

# EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

October 10, 2000

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dossdall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Alberta Learning Diploma Examination Results and Participation Rates  
1999-2000

ORIGINATOR: Gary Reynolds, 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, 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 1999-2000 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. This is the second year that Alberta Learning has used a new procedure for reporting participation rates as of this year. The participation rate now 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: 1999-2000**

Diploma Examination Course	Province (%)	E. P. S (%)	Difference
English 30	54.7	54.2	-0.5
English 33	28.8	25.6	-3.2
Social Studies 30	48.4	50.8	+2.4
Social Studies 33	35.0	29.9	-5.1
Mathematics 30	42.3	45.6	+3.3
Mathematics 33	26.5	23.7	-2.8
Biology 30	37.9	44.1	+6.2
Chemistry 30	35.8	43.9	+8.1
Physics 30	21.9	27.2	+5.1
Science 30	6.4	1.9	-4.5

Participation rates for all courses except English 30, English 33, Social Studies 33, Mathematics 33, and Science 30 are higher for the district than for the province. Participation rates for Biology 30, Chemistry 30, and Physics 30 are substantially higher.

Table 2 provides a comparison of district results to provincial results for each of the ten diploma examination courses for 1999-2000.

**TABLE 2**  
**DISTRICT AND PROVINCIAL RESULTS FOR**  
**GRADE 12 DIPLOMA EXAMINATION COURSES: 1999-2000**

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	24585	3591 (15)	96.8	95.4	16.7	18.3	67.7	67.8
English 33	13345	1810 (14)	94.0	91.6	4.4	5.5	62.9	62.5
Social Studies 30	20269	3120 (15)	95.6	95.0	18.4	20.4	67.5	68.0
Social Studies 33	15188	1877 (12)	91.2	88.8	7.3	7.6	63.1	62.7
Mathematics 30	19104	3236 (17)	88.3	86.8	21.7	23.5	66.2	66.5
Mathematics 33	12026	1815 (15)	86.9	86.4	12.5	13.1	63.2	62.9
Biology 30	17112	3157 (18)	91.9	91.5	25.3	27.0	68.4	68.8
Chemistry 30	15965	3006 (19)	92.8	89.2	25.1	22.9	68.6	66.8
Physics 30	9504	1799 (19)	92.5	90.1	29.0	27.6	69.8	68.7
Science 30	2622	111 (4)	90.9	88.3	9.6	5.4	63.3	61.4

( ) 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, Physics 30 and Science 30. The district blended mark average was higher than the provincial average in English 30, Social Studies 30, Mathematics 30, and Biology 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: 1999-2000**

Diploma Examination	Percentage of Students Meeting Acceptable Standard on Exam		Percentage of Students Meeting Standard of Excellence on Exam	
	Province	District	Province	District
English 30	89.2	89.6	16.2	19.5
English 33	87.9	85.8	8.0	7.9
Social Studies 30	84.0	85.5	16.1	18.6
Social Studies 33	81.0	80.4	12.5	11.1
Mathematics 30	74.7	76.5	19.9	21.8
Mathematics 33	78.3	78.2	14.5	14.6
Biology 30	81.1	82.1	23.2	24.7
Chemistry 30	84.2	80.1	24.2	21.6
Physics 30	82.8	80.2	27.9	26.8
Science 30	78.0	77.5	11.4	6.3

The percentage of students achieving the acceptable standard on individual diploma examinations was higher for the district than for the province for English 30, Social Studies 30, Mathematics 30, and Biology 30. The percentage of district students achieving the standard of excellence was higher than for the province for English 30, Social Studies 30, Mathematics 30, Mathematics 33, and Biology 30.

Table 4 below shows a comparison of the percentages of district students achieving standards based on blended marks for the past two years.

**TABLE 4  
PERCENTAGE OF DISTRICT STUDENTS ACHIEVING STANDARDS ON BLENDED  
MARKS FOR ALBERTA LEARNING DIPLOMA COURSES FOR 1999 AND 2000**

Diploma Exam Course	% Meeting Acceptable Standard			% Meeting Standard of Excellence		
	2000	1999	Diff.	2000	1999	Diff.
English 30	95.4	94.8	+0.6	18.3	15.3	+3.0
English 33	91.6	90.1	+1.5	5.5	5.1	+0.4
Social Studies 30	95.0	94.2	+0.8	20.4	21.3	-0.9
Social Studies 33	88.8	89.8	-1.0	7.6	4.7	+2.9
Mathematics 30	86.8	90.7	-3.9	23.5	25.0	-1.5
Mathematics 33	86.4	83.1	+3.3	13.1	11.4	+1.7
Biology 30	91.5	90.6	+0.9	27.0	26.2	+0.8
Chemistry 30	89.2	88.9	+0.3	22.9	21.7	+1.2
Physics 30	90.1	91.8	-1.7	27.6	29.7	-2.1
Science 30	88.3	93.9	-5.6	5.4	10.2	-4.8

The percentage of district students achieving the acceptable standard increased for six of the ten diploma examination courses, and decreased for four courses. The percentage of students

achieving the standard of excellence also increased in six of the ten diploma examination courses relative to 1999. Courses for which the percentage of students meeting standards decreased for both acceptable and standard of excellence were Mathematics 30, Physics 30, and Science 30.

Appendix I provides district information for the past five years on diploma examination results. 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.

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 4 indicates that based on blended marks, district results exceed the expectation of 85 per cent of students meeting the acceptable standard for all ten diploma examination courses. District results exceeded the provincial expectation of 15 per cent of students achieving the standard of excellence for all courses except English 33, Social Studies 33, Mathematics 33, and 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 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 -- Measures of Performance