

NEWS RELEASE

Per-student spending in Quebec public schools up nearly 25%—mainly for salaries, pensions and benefits

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For immediate release

MONTREAL—Per-student spending in Quebec public schools has increased nearly 25 per cent over the past decade despite declining enrolment in the province, finds a new study by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

And two thirds 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 Quebec’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 Quebec increased by nearly 40 per cent, from \$9.4 billion in 2005/06 to more than \$13 billion in 2014/15, the most recent year of available Statistics Canada data. On a per-student basis, after adjusting for inflation, the increase is 24.7 per cent—from \$8,859 to \$11,049.

Crucially, according to a companion study on education spending also released today, teacher and staff compensation (salaries, pensions and benefits) accounted for 66.7 per cent of that increased spending, rising from \$6.8 billion in 2005/06 to \$9.3 billion in 2014/15.

Capital spending (buildings and renovations, for example) increased a staggering 261 per cent in Quebec over the same period, rising from \$373 million to \$1.3 billion.

This increase in education spending in public schools occurred over a decade that saw a 2.4 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 29,000 students.

“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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