

KEY MESSAGES AND BACKGROUND

SUBJECT: Education Funding

DATE: December 9, 2022

ISSUE: The Government of Saskatchewan continues to move ahead in establishing a new Crown corporation for Distance Learning. Read the latest government [news release](#). The education sector is facing a number of issues due to chronic underfunding. Proper funding of education needs to be addressed before any major decisions and moves are made by the government.

Key Messages

- Education Funding has not kept up with the needs of students in Saskatchewan schools.
- The diverse needs of our students are growing.
- Teachers are dealing with ever-increasing class size and complexity.
- There are more students in our classrooms than ever before and the needs they are coming with are more complex needs than ever before.
- We need adequate funding to address the needs of students.
- Teachers are doing everything they can to fill the gaps, but this is leading to burnout.
- Classroom teachers should not have to do multiple jobs at once: nurse, counsellor, EA, custodian, etc.

Background Information

According to the Government of Saskatchewan Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019, K-12 School Operating expense represented 13.5 percent of total government Budgetary Expense in 2018-19, but in 2022-23 it only made up of 11.7 percent, even though student population is growing, and needs are more diverse.

From 2013-14 to 2021-22, the total number of students increased from 170,582 to 186,084, representing an increase of 9.1 percent, while the total number of full-time equivalent educators increased by only 1.1 percent (or 130 FTEs). This means that only one FTE teacher was added for every 119 students added.

The number of English as an additional language students increased from 11,678 in 2012-13 to 17,696 in 2018-19, representing an increase of 51.5 percent or over 6,000 more students in less than a decade, while the number of EAL teachers increased by only 16.7 percent. This means that only one EAL teacher was added for every 286 students increased.

The total number of students that require intensive support has increased significantly – from 6,742 in 2007-08 to 9,309 in 2018-19, a growth of 38.1 percent, while the numbers of specialists (such as psychologists) has decreased since 2013-14. The number of psychologists has declined from 62 in 2013 to 54 in 2021, representing a decrease of 13.5 percent.

According to Statistics Canada, Saskatchewan and Alberta were the only two provinces to record declines in education spending per student from 2015-16 to 2019-20.

Saskatchewan saw the largest decline in education spending per student at 7.7 percent, while simultaneously experiencing a notable increase in student enrolment at 5.3 percent (Saskatchewan).

Saskatchewan's education spending per student ranked the highest out of all provinces in 2015-16 at \$17,137 per student, however, declined to third place in 2019-20.

The ratio of students to regular classroom teachers has increased from 18.6 in 2013-14 to 19.9 in 2021-22, representing an increase of 6.7 percent. This implies that a classroom that had 30 students in 2013-14 would have 32.1 students in 2021-22. Specifically, the increase in the number of teachers did not keep pace with student enrolment growth.