

Direct control and operation of the public schools is in the hands of local boards of school trustees, usually elected for terms of two or three years. They employ the teachers and administer the revenues received from provincial grants, local taxation and other minor sources. Any fees charged are for secondary education and are merely nominal, except in Newfoundland where they take the place of taxation.

Elementary and secondary education extends over 12 or 13 years or grades depending on the province. The elementary grades terminate with Grade VIII and the secondary grades begin with Grade IX though there is a practical as well as a theoretical separation into three divisions—Primary (Grades I to VI), Intermediate (Grades VII to X), and Senior (Grades XI and XII or XIII). The elementary schools are known as public schools, the secondary schools as high schools. However, many public schools teach some secondary grades and in Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland all grades are taught in the public schools.

In the cities and in some smaller centres there are kindergarten classes for five-year-olds and a few for four-year-olds as part of elementary education. Most children begin Grade I at age six or early seven and many complete the eight grades in seven years. Attendance is compulsory from age seven or eight to age 14 with attendance to age 16 required of urban pupils in some provinces. Emphasis is on the fundamental subjects—reading, writing, arithmetic, health and social studies—with varying additions of science, arts and crafts, music, home economics and shopwork. Many pupils, particularly in rural areas, leave school at the end of elementary schooling and enter employment in agriculture or unskilled occupations.

Secondary education may extend over a period of four or five years. Courses and subjects of study are diversified. A student may choose the academic course leading to university entrance or select courses or subjects preparing for employment in agriculture, commerce or industry. A student may pass from secondary school into commerce or industry at any time during this period provided he or she is over the compulsory age limit.

Further education is available to the high-school graduate through teacher-training school courses of one year for elementary school teachers; specialized technical training extending up to two years in a technical institute—there is at least one such institute in every province; nurse-training school where training extends over three years; or university. University courses are available in all branches of arts, commerce, science, education, philosophy, medicine, theology, etc. Graduation with a first degree (B.A., B.Sc., etc.) requires four years, medicine requires six years and theology seven years. Post-graduate courses require another two or more years.

The French Tradition.—The Quebec Department of Public Instruction is represented in the Cabinet by the Provincial Secretary. Although the Superintendent of Public Instruction is the head of the Department, a Roman Catholic Committee and a Protestant Committee, in charge of the education of Roman Catholics and Protestants, respectively, constitute the Council of Education which formulates policy and superintends the administration of all educational matters. The Council, however, has no authority over many special and technical schools that come directly under various government departments. The Protestant schools follow the English tradition already described; the Roman Catholic schools follow the French tradition.