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ONTARIO FAMILIES AND SCHOOL CHOICE

New study highlights how public school enrolment is declining, while independent school enrolment is rising; funding fails to reflect parental choices

May 6, 2010 (Ottawa) – A new study released today by the Institute of Marriage and Family Canada reveals that in spite of demographic decline, enrolment in Ontario’s independent schools is on the rise as public school enrolment declines. Public school funding, however, continues to rise in a manner that is completely unresponsive to student numbers. “Parental choices in education are not reflected in our current school funding system,” says study author Derek Miedema. “Even in face of demographic decline, independent school enrolment continues to increase. Parents shoulder the burden of this cost across Ontario today.”

Some of the top findings include:

- Between 1960 and 2005, the public education system had a gross increase in enrolment of 52.5 per cent. In the same period, independent school enrolment grew at a rate of almost 357 per cent
- Between 2000 and 2005 Ontario public schools saw an enrolment decrease of 1.1 per cent
- Between 2000 and 2005, independent school enrolment increased by 8.8 per cent
- Between 2003 and 2010 public school funding increased from \$9.4 billion to a projected \$13.8 billion

“Many provinces, British Columbia and Alberta, for example, fund school choice,” says Miedema. “This is an important element for the Ontario school system to consider as they ponder options the result of declining enrolment. A move toward funded school choice would acknowledge the decisions Ontario parents are already making.”

The study *Public education and parental choice: Enrolment trends in Ontario schools*—can be read in full, [here](#).

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