

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 22, 2005

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: First Semester Course Completion

ORIGINATOR: R. MacNeil, Assistant to the Superintendent

RESOURCE

STAFF: Anne Mulgrew, Mike Falk

INFORMATION

As part of the district's work around improving teaching and learning, increasing the percentage of students who successfully complete high school has become a focus. The Board of Trustees has established a goal statement "To achieve at least a high school completion rate of 70 per cent (for students completing in three years) and 80 per cent (for students completing in five years)." Through the district professional development work, high schools have been provided with information on a timely basis to allow them to monitor the successful completion of core courses, on both a semestered, and full year basis. High schools have been proactive in introducing strategies to ensure that a higher percentage of students are able to successfully complete courses, and this will ultimately lead to an increased high school completion rate for the district.

The data contained in this report summarizes, for the district, the percentages of students who successfully completed high school core courses in semester one 2003-04 and semester one 2004-05. The successful completion rate for a course is calculated by determining what percentage of students who were initially enrolled in a course actually achieved credits in that course. Students who drop out of a course, or receive a failing grade in the course are considered to have not successfully completed the course.

Table 1 provides district level information with respect to initial enrolments in core courses, as well as the number and percentage of students who achieve their credits in these courses. The final column in the table indicates the percentage change in successful completion between semester one 2003-04 and semester one 2004-05. As well as a listing of individual courses, the table also includes a summary row by course and by grade level to indicate the overall successful completion rate.

**COMPARISON OF SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION RATES FOR
SEMESTER ONE COURSES FOR 2003-04 AND 2004-05**

Course	2003-04			2004-05			Difference
	Initial N	Passing Marks	% Success	Initial N	Passing Marks	% Success	
English 10-1	568	455	80.1	592	527	89.0	8.9
English 10-2	1116	669	59.9	1065	702	65.9	6.0
English 16	27	21	77.8	55	37	67.3	-10.5
English 10 Total	1711	1145	66.9	1712	1266	73.9	7.0
English 20-1	1130	1016	89.9	1190	1100	92.4	2.5
English 20-2	1315	1014	77.1	1290	995	77.1	0.0
English 26	16	10	62.5	26	25	96.2	33.7
English 20 Total	2461	2040	82.9	2506	2120	84.6	1.7
English 30-1	1463	1186	81.1	1709	1323	77.4	-3.7
English 30-2	1201	839	69.9	1147	855	74.5	4.7
English 36	22	21	95.5	14	9	64.3	-31.2
English 30 Total	2686	2046	76.2	2870	2187	76.2	0.0
Applied Math 10	886	567	64.0	967	627	64.8	0.8
Math 10 Prep	355	222	62.5	304	179	58.9	-3.7
Math 14	601	395	65.7	620	404	65.2	-0.6
Math 16	46	38	82.6	53	37	69.8	-12.8
Pure Math 10	1302	1112	85.4	1259	1065	84.6	-0.8
Math 10 Total	3190	2334	73.2	3203	2312	72.2	-1.0
Applied Math 20	1217	976	80.2	1014	837	82.5	2.3
Math 24	447	310	69.4	395	271	68.6	-0.7
Math 26	31	20	64.5	11	9	81.8	17.3
Pure Math 20	1987	1771	89.1	2125	1908	89.8	0.7
Math 20 Total	3682	3077	83.6	3545	3025	85.3	1.7
Applied Math 30	794	597	75.2	831	645	77.6	2.4
Pure Math 30	1637	1131	69.1	1664	1126	67.7	-1.4
Math 31	318	258	81.1	296	238	80.4	-0.7
Math 30 Total	2749	1986	72.2	2791	2009	72.0	-0.2

Table 1 Continued

Course	2003-04			2004-05			Difference
	Initial N	Passing Marks	% Success	Initial N	Passing Marks	% Success	
Science 10	2384	1951	81.8	2456	1998	81.4	-0.5
Science 14	846	586	69.3	899	648	72.1	2.8
Science 16	29	22	75.9	38	23	60.5	-15.3
Gr 10 Sci Total	3259	2559	78.5	3393	2669	78.7	0.2
Biology 20	1625	1355	83.4	1676	1419	84.7	1.3
Chemistry 20	1814	1447	79.8	1688	1410	83.5	3.8
Physics 20	1108	841	75.9	1138	909	79.9	4.0
Science 20	444	343	77.3	522	393	75.3	-2.0
Science 24	530	402	75.8	555	440	79.3	3.4
Science 26	12	7	58.3	23	18	78.3	19.9
Gr 11 Sci Total	5533	4395	79.4	5602	4589	81.9	2.5
Biology 30	1570	1161	73.9	1682	1230	73.1	-0.8
Chemistry 30	1542	1102	71.5	1510	1135	75.2	3.7
Physics 30	759	608	80.1	724	549	75.8	-4.3
Science 30	300	241	80.3	335	241	71.9	-8.4
Gr 12 Sci Total	4171	3112	74.6	4251	3155	74.2	-0.4
Social Studies 10	1017	902	88.7	869	772	88.8	0.1
Social Studies 13	908	590	65.0	899	621	69.1	4.1
Social Studies 16	24	15	62.5	33	21	63.6	1.1
Gr 10 Social Total	1949	1507	77.3	1801	1414	78.5	1.2
Social Studies 20	1118	1013	90.6	1277	1171	91.7	1.1
Social Studies 23	1206	881	73.1	1120	849	75.8	2.8
Social Studies 26	60	48	80.0	27	21	77.8	-2.2
Gr 11 Social Total	2384	1942	81.5	2424	2041	84.2	2.7
Social Studies 30	1341	1056	78.7	1476	1142	77.4	-1.4
Social Studies 33	1108	874	78.9	1053	811	77.0	-1.9
Gr 12 Social Total	2449	1930	78.8	2529	1953	77.2	-1.6

The information in Table 1 indicates that, for the majority of courses, the district is making progress in increasing the percentage of successful course completions. Data for courses with small enrolments must be interpreted with caution because a small number of students can make up a fairly high percentage of the population. For example, in English 26 in 2004-05, with only 26 students initially enrolled in the course for semester 1, each student accounts for almost 4 per cent of the population.

If we confine the analysis to courses with larger enrolments (greater than 100 students) the following generalizations can be made. For English courses, substantial improvements in successful course completion were evident for English 10-1, 10-2, and 30-2. Slight increases or no change in successful course completion was noted for English 20-1 and 20-2. The only English course to show a decrease in successful course completion was English 30-1.

For semester one mathematics courses, increases in successful course completion were noted for Applied Mathematics at all three levels, 10, 20 and 30. Pure mathematics courses showed a slight increase at the 20 level, but decreases at both the 10 and 30 levels. All other math courses with substantial enrolment also showed slight decreases in successful course completion between 2003-04 and 2004-05. The numbers of students enrolled in mathematics courses in semester one 2004-05 was similar to the enrolment numbers for 2003-04.

For semester one science courses, at the grade 10 level there was a slight decrease in the percentage of successful completions for Science 10, but an increase in the percentage of successful completions for Science 14. At the grade 11 level, there were slight to substantial increases in four of the five science courses. However, Science 20 showed a decreased percentage of successful completions. At the grade 12 level, three of the four science courses offered within the district experienced a decrease in the percentage of successful completions. However, there was an increase in the percentage of successful completions for Chemistry 30.

The 2004-05 semester one data shows an increase in the percentage of students successfully completing Social Studies courses at both the grade 10 and grade 11 levels. However, there were minor decreases in the percentage of students successfully completing Social Studies courses at the grade 12 level.

Overall, of the 33 courses that had sufficient enrolment to allow for valid comparison, 18 courses showed improved successful completion rates, 14 courses showed decreased successful completion rates, and one courses remained exactly the same as the previous year.

District high schools are continuing to examine research, collaborate with colleagues, and analyze their own data in order to identify and implement strategies that are effective in helping students successfully complete courses. A report that summarizes data on successful course completion for the full school year will be brought to the Board in the fall of 2005.

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