

In some provinces the local boards disappeared when the larger units were formed; in others they were retained with limited powers and duties. The larger unit boards accept responsibility for providing the necessary staff, buildings, equipment and transportation. Where local boards remain, they usually function in an advisory capacity, and look after the buildings and grounds.

Elementary and Secondary Education

Enrolment in elementary and secondary schools has been increasing year by year until, in 1964-65, there were 4,972,000 pupils enrolled in public schools, 200,000 in private schools and 70,000 in various vocational schools and courses, both public and private.

Each September, most Canadian children of age six enter an eight-grade elementary school. At about 14 years of age, nearly 90 p.c. of those who entered grade 1 enter a regular four- or five-year secondary school. From the graduates at this level, a limited number—about 13 p.c. of those who began school—go on to college or university where rather more than half of them pursue a three- or four-year program leading to a bachelor degree in arts or science and the remainder enrol in various professional courses such as commerce, education, engineering, law, medicine, theology, etc.

The 8-4 plan leading from grade 1 to university was for many years the basic plan for organizing the curriculum and schools, other than those of Catholic Quebec. This plan, although still followed in some rural, village, town and city schools, has been modified from time to time in various provinces, cities or groups of schools, as it appeared inadequate to meet the demands arising from new aims of education. There are a number of variants to be found at present in Canada: the addition of one or even two kindergarten years at the beginning of the system; the addition of an extra year to high school, providing five rather than four years of secondary schooling; the introduction of junior high schools, changing the organization to a 6-3-3 or 6-3-4 plan; or again, the combining of the first six years of elementary school into two units, each designed to reach certain specified goals during a three-year period. A fairly recent innovation is the establishment of junior colleges, affiliated with universities, in which the last one or two years of high school and the first one or two years of college are offered.

The first secondary schools were predominantly academic and prepared their pupils for entry into university. Until recent years, vocational schools were to be found only in the large cities, although schools in some of the smaller centres did provide a few commercial and technical subjects as options in the academic curriculum. Today, besides commercial and vocational high schools, there are, in increasing number, composite and regional high schools that provide courses in home economics, agriculture, shop-work and commercial subjects as well as in the regular secondary school subjects. The number of subjects offered has also increased greatly and the number of options available, particularly in certain provinces, provides a wide choice for pupils with a great variety of abilities and aims. Three programs can frequently be distinguished—the university entrance course, the general course for those who wish to complete an academic type of program before entering employment, and vocational courses for those who wish to enter skilled trades. Thus, attention is given to the minority who will go on to institutions of higher learning, while the majority, who will look for jobs, are prepared for entry to their chosen occupation. Considerable emphasis has been placed on music, art, physical education, guidance and group activities but not at the expense of the basic subjects that provide a general foundation.

Education in the Catholic Schools of Quebec

Although Catholic education in Quebec has been considered sufficiently different to warrant a separate description, it is conducted after much the same fashion as education in the other provinces. All types of schools familiar to Canadians elsewhere are to be found in Quebec, including ungraded rural elementary schools, graded urban schools, secondary schools with academic bias, vocational schools and, at the top, universities. The administrative structure of school boards, inspectors and central departmental officials is also broadly similar. Such differences as exist are of historical origin and arise out of the