The 12th OISE/University of Toronto Survey of Educational Issues

Since 1978, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto has been polling Ontarians on educational issues. This is our twelfth survey. Every two years we conduct a general population poll of Ontario residents, now done by telephone interview, and a mail survey of a sample of individuals drawn from the Financial Post Directory of Directors. The results of the 1998 survey will be published in Orbit, a popular journal of OISE/UT.

The OISE/UT survey is the only regular, publicly available poll in Canada devoted to educational issues. It is one of the few vehicles available for tracking changes in public opinion and the views of particular groups on satisfaction with schools, educational finance, testing, education for work, and other key areas. Your name has been drawn in our random sample from the Directory of Directors. We ask you to complete the questionnaire in the next day or two and return it to us in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope. The questionnaire is numbered to allow us to follow-up with non-respondents; however, your responses will be treated as confidential and no results will be released for individuals. If you feel the number is a breach of your privacy, just tear it off before mailing back the questionnaire. We urge you to participate in our 12th survey. Without a high response rate, we cannot be sure that our results accurately reflect the views of people in your position. This questionnaire is organized into two sections. The first and main section asks about your views on educational issues and aspects of your own education. It also includes a small number of questions on political and economic issues. The second section covers general background information. On most questions you need only circle options or write in a number indicating your response. Please feel free, however, to make additional comments on any question. Some questions may not apply to you and you will be directed to 'SKIP' over these.

If you would like more information, please contact Dr. David Livingstone (416-923-6641 x2703, or Dr. Doug Hart x2338). We can also be reached by email at dlivingstone@oise.utoronto.ca or dhart@oise.utoronto.ca.

Educational Issues

1. How satisfied are you with the current situation in Ontario elementary and high schools with regard to...?
   Please write in for each item: 1 = very satisfied, 2 = somewhat satisfied, 3 = neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 4 = somewhat dissatisfied, 5 = very dissatisfied, 6 = can't say.

   ___ the school system in general
   ___ the value obtained for taxpayers' money
   ___ student discipline
   ___ the job teachers are doing

2. Overall, would you say over the past ten years that the quality of each of the following has improved or worsened?
   (Please write in below for each type of school: 1 = improved a great deal, 2 = improved a little, 3 = remained the same, 4 = worsened a little, 5 = worsened a great deal or 6 = can't say.)

   ___ The quality of education received by students in Ontario elementary schools
   ___ The quality of education received by students in Ontario high schools

3. Do you think the changes the provincial government has made in the school system in the past few years have generally improved, worsened or made no difference to the quality of education in Ontario?
   1. improved a great deal
   2. improved a little
   3. left the same
   4. worsened a little
   5. worsened a great deal
   6. can't say
4. What would you like to see happen to government spending for the following purposes in the next budget year?
(Please write in below for each purpose:
1 = increase greatly, 2 = increase somewhat, 3 = keep up with inflation, 4 = decrease somewhat, 5 = decrease greatly or 6 = can't say.)

___ total government spending for all purposes
___ total government spending for all levels of education
___ government spending for elementary and high schools
___ government spending for community colleges
___ government spending for universities
___ government spending for job retraining
___ government spending for teaching adults to read

5. Would you be willing to pay more taxes in support of education in Ontario?
   1. yes
   2. no
   3. can't say

6. Provided the schools meet province-wide standards, what schools do you think should be given government funding?
   1. public schools only
   2. public and Catholic schools as now
   3. public, Catholic and private religious schools only
   4. public, Catholic and all private schools
   5. can't say

7. Which of the following do you think should be the most important task for the Ontario government?
   1. cut taxes
   2. reduce the deficit and public debt
   3. maintain educational services
   4. maintain health services
   5. maintain both health and educational services
   6. can't say

8. Some governments have experimented with allowing private groups to sign contracts to operate schools independently of school boards. Would you favour or oppose, and how strongly, allowing private profit-making businesses to operate public schools in your community?
   1. strongly favour
   2. favour
   3. neither favour nor oppose
   4. oppose
   5. strongly oppose
   6. can't say
9. Would you favour or oppose, and how strongly, giving school-parent councils the power to hire and fire school principals?
   1. strongly favour
   2. favour
   3. neither favour nor oppose
   4. oppose
   5. strongly oppose
   6. can't say

10. If governments decided to spend more tax money on education, would you favour or oppose, and how strongly, each of the following?
(Please write in below for each item: 1 = strongly favour, 2 = favour, 3 = neither favour nor oppose, 4 = oppose, 5 = strongly oppose or 6 = can't say.)

   ___ making junior kindergarten available in all school districts
   ___ reducing class sizes in the first few years of elementary schools
   ___ expanding work experience programs for high school students
   ___ providing places for adults who want to go back to school to earn a high school diploma
   ___ expanding apprenticeship programs
   ___ keeping university tuition fees from going up
   ___ increasing financial assistance to university students
   ___ improving the quality of university programs and facilities
   ___ increasing universities' capacity to do research

11. With government budgets tight, universities may be faced with the choice of limiting enrolment, reducing programs, or increasing fees. What choice do you favour...?
   1. limit enrolment
   2. reduce programs
   3. increase fees
   4. can't say

12. At which grade, if at all, should schools stream or separate students into different programs intended to prepare some students directly for the world of work and other students for entry into community college or university?
   1. not at all
   2. grade 12 or 13
   3. grade 11
   4. grade 10
   5. grade 9 or earlier
   6. can't say

13. Over half of students who start high school do not go on to community college or university. Which one of the following do you think would be the most useful thing high schools could do for these students?
   1. Try to get them to go to college or university
   2. Try to get them into vocational training programs
   3. Try to place them in entry-level jobs
   4. Let them find their own way
   5. can't say
14. As a result of changes in the way high schools are organized, in 2003, both the last group of students taking the old five year program and the first group taking the new four year program will graduate from Ontario high schools. This means many more students than usual will be trying to get into Ontario universities. Which of the following best matches your view as to what should be done about this?
1. Increase class sizes in universities.
2. Restrict admissions.
3. Increase staff and facilities to cope with greater number of students.
4. Can't say

15. If university staff and facilities are increased to cope with the larger number of students in 2003, how should the cost be covered?
1. Increase tuition fees
2. Increase grants to universities from the provincial government
3. Both about equally
4. Can't say

16. Do you agree or disagree, and how strongly, that elementary schools should be able to skip province-wide tests if they think these tests are unfair to their students?
1. strongly agree
2. agree
3. neither agree nor disagree
4. disagree
5. strongly disagree
6. can't say

17. There are many ideas for how we can help Ontario elementary school students do better at school. How much do you think each of the following would improve student achievement?
(Please write in below, for each question: 1 = a great deal, 2 = quite a lot, 3 = a moderate amount, 4 = a little, 5 = not at all, or 6 = can't say.)

___ A. Getting parents more involved in reading to their children and helping with homework.
___ B. Getting parents more involved with school councils and the running of the school.
___ C. Putting computers in every classroom.
___ D. Reducing class sizes in the first few years of elementary school.
___ E. Using province-wide tests to measure how students are doing.
___ F. Devoting more class time to teaching basic skills like language and mathematics.
___ G. Increasing the amount of time students spend in school each year.
___ H. Spending more money per student.
___ I. Starting all children in junior kindergarten.
___ J. Providing more training for teachers.
___ K. Providing more special education teachers to help students with learning difficulties.

18. Do you agree or disagree, and how strongly, with each of the following statements:
(Please write in below, for each question: 1 = strongly agree, 2 = somewhat agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree, or 6 = can't say.)

___ Ontario Francophones should have the right to control and manage their own French language schools anywhere in the province where there are enough students.
___ Ontario should get rid of school boards altogether, with the provincial government taking over decisions on curriculum and spending
19. Overall would you say that most recent changes in educational policy have given the provincial government more control, the same control or less control over how schools operate?
1. much more control
2. somewhat more control
3. about the same control
4. somewhat less control
5. much less control
6. can't say

20. Do you think that the provincial government now has, overall, too little, about the right amount or too much control over how schools operate?
1. far too little
2. somewhat too little
3. about the right amount
4. somewhat too much
5. far too much
6. can't say

21. Ideally, who do you think should be responsible for negotiating salary contracts with high school teachers?
1. provincial Ministry of Education
2. regional and local school boards
3. principals and school councils of each school
4. can't say

22. In general, do you think that people generally have more education than their jobs require, the right amount or too little?
1. more education
2. right amount
3. too little education
4. can't say

23. Do you think it is a good idea or a bad idea for people to be credited for learning they did outside of educational institutions when it comes to awarding high school diplomas, college certificates and university degrees?
1. very good idea
2. good idea
3. bad idea
4. very bad idea
5. can't say

24. Paid educational leave is when employees can take time off on a short-term or part-time basis to learn new work skills but continue to be paid and return to their jobs afterwards. Which of the following best matches your view about providing paid educational leave?
1. Paid educational leave should be a privilege decided on by employers.
2. Paid educational leave should be part of contracts between employers and employees.
3. Paid educational leave should be a legal right of employees much like the right to a minimum amount of vacation time.
4. Can't say
25. How much difference do you think a university education makes for university graduates in each of the following areas? (Please write in below, for each question: 1 = a great deal, 2 = quite a lot, 3 = a moderate amount, 4 = a little, 5 = none, or 6 = can’t say.)

___ finding a job after graduation
___ career opportunities
___ getting a well paid job soon after graduation
___ lifetime earnings
___ long-term personal growth
___ long-term personal happiness
___ long-term contribution to society

26. How much education do you think a person now needs to get along in this society?
1. elementary school
2. some high school
3. a high school diploma
4. community college or trade school
5. undergraduate university degree
6. graduate university degree
7. can’t say

27. Do you agree or disagree, and how strongly, with each of the following statements? (Please write in below, for each question: 1 = strongly agree, 2 = somewhat agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree, or 6 = can’t say.)

___ The number of students admitted to university and community college programs should be based primarily on the availability of jobs for graduates, even if this keeps out qualified students who want these programs.
___ Every qualified person who wants to attend university should be guaranteed a place even if this means spending more tax money on universities.
___ A university graduate is as likely to be unemployed as a college graduate.
___ A university graduate is more likely to obtain a better job which pays a higher income than a college graduate.

28. How well does the range of programs offered by Ontario universities meet the needs of our society? How well does the range of programs meet the needs of the economy? (Please write in below, for each question: 1 = very well, 2 = well, 3 = just adequately, 4 = poorly, 5 = very poorly, or 6 = can't say.)

___ society
___ the economy

29. When it comes to filling job openings in high technology companies over the next 10 years, do you think universities will graduate too few, about the right number, or too many graduates?
1. far too few
2. somewhat too few
3. about the right number
4. somewhat too many
5. far too many
6. can't say
30. How important do you think each of the following are, first in terms of making Canada a better society, and second in terms of making the Canadian economy stronger?
(Please write in below, for each question: 1 = a great deal, 2 = quite a lot, 3 = a moderate amount, 4 = a little, 5 = none, or 6 = can't say.)

A. Increasing the proportion of high school graduates going to university.

___ Importance for better society
___ Importance for stronger economy

B. Increasing the proportion of high school graduates from disadvantaged backgrounds going to university.

___ Importance for better society
___ Importance for stronger economy

C. Increasing the amount of research done by universities.

___ Importance for better society
___ Importance for stronger economy

D. Increasing the number of research partnerships between universities and business corporations.

___ Importance for better society
___ Importance for stronger economy

E. Increasing the proportion of university students who go on to graduate studies, for example, to Masters degrees or Ph.D.s.

___ Importance for better society
___ Importance for stronger economy

F. Increasing the number of foreign students that come to Canada for university education and training.

___ Importance for better society
___ Importance for stronger economy

31. Should the main goal of university research be to discover new knowledge or to provide solutions to specific problems?
1. discover new knowledge
2. provide solutions to specific problems
3. both about equally
4. can't say

32. Do you think students from low-income families now have a better, the same or a worse chance of getting a higher education than students from upper-income families?
1. much better chance
2. somewhat better chance
3. about the same chance
4. somewhat worse chance
5. much worse chance
6. can't say
33. Do you think aboriginal students now have a better, the same or a worse chance of getting a higher education than white students?
1. much better chance
2. somewhat better chance
3. about the same chance
4. somewhat worse chance
5. much worse chance
6. can't say

34. Do you agree or disagree, and how strongly, that in Ontario today, both men and women have an equal opportunity of getting a higher education?
1. strongly agree
2. agree
3. neither agree nor disagree
4. disagree
5. strongly disagree
6. can't say

35. In the past year, have you taken any adult or continuing education courses?
1. yes ) PLEASE CONTINUE TO QUESTION 36
2. no ---) PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION 38
3. not applicable, still in school/university PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION 38

36. Did any of the courses you have taken in the past year get you a credit for a high school diploma, community college certificate or diploma, or university degree? (Please check as many options as apply.)
___ high school
___ community college
___ university

37. Which one of the following best captures your main reason for taking adult education courses?
1. to prepare me for a new job
2. to help me do my present job better
3. to meet other practical needs unconnected with work
4. to obtain a diploma, certificate or degree
5. out of general interest
6. can't say

38. Would you be more likely to enroll in a new education or training program if you could get acknowledgement for your learning experiences so it would require fewer courses to finish the program?
1. yes
2. no
3. can't say

39. Please think of any learning you do on your own or with others that is NOT part of organized schooling or continuing education courses. This includes ANY activities in which your main purpose is to gain knowledge or skills.

Not counting course work, about how many hours in a typical week do you spend trying to learn anything related to your paid or household work, or work you do as a volunteer? Just give your best guess.
___ hours
Not counting course work, about how many hours in a typical week do you spend trying to learn anything of general interest to you? Just give your best guess.

___ hours

40. Over the past year, how often, on average, have you visited a public library?

___ never  ___ less than once a month  ___ once a month  ___ a few times a month  ___ about once a week  ___ several times a week  ___ can't say

41. Have you ever followed a course carried on educational television?

___ yes ___ no

Under/Overemployment

1. What is the highest level of education you, yourself have obtained?
   1. elementary school only  
   2. some high school  
   3. completed high school  
   4. some community college or other business/technical college  
   5. community college or other business/technical college certificate or diploma  
   6. some university  
   7. undergraduate university degree (e.g. B.A., B.Sc., LLB.)  
   8. some graduate university  
   9. graduate university degree (e.g. M.A., Ph.D., MBA., LLM, MD.)

2. What general educational requirement, apart from professional certification or licensing, is currently set for new applicants for the type of job you now hold or last held? If you are self-employed, what general educational requirement is set for your trade or profession?
   1. no specific requirement  
   2. some high school  
   3. completed high school  
   4. some community college or other business/technical college  
   5. community college or other business/technical college certificate or diploma  
   6. some university  
   7. undergraduate university degree (e.g. B.A., B.Sc., LLB.)  
   8. some graduate university  
   9. graduate university degree (e.g. M.A., Ph.D., LLM, MD.)
3. In terms of your schooling, do you feel you are overqualified, adequately qualified or underqualified for your current job?
1. overqualified
2. adequately qualified
3. underqualified
4. can't say

Breakdowns of results are available for the following social background variables:

- Parental status
- School supporter (public, separate, private)
- Age
- Gender
- Ethnic group (ancestral origin)
- First language
- Religion
- Family income
- Occupation
- Region (Toronto, GTA, east/west/north Ontario)
- Union membership
- Political party preference