



## **Commentary on *Education Indicators in Canada: An International Perspective (2012)***

*Canadian Teachers' Federation  
Research & Information*

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Canadian Teachers' Federation  
Fédération canadienne des enseignantes et des enseignants



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The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has just released its *Education at a Glance 2012* report, an annual review of education systems in OECD member countries including Canada. The 565-page report contains a broad range of comparable national education indicators.

As the OECD report states, the global education and economic landscapes are undergoing rapid change spurred by three major factors: continued ascent of the knowledge-based economy, explosive growth of higher education worldwide, and more recently the full onset of the global recession in 2009 and 2010.

The Canadian data in this latest OECD report are broken down in more detail by province and territory in a companion report, *Education Indicators in Canada: An International Perspective (2012)*, produced by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) and Statistics Canada. The reports were released simultaneously.

The indicators in the *Education Indicators in Canada* report, harmonized with a selection of indicators from the OECD report, are grouped into four categories:

1. ***The output of educational institutions and the impact of learning***, profiles educational attainment among the adult population. It also presents information on graduation rates at the upper secondary level and on relationships between educational attainment and labour market outcomes.
2. ***Financial resources invested in education***, focuses on expenditure on education. This information is presented both in terms of expenditure per student and expenditure in relation to the overall amount of resources in a country (or province or territory) as measured by GDP. The proportions of current and capital expenditures are also outlined.
3. ***Access to education, participation and progression***, explores the extent of international student enrolment in college and university programs in Canada and its provinces and territories, and how this has changed over time. Several aspects of the transition from education to the labour force are examined, including the extent to which young adults are neither employed nor in education.
4. ***The learning environment and organization of schools***, reports on the amount of time students must, in principle, spend in class as established by public regulations. It also presents information on key aspects of working environments for elementary and secondary school teachers: teaching time (as determined by policy) in the context of total working time, and salary.

These are among the highlights from the report (Source: *The Daily*, Statistics Canada, Sept. 11, 2012):

- In 2010, 92% of Canadian adults aged 25-34 had completed at least a high school education, compared with 82% for those aged 55-64. These rates were higher than the average for the 34 member countries of the OECD, where 82% of adults aged 25-34 and 62% of those aged 55-64 had attained at least a secondary school education.
- Upper secondary graduation rates for females were higher than those for males in most provinces and territories, as well as in most of the OECD countries for which comparable data were available. In Canada, the rate for females was 84%; the rate for males, 77%.
- In Canada, 26% of adults aged 25-64 had completed a university education, higher than the 22% average for the OECD countries.
- The employment rate in Canada for adults aged 25-64 who had completed college or university programs was 81% in 2010, compared with 72% for those who completed secondary school and 55% for those who had not completed high school. The overall OECD employment rates were quite similar.
- In 2010, about 44% of Canada's young adults aged 15-29 were still pursuing some form of education. The most recent average for the OECD countries was slightly higher, at 47%.
- In Canada, close to 14% of young adults aged 15-29 were considered to be in the so-called "NEET" group – those people not in employment, education or training. This proportion compares with an OECD average of approximately 16%. Young Canadians with college or university education were less likely to be in the NEET group (about 10%).
- Canada devoted just over 6% of its gross domestic product (GDP) to educational institutions in 2008, about the same as the OECD overall. About 40% of that share of GDP in Canada was spent on post-secondary education, the highest such allocation among the OECD countries. The United States was close behind at 36%.
- Spending per student for secondary education in Canada averaged \$11,489 in 2008/2009, 7% higher than the average per student for primary education (\$10,758).
- At the primary and secondary level in Canada, the compensation of teachers accounted for the largest share of current expenditure, a situation common to all other OECD countries. Starting salaries for teachers in every province and territory were similar for all levels taught. They were also higher than the corresponding OECD averages.
- School teachers in Canada teach a few more hours than their counterparts in the OECD at each level of schooling. In 2009/2010, primary school teachers taught an average of 799 hours per year compared with the OECD average of 782 hours. At the secondary level, teaching time in Canada was about 740 hours.

- Roughly 100,000 international students were registered in post-secondary programs in Canada in 2009, nearly twice the number in 2001. Students from Asia accounted for 59% of all international students in Canada. In the OECD, Asian students accounted for 51% of international students.

For teachers' organizations these reports raise a number of issues.

*Education Indicators in Canada: An International Perspective* was created using international definitions comparable to the accompanying OECD *Education at a Glance 2012* report. After reviewing the document, we continue to have some questions and concerns regarding the methodology and use of some of the reported data, including teacher working hours and salaries (see Appendix for details on salaries).

In general while the education indicators for Canada provide a somewhat broader picture of the quality of Canada's education system than can be provided by large-scale test score data, there tends to be a bias in these reports toward indicators that represent economic and labour market outcomes for education. Ed Hancock, speaking at the 2012 CTF President's Forum on the teacher perspective on quality in education, emphasized the need for a much broader range of outcomes indicators in education as well as indicators of inputs that measure a range of teaching and learning conditions, and indicators of processes that capture the classroom experience.

Education International in its analysis of the OECD report has this caution about the austerity agenda applied to education:

Burgeoning national debt, spurred by governments' responses to the financial crisis of late 2008, has put pressure on policy makers to reduce government expenditure – particularly on public payrolls. The [OECD] report acknowledges that even if teachers' salaries represent the largest single cost in school education, policy makers should consider very carefully teachers' salaries as they look both for sustaining quality of education and balanced budget.

There is an ongoing obsession with producing more and more data to compare and rank national education systems, and with systems using this data to compete against each other in the "global race to the top in education". The thrust of the CMEC press release on the report is that while the education indicators for Canada show that we are doing well – "Canada is not only a world leader in education, but ... its education outcomes continue to improve" – we cannot be satisfied about these outcomes or become complacent as our national competitors in "the global race to the top in education" are catching up.

The OECD *Education at a Glance* report (and the harmonization of OECD education indicators with those for Canada) is another powerful tool in the OECD arsenal, which includes PISA and TALIS to name two, for increasing its influence over national education policy. In its initial analysis of the report Education International notes that "the priorities, defined by OECD, may or may not correspond to the priorities of teaching professionals."

## Appendix

### Methodological Issues re: Teacher Salaries

#### *Teacher classification issues*

The description on page 87 indicates that the teacher salaries reported “...reflect salaries for teachers with the minimum training required for certification in public elementary and secondary educational institutions.” The statement on page 88 also states: that “In general, the national and provincial/territorial salary figures reflect the gross yearly salary for a full-time teacher with the minimum training necessary to be fully qualified at the beginning of a teaching career”.

The issue of teacher qualification equivalency across jurisdictions is complex, and views may vary regarding the appropriate salary categories to compare. Examining salaries of teachers with comparable level of qualifications is essential in order to make valid and reliable comparisons given that salaries will vary based not only on years of experience but also relative to their level of teacher qualifications/educational attainment.

The CTF typically reports salary comparisons based upon maximum and minimum salaries on the grid, most populated categories, or categories representing equivalent qualifications and experience. This is to ensure that teachers' salaries are comparable across jurisdictions within stated criteria. When examining salaries for teachers with minimum qualifications, CTF typically focuses its comparisons on teachers with 5 years post-secondary education. The CMEC/Statistics Canada joint publication level, however, is generally reporting Ontario and Western provinces based on teachers with 4 years of post-secondary education, while the Atlantic provinces and Quebec are being reported based on teachers with 5 years of post-secondary education.

The problem is related to the fact that provincial Ministries of Education are asked to report salaries for full-time teachers with the minimum training required for certification. Each province reports the data for the category that they deem to be appropriate. Differences in reporting methodologies across jurisdictions impact data comparability. In some cases, more than one salary category could theoretically be reported. The lowest possible category could be reported, regardless of how infrequent that category may actually be entered into by teachers, or they may report the category where most teachers typically enter the teaching force.

It is evident from the published data, that this report does not compare teachers with equivalent levels of qualifications. This may provide the reader with an erroneous impression of actual salaries earned by teachers across the country. The report, for example, shows Ontario starting salaries [\$42,030 for ISCED 1 (primary education) & ISCED 2 (lower secondary)] to be the lowest behind only Quebec and British Columbia. (See table attached.)

The typical starting salaries in effect on September 1, 2009 in Ontario for teachers with 5 years of post-secondary education (Category A2 or A3) would rank much higher than reported in the publication. The \$42,030 figure from Ontario would, in our opinion represent a teacher in Ontario Category A or A1. These categories are used for teachers with less than 5 years of post-secondary study and are thus not comparable.

### *Timing of the data*

The salary data are indicated to be for 2009/10. In general, the data reported are salary data effective September 1, 2009. However, in the case of Quebec, a 10 month weighted average of two salary grids effective April 1, 2009 and April 1, 2010 respectively. In contrast, for New Brunswick and Manitoba, where multiple grids were in effect over the school year examined, the September 1, 2009 salary is reported rather than a weighted average. Given that the salary is a point in time reference it does not take into account the respective increase that occurred in that school year in these two jurisdictions after September 1, 2009.

### *Inconsistencies in the coverage of salaries*

There appear to be inconsistencies in the coverage of salaries where local agreements exist. In Ontario salaries are said to represent the midpoint of a range that is funded by the province (the provincially funded grid). In Manitoba and Alberta averages in all jurisdictions were used and in British Columbia only one school district (Surrey) was used.

Although the minimum requirements for entry into teaching were reported to be used as the basis for comparing salaries there was no indication of the actual salary category used for each jurisdiction.

Although salary data were included for the Yukon and the Northwest Territories (stated as unavailable for Nunavut), they were excluded from the Canada average salary due to a lack of demographic data on educators.

### *CTF's role*

The CTF was invited to a pre-release embargoed examination of the report a week prior to its official release. We expressed, as we did the previous year, our concerns and requested that the salary category used for each jurisdiction be indicated in the publication. We were also informed by Statistics Canada that the data for next year's issue of the publication have already been submitted. CTF will continue to make efforts to ensure that data reported in the publication are accurate and comparable.

### *Changes since last year's publication*

Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island are now reporting salary data based on 5 years post-secondary rather than 4 years post-secondary, making it more consistent with the other two Atlantic provinces and with CTF methodology. Moreover, Saskatchewan salary data are now present and included in the national data after being excluded last year.

**Minimum Entry Level Salaries Reported by CMEC/Statistics Canada<sup>1</sup> in Table D2.1  
in the September 2012 Publication Entitled "Education Indicators in Canada:  
An International Perspective, 2012", Compared to Statistics Compiled  
by the Canadian Teachers' Federation**

Territory	Collective Agreement	CTF Methodology <sup>2</sup> – 5 Years Post-Sec.		CMEC/Statistics Canada Methodology <sup>3</sup>		Difference  CMEC vs CTF Methodology
		Category <sup>4</sup>	Minimum Salary (\$)	Category	Minimum Salary (\$)	
N.L.	Provincial	V	\$47,306	V	\$47,306	\$0
P.E.I.	Provincial	CV	\$46,206	CV	\$46,206	\$0
N.S.	Provincial	ITC	\$47,074	ITC	\$47,074	\$0
N.B.	Provincial	CV	\$45,511	CV	\$45,511	(A) \$0
Que.	Provincial	Single Scale (Year 3)	\$39,179	Single Scale (Year 3)	\$39,238	(B) \$59
Ont.	AEFO (Est publique)	A3	\$49,132	Unknown (possibly A or A1)	\$42,030 for ISCED 1 (Primary Education) and ISCED 2 (Lower Secondary Education) \$42,440 for ISCED 3 (Upper Secondary Education)	(C)
	ETFO (Ottawa-Carleton)	A3	\$49,422			
	ETFO (Toronto)	A3	\$47,826			
	OECTA (Dufferin-Peel Secondary)	A3	\$50,701			
	OECTA (London)	A3	\$46,021			
Man.	Winnipeg	5	\$50,608	IV	\$49,986	(D) -\$622
Sask.	Provincial	V	\$49,051	IV	\$46,419	-\$2,632
Alta.	Calgary Public	E	\$56,730	Unknown (possibly D/Cat 4)	\$53,838	(E)
	Edmonton Public	5	\$57,150			
B.C.	Surrey School District #36	5/PB	\$45,009	4/PC	\$41,963	(F) -\$3,046
Yn.	Territorial	V	\$63,002	IV	\$58,546	-\$4,456
N.W.T.	G.N.W.T. <sup>5</sup>	5	\$69,502	4	\$66,022	-\$3,480
Nun.	Territorial	5	\$64,808	Not Available	Not Available	-

- <sup>1</sup> Note that CMEC/StatsCan report the same figures for ISCED 1 (Primary), ISCED 2 (Lower Secondary) and ISCED 3 (Upper Secondary) for all jurisdictions. The only exception is the figure for ISCED 3 in Ontario which is reported to be slightly different from the ISCED 1 and ISCED 2 figure for that province.
- <sup>2</sup> CTF methodology based on the pay category for a teacher with 5 years of post-secondary education, in effect September 1, 2009.
- <sup>3</sup> CMEC/Statistics Canada methodology is reported to be based on the minimum entry level salaries for teachers with minimum training required for certification in public elementary and secondary educational institutions in effect on September 1, 2009.
- <sup>4</sup> Typical entry level categories for a teacher with 5 years of post-secondary education. These are the same categories used for comparison in the *Economic and Member Services Bulletin on Teacher Certification (EMSB 2008-3)*.
- <sup>5</sup> Applies to teachers outside Yellowknife. Teachers in the Yellowknife Public and Catholic School Districts each have separate salary scales.
- (A) CMEC/StatsCan data for NB shows the Sept. 1, 2009 figure of \$45,511. The methodology differs from 10 month weighted average in Quebec.  
**IF** the same 10 month weighted average methodology was used for NB the figure would be \$45,877 and the Winnipeg figure would be: \$50,805. Based on NB figures: Sept. 1, 2009=\$45,511 and March 1, 2010=\$46,425 and Winnipeg figures: Sept. 1, 2009=\$50,608 and Jan. 1, 2010=\$50,937.
- (B) For Quebec CMEC used a 10 month weighted average: April 1, 2009=\$39,179 and April 1, 2010=\$39,375.
- (C) CMEC/StatsCan figures for Ontario are said to represent the midpoint of a range that is funded by the province (the provincially funded grid).
- (D) CMEC/StatsCan figures for Manitoba are said to be the gross annual salaries based on the average of all of the school divisions.
- (E) CMEC/StatsCan figures for Alberta are reported to be based on the average of all school boards weighted on the student population in each school board.
- (F) CMEC/StatsCan figures for BC are based on the Surrey School district, which they indicate is the largest school district in the province. Note that Vancouver is the usual district examined by CTF for salary data and for salary category 5 the minimum salary was \$47,141 as at September 1, 2009.