

## The Right to Education in Canada 2018

The Right to Education Index (RTEI) is a new global index designed to drive accountability and progress towards realizing the right to education. RTEI works with civil society, research institutions, and governments to collect data on a wide variety of indicators of the right to education to identify progress being made towards the fulfillment of the right to education as well as obstacles to it. RTEI will be conducted on a biennial basis to track such progress, identify trends, and support efforts towards the right to education.

This policy brief examines education policies and education outcomes in Canada. Given that the Canadian education system is decentralized and managed by each province and territory, some questions were difficult to answer or there was not enough data to provide a response representative at a national level.

Canada's overall index score for 2018 was 85, compared to 84 in 2016. The survey was broken into five themes – Governance, Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability and Adaptability. The individual scores are presented below:

<b>Governance</b>	<b>77%</b>
International Framework	55%
National Law	88%
Plan of Action	100%
Monitoring and Reporting	75%
Financing	Insufficient data
Data Availability	69%
<b>Availability</b>	<b>Insufficient data</b>
Classroom	Insufficient data
Sanitation	Insufficient data
Teachers	67%
Textbooks	Insufficient data

<b>Accessibility</b>	<b>89%</b>
Free Education	75%
Discrimination	100%
Participation	93%
<b>Acceptability</b>	<b>73%</b>
Aims of Education	55%
Learning Environment	92%
Learning Outcomes	Insufficient data
<b>Adaptability</b>	<b>83%</b>
Children with Disabilities	83%
Children of Minorities	67%
Out-of-school Education	100%
Out-of-school Children	83%

## **Key Issue Area: Disparities in Education for Indigenous People**

Similar to assessments from the 2016 survey, there continues to remain inequities around education for Indigenous peoples in Canada. Canada's National Household Survey conducted in 2016 provides a snapshot of this inequity by examining high school graduation rates. Among non-Indigenous young adults (20-24) in 2016, 92 per cent have at least a high school certificate. This places Canada above the overall OECD average. Among Métis, 84 per cent have completed high school. Among First Nations young adults living off reserve the rate is 75 per cent. But among those living on reserve, only 48 per cent have done so – less than half. These rates show improvement from the 2011 census numbers but there is still a long way to go for indigenous youth to catch up to the educational attainment of their non-indigenous peers. Some key barriers which are being worked on include a lack of educational programmes that include indigenous specific knowledge, world view and learning and a lack of qualified teachers and support staff including social workers and mental health workers.

### **Data Availability**

Similar to the 2016 survey there continues to remain challenges around data availability. Canada scored 69% in data availability in 2018. This was calculated based on the percentage of data available for all questions within Canada's questionnaire. Canada has extensive legislation for education in each province and territory so general data is generally available. The main areas lacking data were the ones comparing disaggregated statistics such as disaggregated national education budgets figures, public expenditures per pupil, and textbook ratios per pupil.

In addition, although much of the data was available, many of the statistics are from 5 to 10 years ago. Canada's last published national census was in 2011. A household survey was undertaken in 2016 but had not yet been published when the information was gathered for the RTEI 2018 index. The challenge of finding specific and recent data is also a result of the decentralized education system, as different indicators are collected by various bodies who manage education in their region.

### **Recommendations**

1. International Frameworks: Canada should support the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education and the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention.
2. Regional Disparities: Education outcomes should be comparable for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Inequities remain, particularly for Indigenous students living on reserves and remote areas such as the Inuit in the North of Canada. All schools need to have adequate, qualified teachers and support staff such as social workers and mental health workers. In addition, adequate resources such as books and technical assistive devices need to be available that reflect the language and culture of the people.