

Some P.E.I. groups say provincial budget looks promising, but await details ^[1]

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Author: CBC News

Source: CBC News

Format: Article

Publication Date: 25 Feb 2022

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

Officials with several local organizations used words like "encouraging," "exciting," and "pleased" to describe their reaction to P.E.I.'s 2022-23 budget, but cautioned they need to see the details.

"I would like to see ... what's promised here today really come into play because it will improve the lives of Islanders," said Mary Boyd, the chair of the P.E.I. Health Coalition and the director of the Mackillop Centre for Social Justice.

"There's no doubt about it."

The budget includes spending of almost \$2.7 billion. The projected deficit is \$92.9 million.

"There were some very good things in it. There were, of course, some things missing," said Boyd.

For example, she said while she was pleased to see more support for Island seniors and a focus on improving the health-care system, Boyd would have also liked an emphasis on plans to eradicate poverty and increase the minimum wage.

"They have to follow through because that's one of the problems too that sometimes you hear all kinds of good things in budgets and then the next year you hear them again and then the third year, and it's kind of endless," she said.

The budget also included money for the Island's youth and announced \$27.2 million to expand child-care spaces, increase staff wages and designate more centres.

"There's been years past where you have to really scroll through like the thick of the document to try to find out where we are fitting in the budget," said Jamie Lynn Mosher with the Early Childhood Development Association of PEI and co-owner of Rainbow Beginnings Early Learning Centre in Mount Stewart.

"It was really exciting to see that we had our own bullet and a good investment in the sector."

Mosher said she is excited about what the budget means for employee retention and recruitment.

"Sometimes the hardest part is that we lose those good ones to more flexible or intriguing jobs," she said.

"Sometimes when it comes to child care, yourself, or paying your bills... sometimes you have to go with more money-based instead of ... your passion."

The Greater Charlottetown Area Chamber of Commerce highlighted the support for tourism, the cleantech sector and the small business tax rate as positives.

P.E.I.'s small business tax rate, which is one of the lowest in the country, "makes us more competitive and certainly keeps more money in the pockets of the business community," said CEO Robert Godfrey.

"We're very happy to see that."

Godfrey is interested in what happens next.

"The devil sometimes is in the details. So getting down to business on some of these initiatives, some of the programs they've announced, certainly, the chamber looks forward to those discussions," he said.

Region: Prince Edward Island ^[3]

Tags: provincial budget ^[4]

child care workforce ^[5]

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