**The Canada School Choice Policy Index**

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**List of Indicators Covered in the Index:**

1. Homeschool

2. Independent School

3. State-delivered Religious Education

4. State-delivered Minority Language Education

5. Indigenous Education

6. Charter School

7. Choice within Public Education System

8. Accredited International School

**Provinces Covered in the Index:**

1. British Columbia (BC)

2. Alberta (AB)

3. Saskatchewan (SK)

4. Manitoba (MB)

5. Ontario (ON)

6. Quebec (QC)

7. Newfoundland & Labrador (NL)

8. New Brunswick (NB)

9. Nova Scotia (NS)

10. Prince Edward Island (PEI)

**Time Span of Index: 1980-2020**

**Indicator Measures:**

**1. Homeschool**

**Permitted:** The province allows for parents to enroll their children in a home education program.

**Funded:** Home education programs in the province receive financial aid from the provincial government.

**Regulated:** Home education programs in the province must adhere to provincial government regulations. School credential is/is not obtainable through homeschooling.

**2. Independent School**

**Permitted:** The province allows for the establishment and operation of independent schools.

**Funded:** The province provides financial aid to independent schools.

**Regulated:** Independent schools in the province must adhere to provincial government regulations.

**3. State-delivered Religious Education**

**Permitted:** The provincial government provides religiously-based education programs.

**Regulated:** Religiously-based education programs must adhere to provincial government regulations.

**Religious Observance:** Religious education institutions permit faith-based practices during the school day.

**4. State-delivered Minority Language Education**

**Permitted:** The provincial government provides minority language education programs.

**Regulated:** Minority language education programs must adhere to provincial government regulations.

**Separate Board:** Minority language schools operate independent school boards.

**5. Indigenous Education**

**Permitted:** The province allows for the establishment and operation of Indigenous education programs.

**Funded:** The province provides financial aid to Indigenous education programs in addition to the funds provided to Indigenous schools by the federal government.

**Separate Board:** Indigenous schools operate independent school boards.

**6. Charter School**

**Permitted:** The province allows for the establishment and operation of charter schools.

**Funded:** The province provides financial aid to charter schools.

**Regulated:** Charter schools in the province must adhere to provincial government regulations.

**7. Choice within Public Education System**

**Open Enrollment:** The province allows for parents to enroll their children in public schools outside of their catchment area.

**Optional Attendance with Selective Admission:** The province allows for schools operating in the public education system to establish specific admission requirements.

**Specialty Programs/Schools:** The province allows for schools operating in the public education system to provide specialized curricula to their pupils.

**8. Accredited International School/Program**

**Permitted:** The province allows for the establishment and operation of overseas schools and education programs.

**Regulated:** Overseas schools and education programs must adhere to provincial government regulations.

**School Credential Obtainable:** Students enrolled in overseas schools and/or education programs are eligible to receive provincially-certified high school diplomas upon graduation.

**Scoring System:**

Each of the eight indicators is scored out of a total of 3 points reflecting the three measures for each indicator where 0 represents the lowest score for each measure and 1 represents the highest, with 0.25 (minimal), 0.50 (partial), and 0.75 (high) scores as in-between scores.

The “permitted” measure for the relevant indicators is scored with either a 0 (not permitted) or a 1 (permitted) based on whether an indicator is offered within a given province. Partial scores are not used for this measure.

The “funded” measure for the relevant indicators uses partial scores and requires certain thresholds to be met before a score is assigned. If a given indicator is not provided with any funding by provincial governments, it is given a score of 0, if it receives funding up to 25% of that given to schools in the public system, it is given a score of 0.25, if it receives up to 50% funding, it is given a score of 0.50, if it receives up to 75% funding, it is given a score of 0.75, and if it receives higher than 75% funding, it is given a score of 1.

The “regulated” measure is scored in the same fashion as the “funded” measure though partial scores here represent changes to previous legislation or the introduction of new legislation which increase or decrease the degree of choice given to families. However, for the scoring system to accurately reflect the degree of choice available to parents with higher scores on the indicators representing more choice and lower scores less choice, the scoring for the “regulated” measure for the relevant indicators is inversed. Unlike the other measures then, this means that a score of 1 in this measure means that the indicator in question is fully unregulated (indicating the most freedom and choice) and a score of 0 means that the indicator is fully regulated (indicating the least freedom and choice).

There are also several measures which are unique to specific indicators which do not use partial scores and are scored with either a 0 or a 1. These include the “religious observance” measure, the “separate board” measure, the “open enrollment” measure, the “optional attendance with selective admission” measure, the “specialty programs/schools” measure, and the “school credential obtainable” measure.

Each decade between 1980-2020 for the respective provinces has been given a score for each indicator between 0 and 3. Each province has also been given a total “school choice” score consisting of the sum of the scores for all indicators for a given decade. The maximum score possible for each province across all eight indicators is 24 for any given decade.

The scoring rubric is as follows for all measures except the “regulated” measure:

0: No/None

0.25: Minimal

0.50: Partial

0.75: High

1: Yes/Full

The scoring rubric is as follows for the “regulated” measure:

0: Fully Regulated

0.25: Highly Regulated

0.50: Partially Regulated

0.75: Minimally Regulated

1: Fully Unregulated

**Sources of Data:**

The data collected for this index span a diverse set of sources which include but are not limited to legislation, provincial budgets, parliamentary debates and speeches, news/media reports, academic research, research conducted by third parties including think tanks and both for-profit and non-profit organizations, government reports and research conducted by grassroots organizations and advocacy groups. Significant effort has been put in obtaining as much data as possible for each indicator and province in question from as many diverse sources of information as possible for the period of time under study. Given that the aim of this index is to present a broad overview of trends pertaining to school choice across the provinces from the 1980s to 2020, it is important to note that there are specific indicators for specific instances of time for which data are sparse relative to others. Future revisions of this index can work on filling such gaps wherever possible.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Homeschool /3** | **Independent School /3** | **State-delivered Religious Education /3** | **State-delivered Minority Language Education /3** | **Indigenous Education /3** | **Charter School /3** | **Choice within Public Education System /3** | **Accredited International School /3** | **Total School Choice Score by Decade /24** |
| **BC**1980s1990s2000s2010s2020 | 1.752222 | 21.751.751.751.75 | 00000 | 1.752.52.52.52.5 | 111.51.751.75 | 00000 | 22333 | 002.52.52.5 | 8.59.2513.2513.513.5 |
| **AB**1980s1990s2000s2010s2020 | 1.751.51.51.51.5 | 2.252.252.252.252.25 | 2.52.52.52.752.75 | 1.52.52.52.52.5 | 1.251.251.251.51.5 | 02.52.52.52.5 | 33333 | 002.252.252.25 | 12.2515.517.7518.2518.25 |
| **SK**1980s1990s2000s2010s2020 | 21.51.51.51.5 | 2.252222 | 2.752.52.52.52.5 | 1.752.52.52.52.5 | 1.251.251.251.51.5 | 00000 | 22222 | 00000 | 1211.7511.751212 |
| **MB**1980s1990s2000s2010s2020 | 1.751.51.51.51.5 | 1.752222 | 00000 | 1.752.52.52.52.5 | 11.251.252.52.5 | 00000 | 23333 | 002.52.52.5 | 8.2510.2512.751414 |
| **ON**1980s1990s2000s2010s2020 | 1.751.751.751.751.75 | 1.751.751.751.751.75 | 2.752.752.752.752.75 | 1.752.752.752.752.75 | 11.251.251.251.25 | 00000 | 22222 | 02.52.52.52.5 | 1114.7514.7514.7514.75 |
| **QC**1980s1990s2000s2010s2020 | 1.51.51.251.251.25 | 22222 | 2.7511.251.251.25 | 1.252.252.252.52.5 | 11.251.251.251.25 | 00000 | 33333 | 00000 | 11.5111111.2511.25 |
| **NL**1980s1990s2000s2010s2020 | 11.751.751.751.75 | 21.51.51.51.5 | 31.51.51.51.5 | 22.752.752.752.75 | 111.51.51.5 | 00000 | 02222 | 00000 | 910.5111111 |
| **NB**1980s1990s2000s2010s2020 | 1.751.51.51.51.5 | 1.751.751.751.751.75 | 00000 | 2.752.52.52.52.5 | 111.51.51.5 | 00000 | 12222 | 02.52.52.52.5 | 8.2511.2511.7511.7511.75 |
| **NS**1980s1990s2000s2010s2020 | 1.751.51.51.51.5 | 1.751.51.51.51.5 | 00000 | 1.752.52.52.52.5 | 1111.51.5 | 00000 | 22222 | 002.52.52.5 | 8.258.51111.511.5 |
| **PEI**1980s1990s2000s2010s2020 | 1.751.51.51.751.75 | 1.751.51.51.51.5 | 00000 | 1.752.52.52.52.5 | 1111.251.25 | 00000 | 22222 | 02.52.52.52.5 | 8.25111111.511.5 |

**British Columbia:**

**1. Homeschool:**

**Permitted:**

Although homeschooling took place in the province in the 1980s, it became significantly easier as a result of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) which officially laid out the parent’s rights to educate their children at home according to their own beliefs.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Division 4 of the School Act (1996) establishes homeschooling as educational programs provided to a child by a parent which are not supervised by a qualified teacher.

The province also distinguishes between homeschooling and distributed learning. Distributed learning programs/courses are instructed by qualified teachers who are certified by the British Columbia Ministry of Education; parents who wish to homeschool their children must register their child with a local public or independent school board.[[2]](#footnote-2)

**Funded:**

Provincial funding grants to registered homeschoolers are sent to the registering school and not to parents.[[3]](#footnote-3) Public schools are given $250 per pupil who is registered as being homeschooled; independent school authorities that register homeschooled pupils receive $175 for each registered homeschooled child.[[4]](#footnote-4)

According to Van Pelt (2015), the BC Grant for Home School Children Order establishes that a Group 1 or Group 2 independent school that registers a child as a homeschooled pupil will receive $175 for the student (Van Pelt 2015). As well, the Distributed Learning Policy for Homeschoolers provides $600 to independent educational providers for the resources needed for homeschooled students in Grades 10 to 12 who enrol in at least one distributed learning course (Van Pelt 2015).

When a student is registered as a homeschooled pupil, an amount of $150-$250 dollars can be claimed without any conditions.[[5]](#footnote-5) When a student enrols, they are classified as a distance learner and gain access to greater levels of funding; this funding is subject to conditions, the key one being the requirement to fulfill the BC provincial Learning Outcomes.[[6]](#footnote-6)

**Regulated:**

The 1989 Independent School Act requires families schooling their children at home to register with the province and to have their program inspected by the Minister (Barman 1991).

According to Van Pelt (2015), the regulations surrounding homeschooling programs in the province are minimal (Van Pelt 2015). British Columbia can therefore be categorized as a low-regulation province for this indicator; the key regulation to which parents must adhere is to notify the province of their intent to homeschool their child (Van Pelt 2015).

Home education programs in the province do not require provincial approval of their programs and do not need to follow the provincial public school curriculum (Bosetti & Van Pelt 2017).

Home education programs are not monitored by either local public or independent schools (Van Pelt 2015). These programs are also not required to hold examinations and assessments but are free to do so (Van Pelt 2015). As well, graduation diplomas/certificates are not given to students who complete a home education program; thus, homeschooled students in the province are not eligible to be given the BC Graduation Dogwood Diploma upon completing their programs (Van Pelt 2015).

Students in Grades 10-12 who are being homeschooled can choose to enrol in a distributed learning school or program.[[7]](#footnote-7) Doing so will allow for the completion of credits towards the BC high school diploma.[[8]](#footnote-8) Enrolling in distributed learning courses allows homeschooled students to be instructed by BC-certified teachers; students enrolled in these programs are visited on a regular basis by teachers and must also submit portfolios of their work three times every year.[[9]](#footnote-9)

**Homeschool Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1.75/3

1990s: 2/3

2000s: 2/3

2010s: 2/3

2020: 2/3

**2. Independent School:**

**Permitted:**

Since 1977, independent schools in the province have been officially recognized by the government as a result of the Independent Schools Support Act (Banack & Farney forthcoming).

The regulations governing independent schools are laid out in the Independent School Act and the Independent School Regulations.

According to the Federation of Independent Schools Association (FISA BC), the authority administering an independent school must register the school with the Ministry of Education and operate the school in adherence to the terms established in the Independent School Act.[[10]](#footnote-10)

**Funded:**

In order to be given funding from the provincial government, Group 1 and Group 2 independent schools are required to register as non-profit entities; in contrast, Group 3 and Group 4 schools do not have this requirement and are not provided with any funding from the province (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

The School Support Act of 1977 established two levels of per-pupil funding for independent schools; to qualify for the lower tier of 10% of the funding given to public schools, independent schools were required to meet the demand that their educational programs did not promote intolerance of racial and religious diversity and that their main facilities were well-maintained (Barman 1991). In order for schools to be eligible for the upper tier of 30% funding, independent schools were required to offer the same educational programs being offered by public schools, employ qualified teachers, take part in provincial assessments, and establish themselves as non-profit entities (Barman 1991).

According to The Report of the Commission on Private Schools in Ontario, Group 1 schools in BC received around 9% of the per-pupil funding provided to local public schools and Group 2 schools received around 30% throughout the 1980s (Shapiro 1985).

The province implemented a new Independent School Act in 1989. This act raised funding levels for independent schools to 50% of that given to public schools (Barman 1991). A middle tier of funding at 35% was kept for independent schools whose operating costs were higher than those of local public schools; finally, the lowest tier of funding at 10% was left unchanged (Barman 1991).

With the passage of this 1989 Act, Group 1 schools referred to those which were required to adhere to regulations including the adoption of provincial curriculum guidelines, assessment guidelines, and the employing of province-certified teachers; in turn, these schools received 50% of the per-pupil costs of the local public school in the area provided that their operating costs were lower than these schools (Banack & Farney forthcoming).

Group 2 schools referred to those schools whose operating costs exceeded the local public schools’; these schools were provided with a 35% funding grant (Banack & Farney forthcoming).

Today, independent schools in the province receive between 35-50% funding (Clemens et al. 2017).

**Regulated:**

According to the BC Ministry of Education, independent schools that did receive provincial funding from 1977 to 1989 were regulated to a lesser degree; it was not until 1989 when the Independent School Act (ISA) required independent schools both funded and unfunded to abide by a specific set of regulations (Ministry of Education 2011).

It was the 1989 Independent School Act which increased provincial control of independent school for the first time (Barman 1991). Any independent school which enrolled ten or more students was required to register with the province and undergo an inspection (Barman 1991).

As outlined by Van pelt et al. (2017), all funded independent schools in BC must teach the provincial curriculum and employ teachers who are certified; such schools must also participate in provincial assessments and are subject to inspection (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

The Independent School Act and the Independent Schools Regulations outline the guidelines to which independent schools in the province must adhere. Although there are regulations to which all independent schools must adhere, there are also differences between schools in Groups 1-4.

According to Van Pelt et al. (2017), Group 1 schools must abide by the largest set of regulations (Van Pelt et al. 2017). Such schools must be operated by a non-profit authority, must employ teachers who are certified by the Teacher Regulation Branch, must meet provincial graduation requirements, must satisfy inspectors that they are providing adequate education to their pupils, must take part in provincial assessments, must have operating costs equal to or lower than those of public schools, must be run by a principal who is a province-certified teacher, and must submit to regular inspections on a bi-annual basis (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

Group 2 schools must adhere to the same set of regulations as Group 1 schools with the exception of needing to have an equal or lower operating cost as compared to public schools (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

Group 3 schools are unfunded and therefore do not need their instructors to be certified by the province nor are they required to have educational curricula that are consistent with the curricula of schools in the public system (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

Group 4 schools are also not funded and largely cater to out-of-province students. They must meet the same educational program requirements as Group 1 schools and their graduates are eligible to receive a BC graduation diploma so long as the teachers employed at such schools are certified by the province (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

Section 4 of the Independent School Act outlines the key requirements that must be met by independent schools before being certified as Group 1-4 schools. According to the Act, educational programs proposed at independent schools cannot promote any form of racial/ethnic superiority, religious intolerance, or advocate violent means of achieving social ends (Independent School Act). Independent school facilities must abide by the rules of the province and the municipality in which the facilities are located and must abide by the regulations laid out in the Independent School Act (Independent School Act).

**Independent School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 2/3

1990s: 1.75/3

2000s: 1.75/3

2010s: 1.75/3

2020: 1.75/3

**3. State-delivered Religious Education:**

**Permitted: N/A**

**Regulated: N/A**

**Religious Observance: N/A**

**State-delivered Religious Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 0/3

1990s: 0/3

2000s: 0/3

2010s: 0/3

2020: 0/3

**4. State-delivered Minority Language Education:**

**Permitted:**

The first public French-language school in the province was opened in 1983 but it was not until 1989 when the Education Act, for the first time, was amended to include a clause specifically defining the rights of French-speaking parents pertaining to the province’s education system.[[11]](#footnote-11)

It was in 1995 that the province of BC established the Francophone Education Authority or the L’Autorité Scolaire Francophone as a separate French-language school board operating inside the public school system.[[12]](#footnote-12)

In 1997, an amendment to the Education Act (Bill 45) officially recognized the rights of Francophones in issues of education in the province; in 1999, the L’Autorité Scolaire Francophone was given jurisdiction for French education programs over the entire province.[[13]](#footnote-13)

The Education Act outlines that children of francophone background whose parents are qualified for minority language rights under the Charter are permitted to receive their education in French (Education Act).

BC offers four types of French education programs for students: Core French, Intensive French, French Immersion, and Francophone Program.[[14]](#footnote-14)

**Regulated:**

The School Act (1996) puts the establishment of Francophone education authorities under the discretion of the Lieutenant Governor in Council and permits them to establish, change the boundaries of, and/or abolish the school division. However, an elected regional board of trustees exercises the powers and duties of the francophone education authority. Francophone education authorities are required to enrol any eligible person as well as any other student given space availability and are not permitted to charge membership fees. All eligible children who apply for francophone education programs must be allowed to enrol. Francophone education authorities are permitted to establish alternative admission procedures and must also outline and make publicly available the rules governing their actions.

Francophone school boards are required to provide Francophone education programs.[[15]](#footnote-15)

**Separate Board:**

In line with the BC School Act (Section 8.1), Francophone public schools operate their own districts and boards.

This has been the case since 1999.[[16]](#footnote-16)

**State-delivered Minority Language Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1.75/3

1990s: 2.5/3

2000s: 2.5/3

2010s: 2.5/3

2020: 2.5/3

**5. Indigenous Education:**

**Permitted:**

In the 1980s, Indigenous education programs were offered in the public education system; however, this was done so on a school-by-school basis and was not consistently upheld across different schools in the province (Education Report from the Minister 1981).

The Journeys of Justice curriculum was introduced in the 1990s and it allowed schools in the public education system to teach both Canadian and Indigenous justice curricula (The Canadian Press 1994).

Indigenous schools in BC are permitted to operate on reserves and to also enroll students who live off reserve.

Public schools are also permitted to integrate Indigenous education programs into their curricula and have been able to do so since the 1980s.

**Funded:**

The provincial government provides additional specific targeted funding to Indigenous students (CMEC 2012).

In 2007, the principle of reciprocal tuition was implemented at the provincial level as part of The First Nations Education Act, the aim of which was to provide funding to students enrolled in Indigenous schools on reserve.

According to the Reciprocal Tuition Agreement (2009), Indigenous schools that are registered as independent schools receive funding from the provincial government at 30-50% of the funding available to off-reserve students (which is the same level of funding provided to any other independent school in the province); for other Indigenous schools however, funding is not available for off-reserve students (Reciprocal Tuition Agreement 2009).

Under the Reciprocal Tuition Agreement (2009), the provincial government provides full per-pupil funding to students who do not live on reserve but who are attending a band-operated school as well as for non-status students living on reserve; this commitment to reciprocal tuition was originally laid out in the BC First Nation Education Agreement signed by the government of BC and the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) in 2006 (Presswire 2009).

In 2009, a Memorandum of Agreement was signed between the FNESC and the BC ministry of Education. This agreement allowed for the full provision of funding for all status and non-status students living off reserve attending Indigenous schools in the province.

With the passage of the Tripartite Education Framework Agreement (TEFA) in 2012, the province of BC agreed to fund Indigenous students in the province using the provincial funding model with additional changes for Indigenous students in particular. The provincial government agreed to pay tuition for students who do not live on reserve but who are attending any Indigenous school certified by the First Nations Schools Association (FNSA) (TEFA 2012).

According to the BC First Nations Education Funding Handbook, the funding formula for Indigenous schools in BC is outlined under the BC tripartite Education Agreement (BCTEA) which distributes funding in accordance with individual enrolment data and related factors on a school-by-school basis. The formula establishes a basic amount for every eligible full time equivalent (FTE) student in K-12 who is enrolled in an Indigenous school on reserve. For the 2019 school year, this amounted to $7,468 for each FTE student.

According to Education BC, Targeted Indigenous Education Funding is also available to students enrolling in public schools that integrate Indigenous education programs in their curricula. Students who qualify for funding through this initiative are funded as per the current year’s operating grant manual.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Funds provided by the provincial government through targeted funding is done so under the condition that it must be spent on providing Indigenous education programs and services.[[18]](#footnote-18)

**Separate Board:**

There are no separate Indigenous school boards in BC, but Indigenous schools are independently operated by local bands throughout the province.

**Indigenous Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1/3

1990s: 1/3

2000s: 1.5/3

2010s: 1.75/3

2020: 1.75/3

**6. Charter School:**

**Permitted: N/A**

**Funded: N/A**

**Regulated: N/A**

**Charter School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 0/3

1990s: 0/3

2000s: 0/3

2010s: 0/3

2020: 0/3

**7. Choice within Public Education System:**

**Open Enrollment:**

From 1991-2001, open enrolment in BC public schools was permitted, though highly regulated and it was generally expected that children would enrol in the schools residing in their designated catchment areas (Brown 2004). Decisions to enrol in schools outside of specific catchment areas required the approval of both principals from the local school as well as the receiving school (Brown 2004).

BC provides for a high level of choice within its public school system since its adoption of an open enrollment policy in 2002 which allowed parents to enrol their children in schools outside of their catchment area (Allison 2015). Students are provided with the opportunity to enroll in educational programs provided by any school in the public system given that sufficient space is available for them to do so (Allison 2015).

As a result of the 2002 policy, parents do not require permission from their local school principal to enrol their children in public schools outside of their catchment area and can enrol them in any public school that will accept them (Friesen et al. 2015).

**Optional Attendance with Selective Admission:**

The School Act (1996) permits public boards to establish alternative application procedures which can affect the prospects of both catchment and non-catchment students wishing to enrol in certain schools.

For example, the Vancouver School Board (VSB) offers programs of choice for both elementary and high school students, some of which (e.g. Montessori education) require selective admissions processes.[[19]](#footnote-19)

**Specialty Programs/Schools:**

Specialized educational schools such as Fine Arts institutions have operated in the province since the 1980s (Gaskell 2002).

The BC School Act (1996) allows for school boards to offer “specialty academies” which emphasize specific sports, activities, or subject areas and also permits boards to offer an International Baccalaureate (IB) program (Allison 2015). Boards are permitted to charge fees for such programs to implement their unique educational programs (Allison 2015).

The School Act allows boards to offer speciality academies so long as there is demand from parents. These programs must provide students the opportunity to complete the provincial graduation requirements and also offer a standard education program; in addition to these specialty academies, schools are also permitted to offer “trades programs” designed to certify students in specific occupation (School Act).

The School Act also permits the establishment of International Baccalaureate programs based on the curricula designed by the IB organization. Schools offering IB must also provide students with the opportunity to complete graduation requirements and must also offer a standard education program; they are permitted to charge additional fees to cover program costs (School Act).

**Choice within Public Education System Decade Scores:**

1980s: 2/3

1990s: 2/3

2000s: 3/3

2010s: 3/3

2020: 3/3

**8. Accredited International School:**

**Permitted:**

The British Columbia Canadian International School (BCCIS) was established in 2005.[[20]](#footnote-20)

BC offshore schools and education programs are inspected and certified by the provincial government.[[21]](#footnote-21)

Overseas schools that have signed the Pre-certification Agreement are provided with a pre-certified status which means that they may offer the BC curriculum in their schools.[[22]](#footnote-22)

**Regulated:**

In order to register as a BC offshore school, education programs must be successfully inspected by the province in order to check for compliance with the BC Global Education Program.[[23]](#footnote-23)

**School Credential Obtainable:**

Students who are registered in the BC Global Education Program at an overseas school receive instruction in English taught by BC certified teachers.[[24]](#footnote-24)

Graduates from these programs receive a BC certificate of Graduation (Dogwood Diploma).[[25]](#footnote-25)

**Accredited International School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 0/3

1990s: 0/3

2000s: 2.5/3

2010s: 2.5/3

2020: 2.5/3

**Total School Choice Scores by Decade:**

**1980s: 8.5**

**1990s: 9.25**

**2000s: 13.25**

**2010s: 13.5**

**2020: 13.5**

**Alberta:**

**1. Homeschool:**

**Permitted:**

Home schooling was officially introduced in Alberta in 1988 when the School Act was amended to allow home education programs (Taylor 2001; Hiemstra 2017).

Home education programs are recognized under the Alberta Education Act (Part 2 Section 20) which states that parents can provide their children with a home education program provided that they meet the requirements of the regulations, that the program is under the supervision of a public school board or private school, and that the Minister may make regulations regarding home education (Education Act).

**Funded:**

With the first official acknowledgement of homeschooling in the 1988 School Act, public school boards at the time would receive a per-pupil grant of $2,100-$2,500 for each registered student, a smaller portion of which they would redirect to homeschooled students (Wagner 1999).

Home education programs are provided with minimal provincial funding in Alberta. These programs are given 25% of the funding available for public school students.[[26]](#footnote-26)

According to Van Pelt (2015), parents in Alberta are able to receive a minimum of $820 per homeschooled pupil and this amounts to roughly half of the funding that independent schools receive from the province for every homeschooled pupil registered with their school (Van Pelt 2015).

**Regulated:**

Prior to 1988, homeschooling in the province required the approval of the provincial government; parents who enrolled their children in home education programs without this approval were subject to penalties ranging from paying fines to potential imprisonment (Strauss 1981). Enforcement of these regulations varied from district to district.

During this period, home education programs were therefore subject to provincial supervision (Wagner 1999).

Since 1988 however, Alberta has loosened its regulations regarding homeschooling (Banack & Farney forthcoming).

According to Alberta Education’s (2006) Home Education Regulations, associate school boards and associate private schools are required to evaluate the performance of students in home education programs and must visit such students at least two times each year. These visits are conducted by a teacher from the associate public school board or the associate private school registering the home education program.

Home education programs in Alberta are recognized as a legitimate method of fulfilling the requirements of the province’s public high school program.[[27]](#footnote-27)

Students are permitted to incorporate course outlines into their home education program, challenge exams, and earn credits through portfolio assessments in order to receive high school credits towards their home education program.[[28]](#footnote-28)

These credits are the equivalent to those earned in a public school and allow homeschooled students to gradate with a recognized Alberta diploma.[[29]](#footnote-29)

Alternatively, in accordance with the Education Act Home Education Regulation, home education programs can choose to follow the Alberta Programs of Study and fulfill high school requirements through this option.

Home education programs must be registered with a local school board (public or private) and must be inspected at least two times per year by the registering board in order to assess student progress.[[30]](#footnote-30)

Overall, there is an extensive list of regulations pertaining to home education programs in Alberta which include but are not limited to providing the province with detailed education programs which are subject to Ministerial approval, submitting periodical student progress reports, and offering an educational program that is the equivalent to that offered in the public school system (Bosetti & Van Pelt 2017).

**Homeschool Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1.75/3

1990s: 1.5/3

2000s: 1.5/3

2010s: 1.5/3

2020: 1.5/3

**2. Independent School:**

**Permitted:**

Independent schools in Alberta are permitted and governed under two key documents including the Education Act and the Private School Regulations.

The Education Act permits private schools to be established upon approval of the Minister and satisfaction that the school’s educational programs are in accordance with the provisions of the Act (Education Act).

According to Van Pelt et al. 2017, Alberta recognizes four types of independent schools: these include Registered Private Schools, Accredited Non-Funded Private Schools, Level 1 Accredited Funded Private Schools, and Level 2 Accredited Funded Private Schools (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

**Funded:**

Since the provincial government decided to begin funding independent schools in 1967, these schools have generally received between 60-70% of the funding given to public schools (Banack 2015).

Alberta changed the funding formula for its independent schools in 1974; before this change, independent schools were given about 33% of the per-pupil grant given to public schools, though this amount was increased by 1982 to be as high as 75% (Banack & Farney forthcoming).

According to the Report of The Commission on Private Schools in Ontario (1985), independent schools designated as Category 1 schools, prior to 1985, received 75% of the per-pupil funding available for students enrolled in the public education system (Shapiro 1985).

In 1994/95, the Klein government instituted significant reforms in terms of the public funding of private schools in the province.

Per-student funding rates for independent schools were set at 50% of the funding given to public schools (Herman 2013).

In comparison to other provinces, this gave Alberta one of the highest rates of independent school funding for the 1996/97 year(s) (Harrison & Kachur 1999).

As of 2008, since the Stelmach government increased funding rates for independent schools, accredited private schools now receive between 60-70% of the per-pupil funding available to students in the public education system (Banack 2015).

As outlined by Van Pelt et al. 2017, only Level 1 and Level 2 schools are provided with public funding, and to be eligible to receive this funding, these schools must register as non-profit entities (Van Pelt et al 2017).

Level 1 independent schools receive 60% funding (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

Level 2 independent schools receive 70% funding. In order to register as a Level 2 school and qualify for this additional funding of 10% over Level 1 schools, independent schools must adhere to additional regulations outlined by the provincial government (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

Registered Private Schools and Accredited Non-Funded Private Schools do not receive public funding (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

**Regulated:**

All independent schools that receive public funding in Alberta are required to teach the provincial curriculum, employ teachers who are certified by the province, and take part in provincial assessments (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

Funded independent schools must also provide the Ministry of Education with regular financial and enrolment reports (and Level 2 schools are subject to the most detailed reporting requirements) (Herman 2013).

In addition to the regulations that funded independent schools must adhere to, In Alberta, non-funded private schools are also required to abide by certain regulations.

Unfunded accredited schools are required to employ certified teachers but unlike funded schools do not need to teach the provincial curriculum; however, their educational programs do need to be consistent with that of the province’s (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

**Independent School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 2.25/3

1990s: 2.25/3

2000s: 2.25/3

2010s: 2.25/3

2020: 2.25/3

**3. State-delivered Religious Education:**

**Permitted:**

The province of Alberta allows for what are called separate school boards which are, for the most part, public religious schools which are fully funded by the provincial government (Herman 2013).

In Alberta, these Catholic separate schools received constitutional protection in 1905 (Banack & Farney forthcoming).

Since 1988, Alberta has allowed faith-based alternative programs and schools to operate within the public education system; most of these schools are nondenominational Christian programs but Jewish, Muslim, and programs emphasizing aboriginal spirituality are also offered (von Heyking 2013).

**Regulated:**

The Education Act gives the Minister of Education the power to subject the right of a school board to provide religious instruction.

A key development for religious education in the province occurred in 2012 in when a clause in the Education Act was changed to no longer state that educational programs in Alberta were required to “honour and respect the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Alberta Human Rights Act” (Banack 2015). Instead, the new clause stated only that education programs must respect “the common values and beliefs of Albertans”. The initial clause had been a subject of conflict with parents who viewed it as an infringement on their right to educate their children with their own system of beliefs and ethics and Christian practices (Banack 2015).

Religious separate schools in Alberta are required to employ certified teachers and are governed by publicly elected boards; these schools are not permitted to charge tuition and must accept all Catholic students who wish to enroll but are also permitted to admit non-Catholic students.[[31]](#footnote-31)

**Religious Observance:**

The School Act (Section 50 (1)) allows school boards to “prescribe religious exercises for its students” so long as students are given the option to opt out of such exercises; school boards are also given the right to authorize the recitation of the Lord’s Prayer at school (School Act).

Courses pertaining to religion are one way of incorporating religious education into non-denominational public schools in Alberta (Hiemstra & Brink 2006). Another is the provision of faith-based public schooling through the Catholic separate school board; teachers in these school boards are allowed to integrate faith into all subject areas of study (Hiemstra & Brink 2006).

The Catholic separate school system in Alberta allows students to take religious education classes and integrates faith-based practices into school life (e.g. spiritual classroom décor, mass on holy days, and prayer at special school events).[[32]](#footnote-32)

**State-delivered Religious Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 2.5/3

1990s: 2.5/3

2000s: 2.5/3

2010s: 2.75/3

2020: 2.75/3

**4. State-delivered Minority Language Education:**

**Permitted:**

It was in 1984 that the province’s first two public French schools opened (Calgary Herald 1998).

Francophone public schooling was implemented in Alberta in 1993 (Hiemstra 2017).

The implementation of Bill 8 gave the French-speaking community in Alberta the ability to manage their own school system.[[33]](#footnote-33)

Francophone education is permitted under the Alberta Education Act Section 14 and there are three streams through which this education can be delivered: French First language, French as Second Language (Immersion), and French as Second Language (Course).

According to Bosetti & Gereluk (2016), school boards are also authorized to use other minority languages as languages of instruction; as a result of this, the province offers over fifty heritage-language schools that teach over 32 languages (Bosetti & Gereluk 2016).

**Regulated:**

The Education Act outlines that the Minister of Education is permitted to make the regulations regarding the education of francophone pupils and parents. Francophone regional authorities are required to enrol any student in their designated areas who wishes to enrol and must provide said student with an education that is consistent with what is required in the Education Act, and one that meets the educational standards set by the Minister. For students residing outside of a francophone school’s designated area, the francophone regional authority is permitted to enrol such students under a set of terms.

**Separate Board:**

The Mahe v. Alberta (1990) case allowed for the eventual establishment of separate francophone school boards in Alberta in the 1990s which have been in operation since then (Bosetti & Gereluk 2016).

**State-delivered Minority Language Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1.5/3

1990s: 2.5/3

2000s: 2.5/3

2010s: 2.5/3

2020: 2.5/3

**5. Indigenous Education:**

**Permitted:**

Indigenous schools are permitted to operate in Alberta on reserves as well as through specific educational programs within public schools that offer Indigenous curricula (Hiemstra 2017).

For instance, Blackfoot and Cree language and culture programs are available for enrolment in certain public schools for students in K-12.[[34]](#footnote-34)

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the province of Alberta, the federal government, and the Assembly of Treaty Chiefs in Alberta in 2010 and committed to improving education outcomes for Indigenous students in the province and, among other measures, established for the first time a Center for Indigenous Wisdom and Knowledge which acts as a body for education expertise for the province’s Treaty organizations (Presswire 2010).

The agreement also outlined that the province would provide for targeted funding of programs aimed at improving the success of Indigenous students in the province.[[35]](#footnote-35)

Indigenous education content is mandatory in all K-12 public schools (Stanley et al. 2018).

**Funded:**

Since the late 1980s, the government of Alberta has provided funding for local school board-initiated Aboriginal education programs.[[36]](#footnote-36)

Provincial funds are provided to Indigenous students on a district-by-district basis and are locally administered towards a broad range of initiatives (CMEC 2012).

Since 2015/16 additional funding aimed at improving educational outcomes for Indigenous students enrolled in Indigenous and public schools has been available through the Innovation in First Nations Education (IFNE) Grant Program.[[37]](#footnote-37)

According to the Education Funding in Alberta (2018/19) document, Indigenous schools in the province receive the same per-pupil amount given to all public schools (which is determined each year) with additional aid from First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) funding which includes a number of additional grants ranging from support to on reserve schools to support for public schools that incorporate Indigenous learning programs.[[38]](#footnote-38)

For the 2018/19-year, additional FNMI funding was provided on a per-student basis in the amount of $1,178.[[39]](#footnote-39)

**Separate Board:**

There are no separate Indigenous school boards in Alberta, but Indigenous schools are independently operated by local bands throughout the province.

**Indigenous Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1.25/3

1990s: 1.25/3

2000s: 1.25/3

2010s: 1.5/3

2020: 1.5/3

**6. Charter School:**

**Permitted:**

Alberta established its first charter school in 1994 (Thompson et al. 2016). Charter schools are permitted under the Alberta Education Act Section 25. In order to establish a charter school, an application must be made by the party intending to do so to the Minister of Education (Thompson et al. 2016).

**Funded:**

According to the Charter Schools Handbook (2015), charter schools are eligible for the same amount of per-pupil funding provided to students enrolled in any school within the public education system, and specific amounts are laid out in the Funding Manual for School Authorities. Charter schools are also permitted to fundraise and accept donations. Provincial grants to charter schools are given directly to the charter board.

**Regulated:**

Charter schools operate under agreements or “charters” with the Minister of Education and are approved and/or renewed by the Minister (Thompson et al. 2016). Such charters are meant to describe the educational program being offered by the school and must define the intended educational outcomes that students enrolled in their programs will receive (Thompson et al. 2016). Such schools are given more independence in comparison to other public schools and have their own principal, board, and superintendent (Thompson et al. 2016).

According to the Charter Schools Handbook (2015), the curricula offered by charter schools must be structured around the educational programs as defined by Alberta Education and laid out in the Programs of Study.

Students attending charter schools must participate in provincial assessments (Bosetti 2001).

Although charter schools are not allowed to be affiliated with any religious faith, they are permitted to provide religious instruction as is the case with any public school (Bosetti 2001).

Charter schools are not permitted to charge tuition fees but can charge parents for any additional instructional materials that may be required to successfully implement their programs (Bosetti 2001).

All teachers employed at charter schools must be certified by the province (Bosetti 2001).

Charter schools operate based on five-year contracts which are subject to renewal by the Minister of Education (Bosetti & Gereluk 2016).

**Charter School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 0/3

1990s: 2.5/3

2000s: 2.5/3

2010s: 2.5/3

2020: 2.5/3

**7. Choice within Public Education System:**

**Open Enrollment:**

Alberta implemented an open enrolment policy in 1988 (Allison 2015).

Based on this policy, students are free to enroll in any public school so long as there is space available and they meet any admission requirements for that school.[[40]](#footnote-40)

**Optional Attendance with Selective Admission:**

According to the Alternative Programs Handbook (2010), some alternative programs may have “audition criteria” in which students are required to pass some admission requirements to enrol in the school.

**Specialty Programs/Schools:**

The Alberta Education Act permits the establishment of alternative programs which refers to schools whose educational programs are centered around specific languages, cultures, religious educational programs, or schools that utilize a unique philosophy in their teaching that are not universal to all schools in the public education system.[[41]](#footnote-41)

These programs are not programs for pupils with special needs, Francophone education programs, nor programs offering religious content offered by separate school boards, but rather, are programs of choice which school districts enable but do not have offer.[[42]](#footnote-42)

Alternative programs are defined as programs that have been approved by the school board and can be changed by the board or administrative regulations; all alternative programs in the public education system in Alberta follow the curriculum that is offered in the public system, are subject to the policies of the board within which they operate, and are funded in accordance to the same rules as any other public school (Alternative Programs Handbook 2010).

**Choice within Public Education System Decade Scores:**

1980s: 3/3

1990s: 3/3

2000s: 3/3

2010s: 3/3

2020: 3/3

**8. Accredited International School:**

**Permitted:**

Alberta Education has partnerships with schools abroad to allow them to offer the Alberta school curriculum to their students.[[43]](#footnote-43)

The first Alberta Accredited International School (AAIS) opened in 2002.[[44]](#footnote-44)

**Regulated:**

According to the Handbook for Alberta Accredited International Schools (2019), a four-tiered process is required to become an accredited international school. Accreditation agreements are conducted between Alberta Education and the owner of the international school with which the province is partnering. Alberta Education conducts on-site evaluations to assess the progress being made towards accreditation requirements. Alberta accredited international schools must follow the province’s Programs of Study and ensure that educational outcomes are consistent with K-12 education legislation and regulations. The education programs of these schools are subject to review by Alberta teachers on an annual basis to ensure that current practices are being upheld.

**School Credential Obtainable:**

AAIS allows international schools to provide their students with Alberta school credentials and to receive Alberta Education accreditation upon graduation.[[45]](#footnote-45)

**Accredited International School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 0/3

1990s: 0/3

2000s: 2.25/3

2010s: 2.25/3

2020: 2.25/3

**Total School Choice Scores by Decade:**

**1980s: 12.25**

**1990s: 15.5**

**2000s: 17.75**

**2010s: 18.25**

**2020: 18.25**

**Saskatchewan:**

**1. Homeschool:**

**Permitted:**

Homeschooling in Saskatchewan is permitted under the Education Act (1995). Every board of education in the province and the conseil scolaire (Francophone school board) have established regulations regarding the processes of registering and monitoring of home education programs.

**Funded:**

Funding is available for parents who wish to homeschool their children in the province, though it is quite minimal.

Parents registering their children in home education programs in the provinces’ largest school board are eligible to receive up to $1,000 for each child who is enrolled in a home-based education program (Van Pelt 2015).

Exact funding levels are determined by each school division, though funding in general ranges from $0-$1,000 per student.[[46]](#footnote-46)

**Regulated:**

In the 1980s, regulations regarding homeschooling throughout the province were essentially left up to local school boards with varying degrees of enforcement of compulsory education (French 1989).

According to the Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan (2020), the Home-Based Education Program Regulations was established in 1993 when the Education Act was officially amended to include home-education programs.

In order to enrol in a home education program, parents must contact the board of education of their school division and must also submit a written education plan that outlines the program they intend to offer.[[47]](#footnote-47)

Following registration, annual progress reports are required to be submitted to the Minister of Education to assess student progress.[[48]](#footnote-48)

According to the Saskatchewan Home-based Education: Policy and Procedures Manual, the Ministry of Education does not recognize home education programs as providing credits eligible towards the completion of the provincial secondary school requirements. However, school authorities who register a home education program can help students enrolled in these programs in earning certified credits in several ways: first, authorities can grant permission to home-based learners to challenge departmental exams and allow home-based learners to take courses at a secondary school in their division.

Homeschooling regulations in Saskatchewan are classified as “high” as families enrolling in home education programs must provide the province with detailed programs of study which need to be approved by the Minister before they are implemented, must adhere to submitting periodical student progress reports, and must use a curriculum that is equivalent to that of the public school system’s (Bosetti & Van Pelt 2017).

**Homeschool Decade Scores:**

1980s: 2/3

1990s: 1.5/3

2000s: 1.5/3

2010s: 1.5/3

2020: 1.5/3

**2. Independent School:**

**Permitted:**

The oldest independent schools in Saskatchewan are the Historical High Schools which were established in the early 20th century.[[49]](#footnote-49)

Independent schools in Saskatchewan are operated under three main documents: The Education Act, The Independent School Regulations, and The Registered Independent Schools Regulations.

There are four categories of independent schools that are operated across the province: Registered Independent Schools, Associate Independent Schools, Historical High Schools, and Qualified Independent Schools (Van Pelt et al. 2017). Qualified independent schools which have operated in the province since 2012 are the most recently established category of independent schools in Saskatchewan (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

Registered Independent Schools, Associate Independent Schools, and alternative/special needs independent schools have operated in the province since the 1990s (Chamanfar 2017).

**Funded:**

Provincial funding of independent schools in Saskatchewan ranges from between 35% and 80% of the per-pupil costs given to public schools (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

According to Van Pelt et al. 2017, of the four types of independent schools, Registered Independent Schools are the only ones that do not receive public funding (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

Associate Independent Schools receive the most funding at 80% (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

Qualified Independent schools receive 50% funding (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

The funding provided to both Qualified Independent Schools and Historical High schools are established on a yearly basis by the Department of Education. For the 2017/18 year for instance, these rates were set to 50% and 70% of the per-student funding given to public schools (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

It was in 2011 that the Saskatchewan Party decided to fund all Qualified Independent Schools (beginning in September 2012) up to 50% of the public per-pupil costs (Chamanfar 2017).

**Regulated:**

It was not until 1988 when a comprehensive regulatory/registration system was implemented for independent schools in the province.[[50]](#footnote-50)

According to The Report of The Commission on Private Schools in Ontario (1985), funded private schools had to have been in operation for at least five years and have enrolled at least sixty students during this period to be eligible for provincial funding; schools were also required to meet Ministry regulations in terms of the courses of study offered, the qualification of the teachers employed, and supervision by the Department of Education (Shapiro 1985).

In order to receive funding, independent schools other than Historical High Schools in Saskatchewan must be registered as non-profit entities (Van Pelt et al. 2017). In addition, Qualified Independent Schools must adhere to program and operational requirements set by the provincial government, Associate Independent Schools must operate under agreements with a public school board, and Historical High Schools must be included in the list of qualifying schools (Van Pelt et al. 2017). All independent schools must, on a regular basis, also submit financial and enrolment reports to the Department (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

According to the Registered Independent Schools Handbook, all independent schools in the province must register with the Ministry of Education. Teaching the provincial curriculum is not a requirement for Registered Independent Schools; however, these schools must employ teachers who are certified and are also subject to annual ministry inspections as well as annual reporting requirements.

**Independent School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 2.25/3

1990s: 2/3

2000s: 2/3

2010s: 2/3

2020: 2/3

**3. State-delivered Religious Education:**

**Permitted:**

As part of its public education system, Saskatchewan offers separate (primarily Roman Catholic) school boards, as well as one Protestant school board that are fully funded by the provincial government (MacLeod & Hasan 2017).

According to the Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan (2020), Roman Catholic schools in particular are considered to be public schools.

These separate school divisions are primarily meant to provide religious and general education to the Christian community within the province.[[51]](#footnote-51)

**Regulated:**

In accordance with the Education Regulations (1986) and the Education Act (1995), a minority of electors in a school district (e.g. Catholic or Protestant) have the right to establish a school division.

Catholic schools are permitted to admit both Catholic and non-Catholic pupils.[[52]](#footnote-52)

**Religious Observance:**

According to the Saskatchewan Education Act (1995), boards of education in the province are permitted to begin school instruction with the reading/reciting of the Lord’s Prayer or passages from the Bible as prescribed by the Minister. If requested by parents, a pupil may be excused from participation in these exercises (Education Act).

The Education Act also permits religious instruction if authorized by the board of education regarding any of the schools within its division for a maximum duration of two and a half hours per week (Education Act).

**State-delivered Religious Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 2.75/3

1990s: 2.5/3

2000s: 2.5/3

2010s: 2.5/3

2020: 2.5/3

**4. State-delivered Minority Language Education:**

**Permitted:**

According to the Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan, the Education Act (1978) allowed public schools to instruct in languages other than English. The provincial core curriculum was implemented for the first time in French in 1988.[[53]](#footnote-53)

In 1993, the provincial government implemented legislation which secured the right of francophone individuals to establish their own schools that are operated and controlled by francophone authorities (Julien 1995).

In 1994/95, the fransaskois school boards were established.[[54]](#footnote-54)

The Education Act (1995) defines French as a minority language that is used as the language of instruction in fransaskois schools. The act also permits any minority language adult residing in the province to apply for and be provided with an education program in French if they choose (Education Act).

In 1995, the province’s only francophone school board (la Division scolaire francophone No. 310) was established, offering a full K-12 education program.

The francophone school board in Saskatchewan operates both secular as well as Catholic schools (MacLeod & Hasan 2017).

**Regulated:**

In accordance with the Education Act (1995), The Conseil Scolaire Fransaskois is established by the Minister as a corporation defined by the Act.

Each Francophone division is governed by a board of education which is responsible for managing the educational affairs of the Francophone school division (Education Act).

Francophone schools are permitted to enrol both French and non-French speaking pupils.[[55]](#footnote-55)

**Separate Board:**

Saskatchewan has a public self-governing Francophone school system (Banack & Farney forthcoming). This has been the case since 1995.

**State-delivered Minority Language Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1.75/3

1990s: 2.5/3

2000s: 2.5/3

2010s: 2.5/3

2020: 2.5/3

**5. Indigenous Education:**

**Permitted:**

Indigenous schools in Saskatchewan operate on both reserves as well as through educational programs offered throughout public schools.

According to Saskatchewan Education’s “Inspiring Success” Framework (2018), Indigenous communities in the province began operating their own on reserve schools in 1973.

The Saskatchewan Department of Education developed a plan for Indigenous curriculum development in the province in 1984 (Whiteman 2005). The purpose of this plan was to outline key recommendations for Indigenous education; this plan was the precursor to the eventual implementation of Indigenous curricula into all public schools later in the decade (Whiteman 2005).

In the late 1980s, the core curriculum of the Department of Education integrated First Nations and Métis curricula and perspectives into the provincial curriculum for all students in the province. Similarly, in 1989, Indigenous and Métis Education policy from K-12 established an integrated curriculum of First Nations and Métis content in all subjects of study.[[56]](#footnote-56)

Since 2007, the province has implemented mandatory Treaty Education into the public school curriculum which provides students with a basic understanding of Treaty relationships and a deeper understanding of Indigenous worldviews.[[57]](#footnote-57)

In 2010, the Governments of Canada and Saskatchewan along with the Saskatoon Tribal Council signed the Memorandum of Understanding for First Nations Education in the Saskatoon Tribal Council Catchment Area. The agreement intended to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous students in the province and to further educate non-Indigenous students on Indigenous communities.[[58]](#footnote-58)

**Funded:**

Historically, individual-level agreements between the Department of Education and local Indigenous schools have provided funding to these schools.[[59]](#footnote-59)

According to the Saskatchewan Teacher’s Federation, a new funding model for Indigenous schools announced in 2019 would provide $1,500 per student to Indigenous schools to support language and cultural programming.[[60]](#footnote-60)

The provincial government provides partial funding through such programs as the First Nations and Métis Achievement Fund to school divisions in the public system with the intent of improving educational outcomes for Indigenous students enrolled in these schools.[[61]](#footnote-61)

**Separate Board:**

There are no separate Indigenous school boards in Saskatchewan, but Indigenous schools are independently operated by local bands throughout the province.

**Indigenous Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1.25/3

1990s: 1.25/3

2000s: 1.25/3

2010s: 1.5/3

2020: 1.5/3

**6. Charter School:**

**Permitted: N/A**

**Funded: N/A**

**Regulated: N/A**

**Charter School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 0/3

1990s: 0/3

2000s: 0/3

2010s: 0/3

2020: 0/3

**7. Choice within Public Education System:**

**Open Enrollment:**

As outlined by Allison (2015), Saskatchewan implemented legislation in 1995 allowing parents to enrol their children in either separate or public high schools regardless of religious affiliation (Allison 2015).

However, there is no official policy of open enrollment in Saskatchewan (Bosetti & Gereluk 2016).

According to the Education Regulations (2019), parents may enroll their children in schools outside of their designated areas by applying to the school board in which they intend to enroll their children.

**Optional Attendance with Selective Admission:**

As outlined in the Education Regulations (2019), admission into schools outside of a pupil’s catchment area are conditional. Parents are able to enrol their children in schools outside of their designated areas if there is no program that is suitable for their children’s grade level in their local school area, or if the Ministry confirms that the type of program within a pupil’s catchment area is different than the program in which parents wish to enrol the child.

**Specialty Programs/Schools:**

The Education Act (1995) permits school boards and the conseil scolaire to establish programs of education with specific curricular goals.

The Act also allows, with the approval of the Minister, for school divisions to approve courses of study that have been developed within a specific school division and to administer them for credit (Education Act).

With Ministerial approval, schools are permitted to offer courses developed to be taught as alternatives to those prescribed by the Department of Education (CUP 2003).

**Choice within Public Education System Decade Scores:**

1980s: 2/3

1990s: 2/3

2000s: 2/3

2010s: 2/3

2020: 2/3

**8. Accredited International School:**

**Permitted: N/A**

**Regulated: N/A**

**School Credential Obtainable: N/A**

**Accredited International School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 0/3

1990s: 0/3

2000s: 0/3

2010s: 0/3

2020: 0/3

**Total School Choice Scores by Decade:**

**1980s: 12**

**1990s: 11.75**

**2000s: 11.75**

**2010s: 12**

**2020: 12**

**Manitoba:**

**1. Homeschool:**

**Permitted:**

Homeschooling in Manitoba is permitted under the Public Schools Act.

**Funded:**

Provincial funding is not available to families who enrol their children in home education programs.[[62]](#footnote-62)

**Regulated:**

There were very few guidelines regarding the operation of home education programs throughout the 1980s in the province (The Globe and Mail 1987).

According to Education Manitoba, parents who wish to register their children in a home education program must notify the Homeschooling office of their intention to do so and provide the office with an outline of their program on an annual basis.[[63]](#footnote-63)

Homeschooled pupils are not eligible to receive a high school diploma upon graduation unless they fulfill the provinces’ graduation requirements, which can be done through a combination of homeschooling and public school enrolment.[[64]](#footnote-64)

For instance, students in their senior years of high school can complete part of their education at home and then enrol in a public or funded independent school for the remainder of their education.[[65]](#footnote-65)

Those who choose to fulfil their education requirements in this manner are eligible for a high school diploma upon meeting graduation requirements.[[66]](#footnote-66)

Homeschooled students can also fulfill high school credits through the Independent Study Option (ISO). The Distance Learning Unit (DLU) offers ISO courses with support from Manitoba-certified teachers; when students complete these courses, they are recorded on their high school transcripts and thus count towards graduation credits and towards receiving a high school diploma.[[67]](#footnote-67)

Parents are allowed to use any curriculum/educational approach in their implementation of a home education program; students are not required to take provincial exams but may do so if they wish and government liaison officers are permitted to visit homeschooling families.[[68]](#footnote-68)

Homeschooling regulations in Manitoba are classified as “moderate” in that home education programs must be inspected or certified by the province and student progress periodically assessed (Bosetti & Van Pelt 2017).

**Homeschool Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1.75/3

1990s: 1.5/3

2000s: 1.5/3

2010s: 1.5/3

2020: 1.5/3

**2. Independent School:**

**Permitted:**

According to Education Manitoba, there are two kinds of independent schools that operate within the province: Funded Independent Schools and Non-Funded Independent Schools.

**Funded:**

The Lyon government in 1980 implemented direct grants to independent schools in the province. This amount was initially set to 34.5% of the amount given to public schools; by 1984, this amount had decreased to 19% (Banack & Farney forthcoming).

It was in 1988 when the Conservative government under Gary Filmon established the system of funding and regulation of independent schools in the province that continues to operate to this day (Banack & Farney forthcoming).

In 1994, the provincial grants given to funded independent schools were raised to 50% (Banack & Farney forthcoming).

Funded Independent Schools in Manitoba receive 50% of the per-pupil funding given to public schools, and the specific amount is determined by the amount given to public schools two years prior to the current year (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

**Regulated:**

Independent schools must offer a curriculum and program of study that are equivalent to those of the public school system’s, and, in order to receive funding, must satisfy the Minister of Education of this requirement and also employ teachers who are certified by the province (Shapiro 1985).

According to Van Pelt et al. 2017, Funded Independent Schools must teach the provincial curriculum and hire Manitoba-certified teachers whereas Non-Funded Independent Schools do not need to adhere to these conditions (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

However, Non-Funded Independent Schools must teach the provincial curriculum during their three-year qualifying term (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

In order for Funded Independent Schools to become eligible for funding, they must comply with the province’s regulations and go through a three-year waiting period to obtain funding (Van Pelt et al. 2017). They are subsequently inspected on an annual basis. Funded independent schools must also take part in provincial assessments (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

According to Van Pelt et al. (2017), Non-Funded Independent Schools are inspected by the provincial government in order to ensure that their educational programs are equivalent to those offered in the public school system (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

**Independent School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1.75/3

1990s: 2/3

2000s: 2/3

2010s: 2/3

2020: 2/3

**3. State-delivered Religious Education:**

**Permitted: N/A**

**Regulated: N/A**

**Religious Observance: N/A**

**State-delivered Religious Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 0/3

1990s: 0/3

2000s: 0/3

2010s: 0/3

2020: 0/3

**4. State-delivered Minority Language Education:**

**Permitted:**

French immersion programs have been offered in the province since the 1970s (Owens 2004).

However, it was not until 1994 that the province of Manitoba established a single province-wide French language school board that allowed francophone schools to operate their own self-governing public school boards (Banack & Farney forthcoming).

Minority language education is permitted under the Public Schools Act.

**Regulated:**

According to the Manitoba Public Schools Act, francophone school divisions are established by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The Francophone school board is responsible for administrating the school division. French language school boards are permitted to admit both “entitled” students and non-entitled students whose French language skills are not sufficient to meet the language requirements of a francophone program. Francophone school boards must provide at least 75% of their instruction in French and must offer English as a subject of instruction.

**Separate Board:**

Since 1994, Manitoba has allowed Francophone school boards to operate their own public school boards. The Division scolaire franco-manitobaine (DSFM) is the board responsible for the delivery of French language education programs in the province.[[69]](#footnote-69)

**State-delivered Minority Language Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1.75/3

1990s: 2.5/3

2000s: 2.5/3

2010s: 2.5/3

2020: 2.5/3

**5. Indigenous Education:**

**Permitted:**

Indigenous communities began to administer their own schools in the 1970s in Manitoba.[[70]](#footnote-70)

Indigenous education programs in Manitoba are offered on reserves as well as through educational programs offered through the public school system. In 1995, Manitoba Education implemented the incorporation of Aboriginal perspectives into the provincial school curriculum.[[71]](#footnote-71)

The Education Framework Agreement (EFA) of 1990-1994 was made between the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) and the federal government as a means of allowing for negotiations between the two parties as well as establishing a new funding arrangement (Fontaine 2018). The process of self-governance for Indigenous education was outlined in the Framework Agreement Initiative (FAI) (1994-2006) (Fontaine 2018).

In 2009, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Southern Chiefs Organization, the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak and the Governments of Manitoba and Canada signed the Education Partnership Letter of Understanding which aimed to increase the educational opportunities provided to Indigenous students in the province.[[72]](#footnote-72)

**Funded:**

The province provides targeted funding for Indigenous students through academic achievement grants on a district level as well as through programs supporting Indigenous language and culture (CMEC 2012).

The funding model for the newly established Manitoba First Nations School System (MFNSS) consists of base public school provincial funding as well as enhancement funding for MFNSS.

Components of this funding come from the province of Manitoba’s Funding of School Program (Fontaine 2018).

**Separate Board:**

In the 2017/18 school year, Manitoba became the first province in the country to establish a fully separate Indigenous school board as a result of an agreement between the federal government and provincial Indigenous leaders (MFNSS).[[73]](#footnote-73)

**Indigenous Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1/3

1990s: 1.25/3

2000s: 1.25/3

2010s: 2.5/3

2020: 2.5/3

**6. Charter School:**

**Permitted: N/A**

**Funded: N/A**

**Regulated: N/A**

**Charter School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 0/3

1990s: 0/3

2000s: 0/3

2010s: 0/3

2020: 0/3

**7. Choice within Public Education System:**

**Open Enrollment:**

Since 1997, students in the public school system have been permitted to enroll in any school throughout the province upon approval of the school to which they are applying (Owens 2004).

Legislation in Manitoba allows parents to enrol their children in any public school in the province (Allison 2015).

According to Education Manitoba, every school board designates a local school which students can attend; however, parents may choose to enrol their children in schools outside of their designated school.[[74]](#footnote-74)

Only students who qualify under the province’s “right to attend school” legislation may enrol in schools outside of those in their designated catchment areas; this process requires an application.[[75]](#footnote-75)

Students who must enrol in a school outside of their catchment area because their recognized program is not offered in their area are exempt from this legislation.[[76]](#footnote-76)

**Optional Attendance with Selective Admission:**

According to Manitoba Education, public schools in the province are permitted to offer specialized programs that have a set criteria/prerequisite that students may have to fulfill before gaining admission.[[77]](#footnote-77)

**Specialty Programs/Schools:**

The first of the province’s alternative learning programs began to be offered in 1981.[[78]](#footnote-78)

The province’s largest school division (Winnipeg) offers six “alternative program schools” including such programs as Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs (Allison 2015).

**Choice within Public Education System Decade Scores:**

1980s: 2/3

1990s: 3/3

2000s: 3/3

2010s: 3/3

2020: 3/3

**8. Accredited International School:**

**Permitted:**

Manitoba partners with overseas schools in order to make the province’s K-12 curriculum available to students outside of the country.[[79]](#footnote-79)

These affiliation agreements allow these overseas schools to teach the Manitoba curriculum.[[80]](#footnote-80)

**Regulated:**

All affiliated schools must employ teachers who hold Manitoba-certified teaching degrees and offer the Manitoba public school curriculum.[[81]](#footnote-81)

**School Credential Obtainable:**

The intent of these overseas programs is to allow high school graduates outside of Canada to be eligible for Manitoba high school diplomas particularly for those who intend to attend post-secondary institutions in Canada.[[82]](#footnote-82)

**Accredited International School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 0/3

1990s: 0/3

2000s: 2.5/3

2010s: 2.5/3

2020: 2.5/3

**Total School Choice Scores by Decade:**

**1980s: 8.25**

**1990s: 10.25**

**2000s: 12.75**

**2010s: 14**

**2020: 14**

**Ontario:**

**1. Homeschool:**

**Permitted:**

Although homeschooling is not explicitly mentioned in the province’s Education Act, students are permitted to be excused from attendance at school provided that they are receiving satisfactory instruction at home or elsewhere.

**Funded:**

In Ontario, homeschooling programs are not provided with provincial funding (Education Act).

However, according to the Ontario Ministry of Education’s Policy Memorandum (No. 131, 2002), parents who are enrolling their child(ren) in a home-based education program are eligible to apply for minimal funding for educational resources needed to conduct the program (these include resources for assessments, courses offered through the Independent Learning Centre, curriculum materials, and support services for health and long-term care).

Although there is no direct funding for parents who enroll their children in home education programs, resources from school boards can be obtained to help them administer the program (Canadian Home-Based Learning Resource Page 2020).

**Regulated:**

Students can be excused from the public school system so long as the province is satisfied with the education program they receive at home; conditions which are “satisfying” very unclear throughout the 1980s (Roseman 1984).

During the 1980s, the burden of demonstrating that a home education program was “satisfactory” often fell to individual school boards; parents could also be charged with truancy though this was not consistently applied across the board (Common & MacMullen 1986).

An explicitly laid out set of rules and regulations governing home education programs are non-existent; the Ministry provides some guidelines to local school boards on how to evaluate home school programs (Ainsworth 1990).

In Ontario, there are no legal requirements that parents must follow in terms of registering with the government in order to enroll their child(ren) in a home education program (OFTP 2020).

The only requirement is to inform their previously attended public school (if they had been enrolled in a public school prior to initiating the home education program) that they will be withdrawing from the program to attend a home education program (OFTP 2020).

Although pupils who are homeschooled are not eligible to receive a certified Ontario high school diploma upon completing their education, they can enrol in “distance schooling” which involves enrollment in an accredited online school to earn OSSD credits that can be counted towards a degree. Thus, credit for a high school degree is only available through adherence to the provincial curriculum as prescribed by the Ministry of Education (Canadian Home-Based Learning Resource Page 2020).

Homeschooling regulations in Ontario are classified as “low” with parents’ declaration of the intent to enroll their children in a home education program to the local school board being the central regulation to which they must adhere; parents are not required to follow the provincial curriculum or have their program of study be approved by the province (Bosetti & Van Pelt 2017).

**Homeschool Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1.75/3

1990s: 1.75/3

2000s: 1.75/3

2010s: 1.75/3

2020: 1.75/3

**2. Independent School:**

**Permitted:**

Independent schools in Ontario are permitted under the Education Act (1974).

**Funded:**

According to the Shapiro Commission Report (1985), independent schools in the province do not have access to local education taxes or direct provincial grants. However, there are some minor sources of funding that such institutions can apply for (these include applying for free textbooks, Ministry of Education guidelines, and access to Ontario’s teacher program to assist teachers with travel costs). Independent schools which instruct in French are eligible for an additional $1,000 annually. Indirect transfers to independent schools include exemption from property taxes, and income tax deductions for religious instruction and charitable purposes.

With regard to funding specifically for religiously-based independent schools, funding was available from 2001-2003 when the provincial government established a refundable tax credit for tuition fees paid by parents enrolling their children in such institutions through the *Responsible Choices for Growth and Prosperity Act* (2001). This act allowed parents to benefit from a progressive 10%-50% credit based on tuition paid. This was repealed in 2003.

**Regulated:**

According to the Education Act (1974) independent schools must inform the province of their intent to be established and must submit annual reports on or before September 1st upon establishment.

The minimal resources available to independent schools are not dependent on adherence to specific regulations (Shapiro 1985).

According to the 1990 Education Act, the Minister of Education may make regulations regarding the activities of independent schools in the province (as laid out in Section 16 of the Act).

These mainly include declaring the intent to establish an independent school, submission of annual reports, and inspections of the institutions themselves by the Minister (Education Act).

According Van Pelt et al. (2017), independent schools in Ontario are only required to use the provincial curriculum if they are offering a high school diploma to their students upon graduation (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

As well, only independent schools offering the provincial curriculum are inspected; these schools must also notify the province of their intent to establish such schools and must submit annual reports to the province three times per year (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

Schools which do not offer the provincial curriculum are not inspected but must maintain student records (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

**Independent School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1.75/3

1990s: 1.75/3

2000s: 1.75/3

2010s: 1.75/3

2020: 1.75/3

**3. State-delivered Religious Education:**

**Permitted:**

Publicly offered Catholic schools in Ontario have been in operation since 1841 and are also explicitly laid out in the Education Act of 1974.

A key decision with regard to publicly-funded religious education in the province was the 1984 decision to fully fund separate religious high schools (Farney 2014).

The Education Act (1990) lays out the conditions for the operation of publicly offered Roman Catholic Schools in Ontario.

**Regulated:**

According to the Education Act (1974), the Minister may make the regulations around the operation of and religious observance and instruction in religious schools.

No other religious denominational schools other than Catholic schools receive public funding in Ontario. Roman Catholic schools also operate their own boards of education independent of the public school system and are fully funded; this has been the case since 1984 (Banack & Farney forthcoming).

The Education Act (1990) permits Roman Catholic school boards to establish and maintain their educational programs and the courses they offer pertaining to religious education for all pupils enrolled in the schools over which they have jurisdiction.

**Religious Observance:**

As permitted by the Education Act (1974), parents who desire their children to receive religious instruction in public schools will be allowed to do so.

However, no pupil at any public religious school shall be required to participate in religious exercises and must be given the opportunity to excuse themselves from such exercises (Education Act).

The case of Zylberberg v. Sudbury Board of Education (1988) ended the specific requirement for one type of prayer in public religious schools. The ruling allowed religious schools to no longer require the Bible as the source of prayer in such schools and expanded it to include “other suitable readings” (spanning a diverse set of religious beliefs) as alternatives to the recitation of the Lord’s prayer.

**State-delivered Religious Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 2.75/3

1990s: 2.75/3

2000s: 2.75/3

2010s: 2.75/3

2020: 2.75/3

**4. State-delivered Minority Language Education:**

**Permitted:**

According to the Ontario Heritage Trust, French language schools have been offered to students in the public education system since 1969.[[83]](#footnote-83)

In 1968, the Ontario Legislative Assembly passed the Schools Administration Act (Bill 140) and the Secondary Schools and Boards Act (Bill 141) which provided for the establishment of French-language secondary schools in the province (The Canadian Encyclopedia 2020).

The specific regulations for such schools are laid out in the Education Act of 1974.

French school boards are permitted to establish and maintain their classes for the purpose of providing French language education to their students (Education Act).

The Education Act (1990) permits any French-speaking student qualified under the Act to enroll in French language schools if they wish.

As well, any school authority under Section 67 of the Act which has one or more students who wish to receive instruction in French shall establish one or more French language instructional units for such students (Education Act).

**Regulated:**

French language school boards are permitted to establish schools in response to demand by French-speaking pupils in the relevant school zone to receive instruction in French; French language schools are also permitted to enroll English-speaking students upon request to the board by parents (Education Act).

The proposal of educational programs of French language schools are the responsibility of a committee tasked with fulfilling the educational and cultural needs of French-speaking pupils and the larger community (Education Act).

According to the Education Act (1990), French language school boards can, upon request of a non-French speaking student’s parents, admit the student if their admission is approved by an admissions committee which is appointed by the school board.

Following the passage of the Charter in 1982 and new legislation at the Ministry of Education in 1991, French language school boards were recognized to a greater degree as the bodies which manage French language education programs in Ontario; the further passage of the 1994 Language Planning Policy further protected the rights of French-speaking individuals (Anderson & Jaafar 2003).

**Separate Board:**

The Education Act permits French language schools to operate their own separate school board in Ontario. A separate francophone school board was established in 1997.[[84]](#footnote-84)

**State-delivered Minority Language Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1.75/3

1990s: 2.75/3

2000s: 2.75/3

2010s: 2.75/3

2020: 2.75/3

**5. Indigenous Education:**

**Permitted:**

Indigenous schools are permitted and operate as part of the public school system in Ontario. Non-Indigenous public schools are also permitted to teach curricula which Include Indigenous languages/culture.

In 2007, the provincial government established the Ontario, First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework which in addition to improving outcomes for Indigenous students in the province, committed to more integration of Indigenous curricula into the public school system in order to recognize the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada and to ensure that students in the public school system would receive an adequate understanding of this history.[[85]](#footnote-85)

In 2009, the province of Ontario and the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) established a memorandum of understanding which further committed to collaboration and the improvement of educational outcomes for Métis students in the province.[[86]](#footnote-86)

Another memorandum of understanding was agreed upon in 2013 between the province, the Government of Canada, and the Nishnawbe Aski Nation to collaborate on improving the educational outcomes of Indigenous students in band operated-provincially funded schools. This agreement increased the inclusion of Indigenous curricula in the public school system.[[87]](#footnote-87)

As of 2015, faculties of education in the province are required to include mandatory Indigenous content regarding history, culture, and ways of knowing.[[88]](#footnote-88)

Two similar memorandums have also been signed in 2017 between the provincial government and the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians and the Tungasuvvingat Inuit to increase resources to Indigenous schools and to improve outcomes.

**Funded:**

A small amount of funds allocated towards Indigenous education programs[[89]](#footnote-89) has been offered by the provincial government in the past though this has not been applied evenly over the decades.

In 2007, the provincial government introduced the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education supplement which provided additional funding for Indigenous students attending public schools in the province. In the 2016/17 academic year, the funding amounted to 25% per-pupil funding.[[90]](#footnote-90)

There is a small amount of funding provided to Indigenous communities for educational purposes as laid out in the Tripartite Education of Understanding with the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, Ontario and Canada (2017).

According to the Ontario Ministry of Education, there are a number of Indigenous (band- operated) and federally operated schools in the province that are eligible to receive funding for tuition at any public school from the provincial government through the Reciprocal Education Approach (REA) since 2019. This agreement has also made it easier for Indigenous students who live off-reserve to attend on-reserve schools and for those living on-reserve to attend any public school of their choosing.[[91]](#footnote-91)

The amount provided to these schools is determined by the annual “base fee” that schools can provide for each student based on the funding formula which is calculated annually by the Ministry of Education.[[92]](#footnote-92)

**Separate Board:**

As outlined by the Ministry of Education, Indigenous schools are offered in Ontario but there are no separate Indigenous school boards in the province.

**Indigenous Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1/3

1990s: 1.25/3

2000s: 1.25/3

2010s: 1.25/3

2020: 1.25/3

**6. Charter School:**

**Permitted: N/A**

**Funded: N/A**

**Regulated: N/A**

**Charter School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 0/3

1990s: 0/3

2000s: 0/3

2010s: 0/3

2020: 0/3

**7. Choice within Public Education System:**

**Open Enrollment:**

There is no official policy of open enrollment in Ontario and decision for movement between schools are made on a district-by-district basis (CUP 2003).

**Optional Attendance with Selective Admission:**

Schools within the public education system are also permitted to use lotteries and/or selective admission practices for accepting students using a priority system; these are used in particular by schools to which students outside of their catchment areas are applying (TDSB 2020).

**Specialty Programs/Schools:**

Since the 1980s, specialized/alternative academic programs in the public school system have been offered by the province (Teri Burgess 2006).

In accordance with the guidelines of local school boards, specialized programs in a given school can be offered to students (e.g., Specialist High Skill Majors Program, IB, AP, among others) (TDSB 2020).

These programs are meant to provide skills training and/or unique educational experiences to students who wish to enroll in them while simultaneously fulfilling the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) requirements (Ministry of Education 2020).

Examples of such programs in the Toronto District School Board in particular include: Arts Schools, Visual Arts Programs, Cyber Arts, Cyber Studies, Athletic Programs, Integrated Technology, IB, AP, Leadership Pathway, and Math, Science, and Technology (TDSB 2020).

**Choice within Public Education System Decade Scores:**

1980s: 2/3

1990s: 2/3

2000s: 2/3

2010s: 2/3

2020: 2/3

**8. Accredited International School:**

**Permitted:**

According to the Ontario Ministry of Education, there are several schools internationally that are permitted to offer credits toward the Ontario Secondary School Diploma.[[93]](#footnote-93)

Some of these schools initiated their programs as early as in the 1990s.[[94]](#footnote-94)

**Regulated:**

The Ministry of Education inspects the standards of education in each of these schools; if such schools satisfy the Ministry’s requirements, the principal is authorized to give credits towards the Ontario Secondary School Diploma.[[95]](#footnote-95)

**School Credential Obtainable:**

Upon satisfactory inspection of the education programs of international schools, these schools are permitted to offer the Ontario Secondary School Diploma to their students upon graduation.[[96]](#footnote-96)

**Accredited International School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 0/3

1990s: 2.5/3

2000s: 2.5/3

2010s: 2.5/3

2020: 2.5/3

**Total School Choice Scores by Decade:**

**1980s: 11**

**1990s: 14.75**

**2000s: 14.75**

**2010s: 14.75**

**2020: 14.75**

**Quebec:**

**1. Homeschool:**

**Permitted:**

The Education Act permits students to opt out of school attendance provided that they are enrolled in a home education program.

The regulations pertaining to home education programs were established in 1987 (Homeschooling Policy Framework 2010).

**Funded:**

The Homeschooling Regulations require school boards to offer certain resources to parents of homeschooled children (Companion Guide 2018).

These include a copy of the school’s learning project, library resources, academic and career counselling, psychological services, special education services, and religious services (Companion Guide 2018).

Homeschooled children are entitled to receive free access to certain resources and services: textbooks, instructional materials, and various student services provided to children in public schools that help with academic and career progress (Homeschooling Support Guide 2020).

There is no direct provincial funding for home education programs in Quebec (CUP 2003).

**Regulated:**

According to the Education Act, the Minister is permitted to monitor home education programs. Since 1989, the Minister also monitors any conditions and/or procedures pertaining the education program of a homeschooled student and evaluates the child’s progress on an annual basis. The government has the authority to regulate the standards of a home education program.

Since 2002, school boards which register homeschooled students require parents to provide the board with official documentation (e.g. birth certificate of student) for both the identity and age of the student (Home Schooling Policy Framework 2017).

The Policy on the Evaluation of Learning adopted by the Ministère in 2003 is also applied to homeschooled pupils; evaluation of such students must be done by a teacher working with the student (Home Schooling Policy Framework 2017).

Parents are required to submit the following documents to their local school board on or before May 31st of each school year: application request for initiating a home-schooling program, the education plan they intend to implement, a copy of a High School Leaving Certificate, and a homeschooling contract (Homeschooling Procedure 2007).

In crafting the home education program, parents must abide by The Basic School Regulation which includes mandatory subjects to be taught and The Quebec Education Program which provides a description of the curriculum in each subject area.

According to the Companion Guide (2018), homeschooled students are permitted to follow the Ministry’s program option in which their program will correspond to that of public schools’. If parents choose to follow their own education program, such programs must still include the compulsory subjects prescribed by the province (e.g. French). Reports must be submitted to the province which include information about the child’s progress and learning project; as well, annual meetings are required for all parent educators. At some point during the program, formal evaluation by a third party is required (these can include individuals from the local school board, a private educational institution, an individual with a teaching licence, the Minister, or evaluation of the program through portfolio).

A child’s learning project must include certain elements as prescribed by the Homeschooling Regulations: description of educational approach, programs of study, skills expected to be acquired from program, relevant teaching and learning activities selected, educational resources required, time allocation for given activities, contact information of those contributing to the program, description of organization’s contributions to the program, evaluation methods for child’s progress, and the last level of educational services a child received in an educational institution prior to the program (Homeschooling Support Guide 2020).

In order to obtain a certified Secondary School Diploma (SSD), homeschooled students must adhere to the same set of regulations as those attending public schools such as the taking of required ministerial exams (Homeschooling Policy Framework 2010).

Homeschooling in Quebec is classified as “high” as families enrolling in home education programs must provide the province with detailed programs of study which need to be approved by the Minister, must adhere to period student progress reports, and use a curriculum that is equivalent to that of the public school system’s (Bosetti & Van Pelt 2017).

**Homeschool Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1.5/3

1990s: 1.5/3

2000s: 1.25/3

2010s: 1.25/3

2020: 1.25/3

**2. Independent School:**

**Permitted:**

Independent schools are permitted in Quebec in accordance with the Education Act and fall into an unfunded and a funded classification.

**Funded:**

In 1984, independent schools classified as “institutions declared of public interest” received about 85% of the funding given to public schools whereas those “institutions recognized for grant purposes” were given about 60% (Bayefsky & Waldman 2007).

Most private educational institutions are not provided with public funding, but private educational institutions accredited for subsidies are provided with up to 60% of the funding given to public schools (Van Pelt & Allison 2017).

**Regulated:**

Both funded and unfunded independent schools in Quebec must follow the provincial curriculum, employ teachers who are certified by the province, and participate in province-wide assessments (Van Pelt & Allison 2017).

All programs are subject to Ministerial approval in accordance with the Education Act.

Two sets of applications are required to establish an independent school in Quebec. The first is for the permit to operate an institution and includes information on the schools’ key objectives and activities, the population and the administrative layout of the school, and the student services and resources required; the second is for the accreditation process needed in order to receive funding which includes a commission inspection of quality of educational organizations involved, the importance both of the school’s mission and to its relevant community(s) (Van Pelt et al. 2017). Inspections (by the Minister) to assess compliance are also required (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

In order to operate, all independent schools must obtain provincially issued permits and may then wish to apply for accreditation and funding which require adherence to a further set of regulations (Johnson & Swift 2000).

**Independent School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 2/3

1990s: 2/3

2000s: 2/3

2010s: 2/3

2020: 2/3

**3. State-delivered Religious Education:**

**Permitted:**

Currently, there are no public religious schools in Quebec and those wishing to provide a religious education program must do so through the establishment of a religious independent school (which can receive funding from the provincial government like any other independent school) (Banack & Farney forthcoming).

This is the case as Quebec’s school system is divided along linguistic lines (i.e. English and French), both of which are secular. This has been the case since 1998 when Roman Catholic and Protestant school boards were replaced with French and English Boards (Freeland 1999).

Since 2008, mandatory religious instruction in the public school system has been implemented (Farney 2017).

**Regulated:**

Though the province does not provide public religious education programs, students in the public school system are required to take religious instruction courses (Bayefsky & Waldman 2007).

Until 1997, the province provided the funding for public Protestant and Catholic schools but control over these education programs was maintained by religious authorities (Robson 2012).

Protestant and Catholic schools implemented their own programs of religious education and guidance (Brief to the Minister of Education 2006).

It was in 1998 that the province officially removed the denominational status of schools in the public education system (Mager 2002).

**Religious Observance:**

Although religious instruction has been mandatory in the province since 2000, observances of religious practices in public schools have not been permitted, though students are permitted to wear religious symbols/attire (Brief to the Minister of Education 2006).

Since 1998, any denominational activities conducted in public schools must be for educational purposes only and must permit students who wish to be excused from them to do so (Brief to the Minister of Education 2006).

**State-delivered Religious Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 2.75/3

1990s: 1/3

2000s: 1.25/3

2010s: 1.25/3

2020: 1.25/3

**4. State-delivered Minority Language Education:**

**Permitted:**

English is permitted to be offered as the minority language in public schools in Quebec.

**Regulated:**

Since 1977, Bill 101 has prevented the children of immigrants from enrolling in English language public schools (Banack & Farney forthcoming).

According to the Charter of the French Language[[97]](#footnote-97), English instruction in public schools is permitted for children whose parents are Canadian citizens and received instruction in English, are non-citizens who received instruction in English in Quebec, who was prior to 1977 receiving instruction in English, or whose parents were receiving instruction in English prior to 1977 in Quebec. The Minister is permitted to verify the eligibility of children wishing to be enrolled in English language education programs. Secondary school diplomas cannot be given to graduating students who do not demonstrate the writing and speaking knowledge of French as required by the provincial curriculum.

Passed in 2015, Bill-86 gave more authority to local school boards in administering their education programs and among several measures, replaced the council of commissioners established in the Education Act with school councils run by parents; the bill also loosened accountability and reporting mechanisms to which schools must adhere.[[98]](#footnote-98)

**Separate Board:**

English language schools operate their own school boards in the province. This has been the case since 1999 (Freeland 1999).

**State-delivered Minority Language Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1.25

1990s: 2.25

2000s: 2.25

2010s: 2.5

2020: 2.5

**5. Indigenous Education:**

**Permitted:**

Indigenous education programs are offered through Indigenous schools in the province. Chapter 17 of the Education Act outlines the establishment of Cree, Inuit, and Naskapi education programs in Quebec.

In 2012, the provincial and federal governments along with the First Nation Education Council (FNEC) represented by the Assembly of First Nations Québec-Labrador signed the First Nation Education Council Quebec Memorandum of Understanding which committed to improving educational outcomes for Indigenous students in the province and established that Indigenous students enrolled in Indigenous education programs are entitled to an education that is of equal quality as that offered in the public school system.

In 2016, the provincial government, the federal government, and the Institut Tshakapesh signed the Agreement to Support the School Attendance and Academic Success of Innu Youth which, although did not include any additional funding by the provincial government, did commit to improving educational outcomes for students enrolled in provincial and on reserve schools and to fostering more cooperation between public schools and Indigenous schools.[[99]](#footnote-99)

**Funded:**

The provincial government ensures that adequate funding is provided to the Kativik school board (Assemblée nationale Quebec 2018).

According to the Education Act for Cree, Inuit, and Naskapi Native persons (1990)[[100]](#footnote-100), the Minister may provide subsidies to any school board in whole or in part, which provide the funds necessary to carry out its purposes.

The Government of Canada contributes 75% of the costs of operating the Kativik school board and the government of Quebec provides the remaining 25% (Conseil en Éducation des Premières Nations First Nations Education Council 2005).

The province also provides targeted funding on a project-by-project basis (CMEC 2012).

**Separate Board:**

Since 1978 in Nunavik, the Kativik school board has managed all Nunavik schools and have offered education programs with the intention of best reflecting Inuit culture (Assemblée nationale Quebec 2018). The Kativik school board is managed by an elected council of commissioners.

The same applies for the Cree school board as outlined in the Education Act for Cree, Inuit, and Naskapi Native persons (1990).

However, there are no separate school boards for Indigenous schools in the province.

**Indigenous Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1/3

1990s: 1.25/3

2000s: 1.25/3

2010s: 1.25/3

2020: 1.25/3

**6. Charter School:**

**Permitted: N/A**

**Funded: N/A**

**Regulated: N/A**

**Charter School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 0/3

1990s: 0/3

2000s: 0/3

2010s: 0/3

2020: 0/3

**7. Choice within Public Education System:**

**Open Enrollment:**

Parents are permitted to enroll their children in public schools outside of their catchment areas provided that they are responsible for the child’s transport to and from school, and that a child living in the catchment area of the school being applied to is not displaced as a result of a student outside of that area enrolling in their local school.[[101]](#footnote-101)

Open enrollment within school districts is permitted by the province (Bosetti & Gereluk 2016).

This has been the case since 1989 as outlined by Section 4 of the Education Act.[[102]](#footnote-102)

**Optional Attendance with Selective Admission:**

Most public schools do not offer selective admission criteria as these are offered predominantly by independent schools[[103]](#footnote-103) though programs such as IB set their own enrollment criteria.

**Specialty Programs/Schools:**

Programs such as AP and IB, and vocational training are offered in the public school system and the individual schools are responsible for determining the criteria for enrollment in such programs (Education Act).

**Choice within Public Education System Decade Scores:**

1980s: 3/3

1990s: 3/3

2000s: 3/3

2010s: 3/3

2020: 3/3

**8. Accredited International School:**

**Permitted: N/A**

**Regulated: N/A**

**School Credential Obtainable: N/A**

**Accredited International School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 0/3

1990s: 0/3

2000s: 0/3

2010s: 0/3

2020: 0/3

**Total School Choice Scores by Decade:**

**1980s: 11.5**

**1990s: 11**

**2000s: 11**

**2010s: 11.25**

**2020: 11.25**

**Newfoundland and Labrador:**

**1. Homeschool:**

**Permitted:**

Homeschooling is permitted under the Schools Act (1997) which permits parents to excuse their children from public school provided that they are attending an alternative education program.

**Funded:**

Funding is not available for parents who wish to homeschool their children (though textbooks are offered by the province) (HEMS 2020).

Those programs following the provincial curriculum are eligible to receive textbooks, curriculum guides, and other materials made available by the local public school in the area (CRHE 2020).

**Regulated:**

The 1997 Schools Act officially established a set of laws governing the provision of home-based education programs in the province.

The main source of regulation for those parents wishing to enroll their children in home education programs is to notify the province of this intent (Van Pelt 2017).

Progress reports must also be submitted up to three times per year (The Canadian Homeschooler 2020).

The School Act (1997) outlines that each of the four regions of the Newfoundland & Labrador English School District (NLESD) have designated homeschool coordinators who approve and oversee applications for home education programs (CRHE 2020).

As outlined by the NLESD, parents must also submit an education plan for the homeschool program to the province prior to commencing the program (CRHE 2020). They are free to follow the provincial curriculum or not (CRHE 2020). Using the provincial curriculum allows students to obtain a certified high school diploma upon graduation. Four core subject areas must be taught by either program: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies with two additional subjects as electives ranging from religious and physical education, French language, fine arts, and home economics (CRHE 2020).

Reports and samples of student work must be submitted annually during the duration of a home education program (CRHE 2020). Home education programs following the provincial curriculum are eligible to provide students with a certificate of graduation (CRHE 2020).

Homeschooling regulations in Newfoundland & Labrador are classified as “low” with parents’ declaration of the intent to enroll their children in a home-based education program to their local school board being the central regulation to which they must adhere; parents are not required to follow the provincial curriculum or have their program of study be approved by the province (Bosetti & Van Pelt 2017).

**Homeschool Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1/3

1990s: 1.75/3

2000s: 1.75/3

2010s: 1.75/3

2020: 1.75/3

**2. Independent School:**

**Permitted:**

According to the Schools Act (1997), private schools are permitted to be established in the province with the prior written permission of the Minister.

**Funded:**

Funding is not provided to independent schools in Newfoundland and Labrador (Progress Alberta 2020; CUP 2003; Banack & Farney forthcoming).

**Regulated:**

Prior to the 1997 Schools Act, private schools in the province were not subject to regulation and were operated by the clergy until the late 20th century (Banack & Farney forthcoming).

As laid out in the Schools Act (1997), a person wishing to establish a private school with the permission of the Minister, must submit the purpose for opening the school, a description of the classes and education programs, and any additional information requested by the Minister.

Private schools are subject to inspections at the request of the Minister and must submit annual reports to the Minister; students enrolled in private schools are still required to participate in provincial testing programs which are required by the Minister under the Schools Act 1997.

Private schools must participate in provincial assessments if they are using the provincial curriculum; as well, teachers must hold certified degrees/licenses (Banack & Farney forthcoming).

**Independent School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 2/3

1990s: 1.5/3

2000s: 1.5/3

2010s: 1.5/3

2020: 1.5/3

**3. State-delivered Religious Education:**

**Permitted:**

According to the Newfoundland & Labrador Religious Education Guide (2016), religious education programs are included as part of the core curriculum from K-9 with optional courses offered to senior high school students (since 1997).

Since 1997, a secular public school system divided between French and English has operated in the province with very small independent religious schools without state support (Banack & Farney forthcoming).

In 1994, the province established its unified inter-denominational education system. Prior to 1994, separate denominational schools were permitted to operate in the province which were funded by the provincial government and not subject to regulation (Bayefsky & Waldman 2007; Banack & Farney forthcoming).

Prior to the 1990s, the province had a multi-denominational education system which included Roman Catholic Schools, a Pentecostal education system, a Seventh-day Adventist education system, and an integrated system which included a combination of four different denominational groups: these included the Anglican, Salvation Army, United Church, and Presbyterian denominations.[[104]](#footnote-104)

Thus, separate public religious schools funded by the government only existed prior to the establishment of the secular public school system in 1997. Since then, religious courses have become part of the required curriculum in public schools, though separate denominational schools supported by the provincial government no longer exist.

**Regulated:**

The Lieutenant-Governor in Council is permitted to establish the regulations respecting the holding of religious observances in schools (Schools Act).

Although religious courses are required in public schools, parents may opt out of these courses if they wish (Bayefsky & Waldman 2007).

**Religious Observance:**

According to the Schools Act (1997), students, at the request of a parent(s), shall be excused from participation in a course in religion or religious observance practices conducted in a school.

The Lieutenant-Governor in Council may make regulations regarding respecting the holding of religious observances in schools (Schools Act).

**State-delivered Religious Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 3/3

1990s: 1.5/3

2000s: 1.5/3

2010s: 1.5/3

2020: 1.5/3

**4. State-delivered Minority Language Education:**

**Permitted:**

Prior to 1982, French-language instruction was available through courses in the public school system, but it was entirely up to local school boards whether such courses would be offered (Riddell 2003).

French immersion programs and courses offered in English-speaking public schools and are available in two forms: Early French Immersion and Late French Immersion.

The Schools Act (1997) also permits parents who wish to have their children educated in French to be able to do so.

**Regulated:**

The conseil scolaire is subject to approval by the minister who is permitted to establish and operate French language schools where the programs of study offered by the school must satisfy the minimum requirements as approved by the Minister (Schools Act).

The Conseil Scolaire is afforded the same powers as schools operating in public boards under Section 76 of the Act and is permitted to establish and maintain French language schools where the school’s programs of study must satisfy the requirements outlined by the Minister.

**Separate Board:**

Francophone schools operate their own school boards outside of the main public school system as permitted by the Schools Act (1997).

**State-delivered Minority Language Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 2/3

1990s: 2.75/3

2000s: 2.75/3

2010s: 2.75/3

2020: 2.75/3

**5. Indigenous Education:**

**Permitted:**

Indigenous students in the province have been attending schools since the 1960s but it was not until several decades later when local bands throughout the province were given jurisdiction of their schools (Fouillard 2013; Silta Associates 2007).

Public schools in the province are permitted to teach courses (upon approval by the Department of Education and EECD) that cover Indigenous languages/culture.

Indigenous content is incorporated into several subjects of study from grades 1-9 (Stanley et al. 2008).

In 2015, the Government of Canada, the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Sheshatshiu and Mushau Innu First Nations groups signed the Mamu Tshishkutamashutau—Innu Education Memorandum of Understanding with the aim of increasing partnerships between the members with regard to the public and on reserve education systems in the province.

Among other measures, this agreement made it much easier for Indigenous students in the province to move between on reserve schools and public schools and vice-versa.[[105]](#footnote-105)

In 2017, the government of Newfoundland and Labrador signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Miawpukek First Nations which provided for resource sharing and support between the two parties with the aim of implementing Mi’qmaq K-12 curriculum and teaching practices.[[106]](#footnote-106) The agreement also allows for provincial government pricing (where applicable) for teaching materials such as textbooks.[[107]](#footnote-107)

**Funded:**

The province provides funds to locally developed programs on a case-by-case basis (CMEC 2012).

For example, the Nunatsiavut Government—Fiscal Financing Agreement (2005) outlines that the provincial government will provide funds to the Nunatsiavut government for the provision of education programs and services pertaining to both elementary and secondary education.[[108]](#footnote-108)

**Separate Board:**

Band-operated schools are permitted in the province though there are no separate Indigenous school boards.

**Indigenous Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1/3

1990s: 1/3

2000s: 1.5/3

2010s: 1.5/3

2020: 1.5/3

**6. Charter School:**

**Permitted: N/A**

**Funded: N/A**

**Regulated: N/A**

**Charter School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 0/3

1990s: 0/3

2000s: 0/3

2010s: 0/3

2020: 0/3

**7. Choice within Public Education System:**

**Open Enrollment:**

There is no official policy of open enrollment in the province (CUP 2003).

According to the Newfoundland & Labrador English School District, parents are permitted to enroll their children in a public school outside of their catchment area through a request to transfer to another school.[[109]](#footnote-109)

Requests are generally made under the following circumstances: when a sibling of a child attends the school to which the child is being requested to transfer, program availability considerations, when the school recommends it, or when a family member of the child live within the attendance zone of the school.[[110]](#footnote-110)

**Optional Attendance with Selective Admission:**

Outside of the requirements that must be satisfied for those wishing to enroll in schools outside their catchment area, specialized public school programs such as IB programs can establish additional admission criteria for applicants and this has been permitted by the Schools Act (1997).

**Specialty Programs/Schools:**

IB, AP, and various other alternative programs are offered by public schools in the province (NLESD 2020).

**Choice within Public Education System Decade Scores:**

1980s: 0/3

1990s: 2/3

2000s: 2/3

2010s: 2/3

2020: 2/3

**8. Accredited International School:**

**Permitted: N/A**

**Regulated: N/A**

**School Credential Obtainable: N/A**

**Accredited International School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 0/3

1990s: 0/3

2000s: 0/3

2010s: 0/3

2020: 0/3

**Total School Choice Scores by Decade:**

**1980s: 9**

**1990s: 10.5**

**2000s: 11**

**2010s: 11**

**2020: 11**

**New Brunswick:**

**1. Homeschool:**

**Permitted:**

Homeschooling in New Brunswick is not explicitly laid out in the Education Act but students, with the approval of the Minister, can be exempted from the public school system and enroll in a home education program instead.

**Funded:**

According to the Education Act (1997), all forms of schooling outside the public school system are not funded by the provincial government.

Although funding not provided by the province, parents do have access to a minimal amount of funds for textbooks.[[111]](#footnote-111)

**Regulated:**

The application of parents to enroll their children in a home education program must be approved by a provincial government official; official exemption from the government and the public school system is required in order to be approved for homeschooling (Education Act).

Students enrolled in home education programs are not eligible to receive provincially recognized diplomas following graduation.[[112]](#footnote-112)

However, students can choose to enroll in certified distance education high school courses through the New Brunswick Virtual Learning Centre which would allow them to fulfill high school credits. Homeschooled students are permitted to take part in provincial assessment programs, though this is not a requirement.

“Effective instruction” must be demonstrated by a home education program in order to continue; this includes teaching certain subjects taught by the public school system and curriculum. Such subjects include Language Arts, Career Development, Mathematics, French, Science, Music, Technology, Social Studies, Physical Education, and Health.[[113]](#footnote-113)

Parents must also submit a portfolio of pupils’ work over the course of the home education program.[[114]](#footnote-114)

Homeschooling regulations in New Brunswick are classified as “low” with parents’ declaration of the intent to enroll their children in a home education program to the local school board being the central regulation to which they must adhere; parents are not required to follow the provincial curriculum or have their program of study be approved by the province (Bosetti & Van Pelt 2017).

**Homeschool Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1.75/3

1990s: 1.5/3

2000s: 1.5/3

2010s: 1.5/3

2020: 1.5/3

**2. Independent School:**

**Permitted:**

The regulations of independent schools in the province are not set out in the Education Act but private schools are permitted to operate in New Brunswick.

**Funded:**

Independent schools are not provided funding by the provincial government (Johnson & Swift 2000; Van Pelt et al. 2017).

**Regulated:**

Students enrolled in independent schools in the province must annually apply to the Minister for exemption from the public school system (Shapiro 1985).

Private schools are free to determine their own curricula and students enrolled in private schools are not eligible to receive a high school diploma upon graduation (CUP 2003).

Although there are few direct regulations for independent schools in the province, there are more student-specific ones such as those outlined above (Van Pelt et al. 2017). “Independent” schools are not explicitly mentioned in government documents though there are few references to “private” schools (Van Pelt et al. 2017).

**Independent School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1.75/3

1990s: 1.75/3

2000s: 1.75/3

2010s: 1.75/3

2020: 1.75/3

**3. State-delivered Religious Education:**

**Permitted: N/A**

**Regulated: N/A**

**Religious Observance: N/A**

**State-delivered Religious Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 0/3

1990s: 0/3

2000s: 0/3

2010s: 0/3

2020: 0/3

**4. State-delivered Minority Language Education:**

**Permitted:**

The regulations for French language education are established under the Education Act (1997).

Francophone school boards were established in 1974 by the Ministry of Education (FNCSF 2020).

**Regulated:**

According to the Education Act (1997), the schools and classes of a given (English or French) school district in the province must be organized in the official language of that district. Each of these education sectors have a dedicated division in the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to develop and administer their education programs. As well, the education programs and services (other than second language instruction) provided by an English or French school district must be developed by persons who speak the official language of the school district. The educational programs provided in a given school district organized in one language shall not be provided in the other language for persons speaking that other official language. Students who fulfill the language requirements of French and English schools are permitted to be enrolled in either school.

**Separate Board:**

Francophone schools operate their own boards in the province (Education Act 1997).

This has been the case since the province passed the New Brunswick Official Languages Act (1969) which established a two-tiered English/French educational system.

**State-delivered Minority Language Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 2.75/3

1990s: 2.5/3

2000s: 2.5/3

2010s: 2.5/3

2020: 2.5/3

**5. Indigenous Education:**

**Permitted:**

In 1994, the First Nations Education Initiative was established and included 11 of 15 of the province’s Indigenous communities with the aim of returning jurisdiction of Indigenous education to the province’s Indigenous groups.[[115]](#footnote-115)

The Education Act (1997) outlines that the provincial government must approve of education programs tailoring specifically to the needs of Indigenous tribes in the province.

Since 2017, the province has implemented a 10-year plan to integrate more Indigenous cultural and educational programming into the public school curriculum (Baker 2017).

**Funded:**

Half of the tuition paid by Indigenous students to attend public schools are reinvested into services for Indigenous students.[[116]](#footnote-116)

This was made possible through the Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Education and First Nations Students and Communities in the Province of New Brunswick (2008).

The provincial government provides additional funding for local program development through its Tuition Enhancement Initiative (CMEC 2012).

A number of provincially-administered programs aiming to assist Indigenous students provide different sources of funding through various channels including bursaries, awards, and the Education Achievement Fund.[[117]](#footnote-117)

**Separate Board:**

There are currently several schools in the province that are band-operated and this has been the case since the 1980s (CBC 2016).[[118]](#footnote-118)

However, there is no separate Indigenous school board.

**Indigenous Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1/3

1990s: 1/3

2000s: 1.5/3

2010s: 1.5/3

2020: 1.5/3

**6. Charter School:**

**Permitted: N/A**

**Funded: N/A**

**Regulated: N/A**

**Charter School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 0/3

1980s: 0/3

1990s: 0/3

2000s: 0/3

2010s: 0/3

2020: 0/3

**7. Choice within Public Education System:**

**Open Enrollment:**

The province does not have an open enrollment policy and student choices for schools are constrained within catchment areas; movement between schools requires the approval of each of the specific schools in question (CUP 2003).

**Optional Attendance with Selective Admission:**

School districts throughout the province are given the freedom to adopt their own policies regarding the programs of choice that they offer to parents and students in order to meet the unique needs of those in their districts (CUP 2003).

**Specialty Programs/Schools:**

Alternative education programs are offered in the public school system (e.g. health sciences and technology).

As of 2020, there are also three schools in the public education system that offer IB programs.

**Choice within Public Education System Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1/3

1990s: 2/3

2000s: 2/3

2010s: 2/3

2020: 2/3

**8. Accredited International School:**

**Permitted:**

The Atlantic Education International Inc. (AEI) was established in 1997 by the province in order to provide the New Brunswick educational curriculum to schools abroad.[[119]](#footnote-119)

According to The Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials[[120]](#footnote-120), there are currently 23 schools abroad that offer the New Brunswick curriculum as well as an equivalent diploma to students enrolled in these programs.

**Regulated:**

The AEI recruits certified teachers from the province to work at schools abroad which choose to offer the New Brunswick public school curriculum (Canadian Government News 2018).

**School Credential Obtainable:**

Dual-high school diplomas are obtainable at certain schools abroad enrolled in the AEI.[[121]](#footnote-121)

**Accredited International School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 0/3

1990s: 2.5/3

2000s: 2.5/3

2010s: 2.5/3

2020: 2.5/3

**Total School Choice Scores by Decade:**

**1980s: 8.25**

**1990s: 11.25**

**2000s: 11.75**

**2010s: 11.75**

**2020: 11.75**

**Nova Scotia:**

**1. Homeschool:**

**Permitted:**

Homeschooling is permitted under the Education Act (1995).

**Funded:**

Home education programs in Nova Scotia are not funded by the provincial government.[[122]](#footnote-122)

**Regulated:**

There were no laws governing the regulation of home education programs in the province through the 1980s. Rather, alternative means of educating children outside of the public education system were permitted based solely on the notion that such means were providing an adequate education to students (Shapiro 1985).

In accordance with the Education Act, parents can request that their child’s home education program be evaluated in accordance with the regulations of the public school system with regard to assessment and educational progress; doing so allows students to obtain provincially recognized credits.

According the Education Act, the Minister may request the parent(s) of a homeschooled child to submit progress reports; these can include results of standardized tests, assessments from an assessor deemed to be qualified, or a portfolio of the pupil’s work.

According to the Education Act (2003), parents wishing to enroll their children in a home education program must submit registration forms to the Minister on or before September 20th.

Homeschooling regulations in Nova Scotia are classified as “moderate” in that home education programs must be inspected or certified by the province and student progress periodically assessed (Bosetti & Van Pelt 2017).

**Homeschool Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1.75/3

1990s: 1.5/3

2000s: 1.5/3

2010s: 1.5/3

2020: 1.5/3

**2. Independent School:**

**Permitted:**

Independent schools are permitted under the Education Act (1995-96) and can be of both secular and religious nature.

**Funded:**

The majority of non-public schools in the province do not receive public funding; however, it should be noted that although independent schools are unfunded in the province, there are four private high schools in particular which receive grants of $400 per student (Johnston & Swift 2000.

Private high schools which follow the provincial curriculum are eligible for textbook subsidies (Johnston & Swift 2000).

**Regulated:**

Independent schools have been operating in the province since the 1970s.[[123]](#footnote-123)

However, there was no legislation governing the establishment and operation of private schools during this period; independent schools were permitted to operate based on the understanding that a child receiving adequate education outside of the public school system was able to do so (Shapiro 1985).

The Education Act stipulates that independent schools in the province are subject to monitoring by government representatives mainly for adherence to requirements for obtaining a certified high school diploma upon graduation.

According to the Education Act (2003), an independent school’s program of study must be recognized by the Minister as one that meets the requirements for obtaining a certified high school diploma upon graduation. A school’s program of study must be submitted to and approved by the Minister before the school is permitted to operate. The school must also demonstrate to the Minister that the teachers it has employed are eligible to teach in Nova Scotia and hold a valid teaching certification.

Bill 72 (Education Reform Act 2018) outlines that independent schools are also to be monitored by the province for keeping up with providing an education level that is similar to that of the public school system (e.g. through recognized standardized testing practices).

However, private schools are free to adopt their own curricula (CUP 2003).

**Independent School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1.75/3

1990s: 1.5/3

2000s: 1.5/3

2010s: 1.5/3

2020: 1.5/3

**3. State-delivered Religious Education:**

**Permitted: N/A**

**Regulated: N/A**

**Religious Observance: N/A**

**State-delivered Religious Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 0/3

1990s: 0/3

2000s: 0/3

2010s: 0/3

2020: 0/3

**4. State-delivered Minority Language Education:**

**Permitted:**

An Education Act passed in 1981 permitted schools with French first-language programs to operate in the province and the subsequent 1995-6 Education Act continued this program.

**Regulated:**

As outlined in the Nova Scotia Education Act (1995-6), the Governor in Council is permitted to establish a school board with province-wide jurisdiction (Conseil scolaire Acadien) in order to provide French language programs to the children of entitled parents.

The Conseil Acadien has the responsibility of delivering and administrating all French-first language programs in the province.

The Governor in Council can make the regulations regarding the determination of those who are entitled to receive a French-first language education program, determining the location of these facilities, providing for the conveyance of students, provisioning for the administration of these programs, and respecting other matters as deemed necessary; the courses and programs adopted by a Francophone school must first be approved by the Minister (Education Act 1995-6).

According to the 1995-6 Act, in order to be eligible for enrollment in a Francophone school, individuals must be defined as an “entitled parent” which means a Canadian citizen whose first language is French, who received their primary school education in Canada in French, or whom have any children who have received primary school education in Canada in French.

**Separate Board:**

A new School Boards Act (1991) allowed for independent Francophone school boards in the province.

There is only one separate French language school board in the province (i.e. The Conseil Scolaire Acadien).

**State-delivered Minority Language Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1.75/3

1990s: 2.5/3

2000s: 2.5/3

2010s: 2.5/3

2020: 2.5/3

**5. Indigenous Education:**

**Permitted:**

Indigenous education programs have been permitted in the province with the Eskasoni gaining control of their own school system in 1980.[[124]](#footnote-124)

Under the Education Act (1995), there is a separate council authorized for Mi’kmaq education which has control over the education policies for Mi’kmaq students in the public education system.

Indigenous education in Nova Scotia is largely governed under the Mi’kmaq Education Act (1998).[[125]](#footnote-125)

Since 1999, the Mi’kmaw communities in the province have had control over their education programs.[[126]](#footnote-126)

The province has also implemented mandatory treaty education starting in primary school since 2015 (Canadian School Boards Association 2018).[[127]](#footnote-127)

**Funded:**

The Nova Scotia Department of Education provides funding for the same professional development given to teachers in the public school system for teachers in the Mi’kmaw Kina’matnewey education system (Simon 2014).

Since a Memorandum of Understanding which was signed in 2015[[128]](#footnote-128), the provincial government has provided annual funding for the implementation of the Treaty Education initiative (OAA 2016).

**Separate Board:**

There are no separate Indigenous school boards in the province.

However, the Mi’kmaw Kina’matnewey (MK) is an independent governing body which has existed since 1997 and is in charge of administering band-operated Indigenous education programs in Nova Scotia (Simon 2014).

**Indigenous Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1/3

1990s: 1/3

2000s: 1/3

2010s: 1.5/3

2020: 1.5/3

**6. Charter School:**

**Permitted: N/A**

**Funded: N/A**

**Regulated: N/A**

**Charter School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 0/3

1990s: 0/3

2000s: 0/3

2010s: 0/3

2020: 0/3

**7. Choice within Public Education System:**

**Open Enrollment:**

There is no official policy of open enrollment but individual school districts are permitted to set the rules for movement between schools in the district and between schools outside of the district (CUP 2003).

**Optional Attendance with Selective Admission:**

Public programs of choice offered in schools in Nova Scotia are open for enrolment by any student enrolled in the public education system.[[129]](#footnote-129)

**Specialty Programs/Schools:**

As of 2020, there are 13 schools offering the IB program (Department of Education & Early Childhood Development 2020).

In addition, there are several different specialized programs in which students in the public education system can enroll.[[130]](#footnote-130)

Specialty courses are also offered through the Nova Scotia Virtual School (2020). Skilled trades programs are also offered at public schools from Grades 10-12.

Outside of the public school curriculum, individual schools are permitted to develop locally made programs which suit the needs of their communities (CUP 2003).

**Choice within Public Education System Decade Scores:**

1980s: 2/3

1990s: 2/3

2000s: 2/3

2010s: 2/3

2020: 2/3

**8. Accredited International School:**

**Permitted:**

According to the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials[[131]](#footnote-131) (Nova Scotia), there are currently 15 schools in China and 1 in the UAE that offer the Nova Scotia public school curriculum to students as of 2020.

**Regulated:**

Instructors teaching in Nova Scotia international schools must be certified by the province and the schools must teach the Nova Scotia public school curriculum.[[132]](#footnote-132)

**School Credential Obtainable:**

Diplomas offered by international schools affiliated with the Nova Scotia international schools program are recognized by both jurisdictions.[[133]](#footnote-133)

**Accredited International School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 0/3

1990s: 0/3

2000s: 2.5/3

2010s: 2.5/3

2020: 2.5/3

**Total School Choice Scores by Decade:**

**1980s: 8.25**

**1990s: 8.5**

**2000s: 11**

**2010s: 11.5**

**2020: 11.5**

**Prince Edward Island:**

**1. Homeschool:**

**Permitted:**

Home education programs are permitted under the Education Act.

**Funded:**

Home education programs are not provided with public funding in the province. However, parents have access to textbooks and other resources by making a request through the Home Education Learning Resources form which can cover such costs up to $50 per student (PEI Education 2020).

**Regulated:**

In the 1980s, alternative means of educating children outside the public school system were permitted provided that parents could demonstrate that the education their children were receiving was adequate (Shapiro 1985).

In accordance with the Education Act, parents who wish to enroll their children in homeschooling must notify the Minister of this intention and provide a home education program; they are not required to follow the provincial curriculum.

Students enrolled in home education programs are not eligible for certified high school diplomas unless they enroll in the public education system and fulfill the required credits (PEI Education 2020).

Homeschooling regulations in Prince Edward Island are classified as “moderate” in that home education programs must be inspected or certified by the province and student progress periodically assessed (Bosetti & Van Pelt 2017).

Since 2015 however, the requirement that parents who homeschool their children provide an education program subject to approval by a certified teacher has been removed.[[134]](#footnote-134)

**Homeschool Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1.75/3

1990s: 1.5/3

2000s: 1.5/3

2010s: 1.75/3

2020: 1.75/3

**2. Independent School:**

**Permitted:**

Independent schools are permitted by the Education Act.

**Funded:**

Independent schools in the province are not provided with public funding as such funding is reserved only for secular schools in the public system (Bayefsky & Waldman 2007). Independent schools using the provincial curriculum are eligible to receive textbooks (Bayefsky & Waldman 2007).

**Regulated:**

Private schools must be inspected by the province before they are permitted to operate, and Ministerial approval is required for a child to enroll in a private school (Shapiro 1985).

Independent schools in the province require the approval of the Minister and are subject to inspection by the government (Bayefsky & Waldman 2007).

According to the Education Act, in order to operate, independent schools must notify the government and provide an outline of their program of study and information regarding their instructors though they are not required to follow the provincial curriculum.

According to the Private Schools Act (2016), private schools are required to employ teachers with certified degrees and that such school submit annual reports to the province.

**Independent School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1.75/3

1990s: 1.5/3

2000s: 1.5/3

2010s: 1.5/3

2020: 1.5/3

**3. State-delivered Religious Education:**

**Permitted: N/A**

**Regulated: N/A**

**Religious Observance: N/A**

**State-delivered Religious Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 0/3

1990s: 0/3

2000s: 0/3

2010s: 0/3

2020: 0/3

**4. State-delivered Minority Language Education:**

**Permitted:**

Although French language schools have historically operated in the province, it was in 1990 when the responsibility of governing French schools in the province was given to the French Language School Board (Education Governance Commission 2011).

The Education Act permits those wishing to receive instruction in French to do so.

French language education programs are available through Core French beginning in grade 4, French Immersion Programs from K-12, and French First Language Programs (PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada 2020).

**Regulated:**

According to the Education Act, to enroll in a French language education program parents must be regarded as “eligible” which means that they are a resident of the province who under section 23 of the Charter have the right to have their children receive French first language instruction.

Those who do not have eligibility to enroll under the Charter can do so through application to the Commission Scolaire de langue française (CUP 2003).

Teachers employed in French Immersion programs are required to meet French linguistic competency tests.[[135]](#footnote-135)

In accordance with the Education Act, the French language school board has jurisdiction over the administration of French first language instruction in the province. The Minister may designate a school as a French school.

**Separate Board:**

PEI currently has 1 French language school board (CSLF) which has been in operation since the 1990s.

**State-delivered Minority Language Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1.75/3

1990s: 2.5/3

2000s: 2.5/3

2010s: 2.5/3

2020: 2.5/3

**5. Indigenous Education:**

**Permitted:**

Band-operated Indigenous schools have been operating in the province since the 1980s.[[136]](#footnote-136)

There is some integration of Indigenous curricula in the K-12 public education system, though negotiations between the province’s Mi’kmaq communities and the government to include more Indigenous content are regularly being conducted (Stanley et al. 2018).

The Government of Canada, of Prince Edward Island, and the Mi’kmaq First Nations of PEI signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2010 to support Indigenous students in the province. The agreement allowed for the formulation of a more comprehensive education plan between the province and its Indigenous communities, a provincial government guarantee of reinvesting tuition payments into Indigenous educational programs, and the establishment of tuition fee agreements for Mi’kmaq students enrolled in public schools (Marketwire 2010).

**Funded:**

In 2010, the provincial and federal government signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the province’s two Indigenous bands and three other provincial departments to establish of tuition fee agreements. This agreement allows for reinvestment of a proportion of tuition payments for Indigenous students attending public schools towards Indigenous education initiatives.[[137]](#footnote-137)

**Separate Board:**

There are no separate Indigenous school boards in PEI but there is one band operated school (Canadian School Boards Association 2018).[[138]](#footnote-138)

**Indigenous Education Decade Scores:**

1980s: 1/3

1990s: 1/3

2000s: 1/3

2010s: 1.25/3

2020: 1.25/3

**6. Charter School:**

**Permitted: N/A**

**Funded: N/A**

**Regulated: N/A**

**Charter School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 0/3

1990s: 0/3

2000s: 0/3

2010s: 0/3

2020: 0/3

**7. Choice within Public Education System:**

**Open Enrollment:**

Students must attend the public school that is in their catchment area (PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada 2020). The exception to this is if they are applying to a specialty program such as IB which is not offered by their local school.

**Optional Attendance with Selective Admission:**

Though there is no policy of open enrollment, specialty programs such as IB programs do have their own admission criteria to which applicants must adhere if they wish to attend these schools.

**Specialty Programs/Schools:**

There are several schools in the province which have historically offered various educational programs to their students.[[139]](#footnote-139)

Locally developed courses are offered on a district-by-district basis (CUP 2003).

Since 2010, IB programs have been offered in the public school system (PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada 2020).

AP programs are also offered along with several other specialized programs of study.[[140]](#footnote-140)

The Academy Diploma Program (ADP) offered by the department of education enables students to gain sector specific skills.

**Choice within Public Education System Decade Scores:**

1980s: 2/3

1990s: 2/3

2000s: 2/3

2010s: 2/3

2020: 2/3

**8. Accredited International School:**

**Permitted:**

There are currently 3 schools abroad which offer the PEI public school curriculum, the first of which opened in 1999.[[141]](#footnote-141)

**Regulated:**

PEI-affiliated schools overseas must use the public school curriculum used in the province and are inspected annually by the Ministry of Education.[[142]](#footnote-142)

**School Credential Obtainable:**

Students abroad who attend PEI international schools are permitted to graduate with a PEI-recognized diploma school certificate (PEI Education 2020).

**Accredited International School Decade Scores:**

1980s: 0/3

1990s: 2.5/3

2000s: 2.5/3

2010s: 2.5/3

2020: 2.5/3

**Total School Choice Scores by Decade:**

**1980s: 8.25**

**1990s: 11**

**2000s: 11**

**2010s: 11.5**

**2020: 11.5**

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