

## EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

November 9, 2004

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Alberta Learning Diploma Examination Results and Senior High Course Completion Rates

ORIGINATOR: B. Holt, Executive Director Curricular and Instructional Support Services

RESOURCE

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### 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 30-1 and 30-2, Social Studies 30 and 33, Pure and Applied Mathematics 30, Biology 30, Chemistry 30, Physics 30, Science 30 and French Language Arts 30. All grade 12 students in Alberta are required to write at least two diploma examinations, English 30-1 or 30-2 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.

### DIPLOMA EXAMINATION RESULTS

This report provides results of the Alberta Learning diploma examinations written during the 2003-2004 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 2003-2004 diploma examination participation rates for the district and for the province.

**TABLE 1  
DISTRICT AND PROVINCIAL PARTICIPATION RATES  
FOR GRADE 12 DIPLOMA COURSES: 2003-2004**

<b>Diploma Examination Course</b>	<b>Province (%)</b>	<b>EPS (%)</b>	<b>Difference</b>
English 30-1	56.1	53.3	-2.8
English 30-2	24.9	24.3	-0.6
Social Studies 30	52.6	53.2	+0.6
Social Studies 33	33.6	30.2	-3.4
Applied Mathematics 30	22.2	21.6	-0.6
Pure Mathematics 30	43.9	44.8	+0.9
Biology 30	42.6	45.7	+3.1
Chemistry 30	37.7	40.3	+2.6
Physics 30	24.0	26.4	+2.4
Science 30	7.6	9.1	+1.5

District participation rates are higher than provincial rates for Social Studies 30, Pure Mathematics 30, Biology 30, Chemistry 30, Physics 30 and Science 30, but lower than the province for English 30-1, English 30-2, Social Studies 33, and Applied Mathematics 30. District participation rates for Biology 30 Chemistry 30, and Physics 30 are substantially higher than provincial rates.

Table 2 provides a comparison of district results to provincial results based on diploma examination marks.

**TABLE 2  
DISTRICT AND PROVINCIAL RESULTS FOR  
GRADE 12 DIPLOMA EXAMINATIONS: 2003-2004**

<b>Diploma Examination</b>	<b>Percentage of Students Meeting Acceptable Standard</b>			<b>Percentage of Students Meeting Standard of Excellence</b>		
	<b>Prov.</b>	<b>E.P.S.</b>	<b>Diff.</b>	<b>Prov.</b>	<b>E.P.S.</b>	<b>Diff.</b>
English 30-1	92.1	90.6	-1.5	18.8	19.4	+0.6
English 30-2	85.2	82.6	-2.6	7.1	7.6	+0.5
Social Studies 30	85.9	85.8	-0.1	23.8	26.9	+3.1
Social Studies 33	83.0	81.2	-1.8	15.1	14.5	-0.6
Applied Math 30	85.5	84.4	-1.1	14.3	15.6	+1.3
Pure Math 30	83.8	87.8	+4.0	32.0	36.1	+4.1
Biology 30	81.9	80.8	-1.1	26.6	27.8	+1.2
Chemistry 30	85.7	86.4	+0.7	27.8	29.4	+1.6
Physics 30	86.6	87.1	+0.5	29.8	31.8	+2.0
Science 30	84.3	83.6	-0.7	16.5	17.2	+0.7

The percentage of students achieving the acceptable standard on individual diploma examinations was higher for the district than for the province for Pure Mathematics 30, Chemistry 30 and Physics 30, but lower than the province for the remaining seven diploma examinations. The percentage of district students achieving the standard of excellence was higher than for the province for all diploma examinations except for Social Studies 33.

The Alberta Learning diploma examinations are used as one of the indicators to monitor student achievement in the district. Appendix I provides information for the past five years based 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 standards consistent over time. However, this graphic representation provides a snapshot of district performance over the past five years. For English 30-1 and English 30-2, data prior to the 2003-04 school year is not included as a new program of studies was implemented in this year. In relation to results from 2002-03, there was an increase in the percentage of students achieving the acceptable standard in all eight courses that have comparable data. There was also an increase in the percentage of district students achieving the standard of excellence in all courses except for Science 30.

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 for 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

Individual high schools have accessed their results from the Alberta Learning website. Principals, in collaboration with school staffs, will be examining their results to look for areas of strength and weakness in the delivery of curriculum. Diploma examination results are one piece of the picture when looking at the district high school results.

## **SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF GRADE 10 AND 11 COURSES**

Success of students in core courses at the grade 10 and 11 levels is also important to increasing the percentage of students who successfully complete high school. Table 3 provides a comparison of course completion for the past two years for grade 10 and Table 4 provides a comparison for grade 11 courses. Successful completion is defined as the percentage of students initially enrolled who achieve credits in a course.

**TABLE 3**  
**GRADE 10 COURSE COMPLETION DATA**  
**2002-03 AND 2003-04**

Course	2002-03		2003-04		Difference
	Initial N	% Successful Completion	Initial N	% Successful Completion	
English 10-1	4388	86.8	4526	89.1	+2.3
English 10-2	2538	59.3	2515	60.9	+1.5
English 16	149	51.7	179	58.1	+6.4
<b>English 10 Total</b>	<b>7075</b>	<b>76.2</b>	<b>7220</b>	<b>78.5</b>	<b>+2.3</b>
Applied Math 10	2148	60.2	2028	60.7	+0.5
Math 10 Prep	670	46.4	446	60.1	+13.7
Math 14	1376	56.3	1289	62.0	+5.7
Math 16	186	62.9	201	61.7	-1.2
Pure Math 10	3998	78.1	4300	82.9	+4.7
<b>Math 10 Total</b>	<b>8378</b>	<b>67.1</b>	<b>8264</b>	<b>72.4</b>	<b>+5.4</b>
Science 10	5843	74.8	5739	79.3	+4.5
Science 14	1693	55.5	1684	66.9	+11.5
Science 16	191	56.0	195	61.0	+5.0
<b>Science 10 Total</b>	<b>7727</b>	<b>70.1</b>	<b>7618</b>	<b>76.1</b>	<b>+6.0</b>
Social Studies 10	4556	86.8	4642	90.8	+4.0
Social Studies 13	2385	59.1	2212	65.1	+6.0
<b>Social 10 Total</b>	<b>6941</b>	<b>77.3</b>	<b>6854</b>	<b>82.5</b>	<b>+5.2</b>

The percentage of students successfully completing grade 10 courses has increased in all core subject areas with the exception of Math 16 when compared to 2002-03 completion data. Substantial increases were noted for many of the non-academic stream courses.

**TABLE 4**  
**GRADE 11 COURSE COMPLETION DATA**  
**2002-03 AND 2003-04**

Course	2002-03		2003-04		Difference
	Initial N	% Successful Completion	Initial N	% Successful Completion	
English 20-1	3824	88.8	3824	91.8	+2.9
English 20-2	2540	73.7	2611	73.4	-0.3
English 26	64	71.9	99	64.6	-7.2
<b>English 20 Total</b>	<b>6428</b>	<b>82.7</b>	<b>6534</b>	<b>84.0</b>	<b>+1.3</b>
Applied Math 20	2414	74.4	2242	77.6	+3.2
Math 24	1012	66.9	1071	64.6	-2.3
Math 26	93	54.8	122	52.5	-2.4
Pure Math 20	3716	83.6	3571	86.1	+2.5
<b>Math 20 Total</b>	<b>7235</b>	<b>77.8</b>	<b>7006</b>	<b>79.5</b>	<b>+1.7</b>
Biology 20	4059	81.7	3898	85.6	+3.9
Chemistry 20	4179	77.0	4009	79.9	+2.9
Physics 20	2730	75.3	2643	79.6	+4.3
Science 20	662	72.2	806	73.8	+1.6
Science 24	1241	67.3	1275	74.3	+7.0
Science 26	55	81.8	97	61.9	-20.0
<b>Science 11 Total</b>	<b>12926</b>	<b>77.0</b>	<b>12728</b>	<b>80.5</b>	<b>+3.5</b>
Social Studies 20	3776	90.5	3564	91.9	+1.3
Social Studies 23	2365	68.5	2379	70.3	+1.8
<b>Social 11 Total</b>	<b>6141</b>	<b>82.0</b>	<b>5943</b>	<b>83.2</b>	<b>+1.2</b>

The percentage of students successfully completing grade 11 courses has increased in most core courses when compared to 2002-03. The core subject totals increased relative to last year in all four areas.

### THREE AND FIVE YEAR SUCCESSFUL HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION

For the past four years, Alberta Learning has been providing data to jurisdictions with respect to the percentage of students who successfully complete high school within three and five years of starting grade 10. The high school completion rate tracks first-time grade 10 students for three years and five years. Alberta Learning defines students as having completed high school if, within three and five years after entering grade 10, they have

- obtained an Alberta High School Diploma, a high school equivalency diploma (GED) or Integrated Occupational Program (IOP) certificate; or
- enrolled in a credit program at an Alberta post-secondary institution, or registered in an apprenticeship program; or

- earned credit in five grade 12 courses, including one language arts diploma exam course and three other diploma exam courses, which makes them eligible for post-secondary admission.

Students who have moved from one jurisdiction to another within Alberta during high school are counted in the jurisdiction where they received the most high school credits. Alberta Learning uses data from Statistics Canada on inter-provincial migration to make corrections to the data for students who may move out of province during high school.

Appendix II provides information for the jurisdiction and the province on the percentage of students successfully completing high school three years after entering grade 10. Appendix III provides information for the jurisdiction and the province on the percentage of students successfully completing high school five years after entering grade 10.

For the three year completion data, the district increased from 51.1 percent in 1997-98 to 57.5 per cent in 2002-03, an increase of 6.4 per cent. During the same time frame, the provincial completion rate increased 5.7 per cent. Although the district rate is below the provincial rate of 67.4, the district showed a more substantial gain over the given time frame.

For the five year completion data, the district increased from 63.4 percent in 1999-2000 to 68.0 per cent in 2002-03, an increase of 4.6 per cent. During the same time frame, the provincial completion rate increased 2.5 per cent. As with the three year data, although the district rate is below the provincial rate of 74.5, the district showed a more substantial gain over the given time frame.

The dates provided at the bottom of each graph indicate the completion year. As can be seen from the graphs, the most recent year for which we have completion data is 2002-03. Data for the students completing high school in 2003-04 will be available from Alberta Learning in the spring of 2005.

The district will continue to emphasize the importance of successful completion of high school courses in order to have this improvement in successful high school completion rates continue.

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APPENDIX I - Student Achievement Report: 2000 – 2004

APPENDIX II - Edmonton School District #7 vs Province Trendlines High School Completion Rates Based on Tracking Grade 10 Students for 3 Years

APPENDIX III- Edmonton School District #7 vs Province Trendlines High School Completion Rates Based on Tracking Grade 10 Students for 5 Years