

Adventist Education in Canada Parents' Attitude Survey Summary of Findings

Responses with means (M^*) of 3.5 (the lower limit of “agree”) or higher were considered as positive, and anything below 3.5 as questionable.

Respondents had the most positive perception of the following (see Table 1):

- Teachers care about students in Adventist schools in Canada ($M = 4.15$),
- Students are helped to develop personal relationship with Jesus Christ ($M = 4.14$),
- Adventist schools in Canada are safe and orderly environments ($M = 4.04$),
- They foster spiritual growth ($M = 4.03$), and
- The school administrators and teachers are committed to the principles of Adventist education ($M = 4.02$).

Table 1

Top Five Attitude Statements

Attitude Statements	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Rank
17. Teachers care about students.	1384	4.15	0.79	1
02. Students are helped to dev. pers. relationship with J. Chr.	1387	4.14	0.85	2
26. The school is a safe and orderly environment.	1376	4.04	0.83	3
15. Spiritual growth is fostered in the school.	1382	4.03	0.83	4
20. Adm. & teach. committed to the principles of Adv. ed.	1381	4.02	0.85	5

Note. The response range of options was 1-5: 5 - Strongly Agree (SA), 4 - Agree (A), 3 - Not Sure (NS), 2 - Disagree (D), 1 - Strongly Disagree (SD).

* Mean is the sum of a set of scores divided by the total number of scores in the set.

There are five issues most respondents were concerned about (see Table 2):

- Students have access to a variety of resources ($M = 3.44$)
- School facilities are adequate for high quality education ($M = 3.41$)
- The school provides a variety of extracurricular activities ($M = 3.41$)
- Bullying is NOT a problem at the school ($M = 3.41$), and
- Sending children to the Adventist school is affordable ($M = 3.20$).

Table 2

Bottom Five Attitude Statements

Attitude Statements	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Rank
11. Students have access to a variety of resources.	1383	3.44	1.02	27
14. School facilities are adequate for high quality education.	1378	3.41	1.08	28.3
31. The school provides a variety of extracurricular activities.	1379	3.41	1.11	28.3
08. Bullying is <u>NOT</u> a problem at the school.	1377	3.41	1.13	28.3
10. Sending children to the Adventist school is affordable.	1374	3.20	1.24	31

Note. The response range of options was 1-5: 5 - Strongly Agree (SA), 4 - Agree (A), 3 - Not Sure (NS), 2 - Disagree (D), 1 - Strongly Disagree (SD).

There were five scales under investigation in this study. The ranking, based on means scaled to the Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5) continuum, is also shown below (see Table 3). As the results suggest,

- the respondents viewed *Spiritual Focus* to be most positive, followed by
- *Interpersonal Relationship and Student Personal Development*,
- *Safe and learning environment*,
- *School administrators and teachers*,
- *Academic Excellence* was perceived to be least positive.

Table 3

Ranking of Attitude Scales

Attitude Areas/Scales	Scale Mean ^a	No. of Items	Scale Mean ^b	Rank Order
Spiritual Focus	19.71	5	3.94	1
Interp. Relations & Pers. Dev.	19.53	5	3.91	2
Safe learning environment	22.67	6	3.78	3.5
School Admin. & Teachers	15.10	4	3.78	3.5
Academic Excellence	18.40	5	3.68	5

^a Mean based on sums of items comprising the scale.

^b Mean scaled to the Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5) continuum.

In the area of *School Accessibility* (see Table 4), most respondents agreed that

- conference subsidy to the schools should be increased ($M = 3.94$),
- that their local Adventist school is conveniently located ($M = 3.72$),
- that the Adventist schools should accept government funds ($M = 3.55$), and
- that local church subsidy to the school should be increased ($M = 3.50$).

However, the respondents were less in agreement that

- school facilities are adequate for high quality education ($M = 3.41$) and that
- sending children to the Adventist school is affordable ($M = 3.20$).

Table 4

School Accessibility Variables

Attitude Statements	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
21. Conference subsidy to the school should be increased.	1368	3.94	0.94	1-5
24. The school is conveniently located.	1382	3.72	1.15	1-5
30. Adventist schools should accept government funds.	1376	3.55	1.33	1-5
19. Local church subsidy to the school should be increased.	1372	3.50	1.07	1-5
14. School facilities are adequate for high quality education.	1378	3.41	1.08	1-5
10. Sending children to the Adventist school is affordable.	1374	3.20	1.24	1-5

Differences Between Groups

The analysis of the data indicated significant differences between Adventist parents with children in Adventist schools, Adventist parents with school age children but with no children in Adventist schools, and non-Adventist parents with children in Adventist schools toward academic excellence, school accessibility (affordability, adequate facilities, church subsidy, conference subsidy, school location, government funding), and safe learning environment in Adventist schools in Canada.

In general, non-Adventist parents, especially mothers, had more positive attitudes toward Adventist schools in Canada than both Adventist parents with or without children in Adventist schools. Adventist parents with children in Adventist schools were more positive than the Adventist parents without children in Adventist schools.

Gender Differences

- Male non-Adventist and Adventist parents with children in Adventist schools had significantly more positive perception of *Spiritual Focus*, *School Administrators and Teachers* and *Interpersonal Relationships and Student Personal Development* in Adventist schools than the male Adventist parents with no children in Adventist schools.
- Female non-Adventist parents with children in Adventist schools had significantly more positive perception of *Spiritual Focus* and *School Administrators and Teachers* in Adventist schools in Canada than both female Adventist parents with or without children in Adventist schools.
- Female Adventist parents were significantly more positive toward *Spiritual Focus* and *School Administrators and Teachers* in Adventist schools than the female Adventist parents without children in Adventist schools.
- There was no significant difference between male and female Adventist parents with or without children in Adventist schools with respect to their attitude toward *Spiritual Focus* and *School Administrators and Teachers* and *Interpersonal Relationships and student personal development* in Adventist schools in Canada.
- Female non-Adventist parents had significantly more positive attitudes toward *Spiritual Focus* and *School Administrators and Teachers* in Adventist schools than the male non-Adventist parents as well as female Adventist parents with or without children in Adventist schools. Overall, female non-Adventist parents had most positive attitudes toward Adventist schools in Canada.

Marital Status Relationships

- No significant relationships were found between marital status and attitudes toward *Spiritual Focus*, *Academic Excellence*, *School Accessibility* (adequate facilities, conference subsidy, school location, government funding), *Administrators and Teachers*, *Interpersonal Relationships and Student Personal Development*, and *Safe Learning Environment* in Adventist schools.
- There were significant relationships between marital status and attitudes toward increasing *Church Subsidy* to Adventist schools in Canada and the *Affordability* of the schools.
- Single, separated, divorced, or widowed parents had more positive attitude toward the increase of *Church Subsidy* to Adventist schools in Canada than did the parents who were married.
- The parents who were married were more positive about the *Affordability* of Adventist schools, than those who were single, separated, divorced, or widowed.

Age Relationships

- No significant relationships were evident between age and attitudes toward *School Accessibility* (affordability, adequate facilities, church subsidy, conference subsidy, school location, government Funding), *School Administrators and Teachers*, and *Safe Learning Environment* in Adventist schools.
- Significant relationships were found, however, between the age of the respondents and their attitudes toward *Spiritual Focus*, *Academic Excellence*, and *Interpersonal Relationships and Student Personal Development*.
- Parents in their 20's and 30's showed more positive attitude toward *Spiritual Focus* in Adventist schools in Canada, than those in their 40's.
- Parents in their 20's and 30's showed more positive attitude toward *Academic Excellence*, and *Interpersonal Relationships and Student Personal Development*, in Adventist schools in Canada, than those in their 40's, 50's and 60's.
- The younger the parents, the more positive they appear to be toward the *Spiritual Focus*, *Academic Excellence*, and *Interpersonal Relationships and Student Personal Development* in Adventist schools in Canada.

Differences Between Adventist and Non-Adventist Parents

- There were no significant differences in attitudes toward the increase of *Church Subsidy* (accessibility) for Adventist schools in Canada.
- Non-Adventist parents had much more positive attitude than the Adventist parents toward *Spiritual Focus, Academic Excellence, Accessibility* (affordability, adequate facilities, school location, government funding), *Administrators and Teachers, Interpersonal Relationships and Student Personal Development*, and *Safe Learning Environment* in Adventist schools in Canada.
- Adventist parents were more of the opinion than the non-Adventist parents that the *Conference Subsidy* to the schools should be increased.

Employment Relationships

- No significant relationships were found between employment and attitudes toward *Accessibility* (affordability, church subsidy, conference subsidy, school location and government funding) to Adventist schools in Canada.
- However, parents who were students, and those who were unemployed had much more positive attitude toward *Spiritual Focus, Academic Excellence, Accessibility* (adequate facilities), *Administrators and Teachers, Interpersonal Relationships and Student Personal Development*, and *Safe Learning Environment* in Adventist schools in Canada than parents with various employment backgrounds.
- Parents employed by the Adventist Church were least positive.

Income Level Relationships

- No significant relationships were evident between income levels and parents' attitudes toward *Accessibility* (conference subsidy, school location, government funding) to Adventist schools in Canada.
- Parents who earned less than CAD\$30,000 a year were significantly more positive in their perceptions of *Spiritual Focus, Academic Excellence*, the need to increase *Church Subsidy*, in their attitudes toward *Administrators and Teachers, Interpersonal Relationships and Student Personal Development*, and *Safe Learning Environment* in Adventist schools in Canada than those who earned more.

- Parents who earned less than CAD\$30,000 a year had significantly higher level of agreement that *facilities in Adventist schools are adequate* than those who earned CAD\$30,000-50,000 or more than \$75,000. Those who earned CAD\$51,000-75,000 were higher than those who earned over CAD\$75,000.

Education Level Relationships

- No significant relationships were found between educational levels and attitudes toward *Spiritual Focus, Academic Excellence, School Accessibility* (adequate facilities, church subsidy, conference subsidy, government funding), *school administrators and teachers, interpersonal relationships and student personal development, and safe learning environment* in Adventist schools in Canada.
- Parents with elementary/secondary education had significantly higher level of agreement that Adventist schools in Canada are *conveniently located* than those parents who had college, master's/doctoral level of education.

Adventist School Attendance Relationships

- There were no significant relationships between years of attending Adventist schools and attitudes toward *Accessibility* (affordability, adequate facilities, church subsidy, conference subsidy, government funding) to Adventist schools in Canada.
- Significant but very weak negative correlations were evident between parents' years of attending Adventist schools and attitudes toward *Spiritual Focus, Academic Excellence, School Accessibility* (school location), *Administrators and Teachers, Interpersonal Relationships and Student Personal Development, and Safe Learning Environment* in Adventist schools in Canada.
- The longer parents studied in Adventist schools, the more negative, cynical, and skeptical they seemed to feel about them.

Differences Between Parents Who Would and Those Who Would Not Send Their Children to Adventist Elementary Schools in Canada

- No significant differences were found between parents who would and those who would not send their children to Adventist elementary schools and their attitudes toward *Accessibility* (affordability, adequate facilities, school location, government funding) to Adventist schools in Canada.

- Parents who would send their children to Adventist elementary schools were much more positive in their attitudes toward *Spiritual Focus, Academic Excellence, Accessibility* (Church Subsidy, Conference Subsidy), *Administrators and Teachers, Interpersonal Relationships and Student Personal Development*, and *Safe Learning Environment* in Adventist schools, than those who would not send their children to Adventist elementary schools.

Differences Between Parents Who Would and Those Who Would Not Send Their Children to Adventist Secondary Schools in Canada

- No significant differences were found between parents who would and those who would not send their children to Adventist secondary schools and their attitudes toward accessibility (affordability, adequate facilities, school location, government funding) and administrators and teachers in Adventist schools in Canada.
- However, parents who would send their children to Adventist secondary schools were much more positive in their attitudes toward *Spiritual Focus, Academic Excellence, School Accessibility* (church subsidy, conference subsidy), *Interpersonal Relationships and Student Personal Development*, and *Safe Learning Environment* in Adventist schools, than those who would not send their children to Adventist secondary schools.

Differences Between Parents Who Would and Those Who Would Not Send Their Children to Adventist College/University in Canada

- No significant differences were found between parents who would and those who would not send their children to an Adventist college/university and their attitudes toward *Spiritual Focus, Accessibility* (affordability, adequate facilities, school location) *Administrators and Teachers, Interpersonal Relationships and Student Personal Development*, and *Safe Learning Environment* in Adventist schools in Canada.
- Parents who would send their children to an Adventist college/university had more positive perception of the *Academic Excellence*, and *Accessibility* (increase of church and conference subsidies) in Adventist schools, than those who would not send their children to an Adventist college/university in Canada.
- Parents who would not send their children to an Adventist college/university were more favorable toward the acceptance of *Government Funding* than the parents who would send their children to an Adventist college/university.

Ethnic Bond Differences

- No significant relationships were evident between ethnicity and attitudes toward *Academic Excellence, Administrators and Teachers, Interpersonal Relationships and Student Personal Development, and Safe Learning Environment* in Adventist schools in Canada.
- Significant relationships were found between ethnicity and attitudes toward *Spiritual Focus, and School Accessibility Variables*.
- Parents of Asian, other, and Black ethnic bonds had significantly more positive perception of *Spiritual Focus* in Adventist schools in Canada than those of White ethnic bond.
- Parents of White ethnic background had significantly more positive attitude toward *Affordability and Facilities Adequacy* of Adventist schools in Canada than those of Black ethnic background.
- Parents of Asian and Black ethnic bond were significantly more in agreement to increase the *Church Subsidy* to the Adventist schools than those of White ethnic bond.
- Parents of Black ethnic bond were significantly more in agreement that *Conference Subsidy* to Adventist schools in Canada should be increased than those of White and other ethnic bond, and that Asians were more in agreement with it than Whites.
- Parents of White, other, and Asian ethnic bond had more positive attitude toward the *Location* of Adventist schools in Canada than those of Black ethnic bond.
- Parents of Asian ethnic bond were significantly more in agreement that Adventist schools should accept *Government Funding* than parents of any other ethnic bond. Those of White ethnic bond were significantly more in agreement than those of Black ethnic bond.

Three Main Reasons for Sending Children to Adventist Schools (see Table 5)

- Adventist parents with or without children in Adventist schools: (1) spiritual focus, (2) safe and caring environment, and (3) dedicated school personnel.
- Non-Adventist parents with children in Adventist schools: (1) safe and caring environment, (2) high quality academics, and (3) spiritual focus.
- All respondents together chose: (1) spiritual focus, (2) safe and caring environment, and (3) high quality academics.

Table 5

Ranking of Reasons for Sending Children to Adventist Schools

Description	Group 1		Group 2		Group 3		Total		Rank Order
	N	%*	N	%*	N	%*	N	%*	
Spiritual focus	763	89.8	22	9.2	149	54.6	934	68.6	1
Safe and caring environment	481	56.6	12	5.0	175	64.1	668	49.0	2
High quality academics	303	35.6	8	3.3	150	54.9	461	33.8	3
Dedicated school personnel	310	36.5	10	4.2	115	42.1	435	31.9	4
Social life	190	22.4	4	1.7	25	9.2	219	16.1	5
Other	72	8.5	2	0.8	38	13.9	112	8.2	6
Affordable tuition	53	6.2	3	1.3	54	19.8	110	8.1	7
Convenient location	68	8.0	3	1.3	32	11.7	103	7.6	8

Note. Group 1 = Adventist parents with children in Adventist schools; Group 2 = Adventist parents with no children in Adventist schools; Group 3 = non-Adventist parents with children in Adventist schools. *Percentages do not necessarily add up to 100% because respondents were asked to indicate three responses.

Three Main Reasons for Not Sending Children to Adventist Schools (see Table 6)

- Adventist parents with children in Adventist schools as well as in other schools: (1) high tuition costs, (2) distance from home, and (3) lack of high quality academics.
- Adventist parents without children in Adventist schools: (1) distance from home, (2) high tuition costs, and (3) lack of high quality academics.
- Non-Adventist: (1) high tuition costs, (2) other, and (3) lack of transportation or lack of extra curricular activities.
- All respondents together chose: (1) high tuition costs, (2) distance from home and (3) other as three main reasons for not sending children to Adventist schools.

Table 6

Ranking of Reasons for Not Sending Children to Adventist Schools

Description	Group 1		Group 2		Group 3		Total		Rank Order
	N	%*	N	%*	N	%*	N	%*	
High tuition costs	54	6.4	127	53.1	11	4.0	192	14.1	1
Distance from home	35	4.1	129	54.0	6	2.2	170	12.5	2
Other	30	3.5	55	23.0	10	3.7	95	7.0	3
Lack of high quality academics	32	3.8	58	24.3	2	0.7	92	6.8	4
Lack of transportation	14	1.6	48	20.1	8	2.9	70	5.1	5
Lack of extra-curricular activities	20	2.4	34	14.2	8	2.9	62	4.6	6
Lack of spiritual focus	16	1.9	24	10.0	0	0.0	40	2.9	7
Home schooling	12	1.4	23	9.6	4	1.5	39	2.9	8

Note. Group 1 = Adventist parents with children in Adventist schools; Group 2 = Adventist parents with no children in Adventist schools; Group 3 = non-Adventist parents with children in Adventist schools. *Percentages do not necessarily add up to 100% because respondents were asked to indicate three responses.

Comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative (Written In Comments) Data

Of the 1,389 valid, usable surveys that were returned, 754 (or 54.3 %) chose to make written comments, ranging from a few words like “Thank you for all you do for my kids”(#699-3) or “The quality of the academics could be higher” (#150-1) to lengthy commentaries in excess of 500 words (#503-1 or #112-2). The comments were given a number and categorized. The 1, 2, and 3 stand for groups where respondents came from: 1- Adventist parents with children in Adventist schools, 2 - Adventist parents without children in Adventist schools, and 3 - non-Adventist parents with children in Adventist schools. Some of the comments were positive but most were not.

Table 5 presents the major themes/issues 501 parents commented on. Some of the comments were positive but, as one would expect, most were not.

Table 5

Major Themes From Parents' Comments

Major Themes	Total %	Total N	Group 1 N	Group 2 N	Group 3 N
Funding & Affordability	24	122	74	29	19
Curriculum and Academics	18	89	60	16	13
Teachers and Teaching	17	87	63	18	6
Spiritual Atmosphere and Adventist Standards	15	76	57	15	4
Location & Accessibility	9	45	23	16	6
Special Education Needs	6	32	18	10	4
Bullying	5	26	16	6	4
Discipline	5	24	15	5	4
Total	100	501	326	115	60

Note. Group 1 = Adventist parents with children in Adventist schools; Group 2 = Adventist parents with no children in Adventist schools; Group 3 = non-Adventist parents with children in Adventist schools.

Other concerns with negligible number of proponents included the need for uniforms (9), dealing with racial issues (4), nepotism (4), favoritism (4), school appearance (3), and safety concerns (3). There were still other miscellaneous comments (117) which varied greatly from scheduling to marketing, to need for playground equipment and wish music lessons could be taught at the school. The remainder (109) of the comments are like #143-1, “Christian education should be promoted strongly in every family’s home,” or #364-1, “God bless our school,” or #445-3, “So sorry to see the school close on Fresh Water Rd., St. John’s, NFLD.” They are just “wish this questionnaire had been in French” (#301-1) or “Thank you for providing Adventist

Christian education!" (439-2) sorts of comments. Some had a litany of complaints related to the local school that really weren't theme-oriented and couldn't be used but were shared with the school principals.

There appears to be coherence between the quantitative and qualitative data findings. Of all Likert type survey items, item 10, "Sending children to the Adventist school is affordable," ranked last ($M = 3.20$, - Table 4), meaning that sending children to Adventist schools in Canada, for many parents, is not affordable. This seems to be congruent with parents' comments. Although some parents felt that "Adventist education is worth its weight in Gold!!" (#94-1), or that "The tuition is not affordable compared to public education, but is affordable compared to a non-denominational Christian school" (#744-3), most of the parents said, "I would love to send my children to church school but can't afford to!" (#65-2:), "My family and I are surely supportive of Adventist education, but it is very expensive, we just can't afford it" (#586-1), "If it were financially possible for me to send my precious ones there, I would" (#571-2), or "I would send all of my children to an Adventist school if the cost were within reach" (#602-1).

Survey item 11, "Students have access to a variety of resources" ($M = 3.44$), also ranked low, meaning that variety of resources are often perceived as lacking. Provisions of increased funding are seen by parents as a solution to the problem: "Any negatives we see could be fixed if the school had more money for such things as science lab, computers, larger library, etc." (#227-1). This funding, in their opinion should come from increased subsidies from the church (survey item 19 - Table 4 and 6, $M = 3.50$) - "The Adventist church should be allocating an enormous amount of funds into the school system globally and locally" #606-1; and especially conferences (survey item 21, $M = 3.94$) - "I think that somehow the Conferences should be able to provide subsidy or some sort of plan to make it more affordable for those with more than one child easier to pay for tuition" (#484-1). For parents, increased funding would also secure quality teachers, "We need to focus on better wages for teachers so that we may attract more qualified teachers" (#16-1).

Curriculum and academic concerns seem also to be present in both quantitative and qualitative data. Overall, academic excellence scale ranked lower than school administrators and teachers scale, safe learning environment, interpersonal relationships and student personal development, and spiritual focus scale (see Table 3). Also, the lower means of the last two items in this group seem to indicate a wish for a greater variety of resources ($M = 3.44$), and the need to provide more extracurricular activities ($M = 3.41$) at the school. Similarly, many parents commented that "The quality of academics could be higher" (#150-1); "If the academic quality doesn't improve once he reaches secondary grades, I will send him to a school which will provide the produce he needs." (#422-1); "We feel that its academic standards are not as high as we would like. The spectrum of classes is limited by the number of students and teachers. Resources, especially library and computer, are limited" (#434-1)".

The attitudes toward teachers described in quantitative as well as in qualitative data are also similar. Many respondents felt that teachers were competent in their subject areas ($M = 3.93$): “While most teachers are generally competent, a few teachers are very inept” (#26-1); “The teachers are dedicated and motivated and with very few exceptions well qualified” (#166-1).

However, there were those who were not as positive: “Poor quality staff in private system is difficult to eliminate for religious/political reasons and are usually passed on to another school” (#128-2); “The school is only as good as the teacher. We do not plan to have our child return next year” (#409-3); “I totally agree with the spiritual focus, but academically needs improvement with regard to teachers” (#412-2); “There are teachers who ‘don’t teach.’ They put the assignment on the board and then let the students work alone” (#537-1); or “Parents must be assured that all teachers are qualified teachers. This is where we worry about the quality of our children’s education” (#530-1).

Also, most parents felt that teachers care about students ($M = 4.15$): “Our local academy has excellent caring teachers” (#690-3); “Exceptional staff. My child has never been happier in school!” (#684-3); “My children love school for the first time; they have flourished. I owe it all to the caring and patience of the teachers at the school ” (#738-3); “The teachers are nice and helpful, but the academic level could be more rigorous with less “busy work”. Too much rote activity (meaningless projects) without a focus on a true depth of understanding” (#474-1).

Spiritual focus ranked highest in Adventist schools in Canada (see Tables 3). Some comments classified under the theme of spiritual atmosphere and Adventist standards confirmed it with statements such as, “I thank the Lord for giving me this opportunity to have my children in His school. . . . Thank God my children [are] growing closer to Him” (#636-1). However, others said: “More spiritual focus needed” (#610-1); or “I believe we have too much worldliness in our schools in general” (#270-2).

Although the survey item 16, “School administrators’ and teachers’ lives are consistent with Adventist beliefs and lifestyle” ($M = 3.74$), obtained an agreeable score, there were parents who commented negatively about the issue: “The system is supposed to be good, but it’s the unconverted faculty members who make the school institution look bad” (#627-2); “But spiritually the school lacks. I’m not satisfied with several of the teachers, some attend church very little. Some are godly examples, and some need to be fired now!” (#243-1); “Teachers should be an example of what they expect from kids with respect to hair coloring, jewelry, makeup, and clothes” (#466-1); or “Our family finds the standard of morality at our school has decreased drastically since we began at our school nine years ago” (#698-3).

Table 4 shows that, in the area of school accessibility, most respondents are of the opinion that the school is conveniently located ($M = 3.72$). However, the following parents’ comments express a concern: “The closest Adventist school is 400+ kms. away from my home” (#416-2); “I travel about 60-65 kms. one way to take my son to school.

We need a bus to transport them (students)” (#536-1); or “My children spent at least one hour each way to go to school and back home, but it was fine with us. . . However, when we moved to a new home, access to school bus stops was difficult; hence, we decided to send them to a public elementary school near our place” (#171-3).

Special education needs have not been a part of this study. Adventist schools in Canada are usually not equipped to deal with special needs. However, a good number of parents (76) wanted some kind of support: “Our Adventist perspectives toward special needs kids seem to be lacking much compared to others” (#183-1); “Children with special learning and behavioral issues deserve more support” (#463-1); “If a child has an exceptionality, they are discouraged from attending... I have no confidence in the Adventist education system” (#634-2); or “I feel a big problem with our school is a lack of resources for students who need extra help” (#739-3).

The lower mean for survey item 8, “Bullying is NOT a problem at the school” ($M = 3.41$, or 68.2% - Tables 2), seems to indicate that respondents perceived it as a problem in many Adventist schools in Canada. This is congruent with parents’ comments who stated: “Our school presently has a problem with bullies” (#29-1); “Bullying is a problem at the Adventist school. It was when I was a student and it still is” (#112-2); “We believe that the school has become easy for children who bully and disrupt others. It seems that they are the ones who receive the special treatment and are kept in the school when they should be asked to leave” (#698-3).

Although the mean for the survey item 12 ($M = 3.57$), “Discipline problems are handled effectively at the school,” is at or slightly above the minimum considered acceptable in this study, 3.5 - the lower limit of “agree”, it is one of the lowest scores in the safe learning environment scale. Here too, there appears to be coherence between the quantitative and qualitative data findings. The following are comments in support of more effective discipline in Adventist schools in Canada: “Too lenient when it comes to alcohol and drugs” (#56-1); “Children in our local church who go to our Adventist school do not manifest a behavior that we can be proud of” (#572-2); “This school seems to be a catchment school for all the kids that have discipline problems... we accept them because it boosts attendance and helps with money issues, but it discourages students like mine so he won’t be back next year.” (#702-3); “The environment is friendly, but undisciplined”... (#753-3). And yet, another parent said: “Learning is great, expectations are clear and any problems are quickly dealt with” (#721-3).

In sum, there appears to be coherence between the quantitative and qualitative data findings in the various concerns that need to be addressed. The comparison of the quantitative and qualitative findings showed congruence between both on the following:

- the lack of funding for and affordability of Adventist schools in Canada,
- curriculum and academic concerns,

- teachers and teaching needs,
- spiritual atmosphere and Adventist standards challenges,
- the distance from home to schools and accessibility to them,
- bullying, and
- discipline challenges.

The only issue that has not been addressed in the survey but significantly commented on by the parents was the 'special education needs'.

Attending Adventist schools in Canada, for many parents, appears not affordable. A variety of resources are often perceived as lacking and the facilities are considered inadequate for high quality education due to lack of funds. Increased funding from the churches and especially conferences, and in some cases the acceptance of government funding, are seen by parents as a solution to the problem.

Curriculum, including extracurricular activities, and academic concerns seem to be present in both quantitative and qualitative data. There is a need for a greater variety of resources and more extracurricular activities in Adventist schools in Canada. Overall, academic excellence scale ranked lower than other scales in this study. In many cases parents commented that the quality of academics could be higher and that teachers, although perceived as mostly competent, could update their methods of teaching and strengthen their teaching skills.

Although spiritual focus scale ranked highest in Adventist schools in Canada, some parents indicated that there was a room for growth in this area as well. This was especially true in the area of teachers' lives being consistent with Adventist beliefs and lifestyle. Some parents wanted some teachers to be more involved in the local churches and be positive Adventist role models to their children, especially in their outward appearance. A number of schools seem to be far away from the places where Adventist parents with school age children live. The access to them by school buses is often a challenge. that will need to be addressed.

Also, both quantitative and qualitative data indicated that bullying is a problem and that discipline is a challenge in many Adventist schools in Canada. Special education needs have not been a part of this study. Adventist schools in Canada are usually not equipped to deal with special needs students. However, a good number of parents wanted some kind of support which will need to be considered by the educational administrators of Adventist schools in Canada.

Recommendations for Practice

- Launch a vigorous and sustained educational marketing campaign, capitalizing on strengths of Adventist education in Canada: Spiritual Focus, Interpersonal Relationships and Student Personal Development, and Safe and Caring Environment.
- Explore ways to improve the affordability of Adventist schools in Canada, making it possible for all Adventist children/youth to attend Adventist schools.
- Consider means and ways to address the need in many Adventist schools in Canada for greater variety of learning resources, to improve the adequacy of school facilities for high quality education, and to provide a variety of extracurricular activities.
- Formulate a philosophy regarding bullying, write an anti-bullying policy, and implement and maintain an anti-bullying program.
- Investigate why the non-Adventist parents are so much more positive than Adventist parents in their attitudes toward Adventist schools in Canada.
- Survey Adventist church employees (pastors, teachers, other) to find out why their attitudes are so negative toward Adventist schools in Canada.
- Investigate why the longer parents studied in Adventist schools, the more negative, cynical, and skeptical they seem to feel about them.
- Find ways and means to improve academic excellence in Adventist schools in Canada.
- Formulate a policy for dealing with special needs students in the regular classroom.