



# REEES

QUEBEC FIRST NATIONS  
**REGIONAL EARLY CHILDHOOD,  
EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT SURVEY**



**FIRST NATIONS OF QUEBEC  
AND LABRADOR HEALTH  
AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
COMMISSION**

# EDUCATIONAL AMBITIONS

## METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

The First Nations Regional Early Childhood, Education and Employment Survey (REEES) aims to describe the state of development of early childhood, education, and employment among First Nations communities in Quebec. It was conducted between January 2014 and March 2015 in 20 communities of 8 nations. In all, 2,435 people (923 children age 11 and under, 472 adolescents age 12–17, and 1,041 adults age 18 and over) answered an electronic questionnaire submitted by field agents.

Data followed by “\*” has a variation coefficient of 16.6% to 33.3% and must be interpreted with caution. The symbol “\*\*\*” indicates a variation coefficient higher than 33.3%. This data is not published, except for estimates below 5%, which must be interpreted with caution.

In some cases, data is presented according to the respondents’ community geographic zone as defined by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada:

- Zone 1 (urban): less than 50 km from a service centre with road access;
- Zone 2 (rural): between 50 km and 350 km from a service centre with road access;
- Zone 3 (isolated): over 350 km from a service centre with road access;
- Zone 4 (difficult access): no year-round road access to a service centre.

Service centre: The nearest location where community members must go to access service providers, banks and government services.

In the REEES, the term “community” is used to refer to “Indian reserves.” Although officially recognized, the term “Indian reserve” is considered pejorative and has therefore been replaced by “community.”

For more information, see the REEES *Methodology* booklet.

The REEES report is divided into three sets of booklets: early childhood, education, and employment. All booklets are available in the FNQLHSSC documentation centre: <https://centredoc.cssspnql.com>.



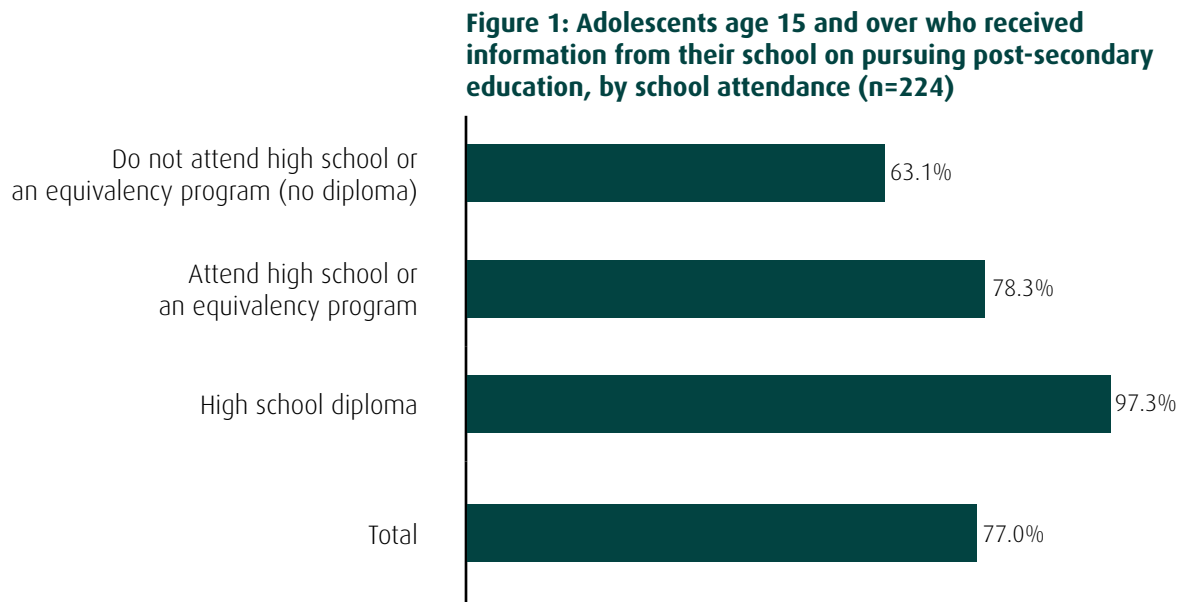
## HIGHLIGHTS

This booklet gives an overview of the educational ambitions of First Nations adolescents (age 12–17) and adults (age 18–45) based on the results of the Regional Early Childhood, Education and Employment Survey (REEES). The REEES was conducted between January 2014 and March 2015 in 20 First Nations communities in Quebec and involved 472 adolescents and 1,041 adults.

- Nearly a third (32.8%) of the adolescents surveyed hope to finish university and 37.0% hope to complete collegial studies.
- Three quarters of the boys and two thirds of the girls want to continue their studies after high school (college or university).
- Although a greater proportion of boys than girls want to go to university, fewer boys expect to graduate.
- The main obstacles to reaching the desired level of education are low grades and lack of motivation.
- More than a third of the adolescents and more than half of the adults (age 18–45) indicated that their parents had never finished high school. Nevertheless, a large majority of respondents say that their parents consider it important that they get a high school diploma and continue their studies.

## INFORMATION ON ACADEMIC PROGRESS

More than three quarters of the adolescents said that their school had given them information on how to pursue post-secondary studies. The results indicate that the vast majority of high school graduates had received this type of information, whereas about two thirds of those not attending school and without a diploma received it (Figure 1).

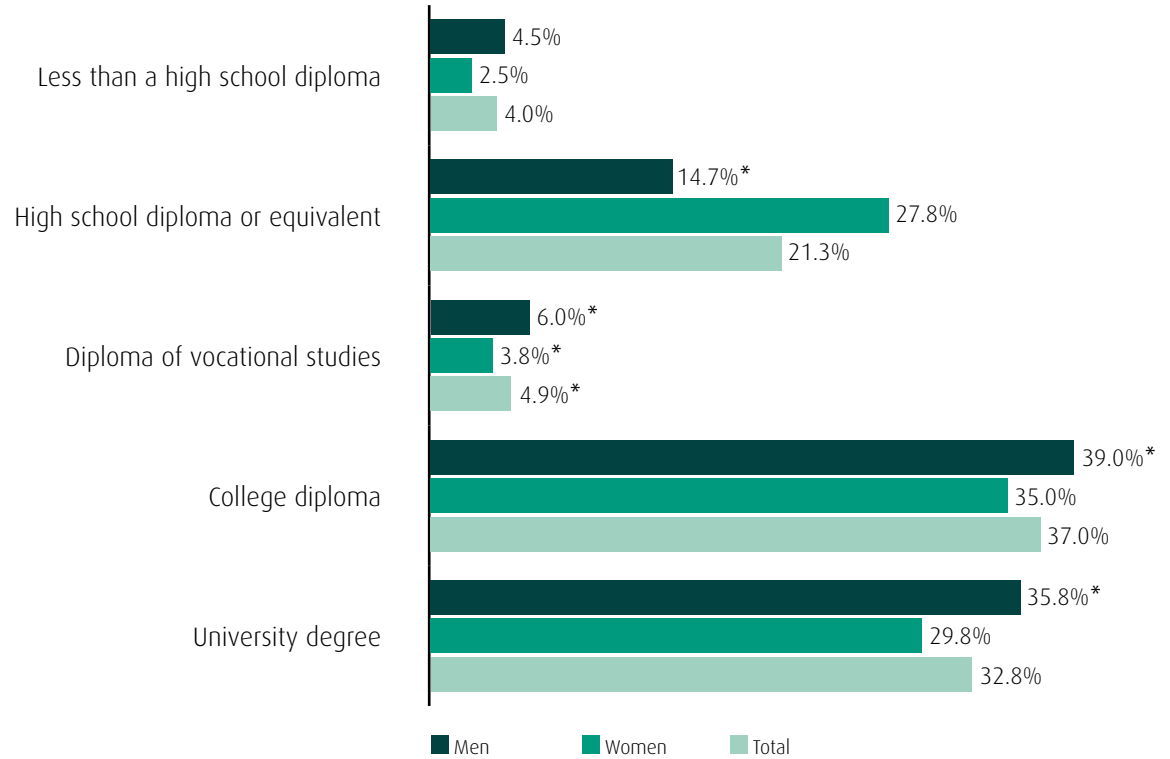


## EDUCATIONAL AMBITIONS

This section concerns adolescents age 15 and over only.

When asked what type of diploma they wanted to get, nearly a third answered that they want a university degree and 37.0% want a college diploma. Less than a quarter (21.3%) want to stop after getting a high school diploma, and 4.9% after getting a diploma of vocational studies. A total of 4.0% of the adolescents do not intend to get a high school diploma. A greater proportion of girls want to obtain a high school diploma, while more of the boys are aiming for a college diploma or a university degree (Figure 2). If the college and university levels are combined, the results show that three quarters of the boys and two thirds of the girls want to continue their studies after high school.

**Figure 2: Educational ambitions of adolescents by gender (n=207)**



The data in Table 1 shows that a greater proportion of high school graduates (43.0%\*) want to get a university degree. Two thirds of adolescents who attend school want to get a college diploma or a university degree. Most of the adolescents who do not attend school hope to complete a college diploma (42.5%).

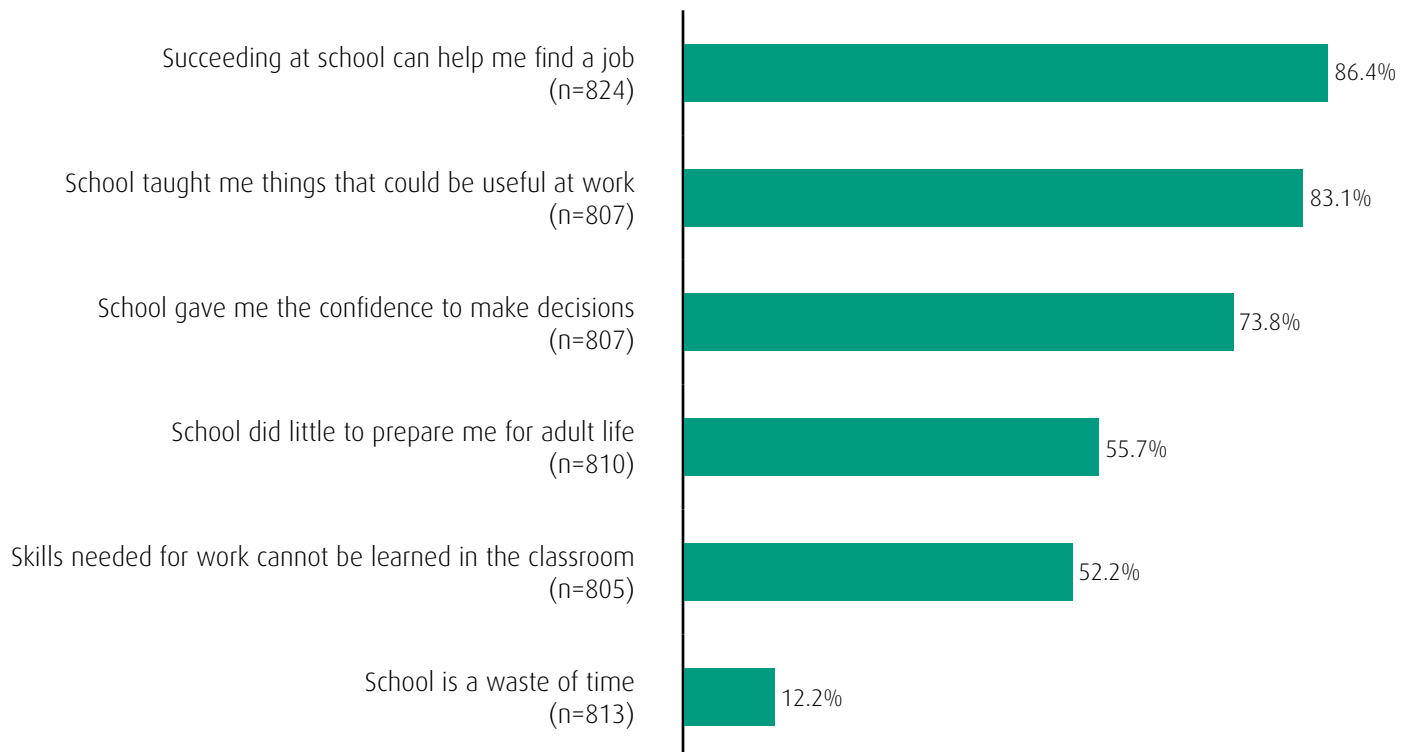
**Table 1: Educational ambitions of adolescents by school attendance (n=202)**

	Do not attend elementary/high school or an equivalency program (no diploma)	Attend elementary/high school or an equivalency program	High school diploma or equivalent
Less than a high school diploma	**	**	0.0%
High school diploma or equivalent	21.3%*	24.3%	**
Diploma of vocational studies	**	**	**
College diploma	42.5%*	34.6%	43.4%*
University degree	18.8%*	34.8%	43.0%*
Total	100%	100%	100%

## PERCEPTION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

As shown in Figure 3, a large proportion of adults believe in the importance of school. A large majority (86.4%) consider that academic success makes it easier to get a job. Moreover, 83.1% say that school allows for the acquisition of knowledge that can facilitate entry into the job market. Three quarters also said that school had given them the confidence to make decisions. However, more than half of the respondents indicated that school had done little to prepare them for adult life and say that work skills cannot be learned in the classroom. Finally, a small proportion (12.2%) consider that school is a waste of time.

Figure 3: Adults' perception of the importance of school



The results show the same trend in adolescents, although they seem more optimistic than adults. A very large majority of adolescents think that academic success is important for getting a job and learning things that are useful at work. A high proportion of adolescents (86.8%) also think that school helped them acquire the necessary confidence to make decisions. However, about two thirds of adolescents indicated that school had done little to prepare them for adult life, and 58.0% say that work skills cannot be learned in the classroom. Finally, 6.6% say that school is a waste of time (Figure 4). The *Basic Skills* booklet contains more information on the perception of the importance of school.

**Figure 4: Adolescents' perception of the importance of school**

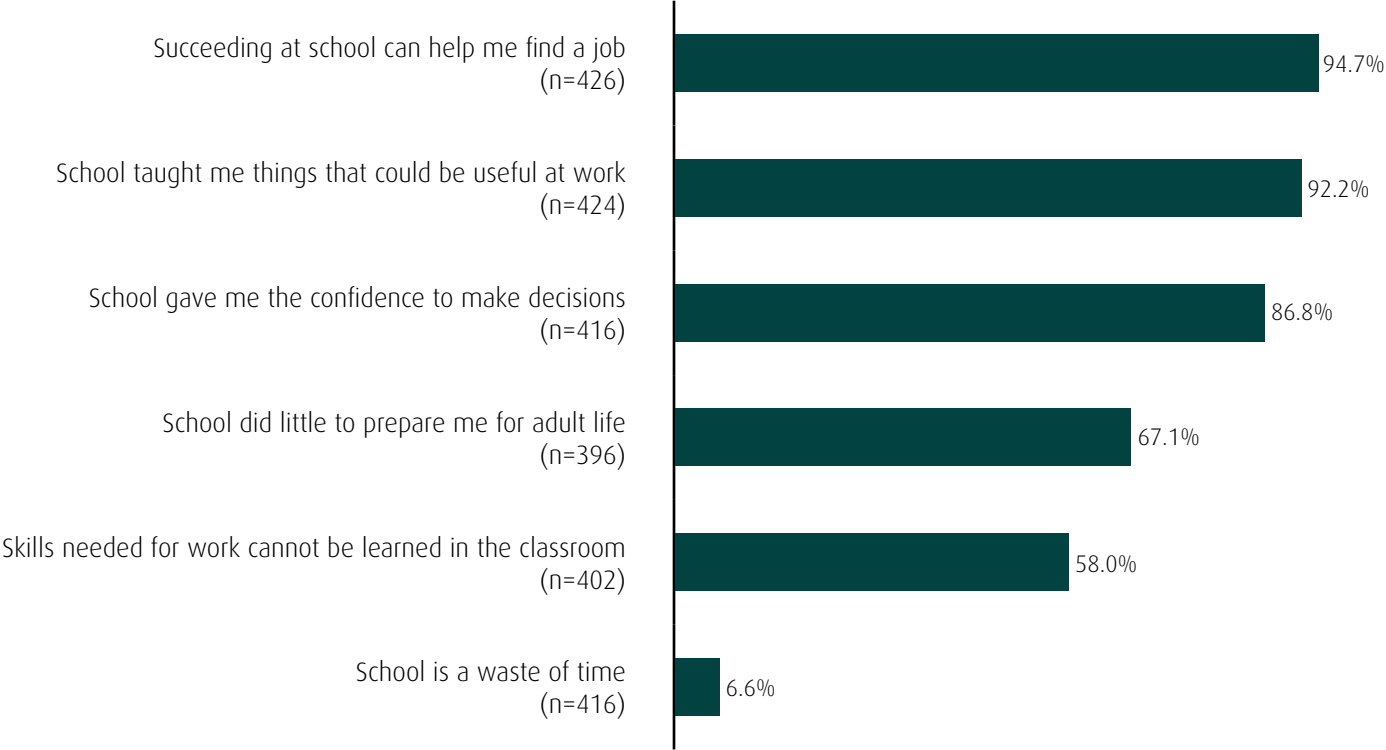
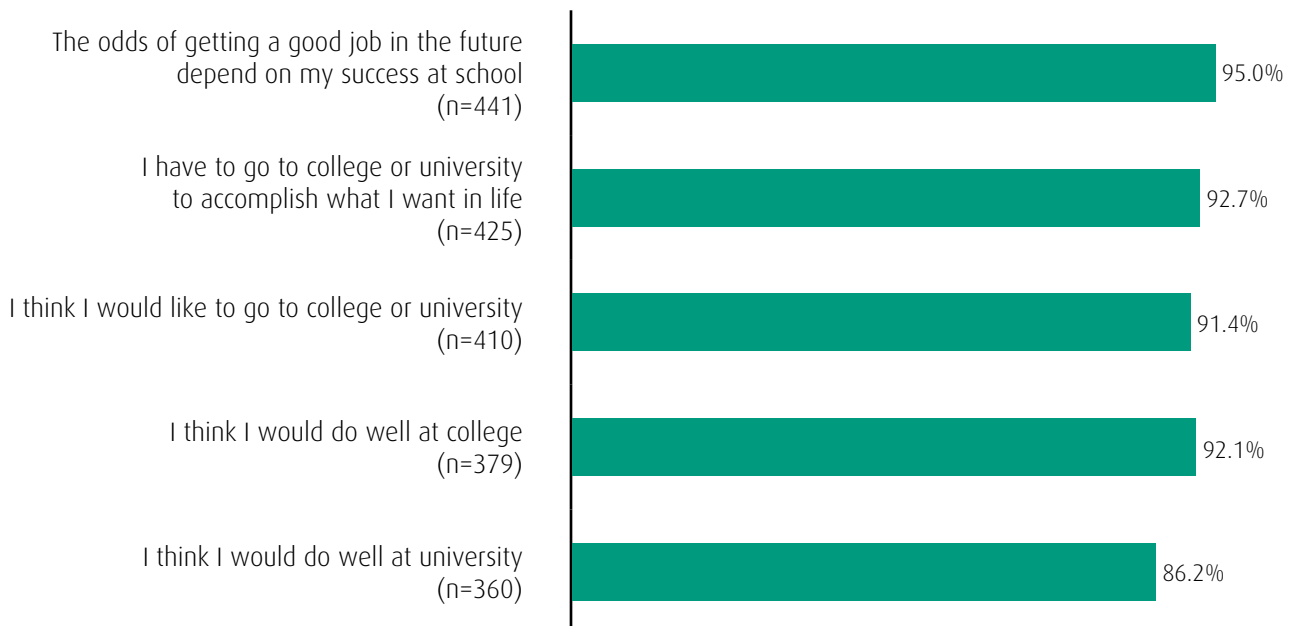




Figure 5 shows that almost all adolescents consider that their chances of getting a good job depend on their academic success. Along the same lines, 92.7% believe that they need to go on to college or university to reach their objective. A large majority of adolescents say that they would like to go to college or university. Adolescents are generally optimistic about their academic success, and a high proportion of them think that they would succeed at college or university.

Among adults, it is interesting to note that the proportion of women who believe in their chances of success at college is higher than that of men (96.1% and 87.6%, respectively). The same is true with regard to success at university (91.7% and 80.1%, respectively).

**Figure 5: Future directions: Proportion of adolescents who agree with the following statements**

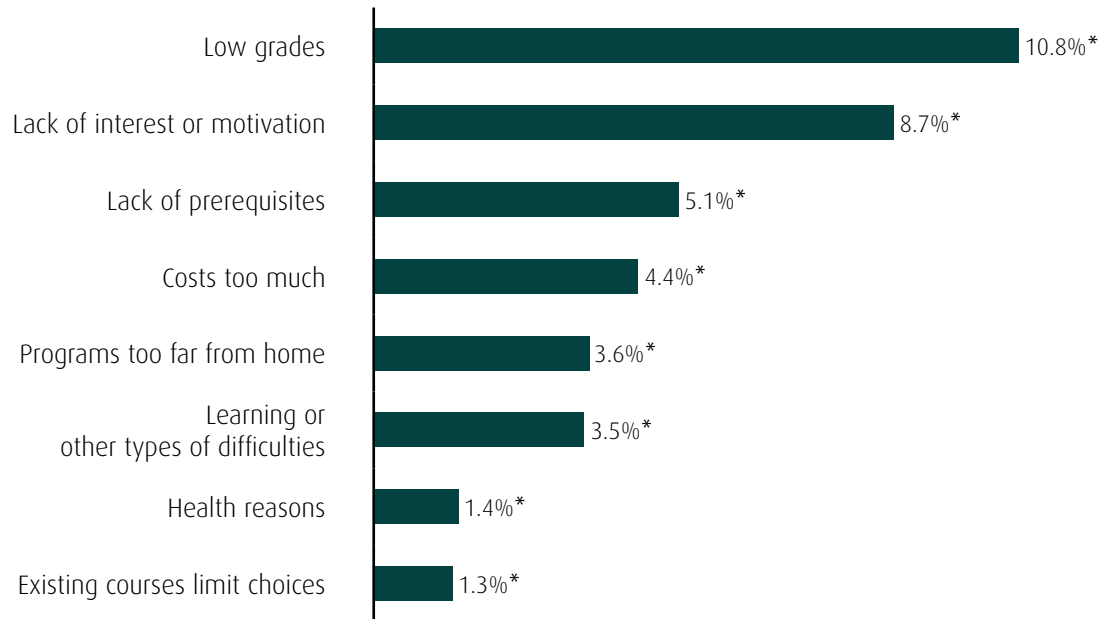


## OBSTACLES TO ACHIEVING THE DESIRED LEVEL OF EDUCATION

A very large majority of adolescents age 15–17 said that they wanted to get at least a high school diploma (96.0%). Of those, more than a quarter (25.6%) indicated that certain obstacles could prevent them from reaching their goal. The main obstacles mentioned are low grades (10.8%\*), a lack of interest or motivation (8.7%\*), and a lack of prerequisites (5.1%\*) (Figure 6).

Thus almost all the adolescents said that they wanted to get at least a high school diploma, but many also indicate that they lack the necessary motivation or grades. These statements seem to reveal a contradiction that deserves more in-depth analysis.

**Figure 6: Obstacles mentioned by adolescents age 15 to 17 aiming for a high school diploma or a post-secondary diploma (n=191)**

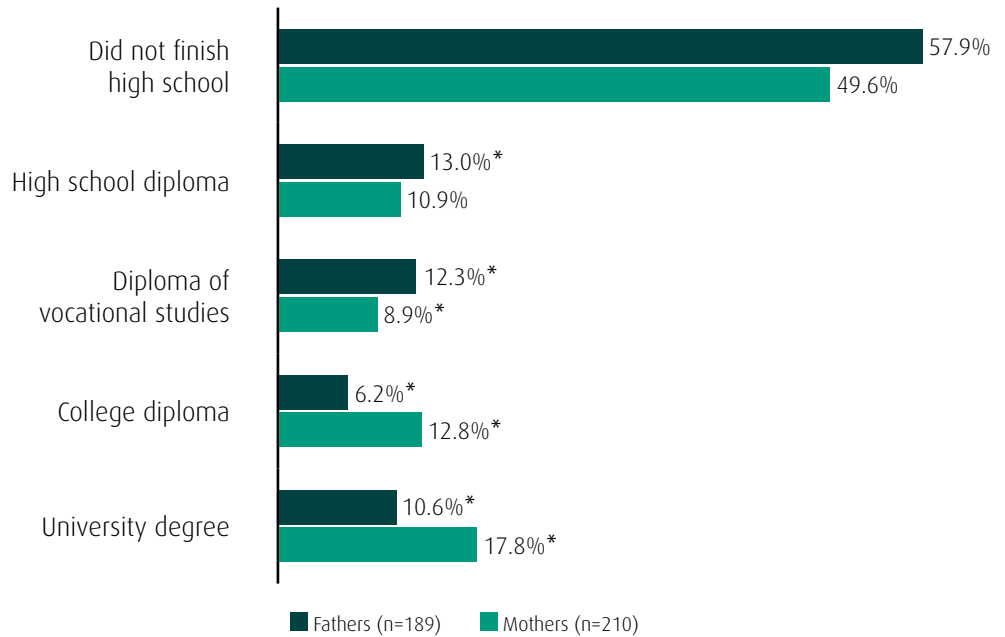


## PARENTS' LEVEL OF EDUCATION

This section presents data on parents' level of education and on the importance they attach to education.

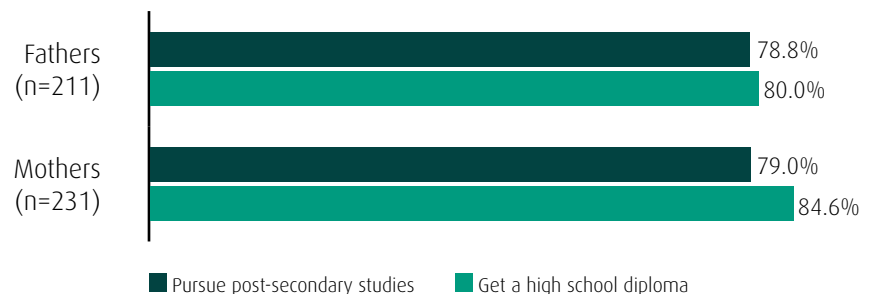
About half of the adults said that their parents, both mother (49.6%) and father (57.9%), had never finished high school. Although the difference is not statistically significant, a greater proportion of mothers seem to have completed college or university.

**Figure 7: Level of education achieved by parents of adult respondents (age 18-45)**



Generally speaking, more than three quarters of adults say that their parents think that getting a high school diploma is important (80.0% of fathers and 84.6% of mothers). The same is true for post-secondary education (78.8% of fathers and 79.0% of mothers) (Figure 8).

**Figure 8: Proportion of parents of adult respondents (age 18-45) who think education is important**



Among adults age 18–45, 42.1% said their father had at least obtained a high school diploma. The proportion is 50.4% for mothers (Figure 7). In comparison, a larger proportion of parents of adolescents had at least finished high school, that is 61.1% of mothers and 55.2% of fathers (Figure 9). These results indicate that the proportion of parents with a diploma increased from one generation to another, mostly for mothers.

The results also indicate that a larger proportion of mothers have a college diploma or a university degree, whereas a larger proportion of fathers have a diploma of vocational studies (Figure 9).

**Figure 9: Level of education achieved by parents of adolescent respondents**

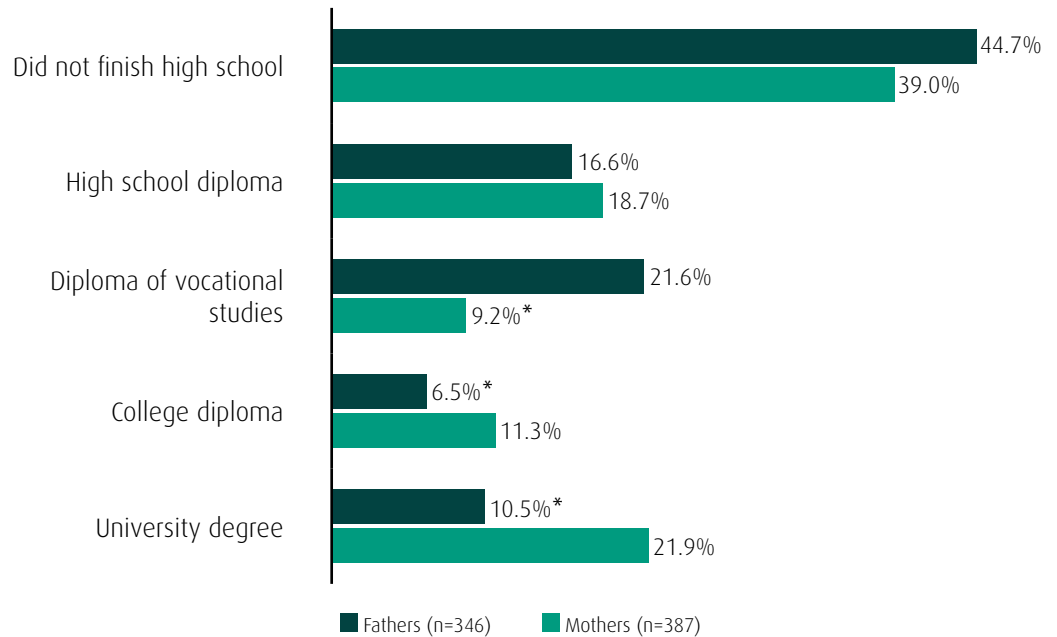
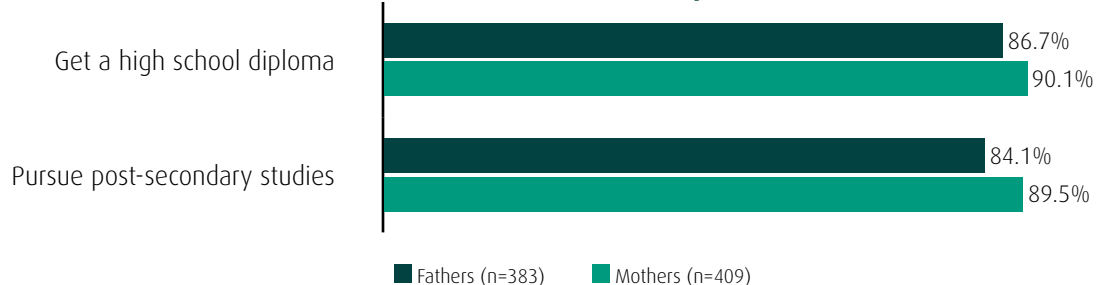


Figure 10 shows that a very large majority of adolescent respondents say that their parents think high school and post-secondary education is important. This finding is interesting given the high proportion of parents who did not finish high school. Finally, the results show that a slightly greater proportion of mothers attach importance to finishing high school and pursuing post-secondary studies.

**Figure 10: Proportion of parents of adolescent respondents who think education is important**



## CONCLUSION

The data reveals that more than a third of the adolescents surveyed aim to complete a university degree and that very few, barely 4%, do not intend to finish high school. The results also show, however, that low grades and lack of motivation are the main obstacles to achieving the desired level of education. This information is crucial given that student motivation is a determining factor in academic success.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately, these obstacles can lead to students dropping out.

Academic ambitions can be strongly influenced by factors such as gender, age, level of education and family. For example, girls seem to be more confident in being able to successfully complete post-secondary studies and show more interest in furthering their studies. Not surprisingly, adolescents who attend school and who have a high school diploma have higher ambitions than those who are not in school. Although a large proportion of parents of respondents do not have a high school diploma, a large majority of them consider that finishing high school and pursuing post-secondary studies are important.

Almost all adolescents intend to get at least a high school diploma, and a large proportion of them are aiming for post-secondary studies. However, the *Factors for Success and Obstacles to Employment* booklet reveals that a large proportion of adults have not finished high school (41.1%). This finding raises a number of questions that are important to consider when developing action strategies. Does the new generation have higher academic ambitions than the previous one? Do young people's ambitions change depending on their situation, for example, due to pregnancy or the birth of a child? And finally, does access to education or a job in the community enable young adults to achieve their goals?

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<sup>1</sup>Thérèse Bouffard (2005), *Les stratégies de motivation des enseignants et leurs relations avec le profil motivationnel d'élèves du primaire*, Université du Québec à Montréal, 103 pages.

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