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Public School Education; Two-thirds (63%) Would Send Their
Children to Private School if Money was no Concern*

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Toronto, ON – As children across the country stuff their backpacks with fresh supplies in anticipation of the first day back to school, a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted exclusively for Global Television, the first of a six-part series on education, has revealed that Canadians have given mediocre marks to the overall state of the elementary school system in Canada.

Just 5% would give the overall state of the school system an “A”, while most would assess a mark of “B” (35%) or “C” (39%). Fourteen percent (14%) would give the school system a mark of “D”, while 7% give it an outright “F – fail”. Interestingly, those with children living in the household are more likely to give good marks – an “A” or “B” – (46%) than those who don’t have kids (36%), and less likely to give bad marks – a “D” or “F” – (17%) compared to those who do not have children in their household (24%).

The best marks in the country (an “A” or “B”) are to be found in Saskatchewan and Manitoba (53%), followed by Alberta (45%), Quebec (41%), Ontario (41%), Atlantic Canada (38%) and, lastly, British Columbia (24%). The worst marks (a “D” or “F”) are found in British Columbia (26%), Ontario (23%), Atlantic Canada (22%), Alberta (20%) and Quebec (19%), while very few in Saskatchewan and Manitoba (6%) gave poor marks to their school system

Canadians were also asked to assess other aspects of the school system:

- Canadians had better things to say about **the quality of the teachers** in the public elementary school system, giving a majority of them good marks of an “A” (17%) or “B” (49%), while fewer would give teachers themselves a mark of “C” (25%), “D” (6%) or “F” (3%). Residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba (74%), Atlantic Canadians (71%), Quebecers (70%), and Albertans (69%) gave out best marks for teacher quality compared to Ontario (63%) and British Columbia (59%). Albertans (12%), Ontarians (12%), and British Columbians (10%) gave more poor marks regarding teacher quality than Atlantic Canadians (8%), Quebecers (6%), and residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba (4%)
- A majority also gave good marks to the **relevance of the curriculum taught**: “A” (9%), “B” (44%), “C” (33%), “D” (9%) and “F” (5%). Residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba (58%), Atlantic Canada (57%), and Alberta (56%) provide best marks for curriculum relevance while a razor-thin majority of Ontarians (52%) and Quebecers (51%) and a minority of British Columbians (48%) provided the same. British Columbians (17%), Atlantic Canadians (16%), and Ontarians (15%) gave the most poor marks on curriculum relevance compared to residents of Alberta (13%), Quebec (12%), and Saskatchewan and Manitoba (10%).
- Canadians are slightly less positive about the **quality of the school buildings**: “A” (9%), “B” (40%), “C” (35%), “D” (12%), “F” (4%). A majority of resident from Saskatchewan and Manitoba (64%), Alberta (54%), Ontario (52%), and Atlantic Canada (51%) cited good marks for school building quality, compared to a minority of Quebecers (42%) and British Columbians (42%). Quebecers (24%) are most likely to give poor marks for school building quality, followed by British Columbians (16%).

Public vs. Private

With Canadians seeming reluctant to hand out top marks to public elementary education in Canada, it's interesting to note that six in ten (58%) 'agree' (22% strongly/37% somewhat) that 'private-school education is better than public-school education', with residents of British Columbia (64%) and Quebec (63%) being most likely to think so. Conversely, four in ten (42%) 'disagree' (11% strongly/31% somewhat), with a majority of those in Atlantic Canada (54%) disagreeing.

A similar question posed in 1999 revealed that 61% believe that private schools students receive much better education than public school students, while only one-third (34%) disagreed with such a statement.

Furthermore, two-in-three (67%) parents with kids in the household 'agree' (38% strongly/29% somewhat) that they would 'send their children to private school if money was no concern', while just one in three (33%) 'disagree' (10% strongly/22% somewhat) that they would. Residents of British Columbia (70%), Quebec (64%), and Ontario (63%) are more likely to agree that, if money was no concern, they would send their children to private school compared to residents of Albertans (60%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (59%), and Atlantic Canada (56%).

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between August 20th to 27th, 2012, the first of a seven-part series on education commissioned by Global Television. For the survey, a sample of 1,569 Canadians from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, respectively, of what

the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Canada been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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