

Provincial education systems

2

Because each province has exclusive constitutional responsibility for education within its boundaries, a single, national system of education has not developed in Canada. Instead, provincial autonomy has resulted in distinctive education systems reflecting historical and cultural traditions and socio-economic conditions. While there are many similarities between provinces, provincial education systems differ in organization, policies and practices. Examples of the differences between education systems can be found in compulsory school attendance ages, the length of the school year, the years of schooling designated as elementary, and the organization of postsecondary education.

Each province has a department of education headed by a minister who is an elected member of the provincial legislature. Day-to-day administration of the department is the responsibility of the deputy minister, an appointed public servant who advises the minister on policy.

Some provinces have created separate departments for postsecondary education, usually headed by their own minister. Related activities such as manpower training, technology and continuing education may also be under the jurisdiction of the minister of postsecondary education.

Departments of education have responsibility for supervision and inspection of elementary and secondary schools, provision of curricular and school organization guidelines, certification of teachers, and research and support services.

Other provincial departments may also have a role in education. They support various institutions and programs such as schools of agriculture, schools for retarded children, reform and prison schools, apprenticeship and training programs.

Indirect federal involvement in education

In addition to the operation of federal schools, the funding of training programs and the transfer of money to the provinces for education, several federal departments and agencies are indirectly involved in education through research and support services. These are briefly described below.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has provided facilities and production assistance for radio and television broadcasts to be used in schools for a number of years.

The National Film Board co-operates in the use of its facilities and has assisted provinces in establishing film libraries.