



## Budget 2019-2020

### **Major Reinvestment in the Key Sectors of Education and Health**

**Québec, March 21, 2019.** – Education and health have been the new government's top priorities since coming into power. However, both sectors were strained by inadequate funding in recent years. Budget 2019-2020 makes a major reinvestment in these sectors, totalling \$7.3 billion within five years, to improve student services as well as health care, particularly for seniors, as we promised we would do.

To enable every child to reach his or her full potential, the government intends to improve the services provided to students, starting at a very young age. To that end, education spending will be increased by 5.1% in 2019-2020. More specifically, the government is announcing, among other investments:

- \$4 billion for the 2019-2029 Québec Infrastructure Plan (QIP) to, among other things, enlarge and build schools;
- \$1 billion over the next five years to roll out 4-year-old kindergarten;
- \$340 million for the Agir tôt program, to enable early screening for learning disabilities;
- \$455 million to add an extra hour to the school day for extracurricular activities;
- \$135 million for cultural outings and school libraries;
- \$235 million to increase direct professional support services to students;
- \$100 million to add more special education classes;
- \$36 million a year to allow for the purchase of eyeglasses and contact lenses for children aged 17 and under.

#### **Giving every child the means to reach his or her full potential**

In Budget 2019-2020, the government is beginning to roll out non-compulsory 4-year-old kindergarten programs across Québec so as to help every child develop his or her full potential. As announced, 250 new 4-year-old kindergarten classes will be added as of September 2019.

Additional investments will be made to add an extra hour to the school day in secondary schools for physical activities, arts and help with homework in order to support student success and retention. In addition, new special education classes will be added to provide students with schooling that better matches their needs.

In order to better meet students' needs and provide better support to teaching staff, the government plans to increase direct professional support services to students.

Lastly, to give children every opportunity to succeed in school, starting in September 2019, the government will offer financial assistance in the amount of \$250 per 24-month period to help cover the cost of eyeglasses and contact lenses for children aged 17 and under.

#### **Over \$20 billion for education and higher education infrastructure**

Education infrastructure must provide healthy, safe, accessible environments that are conducive to students' learning and development. Unfortunately, the asset maintenance deficit accumulated over the last 15 years has resulted in serious deterioration in our infrastructure. The 2019-2029 QIP invests \$20.3 billion in the education and higher education networks. Of that amount, \$16.3 billion is earmarked for existing infrastructure and \$4 billion, for the enlargement and construction of schools, including new classrooms for 4-year-old kindergarten.

### **Improving Quebecers' quality of life and health**

To deliver on its commitments and improve Quebecers' quality of life and health, the government is announcing a 5.4% increase in spending on health and social services in 2019-2020. Additional investments in health, totalling \$4.9 billion within five years, are planned. They include:

- \$1.5 billion to strengthen home care and support services;
- \$105 million to improve the quality of life of informal caregivers;
- \$1.1 billion to add more caregiving staff;
- \$564 million to roll out seniors' homes.

### **Providing better services to seniors**

To help seniors enjoy a good quality of life, Budget 2019-2020 includes substantial additional investments to, among other things, offer more home support, add more staff in residential and long-term care centres and other health institutions, and support informal caregivers.

In addition, as promised, the government intends to establish 30 seniors' homes within the next few years. For that purpose, Budget 2019-2020 provides \$245 million in annual funding starting in 2022-2023. In addition to this funding, the 2019-2029 QIP provides \$1 billion in investments for the establishment of seniors' homes, which will replace residential and long-term care centres and offer a new, quality living environment for both seniors and caregiving staff. In the meantime, existing needs will be met by adding another 900 residential beds and spaces in residential and long-term care centres thanks to an investment of \$70 million annually as of 2019-2020.

### **Quotation:**

"Giving our children access to quality education that matches their diverse needs remains the surest way to secure Québec's future. We have made it a priority and today we are sending a clear message by announcing a major reinvestment in the education network. In addition, Québec faces major challenges in the health sector, particularly with regard to seniors. Quebecers are concerned about the situation and we are honouring our commitment to this important sector by allocating a level of funding in keeping with seniors' needs. We are investing substantial sums to improve seniors' quality of life not only by ensuring they have access to quality care, but also by providing respite to caregiving staff and informal caregivers, who have been stretched thin in recent years."

*Eric Girard, Québec Minister of Finance*

### **Related link:**

Full details of Budget 2019-2020:

[http://www.budget.finances.gouv.qc.ca/budget/2019-2020/index\\_en.asp](http://www.budget.finances.gouv.qc.ca/budget/2019-2020/index_en.asp)

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