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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Education

### **B.C. SCHOOLS RECEIVE BIGGEST FUNDING INCREASE EVER**

VICTORIA – B.C. school districts will receive a funding increase of nearly half a billion dollars this year while student enrolment continues to decline, Education Minister Shirley Bond said today.

“Government has increased funding for school boards this year by \$470 million,” said Bond. “This represents the single largest increase in education funding ever.”

The \$470-million increase includes:

- \$20 million in operating funding announced earlier this year;
- \$196 million in ongoing funding to fully fund negotiated agreements reached earlier this year with employees in the K-12 education sector; and
- \$254 million in one-time funding related to the negotiated settlements.

“At the same time, there are about 12,300 fewer students in B.C. public schools – the largest single decrease ever,” said Bond. “As a result, the average total funding per pupil is \$7,596 this year – up \$503 from last year.”

This is the sixth year in a row the average per pupil funding has increased. Final enrolment figures for 2006-07 show there are 555,414 full-time equivalent students. That’s a decrease of 12,336 students from last year: 11,308 school-age students and 1,028 adults. Meanwhile, funding for public schools has grown from \$4.027 billion in 2005-06 to more than \$4.47 billion this year.

“We committed to fully fund agreements settled in recent labour negotiations, and this unprecedented funding increase does just that,” said Bond. “All 60 B.C. school districts will get more funding to help them continue to improve student achievement.”

The \$503 increase in per pupil funding consists of operating funding and the ongoing funding for the negotiated agreements. In addition, the one-time funding related to the negotiated settlements represents payments to teachers that are equivalent to an additional \$457 for every student in the Province.

The Province will continue to help school districts faced with rapidly declining enrolment by providing extra funds when the decrease is greater than one per cent in a year. This year, more than 51 districts across B.C. will receive grants totalling \$23.9-million to help with declining enrolment.

Government also provides additional funding for districts with a decrease in enrolment of four per cent or more, and for districts with a decrease of seven per cent or more over the previous three years.

School boards will also continue to receive extra funds for any special needs students who have transferred into a district or who have been identified since the Sept. 30 final enrolment report. School districts with a decline in special needs students since Sept. 30 will see no change in funding.

“This funding will help school boards address education priorities such as support for special needs students and improvements to library, arts, and music programs,” said Bond. “It supports our commitment to ensure all students have access to our world-class public education system, no matter where they live.”

The government is working to make B.C. the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent. Since 2000-01, the Province has increased funding to B.C. public schools by nearly \$958 million: \$551 million in operating grants and \$407 million in one-time grants. During the same period, enrolment has declined by about 42,500 students and is projected to decline by another 30,000 students over the next five years.

For information on 2006-07 final funding, visit [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/k12funding/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/k12funding/) online. Click on 2006/07 Funding, and then click on 2006/07 Final Funding Allocations.

1 backgrounder(s) attached. 1 factsheet(s) attached.

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