

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

November 13, 2001

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Alberta Learning Diploma Examination Results and Participation Rates 2000-2001

ORIGINATOR: Marion de Man, Department Head

RESOURCE
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INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

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.

For the 2000-2001 school year, local summary data for Mathematics 30, Pure Mathematics 30, and Applied Mathematics 30 have not been provided to jurisdictions. The group of students taking Mathematics 30 in 2001 is not representative of the population that has normally taken Mathematics 30. As well, this is the first year of implementation of Pure Mathematics 30 and the first year of optional implementation of Applied Mathematics 30, and standards have not yet been finalized. Therefore, only Mathematics 33 results are included in this report.

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 2000-2001 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 examination in the same course in the same year, only the highest mark is used in compiling these results.

One factor to be considered in reviewing diploma examination results is the 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.

**TABLE 1
DISTRICT AND PROVINCIAL PARTICIPATION RATES
FOR GRADE 12 DIPLOMA COURSES: 2000-2001**

Diploma Examination Course	Province (%)	EPS (%)	Difference
English 30	55.0	51.9	-3.1
English 33	27.8	26.6	-1.2
Social Studies 30	48.6	48.6	0.0
Social Studies 33	34.0	29.0	-5.0
Mathematics 33	16.5	20.4	3.9
Biology 30	39.0	44.4	5.4
Chemistry 30	35.2	39.4	4.2
Physics 30	21.5	24.3	2.8
Science 30	6.6	2.2	-4.4

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

Table 2 provides a comparison of district results to provincial results for each of the nine diploma examination courses for which data is available for 2000-2001.

TABLE 2
DISTRICT AND PROVINCIAL RESULTS FOR
GRADE 12 DIPLOMA EXAMINATION COURSES: 2000-2001

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	25,520	3759 (15)	96.9	95.9	19.1	20.5	68.4	68.2
English 33	13,303	1874 (14)	93.9	91.6	4.5	4.7	62.9	62.2
Social Studies 30	21,104	3228 (15)	96.1	95.4	20.1	22.8	68.3	68.8
Social Studies 33	15,287	1970 (13)	91.2	90.4	8.1	9.1	63.3	63.3
Mathematics 33	8345	1692 (20)	88.6	85.0	14.7	15.4	64.3	63.2
Biology 30	17,933	3340 (18)	91.4	89.4	27.6	29.4	68.7	68.9
Chemistry 30	16,027	3015 (19)	90.7	86.8	23.8	23.4	67.6	66.5
Physics 30	9758	1748 (18)	91.9	90.6	26.9	28.0	68.9	69.2
Science 30	2819	133 (5)	92.7	92.5	11.3	9.0	64.6	63.6

() 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. The percentage of district students achieving the standard of excellence was higher than the province for all diploma examination courses, except Chemistry 30 and Science 30. The district blended mark average was higher than the provincial average for Social Studies 30, Biology 30, and Physics 30.

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: 2000-2001**

Diploma Examination	Percentage of Students Meeting Acceptable Standard			Percentage of Students Meeting Standard of Excellence		
	Province	EPS	Diff.	Province	EPS	Diff.
English 30	89.1	88.0	-1.1	18.6	20.5	1.9
English 33	86.9	84.0	-2.9	7.6	7.8	0.2
Social Studies 30	85.2	86.9	1.7	18.6	21.3	2.7
Social Studies 33	81.4	80.9	-0.5	12.8	13.0	0.2
Mathematics 33	81.7	79.6	-2.1	18.3	19.6	1.3
Biology 30	80.8	81.3	0.5	27.2	29.0	1.8
Chemistry 30	79.1	77.0	-2.1	22.0	21.7	-0.3
Physics 30	78.5	80.8	2.3	24.3	25.9	1.6
Science 30	82.5	84.2	1.7	14.3	11.3	-3.0

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, Biology 30, Physics 30, and Science 30. The percentage of district students achieving the standard of excellence was higher than for the province for all diploma examinations except Chemistry 30 and Science 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 Social Studies 30, but not for the remaining seven diploma examinations in 2000-2001. The district met the expectations for standard of excellence on all diploma examinations except English 33, Social Studies 33, and Science 30.

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 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

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APPENDIX I - Measures of Performance