

5 Myths about Public School Funding

Myth 1: Actual education costs determine funding levels.

Funding provided by government is ultimately based on political priority decisions, not necessarily based on an assessment of how much it would actually cost to meet all educational needs.

Myth 2: Funding levels have shot up, outpacing inflation and the underlying cost of delivering services.

Costs have gone up, reflecting not just inflation, but to a large degree because demands for types of services and educational supports have increased substantially. Expenditures on public education have actually declined both as a share of the provincial budget and the gross domestic product (GDP).

Myth 3: Maintaining tight controls on spending has had no adverse consequences for BC public schools.

Not all educational needs can be met, particularly for students with special needs. Wage and salary levels of school employees have fallen in real terms making it difficult to attract needed teachers and support personnel. School facility maintenance has not been adequately maintained everywhere.

Myth 4: Funding follows the individual student.

While the number of students brings funding to a district, it isn't attached to an individual student. Even when funding resulting from a particular student being identified with a special need produces funding for a district, the district can make use of those funds to assist other students as well.

Myth 5: The funding system as it exists produces equity for all students.

The funding system has many features aimed at providing equity among districts. However, that equity is undermined by differences in ability of districts to raise extra funds through international student tuition and inequality in the ability of school communities to raise supplementary funding.