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## **School Choice favored by most Ontarians: Poll**

According to a recent Ipsos-Reid survey of 1000 randomly-selected adult Ontarians, eighty-four percent agree that "parents should have the right to choose a school for their child that best reflects their personal values and beliefs." The study, done on behalf of the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools (OACS) in mid-August, also showed that 76% of respondents believe parental satisfaction would increase with school choice, and more than half (52%) think all schools would improve if choice were the norm.

Most Ontarians (86%) say that parents are far and away the most important factor in the "development in children of proper social values such as, tolerance, respect, discipline and work ethic." Parents are also the most important contributors to the educational success of their children, say 52% of those polled, while 28% would give that place to teachers, followed by overall school environment (12%) and class size (7%).

"This explodes the myth that public schools are the sole guardians of democratic values," said OACS Executive Director, Dr. A. Guldmond. "We commissioned this poll to determine how the public views the relationship between parents and schools and we are very pleased with the results. It is crystal clear that parental choice in education is a value held by the large majority of Ontarians."

The results also showed that 54% of those polled say current public school funding (approximately \$7500 per student) is not enough, while 41% think it is more than enough. Regular parent-teacher communication is seen as the most effective means of providing parents with information on student progress with a mean score of 8 out of 10, and schools are viewed as most successful at preparing students to participate and contribute to society (mean score 6.2), as compared to building self-esteem (5.8) and job preparedness(5.7).

"We believe this poll shows that people in Ontario generally agree on two very important points," said John Vanasselt, OACS Director of

Communications. "They agree that parents are the best people to make educational decisions for their children, and they agree that a one-size-fits-all education system does not meet the needs of all of the children of this province."

OACS is a comprehensive educational service organization for 78 Christian schools with over 13,000 students. OACS has been advancing the cause of Christian education since 1952.

*(These are) the findings of an Ipsos-Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools between August 11<sup>th</sup> and August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2003. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 1,000 adult Ontarians. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within  $\pm$  3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Ontario population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Ontario population according to the 2001 Census data.*

[http://www.ipsos-reid.com/media/dsp\\_pre\\_more\\_cdn.cfm](http://www.ipsos-reid.com/media/dsp_pre_more_cdn.cfm)

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