



## What can I do?

The focus of the government's current GLA Reporting plan is to provide yet another layer of data collection and surveillance of schools. For example, the government plans to compare uploaded GLA data with school provincial achievement test results.

To date, the ministry has refused to re-consider what the Association views as an ill-conceived plan that will drain scarce resources from schools.

A child is more than a single grade or number. As teaching professionals, it is your responsibility to stand up for what is right for students and oppose the current GLA Reporting program.



**If you are required to participate in the current GLA Reporting program then, in the Association's view, it is pedagogically appropriate to report the achievement level of students for the grade and program for which the student *actually* received instruction.**

For example, if a student has met the requirements for grade four, the whole number "4" can be used. However, if the student has not met or has exceeded the level of requirement, it would be best to indicate, in place of the whole number, that the child is either "not yet" or "at the standard of excellence" for that grade level.



**It is impossible for teachers to specify a grade level of achievement for programs for which students have not received instruction.**

For example, there is no validity in reporting the whole number "9" for a student who is "above grade level" in grade eight science unless the student has been provided instruction in the 200 outcomes in that subject. The reverse is true for a student who has not achieved the outcomes for the program in which he/she is enrolled. In either situation, all teachers can responsibly do is report the student as "below grade level" or "above grade level."

## Together with parents — taking back the classroom



The Alberta Teacher's Association, along with education partners, continues to call for a moratorium on the current Grade Level of Achievement Reporting initiative. Millions of dollars are being wasted on a massive data collection program that duplicates current classroom teacher assessments and reporting. With support available from your provincial Association and your local, you can take the lead in doing what is best for students.

Engage parents and school councils in conversations about what quality assessment and evaluation of student learning looks like.

Provide parents with copies of *Getting to the Heart of Learning: A Parent Guide to Reporting Student Progress*, available at no cost from the Association.

For further information about assessment and testing, contact:



Alberta Teachers' Association  
1-800-232-7208  
[www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca)



# Always more than a number

## GRADE LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT (GLA) REPORTING — WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOUR STUDENTS



PUBLIC EDUCATION...  
*Shaping the future*



## The profession's view

## Why the government's current plan is wrong for students...

## What counts as learning and what learning counts

The Alberta government's current implementation plan requires reporting Grade Level of Achievement (GLA) data in language arts and math by June 2007 for one-third of grades 1-9 schools in each school authority, representing each grade division (1-3, 4-6 and 7-9). By 2008, all grades 1-9 schools will be required to report GLA data in language arts and math.

Alberta teachers and the Alberta Teachers' Association have always supported reporting student levels of achievement through multiple sources of information including report cards, comments on assignments, journals and parent-teacher meetings. The Association has provided leadership in improving assessment practice through workshops, professional conferences and professional development programs. However, the government's current GLA Reporting initiative and accompanying data management bureaucracy focuses solely on the collection of a single whole number.

Initially, by 2007-08, Alberta Education required teachers and school jurisdictions to assign and report to parents and government a whole-number grade in the four core subjects in grades 1-9.

Following opposition by the Association and other education partners, and with the failure of the 2005-06 pilots to demonstrate any significant benefits of GLA Reporting, the provincial government was forced to delay its initial implementation plan.



While government claims that GLA Reporting will improve the quality of information to parents, there is no evidence that it will do so. Parents already highly value the current assessments and reporting provided by teachers in Alberta (*Vector Research & Development, 2006*).

The GLA Reporting requirement for schools to submit a single number to Alberta Education, neither enhances teaching practice or student learning. No new meaningful information will be generated that parents do not already have.

The government plans to use GLA data to evaluate and determine the value of funding targeted at specific groups, i.e., First Nations and ESL students. According to education policy analysts, Alberta

already has the most centrally controlled accountability regime in Canada, and still the government continues to spend millions of dollars on its provincial reporting and data collection bureaucracy.

GLA Reporting is yet another form of educational managerialism. Initial pilots indicate that for a typical school jurisdiction, it will cost \$50,000 to implement GLA reporting in one subject area alone. Factoring in elaborate data submission requirements and the technical supports needed to upload GLA data to the ministry, this initiative will cost at least one million dollars per year across the province.



The government's current GLA Reporting plan is superficial at best and misleading at worst. According to the government's own estimates, currently 85% of students are achieving at grade level. Teachers know which students are most in need and require resources and support. More layers of reporting and paperwork do nothing to help students.

Single whole number reporting undermines the integrity of Alberta's curriculum. For example, is a standard of excellence in Grade 4 mathematics the equivalent to a satisfactory level in Grade 5 math? How would exemplary student writing in Grade 6 language arts compare to moderately successful writing in Grade 8?

**"GLA Reporting is the educational equivalent of building mathematical brick walls on empirical beds of sand."**

*Jim Field, Professor, Faculty of Education, University of Calgary*