

**2001/2002 LEARNER, PARENT AND PUBLIC SATISFACTION SURVEY  
SUMMARY REPORT**

*Prepared by*  
**PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING  
ALBERTA LEARNING**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Learner, Parent and Public Satisfaction Survey is a set of four surveys conducted annually to provide feedback from parents, learners, and the public regarding their perceptions of Alberta's learning system. R. A. Malatest & Associates was retained by Alberta Learning to conduct this set of surveys for 2001/02.

This year's set of surveys was conducted in late January and early February 2002, immediately preceding the strike action taken by teachers in many school districts. The results of the survey may be influenced by awareness of the teacher negotiations, a mid-year adjustment by the public and private sector, and a general shift of the public confidence in government institutions in the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001.

The main objectives of this study are to determine:

- Satisfaction with the overall quality, responsiveness, and accessibility of Alberta's learning system (Goal 1 in Alberta Learning's Business Plan).
- Satisfaction with the preparation of learners for lifelong learning, employment, and citizenship (Goal 3 in Alberta Learning's Business Plan).

## Key Findings

***The vast majority of high school students and parents of students (both ECS –12 and special needs) are satisfied with the quality of education.***

The greater the involvement the stakeholder had in the learning system, the higher their level of satisfaction. 89% of high school students are satisfied with the quality of basic education, followed by 84% of parents (both ECS – Grade 12 and special needs) and 63% of the public.

***Most high school students and parents of students (both ECS –12 and special needs) are satisfied with the responsiveness of the education system to their needs and expectations.***

83% of parents of children with severe special needs are satisfied with the responsiveness of the educational system, followed by 79% of high school students and 74% of parents (ECS - Grade 12). 54% of the public surveyed indicated the responsiveness of the educational system was satisfactory.

***The majority of parents and the public agree that students are learning what they need to know.***

Parent (ECS – Grade 12) agreement was high at 79%, while public agreement was 62%.

***Most adult learners and the public (non-learners) are satisfied that adults taking education or training are getting the skills they need for the workforce.***

Adult learner satisfaction was 82%, while public satisfaction was 75%.

***Most high school students are satisfied that graduates are well prepared for citizenship, compared to just over half of parents (ECS – Grade 12) and the public. Satisfaction for all three respondent groups rose significantly in 2001/02.***

The vast majority (87%) of high school students are satisfied that graduates from Alberta's learning system are well prepared for citizenship, compared to 55% of parents and 58% public.

Satisfaction for all three respondent groups rose significantly in 2001/02.

***The overwhelming majority of adult learners are satisfied with the education or training they received.***

Adult learner satisfaction was very high, with 94% of the adult learners surveyed expressing satisfaction with the education or training they have received.

***The vast majority of high school students, two-thirds of parents, and a majority of the public agree that learners have access to lifelong learning.***

Agreement among the stakeholder groups is as follows:

- 81% for high school students
- 67% for parents
- 58% for the public

***About half of the parents and one-third of the public have been involved in decision making at their local school.***

Parents are almost evenly split between those who have been involved in the decision making process at a school in their community (52%) and those who have had very little or no involvement (48%). 37% of the public responded that they have been involved in at least some decision making process with their local school.

***Two-thirds of parents and half the public are satisfied that they are receiving value for the money spent in their community's schools.***

68% of parents are satisfied that they are receiving value for money spent in their child's school, while 53% of the public are satisfied that they are receiving value for money that is spent in schools in their community.

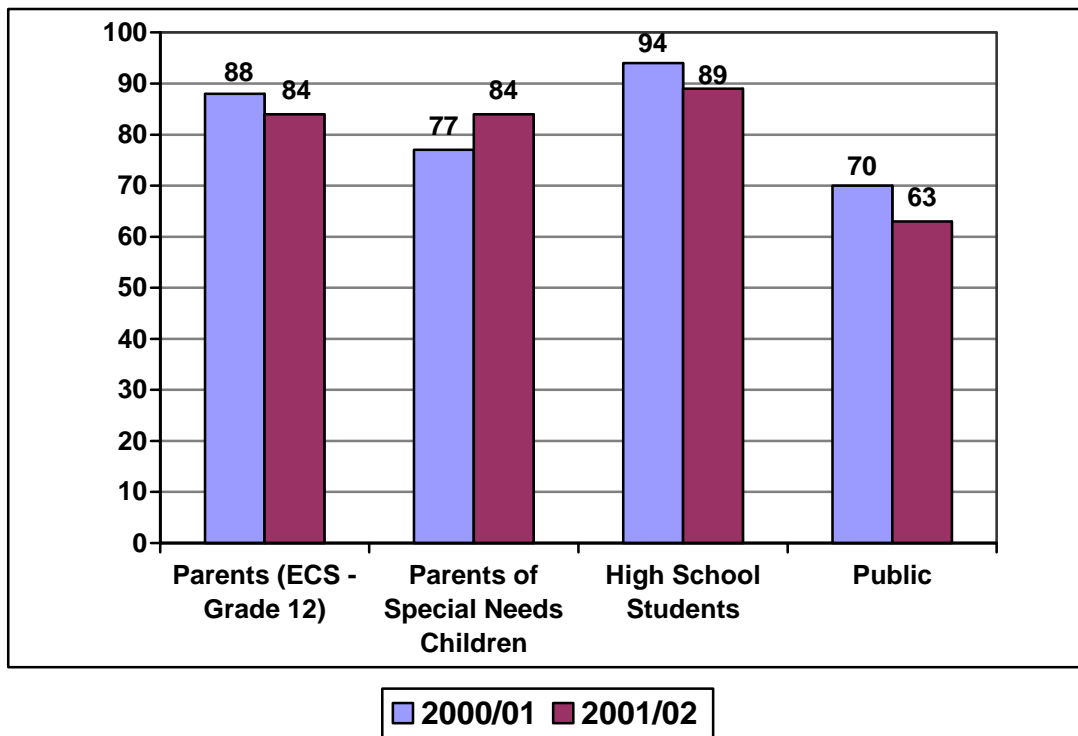
**I. OVERALL QUALITY AND RESPONSIVENESS OF EDUCATION SYSTEM**

**Quality of Education**

***The vast majority of high school students and parents of students (both ECS –12 and special needs) are satisfied with the quality of education.***

Parents of students (both ECS - Grade 12 and special needs), high school students and the public were asked to rate their satisfaction with the elementary, junior and senior high educational system. The greater the involvement the stakeholder had in the learning system, the higher their level of satisfaction. Thus, high school students (89%) are the most satisfied with the quality of basic education followed by parents of both severe special needs and ECS to grade 12 students (84%) and the public (63%).

**Satisfaction with Quality of Education**



Note that each respondent group was asked this question from their perspective:

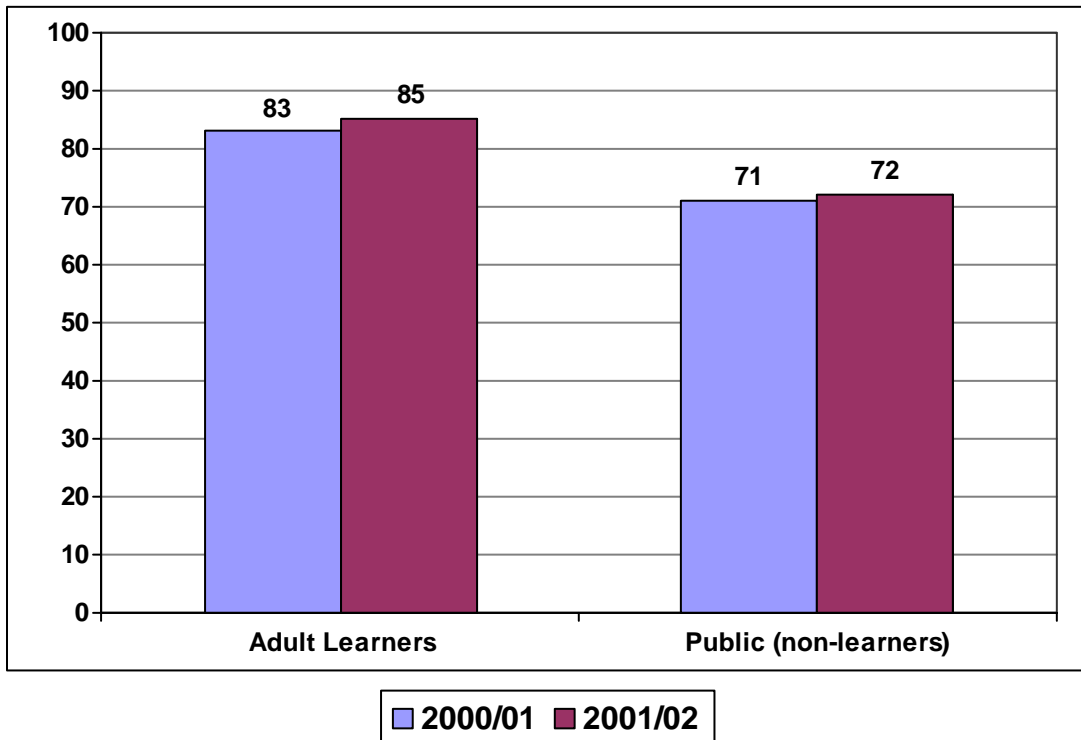
- for parents, it was the quality of education their child was receiving
- for students, it was the quality of education in their school
- for the public, it was the quality of education students received at schools in their community.

***Overall, adults are satisfied with the quality of learning programs in Alberta's adult learning system.***

Adult learner satisfaction with the quality of learning programs in the adult learning system was very high at 85% (27% "very satisfied" and 58% "satisfied").

Public (non-learner) satisfaction with the quality of learning programs in the adult learning system was 77% (20% "very satisfied" and 57% "satisfied").

**Satisfaction with Quality of Adult Learning System**



For both respondent groups the 2001/02 results are not significantly different than those from 2000/01.

***The overwhelming majority of adult learners are satisfied with the education or training they received.***

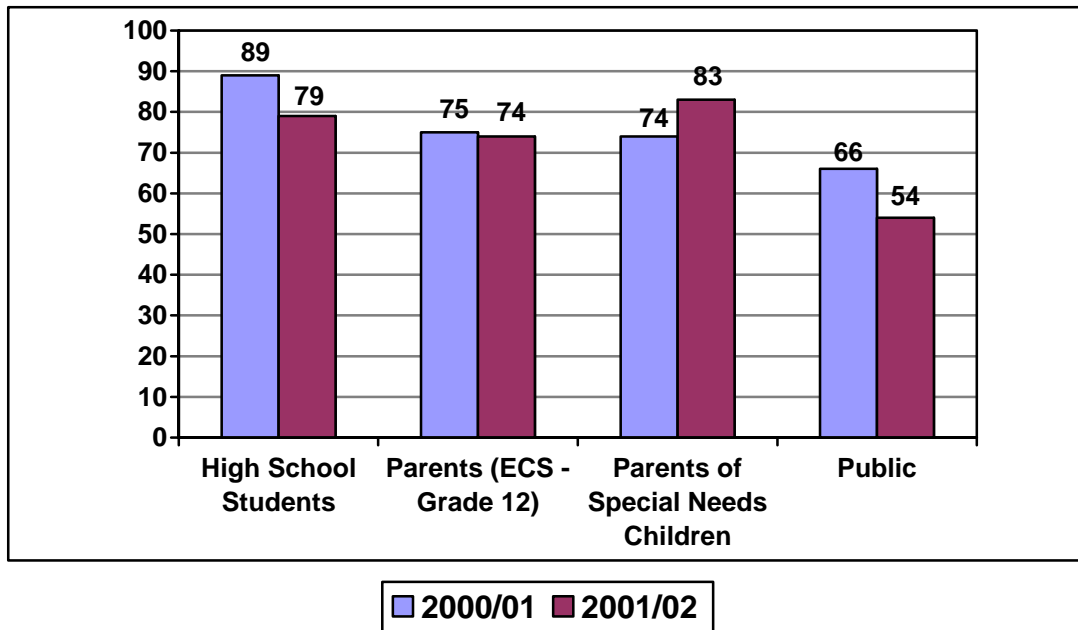
94% of the adult learners surveyed expressed satisfaction (46% "very satisfied" and 48% "satisfied") with the education or training they have received. This is consistent with the result of 92% in 2000/01.

## **Responsiveness**

***Most high school students and parents of students (both ECS –12 and special needs) are satisfied with the responsiveness of the education system to their needs and expectations.***

Stakeholders in Alberta's educational system generally agree the system is responsive to their needs and expectations. Parents of children with severe special needs (83%) were the most satisfied with the responsiveness of the educational system, followed by high school students (79%) and parents of ECS to Grade 12 students (74%). Unlike the other stakeholder groups, however, the public was substantially less satisfied with educational system responsiveness. Slightly more than half (54%) of the public surveyed indicated the responsiveness of the education system was satisfactory.

**Responsiveness of the Education System to Needs and Expectations**



Satisfaction with the responsiveness of the education system has increased since 2000/01 for parents of special needs children (up 9%), but has decreased for students (down 10%) and the public (down 12%).

## II. PREPARATION OF LEARNERS

### Overall Student Learning

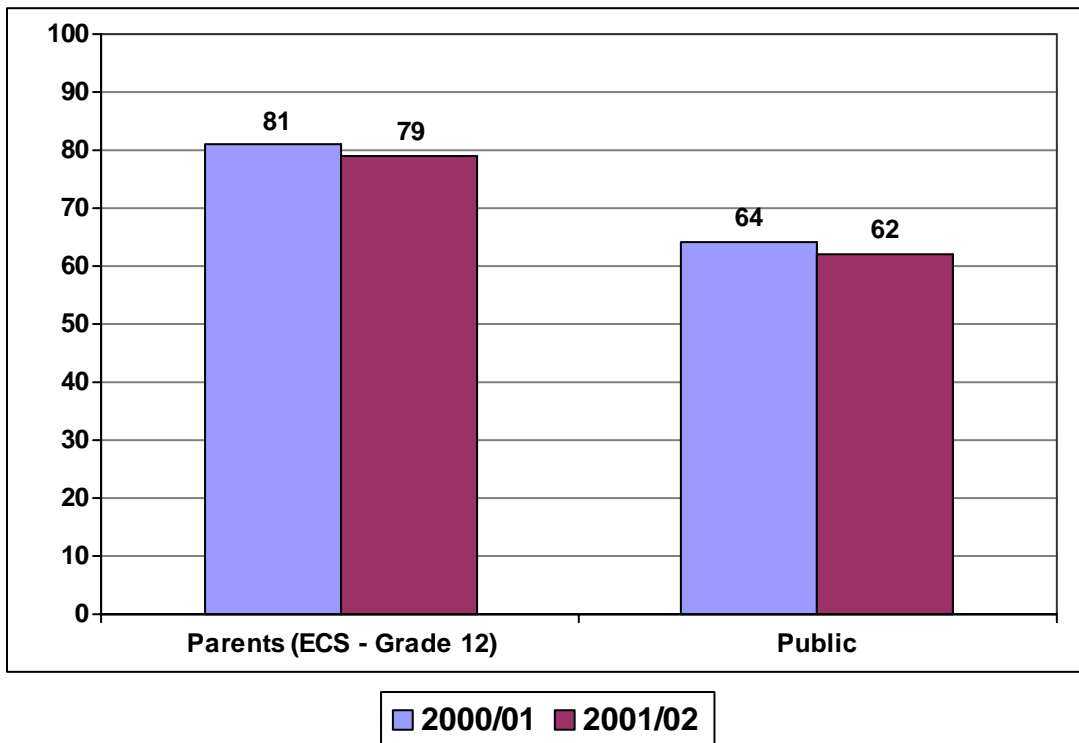
***The majority of parents and the public agree that students are learning what they need to know.***

Parents were asked to consider what is being taught in their child's school and rate their level of agreement that students are learning what they need to know. Most parents (79%) agreed that students are learning what they need to know at their school.

62% of the public agreed that students are taught what they need to know.

For both respondent groups, the results are not significantly different than those from 2000/01.

**Agreement that Students are Learning What They Need to Know**



Parents of students (both ECS – Grade 12 and special needs) and the public were asked to rate their level of agreement that students are learning what they need to know in a number of core skill areas. Compared to the public, parents of ECS - Grade 12 students are more inclined to agree that students are learning what they need to know overall and in core curriculum areas. Similarly, parents of children with severe special needs express lower levels of satisfaction than

parents of ESC – Grade 12 students with what their child is learning in mathematics, reading, and writing.

Parents of ECS – Grade 12 are most satisfied that students are learning what they need to know in reading (82%) and science (82%). The area of lowest satisfaction was technology skills (68%).

The public’s highest level of satisfaction was in the area of science, where 77% felt what is being taught is appropriate. The subject areas of writing (59%) and technology (61%) received the lowest satisfaction ratings.

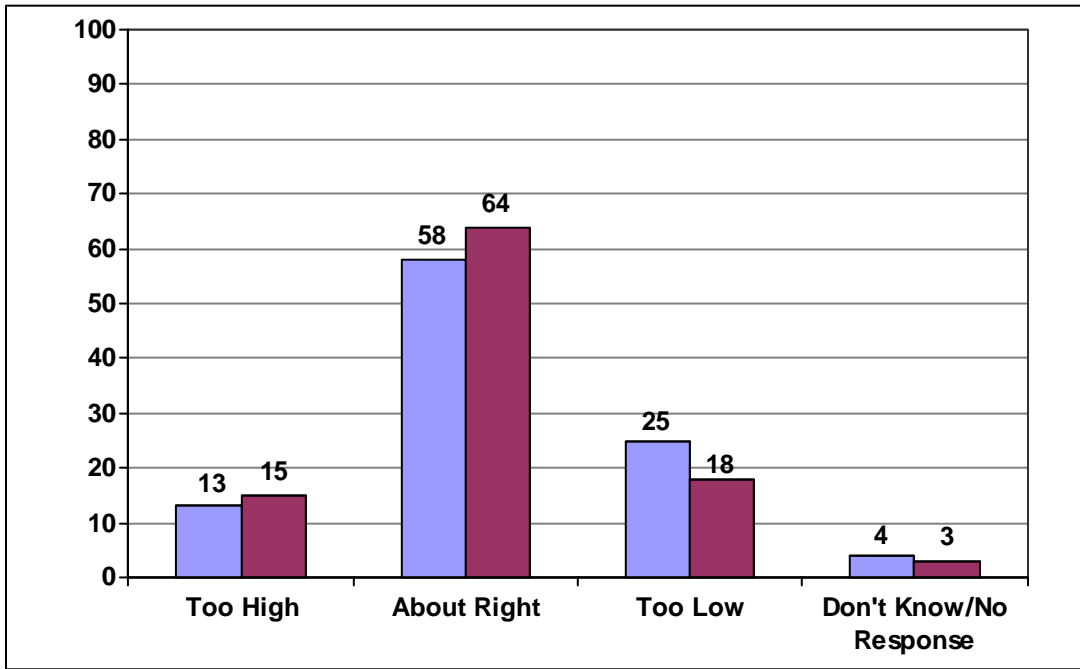
| Subject           | Parents of ECS to Grade 12 Students |         | Public  |         | Parents of Special Needs Children |         |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|-----------------------------------|---------|
|                   | 2000/01                             | 2001/02 | 2000/01 | 2001/02 | 2000/01                           | 2001/02 |
| Reading           | 83%                                 | 82%     | 68%     | 64%     | 68%                               | 56%     |
| Science           | 89%                                 | 82%     | 80%     | 77%     | N/A                               | N/A     |
| Mathematics       | 81%                                 | 80%     | 70%     | 68%     | 66%                               | 50%     |
| Writing           | 79%                                 | 77%     | 62%     | 59%     | 61%                               | 59%     |
| Social Studies    | 84%                                 | 76%     | 69%     | 68%     | N/A                               | N/A     |
| Technology Skills | 70%                                 | 68%     | 65%     | 61%     | N/A                               | N/A     |

Results for some subject areas have declined since 2000/01, though no subject shows a significant decline across all respondent groups.

***Parents are generally satisfied that the learning expectations placed on students are appropriate, while less than half the public feel that expectations placed on students are appropriate.***

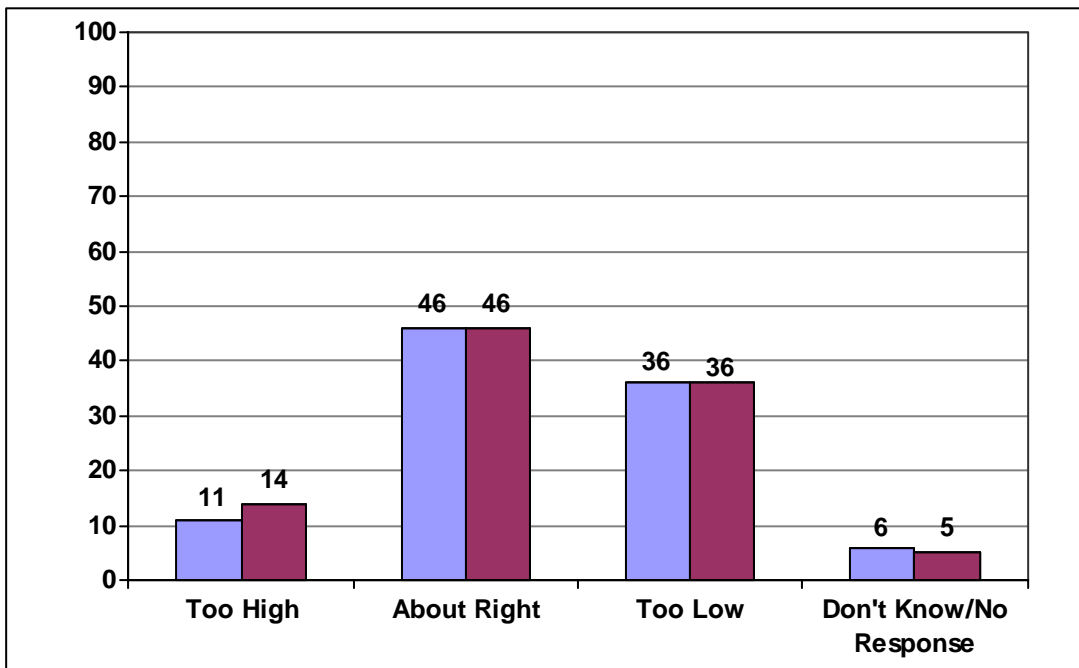
Parents and the public were asked to indicate whether they felt the learning expectations placed on students are “too high”, “about right”, or “too low”. Most parents (64%) feel that learning expectations are about right, and there was a rough balance between those who feel they are “too high” (15%) and “too low” (18%).

**Parent Opinion that the Learning Expectations Placed on Students Are...**



2000/01 2001/02

**Public Opinion that the Learning Expectations Placed on Students Are...**



2000/01 2001/02

### **Preparation for Lifelong Learning**

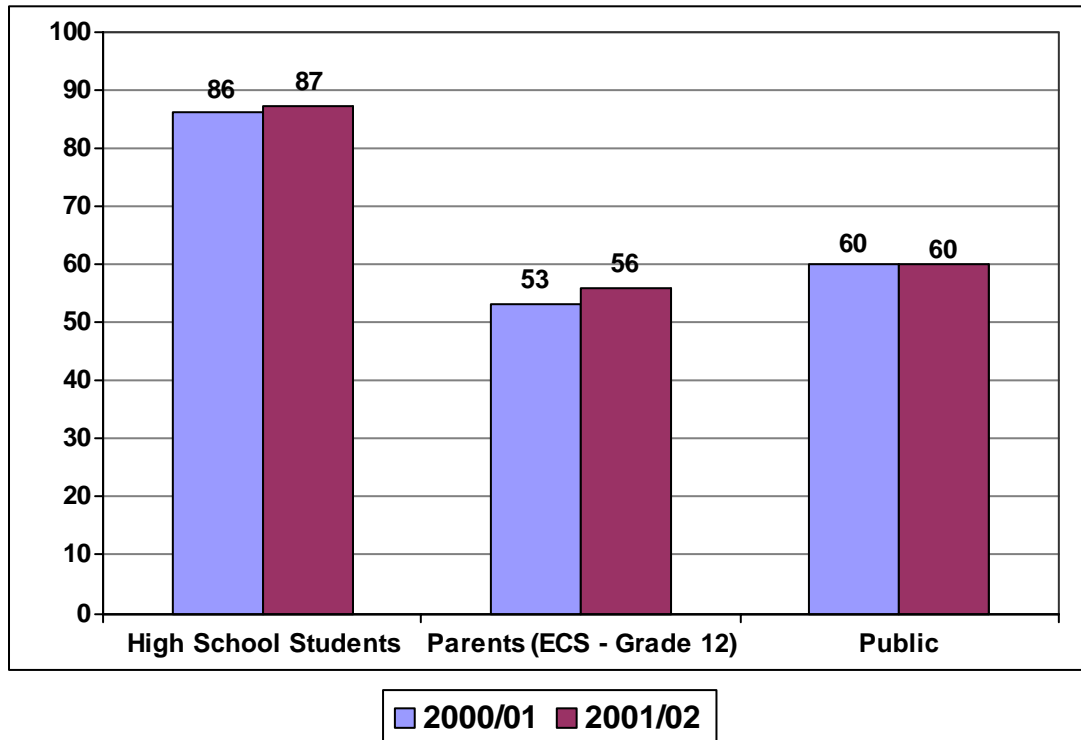
***High school student agreement that high school graduates are prepared for post-secondary education and training is much higher than that for parents and the public.***

The majority of high school students agreed (87%) that high school graduates from Alberta's learning system are well prepared for post-secondary education and training.

Just over half (56%) of the parents agreed that high school graduates in Alberta are prepared to enter post-secondary education and training. A large proportion (18%) of the parents surveyed felt that they did not know or could not comment on the preparedness of high school graduates for further education and training. Importantly, parents with students in grades 10 to 12 are more likely than parents with children in any other grade to disagree (35%) that high school graduates are prepared for post-secondary education and training.

60% of the public agreed that high school graduates are being prepared for post-secondary education and training.

#### **Agreement that High School Graduates are Prepared to Enter Post-Secondary Education and Training**

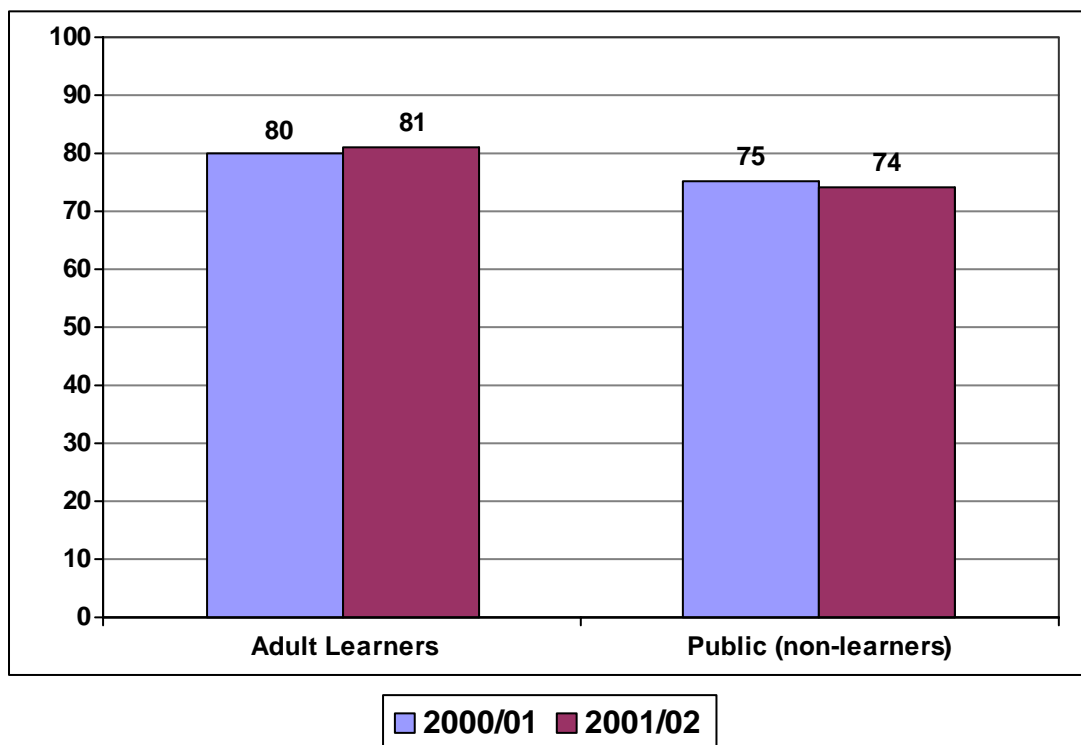


***Most adult learners and the public (non-learners) feel adults taking education or training are well prepared for lifelong learning.***

81% of adult learners reported that adults taking education or training are being taught the appropriate combination of skills and knowledge to prepare them for lifelong learning.

74% of the public was satisfied that adult learners are given the appropriate skill and knowledge to prepare them for lifelong learning. 15% of the public did not know or gave no response.

**Satisfaction that Adults Taking Education/Training are Well Prepared for Lifelong Learning**



The satisfaction for both respondent groups is consistent with the results from 2000/01.

***The vast majority of high school students intend to pursue a university or college education***

93% of high school students agreed they planned to pursue a university or college education, while 40% agreed they planned to pursue a trade as their career choice.

### High School Student Plans

| Question   | 2000/01 | 2001/02 |
|--|---------|---------|
| I plan to pursue a university or college education | 92%     | 93%     |
| I plan to pursue a trade as my career choice       | 38%     | 40%     |

Agreement for both statements is consistent with the results from 2000/01. Note that the two statements are not mutually exclusive, thus a student could respond positively to both statements.

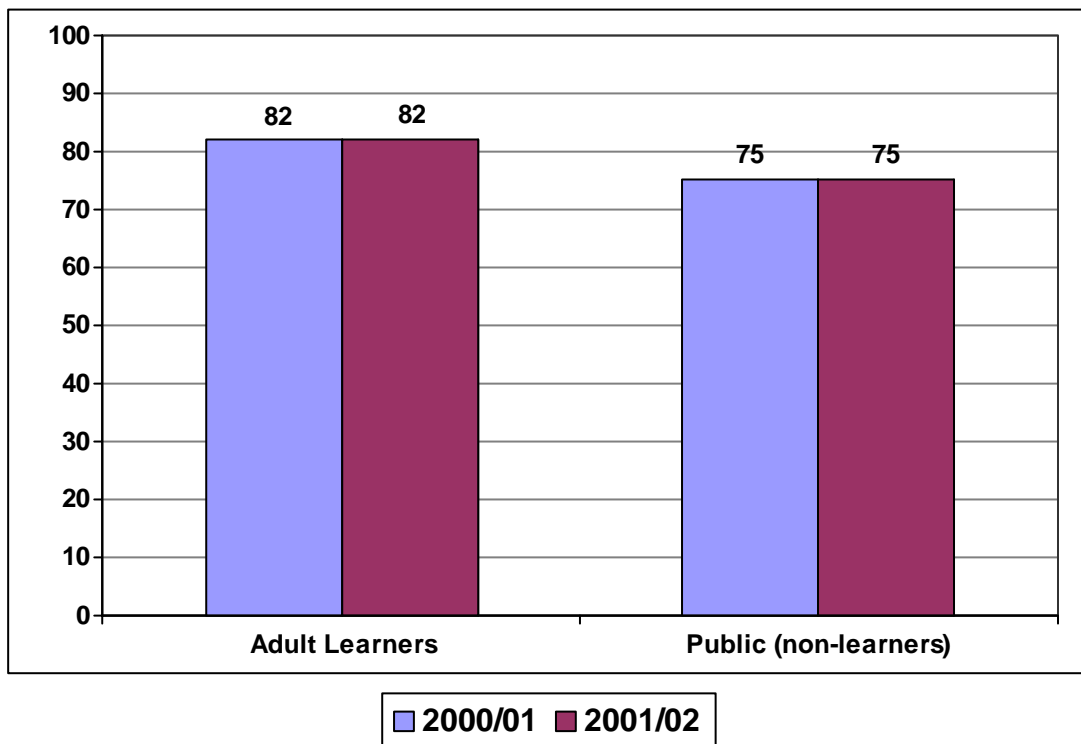
### Preparation for the Workforce

***Most adult learners and the public (not adult learners) are satisfied that adults taking education or training are getting the skills they need for the workforce.***

82% of adult learners surveyed are satisfied that adults taking education or training are getting the skills they need to prepare them for the workforce. This is consistent with the results from 2000/01.

75% of the public (non-learners) are satisfied that adult learners are being prepared for the workforce. This is consistent with the results from 2000/01.

**Satisfaction that Adults Taking Education or Training are Getting the Skills/Knowledge to Prepare Them for the Workforce**



### **Preparation for Citizenship**

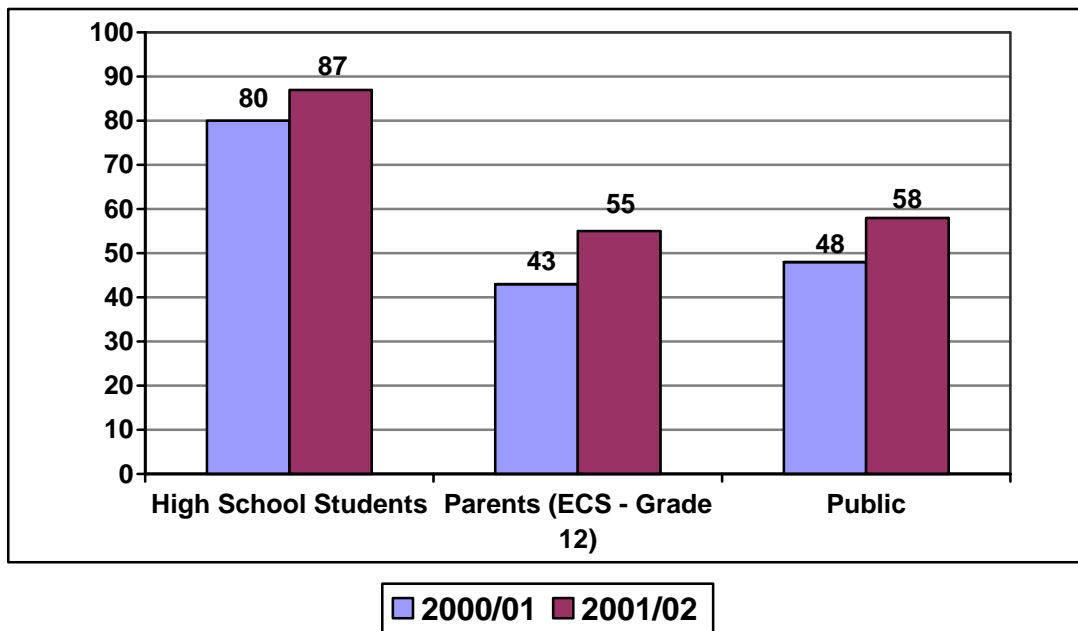
***Most high school students are satisfied that graduates are well prepared for citizenship, compared to just over half of parents (ECS – Grade 12) and the public.***

The vast majority (87%) of high school students were satisfied that graduates from Alberta's learning system are well prepared for citizenship.

Just over half (55%) of the parents indicated they are satisfied that high school graduates are well prepared for citizenship. Note that 15% of parents felt they could not rate the preparedness of high school graduates for citizenship.

58% of the public agreed that high school graduates are being prepared for citizenship.

**Satisfaction that High School Graduates are Well Prepared for Citizenship**



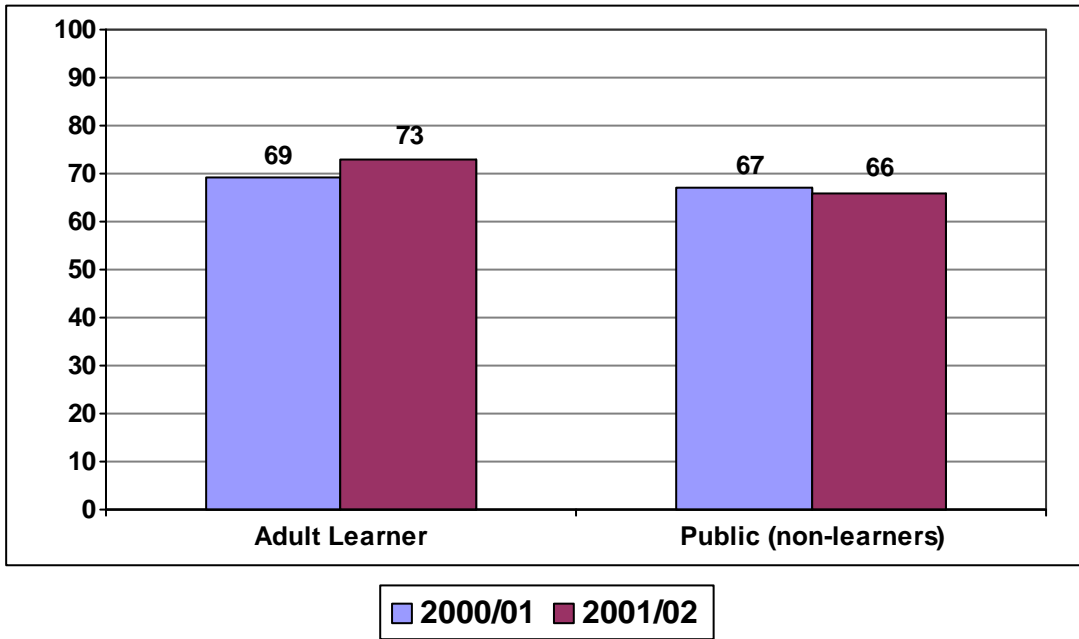
Satisfaction has increased significantly for all respondent groups when compared to the results from 2000/01.

***The majority of adult learners and the public feel that adult learners are being prepared for citizenship.***

Nearly three-quarters (73%) of adult learners are satisfied that the education and training available prepares them for citizenship.

66% of the public expressed satisfaction that adult learners are being well prepared for citizenship.

**Satisfaction that Adult Learners are Well Prepared for Citizenship**



Public satisfaction is comparable to 2000/01 numbers, while adult learner satisfaction shows a slight increase.

### III. ACCESSIBILITY OF EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

#### Access to Education

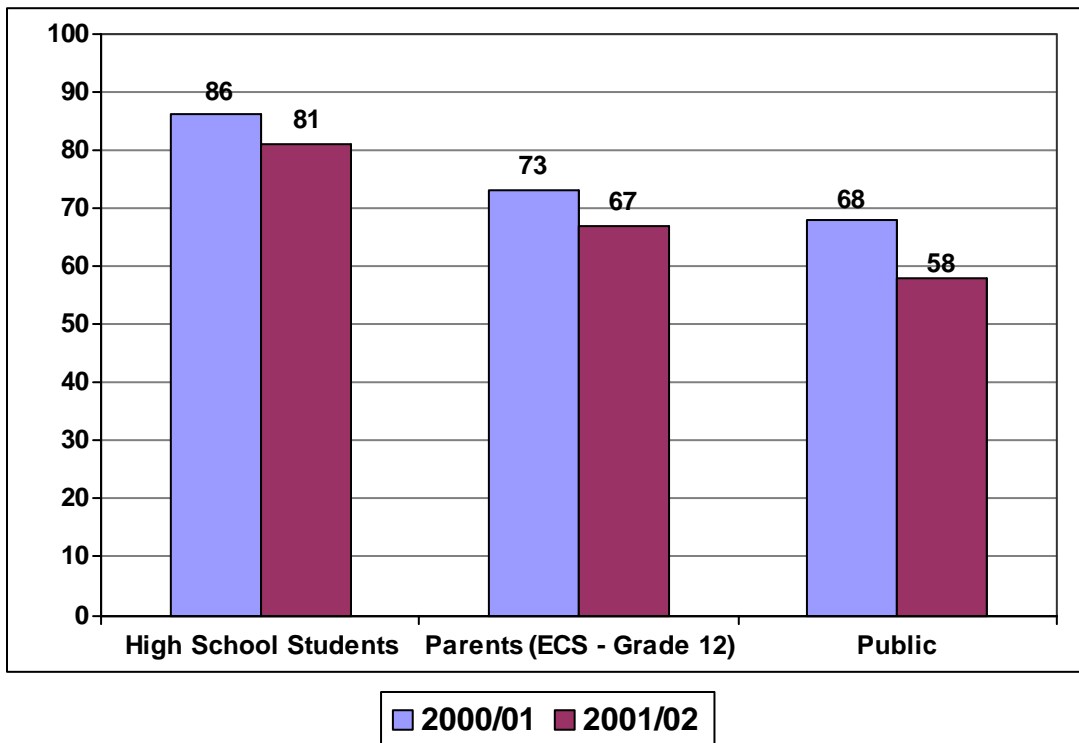
***The vast majority of high school students, two-thirds of parents, and a majority of the public agree that learners have access to lifelong learning.***

The majority (81%) of high school students surveyed agreed, either strongly agreed (30%) or agreed (51%), that learners in Alberta have easy access to life long learning.

Most parents agreed (67%), either “agreed” (47%) or “strongly agreed” (20%), that learners in Alberta have easy access to lifelong learning

Over half (58%) of the public agreed that high school graduates had easy access to lifelong learning (14% “strongly agree” and 44% “agree”).

**Agreement that Learners have Ease of Access to Lifelong Learning**



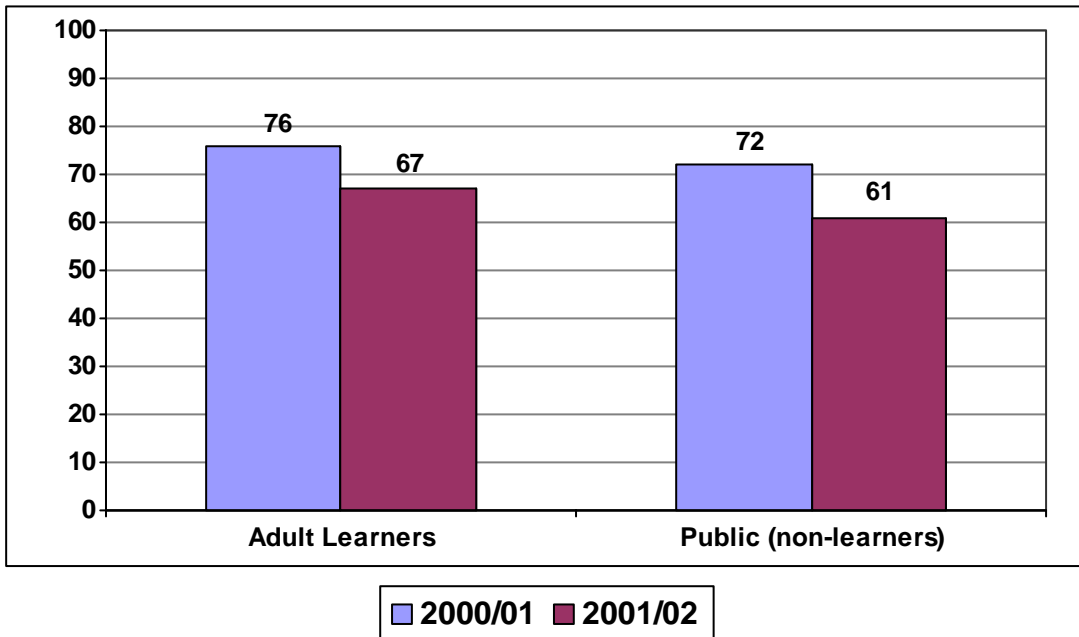
Satisfaction has declined since 2000/01 for all respondent groups.

***Two-thirds of adult learners and the majority of the public (non-learners) feel that adult learners have access to the education or training they want.***

Two-thirds (67%) of adult learners felt that Albertans are able to access the education or training they want. Almost one-third (30%) of the adult learners surveyed, however, are not satisfied with Albertans access to education and training.

Overall, 61% of the public (non-learners) felt that adult learners have access to the education or training they want.

**Satisfaction with Accessibility of Desired Education/Training**



Satisfaction has declined since 2000/01 for both respondent groups.

***Nearly two thirds of the public felt that the learning system was within the means of most Albertans.***

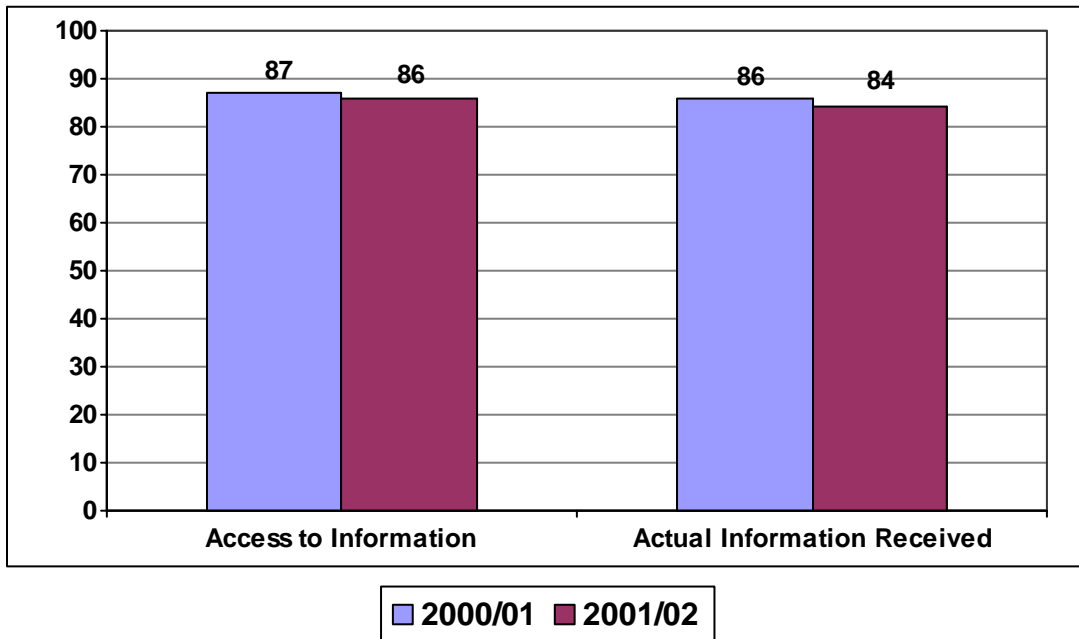
Overall, 63% of the public agreed that the learning system was within the means of most Albertans. This is down from 75% in 2000/01.

### **Access to Information**

**Parent satisfaction with both access to information about their child's educational progress/achievement and actual information received about their child's progress/achievement remains high.**

The vast majority of parents were satisfied with their access to information (86%) and the information they receive (84%) about their child's achievement in school.

#### **Parent Satisfaction with Access to Information and Information Received on Their Child's Educational Progress/Achievement**



***Low levels of satisfaction are expressed with respect to parents' and the public's access to information and the information received concerning educational spending.***

Both parents and the public were generally not satisfied with their access to information and the information received about educational spending. Satisfaction declined as the reference point moved further from their community. Roughly half or less than half of the respondents are satisfied with:

- access to (58% parents & 40% public) and information received (55% parents & 41% public) about how money is spent by their child's school
- access to (47% parents & 37% public) and information received (41% parents & 36% public) about how money is spent by their local school board.

### Satisfaction with Access to Information

| Information about how money is spent:                                      | Parents of ECS to Grade 12 Students** |         | Public* |         |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
|  | 2000/01                               | 2001/02 | 2000/01 | 2001/02 |
| In schools in your community*/in your child's school**                     | 63%                                   | 58%     | 48%     | 40%     |
| By your local school board   | 53%                                   | 47%     | 47%     | 37%     |
| By the provincial government on elementary, junior and senior high schools | 41%                                   | 34%     | 42%     | 28%     |

### Satisfaction with Actual Information Received

| Information about how money is spent:                                      | Parents of ECS to Grade 12 Students** |         | Public* |         |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
|  | 2000/01                               | 2001/02 | 2000/01 | 2001/02 |
| In schools in your community*/in your child's school**                     | 62%                                   | 55%     | 47%     | 41%     |
| By your local school board   | 50%                                   | 41%     | 45%     | 36%     |
| By the provincial government on elementary, junior and senior high schools | 39%                                   | 28%     | 41%     | 25%     |

In all cases, satisfaction has declined from 2000/01 levels.

***Parents and the public indicated that the most useful sources of information about Alberta's elementary, junior, and senior high schools are the schools, newspapers, and school newspapers/newsletters.***

This is consistent with the results for 2000/01, when parents and the public indicated that the school, newspaper, and school newspaper/newsletter were the most useful sources of information.

***Adult learners and the public (non-learners) consider schools, newspapers, and the internet the most useful sources for accessing information about Alberta's adult learning system.***

Adult learners were most likely to select the internet (24%) as the most useful source of information, while the public (non-learners) were most likely to select the newspaper (17%).

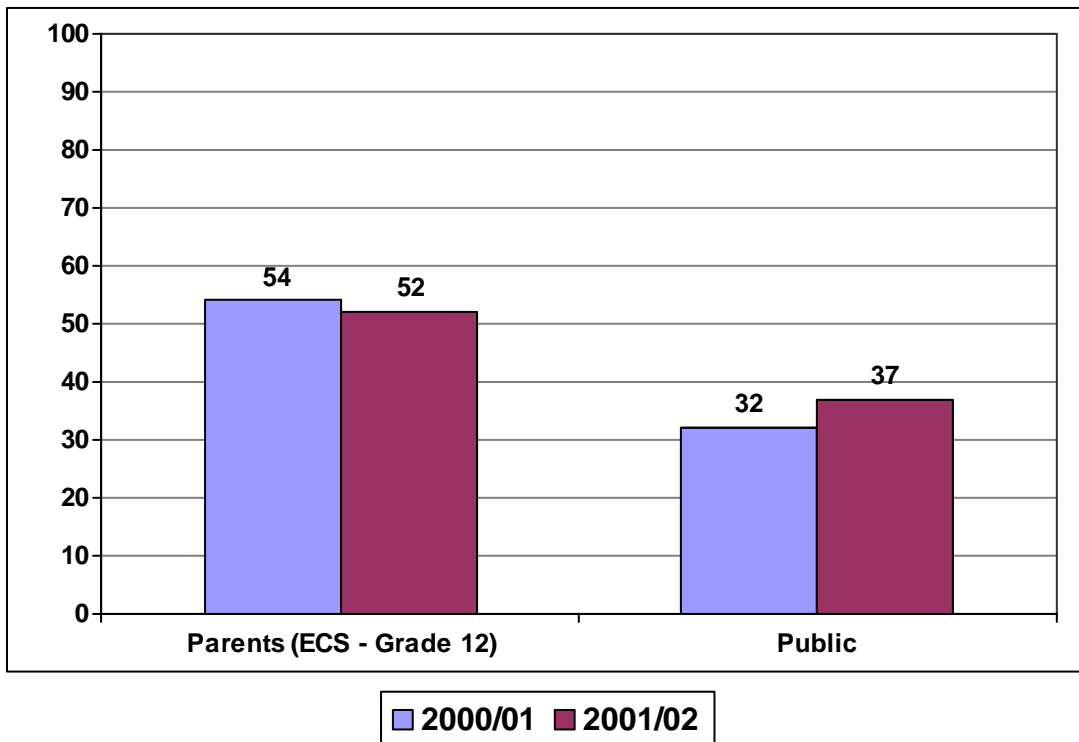
#### IV. INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING

***About half of the parents and one-third of the public had been involved in decision making at their local school.***

Parents were almost evenly split between those who have been involved in the decision making process at a school in their community (52%) and those who have had very little or no involvement (48%).

37% of the public responded that they have been involved in at least some decision making process with their local school, an increase from 32% in 2000/01.

**Parents and the Public who Indicated Involvement in Decisions at Schools  
(Percent reporting they were “a lot” or “somewhat” involved)**

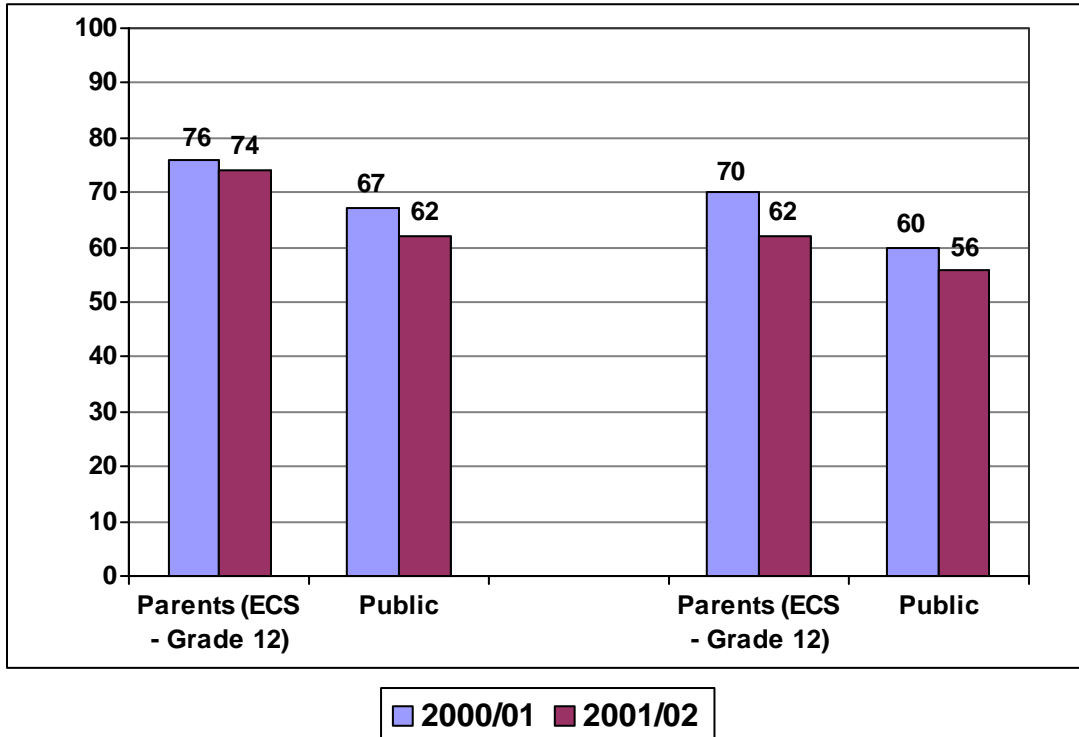


***Parents and the public are more satisfied with their opportunity for involvement than their actual involvement in decision making at local schools.***

Most (74%) parents indicated that they are satisfied with their opportunity for involvement. These findings do not markedly differ from those obtained in 2000/01, when it was found that 76% of the parents surveyed were satisfied with their opportunity for involvement.

62% of the public are satisfied with opportunities available to them to be involved in decision making in their community schools. This is down by 5% from 2000/01 when 67% felt satisfied with the opportunities available to them. 56% of the public responded that they are satisfied with their actual involvement in decision making in their community schools. This is a slight drop from 60% in 2000/01.

**Satisfaction with the Opportunity to be Involved in Decisions**      **Satisfaction with Actual Involvement in Decisions**

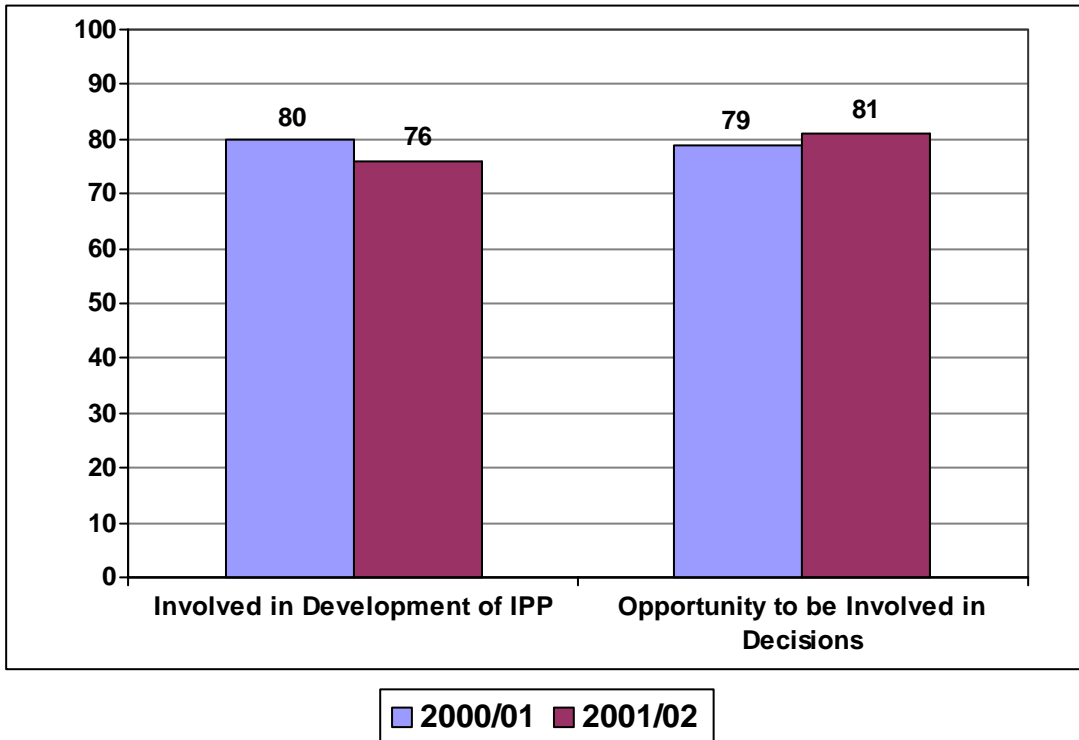


***The vast majority of parents of special needs children agreed that they were involved in the development of their child's Individual Program Plan (IPP), and that they had opportunity for involvement in decisions regarding services offered to their child.***

With respect to their child's Individualized Program Plan (IPP) most parents agreed (76%) that they had been meaningfully involved in the development of the plan. 12% disagreed that they were meaningfully involved in the development of the IPP. The remaining 12% indicated that their child did not have an IPP or they were uncertain if their child had an IPP. These individuals were not asked to rate their satisfaction with the goals identified in the IPP.

Most parents also agreed that they had opportunity for involvement in decisions regarding services offered to their child (81%).

**Parent Involvement in the Development of the IPP and Satisfaction with the Opportunity for Involvement in Decisions Regarding Services**



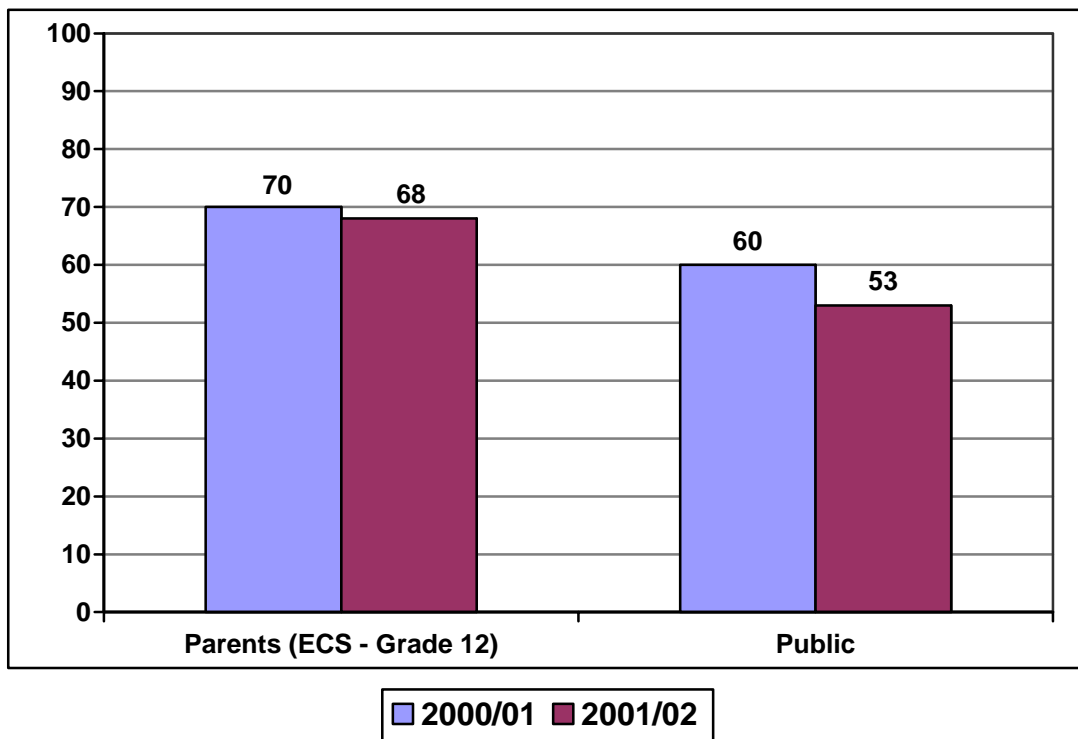
## V. PERCEPTION OF VALUE FOR MONEY

***Two-thirds of parents and half the public are satisfied that they are receiving value for the money spent in their community's schools.***

While parents (68%) appeared to be satisfied that they are receiving value for the money that is spent in their child's school, almost one-third (29%) of parents are dissatisfied with the value for money they are currently receiving.

53% of the public are satisfied with the value that they are receiving for the amount of money that is spent in community schools.

**Satisfaction with Value for Money Spent on Community Schools**



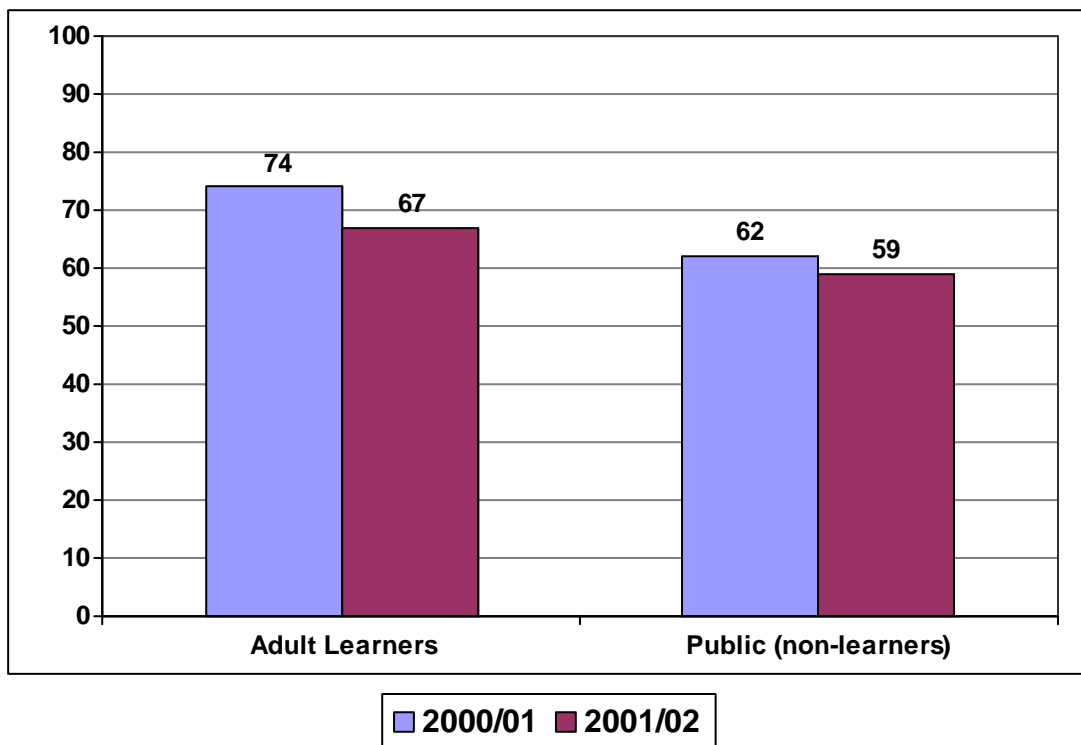
Parent satisfaction in 2001/02 is consistent with 2000/01 results. Public satisfaction has decreased from 2000/01 levels.

***Two-thirds of adult learners and over half the public (non-learners) feel they are receiving value for money spent on adult learning institutions.***

67% of adult learners surveyed reported satisfaction with the value for money spent on adult learning institutions. This is down from 74% that reported being satisfied in the 2000/01 survey. The major change in opinion was from “satisfied” to “no response”.

59% of the public was satisfied they are receiving value for money that is spent on adult learning institutions. Results are consistent with those from 2000/01.

**Satisfaction with Value for Money Spent on Adult Learning Institutions**



## APPENDIX – RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

### Project Objectives

R. A. Malatest & Associates was retained by Alberta Learning to conduct the 2001/2002 Learner, Parent and Public Satisfaction Survey that was administered between January 17 and February 3, 2002. The survey was designed to provide feedback from learners, parents, and the public regarding their perceptions of Alberta's learning system. The survey is based on the goals detailed in Alberta Learning's Business Plan, and some of results of the survey will be used to assess Alberta Learning's performance in terms of these goals.

The main objectives of this study are to determine:

- Satisfaction with the overall quality, responsiveness, and accessibility of Alberta's learning system (Goal 1 in Alberta Learning's Business Plan).
- Satisfaction with the preparation of learners for lifelong learning, employment, and citizenship (Goal 3 in Alberta Learning's Business Plan).

In addition to information related to these objectives, the survey sought to explore satisfaction with opportunities for involvement, value for money spent on the learning system, and other respondent-specific perspectives on their experiences with the learning system.

### Research Methodology

Surveying for the 2001/2002 Alberta Learning Learner and Public Satisfaction Survey was conducted from January 17 to February 3, 2002. The table below highlights the number of interviews completed with each respondent group and the associated margin of error. Less than the expected number of surveys were completed with the public and adult learners due to a teacher's strike which required all surveying activities to be completed earlier than anticipated.

| Respondent Group                    | Completions | Margin of Error,<br>19 times out of 20 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|--|
| Parents of Special Needs Children   | 809         | + 3.5%                                 |
| Parents of ECS to Grade 12 Students | 800         | + 3.5%                                 |
| High School Students                | 800         | + 3.5%                                 |
| Public (Adult Learners = 420)       | 1171        | + 2.9%                                 |

