

Alberta Education Internal Review

Introduction:

A fundamental aspect of *Inspiring Education* is the transformation of education in Alberta to a learner-centered system. Alberta Education wants to ensure teachers have the time to focus on that transformation and on their students.

Under Part C of the Framework Agreement, the Government of Alberta committed to conducting an internal review to determine what Alberta Education-initiated tasks can be eliminated or modified to reduce teacher workload.

The process of reducing teacher workload by modifying and eliminating ministry-initiated tasks will require further assessment. In addition to this review, Alberta Education is committed to ongoing analysis in order to further reduce or eliminate unnecessary tasks. This analysis will culminate in a follow-up report next year detailing additional changes that will be implemented.

Alberta Education has already demonstrated a commitment to improving working conditions for teachers. So far this year, the Government of Alberta has announced several initiatives to improve Alberta's education system for the benefit of teachers, students, parents and all Albertans. This includes:

- a new high school flexibility program, eliminating the 25 hours of instruction per course requirement;
- a new dual credit strategy, creating more opportunities for students to earn credits in high school and post-secondary institutions at the same time;
- improvements to diploma exams, shifting to electronic exams using an online system and digital marking; and
- a replacement for the old provincial assessment tests, moving toward new computer-based tests and giving teachers more tools to help students succeed.

Alberta Education will build upon the progress already made and continue to identify ways in which teacher workload can be reduced. We will continue to work with teachers and other stakeholders to find ways of freeing up time for teachers to implement the vision of *Inspiring Education*.

Results:

Alberta Education has identified changes that can be made to existing tasks that will contribute to the goal of reducing teacher workload. For some of these changes, further review and analysis will be required before they can be implemented. Many of the tasks that were examined as part of the review will undergo more extensive and comprehensive analysis in order to determine what further modifications and eliminations can be made. The changes determined by this review are as follows:

Curriculum Redesign

Alberta Education will launch the Request for Proposal process for curriculum prototyping in August, 2013. Teachers will co-create a curriculum that is less dense and content driven to provide for deep, inquiry-based classroom learning that is cross-curricular in nature. Teachers have long been concerned that the curriculum was too difficult to cover in the time period provided but, more importantly, not consistent with the transformation of teaching practice aligned to *Inspiring Education*.

Diploma Examination Accommodations and Exemption Processes

Teachers facilitating the accommodations for students writing diploma exams clearly identified that the process was challenging and time consuming. Focus group discussions were held to provide input regarding desired changes. In response to this feedback, Alberta Education has streamlined and simplified the application process, reducing the number of required forms and by requiring only one request for accommodations for all diploma exams written by the same student.

Inclusive Education Planning Tool

Alberta Education piloted the Inclusive Education Planning Tool (IEPT) for the 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 school years. The pilot involved teachers in over 150 schools across the province. It has been determined that the IEPT pilot will not be extended into the 2013/2014 school year.

Individualized Program Plans

Current requirements for Individualized Program Plans (IPPs) are reported as cumbersome and often not effective. Frequently IPPs are not connected to educational goals. In an effort to simplify the process and to improve the effectiveness of IPPs, a selection of sample templates will be made available. These templates will have fewer sections, and schools will have several options to choose from. Schools will have the opportunity to use them over the course of the 2013/2014 school year and to provide feedback.

As well, it was determined that the number of required components could be reduced to decrease the time and effort required to complete IPPs. Work has already been initiated to review the components required in IPPs in Alberta, including the IPP Component Review Survey. Some changes will need to be made to the Standards for Special Education to reflect the changes that will be made to IPPs.

Program Unit Funding Applications

The Program Unit Funding (PUF) application was identified as a task that could potentially be modified in order to reduce teacher workload. The process of completing PUF applications could be streamlined by removing the requirement to create budget pages and attachments indicating projected programming expenses in various cost categories. However, further review in consultation with Alberta Education’s stakeholders will be required in order to determine the merits of introducing changes to simplify the PUF application process.

Ongoing Review:

The process of reviewing Alberta Education-initiated tasks will have to continue. Many of the tasks that were considered as part of this review process require more extensive analysis in order to determine whether they can be modified or eliminated. Arriving at the right solutions will require careful consideration that balances the workloads of our teachers and the needs of our school system. Tasks in various areas, such as assessment, will be evaluated and appropriate changes will be determined. Another report will be prepared detailing further modifications and eliminations by March 2014. Active participation and feedback from Alberta Education’s stakeholders will be encouraged to ensure the ongoing review is successful.

Conclusion:

This review has been successful in initiating the process of reducing teacher workload by modifying and eliminating several ministry-initiated tasks. Through this process, changes have been identified that will have an immediate impact on working conditions for teachers. The practice of reviewing tasks that affect teacher workload will continue beyond this report. Ongoing, comprehensive analysis will be necessary in order to find solutions that allow us to give teachers the time they need to do what they do best, and to continue improving and transforming Alberta’s education system. Input from teachers, parents, students, administrators and all Albertans is encouraged and appreciated as we all take an active role in implementing the vision of *Inspiring Education* and shaping the future of education in Alberta.