QENTAK RESEARCH

The State of Independent & Home Education in Canada

2026 Edition, First Annual Report

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qentak.com/research/state-of-independent-and-home-education-canada-2026 · Corrections: qentak.com/research/corrections · Data and methodology: qentak.com/research/data

Ask Qentak

INTRODUCTION · 1 MIN

A note before we begin

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Where sources differ, the report shows the range and explains why.**
- **Every estimate is labelled as an estimate, not a count.**

If you are a parent who has ever lain awake at 2 a.m. wondering whether you are allowed to do this (teach your own child, choose a different school, ask for something better than the default), this report is for you.

If you are a principal watching your enrolment climb while your software bill climbs faster, this report is also for you.

And if you work in a ministry, a division office or a school board and you have sensed, without quite being able to prove it, that something fundamental is shifting in Canadian education: we did the homework, and the numbers are below.

We have tried to be careful about one thing above all. Education statistics in Canada come from several publishers who count slightly different things in slightly different years. Where they differ, we show the range and explain why, rather than choosing the number that sounds best. Where a figure is an estimate and not a count, we say so.

Let's talk numbers like adults, and then let's talk about what they mean.

CHAPTER 1 · 2 MIN

The Headline: Nearly One in Twelve Canadian Students Now Learns in an Independent School

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **The independent share of K-12 enrolment rose 45%, from 5.9% to 8.5% (2000/01 to 2023/24): a change in share, not only in headcount.**
- **Statistics Canada puts private and independent schools at 8.0% in 2024/25, a record. Nearly one student in twelve.**
- **With registered home education, about 9.5% of students learn outside government-run schools.**

Here is the most important sentence in this report.

Between 2000/01 and 2023/24, the independent-school share of Canadian K-12 enrolment rose 45%, from 5.9% to 8.5%. Over the same period the public-school share fell from 93.8% to 90.4% (a 3.7% relative decline), even though public headcount edged up 0.6%. (Fraser Institute, *Where Our Students Are Educated*, 2026 Edition.)

The five numbers to remember

8.0% to 8.5%

of K-12 students attend an independent school

Statistics Canada 8.0% (2024/25); Fraser Institute 8.5% (2023/24). Nearly one in twelve.

+45%

rise in the independent share since 2000/01

From 5.9% to 8.5% (Fraser, 2023/24). A change in share; headcount rose 51%.

9.5%

learn outside government-run schools

Independent plus registered home education, 2024/25, our recomputation of Statistics Canada data.

66,228

registered home-educated students

Statistics Canada, 2024/25. More than tripled (+264%) from 2006/07 to 2021/22.

80,000 to 100,000

estimated children educated at home

An estimate, not a count: no agency publishes one. Confidence: low (estimate).

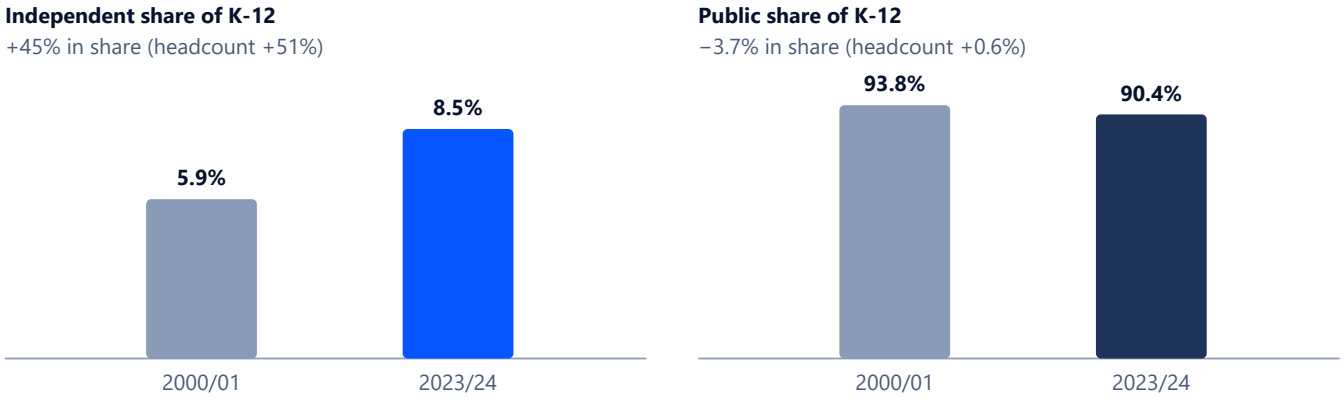
ESTIMATE

Adapted from Statistics Canada, Table 37-10-0109-01, 2006/2007 to 2024/2025. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product. Fraser Institute figures are cited, not reproduced.

Read that carefully, because it is easy to misstate. Independent enrolment grew about 51% in headcount (318,947 to 482,939 students). Public enrolment did not shrink; it was roughly flat while independent and home education grew faster. The 45% and the 3.7% are changes in *share*. That is what makes this a shift and not a rounding error: total enrolment rose only 4.5% over 23 years, and almost all of the movement was between sectors.

The shift is in share, not only in headcount

Independent share +45%, public share −3.7%, 2000/01 to 2023/24. Headcount: independent +51%, public +0.6%.



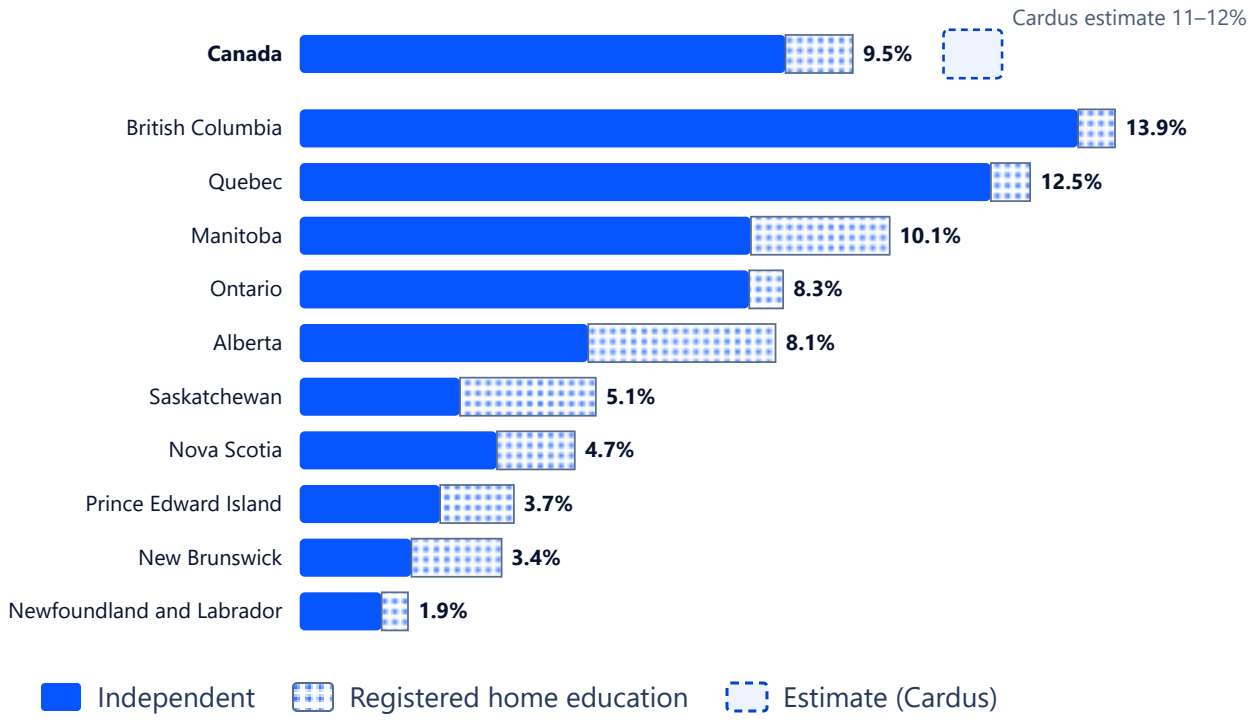
Fraser Institute, Where Our Students Are Educated, 2026 Edition (cited; no Fraser table or chart is reproduced). Chart is Qentak's own.

Statistics Canada, which counts on its own definitions, reaches the same place. Its latest release puts the private and independent share of students at **8.0% in 2024/25, a new high and the fourth consecutive rise**. Fraser's 8.5% (2023/24) and Statistics Canada's 8.0% (2024/25) are two measures of one fact: **nearly one student in twelve is in an independent school.** Add the students whom provinces register as home-educated and, on our recomputation of Statistics Canada's open data, **about 9.5% of students (2024/25) learn outside the government-run system**. Cardus, allowing for under-reported home education, has suggested the true figure could be as high as 11% to 12%. That is an estimate, and we label it as one.

Learning outside the public system, by province

Independent plus registered home-educated students as a share of K-12, 2024/25.

ESTIMATE The dashed 11% to 12% box is Cardus's estimate allowing for under-reported home education. It is not a count.



Home education here is registered home education only.

Estimate (TRI-04), confidence: medium (registered 9-9.5% high; 11-12% low). Cardus: 9% (2021/22, 7.7% + 1.2%); StatCan open table computed 9.1% (2022/23), 9.3% (2023/24), 9.5% (2024/25); Cardus 'up to 11 or 12 percent' (an estimate, 2023)

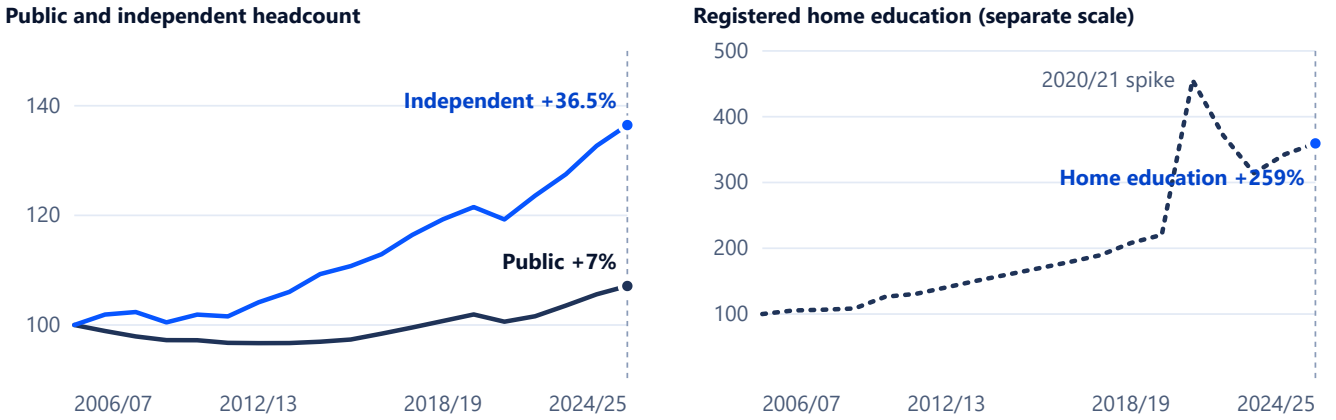
Adapted from Statistics Canada, Table 37-10-0109-01, 2006/2007 to 2024/2025. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product. Our recomputation: shares are of public plus independent plus registered home-schooled students.

British Columbia stands out. About **13.2% to 13.7% of BC students (roughly one in seven)** attend an independent school (Fraser, 2023/24; Cardus, 2026), and Cardus puts the figure near 15% when home education is included.

Nor is this a pandemic blip. An earlier Fraser edition headlined that the independent share was increasing in every province. In the most recent years some of the smallest systems (Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island) have slipped back a little, so "every province, every year" would overstate it. The national trend is clear all the same: independent headcount has dipped only three times since 2006/07 (2009/10, 2011/12 and the pandemic year of 2020/21), each time by less than 2%, and the share reached a new high in 2024/25.

Independent and home education have outgrown the public system

Registered headcount, index 2006/07 = 100, Canada. Home education is on its own scale.

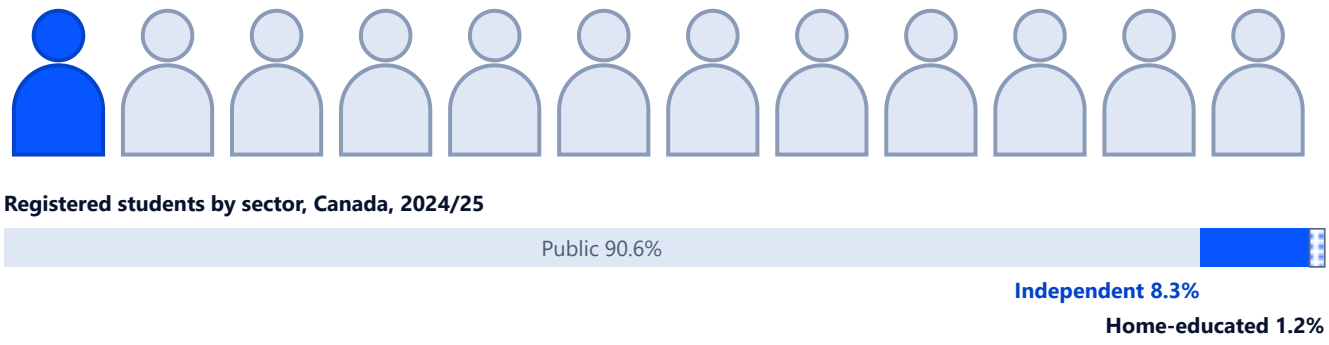


Adapted from Statistics Canada, Table 37-10-0109-01, 2006/2007 to 2024/2025. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product. Our recomputation: shares are of public plus independent plus registered home-schooled students.

Nearly 483,000 students attend independent schools. Each of those is a decision made at a kitchen table: a parent holding a registration form, deciding with their own money what their child's education should look like. When we use the word "choice" in this report we do not mean politics. We mean that decision, repeated nearly half a million times, and the direction it points.

Nearly one student in twelve is in an independent school

Twelve students; one highlighted. Statistics Canada counts 8.0% (2024/25), the Fraser Institute 8.5% (2023/24).



Adapted from Statistics Canada, Table 37-10-0109-01, 2006/2007 to 2024/2025. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product. Our recomputation: shares are of public plus independent plus registered home-schooled students.

The five numbers to remember

#	Finding	Figure
1	Independent-school **share** of K-12 enrolment, 2000/01 to 2023/24	**5.9% to 8.5% (+45%)**; headcount +51%
2	Public-school **share** over the same period	**93.8% to 90.4% (-3.7%)**; public headcount +0.6%
3	Registered home-education enrolment, 2006/07 to 2021/22	**More than tripled (+264%)**; 66,228 in 2024/25
4	Students in independent schools, latest	**8.0% to 8.5% of K-12 (nearly 1 in 12)**; about 9.5% with registered home education
5	Children educated at home	**66,000 reported (2024/25)**; actual practice estimated at **roughly 80,000 to 100,000**

Row 5 is an estimate, not a count. See Section 3 for the basis.

CHAPTER 2 · 3 MIN

The Independent School Story: Quiet, Massive, Misunderstood

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **The independent sector is mostly small and community-rooted, not the stereotype.**
- **Ontario has the most independent students (175,350); British Columbia has the highest share (13.3%).**
- **Where sources differ, as in Alberta (4.9% or 6.7%), the cause is definition, not disagreement.**

Let's kill a stereotype before it gets in the way.

When most Canadians hear "private school," they picture a granite building with a waitlist and a $40,000 cheque. That school exists. It is also almost entirely irrelevant to the real story.

The most thorough national portrait is still the one by Deani Van Pelt and Derek Allison for the Fraser Institute, *A Diverse Landscape: Independent Schools in Canada* (2016, data for 2013/14). It counted **1,935 independent schools serving 368,717 students**, about 6.8% of enrolment at the time (about one in fifteen), and concluded that rigid typecasting of independent schools "is more myth than reality." Its findings: only 4.7% of schools fit the elite preparatory profile; 65% of schools enrolled fewer than 150 students; at least 60.6% received no government funding; and religious schools enrolled about half of independent students (178,119 of 368,717), led by non-Catholic Christian, Catholic, Jewish and Islamic schools, while 581 specialty schools (Montessori, Waldorf, classical, arts and others) made up another 30% of schools. Cardus's 2022 profile of Ontario found the same texture there, and its 2023 paper cites it: 39% of Ontario's independent schools religious and 41% built around a special emphasis.

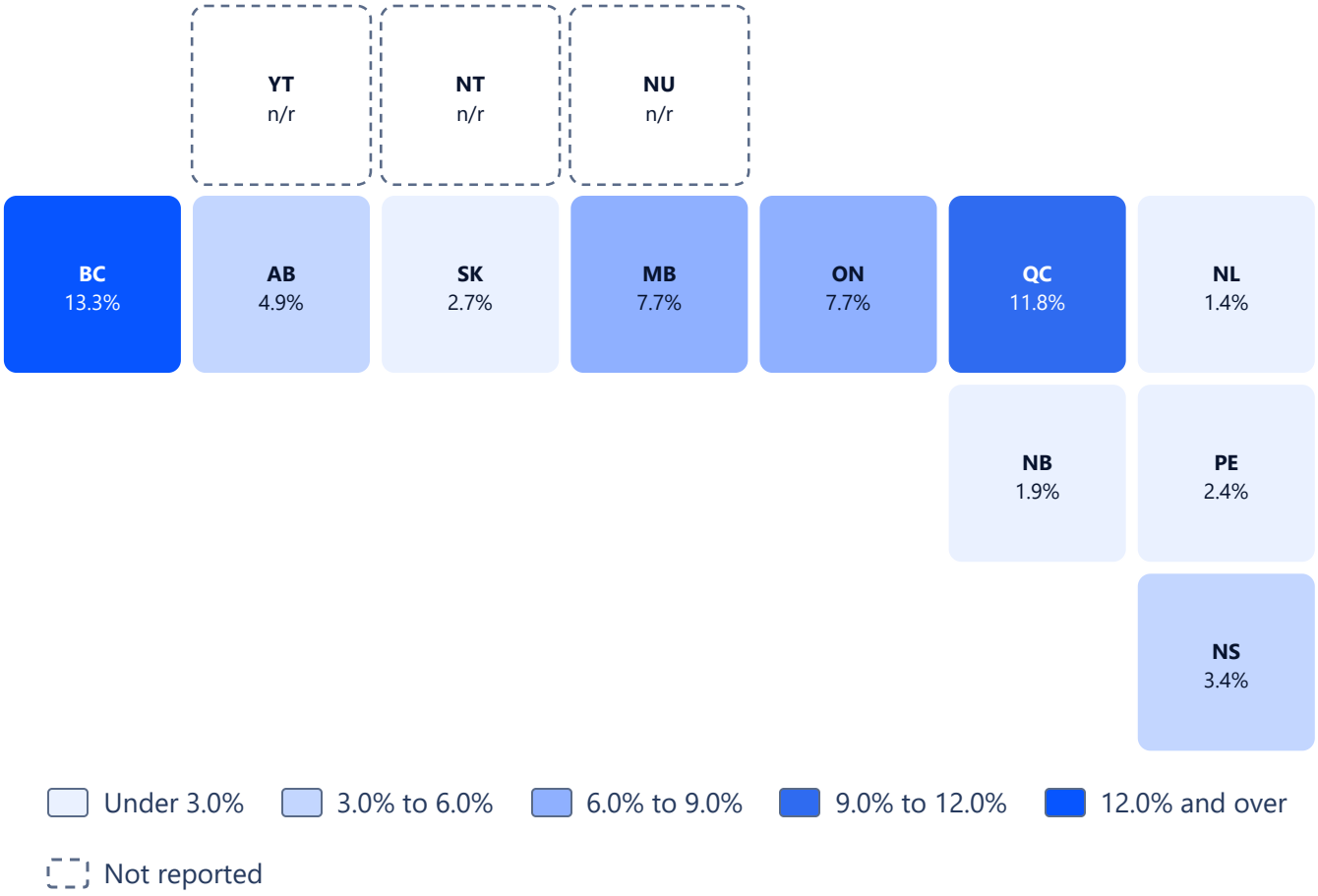
That was 2013/14. The sector has grown since. Statistics Canada counts about **480,000 independent students in 2024/25** (Fraser: nearly 483,000 in 2023/24; Cardus: over 470,000), now **nearly one in twelve**. Ontario alone has gone from roughly 950 independent schools in 2013/14 to more than 1,670 today (Cardus), so the national school count is well above the 2013/14 figure. We know of no consolidated, current national count of schools, and we will not invent one; see Section 7.

Provincial picture, 2024/25

Province	Independent students	Share of K-12	Change in headcount since 2006/07
Ontario	175,350	7.7%	+53%
Quebec	139,419	11.8%	+12%
British Columbia	93,891	13.3%	+44%
Alberta	39,969	4.9%	+39%
Manitoba	16,920	7.7%	+35%
Saskatchewan	5,694	2.7%	+185%
Nova Scotia	4,719	3.4%	+39%
New Brunswick	2,148	1.9%	not reported in 2006/07
Prince Edward Island	549	2.4%	not reported in 2006/07
Newfoundland and Labrador	912	1.4%	+9%

Where independent and home education are strongest

Independent share of K-12, 2024/25. Select a metric; select a province to open its page.

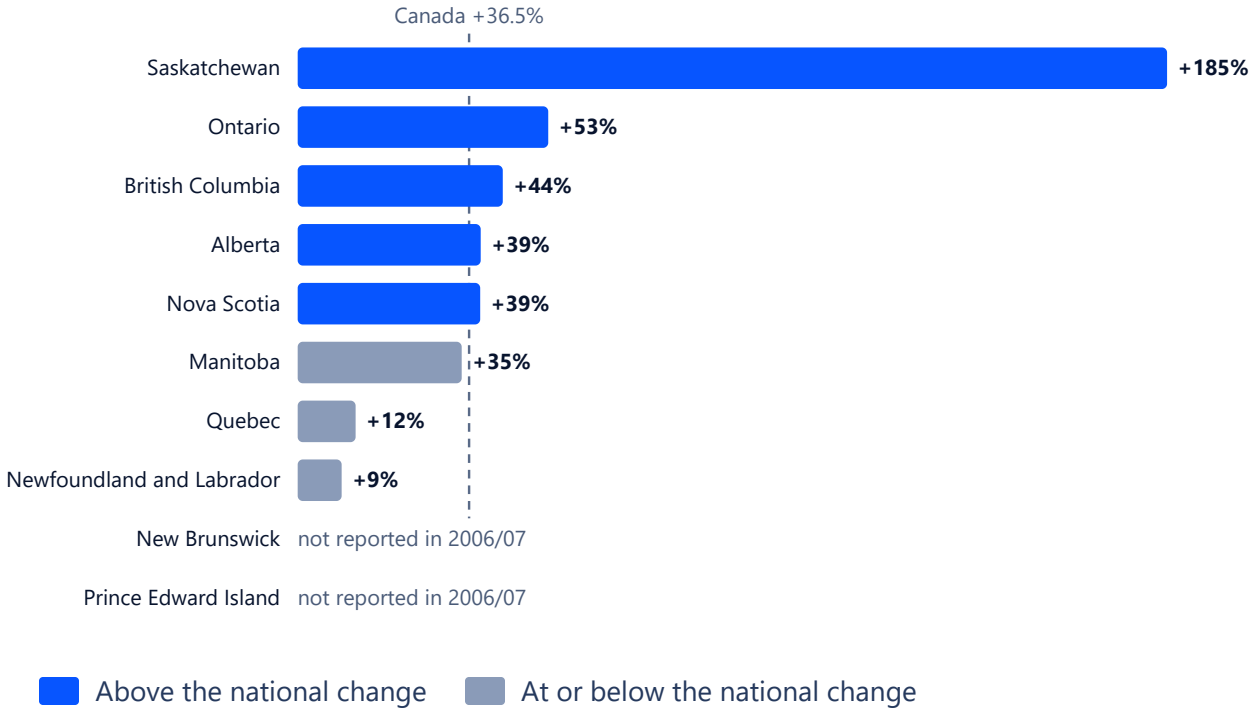


Manitoba's Statistics Canada count includes Catholic schools; the ministry's own count is higher (see the Manitoba page). New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island did not report independent enrolment in 2006/07. Territories report no independent schools.

Adapted from Statistics Canada, Table 37-10-0109-01, 2006/2007 to 2024/2025. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product. Our recomputation: shares are of public plus independent plus registered home-schooled students.

Fastest growth in independent headcount

Change in independent students, 2006/07 to 2024/25. Saskatchewan grew from a very small base.



Adapted from Statistics Canada, Table 37-10-0109-01, 2006/2007 to 2024/2025. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product. Our recomputation: shares are of public plus independent plus registered home-schooled students.

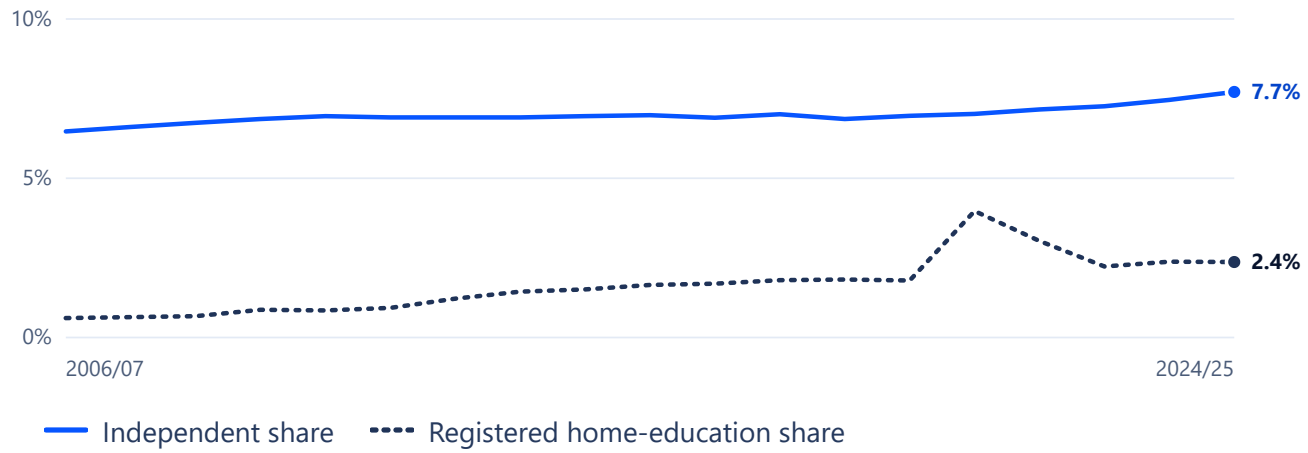
Province explorer

Choose a province to see its series, funding model and sources.

Manitoba

Manitoba: 2024/25 at a glance

16,920 independent students (7.7%); 5,199 registered home-educated (2.4%); funds independent schools at 50% of a public amount.



Independent change since 2006/07	Fraser share, 2023/24	Outside public, 2024/25
+35%	**8.7%**	**10.1%**

Adapted from Statistics Canada, Table 37-10-0109-01, 2006/2007 to 2024/2025. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product. Our recomputation: shares are of public plus independent plus registered home-schooled students.

Read the Manitoba page →

Our recomputation from Statistics Canada, Table 37-10-0109-01 (regular programs for youth; share of public plus independent plus home-schooled students). Adapted from Statistics Canada; this does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product. Manitoba's Statistics Canada count includes Catholic schools; Manitoba's own ministry count is higher (see the Manitoba page).

Fraser's 2026 edition measures a little differently (ministry-based counts) and reports 2023/24 shares of 13.2% for British Columbia, 11.9% for Quebec, 8.7% for Manitoba, 7.4% for Ontario, 3.5% for Nova Scotia and 2.8% for Saskatchewan. Where the two sources differ, the cause is usually definition, not disagreement about the trend. The clearest case is Alberta: Fraser's 2026 share (6.7%) is well above Statistics Canada's (4.9%), apparently because Alberta Education counts students in supervised home-education programs inside the independent school authorities that supervise them. A Cardus memo of April 2026 found 15,332 of the 48,024 students reported under Alberta's independent authorities in 2024/25 were supervised home-education students. Each number is right for what it counts.

Two provinces deserve a second look.

Saskatchewan has grown fastest in relative terms, nearly tripling its independent headcount since 2006/07 from a very small base. The province began funding Qualified Independent Schools in 2012-13, and Cardus found enrolment up 24% in the six years that followed. But much of the growth was already under way before then, so we would not say funding alone caused it. We would say that growth has continued under a funding regime, and that the small base keeps the share low (2.7%).

British Columbia has the deepest independent-school ecosystem in Canada. Its funding model pays eligible independent schools **50% or 35%** of the local public district's per-student operating grant, depending on the school's group. That keeps tuition within reach of many more families than in an unfunded province. Whether that explains BC's lead is a fair argument; in this report we offer it as a hypothesis, not a result.

CHAPTER 3 · 3 MIN

The Kitchen Table Story: Homeschooling Has More Than Tripled

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Registered home education more than tripled between 2006/07 and 2021/22 and was 66,228 in 2024/25.**
- **Actual practice is estimated at roughly 80,000 to 100,000. That is an estimate, not a count.**
- **Alberta leads on both number and rate (3.2%).**

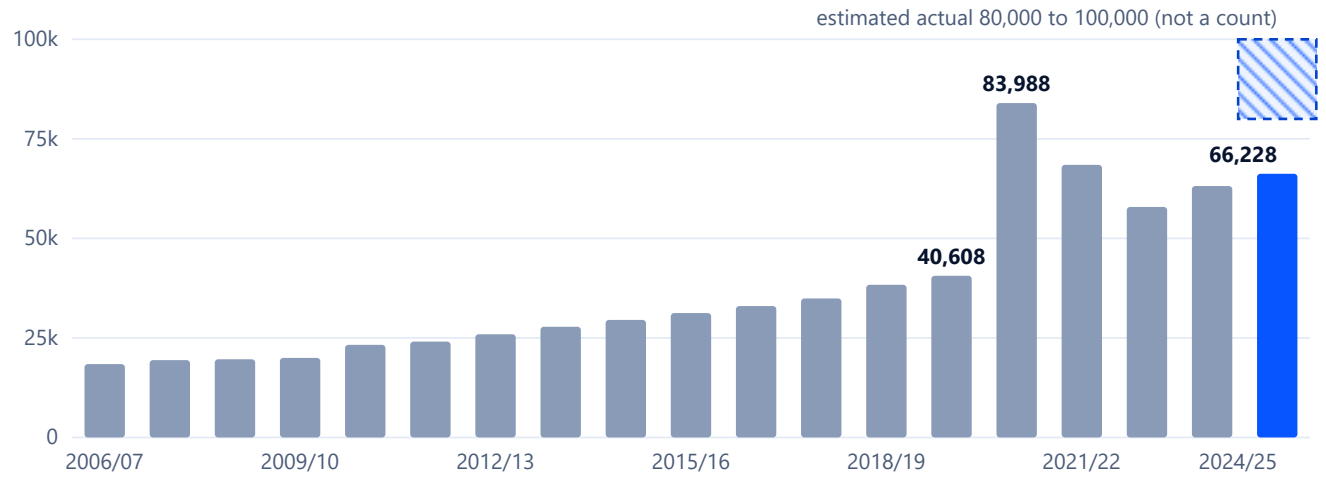
Now for the part almost nobody is tracking.

Between 2006/07 and 2021/22, registered homeschool enrolment in Canada **more than tripled, a 264% increase** (Cardus, from Statistics Canada), while public enrolment grew 4.5% and independent enrolment 23.8%. Then came the pandemic. Statistics Canada counted **40,608** home-schooled students in 2019/20 and **83,988** in 2020/21 (first published as 83,784): enrolment doubled in a single year. It eased to 68,466 in 2021/22 and 57,894 in 2022/23, then turned up again to **63,150 in 2023/24 and 66,228 in 2024/25**.

Registered home education, 2006/07 to 2024/25

Reported counts for Canada. The hatched band is an estimate of actual practice, shown for 2024/25 only.

ESTIMATE The band is an estimate, not a count. Registered figures are a floor.

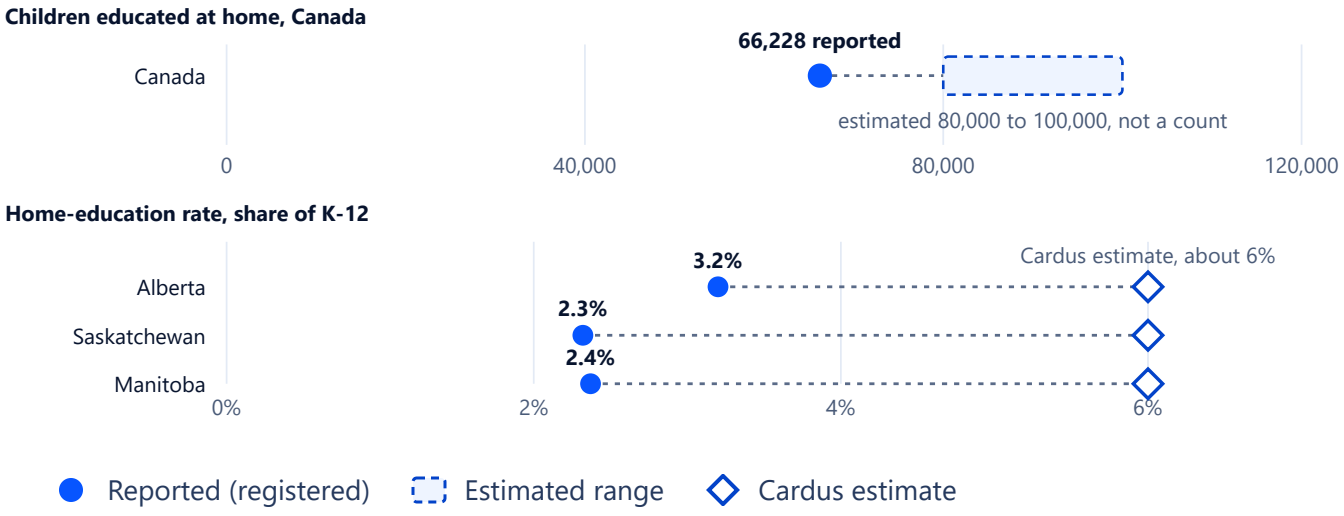


Adapted from Statistics Canada, Table 37-10-0109-01, 2006/2007 to 2024/2025. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product. Estimate: Qentak Research bracket (TRI-10).

Reported versus estimated home education

Solid dots are registered counts. Hollow shapes and dashed boxes are estimates.

ESTIMATE No agency counts unregistered home educators. The range is our arithmetic from published material.



Confidence: low (estimate); high for the 66,000 reported floor. Basis: Floor 66,228 (StatCan reported). Two heuristics: reported +20-30% (a homeschool-sector blog, unsourced) gives 79,000-86,000; Cardus's statement that prairie rates are closer to 6% than the reported ~3% (about double), applied to AB+SK+MB only (about 36,000 reported), adds roughly 36,000 and gives about 100,000-102,000

Adapted from Statistics Canada, Table 37-10-0109-01, 2006/2007 to 2024/2025. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product. Estimate range: Qentak Research bracket (TRI-10); prairie estimate: Cardus (2023), cited.

Two things stand out. First, the pandemic spike did not fully reverse: reported home education in 2024/25 is still about 63% higher than in 2019/20. Second, these are *registered* students. Reporting rules differ by province, and families who do not register are invisible to official statistics. Cardus notes that Statistics Canada's own figures under-report, and that "credible estimates peg homeschoolers closer to 6 percent in the prairie provinces" against a reported rate of nearly 3% in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

How large is the true number? Nobody knows, and we will not pretend to. Our own bracketing, from the published material: registered enrolment of about 66,000 is the floor. If actual practice runs 20% to 30% above registered numbers, as home-education advocates commonly argue, that is roughly 80,000 to 86,000. If Cardus's prairie estimate (about double the reported rate) is applied to Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba and nowhere else, it adds about 36,000 children and brings the total near 100,000. **So "roughly 100,000 children" is a defensible estimate at the top of a range of about 80,000 to 100,000. It is not a count, and no agency publishes one.**

Provincial snapshot: registered home education

Province	2019/20	2021/22	2024/25	Share of K-12, 2024/25
Alberta	14,730	22,539	25,977	**3.2%**, highest among provinces
Ontario	9,888	16,404	13,269	0.6%
Quebec	4,308	9,165	7,851	0.7%
Manitoba	3,690	6,150	5,199	2.4% (ministry: 5,531, Oct 2025)
Saskatchewan	2,781	4,539	4,821	2.3%
British Columbia	2,454	4,515	4,458	0.6%
Nova Scotia	1,134	1,707	1,860	1.3%
New Brunswick	942	2,259	1,734	1.5%

Source: Statistics Canada, Table 37-10-0109-01. Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador and the territories are on their own pages.

Alberta reports the most home-educated children and the highest rate among the provinces. (The Yukon's rate is higher still, on a very small base.) Alberta Education's own count for 2024/25, 24,158 home-education students plus 2,274 in shared-responsibility programs, agrees with Statistics Canada. Ontario is a clear second. Ontario does have the largest number of independent *and* home-educated students combined, simply because it is the largest province.

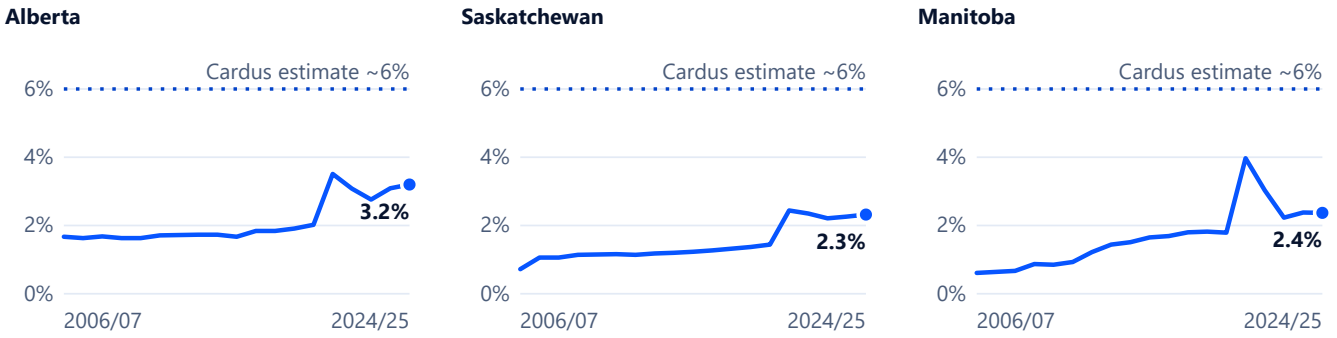
British Columbia's home-education numbers have a longer history than the table shows. Fraser's 2022 edition found BC the one province where home education had not risen over its window. Statistics Canada's series now shows BC up from 2,454 (2019/20) to 4,458 (2024/25), with a break in the series in 2009/10, so we treat any "BC is declining" claim as dated.

Why the prairie provinces lead. Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba combine light legal frameworks with strong home-education communities, and Alberta also funds supervised home education: $901 per Grade 1-12 student ($450.50 for early childhood) in supervised programs in 2025-26. Manitoba requires only annual notification and two progress reports and gives families **no provincial funding**. Saskatchewan leaves funding to school divisions (one division's grant is $800 per elementary student for materials, another reimburses up to $1,000; we found no single provincial rule). The pattern holds across the three: where home education is legible to the authority and easy to register, reported rates run at two to three times the national rate (2.3% to 3.2% against 1.1%). Whether funding, friction or culture explains the difference is something this data cannot tell us.

Prairie home-education rates: reported and estimated

Reported share of K-12 by year. The dotted line is Cardus's estimate of the true rate.

ESTIMATE The dotted line at about 6% is an estimate by Cardus, not a count.



Confidence (TRI-11): high (reported), low (estimated). 1.4-3.2% reported depending on year; about 6% estimated (Cardus)

Adapted from Statistics Canada, Table 37-10-0109-01, 2006/2007 to 2024/2025. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product. Cardus estimate (2023): cited.

Why this matters beyond the homeschool community. Home-educated students are not a fringe. At about 66,000 registered (and plausibly more in practice), they outnumber the independent-school students of every province except Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia. They are grandparents teaching Tuesday and Thursday, co-ops run out of church basements, and families who tried the system, found it wanting, and quietly built something else. Their children will, in a few years, arrive at high schools, colleges and universities with records that somebody, some office, has to know how to read.

That somebody should not be a photocopier in a basement. More on that in Section 5.

CHAPTER 4 · 2 MIN

The Money: Funding Models Decide a Lot

KEY TAKEAWAYS

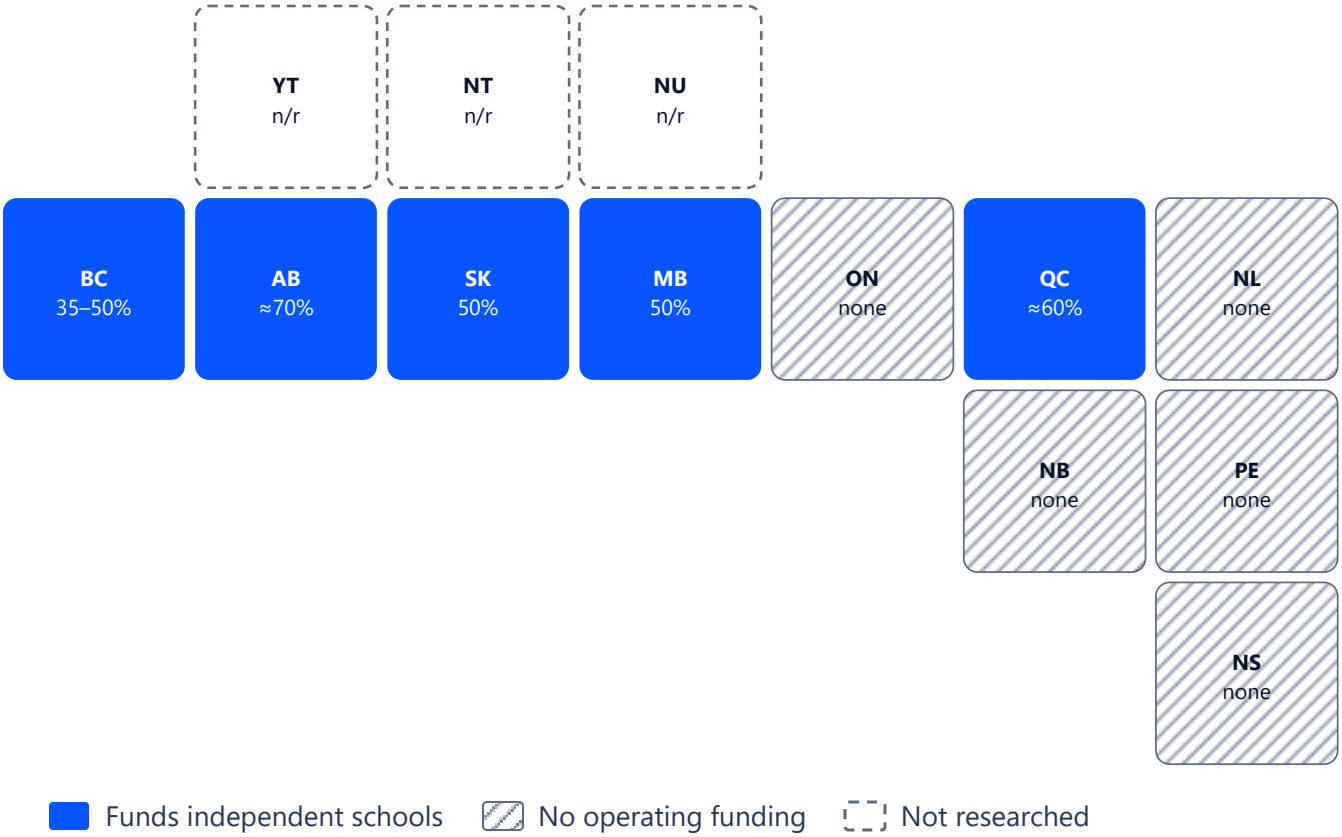
- **Five provinces fund independent schools at roughly 35% to 70% of a public amount, each on its own basis.**
- **The three deepest independent markets by share are all funding provinces, yet unfunded Ontario still has the most students.**
- **Public spending per student ranged from $13,494 (Alberta) to $19,484 (Quebec) in 2022/23.**

Here is the map that explains much of the rest.

Five provinces partially fund the operating costs of independent schools on a per-student basis: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Quebec. Five do not: Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador. The funded provinces pay roughly **35% to 70%** of a comparable public amount, each on its own basis, so the percentages are not directly comparable:

Five provinces fund independent schools

Operating funding per student, as a share of a public amount. Each province uses its own basis.



≈ marks an approximate figure that rests on several consistent secondary sources (Alberta and Quebec); the primary funding manuals were not read.

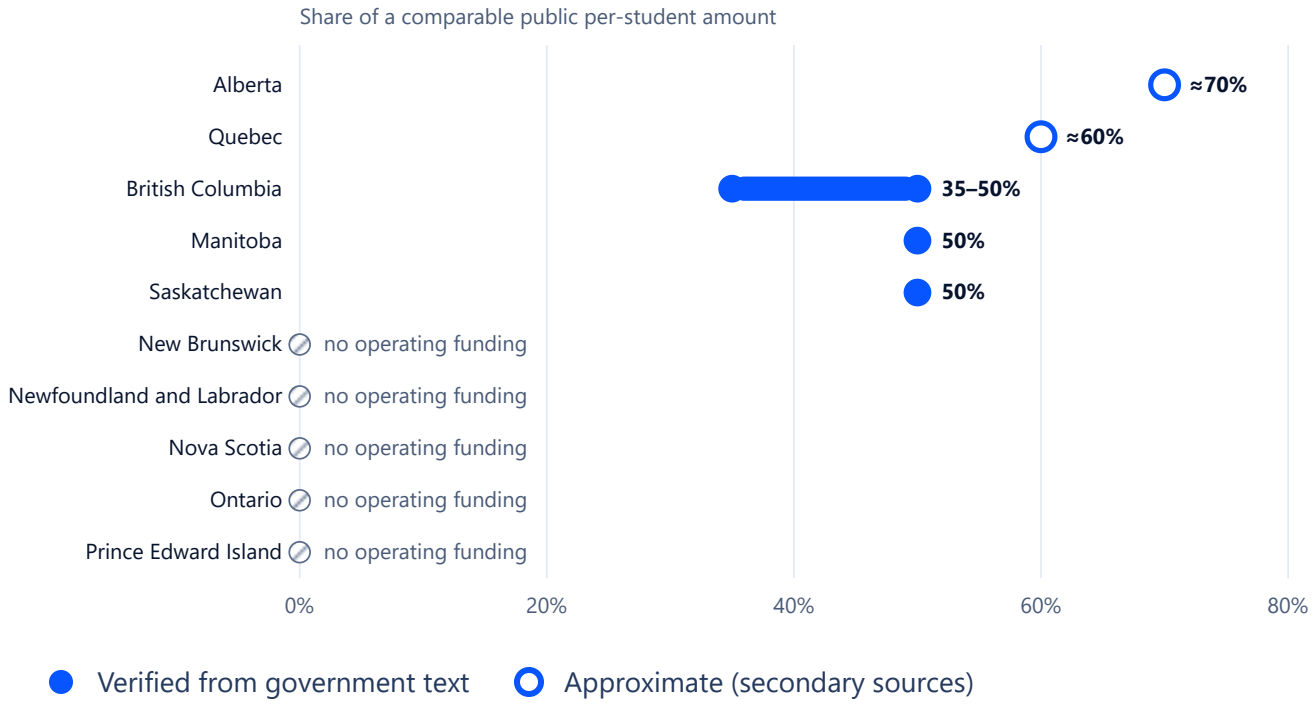
Qentak Research, from provincial government sources and the Fraser Institute. Alberta and Quebec rates are approximate (secondary sources).

Province	Mechanism
British Columbia	50% (Group 1) or 35% (Group 2) of the local public school district's per-student operating grant
Alberta	About 70% of public base instruction rates (100% for some categories)
Saskatchewan	50% of the provincial per-student average for Qualified Independent Schools
Manitoba	50% of the public net operating cost per full-time-equivalent pupil, capped at $6,837 per eligible pupil for 2025/26, plus special-needs and materials grants
Quebec	About 60% of the public per-pupil amount for educational services only (not buildings or student services)

How much of a public amount funded provinces pay

Bars show ranges; hollow markers are approximate. The bases differ, so the percentages are not directly comparable.

ESTIMATE Alberta and Quebec rates are approximate and rest on secondary sources.



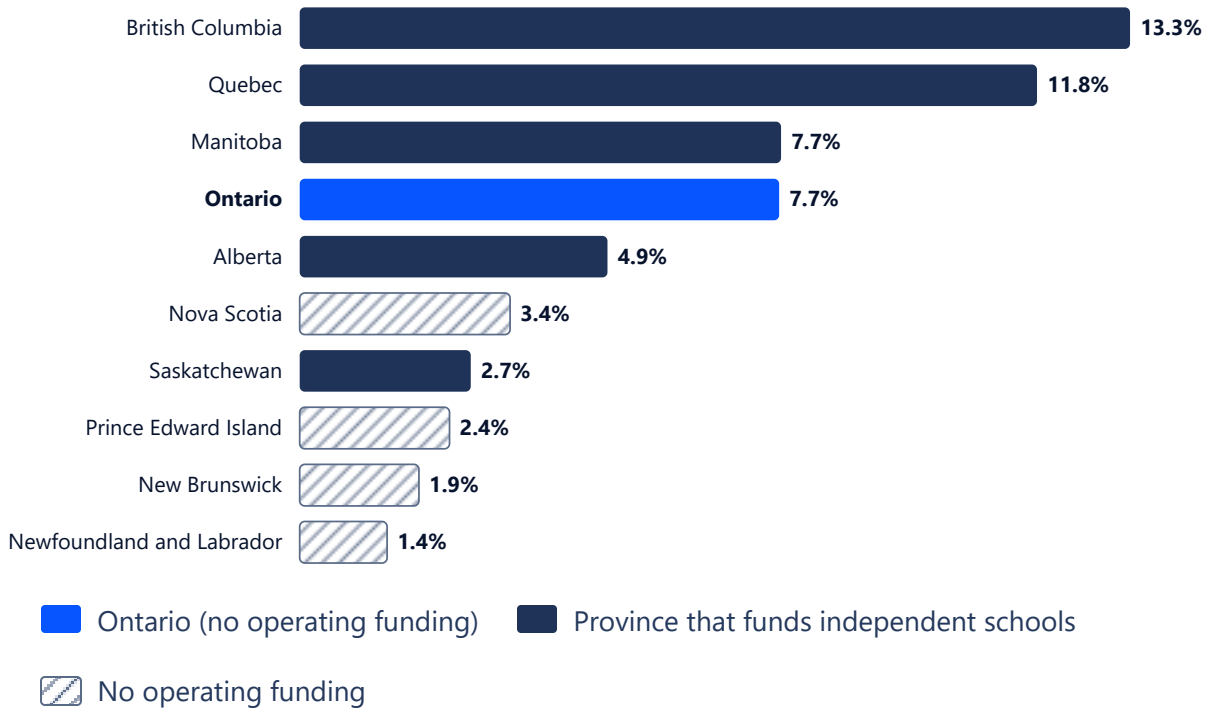
Confidence (TRI-17): high for BC, SK, MB; medium for AB and QC. BC 35-50 (official); SK 50 (official); MB 50 (official); QC 50-60 (secondary: Policy Alternatives, FEEP, others; FEEP says the subsidy is about 40% of total cost); AB 70 (CBC, Alberta School Councils, a blog quoting the manual; Funding Manual not read). No source for 80%

Qentak Research, from provincial government sources and the Fraser Institute. Alberta and Quebec rates are approximate (secondary sources).

The three deepest independent markets in Canada by share, British Columbia (13.2%), Quebec (11.9%) and Manitoba (8.7%) on Fraser's 2023/24 measure, are all funding provinces. Ontario, which funds nothing, has the largest absolute number of independent students (about 175,000) and a share of 7.4% to 7.7%. That rate is below British Columbia's and Quebec's, below Manitoba's on Fraser's measure (level with it on Statistics Canada's), and above Alberta's and Saskatchewan's on both. In other words: funding plainly helps, but Ontario shows that a large, unfunded independent sector can still grow.

Ontario, with no funding, sits between the funded provinces

Independent share of K-12 students, 2024/25. Ontario is above Alberta and Saskatchewan, below British Columbia and Quebec, and level with Manitoba.



Adapted from Statistics Canada, Table 37-10-0109-01, 2006/2007 to 2024/2025. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product. Our recomputation: shares are of public plus independent plus registered home-schooled students. Fraser Institute 2023/24 values are cited in the text.

Funding does not just grow independent schools. It changes who can afford them. In British Columbia a funded model means tuition can be set lower than in an unfunded province. That is a plausible reason one in seven BC students is in an independent school, and a hypothesis worth testing.

Meanwhile the amounts of money moving around are large.

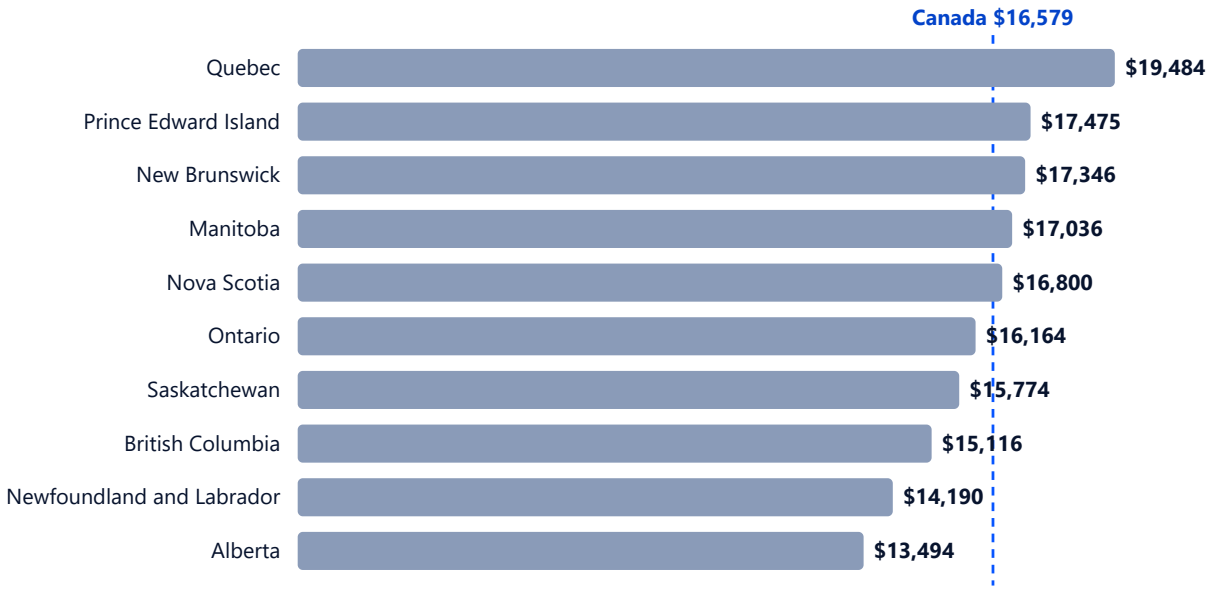
- **Public per-student spending** ranged from **$13,494 (Alberta) to $19,484 (Quebec)** in 2022/23, with a national average of $16,579 (Fraser Institute, *Education Spending in Public Schools in Canada*, 2025 Edition; this is total spending per student, not only operating grants). Every enrolment shift moves five figures of public money per child, per year. Fraser's 2026 edition (data to 2023/24) reports total public spending up 44.8% since 2014/15.
- **Edtech is a large and fast-growing market**, though published estimates differ several-fold by definition. Analyst firms' public estimates of Canada's education-technology market for 2025 run from low single-digit to low double-digit billions of US dollars depending on how broadly the market is drawn, with growth

forecasts of roughly 11% to 14% a year. We do not quote a single figure because the firms define the market differently.

- **Tuition.** Independent-school tuition varies enormously by province, funding status and school type, and we have not found a source that supports a single national range. We would rather publish none than a number we cannot stand behind (see Section 7).

Public spending per student, 2022/23

Total public spending per student, not only operating grants. Every enrolment shift moves five figures of public money per child per year.



Fraser Institute, Education Spending in Public Schools in Canada, 2025 Edition (cited only).

The money is large, mobile and increasingly attached to parental decisions rather than institutional ones. Systems built on the assumption that children flow to the nearest public school are running on arithmetic from 1985.

CHAPTER 5 · 3 MIN

The Gap Nobody Talks About: The Tools Haven't Noticed

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **This chapter is analysis and opinion, and is labelled as such.**
- **The PowerSchool findings establish that a public body does not outsource accountability when it outsources a service.**
- **The gap is fit: provincial rules as configuration, data residency, Canadian payment methods, English and French.**

Now we come to the part of this report that is opinion. We will label it clearly, and we will defend it as far as the evidence allows, because we believe it is the most actionable finding of 2026.

The software built for Canadian education was designed for a world that is changing.

Look at what the data says: decentralized choice, thousands of small schools, tens of thousands of kitchen-table learners, five different provincial funding regimes, two official languages, and a privacy landscape that is genuinely Canadian and genuinely complex: PIPEDA federally; FIPPA and MFIPPA in Ontario; Alberta's *Protection of Privacy Act* (in force since June 2025, replacing FOIP for public bodies); British Columbia's FOIPPA; and Quebec's Law 25. Quebec's Bill 96, a language law, sits beside them on the same procurement checklist.

Now ask what schools actually run. We do not have a survey, and we will not pretend to one, so here instead are questions for you to answer about your own school or household:

- Does your school run a student information system built first for US districts (sold in modules, priced for American budgets, contracted on American timelines) and then bolt on a learning platform, a separate fee-payment service, a parent-communication app, a lunch-ordering system, an enrolment form builder and a spreadsheet holding the whole thing together? **How many separate systems hold some part of one child's record?**
- If you home-educate in Manitoba, the Homeschooling Office currently asks for a progress report for each child by January 31 and another by June 30 (the statute leaves the schedule to the Minister). **What do you assemble them from: binders, printables, memory?**
- If you run a school or a division: **if your student-information vendor had a breach tomorrow, could you say who had access to what?**

That last question is not hypothetical. In November 2025 the privacy commissioners of Alberta and Ontario released their findings on the PowerSchool breach. Alberta's report (F2025-IR-02) made **22 recommendations**: six to educational bodies, thirteen to PowerSchool and three to government. It also made the point that matters most to anyone buying software: a public body does not outsource its accountability when it outsources a service. Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner reached the same view, finding that the institutions lacked reasonable measures to prevent unauthorized access and requiring school boards to show compliance within six months. The recommendations Ontario reported concerned contract terms, vendor oversight, restricting remote access, and breach response.

Many of the most widely used student systems were designed first for large US districts: enterprise budgets, federal rather than provincial privacy law, and feature roadmaps shaped by acquisition more than by the daily reality of a 120-student independent school in Steinbach or a homeschool co-op in Kelowna. That is our reading, and an opinion; the vendors are not malicious.

The gap is not features. The gap is fit. Fit means provincial reporting held as configuration instead of code; a choice about where your data lives; ways to pay that Canadian families actually use; English and French; contracts a small school can sign without a lawyer; and security that is an identity rather than a checkbox.

We build for that gap, so read this section with that in mind. Qentak operates data centres in Canada, the United States and the EU, among other jurisdictions, and supports choosing where a school's data resides. Our product direction, as set out in our build plan, is to hold provincial home-education and school rules as configuration (jurisdiction packs for Manitoba, Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, currently in draft and not legal advice); to design fee payment around Interac e-Transfer and pre-authorized debit alongside cards; to support English and French; and to give home-education co-ops and umbrella schools a household-based record, a compliance calendar and portfolio evidence that travels with the learner. We make no certification claims in this report.

CHAPTER 6 · 1 MIN

What We Predict for 2027

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Five predictions, each stated so the 2027 edition can mark it right or wrong.**
- **Registered independent plus home education is expected to pass 10% of students on the Statistics Canada basis.**

Annual reports earn their keep by sticking their necks out. Here are our five predictions, each stated so that next year's edition can mark it right or wrong.

1. **The non-public share keeps climbing, and registered independent plus home education passes 10% of students on Statistics Canada's basis within two to three releases.** It was 9.5% in 2024/25 on our recomputation (independent 8.3% plus home education 1.2%, on our base). Independent headcount has compounded at 1.7% a year since 2006/07 and 3.4% a year over the last three years, so we expect Statistics Canada's own independent share (8.0% in 2024/25) to reach 8.5% soon. British Columbia stays near 13% to 14%; the prairies' home-education rates stay well above the national rate.
2. **Ontario becomes the policy battleground.** With about 175,000 independent students and no operating funding, pressure for "money follows the child" reform will build. Ontario's reported home-educated population (13,269 in 2024/25, up from 9,888 in 2019/20) will be understood as a floor, not a total.
3. **The PowerSchool precedent rewires procurement.** Post-breach findings from Alberta (22 recommendations, accountability not outsourced) and Ontario (reasonable-safeguards and vendor-oversight findings) will push schools to demand auditable security, data residency and exit rights. Vendors that cannot show their work will lose RFPs they used to win.
4. **Homeschool-to-school pipelines formalize.** As co-ops, pods and hybrid arrangements mature, the artificial wall between "homeschool tools" and "school software" will collapse. The winning platform will be one whose student record works at the kitchen table *and* the front office, because increasingly the same child is in both places.
5. **Consolidation bites back.** Ask a small independent school to list every system it pays for and add up the cost. We expect more of them to do it, driven by CFOs rather than IT, and that "one platform, one record, Canadian law" becomes a procurement criterion and not a slogan. We have no survey behind this one; it is a prediction, and we will report next year on whether it came true.

CHAPTER 7 · 3 MIN

Methodology, Data Sources and Honest Limitations

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Several independent sources per key figure; differences reconciled by cause.**
- **Seven stated limitations, including that no agency counts unregistered home educators.**
- **The publisher builds software for this sector and says so.**

The full methodology, with exact attribution strings, is in the methodology note. This is the summary.

Sources. Enrolment trends: Statistics Canada, Table 37-10-0109-01 (public, private/independent and home-schooled students by province, 2006/07 to 2024/25, released 4 November 2026) and *The Daily*, 4 November 2026; Fraser Institute, *Where Our Students Are Educated: Measuring Student Enrolment in Canada, 2026* (September 2026; data 2000/01 to 2023/24) and its 2022 edition (data to 2019/20). Independent-school portrait: Van Pelt and Allison, *A Diverse Landscape: Independent Schools in Canada* (Fraser Institute, 2016). Home-education trends and estimates: Deani Van Pelt, *Charting New Horizons for Independent Education in Canada* (Cardus, December 2023, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0); Cardus, *Better Together* (April 2026); Cardus memo on Alberta student population statistics (April 2026). Manitoba: Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning, *Enrolment Report, October 1, 2025* and *Funding of Independent Schools and Reporting Requirements, 2025/2026*; the Manitoba Homeschooling Office. Funding: provincial government pages for British Columbia and Saskatchewan; Manitoba's funding guide; for Alberta and Quebec, several consistent secondary sources pending the primary funding manuals. Public per-student spending: Fraser Institute, *Education Spending in Public Schools in Canada*, 2025 Edition. Privacy: Alberta OIPC, Investigation Report F2025-IR-02 (17 November 2025); Ontario IPC PowerSchool investigation (17 November 2025), read through published summaries.

How we handled disagreement between sources. For each key figure we looked at several independent sources and reconciled differences by cause: share vs headcount, independent-only vs independent plus home education, registered vs estimated, year, province coverage, and revisions to the same series. We kept a figure where the evidence supported it, described estimates as estimates, and changed one only where the weight of evidence pointed elsewhere.

Limitations. We publish these because trust is the product.

1. Provincial education data in Canada lags one to four years. This report's national trend runs to 2023/24 and 2024/25; some provincial detail is older, and each table states its year.
2. Home-education counts are undercounts. Registration rules differ by province and unregistered families are invisible. We report registered counts, and label our estimate of actual practice as an estimate with a range.

3. Statistics Canada, Fraser and Cardus count slightly different things (Fraser uses ministry-based counts, Statistics Canada a national survey, Alberta Education counts supervised home education within independent authorities). Where they differ we show why.
4. We could not read two of Fraser's PDFs or the Ontario IPC decision directly (access blocked to automated retrieval), so some Fraser and IPC details come from the publishers' own releases and published summaries. Funding rates for Alberta and Quebec rest on several consistent secondary sources and are marked approximate.
5. We do not have a consolidated current count of independent schools, a national tuition dataset or a count of unregistered home educators. We would rather say so than invent one. We intend to collect school-published tuition figures for a future edition and will say how.
6. The territories are outside the scope of Fraser's provincial data; their pages are limited to Statistics Canada enrolment and the facts we could verify.
7. This report is published by a company that builds software for this sector. We have a point of view. Sections 5 and 6 are labelled as analysis and prediction, and the statistics are sourced to third-party data you can check yourself. Where a source's terms restrict reproducing its tables, we cite it and link to it rather than copy it.

Corrections. Found an error, or a better source? Tell us through the corrections form. We publish corrections prominently, with the date, and carry them into the next edition. A report that cannot be corrected cannot be trusted.

Want the data? Request the underlying datasets and chart sources through the report request form.

QUESTIONS · 2 MIN

Frequently Asked Questions

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Short answers to the questions the data raises most often, with the same sources.

The same questions, with extended answers, are in the FAQ note.

How many independent schools are there in Canada?

Which Canadian province has the most homeschoolers?

Is homeschooling legal in Canada?

Do Canadian homeschoolers get funding?

What percentage of BC students attend independent schools?

Where does this report's data come from?