

Alberta Education

Annual Report **2004/05**

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

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2. Preface

Public Accounts 2004/05

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 24 Ministries.

The Annual Report of the Government of Alberta, released June 29, 2005, contains the Minister of Finance's accountability statement, the consolidated financial statements of the Province and a comparison of the actual performance results to the desired results set out in the government's business plan, including the *Measuring Up* report.

This Annual Report of the Ministry of Education contains the Minister's accountability statement, the audited consolidated financial statements of the Ministry and a comparison of actual performance results to desired results set out in the Ministry business plan. This Annual Report includes information from the Alberta Learning Business Plan 2004-2007 for which Alberta Education has responsibility. Alberta Advanced Education's Annual Report provides other information on that business plan (see Government Organization Changes 2004-2005 in section 9). The Alberta Education 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, and**
- **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).**

3. Minister's Accountability Statement

The Ministry's Annual Report for the year ended March 31, 2005 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 9, 2005, with material economic or fiscal implications of which I am aware have been considered in the preparation of this report.

[Original Signed by]
Gene Zwozdesky
Minister of Education
Deputy Government House Leader

4. Minister's Message

As Minister of Education, I am pleased to present Alberta Education's 2004/05 Annual Report. As we commemorate our province's Centennial, it makes me even more aware of the value of taking time to reflect on the past for guidance and encouragement as we plan for the future. Reviewing our last one hundred years offers us the opportunity to collectively celebrate milestones, illuminate challenges, and renew our commitment to creating the best education system in the world.

In this Annual Report, strategies to provide leadership and support to the Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system are reflected in the accomplishments for the past year. The report also provides an assessment of our success and progress toward reaching our common goals.

On the following pages, you will find updates on initiatives that respond to Alberta's Commission on Learning recommendations. This includes investments to hire more teachers, reduce class sizes, and expand efforts to support our Aboriginal students and students with special needs. These and other initiatives aim to ensure that every child learns and every child succeeds.

Addressing students' needs also means keeping abreast of the changing demands of society and the workplace. The Ministry is preparing students for the global community through endeavours such as the expansion and enhancement of second language instruction resources. Work to update and refresh curriculum on an on-going basis, which won a Premier's Award of Excellence, ensures that course content is kept current and on the cutting edge. In addition, the effective use of video-conferencing in schools throughout the province is an example of how technology is influencing and advancing education delivery.

The Ministry continues to work together with its stakeholders to strengthen our education system, and this has enabled Alberta's students to continue to shine. Once again, the latest national and international student assessments ranked Alberta students at the top in Canada and among the best in the world. This high level of achievement continues to capture the attention of those beyond our provincial borders. This year, we welcomed many international delegations wishing to learn from the success of Alberta's education system.

Thanks to our growing investment in students through a Renewed Funding Framework, our wide range of educational programs and choices, and our system of accountability at every level, Alberta is recognized as one of the best education systems in the world.

This Centennial year, as we celebrate our past accomplishments and look toward the future with renewed enthusiasm, I am confident we are firmly on the path of "leading in learning!"

[Original Signed by]

Gene Zwozdesky

Minister of Education

Deputy Government House Leader

5. Management's Responsibility for Reporting

The Ministry of Education includes:

- the Alberta School Foundation Fund
- the Department of Education

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 so as 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, and
- 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

6. Overview

Introduction

In 2004/05, Alberta Education continued to build on its strong foundation to provide the best possible Kindergarten to Grade 12 education for Alberta students.

Alberta Education's vision, mission, principles and values define the Ministry. Together, the Ministry's vision and mission present Alberta's view of the future for education and how it will be realized. The principles identify the Ministry's approach to conducting its business, and the values demonstrate the beliefs or traits that guide Ministry actions.

In 2004/05, following the creation of the Ministries of Education and Advanced Education from the former Ministry of Learning, Education's vision was reframed to focus on the new Ministry's responsibilities for the Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) education system. The mission, principles and values were re-confirmed, while the descriptions of the principles were reframed in terms of the K-12 education system.

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 learners are prepared for lifelong learning, work and citizenship so they are able to contribute to a democratic, knowledge-based and prosperous society.

Principles:

Learner 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 learner 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.

Values: Respect, Integrity, Trust, Openness and Caring.

The Ministry continues to play a key role in promoting Cross-Ministry Initiatives. These are priorities established by the provincial government each year that transcend the mandate of individual ministries. Alberta Education contributed to three of government's priority policy initiatives:

- Aboriginal Policy Initiative,
- Alberta Children and Youth Initiative (ACYI),
- Health Renewal and Wellness Initiative.

The Ministry also contributed to the key administrative priorities:

- Alberta Corporate Service Centre (ACSC),
- Shared Services Delivery Improvement Strategy,
- Corporate Human Resource Development Strategy,
- Information and Communication Technology Initiative,
- Service Alberta Initiative.

During 2004/05 Alberta Education co-led the ACYI and contributed to the development of the Leading in Learning and Skilled Workforce Initiative, new in 2005/06.

The following core businesses were established and aligned with the reframed Business Plan goals:

- Support High Quality Learning Opportunities in the Education System – Goal 1: High Quality Learning Opportunities for All
- Support Learners to Achieve Excellent Learning Outcomes – Goal 2: Excellence in Learner Outcomes
- Support the Continuous Improvement of the Ministry and Education System – Goal 3: Highly Responsive and Responsible Ministry.

Alberta Education maintained its focus on outcomes and achieving results in 2004/05 with the implementation of the Renewed Funding Framework. The framework has three pillars: Funding, Flexibility and Accountability. The new Funding Pillar distributes funding equitably and gives school jurisdictions maximum flexibility to allocate funds to meet student needs. In return, the Accountability Pillar places increased emphasis on achieving results, which involves an expanded set of measures to assess jurisdiction performance over time. These measures have been included in the Ministry Business Plan for 2005 - 2008 and are introduced in this Annual Report. In addition, two outcomes were added to Goal 1:

- Children at risk have their needs addressed through effective programs and supports.
- Schools are safe and caring.

Highlights: Performance at a Glance

Ministry performance on core measures is compared to results for the base year, which is over five years, or for new measures, the first year data are available. Results for 2004/05 are summarized below and presented in more detail in the Results Analysis (pages 16-40). Targets are considered met if the result is within 95% of the target value, except for provincial achievement tests, whose targets are considered met if the result is within 0.4% of the target. "New" in brackets after a measure refers to new measures in Education's 2005 - 2008 business plan, unless specified for 2004/05. The confidence interval is taken into account in assessing change over time on survey measures (see Endnotes A and B on pages 48-52 for a more detailed explanation of target assessment and use of confidence intervals).

Outcomes	Core Measures Results
Goal One: High Quality Learning Opportunities for All	
The education system meets the needs of all learners, society and the economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Public satisfaction with the overall quality of basic education remained consistent at 72%. = 84% of high school students, parents, teachers, school board members and the public remained satisfied with the overall quality of K-12 education (new).* = 83% of students, parents, teachers, school board members and the public were satisfied that students are receiving a solid grounding in language arts, mathematics, science and social studies (new).* = 78% of students, parents, teachers, and school board members continued to be satisfied with the opportunity of students to receive a broad program of studies (new).* √ The employment rate for Albertans aged 25-34 whose highest level of education is high school completion was 81% and has been consistent over time.
Children at risk have their needs addressed through effective programs and supports.	↑ The dropout rate of students aged 14-18 decreased to 5.3% (new).*
Schools are safe and caring.	= 92% of students, parents, teachers and school board members agreed that students are safe at school, are learning the importance of caring for others, are learning respect for others and are treated fairly by adults at school (new).*
Goal Two: Excellence in Learner Outcomes	
Learners demonstrate high standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↓ Overall achievement test results for all students in grades 3, 6 and 9 declined slightly between 2003/04 and 2004/05 to 77% at the acceptable level. = Achievement test results remained stable for writers at 86% at the acceptable level and 21.8% at the excellence level, and for all students at the excellence level (19.5%). ↑ Students met provincial expectations in more diploma examinations in 2004/05 than in 2003/04. ↑ The percentage of Grade 12 students eligible for a Rutherford Scholarship has risen gradually each year, reaching 34% (new).*
Learners complete programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ The high school completion rate within five years of entering Grade 10 has risen to 75%. √ High school completion of Alberta 25-34 year-olds remained high at 90%.
Learners are well prepared for lifelong learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑ The percentage of students who participated in Early Childhood Services programs prior to Grade 1 increased slightly to 96%.** ↑ The percentage of Alberta's high school students who have enrolled in a post-secondary program within six years of entering Grade 10 has risen slightly over time to 54% (new for 2004/05).*
Learners are well prepared for employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> = 86% of employers continued to be satisfied with the skills and quality of work of high school graduates (restated to focus solely on the K-12 system).* = 69% of parents, teachers and the public agreed that students are taught attitudes and behaviours that will make them successful at work when they finish school (new).*
Learners are well prepared for citizenship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Public satisfaction that high school students are well prepared for citizenship has risen to 60%. = 83% of parents, teachers and high school students continued to be satisfied that students model the characteristics of active citizenship (new).*
Goal Three: Highly Responsive and Responsible Ministry	
Improved results through effective working relationships with partners and stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N 84% of cross-ministry partners and education system stakeholders agreed that Alberta Education staff are collaborative (reframed to reflect the new Ministry of Education).* = 84% of parents, teachers and school board members were satisfied with parental involvement in decisions about their child's education (new).*
The Ministry demonstrates leadership and continuous improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N 82% of cross-ministry partners and education system stakeholders agreed that Alberta Education staff are responsive and flexible (reframed to reflect the new Ministry of Education).* N 60% of stakeholders, parents, teachers and school board trustees were satisfied that the leadership at the provincial level effectively supports and facilitates teaching and learning (new).* N 66% of parents, teachers and school board trustees indicated that the Alberta K-12 education system has improved or stayed the same in the last three years (new).*

Target Met: √ When Target Not Met or No Target: Improved results: ↑ Performance decline: ↓ No change: =
 No prior data for this measure: N No target set for 2004/05: * Proxy measure, no target set: **

Key Accomplishments

Goal 1: High Quality Learning Opportunities for All

- Developed implementation plans for 81% and initiated work on 73% of the Year 1 Alberta Commission on Learning (ACOL) recommendations. Undertook 91% of consultations required to support these implementation plans.
- Enabled school jurisdictions to hire approximately 1,250 new teachers, which reduced average class sizes at all grade levels: from 21.7 to 19.3 at K-3, from 23.8 to 21.7 at grades 4-6, from 24.9 to 23 at grades 7-9 and from 25 to 24 at grades 10-12.
- Consulted with stakeholders in the review of four regulations: *Home Education*, *Private School*, *School Councils* and *Student Record*, and prepared a discussion paper on a new regulation for francophone school authorities.
- Implemented the *Standards for Special Education, Amended June 2004* in school jurisdictions across Alberta, and completed 10 Special Education Programming Standard Reviews to ensure compliance with the new standards.
- Held the fourth annual Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) Conference, which highlighted ways to integrate effective school improvement practices and strategies into new AISI projects.
- Revised and improved the AISI Clearinghouse for sharing project information and promising practices.
- Developed a Daily Physical Activity (DPA) discussion paper and shared it with key stakeholders for response.
- Developed a new Program of Studies for French as a Second Language for Grades 4-12.
- Completed the Draft of Social Studies 10-1 and 10-2 Programs of Study in English and French and prepared Consultation Draft of Grades 11 and 12 Social Studies Programs of Study in English and French.
- Implemented the new Science 10 program in September 2004 and completed draft Biology 20-30, Chemistry 20-30 and Physics 20-30 Programs of Study.
- Authorized student and teacher resources for Grade 4 Chinese, German, Italian, Japanese, Spanish and Ukrainian for the Second Languages Initiative.
- Received a Premier's Award of Excellence for on-going work in the area of curriculum development: Ensuring World Class Curriculum for Alberta Students.
- Created a charter to guide the development of the Learner Pathways Initiative in partnership with Human Resources and Employment and Advanced Education, which is intended to facilitate student transition from school to satisfying work.
- Released the *Learning and Technology Policy Framework*, which provides direction for the infusion of technology across Alberta's education system. Developed with extensive stakeholder input, the Policy Framework ensures that technology integration effectively supports learning system objectives and benefits learners. The 2004/05 accomplishments included:
 - investing nearly \$6 million in the implementation of video-conferencing in the K-12 education system across the province, supporting administrative, professional development and teaching activities and providing greater access to educational opportunities for rural and remote communities;
 - forging a groundbreaking province-wide agreement with Microsoft Canada, which makes Microsoft Office software available at no cost to school boards and post-secondary institutions, and which will realize substantial savings for the education system;
 - creating the LearnAlberta.ca Content Delivery Network to enable all Alberta schools to readily retrieve videos, which are part of the site's collection of 3000 digital resources; and
 - facilitating applied research into emerging technologies through collaborative projects funded by the Ministry.

Goal 2: Excellence in Learner Outcomes

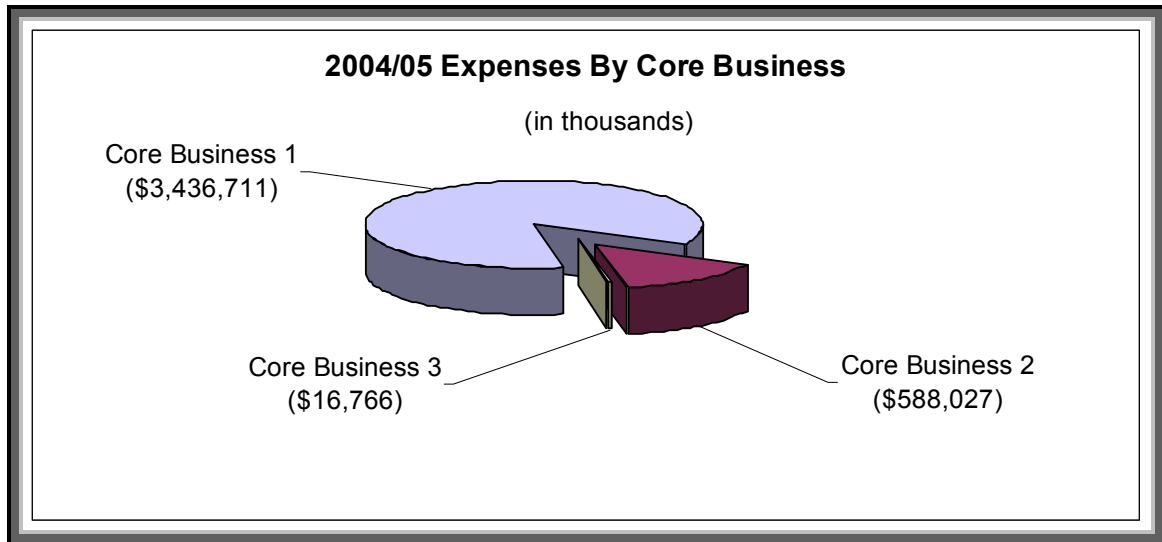
- Results for Alberta students for the 2003 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) were significantly higher than overall national or international results in reading, science, problem solving and mathematics.
- Alberta had the highest percentage of 13- and 16-year-old students in Canada achieving higher than expected standards of knowledge and skills in science on the 2004 School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP) science assessment.
- Expanded the number of diploma examinations with directly comparable results within and across years, from two (Social Studies 30 and 33, which were equated in January 2004) to five, by implementing the equating process in the Pure Mathematics, Chemistry and Physics diploma examinations.
- Expanded field validation of the tests for the Grade 9 Integrated Occupational Program (IOP) by making field testing available to all schools providing instruction to students using the new program.
- Established a task force and consulted with stakeholders on improving high school completion rates.
- Piloted the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) School-Community Learning Environment Project in 16 school jurisdictions.
- Developed the Cree Language and Culture Program of Studies and authorized textbooks for Aboriginal Studies 10 and 20.
- Made progress in connecting the Alberta SuperNet to First Nations communities across the province, including securing approvals for access to and construction on First Nations land, band council resolutions for SuperNet service for 44 First Nations communities and providing LearnAlberta.ca to First Nations students, parents and teachers.

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- Provided support for the Sunchild E-Learning community, which offers online learning to Aboriginal communities to help improve high school completion rates.
 - Signed a Memorandum of Understanding - Alberta-British Columbia Protocol for a Partnership in Support of Assistive Technology for Students with Special Needs.
 - Developed a draft resource on identification and assessment of students with special needs, explored assistive technology services and examined school completion recognition for students with special needs in response to the Special Education Review.
 - Completed a pilot to assess the usefulness of Grade Level Achievement (GLA) data at the classroom, school, jurisdictional, and provincial levels, providing the basis for a phased-in, province-wide implementation of GLA reporting.

Goal 3: Highly Responsive and Responsible Ministry

- Implemented all three pillars of the K-12 Renewed Funding Framework: Funding, Flexibility and Accountability.
- Developed and implemented online Accountability Pillar surveys of students and teachers, replacing the paper and pencil surveys, and reducing the administrative effort of schools, school jurisdictions and the Ministry. In the first year, 86% of schools participated in the surveys online.
- As a result of the Renewed Funding Framework, which allocated increased funding for Aboriginal students, and work with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the federal government has launched a review of funding for band schools.
- Included Aboriginal self-identification question on all school registrations.
- Developed the methodology for jurisdiction-level high school to post-secondary transition rates and provided multi-year rates to school jurisdictions.
- Led the Phase 2 Mathematics Revision Project as part of the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol.
- Provided Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation with the student programming implications associated with the 23 new school construction and modernization proposals.
- Implemented a new funding distribution model for the Student Health Initiative (SHI) that was developed with ministry partners and representatives of the partnerships.
- Continued the development of action plans for the three pilot sites for the Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Strategy.
- Worked with Children's Services and the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC) to form a youth prevention and awareness campaign targeted to children 12-17 years old.
- Worked with Children's Services, AADAC and the Solicitor General to plan the Methamphetamine Summit.
- Collaborated with cross-ministry partners to develop a funding distribution model for Children and Youth with Complex Needs, which was approved in October 2004.
- Worked with education partners to implement the activities for government-accepted recommendations from the *School Councils – Next Steps Report* (1999). Conducted a study of school council effectiveness, and provided the results of the study to school councils, school principals, superintendents and school board chairs.
- Implemented the new Teacher Registry System (TRS) and Teaching Authority Validation (TAV) to improve electronic reporting of employment data and recommendations for interim professional certifications from Alberta teacher preparation institutions.
- Implemented Canada's first direct on-line application form (in both official languages) for teacher certification through Alberta Education's secure website.
- Developed and implemented a web-based class size reporting tool, which was used by all school jurisdictions.
- Conducted business operational reviews for all charter schools and for 16 private schools.
- Implemented the International Education Strategy, including:
 - explored an agreement with China's Ministry of Education to establish Alberta-accredited schools in China and further education initiatives on language and culture in both learning systems;
 - developed an *Accreditation of Out-of-Province Schools Operational Manual* and accompanying *Accreditation of Out-of-Province Schools Student Information System User Guide*.
- Initiated memoranda of understanding with Australia, British Columbia, Ontario and New Brunswick to collaborate on co-development of digital content.
- Conducted a usability study of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) Pan-Canadian Learning Portal.
- Represented Canada on behalf of CMEC on the governing board of the Centre for Education Research and Innovation as part of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).
- Developed a long-range implementation plan for the *CMEC Francisation Tool Kit* across Alberta in collaboration with francophone school authorities.
- A high percentage (84%) of Ministry employees surveyed reported satisfaction with their work, compared to 79% for Government of Alberta employees overall.

Financial Highlights



Operating Expense by Core Business	(In thousands)				
	2004/05				2003/04
	Original Budget	Adjustments (a)	Authorized Budget	Actuals	Actuals
Core Business 1 - Support High Quality Learning Opportunities in the Education System	\$ 3,333,338	\$ (5,964)	\$ 3,327,374	\$ 3,436,711	\$ 3,209,665

Goal 1 – High Quality Learning Opportunities for All

Outcomes:

- The education system meets the need of all learners, society and the economy.
- Children at risk have their needs addressed through effective programs and supports.
- Schools are safe and caring.

Core Business 2 - Support Learners to Achieve Excellent Learning Outcomes	597,401	64,800	662,201	588,027	541,496
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Goal 2 – Excellence in Learner Outcomes

Outcomes:

- Learners demonstrate high standards.
- Learners complete programs.
- Learners are well prepared for lifelong learning.
- Learners are well prepared for employment.
- Learners are well prepared for citizenship.

Core Business 3 - Support the Continuous Improvement of the Ministry and Education System	16,439	30	16,469	16,766	16,067
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Goal 3 – Highly Responsive and Responsible Ministry

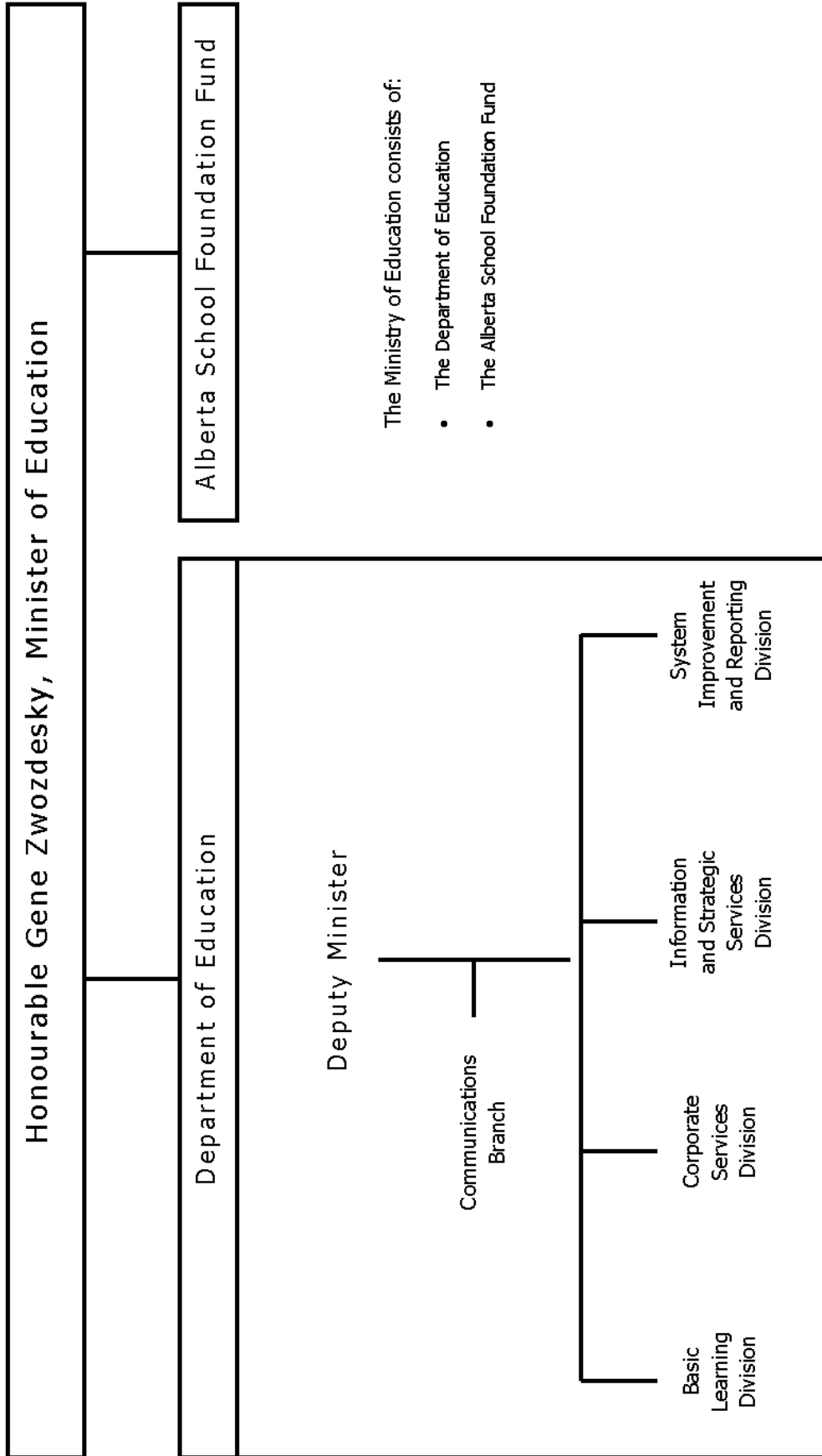
Outcomes:

- Improved results through effective working relationships with partners and stakeholders.
- The Ministry demonstrates leadership and continuous improvement.

Total Ministry Expense	\$ 3,947,178	\$ 58,866	\$ 4,006,044	\$ 4,041,504	\$ 3,767,228
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(a) Adjustments include any dedicated revenue shortfalls and Supplementary Estimates for additional in-year funding.

Ministry of Education Structure



The Ministry of Education consists of:

- The Department of Education
- The Alberta School Foundation Fund

Operational Overview: Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education is comprised of two entities: the Alberta School Foundation Fund and the Department of Education.

ALBERTA SCHOOL FOUNDATION FUND

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

- the equalized assessment of real property in Alberta; and
- 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.

Phone: 780-427-2051. For toll-free access in Alberta, first dial 310-0000.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Students are the central focus of the Ministry. Each year, about 590,000 Albertans, from preschoolers to young adults, enroll in the K-12 education system. Leading a basic education system that addresses the varied learning needs of students throughout the province, the Ministry ensures that students receive a strong foundation of knowledge and skills to prepare them for lifelong learning, citizenship and work.

Phone: (780) 427-7219

Department Division Descriptions

To carry out its functions, the Department of Education is organized into four divisions, as described below.

Basic Learning Division works with the province's school authorities and early childhood services (ECS) operators to support children and students up to Grade 12. This includes programs for preschool and school-age children. The division:

- develops and revises K-12 programs of study (in English and French) to ensure they are relevant and responsive in meeting the learning needs of children and students;
- selects and develops learning and teaching resources (in English and French) to support effective and efficient classroom instruction;

- ensures that Alberta's teachers are certificated and equipped with the knowledge, skills and attributes needed to support K-12 learners in meeting standards set by the Minister and administers the Teacher Excellence Awards program;
- works with school authorities to enhance, provide access to, and support the development and implementation of programs for students with diverse learning, linguistic, or cultural needs;
- develops and implements programs, policies, regulations and legislation that further the capacity of school authorities to meet student learning needs and learning choices of Albertans;
- maintains strong relationships with school authorities;
- monitors public, separate, francophone, charter and private school authority education plans and annual reports;
- approves First Nations, private and charter schools;
- works collaboratively with other ministries to integrate, enhance, develop, implement and evaluate Cross-Ministry initiatives for children, youth and their families; and
- conducts investigations, reviews and hearings to ensure an open, fair and effective K-12 education system.

Phone: (780) 427-7484

Corporate Services Division fosters system and fiscal accountability. The division:

- provides guidelines on financial reporting and financial advisory services to Ministry-funded school authorities;
- manages the collection, critical evaluation and analysis of school authority budgets and audited financial statements;
- assists school authorities with their student transportation issues;
- facilitates Ministry risk management processes;
- funds school authorities;
- administers the Alberta School Foundation Fund;
- produces and distributes learning resources;

- develops and implements the Ministry's human resource planning initiatives, policies and programs;
- develops budgets for the Ministry business plan, monitors budget compliance; and
- oversees Ministry administration, corporate records management, and financial and legal services.

Phone: (780) 427-2051

Information and Strategic Services Division

provides Ministry-wide policy options and policy research; planning and consultation processes; information management and technology services; and direction for effective use of technology throughout the education system. The division:

- conducts policy research and coordinates policy development across the Ministry in the areas of technology, Aboriginal education, federal-provincial relations and international education;
- coordinates the business planning process across the Ministry and facilitates Ministry strategic and business planning;
- provides consultation expertise and implements Ministry-wide consultations in conjunction with business areas;
- facilitates effective and integrated use of information management and technology systems by the Ministry;
- provides and supports technical systems of the Ministry;
- issues high school and equivalency diplomas (GED) and official transcripts of courses and marks;
- collects, manages and provides education system information through the corporate data warehouse;
- provides leadership and support for the implementation of evolving technologies in the education system; and
- designs, develops and delivers print and electronic learning resources to support program delivery in the education system.

Phone: (780) 427-3663

System Improvement and Reporting Division facilitates continuous improvement and ensures accountability throughout the Ministry and education system. The division:

- develops accountability frameworks, performance measures and targets;
- conducts applied research, periodic audits or monitoring, and program evaluations;
- facilitates operational planning for the Ministry and reports the results of business, performance and operational plans;
- develops and administers surveys on the quality of education provided by jurisdictions and schools, and reports results to jurisdictions and schools;
- reports high school completion, dropout and returning, post-secondary transition, and Rutherford scholarship rates to jurisdictions and the public;
- develops and administers Grade 3, 6 and 9 Provincial Achievement Tests and Grade 12 Diploma Examinations, providing individual, school, jurisdiction and provincial results;
- administers General Education Development tests to adult learners; and
- coordinates Alberta's participation in national and international assessments.

Phone: (780) 422-1608

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

In addition:

Communications Branch works with the Ministry and its stakeholders to provide communications advice and support by:

- providing useful, timely and clear information to Albertans on achievements and initiatives in the education system;
- supporting the Ministry in reaching its goals through strategic communications advice, planning services, specialized writing and editing skills;
- facilitating effective communications among Ministry employees; and
- representing the Ministry to the public and the media.

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