

ALBERTANS STILL CALLING FOR INCREASED EDUCATION FUNDING

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Alberta's public education system than they were in 2003*

*And 72% continue to say funding for public schools in Alberta
should be increased*

*Yet, 62% say the quality of education provided today is 'better'
(31%) or 'about the same' (31%) as what they received*



Ipsos Reid

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Calgary, AB – As Alberta's kids head back to school, a new Ipsos Reid poll finds that despite the Alberta government increasing education funding by almost \$300 million in 2005, the number of Albertans who say they are satisfied (57%) with the overall state of the public education system in Alberta remains unchanged since 2003 (58%). In addition, seven-in-ten (72%) continue to say government funding for public education should be increased from current levels (also unchanged from 2003). Yet, six-in-ten (62%) say today's children receive a 'better' (31%) or 'about the same' (31%) quality of education they received while only three-in-ten (32%) say the quality of education is now 'worse'.

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between August 17th and August 23rd, 2005. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 800 adult Albertans. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Albertan population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Alberta population according to the 2001 Census data.

Albertans no more satisfied (57%) with the overall state of Alberta's public education system than they were in 2003

Despite 2005 budget increases totaling \$287 million and a total budget of \$4.3 billion, the percentage of Albertans saying they are satisfied (57%) with the overall state of the province's public education system remains essentially unchanged from 2003 (58%). Just over one-in-ten (11%) say they are 'very satisfied' and a plurality (46%) say they are 'somewhat satisfied.' In contrast, four-in-ten (39%) Albertans say they are dissatisfied with the overall state of public education in the province (14% 'very dissatisfied', 25% 'somewhat dissatisfied.')

- Men (64%) are much more likely than women (51%) to say they are satisfied with the state of public education in the province.
- Albertans under the age of 55 (54%) are less likely to be satisfied than are those over the age of 55 (66%).
- Calgarians (53%) and Edmonton (57%) tend to be less satisfied than the rest of the province (63%) with the state of the education system.

And 72% continue to say funding for public schools in Alberta should be increased

Albertans apparently feel these funding increases are not enough as seven-in-ten (72%) Albertans say provincial government funding for public schools should be 'increased from current levels'. Once again, this is unchanged from 2003 when 72% of Albertans said the same thing. About one-quarter (24%) currently say funding should be 'maintained at current levels' and only 2% say funding should be 'cut back from current levels'.

- Women (77%) are much more likely than men (67%) to believe funding for public education should be increased.
- Albertans under the age of 35 (80%) are significantly more likely to call for increased funding levels than those 35 to 54 (74%) and those over the age of 55 (61%).

- Albertans with a high school education or less (66%) are less likely than those with at least some post-secondary education (75%) to say funding for public schools should be increased.

Yet, 62% say the quality of education provided today is 'better' (31%) or 'about the same' (31%) as what they received

Yet while extra government spending has not curbed Albertans' appetite for increased education funding, a strong majority of Albertans (62%) say the quality of education that today's children receive from kindergarten to grade 12 is either 'better' (31% - 12% 'much better', 19% 'somewhat better') or 'about the same' (31%) as they received. In contrast only three-in-ten (32%) Albertans say that the quality of education is now worse than what they received. This includes 10% who say 'much worse' and 22% who say 'somewhat worse'.

- Albertans aged 55 and over (38%) are most likely to say today's children are receiving a 'better' quality education than those aged 35-54 (31%) or those under the age of 34 (25%).
- Those with the most recent experience in school (Albertans aged 18 to 34) are significantly more likely than those aged 35 and older (44% vs. 25%) to say the quality of education is about the same.
- Those aged 35 to 54 (36%) are most likely to say the quality of education offered today is 'worse.'

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