

Survey Backgrounder

The national Angus Reid Vision Critical survey, commissioned by Let's Talk Science and Amgen Canada Inc, asked 502 students aged 16 – 18 their experience and perceptions of science today, and their intentions for future study. A companion Angus Reid omnibus survey asked more than 1,000 Canadians their belief in the importance of post-secondary science education, scientific study as well as the role of science in their everyday lives. The survey revealed statistics about Canadian's perspective on science literacy:

Survey says...

- **Watching your favourite television show, popping popcorn in the microwave and driving to school or work are just some of the ways science impacts Canadians on a daily basis.** However, 28 per cent of Canadian teens ages 16-18 years believe that science has no relevance to everyday life.

Can science be fun?

- **Ask business man, entrepreneur and philanthropist Brett Wilson...** While thirty-six per cent of 16-18 year olds think that science is boring, taking sciences does not necessarily lead to a job that requires a lab coat.
- **Fun or not, students definitely recognize the importance of science in society today and for the future.** Seventy per cent of Canadian teens agree that understanding science is more important today than when their parents were in school.
- **Olympic athletes, film directors and actors don't seem geeky... do they?** Eighty-one per cent of students stated that someone in the science profession is best described as "intelligent". Only eight per cent stated that they can be described as "exciting."
- **Take a break from studying!** Twenty-four per cent of students state that doing lab activities is their favourite part of science class.

Battle of the Sexes

- **What will the year 2025 look like?** Thirty-seven per cent of female students and 29 per cent of male students agree that if fewer students pursue science then this will have an impact on our society in the long term.
- **Life and living organisms not *his* cup of tea?** Apparently not – only 23 per cent of male students – compared to 38 per cent of female students – prefer biology class. Rather, more male students (30 per cent versus 27 per cent of females) prefer studying matter, motion and the laws of physics...

Mentors important in science education

- **Do teachers deserve more than an apple this year?** Seventy per cent of students agree that their teachers really influence their perception of science and a further 15 per cent state that the way their teachers teach science makes it their favourite thing about science class.
- **Mentors, like teachers, can play an important role in a child's success.** Eighty per cent of 16-18 year olds agree that having easy access to mentors or homework help would help them succeed in science.

Beyond the Classroom

- **Soccer practice and dance classes - why not try something new?** Only one in four (24 per cent) of 16-18 years olds have participated in an extra-curricular science program and only half (48 per cent) of students surveyed know someone who uses scientific knowledge or principles in their job/career.
- **Money, money, money!** Ninety-two per cent of students recognize that studying science can lead to a well-paid career and 82 per cent believe science offers many career options; however, 37 per cent are not interested at all in pursuing science at a post-secondary level.

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