

Financing public elementary-secondary education

In 1982-83, expenditures on elementary-secondary education were an estimated \$.19 billion or 66.8 per cent of all education spending and 5.4 per cent of gross national product.

Financing of public elementary-secondary education has traditionally been a municipal responsibility, with local real estate and corporation taxes paying most of the cost of basic education. However, the expansion in educational services since the Second World War has involved other levels of government in public school finance. At the end of the 1940s, provincial governments were contributing less than 20 per cent of net general revenues. During the following decade, as education spending nearly tripled (reflecting rising enrolments, improvement in teachers' salaries, large-scale building programs, and the growth of special services), municipal authorities sought greater support from provincial governments. And provincial grants to school boards have generally been increasing since then.

The relative contributions of provincial and local governments to public schools differ significantly from province to province, as each provincial authority determines the magnitude of its financial responsibility. In 1982-83 on average, provincial government contributions accounted for 71 per cent of net general expenditures on public education, ranging from the highest levels of 97 per cent and 96 per cent in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island respectively, to the lowest level of 50 per cent in Manitoba.

Part of the provincial support for public schools actually comes from the federal government. Of particular consequence is federal support for the building of schools through the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion, and contributions under a federal-provincial program for the development of bilingualism in education.

Post-secondary education

Until about 20 years ago, higher education in Canada was provided almost exclusively by the universities, which were mainly private institutions, many with religious affiliation. However, during the 1960s, as universities became more dependent on government support, a system