



# **Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools**

## **District Results**

**2015-2016**

### **Student Learning Assessment, Provincial Achievement Tests & Diploma Examinations**

## **Executive Summary**

**Report to the Board of Trustees  
October 17, 2016**

*Report by Rhonda Nixon,  
Assistant Superintendent of  
Learning Services*

## Assessments Used in High Quality Instruction

In Alberta, assessment means to gather information about student progress on outcomes as prescribed by Alberta Education’s programs of study. To ensure high quality instruction and optimal student learning, teachers gather information before, during and after instruction:

- **Diagnostic assessment (Before learning):** Information is gathered by teachers *before* instruction to see what students know and can do, and what gaps exist in students’ learning. Examples: diagnostic reading assessments and pre-tests.
- **Formative assessment (During learning):** Information is gathered by teachers *during* instruction to see what students know and can do and what they *still* need to learn in order to continue to build necessary knowledge and skills. Examples: mid-point quizzes and “feedback only” tests.
- **Summative assessment (After learning):** Information is gathered by teachers *after* instruction to see how well students learned the intended outcomes. Examples: end-of-unit tests and standardized tests such as provincial achievement tests and diploma exams.

Teachers use these three assessment opportunities to gain a *full picture* of students’ learning. Each assessment opportunity is therefore necessary and integral to high guide quality instruction.

In this report, we provide an overview of grade three students’ participation in “Student Learning Assessments”, which are *diagnostic assessments*. They are diagnostic because they are given at the *beginning* of grade three, and results are released to teachers to share with their students and parents and to address learning gaps throughout the year. We also provide an overview of Provincial Achievement Test and Diploma Examination results, which are *summative assessments*. They are summative because the tests happen at the *end* of a school year in grades 6, 9 and 12, and the results are released publically to inform us about how well students learned curriculum in the respective grades.

In Alberta Education’s *Ministerial Order on Student Learning* (May, 2013), students are to learn cross-curricular competencies connected to their development as engaged thinkers, ethical citizens with entrepreneurial spirits. In our District, in parallel to this ministerial mandate to focus on competencies, we highlight the need for our students to learn to live in a Christ-like manner by developing necessary knowledges, skills and dispositions central to their faith formation. Such competencies cannot be measured by summative tests. Provincial assessments are therefore only one part of the assessment picture. They provide an important glimpse into students’ achievement of provincial standards, but results can vary due to many factors. Discussion of individual school results will form part of the presentations by school administrators in their School Results Reports in November.

## Overview of Results of the Student Learning Assessment and Provincial Achievement Tests

Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools (GSACRD) is proud of the achievement of its students and staff on the Provincial Achievement and Diploma Tests. GSACRD students consistently outperformed their provincial counterparts in the core subject achievement tests in both the Acceptable Standard and the Standard of Excellence. **Grade 6 students** outperformed the province on *each of the 5 provincial achievement tests* at the Acceptable Standard and Standard of Excellence. **Grade 9 students** outperformed the province on *each of the 5 provincial achievement tests* at the Acceptable Standard.

**High school students** outperformed the province on *8 of 11 diploma examinations* at the Acceptable Standard and on *10 of the 11 diploma examinations* at the Standard of Excellence.

Some of the highlights of GSACRD results include:

### **Grade 3 Student Learning Assessment (SLA) and New Curriculum Writing Groups**

- Last year was the implementation of the Grade 3 Student Learning Assessment (SLA), which had 4 parts: English language arts performance task; Math performance task; English language arts multiple-choice questions; and Math multiple-choice questions.
- This exam was administered in the fall 2015 instead of May and June 2016, the usual timing of provincial exams. The reason was that the SLA was intended to be a diagnostic assessment used by Grade 3 teachers to identify gaps in students' learning that would impact teaching *throughout* grade 3.
- Because the SLA was intended to be a diagnostic, not a summative assessment, Alberta Education released student results to teachers to share with students and their parents; no results were released to school jurisdictions.
- ALL GSACRD grade 3 teachers, along with 95% of grade 3 teachers in the province, took part in a pilot study of the grade 3 SLA.
- Last year Alberta teachers reported that the SLA was an excellent professional learning experience, but they highlighted that the test took much class time to administer. Grade 3 teachers advised Alberta Education to significantly revise the grade 3 SLA before the 2016 pilot.
- In response to teacher feedback, Alberta Education selected 20 school jurisdictions to engage in an intensive pilot study of the SLA this year (2016-2017) to make necessary revisions to the assessment before it is an expectation to administer it provincially.
- GSACRD was *not* selected to be part of this pilot study; however, all GSACRD grade 2 and 3 teachers are taking part in field testing the SLA.
- Expert working groups are to be comprised of teachers from across the province who will represent expertise provincially in 6 subjects and 6 grade levels. GSACRD has one teacher selected for the Wellness Expert Working Group.

## Grade 6 PAT Results

- Acceptable Standard:
  - In 2016, GSACRD grade 6 students performed, on average, **10% higher** than the province at the Acceptable Standard for ALL core subjects.
  - Over the last 5 years, GSACRD grade 6 students performed, on average, **11% higher** than the province at the Acceptable Standard for ALL core subjects.
- Standard of Excellence:
  - In 2016, GSACRD grade 6 students performed, on average, **5% higher** than the province at the Standard of Excellence in ALL core subjects.
  - Over the last 5 years, GSACRD grade 6 students performed, on average, **9% higher** than the province at the Standard of Excellence in ALL core subjects.
- Subject-based performance:
  - In 2016, GSACRD grade 6 students far exceeded the province in **Social Studies** at the **Acceptable Standard (+14.3%)**.
  - Over the last five years, GSACRD grade 6 students far exceeded the province in **Social Studies** at the **Acceptable Standard (+11.98%)**.
  - Last year and over the last five years, grade 6 students have excelled in **Science** at both the Acceptable Standard and Standard of Excellence.
- English and French program performance:
  - Over the last five years, GSACRD grade 6 students in English and French programs achieve consistently above the province at the Acceptable Standard in ALL core subjects.
  - Over the last five years, GSACRD grade 6 students have performed above the province by 8.3% in English, which is substantial given that students have typically performed a small percentage higher than the province at the Standard of Excellence in other subjects.

## Grade 9 PAT Results

- Acceptable Standard:
  - In 2016, GSACRD grade 9 students performed, on average, **10% higher** than the province at the Acceptable Standard for ALL core subjects.
  - Over the last 5 years, GSACRD grade 6 students performed, on average, **12% higher** than the province at the Acceptable Standard for ALL core subjects.
- Standard of Excellence:
  - In 2016, GSACRD grade 9 students performed, on average, about **1% higher** than the province at the Standard of Excellence in ALL core subjects.
  - Over the last 5 years, GSACRD grade 9 students performed, on average,

**2% higher** than the province at the Standard of Excellence in ALL core subjects.

- Subject-based performance:
  - In 2016, GSACRD grade 9 students have **significantly exceeded** the provincial results at the Acceptable Standard in **All core subjects**.
  - In 2016, GSACRD grade 9 students have **significantly exceeded** the province at the Standard of Excellence in **Social Studies** and **Mathematics**.
  - This increase is especially important in **Math 9**, which has proven to be challenging for our grade 9 students to achieve as well as students in province at the Standard of Excellence level.
  - The number of students achieving at the Standard of Excellence **declined slightly** in **English language arts** and **Science**, and more noticeably in **French Language Arts**.
  - Overall, the 5-year trend indicates that the outstanding success of GSACRD grade 9 students has been consistent at the Acceptable Standard in all core subjects.

## **Diploma Results**

- Acceptable Standard:
  - In 2016, GSACRD high school students performed, on average, **1.1% higher** than the province at the Acceptable Standard for **ALL core subjects**, although there was a **slight decline** at the Acceptable Standard in **Biology 30, Chemistry 30 and Physics 30**.
  - Over the last 5 years, GSACRD high school students performed, on average, **4.1% higher** than the province at the Acceptable Standard for ALL core subjects.
- Standard of Excellence:
  - In 2016, GSACRD high school students performed, on average, about **2.0% higher** than the province at the Standard of Excellence in ALL core subjects.
- Subject-based performance:
  - Over the last 5 years, GSACRD high school students performed, on average, **1.6% higher** than the province at the Standard of Excellence in ALL core subjects.
  - Overall, high school students are **excelling beyond the province** in five-year trends and in last year's results for both the Acceptable Standard and Standard of Excellence.
  - However, specific subjects are **declining** in the last five years at the Standard of Excellence: **Math 30-1, Chemistry 30 and Physics 30**.
  - Given the decline of students' performance in the sciences, **Science 30** students have **sustained excellent growth** in both the Acceptable Standard and Standard of Excellence.

## Looking Ahead

1. SLA field testing is continuing with GSACRD grade 2 and 3 teachers and students. Individual student data will be made available to teachers and parents. No district comparative data is expected.
2. This year we created school-based data analysis tools that administrative teams accessed digitally to interpret their provincial achievement and diploma exam results. Positive emails from administrative teams indicated that it was valuable to begin this analysis process with some tools in place. Now, School-based administrators and their staffs will use these results as part of their data to collaboratively determine a plan of action to either maintain successful results or to improve results. Celebration of achievement will be encouraged at the school level to recognize the work of teachers and the success of our students.
3. School-based administrators will share the results with their school councils and parent communities after the October 7 release.
4. School-based administrators will clarify their school results with the district's senior administrative team during the School Results Reviews in late October and November. Strategies to address those areas requiring improvement at the school level will be shared at that time.
5. As a District, we will continue to focus on building our strength in the Standard of Excellence throughout the all grade levels, especially at the high school level.

**Table 1: Provincial Achievement Test Results 2015-2016**

	Acceptable Standard			Standard of Excellence		
	GSACRD	Prov.	+/-	GSACRD	Prov.	+/-
ELA 6	93.1	82.9	+10.2	24.6	20.4	+4.2
Math 6	82.0	71.4	+10.6	19.2	13.8	+5.4
Science 6	89.3	77.6	+11.7	39.9	27.7	+6.9
Social Studies 6	85.4	71.1	+14.3	27.5	22.6	+4.9
FLA 6	87.9	87.7	+2.2	16.5	14.2	+2.3
ELA 9	88.6	82.9	+5.7	14.7	15.2	-0.5
Math 9	83.2	66.7	+16.5	19.5	17.2	+2.3
Science 9	83.7	73.5	+10.2	22.0	22.5	-0.5
Social Studies 9	74.4	64.0	+10.4	22.9	18.3	+4.6
FLA 9	91.3	83.0	+8.3	8.7	10.8	-2.1
Overall Avg. +/-			+10.0			+2.8

- Full Cohort Results (All Students)

**Table 2: Diploma Exam Results 2015-2016**

	Acceptable			Excellence		
	GSACRD	Prov.	+/-	GSACRD	Prov.	+/-
Biology 30	95.6	96.3	-0.7	41.6	39.7	+1.9
Chemistry 30	93.9	95.1	-1.2	45.5	42.3	+3.2
ELA 30-1	97.6	77.6	+1.5	23.9	21.1	+2.8
ELA 30-2	98.5	96.3	+2.2	12.2	8.6	+3.5
FLA 30-1	100	99.5	+2.2	0	31.9	+2.3
Physics 30	95.2	96.4	-1.2	37.1	44.8	-7.7
Math 30-1	91.9	91.2	+0.7	19.5	17.2	+2.3
Math 30-2	96.2	91.9	+4.3	20.5	17.4	+3.1
Science 30	97.8	96.1	+1.7	22.9	18.3	+4.6
Social Studies 30-1	98.9	98.9	0.0	27.6	27.9	-0.3
Social Studies 30-2	100.0	94.8	+5.2	15.4	13.2	+2.2
Overall Avg. +/-			+1.1			+2.0

- Partial Cohort Results (Only students who wrote the exam)

**Table 3: Five Year Trends, Provincial Achievement Tests: Grade 6 and 9**

Subjects	Acceptable Standard					Ave +/-%	Standard of Excellence					Ave +/- %
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	
ELA 6	+8.6	+7.9	+5.5	+10.1	+10.2	<b>+8.5</b>	+3.6	+6.3	+2.1	+1.8	+4.2	<b>+8.3</b>
ELA 9	+9.9	+12.6	+12.5	+11.7	+5.7	<b>+10.5</b>	+1.9	+4.7	+1.0	+2.5	<b>-0.5</b>	<b>+1.9</b>
FLA 6	+0.5	+11.4	+4.2	+3.8	+2.3	<b>+4.4</b>	+0.7	+2.8	+4.2	+3.8	+2.3	<b>+2.8</b>
FLA 9	+1.2	+3.1	+2.2	+7.1	+8.3	<b>+4.4</b>	+0.2	+5.5	<b>-1.3</b>	+3.4	<b>-2.1</b>	<b>+1.1</b>
Math 6	+9.0	+13.5	+10.4	+11.5	+10.6	<b>+11.0</b>	+1.6	+4.1	+0.8	+2.4	+5.4	<b>+2.9</b>
Math 9	+13.0	+12.7	+12.0	+12.0	+16.5	<b>+13.2</b>	+4.2	+0.5	<b>-1.6</b>	<b>-1.1</b>	+2.3	<b>+0.9</b>
Science 6	+9.9	+11.5	+8.8	+11.7	+11.7	<b>+10.9</b>	+4.4	+6.2	+4.3	+6.6	+6.9	<b>+5.7</b>
Science 9	+11.0	+15.0	+10.6	+10.2	+10.2	<b>+11.4</b>	<b>-1.3</b>	+8.8	+0.3	<b>-2.2</b>	<b>-0.5</b>	<b>+1.0</b>
Social Studies 6	+9.8	+15.0	+10.4	+10.4	+14.3	<b>+11.9</b>	+2.3	+4.0	+3.7	+1.1	+4.9	<b>+3.2</b>
Social Studies 9	+9.5	+10.5	+11.9	+9.3	+10.4	<b>+10.3</b>	+4.1	+6.2	+3.2	+1.1	<b>-0.9</b>	<b>+2.7</b>

**Table 4: Five Year Trends: Diploma Examination Results**

Subjects	Acceptable Standard					Ave +/-%	Standard of Excellence					Ave +/- %
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	
ELA 30-1	+6.6	+6.4	+7.9	+9.4	+1.5	<b>+6.36</b>	+3.7	+3.0	+4.6	+1.6	+2.8	<b>+3.1</b>
ELA 30-2	+5.9	+8.2	+5.9	+2.9	+2.2	<b>+5.02</b>	<b>-0.4</b>	+3.7	+6.2	+5.6	+3.5	<b>+3.7</b>
FLA 30-1	+2.2	+2.8	+3.4	+4.5	+2.2	<b>+3.02</b>	+10.4	<b>-5.2</b>	<b>-0.3</b>	<b>-1.8</b>	+2.3	<b>+1.1</b>
Math 30-1	n/a	3.7	+9.0	+2.4	+0.7	<b>+3.95</b>	n/a	<b>-0.4</b>	<b>-2.6</b>	<b>-5.0</b>	+2.3	<b>-1.4</b>
Math 30-2	n/a	+9.9	+8.7	+4.2	+4.3	<b>+6.78</b>	n/a	+4.1	+6.5	+2.1	+3.1	<b>+4.0</b>
Biology 30	<b>-0.4</b>	+6.3	+2.0	+5.1	<b>-0.7</b>	<b>+2.46</b>	<b>-1.4</b>	+1.4	+4.0	<b>-0.2</b>	+1.9	<b>+1.1</b>
Chem 30	+4.6	+6.6	+3.9	+3.0	<b>-1.2</b>	<b>+3.38</b>	<b>-1.2</b>	+4.4	<b>-3.5</b>	<b>-9.2</b>	+3.2	<b>-1.3</b>
Physics 30	<b>-3.3</b>	+4.7	+0.2	+2.7	<b>-1.2</b>	<b>+0.62</b>	+1.6	+2.1	+8.0	<b>-15.8</b>	<b>-7.7</b>	<b>-2.4</b>
Science 30	+7.1	+0.9	+5.8	+11.3	+1.7	<b>+5.36</b>	<b>-4.6</b>	+5.9	+8.8	+16.9	+4.6	<b>+6.3</b>
Overall Avg. +/-					<b>+1.1</b>	<b>+4.1</b>					<b>+2.0</b>	<b>+1.6</b>