



Backgrounder

The Alberta Teachers' Association

Backgrounder to ATA news release dated 2022 08 17

Alberta School Boards' Operating Expenditures Lowest in Canada

Differences in how public education is funded across Canada make comparisons based on government budget figures difficult. For example, in Alberta school property taxes are collected by the Province and then distributed to school boards by the Alberta School Foundation Fund. However, in Saskatchewan school boards collect school property taxes directly through municipal property tax requisitions. Focusing only on revenue from the provincial governments will give a misleading picture of taxpayer support for public education.

Instead, looking at operating expenditure per student allows us to focus on spending that directly affects school services to children. These operating expenditures include all activities related to services to students: instruction, building operations and transportation. Using data from Statistics Canada, we find that operating expenditure per student in Alberta are the lowest among the ten Canadian provinces.

Table 1: Operating Expenditures Per Student in 2018-19 (Analysis by Dr Neil Hepburn ATA Economist)

Province	Operating Expenditures Per Student	Difference from 10 Province Average
10 province average	\$12,266.16	
Newfoundland and Labrador	\$14,033.17	\$1,767.02
Quebec	\$13,545.85	\$1,279.70
Nova Scotia	\$12,846.60	\$580.45
Manitoba	\$12,743.57	\$477.42
Prince Edward Island	\$12,372.58	\$106.43
Ontario	\$11,887.40	-\$378.75
British Columbia	\$11,724.87	-\$541.28
New Brunswick	\$11,364.03	-\$902.12
Saskatchewan	\$11,247.02	-\$1,019.14
Alberta	\$10,896.46	-\$1,369.70

Source: Statistics Canada tables 37-10-0109 and 37-10-0065