

NEWS

# Immigrants see value of post-secondary education

## SCHOOLS IN



Jane Muskens

attend than any other ethnic group.

Other types of indicators which influence participation rates were family type and place of residence, including which province the student came from and whether they lived in an urban or rural setting.

Family type showed that students where one or both parents had a post-secondary education were more likely to attend.

Urban dwelling students were more likely to attend than their rural counterparts, and Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island had the highest percentage of first and second generation students in their colleges and universities.

Similarities between multi-generational Canadians and new immigrant families showed that income plays a role in determining post-secondary participation rates—students from low-income families from either group are less likely to attend.

In conclusion, the report argues that on a cultural basis, immigrants believe that completing a post-secondary credential is something that isn't negotiable.

First and second generation students often seamlessly transition from high school to college or university—they just go.

So why is this happening?

Comparing Canada to other countries, the report believes the Canadian post-secondary system is much more accessible to immigrants (we have decades of experience dealing with immigrants whose first language is neither English or French).

Studies have shown that immigrants to European nations have a much harder time transitioning into post-secondary education due to language. Language barriers tend to be higher in non-English speaking countries, where opportunities to learn the native language are not as prevalent.

Although all parents want their children to succeed, I believe new immigrants often see post-secondary education as the best way for their children to be financially secure.

These parents may have arrived in Canada with a few dollars in their pocket and from a country where going to college or university was only for the rich. To them, their adopted country can and will provide their children and grandchildren with the best opportunity to get ahead and they see that opportunity as being a post-secondary education.

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My parents emigrated from the Netherlands in 1953 and in the early '60s my husband's parents came to Canada from Scotland.

The children of these two families include one professional engineer, three with master's degrees, one with a diploma, and another with a vocational certificate. All have attended college or university.

Interestingly, the data collected on how well the children of immigrants transition into post-secondary education suggests that our families are fairly normal.

In fact, based on a report published by the Canada Millennium

According to the data, first and second generation immigrants have higher post-secondary participation rates.

Data also show that first and second generation students whose parents were Asian or African were more likely to