

# Summary of Feedback to Alberta Education

## Fall 2015 Grade 3 Student Learning Assessment Pilot

### OVERVIEW

The following provides a high level overview of feedback from teachers, school administrators and school authority personnel on the Fall 2015 Grade 3 Student Learning Assessment (SLA) pilot collected by Alberta Education to help inform next steps.

### PILOT PARTICIPATION

- In 2014, 59 of 61 public, separate and Francophone school authorities participated in the pilot. 42,378 students completed both the literacy and numeracy digital questions and another 1,467 students completed one of the two. 2,891 teachers took part in the 2014 pilot.
- In 2015, 57 of 61 public, separate and Francophone school authorities participated in the pilot. 44,680 students completed both the literacy and numeracy digital questions and another 1,269 students completed one of the two. 2,589 teachers took part in the 2015 pilot.

### METHODOLOGY

Alberta Education collected feedback on the Fall 2015 pilot through a variety of methods: the SLA Application, the Alberta Education HelpDesk, focus groups and online surveys.

Alberta Education conducted face-to-face discussions with key education stakeholder groups:

- Fall 2015 Curriculum Coordinators' Meetings (7 zone meetings in all) – 135 participants
- College of Alberta School Superintendents' Fall 2015 Conference – 40 participants
- SLA Working Group
- Alberta Education Curriculum Policy Advisory Committee.

Alberta Education administered a school authority staff (teachers, school administrators, school authority personnel) survey and a parent and school council survey for which there were 51 responses (new to 2015). In 2015, the school authority survey built upon and included more questions than the 2014 survey to seek feedback on a broader range of topics. There were 761 responses in 2015, compared to 217 responses in 2014. Of the 2015 respondents:

- 491 were teachers, 186 were school administrators, 42 were school authority administrators, and 27 were school authority staff responsible for technology
- representation was 37% rural, 32% urban, and 31% metro
- 501 or 66% of respondents participated in both the 2014 and 2015 pilot, and 246 or 32% of respondents participated only in the 2015 pilot.

## RESULTS

Of the 2,589 teachers who piloted the SLA in 2015, 492 teachers (19%) completed the online survey.

### Overall Feedback

- Marked improvements were noted in 2015 for the Grade 3 SLA, including the assessment instrument, SLA Application, professional learning supports, and results reports for the digital questions.
- Feedback for Year 2 reflects an enhanced experience by both teachers and students.
- The fact that official results for the digital questions were made available by Alberta Education 3 weeks earlier in Year 2 (by November 16, 2015) in comparison to Year 1 (December 4, 2014) was acknowledged.
- Teachers found the information in the individual student reports and class reports for the digital questions more helpful to inform teaching and learning in Year 2.
- The validity and reliability of the digital questions were recognized.
- Streamlining of the performance tasks was appreciated and performance tasks helped build teachers' assessment capacity.
- It took teachers less time in Year 2 to administer and mark performance tasks.
- Teachers and administrators expressed appreciation for the funding that Alberta Education provided to help with the local marking of performance tasks by teachers. Performance task results were reported locally.
- The additional funding provided by Alberta Education enabled release time and collaborative marking sessions by teachers at the local level. These provided opportunities for teachers to meet with other teachers to discuss marking and help enhance assessment capacity.
- Teachers and administrators noted that professional learning supports were enhanced in Year 2 [e.g., face-to-face and online supports provided by the Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia (ARPDC)] and provided positive feedback on the high quality of these supports.
- Materials to support SLA technology setup and administration were simplified.
- There were fewer technical issues at the local level during this administration (most of the technical issues were related to registering students, viewing/using the features on the teacher dashboard, distorted screen displays of some questions, and problems printing reports for the digital questions).
- The paper version of the digital questions, which was significantly improved in Year 2, was used by approximately 600 students who did not have access to technology to complete the SLA.
- Alberta Education was commended for having listened to and acted upon much of the feedback from the Fall 2014 pilot.

### Overall Opportunities for Further Improvement

- Results for the digital questions must be provided much earlier for a beginning of the year assessment. Not having results earlier significantly decreases the value of the information provided by the Grade 3 SLA.
- Consolidate support documents to facilitate access and ease of reference.
- Provide additional supports to assist teachers with local reporting of performance task results.
- Simplify reports for the digital questions and consider a parent-friendly report in 2016.

For additional information, please see the full [Report of Feedback](#).