



NEWS RELEASE

Religious and alternative education—not elite prep schools—dominates independent school landscape in Quebec

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For Immediate Release

TORONTO—The vast majority of non-government schools in Quebec don't conform to the elite preparatory school stereotype but instead offer religiously-oriented or alternative programs not available in the public system, finds a national study of independent schools released today in French by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian policy think-tank.

“Many Quebecers believe independent schools are mostly elite, ivy-clad university-prep schools, but that's simply not the case,” said Deani Van Pelt, director of the Barbara Mitchell Centre for Improvement in Education at the Fraser Institute and co-author of *A Diverse Landscape: Independent Schools in Canada*.

The make-up of the province's 285 independent schools—schools which operate outside the public system— included only 17 schools that conform to the elite prep school stereotype and they enrolled less than five per cent of independent school students in the province.

Far more independent schools—44.2 per cent—have a “specialty emphasis” such as English-language or special needs education, according to data from 2013/2014, the latest year of available statistics.

In addition, fully one-third of Quebec's independent schools are religiously-oriented, including Catholic, Jewish, and Islamic schools.

Quebec also had the highest percentage of independent school enrolment in Canada, with 123,161 (or 12.6 per cent) of all K-12 students in Quebec schools attending an independent school.

“Parents in Quebec send their children to independent schools for many different reasons, including English-language or religiously-oriented education,” Van Pelt said.

“Independent schools add variety and value to the education system and choice for families across Quebec.”

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The Fraser Institute is an independent Canadian public policy research and educational organization with offices in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal and ties to a global network of think-tanks in 87 countries. Its mission is to improve the quality of life for Canadians, their families and future generations by studying, measuring and broadly communicating the effects of government policies, entrepreneurship and choice on their well-being. To protect the Institute's independence, it does not accept grants from governments or contracts for research. Visit www.fraserinstitute.org

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