



INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION IN CANADIAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2026



Canadian Association of
Public Schools - International

Association canadienne des
écoles publiques - International

OUR MISSION

Canadian Association of Public Schools-International is committed to advocacy and promotion of international education programs in Canadian public schools.

CAPS-I'S MANDATE IS TO:

- foster a collaborative approach in the promotion of international education opportunities across Canada
- act as a forum for sharing information about international education in public schools
- ensure that all member programs adhere to the prescribed practices related to 'Student Care & Support, Homestay Screening & Selection, Homestay Monitoring & Support, and Working with Partners/Agents'
- serve as a resource for K-12 international student programs
- promote a unified "Canadian" approach to international education practices across the country
- initiate, facilitate, and coordinate joint marketing activities
- become a provincially, nationally, and internationally recognized organization
- act as an advocate for K-12 international education
- collaborate with provincial and federal governments and international educational groups within and outside of Canada

CAPS-I BELIEVES THAT...

- international education strengthens public education in Canada
- public schools in Canada must provide excellent international education programming to international students
- ongoing support is essential to maximize success for international students in schools and homestays
- international students provide a complementary, enriching experience to the Canadian multi-cultural mosaic
- the presence of international programs assist Canadian staff and students in preparing for life in the global community of the future
- the multi-national relationships developed through international programs will result in long term benefits for Canada
- investment in international education programs in public schools is beneficial for sustainability and growth of international programs in a competitive, world-wide market



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AN OVERVIEW

During the 2025-2026 school year, the Canadian Association of Public Schools – International’s (CAPS-I) membership of 125 school boards/districts/divisions fostered welcoming and inclusive environments for 31,875 international students from 130 countries. This is an overall decline of 4% compared to the prior school year and can be attributed to a number of factors and pressures reshaping global student mobility.

For over two decades, the international education industry commonly referred to the ‘Big 4’ destinations — the US, UK, Australia and Canada. More recently, this number has increased to recognize 14 competitor countries in part due to some traditional source markets (such as Japan and South Korea) having transitioned into sought after study abroad destinations. Layered onto this changing landscape are geopolitical tensions, economic instability, as well as rising travel, tuition and living expenses exacerbated by some currency devaluations. The continued proliferation of offshore schools and transnational education opportunities primarily in Asian source markets has also had an impact.

Last year the Canadian public school sector experienced a notable decline in the number of applications from historically strong source markets such as China, Vietnam, Hong Kong and Mexico. In part, declines were offset by efforts to diversify recruitment in other markets, particularly across Europe. However, European demand is significantly different and shorter-term, with most students enrolling for a semester or just one academic year. A shift in demand has also become evident in some markets (such as China) with shorter term educational experiences increasing in popularity.

While no measures specifically targeted the K-12 sector, the various immigration policy changes imposed by the Canadian government over the last 2 1/2 years have continued to have an impact across all sectors. These measures have caused confusion, disappointment and have changed pathway/future post-secondary and employment opportunities for international students, weakening the Canadian ‘brand.’

It is important to note that approximately half of CAPS-I member programs that experienced a decline or no growth in enrolment also cited internal constraints, including limitations in terms of school capacity and host family availability. On a positive note, 40% expected school capacity to improve in the next 1-3 years and host family capacity is always a priority.

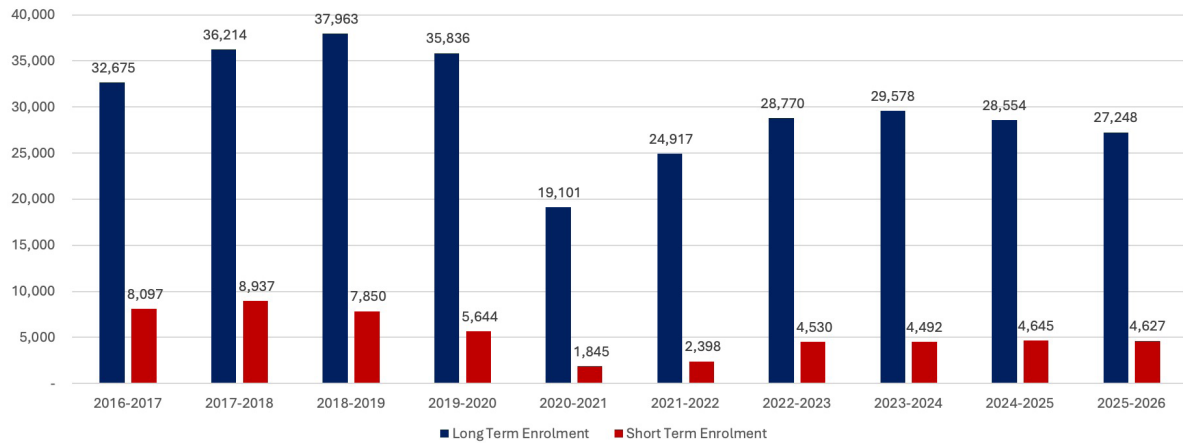
CAPS-I remains committed to the advocacy and promotion of international education programs as international students make significant contributions to their communities and have an incredibly positive impact on public schools across Canada. CAPS-I will continue to advocate for and develop best practices among our membership, support members in diversifying their international student enrolment and support agents and prospective students to find educational opportunities within members’ programs.

CAPS-I and member programs from coast to coast are built on a solid foundation and continue to be highly regarded. Strong relationships, collaboration, ingenuity and adaptability will ensure our association and membership remain competitive in the K-12 global marketplace.



2025-2026 ENROLMENT DATA

Totals for long term (one semester or full academic year) and short term enrolment.



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27,248

Long Term Students (Full Year/1 Semester)

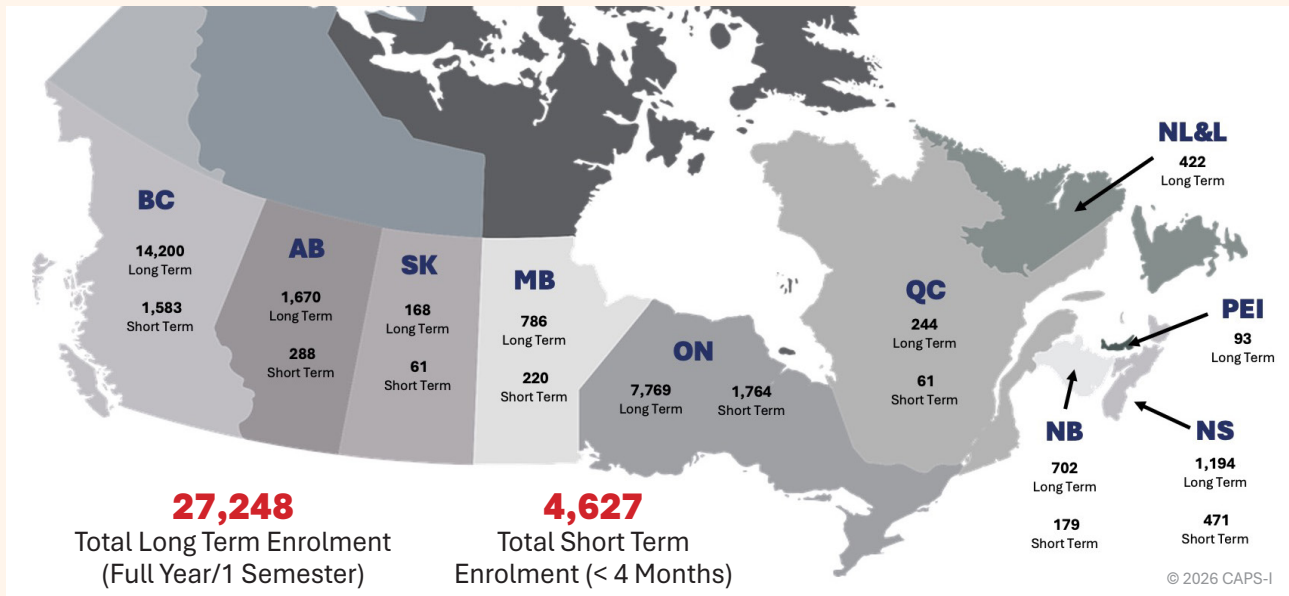
4,627

Short Term Students (< 4 Months)

4%

DECREASE IN ENROLMENT

CAPS-I members enrolled a total 31,875 students during the 2025-2026 school year compared to 33,199 in 2024-2025. This is a decline in enrolment of 4% from the year prior, with the number of both Long Term (1 semester or full academic year) and Short Term (<4 months) students declining. Important to note that the composition of CAPS-I's membership of school boards/districts/divisions can also change year to year.

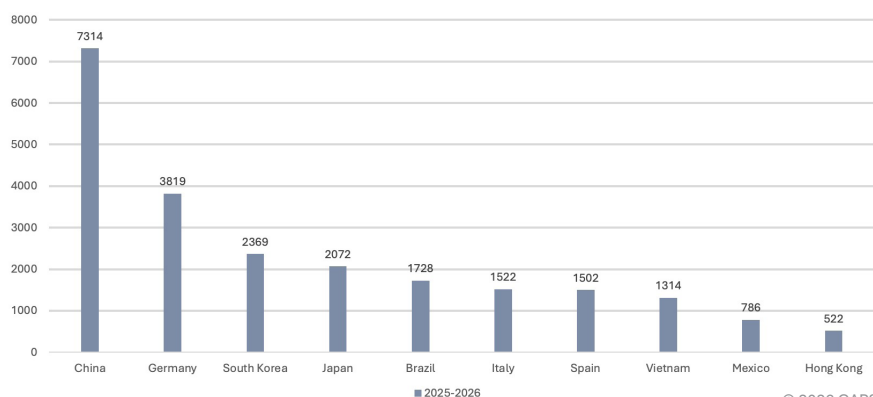


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In 2025-2026, only the provinces of British Columbia (1%) and Newfoundland (5%) experienced increases in Long Term tuition fee-paying student enrolment. PEI's enrolment remained the same, Nova Scotia had a modest decline of just under 3% and other provinces' enrolment declined between 11-20%. Conversely, all provinces reporting Short Term student enrolment experienced an increase with the exception of British Columbia.

TOP 20 SOURCE COUNTRIES OF 'LONG TERM' INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENROLMENT

Top 10 source countries of students enrolled for 1 semester or full academic year of 2025-2026



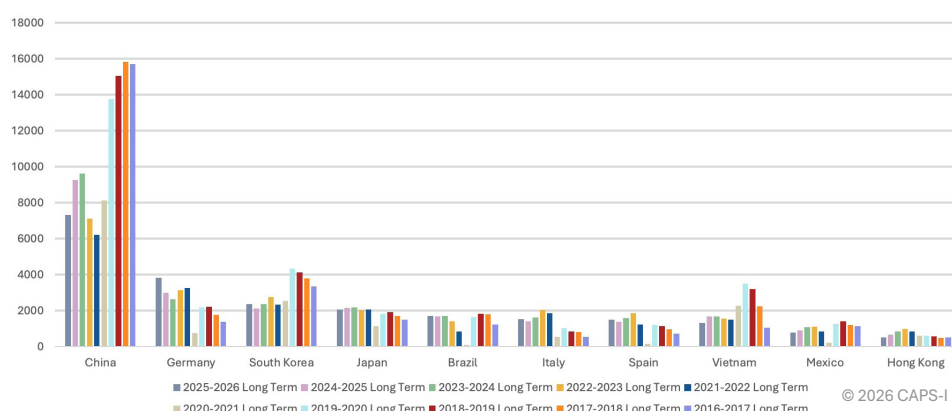
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In 2025-2026, the Top 10 source countries of Long Term (1 semester or full academic year) students were the same as the year prior.

Although China remained the #1 source market, enrolment fell 21% compared to 2024-2025. Members experienced a 27% surge in student enrolment from Germany and it remained the 2nd largest source country. A 10% increase in enrolment from South Korea and a 3.5% decline in students from Japan resulted in South Korea moving into the Top 3. Brazil held 5th position with a 2% increase in 2025-2026.

Enrolment of students from both Italy and Spain increased 7.5% and 9.5% respectively. A 22% decline in enrolment from Vietnam resulted in its fall from 6th to 8th. Mexico and Hong Kong continued to round out the Top 10 source countries with 14.6% & 21.5% decreases in enrolment.

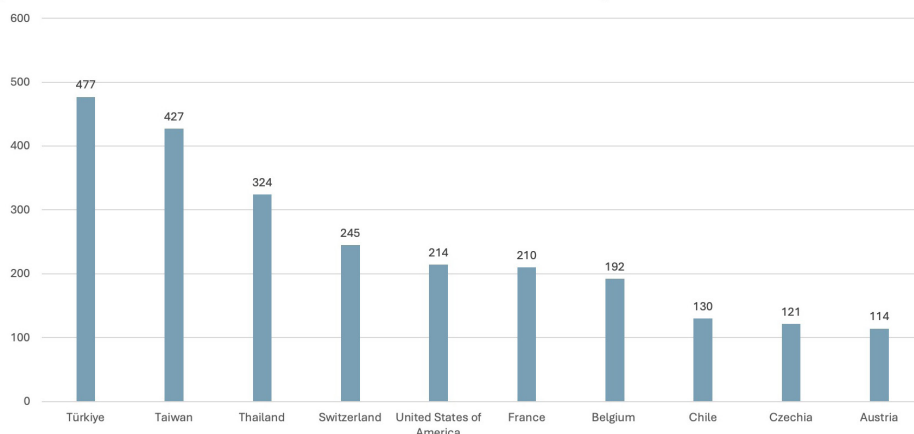
Top 10 source countries of students enrolled for 1 semester or the full academic year over the last 10 years



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Looking at the Top 11-20 source countries of Long Term (1 semester or full academic year) students, all experienced an increase in enrolment with the exception of Thailand. The most notable increase was a 50% rise in Swiss student enrolment with the most other countries increasing between 9-14%. Czechia and Austria also moved onto the Top 20 list of source countries for the first time. There was a decline in the number of students from Iran and Colombia moving these markets out of the Top 20.

Top 11-20 source countries of students enrolled for 1 semester or full academic year of 2025-2026

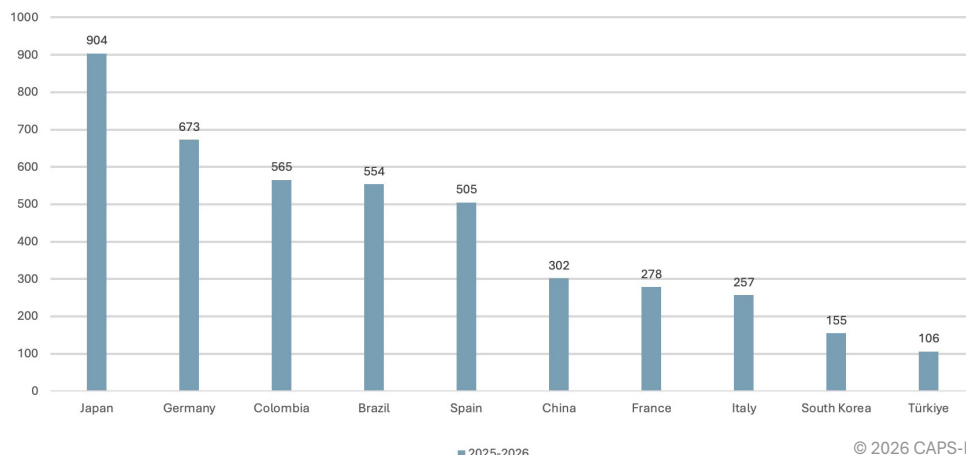


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TOP 10 SOURCE COUNTRIES OF 'SHORT TERM' INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENROLMENT

Top 10 source countries of students studying for 4 months or less from 2025-2026

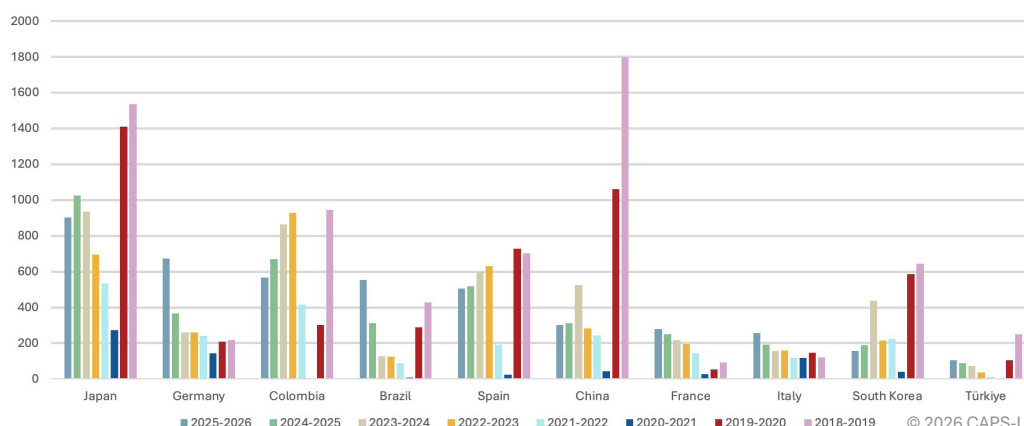


Some CAPS-I members also enrol tuition fee-paying international students in non-credit 'programs' of shorter duration, typically 4 months or less.

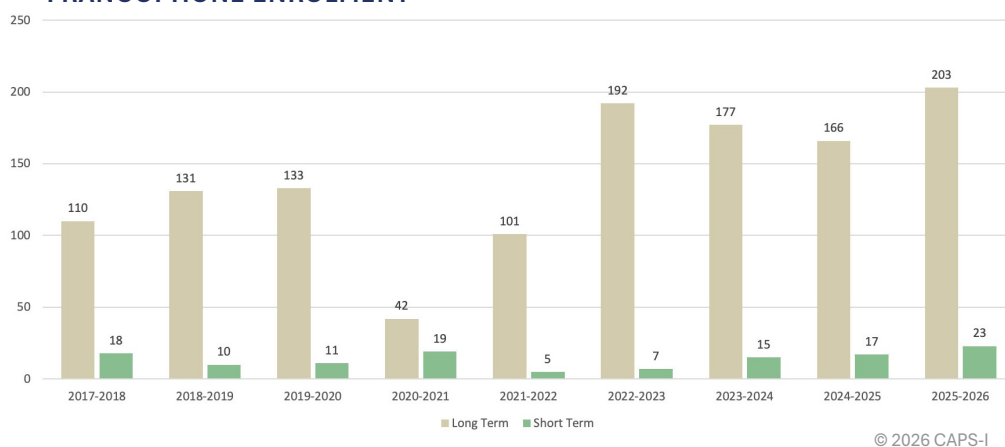
Throughout 2025-2026, 4627 Short Term students were enrolled compared to 4645 in 2024-2025, less than a 1% variation. Japan remained the largest source country followed by Germany, Colombia, Brazil and Spain. Similar to the growth in long term students, there was a significant increase in the number of short term students enrolling from Germany (84%). Brazil followed closely behind with a 78% increase. France, Italy and Türkiye also showed promising growth.

Offsetting the growth, the membership experienced a decline in enrolment of Japanese (12%) and Colombian (15.5%) short term students. There was also a nominal decline in the number of students from Spain, China, South Korea and Thailand. The decline in number of students from Thailand resulted in it no longer being among the Top 10 source countries of short term students.

Top 10 source countries of students studying for 4 months or less over the last 8 years



FRANCOPHONE ENROLMENT



Our Francophone member school boards saw growth in enrolment of international students in both short term and longer term programs in 2025-2026. However the 22% increase in enrolment of students studying in one semester or a full academic year was most notable.



ADVOCACY & INTEL

As the recognized voice of the K-12 sector for international education in Canada, CAPS-I is in regular communication with staff of Global Affairs Canada, Canadian Embassy/Consulates abroad, IRCC, provincial counterparts as well as other key stakeholders.

CAPS-I maintains a record of the 2000+ prospective agencies that the association has met with or had participate in trade missions over the last decade. This resource supports members' market development efforts abroad.

MARKETING & PROMOTIONS

All CAPS-I members in compliance with the association's Standards of Practice have a dedicated page online at caps-i.ca/education-in-canada/member-schools-list, in print in our Guidebook (updated annually) and a listing on our Map of Schools. caps-i.ca/resources/promotional-materials

Each year CAPS-I hosts missions to primary or emerging markets around the globe. These missions provide members with an opportunity to gain market intelligence, meet 1:1 with agent representatives and network with colleagues.

CAPS-I exhibits and presents at Agent Workshop events both virtually and in-person around the globe (5 to 8 times per year) promoting member programs and distributing CAPS-I's Guidebook, map posters, and other resources.

Members are profiled on CAPS-I's social media platforms including [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#). CAPS-I's YouTube Channel features testimonials of students from 25 different countries.

Members are given the opportunity to participate in collaborative print ads in popular industry publications each year. Some publications are country-specific while others are broader in scope.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CAPS-I offers a three-day annual conference in early May each year. Next year our conference will be held in Moncton, NB from May 2-4, 2027. The conference offers 60 workshop sessions, many of them a sharing of best practices by members. Each year, more than 30 industry service providers also attend and many provide tailored or discounted services to CAPS-I members.

CAPS-I's mentorship program is available to new staff in leadership positions of International Student Programs.

he Association also offers a virtual webinar series each Spring/Fall for the host families of CAPS-I member programs and students.

RESOURCES

Members Online Portal – Collection of resources and past conference presentation slide decks

CAPS-I App – Useful not only for the annual conference program but for year round access to resources

Critical Incident Response Guide – Addresses 16 different potential critical incidents and safety while travelling abroad

Travel Best Practices – Supports international travel policies/procedures for International Student Program staff

Leadership Competencies – Supports recruitment/development of ISP leaders through identified competencies

Gender Inclusivity in Homestay – Supports gender inclusive homestay program policies/practices

Membership with CAPS-I provides unparalleled support for International Student Program development as well as marketing and intel, sharing of best practices, advocacy and professional learning opportunities.

SAVE *the* DATE

CAPS-I ANNUAL CONFERENCE
MAY 2-4, 2027
MONCTON, NEW BRUNSWICK



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