Grade 3 Pilot Student Learning Assessment (SLA) – 2016–2017 Pilot
Quick Facts for Superintendents

What are SLAs?
SLAs are a new, digitally based provincial assessment that provide a beginning of the year “check in”. This enables parents and teachers to learn about and identify student strengths and areas of growth at the start of the school year. The Grade 3 SLA is based on outcomes related to literacy and numeracy in language arts and mathematics in Alberta’s current Grade 2 provincial programs of study. Some questions include contexts from arts education, health, science and social studies.

What are the purposes of the SLAs?
The three purposes of the SLAs are to:
• improve student learning (primary purpose);
• enhance instruction for students;
• assure Albertans our education system is meeting the needs of students and achieves the outcomes of the Ministerial Order on Student Learning.

While the SLAs are helpful in providing assurance at the local level, they will not be used in the Accountability Pillar. In 2016–2017, Alberta Education will, in collaboration with stakeholders, determine the best approach to providing assurance at the provincial level.

Provincial assessment programs, including SLAs, are meant to complement, not replace, day-to-day teacher observations and classroom assessment. They are sources of information that must be interpreted, used, and communicated within the context of regular and continuous assessment by classroom teachers.

Why the change to SLAs from PATs?
Knowing early in the school year, rather than at the end, what students know and are able to do and areas for growth will serve as a useful reference and enable collaboration between parents and teachers to help students learn and grow during the year. Also, the SLAs are flexible and can be completed over a number of days rather than on a specific day and time. This gives teachers greater flexibility and students the opportunity to take the assessment “when ready”.

The SLAs are digitally based and allow students to show their learning in ways that are not possible with paper-based tests like the Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs). As such, the SLAs are a more inclusive assessment tool.

What is the structure of the Grade 3 SLA?
This literacy and numeracy assessment consists of digital interactive questions (marked by Alberta Education) and performance tasks (marked locally):
• digital literacy questions;
• a literacy performance task;
• digital numeracy questions;
• a numeracy performance task.
What funding support is available for administering the Grade 3 SLA?

Participating school authorities will receive a $6 per Grade 3 student allocation for the 2016–2017 pilot to help them with local marking of performance tasks by teachers. As student enrolment for the 2016–2017 school year will be confirmed later in the upcoming school year, this funding allocation will be based on 2015–2016 school year Grade 3 enrolment. Given that there are school authorities with a relatively small number of Grade 3 students, there will be a $100 minimum allocation to each participating school authority. This funding will be provided in August 2016, as part of the grant payment to school authorities.

Why are we Piloting the Grade 3 SLA?

The purpose of the Grade 3 SLA Pilot is to improve, in a deliberate and thoughtful manner, the Grade 3 SLA tool as well as the related administration processes and supports for everyone involved. The Grade 3 SLA is set to enter its third Pilot year in 2016. The goal of the Pilot is to ensure the Grade 3 SLA is a valuable and effective assessment tool for teachers, parents, and students to inform future provincial assessments.

Who will participate in the Pilot SLAs?

Alberta Education selected 20 school authorities by random sample to invite them to participate in the 2016-17 Student Learning Assessment (SLA) Pilot. A list of invited school authorities is available online (https://education.alberta.ca/media/3272616/list-of-school-authorities-invited-to-participate.pdf).

What are the important dates for the 2016–2017 Grade 3 SLA Pilot?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 15 – 31, 2016</td>
<td>Teachers within school authorities that are participating in the 2016–2017 Grade 3 SLA Pilot will have preview access to the SLA assessments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 15, 2016</td>
<td>The SLA Teacher Dashboard is available for teachers to set up their class lists, print performance task materials, and prepare for administration.</td>
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<td>August 15, 2016</td>
<td>School authorities can begin to request access to paper-only versions of the SLA for students who are not permitted to use or cannot access technology.</td>
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<td>September 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017</td>
<td>Teachers may administer and/or re-administer SLA components.</td>
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<td>Fall 2016</td>
<td>Field testing opportunities for Fall 2016 will be communicated to school authority Assessment Contacts.</td>
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| 24 hours after the administration or re-administration of digital questions | • Teachers and school administrators can access Individual Student Reports and Class Reports (digital and print) via the SLA Teacher Dashboard.  
• Superintendents can access reports via the SLA Teacher Dashboard.  
• Parents can access their child’s Individual Student Report (including a parent-friendly print copy) via their child’s school. |

Will students in my school authority need to study for the Grade 3 SLA?

Students do not need to study to do this assessment. However, students should be familiar with using a computer or similar technology. As the digital interactive questions require a computer, laptop, or tablet, as well as an Internet connection, technology is central to the Grade 3 SLA Pilot.
What resources are available for students, teachers, and administrators to prepare?

Students can try out the practice questions and released questions from last year that are located at https://public.education.alberta.ca/assessment/.

Teachers and administrators have a number of resources available to them on the Alberta Education website at https://education.alberta.ca/student-learning-assessments/resources/.

Teachers also have a number of professional learning supports available, including training sessions offered by the Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortium (ARPDC). Information on these is available here: https://education.alberta.ca/student-learning-assessments/supports-for-educators/.

Who excuses students from participating in the SLA?

This year, excusing students must be approved by the principal, instead of the superintendent, for the 2016–2017 Pilot. Once approved, teachers can identify excused students to Alberta Education via the SLA Teacher Dashboard using the status “not participating.”

When will students’ results be available?

Starting in September 2016, Alberta Education will provide reports on student results within 24 hours of a class completing the digital questions. Superintendents will also be able to access reports showing the distribution of students across performance levels within 24 hours of a class completing the digital questions.

Parents of participating schools will have access to a parent-friendly report, through teachers, for the digital questions marked by the province.

Teachers and parents/guardians are encouraged to discuss students’ Grade 3 SLA results together, as professional teachers are in the best position to interpret the results.

New this year, within 24 hours of the administration of the 2016–2017 Grade 3 Pilot SLA, superintendents will be able to access reports showing the distribution of students across performance levels:

• within their school authority;
• for any school within their school authority.

Whom should I contact if I have questions about the Grade 3 SLA?

You can contact Nicole Lamarre, Director of Student Learning Assessments, Alberta Education, (in English and in French) at Nicole.Lamarre@gov.ab.ca or by telephone at 780-427-6204. Call 310-0000 for toll-free access within Alberta.

Want to know more?

More information and resources for the Grade 3 SLA are available on the Alberta Education website at http://education.alberta.ca/sla.