



BCTF Research Report

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International student tuition income increases—and inequality grows

By Larry Kuehn, EdD.

The number of international students in BC public schools has grown four-fold since the 2001–02 school year. Two factors have promoted this growth: tuition from international students was one area that school districts could increase financial resources during a period of government austerity policies; and the province promoted the enrolment of international students as an economic strategy. One outcome of the policy has been an increase in inequality between school districts, with most of the additional resources landing in Metro Vancouver and Lower Vancouver Island.

The policy has been a success in an economic sense. International education is the third highest “export” from BC, behind only forestry products and minerals. Education—K–12 and post-secondary—is considered an “export” because it brings in income from across borders for tuition and living expenses. However, given the way it is structured, the increases in tuition revenue also increase the inequalities.

Between 2001–02 and 2016–17, annual K–12 tuition revenue has grown from \$55.5 million to \$242 million, and the number of full-time equivalent students has grown from 4,083 to 15,580 in the public schools. In addition to the economic return, recruiting international students is often justified on educational grounds, that it makes it a richer experience for Canadian students to be in classes with a diverse range of students from other countries.

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On both grounds—economic and social—the current system creates significant inequalities. Eleven school districts out of 60 received 73% of the total funds in 2016–17, the most recent year for which data is available. These are 10 districts in the Metro area, along with Greater Victoria. These are also districts that already have the greatest diversity in their student body.

The districts that don't get many—or even any—international students tend to be those with the least diversity. In many cases, these are also districts that have extra classroom space resulting from declining enrolments.

One measure of the impact of student revenues is the percentage of the district budget that is supplemented by international student funds. International student tuition is generally \$15,000 for an academic year, nearly twice the amount the province provides for each Canadian student.

The district with the largest supplement is West Vancouver, which already has the highest socio-economic status in the province. Its bonus is 12%, based on \$8.8 million in revenue on top of the funding provided by the government to educate students in this district.

International and Out of Province student tuition as percentage of total SD revenue and amount earned, 2016–17, highest earning districts

#	District Name	International and out of province students' tuition as % of operating revenue. (BCTF calculation)	2016–17 International and out of province student tuition revenue	2016–17 International and out of province student headcount
45	West Vancouver	12%	\$8,799,667	571
43	Coquitlam	11%	\$34,200,680	1,858
41	Burnaby	9%	\$21,932,457	1,343
6	Rocky Mountain	9%	\$3,571,343	108
38	Richmond	9%	\$17,086,728	1,013
69	Qualicum	8%	\$3,607,652	173
61	Greater Victoria	8%	\$14,703,438	1,105
40	New Westminster	7%	\$4,968,078	366
35	Langley	7%	\$13,505,472	938
44	North Vancouver	7%	\$9,911,303	719

Source: SDs' Audited Financial Statements, schedule 2A.
 Ministry of Education Student Statistics 2016–17, pg. 1
 Full table on pg. 4

The district with the next highest premium is Coquitlam, with 11% of the budget covered by \$34 million from 1,858 international students. [The majority of students in Coquitlam are from China, and the district has a controversial connection with the Chinese government-sponsored Confucius Institute.]

When the minister of education appointed a K–12 Public Education Funding Model Review, one of the principles central to the review is that the new funding model must be “Equitable—Facilitate access to comparable levels of educational services and opportunities for individual students throughout the province.”

If international students continue to be recruited for K–12 public education and provide revenue for school districts, the funding formula will need to incorporate some approach to ensure that students in districts less able to attract international students will have “access to comparable levels of educational services.”

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References

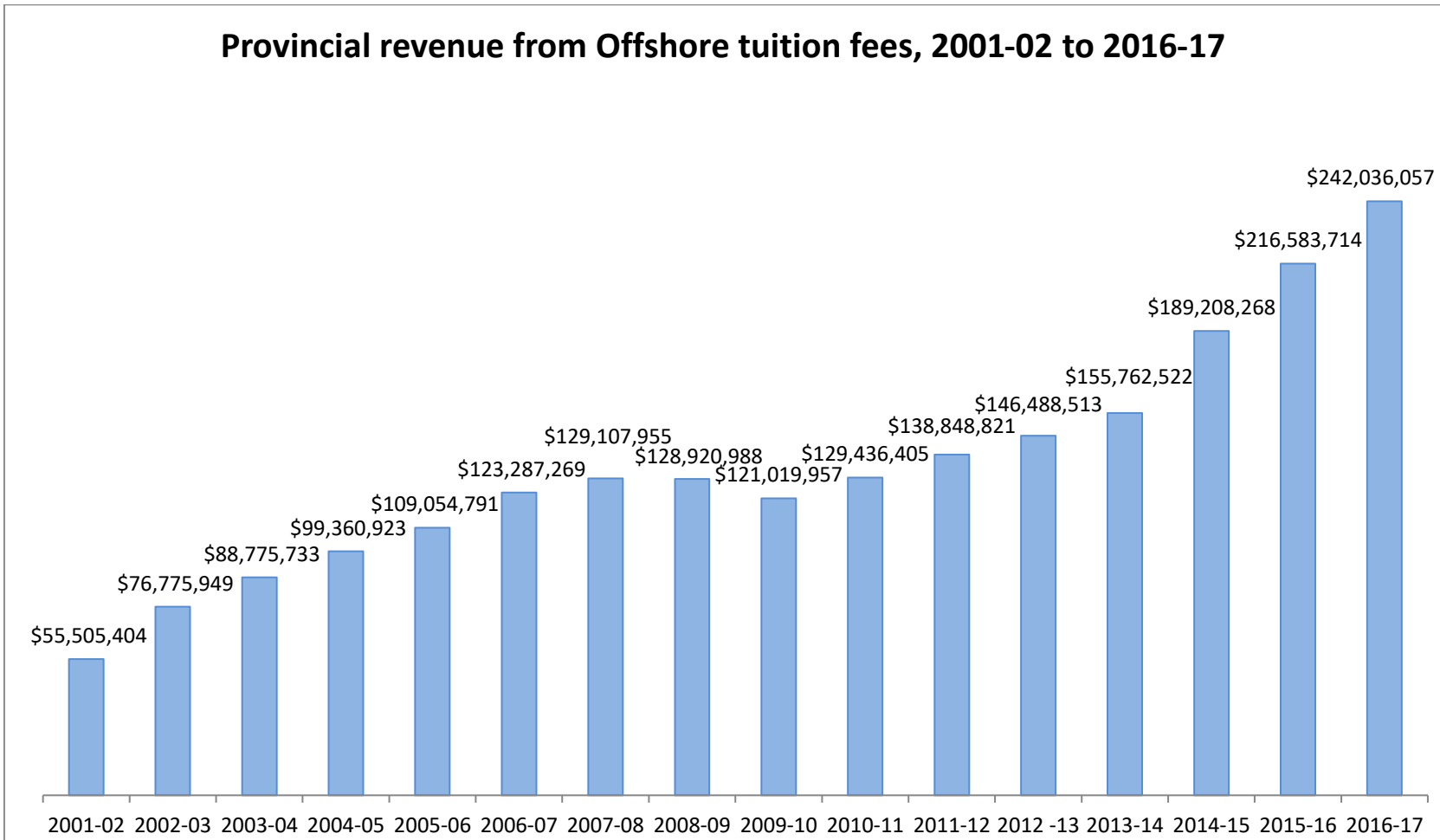
BC Ministry of Education, Student Statistics 2016–17
<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/district.php>

BC School Districts' Audited Financial Statements (AFS),
Schedule 2A, International and out of province student tuition
¹ SD85 Vancouver Island West did not publish their AFS for 2016–17

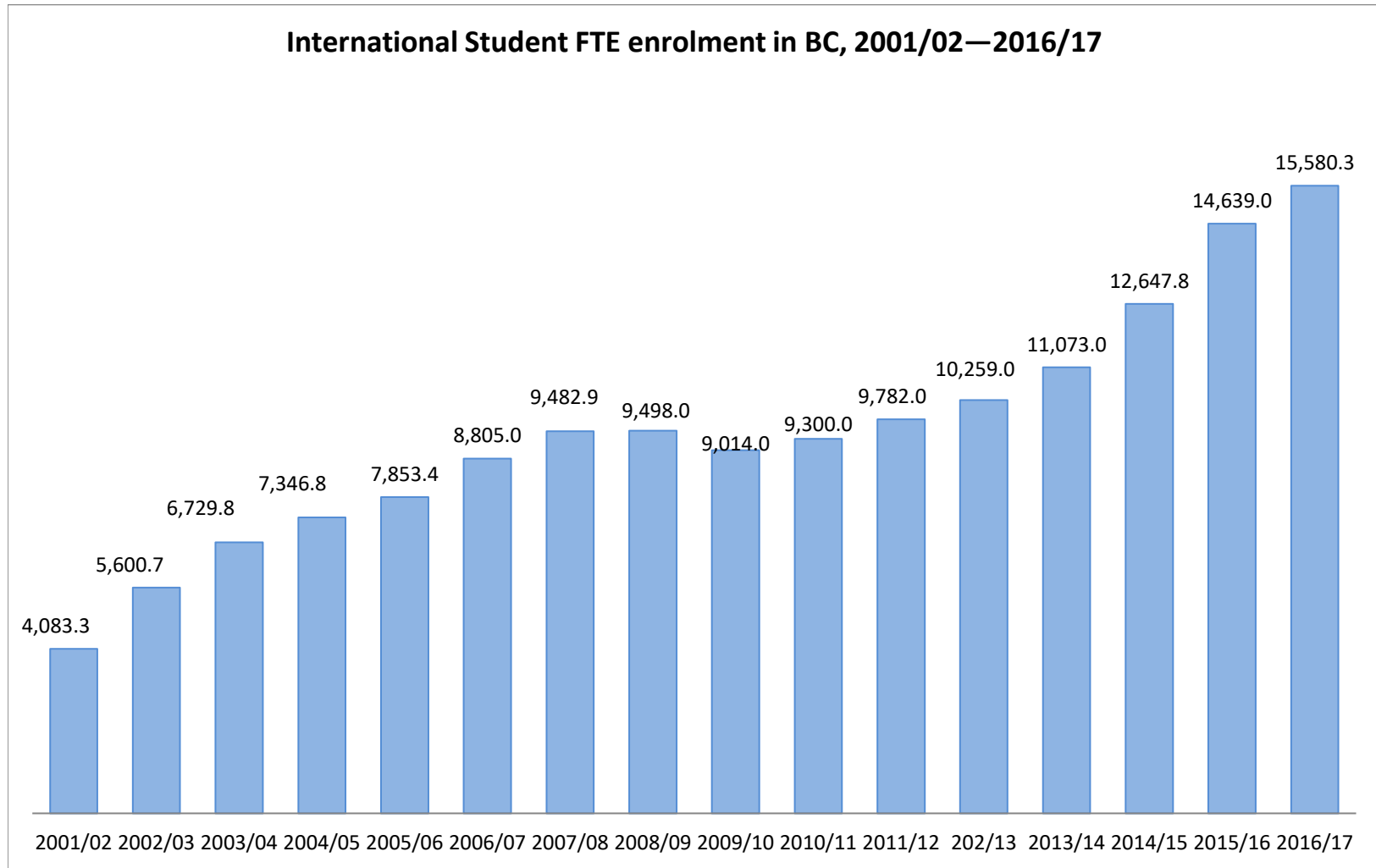
International and Out of Province student tuition as percentage of total SD revenue and amount earned, 2016-17, highest to lowest gains (Source: SDs' Audited Financial Statements¹, schedule 2A; Ministry of Education Student Statistics 2016-17, pg. 1)

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35	Langley	7%	\$13,505,472	938
44	North Vancouver	7%	\$9,911,303	719
63	Saanich	6%	\$4,450,008	383
37	Delta	6%	\$9,257,161	669
22	Vernon	6%	\$4,859,469	203
42	Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows	6%	\$8,134,861	597
48	Sea to Sky	6%	\$2,883,445	241
62	Sooke	6%	\$5,625,646	264
39	Vancouver	5%	\$26,284,400	1,698
47	Powell River	4%	\$922,259	53
79	Cowichan Valley	4%	\$2,900,520	223
68	Nanaimo-Ladysmith	4%	\$4,591,001	317
71	Comox Valley	4%	\$2,670,160	214
64	Gulf Islands	3%	\$708,418	59
75	Mission	3%	\$1,885,101	144
34	Abbotsford	3%	\$5,530,574	442
8	Kootenay Lake	3%	\$1,497,404	66
23	Central Okanagan	3%	\$5,168,270	415
36	Surrey	2%	\$14,348,378	1,013
73	Kamloops Thompson	2%	\$2,900,647	166
67	Okanagan Skaha	2%	\$1,096,294	118
84	Vancouver Island West	1%	\$109,590	-
19	Revelstoke	1%	\$139,028	20
60	Peace River North	1%	\$690,203	53
33	Chilliwack	1%	\$1,398,754	115
72	Campbell River	1%	\$562,266	44
5	Southeast Kootenay	1%	\$415,173	58
10	Arrow Lakes	0.35%	\$25,500	2
46	Sunshine Coast	0.28%	\$105,868	11
91	Nechako Lakes	0.27%	\$139,700	16
70	Alberni	0.24%	\$90,490	2
78	Fraser-Cascade	0.19%	\$38,500	2
51	Boundary	0.17%	\$28,400	2
52	Prince Rupert	0.17%	\$42,750	3
53	Okanagan Similkameen	0.10%	\$27,000	3
59	Peace River South	0.10%	\$43,329	4
27	Cariboo-Chilcotin	0.10%	\$51,200	17
54	Bulkley Valley	0.09%	\$21,015	3
82	Coast Mountains	0.08%	\$39,000	5
57	Prince George	0.07%	\$94,525	12
58	Nicola-Similkameen	0.02%	\$5,282	1
20	Kootenay-Columbia	0.02%	\$6,000	7
28	Quesnel	0.00%	\$150	1
49	Central Coast	0%	\$0	-
50	Haida Gwai'i	0%	\$0	2
74	Gold Trail	0%	\$0	2
81	Fort Nelson	0%	\$0	-
83	North Okanagan-Shuswap	0%	\$0	6
87	Stikine	0%	\$0	-
92	Nisga'a	0%	\$0	-
93	Conseil scolaire francophone	0%	0	-
85	Vancouver Island North	Data unavailable at this time		-

Provincial revenue from Offshore tuition fees, 2001-02 to 2016-17



Source: Schedule 2A, school districts' Audited Financial Statements, 2016-17



Source: Student Statistics, BC Ministry of Education

