

Have you heard that something is going on with boys when it comes to education? This seems to be a running theme these days.

It started about 20 years ago when statistics began to identify that boys were not doing as well in math and science as the girls. Slowly this has progressed to a general falling behind in both elementary and secondary levels and there is currently a major decline in male enrolment in post-secondary institutions.

For many years there was concern that the education system was not girl-friendly. Once conscientiousness was raised, the system began to make changes that supported and facilitated learning for female students. Girls began to take on the traditional male subjects and they not only kept up, they excelled.

Now the gap between boys and girls has all but closed and in some cases the girls have pulled ahead. Some of the female advancement has been attributed to the fact that girls consistently exceed boys in reading and writing. When added to the increasing efficacy in math and science, the girls have a definite edge.

Some researchers suggest that the story is about the accelerated performance of girls rather than a decline in the performance of boys, the logic being that boys are still maintaining the same levels while girls have shot forward and this is skewing the perception that boys are declining.

Other professionals are wondering if the rapidly changing role of men in our society has caused a backlash in terms of male education. There is a role uncertainty that is undermining the aspirations of young males.

In terms of female achievement, girls report a higher level of goal-setting as a component of their life planning and they set the bar higher. Girls also prepare more diligently to enter post-secondary institutions by participating in a variety of preparatory activities, such as prep courses and electives.

Women consistently outnumber men on university campuses. Universities are now making themselves female-friendly and there is less emphasis on the traditional male sports teams and more inclusion in sport profiles.

This trend attracts more females, leading to more female professionals in all walks of life. This may in fact support the theory that men are still present in the system but female students are increasing substantially.

Whether you agree that boys are falling behind or just standing still, the topic is worth considering. In this case it is not the educators who will make a difference. It is the parents of young boys, just as it was the parents of young girls who demanded a better education for their daughters.

Our boys and girls need all the support and attention we can give them to prepare them for the life challenges that lie ahead. Make sure that your child knows the value of an education.