

Accountability *pillar*

ACHIEVING OUTCOMES, REPORTING RESULTS AND USING RESULTS FOR INFORMED DECISION-MAKING IN THE K – 12 EDUCATION SYSTEM.

Accountability Pillar of the Renewed Funding Framework

Accountability for results was strengthened with the implementation of the Renewed Funding Framework for school authorities, which is based on three Pillars: Flexibility, Accountability and Funding, and has the following fundamental characteristics:

- equitable distribution of funds
- increased flexibility in use of funds to facilitate local decision making in meeting student educational needs
- public accountability for use of resources and results achieved.

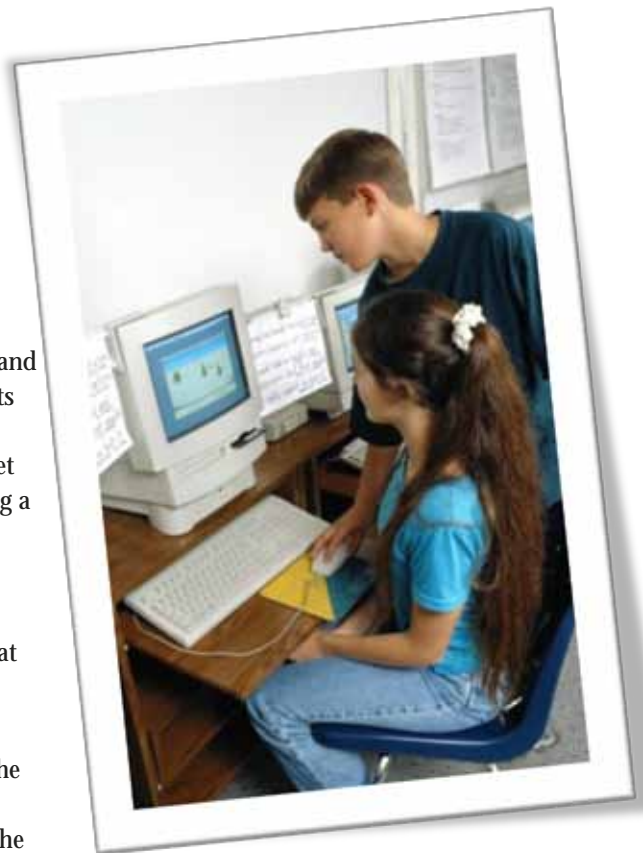
The Accountability Pillar consists of a common set of performance measures and consistent, fair evaluations of results. Through the Accountability Pillar increased emphasis is placed on achieving outcomes, reporting results and using results for informed decision making for the purpose of improving programs and student results in subsequent years. School authority

performance is measured, evaluated and reported by comparing current results against both past performance and provincial standards on a common set of measures for all jurisdictions, using a common evaluation methodology.

School authorities continue to be accountable for meeting the learning needs of all students and ensuring that provincial legislation, regulations, policies and standards are met.

The Accountability Pillar enhances the use of measurement in performance management of school authorities. The Accountability Pillar includes:

- a concise set of performance measures that address important outcomes of the education system.
- results for performance measures calculated by Alberta Education using consistent methodologies, including annual surveys of parents, students and teachers
- standard methodology to evaluate results in a fair and transparent manner
- consistent, accessible data reports from Alberta Education to school jurisdictions for use in authority and school planning and reporting.



Accountability Pillar Evaluation Methodology

Each measure within the set of Accountability Pillar measures is evaluated on two bases: achievement and improvement, then given an overall evaluation that combines the achievement and improvement evaluations. Four years of results are used to evaluate a measure.

The achievement evaluation compares the current school authority result against fixed standards for each measure, which are set by selecting the 5th, 25th, 75th and 95th percentiles on the distribution of all school board baseline three-year average results. These standards are held constant for seven to ten years. The comparison of the current result to the standards results in one of the following achievement levels:

- Very high (blue) for results at or above the 95th percentile
- High (green) for results between the 75th and 95th percentiles
- Intermediate (yellow) for results between the 25th and 75th percentiles
- Low (orange) for results between the 5th and 25th percentiles
- Very low (red) for results below the 5th percentile.

Note: The Achievement Evaluation Table in the Measure Evaluation Reference section of the authority's Accountability Pillar Overall Summary report contains the range of values for each standard for each measure.

The improvement evaluation compares the current school authority result with the authority's prior three-year average result for each measure, using a statistical test to determine the extent of change. This results in one of the following improvement levels:

- Improved significantly (blue)
- Improved (green)
- Maintained (yellow)
- Declined (orange)
- Declined significantly (red)

Note: The Improvement Evaluation Table in the Measure Evaluation Reference section of the jurisdiction's Overall Summary Report contains information about the statistical test used to determine change in results over time.

When new measures are added to the Accountability Pillar, a preliminary improvement evaluation will be calculated beginning with two years of results until four years of results are available for the full improvement

evaluation. This phase-in of the improvement evaluation started with the new basis for calculating the Rutherford Scholarship measure.

The evaluations of improvement and achievement are combined for the overall evaluation for the measure, resulting in one of the following overall evaluations for the measure:

- Excellent (blue)
- Good (green)
- Acceptable (yellow)
- Issue (orange)
- Concern (red)

The table that follows indicates how the achievement and improvement evaluations are combined to arrive at an overall evaluation for each measure.

Improvement	Achievement				
	Very High	High	Intermediate	Low	Very Low
Improved Significantly	Excellent	Good	Good	Good	Acceptable
Improved	Excellent	Good	Good	Acceptable	Issue
Maintained	Excellent	Good	Acceptable	Issue	Concern
Declined	Good	Acceptable	Issue	Issue	Concern
Declined Significantly	Acceptable	Issue	Issue	Concern	Concern

The Accountability Pillar measures are organized into seven categories which reflect dimensions of education of importance to parents and the public:

- Safe and caring schools
- Student learning opportunities
- Student learning achievement, K – 9
- Student learning achievement, 10 – 12

- Preparation for life-long learning, employment and citizenship
- Involvement
- Continuous improvement.

Each of the seven categories of measures is given an evaluation that is based on an average of the overall evaluation for each measure within the category. This results in one of the following category evaluations:

- Excellent (blue)
- Good (green)
- Acceptable (yellow)
- Issue (orange)
- Concern (red)

The table that follows provides an example of the measure and category evaluations.

Category	Measure	Evaluations			Category
		Achievement	Improvement	Overall	
Student Learning Achievement (Grades 10 – 12)	Diploma: Acceptable	High	Maintained	Good	Acceptable
	Diploma: Excellence	Intermediate	Declined	Issue	
	Diploma Exam Participation Rate (4+ Exams)	Intermediate	Maintained	Acceptable	
	Rutherford Scholarship Eligibility Rate	High	Improved	Good	

Accountability Pillar Results and Evaluations for School Authorities

Alberta Education collects data, calculates and provides five years of results, prior three-year averages and evaluations for the Accountability Pillar measures and categories to school authorities twice a year. The early May results are provided for school authorities to use in preparing their three-year education plan. An update is provided in early October, when the achievement test and diploma exam results are available for updating the plan, if necessary, and reporting in the AERR.

The Accountability Pillar reports from Alberta Education contain additional breakdowns to assist school authorities analyze and address their results, such as results and evaluations for schools, courses and for specific populations of students.

The evaluation of the Accountability Pillar measures provides a consistent, fair and transparent assessment of results and helps school authorities identify areas needing improvement.

The results and evaluations of Accountability Pillar measures provide information on school authority performance and trends over time. School authorities have responsibility for:

- applying their expertise in data and program analysis as well as their knowledge of local conditions (context) to develop an understanding of the results
- working with their schools to determine how best to bring about improvement.

Development of the Accountability Pillar

Drawing on the work of the Funding Framework Review Committee and the Review Committee on Outcomes, the Accountability Pillar Design and Implementation Advisory Sub-Committee (the sub-committee) worked with Alberta Education to develop the Accountability Pillar, including identifying the common set of performance measures. The following organizations were represented on the sub-committee: Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA), College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS), Association of School Business Officials of Alberta

(ASBOA), The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA), Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA), Fédération des conseils scolaires francophones de l'Alberta (FCSFA).

The sub-committee's guiding principles for the Accountability Pillar:

- *transparent process*
- *emphasis on achievement*
- *holistic approach to evaluation*
- *on-going collaborative processes*
- *all jurisdictions can succeed.*

The Accountability Pillar is aligned with Alberta Education's goals and outcomes for the K – 12 system and is integrated with the Accountability Framework in place since 1995. The Accountability Pillar focuses on:

- supporting continuous improvement
- improving student outcomes
- providing a clear understanding of jurisdiction performance and successes.

Definitions of Required Performance Measures

Outcomes

School environments are safe and caring.

Definitions for Required Performance Measures

Safe and Caring: Percentages of teachers, parents and students who agree that students are safe at school, are learning the importance of caring for others, are learning respect for others and are treated fairly in school.

Definition: Teachers, parents and students are asked whether:

- students feel safe at school
- students feel safe on the way to and from school
- students treat each other well at school
- teachers care about their students
- students are treated fairly by adults at school.



Outcomes**Definitions for Required Performance Measures**

The education system meets the needs of all students and supports our society and the economy.

Program of Studies: Percentages of teachers, parents and students satisfied with the opportunity for students to receive a broad program of studies, including fine arts, career, technology, and health and physical education.

Definition: Teachers, parents and students are asked about:

- the variety of courses available to students/you at school,
- opportunities students/you have at school to:
 - learn about music
 - learn about drama
 - learn about art
 - learn about computers
 - learn about health
 - learn another language
 - participate in physical education.

Education Quality: Percentages of teachers, parents and students satisfied with the overall quality of basic education.

Definition: Teachers, parents and students are asked about the following:

- overall quality of education in your/your child's school
- the quality of teaching in your/your child's school
- what is being learned in the core subjects is useful (students), students are learning what they need to know (parents and teachers)
- school work is interesting
- school work is challenging
- learning expectations at school are clear.

Outcomes**Definitions for Required Performance Measures**

Satisfaction with Program Access:

Percentages of teachers, parents and students satisfied with the accessibility, effectiveness and efficiency of programs and services for students in their community.

Definition: Teachers, parents and students are asked about the following services for student in schools:

- academic counselling
- career counselling
- library services
- supports for students with special needs.

NOTE: This is not an Accountability Pillar measure. This measure is required of private schools and charter schools that do not have high school programs.

Children and youth at risk have their needs addressed through timely and effective programs and supports.

Drop Out Rate: Annual dropout rate of students aged 14 to 18.

Definition: Alberta students aged 14-18 are tracked for one year to determine how many have left the education system without completing. Students are considered to have dropped out if they are not enrolled in the following year or have not met the high school completion criteria, i.e., have not, within the tracking period: received an Alberta High School Diploma, a Certificate of high school completion, an Alberta High School Equivalency Diploma (GED), earned credit in five Grade 12 courses (including four diploma exam courses), or enrolled in a K-12 school in Alberta, an Alberta post-secondary institution or registered in an Alberta apprenticeship program. An adjustment for attrition (outmigration, mortality) is applied based on estimates from Statistics Canada.

Outcomes	Definitions for Required Performance Measures	Outcomes	Definitions for Required Performance Measures
<p>High school completion rates are showing continual improvement.</p>	<p>High School Completion Rate (3 yr): Percentages of students who completed high school within three years of entering Grade 10.</p> <p>Definition: Alberta Grade 10 students are tracked for three years to determine if they have completed high school. Students are considered to have completed high school if they have, within the tracking period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> received an Alberta High School Diploma, a Certificate of high school achievement (for completing Knowledge and Employability courses) or an Alberta High School Equivalency Diploma (GED) entered a post-secondary level program at an Alberta post-secondary institution registered in an Alberta apprenticeship program or earned credit in five Grade 12 level courses, including four diploma examination courses. <p>Students who move from one school authority to another during high school are attributed to the school authority where they received the most credits. An adjustment for attrition (outmigration, mortality) is applied based on estimates from Statistics Canada.</p> <p>NOTE: Four- and five-year rates also are calculated and provided to school jurisdictions in May for use in planning. These additional results are required to be reported in the jurisdiction's results report in November.</p>		<p>Definition: A student achieving the acceptable standard shows an adequate understanding of the core knowledge and adequate basic skills essential core academic subjects: language arts, mathematics (for Grades 3, 6 and 9) and science and social studies (for Grades 6 and 9). A student achieving the standard of excellence consistently shows a deeper understanding of the concepts of the course demonstrating an ability to integrate information and evaluate it from various points of view. Results are calculated as the percentage of all students in each grade (total enrollment in the grade plus the ungraded students who are in the corresponding year of schooling) who have met the acceptable standard and the percentage who have met the standard of excellence. The overall result is the weighted average of the result for each test.</p> <p>NOTE: Results are also calculated for each grade and subject and provided to school jurisdictions for their use in planning. These additional results are required to be reported in the AERR.</p> <p>Diploma: Acceptable: Percentages of students who achieve the acceptable standard on diploma examinations (overall results - all subjects).</p> <p>Diploma: Excellence: Percentages of students who achieve the standard of excellence on diploma examinations (overall results - all subjects).</p>
<p>Students demonstrate high standards in learner outcomes.</p>	<p>PAT: Acceptable: Percentages of students who achieve the acceptable standard on Grades 3, 6 and 9 Provincial Achievement Tests (overall all grades and subjects).</p> <p>PAT: Excellence: Percentages of students who achieve the standard of excellence on Grades 3, 6 and 9 Provincial Achievement Tests (overall all grades and subjects).</p>		<p>Definition: Diploma examination results are based on the numbers of students writing each exam who achieve the standards. Achieving the acceptable standard (i.e., a mark of 50%) indicates that the student has met the basic requirements of the course. Achieving the</p>

standard of excellence (i.e., a mark of 80%) indicates that the student has performed significantly beyond the minimum requirements of the course. The overall diploma exam result is the weighted average of the result for each exam.

NOTE: Results also are calculated for each diploma exam subject and provided to school jurisdictions for their use in planning. These additional results are required to be reported in the AERR.

Diploma Exam Participation Rate

(4+ Exams): Percentages of students who have written four or more diploma exams by the end of their third year in high school.

Definition: The diploma exam participation rate is calculated by tracking Grade 10 students for three school years to determine the percentage of students who have written four or more diploma exams within the tracking period.

Rutherford Scholarship Eligibility

Rate: Percentages of Grade 12 students who meet the Rutherford Scholarship eligibility criteria.

Definition: Starting in 2007/2008 Rutherford Scholarship eligibility is calculated by determining the percentage of Alberta Grade 12 students who have an average of 75% or higher in any of the eligible Grades 10, 11 or 12 courses. Results for subsequent years will not be comparable to prior results, which were based on an average of 80% or higher.

Students are well prepared for lifelong learning.

Post-Secondary Transition Rate (6 yr): Percentages of students who have enrolled in a post-secondary program within six years of entering Grade 10.

Definition: The high school to post-secondary transition rate is calculated by tracking Alberta Grade 10 students for six years to determine if they have entered a post-secondary-level program at an Alberta post-secondary institution or registered in an Alberta apprenticeship program within the tracking period. An estimate of out-of-province post-secondary enrollment is applied based on the numbers of funded Alberta students attending post-secondary institutions out of province.

NOTE: Four-year rates also are calculated and provided to school jurisdictions in May for use in planning. These additional results are required to be reported in the AERR.

Preparation for Lifelong Learning:

Percentages of teachers and parents satisfied that high school graduates demonstrate the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning.

Definition: Teachers and parents are asked whether:

- high school students demonstrate the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for learning throughout their lifetimes
- students at your school/your child are taught the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for learning throughout their lifetimes.

NOTE: This is not an Accountability Pillar measure. This measure is required of private schools and charter schools that do not have high school programs.

Outcomes**Definitions for Required Performance Measures**

Students are well prepared for employment.

Work Preparation: Percentages of teachers and parents who agree that students are taught attitudes and behaviours that will make them successful at work when they finish school.

Definition: Teachers and parents are asked to indicate whether students in your school/your child are taught attitudes and behaviours that will enable them be successful at work when they leave school.

Students model the characteristics of active citizenship.

Citizenship: Percentages of teachers, parents and students who are satisfied that students model the characteristics of active citizenship.

Definition: Teachers, parents and students are asked whether students at your school/your child's school:

- help each other
- respect each other
- are encouraged at school to be involved in activities that help the community (not asked on the Grade 4 survey)
- are encouraged to try their best
- follow the rules.



Outcomes**Definitions for Required Performance Measures**

Key learning outcomes for FNMI students improve.

The measures used for this outcome are the same as the measures listed above for all students, excluding survey measures. These measures include:

- Annual dropout rate of self-identified FNMI students aged 14-18.
- High school completion rate of self-identified FNMI students within three years of entering Grade 10.
- Overall percentage of self-identified FNMI students in Grades 3, 6 and 9 who achieved the acceptable standard and overall percentage who achieved the standard of excellence on provincial achievement tests.
- Overall percentage of self-identified FNMI students who achieved the acceptable standard and overall percentage who achieve the standard of excellence on diploma examinations within three years of entering Grade 10.
- Percentage of self-identified FNMI students writing four or more diploma examinations.
- Percentage of self-identified Grade 12 FNMI students eligible for a Rutherford Scholarship.
- High school to post-secondary transition rate for self-identified FNMI students within six years of entering Grade 10.

Results are calculated for FNMI students using the identifier in the student's most recent registration year. This reflects the student's intent to be identified as FNMI.

Outcomes	Definitions for Required Performance Measures	Outcomes	Definitions for Required Performance Measures
<p>The education system at all levels demonstrates effective working relationships.</p>	<p>Parental Involvement: Percentages of teachers and parents satisfied with parental involvement in decisions about their child’s education.</p> <p>Definition: Teachers and parents are asked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about the opportunity for parental involvement in decisions about their child’s education • about the opportunity for parental involvement in decisions at their child’s school • whether parental input into decisions at their child’s school is considered • whether parents are involved “A Lot” or “Some” with decisions about their child’s education. 	<p>The education system at all levels demonstrates leadership, innovation and continuous improvement.</p>	<p>School Improvement: Percentages of teachers, parents and students indicating that their school and schools in their jurisdiction have improved or stayed the same the last three years.</p> <p>Definition: Teachers and parents are asked whether the quality of education at your school/your child has received has improved, stayed the same or declined in the past three years. Students are asked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are you proud of your school • would you recommend your school to a friend (not asked on the Grade 4 survey).

Notes

For survey measures:

- All teachers in K-12 schools and all students in Grades 4, 7 and 10 and their parents are included in the surveys. In small schools, including private and charter schools, all students and parents from Grades 4 – 12 are surveyed.
- The surveys of students and teachers are administered online, and the parent survey is mailed to the student’s address on file.
- The percentage for each respondent group is calculated by averaging the responses to all the questions that comprise the measure. The overall percentage is calculated by averaging the results for each respondent group.
- A four-point scale is used for satisfaction and agreement questions, and don’t know responses are recorded.
- Results for each respondent group also are calculated and provided to school jurisdictions and schools for their use.

