

## EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

September 24, 2002

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Alberta Learning Diploma Examination Results and Participation Rates 2001-2002

ORIGINATOR: Bob Holt, Executive Director

RESOURCE  
STAFF: Anne Mulgrew, Lorie Welk

### INFORMATION

The grade 12 diploma examination program is intended to develop and maintain excellence in educational standards by certifying academic achievement. The program provides examinations in English 30 and 33, Social Studies 30 and 33, Mathematics 30 and 33, Pure Mathematics 30, Applied Mathematics 30, Biology 30, Chemistry 30, Physics 30, and Science 30. All grade 12 students in Alberta are required to write at least two diploma examinations, English 30 or 33 and Social Studies 30 or 33, to receive a high school diploma.

To obtain credit in a diploma examination course, students must write the appropriate diploma examination and attain a final blended mark of 50 per cent or higher. The final blended mark is the average of the school-awarded mark and the diploma examination mark.

### RESULTS

This report provides results of the Alberta Learning diploma examinations written during the 2001-2002 school-year. The information for this report is taken from data provided by Alberta Learning which merges results from the January, June, and August examination writings. If a student wrote more than one diploma examination in the same course in the same year, only the highest mark was used in compiling these results.

One factor to be considered in reviewing diploma examination results is participation rate. The participation rate reflects the percentage of students enrolled in their third year of high school who completed the course by August 31 of the reported school year. Students may have completed the course in the reported year, or an earlier school year. Regardless of how many times they complete the course, students are only counted as a participant once, in their third year of high school. Table 1 provides information on the 2001-2002 diploma examination participation rates for the district and for the province.

**TABLE 1**  
**DISTRICT AND PROVINCIAL PARTICIPATION RATES**  
**FOR GRADE 12 DIPLOMA COURSES: 2001-2002**

Diploma Examination Course	Province (%)	EPS (%)	Difference
English 30	56.9	54.3	-2.5
English 33	26.5	25.0	-1.5
Social Studies 30	50.5	51.7	+1.2
Social Studies 33	33.2	28.8	-4.4
Applied Mathematics 30	10.0	3.8	-6.2
Pure Mathematics 30	41.9	44.4	+2.4
Mathematics 33	12.1	16.1	+3.9
Biology 30	40.7	46.5	+5.8
Chemistry 30	36.3	41.6	+5.3
Physics 30	22.5	27.0	+4.5
Science 30	6.9	3.5	-3.4

District participation rates are higher than provincial rates for Social Studies 30, Pure Mathematics 30, Mathematics 33, Biology 30, Chemistry 30, and Physics 30, but lower than the province for English 30 and 33, Social Studies 33, Applied Mathematics 30, and Science 30. The participation rates for Applied Mathematics 30 and Mathematics 33 must be interpreted with caution since 2001-2002 was a transition year. The vast majority of district schools were still offering Mathematics 33, rather than Applied Mathematics 30 at the grade 12 level. Mathematics 33 will be completely phased out by the end of the 2002-2003 school year.

Table 2 provides a comparison of district results to provincial results for each of the eleven diploma examination courses for which data is available for 2001-2002. This table provides provincial and district information for each course on the number of students writing each examination, the per cent of district students out of the provincial population, the percentage of students meeting the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence based on final blended marks, and the blended mark average.

**TABLE 2**  
**DISTRICT AND PROVINCIAL RESULTS FOR**  
**GRADE 12 DIPLOMA EXAMINATION COURSES: 2001-2002**

Diploma Examination Course	Number of Students Writing		Percentage of Students Achieving Standards Based on Final Blended Mark				Final Blended Mark Average (%)	
			Acceptable Standard (50% or Higher)		Standard of Excellence (80% or Higher)			
	Prov.	E.P.S.	Prov.	E.P.S.	Prov.	E.P.S.	Prov.	E.P.S.
English 30	26,611	3912 (15)	96.7	95.9	20.0	20.9	68.7	68.6
English 33	12,599	1776 (14)	94.1	92.4	4.7	4.3	62.9	62.1
Social Studies 30	22,123	3463 (16)	96.1	95.0	22.2	25.1	69.0	69.4
Social Studies 33	15,056	1961 (13)	90.7	88.3	7.3	7.0	63.0	62.3
Applied Math 30	4,379	265 (6)	93.3	92.1	8.6	12.8	63.5	64.6
Pure Math 30	19,033	3105 (16)	91.2	91.2	26.9	28.8	68.7	69.4
Mathematics 33	5914	1293 (22)	85.2	83.2	12.9	13.1	62.7	61.8
Biology 30	19,214	3406 (18)	93.0	91.7	27.1	27.9	69.3	69.2
Chemistry 30	16,665	3008 (18)	92.0	88.7	25.2	23.2	68.6	67.0
Physics 30	10,126	1901 (19)	93.7	92.9	33.2	33.2	71.3	71.3
Science 30	3047	294 (10)	92.0	92.5	10.8	17.0	64.2	66.6

( ) Percentage of provincial population

The percentage of district students writing the diploma examinations and achieving the acceptable standard on blended marks was lower than the province for all diploma examination courses except Science 30 and Pure Mathematics 30 where the percentage students meeting the acceptable standard was equal to or higher than the province. The percentage of district students achieving the standard of excellence was equal to or higher than the province for all diploma examination courses, except English 33, Social Studies 33 and Chemistry 30. The district blended mark average was higher than the provincial average for Social Studies 30, Applied Mathematics 30, Pure Mathematics 30 and Science 30, equal to the provincial average for Physics 30, but was lower than the provincial average for the other six diploma examination courses.

Table 3 provides a comparison of the district results to provincial results based on diploma examination marks.

**TABLE 3**  
**DISTRICT AND PROVINCIAL RESULTS FOR**  
**GRADE 12 DIPLOMA EXAMINATIONS: 2001-2002**

Diploma Examination	Percentage of Students meeting Acceptable Standard			Percentage of Students Meeting the Standard of Excellence		
	Prov.	EPS	Diff.	Prov.	EPS	Diff.
English 30	88.4	88.1	-0.3	19.0	21.1	+2.1
English 33	86.5	85.0	-1.5	7.2	7.5	+0.3
Social Studies 30	86.0	86.3	+0.3	21.0	23.8	+2.8
Social Studies 33	80.6	79.0	-1.6	11.5	10.6	-0.9
Applied Math 30	85.0	86.4	+1.4	14.0	20.4	+6.4
Pure Math 30	81.4	83.2	+1.8	28.3	30.2	+1.9
Mathematics 33	74.9	72.9	-2.0	13.4	12.1	-1.3
Biology 30	83.6	83.4	-0.2	25.6	26.2	+0.6
Chemistry	82.0	78.3	-3.7	24.1	21.9	-2.2
Physics 30	84.4	85.1	+0.7	32.6	32.6	0.0
Science 30	81.5	84.4	+2.9	12.2	20.7	+8.5

The percentage of students achieving the acceptable standard on individual diploma examinations was higher for the district than for the province for Social Studies 30, Applied Mathematics 30, Pure Mathematics 30, Physics 30, and Science 30. The percentage of district students achieving the standard of excellence was equal to or higher than for the province for all diploma examinations except Social Studies 33 Mathematics 33, and Chemistry 30.

The Alberta Learning diploma examinations are used as one of the indicators to monitor student achievement in the district. The province expects that 85 per cent of students will meet the acceptable standard and that 15 per cent of students will meet the standard of excellence. The information in Table 3 indicates that the district met the expectation for acceptable standard in English 30 and 33, and Social Studies 30, Applied Mathematics 30, and Physics 30 but not for the remaining six diploma examinations in 2001-2002. The district met the expectations for standard of excellence on all diploma examinations except English 33, Social Studies 33, and Mathematics 33.

Appendix I provides information for the past five years based only on students who wrote diploma examinations. This graph shows the percentage of students achieving the standard of excellence (80 per cent or higher), the acceptable standard (50 per cent or higher), and not meeting the acceptable standard, based on the blended mark. Alberta Learning discourages longitudinal comparisons of jurisdiction results in isolation from provincial results because of the difficulty in keeping examination difficulties consistent over time. However, this graphic representation is provides a snapshot of district performance relative to targets over the past five years.

The reports issued by Alberta Learning following the administration of diploma examinations provide information at the district, school, classroom, and student level. These reports can be used as part of the information for evaluating programming at the school and district level, and for examining district performance in light of performance across the province.

Diploma examination results are used as an aid in determining the strengths and weaknesses of programming and resources. The results are used as part of the information for:

- awarding high school diplomas to individual students
- selecting students for entrance to post-secondary institutions
- examining the effectiveness of instruction
- programming to improve the performance of the school and district
- setting performance targets

AM:fm

APPENDIX I - Measures of Performance