

Budget 2021-2022

**Concrete initiatives so all young Quebecers
can develop to their full potential**

Québec, March 25, 2021. – The pandemic and its repercussions have taken a major toll on young Quebecers and have impacted many key aspects of their lives. Therefore, in Budget 2021-2022, the government is making young people a priority by announcing initiatives totalling \$1.5 billion over the next five years so they can all develop to their full potential.

The government wants to support young people, from the time they start school to the time they enter the labour market. The initiatives announced today are specifically aimed at:

- fostering educational success;
- supporting student retention and graduation in higher education;
- facilitating social and professional integration;
- promoting sports and recreation.

Fostering educational success

Education has been seriously impacted by the crisis, which has, among other things, forced schools to close, thereby pivoting to distance learning or hybrid models, and suspending extracurricular activities. Budget 2021-2022 therefore provides \$170 million over two years to support students and school staff by focusing, in particular, on specialized education support such as tutoring, homework assistance and psychosocial support.

In addition, to raise the graduation rate across all levels, the government is increasing the assistance granted to the school system by more than \$403 million over the next five years. This investment will make it possible to implement a strategy to attract and mobilize school staff and enhance the status of the network, to add special education classes, to improve the condition of Québec schools and to continue the digital shift through artificial intelligence.

Supporting student retention and graduation in higher education

College and university students have also been greatly affected by the pandemic, which has forced them not only to transition to remote learning but also to socially isolate, having a significant impact on the educational trajectory. To encourage student perseverance, an investment of \$145 million over five years will, in particular, enhance services aimed at improving the health and well-being of students. The government is also providing \$369 million of additional funding over the next five years to increase the number of college and university graduates, mainly in information technology, an industry that has been experiencing a critical labour shortage for a number of years now.

As well, two additional initiatives totalling more than \$154 million will help alleviate the financial burden on students during the pandemic. Thus, a lump sum of \$100 per term for the fall of 2020 and winter of 2021 will be paid to full-time college or university students and interest on student loans will be eliminated from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022.

Facilitating the social and professional integration of youth

The government wants to better equip young people and facilitate their transition from school to the labour market. Budget 2021-2022 provides \$107 million over five years to assist young people with their professional integration and ensure funding for the next youth action plan. Special efforts will be directed at young people who are neither in school, nor working nor enrolled in a training program to help them enter the labour market. The investments will also ensure stable funding for youth employment centres and enhance the tax credit for on-the-job training periods.

Promoting sports and recreation

To promote sport and recreational activities, particularly among young people, the government will invest \$113.3 million over the next five years. These funds will be used for initiatives to encourage physical and recreational activities in all environments and to develop the related infrastructure.

Significant investments are also planned to ensure quality sports and recreational infrastructure in schools throughout Québec.

Quotations:

“We have a responsibility to support our young people, who have seen their academic progress and daily lives turned upside down by the pandemic. Whether at the elementary, secondary, college or university level, we must provide them with tools and a living and learning environment that will help them develop to their full potential.

We have ambitious goals for academic success and graduation rates. We continue to invest to increase the economic potential and development of Québec society.”

Eric Girard, Québec’s Minister of Finance

Related link:

All the details on Budget 2021-2022: http://www.budget.finances.gouv.qc.ca/budget/2021-2022/index_en.asp.

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