



Feb. 25, 2014 Council of School Councils Meeting: Responses related to teacher workload and implementation

A number of different questions were asked about the effect of changing reporting and assessment practices on teacher workload.

A: Our teachers are dedicated to providing a world-class education to students. As the education system evolves, so do the roles and responsibilities of teachers – often with growing demands on their time. Many factors influence the work of a classroom teacher. Class size and complexity, as well as subject matter, are important considerations as teachers design and assess learning. Teachers use a variety of methods to assess accurately the progress and achievement of students in their class. The methods a teacher chooses is based on the concepts and skills being learned as well as the class composition and individual students. Teachers might use one or a combination of: observation, checklists, rubrics, quizzes, tests, performance and interviews to determine what a student knows and can do.

Each school jurisdiction in Alberta has established a joint committee between the Alberta Teachers Association and the school district to identify workload issues and address areas in need of modification or elimination to reduce workload and increase teacher efficacy.

As part of this work, teacher workload study is being conducted in spring 2014, with a full province-wide study to follow. The study will examine workload for classroom teachers, school administrators (vice-principals and principals) and central office staff with a focus on their professional duties, the time spent completing these duties, fluctuations in workload throughout the year and the relationship between workload and various types of schools. The information gathered through this study will provide comprehensive insight into what Alberta educators are asked to deliver each day. Ultimately, this information will contribute to improving the educational experience for our students.

We realize this doesn't specifically answer all questions regarding the changes to assessment and reporting and the impact on teacher workload, but all of these factors will be considered as part of the teacher workload study. Our goal is to ensure that any changes improve the educational experience for students, teachers and parents.

There were other questions related to how new assessment processes are effectively implemented across the system.

Principals meet with teaching staff regularly to ensure they are meeting or exceeding parent, student, school and Alberta Education expectations. As assessment and reporting practices evolve, teachers will be required to adopt more effective assessment processes. Each school is accountable for the adoption of new assessment and reporting practices as they evolve. This will occur at different rates for different schools, depending on the school community.

Actual Questions:

How can the teachers assess, accurately, with (sic) the number of students in the class?

How are teachers going to manage this process effectively with class sizes of 30-35?

Designing an effective assessment process is part of the solution. Ensuring that process is adopted and becomes used by staff is another part. How do you review the extent to which it is adopted?

How do you make teachers accountable?

Concerns around staff workload?

How is it going to be handled with workload for teachers?

How will teachers be supported (financial and staffing) by government?

Communication is not standard or strong between schools and parents. There is some Iris usage, some D2L usage etc. It would have been helpful to create strong communication paths before you decided to rely on them.

With restricted resources at hand, how do you justify the successful implementation of the new assessment system as it warrants more work on the teacher's part? (Someone said it is different work but just adding numbers and taking average is not different but less work than this). Please make class sizes smaller.

