

NEWS RELEASE

For-profit independent schools, teacher incentive pay and additional charter schools among reforms that could improve K-12 education in Alberta

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For immediate release

CALGARY—The Alberta government can improve K-12 education in Alberta without increasing the financial burden on taxpayers by implementing a series of reforms to both the public and independent school systems, finds a new study released today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

“Albertans currently pay a lot for their education system, but student performance is stagnant or even declining in key subject areas, so policymakers should consider reforms to achieve better results,” said Jason Clemens, Fraser Institute executive vice-president and co-author of *K-12 Education Reform in Alberta*.

The study finds that per student education spending in Alberta increased 17.5 per cent (inflation adjusted) from 2005/06 to 2014/15, the latest year of comparable data. At \$13,511 per student, spending in Alberta eclipses the national average (\$12,646) and spending in neighbouring British Columbia (\$11,216).

And yet, despite this comparatively high level of spending, Alberta math scores (based on international tests) are lower than B.C.’s. And nationwide, only Manitoba has experienced a faster decline in math scores.

The study suggests a number of reforms for Alberta’s public and independent school systems that could improve student performance and reduce costs including:

- Experiment with incentive pay for teachers.
- Relax limits and regulations on charter schools to allow more school choice for parents.
- Allow for-profit independent schools, now the dominant provider of independent K-12 education in Sweden due to their success.
- Increase independent school grants for lower-income families—similar to Australia’s means-tested tuition system—to make independent schools more affordable for more families.
- Allow more choice for schools and teachers in curriculum while still maintaining agreed upon education outcomes.

“By reforming Alberta’s education system, policymakers could improve student performance, provide more education options for families and potentially even reduce costs for taxpayers,” Clemens said.

*This study is part of a Fraser Institute series, **Re-Establishing the Alberta Advantage**.*

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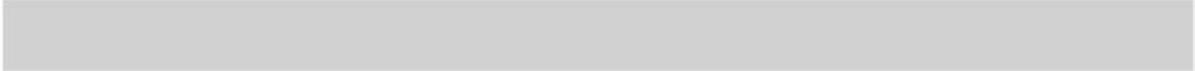
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