



# NEWS RELEASE

## Spending on public schools in Atlantic Canada on the rise, despite largest declines in enrolment nationwide

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For immediate release

**HALIFAX**—Spending on public schools increased in every province in Atlantic Canada over the past five years, despite experiencing the largest declines in enrolment across the country, finds a new study by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

“Contrary to what we often hear, public school spending is on the rise across Atlantic Canada, even though there are fewer and fewer students to educate,” said Alex Whalen, policy analyst at AIMS, the Fraser Institute’s new Atlantic Canada Initiative.

The study, *Education Spending in Public Schools in Canada, 2020 Edition*, finds that the Atlantic provinces experienced the largest declines in public school enrolment across Canada from 2012/13 to 2016/17, the most recent year of available Statistics Canada data.

Nova Scotia experienced the largest enrolment decline nationwide with 3.3 per cent fewer students, followed by New Brunswick (-3.2), Prince Edward Island (-2.0) and Newfoundland and Labrador (-1.9).

The national average over the same period was an increase in enrolment of 1.4 per cent.

And even though enrolment declined across Atlantic Canada, nominal spending on public schools increased by between 2.2 and 10.4 per cent over the same five-year period.

After adjusting for inflation and enrolment changes, the per-student spending in P.E.I. increased by 8.3 per cent. Per-student spending also increased in Nova Scotia (7.1 per cent) and in New Brunswick (1.2 per cent).

“In critical policy discussions, especially those that affect our children’s education, it’s important to understand exactly what’s happening with public education spending,” said Alex Whalen, a policy analyst with the Fraser Institute.

“Across Atlantic Canada, the evidence is clear—public education spending has increased in recent years.”

*AIMS merged with the Fraser Institute earlier this month to create the country’s largest independent think-tank, covering public policy from coast to coast.*

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