

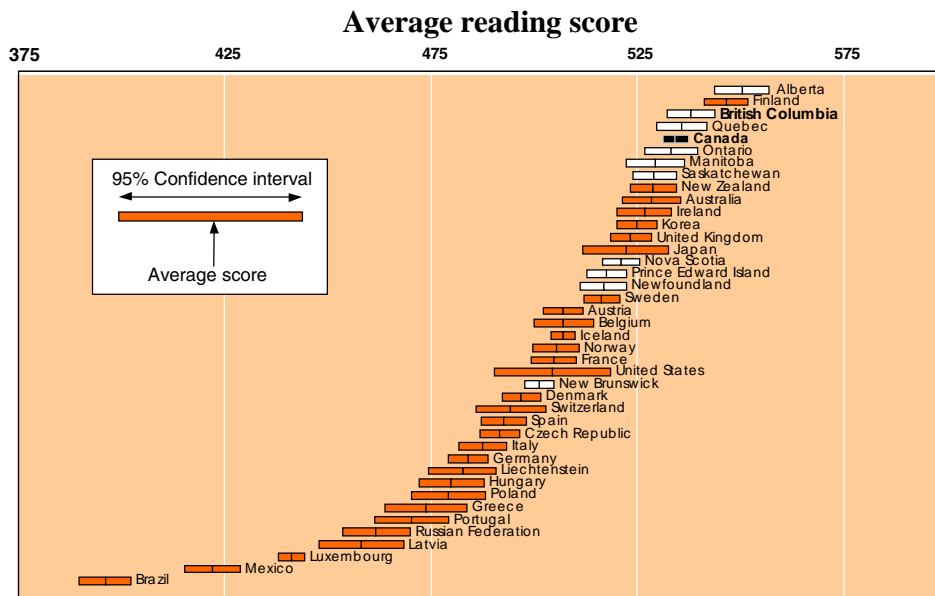
## Earnings and Employment Trends - MAY 2002

### The Performance of BC Youth in Reading, Math and Science

So often in Canada the public perception is that our high school graduates are not up to scratch with the rest of the developed world. This month the results of a satisfaction survey of parents, students and teachers regarding the BC education system were released. Parents of secondary school students re-enforced this public perception. While not actually damning the education system, they did not come out with particularly glowing reports. Two-thirds of parents were satisfied with their child's overall learning accomplishments. Among reading, writing and math, reading skills received the best grade of 64 per cent being satisfied "all of the time" or "many times". That number fell off to 57 per cent for writing skills and 52 per cent for math skills.

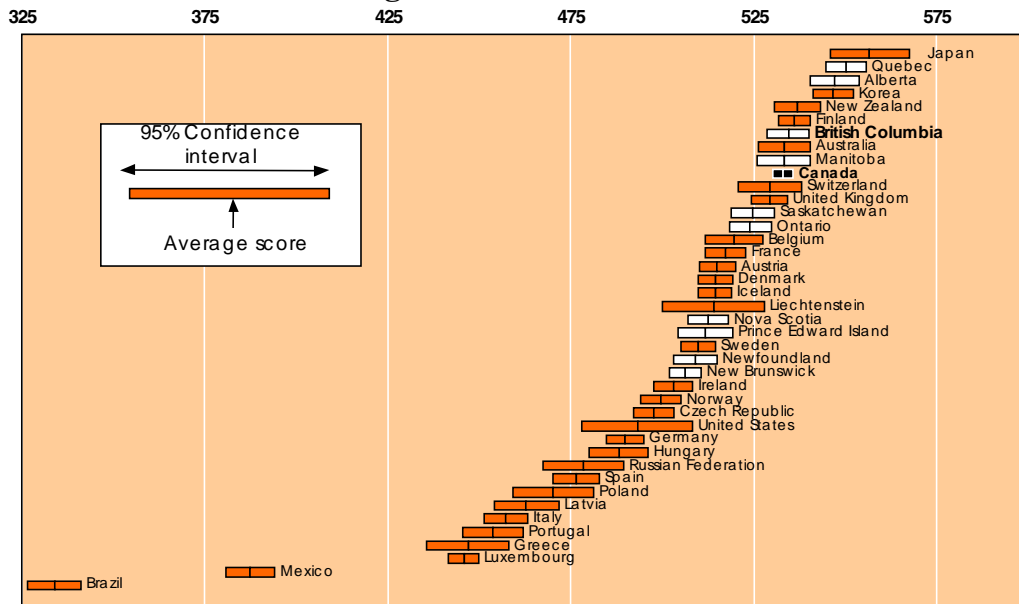
Contrary to this less than positive public perception, Canada's education system does very well in international comparisons of the academic skills of its students. The OECD "Programme for International Student Assessment, 2000" (PISA) tested 15 year old students in 31 countries in the areas of reading, mathematics and science. Canadian students performed very well in all three areas, ranking 2<sup>nd</sup> to Finland in Reading, and 5<sup>th</sup> in both Math and Science. Canada was among only a very few countries that ranked near the top in all three subjects.

### Canada rates near the top of the world in Reading, Mathematics and Science



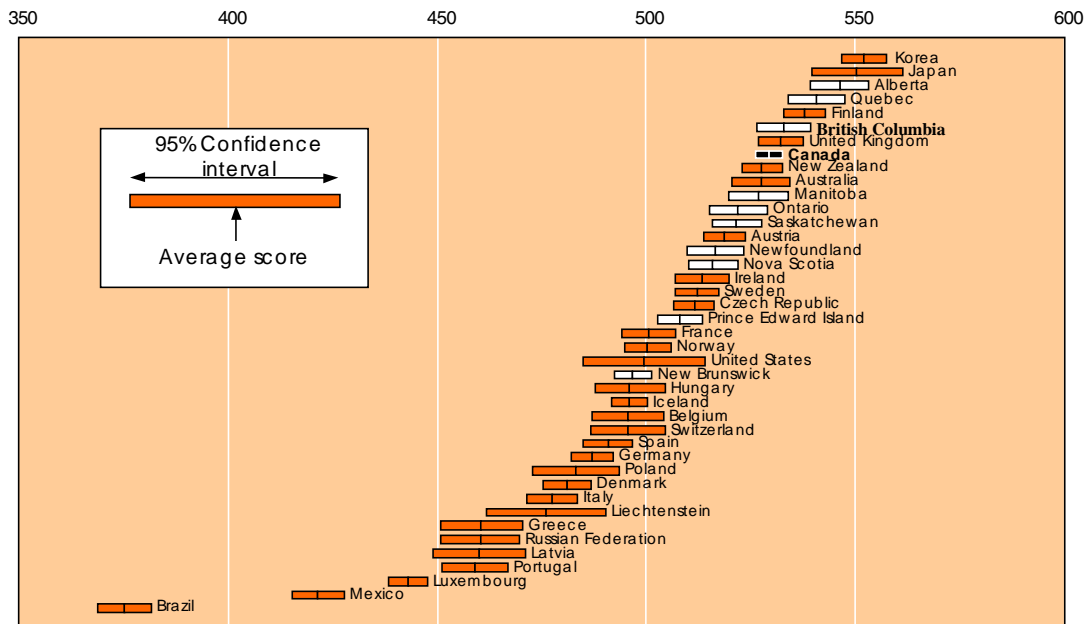
Source: Programme for International Student Assessment, 2000.

## Average mathematics score



Source: Programme for International Student Assessment, 2000.

## Average science score



The three charts show not only Canada's position among 31 OECD countries, but also the provinces' rankings compared to these international standards. In all three skills, BC is above the Canadian average and positioned near the top among all countries. Of particular interest is how Alberta shines in all three subject matters and Quebec does very well in all three but particularly in Math where they are almost on a par with Japanese students. While BC students performed very well in these tests, there may be lessons to learn from the education structures of Alberta and Quebec.

There is further detail and analysis on the results of this international study at [www.pisa.gc.ca](http://www.pisa.gc.ca).