Building a better Alberta



June 13, 2011

High school completion rate continues upward climb

Edmonton... Alberta's three-year high school completion rate jumped to 72.6 per cent in 2010 from 71.5 per cent in 2009. The increase follows efforts by school boards, teachers, parents, communities and government to better engage students in the importance of learning.

"A high school diploma helps set young people up for successful futures," said Minister of Education Dave Hancock. "We've been working hard across the education system to keep students engaged in their education. Seeing the completion rate increase year after year demonstrates we're definitely focused on the right things."

Additionally, Alberta's dropout rate for students aged 14-18 decreased to 4.2 per cent in 2010 from 4.3 per cent in 2009. The percentage of students completing high school within five years of entering Grade 10 remained stable at 79 per cent.

Under the Alberta government's High School Completion Framework, Alberta Education works with school boards to identify barriers to graduation and develop plans to enhance existing programs that fit the needs of school communities. The framework includes five strategies: student engagement, successful transitions, collaborative partnerships, positive connections and tracking progress. Initiatives under the framework include the Advancing Adolescent Reading Initiative, the High School Flexibility Enhancement Pilot, the Alberta Mentoring Partnership and outreach programs.

"Nobody makes a snap decision to leave school," said Hancock. "That's why our focus has been to get at the core of why students don't complete. We're working closely with schools and school boards, but are also focusing on parents who may also be looking for help for their children."

The recently refreshed High School Completion website at www.education.alberta.ca/highschoolcompletion provides parents, caregivers and students with information and resources to support efforts to keep their children in school or return to high school themselves. The site has information on upgrading and returning to school; resources for drug and alcohol issues; career and work programs; and mental health and literacy resources.

High school completion results are released as part of the provincial Accountability Pillar report, which contains performance results for key areas of success in the K-12 education system. For more information, visit www.education.alberta.ca and click on the Accountability Pillar.

The Alberta government is working to build a better Alberta by fostering economic growth, strengthening our health and education systems, investing in infrastructure, supporting safe and strong communities and ensuring a clean and healthy environment.

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Backgrounder: High School Outreach Programs

Media inquiries may be directed to: Karin Campbell, Communications

Karin Campbell, Communications Alberta Education Phone 780-644-5591 Karin.campbell@gov.ab.ca

To call toll free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

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High School Outreach Programs

Outreach programs offer an educational alternative for junior and senior high school students who find the traditional school setting does not meet their learning needs. Typically, those attending outreach programs are working students, teen parents and other students who are at risk of dropping out of school.

There are a total of 136 outreach programs, including two new ones, across the province. Government is providing school jurisdictions with more than \$8.3 million to fund these programs for the 2011/2012 school year.

Two new programs:

Community	Program Name and School Jurisdiction	Program Highlights
Drumheller	St. Luke's Outreach Centre, Christ the Redeemer Catholic Separate Regional Division No. 3	This outreach program will address the spiritual, social, psychological, and emotional needs of students as their academic needs are being served through customized program planning. Program will have access to online education, distance education with direct instruction and access to videoconferencing courses delivered in traditional highs schools.
Fishing Lake Settlement	Fishing Lake Outreach, Northern Lights School Division No 69	This outreach program is modeled after the successful programs at Buffalo Lake and Kikino Métis Settlements. The program integrates personalized learning plans with the Alberta curriculum, counseling support, strong career development guidance and experiential education programming.

For more information about outreach programs, visit www.education.alberta.ca/parents/choice.aspx.

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