

Appendix 1

Summary of Accomplishments – Alberta Learning Business plan

April 1, 2000 to March 31, 2001

Cross-Ministry Initiatives

Cross-ministry initiatives have been established by government to address priorities that transcend the mandate of individual ministries. Each year some of these initiatives are selected for special emphasis. The following briefly highlights Alberta Learning's involvement in these initiatives in 2000/01.

Priority Cross-Ministry Initiatives

Economic Development Strategy

- Worked with Economic Development to produce "Get Ready Alberta" and "People and Prosperity". Reports were prepared on the results and accomplishments for 2000/01.
- Developed plans and targets for 2001/02 for the learning components of the strategy.
- Worked with Human Resources and Employment to update and distribute Youth Employment Strategy to schools, post-secondary institutions and other learning organizations and libraries throughout the province to provide information and promote labour force participation.
- Increased post-secondary spaces (including apprenticeship) in areas of high labour market demand.

Aboriginal Policy Initiative

- Worked with Edmonton Public Schools on piloting a new Aboriginal high school pilot, aimed at better meeting the needs of Aboriginal students living in an urban environment.
- Increased Aboriginal participation in apprenticeship as a result of the collaborative efforts of industry, agencies, other ministries and Aboriginal groups.
- Contributed to a cross-government database and tracking system to identify Aboriginal participation in programs.

Alberta Corporate Service Centre

- Transferred identified functions, e.g. selected human resources, library, information technology services, to the Alberta Corporate Service Centre (ACSC), which provides shared services to all ministries. Service levels were maintained through the transfer.

Corporate Human Resource Development Strategy

- Drafted a Human Resource Plan for the Ministry aligned with the Corporate Human Resource Development Strategy.
- Developed a Leadership Continuity Plan consistent with government direction.

Continuing Cross-Ministry Initiatives

Children and Youth Initiative

- Worked with Health and Wellness, Children's Services, and the Alberta Mental Health Board to evaluate the Student Health Initiative and reviewed Student Health Partnerships' annual report for the 1999/2000 service plan year.
- Reviewed and approved action plans for the Student Health Partnership's Joint Service Plans for 2000/01.
- Worked with Health and Wellness and Children's Services, to help develop recommendations for a comprehensive, integrated Mental Health Services framework. Specific strategies were developed to meet the needs of children in care, children and youth with complex needs, youth in transition and young offenders.

Corporate Information Management/Information Technology Strategy

- Worked with Alberta Innovation and Science and other partners to provide high-speed networks for learning. Selected a vendor to provide viable connectivity solutions for all Alberta's learning institutions. Consultations with stakeholders on issues and priorities will assist in future stages of SUPERNET implementation.
- Implemented a three-year business plan for information technology that aligns with Alberta government's direction.

Goal One: High-Quality Learning Opportunities

During 2000/01 Alberta Learning continued to work with stakeholders and partners to provide a responsive, flexible learning system that:

- meets the needs of all learners, society and the economy; and,
- is flexible and provides a variety of programs and modes of delivery.

Following are key accomplishments that helped provide high-quality learning opportunities.

Enhancing funding for changing needs

- Expanded funding to increase hours of kindergarten instruction from 400 to 475.
- Adjusted rural and urban transportation formulas.
- Established and supported an MLA Post-Secondary Funding Review Committee, with the mandate to improve flexibility and responsiveness of the post-secondary learning system. In response, announced \$12 million in funding adjustments to achieve a more equitable resource distribution.
- Provided an additional \$500,000 per school year to cover busing costs for students attending year-round schools, benefiting more than 7,500 children.
- Increased funding by \$7.4 million per school year for school jurisdictions facing increased enrolment and higher costs as a result of unique geographic and economic conditions.
- Reallocated an additional \$5 million for the 2000/01 school year to provide programs and assistance for students with severe behavioral disorders. Provided direct funding for special education in designated private schools.
- Announced \$12.5 million to post-secondary institutions for faculty retention. Initiated a strategy to attract and retain top quality faculty to ensure 'brain gain'.
- Increased technology funding to redevelop post-secondary courses for distance and multi-media delivery; awarded nine post-secondary institutions with grants approximating \$1 million.
- Phased in private school funding to reflect 60 per cent of basic instruction grants.
- Awarded \$10 million in additional funds through the Performance Envelope, recognizing excellence in the adult learning system.

Expanding post-secondary programs to meet demand

- Added almost 1,800 new spaces through the Access Fund for apprenticeship training at post-secondary institutions to meet high-demand trades such as welding and electrical.
- A \$4 million one-time grant to institutions in 1999/2000, enabled them to revamp training and purchase equipment that reflects industry demand for increased training options in the Heavy Equipment Technician Programs in 2000/01.
- Through the Access Fund, about 1,800 spaces were created in priority labour market areas and in response to high student demand. Spaces included information and communication technology and health (licensed practical nurses, registered nurses, personal support aides, medical radiological technologists, speech language pathologists, and physicians).

Restructuring to enhance flexibility

- Led a Campus Alberta Symposium with representatives across the learning system that included students, educators, government, industry and community partners to further develop the concept of a single streamlined learning system. Participants developed recommendations to enhance system coordination and ensure quality learning opportunities through collaboration.
- Transferred Alberta College educational programs and assets to the public learning system, to ensure the college could continue to meet the educational needs of a growing number of post-secondary students.

Developing and updating curriculum

- Released a new Social Studies resource to help grade 6 students gain a better understanding of school boards and their function. Highlighted the importance of education in Alberta and the role of school boards within the education system.
- Implemented the Information and Communication Technology Program (ICT) province wide to help students develop technology skills by blending lessons into existing core subjects offered in Kindergarten to grade 12. Provided implementation direction, including coordination of ICT professional development initiatives. Provided Web awareness training to Alberta teachers in support of the ICT curriculum to help teachers show students how to use the Internet safely and more effectively.
- Revised and validated Health programs through a kindergarten to grade 9 pilot.
- Developed a new senior high transitions math course in collaboration with eight post-secondary institutions. Developed an interim program of studies for Pure Math in grades 10 and 11. Revised Applied Math for grades 10, 11 and 12.
- Developed interim programs of study for Science in grades 7 and 8; conducted field validations for drafts of Science in grades 10, 11 and 12.
- Enhanced liaison with post-secondary institutions while developing interim programs of study for senior high English Language Arts 10-1 and 10-2.
- Conducted a field validation for the draft Aboriginal Studies in grades 10, 11 and 12.

Supporting implementation of provincial programs and policies of basic learning

- Conducted workshops for school and central office administrators on curriculum, policies regulations and funding.
- Supported school authorities in preparing three-year education plans and annual education results reports.
- Advised school authorities and schools in a variety of issues.
- Mediated disputes among basic learning stakeholders and clients.
- Implemented Private Schools Task Force recommendations by providing assistance to private schools in meeting accountability requirements and improving learning opportunities for private school students.

Recognizing Aboriginal and French cultures

- Recognized the unique roles of Aboriginal and French cultures through development of a draft Social Studies curriculum framework common to the western provinces. Developed a consultation forum to gather advice and feedback from stakeholders and partners. Drafted Social Studies Kindergarten to grade 9 specific outcomes.
- Reorganized several Basic Learning program committees to include Aboriginal and Francophone representatives.
- Revised the Kindergarten program statement to recognize the unique roles of Aboriginal and French cultures.

Strengthening School Councils

- Reviewed feedback from education stakeholders and parents, following an MLA review of school councils. Accepted recommendations in April 2000 that included keeping school councils mandatory, maintaining their advisory role and facilitating training opportunities for school council members.

Improving Outcomes for the Basic Learning System

- Brought together education partners, including parents, teachers, students, business and labour representatives, to better define the results Albertans expect from the basic learning system. The committee's work will be the first phase in the development of a larger, outcomes-based blueprint to make the education system more flexible and responsive to learners.

Evaluating Student Health Initiative

- Evaluated the Student Health Initiative, one of the strategies under the government-wide Alberta Children's Initiative. Conducted a provincial Student Health evaluation and approved action plans for the Student Health Partnership's Joint Service Plans for 2000/01. Reviewed the Student Health Partnerships' annual report for the 1999/2000 service plan year.

Supporting MLA Committee on Lifelong Learning

- Provided consultation expertise and support to the MLA Committee on Lifelong Learning, with 14 public input sessions held.

Developing scanning model

- Implemented an expanded environmental scanning model to respond to lifelong learning trends and challenges.

Responding to concerns and inquiries

- Managed 21 Reviews by the Minister (an independent examination of an unresolved dispute between two parties in the basic learning system, leading to a decision), 300 referrals to the Attendance Board to help students with school attendance problems, and 2 special needs tribunals to find a suitable solution when a school board has determined a student has special needs that cannot be met by a program provided by the board.

A second desired outcome is system accessibility, so that:

- **all Albertans can participate in learning, including those with special needs**

Following is a summary of Alberta Learning initiatives designed to promote system accessibility.

Funding post-secondary infrastructure

- In partnership with Infrastructure, announced \$200 million in one-time infrastructure funding to post-secondary institutions, including the following projects:
 - The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology to help build a new high-tech learning centre;
 - Athabasca University for assistance in campus expansion to serve expanding enrolments;
 - Keyano College to help build a new facility to accommodate 400 more full-time students;
 - University of Alberta to help construct a high-tech learning complex;
 - Red Deer College to help expand and upgrade facilities to accommodate more than 500 additional full-time students;
 - Medicine Hat College to help expand classroom, lab and library space;
 - Lethbridge Community College to assist in its expansion to accommodate an additional 1,000 students;
 - Mount Royal College to assist in its expansion to accommodate an additional 3,700 students;
 - Bow Valley College to help renovate its campus to create more than 700 additional training spaces;
 - and,
 - Southern Alberta Institute of Technology to assist in its expansion needs.

Addressing children's mental health needs

- Developed recommendations for a comprehensive, integrated Mental Health Services framework. The report was prepared by the Children's Mental Health Committee, which operates under the auspices of the cross-Ministry Alberta Children's Initiative. Specific strategies were developed to meet the needs of children in care, children and youth with complex needs, transitional youth and young offenders.

Improving programs and services for children with special needs

- Reviewed special education programs and services delivery to streamline administrative processes for school boards, resulting in a report *Shaping the Future for Students with Special Needs: A Review of Special Education in Alberta*.
- Introduced a staged increase in funding of \$20 million to assist 7,000 students with emotional/behavioral disabilities, supporting extra counseling, therapy or more one-on-one time with a teacher's assistant.
- Developed 11 teacher resources supporting inclusion of students with emotional disorders and/or mental illnesses as well as students who are gifted and talented.
- Worked with school authorities to establish outcomes and measures for special education programs and services. Tabled the resulting accountability framework as a discussion paper among western provinces and territories and reviewed it with stakeholders.

Enhancing Aboriginal learning opportunities

- Partnered with Edmonton Public Schools on a new Aboriginal high school pilot aimed at better meeting the needs of Aboriginal students living in an urban environment.
- Enhanced training opportunities for Aboriginal people in local communities by facilitating training in the carpenter trade on the Siksika, Sarcee and Garden River reserves. Considerable progress was made on the goal to increase Aboriginal participation in apprenticeship, as a result of the collaborative efforts of industry, agencies, Alberta Ministries and Aboriginal groups.
- Contributed to a cross-government database and tracking system to identify Aboriginal participation in programs.
- Developed an Aboriginal Policy Framework and on-line learning strategy following an accessibility survey.

Providing electronic solutions

- Partnered with the Alberta Online Consortium (AOC) to host an Online Learning Symposium for 550 basic learning and post-secondary educators from across Alberta and Canada. Provided a \$30,000 grant to the AOC to support research on the effectiveness of on-line education. AOC comprises more than 50 school jurisdictions, 15 association school jurisdictions and 17 post-secondary institutions along with six private sector companies that focus on creating flexible learning environments.
- Worked with Alberta Innovation and Science and other partners to select a vendor to provide access to high-speed networks for learning. Viable connectivity solutions will be provided for all Alberta Learning institutions. Consultations with stakeholders will assist in future stages of the cross-government SUPERNET implementation.
- Redesigned Ministry Internet site for greater functionality resulting in an effective communications mechanism for Ministry employees, partners, stakeholders and clients.
- Managed the GrassRoots Program in Alberta, including a contract with Industry Canada for over \$500,000, to support teachers in developing telecollaborative learning projects.
- Developed high-quality print and electronic learning resources for Alberta parents, students and teachers in support of regular and alternative programs from kindergarten to grade 12 and in post-secondary institutions.

Enhancing rural adult learning opportunities

- Enhanced rural learning opportunities providing more access in previously under-served or unserved communities and through the development of Community Learning Centres. 41 Community Adult Learning Councils provided nearly 550 additional non-credit programs to more than 7,600 participants in rural communities. Seven Community Adult Learning Councils began the development of Community Learning Centres.

Reviewing post-secondary admission and transfer policies

- Worked with members of the Minister's Working Group on Admission and Transfer on recommendations to ease access for learning opportunities.

A third desired outcome for this Alberta Learning goal is system affordability, so that:

- **cost is not a barrier to learners participating in learning opportunities; and,**
- **the learning system is affordable.**

The following Alberta Learning initiatives in 2000/01 assisted the Ministry to meet its goal of system affordability.

Increasing financial assistance for Alberta learners

- Developed a new Student Loan Relief Program, which will provide more than \$70 million in debt reduction and respond to student concerns about rising debt levels.
- Provided nearly 47,100 students with financial assistance through loans, grants, bursaries or scholarships designed to assist Albertans to pursue post-secondary studies.
- Provided students with more information on financial assistance through a Street Cents video on planning for post-secondary studies.
- Enhanced features of student finance programs, including portability to other provinces for study, extended interest relief, enhanced grants, health care benefits for children of students and increased allowances for part-time earnings and scholarships.

Goal Two: Excellence in Learner Achievement

One of the desired outcomes for this Alberta Learning goal is that learners demonstrate high standards across a full range of areas, optimizing full potential.

During 2000/01, a number of new and continuing initiatives supported excellence in learner achievement.

Assessing and enhancing learner achievement

- Continued to implement the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI), which aims to work with the education community to improve student learning. Improved communication among stakeholders through on-line access to approved AISI projects.
- Reported on the achievement of students in grades 3, 6 and 9 in core subjects and students taking grade 12 diploma examination courses.
- Prepared recommendations to improve Math achievement by grade 9 students.
- Implemented new provincial standards for Pure and Applied Math 30 exams.
- Incorporated new scoring rubrics in chemistry and physics.
- Continued to work with stakeholders to improve the diploma examination programs.
- Completed pilots for reporting achievement of home education, the Integrated Occupation Program and absent students, while redesigning special needs assessment.
- Begin to collect information on students who did not write achievement tests (Home Education, Integrated Occupational, Special Needs).
- Incorporated student assessment into teacher pre-service and in-service through collaboration with stakeholders at workshops and presentations.

Recognizing learner achievement

- Participated in national and international assessments, and used the results to demonstrate high achievement and global competitiveness of Alberta students.
- Issued more than \$18.2 million in Alberta Heritage Scholarship Fund awards to more than 8,900 post-secondary students.
- Awarded \$2.7 million in scholarships to more than 2,700 students in the first year of The Jason Lang Scholarship for second year post-secondary students.
- Partnered with industry to develop a scholarship program for Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) apprentices. The new scholarship program will annually reward and encourage 50 of Alberta's top young apprentices with scholarships of \$1000.
- Honored 51 apprentices who received the Top Apprentice Award, recognizing the apprentice achieving the highest overall mark in each trade or craft. Presented awards to two employers for exceptional efforts in training apprentices.
- Honored five Albertans in five different trades who won gold medals at a national competition in Quebec and who will participate in the World Skills Competition in Seoul, Korea.

Recognizing teaching achievements

- Honored 21 teachers with Excellence in Teaching Awards for their ingenuity and enthusiasm in the classroom.
- Created a Top Instructor Award in conjunction with training institutions and industry partners.

Evaluating programs and initiatives

- Evaluated and prepared a final report on the Teacher Assistants Program.
- Evaluated and prepared a final report on the Early Literacy Initiative.

A second desired outcome of this goal is that learners complete programs.

Addressing barriers to high school completion

- Completed report on Barriers to High School Completion and drafted next steps for dissemination and consideration in the education community.
- Explored options and developed a method for calculating a high school completion rate for school authorities.

Goal Three: Well Prepared Learners for Lifelong Learning, the World of Work and Citizenship.

As a desired outcome of this goal, Alberta Learning works towards ensuring learners are well-prepared for lifelong learning. As a result:

- **children start school ready to learn;**
- **learners have the ability to learn continuously: in school, at work and in society; and,**
- **learners' achievements are recognized.**

Throughout the year, a number of initiatives highlighted Alberta Learning's goal of well-prepared learners.

Providing literacy services

- Thirty-three family literacy projects benefited more than 3,800 parents and more than 3,800 preschool children.
- Through volunteer tutor literacy programs, more than 2,400 adult learners received almost 132,000 hours of literacy instruction from more than 2,700 volunteers.
- Community Adult Learning Councils offered almost 500 adult basic literacy courses for more than 5,500 registrants.

Lifelong Learning and Citizenship Opportunities

- Community Adult Learning Councils offered more than 4,400 non-credit programs to more than 87,000 registrants in the areas of adult basic literacy, English or French as a second language, citizenship, employment-related and community issues. Over 8,000 volunteer hours were also contributed to support non-credit adult learning in local communities.
- More than 13,000 new immigrants to Alberta received settlement services including orientation information and interpretation and translation services. Over 160,000 hours were contributed by community volunteers to assist newcomers. Close to 12,000 immigrants were assessed and referred to English as a second language courses. Community Adult Learning Councils also offered 238 Citizenship and English or French as a second language courses for more than 6,800 adult learners.

Emphasizing early literacy programs

- Shared effective practices in early literacy with all school authorities.

Promoting technology implementation and integration

- Finalized five best practices studies to assist school jurisdictions with technology planning and implementation. Identified and initiated additional studies based on stakeholder input.
- Directed and coordinated hardware and software initiatives with stakeholders, including identification of software priorities and establishment of software agreements.
- Developed software standards for communications between the Ministry and stakeholders.
- Coordinated hardware distribution through Alberta Computers for Schools.
- Communicated policies and procedures for accessing Technology Integration Funding.

A second desired outcome of this Alberta Learning goal is that learners are well-prepared for work. Therefore:

- **learners are successful in finding/maintaining work; and,**
- **employers are satisfied with the knowledge, skills and attitudes of employees.**

Following are key accomplishments in 2000/01 that assisted the Ministry to prepare learners for work.

Promoting youth training and employment

- Expanded promotion of the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) to a wider audience, including grade 9 students and Aboriginal youth.
- Assessed achievement of RAP goals and established baseline data to assess program promotion and administration.
- Developed an outline for a Youth Learning Opportunities program in partnership with the Northern Alberta Development Council.
- Began implementing a communications plan to increase awareness of training opportunities for young people.
- Provided schools, post-secondary institutions, libraries, provincial apprenticeship committees and others with an update on the Youth Employment Strategy, to promote participation and keep Albertans informed of progress.

Including essential employability skills in learning programs

- Incorporated essential competencies into curriculum for Kindergarten through to grade 12 students.
- Developed career modules for senior high schools.
- Incorporated essential competencies into career programs for adult learners.

Delivering special programs

- Approved a new Green Certificate program in partnership with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development to develop human resources for Alberta's agricultural sector. Developed seven specializations related to agricultural production.
- Prepared draft curriculum for academic and occupational courses for grades 7 to 12.

Providing immigrant services

- Awarded International Qualifications Services certificates to more than 1,800 individuals with foreign credentials to assist them with entry into the labour force and educational institutions.

Updating accreditation

- Developed a Career and Technologies Studies agreement for warehousing and updated accreditation for welders.

Supporting the Labour Force Demand and Supply Initiative

- Conducted economic, labour market, demographic and related research to support the Labour Force Demand and Supply Initiative. Learning participated in this cross-ministry undertaking to assess labour supply issues, and developed education and immigration policy responses to address emerging provincial requirements for skilled labour.

Conducting university and apprenticeship surveys

- Conducted an Alberta Graduate Survey to assess program satisfaction levels and labour market outcomes of university students.
- Conducted a survey of apprenticeship graduates to determine their satisfaction with training and their current employment status.

Developing International Education Strategy

- Drafted an Alberta International Education Strategy, following stakeholder consultations. The strategy provides direction across ministries toward a more coordinated approach to programs, services, and entrepreneurial activities in the education sector, the internationalization of curriculum to support Alberta providers in offering international services and in accessing international markets, and the expansion of the range of international opportunities available to Albertans.

A third desired outcome is that learners are well-prepared for citizenship, so that:

- **learners have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to become contributing members of society; and,**
- **learners have an awareness of the increasing global interdependency.**

Following are key accomplishments that assisted the Ministry prepare learners for citizenship.

Promoting second language learning

- Develop programs in Spanish for grades 7 to 12, Spanish for high school students, Spanish Language Arts and Ukrainian for kindergarten through to grade 12 students, Ukrainian for high school students; Ukrainian for grades 7 to 12; German for high school students and German for grades 7 to 12.
- Promoted second language learning through cooperative ventures with stakeholders.
- Conducted an inventory of second language credit programs in 13 post-secondary institutions, which showed more than 14,000 students registered in 25 different language courses.

Goal Four: Effective Working Relationships with Partners

As a desired outcome of this goal, Alberta Learning strives to ensure joint initiatives meet the learning needs of Albertans.

Alberta Learning works with other Alberta Ministries, jurisdictions, partners and stakeholders to meet the learning needs of Albertans. 2000/01 accomplishments are listed below.

Developing collaborative models with stakeholders

- Organized a three-day Canadian conference, in partnership with provincial education stakeholders, to share strategies, resources and best practices for safe and caring schools and communities. In conjunction with the conference, launched a teachers' resource "Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum," developed by the Alberta Teachers' Association with support from the Alberta Safe and Caring Schools Initiative.
- Several projects offering post-secondary courses in high schools developed by agreement between local post-secondary institutions and school jurisdictions.
- Developed a draft guide for principals to assist with supervision of teachers and to support teacher evaluation.
- Established a collaborative framework with stakeholders to review adult learning performance measurement and management information.
- Developed a new collaborative working relationship with the Metis Nation of Alberta (MNA) leading to the first outcome-based contract for the Ministry and the MNA.
- To enhance the use of the common Alberta Student Number, the ECS-12 Student Identifier System was extended to include post-secondary learners.
- Developed collaborative models with stakeholders to implement the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AIS) focusing on student learning and performance.
- Alberta Learning contributed the Alberta perspective to the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) project: Public expectations for Post-Secondary Education and University Research Consortium Project.

Implementing teacher labour mobility agreements

- Adopted procedures permitting teachers with credentials in one province or territory to access teacher certification in Alberta.

Coordinating projects with the federal government

- Worked closely with the Government of Canada on common brochures and communication tools for students pursuing post-secondary studies.
- Participated in a strategic review of the future of funding approaches for post-secondary students.
- Administered federal Canada Millennium Scholarships program which awarded \$26.6 million to about 11,000 post-secondary students in Alberta.

Strengthening partnerships

- Responded to industry needs by implementing 90 per cent of recommendations from an industry network workshop, focusing on improving communication, committee activities and resource material for committees.

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- Contributed \$1.5 million towards establishing a new Academic Chair in Beef Cattle Health Management at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Saskatchewan. The endowment allowed the college to expand research, attract students to specializations in agriculture veterinary practice and provide greater support to the needs of the beef cattle industry in Alberta and across western Canada.
 - Developed collaborative models such as the Comprehensive Development and Implementation Curriculum Framework to enhance effective working relationships with partners.

A second outcome of this goal is that joint initiatives contribute to the achievement of the social and economic goals of the province.

Meeting industrial labour market needs

As a result of the on-going partnership with industry:

- More apprentices are working on industrial sites because the tender process for major projects provides additional points for the number of apprentices included in bids.
- Programs developed under the Construction Owners of Alberta Best Practices initiative, such as a pilot study by industry on the effective use of apprentices on industrial sites, were implemented.
- A new trade for technicians who repair outdoor power equipment was created.

A third outcome is that partners are satisfied with the effectiveness of partnerships.

Surveying partners

- Conducted surveys of stakeholder and partner perceptions, which showed that satisfaction levels remain high.

Goal Five: Highly Responsive and Responsible Ministry

Demonstrating value for dollars is a key outcome for this Alberta Learning goal.

Summary of activities in 2000/01 to ensure value for money in the learning system are listed below.

Ensuring sound financial policies and practices

- Commenced a review of funding support to school authorities to ensure a high percentage of dollars are directed towards student learning. Resulted in the introduction of a growth and density funding grant.
- Critically evaluated school jurisdictions' and post-secondary institutions' financial statements to identify business risks and reporting deficiencies.
- Met financial targets while addressing unanticipated cost pressures in post-secondary institutions and school jurisdictions, such as rising energy costs.
- Enhanced accountability processes to provide further assurance that grants were expended for their intended purpose. For example, audited grant funds provided to Careers: The Next Generation, reviewed special education funding and programming, and federal funding for hours in French immersion, second language, and francophone instructional programs.
- To validate funding claims, verified September 30 enrollment counts on a sample basis, and monitored allocation of high school funding for course completions, including Careers and Technology Studies courses.

Enhancing accountability and validating program quality

- Monitored the performance of post-secondary institutions through: reporting systems that provided institutional financial, enrolment, program and performance indicator data; business plans; campus development plans; accessibility plans; annual reports and audited financial statements.
- Enhanced the quality and timeliness of institution reporting by delivering training workshops to institution staff, and by streamlining reporting processes and guidelines.
- Established the Performance Measures and Management Information Committee (PMMIC), a system-wide body that is responsible for providing advice to the adult learning system on the use of performance measures within the adult learning accountability framework.
- Reviewed funded accredited private schools on a sample basis to ensure alignment with the applicable provisions of the *School Act*, the *Private School Regulation*, the *Student Record Regulation*, and *Private School Policy*.
- Approved annual applications to operate from 180 private schools and 125 private ECS operators.
- Reviewed designated special education private schools to determine the extent to which the sole purpose of the school is to serve students with special needs, all students are diagnosed as having mild, moderate or severe disabilities, and Individualized Education Plans are developed for every student.
- Reviewed outreach programs and schools to determine the types of students being served in outreach schools and the services being provided.
- Reviewed programming for ECS students with mild/moderate special needs to ascertain how changes in funding for ECS students with mild/moderate special needs has affected programming.
- Reviewed charter schools to ensure alignment with the requirements of the charter school regulations and *School Act*.

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- Evaluated the effectiveness of the Early Literacy and Teacher Assistance programs.
 - Analyzed school board education plans and results reports for alignment with and implications for provincial policies.

As a second outcome of this goal, Alberta Learning will show leadership and continuous improvement in administrative and business processes and practices.

Alberta Learning accomplished a number of business improvements in 2000/01, as listed below.

Restructuring to improve service

- Implemented a new organizational structure to increase Ministry responsiveness to clients and to societal changes.
- Identified specific finance and administrative functions, information technology, library, and printing services for transfer to the Alberta Corporate Service Centre (ACSC).

Improving business processes

- Implemented a streamlined regulatory framework to enable the Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board to maintain high industry standards while increasing responsiveness. Reviewed and updated 55 regulations and two Board orders.
- Improved apprenticeship and industry training client service and increased operational efficiency through a business process re-engineering project.
- Completed the preliminary analysis and system architecture for renewal of the Skilled Trades Information System.
- Developed and implemented strategies to involve Ministry employees in business planning.
- Introduced a Ministry operational planning process.
- Developed and implemented a long-range strategic planning process to fulfill government and Ministry requirements.
- Developed a framework on public consultation in addition to a process and tools to assist divisions in providing public consultations.
- Redeveloped and expanded the Corporate Data Warehouse to house official learning system data.
- Implemented a three-year business plan for information technology to support Ministry business and to develop the 2001-2004 Information Technology Business Plan and architecture.
- Re-engineered Learning Resources Centre's and Program Resources Branch's business practices.
- Streamlined the school authority planning and reporting guide by separating the standard components from the specifics that are reviewed and subject to change annually.
- Redeveloped the system for managing the preparation and approval process for Ministerial correspondence. Prepared more than 7,150 detailed responses to correspondence to the Minister from stakeholders, learners and the public.

Implementing human resource initiatives

- Promoted stronger links between the Ministry business plan and the Ministry human resource plan through information sessions.
- Implemented a learning strategy using Results-Oriented Government training materials.
- Developed formal and informal recognition policies for staff.
- Implemented wellness initiatives, including smoking cessation programs and breast cancer awareness programs.

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- Increased opportunities for continuous learning among Ministry employees.
 - Began implementing a continuity plan to ensure Alberta Learning has the employees and skill sets needed to achieve Ministry goals.
 - Provided human resource services as well as financial and administrative services to International and Intergovernmental Relations.

Improving electronic applications

- Improved electronic applications for full-time post-secondary students, in addition to an on-line enquiry system.
- Implemented on-line ordering of key Ministry documents.
- Implemented on-line registration for a number of Ministry-sponsored training opportunities.