

NEWS RELEASE

Per-student spending (inflation-adjusted) on public schools rose in 7 out of 10 provinces in recent five-year period

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For immediate release

VANCOUVER—Despite common misperceptions, education spending on public schools across Canada increased over the most recent five-year period of available data, finds a new study released today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

“Contrary to the popular narrative that education spending has been cut, spending increases in public schools exceeds what was required to account for enrolment changes and inflation,” said Paige MacPherson, associate director of education policy at the Fraser Institute and co-author of *Education Spending in Public Schools in Canada, Fall 2021*.

After accounting for inflation, per-student spending increased in seven of ten provinces. Nova Scotia saw the largest increase (9.2 per cent), followed by Quebec (7.3 per cent) and Prince Edward Island (5.1 per cent). Ontario—the province with the highest total spending—saw a real per-student spending increase of 2.8 per cent.

Only Saskatchewan (-10.8 per cent), Newfoundland & Labrador (-9.9 per cent), and Alberta (-4.3 per cent) recorded decreases in inflation-adjusted per-student spending in public schools from 2014/15 to 2018/19.

In terms of per-student spending in public schools as of 2018-19, New Brunswick had the highest level at \$15,486 while British Columbia had the lowest at \$12,513. The national average was \$14,070.

The study also finds compensation (salaries, wages, fringe benefits, and pensions) contributed the most to the total growth in spending nationally.

“Compensation increases – including teachers’ salaries, pensions, benefits and other costs – are driving the spending growth in Canadian public schools” MacPherson said.

“Before parents and taxpayers can begin to assess value for money in education, it’s crucial that they understand how much is being spent, and exactly where these dollars are going,” said MacPherson.

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