

NEWS RELEASE

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Today's Budget Means Saskatchewan Will Fall Even Further Behind in Education Operating Funding

SASKATOON – The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation's preliminary analysis of the province's education funding announcement suggests per-student funding is poised to drop even further in the national ranking, potentially landing in 10th place among all provinces. In 2015-16, Saskatchewan had the highest school board operating spending per-student in the country, according to Statistics Canada. By 2021-22, it had fallen to eighth place, representing a reduction of 20.7 percent or \$3,362 less per student, after adjustment for inflation. This preliminary analysis reveals that to maintain per-student funding at the 2015-16 level, per-student spending would need to increase by another 12 percent, which translates to an additional \$268 million on top of the already announced \$180 million.

“Since the Premier made the unusual move of announcing education funding two weeks prior to budget day, we have had time to dig into the numbers,” says STF President Samantha Becotte. “Instead of showing a real commitment to improve student learning conditions and teacher working conditions, Education Minister Jeremy Cockrill and Premier Scott Moe are making things worse, and that's tremendously discouraging. Students, families and teachers deserve transparency, accountability and predictability in their publicly funded schools, all of which are sorely lacking from this government.”

According to Premier Scott Moe's announcement on March 6, 2024, school operating funding will increase from \$2.0 billion in 2023-24 to \$2.2 billion in 2024-25, representing an increase of 8.8 percent or \$180 million. As a percentage of total education funding, however, supports for learning have declined

over time, from 15.1 percent in 2017-18 to 14 percent in 2024-25. These are the funds intended to address critical class size and complexity issues, but this budget line is currently unrestricted. This means that school boards can choose to use these funds for other purposes, such as servicing debt, instead of being used to assist students with their learning needs. Teachers are adamant that restricting these funds to their intended use is essential to hold government and school boards accountable, and the best way to achieve this is within the language of a provincial collective agreement.

“We have no assurance that this year’s funding increases will continue in non-election years, and in fact, past precedent suggests that it will not,” says Becotte. “Saskatchewan’s teachers are once again bringing our concerns straight to government’s front steps, demonstrating our unwavering commitment to current and future students’ needs. Government needs to make the needs of students a priority and fulfill their responsibility of supporting public education.”

More than 4,000 teachers are taking to the Saskatchewan legislature today to make their voices heard. They are gathering for the second time this month to call on the government to finally put students first, make a commitment to stable and sustainable funding for education, end the bad faith bargaining and accept one of multiple paths forward that teachers have presented to get negotiations back on track.

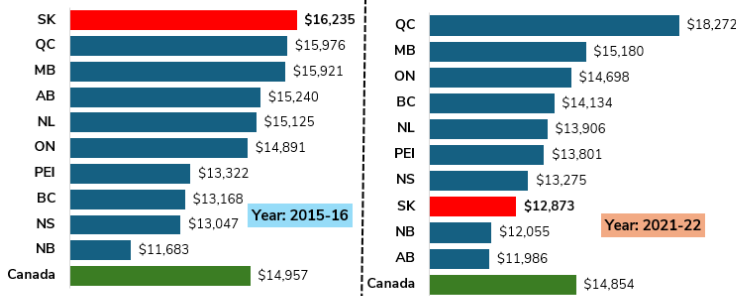
Since January 1, 2024, over 300,000 emails have been sent to decision-makers in government and school boards, calling on them to bargain in good faith with teachers. Anyone concerned for the future of publicly funded schools in Saskatchewan is encouraged to visit www.tellthemtuesday.com and join this call.

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Samantha Becotte will be at the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly today for the budget announcement and will be available to speak to media on-site.

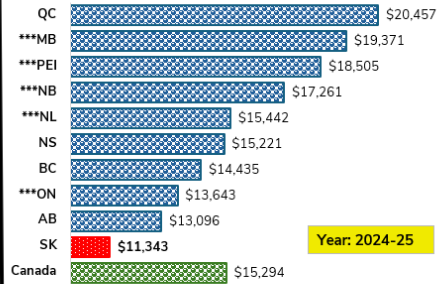
BACKGROUND

School Board Operational Funding Per-Student Adjusted for Inflation (\$2022): 2015-16 versus 2021-22



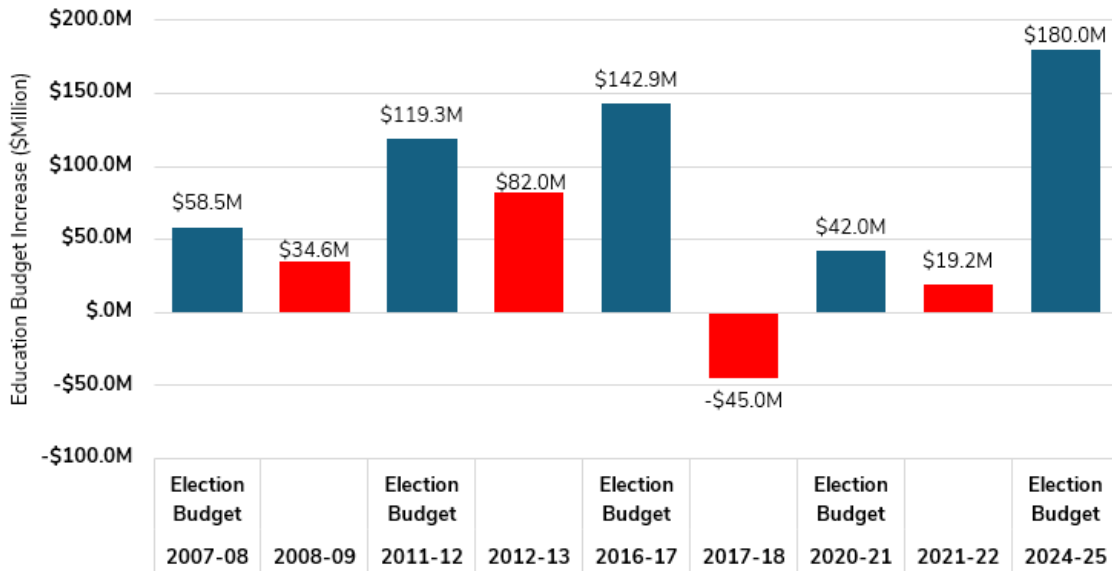
Source: Statistics Canada. 2024. Table 37-10-0066-01 Public and private elementary and secondary education expenditures. Table 37-10-007-1 Number of students in regular programs for youth. Table 18-10-0005-01 Consumer price index.

Projected Education Funding Per Student based on Budget Day Documents: 2024-25



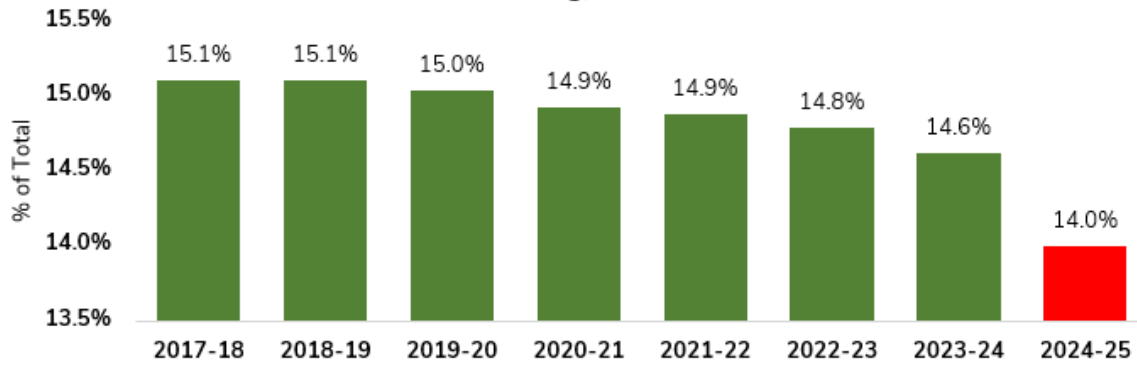
Source: Projected education funding data obtained from each province's budgets. Data for QC, NS, BC, AB and SK based on 2024-25 provincial's budget day documents or government announcements. ***2024-25 education funding data for MB, PEI, NB and ON is not available, thus, 2023-24 data is used.

Note: "Projected Education Funding Per-Student based on Budget Day Documents: 2024-25" is a preliminary analysis, not adjusted for inflation.



Source: Saskatchewan's Provincial Budget Documents.

**Supports for Learning as a Percentage of
Total Education Funding, 2017-18 to 2024-25**



Source: Saskatchewan's Funding Manual, Prekindergarten to Grade 12 Funding Distribution Model reports.
Funding for 2024-25 based on Saskatchewan's Premier announcement in March 6, 2024.