



NEWS RELEASE

Spending per student in Ontario public schools has increased over recent five-year period, primarily due to increases in compensation

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For immediate release

TORONTO—Despite common misperceptions, education spending in public schools in Ontario has increased substantially 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 in public schools has been cut in Ontario, it’s actually increased and exceeds what was required to account for enrolment changes and inflation in the province,” 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*.

The study finds that from 2014/15 to 2018/19, total spending on public schools in Ontario rose from \$26.8 billion to \$30.2 billion, a 13 per cent increase. Meanwhile, enrolment in Ontario public schools only grew by 1.9 per cent over this same period.

This means that on a per-student basis, after adjusting for inflation, spending in Ontario public schools increased from \$14,416 to \$14,821—a 2.8 per cent jump.

Nova Scotia led the country in per-student inflation-adjusted public school spending growth, while Ontario was middle of the pack, with the fifth-largest growth in Canada.

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

“Compensation – spending on teachers’ salaries, pensions, benefits and other costs – is driving the growth in education spending in public schools in Ontario and Canada more broadly,” 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.”

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