

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

September 30 2003

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Alberta Learning Diploma Examination Results and Participation Rates
2002-2003

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 and 33, Social Studies 30 and 33, Pure and 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.

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 2002-2003 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 2002-2003 diploma examination participation rates for the district and for the province.

TABLE 1
DISTRICT AND PROVINCIAL PARTICIPATION RATES
FOR GRADE 12 DIPLOMA COURSES: 2002-2003

Diploma Examination Course	Province (%)	EPS (%)	Difference
English 30	58.1	55.5	-2.6
English 33	26.1	26.3	0.2
Social Studies 30	52.6	52.7	0.1
Social Studies 33	33.1	29.5	-3.6
Applied Mathematics 30	21.5	20.1	-1.4
Pure Mathematics 30	43.7	44.2	0.5
Biology 30	42.6	47.4	4.8
Chemistry 30	38.0	41.0	3.0
Physics 30	24.1	26.4	2.3
Science 30	7.1	4.5	-2.6

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

Table 2 provides a comparison of district results to provincial results for each of the ten diploma examination courses for which data is available for 2002-2003. This table provides provincial and district information for each course on the number of students writing each examination, the per cent of district students out of the provincial population, the percentage of students meeting the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence based on final blended marks, and the blended mark average.

**TABLE 2
DISTRICT AND PROVINCIAL RESULTS FOR
GRADE 12 DIPLOMA COURSES: 2002-2003**

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	27215	4107 (15.1%)	97.7	97.0	23.5	24.1	70.4	70.0
English 33	12611	1903 (15.1%)	93.7	92.2	4.5	6.5	62.7	62.6
Social Studies 30	23024	3630 (15.8%)	96.7	95.3	23.5	24.9	69.4	69.5
Social Studies 33	15085	1997 (13.2%)	92.1	90.2	8.6	8.8	63.7	63.3
Applied Math 30	9774	1546 (15.8%)	92.5	91.7	9.6	13.1	64.2	65.0
Pure Math 30	21071	3448 (16.4%)	92.8	92.2	27.6	31.8	69.5	70.7
Biology 30	20171	3605 (17.9%)	92.0	89.7	25.5	25.9	68.5	68.1
Chemistry 30	17731	3156 (17.8%)	92.9	89.8	26.2	25.6	69.2	68.2
Physics 30	10766	1827 (17.0%)	93.0	91.3	28.6	29.7	69.8	69.6
Science 30	3217	489 (15.2%)	93.9	91.6	15.5	18.6	66.2	66.1

() Percentage of provincial population

District results for students achieving the acceptable standard on blended marks were lower than for the province for all diploma examination courses. The percentage of district students achieving the standard of excellence on blended marks was higher than the province for all diploma examination courses except Chemistry 30. The district blended mark average was higher than the provincial average for Social Studies 30, Applied Mathematics 30 and Pure Mathematics 30, but was lower than the provincial average for the other seven diploma examination courses.

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: 2002-2003

Diploma Examination	Percentage of Students Meeting Acceptable Standard			Percentage of Students Meeting The Standard of Excellence		
	Prov.	E.P.S.	Diff.	Prov.	E.P.S.	Diff.
English 30	92.4	91.8	-0.6	24.3	26.2	+1.9
English 33	85.2	83.4	-1.8	6.6	8.0	+1.4
Social Studies 30	86.6	86.6	0.0	22.1	23.7	+1.6
Social Studies 33	81.7	79.6	-2.1	13.3	12.7	-0.6
Applied Math 30	84.9	85.0	+0.1	14.0	14.5	+0.5
Pure Math 30	84.5	86.3	+1.8	27.2	31.7	+4.5
Biology 30	80.9	79.1	-1.8	22.1	22.4	+0.3
Chemistry 30	84.5	82.2	-2.3	24.7	24.3	-0.4
Physics 30	81.5	81.4	-0.1	25.1	27.0	+1.9
Science 30	88.2	85.1	-3.1	19.8	20.4	+0.6

The percentage of students achieving the acceptable standard on individual diploma examinations was higher for the district than for the province for Pure and Applied Mathematics 30, equal to the province for Social Studies 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 Social Studies 33 and Chemistry 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, Social Studies 30, Pure and Applied Mathematics 30, and Science 30 but not for the remaining five diploma examinations in 2002-2003. The district met the expectation for standard of excellence on all diploma examinations except English 33, Social Studies 33, and Applied Mathematics 30. In almost all the courses where the district did not meet these expectations, the province as a whole also did not meet these expectations.

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 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. In relation to results from last year, there was an increase in the percentage of district students achieving the standard of excellence in all courses except Biology 30, Physics 30 and Social Studies 30. There was also an increase in the percentage of students achieving the acceptable standard in five of the ten courses.

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. Success of students in non-diploma courses and in grade 10 and 11 courses is also important to the district. All high schools will be taking part in a half-day workshop on October 2, 2003 to examine not just diploma examination results, but successful completion rates at the 10 and 20 levels as well.

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APPENDIX I – Student Achievement Report: 1999 - 2003