

# **EDUCATION FUNDING**

*A Brief to the*

**Government of  
British Columbia**

*from the*

**British Columbia  
Teachers' Federation**

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# Executive Summary

The British Columbia public-education system has suffered through cutbacks in the 1990s, following on the heels of the “restraint” program of the 1980s. While the BCTF applauds recent government initiatives to inject new funding into public education, much still remains to be done. Continuity of funding is essential to ensure continuity of the high-quality educational services that parents and the public have come to expect from British Columbia’s public schools.

Since block funding was introduced in 1990–91, provincial operating funding per pupil has increased in nominal terms every year except 1997–98, when it declined by \$43. At first glance, it appears that the 1998–99 per-pupil amount of \$5,849 is \$636, or 12.2%, higher than the comparable amount for 1990–91.

Applying the British Columbia Consumer Price Index to reflect September 1998 dollars, however, reveals that **real per-pupil operating funding in British Columbia has declined by \$300 or 4.9% since 1990–91**. Relatively stable funding from 1990–91 to 1992–93 was followed by a decline every year between 1993–94 and 1997–98. A modest increase in 1998–99 returned real funding almost, but not quite, to its 1996–97 level.

**If the real per-pupil funding for 1998–99 were the same as in 1990–91, the system would be funded to the tune of about \$182.6 million more. This funding could be used to hire more than 3,200 additional teachers to meet the educational needs of students in British Columbia.**

These cuts to education funding have occurred during a period when more and more students need specialized educational services, when more students have English as their second language, when more students are identified as having special needs, and when additional pressures have been placed on teachers to revise methods and curriculum.

## **Some recent statistical changes in the system include:**

- **Intense enrolment growth:** 89,445 students—more than the enrolment of the Vancouver and Coquitlam school districts combined—have been added to the system since 1990.
- **More students per educator and larger classes:** The student/educator ratio has risen from 16.12 to 16.92. **If the SER of 1990–91 were still in place, 1,729 more teachers would be in the system.** Average elementary class size has grown from 22.6 to 23.4. Comparable numbers are not available for the secondary system.

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- **Dramatic increases in numbers of students with special needs and those requiring ESL services:** There has been a 65.5% increase in the number of students identified as having special needs and a 130% increase in the number of ESL students.

**A number of education-funding issues stand out as worthy of extra attention:**

- **Cap on administration:** Districts allocate almost half of administrative officers' time to instruction. It is unclear how much of this is identified incorrectly. There are serious cost implications.
- **Teachers subsidizing the system:** Because of cutbacks and workload, teachers provide extra unpaid labour and often pay for classroom materials out of their own pockets.
- **"Efficiency adjustments":** Funding cuts of over \$31 million have had a negative impact on the classroom and should be discontinued.
- **ESL funding:** As a new ESL service delivery policy is expected shortly, there should be a moratorium on changes to the ESL funding formula. A detailed examination of the formula should take place over the next year.
- **Teacher Professional Development Service:** To enhance teacher professional development as well as learning opportunities for students, the BCTF proposes to operate the TPDS on a pilot basis in 1999-00.

**The BCTF has identified two potential sources of new revenue:**

- **Private schools:** The BCTF recommends that the government withdraw funding for elite private schools in 1999-00 and phase out funding for other independent schools over a four-year period.
- **School taxes:** Homeowners pay 14% less in school taxes now than they did in 1993. Restoring the average school tax of 1993 would cost homeowners less than \$2 per month on average and would generate more than \$35 million.

**The BCTF recommends that the government of British Columbia:**

1. **Improve on the 1998-99 commitment of per capita funding to reflect the full costs of inflation, the restoration of the 1990-91 student/educator ratio, and the actual costs of the collective agreement.** The provincial agreement bears the stamp of the Legislature of the province of British Columbia. Allocations to districts should reflect the actual costs of operation, including those determined by the collective agreement, enrolment, and inflation.
2. **Fully fund the K-3 and non-enrolling teacher commitments in the Provincial Collective Agreement.**

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3. **Collect the data that is required to monitor learning conditions and expenditures, including class-size figures from Kindergarten to Grade 12, non-enrolling staffing levels, and accurate reporting of administrative time and numbers.**
  4. **End the “Efficiency and Restructuring Adjustment” and the “Savings Initiative.”** These cuts totalled more than \$31 million in 1998–99. The classroom has suffered because of these cuts; this was not supposed to happen.
  5. **Place a moratorium on any changes to the ESL funding formula for the next 12 months.** During this time, conduct a detailed examination of the formula and its relationship to the new ESL service delivery policy, which will be announced shortly.
  6. **Provide the BCTF with funding for the establishment of a Teacher Professional Development Service on a pilot basis beginning in the 1999–00 school year, and re-allocate \$2 million from the 1999–00 budget of the Ministry of Education Field Services Branch or other internal ministry budget for the Teacher Professional Development Service pilot project.**
  7. **Eliminate public funding for private schools.** Phase out government funding of Group 1 independent schools by removing 25% in each of the next four years. Discontinue government funding of Group 2 independent schools in 1999–00.
  8. **Reverse the decline in school taxation levels.** Restoring the average net school tax of 1993 would raise more than \$35 million yet would cost the average homeowner less than \$2 per month.

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# Building on Success: BCTF 1999 Education Funding Brief

*Nothing will so improve future income and output—the yield of the economy in general—as the educational qualifications of the people. It follows that when investment for the future is considered, nothing will so effectively underwrite future return as that in education—in the improved intelligence and productivity of human beings.*  
— John Kenneth Galbraith  
*The Good Society, 1996*

## Public Education as an Investment

Too often, governments succumb to political arguments of economic imperative without examining the long-term consequences. Many people today uncritically accept that government debt and deficits jeopardize our children's future. We challenge this view, asking instead: What future will children have if they are denied access to an adequate education? How will they ever participate equally in society and the economy? We must see our education system as a means of escaping from the debt. If we simply cut, we will end up being worse off than when we started.

The vast majority of British Columbians seem to agree. In a recent poll commissioned by the BCTF, 90% of those surveyed agreed that “our public-education system is not part of the country's deficit; it is the source of our future wealth” (McIntyre and Mustel, May 1997). Decreased real funding for education threatens that investment.

In British Columbia, public schools were subjected to extensive cutbacks in resources between 1982 and 1986. The rationale? “The need for fiscal restraint.” B.C. teachers opposed the cuts as short-sighted and harmful to the long-term benefit of the province's children and hence to its future.

The BCTF continues to advocate for improvements to learning and working conditions in our schools. In our briefs for the past several years, we have noted the decline in real per-pupil funding in British Columbia since 1990.

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# Principles of Education Funding

Stable, adequate, and fair funding provisions are essential to maintaining high-quality public education. The British Columbia Teachers' Federation recommends that education-funding policy be based on the following principles:

- Operating expenditures per student will be increased to cover inflation.
- Increased enrolment will be fully funded.
- Funding for students with special needs will fully reflect the specific needs and conditions identified for those students.
- Policies in respect to reporting student progress, the preparation and delivery of Individual Education Plans, and changes in curriculum will be funded adequately, or policy demands will be revised to match existing funding.
- Monitoring and accountability measures will ensure that instructional budgets are used for instruction, not administration.
- Accurate and timely data collection will ensure that targeted and special funds are being used correctly.
- Taxpayer dollars should not be used to fund private schools.
- The education funding formula should result in equitable allocations to school districts and reflect the actual costs of operating the districts, including those generated by the collective agreement.
- Adequate funding will be provided to maintain satisfactory levels of support staff, including clerical, maintenance staff, and teaching assistants.
- All improvements arising from the teachers' collective agreement will be fully funded.

## Building on Success

The British Columbia Teachers' Federation acknowledges and applauds the government's two major commitments to increased funding for education this year.

In March, the premier and minister announced that operating funding for 1998–99 would rise by \$105 million to cover enrolment increases, inflation, and changes in salaries and benefits of teachers and support staff. An economic adjustment was implemented for the first time in three years. The failure of expected enrolment numbers to materialize provides an opportunity for the restoration of real per-pupil funding cuts suffered by the system since 1990–91 (see Figure 2).

In August, the ministry injected funds to implement some provisions of the 1998 collective agreement with teachers. Funding of \$20 million for additional ESL and non-enrolling teachers was granted, part of a \$75-million package designed to improve the ratio of students to non-enrolling teachers over the three years of the agreement.

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Another \$75 million was set aside for K-3 class-size reductions over the same three years. While \$5 million of this amount was identified in the agreement for the first year's reductions in Kindergarten and Grade 1 class sizes, the ministry actually released \$10.5 million.

The BCTF also acknowledges two other areas in which the government deserves kudos with respect to education funding: the Public Sector Accord on Early Retirement and Teacher Career Transition and the April 15, 1998 announcement of \$338 million in capital spending over five years to create new spaces and reduce the number of portable classrooms.

The British Columbia government's record in the area of education funding provides a firm footing on which to build for the future.

## **The Provincial Agreement**

The new collective agreement ratified by teachers earlier this year is a provincial collective agreement. It was passed by a vote of the provincial legislature on July 30. The legislature passed not only the improvements (\$150 million over 3 years) but all previously negotiated and rolled-over provisions. Government has endorsed this agreement and there is no excuse to fund short of requirements to implement it.

## **What We Expect**

Providing high-quality educational services to students requires continuity of funding. Over the years, British Columbia parents and the public in general have come to expect public schools to offer students a solid foundation of essentials and a variety of specialized educational experiences.

To acquire the level of education required in our rapidly changing world, all students in the public-education system depend on continuity of programs to make full use of the resources already invested in their education. Continuity of service is also critical to enable students to have equitable access to post-secondary learning opportunities. Discontinuities in the funding system threaten these goals.

## **Changes in the Funding System**

Block funding was introduced in 1990-91, as recommended by the Sullivan Royal Commission on Education. Each year, the ministry responsible for education establishes a provincial per-pupil dollar amount that is then multiplied by the projected number of students to determine the Total Estimated Provincial Funding Allocation. This global amount is then assigned to districts using the Funding Allocation System, which uses factors such as the individual district's enrolment, and specific factors that apply to each school district. In addition, districts receive a number of other grants from the government, for example, ESL Turnover and Technology grants from the Ministry of



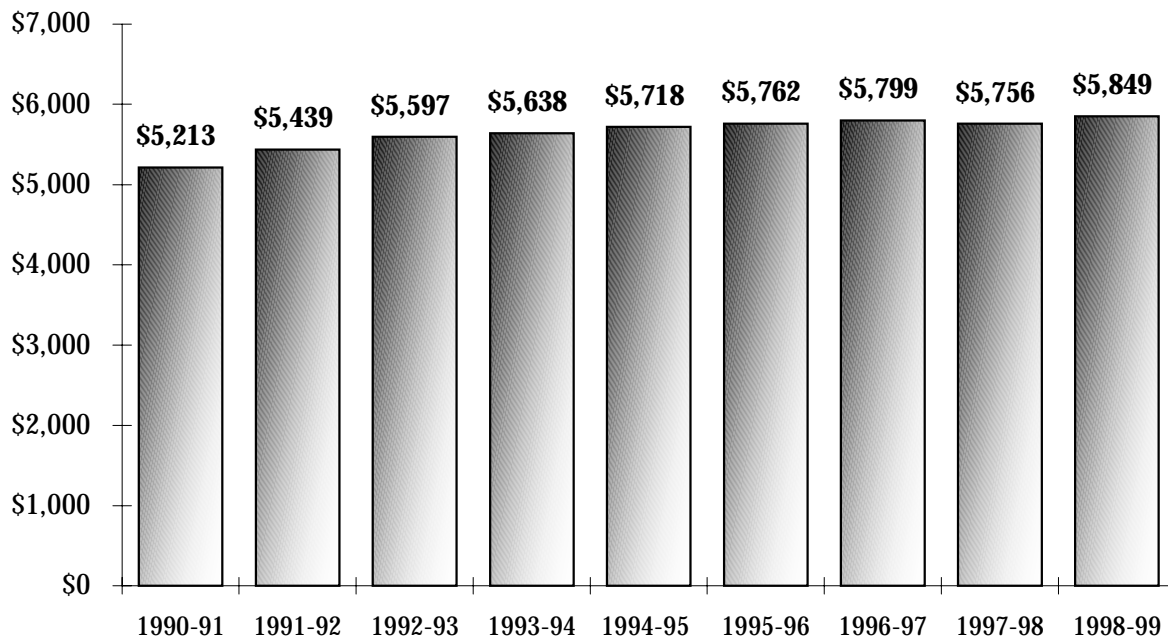
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Education, and Community Schools and School Meal Program grants from the Ministry for Children and Families; however, those grants are not the subject of this brief.

Figure 1 displays the history of provincial operating funding per pupil since the introduction of block funding. These figures, published by the ministry in the Budget Instruction Manual supplied to school districts, take into account changes in the education funding system to allow for accurate inter-year comparisons. For example, the Annual Capital Allowance that was removed from the formula in 1996-97 has been removed retroactively from previous years' figures. For this reason, these numbers may differ from previously published per-pupil amounts.

**Figure 1**

## Provincial Operating Funding Per Pupil, 1990-91 to 1998-99

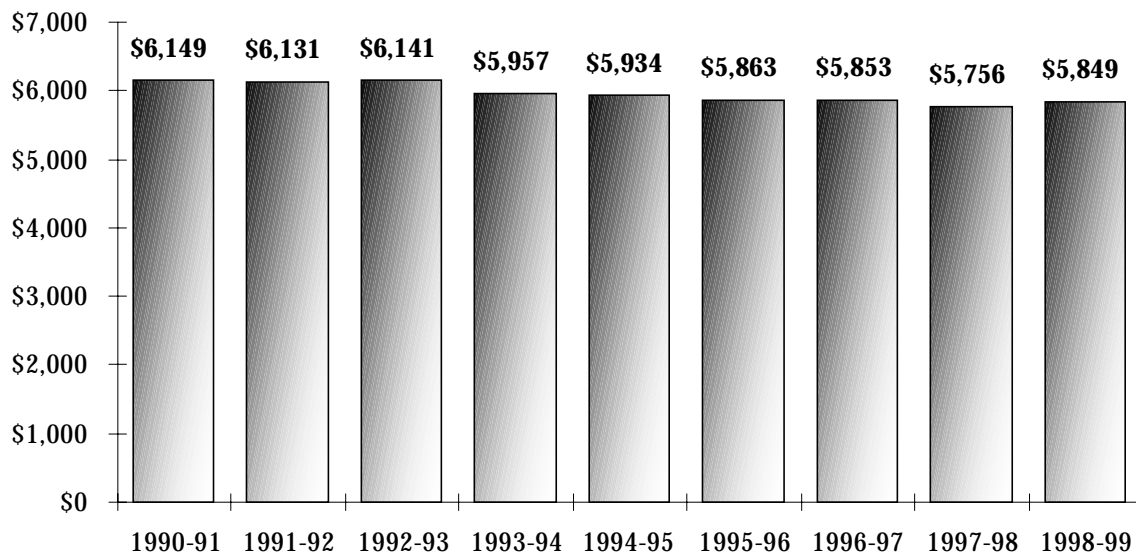


Source: "History of Provincial Funding Per Pupil" (Budget Instruction Manual, 1998/99 Preliminary Budget); Ministry restated numbers to allow accurate inter-year comparisons.

At face value, the amount of funding per student increased every year between 1990-91 and 1996-97, then declined by \$43 in 1997-98 for the first time in seven years as the result of system-wide "Efficiency Adjustments." The upward trend resumed in 1998-99

**Figure 2**

## **Inflation-Adjusted Provincial Operating Funding Per Pupil, 1990-91 to 1998-99**



Source: "History of Provincial Funding Per Pupil" (Budget Instruction Manual, 1998-99 Preliminary Budget); British Columbia CPI, September of each school year (Statistics Canada).

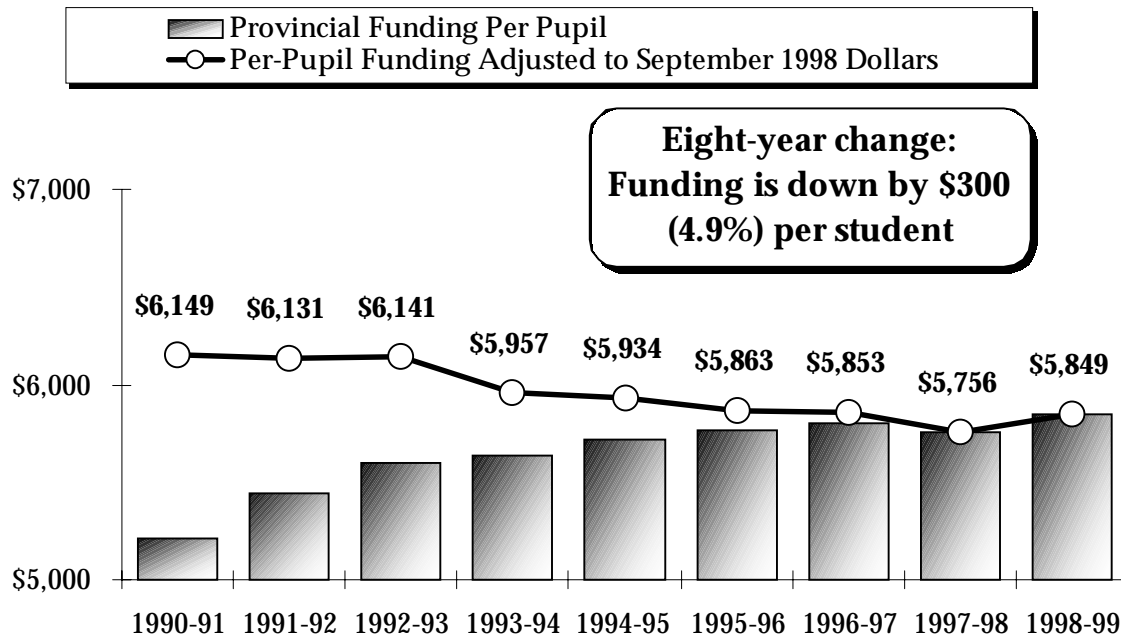
with a boost in per-pupil funding of \$93, or \$50 more than the 1996–97 level. The resulting per-pupil amount of \$5,849 is \$636 or 12.2% higher than the comparable amount for 1990–91.

When inflation is taken into account, however, the figures tell a different story. Figure 2 displays the same per-pupil funding amounts as Figure 1, this time adjusted using the British Columbia Consumer Price Index (CPI) to reflect September 1998 dollars (that month was chosen as the benchmark since it is the beginning of the school year). This chart demonstrates that real operating funding per student has declined every year between 1993–94 and 1997–98. The modest increase in 1998–99 returned real funding almost, but not quite, to its 1996–97 level.

Figure 3 combines actual funding per pupil with inflation-adjusted amounts. It is evident from these figures that public education in British Columbia has experienced a decline in real per-pupil operating funds of \$300 per student since 1990–91. This 4.9% decline has occurred during a period when more and more students need specialized educational services, when more students have English as their second language, when more students are identified as having special needs, and when additional pressures have been placed on teachers to revise methods and curriculum.

Figure 3

## Real Provincial Funding Per Student Down \$300



Source: Budget Instruction Manual, 1998-99 Preliminary Budget--"History of Provincial Funding Per Pupil"; British Columbia CPI from Statistics Canada.

Reduced per-student funding for education diminishes the quality of education available to students. **If the real per-pupil amount for 1998-99 were the same as in 1990-91, the system would be funded to the tune of about \$182.6 million more in the upcoming year. This funding could be used to hire more than 3,200 additional teachers, assuming a salary and benefits cost of \$57,000 per teacher.**

Cumulative effects are even more devastating—even relatively small reductions in funds to support the delivery of instruction to students in the next budget year will have much larger, negative impacts on educational opportunities. Restoring per-pupil operating funds to a provincial average of \$6,149 would ensure continuity of programs.

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# Statistical Changes in the System Since 1990

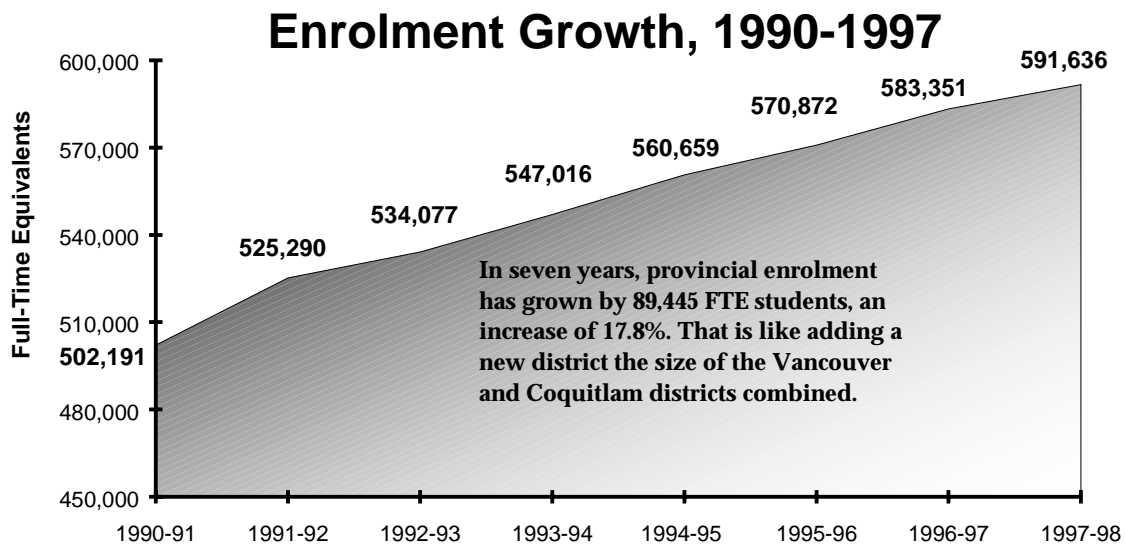
Reduced staffing levels have intensified the increased demands on teachers in today's classrooms. The following overview uses the most recent data available to the BCTF to illustrate enrolment and staffing trends.

## Growing Enrolment

Enrolment growth in B.C. schools has been stunning in recent years. As illustrated by Figure 4, more than 89,000 additional full-time-equivalent students entered the system in the seven years between 1990 and 1997 (Ministry of Education Standard Report 2077, September 1997). That is 2,000 more than the combined enrolment of the Vancouver and Coquitlam school districts (Ministry of Education Standard Report 2077, September 1997). Such numbers cannot be easily accommodated without considerable cost and stress on an already overburdened system.

**Indications are that this decade's spectacular enrolment growth is now over; this hiatus provides an opportunity to catch up and meet the needs of the students currently in the system.**

*Figure 4*



Source: Ministry Standard Report #2077

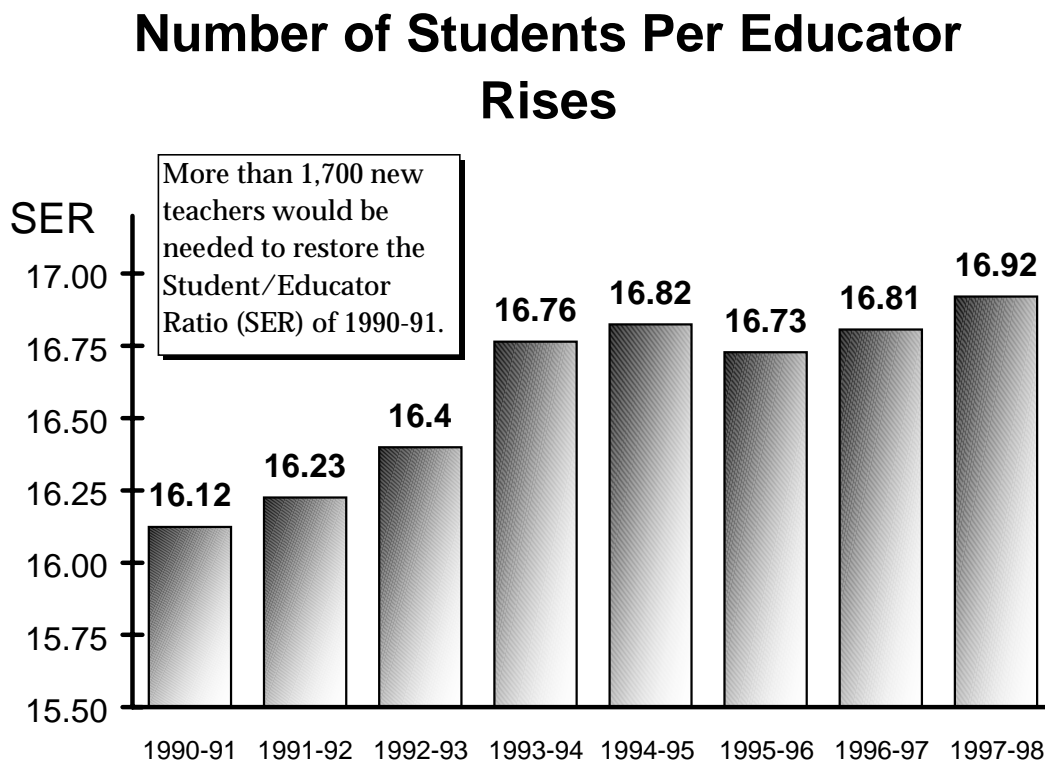
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## More Students per Educator

In 1990, the student/educator ratio (SER) was 16.12. The most recent figures (Ministry of Education Standard Report 2077, September 1997) indicate the ratio has deteriorated to 16.92 students for every educator (Figure 5). While provincial enrolment grew by 89,445 students or 17.8% in this period, the number of teachers and other educators increased by only 3,819 or 12.3%. **If the SER of 1990–91 were still in place, there would be 1,729 more teachers in the system to work with B.C.'s growing and diversifying student population.**

The non-enrolling/ESL and K-3 class-size provisions of the 1998 teachers' collective agreement call for the hiring of additional teachers to begin addressing the issue of rising student/educator ratios.

*Figure 5*



Source: Ministry Standard Report #2077

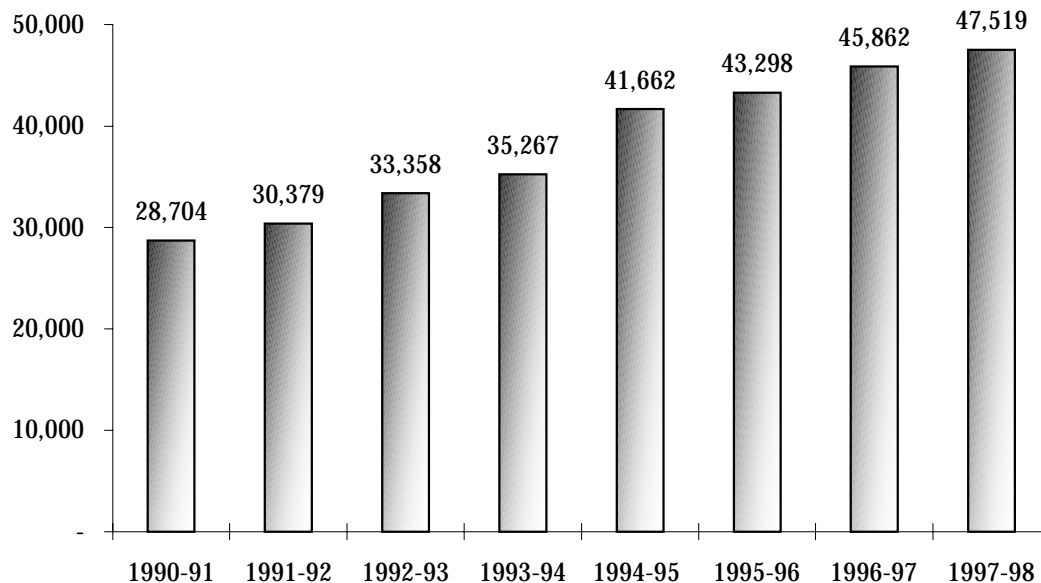
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## Students with Special Needs

Students themselves have changed dramatically over the seven years between 1990 and 1997 (Figure 6). In 1990, the ministry reported that there were 28,704 students with special needs such as physical dependence, visual impairment, severe behaviour disorders, and learning disabilities; by 1997, a total of 47,519 such students were identified (Ministry of Education Standard Report 1585). That represents a 65.5% increase in the number of students identified as having special needs over a seven-year period.

**Figure 6**

**Number of Students with Special Needs  
Rises Dramatically**



Source: Ministry Standard Report #1585

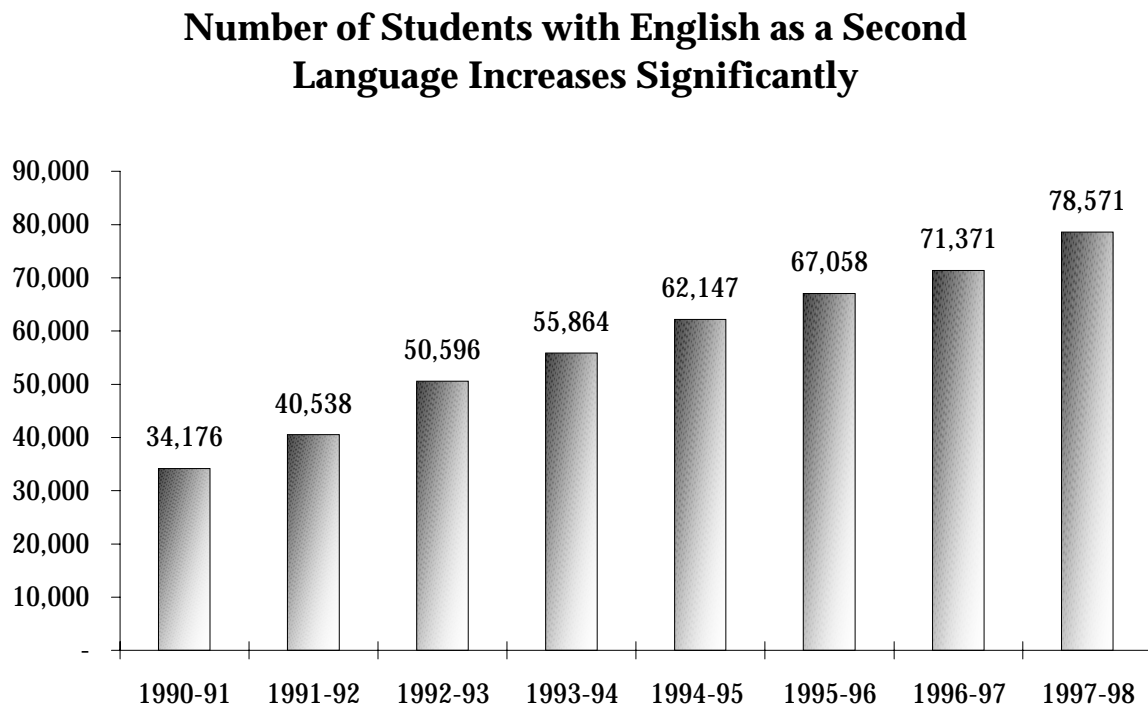
To place these numbers in context, consider the following: While the number of teachers entering the system increased by only 12% between 1990 and 1997, the overall number of students increased by 18% but the number of students with special needs increased by nearly 66%. Dramatic as this growth is, it is likely an understatement. One of the most common criticisms teachers level at the system is that many students in their classrooms have special needs but are not identified or recognized for funding purposes and are therefore not receiving the special services they require in order to learn. Accurate identification and data are required to ensure that special-education funding is being used for its intended purpose—providing services to all students with special needs.

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## English as a Second Language Enrolments

There are other indicators of additional stresses on the system since 1990. For example, as Figure 7 shows, the number of identified ESL students requiring special services has more than doubled, going from 34,176 in 1990 to 78,571 in 1997—a 130% increase (Ministry of Education Standard Report 1586A).

**Figure 7**



Source: Ministry Standard Report #1586A

## Class-Size Increases

In this environment of increased student needs, intensified demands, and additional programs being offered, class sizes have actually increased in the elementary grades in the seven-year period under study. Class size averaged 22.6 in 1990; by 1997, the average had risen to 23.4 (Ministry of Education Standard Report 2040).

Unfortunately, comparable numbers are not available for secondary class size as the practice of gathering this information was discontinued in 1997. Furthermore, elementary-class size by grade cannot be determined. These omissions point to the need for accurate and relevant data collection to monitor the performance of the system with respect to working and learning conditions.

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# Education-Funding Issues

## Cap on Administration

Clouding the issue of how many resources are actually directed toward students in the classroom is districts' practice of allocating at least 1,159.388 of the provincial total of 2,569.771 full-time-equivalent administrative officers to the instructional budget at a cost of \$92.7 million (Revenue and Expenditure Information, August 1997, Tables 10 and 15). In other words, almost half of administrative officers' time is allocated to instruction in school districts' budgets.

In addition, it is unclear how much of the administrators' time is being identified incorrectly as teachers' time. One possible symptom is the inconsistency in numbers of administrators reported on different forms. In September 1997, for example, districts reported a final count of 2,587.99 FTE administrative officers on Form 1530 while the corresponding number on Forms 2001 and 2003 was 2,679.03. In other words 91 fewer principals, vice principals and directors of instruction were reported as administrators on Form 1530 (Ministry of Education Standard Report 2063, September 1997; unpublished September 1997 Form 1530 data from Ministry of Education).

These inconsistencies have serious cost implications when the average administrative officer earns over \$24,000 more than the average teacher— \$77,369 compared to \$53,212 (Ministry of Education Standard Report 2063, September 1997). It is essential to the health of the public-education system that monitoring and accountability measures guarantee the use of instructional budgets for instruction, not administration.

## Teachers Subsidizing the System

Teachers are subsidizing the system in two major ways. First, they provide extra unpaid labour as they try to meet the additional learning requirements of today's students with inadequate overall funding. About 38% of Canadian teachers work overtime, almost always unpaid (Statistics Canada, *Labour Force Update: Hours of Work*, 71-005-XPB, first quarter 1997). And teachers in B.C. work even harder than their hard-working colleagues in the rest of the country: A 1994 Statistics Canada study showed that teachers in B.C. work 42.2 hours per week—almost three hours more than the national average of 39.4 (Statistics Canada, *Education Quarterly Review*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1994).

Second, teachers—especially beginning teachers and those who are changing assignments—often pay for classroom materials and resources to create an environment that is amenable to learning in otherwise barren classrooms. Estimates of this amount range from \$200 to \$1,500 per year (Verena Foxx, "Teachers subsidizing education," *Teacher*, September 1998).



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## “Efficiency Adjustments”

In 1998–99, cuts to funding were made under the guise of an “Efficiency and Restructuring Adjustment” (\$27 million) and a “Savings Initiative” (\$4.3 million). These initiatives were implemented with the express intention of not affecting the classroom. Unfortunately they have had a negative impact on classrooms throughout the province and for that reason should be discontinued.

## ESL Funding

As noted earlier in this brief, British Columbia’s public schools have experienced a dramatic increase in the number of students requiring English as a second language services throughout the 1990s. Within this context, the Ministry of Education is on the brink of announcing a new ESL service delivery policy. Introducing both policy and funding changes at the same time would likely reduce the effectiveness of the new policy as districts would be forced to adapt ESL services to funding changes rather than being guided by policy initiatives.

The BCTF therefore urges a moratorium on any changes to the ESL funding formula for the next 12 months. This moratorium would provide time for districts to adjust to the new ESL policy. A detailed examination of the ESL funding formula—and its relationship to the educational needs of ESL students and the capacity of teachers and school districts to meet such needs—should be undertaken over the next year.

## The Teacher Professional Development Service

The Teacher Professional Development Service (TPDS) is for, by, and about teachers and teaching. The TPDS will enhance learning opportunities for students by promoting and providing sustained, high-quality, career-long professional development opportunities for teachers in British Columbia.

**The BCTF proposes to operate the TPDS on a pilot basis in 1999–00. To this end, we request funding of \$2 million to be re-allocated from the Ministry of Education Field Services Branch or other internal ministry budget.** The three-year plan to expand the service calls for funding of \$3 million in 2000–01 and \$4 million in 2001–02. The details of our three-year proposal are outlined in a BCTF project proposal entitled “Enhancing Teacher Professional Development in B.C.: The Teacher Professional Development Service” (June 1998).

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# Potential Sources of New Revenue

The British Columbia Teachers' Federation has identified the following two potential sources of new revenue to assist in fully funding the public-education system.

## Private-School Funding

The B.C. government currently contributes \$132 million in grants to independent schools (*Public Accounts*, Volume 2, 1997–98), compared to \$82 million in 1990 (Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, *Statistical Supplement to the Annual Report*, 1994–1995). Between 1990 and 1997, actual government grants to private schools increased by 58%, even though funded enrolment in those schools increased by only 43%. The BCTF is opposed to using taxpayer dollars to fund private schools. Returning this funding to the public school system would go a long way toward addressing some of the pressing needs of the public system.

Funding to independent schools should be withdrawn for a number of reasons, including the following:

1. Unlike public schools, independent schools are not accountable to elected officials. The ministry does not have the resources to monitor the independent schools of the province.
2. Independent schools foster exclusive rather than inclusive values. Our society is growing in cultural, religious, linguistic, and economic diversity and requires opportunities for people of diverse backgrounds to interact and gain understanding of their commonality. Independent schools, particularly those that exist to preserve particular cultural or religious values, define community in a narrow and exclusive, rather than a broad and inclusive manner.
3. Government funding to independent schools gives some private schools advantages over schools that rely totally on public funds. Elite private schools that charge substantial tuition and also receive public funds are able to offer smaller classes, more individualized instruction, and superior learning resources, including technology. Government funding to these elite schools offers additional advantages to students who already benefit from a privileged socio-economic status.
4. Independent schools may be selective and discriminatory in their admission policies. Public schools turn away no child—and are proud of their inclusiveness—but private schools may deny entry to students with behaviour problems or any other attribute the school does not wish to address. Some parents choose the independent option because they want their children to escape integrated classrooms where there are insufficient resources to meet the needs generated by inclusion.
5. Public funding of independent schools will create a two- or three-tiered education system in B.C. in the long run. A second tier will result from the upper and middle classes abandoning public schools to obtain the advantages of smaller class size and

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non-inclusive classrooms. A third tier is imminent when fundamentalist groups—who reject the inclusive and secular values of our democracy—flee the system. Thousands of B.C. students attend independent schools that teach that homosexuality is a sin and that the theory of evolution is in error, in spite of the requirement that the B.C. curriculum be taught to qualify for public funding.

The BCTF believes that the public should not subsidize private education and therefore urges government to discontinue funding for independent schools. Group 1 independent schools—which offer programs consistent with the goals of the British Columbia curriculum, employ certificated teachers, maintain adequate educational facilities and meet municipal codes—currently receive 50% of the per-pupil funding granted to neighbouring public schools. **Government funding of Group 1 independent schools should be phased out by removing 25% of the total grant in each of the next four years.** This approach would free up approximately \$29 million per year for the public system.

Group 2 independent schools meet the same requirements as Group 1 schools but receive per-student grants at the 35% level because their costs exceed those of local public schools. The sum of these schools' tuition fees and current government funding results in per-pupil spending that is much higher than is possible in the public system. **Government funding of Group 2 schools should be discontinued in 1999–00.** Public grants to Group 2 private schools currently amount to about \$14 million, so these two measures would make about \$43 million available to public schools in the first year.

If government does continue to fund private schools, however, in no event should the combination of tuition and public funding total more than the average per-pupil allocation in the public system. The BCTF would accept adjustments for those schools that enrol students who would qualify for additional funding within the public system because of their unique needs, such as ESL, aboriginal or special needs. Furthermore, government would base its grant on the tuition fees charged in the 1998–99 school year to prevent a school from manipulating the public subsidy by lowering its tuition fees after the fact.

## School Taxes

The net school tax bill of B.C. homeowners has declined steadily over the past several years. In 1997, the average B.C. homeowner paid only \$11.92 per month in net school taxes. That is 2% less than the \$12.17 paid in 1996, 10% less than the \$13.25 paid in 1995, and 14% less than the 1993 level of \$13.83 (Revenue and Expenditure Tables, various years). It is necessary to reverse this trend. Adding 0.132 point to the tax rate would raise more than \$35 million in new revenues, yet it would cost the average homeowner less than \$2 per month.

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# Conclusion and Recommendations

British Columbia teachers are committed to maintaining and improving our high-quality public-education system. The British Columbia Teachers' Federation therefore respectfully requests that the government **provide adequate funding to cover enrolment growth, inflationary losses, the learning requirements of students requiring special educational services, and all negotiated learning and working conditions.**

*Specifically, the British Columbia Teachers' Federation recommends that the government of British Columbia:*

- 1. Improve on the 1998–99 commitment of per capita funding to reflect the full costs of inflation, the restoration of the 1990–91 student/educator ratio, and the actual costs of the collective agreement.** The provincial agreement bears the stamp of the Legislature of the province of British Columbia. Allocations to districts should reflect the actual costs of operation, including those determined by the collective agreement, enrolment, and inflation.
- 2. Fully fund the K-3 and non-enrolling teacher commitments in the Provincial Collective Agreement.**
- 3. Collect the data that is required to monitor learning conditions and expenditures, including class-size figures from Kindergarten to Grade 12, non-enrolling staffing levels, and accurate reporting of administrative time and numbers.**
- 4. End the “Efficiency and Restructuring Adjustment” and the “Savings Initiative.”** These cuts totalled more than \$31 million in 1998–99. The classroom has suffered because of these cuts; this was not supposed to happen.
- 5. Place a moratorium on any changes to the ESL funding formula for the next 12 months.** During this time, conduct a detailed examination of the formula and its relationship to the new ESL service delivery policy, which will be announced shortly.
- 6. Provide the BCTF with funding for the establishment of a Teacher Professional Development Service on a pilot basis beginning in the 1999–00 school year, and re-allocate \$2 million from the 1999–00 budget of the Ministry of Education Field Services Branch or other internal ministry budget for the Teacher Professional Development Service pilot project.**

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***To access potential sources of new revenue for the public-education system, the BCTF also recommends that the government of British Columbia:***

- 7. Eliminate public funding for private schools.** Phase out government funding of Group 1 independent schools by removing 25% in each of the next four years. Discontinue government funding of Group 2 independent schools in 1999–00.
  
- 8. Reverse the decline in school taxation levels.** Restoring the average net school tax of 1993 would raise more than \$35 million yet would cost the average homeowner less than \$2 per month.

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