

co-operates with the territorial departments of education for the schooling of native children.

Across Canada, about half the native children attend provincial public schools. The federal government reimburses the provinces, either by paying tuition or contributing to the schools' capital costs.

Counselling units in Ottawa and Winnipeg assist northern native students attending high school, technical school, college or university in Southern Canada.

The Department of National Defence maintains schools for dependents of service personnel at military establishments in Canada and overseas. The curriculum of these schools in Canada follows that of the province where they are located. The policy, however, is to avoid building schools where children can attend local institutions. Provinces are reimbursed on a per-pupil basis for armed forces dependents in public schools.

In 1984-85, there were nine overseas schools — in Belgium, the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany. The curriculum to Grade 8 in the English schools is not patterned after any province; Grades 9 to 13 follow the Ontario curriculum. In the French schools, all grades follow the Quebec curriculum.

Grade structure. School attendance is compulsory for about 10 years in every province. The starting age is 6 or 7, and the minimum leaving age, 15 or 16. The elementary-secondary program, however, usually extends over 12 years. Some provinces include kindergarten in their elementary schools, while in other provinces, the only pre-Grade 1 classes are in private schools operating under varying degrees of provincial supervision.

Levels within elementary-secondary schools differ from one province to another. The elementary level covers the first six grades in six provinces and Northwest Territories; in others, Grades 7 and/or 8 are considered elementary. As a result, interprovincial variations also exist at the secondary (high) school level. These schools include five or six grades and may be further subdivided into junior high schools, senior high schools or junior-senior high schools.

The curriculum of elementary-secondary schools also varies, although the provinces share general commonalities. Programs from Grade 1 to the beginning of secondary school are usually designed to develop the same basic skills in reading, writing, speaking and mathematics.

Chart 4.2

Expenditures on education and percent of Gross National Product, selected years

