

NEWS RELEASE

For Information Contact:

Courtney Forseth, MA
Managing Director, Public Relations and Communications
1-306-221-4209
courtney.forseth@stf.sk.ca

For Immediate Release:

May 1, 2023

PUBLIC DEMANDS INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION, CUTS TO BE REVERSED

SASKATOON – Saturday's Rally for Public Education drew a crowd of more than 3,500 people from every corner of the province, demanding the Government of Saskatchewan stop the cuts to education.

"The reality in classrooms is that this is **not** growth that works for everyone. Each year, more supports and services that students rely on are taken away," said Samantha Becotte, Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation President. "While we appreciate Minister Duncan's comments on our organizational skills, had he accepted our invitation to the rally, he would have seen the large crowd of parents, students, trustees and concerned citizens standing alongside teachers and other education workers demanding better for students."

The experiences of students and teachers in the classroom prove public education is a chronically underfunded system and is in crisis. The government's own data details the cuts to education:

- From 2021-22 to 2022-23, student enrolment increased by 2.1 percent or by 3,840 students. During the same time period, full-time equivalent teachers declined by 1.0 percent or 117 teachers.
 - *Source: Ministry of Education, Provincial K-12 Student Enrolment; Ministry of Education, Salary Finance Report.*

- From 2017-18 to 2021-22, there has also been a reduction in other professionals who support students, all while student enrolment grows:
 - 13.5 percent reduction in English as an additional language teachers.
 - 16.2 percent reduction in teacher counsellors.
 - 64.5 percent reduction in teacher-librarians.
 - 5 percent reduction in school counsellors.
 - 6 percent reduction in teacher-coordinators.
 - 2.1 percent reduction in speech language pathologists.
 - *Source: Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, Education Sector Staffing Profile.*
- Student needs have increased and are more complex. From 2007-08, students requiring intensive supports increased by 38 percent.
 - *Source: Ministry of Education, Assistant Deputy Minister.*

In addition, Minister Duncan's statement in the media that the new Saskatchewan Distance Learning Corporation will save school divisions money is inaccurate. Funding follows the student and, therefore, there is no cost saving to divisions.

"Ignoring the reality in schools and dodging questions will not make the problems go away. The fact remains that students are being short-changed. Refusing to properly fund public education is a deliberate and political choice by this government," said Becotte. "Our province has the money to invest in students. Elected officials are simply choosing not to."

The Federation wishes to thank everyone who joined Rally for Public Education for having the courage to speak up and demand better for students. All those concerned about the government's chronic underfunding of public education are invited to join www.TellThemTuesday.com and take part in future activities.

