



Local Democracy Works in Education

Democracy and a Focus on Equity

The following tables and charts explain, through international comparisons of student achievement and public expenditures on education, why the Canadian system of locally elected school boards is better than what exists elsewhere.

Expenditures on Education Relative to GDP – Some Facts

Efficiency - The table on the right shows that Canada spends less than seventeen other countries on the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development rankings.

How does that happen? Good governance of local school boards. Elected trustees have their eye on financial and student achievement bottom lines.

Canada is larger than all of those other countries, including the United States – our costs of education logistics are higher.

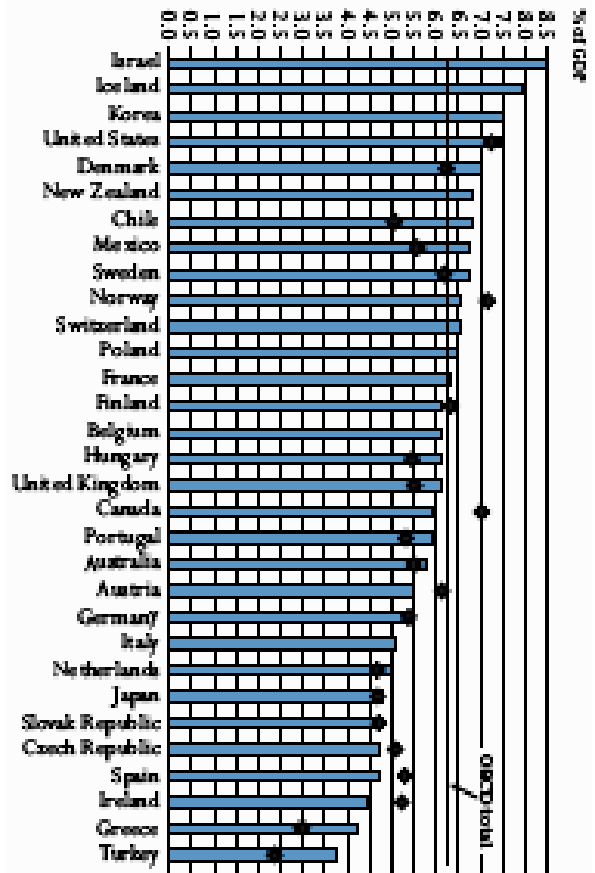
Canada has no federal involvement in education policy or delivery.

The Equality & Efficiency Indicators

The Between- and Within-School Variance table below shows that Canada's variance is very low.

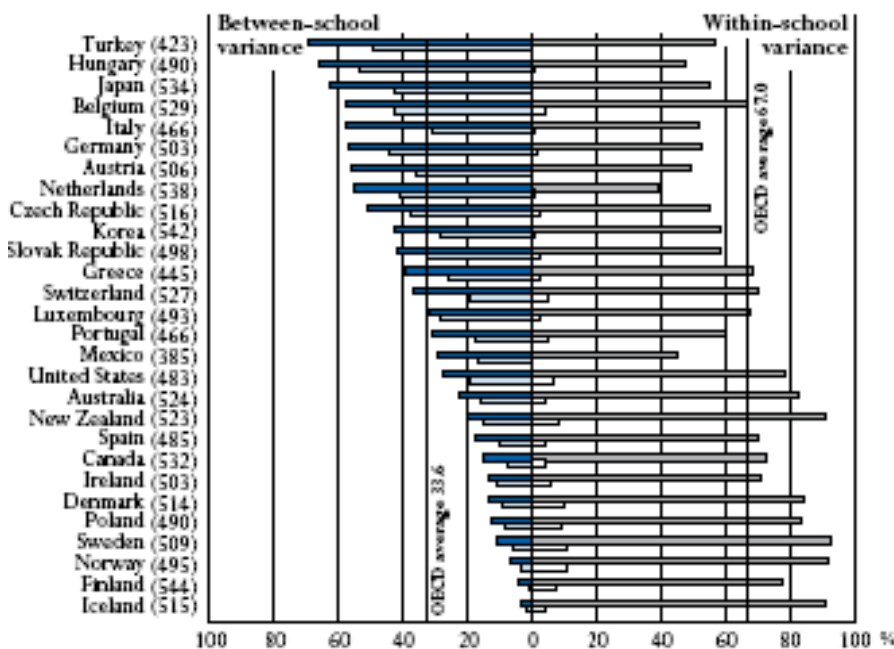
It means that:

1. Canadian parents can feel very confident that no matter what school in the country their child goes to, no matter their income level, their child will receive a good education [in this case, specifically mathematics].
2. Canadian school boards deliver better equality than many countries that spend more money as a percentage of education.
3. Canadian school boards deliver equality more efficiently than most other countries.



Education at a Glance OECD 2006, p. 32

The national voice of school boards • Le porte-parole national des commissions/conseils scolaires



Education at a Glance OECD 2006, p. 16

Country	Square KM
Canada	9,984,670
United States	9,826,630
Australia	7,686,850
Mexico	1,972,550
France	547,030
Sweden	449,964
Finland	338,145
New Zealand	268,680
United Kingdom	244,820
Korea (South)	98,480
Denmark	43,094
Switzerland	41,290

CIA Fact Book



More on Equality

The table on the left shows that Canada is in third place in ensuring that most of its population does well at the basics in mathematics.

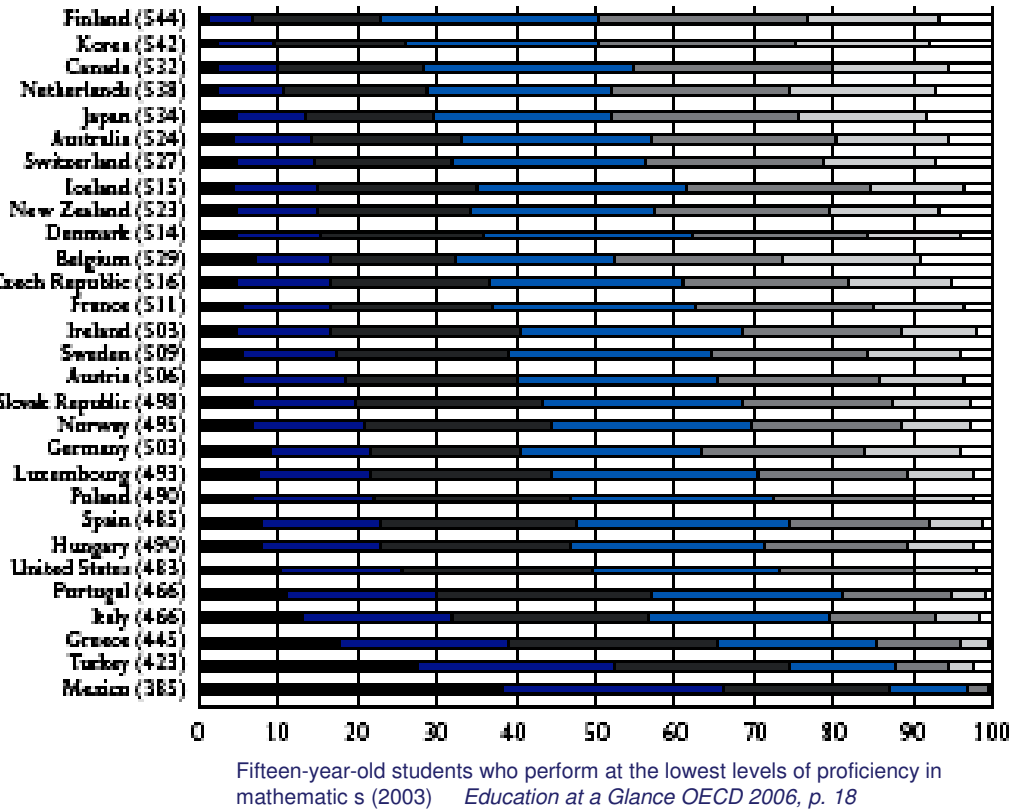
Only Korea and Finland do better.

Combined, Korea and Finland are only slightly larger than Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Excellence Indicator

The table below compares 15 year old Canadian students to 15 year olds in other countries in mathematics.

Canada's system is in fifth place, behind smaller countries. Note that each one spends more as a percentage of their GDP than Canada.



Still More on Equality

We can also argue, by looking at the spread of the range on the table on the left, that Canada does well in ensuring that **most** of its students do well.

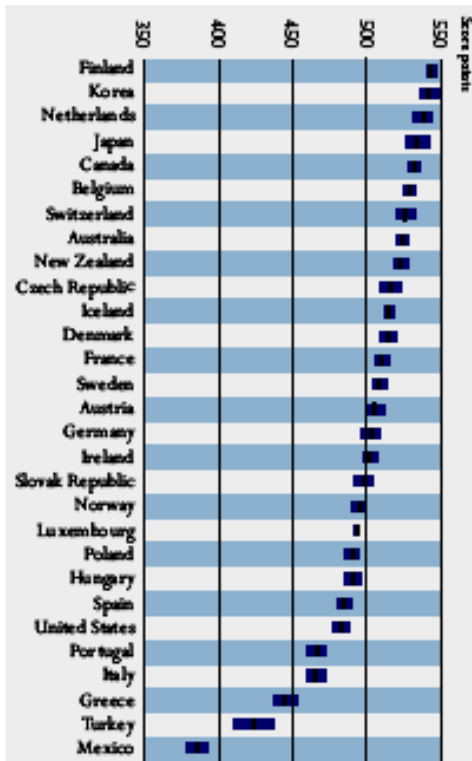
How does equality happen?

Democracy. People with lower incomes and those who live in less populated regions can control the education system that directly affects their children by voting for school trustees who commit to making a difference.

Accountability. Locally elected school boards are accountable to the whole community, the 70% of the population who do not have children in school, but do need intelligent creative employees, responsible citizens and reliable family members.

The restless Canadian – The member associations of the CSBA and their school boards are not content with our international standings and have identified three student achievement priorities to keep Canada competitive. Although we look forward to more international comparisons to see where we can improve, democracy in itself is a restless dynamic that demands ever-increasing improvement. The following are the priorities:

1. The achievement of aboriginal students in the public system
2. The achievement of immigrant and refugee students
3. Improving high school completion rates



What Fifteen-year-old students can do in mathematics (2003) *Education at a Glance OECD 2006, p. 14*

Thank you

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June 1 2007