

NEWS RELEASE

Public school spending up \$7 billion in Ontario— mainly for salaries, pensions and benefits

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For immediate release

TORONTO—Spending on public schools in Ontario has increased more than \$7 billion over the past decade despite a more than five per cent drop in enrolment, finds a new study by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

More than eight of every 10 dollars of the 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 Ontario’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 Ontario increased by nearly 37 per cent, from \$19.5 billion in 2005/06 to nearly \$26.6 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 84.8 per cent of that increased spending, rising from \$14 billion in 2005/06 to more than \$20 billion in 2014/15.

This increase in education spending in public schools occurred over a decade that saw a 5.4 per cent decline in public school enrolment in the province. In fact, from 2005/06 to 2014/15, public school enrolment dropped by more than 115,000 students.

On a per-student basis, spending increased from \$10,762 to \$13,276 (after accounting for inflation)—a dramatic 23.4 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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