

Study Says Student Spending Up 11%

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Spending on public schools in BC has increased 11 per cent, on a per-student basis, over the past decade, according to a study by the Fraser Institute.

The public policy think-tank says per student spending, adjusted for inflation, rose from about \$11,059 in 2006/07 to \$11,656 in 2017, even though enrolment dropped by 7 per cent over that period.

“Contrary to what we often hear, spending is on the rise in B.C.’s public education system,” said Angela MacLeod, a senior policy analyst with the Institute and co-author of *Education Spending and Public School Enrolment in Canada, 2019*.

The institute says teacher and staff compensation (salaries, pensions, benefits) accounted for 90 per cent of the increased spending, rising from \$3.9 billion in 2006/07 to more than \$4.5 billion in 2015/16.

“This spending increase occurred over a decade that saw a 7.2 per cent decline in B.C. public school enrolment. In fact, from 2006/07 to 2015/16, public school enrolment dropped by more than 25,000 students. This is part of the reason why per student spending is increasing; even small nominal increases in spending get amplified when the number of students decline,” says MacLeod.