

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

September 28, 1999

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dossdall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Alberta Learning Diploma Examination Results and Participation Rates 1998-99

ORIGINATOR: G. 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 1998-99 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. Alberta Learning has introduced 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 in 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: 1998-99**

Diploma Examination Course	Province (%)	E. P. S (%)
English 30	55.2	52.2
English 33	29.4	26.1
Social Studies 30	49.7	49.8
Social Studies 33	34.4	29.1
Mathematics 30	42.9	43.7
Mathematics 33	26.7	23.2
Biology 30	38.9	43.6
Chemistry 30	37.0	42.4
Physics 30	22.3	26.9
Science 30	4.7	1.0

Participation rates for five of the ten courses 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 1998-99.

TABLE 2
DISTRICT AND PROVINCIAL RESULTS FOR
GRADE 12 DIPLOMA EXAMINATION COURSES: 1998-99

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	23421	3278 (14)	95.8	94.7	14.5	15.2	66.6	66.4
English 33	12835	1693 (13)	93.3	90.0	4.5	5.0	62.7	61.7
Social Studies 30	19472	2903 (15)	95.6	94.2	19.2	21.3	67.8	68.0
Social Studies 33	14149	1761 (12)	91.6	89.6	6.2	4.7	62.7	61.4
Mathematics 30	19142	3106 (16)	91.5	90.7	24.5	25.0	68.1	68.2
Mathematics 33	11922	1697 (14)	83.9	83.0	11.1	11.3	61.7	61.3
Biology 30	16295	2865 (18)	92.1	90.6	26.1	27.5	68.8	68.7
Chemistry 30	15451	2838 (18)	91.9	88.7	20.8	20.8	67.3	66.3
Physics 30	9209	1646 (18)	94.1	91.8	31.3	30.4	71.0	70.1
Science 30	1846	49 (3)	92.7	93.9	11.1	10.2	64.8	65.7

() 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 courses except Science 30. The percentage of district students achieving the standard of excellence was equal to or higher than the province for all diploma examination courses, except Social Studies 33, Physics 30 and Science 30. The district blended mark average was higher than the provincial average in Social Studies 30, Mathematics 30, and Science 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: 1998-99

Diploma Examination	Percentage of Students Meeting Acceptable Standard		Percentage of Students Meeting Standard of Excellence	
	Province	District	Province	District
	English 30	85.7	85.8	12.9
English 33	86.4	84.0	9.0	8.9
Social Studies 30	85.2	86.1	17.6	19.3
Social Studies 33	83.2	81.1	10.2	9.3
Mathematics 30	81.6	84.4	24.0	25.7
Mathematics 33	72.5	73.1	11.8	11.8
Biology 30	83.1	82.2	25.9	26.5
Chemistry 30	82.1	79.5	18.7	18.3
Physics 30	86.4	85.5	31.5	30.6
Science 30	88.4	85.7	16.8	22.4

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 Mathematics 33. The percentage of district students achieving the standard of excellence was equal to or higher than the province for all diploma examinations except English 33, Social Studies 33, Chemistry 30 and Physics 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. For the 1998-99 school year, the percentage of district students achieving the acceptable standard increased for Social Studies 33, Mathematics 30 and 33, Biology 30, and Science 30 relative to the previous year. The percentage of students achieving the standard of excellence in 1998-99 increased for all diploma examination courses except English 30, Mathematics 30, and Chemistry 30 relative to the previous year.

The Alberta Learning diploma examinations are used as one of the indicators to monitor student achievement in the district. During the budget process in the spring of 1998, schools established targets for student achievement. The school targets for the percentage of students writing diploma examinations who would achieve the acceptable standard or the standard of excellence were aggregated to determine a district target for each of the diploma examinations. Table 4 provides a comparison of district results to district targets for the ten diploma examination courses for the 1998-99 school year.

TABLE 4
DISTRICT TARGETS FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT EXPRESSED AS
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS MEETING STANDARDS 1998-99

Course	Percentage Meeting Acceptable Standard		Percentage Meeting Standard of Excellence	
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
English 30	97	95	19	15
English 33	92	90	7	5
Social Studies 30	96	94	22	21
Social Studies 33	89	90	8	5
Mathematics 30	91	91	27	25
Mathematics 33	85	83	12	11
Biology 30	93	91	27	28
Chemistry 30	92	89	24	21
Physics 30	94	92	29	30
Science 30	91	94	21	10

District targets for percentage of students meeting acceptable standard were met or exceeded for Social Studies 33, Mathematics 30, and Science 30, but not for the remaining 7 diploma examination courses. District targets for percentage of students meeting the standard of excellence were met or exceeded for Biology 30 and Physics 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 I - Measures of Performance