

SELECTING AN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

The Benefits of the Co-educational Environment



Your Child's School Experience

Choosing the right school for your child is a complex decision. “What type of learning environment will offer my child high educational standards? What school will offer enriched academic experiences? Does the school have a reputation for academic excellence? Will my child thrive in a single-gender or a co-educational setting?” These are all questions you may ask yourself.

Current research shows that parents of students attending independent co-educational schools believe that a co-ed learning environment offers many benefits. A national survey conducted in 2005–2006 reveals that 79% of Canadian parents with children in independent co-ed schools heartily agree that these schools better reflect the diversity of our society and 79% believe they better prepare students to eventually enter the workforce. In addition, 71% agree that these students are better prepared to succeed in post-secondary education.

Canadian research reveals that students at independent co-ed schools feel comfortable about who they are and have a healthy and positive attitude and self-image. In fact, 71% of students indicate that “It is easy for students at my school to find a group that they fit in with.” The self-confidence expressed around fitting in enables students in a co-ed environment to perform to the best of their ability and get the most out of their educational experience.

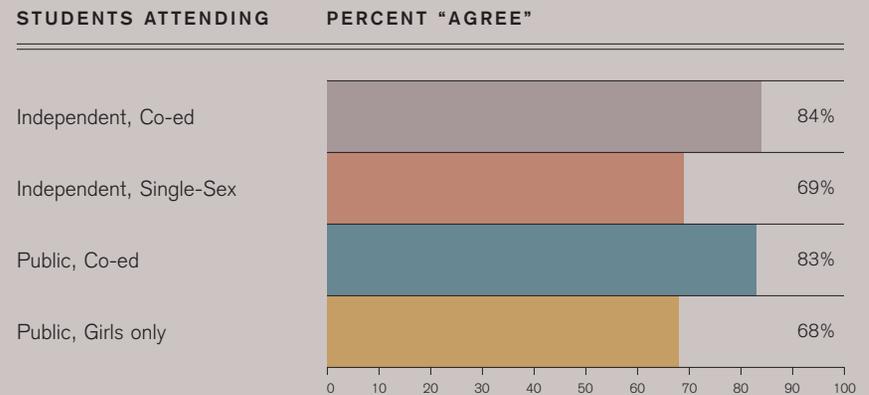
The environment and atmosphere fostered also has an impact in other ways. Students at independent co-ed schools in Canada are more likely (88%) than other types of students to feel safe in their school environment. Not only do independent co-ed schools rank the highest when students are asked generally about safety for all students, but their responses also suggest that reports of harassment and bullying are lower at these schools.



Why Does an Independent Co-education Environment Matter?

The good news for Canadian parents is that research reveals that most motivated students enjoy attending school regardless of the type of school they attend, and most would recommend their school to others. Students, however, recognize that a co-ed environment reflects the world around them once they get beyond the classroom. In the same research study, 84% of students attending independent co-ed schools responded that they feel confident expressing their views in the presence of members of the opposite sex. Collaboration between the sexes in the classroom helps develop confidence in students so that they feel comfortable sharing their ideas and opinions in any situation, and excel at university and beyond as leaders.

**"I FEEL CONFIDENT EXPRESSING MY VIEWS
WHEN THERE ARE MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITE SEX AROUND"**



Get the Facts – Co-education Matters

Recognizing that gender differences in learning do exist, the application of this knowledge in the classroom by teachers ensures that all students benefit from the latest techniques and approaches. Canadian students report that their level of confidence in their own academic ability is high and this perception is not altered by the type of school a student attends. In fact, contrary to popular myth, both boys and girls report nearly the same level of academic confidence no matter the school environment (co-ed or single-sex).

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THEIR OWN ACADEMIC ABILITY BY CANADIAN STUDENTS IS THE SAME REGARDLESS OF THE TYPE OF SCHOOL A STUDENT ATTENDS

	INDEPENDENT		PUBLIC	
	Co-ed	Single-Sex	Co-ed	Girls Only
"I am a quick learner"	90%	85%	87%	85%
"When I really try, I can do almost everything I want to do"	92%	89%	92%	89%



Get the Facts – Co-education Matters

In choosing a school, there is often confusion about which environment offers the best for each child. There are compelling new arguments for co-education. Consider that:

CONFIDENCE

Students attending a co-ed school in Canada (both independent and public) feel more confident expressing their views in the presence of opposite-sex peers.

RESPECT

Co-ed school students are more likely than students of single-sex schools to agree that their peers respect members of the opposite sex.

MAKING FRIENDS

Students at co-ed schools indicate that they make friends easily with members of their own sex (80%) and members of the opposite sex (72%). For these students there is a stark contrast with their peers attending independent single-sex schools, of whom only 58% report making friends easily with students of the other gender.

“BEST OF BOTH WORLDS” OPPORTUNITIES

Students at co-ed schools agree that there are opportunities to participate in activities with opposite-sex peers and 62% agree they have the chance to participate in activities without opposite-sex peers. Conversely, only 32% of students at single-sex independent schools report occasions to participate in activities with members of the opposite sex.

STRONG PARTICIPATION OF GIRLS

Girls at single-sex schools are no more likely than those at co-ed schools to participate in class discussions.

- ~ 89% of girls in independent co-ed schools ask questions or contribute to class discussions compared with 87% of their counterparts attending single-sex schools.
- ~ Girls in co-ed and single-sex schools report that they voice an opinion regardless of peer approval in both environments almost equally (66% co-ed, 67% single-sex).

ABILITIES IN MATH AND SCIENCE

Girls' perceptions of their abilities in math and science are not affected by the gender composition of their schools. Girls attending independent schools (both co-ed and single-sex) agree with the statements, “I get good marks in science” and “math is one of my best subjects.” Their perceptions are nearly identical on these points.

BOY ENGAGEMENT

Research indicates that boys in a co-ed environment are as likely to be engaged in learning as boys in a single-sex environment. However, studying in a mixed peer setting allows boys to become comfortable voicing opinions and ideas when girls are present. In this environment, they learn how to interact with and gain respect for female classmates. Each gender has a perspective to offer the other. Working together in the classroom and on homework assignments provides boys and girls the opportunity to learn from each other intellectually as well as socially.

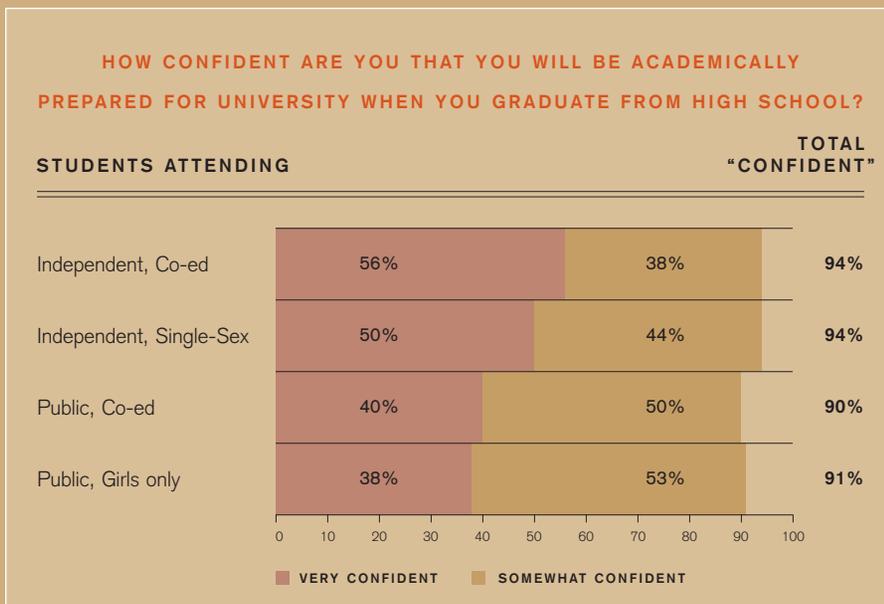
Equality

Both girls and boys at co-ed schools have positive self-images, are socially well adjusted, and enjoy being challenged.

Students at co-ed schools responded in the survey that they make friends easily with members of the opposite sex and that their peers are more likely to respect members of the opposite sex. Again, student responses confirm that independent co-ed schools foster an environment that prepares students for real-world experiences and situations.

In addition, students at independent co-ed schools overwhelmingly agree (88%) that they believe their school is a safe environment for all students.

Research shows that students attending co-ed schools are much more likely to discuss ideas from their homework with opposite-sex friends (83%) than students in other school environments. This interaction results in exposure to a greater diversity of views and opinions as they share ideas with peers of both sexes.



CANADIAN STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS GENDER ROLES AND OPPORTUNITIES

	CO-ED		SINGLE-SEX	
	Independent	Public	Independent	Public, Girls Only
"Most of the boys I know respect girls"	76%	68%	56%	54%
"Most of the girls I know respect boys"	80%	73%	62%	61%

Enriched Academic and Social Environment

A gender-rich environment allows for diverse opinions and viewpoints to be expressed in classes, which is important in creating a good learning and social environment.

Independent co-educational schools offer students the opportunity to exchange a broad range of opinions and viewpoints with their peers since the schools comprise a mixed gender student body. In a co-educational learning environment, students are exposed to both male and female role models.

STRONG FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

Preparing students in the twenty-first century demands an educational environment that is reflective of today's society.

Independent co-ed schools offer:

- ~ A diverse student body that reflects both genders
- ~ Preparation for real-world experiences and situations
- ~ Exposure to male and female role models
- ~ Exposure to different leadership styles
- ~ Exposure to diverse values and lifestyles
- ~ A rich academic experience
- ~ Encouragement of wide-ranging opinions and ideas
- ~ Preparation of boys and girls to become leaders
- ~ Creation of a good learning and social environment in the classroom
- ~ Nurturing confidence in boys and girls



ABOUT THE RESEARCH

Data included in this document is based on the comprehensive study, “Perceptions and Attitudes of Students toward their Academic and Social Experiences in Canadian High Schools.” The study examines the merits of co-education and provides context for the benefits of the “real-world” learning experience based on Canadian student experiences.

The Strategic Counsel, a leading Canadian research firm, conducted a groundbreaking study on co-education in Canada. The study involved administering an online survey to 17,798 students who attend or recently graduated from a Canadian high school. The students surveyed are primarily university- or college-bound, and attend or attended one of four different types of high schools: independent co-ed, independent single-sex, public co-ed and public single-sex (girls only). The questions administered asked students to reflect upon their most

recent school experiences, and centred on five key areas: overall attitudes toward attending school, experiences in the classroom, involvement in extracurricular activities and school life, self-image and friendships, and preparing for life after high school. All data is weighted to reflect equally the responses of boys and girls for each of the four school types.

A report examining student perspectives as well as additional research with select Canadian parents and faculty of independent co-ed schools was compiled in 2006. All research was supported by 32 Canadian independent co-ed schools and was led by a steering committee comprised of Guy McLean (Appleby College), David Howie (St. John’s-Ravenscourt School), and Catherine Raafluab (Strathcona-Tweedsmuir School).

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For more information about the benefits of co-education or a copy of the full report, please contact the schools listed or visit their websites:

APPLEBY COLLEGE
www.appleby.on.ca

ASHBURY COLLEGE
www.ashbury.on.ca

BAYVIEW GLEN
www.bvg.on.ca

BISHOP’S COLLEGE SCHOOL
www.bishopscollegeschool.com

BRENTWOOD COLLEGE SCHOOL
www.brentwood.bc.ca

CENTENNIAL ACADEMY
www.centennial.qc.ca

FERN HILL SCHOOL
www.fernhillschool.com

GLENLYON NORFOLK SCHOOL
www.glenlyonnorfolk.bc.ca

GREENWOOD COLLEGE SCHOOL
www.greenwoodcollege.com

GRENVILLE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
www.grenvillecc.ca

HALIFAX GRAMMAR SCHOOL
www.hgs.ns.ca

HILLFIELD STRATHALLAN COLLEGE
www.hillstrath.on.ca

HOLY TRINITY SCHOOL
www.hts.on.ca

KINGSWAY COLLEGE SCHOOL
www.kcs.on.ca

LAKEFIELD COLLEGE SCHOOL
www.lakefieldcs.on.ca

LOWER CANADA COLLEGE
www.lcc.ca

MEADOWRIDGE SCHOOL
www.meadowridge.bc.ca

RIDLEY COLLEGE
www.ridley.on.ca

ROTHESAY NETHERWOOD SCHOOL
www.rns.cc

RUNDLE COLLEGE
www.rundle.ab.ca

SEDBERGH SCHOOL
www.sedbergh.com

ST. GEORGE’S SCHOOL OF MONTREAL
www.stgeorges.qc.ca

ST. JOHN’S-KILMARNOCK SCHOOL
www.sjkschool.org

ST. JOHN’S-RAVENS COURT SCHOOL
www.sjr.mb.ca

ST. MICHAELS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL
www.smus.bc.ca

STANSTEAD COLLEGE
www.stansteadcollege.com

STRATHCONA-TWEEDSMUIR SCHOOL
www.sts.ab.ca

TORONTO FRENCH SCHOOL
www.tfs.ca

TRINITY COLLEGE SCHOOL
www.tcs.on.ca

WEST ISLAND COLLEGE
www.westislandcollege.ab.ca

WEST POINT GREY ACADEMY
www.wpga.ca

THE YORK SCHOOL
www.yorkschooll.com