

Ministry of
Education

2009/10
Annual Service Plan Report



Ministry of Education

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Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement



B.C.'s education system continues to rank among the best in the world. Our performance compared to other countries shows that B.C.'s secondary students writing post-secondary level exams outperformed the rest of Canada and the United States according to the 2009 Advanced Placement or AP exam results. Also, British Columbia was fourth nationally in 2007 in the most recent Pan-Canadian Assessment Program's tests of 13 year olds' reading, math and science skills. These results are a reflection of the excellent work teachers and students continue to do in this province.

In Budget 2010 the Province is increasing funding for B.C.'s public schools to record levels even though enrolment has declined by 56,000 students since 2000/01. Our Government's commitment to literacy, laid out in our Great Goals, is for B.C. to be the best educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent, and we remain committed to that goal.

Our Government recognizes the importance of investing in early learning and has committed \$280 million over three years to implement full-day kindergarten for all five-year-olds in the province. Full-day kindergarten will be available for 50 per cent of kindergarten students this September and for every five-year-old starting school in 2011. Research shows that a dollar invested in early childhood yields three times as much as one in school-aged children and eight times as much as one in adult education (Cunha, et al. 2005).

Throughout B.C., our StrongStart BC early learning programs continue to be a huge success. We are proud to have more than 310 programs operating across the province today. In 2008/09, there were over 278,000 visits by children to StrongStart BC programs, a substantial increase from 2007/08 when there were over 91,000 visits.

We are continuing to work with boards of education and the Aboriginal community to improve achievement and choice for Aboriginal students through Aboriginal education enhancement agreements. To date, 50 districts have signed agreements, which ensure that Aboriginal languages and culture are integrated in public schools, and Aboriginal communities are involved in the design of programs, services, and curriculum delivery for our Aboriginal students.

This year, B.C. also had the opportunity to host the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games and it was a tremendous success. Our students and teachers had access to a wealth of programs and resources designed to connect students to the spirit and energy of the Games. Hosting the Games gave us the opportunity to showcase B.C.'s education system, showing other countries that our students' achievement is comparable to the best in the world.

Looking forward, the Province is encouraging all school districts in B.C. to find ways to design schools with community use in mind and to create places where people have better access to educational and community services. Neighbourhood learning centre schools can include a

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variety of services, such as child-care programs, office space, health clinics, sports programs, seniors' centres, and family resource centres.

We are also looking at doing things more efficiently in the education sector and are undertaking a review of the existing payroll, business, and administration systems in four pilot districts. This review will determine the complexities of implementing a single system across school districts, from timelines to the savings that can be found as we continue to keep dollars in our classrooms.

The Ministry of Education 2009/10 *Annual Service Plan Report* compares actual results to the expected results identified in the Ministry's 2009/10-2011/12 *Service Plan*. I am accountable for those results as reported.



Honourable Margaret MacDiarmid
Minister of Education and Minister Responsible for Early Learning and Literacy

June 30, 2010

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Purpose of the Ministry

The Government of British Columbia aims to make B.C. the best educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent and the Ministry of Education is leading the way by supporting early learning, the K–12 school system, and life-long literacy.

Preschoolers and their families benefit from Ministry initiatives such as StrongStart BC early learning centres, which help children develop the skills they need for school and life. Full-day kindergarten for five-year-olds, to be phased in starting September 2010, will further prepare young people for success.



The Ministry provides leadership and funding to the K–12 education system through governance, legislation, policy, and standards. The Ministry monitors performance through superintendents of achievement, who provide guidance and support to help school districts respond to students.

In 2009/10, the K–12 system served approximately 580,000 public school students, 69,000 independent school students, and 2,400 home-schooled children. About 64,000 Aboriginal students were included in these numbers, as were 4,300 students enrolled in Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique, exercising their right to a Francophone education.

The Ministry of Education funds adults completing secondary school or upgrading their skills. British Columbians of all ages can also take advantage of the many services and resources available through public libraries to improve their literacy levels and continue to learn at all stages of life. Neighbourhood learning centre schools bring educational and community services together under one roof. These schools may include many services, such as child-care programs, office space, health clinics, sports programs, seniors' centres, and family resource centres.

The Ministry also understands that health and learning are linked. The BC Healthy Schools Network and cross-government initiative ActNow BC are helping students focus on physical activity and healthy eating.

The Ministry of Education works closely with boards of education and independent school authorities, professional education partners, community literacy organizations, First Nations representatives, provincial ministries and agencies, the private sector, and public libraries. Roles and responsibilities are set out under the *School Act*, the *Independent School Act*, the *Teaching Profession Act*, the *Library Act*, the *First Nations Education Act*, the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*, the *Special Accounts Appropriation and Control Act* and accompanying regulations.

Strategic Context

The Ministry of Education was influenced in 2009 by many new and pre-existing social and economic factors affecting British Columbia. The following are examples of developments that presented the Ministry with specific challenges and opportunities since the fall of 2009.

Social Factors

- Enrolment of full-time students in the K–12 education system continued to drop through 2008/09.
- At the same time, demand for online learning continued to grow.¹

Economic Factors

- Economic decline continued through 2009 and the province saw an increase in both the number of adult learners and the use of public libraries.
- Preliminary estimates from Statistics Canada show that British Columbia's real GDP contracted by 2.3 per cent in 2009, following a year of 0.0 per cent growth (or no change) in 2008. The slowdown in BC during 2009 reflects the sharp US and global economic downturn, the moderation of domestic demand in BC, and volatility in world financial and commodity markets.
- The Ministry of Finance forecasts BC's economy to return to growth in 2010, with real GDP increasing by 2.2 per cent. Risks to BC's 2010 economic outlook include a double dip recession originating in the US, slower than anticipated global demand resulting in reduced demand for BC's exports, further appreciation of the Canadian dollar, and further weakening of the US dollar resulting in significant disruptions to global financial and commodity markets.

¹ Data Source: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/student_stats/prov.pdf, Ministry of Education, page 5. Data includes all school age and adult full-time equivalent students enrolled in public schools.

Report on Performance

The Ministry of Education *2009/10 – 2011/12 Service Plan Update* published performance measures and targets; this annual service plan report provides data related to those measures and discusses whatever results were achieved. Through this report the Ministry models accountability and communicates both successes and lessons learned. However, the Province’s fiscal year does not parallel the school year and so some data is unavailable at this time; that information will be made public at a later date and/or as it becomes available.

Performance Plan Summary Table

Goal 1: Improved Student Achievement For greater detail see pages 9 to 14	2009/10 Target	2009/10 Actual
1.1 Improved Academic Achievement for All Students		
The percentage of students who complete school within six years of first starting Grade 8	80%	79.7% SUBSTANTIALLY ACHIEVED ¹
The percentage of Aboriginal students who complete school within six years of first starting Grade 8	50%	50.4% ACHIEVED ²
1.2 Improved Non-Academic Achievement for All Students		
1.3 Students Focus on Career Development		
The percentage of students satisfied with career or post-secondary preparation in school	54%	45% NOT ACHIEVED

¹ UPDATED 05-2011

² UPDATED 05-2011

Goal 2: A High Quality Education System For greater detail see pages 14 to 17	2009/10 Target	2009/10 Actual
2.1 Meeting the Specific Educational Needs of Students and Parents through Choice and Flexibility		
The percentage of public school students satisfied with the educational program choices available to them	54%	50% NOT ACHIEVED
The percentage of public school parents satisfied with the educational program choices available to them	76%	69% NOT ACHIEVED

2.2 Improve Service Delivery to Students and Parents through Service Integration
2.3 A K–12 Education System that is Accountable

Goal 3: Improved Literacy for All British Columbians For greater detail see pages 17 to 22	2009/10 Target	2009/10 Actual
3.1 Improved Reading Levels at All Ages through Greater Access to Literacy Programs, Services, and Information within Communities		
The percentage of Grade 4 students who meet or exceed reading expectations	70%	67% NOT ACHIEVED ¹
The percentage of Grade 7 students who meet or exceed reading expectations	68%	65% NOT ACHIEVED ²
The percentage of adult B.C. residents who read successfully	67%	Data Available 2013
3.2 Improved School Readiness		
The percentage of children who enter kindergarten developmentally ready to learn	73%	Data Available Fall 2011 ³

^{1/2} The total number of eligible students is reflected in these performance results, including those who did not take the assessment.

³ UPDATED 05-2011 Since not all school districts participated in EDI data collection in 2009, the previously expected availability of data in Fall 2010 was not possible.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Performance Results

In 2009/10, the Ministry of Education, together with its partners, pursued the following goals:

- Improved student achievement;
- A high quality education system; and
- Improved literacy for all British Columbians.²

² While the spirit of these goals has stayed the same, The Ministry of Education *2010/11 – 2012/13 Service Plan* revised each statement to be distinct and chronological, reflecting a commitment to learners as they move through the education system: goal one has changed from “improved student achievement” to “high-quality early learning”; goal two changed from “a high quality education system” to “responsive K–12 education”; and, goal three changed from “improved literacy for all British Columbians” to “life-long learning and literacy”.

Well-educated citizens are better able to meet the demands of a modern economy and are more likely to become productive members of society. By promoting educational excellence, government helps build stronger and more resilient communities.

Goal 1: Improved Student Achievement

Student achievement encompasses both academic skills, including reading, writing, and numeracy, and non-academic skills, such as learning to make responsible choices related to health and safety and good citizenship.

Objective 1.1: Improved academic achievement for all students

Strategies

- Assessing, monitoring, and reporting achievement levels for the overall student population, Aboriginal students, and students with special needs,
- Improving Aboriginal student achievement by supporting school districts and Aboriginal communities as they develop and implement their Aboriginal education enhancement agreements, and
- Sharing information and promising practices among school districts and other jurisdictions.

Performance Results

Performance Measure	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2009/10 Actual
The percentage of students who complete school within six years of first starting Grade 8	79%	79%	80%	79.7% SUBSTANTIALLY ACHIEVED ¹
The percentage of Aboriginal students who complete school within six years of first starting Grade 8	47%	49%	50%	50.4% ACHIEVED ²

Data Source: Completion rates are based on data collected by the Ministry of Education.

¹ UPDATED 05-2011

² UPDATED 05-2011

Discussion of Results

Completion rates are determined by calculating the percentage of students who graduate with a Dogwood Diploma within six years of starting Grade 8 for the first time in a B.C. public or independent school.³

Young adults have a greater chance of making a successful transition to post-secondary studies or the workplace if they complete B.C.'s graduation requirements and receive a secondary school graduation diploma.

Results continue to show that B.C.'s world-class education system is meeting the needs of most students but new strategies are needed if students are to surpass the existing plateaus in achievement.

Ministry Response

While B.C. currently enjoys a reputation as one of the top jurisdictions in education, to maintain that position well into the future the Province must embrace change. That is why Government has supported new innovations to improve student achievement, such as the establishment of LearnNow BC, the Province's virtual school, which is providing students around the province with more choices and first-rate tutoring.

Other substantial recent changes include the creation of provincial superintendents of achievement, who are helping boards of education examine student outcomes. These superintendents discuss student achievement reports with each district superintendent and executive team to discuss individual students who may be vulnerable. School districts then manage interventions to assist these students. Superintendents of achievement also canvass school districts for strategies that are improving student achievement. These strategies are shared with other districts that have similar challenges.

In addition, the Ministry is continuing to work with Aboriginal communities and school districts to make tangible plans to engage Aboriginal students. In fact, there are now 50 Aboriginal education enhancement agreements. At the same time, the Ministry is coordinating province-



³ The calculation of completion rates requires an estimate of migration from British Columbia. This estimate cannot be generated at the school level; therefore, completion rates are available only at the provincial and district levels.

wide changes, such as the introduction of English First Peoples 10 and 11.

Objective 1.2: Improved non-academic achievement for all students

The Ministry of Education supports the Government of British Columbia's Great Goal to lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness. Recently, the Ministry took advantage of education opportunities related to ActNow BC and the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. B.C. students learned to make responsible health and safety choices.

Strategies

- Focusing on Healthy Schools⁴:
 - Continuing to support Daily Physical Activity (K–12)⁵ requirements and the *Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools*;
 - Evaluating the BC Anaphylactic and Child Safety Framework;
 - Supporting the BC Healthy Schools Network; and
 - Developing Healthy Living Performance Standards.

Although there are no performance measures tied to the above objectives, below are examples of recent progress.

- Developed and distributed the Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Learning Resource for students in grades 11 and 12.
- Participated in the development of the Provincial Obesity Reduction Strategy to engage all sectors in an effort to counteract obesity.
- Issued planning grants to communities to develop and share examples of how schools and recreation centres can work together to support daily physical activity.⁶
- Expanded the Healthy Schools Network to 120 schools in 16 regions.
- Increased enrolment in the Walking School Bus and Bicycle Train Program to almost 20,000 students.

⁴ To learn more about how the Ministry promotes healthy schools, please visit www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/

⁵ For more information about the Daily Physical Activity Strategy, please visit www.bced.gov.bc.ca/dpa/

⁶ For more information about the daily physical activity community planning grants, please view the summary report at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/dpa/pdfs/dpa_rec_pilot.pdf

Objective 1.3: Students focus on career development

Strategies

- Ensuring that all students understand the concepts of career development and career exploration,
- Providing, as part of the graduation program, opportunities for students to practice skills that can be used for employment, and
- Providing occupation-specific training opportunities for students who plan to enter the workforce directly after Grade 12.

Performance Results

Performance Measure	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2009/10 Actual
The percentage of students satisfied with career or post-secondary preparation in school	51%	52%	54%	45% NOT ACHIEVED

Data Source: Annual satisfaction survey, Ministry of Education, found at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/sat_survey/public.pdf

The graduate transitions survey has also been used to supply data for this measure but was not conducted in 2009/10.

Discussion of Results

It is important that students feel prepared for post-secondary studies and/or their chosen careers.⁷

On the annual satisfaction survey, Grade 10 and 12 students were asked the following questions: “Are you satisfied that school is preparing you for a job in the future?” and “Are you satisfied that school is preparing you for post-secondary education?”

These questions assume that students will effectively evaluate their preparation even before graduating and as early as Grade 10. Past survey results have been consistent from year to year.

⁷ We consider students satisfied with career or post-secondary education preparations when they respond “all the time” or “many times” on the annual satisfaction survey.

Ministry Response

The Ministry is committed to exploring innovations in education to honour each student's individual learning style and encourage each to explore and expand his or her unique talents. This focus on choice and the interests of the individual will allow the passion in each student to clear a path for his or her successful future.

In addition, career development has long been a focus in Health and Career Education K–9 and Planning 10. In grades 10–12, students also have the option of enrolling in career and trades-training programs, some of which offer extended work experience placements. To graduate, students must also participate in at least 30 hours of work experience or community service, describe their experience and resulting skills, and develop a comprehensive plan for their successful transition from secondary school.

The Ministry is comparing the results above with other information to explore possible causes contributing to the change in the satisfaction rate. The Ministry will continue to track and respond to satisfaction survey information, which will remain available on its website.

The Ministry is also developing a stronger and more meaningful performance measure. It will complete a set tracking the literacy and success of learners from the early years through to the workforce and beyond.

Goal 2: A high quality education system

Choice, flexibility and access, service, and accountability are the hallmarks of a high quality education system. These traits have the power to inspire even higher levels of student achievement.

Objective 2.1: Meeting the specific educational needs of students and parents through choice and flexibility

Strategies

- Providing, through the Distributed Learning Strategy, high quality distributed learning choices, regardless of location, including online education and combinations of classroom and distributed learning instruction⁸, and

⁸ LearnNow BC provides a single point of entry to information about distributed learning in British Columbia. Learn more at www.learnnowbc.ca. This website contains both distributed learning course details and information about student services available online.

- Supporting recent agreements that recognize First Nations’ jurisdiction over on-reserve K–12 education, easing transitions between the public and band school systems, and facilitating resource and information sharing between those systems.

Performance Results

Performance Measure	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2009/10 Actual
The percentage of public school students satisfied with the educational choices available to them	48%	51%	54%	50% NOT ACHIEVED
The percentage of public school parents satisfied with the educational choices available to them	72%	70%	76%	69% NOT ACHIEVED

Data Source: Annual satisfaction survey, Ministry of Education, found at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/sat_survey/public.pdf

Discussion of Results

This measure reflects the Ministry’s commitment to service.

Recent progress has included a November 2009 reciprocal tuition agreement that provides full funding for students who, while the funding responsibility of the Province, choose to attend a band-operated school.

Another example is the English First Peoples 10 and 11 curriculums, ready for this September. Drafts were available on the Ministry website this winter for public review and feedback.

While past survey results have generally increased, low satisfaction-survey participation rates have long weakened the accuracy of the data.

Ministry Response

The Ministry is again comparing the results above with other information to explore possible causes contributing to the change in the satisfaction rate. One possibility is that the number of parents taking the survey has continually dropped since 2002/03, which could prevent accurate reporting on the attitudes of all parents. To encourage wide-spread survey participation, the Ministry put versions online but the number of respondents remained low.

The Ministry remains committed to choice for students and parents, just as it remains committed to parent involvement. In fact, the Ministry is open to innovations that will help students choose a path drawing on their individual strengths while acquiring all the skills needed to overcome the many challenges of work and life. Again, the Ministry will continue to track and respond to satisfaction survey information, which will remain on its website. At the same time, the Ministry is developing a stronger and more meaningful performance measure to complete a set tracking the literacy and success of learners from the early years through to the workforce and beyond.

Objective 2.2: Improve service delivery to students and parents through service integration

Strategies

- Continuing to improve collaboration and cooperation with other ministries, agencies, and organizations,
- Focussing on enhancing connections between communities and schools to build community capacity and integrate services, and
- Continuing to implement the Children and Youth with Special Needs Framework for Action with the ministries of Children and Family Development, Health Services, and Healthy Living and Sport.

Ministry Response

Over the past year, the ministries that provide different aspects of service to children and youth with special needs have come together to create protocol agreements to smooth service delivery for these students.

The Ministry is also committed to creating neighbourhood learning centres, which have the potential to serve their communities well, by taking advantage of space in schools, by offering British Columbians the convenience of several services under one roof, and by inspiring clusters of community groups who are likely to find that together they are more than the sum of their parts. The Ministry has now embarked on a consultation and engagement process, working closely with districts and other stakeholders to build neighbourhood learning centres. Through the School Community Connections Program, the Ministry has put forward \$1.8 million to support consultation and planning for these centres.

Objective 2.3: A K–12 education system that is accountable

Strategies

- Monitoring student achievement in school districts through the Office of the Superintendent of Achievement and reporting trends to the Minister of Education,
- Requiring all schools to prepare annual school plans and all boards of education to prepare annual achievement contracts to improve student achievement, and
- Requiring all superintendents to report annually on the improvement of student achievement in their school districts.

Discussion of Results

British Columbia's boards of education are required by legislation to prepare and submit to the Minister of Education an annual achievement contract:

- Focusing school district attention and resources on improving the achievement of all students, including Aboriginal learners;
- Detailing the specific goals that boards of education have set to enhance student achievement and describing the steps they are taking to achieve those goals; and
- Communicating these efforts to a variety of audiences.

Based on the needs of students, each school district, in completing its achievement contract, identifies areas on which to focus. Goals, objectives, and targets are developed for areas that need improvement. Each year, school districts are expected to report their progress in achieving their targets. In cases where a district did not meet its targets, the district is expected to outline how it will adjust its strategies to meet its targets in the following year. Demonstrating improvement in achievement contracts reflects each district's accountability to the public and commitment to improving achievement for all students.⁹

Goal 3: Improved literacy for all British Columbians

To address areas of the Ministry's mandate that expand beyond the K–12 education system, the Ministry's third goal involves literacy, public libraries, and early learning. Meeting the objectives of this goal remains instrumental in supporting the Government's first Great Goal to make British Columbia the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent.

The Ministry of Education is the lead ministry on ReadNow BC,¹⁰ the provincial literacy framework, designed to increase awareness of B.C.'s literacy needs and provide a coordinated approach to the available resources and programs so that all British Columbians have opportunities to improve their literacy skills.



⁹ For more information about achievement contracts, please visit www.bced.gov.bc.ca/schools/sdinfo/acc_contracts/

¹⁰ For more information about ReadNow BC, please visit www.readnowbc.ca

Objective 3.1: Improved reading levels at all ages through greater access to literacy programs, services, and information within communities

Strategies

- Providing leadership and coordination through ReadNow BC, which involves working with other ministries, boards of education, community organizations, literacy stakeholders, libraries, post-secondary institutions, Aboriginal groups, businesses, and community members to improve literacy in British Columbia,
- Ensuring the implementation of district literacy plans¹¹ by guiding boards of education toward further collaboration with communities and the fulfillment of their literacy goals,
- Making effective use of provincial public library resources¹² by promoting equitable access to information for all British Columbians, and
- Developing a monitoring and evaluation framework to continually and consistently report on progress in literacy.

Performance Results

Performance Measure ¹	2007/08 Actual ²	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2009/10 Actual
The percentage of Grade 4 students who meet or exceed reading expectations	74%	69%	70%	67% NOT ACHIEVED
The percentage of Grade 7 students who meet or exceed reading expectations	69%	66%	68%	65% NOT ACHIEVED

Data Source: Foundation Skills Assessment data, Ministry of Education.

¹ The total number of eligible students is reflected in the performance results, including those who did not take the assessment.

² Significant changes made to the Foundation Skills Assessment in 2008 are explained at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa/results/

¹¹ To view district literacy plans for any district, please visit www.readnowbc.ca/dlp.html

¹² For more information on the Public Library Services Branch strategic plan, please visit www.bced.gov.bc.ca/pls/

Discussion of Results

The Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) is used to measure the percentage of public and independent school students in grades 4 and 7 who meet or exceed grade level expectations in three key areas of student learning: reading, writing, and numeracy. The FSA is administered to all students at those grade levels and focuses on the skills that form the foundation for other learning. Standards set by the Ministry are based on the recommendations of B.C. teachers.

The FSA can help educators and parents identify students who may be struggling, and it can inspire appropriate interventions to benefit those individuals. It was chosen as a measure because it can indicate a shift in achievement, such as an overall improvement or decline in reading skills, and the data gathered provides all partners within the education system an opportunity to plan more effectively, focusing on priorities and aiming to improve student achievement.¹³

Ministry Response

Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) achievement rates have remained steady. B.C. must now innovate to remain a world leader in education.

While students need many skills to reach their goals in life, most of those skills require the ability to read well and do basic math.

No matter what education choices B.C. makes, it must also measure those choices by recommitting to administering the FSA to all students.

In 2010, only 81 per cent of students participated. The FSA shows whether students are moving in the right direction at two critical points in their schooling; it can even help predict whether a student will complete school. Participation by all students in grades 4 and 7 will allow all parents and teachers to understand clearly whether their children and students are learning the essential skills needed for future success.

District by District

FSA results vary significantly across districts. The Ministry's superintendents of achievement are working to spread the news of successful, innovative teaching practices from districts that are seeing successes.

One Standout — Fort Nelson

It's often thought that urban areas perform better than rural ones on standard tests, yet the northern district of Fort Nelson has the highest FSA reading scores in the province, with 92 per cent of Grade 4 students meeting or exceeding expectations, compared to the provincial average of 67 per cent.

The district uses a structured reading program that assists all students to achieve age appropriate reading levels on schedule.

¹³ For more information, please visit www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa/

Performance Results

Performance Measure	2003/04 Actual ³	2008/09 Actual ³	2009/10 Target	2009/10 Actual
The percentage of adult ¹ B.C. residents who read successfully ²	65%	65%	67%	Data Available 2013 ⁴

Data Source: International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey.

1 An adult is defined as someone aged 16–65.

2 The Ministry of Education has defined reading successfully to mean possessing reading skills that correspond to Level 3 and above on the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey assessment scale. Level 3 has been designated as the desired threshold for coping with the increasing skill demands of a knowledge-based society.

3 The International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey is conducted infrequently; the last survey was performed in 2003/04.

4 Results for the latest International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey, administered in 2012, will be available in 2013.

Discussion of Results

The International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey is an international comparative study conducted to provide participating countries with information about the literacy skills of their adult populations. In 2003, the survey tested more than 23,000 Canadians on their proficiency in numeracy and literacy; results were published in 2005.

The benefit of this survey is that its wide survey sample provides a clear benchmarking tool to help measure success in promoting adult literacy. The challenge in using the survey as a performance measure is that it is conducted infrequently.

Ministry Response

The Ministry is committed to continuous improvement in education, constantly making adjustments to offer today’s students the skills they will need as part of tomorrow’s workforce. The scope of this aim makes measuring and monitoring a challenge. For example, the above performance measure cannot capture important small steps toward success, such as the literacy benefits to parents of students enrolled in the Immigrant PALS program¹⁴. Similarly, the above survey does not occur often enough to model clear, accountable reporting. The Ministry will soon replace this measure with one conducted more frequently.

¹⁴ Early indications from the Immigrant PALS pilot program indicate strong literacy benefits for adult caregivers of students attending the program.

Objective 3.2: Improved school readiness

School readiness describes the skills, knowledge, and dispositions that young children acquire from their early experiences and bring with them when they enter kindergarten. Rich, play-based early learning experiences prior to school entry can benefit children academically and socially in kindergarten and beyond.

Strategies

- Continuing to support and implement StrongStart BC¹⁵ early learning centres and outreach programs to help pre-kindergarten children realize their potential and become life-long learners,
- Implementing the BC Early Learning Framework, and
- Planning for the successful implementation of full-day kindergarten for five-year-olds and optional pre-kindergarten for three- and four-year-old children in the future.

Performance Results

Performance Measure	2005/06 to 2007/08 Baseline ¹	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Target	2009/10 Actual
The percentage of children who enter kindergarten developmentally ready to learn	70.4 %	71.4 %	73%	Data Available Fall 2011 ²

Data Source: The Human Early Learning Partnership (University of British Columbia, funded by the ministries of Children and Family Development, Education, and Healthy Living and Sport). For more information see <http://www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/>

¹ Prior to 2008/2009, data was collected in waves over three year intervals by the Human Early Learning Partnership.

² UPDATED 05-2011 Since not all school districts participated in EDI data collection in 2009, the previously expected availability of data in Fall 2010 was not possible.

¹⁵ For more information on StrongStart BC, please visit www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early_learning/strongstart_bc/

Discussion of Results

The tool chosen to gauge children's readiness for school is the Early Development Instrument, created and maintained by the Human Early Learning Partnership at the University of British Columbia. Kindergarten teachers in B.C. began to collect data for the Early Development Instrument in 1999/00, and, since March 2004, all 60 school districts submit data.

The Early Development Instrument assembles data in five key areas of children's development: physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, and communication skills and general knowledge. This information is then examined to teach us more about how and why different groups of children are developing.

Ministry Response

The Ministry has made major investments in B.C.'s education system to benefit early learners. The most prominent examples, which are StrongStart BC and full-day kindergarten, will support learning and development among children and lead to increased student achievement. We are committed to extending the options for parents to include pre-kindergarten for all three- and four-year-olds.

Ministry progress on StrongStart BC and full-day kindergarten within the timeframe of this report includes the following highlights:

- approved additional StrongStart BC early learning programs, bringing the total to 315;
- offered school districts the opportunity to begin implementing full-day kindergarten; and
- created a full-day kindergarten program pamphlet for parents, a guide for educators, and a toolkit for boards and districts that need to recruit additional teachers.

The Ministry has since published its guidelines on full-day kindergarten for schools at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early_learning/fdk/.

Report on Resources

Resource Summary Table

Core Business Area	Estimated ¹	Other Authorizations ¹	Total Estimated	Actual	Variance
Operating Expenses (\$000)					
Education Programs	4,966,415		4,966,415	4,965,635	(780)
Public Libraries	13,130		13,130	13,829	699
Executive and Support Services	63,013	44,349	107,362	107,443	81
Statutory Account (Funding for Children's Education Fund Special Account)		43,772	43,772	43,772	0
Transfer from General Account to Children's Education Fund Special Account		(43,772)	(43,772)	(43,772)	0
Sub-total Operating Expenses	5,042,558	44,349	5,086,907	5,086,907	0
Adjustment of Prior Year Accruals				(17,215)	(17,215)
Total	5,042,558	44,349	5,086,907	5,069,692	(17,215)
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)					
Executive and Support Services	1,436		1,436	838	(598)
Total	1,436		1,436	838	(598)
Capital Plan (\$000)					
Public Schools	372,903		372,903	304,203	(68,700)
Total	372,903		372,903	304,203	(68,700)

¹ "Other Authorizations" include Supplementary Estimates, Statutory Appropriations and Contingencies. Amounts in this column are not related to the "estimated amount" under sections 5(1) and 6(1) of the Balanced Budget and Ministerial Accountability Act for ministerial accountability for operating expenses under the Act. The Ministry obtained access to Government contingency for the accrued expense for the Teachers Pension Plan liability arising from the accounting treatment of the December 2008 actuarial evaluation result for the Plan, and specifically results from a downward revision of future forecasted earnings of the Plan.

Resource Summary Public Schools

School Districts	2009/10 Budget	2009/10 Actual	Variance
Combined Income Statement (\$000)¹			
Total Revenue	5,414,000	5,407,000	(7,000)
Total Expense	5,324,000	5,379,000	55,000
Operating Results	90,000	28,000	(62,000)
Gain (Loss) on sale of Capital Assets (if applicable)	4,000	12,000	8,000
Net Results	94,000	40,000	54,000

¹ This combined income statement includes estimates from 60 school districts. Numbers do not include the eliminating entries required to consolidate these agencies with the government reporting entity.

Annual Service Plan Report Appendices

Appendix A: Ministry Contact Information

General Enquiries

The Ministry of Education provides a single contact point for the public to ask questions relating to the Ministry's activities. The operating hours for this general enquiries line is Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, excluding statutory holidays. Call **1 888 879-1166**.

Ministry Mailing Address

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