

NEWS RELEASE

Public school spending in B.C. up 13%—mainly for salaries, pensions and benefits

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VANCOUVER—Spending on public schools in British Columbia has increased dramatically over the past decade despite the country’s largest decline in enrolment outside Atlantic Canada, finds a new study by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

More than nine of every 10 dollars of increased spending went to teacher and staff salaries, benefits and pensions.

“Contrary to what we often hear, more and more money is being spent on fewer and fewer students in B.C.’s public education system,” 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 B.C. increased by about 13 per cent from \$5.5 billion in 2005/06 to \$6.2 billion in 2014/15, the most recent year of available Statistics Canada data.

Crucially, according to a companion study on education spending also released today, teacher and staff compensation (salaries, pensions and benefits) accounted for nearly all—95.6 per cent—of that increased spending, rising from \$3.8 billion in 2005/06 to \$4.4 billion 2014/15.

This increase in education spending in public schools occurred over a decade that saw a 9.1 per cent decline in B.C.’s public school enrolment. In fact, from 2005/06 to 2014/15, public school enrolment dropped by almost 53,000 students.

In fact, on a per-student basis spending increased from \$10,392 to \$11,216 (after adjusting for inflation)—a 14 per cent increase.

“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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