



# NEWS RELEASE

## Higher spending on K-12 education does not result in better student outcomes

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For Immediate Release

**VANCOUVER**—Higher levels of per-student spending do not achieve higher student scores on standardized tests, either internationally or among the provinces, finds a new report published today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

“Just spending more on K-12 education does not lead to better student outcomes,” said Derek J. Allison, Fraser Institute senior fellow and author of *School Spending and Performance in Canada and Other High-Income Countries*.

The study compares provincial per-student spending on K-12 education in 2018 (the last year of comparable data) to other high-income countries in the OECD and to performance on the OECD’s *Programme for International Student Assessment* (PISA).

It finds that higher per-student spending levels are not associated with stronger academic achievement. In fact, in 2018, 10 countries—or one third—of the high-income OECD countries included in the analysis spent more per student than Canada but achieved significantly lower PISA scores.

Similarly, among the provinces, Saskatchewan was the highest per-student spender among the provinces but ranked 8<sup>th</sup> out of 10 on PISA scores. Manitoba was the second-highest per-student spender and recorded the lowest PISA scores nationwide. Conversely, British Columbia was the lowest spender per student in Canada and achieved the fourth-highest PISA scores.

“The evidence is clear—simply spending more on established K-12 schools without finding new and better ways to help kids learn will not improve student outcomes,” Allison said.

**Provincial per-student spending (2018) compared to core PISA score**

| Province                  | Spending        | Core PISA score    |
|---------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Saskatchewan              | Highest spender | 8 <sup>th</sup>    |
| Manitoba                  | 2 <sup>nd</sup> | Lowest PISA score  |
| Alberta                   | 3 <sup>rd</sup> | Highest PISA score |
| Nova Scotia               | 4 <sup>th</sup> | 5 <sup>th</sup>    |
| Ontario                   | 5 <sup>th</sup> | 3 <sup>rd</sup>    |
| New Brunswick             | 6 <sup>th</sup> | 9 <sup>th</sup>    |
| Quebec                    | 7 <sup>th</sup> | 2 <sup>nd</sup>    |
| P.E.I.                    | 8 <sup>th</sup> | 7 <sup>th</sup>    |
| Newfoundland and Labrador | 9 <sup>th</sup> | 6 <sup>th</sup>    |
| British Columbia          | Lowest spender  | 4 <sup>th</sup>    |

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