Leger

Report

Back-to-School Season

A survey of Canadians

August 18, 2025

Methodology

This week, we surveyed Canadians with children in school on their attitudes and feelings about the back-to-school season.

Method

Online survey among respondents 18 years of age or older. (Canadian sample: **n= 1,512**)

Respondents had the option of completing the survey in French and English and were randomly recruited using LEO's online panel.

Weighting

Results were weighted according to **age, gender, mother tongue, region, education and presence of children in the household** in order to ensure a representative sample of the Canadian population.

Notes

A more detailed methodology is presented in the Appendix.

When

Data collection from **August 15 to August 18, 2025**.

Margin of error

For comparison purposes, a probability sample of this size yields a margin of error no greater than **±4.83%**, (19 times out of 20) for the sample.

Significant differences

Data in bold **red** characters indicate a significantly lower proportion than that of other respondents. Conversely, data in bold **green** characters indicate a significantly higher proportion than that of other respondents.

Rounded data

The numbers presented have been rounded up. However, the numbers before rounding were used to calculate the sums presented and might therefore not correspond to the manual addition of these numbers.

Questions

Have questions about the data presented in this report? Please contact Andrew Enns, Executive Vice-President, Central Canada at the following e-mail address: aenns@leger360.com or Sébastien Dallaire, Executive Vice-President, Eastern Canada, at sdallaire@leger360.com.

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The Most Accurate Polling Firm in Canada

CANADA 2025

	LEGER POLL Published on April 26, 2025	OFFICIALS RESULTS 2025 Canada Federal Election
	43%	43.7%
	39%	41.3%
NDP	8%	6.3%
	6%	6.3%
GREEN PARTY	2%	1.2%

BRITISH COLUMBIA 2024

	LEGER POLL Published on October 18, 2024	OFFICIALS RESULTS 2024 British Columbia Provincial Election
BC NDP	46%	45%
	42%	43%
greens	9%	8%
Others	3%	4%

UNITED STATES 2024

	LEGER POLL Published on November 4, 2024	OFFICIALS RESULTS 2024 United States Presidential Election
	49%	50%
	49%	48%
Others	2%	2%

Key Highlights

Some of the key highlights of our survey…

Financial Impact and Stress of Back-to-School

- A majority of parents are noticing higher costs for school supplies. Six in ten (60%) say expenses have risen compared to last year, and one in five (21%) describe them as much higher. Families with children in public schools are the most likely to report increases, with 64% indicating higher costs. Regionally, Ontario parents are the most affected, with 69% reporting higher costs.
- Back-to-school spending is creating financial strain for many families. Nearly two-thirds (63%) say these expenses have a significant impact on their household budget. Younger parents are the most affected, with 74% of those aged 18 to 34 reporting a major impact.
- Beyond financial concerns, many parents also feel emotionally taxed by the back-to-school season. Overall, 58% find the process stressful, with 18% describing it as very stressful and 39% as somewhat stressful.

Preferences Regarding School Supplies

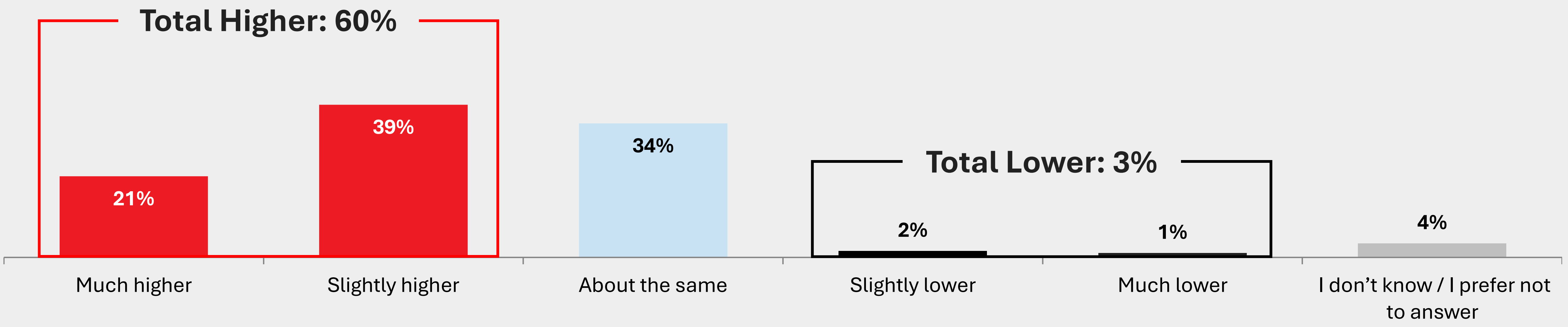
- Most parents (58%) prefer to buy all school supplies at the beginning of the school year, while 39% spread purchases out as needed throughout the year. This “all at once” approach is especially common in Quebec, where 80% of parents say they buy everything up front.
- When it comes to where parents shop, big-box retailers such as Walmart and Canadian Tire are by far the most popular choice (61%). Dollar stores (38%) and online retailers (38%) are also widely used, while about one-third of parents (34%) say they plan to reuse supplies from older children or past school years. The main factor influencing store choice is cost, with three in four parents (75%) prioritizing price. Product quality comes second (54%), while convenience also matters, as 28% value being able to find everything in one place.

Financial Impact and Stress of Back-to-School

Cost of School Supplies Compared to Last Year (1/2)

Q2. Compared to last year, do you find the cost of school supplies for your child(ren) to be...

Base: Respondents with children in school (n=319)



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Cost of School Supplies Compared to Last Year (2/2)

Q2. Compared to last year, do you find the cost of school supplies for your child(ren) to be...

Base: Respondents with children in school (n=319)

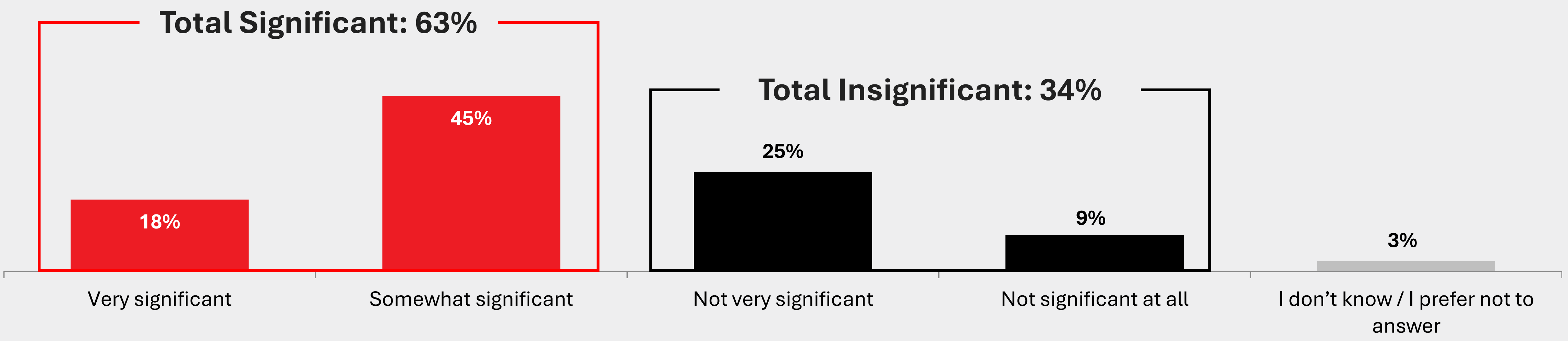
	Total CANADA	ATL	QC	ON	MB/SK	AB	BC	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Type of school attended: Public school	Private school	Home schooled
Weighted n=	***316***	***25***	***67***	***122***	***25***	***36***	***41***	***172***	***144***	***108***	***190***	***18***	***259***	***47***	***21***
Unweighted n=	***319***	***21****	***82***	***122***	***31***	***34***	***29****	***177***	***142***	***89***	***205***	***25****	***263***	***57***	***13****
TOTAL HIGHER	**60%**	51%	50%	69%	56%	55%	59%	60%	59%	56%	59%	85%	64%	54%	31%
Much higher	**21%**	6%	19%	27%	22%	5%	28%	20%	21%	17%	18%	64%	23%	17%	3%
Slightly higher	**39%**	45%	31%	42%	33%	50%	31%	40%	38%	39%	41%	21%	41%	37%	28%
About the same	**34%**	45%	46%	24%	32%	43%	33%	34%	35%	39%	34%	4%	30%	43%	51%
TOTAL LOWER	**3%**	0%	2%	4%	6%	0%	3%	3%	3%	2%	4%	0%	3%	1%	7%
Slightly lower	**2%**	0%	1%	3%	0%	0%	3%	1%	2%	0%	3%	0%	2%	1%	4%
Much lower	**1%**	0%	1%	1%	6%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	3%
Don't know / Refusal	**4%**	5%	2%	4%	6%	2%	5%	4%	3%	3%	3%	11%	3%	2%	11%

*Given the number of respondents (n<30), the results are presented for indicative purposes only.

Financial Impact of Back-to-School Expenses on Household Budget (1/2)

Q3. How would you describe the financial impact of back-to-school expenses on your household budget this year?

Base: Respondents with children in school (n=319)



Financial Impact of Back-to-School Expenses on Household Budget (2/2)

Q3. How would you describe the financial impact of back-to-school expenses on your household budget this year?
Base: Respondents with children in school (n=319)

	Total CANADA	ATL	QC	ON	MB/SK	AB	BC	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	*Type of school attended* Public school	Private school	Home schooled
Weighted n=	*316*	*25*	*67*	*122*	*25*	*36*	*41*	*172*	*144*	*108*	*190*	*18*	*259*	*47*	*21*
Unweighted n=	*319*	*21**	*82*	*122*	*31*	*34*	*29**	*177*	*142*	*89*	*205*	*25**	*263*	*57*	*13**
TOTAL SIGNIFICANT	**63%**	65%	61%	67%	74%	63%	47%	62%	64%	74%	56%	71%	64%	75%	31%
Very significant	**18%**	28%	18%	18%	26%	12%	15%	20%	16%	27%	12%	28%	20%	13%	10%
Somewhat significant	**45%**	37%	43%	49%	48%	51%	33%	42%	47%	47%	44%	43%	44%	62%	21%
TOTAL INSIGNIFICANT	**34%**	33%	39%	30%	26%	37%	42%	36%	32%	24%	41%	27%	33%	25%	69%
Not very significant	**25%**	20%	31%	22%	20%	30%	27%	24%	27%	20%	29%	17%	24%	21%	41%
Not significant at all	**9%**	13%	8%	8%	6%	7%	15%	12%	5%	4%	12%	10%	8%	4%	27%
Don't know / Refusal	**3%**	1%	0%	3%	0%	0%	10%	1%	4%	2%	3%	2%	3%	0%	0%

*Given the number of respondents (n<30), the results are presented for indicative purposes only.

Stress Related to Preparing for Back-to-School (1/2)

Q4. How stressful is it preparing for your children's Back to School?

Base: Respondents with children in school (n=319)

Stress Related to Preparing for Back-to-School (2/2)

Q4. How stressful is it preparing for your children's Back to School?
Base: Respondents with children in school (n=319)

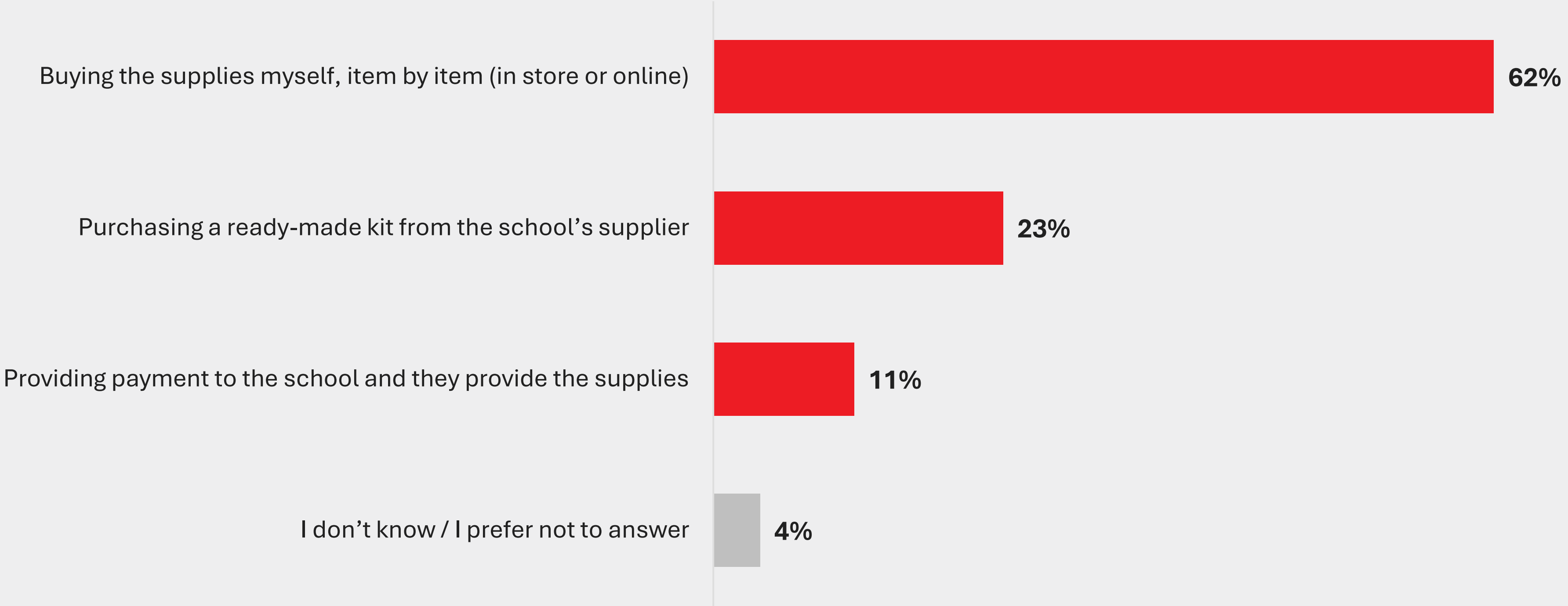
	Total CANADA	ATL	QC	ON	MB/SK	AB	BC	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Weighted n=	***316***	***25***	***67***	***122***	***25***	***36***	***41***	***172***	***144***	***108***	***190***	***18***
Unweighted n=	***319***	***21****	***82***	***122***	***31***	***34***	***29****	***177***	***142***	***89***	***205***	***25****
TOTAL STRESSFUL	**58%**	74%	54%	63%	42%	45%	57%	55%	61%	65%	53%	57%
Very stressful	**18%**	28%	18%	21%	14%	7%	18%	19%	17%	21%	17%	20%
Somewhat stressful	**39%**	46%	36%	42%	28%	39%	40%	36%	43%	44%	37%	37%
TOTAL NOT STRESSFUL	**42%**	26%	46%	37%	58%	55%	38%	45%	38%	35%	46%	43%
Not very stressful	**30%**	20%	35%	27%	40%	38%	26%	32%	28%	27%	33%	19%
Not at all stressful	**12%**	6%	11%	10%	18%	17%	12%	13%	10%	8%	12%	24%
Don't know	**1%**	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%

*Given the number of respondents (n<30), the results are presented for indicative purposes only.

Preferences Regarding School Supplies

Preferences Regarding School Supplies (1/2)

Q5. When it comes to school supplies, which of the following do you prefer?
Base: Respondents with children in school (n=319)



Preferences Regarding School Supplies (2/2)

Q5. When it comes to school supplies, which of the following do you prefer?

Base: Respondents with children in school (n=319)

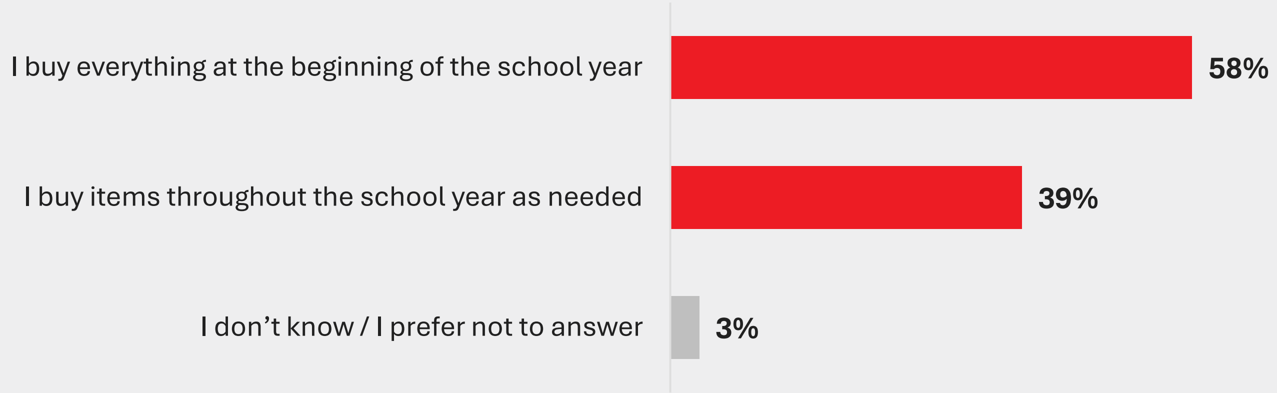
	Total Canada	ATL	QC	ON	MB/SK	AB	BC	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Weighted n=	***316***	***25***	***67***	***122***	***25***	***36***	***41***	***172***	***144***	***108***	***190***	***18***
Unweighted n=	***319***	***21****	***82***	***122***	***31***	***34***	***29****	***177***	***142***	***89***	***205***	***25****
Buying the supplies myself, item by item (in store or online)	**62%**	73%	62%	**70%**	55%	49%	47%	**54%**	**72%**	57%	64%	72%
Purchasing a ready-made kit from the school's supplier	**23%**	20%	29%	20%	19%	23%	27%	**30%**	**15%**	28%	21%	12%
Providing payment to the school and they provide the supplies	**11%**	5%	8%	**4%**	27%	29%	16%	12%	11%	9%	12%	10%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	**4%**	2%	1%	5%	0%	0%	10%	5%	3%	5%	3%	5%

*Given the number of respondents (n<30), the results are presented for indicative purposes only.

Timing of School Supply Purchases: Start of Year vs. As Needed

Q6. When it comes to school supplies, do you purchase everything at the beginning of the school year, or do you buy items throughout the year as needed?

Base: Respondents with children in school (n=319)



	Total Canada	ATL	QC	ON	MB/SK	AB	BC	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Weighted n=	***316***	***25***	***67***	***122***	***25***	***36***	***41***	***172***	***144***	***108***	***190***	***18***
Unweighted n=	***319***	***21****	***82***	***122***	***31***	***34***	***29****	***177***	***142***	***89***	***205***	***25****
I buy everything at the beginning of the school year	**58%**	69%	80%	50%	61%	52%	39%	58%	58%	61%	56%	56%
I buy items throughout the school year as needed	**39%**	31%	18%	46%	39%	45%	51%	40%	38%	36%	41%	41%
Don't know / Refusal	**3%**	0%	1%	4%	0%	2%	10%	3%	4%	3%	3%	2%

*Given the number of respondents (n<30), the results are presented for indicative purposes only.

Planned Purchase Locations for School Supplies (1/2)

Q7. Where do you plan to purchase most of your school supplies?

Base: Respondents with children in school (n=319)

Planned Purchase Locations for School Supplies (2/2)

Q7. Where do you plan to purchase most of your school supplies?

Base: Respondents with children in school (n=319)

	Total Canada	ATL	QC	ON	MB/SK	AB	BC	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Public school	Private school	Home schooled
													Type of school attended		
Weighted n=	***316***	***25***	***67***	***122***	***25***	***36***	***41***	***172***	***144***	***108***	***190***	***18***	***259***	***47***	***21***
Unweighted n=	***319***	***21****	***82***	***122***	***31***	***34***	***29****	***177***	***142***	***89***	***205***	***25****	***263***	***57***	***13****
Big-box retailers (e.g., Walmart, Canadian Tire)	**61%**	68%	64%	64%	60%	48%	59%	58%	66%	55%	64%	71%	63%	**41%**	74%
Dollar stores	**38%**	37%	**28%**	**50%**	40%	43%	16%	43%	32%	35%	39%	53%	**41%**	**22%**	42%
Online (e.g., Amazon, Staples.ca)	**38%**	49%	**27%**	42%	33%	38%	40%	43%	32%	44%	35%	31%	39%	38%	17%
I reuse school supplies from my older children or from previous school years	**34%**	28%	**46%**	**25%**	34%	42%	42%	**26%**	**45%**	**21%**	**41%**	43%	33%	38%	49%
Grocery stores	**11%**	1%	8%	12%	25%	19%	6%	**17%**	**4%**	18%	9%	0%	12%	12%	11%
Specialty shops or boutiques	**9%**	0%	**26%**	7%	0%	0%	6%	10%	8%	9%	9%	4%	8%	**22%**	3%
Second-hand / thrift stores	**7%**	6%	6%	5%	7%	7%	13%	5%	9%	8%	7%	0%	**5%**	10%	33%
Other	**5%**	0%	**13%**	**1%**	0%	14%	0%	3%	6%	**1%**	6%	6%	4%	8%	0%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	**3%**	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	20%	5%	1%	3%	3%	2%	3%	2%	0%

*Given the number of respondents (n<30), the results are presented for indicative purposes only.

Key Criteria Influencing the Choice of Store or Supplier for School Supplies (1/2)

Q8. Which of the following criteria most influences your choice of stores or supplier for school supplies? *Please select up to three answers.*

Base: Respondents with children in school (n=319)

Key Criteria Influencing the Choice of Store or Supplier for School Supplies (2/2)

Q8. Which of the following criteria most influences your choice of stores or supplier for school supplies? *Please select up to three answers.*

Base: Respondents with children in school (n=319)

	Total Canada	ATL	QC	ON	MB/SK	AB	BC	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Weighted n=	***316***	***25***	***67***	***122***	***25***	***36***	***41***	***172***	***144***	***108***	***190***	***18***
Unweighted n=	***319***	***21****	***82***	***122***	***31***	***34***	***29****	***177***	***142***	***89***	***205***	***25****
The price of the items	**75%**	66%	80%	76%	81%	73%	71%	**68%**	**84%**	**64%**	**82%**	80%
The quality of the products	**54%**	53%	44%	60%	64%	61%	41%	54%	55%	50%	56%	55%
The availability of the items in one place (one-stop shop)	**28%**	13%	21%	24%	49%	45%	36%	24%	33%	**19%**	32%	44%
The proximity of the store	**23%**	9%	33%	27%	6%	18%	23%	22%	25%	23%	23%	32%
The speed and reliability of delivery (online purchase)	**10%**	11%	12%	13%	0%	8%	9%	11%	10%	10%	10%	12%
The presence of the school list directly integrated	**8%**	0%	13%	9%	8%	5%	5%	8%	8%	14%	**5%**	10%
The pleasant shopping experience	**7%**	1%	6%	8%	5%	6%	9%	9%	4%	9%	6%	2%
Country of origin, i.e. made in Canada	**6%**	4%	5%	10%	8%	0%	0%	4%	7%	5%	6%	7%
Customer service	**4%**	0%	6%	5%	0%	0%	5%	4%	4%	8%	2%	6%
The possibility of buying eco-friendly supplies	**3%**	1%	2%	6%	5%	0%	2%	5%	2%	6%	2%	0%
Other	**1%**	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	**4%**	10%	1%	2%	6%	2%	12%	5%	4%	5%	4%	0%

*Given the number of respondents (n<30), the results are presented for indicative purposes only.

Respondent Profile

Respondent profiles

(Base n=1,512)

The table below presents the Canadian distribution of respondents before weighting.

Gender

	Unweighted	Weighted
Male	**728**	**740**
Female	**784**	**772**

Language (Mother Tongue)

	Unweighted	Weighted
French	**377**	**299**
English	**1,003**	**1,085**
Other	**131**	**128**

Kids in Household

	Unweighted	Weighted
Yes	**411**	**410**
No	**1,098**	**1,099**

Age

	Unweighted	Weighted
18 to 34	**361**	**400**
35 to 54	**472**	**488**
55+	**679**	**624**

Province

	Unweighted	Weighted
British Columbia	**151**	**206**
Alberta	**127**	**169**
Manitoba/Saskatchewan	**128**	**98**
Ontario	**601**	**587**
Quebec	**405**	**350**
Atlantic	**100**	**102**

Our Credentials

Canada

Leger is a member of the Canadian Research Insights Council (CRIC), the industry association for the market/survey/insights research industry.

Europe

Leger is a member of ESOMAR (European Society for Opinion and Market Research), the global association of opinion polls and marketing research professionals.

America

Leger is also a member of the Insights Association, the American Association of Marketing Research Analytics.

International

Leger is a member of the Worldwide Independent Network of Market Research (WIN), a global alliance of leading independent market research and polling firms that collaborate to share expertise, methodologies, and insights across diverse markets.

Our services

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Online community management

Leger Digital
Digital strategy and user experience

International Research
Worldwide Independent Network (WIN)

300 employees

185 consultants

8 offices

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