

# NEWS RELEASE

## Ontario students trail Quebec in international PISA math test scores, continued declines in all three testing areas should be of concern

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For immediate release

**TORONTO**—15-year-old students in Ontario continued to trail Quebec students in math in the latest 2018 PISA international test results, while nationwide as well as in Ontario, results are trending down, finds a new study released today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan, Canadian public policy think-tank.

Conducted every three years, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is the most extensive and widely accepted measure of academic proficiency among lower secondary school students around the world.

“Ontario students generally performed well in the latest PISA tests, with scores statistically similar to Quebec students in reading and science, but significantly lower in math, a subject in which Quebec places among the highest scoring countries around the world...policymakers, educators and parents should all be asking why that is,” said Derek J. Allison, professor emeritus at the University of Western Ontario, a Fraser Institute senior fellow and author of *What International Tests (PISA) Tell Us about Education in Canada*.

The study finds that Ontario students experienced a drop in reading – from 533 in 2000 to 524 in 2018; in math – from 530 in 2003 to 513 in 2018; and in science – from 537 in 2006 to 519 in 2018—all core subjects.

Canada ranked comparatively high, outperforming all other G7 countries in reading, and placing second among G7 countries (after Japan) in math and science. But crucially, across all three disciplines, results in each province have declined since PISA testing began in 2000.

Score declines have been less severe in Ontario and Quebec with the Western provinces experiencing the largest score declines. The substantially larger enrolments in Ontario and Quebec, which account for 61 percent of Canadian school enrolment, cushioned the effect of the more severe score declines in other provinces on the national picture.

“We should always strive to do better when it comes to education, and Ontario’s relatively good PISA results should not detract from the fact that students just next door in Quebec are achieving significantly higher, world-class, math scores,” Allison said.

“The PISA tests are an opportunity for policymakers and educators to learn best practices from other more successful jurisdictions and correct course, if necessary, for the benefit of their students.”

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