

NEWS RELEASE

Five provinces recorded large increases in per-student spending (inflation-adjusted) in public schools prior to COVID

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For immediate release

VANCOUVER—Despite common misperceptions, spending on public schools across Canada increased in seven out of ten provinces, markedly in five provinces, between 2012-13 and 2019-20, before COVID spending started, finds a new study by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

“Contrary to what we often hear, spending is on the rise in public schools across Canada, and in most cases, it’s outpacing inflation and enrolment changes,” said Jake Fuss, associate director of fiscal studies for the Fraser Institute and co-author of *Education Spending in Public Schools in Canada, 2022 Edition*.

The study finds that annual spending in public schools in Canada increased by \$898 million more than was necessary to account for changes in enrolment and inflation between 2012/13 and 2019/20.

Nationally, inflation adjusted per student spending on public schools increased by 1.4 per cent over that same time period.

Nova Scotia (17.5 per cent) and Prince Edward Island (17.2 per cent) experienced the largest increases in spending per student, followed by Quebec (12.7 per cent). Newfoundland and Labrador (7.6 per cent) and British Columbia (9.0 per cent) also recorded large increases in per student spending.

Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Ontario were the only provinces to experience a decline in per student spending (inflation-adjusted) on public schools during this same period, at -14.2 per cent, -12.6, and -1.3 per cent, respectively.

Compensation (salaries, wages, fringe benefits, and pensions) contributed the most to the total growth in spending on public schools from 2012/13 to 2019/20.

“In critical policy discussions, especially those that affect our children’s education, it’s important to understand exactly what’s happening with spending in public schools,” Fuss said.

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