

NEWS RELEASE

Per-student spending on Alberta public schools up nearly 18%—mainly for salaries, pensions and benefits

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For immediate release

CALGARY—Per-student spending in Alberta public schools increased nearly 18 per cent over the past decade, with the vast majority of all increased spending going to teacher and staff compensation, finds a new study by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

“Contrary to what we often hear, education spending on public schools in Alberta has increased significantly,” said Angela MacLeod, policy analyst with the Fraser Institute’s Barbara Mitchell Centre for Improvement in Education and co-author of *Education Spending and Public School Enrolment in Canada, 2017*.

The study finds that total spending on public schools in Alberta increased from \$5.2 billion in 2005/06 to \$8.3 billion in 2014/15, the most recent year of available Statistics Canada data.

This nearly 60 per cent increase in spending far exceeds the 14 per cent increase in public school enrolment in Alberta over the same period.

In fact, on a per-student basis (after adjusting for inflation) spending increased from \$11,157 in 2005/06 to \$13,115 in 2014/15—an increase of 17.5 per cent.

Crucially, according to a companion study on education spending also released today, teacher and staff compensation (salaries, pensions and benefits) accounted for 82.8 per cent of that increased spending, rising from \$3.8 billion in 2005/06 to \$6.4 billion in 2014/15.

“In critical policy discussions, especially those that affect our children’s education, it’s important to understand exactly what’s happening with public education spending—how much money is being spent and where it’s going,” MacLeod said.

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