

# **THE EVOLUTION OF EDUCATION IN CANADA**

## **HOW has the curriculum and system structure changed over the years?**

Over the years the school curriculum and learning structure in Canada has changed a lot. In the 1800s education was local and church-run. Schools focused on basic learning and moral teaching. During that period the government created the residential school system forcing indigenous children to attend schools meant to assimilate them into European culture.

In early 1900s Canada started developing a better public education system public and the government started taking control of schooling and making education more public and available to children.

Later in the 20th century, schools began sharing ideas and introductions to multicultural and advanced learning and more access to secondary education.

Now in the current 21<sup>st</sup> century, Canadian education focus on diversity, inclusivity and technology-based learning. Schools now often use computers and online learning platforms.

## **WHO are some of the key individuals and groups that influenced and helped evolve school policies?**

A popular figure that helped evolve school policies was Egerton Ryerson. He was born on March 24, 1803. He was an important figure in education and politics. In 1844 he was appointed superintendent of education for Canada West. He worked in collaboration with Jean-Baptiste Meilleur in Québec, as well as John Jessop in British Columbia. He wrote a report recommending improvements for the educational system, which were later adopted in 1846 and 1850. He believed that Canada West should have a free and mandatory public education system, his ideas also led to the creation of Residential Schools, which we now know were harmful. He also recommended that students at common schools should learn spelling, writing, arithmetic, grammar, history, etc.

**The constitution Act of 1867 gave provinces exclusive power over their own education systems.** A huge group of people that influenced school policies were religious churches and missionaries who had strong desire to assimilate indigenous children into the European culture. The Constitution Act of 1867 section 91 gave the federal government legal authority over “Indians and lands reserved for Indians” and while provinces managed their own education systems, the federal government took control over Indigenous people and their schooling which created the Residential School System. It moved from missionary deculturation to the federal government adopting a new policy and providing funding to churches and making it mandatory for Indigenous children to attend residential schools for almost 50 years.

### **WHAT are some major changes in the curriculum and teaching?**

The Canadian education system has gone through major changes. Schooling became a lot more public and government-run. Elementary school became compulsory and increased learning across the country. A lot of higher education colleges and universities have also opened increasing different opportunities of learning after high school. Another huge and massive change are the closings of Indigenous residential schools and adding important Indigenous cultures and history to be added in school as a part of reconciliation.

In the 21st century, there has been great expansion of schools. There has been great construction of modern schools with big and equipped learning classrooms, gyms and facilities for learning and activities. Technology has transformed classrooms with computers and even provided online learning, helping students in new and interactive ways.

Schools have become more inclusive about welcoming different cultures. Today education in Canada has grown and developed so much and has given students way better learning resources and opportunities.

### **WHY did the Canadian education system evolve the way it did?**

Canada’s school system and structure evolved the way it did due to a lot of government decision and European influences. Early education in Canada was influenced a lot by the British and French, who brought their language and culture to Canada. Because of this the education system and structure were mostly based on European values and excluded Indigenous communities and people

which later brought to the cause of Residential schools. When Canada became a country later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, each province was responsible for their own school system and structure and due to that education was developed differently across Canada.

## **EDUCATION IN SASKATCHEWAN**

Under the Constitution Act of 1867, education has become a provincial responsibility. The federal government simultaneously created the Residential School system, which forcibly separated over 150,000 Indigenous children from their families to cross-provincial lines. In Saskatchewan, this history is deep in our education; our province was home to over 20 residential schools, including Gordon's Residential School, which was the last in Canada to close in 1996. Today, Saskatchewan is a leader in Treaty Education, transforming our schools into places of Reconciliation where every student learns the true history of the land we share.

