Pan-Canadian Data Scan

Methods and scope

This scan was undertaken to identify and catalogue the types of data currently collected across Canada related to children and youth, publicly funded K-12 school systems, or outcomes related to public education. To find datasets, we searched federal, provincial and territorial government websites and open data catalogues, as well as websites of organizations that conduct research about public education and child and youth outcomes.

We searched for both datasets or presentations of data such as reports, slide decks, or summary tables on websites. "Data" could include survey results (responded to by parents, students, or staff), administrative data (data that is collected by jurisdictions for organizational purposes, e.g., enrolment counts), or student outcome data (e.g., scores on standardized assessments).

To be included in the scan, the data must have referred to school-aged children, public schools, or the administration of public education, and must have been collected in Canada. While it is not possible to be exhaustive with *all* Canadian data, and the datasets from Quebec were limited by English language searches, we tried to capture datasets that were sufficiently large to possibly provide sources of evidence for policymaking. For this reason, we did not include one-off surveys or single point-in-time datasets such as COVID-era surveys that were not designed to be re-administered. Similarly, we could not capture the varied and in-depth research conducted by university-based researchers around the country—although we recognize that this work contributes greatly to our understanding of how to administer strong public education that serves all students. Finally, this data scan does not include the research conducted at school boards since the scope of this work is necessarily geographically limited.

How to navigate the data scan

We have organized the data sources by region beginning with Canada-wide data, followed by headings for each province or territory. Within each region, there will be a list of data sources (for example, a survey or an administrative dataset). If you click on the name of the data source, you will also find information about the it, including the purpose of the instrument or study, the administrator (or administrators) that collect the data, the relevant age group(s) the data refer to, and the frequency and most recent date of data collection (if applicable).

The data source will also be tagged with a symbol that will identify the type of data it contains; either: administrative data, assessment data, and other surveys and studies.

Administrative data refers to data that is collected through the natural administration of the public education systems in Canada (e.g., information about expenditures, enrolment, or graduation).

Assessment data refers to the results of large-scale assessments, which evaluate students' competence in particular subject areas at particular ages / grade levels (e.g., the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment or the provincial/territorial assessments such as tests administered by Ontario's Education Quality and Accountability Office that assess students in reading, writing, and math in Grades 3, 6, 9, and 10, or Alberta's Provincial Achievement Tests in English Language Arts, math, science and social sciences in Grades 6 and 9).

Other surveys and studies can refer to other large-scale surveys or longitudinal studies that are undertaken by governments, non-governmental organizations, or universities (or multiple organizations in partnership) to collect health- or education-related information about children and youth in Canada (e.g., the Early Years Development Instrument, or EDI, which help assess student preparedness for kindergarten; the Canadian Survey on Disability, which collects information about disabled Canadians' needs and experiences, including requirements and unmet needs for accommodations in educational settings; or the BC Adolescent Health Survey, which tracks youth well-being and experiences at school and home).

Each data source will also include a link that you can use to explore information about the data directly on its website.

Help us keep this scan up to date

It is certain that this scan does not include every single study related to children and youth in Canada, but we hope that by providing this starting point we can have a broader conversation about what data is available and what data may be missing.

Our goal is that this scan can be a living resource; a goal that we can achieve with your help. If you see an important source of data that we have missed, please let us know through the comment box on our website.