



NEWS RELEASE

Spending on public schools in Maritime Canada on the rise, despite largest declines in enrolment nationwide

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For immediate release

HALIFAX—Spending on public schools has increased in every Maritime province in recent years, despite the region experiencing the largest declines in enrolment across the country, finds a new study by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

“Contrary to what we often hear, public school spending is on the rise across the Maritime provinces, even though there are fewer and fewer students to educate,” said Tegan Hill, an economist with the Fraser Institute and co-author of *Education Spending in Public Schools in Canada, 2021 Edition*.

The study finds that Atlantic Canada experienced the largest declines in public school enrolment across Canada from 2013/14 to 2017/18, the most recent year of available Statistics Canada data.

New Brunswick experienced the largest decline in enrolment among the provinces with 2.2 per cent fewer students. Nova Scotia saw a 1.7 per cent decline in student enrolment, and Prince Edward Island’s enrolment was essential flat with an increase of just 0.3 per cent.

At the same time, after adjusting for inflation and enrolment changes, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and P.E.I. all experienced per-student spending increases that exceeded the national average increase of 3.8 per cent.

Nova Scotia experienced the largest per student spending on public school increase anywhere in the country at 15.2 per cent. New Brunswick’s per student spending on public schooling increased 5.1 per cent over the same five-year period, and now has the second-highest amount per student nationwide at \$15,000. P.E.I.’s per-student spending also notably increased by 7.3 per cent.

Conversely, while Newfoundland and Labrador experienced the largest enrolment decline nationwide of 3.0 per cent, that province’s (inflation adjusted) per-student spending on public schools also decreased 6.3 per cent.

“In critical policy discussions, especially those that affect our children’s education, it’s important to understand exactly what’s happening with spending on public schools, where the majority of kids are educated,” said Alex Whalen, a policy analyst with the Fraser Institute’s Atlantic Canada Initiative.

(30)

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