

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Students and Families Should Benefit From \$1.1 Billion Government Surplus**

SASKATOON – Following the Government of Saskatchewan’s mid-year financial statement announcing a \$1.1 billion surplus forecast for 2022-23, the Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation is calling for urgently needed funds to be allocated to the chronically underfunded public education system.

“I am hearing from teachers whose students do not have adequate access to the professional services they need,” says STF President Samantha Becotte. “So many students need the ongoing support of a speech and language pathologist, the one-on-one support of an educational assistant, an occupational therapist, a counsellor, or a psychologist, and yet they either have no access or they are waiting far too long.”

The Federation continues to hear examples of how students’ needs are not being adequately met. Parents, grandparents and teachers have shared stories such as:

- Parents paying out of pocket for services their children used to receive through school, such as mental health support and speech language pathology, but are no longer available due to cuts.

*“It has been a huge strain on our budget and all areas of our life. It hurts to think of the other children in the same boat, but whose parents cannot make these sacrifices.”*

- Large class sizes, diverse student needs and no additional support.

*“In a class of 27 students, more than half have diverse needs. Some have academic learning delays, some have intense behavioural needs, many are second language learners, and some have undiagnosed medical needs. There is only one of me. I simply cannot get to every student.”*

The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation notes that the mid-year financial statement shows there has been a significant improvement in the province's financial position. With a projected surplus of \$1.1 billion, the Government of Saskatchewan is asked to consider significant new investments in operational funding for K-12 public school students.

“These are services students desperately need. Years of underfunding has resulted in school divisions having to make cuts,” said Becotte “Our kids are the ones making sacrifices and paying the price. It's time the provincial government support students and families by funding the resources and supports students have a right to.

“Parents across Saskatchewan have experienced the frustration of the growing crisis of underfunding, and the impact on their child's learning,” Becotte says. “As critical services are being rolled back or cut, teachers have been doing more with less to try to give students the support they need.”

Operational funding increases have been well below the rate of inflation for several years. According to the Fraser Institute, over the period of 2012-13 to 2019-20, Saskatchewan has dropped from the highest per-student spender in the country to the sixth highest. Over that same period, Saskatchewan's student enrolment has increased among the highest in the country at 9.6 percent.

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