

Public Accounts 2000/01

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 June 2001 contains the Minister of Finance'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.

On March 15, 2001, the government announced new ministry structures. Since the 2000 - 2001 fiscal year was substantially completed prior to this announcement, ministry annual reports and financial statements have been prepared as if the restructuring took place on April 1, 2001, to provide proper accountability for the 2000-01 fiscal year against the original business plan.

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 a part of the 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, 2001 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 12, 2001 with material economic or fiscal implications of which I am aware have been considered in the preparation of this report.

Original signed by:
Dr. Lyle Oberg
Minister of Learning
September 12, 2001

Minister's Message

Education is a cornerstone of our modern world: It plays a key role in building a successful economy and contributing to our quality of life. Now more than ever, Alberta is seeing the benefits of living in a knowledge-based society. To continue to reap these benefits as individuals and communities, we must be prepared to take on the challenges and opportunities that come with the information age and the rapid growth of technology. I am proud to report that Alberta Learning and Albertans are successfully responding to these challenges.

One of the goals of Alberta Learning is to inspire all Albertans to embrace the challenges of lifelong learning. The rewards of education can be enjoyed at every stage and in every aspect of life. Some successes are obvious, others are more subtle, but they are all worthy of applause.

All our students can be proud of their achievements. They are attaining high academic standards, and this accomplishment is recognized beyond our provincial borders. Albertans are among some of Canada's finest students. At a national competition five of our apprenticeship students won gold medals and will move onto the Worlds Skills Competition. Plus Alberta students were once again celebrated internationally on the latest International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS-99). This solid learning foundation will serve our youth well whatever career path they choose.

To assist all Albertans in reaching their professional and personal goals, we have first-rate schools and post-secondary institutions. More and more Albertans are seeking further education and we encourage them to continue to do so.

From children in kindergarten, to young adults seeking a post-secondary education, to seniors going back to school for the pure pleasure of learning, Albertans everywhere are discovering that simply the act of engaging in lifelong learning is an accomplishment!

Those who play an active role in providing these opportunities for achievement can also take pride in a successful year. Through effective collaborative relationships with our teachers, all education stakeholders and ministry staff are improving a learning system that is consistently recognized as an excellent example of high quality educational services. Working together we are creating a more flexible, diverse system that is able to keep pace and evolve. At the same time, we remain focused on the primary building blocks of learning.

Alberta Learning and Albertans will always face challenges as we strive to take advantage of the opportunities presented by an ever-changing knowledge-based society. However, I am confident we will rise to the challenges and continue to mark each year with many successes. We will continue to strive to make lifelong learning a real and rewarding experience for all Albertans.

Original signed by:
Dr. Lyle Oberg
Minister of Learning

Management's Responsibility for Reporting

The Ministry of Learning includes:

- the Alberta School Foundation Fund
- the Department of Learning

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 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 Executive Council, Treasury Board, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Learning 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:
Donald M. Ford
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Learning

Overview

Introduction

In 2000/01, the Ministry of Learning, building on its strong foundation, focused on providing the best possible learning system for Albertans through the core businesses of Basic Learning, Apprenticeship and Industry Training, and Adult Learning.

The Ministry continued to pursue five goals for the learning system that were established in consultation with stakeholders when the Ministry of Learning was created:

- High Quality Learning Opportunities
- Excellence in Learner Achievement
- Well Prepared Learners for Lifelong Learning, World of Work and Citizenship
- Effective Working Relationships with Partners
- Highly Responsive and Responsible Ministry

The Ministry played a key role on cross-ministry initiatives, which are established by the provincial government to address priorities that transcend the mandate of individual ministries. Alberta Learning worked with other ministries on the:

- Economic Development Strategy
- Aboriginal Policy Initiative
- Alberta Corporate Service Centre
- Corporate Human Resource Development Strategy
- Children and Youth Initiative
- Corporate Information Management/Information Technology Strategy.

Details of the Ministry's accomplishments for the year are summarized in Appendix 1.

The Ministry maintained an emphasis on the achievement of results. The accomplishments and performance of the Ministry are profiled on the pages that follow. Note: targets for 2000/01 for the core performance measures are found either in Alberta Learning's business plan for 2000/01 to 2002/03 or in former Alberta Education's three-year plan for 1998/99 to 2000/01.

Highlights: Performance at a Glance

Outcomes	Core Measures	Results for 2000/01
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Goal One: High Quality Learning Opportunities

Responsive and flexible programs meet learning needs	Quality of basic education	√ A very large majority of high school students (94%) and parents (88%) are satisfied with the quality of basic education.
	Quality of post-secondary education	= Public satisfaction with the quality of basic education remains stable at 70%. ↑ 77% of the public is satisfied that adult learners are being prepared for the workforce, up from 72%. = Adult learner satisfaction with their preparation for the workforce is stable at 81%.*
		√ A high percentage of adult Albertans (92%) are satisfied with the quality of education or training taken in the last year.
Programs are accessible	Adult participation in learning	↓ 30% of adults participate in learning, down from 32%, a reflection of increased employment opportunities.*
Programs are affordable	Financial assistance to post-secondary students	√ The average financial assistance award to post-secondary students has increased each year in recognition of rising costs.

Goal Two: Excellence in Learner Achievement

Learners demonstrate high standards	Student achievement	↑ Student results improved overall in grades 3,6, and 9 on provincial achievement tests.
		√ Overall student results on provincial achievement tests exceeded the target for standard of excellence.
		= Students met or exceeded the acceptable standard on three diploma exams and met or exceeded the standard of excellence on six exams.
Learners complete programs	High school completion	↑ 71% of high school students completed high school within 6 years of entering grade 9.

Goal Three: Well Prepared Learner for Lifelong Learning, World of Work, and Citizenship

Learners are well prepared for lifelong learning	Readiness to learn	↑ About 95% of Alberta grade 1 students participated in ECS, up from 91% in 1996/97.
	Preparation for lifelong learning	↑ Public satisfaction that adult learners are prepared for lifelong learning increased to 77%.* = 80% of adult learners are satisfied.*
		√ 83% of post-secondary graduates are employed, up from 81%.
Learners are well prepared for work	Employment status of post-secondary graduates	= About 90% of employers are satisfied with the skills of recent diploma graduates.*
	Academic/technical skills of post-secondary graduates	↓ 84% of employers are satisfied with the skills of recent degree graduates.*
Learners are well prepared for citizenship	Results on social studies assessments	√ Student results met target on four provincial social studies assessments. ↑ Results improved on the other four social studies assessments.
	Second language course enrollments	↓ The percentage of high school students enrolled in second language courses has decreased from 27% to 22%.*
	Prepared for citizenship	↑ Public satisfaction with learners' preparation for citizenship has increased to 67% for adult learners and to 48% for high school students.*

Goal Four: Effective Working Relationships with Partners

Joint initiatives meet the learning needs.	Partner satisfaction with the effectiveness of partnerships.	↑ Partner and stakeholder agreement that Alberta Learning staff are flexible and responsive increased to 71% for flexibility and 83% for responsiveness, and declined to 77% for staff collaboration.*
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Goal Five: Highly Responsive and Responsible Ministry

Value for dollars.	Administrative efficiency	= Spending on support for Ministry administration is a very small percentage (1.8%) of total spending on the learning system.
Leadership and continuous improvement.	Perceptions of Ministry staff	= 77% of Alberta Learning staff agree the Ministry provides support that makes them competitive in the job market.*
		= 92% of apprenticeship graduates and employers of apprentices are satisfied with the quality of Ministry services.*

√ Met target From base year: = no change ↑ Improved performance ↓ Performance decline

* No target was set for 2000/01.

Performance assessment for survey measures considers the confidence interval (See Endnote A).

Highlights: Key Accomplishments, 2000/01

Goal One: High Quality Learning Opportunities

High quality learning opportunities are accessible to all learners, offer flexibility to meet diverse needs, while employing results oriented, affordable funding.

Ministry Initiatives:

- Expanded funding to increase Kindergarten instruction, from 400 to 475 hours.
- Introduced the growth and density grant and increased funding by \$7.4 million per school year for school jurisdictions facing increased enrolment or higher costs as a result of unique geographic and economic conditions.
- Accepted the recommendations of the report on the MLA Review of School Councils that school councils remain mandatory and advisory, and training opportunities be provided for school council members.
- Recognized the unique roles of Aboriginal and French cultures through development of a draft Social Studies curriculum framework common to the western provinces.
- Developed 11 new resources to support the inclusion of students with special needs in the basic learning system.
- Introduced a staged increase in funding of \$20 million by the end of 2003 school year to expand services for 7000 special needs students with severe emotional/behavioral disabilities.
- Completed the Western Canadian Protocol framework for International Languages and its adaptation for Alberta.
- Established and supported an MLA Post-Secondary Funding Review Committee to improve flexibility and responsiveness of the post-secondary learning system, and as a result announced \$12 million in funding adjustments for more equitable distribution of resources.
- Announced \$12.5 million in funding to post-secondary institutions for faculty retention.
- In partnership with Alberta Infrastructure, announced \$200 million in one-time infrastructure funding to post-secondary institutions for building expansions and upgrades.
- Led a provincial symposium to further develop the Campus Alberta concept of a single streamlined learning system. Participants developed recommendations on enhancing system coordination and quality learning opportunities through collaboration.
- Responded to student concerns about rising debt levels with the announcement of a new Student Loan Relief Program.

Goal Two: Excellence in Learner Achievement

Evaluate, encourage, and support learner achievement through a full-range of educational options, as well as recognize and reward excellence.

Ministry Initiatives:

- Implemented the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement making a total of \$37 million available to school boards for approved projects which are designed to improve student learning.
- Implemented the Information and Communication Technology curriculum to enable students to better understand and apply technology in all grades and subjects.
- Completed a report on Barriers to High School Completion and developed responses to recommendations.
- Used results of the Third International Mathematics and Science Study to recognize the achievement and competitiveness of Alberta students.
- Issued more than \$18.2 million in Alberta Heritage Scholarship Fund awards to more than 8,900 post-secondary students.

Goal Three: Lifelong Learning

Foster lifelong learning by providing for a strong educational foundation; preparing learners for the work world; encouraging continued learning, and promoting attitudes of citizenship.

Ministry Initiatives:

- Included essential employability skills in Career Direction and Science courses for grades 7 to 12, and the value of the Alberta framework was recognized by the Conference Board of Canada by incorporating it into their Toolkit.

-
- Facilitated consultations across the province for the MLA Committee on Lifelong Learning to provide Albertans with opportunities for input into shaping the development of a lifelong learning system.
 - Created about 1,800 post-secondary spaces in priority labour market areas.
 - Expanded training opportunities for Aboriginal people in local communities by facilitating training in the carpenter trade on the Siksika, Sarcee and Garden River reserves.
 - Provided alternate technical training delivery opportunities for apprentices as identified by industry.

Goal Four: Effective Working Relationships with Partners

Effective partnerships generate joint initiatives to enhance learning, and contribute to achieving the province's social and economic goals by involving stakeholders in planning, development and evaluation processes.

Ministry Initiatives:

- Partnered with the Alberta Online Consortium (AOC) to present an Online Learning Symposium for 550 kindergarten to grade 12 and post-secondary educators from across Alberta and Canada.
- Brought together a team of education stakeholders to better define the results Albertans expect from the basic learning system, and drafted outcomes for province wide discussion.
- Contributed to the leadership team of an assistant deputy ministers' committee on federal/provincial relations.
- Partnered with Edmonton Public Schools to pilot a new Aboriginal high school, aimed at better meeting the needs of urban Aboriginal students.
- Organized and presented Alberta's second National Conference on Safe and Caring Schools & Communities in partnership with provincial education stakeholders.
- Developed an outline for a Youth Learning Opportunities program in partnership with the Northern Alberta Development Council.
- Contributed \$1.5 million to the Beef Cattle Health Management program at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Saskatchewan.
- Shared the responsibility for implementation and enhancement of the Alberta Learning Information Services (ALIS) with Alberta Human Resources and Employment.
- Signed a formal shared services agreement with Alberta Human Resources and Employment to strengthen the quality of delivery service of financial assistance programs for learners.

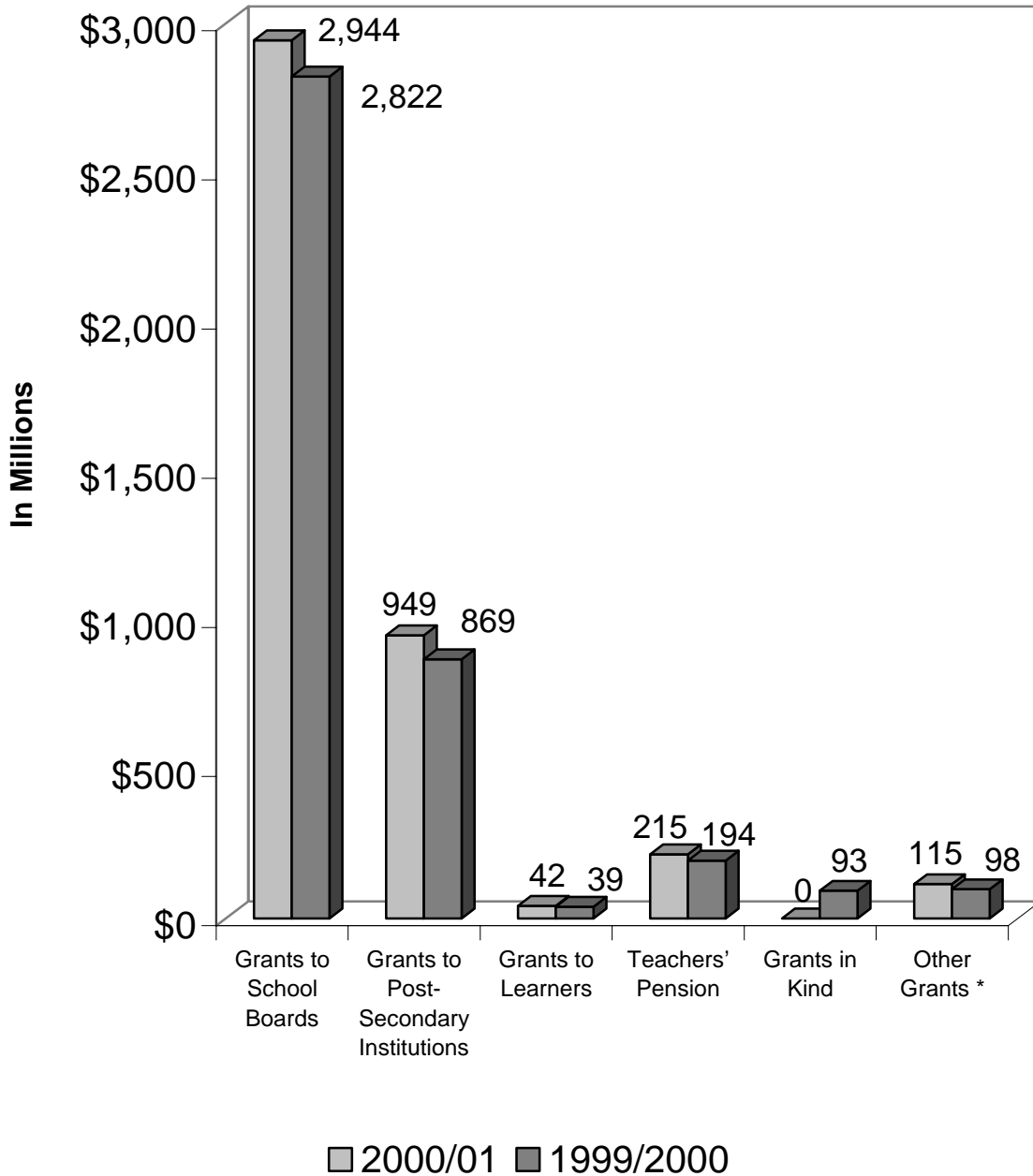
Goal Five: Responsive and Responsible Ministry

A responsive and responsible learning system demonstrates leadership, value for dollars, and continuous improvement in administrative and business processes and practices.

Ministry Initiatives:

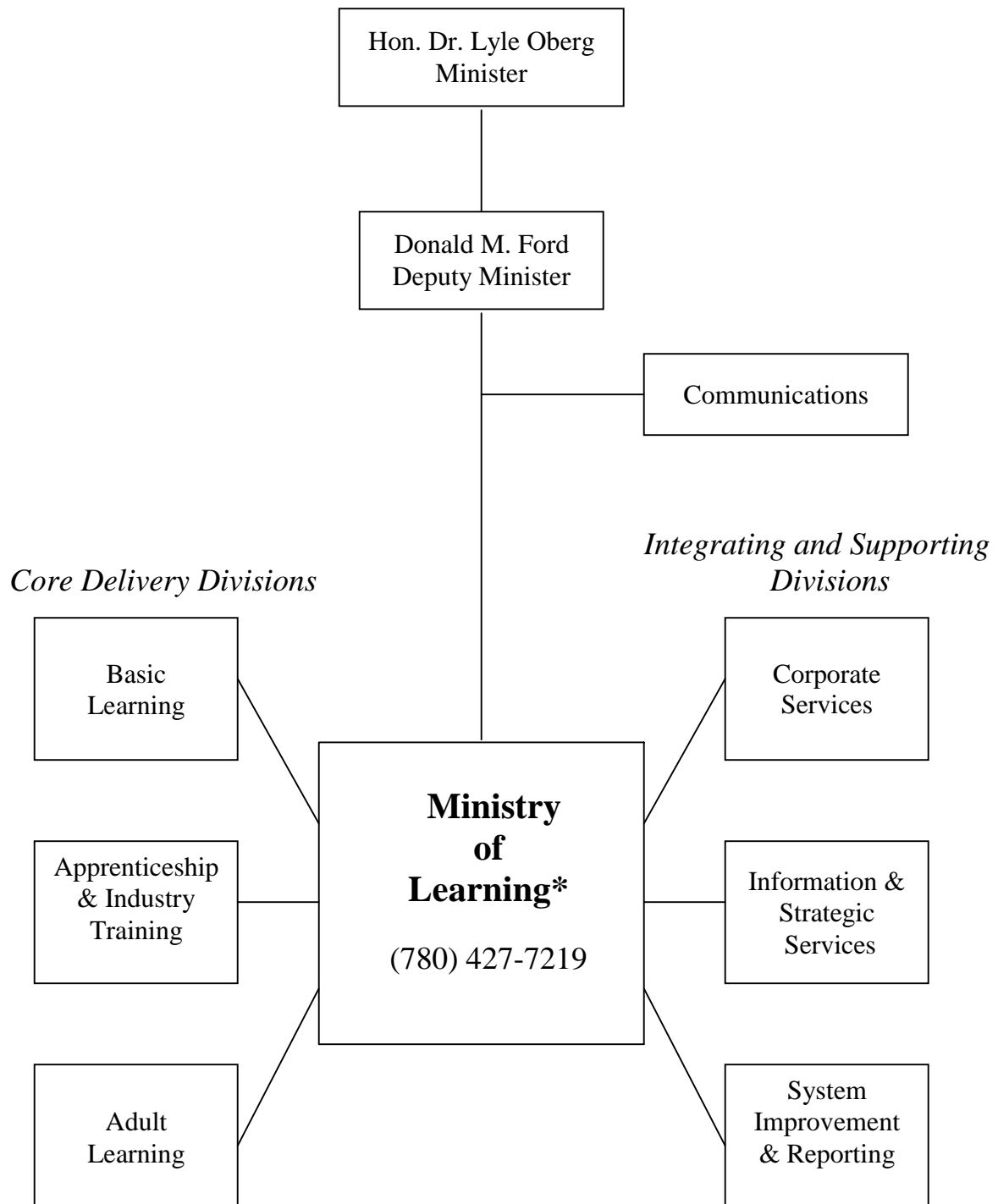
- Met financial targets while addressing unanticipated increases in energy costs for post-secondary institutions and school boards.
- Assessed the financial and non-financial performance of school authorities and post-secondary institutions.
- Introduced a streamlined regulatory framework for the Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board.
- Re-engineered business processes to improve apprenticeship and industry training client service and to increase efficiency.
- Introduced long-range strategy planning and operational planning processes.
- Implemented a three-year plan for Information Technology.
- Began implementation of a continuity plan to ensure Ministry's future staffing needs can be met.

Ministry Grants



* Includes funding for Community Programs and Learning Television and grants to Private Schools.

Entity Map: Alberta Learning



*Includes:

- Department of Learning
- Alberta School Foundation Fund

Operational Overview: Ministry of Learning

The Ministry of Learning comprises two entities: the Alberta School Foundation Fund and the Department of Learning.

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 public school boards.

DEPARTMENT OF LEARNING

Learners are the central focus of the Ministry. Each year, nearly 750,000 Albertans, from preschoolers to seniors, access the learning system. In order to focus on their varied needs, the Ministry leads a learning system that continually adapts to learner circumstances. It allows learners to move easily between school and the workplace, between high school and post-secondary learning and among post-secondary institutions across the province.

Core Businesses

The Ministry supports Alberta's learning system through three core businesses.

1. Basic Learning

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

2. Apprenticeship and Industry Training

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

3. Adult Learning

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

The Ministry carries out its core businesses 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; and,
- optimizing mobility and transferability.

Ministry Division Descriptions

Reflecting the core businesses, the Ministry of Learning is organized into core delivery divisions and integrating and supporting divisions. The Communications Branch represents the Ministry to the public. Each provides specific expertise to the learning system. They also share responsibility for providing integrated service by partnering with one another, as well as with other Alberta Ministries, school authorities, post-secondary institutions, adult learning providers, stakeholder organizations and industry.

Core Delivery Divisions

The three core delivery divisions – Basic Learning, Apprenticeship and Industry Training, and Adult Learning provide learning services and standards for the learning system. These divisions work closely to ensure program continuity and smooth transitions for learners.

Basic Learning Division works collaboratively with the province's school authorities and Early Childhood Service (ECS) operators to provide learning programs for preschool children through to early adulthood. The division focuses on:

- developing curriculum and setting standards;
- providing services to support program implementation;
- providing educational leadership responsive to the community;
- targeting programs such as Aboriginal and Francophone education or programs for students with special needs; and
- coordinating projects such as the Alberta Children and Youth Initiative or the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement.

Phone: 427-7484

Apprenticeship and Industry Training (AIT) Division works with industry, employer and employee organizations, technical training providers, government and Ministry divisions to support the development, maintenance and delivery of designated trade and occupation programs. These programs:

- contribute to the development of a trained and skilled workforce, which supports the economic progress of the province and its competitive role in the global market;
- respond to current technological advancements and workplace needs; and
- support labour mobility through continued development of interprovincial standards and certification programs.

AIT works with the Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board and others to ensure:

- high school and adult apprentices receive formal instruction and on-the-job training to acquire skills in designated trades;
- standards are developed in consultation with industry for formal instruction and apprentice examinations;
- formal instruction for apprentices is scheduled;

- long-term training needs are identified;
- institutions offer training in response to industry needs; and,
- records of apprentice contracts and their progress in the program are maintained.

Phone: 427-4601

Adult Learning Division works with adult learners, public and private post-secondary institutions and community adult learning councils to support learners, provide learning opportunities and enhance the adult learning system. The division:

- with post-secondary institutions and community adult learning councils:
 - identifies learning needs and approves programs of post-secondary study;
 - licenses and certifies private educational providers;
 - approves and coordinates such community-based services and programs as family literacy, academic upgrading and English as a Second Language study;
 - provides funds to meet the operational needs of both individual institutions and the adult learning system as a whole, and
 - targets funds based on analysis of institutions' business plans and key performance indicators.
- assists adult learners financially through scholarships, bursaries and loans;
- helps adult learners access information on available learning opportunities through the province's public and private post-secondary institutions and community adult learning councils; and
- evaluates and recognizes prior credentials of new Albertans.

Phone: 427-5607

Integrating and Supporting Divisions

The integrating and supporting divisions provide services that, by nature, focus on ministry-wide operations and facilitate integration and accountability across all divisions.

Corporate Services Division fosters system and fiscal accountability as well as provides services in the following areas:

- calculation and awarding of funding to all school authorities and analysis of financial reporting submitted by the authorities;
- review of funding support provided to school authorities to ensure a high percentage of dollars are directed to student learning;
- development, production and distribution of learning materials;
- development and implementation of human resource planning initiatives, policies and programs in support of the Ministry's human resources plan;
- development of budgets for the Ministry business plan and monitoring compliance to these budgets, and
- administration, corporate records management, and financial and legal services for all program areas.

Phone: 427-2051

Information & Strategic Services (ISS)

Division provides ministry policy options, planning and information management and structure by:

- developing policy positions, options and responses, conducting research and integrating policy direction across the Ministry;
- facilitating ministry planning and decision making with planning processes, consultation and coordination, facilitation and information;
- managing information management and technology systems and functions;

- designing and developing print and electronic learning resources to support program delivery in the learning system, and
- providing direction and coordination for the implementation of evolving technologies in learning.

Phone: 427-3663

System Improvement & Reporting (SIR)

Division facilitates ongoing improvement and ensures accountability throughout the Ministry and learning system by:

- conducting applied research and program evaluations;
- leading the development of accountability frameworks, performance indicators, measures and targets;
- developing and administering provincial Achievement Tests and Diploma Examinations and providing individual, school, jurisdiction and provincial level results to support teaching and learning in the ECS to grade 12 education system;
- administering General Education Development Tests to adult learners, and
- coordinating Alberta's participation in national and international assessments.

Phone: 422-1608

Email: measurement.learning@gov.ab.ca

Communications works with the Minister and its partners to:

- provide useful, timely and clear information to Albertans on achievements and initiatives in the learning system;
- support the Ministry in reaching its goals by providing strategic communications advice, planning services, specialized writing and editing skills.
- facilitate effective communications among Ministry employees, and
- represent the Ministry to the public and the media.

Phone: 427-2285

Email: comm.contact@learning.gov.ab.ca