

IssueAlert

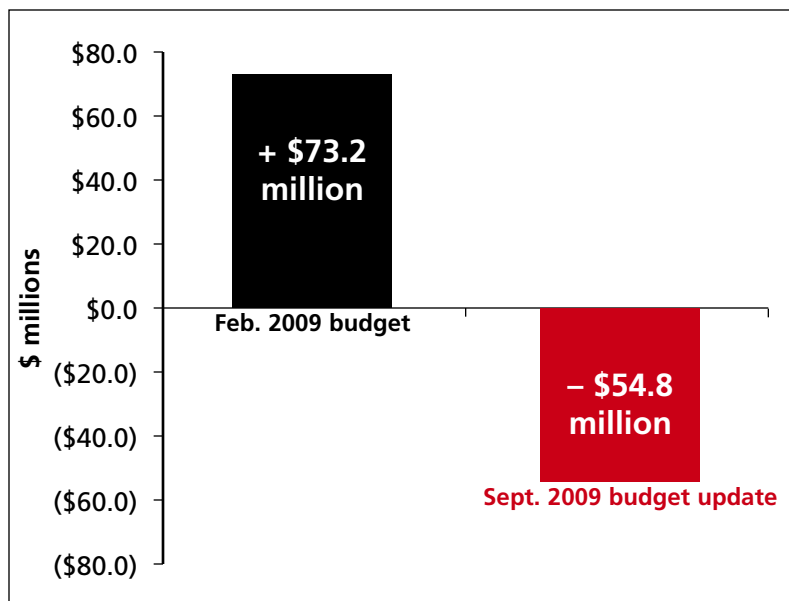


Schools, classrooms, and children hit by provincial cuts

After pledging to “protect” education, the provincial government has slashed funding for 2009–10 in the September budget. The following chart shows that instead of a \$73.2 million funding increase to education programs as announced in February 2009, Education Program funding decreases by \$54.8 million in the current updated budget.*

After accounting for the transfer of \$50 million in CommunityLINK funding to the Ministry of Housing and Social Development, there is still a funding decrease of \$5 million since 2008–09 and \$78 million less funding than was allocated in the February budget.

Change in Education Program Funding* 2008–09 to 2009–10



Calculations by BCTF Research with data from: Ministry of Education 2009/10 to 2011/12 Service Plan—Resource Summary Table, February 2009, p. 21; Ministry of Education 2009/10 to 2011/12 Service Plan Update—Resource Summary Table, September 2009, p. 22.

***Note:** The change in funding from year-to-year is calculated by comparing the 2009–10 estimates to the 2008–09 restated estimates figures in the Resource Summary Table (for the February and September budget estimates).

Since public-school funding comprises 95% of all Education Program Funding, this loss of funding is going to hurt. School districts and schools across BC are already implementing cuts to staff and increases in class size. Along with cuts to the arts, sports, libraries, parent groups, and charities, the impact on education will be felt from many quarters. On top of a surprise cancellation of the facilities grants (maintenance), boards are now left holding the bag with no extra funding to cover inflationary increases, negotiated settlements, increased MSP premiums and a potential increase this year of 8.7% in BC Hydro rates, to say nothing of any improvements to class size and student supports.

As schools opened for the 2009–10 year, the provincial government announced a new round of cuts that will have a huge impact on our students and public education.

Parent Advisory Councils lost 50% of their funding, a cut that will hit lower income communities the hardest.

It's just going to have a huge effect... There is no way this is not going to affect children in the classroom... If you're in a socio-economic area that's struggling to put food on the table, you're not going to be fundraising and selling poinsettias... Those are the students that have lower graduation rates that teachers are struggling to get them to come to school.

– Ann Whiteaker, BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils president.
Surrey Leader September 10, 2009

School districts across the province lost their annual \$110 million to maintain and repair school buildings. The cut could put student and staff health and safety at risk.

To suddenly eliminate the Annual Facilities Grant (AFG) for the coming school year is incomprehensible.

– Patti Bacchus, Vancouver Board of Education chair, Vancouver School Board press release, August 27, 2009

That was promised money. They have pulled it back... It's horrible. It shows a total lack of respect.

– Annette Glover, Kamloops-Thompson School Board trustee, *The Daily News* (Kamloops), August 31, 2009

If we start letting our buildings deteriorate it's going to cost us more in the long run.

– Diana Mumford, Burnaby School Board chair,
Province/Sun, August 30, 2009

We vigorously protest the growing provincial practice of unilaterally changing the rules whenever it pleases... Ultimately, it damages our most precious institution of public education.

– Helen Moats, (Campbell River) board chair,
Courier-Islander, September 9, 2009

BC School Sports lost their entire operating grant and \$14 million has been cut from various community and school athletic programs. Minister of Education Margaret MacDiarmid, told reporters that students can overcome the cuts by “dancing or playing in parks.”

The most troubling comment I have heard from someone in a position of leadership in this province, when it comes to sport and competition issues... [These cutbacks] will end up costing us 10 times more in the long run.

– Elaine Tanner, three time swimming medalist at the 1968 Olympics.
Globe and Mail, September 11, 2009

I can't over-emphasize how much those grants meant to me... Every year when I would apply for those (grants) you would sort of say a little thank you prayer because you know that this is what is going to make the difference that will put us over the top—and it did.

– Joe Sullivan, retired Hazelton teacher and high school wrestling coach of Beijing gold medalist Carol Huynh