comparisons between provinces and territories should be approached with caution, as reporting practices by school type and program vary across jurisdictions.

All numbers, including the totals, have been randomly rounded; therefore, sums of the values for the provinces and territories may not add up to the total counts for Canada. All data are subject to revision.

Available tables: 37-10-0007-01 to 37-10-0009-01 , 37-10-0019-01, 37-10-0078-01, 37-10-0109-01, 37-10-0111-01, 37-10-0153-01, 37-10-0173-01 to 37-10-0179-01 , 37-10-0213-01 and 37-10-0214-01.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 5102.

To further explore 2022/2023 data on enrolments and graduates in a visual format, refer to the comprehensive data visualization tool "Elementary to Postsecondary Student Education Dashboard: Enrolments, Graduations and Tuition Fees."

This comprehensive data visualization tool combines information from three surveys: Tuition and Living Accommodation Costs, Elementary-Secondary Education Survey and the Postsecondary Student Information System. Each survey is released separately, and information includes the cost of tuition, an overview of total enrolment and graduation counts, characteristics of students and programs, as well as details on new enrolments by gender, age group and student status.

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; **infostats@statcan.gc.ca**) or Media Relations (**statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca**).