

NEWS RELEASE

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Saskatchewan Government Fails Students and Ignores Reality in Schools

SASKATOON – The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation is baffled by the government's disregard for students. Budget 2023-24 fails to provide adequate funding for increasing student enrolment and more complex needs.

"Government either doesn't understand the issues or doesn't think they are important," says STF President Samantha Becotte. "I hear from parents and teachers every day. There is a serious concern for student well-being because school divisions simply don't have enough funding to meet students' needs. These decisions have a critical, lasting impact on the future of our province."

The 2023-24 provincial budget provides an operational funding increase of 2.5 percent. This does not keep pace with rising costs and will result in further cuts to services and supports that children need. A minimum of 5 percent was required to maintain last year's funding levels. This comes at a time when the public school system is already struggling to manage the impact of chronic underfunding, record-high enrolment and rising costs.

In 2012-13, Saskatchewan's per-student funding was the first in the country. By 2019-20, Saskatchewan's per-student funding had fallen to sixth in the country. At the same time, Saskatchewan's enrolment has increased at rates among the highest in Canada, meaning our public schools have received less funding and less support while student populations have increased. Years of underfunding have created a learning environment where students' needs cannot be fully met because class sizes are too large and there aren't enough professionals available to meet students' growing and diverse needs.

"Teachers are doing everything they possibly can to support a growing number of students in an underfunded system," says STF President Samantha Becotte. "Once again, this government is choosing to shortchange kids and families. Saskatchewan is in a strong financial position. Government has the money to invest in education. It is simply refusing to make students a priority."

Based on data in a report from the Fraser Institute, more than \$400 million is needed to restore per-student funding to 2012-13 levels. Recent polling also shows two-thirds of Saskatchewan residents think the government should increase spending on public education.

“These impacts are being felt by students, parents and teachers. There is real concern and real frustration,” says Becotte. “It is no coincidence that in six weeks Premier Moe, Minister Duncan and MLAs received more than 1,600 emails through the Tell Them Tuesday campaign. It is time for the government to listen and take action by investing in public education.

“This budget continues the Saskatchewan Party trend of eroding the quality of public education in our province,” says Becotte. “I want to thank everyone who has shared their concerns and asked for more funding for public education. Government’s actions show they still aren’t listening, but it isn’t too late. A crisis can still be avoided if we start reversing years of cuts and start investing in our future.”

The Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation urges the Government of Saskatchewan to provide consistent, predictable and sustainable education funding. Saskatchewan residents who share these concerns are encouraged to visit www.TellThemTuesday.com for advocacy tools and to attend the Rally for Public Education at the Saskatchewan Legislative Building in Regina on April 29.

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Note: Service en français disponible.