

## **International Education and the Internationalization of Public Schooling in Canada: Approaches and Conceptualizations**

Abdelhady Elnagar and Jon Young

Number 195, 2021

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1075674ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1075674ar>

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Publisher(s)

Department of Educational Administration, University of Saskatchewan

ISSN

1207-7798 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Article abstract

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Cite this article

Elnagar, A. & Young, J. (2021). International Education and the Internationalization of Public Schooling in Canada: Approaches and Conceptualizations. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy / Revue canadienne en administration et politique de l'éducation*, (195), 80–94. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1075674ar>

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## **International Education and the Internationalization of Public Schooling in Canada: Conceptualizations and Approaches**

Abdelhady Elnagar & Jon Young  
University of Manitoba

### **Abstract**

While there is now extensive literature related to the internationalization of post-secondary education in Canada, developments within K-12 public schooling have received much less attention. This article explores recent developments in international education in Canadian public-school systems, with specific attention to developments in Manitoba. In doing so, it argues that these developments incorporate three distinct policy interests – trade, immigration, and education – resulting in strong federal influences on provincial education policies and practices. The article examines two major international education initiatives: the recruitment of international students; and, the establishment of affiliate school agreements overseas. It argues that these recent developments reflect a particular notion of “the internationalization of public schooling” where a historical notion of “international education” as a learning-focused concept has been supplanted by an economic and market-driven notion that has trade and immigration considerations as its primary interests.

*Keywords:* international education, internationalization, public schooling.

### **Introduction**

In 2017, there were 492,085 international students studying in Canada. Approximately 75% of these students were enrolled in post-secondary education institutions, and 15% were enrolled in secondary or lower levels of education (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2018a). While there is now a substantial scholarly literature related to the internationalization of post-secondary education in Canada (for example, Anderson, 2015; Chen, 2008; Garson, 2016; Guo & Guo, 2017; Larsen, 2015; Viczko & Tascón, 2016; Weber, 2007), research on this topic related to public K-12 schooling is much less well developed (Elnagar, 2019; Cover, 2016; Tamtik, 2018). In an effort to map-out the terrain of the emerging area of internationalization of public schooling, this article provides an analysis of how the two terms, or notions, of *international education* and *internationalization* have come to embody different meanings and practices in relation to public schooling. It also examines the growing federal interests in that area and the market-driven approaches to the internationalization of public schooling in the case of Manitoba. The article concludes with suggestions for an ongoing research agenda. In doing this, the article builds on four main arguments: (i) that the development of K-12 international education policies and practices in Canada reflect the influences of three distinct policy interests; trade – the marketing of Canadian education overseas; immigration - international education as an immigration strategy and path to Canadian citizenship; and, education – international education as a process for fostering international awareness and the preparation of young people for life in an increasingly interdependent world (Hayden & Thompson, 1995); (ii) that as a consequence of these framing influences, and notwithstanding the fact that

jurisdiction over education in Canada lies primarily with provincial legislatures, the overriding interests of trade and immigration have resulted in a strong federal influence on internationalization policies and practices; (iii) that while the literature on international education offers a broad range of possible initiatives and approaches, to date priority in Canada has been given to only two approaches – the recruitment of international students and the establishment of Canadian affiliated schools overseas; and, (iv) that these recent developments reflect a particular notion of ‘internationalization’ of public schooling consistent with neoliberal discourses of commodification, marketization and privatization of public education. As such, the article suggests that the internationalization of public schooling in Canada over the last two decades raises important questions about such basic matters as the purposes, funding mechanisms, and governance structures of public education that warrant scholarly attention.

## Methodology

The article draws on and expands upon a larger policy analysis research study conducted by Elnagar (2019) examining the development of Manitoba’s international education policies between 1999 and 2016 – a seventeen-year timeframe during which the province was governed by a left-of-centre, New Democratic Party government. That study sought to analyze the ways in which these policies were associated with prevailing national and international neoliberal discourses and the ways in which international education policy problems and their solutions were formulated within a broader economic, market-driven lens.

Framed by Stephen Ball’s work on policy as text and policy as discourse (Ball, 2006), the larger study, carried out between 2016 and 2019, primarily analyzed five key provincial policy documents, released by the Manitoba government,<sup>1</sup> and interviewed 20 members of the policy community (Elnagar, 2019) – including government ministers, civil servants, school board officials, and business people associated with the operation of international student programs. In this article, several key pan-Canadian and federal international education policy documents, released since 2000, are also considered to inform the analysis. These include *A Brand for Education in Canada* (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, 2008), *Canada’s International Education Strategy* (Government of Canada, 2014), and *Building on Success: International Education Strategy 2019–2024* (Government of Canada, 2019).

## International Education and Internationalization

The terms *international education* and *internationalization* are sometimes used interchangeably within both the academic literature (e.g., Altbach & Knight, 2007; Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2018b; Cover, 2016; Hénard et al., 2012; Knight, 2004) and in governmental documents (e.g., Government of British Columbia, 2012; Government of Canada, 2012; Government of Manitoba, 2009; Government of Ontario, 2015). While on other occasions, they are used to differentiate different meanings and different historical moments (e.g., Bunnell, 2007; Cambridge & Thompson, 2004; Mathews, 2002).

A variety of different scholars have traced the development of international education as an academic field over the last fifty years (e.g., Burnell, 2007; Cambridge & Thompson, 2004). Historically, international education was considered as a sub-field of the theoretical field of comparative education that focused on comparing national education systems and was recognized as an “ideological” (Cambridge & Thompson, 2004) movement towards global understanding and cooperation through a type of education, mostly provided by international schools, to globally mobile students in different countries. De Wit et al. (2015, pp. 4-5), note that prior to the 1990s, there was a variety of academic research and educational practices using the term international education, associated with different international activities, including study abroad, student exchanges, peace education, multicultural education, and international studies.

During the 1990s, the term internationalization appeared more frequently in the literature and more recently has supplanted the term international education – often used to describe a different, more diverse set of international practices, especially at the post-secondary educational levels, where perspectives on international education started to reflect more what Cambridge and Thompson (2004) refer to

<sup>1</sup> These five documents were: *Reaching Beyond our Borders: The Framework for Manitoba’s International Activities* (Government of Manitoba, 2005); *International Education Strategy of the Province of Manitoba 2009-13* (Government of Manitoba); *The International Education Act* (The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, 2013); *International Education Regulations* (The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, 2015); and, *Code of Practice and Conduct Regulation [Regulation 1/2016]* (The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, 2016).

as both “ideological and pragmatic interests” (p. 164). From an ideological point of view, they suggest, international education has been generally articulated as an educational approach to the preparation of students as active international citizens by nurturing their interests in global understanding, peace, and cooperation among different nations. Pragmatically, international education became more driven by global economic processes – international trade agreements focused on labour mobility and the free movement of goods and services including education – and the demand for transferable educational credentials among students, education systems, and nations (Cambridge & Thompson, 2004, p. 164; Matthews, 2002, p. 376).

This discussion suggests that international education as an academic field has developed to reflect two often overlapping but also separable research interests. First, an education-oriented interest related to international development, cooperation, peacemaking, and co-existence amongst different nations. Second, an economic-oriented interest related to national competitiveness, profit-making, and the recruitment and development of a skilled national labour force. In that context, there are two observable approaches to conceptualize international education; a learning-driven conceptualization and a market-driven one.

### *Learning-Driven Conceptualizations*

Authors such as Katz (1970) describe how after World War II, Canadian educational institutions with the support of provincial and federal governments became active in educational activities abroad guided by a belief that education could serve to help to minimize injustices that separated nations from each other and unite the world again after the political and economic interests that had divided it. As Trilokekar & Kizilbash (2013) suggest, during the 1950s and 1960s, the two basic components of Canada’s international role were: development cooperation with developing nations; and admission of post-secondary international students to Canadian universities and colleges. Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) was one of the essential aspects of this early Canadian international policy.

In line with this learning-driven approach to conceptualize international education, Dolby and Rahman (2008, p. 699) suggest that four international education efforts at K-12 levels were significantly developed during the 1960s and 1970s. As a result, studies that focused on environmental, peace, multicultural, and human rights education were flourishing as academic areas. As Hayden and Thompson (1995) suggested, within such academic literature, the term *international education* carried both a general and a specific meaning. Generally, it applied to “all educative efforts that aim at fostering an international orientation in knowledge and attitudes”, while specifically, it refers to “an instrument for the preparation of young people to cope with life in an increasingly interdependent world” (pp. 327-328).

James (2005) has also offered another definition of international education as “all educative efforts that aim at fostering an international orientation in knowledge and attitudes and seek to build bridges between countries” (p. 315). In that context, Hill (2012, p. 246) has attempted to introduce and examine the concept of international-mindedness and its relation to international education practices. Hill (2012) offered the following definition for what he called “education for international mindedness,” which means:

*The study of issues which have application beyond national borders and to which competencies such as critical thinking and collaboration are applied in order to shape attitudes leading to action which will be conducive to intercultural understanding, peaceful co-existence, and global sustainable development for the future of the human race. (p. 259)*

Such conceptualizations are more focused on teaching educational content and practices that nurture international understanding, cooperation, and development. They are also mostly learning-driven and more usually employ the term *international education*.

### *Market-Driven Conceptualizations*

Since the beginning of the 1970s, the restructuring of global political and economic systems and the adoption of neoliberal policies in many countries have significantly impacted public education structures and policies. As a result of the associated commodification and marketization pressures, a broad range of social services have come increasingly to be viewed as commodities to be traded, opening the

doors to a greatly increased private sector participation in the provision of public education (Ball et al., 2010; Davies & Bansel, 2007).

Within Canada's public K-12 school systems, the growth of international student programs and the recruitment of fee-paying students, along with the development of a variety of different private, affiliated schools overseas are promoted as providing the dual economic benefits of a new and substantial revenue source and an immigration pathway to support a highly skilled labour force. In this conceptualization, educational interests are not irrelevant, and Canadian school systems have to pay attention to targeted marketing of the quality and benefits of attending Canadian schools. However, it is a conceptualization of education/schooling that from a policy stance, has a clear human resources/labour market development orientation (CBIE, 2012; Government of Canada, 2014; Government of Manitoba, 2009). In addition, these internationalization initiatives introduce into public schooling a radically new set of public-private relationships through the key role of private immigration and education agents, operating both within Canada and globally, who are generally paid a commission by school divisions for each student recruited as well as charging fees to the students' families for their services. As noted above, this approach to conceptualize international education is primarily market-driven and tends to employ the more procedural term *internationalization* (CMEC, 2013).

This distinction seems helpful to understand how in Canada, the historical notion of *international education* as a learning-focused concept should be seen as distinct from, and to a large degree has been supplanted by, an economic and market-driven notion that has trade and immigration considerations as its primary interests.

## Trade and Immigration: The Federal Interest in the Internationalization of Public Schooling

Section 93 of the Canadian Constitution assigns authority over education to each province, and traditionally this has meant that the governance of K-12 schooling – more so than post-secondary education – been jealously guarded by each province<sup>2</sup>. However, it is the federal government that has primary responsibility for immigration, citizenship, international trade and foreign affairs giving it a key role in the framing of international education policies and practices. This role is distributed among a variety of departments and agencies including Global Affairs Canada (GAC), formerly known as The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT); Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), formerly Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC); Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA); and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

The federal government's interest in international education was laid out clearly in the first decade of the twenty-first century when the Conservative government led by Stephen Harper released two economic policy documents: *Advantage Canada* (Government of Canada, 2006) and *Compete to Win* (Government of Canada, 2008). In these documents, the government outlined its strategy for effectively engaging in the world economy and included attention on promoting Canadian education and the recruitment of foreign students by Canadian post-secondary educational institutions. This federal interest was expressed in a DFAIT initiative called *Edu-Canada* designed to *brand* Canadian education internationally. In September 2008, a Canadian international brand was launched under the label *Image Education au/in Canada*. Federal support for this initiative took various important forms such as creating a comprehensive web-portal on the DFAIT/GAC website, recruitment fairs, international agreements, and the management of student visas through the country's global network of embassies, consulates, high commissions and trade missions (CMEC, 2008).

In the late 2000s, new federal immigration measures were introduced to attract international students and facilitate their transition to eventual immigration (Lu & Hou, 2015). Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) permitted international students to seek work opportunities during and immediately after completion of their program of study. They also introduced a modified points system in the immigration selection procedure that assigned more points for being of prime working age, proficient in the official languages, having a university degree and Canadian work experience (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2015; Lu & Hou, 2015). While these immigration policies were targeted at post-secondary education graduates, they significantly impacted on K-12 schooling opening it up as a potential

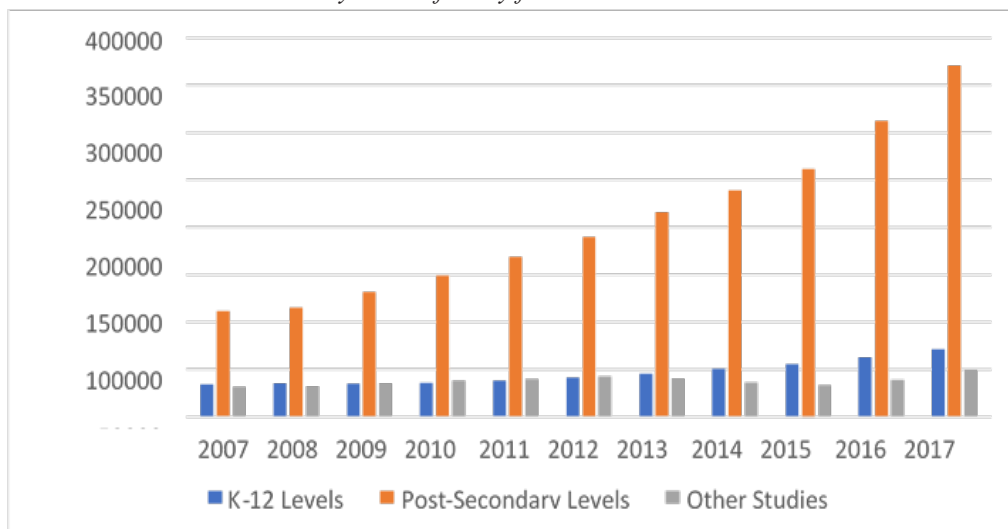
<sup>2</sup> An important exception to this is the education of First Nations students living on reserves. Section 91 of the Constitution assigns this responsibility to the federal government.

'feeder system'/early entry path' to post-secondary educational institutions and immigration.

In 2011, the federal government assigned an *Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy* the task of suggesting new approaches to promote international education as one of Canada's top priorities. When released in 2014, *Canada's International Education Strategy* asserted that it was an important component of the federal *Global Markets Action Plan* and intended to assist Canadian institutions to build on their pre-existing infrastructures and invest further in the internationalization of Canadian education (Government of Canada, 2014, p. 9). As a broadly based, pan-Canadian strategy, it covered concerns related to international students coming to study in any Canadian program; Canadians studying abroad; educational and academic partnerships between Canadian and overseas institutions; and offering Canadian educational expertise to other countries (Kunin & Associates, 2016, p. 1). In August of 2019, the now Liberal federal government, led by Justin Trudeau, released an updated federal strategy titled *Building on Success: Canada's International Education Strategy 2019–2024* (Government of Canada, 2019). Based on the 2014 objectives, the new strategy proposed to: (i) motivate Canadian students to obtain new skills by studying and working in global markets, such as Asian ones; (ii) expand the source countries of international students coming to Canada, their areas and levels of study, and their host institutions in Canada; and (iii) enlarge the support for Canadian institutions to increase their exports of educational services and explore new markets.

**Figure 1**

*International Students in Canada by Level of Study from 2007 to 2017*



*Source.* Numbers are taken from: Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) (2018a); and the online Canadian Magazine of Immigration (<https://canadaimmigrants.com/canada-international-students-by-study-level-20>).

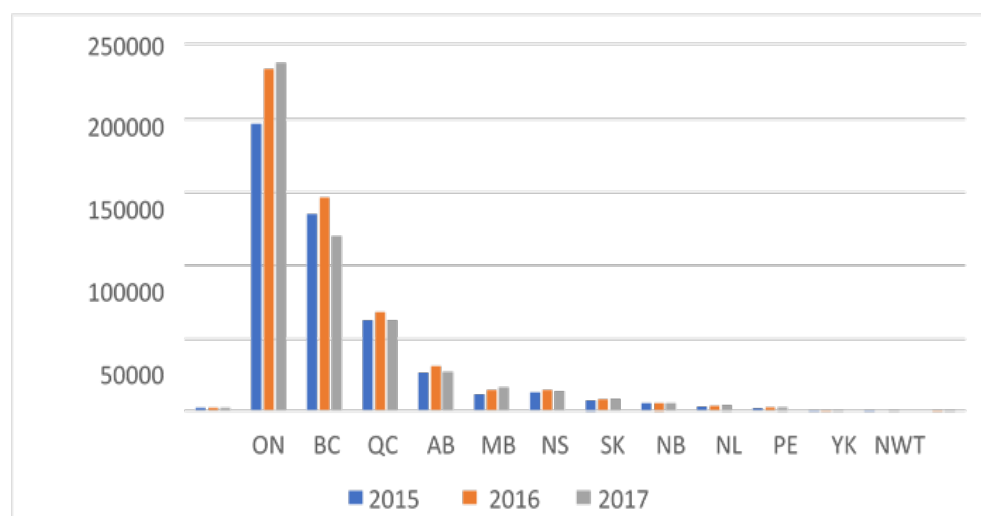
Of these three strategic objectives, those related to the recruitment of international students and the exporting of educational activities that have generated the most activity, and while it is post-secondary universities and colleges that have been the largest recruiters of international students, provincial K-12 public schools – the focus of this article – also have a significant presence (See Figure 1)

While the federal strategies mention the post-secondary education institutions as the major player in the international education area, it is clear that the government seeks to promote and engage educational institutions at the K-12 level in international education activities. As the 2014 Strategy noted: “all components of our education sector—ranging from language schools, K-12 to post-secondary education (colleges, polytechnics, Cegeps, and universities)—have been active in the international arena, as have many professional associations” (Government of Canada, 2014, p. 6). The 2019 Strategy has also listed the international education stakeholders in Canada as including, “K-12 schools, colleges, institutes, CEGEPs, universities, language schools, not-for-profit organizations and private companies, all of which may be engaged in multiple areas of the international education sector” (p. 6).

Framed by these federal policy contexts, each Canadian province has developed its own internationalization policies and strategies, within which individual school boards have structured their own levels of engagement. Notwithstanding the role that the Council of Ministers of Education (CMEC) has played in fostering inter-provincial collaboration and at times coordinating federal and provincial international initiatives (CMEC, 2019), there is considerable variation in the extent to which in which different provinces have prioritized international initiatives related to K-12 schooling. At the forefront of the internationalization of public schooling have been the provinces of Ontario and British Columbia. In July of 2013, British Columbia released a *K-12 International Education* policy document that confirmed the provincial government's recognition of the growing importance of the internationalization of public education to the provincial education and economic systems (Government of British Columbia, 2013, p. 1). In 2015, Ontario also issued its Strategy for K-12 International Education. The provincial government proposed to link the recruitment of K-12 international students to the completion of post-secondary education, permanent residency, and employability in the province (Government of Ontario, 2015, p. 5).

**Figure 2**

*International Students in Canada by Province/Territory from 2015 to 2017*



*Source.* Numbers are taken from: the Canadian Government website (<https://www.international.gc.ca/education/report-rapport/impact-2017/table1-tableau1.aspx?lang=eng>) and the online Canadian Magazine of Immigration (<https://canadaimmigrants.com/canada-international-students-by-study-level-2016/>).

## **Provincial Approaches to the Internationalization of Public Schooling: The Case of Manitoba**

Without the same level of international engagement pursued by the provinces of Ontario and British Columbia, the Manitoba government has, since the beginning of the twenty-first century, been active in articulating a strategy to encourage as well as regulate the development of international education both at the post-secondary and the K-12 levels.

### *Manitoba's International Education Policy Development*

In 2000, the last elected New Democratic Party government established an International Education Branch (IEB), housed initially within the Department of Competitiveness, Training, and Trade, to coordinate internationalization efforts between the provincial departments of Competitiveness Training and Trade (CTT); Education Citizenship and Youth (ECY); Advanced Education and Literacy (AEL); Labour and Immigration Manitoba (LIM); in addition to provincial institutions were offering international education programs. The International Education Branch's mandate charged it with implementing a provincial vision related to the promotion of Manitobans' global knowledge and skills; promoting Manitobans' cross-cultural education; augmenting the returns of internationalization to the provincial

economy; engaging different stakeholders and educational institutions at all levels, in rural and urban areas, in internationalization; and, marketing Manitoba as a provider of quality education, with competitive tuition, to international students (Government of Manitoba, 2008, pp. 53-54).

One of the early initiatives of the IEB was the creation of an interest-free International Education Loan Fund to encourage public education institutions to internationalize their programs and to allow interested local school divisions to build their capacities related to the provision of international student programs (Government of Manitoba, 2010, p. 15). The IEB developed a website to provide relevant information to Canadian and international students, teachers, and international education leaders. They marketed the province and its institutions as a destination where international students would receive affordable, quality education. In addition to developing marketing materials in different languages, the Branch coordinated student recruitment missions, mostly to Asian and South American countries (Government of Manitoba, 2014, p. 13) <sup>3</sup>.

In 2005, the Government of Manitoba issued a document titled *Reaching Beyond our Borders: The Framework for Manitoba's International Activities*. The document identified education as the key to Manitoba's 2003 Action Strategy for Economic Growth. It argued that a good education and a well-educated workforce are the cornerstones for social, economic, and democratic development. The document also suggested that international education could play a significant role in enhancing the province's wellbeing (Government of Manitoba, 2005, p. 21). In 2009, building on the *Framework for Manitoba's International Activities*, the provincial government issued an International Education Strategy covering a five-year period, from 2009 to 2013. The strategy included five approaches to internationalization – the internationalization of teaching and learning activities; mobility of domestic staff and students; international education projects and contracts; offshore education and partnerships; and recruiting international students. (See Figure 3.)

**Figure 3**

*Five Dimensions of Manitoba International Education Strategy (2009-2013)*



*Source.* The Manitoba International Education Strategy 2009-2013.

In 2013, to support and protect international students studying in Manitoba and promote Manitoba as an education destination the NDP government introduced Bill 44: The *International Education Act* (IEA) (The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, 2013; Rounce, 2013). The Act, which was guided through the legislature by the Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy, Erin Selby, and later the Minister of Education and Advanced Learning, James Allum, was enacted by January 2016 and became

the first piece of Canadian legislation designed to protect all levels international students, and to ensure that their education providers act with integrity. The IEA, along with its two Regulations (Manitoba



Regulation 51[1]) and Code of Practice and Conduct Manitoba Regulation 51[2]), established the criteria, processes, and oversight mechanisms for designating education providers in the province and standards of practice for providers and education agents.

### *Recent Provincial International Education Initiatives*

Manitoba's provincial public-school system, with K-12 enrollments of around 180,000 students (Government of Manitoba, 2018), is governed by the Manitoba Public Schools Act and the Education Administration Act, with the ongoing operations of its schools and delivery of its programs administered through 37 local school boards. In this section, the focus is on what, we argue, have been the two main recent international education initiatives in Manitoba. The first of these, offshore educational partnerships involving affiliate schools teaching the Manitoba public schooling curriculum, represent a provincially focused initiative managed through the Department of Education, while the second, international student programming and recruitment, operate primarily at the level of individual school divisions<sup>4</sup>.

**Affiliate Schools Teaching the Manitoba Provincial Curriculum.** Since the 1990s, Canada has been actively exporting a variety of different educational programs and expertise as a commodity to different countries worldwide. Provincial jurisdictions have contributed to these endeavors by offering their public schooling curricula in overseas private schools and through a variety of products, techniques, and forms, such as online education, affiliate institutions, and accredited programs (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2012, p. 83). In Manitoba, there are two types of these affiliations. Some schools have an International Program that delivers a complete Manitoban curriculum in English along with other local language courses. Others have a Blended Program that teaches Manitoban courses alongside other local courses (See Table 1.) To establish either of these programs, offshore applicants have to go through a regulatory process for review, evaluation, and approval by the Manitoba Department of Education. At the successful completion of this process, an agreement will be signed between the school and the provincial Department of Education with the intent of allowing students to obtain the Manitoba high school diploma and pursue their post-secondary education in Manitoba or other Canadian jurisdictions (Wang, 2017, p. 535)<sup>5</sup>.

According to Manitoba regulations, affiliate schools and programs are expected to teach all Manitoba's curricula in English, except for the courses that are taught in local languages. K-8 programs should adhere to Manitoba conditions that include the time allocated to subject areas. Grades 9-12 programs offer compulsory and elective courses in line with Manitoba conditions for high school completion. Grade 12 candidates also write required provincial standard exams in English Language Arts and Mathematics (Government of Manitoba, nd1, p. 5). Affiliated schools pay a fee to the Manitoba government for the costs associated with the signing of these agreements and their ongoing review. However, the primary benefits for the province stemming from these partnership agreements, outlined in the document Joint Statement of Benefits of Internationally Affiliated Schools, lies in the educational and economic benefits associated with the schools constituting a significant initial pathway for students to access post-secondary education in Manitoba and potentially permanent residency in Canada (Government of Manitoba, n.d.2, p. 2).

### **Table 1**

<sup>4</sup> A third international education partnership agreement that is not included here because it is a program that dates back to the 1970s and remains a relatively small program is the Manitoba-German High School Exchange Program overseen by the province but administered by local education institutions. This program, started in 1979, supports reciprocal, three-month exchange visits each year between around 30 Manitoba Grade 11 students and students from Hamburg and Lower Saxony. Students stay with local exchange families, attend local schools and participate in programs to enhance their language skills, cultural understandings and global awareness. Students do not pay tuition fees to attend school in their host country and most living costs are covered, in turn, by the hosting family. More information is available at [https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ie/pdf/st\\_in\\_germany\\_brochure.pdf](https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ie/pdf/st_in_germany_brochure.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> The Manitoba Education website ([https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/iep/aff\\_schools.html](https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/iep/aff_schools.html)) states that Manitoba is not currently accepting new affiliation proposals.

*Manitoba Overseas Affiliate Schools/Programs*

<b>Affiliations</b>	<b>Name of the Affiliate School/Program</b>	<b>Country/Location</b>
<b>Affiliate Schools</b>	Clifford School: <a href="http://www.clifford-school.cn">http://www.clifford-school.cn</a>	Guangdong Province, People's Republic of China
	Canada Maple International School (CMIS Canada): <a href="http://cmis.kr/">http://cmis.kr/</a>	Yeonsu-gu, Incheon, Rep. of South Korea
	Yang Guang Qing School of Beijing: <a href="http://www.bdaschool.com">http://www.bdaschool.com</a>	Beijing Economic and Development Zone, China
<b>Affiliate Programs</b>	Canadian International School, Bangladesh (High School Program): <a href="http://www.canadaeducationbd.com">http://www.canadaeducationbd.com</a>	Dhaka, Bangladesh
	Heritage International School, Egypt (High School Program): <a href="http://www.heritageinternationalschool.com">http://www.heritageinternationalschool.com</a>	6th October City, Giza, Egypt
	Novopecherska School, Ukraine (High School Program): <a href="https://novoshkola.com.ua">https://novoshkola.com.ua</a>	Drahomyrova Street 9-b Kyiv 01103 Ukraine
<b>Other Affiliations</b>	Meitoku Gijuku High School, Japan: <a href="http://www.meitoku-gijuku.ed.jp">http://www.meitoku-gijuku.ed.jp</a>	Yosa City, Kochi, Japan
	Maple Bear Schools: <a href="http://maplebear.com.br/eng">http://maplebear.com.br/eng</a>	Sao Paulo, Brazil

*Note.* The information in this table is extracted from the website of the Manitoba Department of Education ([https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ie/study/st\\_rep.html](https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ie/study/st_rep.html)).

**Local Divisional International Student Programs.** Across Canada, the recruitment of international, fee-paying students by local school boards to provincially operated schools has been generally seen as the most developed expression of international education at the K-12 level. Distinct from the small-scale educational exchange programs that had existed prior to the 1980s and 1990s, the last 20-30 years have seen many school divisions across the country embark on large-scale international student recruitment initiatives - supported by both a local and an international network of private immigration and education agents (CMEC, 2013; Canadian Association of Public Schools – International, 2019) and a well-developed home placement industry - with their tuition fees constituting a new and significant 'revenue stream'. As already noted, in addition to the perceived financial benefits to the local school divisions, these international students provide additional economic benefits to the local community through their homestay living expenses. Furthermore, these programs provide a clear and cost-effective path into post-secondary education and through provincial and federal immigration policies to enhancing Canada's skilled labour market (Alboim & Cohl, 2012; Lu & Hou, 2015).

Table 2 shows total international student enrolments in Manitoba education institutions almost doubling from 5,914 in 2004/05 to 11,549 in 2014/15. While university enrollment accounted for the largest increase in students over this time, enrollment in regular K-12 school programs increased by more than 40% and accounted for 1,388 students in 2014/15. Exchange program students declined over this period and accounted for only 70 students in 2014/15.

**Table 2**

*International Students Enrolment in Manitoba's from 2004/05 to 2014/15*<sup>6</sup>

The Canadian Association of Public Schools – International (CAPS-I) (2019) provides a national

School Years & Numbers		Education Levels				ESL Schools	Total Enrolment
		Elementary and Secondary Schools		Post-Secondary Education			
		Exchange Students	Regular Students	College Students	University Students		
2004/05	Numbers	196	838	232	3,100	1,548	5,914
	Percentage	3.3%	14.2%	3.9%	52.4%	26.2%	100%
2005/06	Numbers	185	870	189	3,496	1,099	5,839
	Percentage	3.2%	14.9%	3.2%	59.9%	18.8%	100%
2006/07	Numbers	170	1,049	250	3,498	1,422	6,389
	Percentage	2.7%	16.4%	3.9%	54.8%	22.3%	100%
2007/08	Numbers	90	982	349	3,187	1,375	5,983
	Percentage	1.5%	16.4%	5.8%	53.3%	23.0%	100%
2008/09	Numbers	132	978	506	2,872	1,037	5,525
	Percentage	2.3%	17.7%	9.2%	52.0%	18.8%	100%
2009/10	Numbers	78	1,004	808	2,938	464	5,292
	Percentage	1.5%	19.0%	15.3%	55.5%	8.8%	100%
2010/11	Numbers	91	1,027	1,176	3,132	794	6,220
	Percentage	1.5%	16.5%	18.9%	50.4%	12.8%	100%
2011/12	Numbers	72	1,216	704	4,351	1,317	7,660
	Percentage	0.9%	15.9%	9.2%	56.8%	17.2%	100%
2012/13	Numbers	101	1,210	928	5,082	1,334	8,655
	Percentage	1.2%	14.0%	10.7%	58.7%	15.4%	100%
2013/14	Numbers	107	1,324	1,015	7,225	1,503	11,174
	Percentage	1.0%	12.0%	9.0%	64.5%	13.5%	100%
2014/15	Numbers	70	1,388	1,625	6,976	1,490	11,549
	Percentage	0.6%	12.0%	14.1%	60.4%	12.9%	100%

guide to the approximately 130 public school districts/divisions that offer international programs and identifies nine well-developed Manitoba international student programs operated individually or collaboratively by Manitoba school divisions. Of these programs, five are operated in Winnipeg area school divisions, three rural school divisions have their own programs, and one called the “Study Manitoba Program” operates as a collaborative initiative between five small rural school divisions in Souris Manitoba.

In terms of the rationale of these recent internationalization initiatives, Elnagar (2019) documents how, at the institutional level, the provision of international student programs and the recruitment of international students was seen by some school divisions as an attractive new revenue stream to help to maintain the viability of low enrollment schools in an era of declining local enrollments. At the provincial level, the internationalization of public schooling and the focus on the recruitment of international students were also supported by the Manitoba government as a valuable contribution to Manitoba's economic development. At the early stage of policy development in the first decade of the twenty-first century, the provincial focus was on promoting public schooling in Manitoba as an internationally tradable commodity to international students. Later, some changes were introduced in both federal and provincial immigration programs to provide a clear pathway for international students to work in Canada and apply for permanent residency. In order for K-12 public schooling to become an initial feeder system into this pathway, increased attention was paid to regulating the provision of international education programs and recruitment of international students, resulting in the passage of the *International Education Act* in 2016.

As outlined above, a variety of international initiatives appear quite firmly entrenched within Manitoba's public-school structures, but future developments remain unclear, not only as a consequence of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. The *International Education Act* and its associated regulations provide a legal and administrative framework to protect international students and to promote international edu-

<sup>6</sup> The numbers in this table are extracted from the most updated and available Reports on International Students in Manitoba from 2004/05 to 2014/15 and includes the most up-to-date publicly available data from the province. The Reports available at: [https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ie/study/st\\_rep.html](https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ie/study/st_rep.html)

cation, but the dismantling of the International Education Branch by the provincial government in 2017 removed an important oversight agency. Manitoba affiliate schools continue to operate around the world, but there is currently a government-imposed moratorium on new agreements. In January 2019, the provincial government established a Manitoba Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education. It was charged with conducting a comprehensive review and presenting a renewed vision for K-12 education. The Commission's report which was due to be released in February 2020 has been delayed by the provincial government because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Its recommendations and the government's responses may indeed provide a new vision for the internationalization of public education in the province.

## Conclusions and a Research Agenda

Although international education and the internationalization of education are still often used interchangeably in the literature and in policy documents, we argue that the emergence of the term internationalization of education in the last two decades reflects a significant shift in the practices associated with, and traditional meaning of, the term international education. More than simply referring to the process by which international education practices have been incorporated into federal, provincial, and local educational systems, the current internationalization of public education in general, and of K-12 public schooling in particular, reflects a new market-driven focus on education as a commodity important to Canada's economic well-being through international trade and as a two-stage immigration pathway for the recruitment of skilled workers. This shift in the policy discourse is apparent in the text of different federal and provincial policy documents and through the linking of international education, international trade, and immigration policies.

The significance of these developments for Canadian public education has received far more attention at the post-secondary level than it has for Canada's public, K-12 school systems. Matthews' (2002) observation that "there is virtually no literature that looks specifically at the internationalization of government schools and full-fee-paying international students" (p. 372) remains accurate in 2020 in the case of Canada. Yet, clearly, post-secondary education institutions differ from public schools in a variety of fundamental ways, including their mandates, structures, funding, governing policies, teaching and learning practices, and the age and maturity, or independence, of students. Given these differences, the subsuming of K-12 policies within a broader internationalization of education policy driven by the larger post-secondary education sector becomes problematic. Addressing this problem suggests the need for a wide-ranging, K-12 research agenda that would provide insights into topics such as:

- International student recruitment practices and the roles, and regulation of, education and immigration agents operating across Canada and globally;
- The legal and social provisions for, and well-being of, international students, who unlike their post-secondary counterparts, are minors;
- The programming and educational experiences of international students in public schools and in their home placements;
- The representation of international students' (and/or their parents') interests and voices in the governance of public schooling in Canada;
- Issues of accessibility and equity for all students, and the financial injustices and educational inequalities that may result from an increased recruitment of fee-paying international students;
- The impact of international student fees on the funding of public education at the school, school division/district, and provincial levels;
- The effects of international student programming on teacher and administrator preparation, roles, and work-loads;
- The impact of Canadian immigration programs on international students' educational choices and subsequent career and immigration experiences.

These issues appear central to both domestic and international K-12 students' well-being and to the fundamental purposes of public schooling in Canada. The COVID-19 pandemic has made 2020 a watershed year for the development of the internationalization of all levels of education in Canada as well as other major host countries of international students such as Britain, the USA, and Australia. Changes are likely. An expanded scholarly interest in international education/internationalization could make an important contribution to a careful and informed response from all levels of governments and providing institutions.

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