

Ottawa Citizen/COMPAS Poll in Don Valley West

**Liberal Minister Kathleen Wynne Leading by Wide Margin:
PC Schooling Promise Stirs Unease
about Integrating Immigrants**



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John Tory Far Behind in Don Valley West

If a day is an eternity in politics, then the Ontario Progressive Conservative leader has ten eternities during which he can turn his fortunes around in Don Valley West (DVW).

An Ottawa Citizen/COMPAS poll in John Tory's riding of Don Valley West was carried out carefully over a five day period, September 25-29, 2007, to minimize the risk of sampling error. It shows the Liberal incumbent with a 15% lead over the PC leader, as shown in table 1. By convention, the poll of 333 voters is deemed accurate to within approximately 5.6 percentage points 19 times out of 20.

Table 1: Vote Intentions in Don Valley North

Candidate and Party	Vote in Percent after the 21% Undecided Are Excluded from Calculations
Kathleen Wynne, Liberal	52
John Tory, Progressive Conservative	37
Adrian Walker, Green	6
Mike Kenny, NDP	5

There is little movement among voter groups since the last election. Most of Kathleen Wynne's support consists of those who voted Liberal in the last election. Nine of ten Wynne voters voted Liberal last time; she retains about 75% of the former Liberal vote. For his part, John Tory is doing very well at retaining the small PC base in the riding in the last election. He is retaining 88% of the former PC vote, which constitutes 66% of his total current support. Tory holds onto the small, previous PC base and is building on it but not sufficiently to carry the riding.



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Tory Excels Personally But Loses on the Issues

For voters as a whole, the top issues in the Don Valley West riding are the school funding issue, the government's performance, the Liberals' record on broken promises, and John Tory himself, as shown in table 2.

The top issues vary sharply between Liberal and PC voters. John Tory's character and personality is a top reason for people to support him. That is one of his campaign's two greatest strengths in the riding. Among PC-intended voters, Tory himself (30%) and the government's record of broken promises (26%) are the top reasons for voting the way they intend to. The Liberal government's track record is a top factor for only 8% of PC voters. Crime hardly resonates. It's a factor for 4% of PC voters and 2% of voters as a whole.

Table 2: Top Issues¹

Election Issues	%
The school funding issue	29
The Liberal Government's general performance	20
The Liberals Government's record of keeping or not keeping promises	15
John Tory personally	11
Kathleen Wynne personally	8
The Progressive Conservative Party	7
Dalton McGuinty personally	5
The Liberal Government's record on taxes	3
Crime	2
The New Democratic Party	1

For Liberal voters, neither candidate Kathleen Wynne nor party leader Dalton McGuinty figure as strongly as factors in their decision. Policy issues are

¹ "Which of the following issues is the key factor in why you are voting the way you are?"



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bigger factors propelling voters to support Liberal Kathleen Wynne. The Liberal government's general performance is a top factor for 35% of Liberal voters, followed closely by 34% naming the school funding issue.

Normally, opposition parties are able to use the incumbent government's track record to successfully undermine the government's credibility. But the opposition parties have failed to do so in Don Valley West. Liberal strength in DVW is further reinforced by the PC issue of school funding, as discussed below.

Unease about Cultural Integration—the Key Factor

Apprehension about cultural integration is a key consideration in the minds of voters in the riding.

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with four opinions about the school funding issue, as shown in table 3. Voters as a whole do not agree with the idea that funding should be extended because all faith-based systems should be treated equally. Liberal voters are especially opposed with 60% scoring "1" on the 7 point agree-disagree scale. Far from backing party reasoning, PC voters are divided on it—28% scoring "1" and 28% scoring "7".

Voters as a whole also do not embrace the idea that funding should be extended because parents should have the freedom to pass on to their own children their personal moral and religious values. Liberal voters are especially opposed with 65% scoring "1" on the 7 point agree-disagree scale. For their part, PC voters are at least as likely to oppose this view as support it—32% and 18% scoring "1" and "2" compared to 4% and 18% scoring "6" and "7".



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Table 3: Agreement or Disagreement with Four Views on School Funding Issue (1=Disagree Strongly, 7=Agree Strongly)²

Viewpoint	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Funding should not be extended because Ontario already has a major challenge making sure that our large immigrant population fits in and shares our values	16	5	6	8	11	11	43
It is risky to extend funding because public money could be used by some schools to teach extremist values.	24	10	13	10	7	7	28
Funding should be extended because all faith-based systems should be treated equally and the Catholic system is already funded	48	9	7	6	9	6	16
Funding should be extended because parents should have the freedom to pass on to their own children their own personal moral and religious values	54	10	8	8	5	3	12

Explicit fear that faith-based schools might disseminate extremist values divides voters as a whole, as shown in table 3. In practice, 42% agree (scoring 5-7) with the idea that “it is risky to extend funding because public money could be used by some schools to teach extremist values.” Meanwhile, 47% disagree (scoring 1-3).

Individual voter segments are also divided. The internally split opinions of Liberal and PC voters resemble each other on this point—28% and 29%, respectively, scoring “1” while 26% and 23% score “7”.

For the Progressive Conservative campaign, the most damaging finding in this poll is probably the widespread agreement with the idea that funding should not be extended because the province has “a major challenge making sure that

² “please tell me if you agree or disagree with each of the following opinions about whether funding should be extended to more faith-based schools.” RANDOMIZE



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our large immigrant population fits in and shares our values.” Among voters as a whole, 65% agree, scoring 5-7 (27% disagree, scoring 1-3). Among Liberal voters, 74% agree with this view, scoring 5-7 on the agreement scale (19% disagree, scoring 1-3). An apparent majority of PC voters agree with the Liberals—53% score 5-7 (41% disagree, scoring 1-3).

The concern about integrating a diversity of cultures seems to extend to most potential cultural and immigrant groups. Those respondents who agreed that extending aid to all faith-based schools involves a risk of disseminating extremist values³ were asked if any type of school were of special concern.⁴ Among those willing to name a particular type of school, the responses were Islamic (14%); Christian and Sikh (each 6%); Hindu, Tamil, and Buddhist (each 4%); and Orthodox Jewish (>0%).

The principal investigator on this study was Dr. Conrad Winn.

³ Respondents were asked to score agreement or disagreement on a 7 point scale with this item: “It is risky to extend funding because public money could be used by some schools to teach extremist values.”

⁴ “Which types of schools are of particular concern?”

