

December 7, 2007

Exam Results

On December 6, 2007 we released the full-year exam results for Grade 10, 11 and 12 courses with both required and optional provincial exams. Schools and districts have access to their results for each exam session, but once a year the Ministry produces a roll-up of those results. Provincial, district and school reports are found at: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/>

At the provincial level, exam results, course marks, final blended marks and pass rates are high and consistent over time. For example, the final course pass rate for English 12 has been 98% for the past five years. It is normal to see variations in pass rates, etc. at school and district levels. All districts and schools have areas of strength and all have areas where improvements can be made.

The required Grade 10 and 11 exams that are part of the 2004 Graduation Program seem to have settled in. In English 10, 95% of the students earned credit for the course after the class marks and exam scores were blended. But even though course pass rates for the three Grade 10 math courses were above 90%, we still have about 4,000 students who need to earn their Grade 10 math credits and about 3,500 who need to earn their Grade 10 Science credit. (94% of students had a passing classroom mark in Science 10 but only 76% passed the exam). The new Grade 10 - 12 math curriculum is now in place and the new Science 10 curriculum begins next fall; in both cases, the learning outcomes have been focussed, which will enable students to have time to master course content.

Aboriginal students are meeting with success on several fronts: final course pass rates were 87% for English 10; 86% for Applications of Math 10; 89% for Essentials of Math 10; 83% for Principles of Math 10; 82% for Science 10; 90% for Social Studies 11; 91% for BC First Nations Studies 12 and 96% for English 12.

More Aboriginal students are using English 12 to meet graduation requirements while fewer are using Communications 12. English 12 opens more doors for all students.

Our six-year completion rates are also holding steady. As communicated at the November 2, 2007 meeting of Superintendents and Board Chairs, our provincial completion rate sits at 80.4 per cent. Detailed information for all students, for all students minus international students who are only here for a year or two, as well as for our Aboriginal student population is being made available to all superintendents.

PISA

Results were released December 4, 2007 from the 2006 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) of 15-year-olds' abilities in science, math, and reading. The overall focus of the 2006 assessment was science.

BC students were in the top-performing range worldwide, with only Finland doing significantly better in science. In reading, only Finland and Korea were above BC's range, while in mathematics, five jurisdictions were above BC's range. When comparing average scores, BC ranked fourth in science, sixth in reading and thirteenth in math. Generally, the 2006 results for BC students show scores similar to the 2003 results.

The information from the PISA survey also indicates factors that lead to higher student success, such as immigrant status, parental education and socio-economic status. British Columbia has been identified as the best Canadian example of a jurisdiction that has minimized the effect of socio-economic status on performance while still maintaining a high level of student performance.

Paperless Exams

November exam results for the first paperless provincial exam session in BC were released this past Tuesday, November 27, 2007. Over 2,500 students wrote their Grades 10, 11, and 12 exams online over three days in November. This number includes 84 students from four offshore schools in China, 12 students with special needs (with the aid of Spellchecker and Kurzweil reader), and four out-of-province students including two from Holland, one from Haiti and one next door in Alberta.

With the exception of nine exams, no paper exchanged hands between the Ministry and schools. Communication regarding this session was sent out to schools via the TRAX Information Updates, and documents such as administrative manuals, invigilation procedures, session passwords and marking materials were posted to the School Secure Web.

The written-response sections of the exams were also marked electronically. Grades 10 and 11 written-responses were marked locally by teachers who logged on to the e-Marking application and submitted scores electronically. Grade 12 exams were marked centrally, but also on-line, with scores being submitted in the same fashion as Grade 10 and 11 exams.

Students have the opportunity to write many of their provincial exams electronically in all six provincial exam sessions. The new May 2008 exam session will be entirely electronic, while the April and August sessions will be primarily electronic. For January and June sessions, which are the largest paper sessions, the option to write electronically should appeal to the conservationists in all of us.

Legislation

Last Thursday saw the passage of Bill 46-2007, the First Nations Education Act. This historic legislation complements the Federal government legislation,

Bill C34, First Nations Jurisdiction over Education in British Columbia Act. Both pieces of legislation are the culmination of years of negotiations involving Canada, the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC), and British Columbia. First Nations who participate will be able to create their own legislation governing First Nations education in their schools on their lands. The legislation recognizes First Nations jurisdiction and provides for consultation with the First Nations Educational Authority and contains consequential amendments to the School Act, Independent School Act, and the Teaching Profession Act. There was a [special celebration](#) when the legislation was introduced in the House on November 22, with many of those who have been involved over the years in attendance.

Annual Teachers' Congress

The second Annual Teachers' Congress took place on Friday, November 30, in Vancouver, providing over 130 educators from public, independent and band schools around the Province the opportunity to dialogue with each other and with Education Minister Shirley Bond.

The theme of this year's conference was Reaching Higher for Students. Shawn Atleo, BC Regional Chief, Assembly of First Nations, delivered an inspirational keynote and follow-up discussion. "Excellent choice in keynote speaker! – amazing! Thanks for sharing," wrote one participant on the evaluation form.

The keynote discussion was followed by presentations and follow-up discussions. Vivian Qualizza from the Ministry of Advanced Education delivered a demonstration on teacher resources. Nancy Reid of School District No. 57 (Prince George) presented on "Literacy and Formative Assessment," Geoff Burns of School District No. 8 (Kootenay Lake) presented on "Healthy Schools" and Julie Krall and Nicole Davey of School District No. 54 (Bulkely Valley) presented on "Supporting Aboriginal Learners."

Praise for the presenters was unanimous. "Very well organized," wrote another participant, "engaging presenters with inspiring messages."

As well, student string quartets from Killarney Secondary School and Lord Byng Secondary School provided the music for the day and were greatly appreciated.

Further information and a summary of the second Annual Teachers' Congress will be available within a few weeks on the Annual Teachers' Congress website (<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/atc/>).

The Ministry holds the Annual Teachers' Congress as part of a commitment to communicate directly with BC education partners and to seek out their ideas for positive change. In addition to the Teachers' Congress, the Ministry of Education also runs congresses for parents and students.

The 2008 Annual Parent Congress will take place on January 28, 2008 in Vancouver. You will find more information on the Parent Congress below.

The 2008 Annual Student Congress will take place in April, and I look forward to sharing more information with you in the New Year.

British Columbia's education system has recently scored multiple top-five scores in several important international surveys. The aim of all of our Ministry-run congresses is to ensure effective communication as we work together to continually improve on an education system that is already world renowned for excellence.

2008 Annual Parent Congress

Following on the success of the first-ever Parent Congress, held on November 16, 2006 in Kelowna, a second Parent Congress will be held on January 28, 2008, in Vancouver.

This year, the theme of the Parent Congress is Working Together: Parents as Partners in Education. We are looking forward to a productive day of dialogue and innovative thinking. Close collaboration with British Columbia's parents is required to ensure that our students continue to receive an education that prepares them for the changing world ahead and that our teachers and schools employ a blend of cutting-edge and community-based thinking to maintain our global reputation for excellence.

Any individual who is a parent or legal guardian of a child enrolled in the public, independent or band school system in British Columbia may apply to attend the Congress. Participants to the Congress will be randomly selected from the total number of applicants. In addition to the random selection process, efforts will be made to ensure that there is adequate geographic and demographic representation.

The online application site is now open, and applications will be accepted until noon on December 21, 2007. For more information and to access the online application form, please go to www.bced.gov.bc.ca/apc/



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