What is the future of learning in Canada?

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Format: Report

Publication Date: 11 Oct 2011

AVAILABILITY Report in pdf [2]

News release and speaking tour schedule [2]

Excerpts from the report:

In its final report to Canadians, the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) reveals that Canada is slipping down the international learning curve

The needs in this area are stark. The potential rewards are enormous. But we are falling behind competitor countries and economies. We are on the wrong road and must make a dramatic change in the course we are taking.

The principal cause of this unacceptable and deeply troubling state of affairs is that our governments have failed to work together to develop the necessary policies and failed to exhibit the required collective political leadership.

The necessary approach is voluntary and co-operative, respectful of provincial and territorial responsibility, but involves the development of clear trans-Canadian policies and actions.

The starting point for the proposed directions is the establishment of a federal/provincial/territorial Council of Ministers on Learning. In addition, there must be: clear and measureable national goals for each stage of learning, as described in this report; permanent, independent monitors to compare Canadian learning results to our stated goals; standing advisory groups, including educators and civil society, to consult on requisite national objectives and the means to reach these goals.

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This final report summarizes the state of learning for each stage of the life cycle. Our analysis of Early Childhood Education and Learning (ECEL) illustrates a paradox that runs through each phase of learning in this country: huge discrepancies between what Canadians purport to believe and the actual programs and practices to which they have access. The discrepancies are due to the dysfunctional relationships among governments and the consequent absence of national goals.

With respect to ECEL, Canadians are acutely aware of its crucial significance throughout the lifetime of their children; yet Canadian public expenditures for ECEL are among the lowest in developed countries.

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