

# Media Release

## ***PSBAA releases research paper on Private Schools Funding in Alberta: Scaling-up Privatization***

May 2, 2022 (Edmonton, AB) ... Private school supporters say that private schools save taxpayers money, but new research tells a different story.

The Public School Boards' Association of Alberta (PSBAA) has released a research paper by Curtis Riep, PhD, called *Private Schools Funding in Alberta: Scaling-up Privatization*. This paper reveals that the 18 most expensive private schools in Alberta—which charge tuition rates ranging from \$12,000 to \$35,000 or more—also received more than \$43 million in Alberta government funding in 2021 alone.

“Essential public funds are diverted into elite educational enclaves that are inaccessible to 99 per cent of Albertans,” said Riep in his presentation to PSBAA trustees. “It is a social policy and funding arrangement that entrenches inequalities and inequities in Alberta, rather than one that starts to tackle those inequalities and inequities. “

Riep identifies one school in Calgary where tuition costs more than \$30,000 per year, yet the school received \$3.26 million in provincial funding for the 2020-2021 school year alone. At the same time, nearby public schools in southeast Calgary have been coping with over-crowded classrooms and badly-needed retrofits for years.

In 2021, more than \$314 million of provincial funding was allocated to private education in Alberta. Riep recommends that, based on his research, public financial support for private schools (exclusive of ECS and designated special education private schools) be phased out over a period of time.

PSBAA President Dennis MacNeil concurs with the findings of the report. “The PSBAA has previously expressed concern that private schools do not have the same level of accountability and transparency as public schools. Public schools have publicly-elected school board trustees who are accountable to the communities that elect them and to the Minister of Education. Private schools do not. Public schools must accept all children, whereas private schools can exclude children on the basis of aptitude as scored through entrance exams, religious beliefs or ability to pay. Yet, they continue to receive millions of dollars of public funding each year.”

Dr. Riep's report and presentation to trustees are posted on the PSBAA website at <https://public-schools.ab.ca/research/>.

The Public School Boards' Association of Alberta is the only provincial association representing and advocating for Alberta's public school boards, and public school education in Alberta.

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