



NEWS RELEASE

Government funding for independent schools saves British Columbia taxpayers millions every year

May 22, 2024
For immediate release

VANCOUVER—Despite misperceptions, government funding for independent schools in British Columbia saves the province (i.e. provincial taxpayers) millions of dollars every year, finds a new study published by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

“Some people claim that BC’s funding for independent schools take resources away from government public schools, but in fact, funding independent schools actually reduces the strain on government finances, saving taxpayers money,” said Paige MacPherson, associate director of education policy at the Fraser Institute, and co-author of *Funding for BC independent schools saves government money*.

The B.C. government partially funds independent schools from 0% up to 35% or 50% of per-student government school operational funding, which helps defray costs for families and makes independent schools more affordable.

In 2020/21, the average per-student cost to government of a student attending government public school was \$14,601. The same year, the average per-student cost to government of a student attending independent school was \$8,685.

In other words, the B.C. government saves \$5,916 on average for every student who attends independent school rather than government public school.

If just 10 per cent of independent school students migrated to government public schools because the government eliminated independent school funding, the B.C. government would need to increase spending by \$51.6 million per year.

If 25 per cent of independent school students moved to government public schools, it would cost B.C. taxpayers an additional \$129.1 million per year. And if 50 per cent of independent school students migrated to government public schools, the B.C. government would need to spend an additional \$258.2 million per year.

“Government public school isn’t the right fit for every child, and BC’s school choice policies make independent schools affordable for many middle-income families,” MacPherson said.

“If funding for independent schools was taken away, many families would have no choice but to migrate to the government school system, limiting school choice for parents and increasing costs for taxpayers.”

(30)

MEDIA CONTACT:

Paige MacPherson, Associate Director, Education Policy
Fraser Institute

For interviews or for more information, please contact:

Drue MacPherson, Fraser Institute

Office: (604) 688-0221 ext. 721

Cell: (604) 250-8076

drue.macpherson@fraserinstitute.org

Follow the Fraser Institute on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)

The Fraser Institute is an independent Canadian public policy research and educational organization with offices in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal and ties to a global network of think-tanks in 87 countries. Its mission is to improve the quality of life for Canadians, their families and future generations by studying, measuring and broadly communicating the effects of government policies, entrepreneurship and choice on their well-being. To protect the Institute's independence, it does not accept grants from governments or contracts for research. Visit www.fraserinstitute.org