



NEWS RELEASE

Eight out of ten provinces recorded increases in per student spending (inflation-adjusted) in public schools

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For immediate release

VANCOUVER—Despite common misperceptions, education spending, specifically per student spending in public schools across Canada increased in 8 of ten provinces between 2012-13 and 2020-21, finds a new study published 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 Michael Zwaagstra, senior fellow with the Fraser Institute and co-author of *Education Spending in Public Schools in Canada, 2023 Edition*.

The study finds that annual spending in public schools in Canada increased by \$7.8 billion more than was necessary to account for changes in enrolment and inflation between 2012/13 and 2020/21.

Nationally, inflation adjusted per student spending on public schools increased by 8.3 per cent over that same time period.

Quebec experienced the largest increase at 32.9 per cent. Nova Scotia (26.9 per cent) and Prince Edward Island (19.0 per cent) experienced the next largest increases in spending per student. British Columbia (12.8 per cent) and Manitoba (7.8 per cent) also recorded substantial increases in per student spending (inflation-adjusted).

Saskatchewan (-11.6 per cent) and Alberta (-10.0 per cent) were the only two provinces to experience a decline in inflation-adjusted per student spending on public schools during this same period, with Alberta dropping from a 3rd place ranking in 2012-13 to 10th in 2020-21, and Saskatchewan from 1st to 6th.

The spending analysis includes compensation, capital and other spending as categorized by Statistics Canada. Compensation (salaries, wages, fringe benefits, and pensions) contributed the most to the total growth in spending on public schools from 2012/13 to 2020/21.

“When it comes to our children’s education, it’s important to understand exactly what’s happening with spending in public schools,” said Zwaagstra.

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