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Published by the Ministry of Education

## Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement



B.C.'s education system is one of the best in the world and the next three years are an opportunity for even more students, families and communities to build better lives through educational excellence. Through the 2008 Speech from the Throne, Government made clear that this opportunity must be available to all British Columbians.

The Ministry of Education has engaged an array of partners and encouraged collaboration. And while the Ministry is committed to further improving the overall quality of the education system, a priority is to reach out to the almost 20 per cent of British Columbian students who find learning a challenge.

If children are to succeed in school, they need to be developmentally ready when they begin. To help them, we are creating StrongStart BC early learning centres around the province. We have also invested more than \$151 million to improve literacy in schools and communities so that all British Columbians have the opportunity to achieve their dreams.

To help ensure that Aboriginal students have a wealth of opportunities, we have signed Aboriginal education enhancement agreements with almost three-quarters of all B.C. school districts. Along with increased funding and a system-wide focus on Aboriginal achievement, these agreements help Aboriginal students build academic success, a sense of belonging, youth leadership, and a stronger connection to their Aboriginal culture.

British Columbia is not just leading the way academically. Through ActNow BC and our emphasis on healthy schools, B.C. has become the first province in Canada to require all students to participate in daily physical activity and to ban junk food sales in all public schools. As the Olympics and Paralympics open in 2010, B.C.'s students will already be part of a movement to create a healthier, stronger population.

In addition, B.C.'s *Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act* calls for a reduction in provincial greenhouse gas emissions by 33 per cent from 2007 levels by 2020. British Columbia's schools are doing their part. The Ministry of Education now requires all new and upgraded schools to adhere to LEED Gold energy and environmental standards. This Government is supporting the efforts of boards of education by reimbursing carbon tax levies for all boards that sign on to the Climate Action Charter.

It is clear that those communities where education is a high priority are communities with more successful learners. Through the Neighbourhoods of Learning pilot project and connections with public libraries, community literacy providers, and programs like StrongStart BC, we are helping to build learning communities.

This Ministry of Education 2009/10 – 2011/12 Service Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared. All material fiscal assumptions and policy decisions as of February 2, 2009 have been considered in preparing the plan, and I am accountable for achieving the specific objectives in the plan.



Honourable Shirley Bond  
Deputy Premier, Minister of Education and Minister Responsible for Early Learning and Literacy

February 2, 2009

# Table of Contents

<b>Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Purpose of the Ministry .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Strategic Context .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Resource Summary .....</b>	<b>21</b>
Resource Summary Table.....	21
Resource Summary: Public Schools.....	22
Major Capital Projects .....	22
<b>Ministry Contact Information .....</b>	<b>25</b>

# Purpose of the Ministry

The Government of British Columbia's first Great Goal is to make B.C. the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent, and the Ministry of Education is leading the way by investing in early learning, the K–12 school system, public libraries and life-long literacy.

Preschoolers and their families benefit from Ministry initiatives such as StrongStart BC early learning centres, which help B.C. children develop the skills they need to succeed in school and life.



The Ministry provides leadership and support to the K–12 education system through governance, legislation, policy, and standards, and insists on accountability, from monitoring performance to reporting results.

The K–12 system serves approximately 580,000 public school students, 69,000 independent school students and 2,700 home-schooled children. Approximately 64,000 Aboriginal students, and 4,400 students enrolled in Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique, exercising their right to a Francophone education, are included in these numbers.

The Ministry of Education also funds adults completing secondary school or upgrading their skills. And British Columbians of all ages can 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.

The second Great Goal for Government is to lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness. The Ministry is helping the Province realize this through its commitment to overall school health and ActNow BC. Schools influence student health, and healthy children are better able to learn.

Another of Government's Great Goals is to lead the world in sustainable environmental management. The Ministry is working with the BC Climate Action Secretariat and others to enhance environmental sustainability now and to instill green values in future generations.

The Ministry pursues all these goals through collaborative relationships. Partners include boards of education and independent school authorities, professional education organizations, 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 *Teaching Profession Act*, the *Independent School Act*, the *Library Act* and accompanying regulations.

# Strategic Context

Like any organization, the Ministry of Education is influenced by the social, economic, and contextual factors of life in British Columbia. An aging population and the number and location of students, labour relations, children's health and special needs all impact the education system.

An examination of risks and opportunities can identify factors likely to affect the Ministry's ability to achieve its goals, allowing the Ministry to act on opportunities, and anticipate and rise to challenges.

## Social Factors

- B.C. students perform well in national and international comparison tests.
- Enrolment in the K–12 education system is estimated to have declined between 1997/98 and 2008/09 by approximately 60,000 students (public only). Over the next six years, from 2009/10 to 2014/15, enrolment is expected to continue to decline.
- More than 25 per cent of children start kindergarten without the skills they need to succeed. These students are likely to have difficulty throughout their education.<sup>1</sup>
- The number of children with identified special needs receiving supplemental funding increased by more than 4,500 in the last six years from 18,131 in 2002/03 to an estimated 22,646 in 2008/09.
- A significant difference remains between the achievement levels of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.
- More than 64,000 students require English-as-a-second-language services, up from approximately 60,000 in 2003/04.
- Online learning is increasingly in demand despite the decline in overall student enrolment.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2004, more than 25 per cent of B.C. children ages 2–17 were obese or overweight. In the past 25 years, the number of obese adolescents ages 12–17 has tripled.<sup>3</sup>
- Almost 40 per cent of adult British Columbians have difficulty understanding and using printed information in everyday life.<sup>4</sup>

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1 *The British Columbia Atlas of Child Development* (Human Early Learning Partnership); Paul Kershaw, Lori Irwin, Kate Trafford, and Clyde Hertzman. 2005. [www.ecdportal.help.ubc.ca/archive/bc-atlas-child-development.htm](http://www.ecdportal.help.ubc.ca/archive/bc-atlas-child-development.htm)

2 Data Source: [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/student\\_stats/prov.pdf](http://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.

3 Statistics Canada: Shields, M., *Measured Obesity: Overweight Canadian children and adolescents*, page 2, [www.statcan.ca/english/research/82-620-MIE/2005001/pdf/cobesity.pdf](http://www.statcan.ca/english/research/82-620-MIE/2005001/pdf/cobesity.pdf)

4 The International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey. [www.statcan.ca/cgi-bin/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=4406&lang=en&db=IMDB&dbg=f&adm=8&dis=2](http://www.statcan.ca/cgi-bin/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=4406&lang=en&db=IMDB&dbg=f&adm=8&dis=2)

### **Economic Factors**

- The private sector now expects that B.C. will experience slower economic growth in 2009 and 2010 than it has in previous years. Risks to B.C.'s economic outlook include a prolonged US recession, continued turmoil in global financial markets, slower global demand for B.C. products, volatile commodity prices and further moderation of domestic demand in British Columbia.

### **Contextual Factors**

- The Government of British Columbia signed the Transformative Change Accord with the Government of Canada and the First Nations Leadership Council in November 2005. The accord aims to close the gap that exists between First Nations and other British Columbians in health, housing, education and economic opportunities.
- The Province has enacted the *First Nations Education Act*, recognizing First Nations' authority to enact laws with respect to education on First Nations' land. Developed in consultation with the First Nations Education Steering Committee, the *First Nations Education Act* also allows greater cooperation between boards of education and First Nations, and builds increased consultation between the Province and the First Nations Education Authority.
- The Province has created StrongStart BC early learning centres, which offer free, drop-in programs for families to help preschool-aged children develop the skills they need to succeed in school. There are now 189 StrongStart BC early learning programs open across British Columbia, and these were visited over 90,000 times last year.
- The Province has created an Early Childhood Learning Agency<sup>5</sup> to look into the feasibility of offering all-day kindergarten for five-year-olds and optional all-day early learning programs for children ages three and four by 2012.
- B.C. is the pan-Canadian lead on literacy, which is one of three priorities for the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada — an intergovernmental forum that represents the national and international education interests of Canada's 13 provinces and territories.<sup>6</sup>
- B.C. is also the current lead for the pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health, which aims to increase promotion of school health in the education and health systems.<sup>7</sup>
- B.C. is expanding Canada's gateway to the Pacific by building stronger relationships with Asia-Pacific nations through transportation links, cultural exchange, and educational partnerships.

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<sup>5</sup> For more information about the Early Childhood Learning Agency, please visit [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/ecla/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/ecla/)

<sup>6</sup> For more information on the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, please visit [www.cmec.ca](http://www.cmec.ca)

<sup>7</sup> For more information on the Joint Consortium for School Health, please visit [www.jcsh-cces.ca](http://www.jcsh-cces.ca)



# Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

The Ministry of Education, together with its partners, has three main goals.

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

Well educated citizens are better able to meet the demands of a modern economy, and are more likely to become productive, participating members of society. Government's goal for our education system is to strive constantly for educational excellence to build stronger, more resilient communities.

## Goal 1: Improved student achievement

Continuous improvement in student achievement refers to both academic achievement (including reading, writing and numeracy) and non-academic achievement, such as learning to make responsible choices related to health and safety, and demonstrating the qualities of good citizenship.

### Objective 1.1: Improved academic achievement for all students<sup>8</sup>

#### Strategies

- To assess, monitor and report achievement levels for the overall student population, Aboriginal students and students with special needs;
- To improve Aboriginal student achievement by supporting school districts as they complete and implement Aboriginal education enhancement agreements; and
- To share information and best practices among school districts and other jurisdictions.



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<sup>8</sup> Student achievement levels are available for a number of student sub-populations including Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal, English as a second language and by gender on the Ministry website at [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/grad/grad-rpt.php/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/grad/grad-rpt.php/)

## Performance Measure 1: Six-year completion rate

Performance Measure	2008/09 Forecast	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Completion Rate — Overall	82%	83%	84%	85%
Completion Rate — Aboriginal	58%	60%	63%	65%

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

### Discussion

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.<sup>9</sup>

Completion rates were chosen as a performance measure because these rates are tangible evidence that students have succeeded in the K–12 education system. 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.

While the completion rate has increased five per cent since 2001, there is still more work to be done.<sup>10</sup> Our Government has supported new measures to improve student achievement, such as the creation of provincial superintendents of achievement, who are helping boards of education examine student outcomes, and the establishment of LearnNow BC, the Province's virtual school, which is providing students around the province with more choices and first-rate tutoring.

### ***PATHFINDERS — Aboriginal Education***

*Less than half of Aboriginal students are completing school. It doesn't have to be this way.*

*The Ministry of Education is working with school districts and Aboriginal communities across the province to sign Aboriginal education enhancement agreements. With over 40 district-wide agreements now coordinating local efforts to honour, engage and challenge Aboriginal students, communities around B.C. are already seeing significant benefits.*

*The Qualicum school district signed their first Aboriginal education enhancement agreement in 2003. Between 2002/03 and 2005/06, the number of Aboriginal students meeting or exceeding expectations in Foundation Skills Assessments rose from 74 per cent to 94 per cent.*

<sup>9</sup> Calculation of completion rates requires an estimate of migration from British Columbia. This estimate cannot be generated at the school level; therefore, the completion rate is available only at the district and provincial level.

<sup>10</sup> For more information on past and present completion rates, please see the most recent Summary of Key Information on the Ministry website at [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/levels/prov\\_key.php](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/levels/prov_key.php)

## **Objective 1.2: Improved non-academic achievement for all students**

The Ministry of Education is committed to ActNow BC and is supporting the Government of British Columbia's Great Goal to "lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness" by ensuring that B.C. students learn to make responsible choices related to health and safety.

### **Strategies**

- To focus on Healthy Schools<sup>11</sup>
  - Setting standards for K–12 daily physical activity<sup>12</sup> requirements and the *Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools*;
  - Setting standards for anaphylaxis protocols in schools across the province;
  - Developing a provincial ActNow BC healthy schools designation;
  - Expanding the BC Healthy Schools Network; and
  - Developing a provincial walking school bus and bicycle train program.
- To focus on safe, caring and orderly schools through the *School Act*,<sup>13</sup> which requires boards of education to establish codes of conduct in their schools. Standards and guidelines in the *Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct Order*<sup>14</sup> and *Safe, Caring and Orderly Schools: A Guide*<sup>15</sup> assist boards of education and schools in creating and maintaining positive learning environments for student achievement.

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<sup>11</sup> To learn more about how the Ministry promotes healthy schools, please visit [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/)

<sup>12</sup> For more information about the Daily Physical Activity Strategy, please visit [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/dpa/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/dpa/)

<sup>13</sup> To access Sections 85(1.1) and 168(2)(s.1) of the *School Act*, please refer to [www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/stat/s/96412\\_00.htm](http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/stat/s/96412_00.htm)

<sup>14</sup> To access the *Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct Order*, please visit [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/safe\\_caring\\_orderly\\_schools.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/safe_caring_orderly_schools.htm)

<sup>15</sup> To access the safe, caring and orderly schools guide, please visit [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/sco/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/sco/)

### Objective 1.3: Students focus on career development

#### Strategies

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

### Performance Measure 2: Student satisfaction with preparation for career or post-secondary education

Performance Measure	2008/09 Forecast	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Percentage of graduates who "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that secondary school prepared them academically for post-secondary education	74%	75%	76%	77%
Percentage of graduates who "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that secondary school provided them with work skills for employment	50%	51%	52%	53%

Data Source: Graduate transitions survey, Ministry of Education, found at [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/surveys/grad-tran.php](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/surveys/grad-tran.php)

#### Discussion

The Ministry uses the graduate transitions survey to collect information about student transitions to post-secondary study and employment. The survey also measures the level of satisfaction graduates feel about their secondary school education and how it helped prepare them for either career development or post-secondary studies.

It is important that students feel prepared for post-secondary studies and/or their chosen careers. Some suggestions for improvement offered by students in the graduate transitions survey included more opportunities for advanced study, more information on career options and how to apply for jobs and post-secondary institutions.

## Goal 2: A high quality education system

The Ministry believes that a high quality education system with increased choice, flexibility and access, improved service for clients and a continued emphasis on accountability will result in high levels of student achievement.

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

#### Strategies

- To ensure, through the Rural Education Strategy,<sup>16</sup> that students, parents and educators have equitable access to the educational programs and services they need, regardless of where they live in the province;
- To provide, through the Distributed Learning Strategy, high quality distributed learning choices, including online education and hybrid models that combine classroom and distributed learning instruction;<sup>17</sup> and
- To support recent agreements that recognize First Nations' jurisdiction over on-reserve K–12 education, ease transitions between the public and band school systems and facilitate resource and information sharing between those systems.

### Performance Measure 3: Percentage of public school students and parents satisfied with educational program choices available to them

Performance Measure		2008/09 Forecast	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Percentage of public school students and parents satisfied with educational program choices available to them	Parents <sup>1</sup>	73%	76%	79%	80%
	Students <sup>2</sup>	51%	54%	57%	58%

**Data Source:** Annual satisfaction survey, Ministry of Education, found at [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/surveys/sat-bas.php](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/surveys/sat-bas.php)

<sup>1</sup> Data combines responses from elementary and secondary parents.

<sup>2</sup> Data combines responses from students in grades 10 and 12.

<sup>16</sup> To learn more about the Rural Education Strategy, please visit [www.learnnowbc.ca/educators/Rural\\_Education/](http://www.learnnowbc.ca/educators/Rural_Education/)

<sup>17</sup> LearnNow BC provides a single point of entry to information about distributed learning in British Columbia. Learn more at [www.learnnowbc.ca](http://www.learnnowbc.ca). This website contains both distributed learning course details and information about student services available online.

### **Discussion**

The Ministry annually collects opinions from students, parents and school staff on human and social development, safety, and achievement. Parents' and students' level of satisfaction serves as a critical measure for assessing the overall performance of the education system.

This measure was chosen because it reflects the Ministry's commitment to service and because it assesses the degree to which the education system is accessible, flexible and meets the needs of all students. A concern with using data from the annual satisfaction survey is that its accuracy may be impacted if participation rates are low. To encourage participation, the Ministry has made the survey available online and in many languages.

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

#### **Strategies**

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

*See also Performance Measure 3*

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

#### **Strategies**

- To monitor student achievement in school districts through the Office of the Superintendent of Achievement and report trends to the Minister of Education;
- To require all schools to prepare annual school plans and all boards of education to prepare annual achievement contracts, to improve student achievement;
- To undertake district reviews to analyze efforts to support student achievement; and
- To provide boards of education with administrative direction that will help improve student achievement.

*See also Performance Measure 1*

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

- To focus school district attention and resources on improving the achievement of all students, including Aboriginal learners;
- To detail the specific goals that boards of education have set to enhance student achievement and to describe the steps they are taking to achieve those goals; and
- To communicate 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.<sup>18</sup>

### **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 will be 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,<sup>19</sup> the provincial literacy framework, designed to increase awareness of B.C.'s literacy challenge and provide a coordinated approach to the resources and programs that will ensure all British Columbians have opportunities to improve their literacy skills.



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<sup>18</sup> For more information about achievement contracts, please visit [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/schools/sdinfo/acc\\_contracts/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/schools/sdinfo/acc_contracts/)

<sup>19</sup> For more information about ReadNow BC, please visit [www.readnowbc.ca](http://www.readnowbc.ca)

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

#### **Strategies**

- To provide 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;
- To ensure the development and implementation of district literacy plans<sup>20</sup> by supporting boards of education in their collaboration with communities and in their pursuit of literacy goals;
- To make effective use of provincial public library resources<sup>21</sup> by providing equitable access to information for all British Columbians; and
- To develop a monitoring and evaluation framework to continually and consistently report on progress.

#### ***PATHFINDERS — Literacy***

*In early 2007, the Peace River North school district looked at the dramatic reading improvements that one elementary school had seen with a teaching technique called facilitated collaboration between teachers and decided to extend the program district-wide.*

*The district used a provincial literacy innovation grant to create school teams of teachers, pay for collaboration time to assess local literacy data, and build common goals. With access to literacy support teachers and a collaborative working environment, literacy teams worked with low-literacy learners in groups using one-on-one coaching techniques.*

*In 2007/08, their efforts had a significant effect on reading improvement. In five of seven grades, the numbers of children meeting or exceeding reading expectations increased. The gains were particularly dramatic for Aboriginal learners.*

*Ministry of Education literacy innovation grants fund literacy programs that target students who struggle with basic reading and math. Innovation grants give school districts a source of literacy-specific funding and the freedom to choose the programs that work best for local learners.*

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<sup>20</sup> To view the 2007/08 district literacy plan guidelines, please visit [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/transitional\\_DLP\\_2007.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/transitional_DLP_2007.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> For more information on the Public Library Services Branch strategic plan, please visit [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/pls/strat\\_plan.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/pls/strat_plan.htm)



## Performance Measure 4: School reading skills

Performance Measure		2008/09 Forecast	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
School reading skills (Foundation Skills Assessment, grades 4 and 7) — percentage of students who meet or exceed expectations <sup>1</sup>	Reading Grade 4	74%	75%	76%	76%
	Reading Grade 7	70%	72%	73%	74%

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

<sup>1</sup> Significant changes were made to the Foundation Skills Assessment in 2008. For more information, please refer to [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa/)

### Discussion

The Foundation Skills Assessment 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 assessment 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 Foundation Skills Assessment was chosen as a measure because it can indicate a shift in achievement, such as an overall improvement or decline in reading skills. As well, the data gathered from the assessments provide all partners within the education system with an opportunity to plan more effectively and to focus on key priorities with the aim of improving student achievement.<sup>22</sup>

## Performance Measure 5: International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey — percentage of adults who read successfully

Performance Measure	2008/09 Forecast	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
Percentage of adult <sup>1</sup> B.C. residents who read successfully <sup>2</sup>	66%	67%	69%	70%

**Data Source:** International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey.

<sup>1</sup> Adult is defined as being aged 16 to 65.

<sup>2</sup> The Ministry of Education has defined reading "successfully" to mean possessing reading skills that correspond to levels 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.

<sup>22</sup> For more information, please visit [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa/)

## Discussion

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 it measures the literacy and numeracy skills of a nationally-representative sample of participants 16 to 65 years of age, from six participating countries, providing a useful 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 sporadically. The next survey to gather information about adult literacy will be the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies<sup>23</sup> with results available in 2013.

*The B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development conducted a study of adult literacy based on the International Adult Literacy Skills Survey structure and content.*

*The results will be compared with those from the International Adult Literacy Skills Survey published in 2005.*

### ***PATHFINDERS — Public Libraries***

*British Columbia's public libraries are an outstanding resource for learning, literacy and community activity across the province. Now, the Ministry of Education is providing infrastructure and coordination assistance to help B.C.'s libraries reach even more people, in more places.*

*Coordination enables almost every resident of B.C. to get a library card no matter where they live.*

*It makes it possible for a Kamloops resident to take a book out while visiting Prince George, or benefit from a book in the Vancouver library.*

*It gives more British Columbians instant access to world class information resources, such as the AskAway online reference service, or online databases covering everything from magazine articles and online encyclopedias to health information and auto repair manuals.*

*And it allows anyone with a B.C. public library card to download free any of the over 4,000 audio and e-books now available on the B.C. public libraries website: [www.bclibrary.ca](http://www.bclibrary.ca).*

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<sup>23</sup> For more information about the 2009 Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies, please visit [www.oecd.org/document/35/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_201185\\_40277475\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/35/0,3343,en_2649_201185_40277475_1_1_1_1,00.html)

### Objective 3.2: Improved school readiness

"School readiness" describes the collection of cognitive and social skills, knowledge, dispositions and personal experiences children bring with them when entering kindergarten. Play-based learning prior to school entry can give children an academic and social advantage in school.



### Strategies

- To continue to support and implement StrongStart BC<sup>24</sup> early learning centres to help pre-kindergarten children realize their potential and become life-long learners;
- To implement the BC Early Learning Framework;
- To support school districts address the learning needs of preschool-aged children and their families; and
- To consider the feasibility of all-day kindergarten for five-year-olds and then also optional early learning programs for children ages three and four.

#### ***PATHFINDERS — Early Learning***

*More than 25 per cent of children are not ready for success in school when they start kindergarten. These children may face long-term challenges in school and throughout life.*

*That's why the Province has helped establish StrongStart BC centres, which feature free, drop-in early learning programs for preschool-aged children and their parents and caregivers. With 189 programs now open and 200 expected by June 2009, StrongStart BC is quickly becoming an important part of communities across the province.*

*These are comments from some of the parents and other caregivers who collectively visited StrongStart BC early learning centres with their children over 90,000 times last year.*

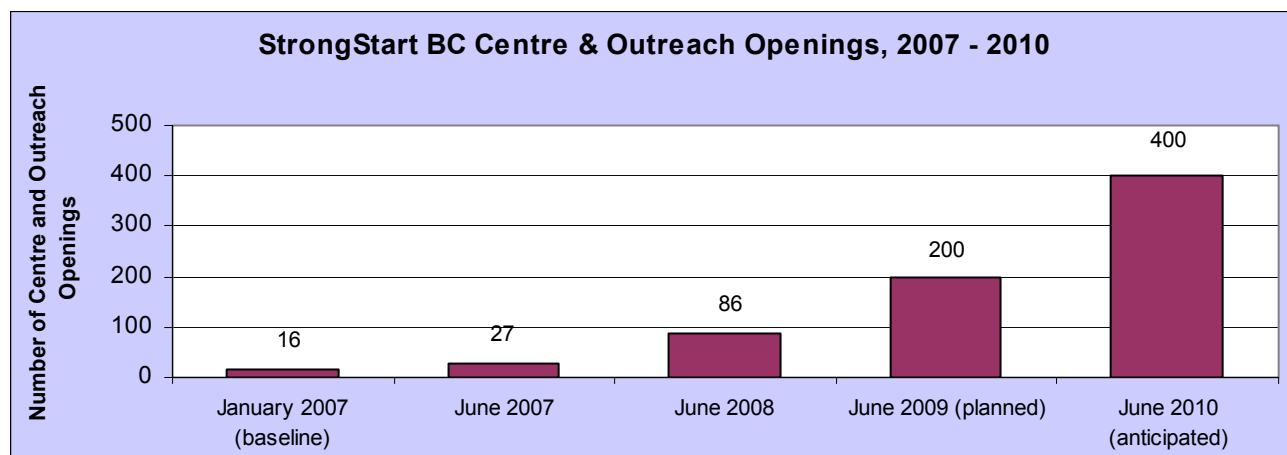
*— "StrongStart has everything here — library, story time, Mother Goose songs .... At StrongStart all the pieces work together to teach the children so much."*

*— "My daughter used to be extremely physical — now she is more loving and sharing with others."*

*— "I used to be really shy when I came to school; now I say "Hi" to the secretary. I say "Hi" to the principal. I feel like this is my school."*

*StrongStart BC centres give young children and their families a tremendous opportunity to increase their readiness for success in school and reap life-long benefits.*

<sup>24</sup> For more information on StrongStart BC, please visit [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early\\_learning/strongstart\\_bc/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early_learning/strongstart_bc/)



**Performance Measure 6: School readiness (Early Development Instrument) — percentage of children who enter kindergarten "developmentally ready" to learn**

Performance Measure	2008/09 Forecast	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target	2011/12 Target
School readiness (Early Development Instrument) — percentage of children who enter kindergarten "developmentally ready" to learn	N/A <sup>1</sup>	73%	75%	76%

**Data Source:** The Human Early Learning Partnership (University of British Columbia, funded by the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport).

<sup>1</sup> Data not collected annually at this time by the Human Early Learning Partnership.

**Discussion**

The tool chosen to gauge children's readiness for school is the Early Development Instrument. Kindergarten teachers in B.C. began to collect data for the Early Development Instrument in 1999/00, and, as of March 2004, all 60 school districts collect data.

The Early Development Instrument assembles data in five key areas of children's development. The data are then considered cumulatively to suggest the developmental status of populations of children. The five areas considered are physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, and communication skills and general knowledge.

## Resource Summary Table

Core Business Area	2008/09 Restated Estimates <sup>1</sup>	2009/10 Estimates	2010/11 Plan	2011/12 Plan
<b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>				
Education Programs .....	5,021,215	5,094,418	5,131,538	5,147,811
Public Libraries .....	15,675	15,675	15,675	15,675
Executive and Support Services .....	79,627	68,447	67,903	66,935
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>5,116,517</b>	<b>5,178,540</b>	<b>5,215,116</b>	<b>5,230,421</b>
<b>Full-time Equivalents (Direct FTEs)</b>				
Executive and Support Services .....	342	336	336	336
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>336</b>
<b>Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)</b>				
Executive and Support Services .....	5,220	1,501	1,565	1,565
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>5,220</b>	<b>1,501</b>	<b>1,565</b>	<b>1,565</b>
<b>Capital Plan (\$000)</b>				
Public Schools .....	306,502	322,886	302,683	278,375
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>306,502</b>	<b>322,886</b>	<b>302,683</b>	<b>278,375</b>

<sup>1</sup> Amounts have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with Schedule A of the 2009/10 *Estimates*.

## Resource Summary: Public Schools

School Districts	2008/09 Forecasted Estimates <sup>1</sup>	2009/10 Budget	2010/11 Plan	2011/12 Plan
<b>Combined Income Statement (\$000)<sup>2</sup></b>				
<b>Total Revenue</b> .....	5,399,337	5,483,801	5,507,717	5,514,203
<b>Total Expense</b> .....	5,308,302	5,393,841	5,436,795	5,450,422
<b>Operating Results</b> .....	91,035	89,960	70,922	63,781
<b>Gain (Loss) on sale of capital assets (if applicable)</b> .....	0	3,550	0	0
<b>Net Results</b> .....	91,035	93,510	70,922	63,781

<sup>1</sup> Amounts have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with Schedule A of the 2009/10 *Estimates*.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

## Major Capital Projects

### Alberni District Secondary School

**Objective:** Replace Alberni District Secondary School (existing capacity 1,300 students) with a new, 1,000-student capacity school on a new site on Roger Street in Port Alberni in School District No. 70 (Alberni).

**Costs:** The estimated cost for this project is \$50.9 million.

**Benefits:**

- A new environmentally-friendly secondary facility will have lower operating and maintenance costs for the board of education;
- Secondary programs will be provided in an improved educational environment;
- The new site is more centrally located in proximity to community recreation facilities and the local post-secondary campus; and

- The new school will have a seismically safe design.

**Risks:**

- If not replaced, the board of education will continue operating an aging facility that is becoming increasingly expensive to operate and maintain; and
- If not replaced, seismic risk will still exist.

**Burnaby Central Secondary School**

**Objective:** Replace Burnaby Central Secondary School with a new, 1,300-student capacity school on the existing grounds in School District No. 41 (Burnaby).

**Costs:** The estimated cost for this project is \$55.7 million.

**Benefits:**

- A new environmentally-friendly secondary facility will have lower operating and maintenance costs for the board of education;
- Secondary programs will be provided in an improved educational environment; and
- The new school will have a seismically safe design.

**Risks:**

- If not replaced, the board of education will continue operating an aging facility that is becoming increasingly expensive to operate and maintain; and
- If not replaced, seismic risk will still exist.

**Chilliwack Senior Secondary School**

**Objective:** Replace Chilliwack Senior Secondary School (existing capacity 900 students) with a new, 1,200-student capacity school on the existing grounds in School District No. 33 (Chilliwack).

**Costs:** The estimated cost for this project is \$52.3 million.

**Benefits:**

- A new environmentally-friendly secondary facility will have lower operating and maintenance costs for the board of education;
- Secondary programs will be provided in an improved educational environment; and
- The new school will have a seismically safe design.

**Risks:**

- If not replaced, the board of education will continue operating an aging facility that is becoming increasingly expensive to operate and maintain;
- Many secondary students will continue to be accommodated in portable classrooms and inadequate program areas; and
- If not replaced, seismic risk will still exist.

**New Westminster Secondary School**

**Objective:** Replace the existing New Westminster Secondary School with a new, 1,800-student capacity secondary school (grades 9–12), and construct a new, 500-student capacity middle school (grades 6–8) in School District No. 40 (New Westminster).

**Costs:** The estimated cost of the two schools is \$104 million, including \$74.5 million for construction of the secondary school and \$29.5 million for the middle school.



**Benefits:**

- A new environmentally-friendly secondary facility will have lower operating and maintenance costs for the board of education;
- Secondary programs will be provided in an improved educational environment;
- The middle school will reduce overcrowding in the existing elementary schools and reduce the need for a larger secondary school;
- Completion of the new middle school completes the district’s conversion to the elementary/middle/secondary school delivery model; and
- Seismic risk will be reduced.

**Risks:**

- If not replaced, the board will continue operating an aging secondary school facility that is becoming increasingly expensive to operate and maintain;
- If not replaced, seismic risk will still exist;
- Many elementary students will continue to use portable classrooms with inadequate program areas; and
- Due to the existence of a former cemetery on the secondary school site, the board has been directed to review various available site location options for the secondary and middle schools.



# 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 the Ministry's General Enquiries Line is Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, excluding statutory holidays.

**General Enquiries Line: 1 888 879-1166**

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