

EDUCATIONAL DIVERSITY



Canada's education system needs diverse perspectives to thrive. However, the education system is largely uniform and tends to centralize, despite the diverse populations within each province. This report outlines three key reasons why educational diversity should be respected and promoted.

First, educational diversity recognizes the role of parental responsibility in education. Parents have a responsibility to direct the education that is best for their children and cannot forfeit that responsibility. The civil government also has an interest in children receiving a good education and can regulate education in a limited way while respecting parental authority.

Second, Canada's legal and constitutional frameworks support educational diversity. Freedom of association protects the ability of parents to educate their children in a specific way with like-minded individuals, through independent schools. This also enhances cultural identities. Additionally, education is uniquely linked to freedom of religion. Education includes a variety of moral and ethical issues, and it is impossible for schools to be neutral on these matters. The ability to educate children according to religious beliefs and from a specific religious perspective is encompassed within religious freedom.

Third, educational diversity improves educational outcomes in the education system as a whole. Diverse schooling options mean no single type of school has a monopoly on education, creating competition which results in educational outcomes being improved within both public and independent schools as they seek to improve for the good of their students. Independent schools and homeschooling may also be a better fit for some students because of unique needs and abilities and provide a valuable service to Canadians.

Independent schools should be accommodated and supported by provincial governments in Canada, as many Canadians are trying to find alternatives to public education to meet their unique needs. ARPA Canada's recommendations focus on policy and funding decisions that prioritize parental involvement and choice in Canada's education system.

For more information about this topic, please refer to our related policy report document. This report can be found on our website at [ARPACanada.ca/publication/educational-diversity](https://www.arpacanada.ca/publication/educational-diversity).