

Education



we envision

we engage

Annual Report
2007-2008

Extracts from this report are available
on Alberta Education's website at
<http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/annualreport/>

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Preface: Public Accounts 2007/2008

The Public Accounts of Alberta are prepared in accordance with the *Financial Administration Act* and the *Government Accountability Act*. The Public Accounts consist of the annual report of the Government of Alberta and the annual reports of each of the 20 Ministries.

The annual report of the Government of Alberta, released June 24, 2008, contains Ministers' accountability statements, the consolidated financial statements of the Province and the *Measuring Up* report, which compares actual performance results to desired results set out in the government's business plan.

On March 12, 2008 the government announced new ministry structures. Since the 2007/2008 fiscal year was substantially completed prior to this announcement, ministry annual reports and financial statements have been prepared as if the restructuring took place on April 1, 2008 to provide proper accountability for the 2007/2008 fiscal year against the original business plan.

This annual report of the Ministry of Education contains the Minister's accountability statement, the audited financial statements of the Ministry, and a comparison of actual performance results to desired results set out in the Ministry business plan.

Education's Annual Report also includes:

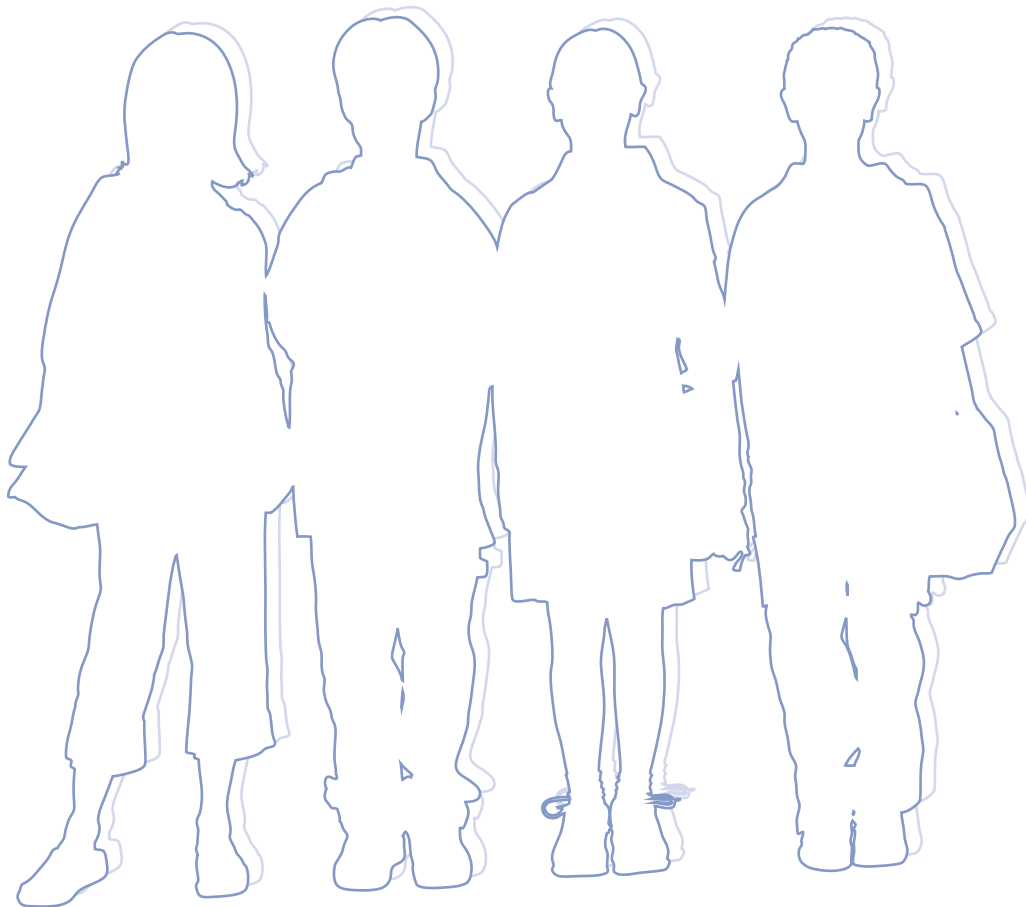
- the financial statements of entities making up the Ministry including the Department of Education and the Alberta School Foundation Fund, for which the Minister is responsible
- other financial information as required by the *Financial Administration Act* and *Government Accountability Act*, either as separate reports or as a part of the financial statements, to the extent that the Ministry has anything to report
- financial information relating to accountable organizations and trust funds, which includes the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund and school jurisdictions in the public education system (public, separate and francophone school boards and charter schools).

Minister's Accountability Statement

The Ministry's annual report for the year ended March 31, 2008 was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Government Accountability Act* and the government's accounting policies. All of the government's policy decisions as at September 15, 2008 with material economic or fiscal implications of which I am aware, have been considered in the preparation of this report.

[original signed by]

Dave Hancock, Q.C.
Minister of Education



Minister's Message



Our children are the future of a vibrant and prosperous Alberta in the 21st century. We must put children first and ensure every child reaches his or her potential. The education system must equip students with the skills, abilities and knowledge that will enable them to take advantage of the wide variety of opportunities our province has to offer when they complete high school. Meeting that objective begins with accepting that not all children begin their education with the same physical, intellectual, social, health and financial assets. Our education system must be responsive to young Albertans' individual needs and flexible enough to meet them.

Recognizing the different needs of a diverse student population, the Premier directed my predecessor to address a number of challenges in education. This annual report shows that a variety of initiatives were undertaken to prepare students for lifelong learning.

One initiative was to ensure access to early learning opportunities that would enable all children to start their education on a level playing field. Beginning in 2007/2008, two years of language development funding is being provided for preschool children whose first language is neither English nor French.

The Ministry also worked with the Ministries of Health and Wellness and Children and Youth Services to create Preschool Development Screening and Follow-Up Services projects. These pilot projects identified preschoolers who would benefit from additional supports that would allow them to start school ready and able to learn.

Since the majority of new jobs that will be created in Alberta will require some post-secondary education, the Premier also indicated the need to further improve the high school completion rate. While the completion rate continues to increase, reaching 79.5 per cent in the most recent year, it needs to be higher so more students can benefit from a high school education.

Projects initiated in 24 school jurisdictions are looking at how technology can be used to keep students engaged in their education. The Ministry also facilitated the sharing of promising practices and success stories amongst school jurisdictions.

The Minister's mandate that received the greatest public attention in 2007/2008 was resolving the Teachers' Unfunded Pension Liability. For years, this issue negatively affected the quality of the relationship between the Department of Education, school boards and The Alberta Teachers' Association. The combined efforts of all those involved finally resolved this issue in January 2008.

I believe that the resolution of the Teacher's Unfunded Pension Liability heralds a new era in education. Resolving this long-standing concern means all stakeholders can work together more effectively to address current and emerging issues in education. In particular, school boards will be able to focus their efforts on identifying and addressing the educational needs of the communities they serve.

We must put children first.

In March 2008, I was delighted to become Minister of Education. My mandate includes working with stakeholders to increase student participation and completion rates in health, math, science and Career and Technology Studies courses. The intent is to build a skilled workforce that can participate ably in the development of Alberta's technology and science sectors to improve the sustainability of the province's economy.

As one step in this process, an expansion of the Career and Technology Studies program is underway, supported by increased funding of \$79 million over three years. More course options will enable students to develop career pathways that lead to more opportunities to become part of Alberta's skilled and knowledgeable workforce. This training is essential to support the province's industries. We also are pursuing new ways to deliver science programs — for example, online courses for Biology, Chemistry and Physics that incorporate technology-based alternatives to science labs.

Of particular interest to me is Premier Stelmach's direction to increase broad-based learning supports and early intervention initiatives for at-risk children. To do that we need to look at the many factors that affect educational success. The Ministry of Education will continue to work with other ministries to ensure the services a child needs to be successful are in place and accessible.

In the past year, we have worked with school jurisdictions, mental health and health service providers and community partners to establish 32 school-based projects that improve prevention, promotion and intervention in student mental health. We will continue to work with these partners to spread these innovative practices.

In 2008 a number of improved learning supports were introduced. For example, visually impaired students will have more access to specialized equipment such as Braille computers and closed circuit televisions, enabling the full use of textbooks both in and out of the classroom.

I also am committed to ensuring our students are educated in a safe and well-maintained environment that is conducive to learning. We will meet the needs of a growing population by working with school boards and other ministries to plan and build schools that encourage community involvement and that can be adapted to changing instructional environments.

We must recognize the exemplary work that is done by the dedicated and talented staff who serve our students. Our teachers turn our policies and resources into great kids with a passion for learning and citizenship. For this, teachers deserve our recognition and thanks.

The results of international testing outlined in this report show that Alberta has one of the best education systems in the world. Our challenge is to improve not only the success of each of our students, but also how our education system is equipped to meet student needs now and into the future. Based on our history of success, I have every confidence we will do exactly that.

Alberta has one of
the best education
systems in the world.

[original signed by]

Dave Hancock, Q.C.
Minister of Education

Management's Responsibility for Reporting

The Ministry of Education consists of:

- the Department of Education
- the Alberta School Foundation Fund
- school jurisdictions.

The executives of the individual entities within the Ministry have the primary responsibility and accountability for the respective entities. Collectively, the executives ensure the Ministry complies with all relevant legislation, regulations and policies.

Ministry business plans, annual reports, performance results and the supporting management information are integral to the government's fiscal and business plans, annual report, quarterly reports and other financial and performance reporting.

Responsibility for the integrity and objectivity of the consolidated financial statements and performance results for the Ministry rests with the Minister of Education. Under the direction of the Minister, I oversee the preparation of the Ministry's annual report, including consolidated financial statements and performance results. The consolidated financial statements and the performance results, of necessity, include amounts that are based on estimates and judgments. The consolidated financial statements are prepared in accordance with the government's stated accounting policies.

As Deputy Minister, in addition to program responsibilities, I establish and maintain the Ministry's financial administration and reporting functions. The Ministry maintains systems of financial management and internal control which give consideration to costs, benefits and risks that are designed to:

- provide reasonable assurance that transactions are properly authorized, executed in accordance with prescribed legislation and regulations and properly recorded to maintain accountability of public money
- provide information to manage and report on performance
- safeguard the assets and properties of the Province under Ministry administration
- provide Executive Council, Treasury Board, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Education any information needed to fulfill their responsibilities
- facilitate preparation of Ministry business plans and annual reports required under the *Government Accountability Act*.

In fulfilling my responsibilities for the Ministry, I have relied, as necessary, on the executive of the individual entities within the Ministry.

[original signed by]

Keray Henke
Deputy Minister
Alberta Education

Overview

Highlights

Performance at a Glance

Selecting measures and setting targets to assess, report and improve upon the performance of the Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K – 12) education system is key to being accountable for results. The performance measures and targets for 2007/2008 are established in the Ministry of Education business plan for 2007 – 2010. Highlighted below are the performance measures reported in the Integrated Results Analysis section, including:

- baseline and most recent results
- change over time
- achievement of 2007/2008 targets.

Major activities undertaken in 2007/2008 to influence results in this and future years are presented in the Integrated Results Analysis section. Results for 2007/2008 reflect the cumulative impact of investment of resources and effort over time on the part of government, school boards, parents, teachers and students.

Goal 1: High quality learning opportunities for all

Results over time	Target Achievement
↑ Improved performance	✓ Target Met
~ No significant change in performance	✓+ Target Exceeded
↓ Performance decline	× Target not met
	n/a No target set for 2007/08 (insufficient data or new measure for 2007-2010)

Outcomes	Performance Measures <i>(in percentages)</i>	Results Over Time			Targets
		Baseline	Current		2007/08
Needs of all K – 12 students, society and the economy are met	Overall satisfaction with the quality of K – 12 education	83	84	~	85 ✓
	Overall satisfaction that students receive solid grounding in language arts, mathematics, science and social studies	83	82	~	84 ✓
	Overall satisfaction with students' opportunity to receive a broad program of studies	80	79	~	79 ✓
	Employer satisfaction with the skills and quality of work of recent Alberta high school graduates	77	67	↓	n/a
Schools provide a safe and caring environment	Overall agreement that students are safe at school, learn the importance of caring for others, learn respect for others and are treated fairly at school	91	91	~	92 ✓
Needs of children at risk are addressed	Annual dropout rate of students aged 14-18	5.5	5.0	↑	4.9 ✓
Students complete programs	High school completion rate of students within five years of entering Grade 10	75.2	79.5	↑	78 ✓

Goal 2: Excellence in student learning outcomes

Outcomes	Performance Measures (in percentages)	Results Over Time			Targets 2007/08
		Baseline	Current		
Students demonstrate high standards	Overall results on Grades 3, 6 and 9 Provincial Achievement Tests	acceptable	76.4	75.2 ↓	78.4 ×
		excellence	18.7	18.9 ~	20.5 ×
	Overall results on diploma examinations	acceptable	85.8	85.0 ↓	n/a
		excellence	22.2	22.3 ~	n/a
	Diploma examination participation rate (four or more exams within three years of entering Grade 10)		51.4	53.6 ↑	54 ✓
Rutherford Scholarship eligibility rate of Grade 12 students		32.5	38.2 ↑	36 ✓+	
Students are well prepared for lifelong learning	Participation in Early Childhood Services (ECS)		95.5	97.6 ↑	95+ ✓
	Post-secondary transition rate of students within six years of entering Grade 10		51.5	60.3 ↑	58 ✓
Students are well prepared for employment	Overall satisfaction that students are taught attitudes and behaviours that will make them successful at work		69	65 ~	70 ×
Students model the characteristics of active citizenship	Overall agreement that students model the characteristics of active citizenship		82	85 ~	83 ✓

Goal 3: Highly responsive and responsible education system

Outcomes	Performance Measures (in percentages)	Results Over Time			Targets 2007/08
		Baseline	Current		
Effective working relationships	Overall satisfaction that stakeholder and public input is considered, respected and valued by the school, jurisdiction and province		58	58 ~	61 ×
Leadership and continuous improvement	Overall satisfaction that leadership at all levels supports and facilitates teaching and learning		69	69 ~	73 ✓
	Overall perception that Alberta's K – 12 system has improved or stayed the same in the last three years		66	71 ↑	72 ✓
	Percentages of school jurisdictions with an overall evaluation of Good or Excellent on accountability measures	Percentages of jurisdictions • increased on 8 of 15 measures • maintained on 1 measure • declined on 6 measures			

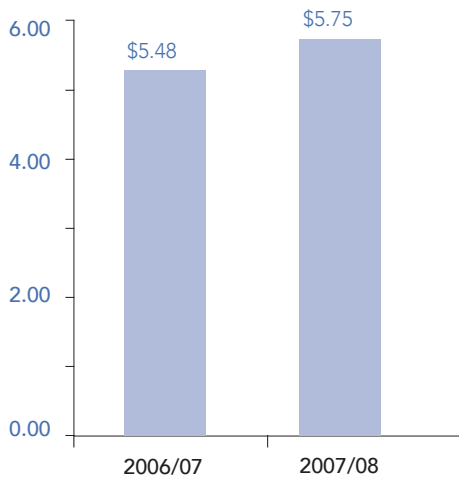
The confidence interval is considered in assessing change over time on survey measures. Targets are considered met if the result is within 5% of the target value. See Endnotes A and B for detailed information on assessing change over time and target achievement. Base year is five years ago or earliest subsequent year results are available.

Financial Highlights

In 2007/2008, more than \$5.75 billion was spent on K – 12 education, an increase of 4.9% over 2006/2007. This amount includes the education property tax support for opted-out separate school boards, which totaled just over \$172 million in 2006/2007 and slightly more than \$176 million in 2007/2008.

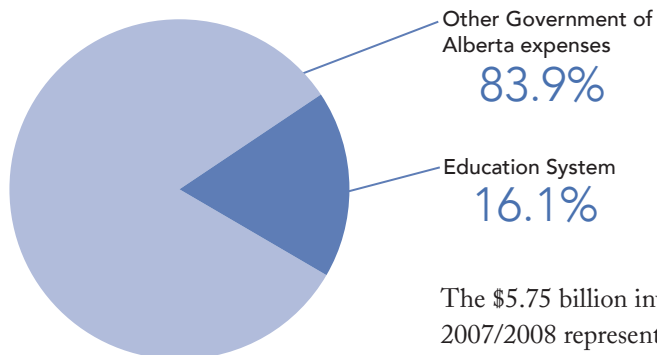
Total Education System Spending

(in billions)



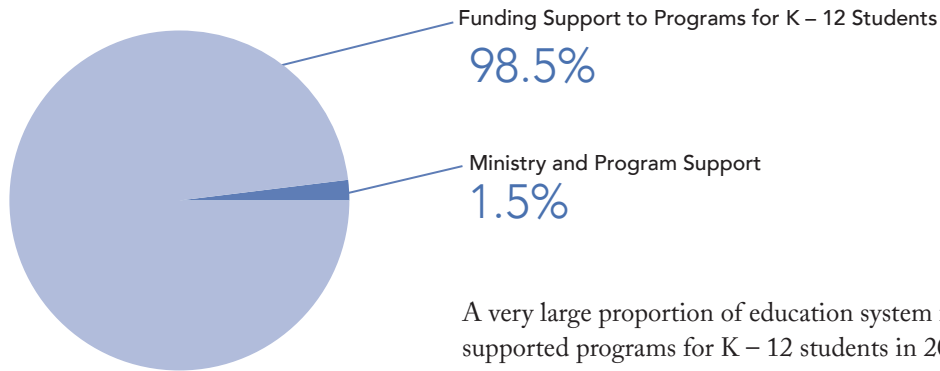
Total education system spending rose from \$5.48 billion in 2006/2007 to \$5.75 billion in 2007/2008, an increase of 4.9%.

Education System Spending Compared to Total Government of Alberta Spending



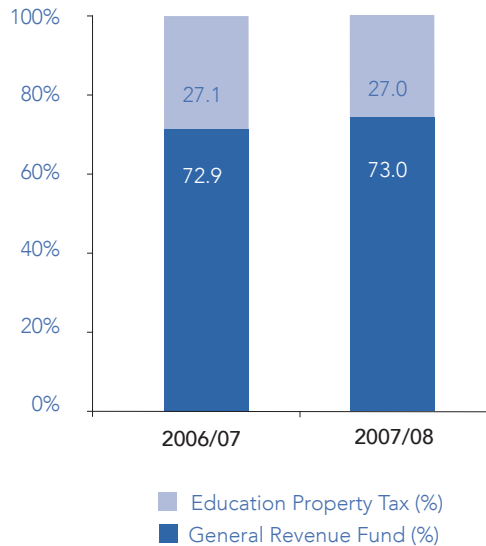
The \$5.75 billion investment in K – 12 education in 2007/2008 represented 16.1% of total government spending.

Funding for K – 12 Programs as a Proportion of Total Education System Spending



Education System Funding by Source

(in percentages)



The General Revenue Fund and the Education Property Tax provided about the same portions of education system funding in 2007/2008 – 73% and 27% respectively – as in 2006/2007.

Introduction

In 2007/2008, the Ministry of Education built on its strong foundation to provide the best possible education for Alberta K – 12 students. Work on 2007/2008 was guided by the Ministry’s three-year business plan for 2007 – 2010.

The Ministry is defined through its vision, mission, values and principles. The vision is its view of the future. The mission describes the Ministry’s purpose and reason for existence. Together, the Ministry’s vision and mission present Alberta’s view of the future for education and how it will be realized. Ministry staff follow the renewed Alberta Public Service values, which were implemented in 2007/2008. These values demonstrate the beliefs that characterize Ministry actions, and the principles identify the Ministry’s method of operating.

Vision

The best Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system in the world.

Mission

The Ministry of Education, through its leadership and work with stakeholders, ensures that students attain the knowledge and skills required for lifelong learning, work and citizenship.

Alberta Public Service Values

Respect – We foster an environment in which each individual is valued and heard.

Accountability – We are responsible for our actions and for contributing to the effectiveness of the public service.

Integrity – We behave ethically and are open, honest and fair.

Excellence – We use innovation and continuous improvement to achieve excellence.

Principles

Student Centred – The highest priority of the education system is the success of the student.

Accessible – Every student in Alberta has the right of access to a quality basic education consistent with the student’s needs and abilities.

Collaborative – Kindergarten to Grade 12 education, which provides the foundation for lifelong learning, best occurs when partners and stakeholders work together to provide a holistic approach and a supportive environment.

Accountable – All those involved in the education system are accountable to Albertans for quality results, system sustainability and fiscal responsibility.

Responsive – The education system is flexible, anticipates student needs and provides opportunities for parent and student choice.

Innovative – The education system demonstrates leading-edge innovation for improved results.

Equitable – All students have equitable access to quality learning opportunities.

Government and Ministry Priorities

Over the last year, the Ministry played a key role in advancing two of the five priorities established by the provincial government. Alberta Education's strategic priorities contributed to each of these government priorities and included the Minister's three mandates:

Government Priorities	Ministry Strategic Priorities
Building a Stronger Alberta	Minister's Mandates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Early Learning Opportunities • Improve High School Completion Rates • Address the Teachers' Unfunded Pension Liability
	Other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success for All Students • Support the Healthy Development of Alberta's Children and Youth • First Nations, Métis and Inuit Student Success • Enhancing Relationships
Manage Growth Pressures	Schools Where Students Live and Learn

Ministry Core Business and Goals

In 2007/2008, the Ministry of Education continued to identify one core business that is an ongoing key responsibility — to lead and support the Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system so that all students are successful at learning. The core business includes three goals with specific outcomes that describe the end results the Ministry wants to achieve in fulfilling its mission.

Goal 1: High quality learning opportunities for all

Outcomes

- The education system meets the needs of all Kindergarten to Grade 12 students, society and the economy
- Children and youth at risk have their needs addressed through effective programs and supports
- Schools provide a safe and caring environment for students
- Students complete programs

Goal 2: Excellence in student learning outcomes

Outcomes

- Students demonstrate high standards
- Students are well prepared for lifelong learning
- Students are well prepared for employment
- Students model the characteristics of active citizenship

Goal 3: Highly responsive and responsible education system

Outcomes

- All levels of the education system demonstrate effective working relationships with partners and stakeholders
- All levels of the education system demonstrate leadership and continuous improvement

Strategies identified in the 2007 – 2010 business plan were implemented to address the strategic priorities and make progress toward achieving the outcomes identified for the education system. The plan also included performance measures to assess how progress would be measured. The Integrated Results Analysis section of this document reports on accomplishments related to the strategies and results for performance measures.

2007/2008 Developments

In March 2008, the Premier announced a new cabinet and specific, challenging mandates for each minister. The Minister of Education was given the following mandates:

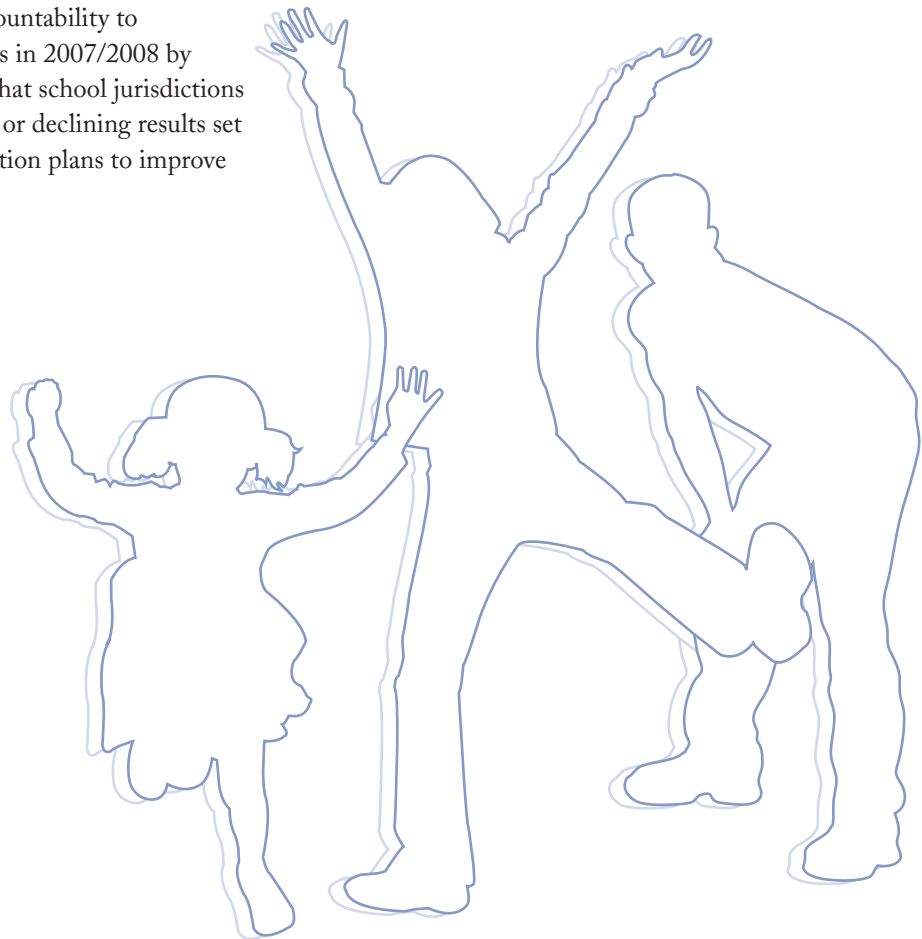
- Lead an initiative to increase student participation and completion rates in health, math, science and Career and Technology Studies courses to grow the technology and science sectors
- Lead an initiative to increase broad-based supports and early intervention initiatives for at-risk children to improve their learning outcomes.

These mandates are being addressed by the Ministry and are included in the Ministry's business plan for 2008 – 2011.

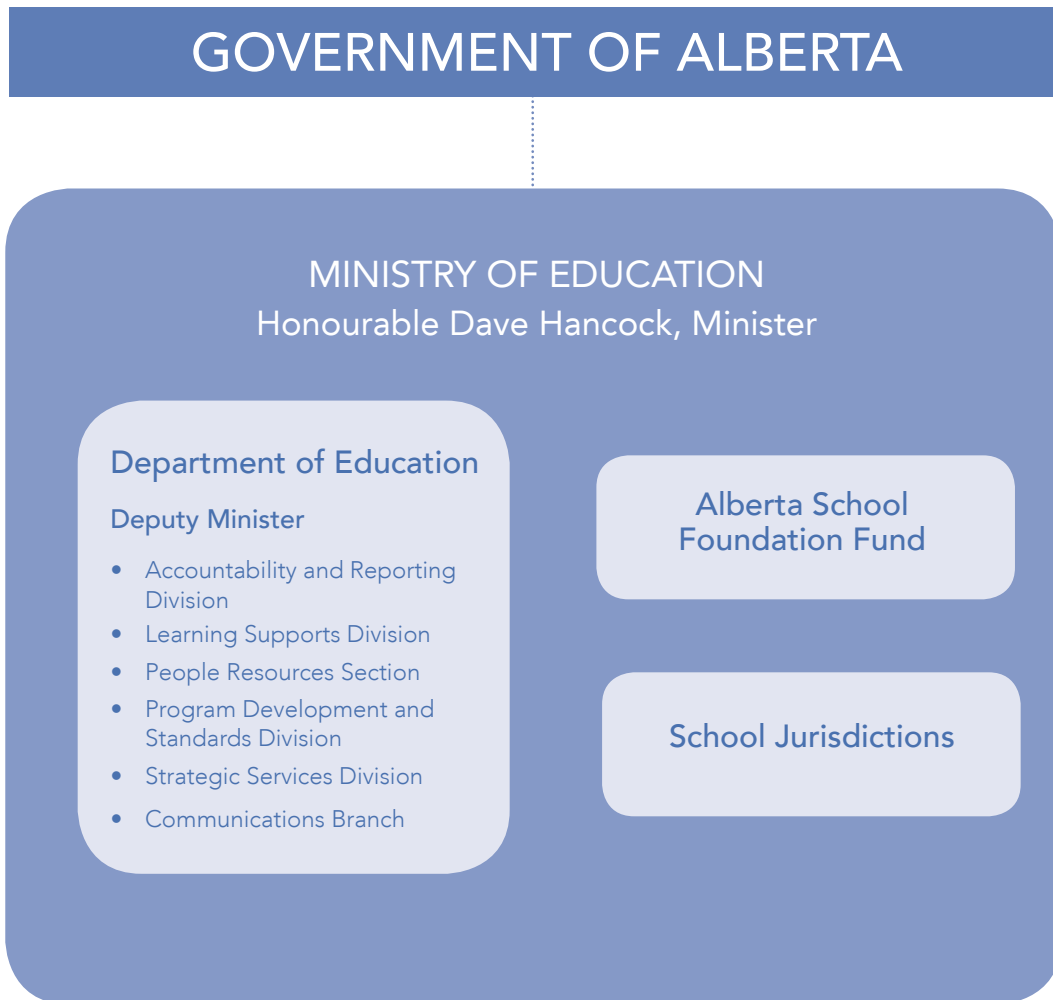
Enhanced Focus on Accountability for Outcomes and Continuous Improvement

Accountability, together with equity and flexibility, supports the funding of the education system. Funding is distributed equitably and school jurisdictions have maximum flexibility to allocate funds to meet students' learning needs. In return, school jurisdictions are accountable for results. The Ministry evaluates school jurisdiction improvement and achievement of outcomes that are important to parents and the public based on a common set of performance measures.

To support continuous improvement, school jurisdictions report their results and evaluations publicly and develop strategies to improve results for measures with low or declining results, while maintaining good results. Consistent with the provincial government's intent to govern with integrity and transparency, the Ministry enhanced its focus on outcomes and accountability to improve education for students in 2007/2008 by implementing a requirement that school jurisdictions with two or more years of low or declining results set targets and develop specific action plans to improve their results over time.



Ministry of Education Structure



Operational Overview: Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education, for which the Minister of Education is accountable, consists of the Department of Education, the Alberta School Foundation Fund and school jurisdictions. School jurisdictions include public and separate school boards, francophone education authorities and charter schools.

These school jurisdictions, along with accredited private schools, provide programs for students in the province's K – 12 education system in accordance with the *School Act*. The information that follows in this section describes the functions and purpose of the Department of Education and Alberta School Foundation Fund in more detail.

Department of Education

With students' varied learning needs as its central focus, Alberta Education leads a K – 12 education system that provides the foundation of knowledge and skills needed to prepare Alberta children and youth for lifelong learning, work and citizenship. In 2007/2008, about 585,000 young Albertans were enrolled in K – 12 schools across the province.

For more information, phone (780) 427-7219

Department Organization

The Department of Education is divided into six organizational units reporting to the Deputy Minister.

Accountability and Reporting Division

The Accountability and Reporting Division focuses on continuous improvement of student learning and takes a lead role in defining and supporting outcomes-based accountability for the Department and the K – 12 education system. The division:

- leads the development of the Accountability Framework for K – 12 education, including the evaluation and reporting of school jurisdiction performance

- leads the development of, and reports on, performance measures for the Ministry and school jurisdictions
- develops, manages and reports on provincial assessments of students in Grades 3, 6, 9 and 12
- develops, administers and reports on surveys of students, parents, teachers, superintendents, school board members and the public
- develops accountability frameworks for projects and conducts program evaluations and research in K – 12 education on a priority basis
- leads the development of processes for teachers in assessing and reporting to parents on their child's progress and achievement
- coordinates Alberta's participation in, and reports results of, national and international assessments
- administers high school equivalency exams (GED)
- develops and implements the Ministry's Information Management Framework
- develops and manages information and technology systems to collect, analyze and report data used to support decision-making and analysis within the Department and the K – 12 education system.

For more information, phone (780) 422-1608

E-mail: measurement.education@gov.ab.ca

Learning Supports Division

The Learning Supports Division provides leadership and support services to school authorities for implementation of Ministry programs and policies that meet students' diverse learning needs. Specifically, the division:

- facilitates the exchange of promising practices and innovative ideas to better meet students' needs and improve student learning

- enhances effective and collaborative relationships with school authorities and stakeholders
- provides timely information, advice and support related to the education system and emerging issues
- provides leadership and support to school boards with respect to school infrastructure and innovative ways to use technology to meet the changing needs of the education system
- works with stakeholders, other ministries and other jurisdictions across Canada to support the implementation of programs, policies and initiatives for preschool children and K – 12 students
- gathers information and monitors school authorities for compliance with Ministry requirements
- produces and distributes learning and support resources including alternate format resources (Braille, audio, large print) and specialized equipment for students with visual impairment or perceptual disabilities.

For more information, phone (780) 427-2051

Program Development and Standards Division

The Program Development and Standards Division collaborates with school authorities and stakeholders to develop the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes young Albertans need to achieve their potential for lifelong learning, work and citizenship and to engage their passions and interests. The division:

- develops and supports K – 12 programs of study and standards that are relevant and responsive to students' learning needs and choices
- develops and/or acquires print and digital resources in English and French to support effective learning and teaching based on Alberta programs of study
- supports the implementation of curriculum for students

- leads the implementation of the Ministry's International Education Strategy
- provides strategic advice and direction on international education matters.

For more information, phone (780) 427-7484

Strategic Services Division

In its work to provide strategic and corporate services to the Ministry, the Strategic Services Division:

- leads Ministry policy development, research and coordination to address strategic issues
- leads planning services for the Ministry including strategic planning, business planning, operational planning and project management
- provides leadership in development and implementation of the Ministry's public involvement framework
- works collaboratively with partners to support continuous improvement in teaching and learning through Alberta Initiative for School Improvement projects
- provides support to the Ministry's involvement in the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada and coordinates inter-provincial and territorial initiatives
- prepares Ministry budget estimates and financial statements
- monitors, reviews and analyzes school jurisdiction financial health and financial management, including:
 - audited financial statements
 - high school funding
 - budgets
- provides corporate services in the areas of legislative services, acquisition of contracted services, records management and administration
- leads ministry-wide financial accountability processes and internal review services
- leads ministry-wide enterprise risk management.

For more information, phone (780) 427-3663

People Resources Section

The People Resources Section provides strategic advice on human resource management, education sector workforce planning and teacher development and certification programs. With the vision: “The Right People with the Right Skills in the Right Places at the Right Times,” the section:

- builds, strengthens and promotes the highest quality education sector workforce possible
- promotes and maintains a positive, safe and healthy workforce
- provides the education sector with informed strategic advice and direction regarding key workforce issues
- ensures provincial standards related to certificated teachers, school leaders and human resources are promoted and met.

In meeting these responsibilities, the People Resources Section focuses on:

- planning and policy development impacting the education sector workforce in the longer term
- providing support to the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards (COATS) and the Certification Appeal Committee to ensure teacher quality standards are maintained
- certifying teachers
- providing strategic advice and direction to the education sector for emergency and pandemic planning
- implementing the Alberta Public Service Workforce Plan to attract, develop and engage employees.

For more information, phone (780) 644-3575

Communications Branch

Working with the department staff and education stakeholders, the Communications Branch:

- enhances Albertans’ awareness of Ministry achievements and initiatives
- provides strategic communications advice, communications planning and media relations, as well as specialized writing and editing
- facilitates communications within the Ministry.

For more information, phone (780) 422-4495

E-mail: edc.communications@gov.ab.ca

Alberta School Foundation Fund

The Alberta School Foundation Fund receives tax revenues from municipalities based on:

- the equalized assessment of real property in Alberta
- education mill rates established by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

These monies, along with those from provincial general revenues, are allocated on a fair and equitable basis to school boards.

For more information, phone (780) 427-2055.

For toll-free access in Alberta, first dial 310-0000.