



Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives- Saskatchewan Getting the Balance Right: 2006 Alternative Provincial Budget Highlights

Total new spending:	\$957 million
Increased revenue from resource royalties:	\$1.04 billion
Projected Budget Surplus:	\$833 million

No more corporate tax give-aways

- **Reconsider** the findings of the Business Tax Review Commission;
- Undergo a **comprehensive review of resource royalties** with view to substantially increasing these rates.
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Progressive tax relief

- New tax credit program for people who, after gaining employment, are in a transition period between social assistance and total independence;
- Additional resources to municipalities to offset regressive education property taxes.

Measures to Address Poverty

- Increase Social Assistance rates by \$70 to a total of \$275/month and disability allowance by \$50/month to \$100/month;
- Eliminating the Transition to Employment Assistance (TEA) program and the Call Centre;
- End National Child Benefit clawback and redistribute to Social Assistance recipients
- Increase quantity and quality of government social housing units;
- Increase funding to Community-Based Organizations;
- Money for a collaborative research project to investigate Basic Income Program for unconditional and universal assurance of an adequate income to every adult person.

New focus and re-investment in Health Care

- Increase total Health budget by 10% for investments in primary health care and health prevention;
- Address fee-for-service system that provides incentives for high-volume turnaround instead of health promotion and disease prevention by:
 - Expanding number of community health centres that employ salaried doctors;
 - Revising payment schedule for fee-for-service schedules to increase fees for services needed in the primary care model which emphasizes health promotion and prevention; and reducing some specialist fees;

- Increased funding for the promotion of healthy living and preventing chronic disease including more money for mental health services, programs to increase physical activity and access to nutritious food, and decrease substance abuse;
- Implement Healthy Workplaces Strategy to address conditions in the workplace before they create chronic health problems;
- Increase the number of full-time health care positions.

Re-investment in Education

Early Childhood Education

- Increase to Provincial Day care subsidies
- Investment in day care training and education
- Additional resources for special needs grants for day cares, day care equipment
- Increased funding for nutrition Programs and Staffing in the Community Schools

Kindergarten to Grade 12

- Education property tax offset to bring provincial funding of education up to 60%
- Increase in Foundation Operating Grants of \$39 million
- Increase of \$36.9 million for additional capital expenditures
- \$9.2 million to community schools, plus an additional \$600,000 for adequate nutrition costs; for a total of \$9.8 million
- \$4.8 million for curriculum development

Post-Secondary Education

- Tuition fees at universities, regional colleges and SIAST be cut in half over five years, beginning this year with a reduction of ten per cent;
- Grants to defray cost of living expenses for low-income students and for rural post-secondary students who must live away from home are introduced;
- Co-op and other employment opportunities for students are expanded;
- Funding for significantly more students to enroll in targeted SIAST programs is planned over the next five years;
- Increase the maximum loan amount from \$9,350 to \$14,000 and reduce parental contributions to more realistic levels and have options to meet contribution expectations from future income;
- Increase the funding to the Apprenticeship and Trade Certificate Program.

Other important initiatives

- Support for local food systems, organic agriculture and environmental stewardship;
- Strategies to address gender inequality and violence against women;
- Initiatives that address problems in our Justice system;
- Measures to address inequality faced by Aboriginal people and people with disabilities;
- Important initiatives in the cultural sector.