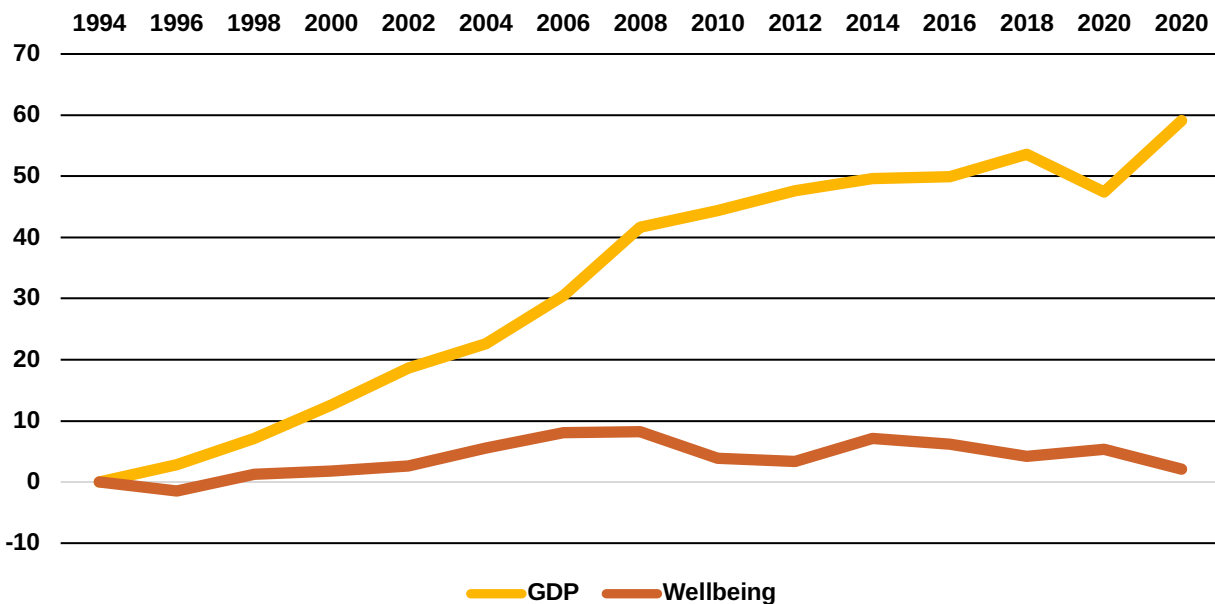


EDUCATION INTEGRAL TO WELLBEING

While GDP rises, does wellbeing rise alongside it? The answer surprises many. While GDP in many parts of Canada has increased, wellbeing has not followed suit. From 1994 to 2022, GDP in Saskatchewan increased by nearly 60%; during the same period, wellbeing metrics rose by just over 2%. Thus, the story becomes clear: **GDP alone fails to measure how well our population is faring.**

GDP v. Wellbeing in Saskatchewanⁱ



Education and Wellbeing

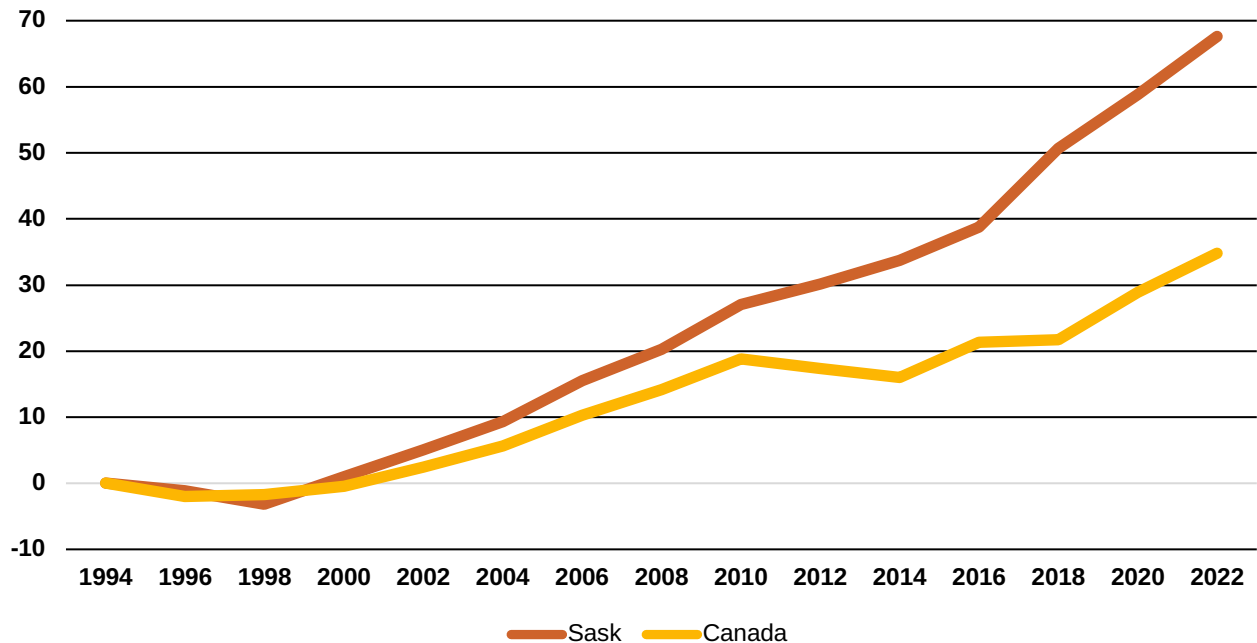
So, what of education from 1994 onwards?

How have educational outcomes in Saskatchewan changed since 1994, and how do these outcomes compare to national metrics? Below we examine the statistical trends of education, and the story they tell. In the Saskatchewan Index of Wellbeing, Education is measured in eight metrics. These metrics have been compiled into a single numerical value with 1994 as the baseline.^{iv}

How do we define education in the context of this analysis?

Education is the systematic instruction, schooling, or training given to the young in preparation for the work of life, and by extension, similar instruction or training obtained in adulthood.

Rate of Improvement in Educationⁱⁱ



While both Canada and Saskatchewan have shown improvement in educational metrics since 1994, Saskatchewan still exhibits decline in certain areas. Additionally, some metrics, although improving, have lagged significantly behind national gains.

Metrics of Successⁱⁱⁱ

Percentage of adults 25 years of age or older who participate in education-related activities: 5.6% increase in Saskatchewan; 3.91% increase Canada-wide.

Percentage of 25- to 64-year-olds in population with a university degree: 16.5% increase in Saskatchewan; 19.6% increase Canada-wide.

Percentage of children 0 to 5 years of age for whom there is regulated, centre-based childcare: 13.8% increase in Saskatchewan; 17.2% increase Canada-wide.

Average expenditure per public school student (\$2022): 7.36% increase in Saskatchewan.; 8% increase Canada-wide.

Percentage of bachelor's degree students with debt after graduation: Decrease of 4.2% in Saskatchewan; 1.4% decrease Canada-wide.

Metrics of Concern^{iv}

High School Graduation Rate: 5.5% increase in Saskatchewan; 18.7% increase Canada-wide.

Ratio of students to educators in public schools: 2% decrease in Saskatchewan; 3.8% decrease Canada-wide.

Average annual Canadian undergraduate tuition fees (current dollars): 261% increase in Saskatchewan; 229.2% increase Canada-wide.

How Do We Build Stronger Educational Wellbeing for the Future?

While the data shows progress in some educational metrics, it also reveals areas of concern in others. **These areas must be addressed by government and decision-makers in order to support the educational wellbeing of Saskatchewanians.**

Possible Policy Solutions

Increasing support for high school students: Ontario created a *Student Success Strategy*, providing career-focused pathways to reduce dropouts and improve graduation rates.^v

Increasing the number of teachers per student: British Columbia established class size and composition requirements to improve academic support per pupil.^{vi}

Improving affordability for post-secondary education: Nova Scotia froze tuition and boosted postsecondary operating grants, lowering financial barriers.^{vii}

At every stage of life, education delivers wide-ranging benefits, supporting both emotional and social wellbeing.^{viii} Looking to other provinces for comparison and policy inspiration can help guide these efforts and build a more resilient state of wellbeing for all. Further, thoughtful consideration and investment in education can impact and uplift other domains. No domain exists in a vacuum, with education strongly linked to metrics in domains such as community vitality and democratic engagement.

Who Are We?

What is Saskatchewan's definition of wellbeing?

"Wellbeing is achieved when people are physically, emotionally and spiritually healthy; economically secure; have a strong sense of identity, belonging and place; and have the confidence and capacity to engage as citizens." ix

Who and What is SaskWellbeing?

SaskWellbeing is a Saskatchewan-based initiative that works to support collaboration across sectors to improve quality of life and inform decision-making for healthier, more resilient communities. Further information can be found at: saskwellbeing.ca

What is the Canadian Index of Wellbeing?

The Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) is a framework that measures the quality of life for Canadians across eight interconnected domains. Further information can be found at:

uwaterloo.ca/canadian-index-wellbeing/about-canadian-index-wellbeing

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| <p>I. Smale, Bryan. (2025). <i>Data and Trends in Wellbeing in Saskatchewan and Canada from 1994 to 2022: A Technical Report</i>. Canadian Index of Wellbeing, University of Waterloo. Prepared for Heritage Saskatchewan and Community Initiatives Fund.</p> <p>II. Smale, Bryan (2025).</p> <p>III. Smale, Bryan (2025).</p> <p>IV. Smale, Bryan (2025).</p> <p>V. Office of the Auditor General of Ontario. (2011). <i>2011 annual report</i> (Chapter 3, Section 3.13). Queen's Printer for Ontario.</p> | <p>VI. British Columbia. (2002). <i>Class regulation</i> (B.C. Reg. 245/2002). Queen's Printer for British Columbia.</p> <p>VII. Government of Nova Scotia. (2025, April 25). <i>Province signs new funding agreements with universities</i>.</p> <p>VIII. OECD (2024), <i>Social and Emotional Skills for Better Lives: Findings from the OECD Survey on Social and Emotional Skills 2023</i>. OECD Publishing, Paris.</p> <p>IX. SaskWellbeing. (2025). <i>Definition of Wellbeing</i>.</p> |
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