

To provide information on how well the education systems are meeting the needs of students and society, the provinces and territories, through CMEC, developed the SAIP to assess the performance of 13- and 16-year-old students in mathematics content and mathematics problem-solving, reading and writing, and science (see www.cmec.ca). Planning for administration began in 1991. Two full cycles of SAIP have been administered with mathematics being assessed in 1993 and 1997; reading and writing in 1994 and 1998; and science in 1996 and 1999. A third cycle is underway with the administration of mathematics in 2001 and writing in 2002. A review of SAIP activities was completed in October 2000. Review findings are currently being examined in order to devise recommendations to further enhance the program's value.

Under the Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program, CMEC worked with the Government of Canada and other partners to create a full range of indicators to describe education and learning in Canada, from preschool through lifelong learning. The first report was published in 1996, and since that time, CMEC and Statistics Canada have consulted with ministries and departments of education across Canada about their information needs, and an updated indicator set has been developed to provide current data on the key inputs, processes, and outputs of education systems across Canada. A report on these indicators was published in early 2000 entitled *Education Indicators in Canada: Report of the Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program 1999*.

Through the Accessibility and Research component of the Public Expectations of Post-Secondary Education Project, CMEC is working with all jurisdictions and key stakeholders to review barriers to accessing post-secondary education and identify ways to remove these. The accessibility project is part of CMEC's work initiated by ministers of education through their *Report on Public Expectations of Post-Secondary Education in Canada*, released in 1999. The report outlines expectations in the context of six overarching themes: quality, accessibility, mobility, relevancy and responsiveness, research and scholarship, and accountability.

In October 1998, CMEC approved Canada's participation in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) Cycle 1, to be administered in 2000. PISA's goal is to produce policy-oriented and internationally comparable indicators of student achievement. Cycle 1 assesses a sample of 15-year-old students in reading (the major domain) and in mathematics and science (the minor domains). The assessment has been undertaken in collaboration with Human Resources Development Canada, Statistics Canada and the provinces.

All of Canada's provinces are participating in both PISA and Canada's Youth in Transition Study (YITS), to obtain international and national data. PISA/YITS allows provincial comparisons in achievement and in student perceptions similar to the information obtained through the CMEC School Achievement Indicators Program. PISA/YITS, a comprehensive assessment program, is administered to about 33 000 students and includes student and principal questionnaires. Statistics Canada, through YITS, also contacts the parents of students participating in the study, and their responses are combined with the students' assessment results and questionnaire responses. It is expected that PISA/YITS will provide CMEC with a rich bank of data.