

# Public Accounts, 1999/2000

## PREFACE

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 18 Ministries.

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

This annual report of the Ministry of Learning 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 Ministry annual report also includes:

- the financial statements of entities making up the Ministry including the Department of Learning 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 part of financial statements, to the extent that the Ministry has anything to report.
- financial information relating to accountable organizations and trust funds which includes the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund, school authorities in the public education system (public and separate school boards and charter schools), the universities, technical institutes, public colleges and the Banff Centre for Continuing Education.

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## **Minister's Accountability Statement**

The Ministry's Annual Report for the year ended March 31, 2000 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 14, 2000 with material economic or fiscal implications of which I am aware have been considered in the preparation of this report.

Dr. Lyle Oberg

Minister of Learning

## **Minister's Message**

It is an exciting time to be involved in education. We have just entered a new century where the ability

to acquire knowledge and skills increasingly plays a significant role in our continued success and quality of life. In response, the Government of Alberta created a new ministry of Learning with a new focus on meeting these challenges. Learning is no longer reserved for school children or young adults – our focus must now turn to lifelong learning.

Since Alberta Learning's creation a year ago, I see many successes – successes made possible through our partnerships. Last November, over 200 Albertans from around the province gathered for the Minister's Forum to provide input on how to foster lifelong learning in the province. Given the multi-faceted nature of learning, this rich mix of insights and experience will be valuable to meeting the wide variety of needs among learners.

Building on the forum's discussions, MLA Wayne Cao's Committee on Lifelong Learning talked to stakeholders about how we can improve learning opportunities for adults seeking to improve their career potential. Our mandate requires us to plan for shifting needs in the workforce and the community. To help accomplish our goals, we worked through two MLA committees to help address these issues. MLA Rob Renner's Committee began a review of the post-secondary funding framework to ensure our funding mechanisms help post-secondary institutions provide the best possible learning opportunities. MLA Mark Hlady's Committee on Growth and Density visited school jurisdictions that are facing rapid economic growth and identified ways to make our funding model more adaptive to changing local needs.

The \$151 million one-time grant, which was divided on an equal per student basis, represented another major initiative to give school boards more flexibility in addressing local pressure points. The funding allowed school boards to eliminate accumulated deficits, as well as reward those school boards that recorded balanced budgets.

We continued to look at local needs when, together with our education partners, we created the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI). Through AISI, we designed a program to improve student learning that would encourage initiatives reflecting the unique needs within different school jurisdictions. Through AISI, we also built a ready mechanism for ongoing collaboration that will be vital to every initiative we undertake.

Parents and all members of the community also have an important role to play in providing quality education to children. To further strengthen this role, we made significant progress on a review of school councils that drew on the input of over 3,000 Albertans.

We remain committed to ensuring supports are in place for students with special needs. This year, an additional \$16 million was released by lifting the caps on funding for special needs and English as a Second Language students. Based on further consultations, Alberta Learning revised severe special needs funding so that school authorities registering students mid-year can also receive funding for needed programs. The adjustment resulted in an additional \$2 million in assistance to school boards.

To improve the learning success of First Nations, Metis and Inuit students, Alberta Learning initiated the

Native Education Policy Review to find ways of better meeting their needs. As a significant province-wide consultation, the review is an important opportunity to strengthen relationships and foster a greater appreciation by all Albertans for Aboriginal culture.

More than 60 per cent of new jobs created in the next five years will require post-secondary education – many people will have three or four careers during their lifetimes. Given these realities, a large number of adults will enter or return to adult learning in the next several years. For the 1999/2000 fiscal year, Alberta Learning's innovative Access Fund allocated over \$25.9 million to the creation of 1,200 new post-secondary student spaces in areas of high growth. In a joint announcement with Alberta Infrastructure, Learning allocated an additional \$38 million in one-time infrastructure grants to upgrade existing post-secondary facilities.

On the apprenticeship front, two significant initiatives were begun as a result of industry consultations. Amendments to the Apprenticeship and Industry Training Act were introduced, which will allow for greater responsiveness to industry needs; and work was begun on providing a wider range of career choices within the Heavy Equipment Technician program.

With these educational priorities, we have committed to a 19% increase in spending over the next three years – an investment that is based on a solid record of collaboration to identify key learner needs. To meet the unique and changing needs of learners, we will continue to explore new ways of delivering programs and offering alternatives beyond full-time, classroom-based instruction.

We have an excellent learning system. We have outstanding, dedicated teachers. We have a highly educated adult population. Our students consistently outperform their peers across the country and internationally – and we want to keep it that way. To stay ahead, we are making changes in response to the trends that are shaping our world. We all have a stake in the success of Alberta's students. When they succeed our province succeeds.

Dr. Lyle Oberg

Minister of Learning

## **Management's Responsibility for Reporting**

The Ministry of Learning includes:

- the Alberta School Foundation Fund (ASFF);
- the Department of Learning.

The executives of the individual entities within the ministry have the primary responsibility and accountability for the respective entities. Collectively, we 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 Ministry of Learning. 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 judgements. 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 Cabinet, Treasury Board, the Provincial Treasurer and the Minister 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.

Maria David-Evans

Deputy Minister

## Overview

### Introduction

As part of the government reorganization, Alberta Learning was created in May 1999 from substantial portions of the former departments of Education and Advanced Education and Career Development. The key objective of the restructuring was to improve government services and programs through better organization and interdepartmental teamwork.

For Alberta Learning, the reorganization was part of enhancing government's focus on people development - "to equip Albertans of all ages with the information, skills and training they need to live and work in the information age ... and to ensure our children grow up healthy and safe."

A new vision, mission and goals for a lifelong learning system were created in consultation with stakeholders.

Vision: "Optimizing human potential."

Mission: "Alberta Learning's leadership and work with partners build a globally recognized lifelong learning community that enables Albertans to be responsible, caring, creative, self-reliant and contributing members of a knowledge-based and prosperous society."

Goals: Alberta Learning is committed to:

- providing high quality learning opportunities;
- excellence in learner achievement;
- well prepared learners for lifelong learning, the world of work and citizenship;
- effective working relationships with partners; and
- highly responsive and responsible ministry.

Working to achieve these goals will help ensure our people and province continue to prosper well into the new century.

During its first year of operation, Alberta Learning has focused on its core businesses of basic learning, adult learning and apprenticeship and industry training as well as worked with partners and stakeholders to create a more integrated lifelong learning system for Albertans, while maintaining the strength of the existing basic education and adult learning systems.

The accomplishments and performance of the Ministry in 1999/2000 are profiled in the pages that follow. Targets for 1999/2000, which apply to the Ministry's core performance measures, are found in former Alberta Education's three-year plan for 1997/98 to 1999/2000 as well as Alberta Learning's restated business plan, 1999/2000 – 2000/01. Change in performance is compared to the base year of 1995/96 unless otherwise noted.

[Pages 8 – 12 missing: Highlights: Key Accomplishments, 1999/2000; Financial Highlights; Highlights: Performance at a Glance; Entity Map: Alberta Learning]

## **Operational Overview: Ministry of Learning**

### **Associated Entities**

Alberta School Foundation Fund (ASFF)

receives tax revenues from municipalities based on the equalized assessment of real property in Alberta, and on education mill rates established by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. These monies, along with those from the General Revenue Fund, are allocated on a fair and equitable basis to school authorities.

### **Department of Learning**

Mandate: Focusing on the Learner

Learners are at the centre of everything Alberta Learning does. It has a mandate to provide Albertans with access to quality lifelong learning opportunities. And with over 740,000 Albertans, from preschoolers to seniors accessing education, the Ministry leads a learning system that meets learners where they are – a system that allows them to move easily between school and the workplace, between high school and post-secondary learning and among post-secondary institutions across the province. To support this system the Ministry is responsible for the following core businesses:

Basic Learning

- Develop curriculum and set standards
- Evaluate curriculum and assess outcomes
- Certificate teachers and learners
- Fund school authorities
- Support students with special needs

### Adult Learning

- Approve programs of study
- Provide student financial assistance to Albertans who require it to learn
- License and certify educational providers
- Fund educational providers, including research

### Apprenticeship and Industry Training

- Develop program standards with industry
- Counsel apprentices and employers
- Provide funding for approved programs
- Certify learners

### By:

- Being learner-focused
- Establishing and maintaining effective partnerships and linkages
- Being flexible, responsive and innovative
- Providing system-wide planning, policy and information management

- Evaluating performance and providing incentives
- Promoting seamless transitions and lifelong learning
- Ensuring system and fiscal accountability
- Sharing information and achievements
- Optimizing mobility and transferability

The core businesses provided the framework for creating the department structure.

All divisions in Alberta Learning provide a specific expertise to the learning system, and at the same time, all share a responsibility to provide integrated service by partnering with one another, as well as with other government departments, school authorities, post-secondary institutions, adult learning providers, stakeholder organizations and industry.

### **Learning Services and Standards Divisions**

Learning Services and Standards refers to Alberta Learning's three core delivery divisions – Basic Learning, Adult Learning and Apprenticeship & Industry Training. These divisions work closely to ensure program continuity and smooth transitions for learners.

**Basic Learning** works with the province's school authorities and early childhood services operators to provide learning programs that affect birth through adolescence. This includes programs for preschool and school-age children. The work of the division focuses on setting standards for the province's school authorities. As well, the division provides services to support program implementation. Numerous specialized functions and projects related to special programming initiatives such as aboriginal education, coordination of the Alberta Children's Initiative, francophone education and programs for children with special needs contribute to laying the foundation for lifelong learning for all Alberta's children. **Phone: 427-7484**

**Adult Learning** assists adult learners financially through scholarships, bursaries and loans, and helps them access information on the learning opportunities available through the province's post-secondary institutions and community adult learning councils. By working with these organizations, the division identifies learning needs and approves and coordinates education programs across Alberta. Programs for adults range from post-secondary study to family literacy services, academic upgrading and English as a Second Language study. Based on analysis of institutions' business plans and key performance indicators, the division targets funding to meet the operational needs of both individual institutions and the adult learning system as a whole. **Phone: 427-5607**

**Apprenticeship & Industry Training (AIT)** works with the Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board and industry committees to ensure high school and adult apprentices receive formal instruction and on-the-job training to acquire skills in designated trades. The division supports the Board and industry committees to develop standards for formal instruction and apprentice examinations. The division works with post-secondary institutions and schools to schedule the delivery of formal instruction to apprentices. To identify long-term training needs in the province, the division works with the Board and its industry partners and negotiates with post-secondary institutions to offer training in response to industry needs. AIT counsels employers and apprentices from their initial application to journeyman certification, keeps records of each apprentice's contract and training progress and monitors over 12,000 job sites a year for compliance with legislation. **Phone: 427-4601**

## **Integrating Divisions**

The Information & Strategic Services and System Improvement & Reporting divisions provide services that, by nature, focus on Ministry-wide operations and facilitate integration across all divisions. These divisions share responsibility with the Learning Services and Standards divisions for integrated processes like system-wide planning, business planning and performance measurement.

**Information & Strategic Services (ISS)** prepares the ministry and learning system to anticipate and respond to emerging issues and changes in direction. ISS assists the Alberta Learning Ministry in making strategic decisions on the learning system's long-term direction and goals. This is achieved by:

- conducting environmental scanning to gather information that helps identify social and economic factors relevant to the province's learning system and leading the ongoing consultation with Albertans and stakeholders to improve learner success,
- providing leadership and integration of policy development, policy research, immigration, international, aboriginal and federal-provincial issues,
- facilitating the strategic business planning process within the ministry, and
- managing the Ministry's information and technology systems, providing leadership in development of learning technologies and collaborating with school jurisdictions and post-secondary partners in implementation and integration of technology.

**Phone: 427-3663**

**System Improvement & Reporting (SIR)** fosters continuous improvement and ensures accountability in the department and throughout our province's learning system. The division supports planning and

budgeting activities by leading the development of a comprehensive performance measurement system for the Ministry that includes accountability frameworks, performance indicators, measures and targets. SIR works with educational institutions and school jurisdictions to monitor, measure and evaluate system performance on an ongoing basis. In partnership with Communications Division, SIR strives to ensure that Albertans are informed about the achievements of the province's learning system by developing and distributing the Alberta Learning Annual Results Report. As well, the division works with partners within and outside Alberta Learning to develop and evaluate specific systems improvement initiatives on a project basis. The division's involvement with these initiatives can take the form of issues identification, review of literature, primary research and data collection, project coordination and supervision, results analysis, and formulation of recommendations.

**Phone: 422-1608;**

**Email: [performance.measurement@gov.ab.ca](mailto:performance.measurement@gov.ab.ca)**

### **Support Divisions**

**Corporate Services** handles the Ministry's financial operations, which includes developing the Ministry's budget, calculating and awarding funding to all school authorities and analyzing the financial reporting submitted by those authorities. Corporate Services provides administrative services to ensure appropriate telecommunication tools and accommodations (office equipment and furniture) for all staff. The division implements Alberta Learning's Human Resource Plan and manages all Ministry human resource activities – including pay and benefits, staffing, employee performance measurement and employee relations. Corporate Services also provides advice on the drafting of legislation and distributes provincially authorized learning resources to schools and jurisdictions. **Phone: 427-2051**

**Communications** works with the Minister, the Department and Ministry partners to provide useful, timely and clear information to Albertans on achievements in the learning system. To support the department in reaching its goals, Communications provides strategic communications advice and planning services. The branch also provides specialized writing and editing skills, represents the Ministry to the public and media and facilitates effective communications to Ministry staff.

**Phone: 427-2285**

**Email: [comm.contact@gov.ab.ca](mailto:comm.contact@gov.ab.ca)**

**Impact of Government Reorganization, May 1999**

The Ministry of Learning was created from substantial components of the former ministries of Advanced Education & Career Development and Education in May 1999.

At the start of the fiscal year (April 1, 1999):

- The Ministry of Education consisted of the Alberta School Foundation Fund and the Department of Education.

Reporting to the Deputy Minister were the Regional Services, Corporate Services and Student Programs and Evaluation divisions and the Communications branch.

- The Ministry of Advanced Education and Career Development consisted of the Department of Advanced Education and Career Development (AECD), and the Personnel Administration Office.

Reporting to the Deputy Minister were the Learner Assistance, Apprenticeship and Industry Training, Learning Support and Accountability, Information and Policy Services divisions, the Finance and Administrative Services, Human Resource Services and Communications branches, and the Learning Organization Project.

In the reorganization, the following components of the former ministries were relocated:

- From AECD, the Personnel Administration Office, Learner Assistance (except Student Finance), Labour Market Information and parts of Policy and of Evaluation became the responsibility of the new Ministry of Human Resources and Employment;
- Capital Infrastructure (Post-Secondary Institutions, AECD) and School Facilities (Education) were transferred to the new Ministry of Infrastructure; and
- University Research from AECD was incorporated into the new Ministry of Innovation and Science.

The remaining components were amalgamated into the new Alberta Learning divisions (see Entity Map) [\[insert link\]](#).

## **Results Analysis**

## **Deputy Minister's Message**

It has been a year of challenges, opportunities and new ways of doing business! With the reorganization that took place in May 1999, Premier Klein created a new ministry that is focused on the learning needs of all Albertans of all ages. With this mandate, our challenge was to come up with a plan of action that would best support an environment of lifelong learning in our province – a challenge that we not only accepted, but viewed as an opportunity.

One of our most valuable opportunities involved bringing together partners from all areas of the learning system to set a solid direction for Alberta Learning. We established a Transition Team comprised of staff, representatives of partnering ministries and stakeholders, which met regularly to build the new ministry structure and business plan. The Transition Team has become a model for the collaborative way of working that is being infused into everything we do. We all recognize that by working together, we serve our students best.

Through this partnership effort, staff and stakeholders successfully turned around a new 1999 – 2002 business plan, the goals of which are reported on in the next section. These goals and the work done to meet them represent some of the department's first steps as a fully reorganized, established Alberta Learning. They are the beginning of a plan that we are moving forward with over the next three years.

In reviewing the past year, I am proud to note three major outcomes. We came through a significant restructuring process that required a great deal of energy and perseverance. We launched several brand new initiatives to move our vision of lifelong learning forward in a real and concrete way. And most important, we upheld the level of service that Albertans expect and deserve from the learning system. Our results demonstrate this: we met many of our targets and we're continuing to look at opportunities for improvement. I thank all staff, internally and system-wide, for making it all happen.

It is with pride that I point to our Summary of Accomplishments located in Appendix 1 of this report. As a summary, even this is only a snapshot of our achievements for the 1999/2000 fiscal year. It is a glimpse, however, of the important and exciting work underway in the learning system and our continuous process of striving for excellence.

Maria David-Evans

Deputy Minister