

School Governance On-Reserve: An Unsatisfactory State of Affairs

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Abstract

This paper provides a brief historical review of interpretation of Aboriginal education treaty rights. It also offers an initial assessment of the 2011 census data on Aboriginal education in Canada. Relative to comparable 2006 results, high school completion rates improved among young Métis and Indian/First Nation Aboriginals (ages 20-24 in 2011). However, among young adult Indian/First Nation living on-reserve, high school completion remains approximately 40 percent, with little change from 2006. Nine in ten Aboriginals live in one of the six provinces from Quebec to British Columbia. Interprovincial variation in education outcomes among the six is large. The paper offers tentative explanations for the dramatically better outcomes in BC relative to the five other provinces with large Aboriginal cohorts. The paper also discusses the role of weak reserve schools as reason for the inter-census decline in the on-reserve share of those identifying as Indian/First Nation.