



Spotlight on official languages

Public opinion from coast to coast

In February 2006, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages asked Decima Research to survey Canadians to find out their opinions on bilingualism in Canada. A survey conducted in October and November 2006 by CROP for the CBC confirms the results obtained. Here is a brief summary.

Attitude towards bilingualism in Canada

- About 7 in 10 Canadians say that they are personally in favour of bilingualism throughout the country (Decima), and this support is largely confirmed by the CROP/CBC poll.
- The high level of support for bilingualism throughout Canada is due mainly to the growing support of Anglophones outside Quebec, up 19% from 2003 to 2006. (Decima)
- Among young people 18 to 34, support for Canadian bilingualism is now at 80%. (Decima)
- According to 9 out of 10 Canadians, bilingualism is a factor for success in the world. (Decima)
- For 70% of the population, Canada's policy on official languages is part of what defines our country. (Decima)

Attitude to bilingualism in the public service

- More than 9 out of 10 Canadians expect the Prime Minister of Canada to be bilingual. (CROP)
- The vast majority of Canadians expect political leaders and senior civil servants to be bilingual. (CROP)

Attitude to learning the other official language

- About 8 out of 10 Canadians, including 94% of Francophones, think that getting a job is a good reason for becoming bilingual. (Decima)
- Most Canadians (57%) think that the bilingualism rate outside Quebec is too low (1 person in 10); 74% of Francophones think so. (CROP)
- In total, 83% of Canadians think that it is important for their own children or those in their community to learn a language other than English, and almost all Quebecers (98%) think that it is important for children to learn a language other than French. French is the first choice for a second language in all regions (except Quebec, where English is the choice of 88%).

Attitude to teaching French outside Quebec

- In total, 77% of Canadians think that both official language groups should receive education of the same quality, even if the language group is in the minority. (Decima)
- About 7 out of 10 Canadians outside Quebec think that French should be compulsory in all primary schools. (CROP)

Attitude to bilingualism in Canada – Regional overview

- The highest support for bilingualism in Canada is in Quebec (91%) and the Atlantic region (77%). The lowest is in Alberta (58%), but even there it is still a majority. (Decima)
- Support for bilingualism throughout Canada grew by 24% in Saskatchewan and Manitoba between 2003 and 2006. (Decima)
- British Columbia shows the largest increase in support for provincial bilingualism, up from 41% in 2003 to 59% in 2006. (Decima)

REGIONAL SUMMARY OF PUBLIC OPINION

	Quebec	Atlantic	Ontario	Manitoba / Saskatchewan	Alberta	British Columbia
In favour of bilingualism throughout Canada	91%	77%	66%	66%	58%	68%
In favour of bilingualism for their province	85%	79%	66%	63%	53%	59%
Agree that more resources should go to minority-language schools to ensure the same quality of education as the majority receives	83%	85%	76%	73%	69%	73%
Believe it is important for children to learn a language other than English (French in Quebec)	98%	90%	84%	78%	--	88%

Quebec

- 91% are in favour of bilingualism throughout Canada (up 2% from 2003 to 2006). Quebec is the province with the highest support.
- 85% are in favour of bilingualism for the province (up 2% from 2003 to 2006).
- 83% agree that more resources should go to minority-language schools to ensure the same quality of education as the majority receives.
- 98% believe that it is important for children to learn a language other than French.
- 88% think that English is the most important language to learn after French.

Atlantic

- 77% are in favour of bilingualism throughout Canada (up 23% from 2003 to 2006).
- 79% are in favour of bilingualism for their province (up 16% from 2003 to 2006).
- 85% agree that more resources should go to minority-language schools to ensure the same quality of education as the majority receives.
- 90% believe that it is important for children to learn a language other than English.
- 90% think that French is the most important language to learn after English.

Ontario

- 66% are in favour of bilingualism throughout Canada (up 21% from 2003 to 2006).
- 66% are in favour of bilingualism for their province (up 14% from 2003 to 2006).
- 76% agree that more resources should go to minority-language schools to ensure the same quality of education as the majority receives.
- 84% believe that it is important for children to learn a language other than English.
- 71% think that French is the most important language to learn after English.

Manitoba / Saskatchewan

- 66% are in favour of bilingualism throughout Canada (up 24% from 2003 to 2006).
- 63% are in favour of bilingualism for their province (up 17% from 2003 to 2006).
- 73% agree that more resources should go to minority-language schools to ensure the same quality of education as the majority receives.
- 78% believe that it is important for children to learn a language other than English.
- 64% think that French is the most important language to learn after English.

Alberta

- 58% are in favour of bilingualism throughout Canada, the lowest level of support in the country (up 17% from 2003 to 2006).
- 53% are in favour of bilingualism for their province (up 14% from 2003 to 2006).
- 69% agree that more resources should go to minority-language schools to ensure the same quality of education as the majority receives.
- 80% believe that it is important for children to learn a language other than English.
- 57% think that French is the most important language to learn after English.

British Columbia

- 68% are in favour of bilingualism throughout Canada (up 22% from 2003 to 2006).
- 59% are in favour of bilingualism for their province (up 18% from 2003 to 2006).
- 73% agree that more resources should go to minority-language schools to ensure the same quality of education as the majority receives.
- 88% believe that it is important for children to learn a language other than English.
- 44% think that French is the most important language to learn after English.