



Measuring the quality of your child's education

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Parents want to know that their children are receiving a quality education. Grades are important but there is more to it than that. A quality education helps all children make the most of their talents and abilities. It takes place in schools that allow parents to play a key role in the education of their children. A great school is a caring and safe place for children and welcomes parents.

While it's easy to agree on such goals, how do we measure our progress towards them?

The accountability report is an innovative and straightforward way of assessing and reporting progress on our learning goals for schools, school authorities and the provincial government. It includes measures on safe and caring schools, students' sense of citizenship, parental involvement, high school completion rates, scholarship eligibility, school improvement, provincial examinations and more.

Each year an easy-to-read, colour-coded summary report is prepared for every school authority and for the provincial education system overall. These accountability reports show where results have improved, declined or stayed the same. This helps everyone – parents, teachers, school boards, students and the province – to respond to challenges together so that each student can succeed.

All on the same page

Accountability reports ensure that all school authorities are on the same page, measuring the same factors in the same way at the same time, creating an accurate picture to share with the public.

The ultimate goal of the accountability report is to provide school authorities with the best information possible to make decisions about student learning. This, in turn, provides students with the best learning experience possible.

What results are reported?

The accountability report is made up of the following types of measures:

- Survey results – every year between January and March students, parents and all teachers are surveyed to see how they perceive the quality of education they receive
- Results from student learning indicators such as dropout rates, high school completion rates, and the percentage of students eligible to receive a Rutherford Scholarship
- Student results from Provincial Achievement Tests and Diploma Examinations.

Why is Accountability important?

The highest priority of our education system is the success of each student. Accountability is very important because it helps ensure students receive the best possible education and succeed in school.

The province and school authorities together are responsible for education and are accountable to parents and the public for student programs and results. School authorities receive equitable funding and have flexibility to use these funds to best meet diverse student needs. Together, accountability, equity and flexibility are the three pillars that support the funding of our education system.

By reviewing the accountability results along with other information about the community, schools and school authorities can improve programs and results for their students. The results enable the education system to know more about what is working well and what areas need more work. This helps to continuously improve student learning throughout the province.

How does it work?

Results are reported in seven measure categories. In examining each measure, there are two questions to answer:

- How do the school authority results compare to province-wide standards?
- How do the school authority results compare to its own previous results on the same measure?

By combining both the achievement and the improvement results, we arrive at an overall evaluation for each measure and category.

Every May, school authorities receive their accountability report from Alberta Education. In October, the reports are updated with the most recent Diploma Examination and Provincial Achievement Test results.

The categories and measures are listed on the next page.

What does the accountability report look at?

| Category | What we measure |
|---|---|
| Safe and caring schools | Answers to a survey measure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of students, teachers and parents who agree that students are safe at school. |
| Student learning opportunities | Annual dropout rate of students aged 14-18 Percentage of students completing high school Answers to two survey measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student, teacher and parent satisfaction with the opportunity for students to receive a broad program of studies. • Student, teacher and parent satisfaction with the overall quality of basic education. |
| Student learning achievement (Grades K to 9) | Acceptable results on provincial achievement tests. Excellent results on provincial achievement tests. |
| Student learning achievement (Grades 10 to 12) | Acceptable results on diploma exams. Excellent results on diploma exams. Percentage of students who write four or more diploma exams. Percentage of students eligible for a Rutherford Scholarship. |
| Preparing for lifelong learning, world of work, and citizenship | Percentage of high school students who go on to college, university or apprenticeship training. Answers to two survey measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student, teacher and parent agreement that students are taught the attitudes and behaviours that will make them successful at work. • Student, teacher and parent satisfaction that students show the qualities of a good citizen. |
| Parental involvement | Answers to a survey measure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher and parent satisfaction with parental involvement in decisions about their child's education. |
| Continuous improvement | Answers to a survey measure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of teachers and parents who say their school, and others in the jurisdiction, have improved or stayed the same in the last three years. |



What does the accountability report look like?

Visit <http://education.alberta.ca/admin/funding/accountability/results.aspx> to see the colour-coded assessment of results for the education system overall and for each school jurisdiction.

How is this information shared and used?

Parents and the general public can access results in a number of ways:

- **Your school.** School results are shared with parents or the school council each year and are included in the school's three-year plans and annual education results reports. The plan indicates what the school intends to do to improve programs and results for students. You can contact your school council or school principal for more information.
- **Your school board (of public, separate, francophone and charter schools).** Your school board's three-year education plan and annual education results report are posted on its website. These documents contain the school jurisdiction's results, including the accountability summary report. The plan also contains information of what actions are being taken to improve results.
- **Alberta Education.** Results for each school board and overall provincial education system results, including the accountability summary reports, are posted on Alberta Education's website at <http://education.alberta.ca/admin/funding/accountability/results.aspx>.
- **Alberta Government.** Alberta Education's business plan and annual report contain provincial results and targets. These documents can be accessed at <http://education.alberta.ca/department/publications.aspx>.

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How was the Accountability report developed?

All of the province's primary education stakeholder organizations, including the Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA), were members of a stakeholder advisory committee that was formed in October 2003. This committee advised the Education Minister on the design and implementation of the Accountability Pillar.

The committee's work was based on a number of operating principles, with five primary areas of focus:

1. **A transparent process**
2. **Focus on achievement**
3. **Comprehensive approach to evaluation**
4. **An ongoing, collaborative process**
5. **All schools can succeed**

Based on these principles, the Accountability Pillar was designed to ensure that school authorities and the province report results clearly and address low or declining results. Improvement is a shared responsibility among schools, school authorities and the province.

How are Parents Involved?

Parents have an important role to play in school improvement. Parents are involved in improvement efforts at their child's school through their involvement in their child's education and in the school council.

The voice of parents is an important component of the accountability reports. Each year parents of students in selected grades have the opportunity to respond to the parent survey. When you fill out the survey, you are adding your voice to the future of education in your school, your school authority and throughout the province. These results are used by schools, school authorities and Alberta Education to see what's working well, and what needs to be improved.

Your voice, honest and confidential, is a priceless resource.



Consultation

The province's primary education stakeholder associations, including the Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA), are all working with Alberta Education to improve the accountability reporting so that we have the best information available to help each student succeed.

If you have questions or comments

We'd love to hear from you:

Contact us by e-mail at measurement.education@gov.ab.ca

or

Performance Measurement & Reporting

Alberta Education
Telephone: (780) 427-8217

or

Field Services

Alberta Education
Telephone: (780) 427-5378
for toll free access, dial 310-0000 first.

We value your input and welcome your suggestions on how we can all ensure your child receives the best education possible.

www.education.alberta.ca/accountability

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