

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 359 619

EA 025 052

TITLE Achieving the Vision--1992 Report.
 INSTITUTION Alberta Dept. of Education, Edmonton.
 REPORT NO ISBN-0-7732-0846-1
 PUB DATE 93
 NOTE 110p.
 PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; *Educational Improvement;
 *Educational Quality; Elementary Secondary Education;
 *Excellence in Education; Foreign Countries;
 *Outcomes of Education; School Effectiveness; *State
 Standards
 IDENTIFIERS *Alberta

ABSTRACT

Educational outcomes of the Alberta education system for 1991-92 are presented in this report. Progress toward each of the 13 priority areas set forth in the provincial action plan, "Vision for the Nineties," is described. The ratings were based on the collective judgment of senior Alberta education managers. Information is presented on curriculum; student persistence; education for immigrant, Native children, and disabled children; science achievement; excellence in teaching and schools; equal opportunity; and educational partnerships. Findings indicate that Alberta has a solid education system, but that it can and must be improved. Overall, the system receives a B-, the same rating it received in 1991. Progress is demonstrated by improved student persistence, improved science programs and science achievement, and the growth of partnerships. On the less positive side, Alberta schools have experienced increasing inequities among school jurisdictions, a slight decline in students' basic skills, and concern over mathematics achievement. A contact list for additional information, 22 tables, and 52 figures are included. (Contains 40 references.) (LMI)

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Achieving the vision

1992 report

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Alberta
EDUCATION

Alberta Education Cataloguing in Publication Data

Alberta. Alberta Education.

Achieving the vision 1992 report.

ISBN 0-7732-0846-1

1. Education — Alberta — Aims and objectives. 2. Educational evaluation — Alberta. 3. Education — Alberta — Evaluation. 4. Education and state — Alberta. 5. Educational accountability — Alberta. I. Title.

LB2822.75.A333 1993

379.154

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Message from the Minister of Education

In *Vision for the nineties. . . a plan of action*, the Provincial Government stated "We will regularly ask and report what is being done and what has been achieved. We will share the information required to assist in assessing our mutual progress on achieving the results and improving the education for Alberta students."

I am pleased to provide this second annual report, "Achieving the Vision, 1992."

The 1991 report included a rating of "Where We Are Now" for each of the 13 priority areas in the action plan. This practice has been continued. The 1991 ratings were used as benchmarks, and the 1992 appraisals were made relative to these. A graphic which illustrates both ratings is included. The graphic shows the direction of change and provides a general indication of the amount of change.

As this report shows, progress has been made in several key areas. More students are staying in school. Science programs are improving and students continue to do well on diploma exams in the sciences. More schools have effective partnerships in place. And overall our schools are improving.

On the less positive side, inequities among school jurisdictions are growing. Province-wide student results in basic skills have declined slightly from 1991 and results in mathematics continue to be a concern. Our overall rating remains the same as last year, a B -.

I am proud of the commitment of the Government of Alberta to public education, and I am proud of the efforts students, teachers, administrators, parents, and the business and professional community have made to maintain, and enhance our education system. Our students are taught by dedicated, caring, and committed teachers, in school facilities that are widely regarded as among the best in Canada and around the world. Students and teachers work cooperatively with

relevant, and current curricula and resources. Students learn to read, write, compute, solve problems, and think critically about issues.

This report lets all Albertans know how well we are doing in key areas of education. More importantly, it helps us focus our energies in areas where improvements are needed.

We must continue to strive for excellence in our education system. Our students deserve nothing less.



Halvar Jonson
Minister of Education

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Introduction

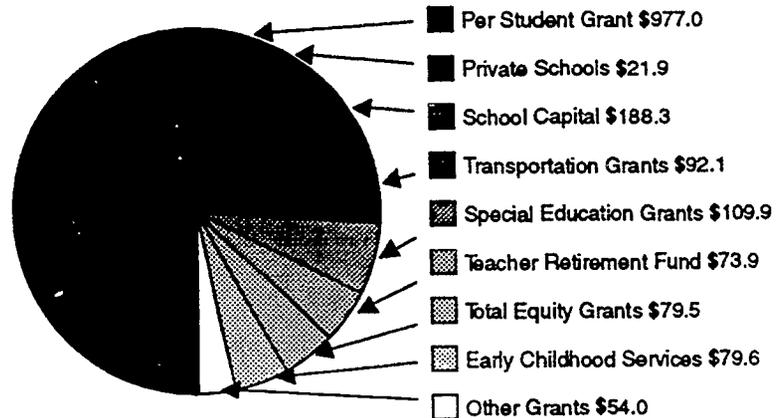
Achieving the vision: 1992 report is the second annual report on our progress toward achieving the 13 priority directions in *Vision for the nineties . . . a plan of action*. This report reflects the Government of Alberta's commitment to report regularly to Albertans on the results being achieved by the education system in these priority areas.

The Alberta education system is diverse. During the 1991-92 school year, enrolments increased by 1%, to nearly 500,000 students. These students attended Early Childhood Services to grade 12 in about 1,600 public and separate schools operated by 148 active school boards. Nearly 30,000 full time and part time teachers, principals, librarians, counsellors and other professionals provided service to these students. The student population is becoming more diversified. Approximately 3,400 new immigrant students attended Alberta schools in 1991-92. Enrolments of Native students increased by more than 10% and more special needs students, with a wider range of disabilities, were integrated into regular classrooms.

Alberta schools vary tremendously in size, programs offered and philosophy. This diversity is a strength, and must continue to be fostered. In many parts of the province, students are provided with a choice in the kind of schooling they receive, and so can match their needs and interests to the programs offered. Student choice is also enhanced through alternative delivery systems such as cooperative education programs, or courses offered by the Distance Learning Center.

The taxpayers of Alberta continue to invest heavily in the public education system. School boards spent more than \$2.7 billion in 1991-92; of this, about 58% of the revenues came from the provincial government. Basic education spending increased by about \$200 million over expenditures for the 1990-91 school year. Nearly \$1.8 billion was spent on instruction, with the remainder spent on administration, operations and maintenance, student transportation and capital costs. The provincial contribution to all school authorities including private schools and Early Childhood Services private operators, and contributions to the Teachers' Retirement Fund, totalled \$1.68 billion (see Figure 1).

Figure 1
Provincial Financial Assistance to Schools in Alberta:
1991-92 Fiscal Year (in millions)



Total: \$1.68 Billion
 Source: Alberta Education

During the past year, Alberta Education conducted a number of surveys of various education partners to get perceptions of the achievement of the 13 priorities outlined in *Vision for the nineties . . . a plan of action*. The surveys were distributed to 6,500 recent graduates and parents, 2,550 teachers, 175 board chairmen, 125 superintendents, and 600 post-secondary instructors. About 1,300 graduates, 1,200 parents, 1,100 teachers, 50 trustees, 100 superintendents, and 350 post-secondary instructors completed the questionnaires. Their responses to various questions are presented throughout the report.

Achieving the vision: 1992 report has evolved from the 1991 edition. There are more data which can be used to make direct comparisons with last year, and to develop trend lines. Some data are perceptual, while other data are from studies specifically designed to get additional and more accurate information on the outcomes realized by our education system. This year's ratings of the results achieved in each of the 13 priority areas were based on the collective judgement of senior Alberta Education managers, who reviewed last year's report and the new information available this year. To increase the emphasis on results, the 1992 report has focused on "what we have done," and what results have been achieved rather than highlighting "what we are doing" to make education better for our students.

This report serves three major purposes.

- 1) It provides an accounting to Albertans of the results achieved in the 1991-92 school year in the 13 priority direction areas of *Vision for the nineties ... a plan of action*.
- 2) It provides opportunities for Albertans to discuss these results.
- 3) It helps all partners in education identify those areas where we need to change our approaches; it provides basic information we can use to assess whether desired improvements are indeed being achieved.

The report highlights results—what provincial data tells us about what we have achieved, and what still needs to be accomplished.

Superior standards and results

High standards, improved results: Our standards must be the highest in Canada and among the highest in the world. We must ensure that Albertans are well informed about the results our students are achieving.

Results expected

- Alberta's student achievement standards are among the highest in the world
- Students achieve the high expectations set out in the provincial curriculum
- High school graduates have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable them to enter the workforce successfully
- High school graduates are well prepared for the challenges of post-secondary education and training

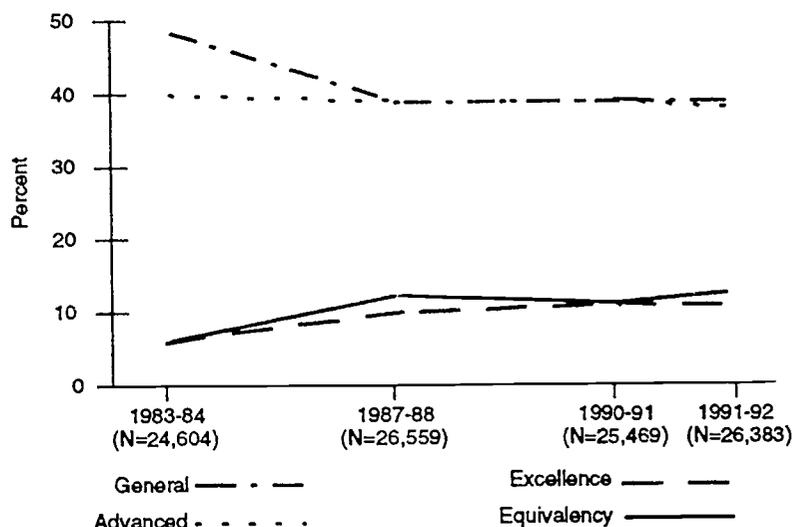
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What we know

Half of Alberta's high school graduates earned an advanced diploma (39%) or an advanced diploma with excellence (11%) in 1990-91.

Almost twice as many students received an advanced diploma with excellence in 1990-91 compared to 1983-84. The percentage of students receiving a general diploma has declined by almost 10% while those receiving an advanced diploma has remained fairly stable over this period. The number of students obtaining an equivalency diploma has doubled since 1983-84. Figure 2 presents the results.

Figure 2
Percentage of Students Receiving High School Diplomas by Type



Source: Alberta Education

Almost 2,000 more students wrote diploma exams in 1991-92 than in 1990-91.

The relative proportion of students writing each exam has remained constant: more than 60% wrote diploma exams in English 30, Social Studies 30, and Biology 30; 57% wrote Mathematics 30, 49% Chemistry 30, and 25% Physics 30. Table 1 presents the number of students who wrote each examination and the percentage this represents of those writing English 30 and 33 since all students must write one of these to graduate.

- All students are well prepared for the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and daily life in a changing society
- Students attain superior results on national and international measures
- Albertans are well informed about educational standards and results and have confidence in education

*vision for the nineties
... a plan of action*

Table 1
Number of Students Writing Diploma Examinations in 1990-91 and 1991-92*

Course	1990-91		1991-92	
	N	% of English	N	% of English
English 30	22,841	72.7	24,027	72.2
English 33	8,586	27.3	9,254	27.8
Total English 30/33	31,427		33,281	
Social Studies 30	20,168	64.2	20,804	62.5
Français 30	70	0.2	84	0.3
Mathematics 30	18,268	58.1	19,065	57.3
Biology 30	19,167	61.0	20,313	61.0
Chemistry 30	15,312	48.7	16,156	48.5
Physics 30	7,736	24.6	8,196	24.6

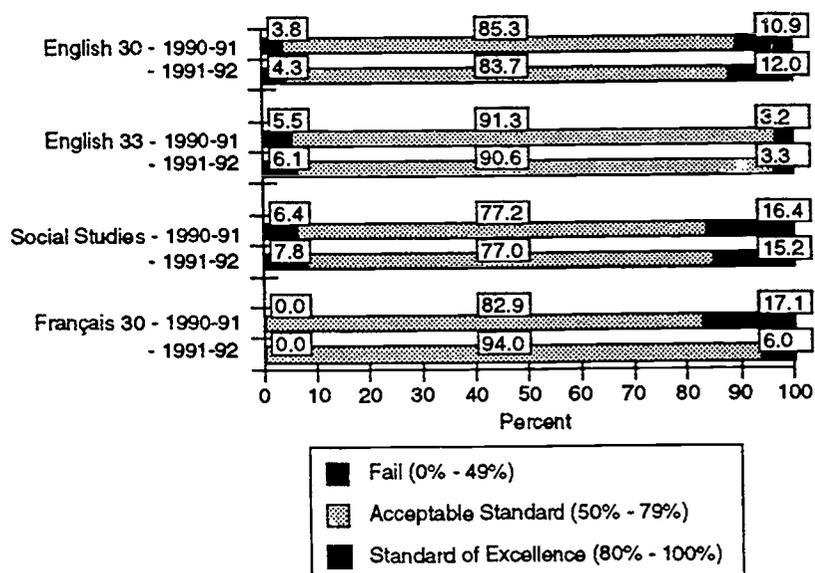
*Students who have both school awarded and diploma exam marks in the course.

Source: Alberta Education

Senior high school students continued their strong performance in English, social studies, and Français.

Slightly more students achieved excellence in English 30 this year than last year. Almost three quarters of all students who wrote exams wrote English 30. In Social Studies 30, slightly fewer students achieved excellence and slightly more failed. While all francophone students passed Français 30, the percentage who received excellence has dropped 11% since last year. The number of students writing this exam is very small. Figure 3 presents the level of achievement for the 1990-91 and 1991-92 school years for the diploma courses in English, social studies and Français.

Figure 3
Percentage of Students Achieving Acceptable and Excellence Standards in English, Social Studies and Français Diploma Courses in 1990-91 and 1991-92



Source: Alberta Education

About 14% of the students who wrote Mathematics 30 in 1991-92 failed the course.

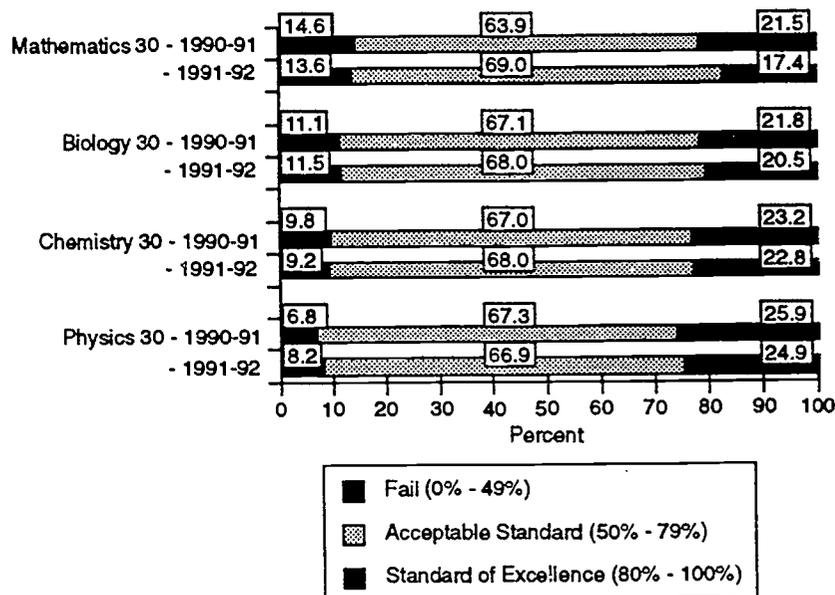
This is a slight improvement over last year when almost 15% failed. Students' performance in mathematics indicates that many still have difficulty applying what they know to new situations. This difficulty in relating concepts and seeing their significance in solving a variety of problems is also evident in other subjects.

More than 20% of the students achieved excellence in Biology 30, Chemistry 30 and Physics 30 in 1991-92.

Student achievement in science courses compares favorably to 1990-91. The highest rate was for Physics 30 where one in four students achieved excellence. Figure 4 presents the results for mathematics and science diploma courses.

Figure 4

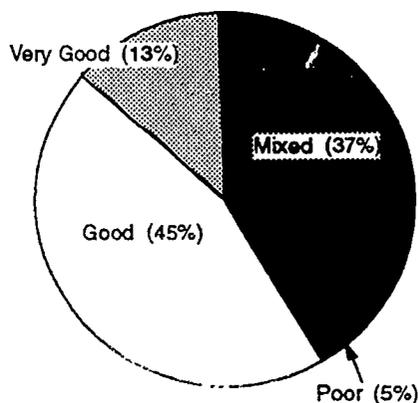
Percentage of Students Achieving Acceptable and Excellence Standards in Math and Sciences in 1990-91 and 1991-92



Source: Alberta Education

Figure 5

Performance of School Jurisdictions on Diploma Examinations in June 1992



Source: Alberta Education

The June 1992 diploma exam results ranged from very good or good in more than half of Alberta's school jurisdictions to mixed or poor results in others.

In 13% of the jurisdictions across the province, student results were very good in most of the diploma exam courses; this means that district results were consistently above the provincial average. In almost half (45%) of the jurisdictions, results were generally consistent with the results for the province as a whole. In 37% of the jurisdictions, results were mixed, with strong performance in some schools and some courses, but evidence of problems in others. Results were poor, or consistently below the provincial results in most of the diploma exam courses, in 5% of the jurisdictions. Figure 5 presents the results.

Achievement standards on diploma exams have been maintained since 1990.

As new diploma exams are developed each year, it is not possible to make direct comparisons of achievement from one year to the next. To compare student performance directly on diploma exams from one year to the next, Alberta Education administers anchor tests to samples of

students registered to write the diploma exams. Anchor tests consist of a set of common questions having the same content and emphasis as the diploma exam. These anchor tests are used to compare achievement on the multiple choice component of the respective exams. The results indicate that there have been no significant changes in student achievement standards as measured by the diploma exams since 1990.

Most respondents to Alberta Education's 1992 surveys said that high school graduates are prepared for citizenship, the workplace, and post-secondary education.

Seventy percent or more of respondents said high school graduates are prepared for citizenship and post-secondary education. One out of four graduates did not feel they had learned the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. About 25% of graduates and parents said high school graduates are not prepared for post-secondary education.

About 60% or more of respondents said graduates are prepared for successful entry into the workplace but more than a third of graduates, parents, and trustees disagreed. More than a quarter of teacher respondents also said graduates are not prepared for the workplace (see Table 2).

These 1992 survey results are more positive than results from a 1991 survey of a sample of adult Albertans. The 1991 results indicated less public satisfaction with schools' preparation of students to become good citizens (54%) and for college and university (48%). Fifty percent were dissatisfied with students' preparation for the labor force.

Table 2
Stakeholder Perceptions of the Preparation
of High School Graduates (1992)

<i>Preparation</i>		<i>% Agree</i>	<i>% Disagree</i>	<i>% Don't Know</i>
<i>for citizenship</i>	<i>teachers</i>	77	13	10
	<i>supts.</i>	90	5	5
	<i>trustees</i>	79	15	6
	<i>graduates</i>	74	25	1
	<i>parents</i>	79	15	6
<i>for successful entry into the workplace</i>	<i>teachers</i>	59	27	14
	<i>supts.</i>	74	19	7
	<i>trustees</i>	59	38	3
	<i>graduates</i>	62	36	2
	<i>parents</i>	61	34	5
<i>for entry into post-secondary education</i>	<i>teachers</i>	74	13	13
	<i>supts.</i>	96	1	3
	<i>trustees</i>	81	15	4
	<i>graduates</i>	70	27	3
	<i>parents</i>	70	26	4

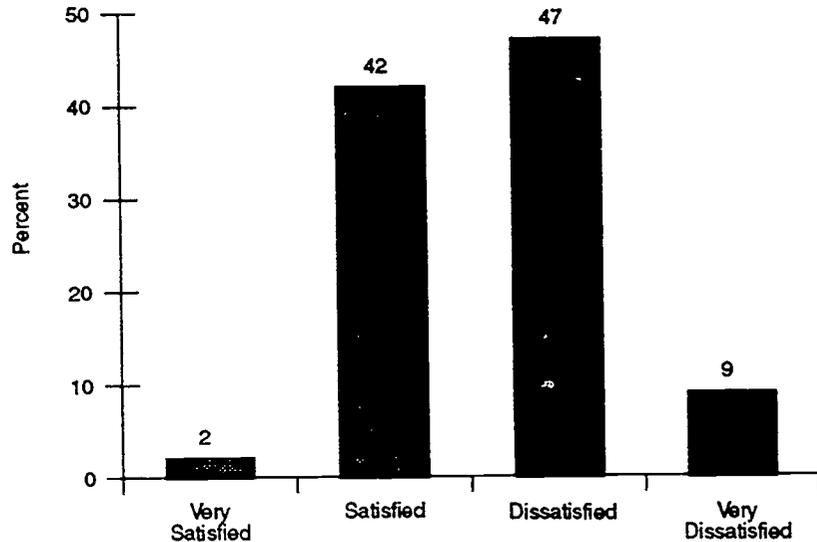
Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

Post-secondary educators surveyed in 1992 are less satisfied with the quality of recent high school graduates than with those of former years.

Over half (56%) of survey respondents are dissatisfied (47%) or very dissatisfied (9%) with the quality of high school graduates (see Figure 6).

Half of post-secondary educators responding (52%) feel that recent high school graduates who attend post-secondary institutions are of poorer quality or less well prepared than graduates of former years. A quarter of respondents (28%) said recent graduates were of higher quality and were better prepared than former graduates. Another 14% indicated that quality and preparedness of recent graduates were at the same level as those of former years.

Figure 6
Post-Secondary Educators' Satisfaction with the Quality of High School Graduates (1992)



Source: Alberta Education Survey, 1992

Alberta students rank high in science compared to students from other provinces.

Alberta continued to participate in national and international studies that assess how well Alberta students are doing compared to other students in Canada and around the world.

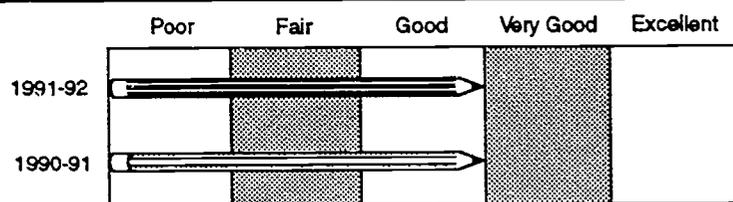
In 1991, Alberta participated in the International Assessment of Educational Progress (IAEP II) of mathematics and science achievement of 13 year old students. Nationally, Alberta students ranked first in science and fifth in mathematics. Internationally, Alberta ranked third in science and in the middle in mathematics compared to the 15 countries with representative samples.

In 1992, a sample of Alberta's grade 11 students participated in an international study of math achievement and students' attitudes toward schooling. Results will be available later.

In the spring of 1993, Alberta will participate in the Canada-wide School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP) assessment of mathematics under the auspices of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada.

Rating of this priority

Superior standards and results



Rationale for 1991-92 rating

Student achievement in science, English, social studies and Français diploma courses remains strong. Math results need considerable improvement. Most people are more satisfied with the preparation of high school graduates for life beyond high school. Post-secondary educators' perceptions of the quality of graduates indicates more work is needed to improve the transition to post-secondary education and training. The 1991-92 rating is not changed from the previous year.

Questions to ask

How do the diploma exam results of your schools/school jurisdiction compare with the provincial results?

What's being done by your schools/school jurisdiction to improve student results?

What's being done to help students apply what they learn to new situations?

Do you think graduates from your schools/school jurisdiction are well prepared for citizenship, for the workplace, and post-secondary education? What do you think needs to be improved?

Excellence in curriculum

Curriculum focuses on student learning. Our curriculum must set high expectations for what our students need to know and be able to do in our changing world. Our programs and learning resources must support the achievement of these high expectations.

Results expected

- Alberta's curriculum standards are among the highest in the world: the standards clarify what students are expected to learn, and this enables teachers to focus their teaching efforts on helping each student achieve these high educational standards*
- Parents, the business community, and the public are well informed about student learning expectations and achievements*

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What we know

Alberta Education continued its extensive curriculum development and revision efforts throughout 1991-92.

Courses developed or updated for implementation in the 1992-93 school year included Science 10, ECS/Elementary Language Learning, French as a Second Language, and revised senior high music courses. An estimated 30,000 students are taking the Science 10 course in the 1992-93 school year. The course of studies for CALM 20 is being revised using feedback received from monitoring in the 1991-92 school year. In addition, 19 new distance learning opportunities are helping to reduce some of the disparities in courses offered to students in small schools and in remote areas of the province. (For a description of some of the new distance learning courses, see the Equity section.)

All four western Canadian provinces are participating in a project to develop Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) courseware for Math 10 and 20. The Math 30 program has recently been made available on a CD-ROM and is being used with success at J. Percy Page High School in Edmonton. Curriculum standards are being developed for Math 10 and 20 and these will assist teachers in assessing student performance. Work has begun to review the mathematics curriculum across all levels as the Math 30 diploma exam results show that more students need to achieve the Acceptable or Higher Standard.

The developmental work in the new Career and Technology Studies program (CTS) also continued in 1991-92. Enterprise and Innovation (20-30) modules were available for implementation in the 1992-93 school year. Fourteen CTS programs such as legal studies, management and marketing, construction technologies, and agriculture are being field-reviewed this year in sites across the province. Tourism and a revised work experience program will be available for implementation in September 1993.

Other new and revised courses that are being field-tested for implementation in 1993-94 include senior high sciences and French. Sample teaching units, final examinations, and performance assessment activities have been developed for Science 20, Biology 20, Chemistry 20, and Physics 20.

Students' learning about science and technology is supported through custom-developed books and teacher resources for Science 10, 20, and 30

- *Teacher and student resources support the achievement of expectations*
- *The Alberta curriculum includes the knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable high school graduates to be successful in the workplace, in Alberta, in Canada and internationally*
- *The Alberta curriculum includes the knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable high school graduates to be well prepared for the challenges of universities, colleges, technical institutes, and other post-secondary training*
- *The Alberta curriculum includes the knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable all students to be well prepared for the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and daily life in a changing society*

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as well as Alberta versions of many of the texts for the new biology, chemistry and physics programs.

A wide range of Albertans are involved in curriculum preparation work, including the discussion of course standards and students' achievement on diploma exams.

For example, the Career and Technology Studies Network has about 1,700 members, an increase of 300 members over the previous year. The network includes people from schools, post-secondary institutions, business and industry, professional associations and community groups. This wide spread involvement is helping to make curriculum more relevant to the real world and to inform Albertans about what students are learning.

Two public advisory meetings were held in July and September 1992 with a wide range of representatives of business, professional, and other community groups. For example, the September meeting of the Public Advisory Committee for the Diploma Examinations Program involved 35 representatives of 22 professional organizations, business and industry, post-secondary institutions and special interest groups. Both meetings focused on what the province expects students to learn and how well students are learning. These meetings produced recommendations which are being used to make curriculum revisions and to improve diploma exam courses and assessment. For example, the committee that met to review English 30 and English 33 recommended an increase in the standards for written response in English 33 and that the status of English 33 be raised. Alberta Education is working on increasing the standards for English 33.

Standard setting through broadly-based community representation is critically important to Alberta Education as it assesses provincial curriculum. These representatives provide the "feedback loop" to ensure that curriculum content, values, and standards are appropriate to societal needs and expectations.

The integration of the Alberta curriculum continued in 1991-92 with the goal to help students better understand the connections among different concepts, skills, and subject matter, and to apply these understandings in their daily lives.

For example, communications and problem-solving skills are an important part of the new senior high science courses. Students are

expected to demonstrate these essential skills in diploma exams and achievement tests.

In addition, Alberta Education and the Federal Government are participating in the Cooperative Education Program which encourages school districts to develop and implement innovative partnership-based programming in the areas of trades, business, and service industries. These partnership programs help to prepare students for the workforce and for the modern economy. Businesses benefit from an enhanced profile in the community and from a better educated and prepared labour pool from which they can draw in future years.

All new or revised programs specify more clearly what students are expected to know and be able to do, and are organized by "levels."

For example, the new French as a Second Language program (FSL) clearly states the learning expectations and is sequenced in skill levels: Beginning (Levels 1, 2, and 3), Intermediate (Levels 4, 5, and 6), and Advanced (Levels 7, 8, and 9). This program is designed to achieve the maximum learning rate for each student. For example, the Beginning Level may be introduced in the first, fourth, seventh, or tenth year of a 12 year school program, and students placed in it according to their own capabilities. As a result of this initiative, parents have a much clearer understanding of what is expected of their children and communication between parents and teachers about student progress is greatly enhanced.

A 1991 Alberta Chamber of Resources and Alberta Education Study found that Japan, Germany, and Hungary delivered more math and science to their students earlier and with more depth than is the case in Alberta. However, the study found many similarities between Alberta's curriculum in these programs and those of the comparison countries.

The study compared textbook materials used in teaching grades 7 to 12 math, physics, and chemistry in the countries of Japan, Germany, and Hungary, and the province of Alberta. It found that physics and chemistry topics were introduced much earlier and with more advanced treatment in the European countries. Specific mathematical concepts such as calculus, algebra, and polynomials were also found to be introduced earlier in Japan and Germany than in Alberta. However, concepts such as probability and statistics were introduced earlier in Alberta than in the comparison countries.

The study reported a large amount of repetition in Alberta grades 7, 8, and 9 math texts that does not achieve the same results as the approaches used in the other countries.

The study also compared the concepts and content found in Alberta's mathematics, physics, and chemistry curricula with those of Japan, Hungary, Germany, and the U.S.A.. In mathematics, the study found that the body of knowledge delivered appears comparable. The study findings for chemistry and physics were similar to those in mathematics. In its conclusion, the study noted that the Alberta curriculum is very comprehensive. However, the report also indicated a concern with how much of the curriculum is covered and the way in which it is delivered in the schools.

Alberta's curriculum standards continued to receive national and international recognition.

Alberta's new secondary science program was cited by the International Organization on Science and Technology Education as probably the most advanced design of a STS (science — technology — society) curriculum in Canada. The grade 8 ethics course and resources are receiving very favorable reviews and are being considered for classroom use in several provinces and American states and in countries such as Israel and Hong Kong. A video for Math 30 and another for senior high science received a second place award at the 1992 American Film and Video Awards. Other provinces continue to ask if they can use some of Alberta's resource materials and curriculum guides in their programs.

Alberta's Program of Studies sets high and clear expectations for students according to teachers, superintendents and trustees who responded to 1992 surveys.

Eighty-seven percent of superintendents agreed that the provincial Program of Studies sets high expectations for students; this was 16 percentage points more than the trustee group (71%).

Seventy-five percent of superintendents also agreed that the provincial Program of Studies sets clear expectations for students. The results for teachers and trustees were very similar (see Table 3).

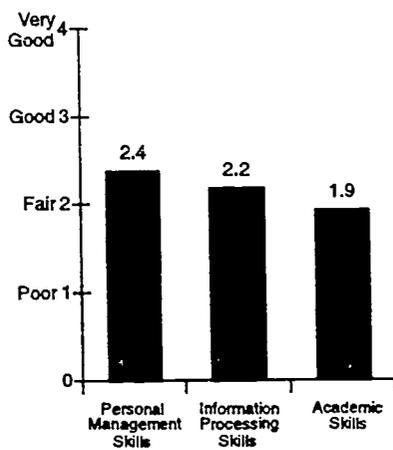
Table 3

Program of Studies Sets High and Clear Expectations for Students

	High Expectations		Clear Expectations		Don't Know %
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree	
superintendents	87	10	75	21	3.5
teachers	80	16	74	22	4
trustees	71	23	70	19	8.5

Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

Figure 7
Post-Secondary Educators Rate the Skills of High School Graduates



Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

Post-secondary educators surveyed in 1992 said that high school graduates have problems in a number of academic skill areas. They also said that high school graduates have some problems in information processing skills as well as managing their time and planning to achieve their goals.

Alberta Education asked post-secondary educators to rate the quality of the preparation that high school graduates received for entrance to these institutions (see Figure 7). As many as 60% of respondents rated graduates as good or better in demonstrating skills associated with effective citizenship. Between 50% and 70% said graduates demonstrate fair or poor ability in other personal management skills including time management and planning to achieve goals.

Between 50% and 65% of respondents rated graduates as fair or poor in more than half of the information processing skills. These included selecting and analyzing information and communicating the results to others, and dealing with data. About 45% said graduates were good or better in their use of technology and information systems.

Fifty to 80% of respondents said graduates demonstrated fair or poor ability in almost all academic skills. These included written work (especially grammar and spelling), carrying out mathematical functions, problem-solving, critical thinking, and applying knowledge. Graduates were rated as only slightly better than fair in reading and understanding directions, and listening and speaking.

Albertans strongly supported Alberta Education's plan to introduce a single Alberta high school diploma.

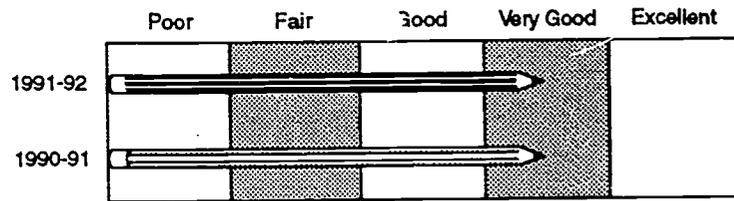
The plan for a single high school diploma has been modified to address

the concerns most frequently mentioned by Albertans in surveys done in 1991. These concerns included the importance of clearly communicating the nature of student achievement. The revised plan bases its requirements in mathematics, science, language arts, and social studies on students meeting standards. It was circulated to a broad response group which included school boards and associations, school staff, students, business and industry, and post-secondary institutions. These groups had diverse opinions about what the minimum standards should be for students to graduate from high school. They generally supported raising the minimum standards for graduation in the areas of math and science. However, they expressed concern that this could make it difficult for some students to graduate from high school. For example, 10 credits in math is a requirement for graduation from high school but these 10 credits can be obtained by completing Math 14 and 24. If the minimum math requirement for graduation was Math 13 and 23, some students may have difficulty in successfully completing these courses.

Comments from the response groups are being considered in making final decision about the new requirements. The revised diploma requirements will be announced in the spring of 1993. School jurisdictions will be required to implement the single diploma for grade 10 students in September 1994.

Rating of this priority

Excellence in curriculum



Rationale for 1991-92 rating

Student learning expectations are high and clear. The Alberta Chamber of Resources Study raised concerns about when and how math and science concepts are presented to students. Post-secondary educators have some concerns about the skills of high school graduates. Alberta's curriculum is regarded as comprehensive and is recognized all over the world for its excellence. The curriculum review and revision process involving diverse groups of Albertans helps ensure the curricula and assessment programs are meeting high standards and reflect society's expectations. The rating for 1991-92 remains the same as for 1990-91.

Questions to ask

What are your schools/school jurisdiction doing to inform you about student learning expectations and how well students do? Are you satisfied?

Do your schools/school jurisdiction have high learning expectations for all students? Are these reflected in student results?

In what student program areas do your schools/school jurisdiction stand out? In what program areas do you want them to improve?

What are your schools doing to encourage students to think critically, problem solve, and apply knowledge and facts to other situations?

What are your schools/school jurisdiction doing to ensure that student writing is at an appropriate standard?

Strong basic skills

Students learn basic skills:

We must ensure that all students develop strong skills in reading, writing, computing, and spelling. These are the foundation for the higher level skills students need in our rapidly changing world.

Results expected

- *All students have a solid foundation in reading, writing, computing, and spelling, and are able to think and apply their knowledge*
- *All students communicate well verbally and in writing*
- *Young children at risk are provided with a full range of educational and support services to ensure they have a fair and equitable chance to succeed at school*

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What we know

The June 1992 achievement test results showed that more students need to meet acceptable standards.

Nearly 100,000 students in grades 3, 6, and 9 wrote the achievement tests in social studies, language arts, and mathematics respectively. These tests assess how well students are meeting provincial curriculum standards.

We expect 85% of the students to achieve or exceed the acceptable standard on the achievement tests. This includes 15% who are expected to achieve the standard of excellence. In 1992, many students failed to meet the acceptable standard at all three grades: 16.5% on grade 3 social studies, 24.4% on grade 6 language arts, and 32.6% on grade 9 mathematics. Table 4 presents the percentage of students meeting standards in the June 1992 achievement tests.

Table 4
*Percentage of Students Meeting Standards
on the June 1992 Achievement Tests*

<i>Achievement Test</i>	<i>Acceptable Standard*</i>	<i>Standard of Excellence</i>	<i>Did Not Meet Acceptable Standard</i>
<i>Grade 3 Social Studies</i>			
<i>Knowledge</i>	81.0	22.7	19.0
<i>Skills</i>	85.0	20.9	15.0
<i>Total Test</i>	83.5	15.9	16.5
<i>Grade 6 Language Arts</i>			
<i>Reading</i>	72.7	15.3	27.3
<i>Writing</i>	76.1	13.6	23.9
<i>Total Test</i>	75.6	9.5	24.4
<i>Grade 9 Mathematics</i>			
<i>Knowledge</i>	75.6	12.7	24.4
<i>Problem Solving</i>	64.1	10.7	35.9
<i>Total Test</i>	67.4	8.9	32.6

* Includes students who achieve the standard of excellence.

Source: Alberta Education

Grade 3 social studies: Almost 85% of the students met the acceptable standard, and over 20% met the standard of excellence on the knowledge and skill components of the test.

Students were generally successful in answering questions based on understanding the concept of community, knowing how to access information, and reading and interpreting maps and graphs. These students performed better than the students who wrote the social studies test in 1984 and as well as those who wrote the test in 1988.

Grade 3 teachers from a random sample of schools took part in an assessment of students' participation skills. Two thirds of the students were rated by these teachers as performing at or above grade 3 level in terms of their ability to work in groups.

Grade 6 language arts: About three quarters of the grade 6 students met or exceeded the acceptable standard in reading and in writing. The expected 15% of students achieved excellence in reading.

The students who met the acceptable standard were able to find directly stated details and main ideas in the passages they read, but they had difficulty seeing implied ideas, details, and relationships. Students were successful in writing introductions and using vocabulary, but their use of mechanics and grammar, sentence structure (both grammatical correctness and use of a variety of sentences) and conclusions tended to be weak. Performance in language arts has not improved since 1984.

Grade 6 teachers and students from randomly selected schools also participated in an assessment of listening and viewing skills. Eighty-one percent of the students had listening skills at or above grade 6 level and 69% had viewing skills at or above expectations.

Grade 9 mathematics: About three quarters of the grade 9 students met or exceeded the acceptable standard on knowledge and almost two thirds achieved this standard on problem solving.

The remaining students' performance was below standard. They did not display grade level performance on the mathematics achievement test.

Students knew ratios, proportions and basic statistical terms, and were able to apply this knowledge to solve single-step problems. However, more advanced skills are expected of students in grade 9. Student performance has improved over the 1984 results, but has not improved since 1988.

Grade 9 students in randomly selected schools also participated in an assessment of problem solving and communication skills in mathematics. Only 47% of the students could solve open-ended problems (questions that do not provide a set of potential answers from which to choose); 51% were able to communicate their solutions to problems satisfactorily.

Student performance on the provincial achievement tests has not improved since 1988.

Since 1988, fewer than the expected 85% of students achieved at or above the acceptable standard on 12 of the 15 achievement tests in the core subjects at grades 3, 6 and 9. The expected percentage of grade 3 students met or exceeded the standard in language arts and mathematics in 1989 and 1990 respectively, and grade 9 students achieved this standard in mathematics in 1988. Table 5 presents the percentage of students achieving the acceptable standard or higher on the total achievement tests since 1988.

Table 5
Percentage of Students Achieving the Acceptable Standard or Higher on the Total Achievement Tests from 1988 to 1992

<i>Year</i>	<i>Grade 3 (%)</i>	<i>Grade 6 (%)</i>	<i>Grade 9 (%)</i>
1988	80.0 SS	83.1 LA	88.9 Ma
1989	86.2 LA	81.6 SS	80.4 Sc
1990	91.8 Ma	82.5 Sc	82.9 LA
1991	78.9 Sc	75.5 Ma	78.9 SS
1992	83.5 SS	75.6 LA	67.4 Ma

Ma – mathematics; Sc – science; LA – language arts; SS – social studies

Source: Alberta Education

High school students are achieving acceptable or higher standards in diploma exam courses.

Since 1990, Alberta Education has reported annual results on diploma exam courses. Requirements for a general diploma include English 30 or 33 while an advanced diploma requires English 30, Social Studies 30, Mathematics 30 and one 30-level science course. The English 30/33

exams consist of two parts: a 2.5 hour written component and a 2 hour multiple choice component. Each is worth half of the diploma exam mark which counts for fifty percent of the final blended mark. Table 6 presents the results of selected diploma exam courses for the past three years. Results for the science courses are presented in the section on superior standards and results.

Table 6
Percentage of Students Achieving the Acceptable Standard or Higher (Final Mark) in Selected Diploma Exam Courses from 1989-90 to 1991-92

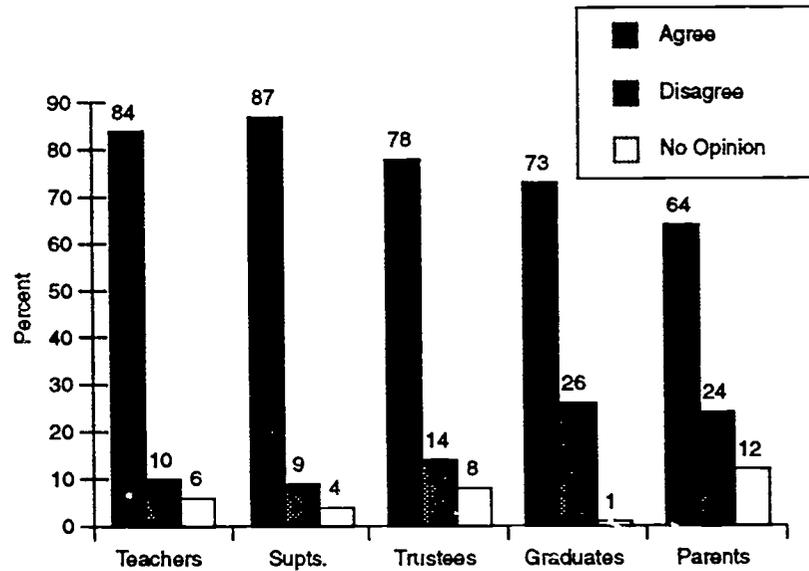
<i>Year</i>	<i>1989-90 (%)</i>	<i>1990-91 (%)</i>	<i>1991-92 (%)</i>
<i>English 30</i>	95.8	96.2	95.7
<i>English 33</i>	93.6	94.5	93.9
<i>Social Studies 30</i>	91.0	93.6	92.2
<i>Mathematics 30</i>	86.5	85.4	86.4

Source: Alberta Education

About 80% of the people who work in education and who responded to recent Alberta Education surveys said schools are emphasizing the importance of reading and writing. Almost three quarters of graduates and two thirds of parent respondents said this about high schools.

About a quarter of the parents and the graduates who participated in the 1992 surveys said that high schools do not emphasize these skills. Figure 8 presents the results.

Figure 8
Schools Emphasize Reading and Writing



Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

Graduates are positive about how much high school helped them improve their skills.

Graduates surveyed in 1992 said that high school helped them improve *a lot* in skill areas including: writing, learning on their own, critical thinking, and math. They reported high school helped them improve *very little* in skill areas such as applying their knowledge to real-life situations, reading and speaking, and creative thinking. Table 7 presents the results.

Table 7

Percentage of Graduates Reporting How Much High School Helped Them Improve Their Skills (1992)

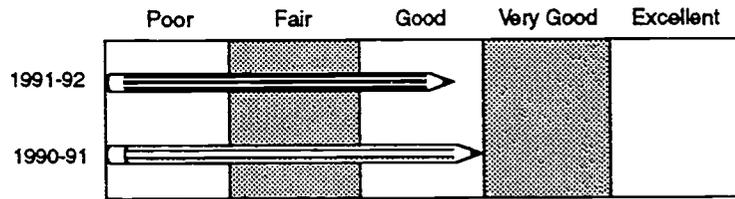
<i>Area</i>	<i>A Lot %</i>	<i>Somz %</i>	<i>Very Little %</i>
<i>Writing</i>	46	43	10
<i>Reading</i>	24	53	23
<i>Speaking</i>	30	47	23
<i>Listening *</i>	34	52	13
<i>Creative Thinking</i>	35	46	19
<i>Critical Thinking *</i>	45	46	8
<i>Learn on My Own</i>	46	42	12
<i>Problem Solving</i>	36	54	10
<i>Math Skills *</i>	44	38	17
<i>Decision Making</i>	36	52	12
<i>Applying Knowledge *</i>	25	45	29

** No response = 1%*

Source: Alberta Education Survey, 1992

Rating of this priority

Strong basic skills



Rationale for 1991-92 rating

Achievement test results in 1992 indicate more students need to meet acceptable standards particularly in grades 6 and 9. Grade 3 social studies results are positive. About the same percentage of high school students achieved the acceptable or higher standard on diploma exam courses as last year. The 1991-92 rating is moved back slightly in the good range to reflect the need for better student performance on the achievement tests.

Questions to ask

How do the achievement test results for students in your schools/school jurisdiction compare to the overall provincial results?

What are your schools/school jurisdiction doing to improve students' basic skills?

What actions are being taken to address areas where you think results need improvement?

Students stay in school

Students get the education they need: All students must stay in school to get the education they need for citizenship and to be successful in work, training, and further education.

Results expected

- *All students stay in school and graduate; the dropout rate decreases*
- *Students have a broader range of opportunities and are recognized for excellence in all areas*
- *Students at risk stay in school and are challenged to excel and achieve their best*

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What we know

The student dropout rate continued to decline.

Students who complete high school include those who achieve a diploma, students who meet university entrance requirements without a diploma, and those who qualify for and enter colleges or technical institutes.

There are two basic methods of calculating rates of students who do not complete high school: annual and longitudinal. *Annual* methods look at the percentage of students across a particular age or grade range (e.g., age 14-18, grade 9-12) who drop out in any given school year.

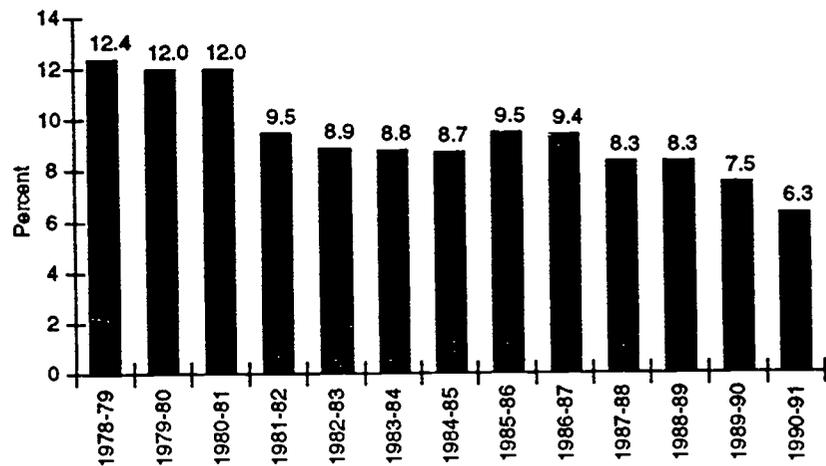
The annual dropout rate of 14 to 18 year olds in Alberta has declined from 12.4% in 1978-79 to 6.3% in 1990-91. Table 8 and Figure 9 present this information in more detail.

Table 8
Annual Dropout Rate, Alberta (14-18 year olds)

School Year	Annual dropout rate (%)	Number of dropouts
1978-79	12.4	17,300
1979-80	12.0	16,500
1985-86	9.5	12,900
1989-90	7.5	10,000
1990-91	6.3	8,600

Source: Alberta Education

Figure 9
Annual Dropout Rate, Alberta, 1978-91 (14 – 18 year olds)



Source: Alberta Education

Longitudinal methods look at the percentage of students entering grade 9 who drop out before completing high school.

While the majority of students complete their schooling within four years of entering grade 9, a significant proportion are in school five, six or more years before either completing or dropping out.

Of students entering grade 9 in 1980-81, 22% dropped out within four years, a further 9% within five years, and an additional 3% within six years. Cumulatively, 34% dropped out within six years. By 1990-91 (11 years after entering grade nine) 29% of these dropouts had returned to school.

Of students entering grade nine in 1984-85, 17% dropped out within four years, a further 10% within five years, and an additional 4% within six years. Cumulatively, 31% dropped out within six years. By 1991-92 (8 years after entering grade nine), 31% of these dropouts had returned to school.

Of students entering grade nine in 1988-89, 17% had dropped out within four years (see Table 9). By 1991-92 (4 years after entering grade nine) 27% of these dropouts had returned to school.

About one third of returning dropouts complete high school.

Table 9

High School Dropout Rates for Students Entering Grade 9 in 1980-81, 1984-85, and 1988-89

	<i>Cumulative Percent Who Dropped Out of High School:</i>		
	<i>Within 4</i>	<i>Within 5</i>	<i>Within 6</i>
	<i>Years</i>	<i>Years</i>	<i>Years</i>
	<i>(%)</i>	<i>(%)</i>	<i>(%)</i>
<i>Entering Grade 9 in:</i>			
1980-81	22	31	34
1984-85	17	27	31
		<i>(projected)</i>	
1988-89	17	25	28

Source: Alberta Education

Table 10 illustrates high school completion rates within 4, 5, and 6 years of entering high school. Some returning dropouts complete high school as much as 10 or more years after first entering high school.

Table 10

High School Completion Rates for Students Entering Grade 9 in 1980-81, 1984-85, and 1988-89

	<i>Percent Completing High School:</i>		
	<i>Within 4</i>	<i>Within 5</i>	<i>Within 6</i>
	<i>Years</i>	<i>Years</i>	<i>Years</i>
	<i>(%)</i>	<i>(%)</i>	<i>(%)</i>
<i>Entering Grade 9 in:</i>			
1980-81	55	63	65
1984-85	56	67	69
		<i>(projected)</i>	
1988-89	55	69	72

Source: Alberta Education

Ten START (stay-in-school) Program projects funded by the Federal Government are in place and are showing some positive gains for students.

A first year evaluation of START programs found that student attendance improved by an average of 1.5%. Five projects showed improvements in attendance ranging from a high of almost 18% to a low of 1%. Three projects showed student attendance declined and two projects were not able to provide attendance figures from the previous

year. (For information about some of the interventions used in the START projects see the Native Student's section.)

The projects had an average annual dropout rate of 7.7% compared to 11.5% in a comparison group.

Three projects reported increases in student achievement. Significant improvements were reported in students' reading and mathematics skills.

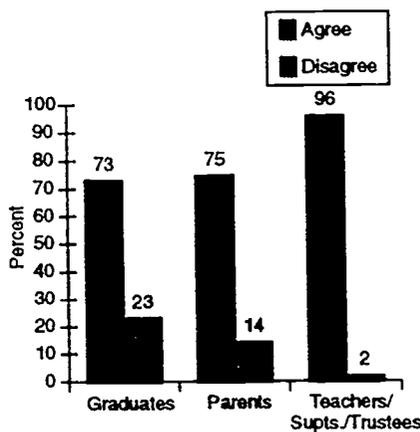
High school graduates, parents, teachers, school superintendents and trustees surveyed in 1992 felt that students are encouraged to stay in school.

The surveys found that teachers, superintendents, and trustees were more positive in response to the question "students are encouraged to stay in school" than were graduates and parents. Twenty-three percent of graduates said they did not feel encouraged to stay in school (see Figure 10).

About 60% of graduates and parent respondents felt that schools have good Health or Career and Life Management (CALM) programs.

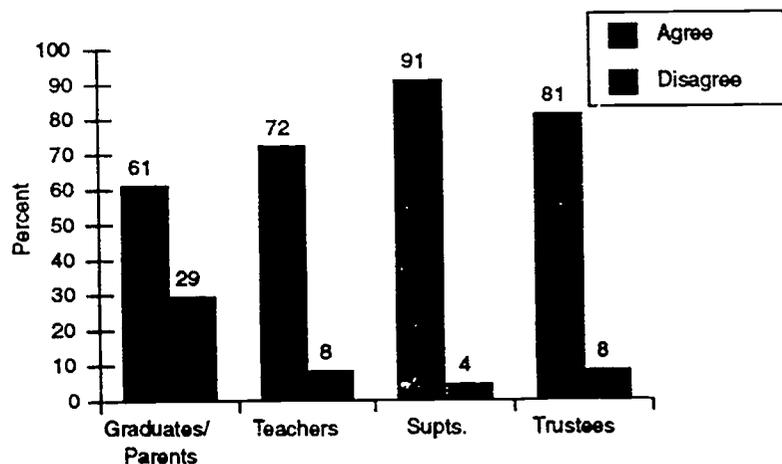
Thirty-four percent of graduates and 24% of parents disagreed (see Figure 11).

Figure 10
Students Are Encouraged to Stay in School



Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

Figure 11
"Schools Have Good Health and/or Career and Life Management (CALM) Programs"

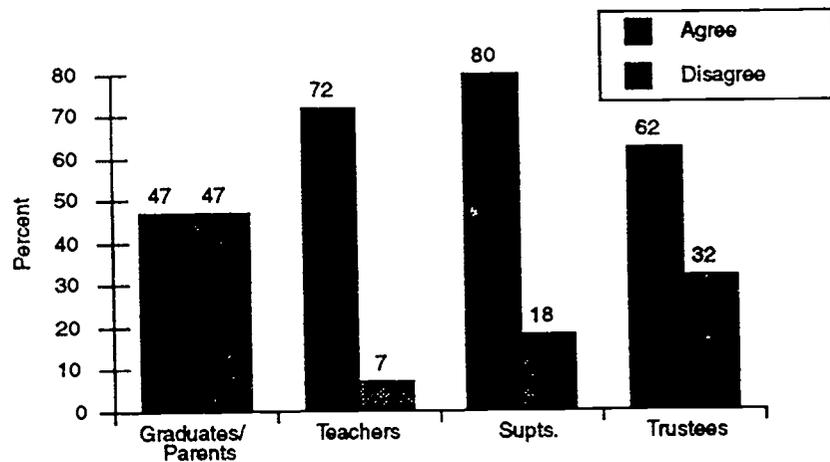


Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

Less than 50% of graduates and parents said that teaching staff provide helpful advice to students about choosing a career.

In contrast, 72% of teachers agreed with this statement. Eighty percent of superintendents and 62% of trustees felt that teaching staff provide helpful advice to students about choosing a career (see Figure 12).

Figure 12
“Teaching Staff Provide Helpful Advice to Students About Choosing a Career”

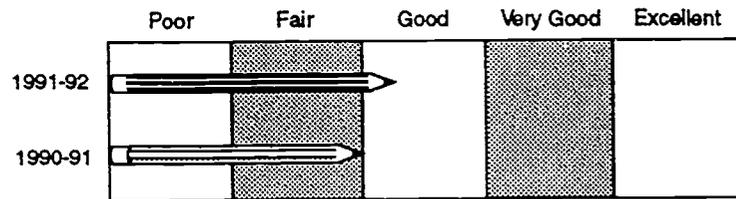


Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

Career programs and helpful advice about how to obtain and keep a successful career position help persuade students that finishing high school is more likely to lead to a successful career.

Rating of this priority

Students stay in school



Rationale for 1991-92 rating

The annual dropout rate for 14-18 year olds has declined from 12.4% in 1978-79 to 6.3% in 1990-91. The percentage of students completing high school is estimated to have increased from about 60% to 70% over the last ten years. Some stay-in-school projects show promising gains. More active support is needed for some students to stay in school. This priority is rated as good, slightly better than in 1990-91.

Questions to ask

What is the dropout rate in your school or school jurisdiction?

What programs are in place in your schools/school jurisdiction to encourage students to stay in school? Are they working?

Are the guidance and counselling programs in your schools effective?

What could I do to help persuade students to complete high school?

Success for Native children

Native children achieve success in school. Our Native students must be challenged to excel and achieve their best.

Results expected

- *More Native students graduate from high school*
- *Native students are well prepared for citizenship, for success in the workplace, and for the challenges of post-secondary education*
- *Schools meet the needs and interests of Native students*
- *Native people are satisfied with their involvement in education*
- *All students have a better understanding of Native culture and values*

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What we know

More Native students are graduating from high school.

Alberta Education information about Native students in schools (excluding band-operated schools) indicates that 64% (450) of the 700 Native students starting grade 12 in September 1991 graduated with a high school diploma or certificate. About 40 more Native students graduated in 1991-92 than in 1990-91, a 10% increase.

More Native students are enrolled in grade 12 and are completing the school year.

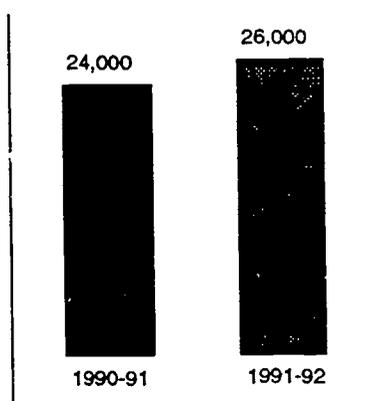
The 700 Native students who enrolled in grade 12 in September 1991 represent about a 5% increase over the previous year. About 600 of these Native students were still enrolled in June 1992. This is almost a 20% increase over the grade 12 Native student enrollment in June 1991.

More Native students are enrolled in Alberta schools.

The 56 Alberta school jurisdictions participating in the Native Education Project report that more than 26,000 Native students were enrolled in the 370 Alberta schools in the project in the 1991-92 school year. This is approximately a 10% increase over the number of Native students enrolled in the 1990-91 school year (see Figure 13).

Figure 13

Native Students in Alberta Schools in Native Education Project



Source: Alberta Education

Native students in two START (Stay-in-school) Program projects showed attendance gains and (in one project) significant improvements in reading.

Marginal improvements in mathematics were also reported in one project. These are key findings from first year (1991-92) evaluations of the two START projects for Native students. Projects used a variety of approaches to help Native students adjust to stress in their lives and to learn better in school. These included tutoring, counselling, work experience, home visits to parents, mentoring, and career awareness classes.

Native Parent Advisory Committees are in place and active in 75% of the 56 Alberta school jurisdictions participating in the Native Education Project.

Some jurisdictions are reported as having difficulty getting parent participation. Some parents said they do not have school jurisdiction support to be participants in education.

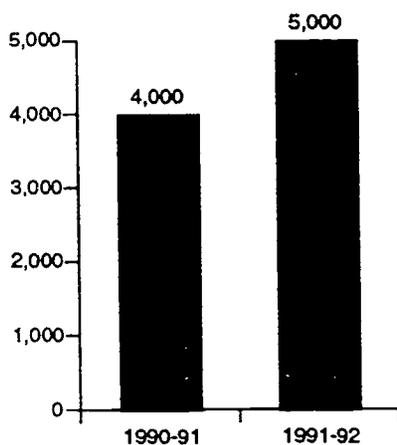
More than 5,000 students are enrolled in Native language courses—Cree, Blackfoot, Sarcee, Chipewyan.

This is a 25% increase over the number of students enrolled in Native language courses in the 1990-91 school year (see Figure 14). It is estimated that almost 3% of the enrolled students in 1991-92 are non-Native.

Superintendents and trustees are more positive than teachers about the preparation of Native students for citizenship, the workplace, and post-secondary education.

A 1992 survey found that less than one third of each group believe that Native students are prepared for citizenship. Trustees were more than twice as positive as superintendents and almost three times as positive as teachers about Native student preparation for the workplace. Trustees and superintendents were slightly more positive than teachers about Native student preparation for post-secondary education. Close to half of each group did not respond to parts of this survey question on Native students (see Table 11).

Figure 14
Student Enrollment in Native Language Courses



Source: Alberta Education

Table 11
Stakeholder Perceptions of the Preparation of Graduating Native Students (1992)

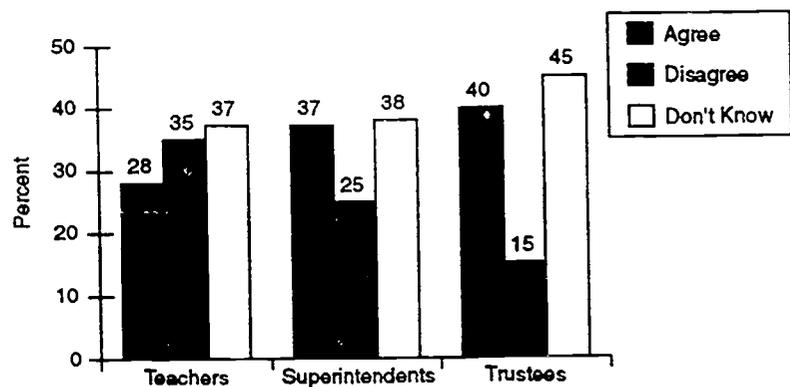
		Agree %	Disagree %	No opinion %
<i>for citizenship</i>	teachers	27	28	45
	supts.	32	20	48
	trustees	27	15	58
<i>for successful entry into workplace</i>	teachers	21	32	47
	supts.	27	34	39
	trustees	59	19	22
<i>for entry into post-secondary education</i>	teachers	21	32	47
	supts.	28	25	47
	trustees	30	11	59

Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

Superintendents and trustees are more positive than teachers about the effectiveness of schools in meeting the educational needs of Native students.

A 1992 survey found that 40% of trustees and 37% of superintendents felt that schools are meeting these needs effectively. This compares to 28% of teachers. Thirty-seven to 45% of respondents in all three groups offered no opinion to this survey question on Native students (see Figure 15).

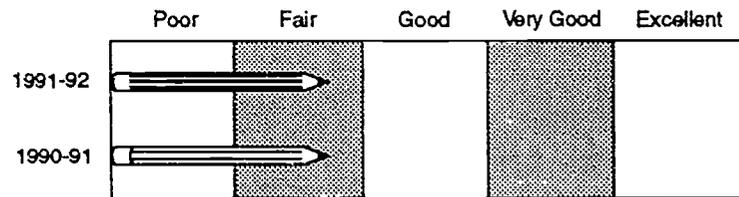
Figure 15
"Schools Are Effective at Meeting the Educational Requirements of Native Students"



Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

Rating of this priority

Success for Native children



Rationale for 1991-92 rating

More Native students are enrolled in and completing grade 12 and graduating. Gains in stay-in-school projects for Native students are promising. Surveys indicate Native student preparation for life beyond high school needs improvement. Schools are challenged to do a better job to meet the educational needs of Native students and improve academic achievement. This rating of fair is not changed from 1990-91.

Questions to ask

If Native students are enrolled in your schools, what is your school/school jurisdiction doing to help them be more successful?

What should your schools do to meet the educational needs of Native students more effectively?

Are there differences in the success of Native and non-Native students in your schools? If so, why?

What programs are in place in your schools to increase Native awareness among students and staff? Are these programs working well?

What is your school/school jurisdiction doing to prevent Native students from dropping out? Is this making a difference?

Success for immigrant children

Children new to Canada take their full place. Our immigrant students must get the skills they need to participate fully in our society.

Results expected

- *Immigrant students are well prepared for citizenship, for success in the workplace, and for the challenges of post-secondary education*

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What we know

In 1991, nearly 17,000 people immigrated to Alberta. Eighty-seven percent of immigrants to Alberta settled in Edmonton or Calgary. More than 3,400 new immigrant students entered our schools in 1991-92.

Nearly 50% of the immigrants came from Asia and the Pacific Rim countries, 20% from Europe, 10% from Africa and the Middle East, 10% from Central or South America, 4% from Australia and 4% from the United States.

More than 85% of all immigrants had a native language other than English, but about half had a knowledge of English. Almost 18% of the new immigrant students who entered our schools in 1991-92 had no formal schooling. Eighty-five percent (530) of these children were in the five to nine years' age group.

Enrollments in English as a Second Language (ESL) programs have increased from 8,067 students in 1990-91 to 8,490 in 1991-92.

About 85% of all students who received ESL instruction in 1991-92 attended school in Calgary or Edmonton.

Four of the ten students who received the Rutherford Scholar Award in 1992 immigrated to Canada during their school years and have a language other than English as their native language.

The ten Alberta high school students with the highest academic achievement on the grade 12 diploma exams receive Rutherford Scholar Awards. These awards were first presented in 1992.

Most respondents to a 1992 survey said that students from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds are encouraged and assisted by Alberta's schools and school jurisdictions.

The percentage of respondents agreeing with this statement ranged from a high of 85% of teachers to a low of 55% of high school graduates. As most school jurisdictions do not have many immigrant students, 39% of parents and 22% of graduates did not provide a response to this survey question (see Table 12).

Table 12**"School/School Jurisdiction Encourages/Assists Students from Different Cultures and Ethnic Backgrounds" (1992)**

	<i>Agree</i> (%)	<i>Disagree</i> (%)	<i>Don't Know</i> (%)
<i>Teachers</i>	85	7	8
<i>Supts.</i>	87	6	7
<i>Trustees</i>	83	2	15
<i>Graduates</i>	62	16	22
<i>Parents</i>	55	6	39

Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

Superintendents are more positive than teachers and trustees about the preparation of immigrant students for citizenship, the workplace, and post-secondary education.

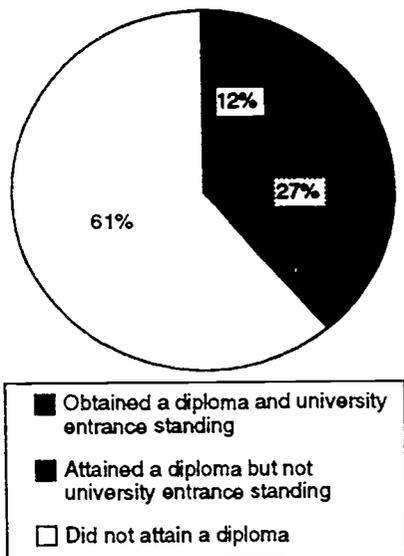
A 1992 survey found superintendents, trustees, and teachers agreed that graduating students who immigrated to Alberta are well prepared for citizenship, the workplace, and post-secondary education. About 30 to 40 percent of all three groups did not offer an opinion to this survey question on immigrant students (see Table 13).

Table 13**Stakeholder Perceptions of the Preparation of Graduating Immigrant Students (1992)**

		<i>Agree</i> (%)	<i>Disagree</i> (%)	<i>Don't Know</i> (%)
<i>for citizenship</i>	<i>teachers</i>	54	11	35
	<i>supts.</i>	62	7	31
	<i>trustees</i>	55	6	39
<i>for successful entry into the workforce</i>	<i>teachers</i>	46	15	39
	<i>supts.</i>	56	11	33
	<i>trustees</i>	45	19	36
<i>for entry into post-secondary education</i>	<i>teachers</i>	49	11	40
	<i>supts.</i>	64	7	29
	<i>trustees</i>	59	6	35

Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

Figure 16
Students Who Took ESL in Junior or Senior High School



Source: Alberta Education

A 1992 study of 165 immigrant students who took English as a Second Language (ESL) in junior or senior high school found that many excel in school, often attaining considerably more than the minimum diploma requirements of 100 credits.

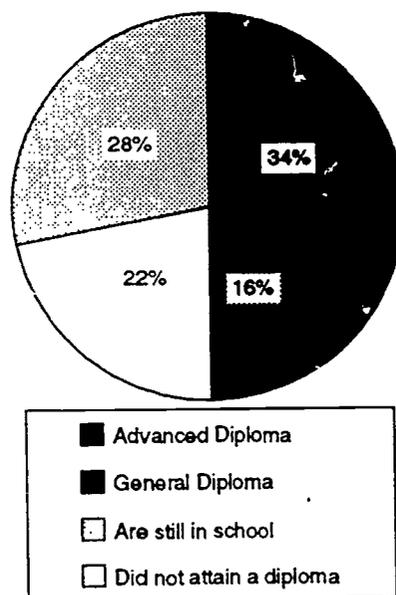
In 1986-87, school boards claimed ESL grants for more than 1100 students in grades 8 through 12. The grant claim forms provided a list of names of immigrant students from which a random sample of 165 high school transcripts was generated. Analysis of the transcripts revealed that nineteen students (12%) attained university entrance standing (see Figure 16). These students earned an average of 116 credits and many completed at least three of Math 30, Math 31, Physics 30, Chemistry 30, or Biology 30. Sixty-four students (39%) in the sample earned a high school diploma (Alberta Education, 1992).

This review of high school transcripts also found that 61% of the students in this sample had not attained an Alberta high school diploma.

About 34% of Alberta's high school students do not attain a high school diploma.

The students in the sample had the most difficulty in social studies as only 17% completed either Social Studies 30 or 33. Lack of English language skills, and limited educational opportunities before coming to Alberta continue to be a major challenge for those who did not attain a diploma (Alberta Education, 1992).

Figure 17
Students Who Took ESL in Elementary School



Source: Alberta Education

Immigrant students who received ESL instruction in elementary school attained about the same level of success in high school as other Alberta students.

A review of the high school transcripts of 153 immigrant students who took ESL in grades 5 or 6 in 1984-85 found that 34% attained an advanced diploma, 16% attained a general diploma, 28% were still in school, and 22% did not get a diploma (see Figure 17). The sample, drawn from a large urban board, represented about 65% of all grade 5 and 6 students who received ESL instruction from that board during the 1984-85 school year (Alberta Education, 1992).

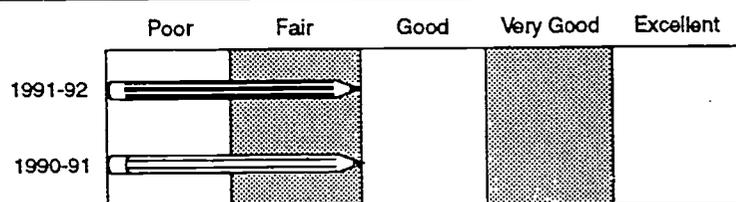
Students from one large urban board who received ESL instruction in grades one to three during the 1986-87 school year scored lower on the 1992 Grade 6 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test than did students in the general population.

About 70% of the students in the sample attained the *Acceptable* or *Higher Standard* and less than 8% attained the *Standard of Excellence*. This is below the performance of grade 6 students provincially, 75.6% of whom attained the *Acceptable* or *Higher Standard* and 9.5% the *Standard of Excellence* (Alberta Education, 1992).

The age at which immigrant students enter Alberta schools, and the time they have been in the school system, may affect the level of academic achievement and their adaptation to school (Alberta Education, 1992).

Rating of this priority

Success for immigrant children



Rationale for 1991-92 rating

Service delivery to immigrant students has not changed. A study of the academic achievements of a sample of immigrant students indicates some are very successful in school, while others experience considerable difficulty. The low graduation rate of students who receive ESL in junior or senior high school indicates that these students continue to have educational needs which are not yet being met. This priority is rated fair, the same as in 1990-91.

Questions to ask

How do the results of immigrant students in your school/school jurisdiction compare to the results of the general student population?

What is your school/school jurisdiction doing to improve the academic success of immigrant students?

Has your school jurisdiction implemented programs to meet the diverse needs of immigrant students? Are these effective?

Are parents of immigrants and other members of the immigrant community actively involved in the education of their children? What is being done to improve the ways they are involved?

Doing what's best for disabled students

Meeting the needs of disabled students: Integration into the regular classroom must be the norm for disabled students and will give them the chance they need to learn and to become full participants in our schools and in our society. Our focus must be on doing what's best for disabled students – developing their full potential.

Results expected

- *Students with special needs are full participants in our schools and our society*
- *All schools are physically accessible to persons with disabilities*

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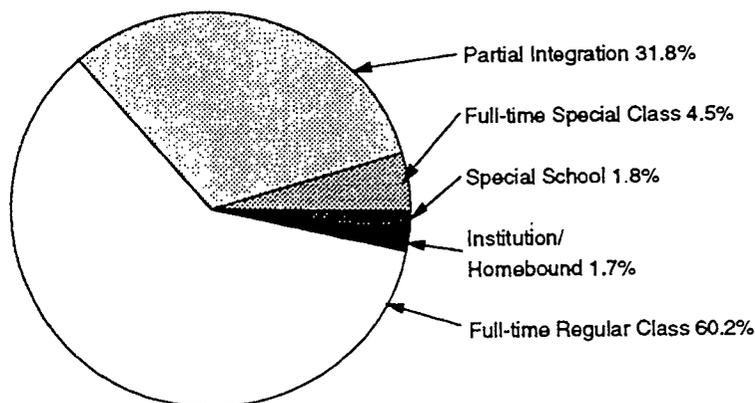
What we know

More than 90% of Alberta students with special needs in grades 1 to 12 were fully or partially integrated into the regular classroom in 1991-92.

Just over 6 out of every 10 students with special needs were in regular classrooms full-time, and almost 1 in 3 were partially integrated (see Figure 18). Less than 9% of all Alberta students in 1991-92 were identified as having disabilities, with about 8% of all students having mild or moderate disabilities (Alberta Education, 1992).

Figure 18

Educational Settings for Alberta Students with Special Needs, 1991-92



Source: Alberta Education

In 1991, superintendents were asked about the extent of integration of students with special needs in schools in their jurisdictions. The survey found variation in the extent these students are integrated in classrooms across the province (Alberta Education, 1992).

More schools are accessible to students and parents who have physical disabilities.

Over one third of Alberta schools are barrier free. In 1991-92, fifty-three more schools received approvals to be made accessible. About 50% of Alberta's schools will be barrier free by 1995. Two thirds of graduates, teachers, and trustees surveyed in 1992 and about 90% of superintendents said that schools are accessible to students with physical disabilities. Just under half of the parents surveyed agreed, but more than 40% did not know (Alberta Education, 1992).

- *Teachers have the training, support, and learning resources they need to integrate students with special needs*
- *Parents, students, and teachers are satisfied that students with special needs are well served*
- *Government and community agencies coordinate their services more effectively so that students with special needs have the supports they need to develop their full potential*

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A 1990 survey found that Alberta teachers feel integration of students with disabilities benefits all students, but integration is not working well enough in our schools and classrooms.

The survey of special education and regular classroom teachers found that fewer than half (46%) felt that integration was working well, and about 20% felt it was not working (The Alberta Teachers' Association, 1992).

Two thirds said students with special needs were accepted when integrated and felt that integration benefited all students. About three quarters reported that teachers did not have enough time to integrate special needs students in their classrooms successfully (The Alberta Teachers' Association, 1992).

The majority of educators surveyed in 1992 said they are comfortable with their knowledge and skills for integrating students with special needs. However, they wanted more inservice programs and better teaching materials.

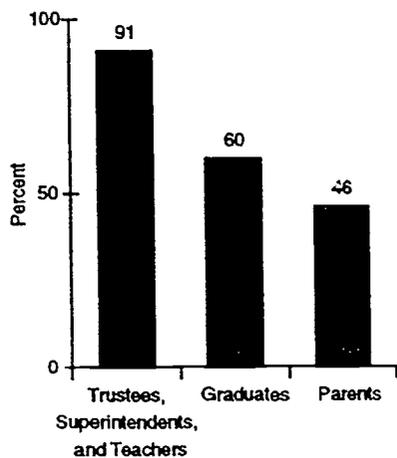
About 60% of the teachers and administrators surveyed in 1992 reported being comfortable with their knowledge and skills for working with special needs students (Alberta Education, 1992). However, over three quarters of teachers, and almost 60% of superintendents and trustees surveyed in 1992 did not agree that teachers have the training, support, and learning resources they need to integrate students with disabilities (Alberta Education, 1992).

Just over 60% of teachers reported having taken at least one university course in special education, and about three quarters had direct experience teaching students with special needs (The Alberta Teachers' Association, 1992; Alberta Education, 1992).

More than half the teachers surveyed in 1990 had attended inservice programs in special education, but about two thirds felt that their availability was inadequate. Nearly all these teachers viewed inservice programs and materials on integration as important (The Alberta Teachers' Association, 1992).

Superintendents surveyed in 1991 said more support for integration is being provided to teachers compared with two years ago, yet only one third of superintendents reported offering inservice for teachers on integration of disabled students in their jurisdiction (Alberta Education, 1992).

Figure 19
Schools Encourage Students with Special Needs



Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

More than 40% of teachers surveyed in 1991 rated program materials for students with special needs as excellent or adequate but about the same percentage said they were inadequate (Alberta Education, 1992; The Alberta Teachers' Association, 1992). Few teachers were familiar with Alberta Education documents developed for use with students with special needs (Alberta Education, 1992).

Surveys done in 1992 found that people who work in education are more satisfied than high school graduates and parents with the education provided to students with special needs. These education respondents also felt that these students are better prepared for citizenship than for the workplace or post-secondary education.

Almost two thirds of teachers and more than three quarters of superintendents and trustees surveyed in 1992 agreed that students with special needs are full participants in Alberta schools. Over 90% of educators and trustees agreed that schools encourage students with special needs, but fewer graduates and parents held this opinion – 60% of graduates and 46% of parents surveyed (see Figure 19). Nearly one third of the graduates and half the parents said they did not know.

Almost 80% of superintendents and about 60% of teachers and trustees surveyed in 1992 agreed that graduating students with special needs are prepared for citizenship. Slightly less than half the superintendents (48%) and more than a third of teachers and trustees agreed these students are prepared for the workplace, and about 30% agreed they are prepared for post-secondary studies. Between about one quarter and one third of respondents (except superintendents) said they did not know (see Table 14).

Table 14**Stakeholder Perceptions of the Preparation of Graduating Disabled Students (1992)**

		Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Don't Know (%)
<i>for citizenship</i>	<i>teachers</i>	56	19	25
	<i>supts.</i>	79	12	9
	<i>trustees</i>	62	15	23
<i>for successful entry into the workforce</i>	<i>teachers</i>	36	33	31
	<i>supts.</i>	48	40	12
	<i>trustees</i>	38	36	26
<i>for entry into post-secondary education</i>	<i>teachers</i>	27	38	35
	<i>supts.</i>	35	52	13
	<i>trustees</i>	29	42	29

Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

Government and community-based services for disabled students have to be better coordinated.

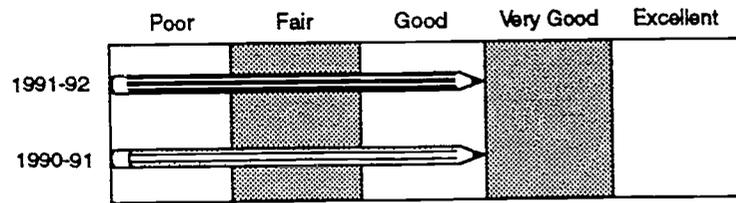
In a 1991 survey of more than 600 individuals and groups in education and other organizations, including government departments and agencies, the most often mentioned areas for improvement included: better coordination across government departments and programs, a need for school-based coordinators, and a need for a support services information system. School jurisdictions and private schools reported in 1991 that 13 types of government and 4 types of non-government agencies were involved in special education programs from ECS to Grade 12 (Alberta Education, 1992).

Several Alberta government departments (Education, Health, Family and Social Services, Justice) are working with communities on new and enhanced service arrangements to improve the coordination of programs and services for children and youth in need, and their families.

Provincial procedures to deal with placement of students with special needs and student attendance problems that are not resolved locally focus on interdepartmental and interagency coordination and cooperation. In 1991-92, the decisions of the three special needs tribunals and the actions of the Student Attendance Board in the majority of its 79 cases are examples of efforts that provide coordinated services to meet the needs of students better.

Rating of this priority

Doing what's best for disabled students



Rationale for 1991-92 rating

Attitudes and efforts toward integration of disabled students are positive and most of these students are fully or partially integrated into regular classrooms. More schools are accessible to students and parents with physical disabilities. Teacher training, resource materials, and access to inservice programs need improvement to make integration work better. People who work in education are more satisfied than students and parents with the education of students with special needs. Services for disabled students need to be coordinated better. The rating for 1991-92 is the same as the previous year.

Questions to ask

To what extent are special needs students integrated into regular classrooms in your schools/school jurisdiction?

Do the teachers with special needs students in their classrooms have the preparation and support they need to integrate these students and meet their learning needs effectively? Where can teachers get help with integration?

What are your schools/school jurisdiction doing to meet the needs of disabled students? Is it effective?

Are the services available to students with special needs in your community and schools coordinated effectively? What else could be done?

How are students in your school/school jurisdiction benefiting from provincial special education funding?

What else can you/your schools do to help students with special needs get the education they need?

Challenging our most capable students

*Achieving and excelling:
Our brightest and most
capable students must be
challenged to excel.*

Results expected

- *Our most capable students are challenged and develop their talents to the fullest; they meet and exceed the standards of the best post-secondary institutions in the world*
- *Students are recognized for excellence in a broad range of endeavors*
- *Specialized schools enlarge the opportunities for students to develop their strengths and talents*

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What we know

Schools are addressing the needs of capable students in a variety of ways.

Capable students include those who are gifted or those who have talents in one or more areas. School boards and teachers across Alberta are addressing the diverse needs of our most capable students through a variety of programs across all grade levels.

Examples of programs for capable students include the following:

The Counties of Wheatland and Vulcan, and Willow Creek, Foothills, and Rocky View School Divisions have worked extensively with the Centre for Gifted Education at the University of Calgary on a project designed to help teachers develop student thinking skills in the classroom.

Malmö Elementary School in Edmonton offers extensive computer instruction to students. The school has entered into a partnership with Apple Canada.

F.E. Osborne Junior High School in Calgary has been participating in an evaluation of an accelerated mathematics program to find out which entrance requirements to the program are the best indicators of success for students.

The County of Parkland provides programs for creativity, independent study, critical thinking, and communication. Students in grades 1-3 use materials designed to develop creativity in language, drama and art. In grades 4-6, students develop leadership and social skills, and grade 7-9 students develop skills in divergent and analytical thinking.

Grande Cache School District has two programs to provide both laboratory and work-site training in a number of vocational and service related fields. The apprenticeship program has been so successful that in a recent contract, the employer agreed to engage 25% of its apprentices from the graduates of the program.

Two international high school programs are provided in Alberta. The Advanced Placement Program is offered in 39 high schools, and the International Baccalaureate Program is offered in 11 Alberta high schools.

Some boards have designated special schools to offer programs to challenge capable students. Three examples of high schools that provide

alternative programs include Father Lacombe School in Calgary, a magnet science school, Foothills Composite in Okotoks which provides programming for community cable television, and Victoria Composite High School in Edmonton which offers visual and performing arts programs.

Skills Canada is a cooperative venture in which business and industry, labor, education, and other government agencies emphasize leadership and technological careers by providing students with the opportunities to experience both in practical settings. St. Joseph Catholic High School in Edmonton is an active participant in the program.

Professional development initiatives provided through a wide range of partnerships are addressing the educational practices of teachers of capable students.

Since 1989, the Centre for Gifted Education at the University of Calgary has delivered over 400 workshops and consultative service sessions to more than 3,500 teachers, parents, administrators, and school board members to serve the needs of the most capable students.

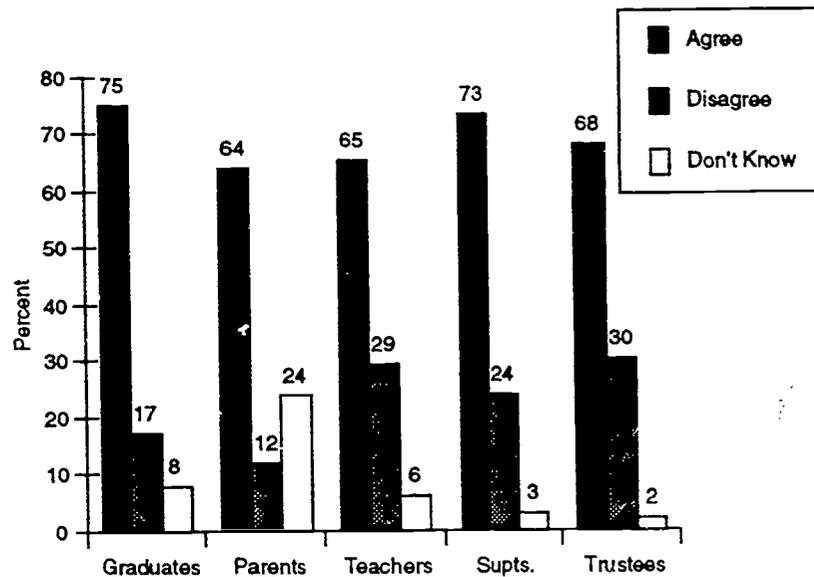
The Alberta Teachers' Association's Gifted and Talented Education Council provides professional development to teachers from ECS to grade 12 which focuses on the most capable students so that the overall quality of educational practices for gifted and talented learners in Alberta can be improved.

An umbrella group, the Society for the Advancement of Gifted Education (SAGE), was initiated by the Centre for Gifted Education at the University of Calgary to offer professional development for teachers. SAGE includes representatives from the University of Calgary, University of Alberta, the Gifted and Talented Education Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association, the Alberta Association for Bright Children, and the Alberta Education Response Centre. This group organizes an annual conference to highlight issues in gifted education. In 1993, the conference will be held in Edmonton.

Graduates, parents and people who work in education, surveyed in 1992, said our most capable students are challenged.

The surveys found about two thirds of teachers, superintendents, and trustees felt our most capable students are challenged. Three quarters of recent high school graduates and about two thirds of parent respondents said their high school challenged very good students to do even better (see Figure 20).

Figure 20
Capable Students Are Challenged



Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

Graduates said they enjoyed high school, worked hard and were encouraged to do their best.

About 80% of graduates responding to a 1992 survey agreed that they had enjoyed high school and that the teaching staff encouraged them to do their best. About three quarters of the graduates said they worked hard to get the grades they received. Parents held similar perceptions about their child's enjoyment, encouragement, and hard work. More than two thirds of the graduates reported earning an advanced diploma (43% an advanced diploma and 25% an advanced diploma with excellence).

About 90% of graduates and their parents felt that their high school recognized student achievement in a variety of areas.

Graduates reported that their high school recognized achievement in academic, artistic, athletic, technical and other areas (42% agreed and 49% strongly agreed). Parents were also positive (52% agreed and 37% strongly agreed).

More than the expected 15% of students achieved the standard of excellence on achievement tests over the past five years, but some shortfalls have occurred since 1990.

Since 1988, more than the expected 15% of students achieved the standard of excellence on 10 of the 15 achievement tests in the core subjects at grades 3, 6 and 9. Three of the shortfalls were in language arts; four of the five shortfalls occurred since 1990. There is a consistent decline in the percentage of students achieving excellence at grade 9. Table 15 presents the results.

Table 15
Percentage of Students Achieving the Standard of Excellence on the Total Achievement Tests from 1988 to 1992

<i>Year</i>	<i>Grade 3 (%)</i>	<i>Grade 6 (%)</i>	<i>Grade 9 (%)</i>
1988	18.8 SS	9.9 LA	24.3 Ma
1989	16.1 LA	16.6 SS	22.9 Sc
1990	26.9 Ma	24.6 Sc	10.8 LA
1991	16.6 Sc	20.6 Ma	8.1 SS
1992	15.9 SS	9.5 LA	8.9 Ma

Ma – mathematics; Sc – science; LA – language arts; SS – social studies

Source: Alberta Education

Our most capable academic students continued to do well in diploma exam courses in 1992; similar percentages of students achieved the standard of excellence as in 1991.

Students continued to do well in science diploma courses with one in five students achieving the standard of excellence in Biology 30, Chemistry 30 and Physics 30. As well, 12% of students achieved excellence in English 30, 15% in Social Studies 30, and 17% in Math 30. These results are similar to those in 1991. Table 16 presents the results.

Table 16

Percentage of Students Achieving the Standard of Excellence (80% or Higher) in the Diploma Exam Courses (1991 and 1992)

<i>Diploma Exam Courses</i>	<i>1991 (%)</i>	<i>1992 (%)</i>
<i>English 30</i>	10.9	12.0
<i>English 33</i>	3.2	3.3
<i>Social Studies 30</i>	16.4	15.2
<i>Français 30</i>	17.1	6.0
<i>Mathematics 30</i>	21.5	17.4
<i>Biology 30</i>	21.8	20.5
<i>Chemistry 30</i>	23.2	22.8
<i>Physics 30</i>	25.9	24.9

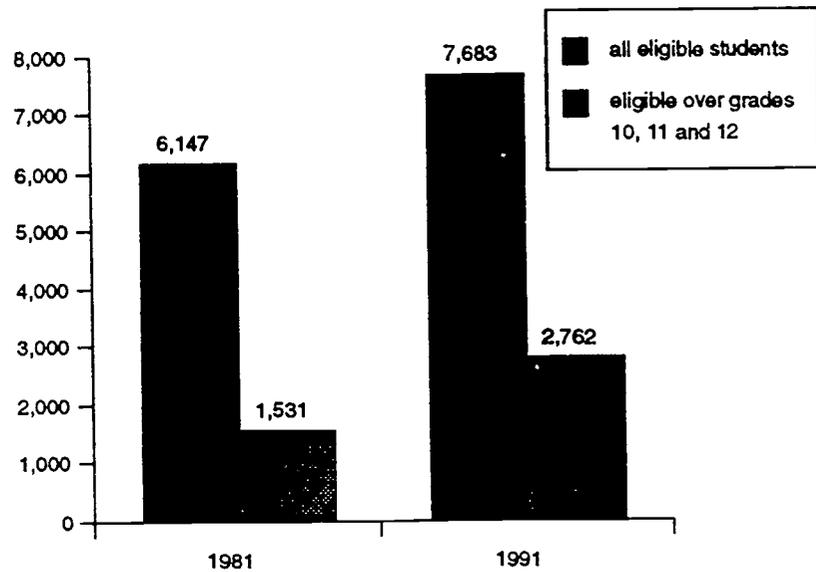
Source: Alberta Education

More students were eligible for the Rutherford Scholarship.

In 1991-92, 7,683 students were eligible for the Rutherford Scholarship. This was an increase of almost 600 students (or 8%) over 1990-91. More than a third (36%) of the eligible students (2,762) maintained an honors average over all three grades. In 1980-81, when the scholarship was introduced, 6,147 students were eligible for the award; 1,531 (25%) of these students maintained an academic standing of 80% or higher throughout their high school careers. Figure 21 displays the numbers.

Figure 21

Number of Students Eligible for the Rutherford Scholarship in 1981 and 1991



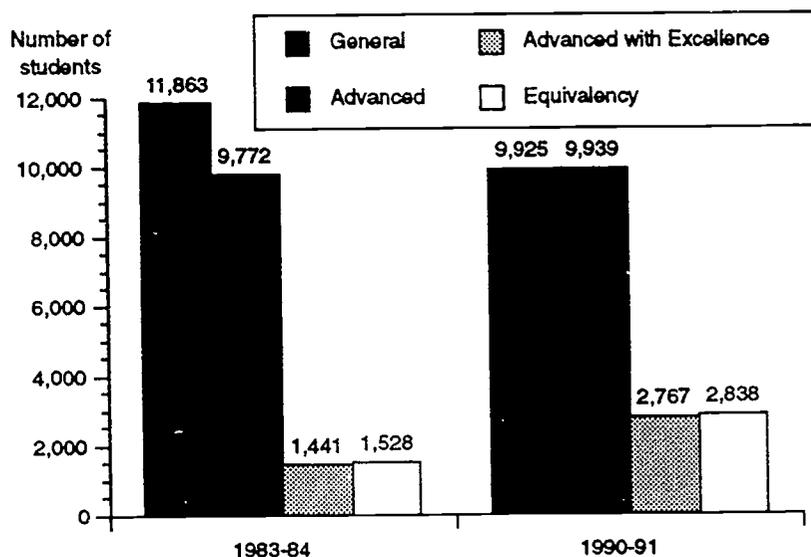
Source: Alberta Education

More students are earning an advanced diploma with excellence.

In 1990-91, 2,767 students received an advanced diploma with excellence. This number represents 11% of all high school diplomas awarded in 1990-91. The number of students who earned this diploma has almost doubled since 1984 when 6% of all diplomas were awarded with excellence. Figure 22 presents the results.

Figure 22

Types of High School Diplomas Awarded in 1983-84 and 1990-91



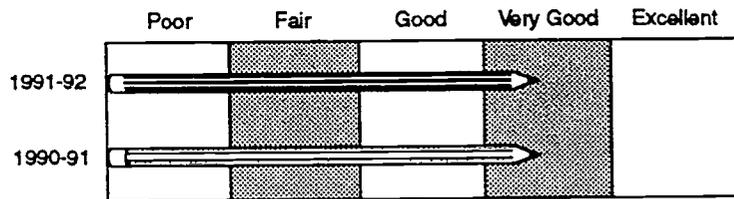
Source: Alberta Education

About 15,000 Alberta high school graduates enrolled in post-secondary institutions in Alberta in 1990-91.

The number of new full-time Alberta students entering post-secondary institutions has been fairly constant since 1988-89 at about 15,000 students. Approximately two thirds of Alberta high school graduates continue their education at Alberta post-secondary institutions, either directly or on a delayed basis.

Rating of this priority

Challenging our most capable students



Rationale for 1991-92 rating

Alberta schools offer a variety of programs to challenge our most capable students across all grade levels. Graduates and their parents are positive about opportunities for capable students and recognition of achievement. The percentage of students achieving the standard of excellence on achievement tests and diploma exams continues to be high. More students are earning an advanced diploma with excellence. Increased numbers of students are eligible for the Rutherford Scholarship. The rating for 1991-92 remains the same as last year.

Questions to ask

What are your local schools doing to challenge capable students from ECS to grade 12? Is this effective?

How do your schools recognize excellence in all program areas?

Excellence in science

Building a strong future in science: Our students must have strong backgrounds in science, be more enthusiastic about careers in science, and be able to use science and technology to understand and improve society and the world.

Results expected

- *Alberta students excel in science, and are prepared for post-secondary education and successful careers in science*
- *More students pursue careers in science, and this improves Alberta's competitiveness in the world economy*
- *Schools, business and the science community work together effectively to improve science education and students' understanding of the relevance of science concepts in today's world*

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What we know

Student participation in science continued to get better and achievement levels remained high.

In 1991-92, 44,665 students wrote diploma examinations in the science courses (21,575 males and 23,090 females) compared to 42,215 (20,404 males and 21,811 females) in 1990-91. Our top academic students continue to do very well with about 20% of senior high students achieving the standard of excellence in diploma examinations in Biology 30, 23% in Chemistry 30, and 25% in Physics 30 in 1991-92. This compares to about 22% in Biology, 23% in Chemistry and about 25% in Physics in 1990-91. (For science achievement in elementary and junior high, see the section on Basic Skills.)

The introduction of Science 10 is encouraging more students to develop an interest in science.

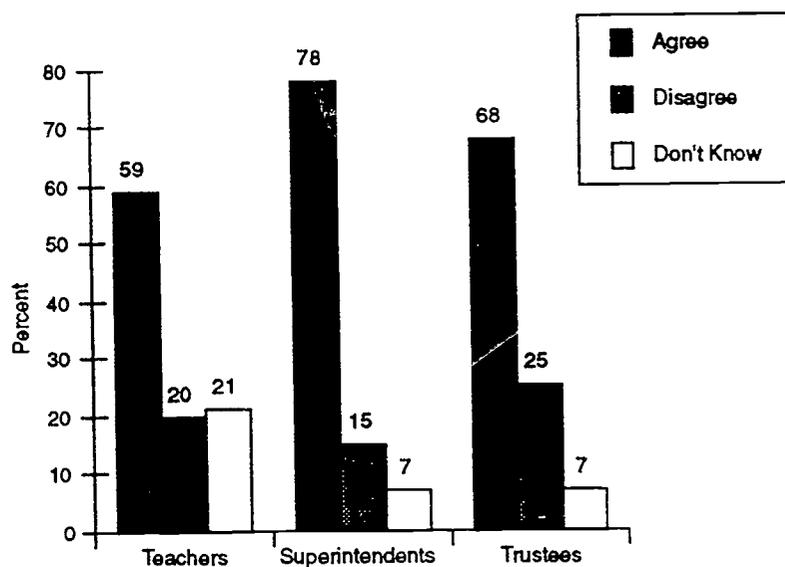
About 80% of grade 10 students took Science 10 to completion in 1991-92 in schools validating the new Science 10 course. This compares favorably with schools that offered the biology, physics and chemistry courses. In these schools, completion rates were about 65% for Biology 10, about 60% for Chemistry 10, and about 26% for Physics 10. Approximately 75% of grade 10 students took at least one science course.

Teachers, superintendents and trustees surveyed in 1992 said that students have a solid background in science but many said that students do not have a solid background in technology.

The Alberta Education survey found that 59% of teachers, 78% of superintendents and 68% of trustees agreed that students have a solid background in science. The same groups responded much less favourably when asked whether they thought that students have a solid background in technology. Thirty-six percent of teachers, 48% of superintendents and 40% of trustees agreed that students have a solid background in technology (see Figures 23 and 24).

Figure 23

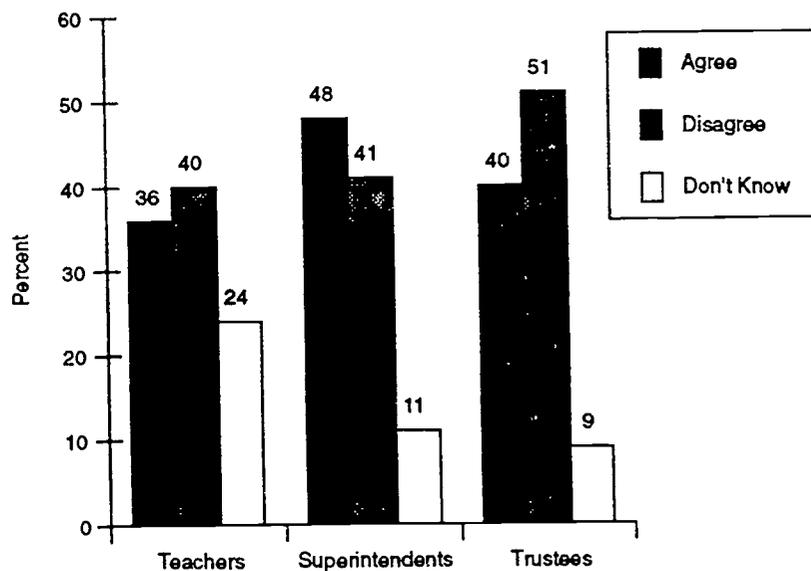
Students Have a Solid Background in Science



Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

Figure 24

Students Have a Solid Background in Technology

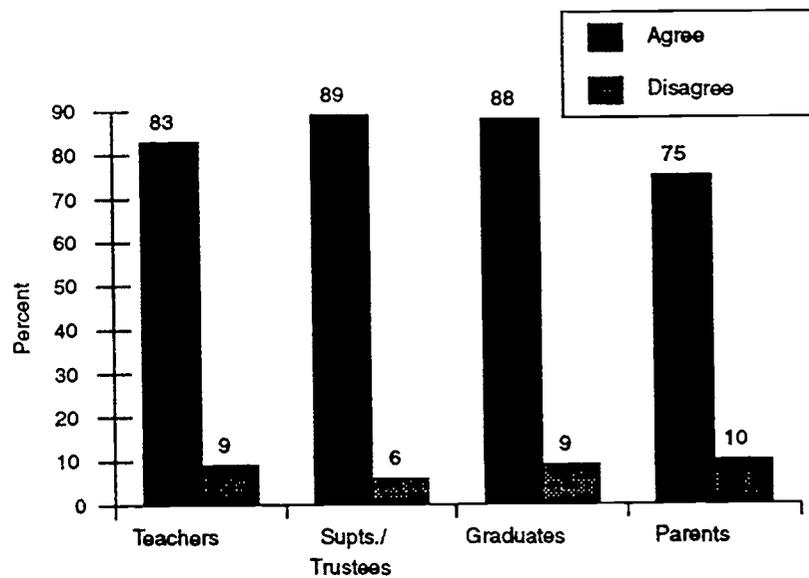


Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

Most survey respondents said that Alberta schools have good science programs, science facilities, and computer equipment.

Graduates, parents, teachers, superintendents, and trustees were asked about science programs and facilities, and computer equipment. About three quarters to almost 90% of the respondents said that schools have good science programs (see Figure 25). Fifteen percent of parents offered no opinion to this question on science programs.

Figure 25
Schools Have Good Science Programs

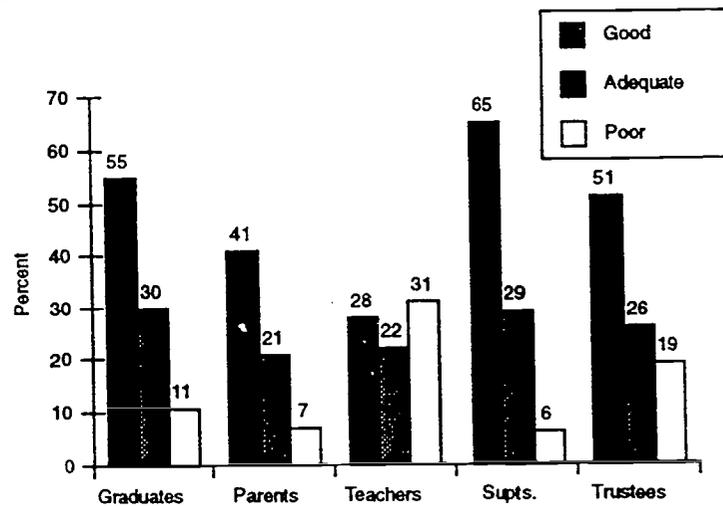


Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

There were major differences of opinion concerning the adequacy of school science facilities and computers.

Superintendents were the most positive about facilities with 65% rating them as good and 29% as adequate. Teachers were the least positive with 28% rating facilities as good, 22% as adequate and 31% as poor (see Figure 26).

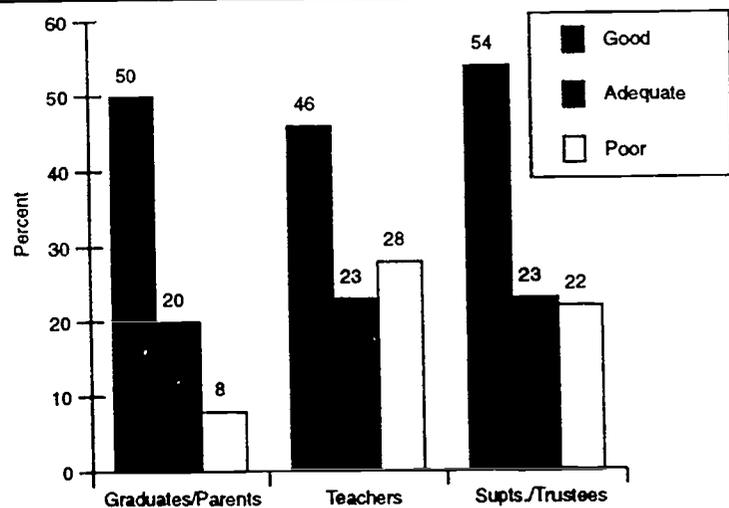
Figure 26
Ratings of the Quality of School Science Facilities



Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

With regard to the adequacy of school computer equipment, superintendents and trustees were the most positive with 54% saying it rated good, followed by graduates and parents, 50% of whom assigned a rating of good. Teachers were the least positive as less than half (46%) gave this rating (see Figure 27).

Figure 27
Ratings of the Adequacy of School Computer Equipment



Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

Post-secondary instructors responding to a 1992 survey said that high school graduates do not demonstrate the skills needed to do well in science related programs.

Instructors in post-secondary institutions were asked about the abilities of high school graduates in skill areas known to be related to strong science achievement. Graduates were perceived to be weakest in dealing with data and carrying out mathematical functions. Sixteen percent of respondents gave graduates a rating of good or excellent in the data area and 12% assigned this rating to math skills. Forty-three percent thought graduates were good or excellent in making effective use of technology and information systems. Thirty-one percent gave ratings of good or excellent for using computer technology to access, organize, analyze and communicate information. As many as 14% to 31% of respondents offered no opinion about high school graduates in these skill areas (see Table 17).

Table 17
Perceptions of Post-Secondary Instructors of the Skills of High School Graduates in Science Related Areas

	Excellent %	Good %	Fair %	Poor %	Don't Know %
<i>Extent to which graduates demonstrate the ability to:</i>					
• carry out mathematical functions	1	11	31	27	31
• make effective use of technology and information systems	5	38	32	10	14
• use computer technology to access, organize, analyze, and communicate information	3	28	31	13	25
• identify data needs, obtain the data from existing sources, and evaluate the relevance and accuracy of the data	0	16	38	25	21

Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

Public confidence in standards and achievement in science remained high.

A Public Advisory Committee in September 1992 reported that the standards for Biology 30, Chemistry 30 and Physics 30 were rigorous. It was also satisfied with the standards of excellence and the acceptable standard set for the diploma examinations.

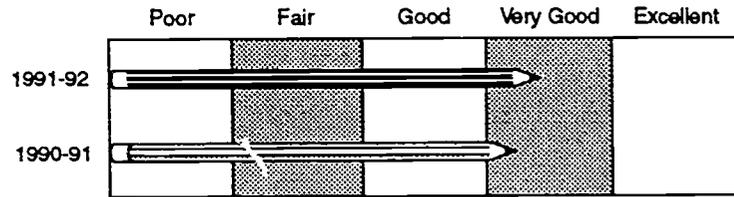
Industry Science and Technology, Canada, recognized 2793 of our most capable high school students in science and mathematics in 1992. The selection criteria for this recognition included an 80% in grade 10 mathematics and science courses. These students represented approximately 10% of grade 10 students in Alberta.

Students recognize the importance of science and technology to their lives.

Six focus groups of 12 to 15 year-old students arranged by Alberta Technology, Research and Telecommunications in March 1992, looked at their perceptions and attitudes toward science and technology. The eight to ten students participating in each focus group had a broad range of interests and career plans. The discussions showed that students recognized the importance of mathematics and science for achieving minimum education requirements, regardless of career choice. The students also concluded that there is still a lack of science role models for young women.

Rating of this priority

Excellence in science



Rationale for 1991-92 rating

Senior high students continue to do very well in science diploma examinations. Survey respondents say graduates have a good background in science, and that schools have good science programs and facilities. Post-secondary instructors think that graduates' science skills need improvement. This priority is rated slightly better than in 1990-91.

Questions to ask

What is the participation rate in science courses in your schools/school jurisdiction? Are there differences in the participation rate for males and females?

How do the results of diploma examinations in science courses in your schools/school jurisdiction compare with the results for the province?

Do the graduates from your schools/school jurisdiction have a solid background in science?

Are the science facilities in your schools/school jurisdiction adequate?

How accessible are computers for student use in your schools/school jurisdiction? How are computers used?

How many graduates from your schools/school jurisdiction enter post-secondary institutions in science fields?

Excellence in teaching

Teachers are key: We must support and empower teachers to meet the diverse and changing needs of students and to improve student results.

Results expected

- *Alberta's teaching force is exemplary in its knowledge and practice; this is reflected in student performance that is second to none*
- *Teachers have high learning expectations for all students*
- *Teachers are able to focus their teaching efforts on helping each student achieve the expectations set out in the curriculum*
- *Students throughout Alberta and in all specialty areas have well-trained teachers*

continued on next page

What we know

Alberta's teaching force is better educated and more experienced each year.

In 1991-92, nearly 98% of Alberta teachers had an undergraduate degree, an increase of five percentage points since 1981-82. Just over 12% of Alberta teachers also had a graduate degree, compared to about 10% in 1981-82.

The average years of teaching experience for Alberta teachers was 13.7 in 1991-92, compared to 11.2 years in 1981-82. This is more than a 20% increase.

The number of Alberta teachers nominated for Excellence in Teaching Awards in 1992 increased by 52% over 1991.

This year, 567 Alberta Teachers were nominated for excellence; last year 373 were nominated. Nearly 1,100 Alberta teachers have been recognized for excellence since the awards program began in 1989.

The number of students per teacher in Alberta schools has decreased over the last ten years but the student-teacher ratio is still high.

In 1991-92, the student-teacher ratio in Alberta schools was 16.9. The ratio has remained stable for the last three years, having declined from 18.2 in 1981-82 (Alberta Education). Alberta's student-teacher ratio is high compared to most other parts of Canada (Statistics Canada).

Alberta's teaching force is aging; more teacher retirements are likely to increase the demand for teachers in about 5 years.

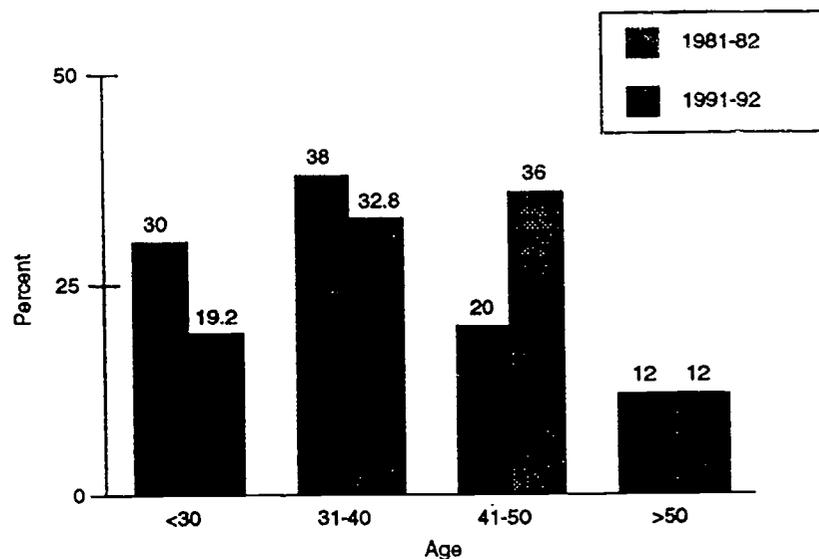
The average age of Alberta teachers is almost 40, compared to the national average age of 42. Ten years ago, the average age of Alberta teachers was 36.4 (Alberta Education, Statistics Canada).

Since 1981-82, the proportion of Alberta teachers over 40 years of age has increased from less than one third of the teaching force to almost half, and the proportion under 40 years of age has decreased from more than two thirds to just over half (see Figure 28). Teacher retirements in Alberta are expected to double over current levels starting in about five years. This will increase the demand for teachers, as student enrollments are expected to continue to increase.

- Teachers are better able to match their teaching strategies to the unique learning needs of each student
- Teachers are satisfied that their professional development opportunities improve their teaching practices

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Figure 28
Percentage of Teachers by Age Group, 1981-82 and 1991-92



Source: Alberta Education

Teachers who recently graduated from Alberta Faculties of Education said they are not well enough prepared to manage curriculum change, student assessment, diverse student needs, and parental expectations.

Alberta studies since the mid-1980s found that new education graduates, as well as experienced teachers, face increasing expectations in Alberta schools (Alberta Education, The Alberta Teachers' Association). The Faculties of Education, in cooperation with Alberta Education and other stakeholders, are working on improving teacher preparation programs to ensure beginning teachers have the skills needed to enter the teaching profession.

The COATS Teacher Education Task Force is working on proposals dealing with standards for beginning and experienced teachers, selection and admission requirements to Faculties of Education, transition into teaching options for beginning teachers, and teacher supply and demand.

About 20% of Alberta teachers responding to a 1992 survey said they experience high levels of stress.

This finding compares to 17% of teachers nation wide who said they experience high levels of stress. The proportion of teachers in the high

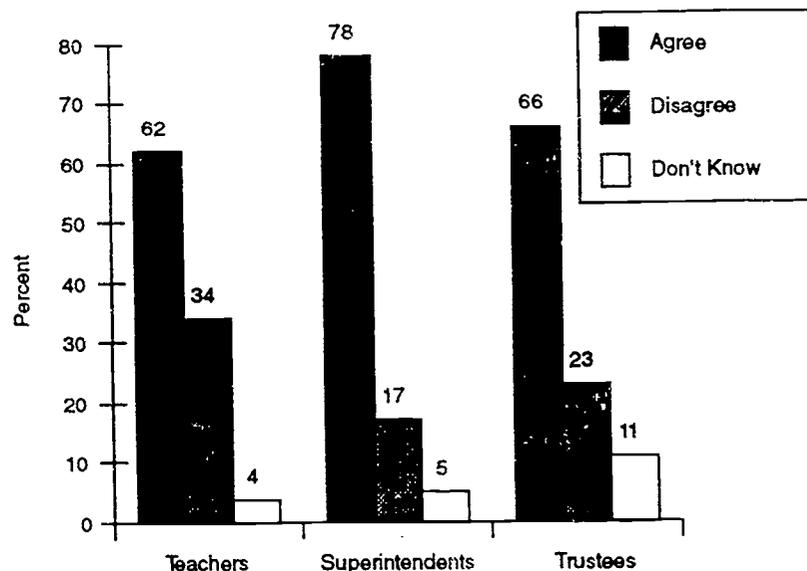
stress group ranged from a low of 11% in Prince Edward Island to a high of 25% in the Yukon. The other provinces where teachers reported high levels of stress included British Columbia, Ontario, and Saskatchewan (Canadian Teachers Federation, 1992).

Over 60% of teachers are satisfied that their professional development opportunities improve their teaching practices.

In 1992, 62% of teachers surveyed said they were satisfied that their professional development opportunities were improving their teaching practices. More than three quarters of superintendents and two thirds of trustees also agreed. About a third of teachers and one in five superintendents and trustees disagreed (see Figure 29).

Figure 29

"Teachers Are Satisfied That Their Professional Development Opportunities Improve Their Teaching Strategies"



Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

Alberta's teacher evaluation policy is helping to meet the professional growth needs of beginning teachers but teacher evaluation practices for experienced teachers who exceed minimum competency standards need to be reassessed.

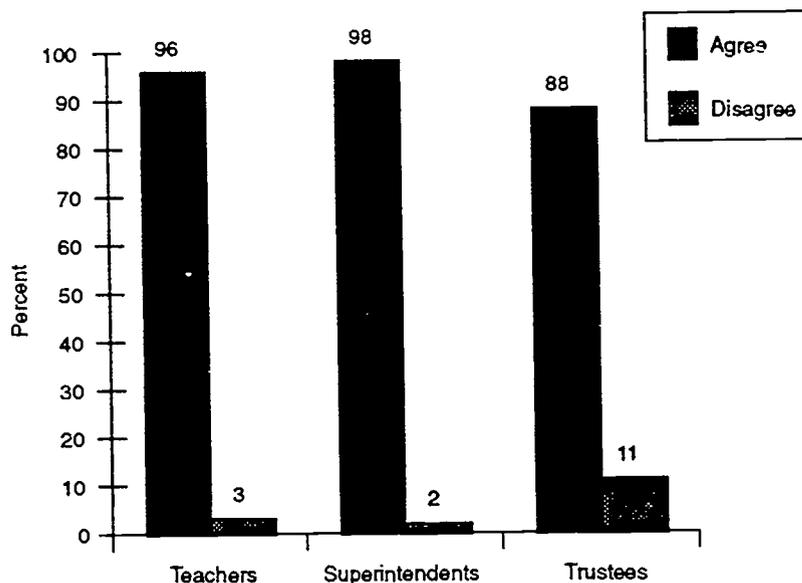
A 1991 study of Alberta education's teacher evaluation policy found that current policies and practices are helpful to beginning teachers and those

experiencing difficulties in their teaching. The evaluation policies and practices help these teachers improve and are also used to assure parents and the public that teachers meet competency requirements. For experienced, competent teachers, the study also recommended that teacher evaluation policies should encourage teachers working together to enhance their skills and improve student learning.

Almost all teachers, superintendents, and trustees responding to 1992 surveys said that teachers provide appropriate and effective instruction for students and demonstrate expertise in the subjects they teach.

The surveys found that about 97% of teachers and superintendents agreed with this statement as did almost as many trustees (88%) (see Figure 30).

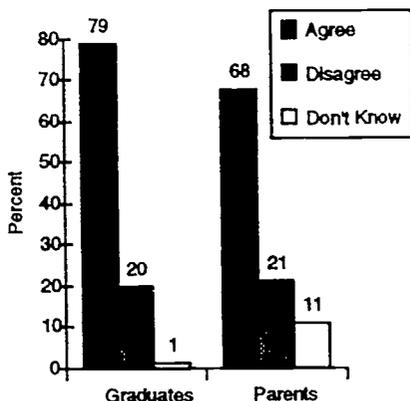
Figure 30
*"Teachers Provide Appropriate and Effective Instruction for Students/
Demonstrate Expertise in the Subjects They Teach"*



Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

Most high school graduates and their parents surveyed in 1992 agreed that the teaching staff in high schools made it clear what was to be learned. A slight majority also agreed that the teachers had high expectations for all students.

Figure 31
"Teaching Staff Made It Clear
What Was to Be Learned"



Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

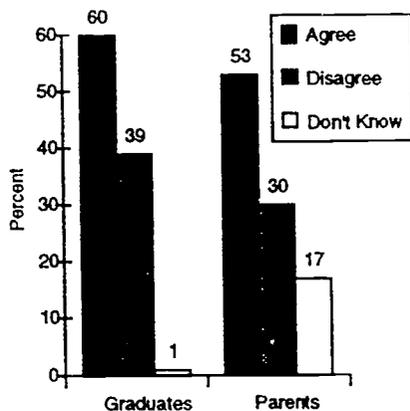
Almost 80% of high school graduates and about 70% of parents responding to the surveys felt high school teachers made learning expectations clear. One out of every five graduates and parents disagreed (see Figure 31).

Sixty percent of high school graduates and 53% of parents said that the teaching staff had high expectations for all students. Almost 40% of graduates and 30% of parents disagreed (see Figure 32).

More than two thirds of teachers responding to a 1992 survey said they are able to focus their efforts on helping students achieve curriculum expectations.

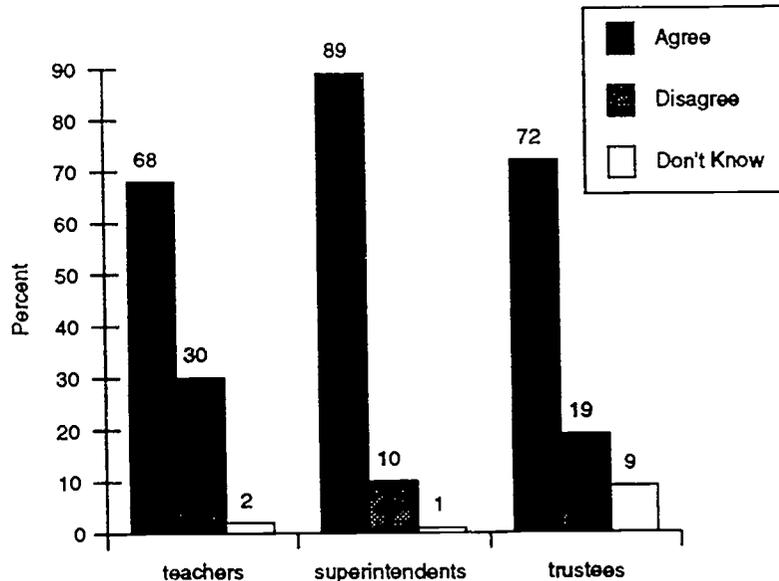
The survey also found about 90% of superintendents and almost three quarters of trustee respondents agreed with this statement. Almost one third of teachers said they are not able to focus their efforts on helping students achieve these expectations (see Figure 33).

Figure 32
"Teaching Staff Have High
Expectations for All Students"



Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

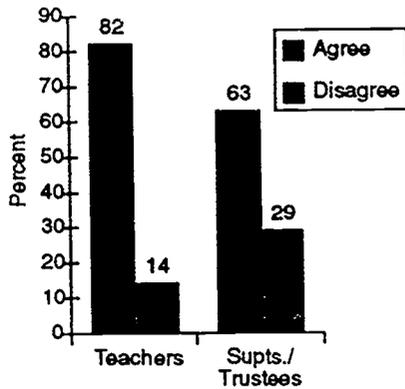
Figure 33
"Teachers Are Able to Focus Their Efforts on Helping Students Achieve
Curriculum Expectations"



Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

People who work in education and who responded to 1992 surveys said that teachers are adapting their teaching methods to meet the differing needs of individual students.

Figure 34
"Teachers Adapt Their Teaching Methods to Meet the Differing Needs of Individual Students"

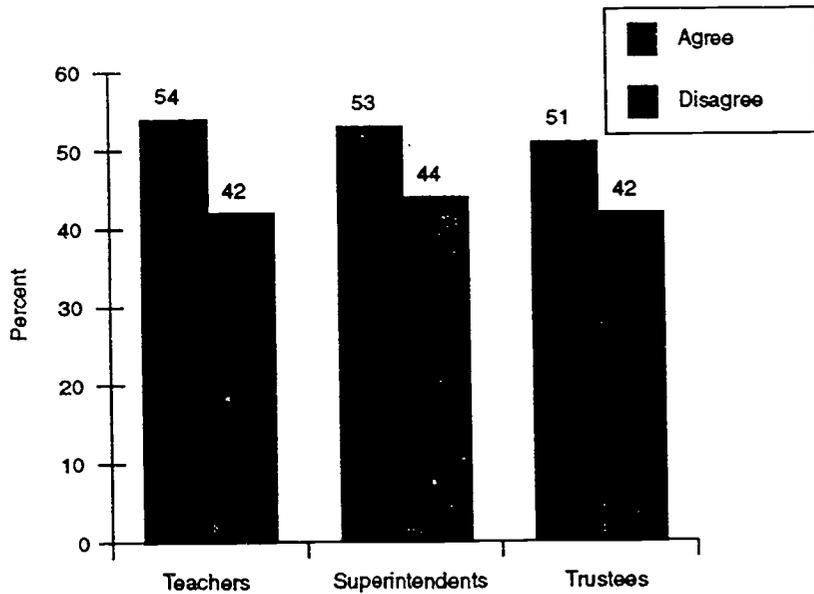


Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

The surveys found more than 80% of teachers agreed with this statement compared to about two-thirds of superintendents and trustees (see Figure 34).

This question was also put in a slightly different way, asking respondents to agree or disagree that teachers are able to match their teaching strategies to the unique learning needs of each student. For this question, slightly better than half the teachers, superintendents, and trustees agreed while many respondents in each of these three groups disagreed (about 43%) (see Figure 35).

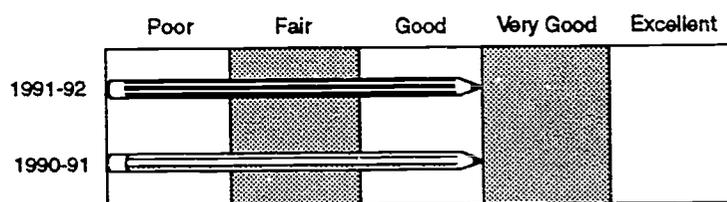
Figure 35
"Teachers Are Able to Match Their Teaching Strategies to the Unique Learning Needs of Each Student"



Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

Rating of this priority

Excellence in teaching



Rationale for 1991-92 rating

Alberta's teachers are well educated and experienced. Their teaching practices are well regarded. Teachers said they need help to meet the diverse learning needs of students and parental expectations. Teacher preparation and professional development programs need to be improved to help meet these demands. The rating for 1991-92 remains the same as last year.

Questions to ask

How are teachers in your schools/school jurisdiction dealing with the wide range of students' needs, interests, abilities, and backgrounds?

Are teachers in your school/school jurisdiction assigned teaching responsibilities that best reflect their knowledge and experience?

Does the teaching staff in your schools/school jurisdiction have high learning expectations for all students? What needs to be improved?

How satisfied are the teachers in your schools/school jurisdiction with their professional development activities? In what way do these programs help to improve their teaching?

How are teachers evaluated in your schools/school jurisdiction? How do these teacher evaluations improve teaching and learning?

Excellence in schools

Schools focus on student learning. Our schools must serve the needs of all students and improve all students' opportunities to achieve excellence.

Results expected

- Schools provide the programs that meet the needs of all students
- Schools are exciting and stimulating places in which their students learn and take more responsibility for their learning
- Schools make effective use of a variety of provincial, municipal and community programs and services to meet the needs of their students and parents better
- Alberta has excellent school facilities

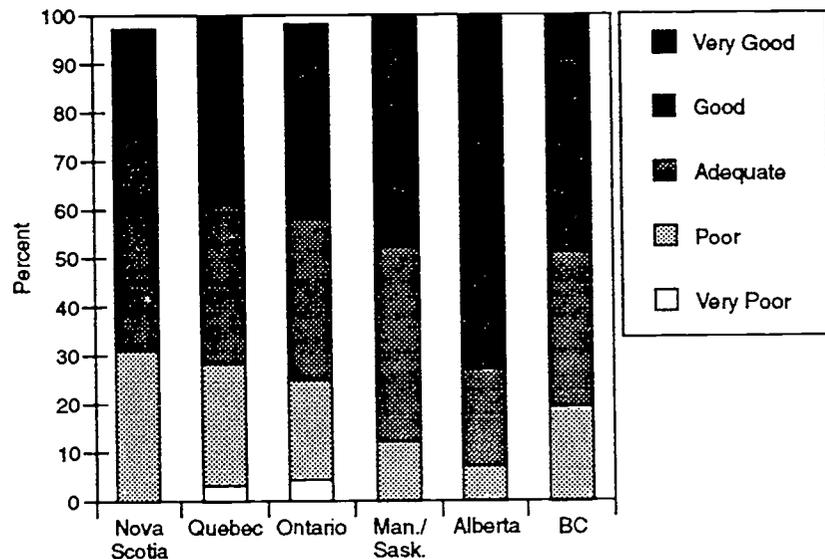
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What we know

Alberta's secondary school system is rated more positively by opinion leaders than any other provincial secondary school system.

A 1992 Opinion Leader Research Program asked about the quality of secondary schools across Canada. Seventy-three percent rated Alberta's secondary schools as good or very good and only 7% said they were poor. Alberta is the only province where a significant number of opinion leaders (27%) described the secondary system as very good (See Figure 36).

Figure 36
Opinion Leaders Rate Provincial Secondary School Systems



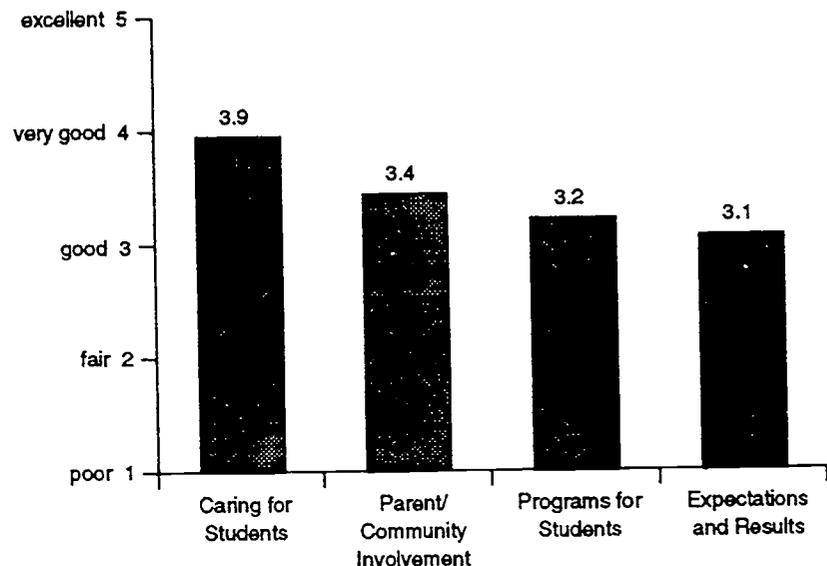
Source: Opinion Leader Research Program, 1992

A 1992 Alberta Education study rated Alberta schools good or better on four indicators of school effectiveness.

The study asked Regional Office Consultants to rate the 33 rural and urban schools selected by school authorities for evaluation in 1991-92. The provincial sample included all the schools that had school evaluations in that year – public and separate schools, several accredited private schools, a school operated by a Native band council, and a school serving special needs students only. The study used four indicators associated with excellence in schools: high expectations and students

results, caring for students, programs that meet students' needs, and parent and community involvement. Figure 37 summarizes the key findings:

Figure 37
Alberta Education's Rating of Thirty-Three Schools on Indicators of School Excellence 1991-92



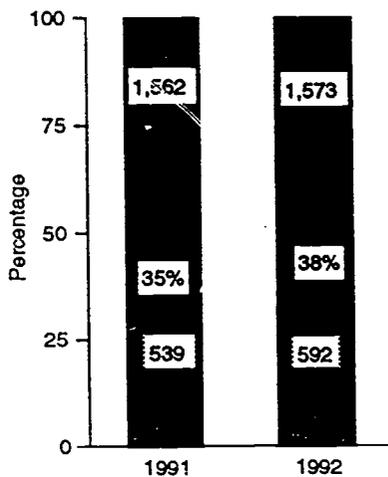
Source: Alberta Education

The study also reported that in two-thirds of the schools, the caring for students that resulted from positive relations among students, staff and administration was considered to be very good or excellent. About one-half of the schools were rated very good or excellent in involving parents and community; another third of the schools were rated good. Almost 40% of the schools were rated very good or excellent in programs and services offered to students. The same percentage of schools was rated as average on this indicator. About one-third of the schools were judged to have above average to high expectations for student learning and to have achieved very good or excellent results. One school in four was rated below average in its expectations for student learning and in results. No school was rated below average on all indicators.

More science facilities in Alberta schools are being upgraded.

Forty-three schools received approvals for new or modernized science

Figure 38
Alberta Schools That Are
Barrier Free



Source: Alberta Education

labs in 1992 compared to 32 in 1991; this is a 34% increase. These upgraded facilities will help to enhance the delivery of science programs and increase student interest, skills and achievements in science. A total of 174 schools will receive approvals for new or modernized science labs in the 1991-95 period.

More than one third of all Alberta schools are barrier free to the disabled.

Fifty-three schools received approvals to provide handicapped access in 1992, compared to 39 approvals in 1991. This brings the total numbers of barrier free schools to 592 which is 38% of the 1,573 public and separate schools in Alberta (see Figure 38). Alberta Education's school capital projects for barrier free schools will result in about 750 schools being barrier free by 1995.

Several Alberta schools have incorporated innovative design, technology and delivery approaches.

Some of these innovative schools make effective use of educational technology, or use innovative ways of providing science and technology programs to their students. Other innovative schools are more focused on community use and partnership activities or are more environmentally friendly.

For example, Lester B. Pearson Senior High School in Calgary offers high tech, fully networked program delivery. Thibault High School to be built in Morinville will be innovative in its technologically enhanced, individualized learning systems and its partnerships in educational technology. The refocussed W.P. Wagner High School in Edmonton and the Walter Phillips School to be built in Canmore are planning to provide an innovative approach to science and Career and Technology Studies. The Andrew School in the County of Lamont puts school and community programs in one facility, and enables better coordination and more efficient use of resources.

Ten school building projects in Alberta have received international, national, or provincial awards for excellence in design during the last seven years.

Athabasca Delta Community School (in Fort Chipewyan), Keephills Elementary School (in the County of Parkland), Kikino Elementary School (in Lac La Biche), Lloydminster Elementary School, Ponoka Elementary School, and Fort Saskatchewan High School (addition),

Robina Baker Elementary School (addition and modernization, in Devon), and Earl Buxton Elementary School (in Edmonton) have all received the Award of the Council of Educational Facility Planners, International. Crystal Park School (in Grande Prairie) was a finalist for an Award of the American Association of School Administrators. Ecole Secondaire Beaumont High (in Beaumont) received an award of the American Concrete Institute.

A majority of high school graduates, superintendents, and trustees surveyed, and slightly less than a majority of parents said that schools in their community rated a grade of B. Teachers tended to rate schools grade A.

The surveys asked about the quality of Alberta schools. Twice as many teachers (48%) assigned schools a grade A as did any other respondent group. About 24% of graduates and parents assigned their high school a C rating.

These 1992 survey results for high school graduates and parents compare very favorably to results from a 1991 survey that asked Albertans to grade schools in their community. Only 5% of Albertans gave schools a grade A in 1991 compared to 36% who said schools rated a grade B and 33% a grade C (see Table 18 for a comparison of the 1992 and 1991 ratings of Alberta schools).

Table 18
High School Graduates, Parents, Teachers, Superintendents and Trustees Grade for Alberta Schools (1992) Compared to the Public's Grade for Alberta Schools (1991)

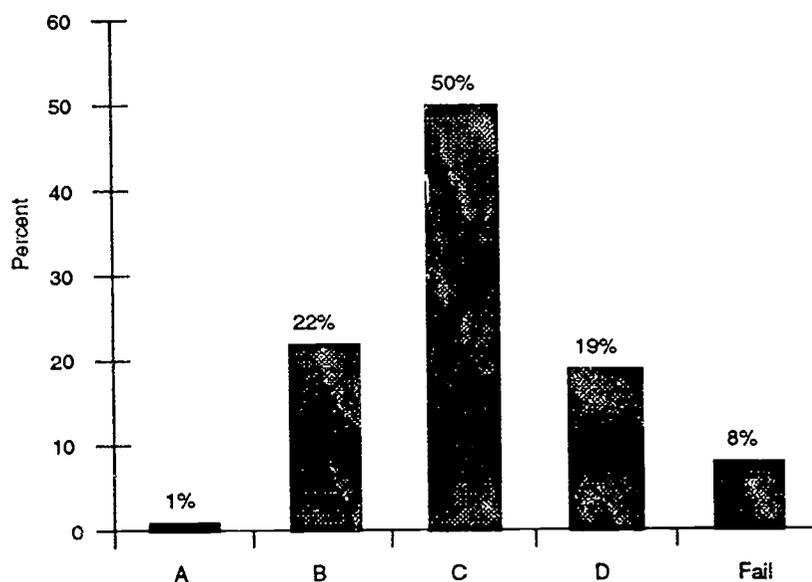
Grade	1991 Public (%)	1992				
		Teachers (%)	Supts. (%)	Trustees (%)	Graduates (%)	Parents (%)
A	5	48	24	23	21	25
B	36	29	61	56	51	44
C	33	17	10	19	23	24
D	7	2	2	2	4	4
Fail	2	0	0	0	1	1
No Response	17	4	3	0	0	2

Source: 1. Population Research Laboratory, University of Alberta, 1991
2. Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

Half of post-secondary educators surveyed in 1992 said that Alberta high schools rated a grade C for effectively preparing graduates for entry to their institutions.

The survey also found slightly more than 20% assigned high schools a grade of B. Almost one out of five respondents gave high schools a rating of D (see Figure 39).

Figure 39
Post-Secondary Educators' Grade for Alberta High Schools



Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

Teachers, superintendents and trustees are more satisfied with the education students are receiving in Alberta schools, than are high school graduates and parents. Six out of ten graduates and parents are somewhat satisfied with the education provided in their high school.

The 1992 surveys found close to half of teachers, superintendents and trustees very satisfied with education in Alberta schools, compared to slightly less than a quarter of graduates and parents. The somewhat satisfied rating ranged from a high of 62% of graduates to a low of 41% of teachers. Less than 15% of all groups said they were dissatisfied with the education provided to students, but twice as many graduates and parents were dissatisfied compared to other respondents (see Table 19).

Table 20
The General Quality of Education Provided by Schools Over the Last 5 Years: a Comparison of Parent (1992) and Public (1991) Perceptions

	1991 Public (%)	1992 Parents (%)
improved	23	15
stayed the same	40	19
had become worse	18	40
no opinion	19	26

Source: 1. Population Research Laboratory, University of Alberta, 1991
 2. Alberta Education Survey, 1992

Table 19
Satisfaction With Education Students Are Receiving in School (1992)

	Very Satisfied (%)	Somewhat Satisfied (%)	Somewhat Dissatisfied (%)	Very Dissatisfied (%)	No Opinion (%)
Teachers	48	41	7	1	2
Supts.	44	52	3	0	1
Trustees	42	45	11	0	2
Graduates	24	62	11	2	1
Parents	22	61	14	2	1

Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

Forty percent of 1,188 parents responding to a 1992 survey said that in general the quality of education provided by the schools in their community had become worse in the last five years.

Fifteen percent of parents felt the quality of education provided by the schools had improved while almost one in five parents said it had stayed the same.

This 1992 survey result does not compare favourably to results from a 1991 survey that asked a sample of 1,345 adult Albertans whether the public and separate schools in their community had improved, stayed the same, or became worse in the last five years. In 1991, 40% said the quality of education was the same, 23% said it had improved, and only 18% said it had become worse (see Table 20).

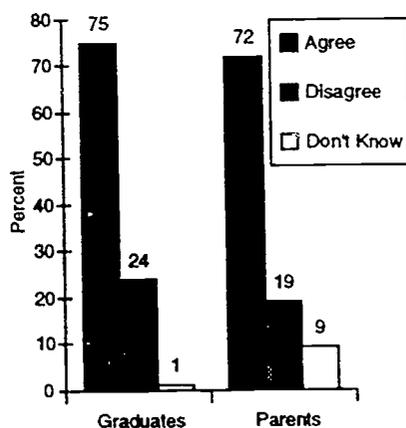
High school graduates and their parents surveyed in 1992 said that the high school encouraged all students to do their best.

Seventy-five percent of graduates surveyed said they agreed (52%) or strongly agreed (23%) that their high school encouraged all students to do their best. About one in four graduates disagreed. Parents were asked about the high school attended by their son or daughter and the results were comparable to the graduates (see Figure 40).

Most people surveyed in 1992 rated the quality of facilities in Alberta's schools as good or adequate.

Superintendents and trustees were generally most positive about the quality of school facilities with about 61% rating these as good. This was

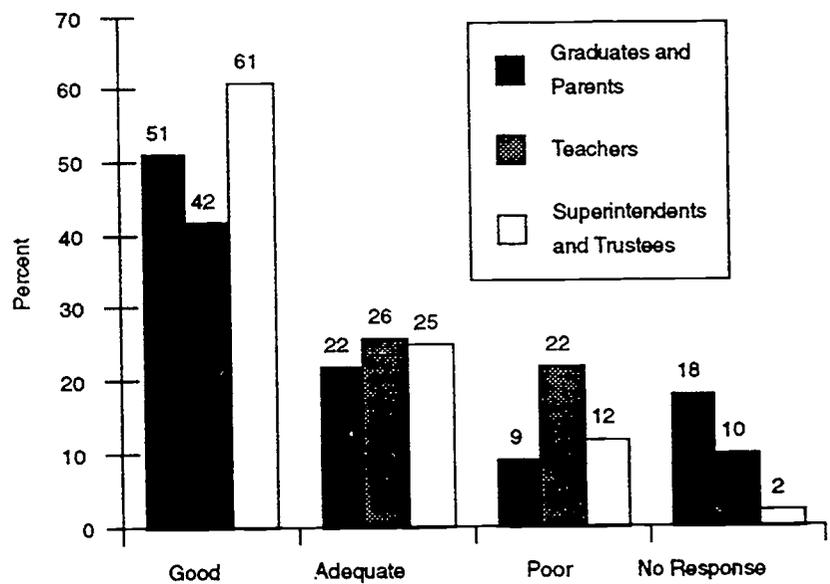
Figure 40
"High School Encouraged All Students To Do Their Best"



Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

followed by high school graduates and their parents (51%), and teachers (42%). About 20 to 25% of all respondents said facilities are adequate. Almost twice as many teachers (22%) said the quality of facilities was poor compared to other respondents. These 1992 survey findings about facilities included ratings of classrooms, science labs, computer equipment, libraries, fine arts and practical arts facilities, gymnasiums, and outdoor sports facilities (see Figure 41).

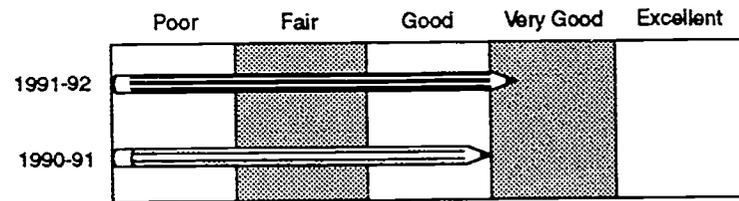
Figure 41
Perceptions of the Quality of School Facilities



Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

Rating of this priority

Excellence in schools



Rationale for 1991-92 rating

Alberta's secondary schools are rated more positively than those in any other provincial system. Surveys show the quality of Alberta schools was rated more favorably than in 1991, however post-secondary instructors are less positive than other groups. Most people are generally satisfied with the education offered in schools; parents seem to be the least satisfied. Parents rate their own schools highly but feel the general quality of education in schools in their community is getting worse. A quarter of graduates do not feel high school encourages all students to do their best. School facilities are rated positively. Schools rate well on indicators of school effectiveness. The rating for 1991-92 improves slightly to the very good range.

Questions to ask

How would you rate the schools in your community?

What are your expectations of your schools? What are you doing to help schools meet these expectations?

How are you working with the schools to ensure that all children are receiving a challenging education?

How would you rate the caring in your schools?

What innovative things are being done in your schools to help students learn better?

What changes are needed to make things work better in your schools?

In what ways are your schools making use of community resources? Is this effective?

Equity of opportunity for students

More equitable access to educational opportunities: All of our children, regardless of their social or cultural background or the wealth of the community in which they live, must have equitable opportunities to get the education they need. School jurisdictions must have more equitable access to the fiscal resources they need to provide the best possible education for their students.

Results expected

- All schools have access to the resources required to provide equitable opportunities to all students, regardless of where they live and regardless of the wealth of their community
- Albertans are satisfied with the quality of education
- Francophone students have better access to programs in their own language

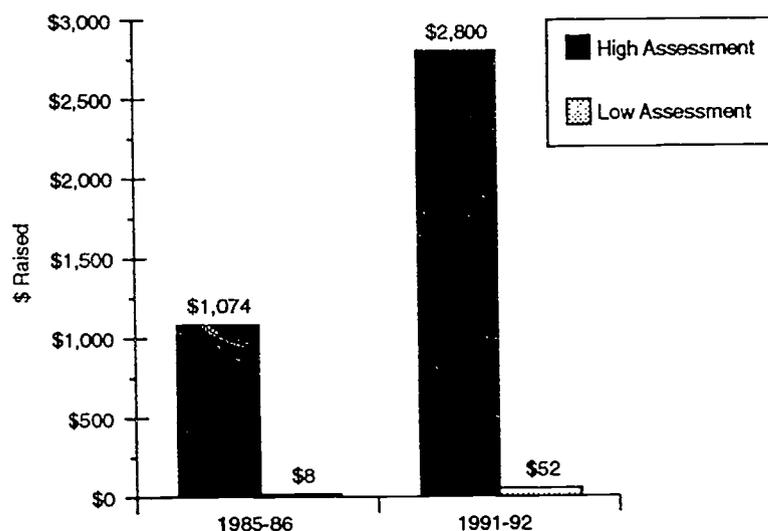
What we know

Inequities in funding education in Alberta are growing.

In 1991-92, one mill of property tax assessment raised as little as \$52 per student, or as much as \$2,800. This gap in fiscal capacity is widening. In the previous year, the amount raised per student ranged from a low of \$54 to a high of \$2,500; in 1985-86 it ranged from \$8 to \$1,074 (see Figure 42).

Figure 42

Comparison of Dollars Raised Per Student From 1 Mill
— 1985-86 and 1991-92



Source: Alberta Education

Reliance on the local tax base to fund education continued to grow, increasing the tax burden on the local taxpayer. The provincial average net mill rate has increased from 9.98 mills in 1987 to 11.35 mills in 1991.

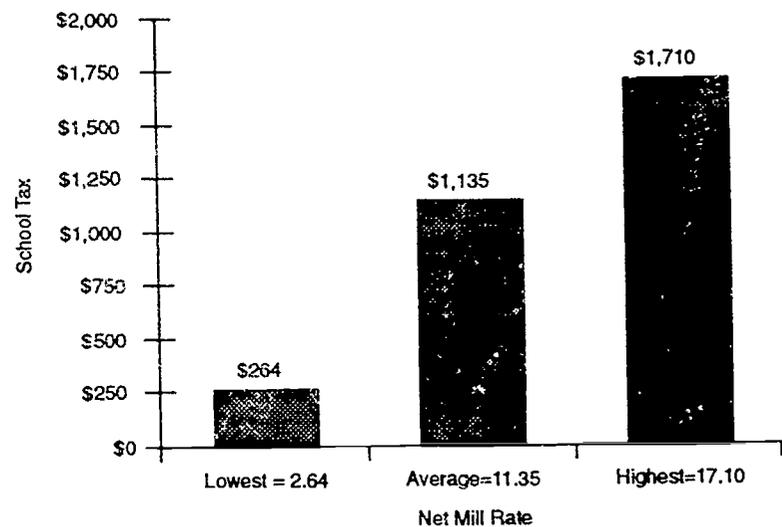
Inequities to taxpayers across school jurisdictions remain great. The gap between the lowest and highest net mill rate in Alberta has ranged from 14.26 to 15.31 over the last five years (1987-1991). The lowest mill rate has ranged from 1.10 to 2.64 and the highest from 15.36 to 17.19 during this period.

Jurisdictions with low mill rates tend to have high concentrations of commercial, industrial, and power and pipeline property in their communities. These are a significant source of local property tax revenue

and enable school boards to raise the revenue they need without undue tax burden on the residential property owner. Jurisdictions with few of these sources of property tax revenues in their communities usually have high tax rates, and their primary source of supplementary revenue for schools is the residential property owner.

In 1991, the owner of a house assessed at \$100,000 in a jurisdiction with the provincial average net mill rate of 11.35 would pay \$1,135.00 in school tax, as compared to \$264.00 in the lowest assessment jurisdiction and \$1,710.00 in the highest assessment jurisdiction (see Figure 43). The local school tax bill in the highest assessment jurisdiction is 6.5 times more than the school tax bill in the lowest assessment jurisdiction.

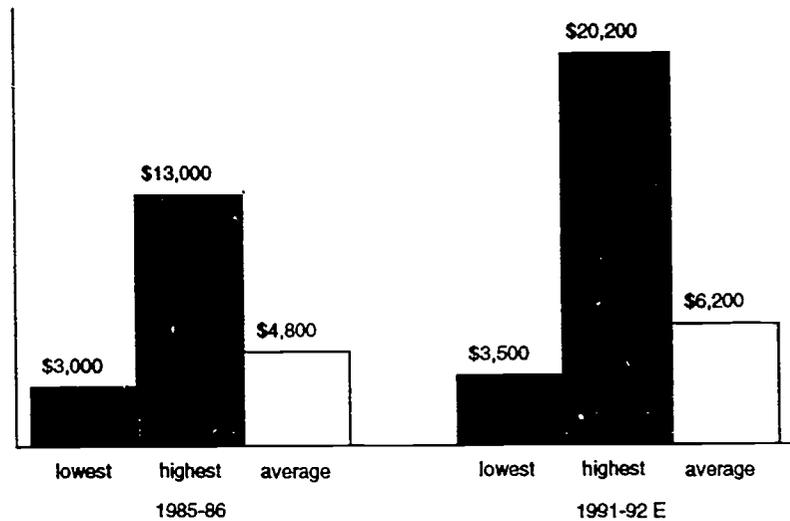
Figure 43
School Tax on \$100,000 House in Lowest, Average and Highest Assessment Jurisdiction in 1991



Source. Alberta Education

The gap in the amount spent per student by operating school jurisdictions has also grown. In 1991-92 per student expenditures ranged from a low of \$3,500 to a high of \$20,200, for a difference of \$16,700. In 1990-91 the gap was \$16,500. In 1985-86 the per student spending ranged from \$3,000 to \$13,000, for a gap of \$10,000. The average spending per student was \$4,800 in 1985-86 and \$6,200 in 1991-92 (see Figure 44).

Figure 44
Lowest, Highest and Average Per Student Expenditures in Operating School Jurisdictions in Alberta, 1985-86 and 1991-92



Note: E = subject to audit verification

Source: Alberta Education

The per student spending of the 68 school boards that have less funding than the provincial average has deteriorated in recent years. From 1985-86 to 1987-88, these boards had about 5% less than the provincial average to spend per student; in the last four years, they have had about 10% less.

School boards with below average assessments have seen their access to the provincial average assessment eroded. In 1989-90, these school boards received revenue equal to 96% of the provincial average assessment. By 1992-93, these revenues had declined to less than 80% of the provincial average assessment (see Table 21).

Table 21
Percent of Provincial Average Tax Base Funded 1989-90 to 1992-93

1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93E
96%	89%	87%	79%

Note: E = subject to audit verification

Source: Alberta Education

Student access to programs varies across the province.

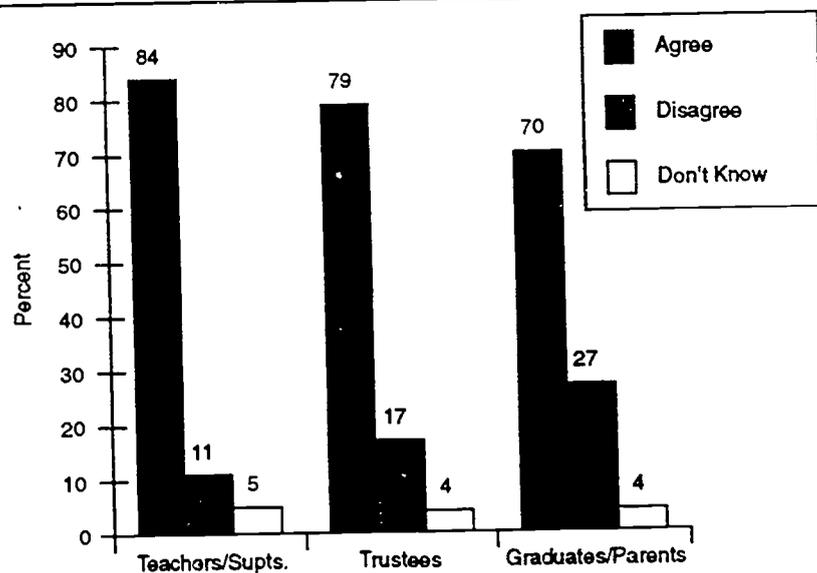
The number of high school courses offered to students ranges from a low of about 20 in some small school jurisdictions to a high of about 200 in others.

Students in jurisdictions with higher than average assessments have more access to courses. In 1991-92, grade 12 students in these jurisdictions were more likely to take diploma exams in chemistry, math, and biology than were grade 12 students from jurisdictions with lower than average assessments.

Most people surveyed in 1992 felt that their school or school jurisdiction offers a wide range of courses, but more than one of every four high school graduates and their parents disagreed.

About 80% of teachers, superintendents and trustees agreed that their school or school jurisdiction offered a wide range of courses. Seventeen percent of trustees disagreed, and most of these were from jurisdictions enrolling fewer than 500 students. Seventy percent of graduates and parents agreed with this statement, while 27% of graduates and parents disagreed (see Figure 45).

Figure 45
"School/School Jurisdiction Offers a Wide Range of Courses"



Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

In 1992, students in jurisdictions with higher assessments generally performed better on provincial achievement tests and were awarded more diplomas.

In 1992, students in jurisdictions with higher than average assessments and tax effort performed better on the Grade 3 social studies and Grade 6 language arts achievement tests than students in other jurisdictions. The teachers in these high assessment jurisdictions also have slightly better qualifications and more years of experience than do teachers in other jurisdictions. (Student results on the Grade 9 mathematics achievement test were lower than expected throughout the province.)

In 1991-92, significantly more students from school jurisdictions with higher than average assessments and low tax effort received a high school diploma than expected, and disproportionately fewer students from jurisdictions with lower than average assessments received diplomas.

Distance learning opportunities are helping to reduce some of the disparities in the number of courses offered to students in small schools and in remote areas of the province.

In 1991-92, nineteen new distance learning courses were completed. This brings the total number of courses available through distance learning to 47. These new distance learning courses included junior and senior high school math and science, senior high accounting, art, basic business, English, law and junior high health, agriculture and social studies. About 15 more distance learning courses will be available by September 1993, including the four 20-level courses in the sciences.

French language versions of provincial achievement tests and diploma exams are available to Alberta students.

Almost 1% of students writing diploma exams in 1991-92 wrote in French; this is more than double the number of students who wrote French translations of diploma exams in 1988. About 4% of students wrote the French version of the achievement tests in 1992. Those writing in French included both francophone and French Immersion students.

More parents are exercising their right to choose alternative education programs for their children.

Most Alberta parents can choose a public or publicly funded separate school system (primarily Catholic) for their children by directing their taxes to the school system of their choice in their community.

School jurisdictions also provide students and parents considerable choice of program and school. A number of school jurisdictions across Alberta permit their students to enroll in any district school as long as space is available. Many offer French Immersion. Across school board choice is also available, provided there is room and tuition agreements are in place.

The large urban jurisdictions offer diverse and specialized elementary programs such as Ukrainian bilingual and Chinese bilingual. As well they offer high school students specialized schools in science and in the arts, and a variety of vocational and academic programs in the composite high schools. These options are provided in response to community interest and parent and student demand.

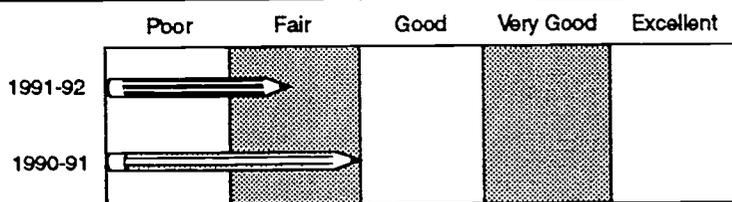
Enrollments in these choice programs are increasing. For example, over 28,000 students were enrolled in French Immersion programs throughout Alberta in 1991-92, an increase of over 4,000 students since five years ago.

Home education and private schools are also publicly funded options within the province's education system. The number of home educated students has increased about 50%, from nearly 1,650 in 1990-91 to approximately 2,550 in 1991-92. Less than one half of 1% of Alberta students are educated at home.

Enrollment in private schools in Alberta increased 2.5% between 1990-91 and 1991-92 (from 14,863 to 15,241). Over the last ten years, private school enrollment and the number of private schools in the province have almost doubled. Enrollment in private schools represents about 3% of the total enrollment in Alberta schools.

Rating of this priority

Equity of opportunity for students



Rationale for 1991-92 rating

The situation with regard to fiscal equity is getting worse. The gap in the amount raised per student by school jurisdictions continues to grow; the gap in the amount spent per student has also grown. Student access to programs reflects these inequities. The availability of more distance learning courses helps to improve student access. Choice of programs and schools is available to the majority of Alberta students but not in every community. A solution to the growing funding inequities must be found. The rating for 1991-92 moves further back in the fair range as it reflects the worsening fiscal equity situation.

Questions to ask

Are you satisfied with the range of courses offered to students from ECS to Grade 12 in your local schools and school jurisdiction?

What choice of programs and schools does your school jurisdiction give parents and students?

Do students have enough access to computers and library materials in your schools/school jurisdiction? What improvements are needed?

How would students in your school jurisdiction benefit if the jurisdiction worked more effectively with others?

Building partnerships

Dynamic and productive partnerships: All who have a stake in a successful education system — students, parents, business leaders, educators and other community members — must work together to make education better for our students.

Results expected

- *Parents are more actively involved in decisions affecting the education of their children*
- *Parents, the business and professional community, students, and other stakeholders are well informed about educational standards and results, and are actively involved and supportive of education; this improves the education that students receive*
- *There are more joint efforts among school jurisdictions to improve education*

*vision for the nineties
... a plan of action*

What we know

School councils are providing the opportunity for more parents to become involved in education.

Twenty-three of the twenty-eight school jurisdictions monitored by Alberta Education in 1991-92 had school councils in place that were contributing to quality education. These school councils are helping improve communication between home and school, helping with obtaining learning resources, providing assistance to students in the classroom and providing awards and scholarships to successful students. The number of parents involved in task forces, strategy planning and committees concerned with education also continues to increase.

The business and professional community is becoming more actively involved in education.

About 11,700 students benefited from both in-school career planning and hands-on career exploration through work experience programs in 1991-92. This is an increase of more than 700 students compared to 1990-91.

In the Calgary region, equal numbers of female and male students participated in the work experience program, while in the Edmonton region, 70% of work experience students are females.

In 1991-92, business and industry teamed up with schools in about 25 cooperative education programs involving approximately 570 students. In 1990-91, there were 16 programs with 360 students.

A 1992 study of business education partnerships involving Alberta Education, Alberta Chamber of Commerce, Alberta Career Development and Employment, the Alberta Teachers' Association, Canadian Manufacturer's Association and the Construction Owners Association identified several innovative Alberta models. Some examples of successful partnerships are described in the following table (Table 22):

Table 22

Innovative Alberta Business and Education Partnerships: Some Examples (1992)

Location	Partnership
Calgary	Canadian Hunter Exploration Ltd./Sherwood Community School IBM Calgary/John G. Diefenbaker High School Norcen Energy Resources Ltd./Clarence Sansom School
Edmonton	AGT/Victoria Composite High School Edmonton Northlands/Archbishop O'Leary High School Misericordia Hospital/Jasper Place High School
Fort McMurray	Syncrude Canada Ltd./Keyano College
Grande Cache	Twelve business partners/Grande Cache School District
Medicine Hat	Xerox Canada Ltd./Medicine Hat High School
Red Deer	Novacor/Lindsay Thurber Comprehensive High School Red Deer TV/Fairview Elementary School

Source: Alberta Education, Business Education Partnerships, Interim Report, 1992

School jurisdictions are making joint efforts to improve education.

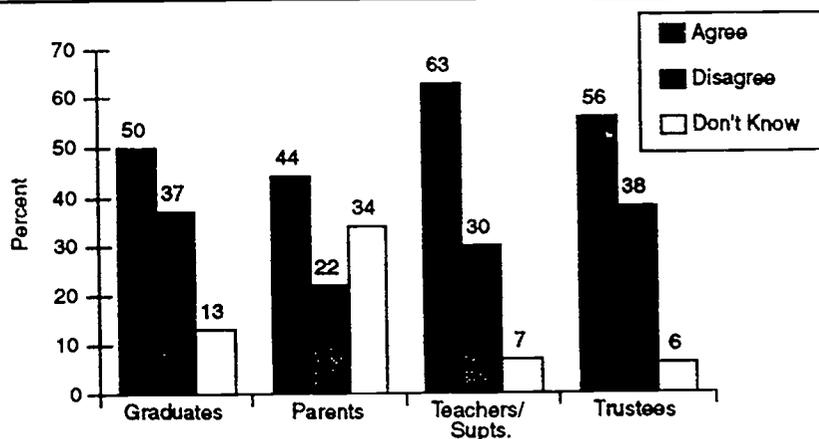
Twelve school jurisdictions are collaborating with Alberta Education in 10 action research projects. The projects are developing systems of education quality indicators to assess a broad range of student outcomes, as well as methods to assess school systems, schools, programs and teachers. Indicators looked at in the projects included student performance in math and art, effective teaching, school system effectiveness, and responsible student behavior. This project is a model for how Alberta Education, the school systems, and their staff can work together with clearly defined objectives to produce results which will improve Alberta's education system.

Most respondents to surveys conducted in 1992 felt that the school involves community groups in school activities. About one third of respondents did not agree.

Almost two thirds of teachers and superintendents felt that the school involves community groups in school activities. Half of the graduates and only 44% of parents agreed with this statement. A third of the parents did not offer an opinion on this question (see Figure 46).

Figure 46

"The School Involves Community Groups (e.g. Business, Clubs, Employers) in School Activities"

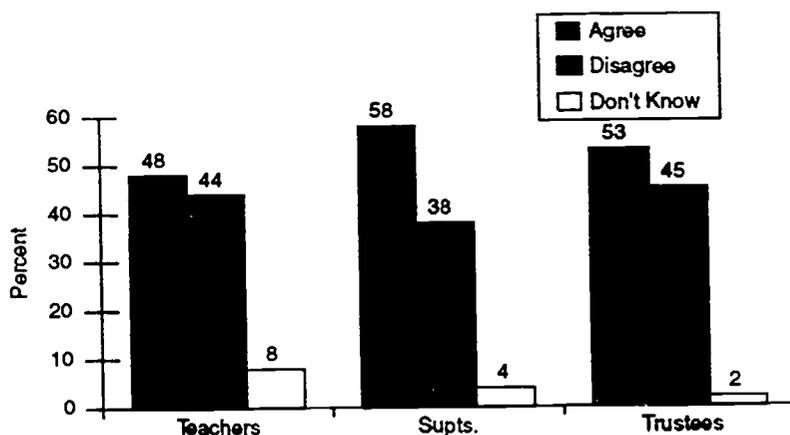


Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

The question was also asked another way for teachers, superintendents, and trustees— "The business and professional communities are actively involved and supportive of education." More than 50% of superintendents and trustees and 48% of teachers agreed with this statement. Many teachers and trustees (45%) and superintendents (38%) disagreed (see Figure 47).

Figure 47

"The Business and Professional Communities Are Actively Involved in, and Supportive of, Education"



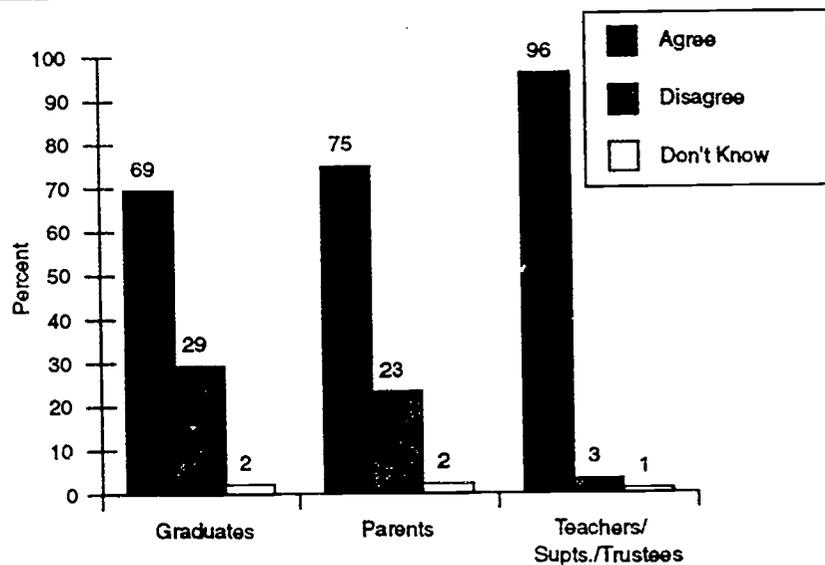
Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

About 96% of teachers, superintendents and trustees felt that parents are kept informed about how well their students are doing in school.

However, almost 30% of high school graduates and about one of every four parents disagreed (see Figure 48).

Figure 48

"The School Keeps Parents Informed About How Well Their Students Are Doing in School"



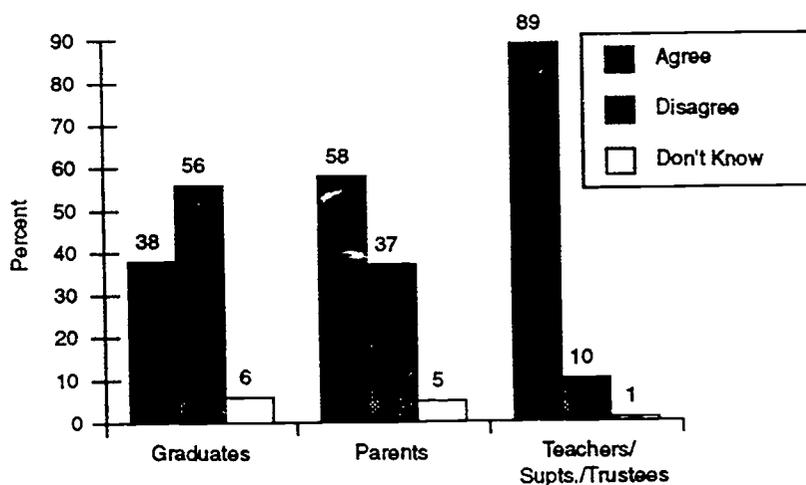
Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

About 60% of parents and less than 40% of high school graduates agreed that the school involves parents in school activities and decision making.

In contrast, almost 90% of teachers, superintendents and trustees felt that schools are doing a good job of involving parents (see Figure 49).

Figure 49

"The School Involves Parents in School Activities and Decision Making"

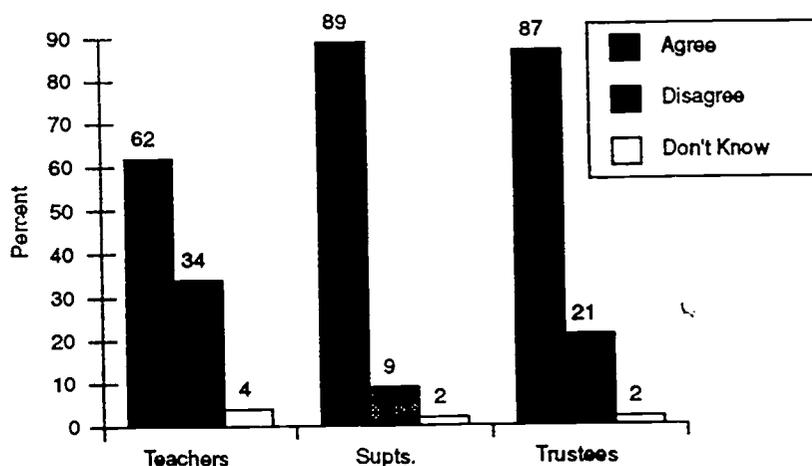


Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

This question was also asked in a different way of teachers, superintendents and trustees—"Parents are actively involved in, and supportive of, education." Almost 90% of trustees and superintendents gave positive responses compared to 62% of teachers (see Figure 50).

Figure 50

"Parents Are Actively Involved in, and Supportive of, Education"



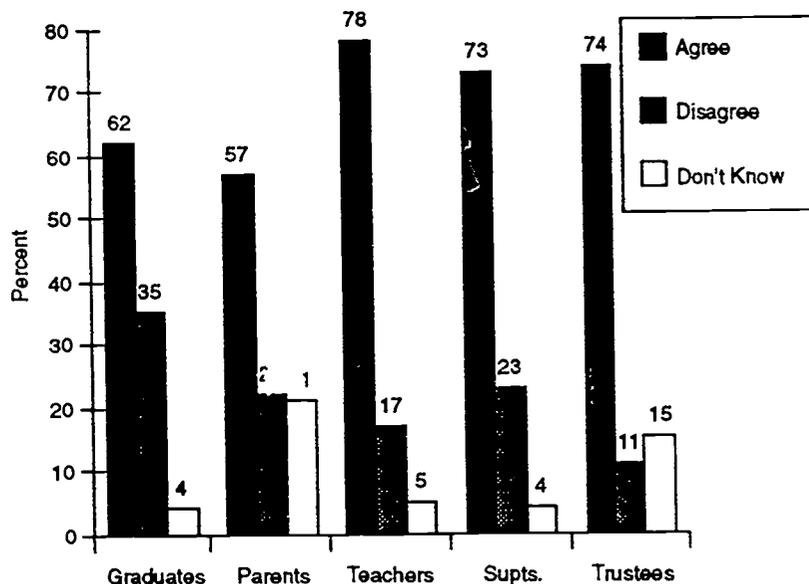
Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

The majority of survey respondents felt that schools involve students in making decisions related to their schooling.

About three quarters of teachers, superintendents and trustees agreed with this statement as did 62% of high school graduates and 57% of parents (see Figure 51).

Figure 51

"Schools Involve Students in Making Decisions Related to Their Schooling"



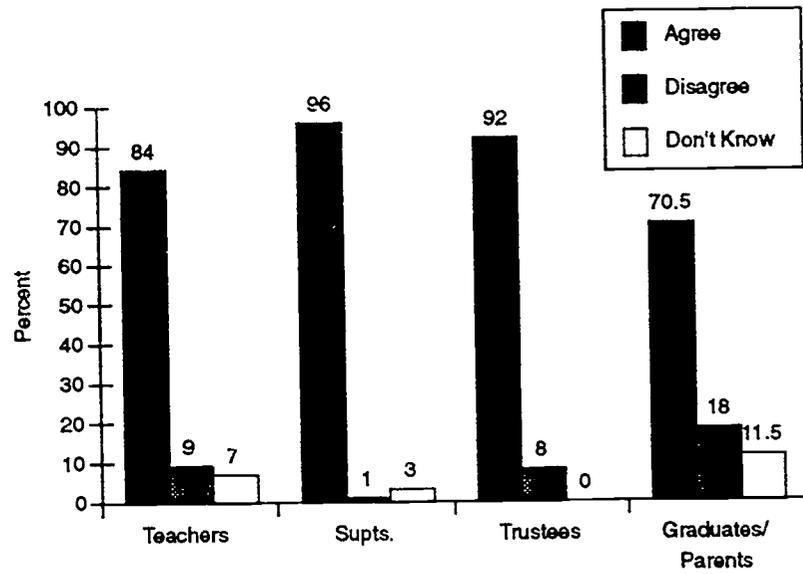
Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

Most survey respondents said students are provided with the opportunity for involvement in community activities.

Close to 90% or more of teachers, superintendents and trustees felt that students are provided the opportunity for community involvement through such programs as work experience, cooperative education, and field trips. About 70% of parents and graduates agreed (see Figure 52).

Figure 52

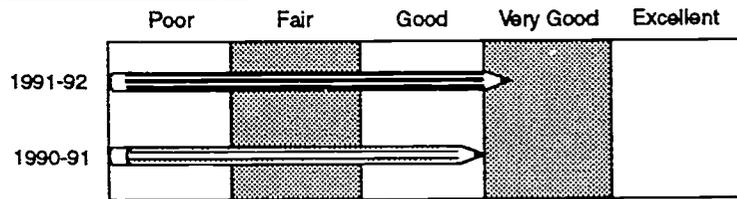
"Schools Provide Opportunities for Student Involvement in Community Activities"



Source: Alberta Education Surveys, 1992

Rating of this priority

Building partnerships



Rationale for 1991-92 rating

School councils, the increased involvement of business and professions, and the greater involvement of students in decision making and in the community are all positives. The educational quality indicator projects are a model for joint efforts between school jurisdictions and the province to improve education. Further involvement of parents is needed. This priority is rated in the very good range with a small improvement from 1990-91.

Questions to ask

What kinds of partnerships are operating in your schools/school jurisdiction?

What kinds of partnerships could I get involved in?

What opportunities are there for me to become involved in my child's education? What opportunities are there to become involved in education even if I have no children in school?

Does my school have a school council or some other avenue for parental involvement?

Does the school council have the opportunity to be involved in school planning, evaluation and decision making?

Next Steps

Alberta has a good, solid education system. But it can and must be made better. This is the key finding from Alberta's second annual Achieving the Vision Report. Overall, the system continues to rate a B-, the same rating as 1991.

As this report shows, progress has been made in several key areas. More students are staying in school. Science programs are improving and students continue to do well on diploma exams in the sciences. More schools have effective partnerships in place. And overall our schools are improving.

On the less positive side, inequities among school jurisdictions are growing. Province-wide student results in basic skills have declined slightly from 1991 and results in mathematics continue to be a concern.

The gains, the losses, and the areas where results are much the same as in 1991 challenge all of us to focus our efforts to do better. We cannot and must not use limited financial resources as an excuse to abandon the challenge. Education is well funded and continues to be a government priority. We need to look for solutions which do not require more funds but rather more creativity, more energy, more collaboration, and more focus on what really works to improve learning in our schools.

Parents, community members, educators, business people, and all Albertans are encouraged to read this report and the Achieving the Vision 1992 Report Card. Use the questions asked at the end of each section of this report to talk with each other and your own school boards, administrators and teachers. Ask questions and expect answers. Most importantly, get involved in meeting the challenge to provide *"the best possible education for all Alberta students."*

Contact List for Additional Information

Reno Bosetti
Deputy Minister
Alberta Education
11160 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 0L2
427-2889 Fax: 422-9735

Gary Zatko
Assistant Deputy Minister
Planning, Information and Financial
Services
11160 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 0L2
427-2991 Fax: 422-5255

Roger Palmer
Assistant Deputy Minister
Student Programs & Evaluation
11160 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 0L2
422-1608 Fax: 422-5129

Steve Cymbol
Assistant Deputy Minister
Regional Services
11160 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 0L2
427-7484 Fax: 422-1400

John Burger
Acting Director
Policy and Planning Branch
11160 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 0L2
427-8217 Fax: 422-5255

Craig Roxburgh
Assistant Director
Policy and Planning Branch
11160 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 0L2
427-8217 Fax: 422-5255

Percy Mirochnick
Acting Assistant Director
Policy and Planning Branch
11160 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 0L2
427-8217 Fax: 422-5255

Calgary Regional Office
Gerry Wilson, Director
Rm 1200, Rocky Mt. Plaza
615 Macleod Trail S.E.
Calgary, Alberta T2G 4T8
297-6353 Fax: 297-3842

Edmonton Regional Office
Russ Weibe, Director
11160 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 0L2
427-2952 Fax: 422-9682

Grande Prairie Regional Office
Ron Smith, Director
12th Floor, 214 Place
9909-102 Street
Grande Prairie, Alberta T8V 2V4
538-5130 Fax: 538-5135

Lethbridge Regional Office
Carol McLean, Director
Provincial Building
200 - 5 Avenue, South
Lethbridge, Alberta T1J 4C7
381-5243 Fax: 381-5734

Red Deer Regional Office
Fred Reinholt, Director
3rd Floor W, Provincial Bdg.
4920 - 51 Street
Red Deer, Alberta T4N 6K8
340-5262 Fax: 340-5305

Brian Wik
Executive Assistant to the Minister
324 Legislature Building
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6
427-2025 Fax: 427-5582

Garth Norris
Director
Communications Branch
11160 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 0L2
427-2285 Fax: 427-0591

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Tell us what you think...

In *Achieving the vision 1992 Report* and in the *1992 Report Card*, Alberta Education has reported on the results which our students and the education system are achieving in each of the 13 areas of the government's *Vision for the nineties*. Each area has been rated on results achieved and where more work has to be done. Your opinions about the Report, the ratings, and the areas to be worked on are very important to us.

In the table below, please check the box that best reflects your feelings about Report '92 and the information it contains.

Feedback Questions on Report '92	Your Rating			
	Not at all	Somewhat	Quite a Lot	Very Much
How readable was Report '92?				
How well did the graphs and tables help you to understand the material presented?				
How well did the information in each section of Report '92 support the rating for the areas?				
How well did the rationale for each rating help you to understand why that rating was given?				
How well did the Report answer the questions which you have about education?				
Do you intend to use the questions at the end of each section in your discussions about education?				
How well did Report '92 outline issues that you think are important to Alberta's education system?				
How well did Report '92 emphasize results across all grade levels?				
Do you agree with the Report's emphasis on educational results?				

Based on Report '92's ratings, which THREE areas do you think Alberta Education should emphasize most during the next year?

Priority 1: _____

Priority 2: _____

Priority 3: _____

Do you feel that there are other issues in education that require attention? If so, please tell us what they are.

Please tell us about yourself:

I am a:

- parent school administrator senior citizen
 teacher system administrator business owner
 trustee student other (please specify) _____

over

Are you?

- Male
- Female

What is your age?

- Less than 18
- 18 to 24
- 25 to 29
- 30 to 39
- 40 to 49
- 50 to 64
- 65 +

Do you have children in school?

- ECS to Grade 6
- Grade 7 to 9
- Grade 10 to 12
- No children in school

In what type of community do you live?

- farm/acreage
- less than 1,000
- 1,000 to 10,000
- More than 10,000 to 30,000
- More than 30,000 to 100,000
- More than 100,000

Thank you for your comments and responses. Your participation is very important and will help to improve future reports. Please tape this survey shut with the address on the outside, affix a stamp, and drop it in the mailbox. You may also fax the survey to us at 422-5255.

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Policy and Planning Branch
 Alberta Education
 11160 Jasper Avenue
 Edmonton, Alberta
 T5K 0L2

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Alberta
 EDUCATION

*Achieving
 the Vision
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 what
 you think*



*achieving
the
vision*

1992

report card

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achieving the vision 1992

In Vision for the nineties... a plan of action, the Provincial Government stated "We will regularly ask and report what is being done and what has been achieved. We will share the information required to assist in assessing our mutual progress on achieving the results and improving the education for Alberta students."

I am pleased to provide this second annual report, "Achieving the Vision, 1992."

The 1991 report included a rating of "Where We Are Now" for each of the 13 priority areas in the action plan. This practice has been continued. The 1991 ratings were used as benchmarks, and the 1992 appraisals were made relative to these. A graphic which illustrates both ratings is included. The graphic shows the direction of change and provides a general indication of the amount of change.

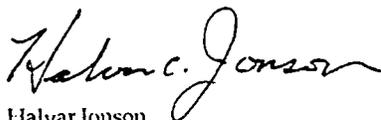
As this report shows, progress has been made in several key areas. More students are staying in school. Science programs are improving and students continue to do well on diploma exams in the sciences. More schools have effective partnerships in place. And overall our schools are improving.

On the less positive side, inequities among school jurisdictions are growing. Province-wide student results in basic skills have declined slightly from 1991 and results in mathematics continue to be a concern. Our overall rating remains the same as last year, a B-.

I am proud of the commitment of the Government of Alberta to public education, and I am proud of the efforts students, teachers, administrators, parents, and the business and professional community have made to maintain, and enhance our education system. Our students are taught by dedicated, caring, and committed teachers, in school facilities that are widely regarded as among the best in Canada and around the world. Students and teachers work cooperatively with relevant, and current curricula and resources. Students learn to read, write, compute, solve problems, and think critically about issues.

This report lets all Albertans know how well we are doing in key areas of education. More importantly, it helps us focus our energies in areas where improvements are needed.

We must continue to strive for excellence in our education system. Our students deserve nothing less.



Halvar Jonson
Minister of Education

100

Where have we improved?

Students stay in school

The annual dropout rate for 14-18 year olds has declined from 12.4% in 1978-79 to 6.3% in 1990-91. The percentage of students completing high school is estimated to have increased from about 60% to 70% over the last ten years. Some stay-in-school projects show promising gains. More active support is needed for some students to stay in school. This priority is rated as good, slightly better than in 1990-91.

====> 1992 Rating: Good

Excellence in science

Senior high students continue to do very well in science diploma examinations. Survey respondents say graduates have a good background in science, and that schools have good science programs and facilities. Post-secondary instructors think that graduates' science skills need improvement. This priority is rated slightly better than in 1990-91.

====> 1992 Rating: Very Good

Building partnerships

School councils, the increased involvement of business and professions, and the greater involvement of students in decision making and in the community are all positives. The educational quality indicator projects are a model for joint efforts between school jurisdictions and the province to improve education. Further involvement of parents is needed. This priority is rated in the very good range with a small improvement from 1990-91.

====> 1992 Rating: Very Good

Excellence in schools

Alberta's secondary schools are rated more positively than those in any other provincial system. Surveys show the quality of Alberta schools was rated more favorably than in 1991, however post-secondary instructors are less positive than other groups. Most people are generally satisfied with the education offered in schools; parents seem to be the least satisfied. Parents rate their own schools highly but feel the general quality of education in schools in their community is getting worse. A quarter of graduates do not feel high school encourages all students to do their best. School facilities are rated positively. Schools rate well on indicators of school effectiveness. The rating for 1991-92 improves slightly to the very good range.

====> 1992 Rating: Very Good

Where is our assessment the same as last year?

Superior standards and results

Student achievement in science, English, social studies and Français diploma courses remains strong. Math results need considerable

improvement. More people are satisfied with the preparation of high school graduates for life beyond high school than in 1991. Post-secondary educators' perceptions of the quality of graduates indicates more work is needed to improve the transition to post-secondary education and training. The 1991-92 rating is not changed from the previous year.

▬▬▬▬▬ 1992 Rating: Good

Excellence in teaching

Alberta's teachers are well educated and experienced. Their teaching practices are well regarded. Teachers say they need help to meet the diverse learning needs of students and parental expectations. Teacher preparation and professional development programs need to be improved to help meet these demands. The rating for 1991-92 remains the same as last year.

▬▬▬▬▬ 1992 Rating: Good

Excellence in curriculum

Student learning expectations are high and clear. The Alberta Chamber of Resources study raised concerns about when and how math and science concepts are presented to students. Post-secondary educators have some concerns about the skills of high school graduates. Alberta's curriculum is regarded as comprehensive and is recognized all over the world for its excellence. The curriculum review and revision process involving diverse groups of Albertans helps ensure the curricula and assessment programs are meeting high standards and reflect society's expectations. The rating for 1991-92 remains the same as for 1990-91.

▬▬▬▬▬ 1992 Rating: Very Good

Success for immigrant children

Service delivery to immigrant students has not changed. A study of the academic achievements of a sample of immigrant students indicates some are very successful in school, while others experience considerable difficulty. The low graduation rate of students who receive ESL in junior or senior high school indicates that these students continue to have educational needs which are not yet being met. This priority is rated fair, the same as in 1990-91.

▬▬▬▬▬ 1992 Rating: Fair

Doing what's best for disabled students

Attitudes and efforts toward integration of disabled students are positive and most of these students are fully or partially integrated into regular classrooms. More schools are accessible to students and parents with physical disabilities. Teacher training, resource materials, and access to inservice programs need improvement to make integration work better. People who work in education are more satisfied than students and parents with the education of students with special needs. Services for disabled students need to be coordinated better. The rating for 1991-92 is the same as the previous year.

▬▬▬▬▬ 1992 Rating: Good

Success for Native children

More Native students are enrolled in and completing grade 12 and graduating. Gains in stay-in-school projects for Native students are promising. Surveys indicate Native student preparation for life beyond high school needs improvement. Schools are challenged to do a better job to meet the educational needs of Native students and improve academic achievement. This rating of fair is not changed from 1990-91.

➡ 1992 Rating: Fair

Challenging our most capable students

Alberta schools offer a variety of programs to challenge our most capable students across all grade levels. Graduates and their parents are positive about opportunities for capable students and recognition of achievement. The percentage of students achieving the standard of excellence on achievement tests and diploma exams continues to be high. More students are earning an advanced diploma with excellence. Increased numbers of students are eligible for the Rutherford Scholarship. The rating for 1991-92 remains the same as last year.

➡ 1992 Rating: Very Good

Where have we fallen behind?

Strong basic skills

Achievement test results in 1992 indicate more students need to meet acceptable standards particularly in grades 6 and 9. Grade 3 social studies results are positive. About the same percentage of high school students achieved the acceptable or higher standard on diploma exam courses as last year. The 1991-92 rating is moved back slightly in the good range to reflect the need for better student performance on achievement tests.

➡ 1992 Rating: Good

Equity of opportunity for students

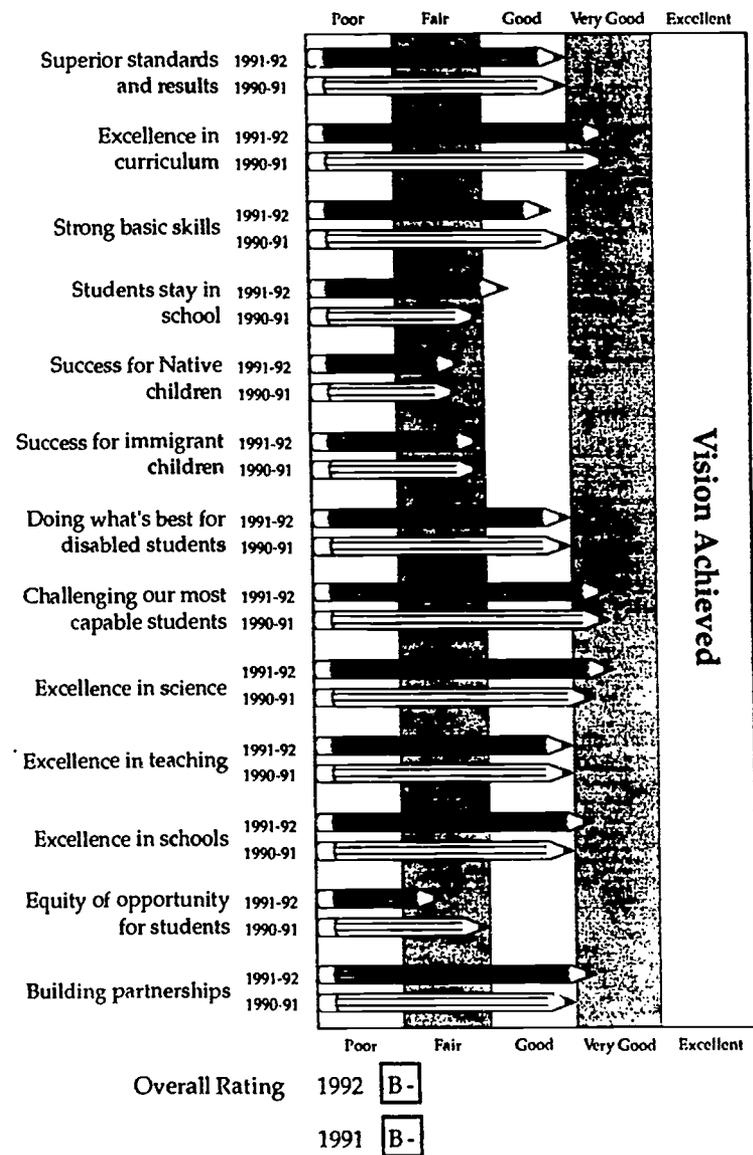
The situation with regard to fiscal equity is getting worse: The gap in the amount raised per student by school jurisdictions continues to grow; the gap in the amount spent per student has also grown. Student access to programs reflects these inequities. The availability of more distance learning courses helps to improve student access. Choice of programs and schools is available to the majority of Alberta students but not in every community. A solution to the growing funding inequities must be found. The rating for 1991-92 moves further back in the fair range as it reflects the worsening fiscal equity situation.

➡ 1992 Rating: Fair

Next steps

Readers should consult the full report and consider the questions asked at the end of each section. The information provided here shows that we have a strong foundation on which to build an even better school system in Alberta. The challenge is to promote positive discussion and, most importantly, to move ahead in providing the best possible education for all Alberta students.

Where We Are Now



for more information or to obtain a free copy of the full report contact:

Policy and Planning Branch 427-8217 (fax 422-5255)

Communications Branch 427-8217 (fax 427-0591)

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ISBN 0-7732-0710-4