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### OECD REPORT

# Canadian education ranked among world's best

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[CBC News](#)

Canadian students are among the top performers in the world, according to an international educational survey of half a million 15-year-olds in more than 70 countries.

Students in Canada tend to perform well regardless of their

socioeconomic background or the school they attend.

The latest figures from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, released Tuesday, show Canada scored its best in reading, earning sixth place behind Shanghai-China, Korea, Finland, Hong Kong-China and Singapore.

## Global rankings

The Paris-based OECD surveyed the reading, science and math performance of a total of half a million students from more than 70 countries and economies, via a two-hour pencil-and-paper test. Here are the top 10 rankings and scores for reading (a difference of 40 points is roughly equivalent to a year of schooling):

1. China – Shanghai province, 556
2. Korea, 539
3. Finland, 536
4. Hong Kong, 533
5. Singapore, 526
6. Canada, 524
7. New Zealand, 521
8. Japan, 520
9. Australia, 515
10. Netherlands, 508

On a regional level, Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia tied with four other jurisdictions for second place in reading, following Shanghai-China.

Andreas Schleicher, head of the OECD's education indicators and

analysis division, said many of these jurisdictions have things in common.

"They set very ambitious standards for all students. They don't tolerate failure. They ensure that every student is able to benefit ... they are able to attract the best teachers into the profession and to put the best teachers into the most challenging classrooms," said Schleicher.

He said there is a link between money and outcomes, but money explains only about 20 per cent of the performance differences observed among countries.

"That means there are lots of education systems that are not expensive but do really well. And there are some education systems that actually are quite expensive and not doing really well," he said.

## **Reading, math, science**

The scores were collected in 2009 through the OECD Program for International Student Assessment.

The program tests 15-year-olds in roughly 70 countries every three years in reading, math and science.

According to the OECD website, the program gauges how well students near the end of mandatory schooling have acquired key knowledge and skills.

The study's findings include that girls read better than boys in every country, by an average of 39 points, the equivalent to one year of schooling, and the gender gap has not improved in any country since 2000.

The study also found that high-performing school systems tend to prioritize teacher pay over smaller class sizes, a conclusion that may be surprising in Canada, where some provinces have caps on class sizes in the elementary grades.

*With files from The Canadian Press*

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