

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IN BC

Survey for Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC (FPSE)



Ipsos Reid

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Vancouver, BC – This report presents the findings of an Ipsos Reid online poll conducted on behalf of The Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC (FPSE).

Provincial Government Performance – Overall and Economy

British Columbians are split on both the overall performance of the provincial government and their performance in regard to the BC economy.

Just less than half (46%) say they think the provincial government is doing a good job when it comes to ‘overall government performance’. A similar proportion (49%) say that the provincial government is doing a poor job in this regard.

Almost half (48%) say the provincial government is doing a good job in their ‘handling of the BC economy’, while 46% say they are doing a poor job.

- A perception that the government is doing a good job on the economy is higher among men (56% vs. 41% of women), higher household income residents (54% of \$75K+ vs. 47% of \$40-\$75K, 42% of <\$40K) and university graduates (54% vs. 47% of some post-secondary, 44% of high school or less).

Provincial Government Performance – Education

British Columbians are more negative than positive in their assessments of the provincial government’s performance when it comes to education.

One-third (33%) say the provincial government is doing a good job in its ‘handling of post-secondary education in BC’. A slight majority (55%) say the government is doing a poor job on post-secondary education.

- A perception that the government is doing a good job on post-secondary education is higher among men (40% vs. 26% of women) and university graduates (39% vs. 28% of some post-secondary, 34% of high school or less).

Three-in-ten (31%) say the provincial government is doing a good job at ‘regulating BC’s 500 private colleges and training institutes’. Four-in-ten (42%) say the government is doing a poor job, while one-quarter (26%) say they ‘don’t know’.

- A perception that the government is doing a good job in regulating these schools is higher among men (37% vs. 25% of women), younger residents (38% of 18-34

years vs. 29% of 35-54 years, 28% of 55+ years) and university graduates (38% vs. 28% of some post-secondary, 27% of high school or less).

Three-in-ten (30%) say the provincial government is doing a good job at 'maintaining the quality of K-12 education here in BC'. Six-in-ten (59%) say the government is doing a poor job on this responsibility.

- A perception that the government is doing a good job on K-12 education is higher among men (36% vs. 24% of women).

Preferred Direction of Tuition Fees at BC's Colleges, Universities and Institutes

Most British Columbians (87%) believe that tuition fees at BC's colleges, universities and institutes should be either 'kept about the same' (46%) or 'reduced' (41%). Only 6% think tuition fees should be 'increased', while 7% say they 'don't know'.

- A perception that tuition fees should be 'reduced' is higher among women (49% vs. 34% of men), those without a university degree (47% of high school or less, 44% of some post-secondary vs. 34% of university graduates) and lower household income residents (50% of <\$40K vs. 42% of \$40-\$75K, 34% of \$75K+).

Agreement with Statements About Post-Secondary Education

More than nine-in-ten (92%) British Columbians agree that 'higher tuition fees make it harder for students from lower income families to get a post-secondary education' (7% disagree).

More than eight-in-ten (84%) British Columbians agree that 'student debt is making it harder for students to complete their post-secondary education' (13% disagree).

Roughly eight-in-ten (78%) British Columbians agree that 'one way to improve the job prospects for young adults in BC is for the provincial government to invest more in public universities, colleges and institutes' (16% disagree).

- Agreement that job prospects are improved through this investment is higher among Vancouver Island residents (86% vs. 76% of Metro Vancouver, 78% of Interior/North).

Three-quarters (73%) of British Columbians agree that 'increasing the access and affordability of post-secondary education is good way to increase the number of high-paying jobs in BC' (21% disagree).

- Agreement that this is a good way to increase high-paying jobs is higher among those with a high school education or less (82% vs. 68% of some post-secondary, 75% of university graduates).

Support for Provincial Government Investing in Programs to Reduce Student Debt

More than eight-in-ten (83%) British Columbian say they support 'the provincial government investing in programs that would help reduce student debt' (13% oppose).

Preference between Public and Private College

British Columbians show a clear preference for public over private colleges. Given a choice between the two, more than six-in-ten (62%) say they would choose to enrol in the 'public' college, compared to only 13% who would choose the 'private' college. One-quarter (24%) say they 'don't know' which option they would choose.

- A preference for the 'public' option is higher among Metro Vancouver residents (67% vs. 58% of rest of BC) and university graduates (76% vs. 56% of high school or less, 57% of some post-secondary).

These are the findings of an online Ipsos Reid poll of 822 adult British Columbians conducted using Ipsos Reid's online household panel between August 18 and 23, 2011. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error would 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 BC population according to 2006 Census data.

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