

**Council of Ministers of Education,
Canada**

**School Achievement Indicators
Program**

**Science Assessment
1999
School Questionnaire**

Your school has been selected as one of more than 1000 schools in Canada participating in the School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP) in science. This program is the only comprehensive assessment of achievement in Canada, and its results are important in determining how well students in various provinces and territories are doing and in deciding on curriculum change and other matters affecting science teaching.

This questionnaire is addressed to the school principal. The questions are about the characteristics of the school, its staff, its facilities, and the community in which the school is located. Some of the questions ask for specific facts, while others require a judgment or opinion. Since your school is part of a national sample, your responses are very important in helping to describe science teaching in Canada. It is therefore important that all questions be answered as carefully and accurately as possible.

This questionnaire is confidential when completed. Your responses will not be used in any way that will permit you, your students, or your school to be identified.

Once you have completed this questionnaire, place it in the envelope provided and return it to your SAIP school coordinator.

**Thank you for your time, effort, and thought in
completing this questionnaire.**

1 In what type of community, town, or city is your school located?

(For this and the next question, please think of what is generally considered locally to be your community, even if it is located near a larger town or city.)

- rural (e.g., farming or fishing) community A
- small town (fewer than 5000 people) B
- medium-sized town (5000 to 25,000 people) C
- small city (more than 25,000 up to 100,000 people) D
- medium city (100,000 to 500,000 people) E
- large city (over 500,000 people) F

2 Where is your school located within the community?

- outside of a community in a rural area A
- in the inner/central part of the community B
- in a suburban area outside the community centre C
- in an urban fringe area on the outskirts of a town/city D
- other E

3 What grade levels are taught in your school?

(Check all that apply)

- Pre-kindergarten
- Kindergarten.....
- Grade 1
- Grade 2
- Grade 3
- Grade 4
- Grade 5
- Grade 6
- Grade 7 (Secondary 1 - QC)
- Grade 8 (Secondary 2 - QC)
- Grade 9 (Secondary 3 - QC, Senior I - MB).....
- Grade 10 (Secondary 4 - QC, Level I - NF, Senior II - MB)
- Grade 11 (Secondary 5 - QC, Level II - NF, Senior III - MB).....

- Grade 12 (CEGEP 1 - QC, Level III - NF, Senior IV - MB)
- Post-grade 12 (any program that offers credit beyond grade 12)

4 Which of the following best represents the governing structure of your school?

- regular public school within a school board or district A
- specialized school within a school board or district or provincial system B
- separate school publicly funded (e.g., denominational) C
- private school with its own board of governors D
- other (please specify)

___ E

5 How many full-time equivalent students are in your school?

_____students

6 If your school is part of a larger school board or district, how many students are in the board or district?

_____students

7 Approximately what percentage of students in your school would you ESTIMATE . . .

per cent

- live within walking distance (about 1 km) of the school?
- travel to and from school by subsidized transportation?
- have a first language other than the language of the school?
- have learning problems that need special attention?
- come from single-parent families?
- have health or nutrition problems that inhibit learning

8 To what extent would you say your school schedule, including starting times and programs outside of regular school hours, is restricted by the travel requirements of students (e.g., bus or drop-off and pick-up)?

- not at all..... A
- slightly B
- substantially..... C
- severely..... D

For question 9 and some subsequent questions, reference will be made to the two SAIP age groups, 13- and 16-year-olds. If the use of age groups presents problems in answering the questions, think of grade 8 (Secondary 2 in Quebec for age 13 and grade 11 (Secondary 5 in Quebec, Level II in Newfoundland, Senior III in Manitoba) for age 16. If only one of these age groups is being tested in your school, please omit the items referring to the other age group.

9 What is the approximate average class size in your school as a whole and in the science classes for the two SAIP age groups?

	whole school	science age 13	science age 16
less than 10.....	A	A	A
10-14.....	B	B	B
15-19.....	C	C	C
20-24.....	D	D	D
25-29.....	E	E	E
30-34.....	F	F	F
35 or more.....	G	G	G

10

How many full-time equivalent (FTE) persons in the following categories are in your school? (1 full-time person, two half-time persons, and so on represent one FTE. If the same person occupies more than one category, use the appropriate fractions of an FTE in each category.)

	number of FTEs
principal	
assistant or vice-principals	
department heads	
classroom teachers (including subject specialists)	
other teachers (e.g., guidance, teacher-librarians)	

teacher aides or assistants
 technicians (including library, computing, laboratory)
 other professionals (e.g., nurses, therapists)
 non-professionals (e.g., clerks, caretakers)

11 What is the most common pattern of teacher assignment for teaching science to 13-year-old and 16-year-old students in your school?

	13-year-olds	16-year-olds
mainly homeroom teachers who are also responsible for other subjects (<i>whether or not specialized in science</i>)	A	A
mainly subject teachers specialized in science	B	B
mainly subject teachers not specialized in science	C	C

12 What percentage of students in your school would you estimate are . .

per cent

above average in achievement?.....
 average in achievement?

below average in achievement?

13 Does your school have . . .

(Check all that apply.)

- an active school improvement group or team?
- a set of goals or a plan for school improvement?
- a policy promoting collaboration and sharing among teachers?
- regular staff meetings (at least once a month)?
- a written student evaluation policy?
- a written discipline policy?
- a written policy on absenteeism?
- a written policy on homework?
- a policy to recognize teacher excellence?

14 In your school, which level has the most influence on decisions regarding the following matters? (If your school has its own board of governors, treat this as the school district. School includes the principal or teachers collectively or individually. Others can include parent councils or similar bodies or parents themselves.)

	territory	pal	province/ council	district	princi-	school	other
hiring teachers			A	B	C	D	E
assigning teachers to classes			A	B	C	D	E
placing students in classes/courses			A	B	C	D	E
textbooks to be used			A	B	C	D	E
establishing homework policies			A	B	C	D	E
establishing discipline policies			A	B	C	D	E
establishing policies on absenteeism			A	B	C	D	E
establishing community relationships			A	B	C	D	E
communicating with parents			A	B	C	D	E
determining course content			A	B	C	D	E
deciding which courses are offered.....			A	B	C	D	E

15 Which level or authority has primary control of the following components of the budget for your school?

	territory	pal	province/ council	district	princi-	school	other
teacher salaries			A	B	C	D	E
capital expenditures			A	B	C	D	E
maintenance			A	B	C	D	E
salaries of non-teaching staff.....			A	B	C	D	E
materials and supplies			A	B	C	D	E
instructional materials (e.g., library books, software)			A	B	C	D	E
new technologies			A	B	C	D	E

16 How much influence would you say each of the following has on your school=s overall activities and programs?

	none	a little	some	a lot
provincial/territory ministry or department of education.....	A	B	C	D
school board or governing body	A	B	C	D
principal	A	B	C	D
teachers collectively (in the whole school)	A	B	C	D
teachers within subject areas	A	B	C	D
individual teachers	A	B	C	D
parent advisory committees or school councils	A	B	C	D
students (e.g., demand for particular courses)	A	B	C	D
textbooks and textbook publishers	A	B	C	D
teacher groups external to the school (e.g., district committees, professional associations).....	A	B	C	D
external examinations, tests, or standards	A	B	C	D
external agencies (e.g., business community)	A	B	C	D
church or religious groups	A	B	C	D

17 To what degree is your school=s capacity to provide instruction limited by the following?

	none	a little	some	a lot
lack of parental support for the school	A	B	C	D
range of student abilities in the school	A	B	C	D
students=home backgrounds	A	B	C	D
community conditions (e.g., language, migration).....	A	B	C	D
bussing of students	A	B	C	D

18 To what extent is your school's capacity to provide instruction limited by shortage or inadequacy of the following?

	none	a little	some	a lot
specialized teaching staff (e.g., guidance)	A	B	C	D
teachers specialized in science	A	B	C	D
non-teaching staff	A	B	C	D
instructional materials (e.g., textbooks)	A	B	C	D
budget for supplies (e.g., paper, pencils).....	A	B	C	D
condition of school buildings and grounds	A	B	C	D
heating/cooling/ventilation/lighting systems	A	B	C	D
instructional space (e.g., classrooms).....	A	B	C	D
special purpose space (e.g., resource rooms, libraries)	A	B	C	D
number of computers for instructional use	A	B	C	D
quality of computers for instructional use.....	A	B	C	D
number of computers for science instruction	A	B	C	D
quality of computers for science instruction	A	B	C	D
science laboratory space	A	B	C	D
science laboratory equipment.....	A	B	C	D
library resources for science instruction	A	B	C	D
audio-visual resources	A	B	C	D

19 Approximately how many working computers are there in your school? _____computers

20 How many of these computers are capable of handling up-to-date software? (e.g., Windows-based programs, Web browsers) _____computers

21 Approximately how many computers are available to . . .

**number of
computers**

- teachers for administrative purposes?
- teachers for instructional purposes?
- students for use within classes?
- students for out-of-class use?

(Please note that these categories may overlap.)

22 Which of the following configurations of computers can be found for use in science teaching in your school?

(Check all that apply.)

- dedicated computer rooms or laboratories where science classes can be scheduled.....
- one computer in all or most science classrooms.....
- multiple computers in all or most science classrooms.....
- multiple computers for student use in science laboratories
- computers for student use in library or resource centre
- computers for teacher use in science teacher work spaces
- other arrangements for student use of computers in classes
- other arrangements for teacher use of computers

23 In your school, for the two SAIP age groups (or grades 8 and 11 or equivalent, as applicable to your school), . . .

13-year- olds 16-year- olds

- how many instructional days are there in the school year?
- how many instructional days are provided for teacher activities but not student activities (e.g., professional development days, administrative days, marking exams)?
- how many instructional days would you estimate are lost in an average year because of school closings (e.g., snowstorms, .. heating p
- how many hours of instruction are there in a normal school day (excluding recess, lunch breaks, and after-school activities)?
- how many class periods are there in a normal school day?.....
- how many minutes long is a normal or average class period?.....

24 What percentage of all the courses in your school are organized on a semester (half-year) basis?

for 13-year-olds
(in grade 8, Secondary 2 - QC) _____percent

for 16-year-olds
(in grade 11, Secondary 5 - QC, Level II - NF, Senior III - MB)....._____percent

25 How many different science courses are available in your school . . .

**number of
 courses**

for 13-year-olds?
(in grade 8, Secondary 2 - QC)

for 16-year-olds?
(in grade 11, Secondary 5 - QC, Level II - NF, Senior III - MB).....

26 Do all or most students in these age groups in your school follow the same course of study in science?

yes no

13-year-olds
(in grade 8, Secondary 2 - QC) A B

16-year-olds
(in grade 11, Secondary 5 - QC, Level II - NF, Senior III - MB)..... A B

27 For the same two age (or grade) levels, how many distinct streams or ability groupings exist in your school?

(Streaming is thought of as explicitly having different levels of course for students of different abilities, not just the availability of course choice.)

**13-year-
 olds 16-year-
 olds**

single stream..... A A

two streams B B

three or more streams C C

28 Where students do not follow the same courses in science, how much influence does each of the following have in deciding which science courses a student will take?

	none	a little	some	a lot	don=t know
general academic ability	A	B	C	D	E
previous achievement in science	A	B	C	D	E
performance on an entrance examination	A	B	C	D	E
teacher recommendations	A	B	C	D	E
the student-s own wishes or choices	A	B	C	D	E
parent wishes or choices	A	B	C	D	E
prerequisites or curricular requirements	A	B	C	D	E
interviews or oral exams	A	B	C	D	E

29 In your school, to what extent do parents . . .

	none	a little	some	a lot
act as volunteers in classrooms or other instructional settings?	A	B	C	D
act as volunteers in monitoring student behaviour?	A	B	C	D
serve on committees on matters of curriculum or instruction?	A	B	C	D
serve on committees on matters of finance or administration?	A	B	C	D
influence the selection of the principal or teachers?	A	B	C	D
serve on committees on matters of student conduct?	A	B	C	D
interact with staff on matters affecting their own children?	A	B	C	D
help raise funds for the school?	A	B	C	D

30 Does your school or district provide remedial teaching in science?

- yes..... A
- no B

If YES, how is this organized?

(Check all that apply.)

- Groups are formed within regular science classes.
- Students are withdrawn from regular classes.
- Separate or modified courses are offered for remediation.
- Students are given extra help outside of regular school hours.
- Programs are offered outside the school.....
- Other (please specify)

31 Does your school provide special enrichment programs/activities in science for gifted students?

- yes..... A
- no B

If YES, how is this organized?

(Check all that apply.)

- Groups are formed within regular science classes.
- Students are withdrawn from regular classes.
- Separate or modified courses are offered for gifted students.
- Students are given extra work outside of regular school hours.
- Programs are offered outside the school.....
- Other (please specify) _____

32 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
There are limits to what a school can accomplish because a student's home environment has a large influence on achievement.	A	B	C	D
Students can achieve at high levels if they work hard.	A	B	C	D
Students can achieve at high levels if they are taught well.	A	B	C	D
High school students should be streamed into different programs based on their abilities and aptitudes.	A	B	C	D
Student ability has a large influence on achievement.	A	B	C	D
This school is supported by the community.	A	B	C	D
Staff morale is high in this school.	A	B	C	D
There is a strong school spirit in this school.	A	B	C	D
Students and staff take pride in this school.	A	B	C	D

**Thank you again for taking time from your busy schedule
to complete this questionnaire**