

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.

**Democracy is Efficient**

The table on the right shows that Canada spends less on education than 17 other countries on the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development rankings.

Canada is larger than all of those other countries, including the United States – (see the table on the bottom right) we should be spending more!

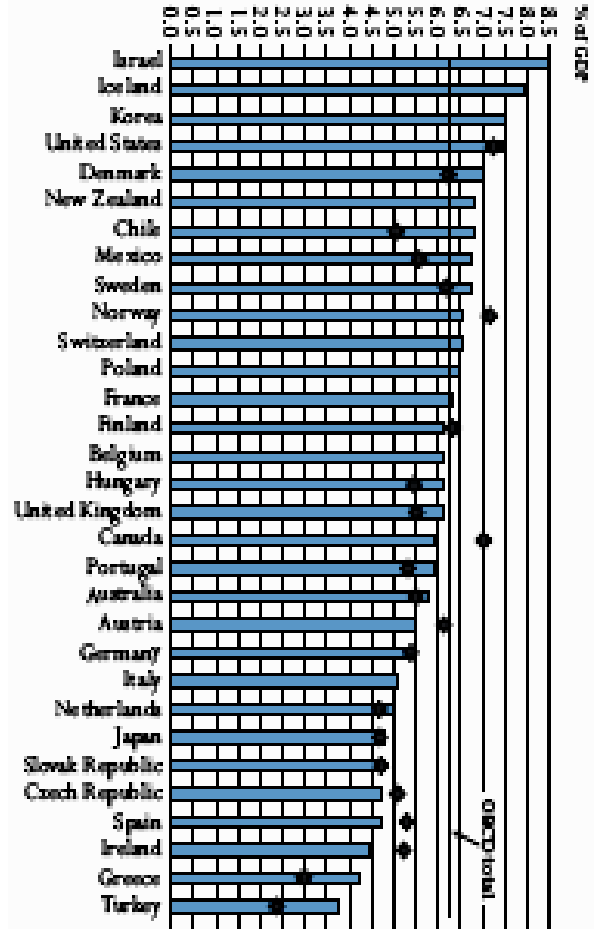
Canada has no federal involvement in education policy or delivery.

**The Equality Indicator**

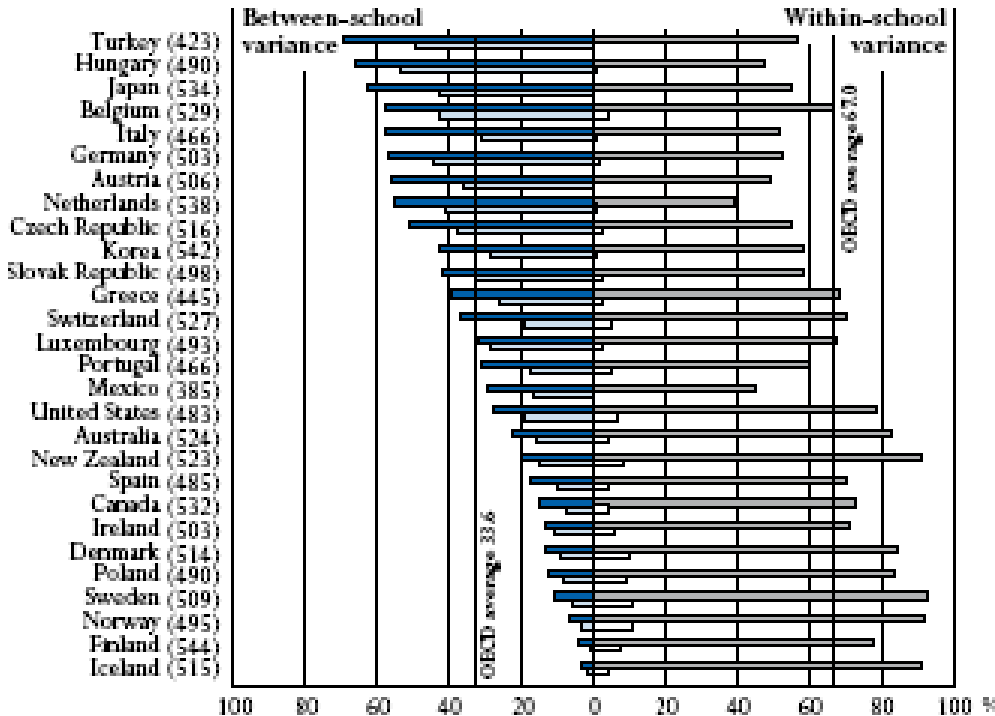
The Between- and Within-School Variance table below shows that Canada's variance is very low. Low variance on both scales means that: *Canadian parents can feel very confident that no matter what school in the country their child goes to, no matter their income level, their child will receive a good education* [in this case, specifically mathematics].

**How can we interpret this combination of facts?**

*Canadian school boards deliver equality more efficiently than other countries.*



Education at a Glance OECD 2006, p. 32



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 Canada scoring in third place – only Korea and Finland perform better.

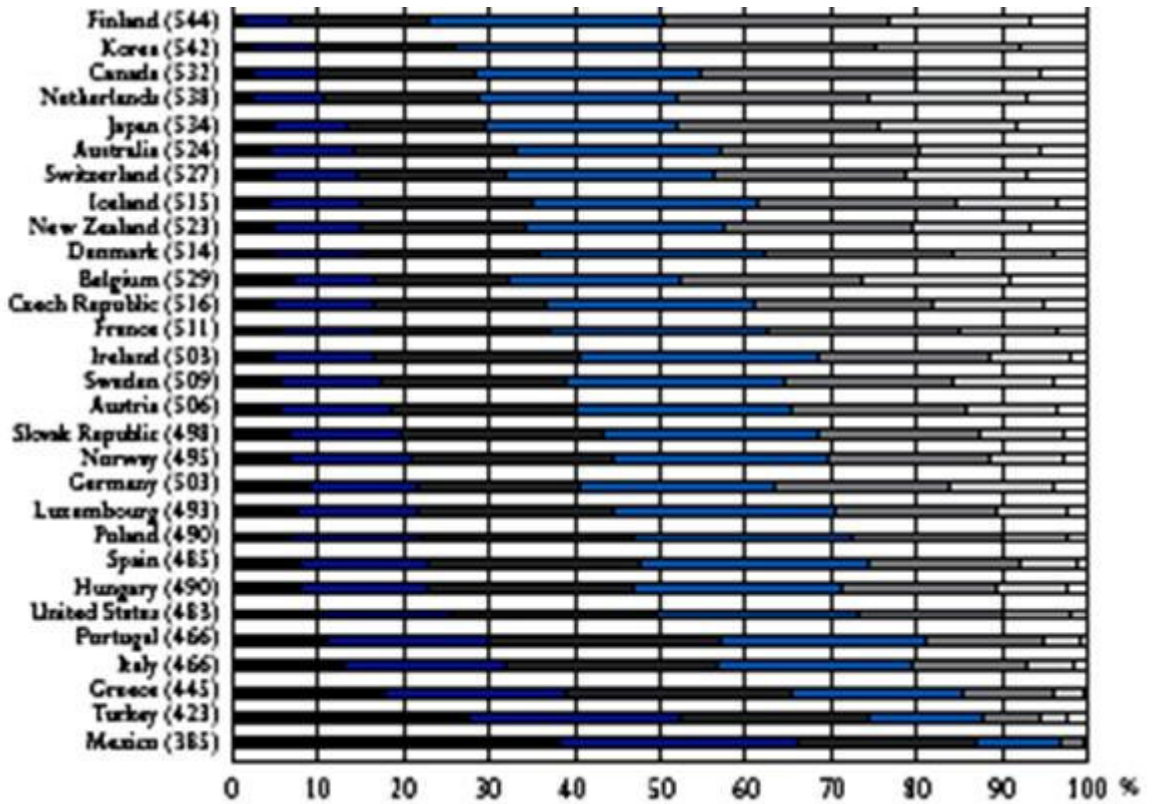
The graph bars also show that *most* of our population does well at the basics in mathematics.

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

**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 5<sup>th</sup> place, and behind smaller countries. Note that each one spends more as a percentage of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) than Canada.



15-year-old students who perform at the lowest levels of proficiency in mathematics *Education at a Glance OECD 2006, p. 18*

**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.

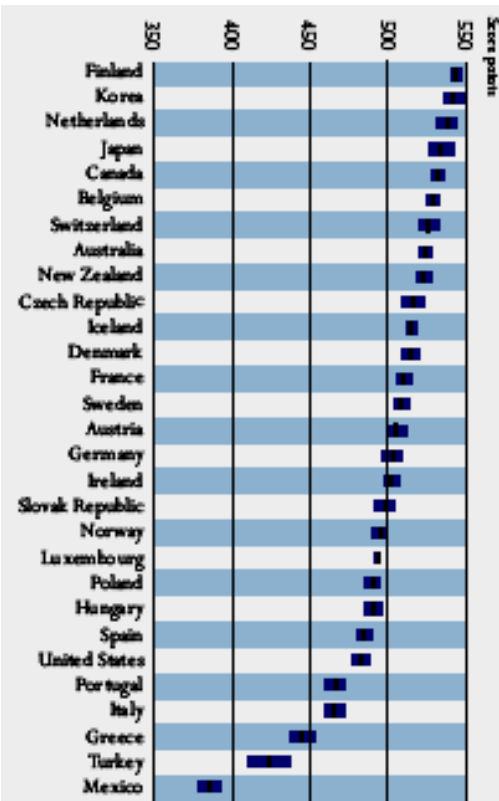
**How does equality happen?**

**Democracy.** People with lower incomes and those who live in less populated regions can still voice their concerns and needs 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 CSBA student achievement priorities: 1. The achievement of aboriginal students in the public system; 2. The achievement of immigrant and refugee students, and 3. Improving high school completion rates.

By the way, the next round of results from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results will be published in mid-December.



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

Patricia Parulekar, National Director  
November 16 2007