

Interpreting Achievement Test Results

Training Manual 2011

Government
of Alberta ■

Alberta ■

Freedom To Create. Spirit To Achieve.

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Achievement Test website: education.alberta.ca, then follow the pathway *Provincial Testing > Achievement Tests*

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Achievement Testing Program

Purpose

The purpose of the Achievement Testing Program is to

- determine if students are learning what they are expected to learn
- report to Albertans how well students have achieved provincial standards at given points in their schooling
- assist schools, authorities, and the province in monitoring and improving student learning

Interpreting Results

Achievement tests assess only part of what is to be learned. In addition, many factors contribute to student achievement. Personnel at the authority and school levels are in the best position to appropriately interpret, use, and communicate school authority and school results in the local context.

Interpreting Results to Improving Student Learning

Careful examination and interpretation of the results can help reveal areas of relative strength and weakness in student achievement. Teachers and administrators can use this information in planning and delivering relevant and effective instruction in relation to learning outcomes in the Programs of Study.

Interpreting Results to Facilitate Accountability

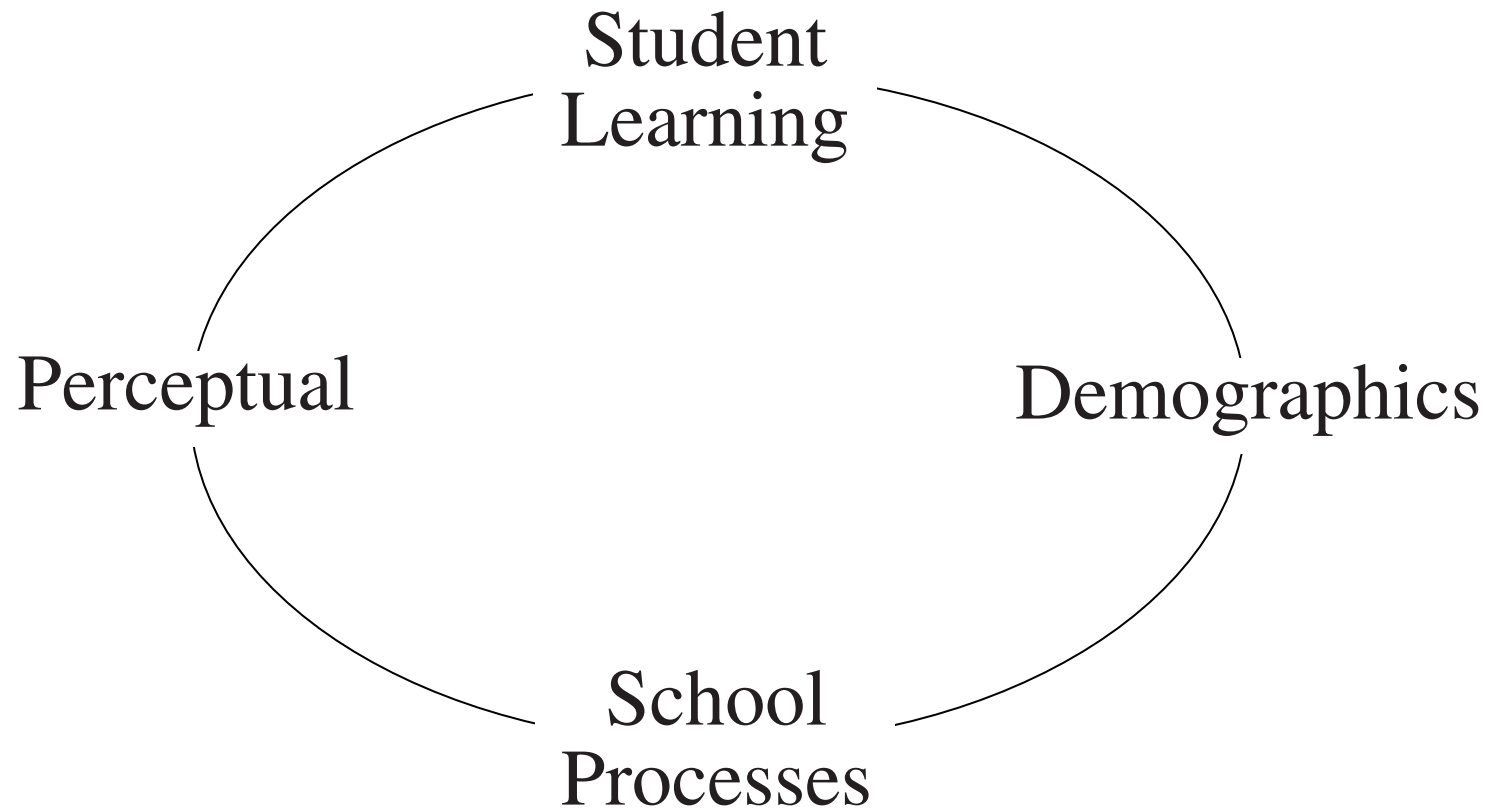
Alberta Education and school authority personnel are responsible for ensuring that high-quality education is provided to all students in the province.

Information about achievement is provided to

- schools and school authorities
- parents
- the public

so that they may know how well students in their schools are meeting local targets and provincial expectations.

Types of Data



Types of Data

Type of Data	What does it Mean?	Guiding Questions
Student Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How students are doing at any point in time• Communicates the degree to which students have acquired specified knowledge, skills, and attitudes• Is measurable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What observations can we make?• What does all the student data tell us?• What do we see when we compare scores within subgroups?• What trends do we see?• What is unique about this data?• What specific observations can be made about student learning?• What should be our focus?
Demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides an understanding of students and their unique needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the make-up of our student population?• What special programs do we have in our school/community?• What is our student attendance like?

Adapted from Eleanor Adams, OISE/UT

Type of Data	What does it Mean?	Guiding Questions
School Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an understanding of students and their unique needs • Includes looking at: materials for teachers, students, parents, instructional time, extra-curricular, diagnosing learning, assessment strategies, organization and management of classrooms, classroom environment, physical facilities, teacher knowledge, teacher attitudes, communication, Professional Development (PD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What resources do we have for teachers and students? • Are there enough? • Are the resources high quality? • Is instruction aligned with the Program of Studies? • Is there sufficient planning time? • How do we meet individual student needs? Does a process exist? Does it assist the teacher? • Is there a system of assessing student progress? Is it effective? Does it align with instruction? Do we use a variety of assessment methods? • Is PD focused on the needs identified through student and teacher data? Is there a link between student needs and PD? Is PD part of an ongoing cycle?
Perceptual Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps us to understand what students, teachers, parents and others think about the school • What we generally observe on an ongoing basis regarding the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the general feeling/tone towards learning? • Do the students and teachers have a positive attitude toward learning? • What do students like most about the school? What is the difference between students who are happy to be at school and those who are not? • What do parents think about the school?

Adapted from Eleanor Adams, OISE/UT

SCHOOL FACTORS THAT AFFECT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Research in education has identified key aspects of school effectiveness that affect student achievement.

1. Productive School Climate and Culture

- There is a shared and articulated focus on achievement.
- There is a shared belief that all students can achieve.
- Staff is cohesive, collaborates, and makes decisions by consensus.
- There is a safe orderly environment that is conducive to teaching and learning.

2. Focus on Student Acquisition of Central Learning Skills

- Teachers know what students are to learn and emphasize mastery of key concepts.
- Students know what is expected of them.
- Learning time is maximized.

3. Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress

- Students' progress is monitored, reported, and used for planning improvements.
- Students can show what they have learned.

- Parents know what their child has achieved.
- A variety of assessments are used.

4. Instructional Leadership

- Effective instructional leadership is provided.

5. Parent-School Partnerships

- High levels of school and home cooperation are evident.

6. Effective Instruction

- Grouping and organizational arrangements are appropriate.
- Pacing is appropriate.
- Curriculum and learning are aligned.
- Teachers use a variety of strategies.
- Students are actively involved.

7. High Expectations and Requirements for Students

- Students are held responsible for learning.
- Higher-order learning is emphasized.

Many other factors can be considered in interpreting results and planning for improved learning. These include students' abilities, attitudes, motivations, aspirations, academic backgrounds, and learning styles. They also include students' family circumstances, socioeconomic backgrounds, and community environments.

The Alberta Education website (education.alberta.ca) contains information about the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI). On the home page, click on *Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI)* under the heading *For Administrators*. This site has information on Alberta school improvement projects and an online, searchable database of articles, book, and websites related to school improvement and effectiveness.

A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH FOR EFFECTIVELY USING TEST RESULTS

Educators can use achievement test results as one part of an overall plan to improve the quality of learning. Such planning should involve teachers, parents, and community members in the analysis of test results. A systematic use of the test results includes the following steps.

1. Evaluate the percentage of students who wrote the achievement tests (participation rate) in your school or school authority. If your participation rate varies greatly from the provincial participation rate, you should consider the degree to which your results reflect achievement in your school or school authority. If more than 10% of eligible students in a school authority or school did not write a test, the reported statistics may not accurately represent the true level of achievement.
2. Compare test results with provincial standards and local targets. Comparisons should include results for both major components, gender, reporting category, and program. Provincial results are provided so that you can see how the whole province compares with these same standards.
3. Examine the results from multiple-choice and numerical-response items. These individual item results provided an opportunity to assess how well your students achieved specific curriculum standards.
4. Examine the results of written-response questions by scoring categories.
5. Note any patterns, anomalies or interrelationships in test results.
6. Hypothesize relationships between your observations and the factors affecting achievement in your school or jurisdiction.
7. Develop and implement a plan to improve the quality of education for students.
8. Communicate with parents about the results of achievement tests and the plans that the school has to improve student achievement.

REFERENCES

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (Statutes of Alberta, 1994, Chapter F-18.5 with amendments in force as of September 1, 1995).

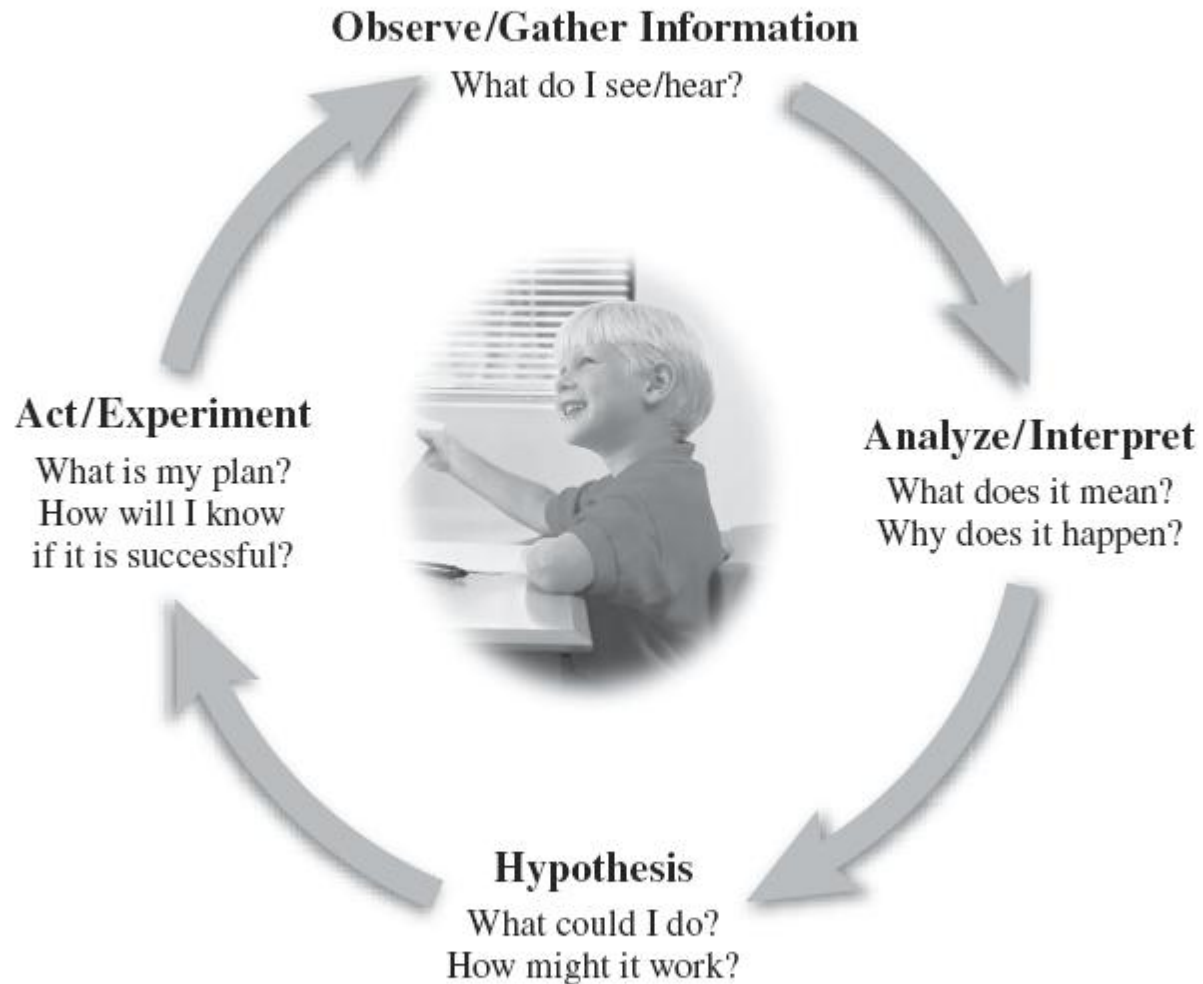
Guide for School Board Planning and Results Reporting. Alberta Education, February 2003.

Joint Advisory Committee (1993). *Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada*. Edmonton. AB: CRAME, University of Alberta.

Correlates of Effective Schools. www.mes.org/correlates.html

Use and Reporting of Results on Provincial Assessments, Alberta Education Policy 2.1.3.

Analyzing Student Learning



—adapted from Eleanor Adams, OISE/UT

Training Instructions for Reading Tables

Focus: *This page gives information about the contents of this report and the order of the tables as they appear on the report.*

A revised table of contents is provided to indicate the order of tables presented in the workshop.

Highlights:

Information will be given that is unique to each table.

Definition of Terms:

Terms will be defined as they appear in individual tables

References:

“Guidelines for Interpreting the 2011 Achievement Tests, Detailed School and Authority Reports”

Focus Questions

For each table, participants will focus on two questions. These questions can provide information and guidance for consideration before doing a more in-depth analysis of the tables.

When reading the table:

1. What are two or three observations you can make from the information in the table?
 - across subjects in one grade
 - across grades in one subject

2. Is there information in the table that you have questions about?

Training Instructions for Reading Table 1: Participation Report

Focus: *This table describes the number and percentage of students who wrote, were absent, were excused by the superintendent, or whose results were withheld. Every student who was in grade 3, 6 or 9 or who was ungraded in the third, sixth or ninth year of school was expected to write the achievement tests unless it was not possible for the student to respond to the tests or if participation would be harmful to the student. Participation rates should be carefully reviewed to ensure that an appropriate number of students wrote the test.*

Highlights:

• Footnotes:

Some reports will have a footnote like the following:

- “This group has fewer than six students, results shall not be publicly released.” Information is released to superintendents and principals only. Results for this group are not to be released to the public (parents or general), in accordance with freedom of information and protection of privacy legislation.

The mathematics, science, and social studies reports will have the following footnote:

- “The results for students writing in French are presented in a separate report.”

Definition of Terms:

- “Students Excused”

Students who received prior approval/permission from a superintendent not to write the test, according to the policy on excusing students.

- “Students Absent”

A student is classified as absent if there was no information available about the student. There are a few cases where a paper could not be located even though the student wrote the test. These students are removed entirely and do not appear in any results. In English language arts, if a student wrote one part of the test but was absent for the other part, his or her results do not appear in the report.

Students who were absent, who were excused by the superintendent, or who wrote but had their results withheld are not included in the

calculations of school or school authority results, except for Table 1 - *Participation Report* and Table 2.1 - *Standards Demonstrated by All Students* (school authority reports only).

- “Results Withheld”

Results are withheld once Alberta Education is informed that circumstances under which students wrote the test were not what they were supposed to be (e.g., administration procedures not fully followed, inappropriate practice of test items, etc.) The mark is withheld and the superintendent is asked to make a recommendation about the validity of the results. In situations where a test was administered following non-standard procedures, superintendents were asked to review the test administration with the principal and teacher and make recommendations to Alberta Education about the validity of the results. Students affected are included under the category “Students Who Wrote, Results Withheld.”

References:

For the policy on exemptions, see the *General Information Bulletin: Achievement Testing Program Grades 3, 6, and 9*. On the Alberta Education website (education.alberta.ca) follow the pathway *Provincial Testing > Achievement Tests > General Information Bulletin*.

General Information Bulletin: Students who are absent on the day of the test are expected to write it when they return, up to the published return date for test materials.

For each table, participants will focus on two questions. These questions can provide information and guidance for consideration before doing a more in-depth analysis of the tables.

When reading the table:

1. What are two or three observations you can make from the information in the table?
 - across subjects in one grade
 - across grades in one subject
2. Is there information in the table that you have questions about?

Training Worksheet to Accompany Table 1

Focus Questions

1. Describe the uniqueness of the student population in your school/school authority (e.g., number of students, type of schools).

2. Did the participation rate in your school/school authority meet expectations? Why or why not?

3. Describe how the participation rate in your school/school authority could improve.

Training Instructions for Reading Table 2.1: Standards Demonstrated by All Students

Focus: *In this table, the number and percentage of students who achieved standards is calculated based on all the students in the grade.*

Highlights:

When interpreting and/or reporting information from this table, it is important to differentiate between those students who wrote the achievement test and those who didn't. When correctly interpreted, this information enables the reader to distinguish the percentage of students **who are known to have met or not met the standard** (based on those who wrote) from the percentage for whom **no information about achievement is available**.

Prior to 2004, this information was only provided in school authority reports.

References:

Test Accommodations for Students:

education.alberta.ca, then follow the pathway

Provincial Testing > Achievement Tests > General Information Bulletin > Accommodations.

Focus Questions

For each table, participants will focus on two questions. These questions can provide information and guidance for consideration before doing a more in depth analysis of the tables.

When reading the table:

1. What are two or three observations you can make from the information in the table?
 - across subjects in one grade
 - across grades in one subject

2. Is there information in the table that you have questions about?

Training Worksheet to Accompany Table 2.1

Focus Questions

1. Calculate the difference between school/school authority percentage and province percentage for:

Students for Whom Test Results are Available

Acceptable Students

Standard of Excellence

Are the differences significant?

2. Calculate the difference between school/school authority percentage and province percentage for:

Students Absent

Students Excused

Are the differences significant?

3. What could be done to reduce the percentage of students for whom test results are not available because of students being absent?

Training Instructions for Reading Table 2.2: Standards Achieved by Students Writing the Test, by Reporting Category

Focus: *This table gives the number and percentage of students that have achieved standards by reporting category. Each reporting category relates to either components of the test or the total test.*

School and school authority results should be reported in terms of local targets as well as relative to provincial targets and results.

Table 2.2 shows the number and percentage of students writing the test who achieved the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence for the total test and the two major components of the test. The cut score reported in this table is the lowest score on a test that students must achieve for their performance to be identified as “acceptable” and/or “excellent” in relation to provincial expectations. Since curriculum standards do not change from year to year, every effort is made to construct tests that are equivalent in difficulty to tests from previous years. Sometimes when a test is more difficult or easier than anticipated, the cut score has to change to ensure that the level of difficulty associated with meeting the standard remains the same. Cut scores are determined through test equating, a statistical procedure that is used to determine equivalent scores on tests.

If the number of students in a school or school authority is small, consideration should be given to looking at results from more than one year to determine if the performance of students is different from expectations.

Practical Importance:

- Is the difference in our school/school authority results compared to the province, large enough to be concerned about? Does it represent a “real” improvement or decline in achievement?
- Differences could be applied to a small population because you know the nature of your school population.

Note: The writing score and the reading score are weighted equally when the total test score is determined.

References: Achievement Test Multiyear Report

Focus Questions

For each table, participants will focus on two questions. These questions can provide information and guidance for consideration before doing a more in depth analysis of the tables.

When reading the table:

1. What are two or three observations you can make from the information in the table?
 - across subjects in one grade
 - across grades in one subject
2. Is there information in the table that you have questions about?

Training Worksheet to Accompany Table 2.2 (Mathematics, Science, Social Studies)

Complete the table below to assist in the interpretation of the information presented on Table 2.2.
 What percentage of students in your school met the Acceptable Standard/Standard of Excellence? Circle any differences that are noteworthy.
 (Place on table below.)

<i>Reporting Category</i>	<i>Comparison of School to Provincial Expectations</i>			<i>Comparison of School to Local Target</i>		
	School	Provincial	Difference	School	Local Target	Difference
Acceptable Standard Total Test Knowledge Skills						
Standard of Excellence Total Test Knowledge Skills						

Focus Questions

1. Compared to actual provincial results, in which reporting categories does your school performance show strength or need improvement?

2. Compared to local targets, in which reporting categories does your school performance show strength or need improvement?

3. How can these comparisons be used to improve student learning in your school?

Training Worksheet to Accompany Table 2.2 (English Language Arts)

Complete the table below to assist in the interpretation of the information presented on Table 2.2.
 What percentage of students in your school met the Acceptable Standard/Standard of Excellence? Circle any differences that are noteworthy.
 (Place on table below.)

<i>Reporting Category</i>	<i>Comparison of School to Provincial Expectations</i>			<i>Comparison of School to Local Target</i>		
	School	Provincial	Difference	School	Local Target	Difference
Acceptable Standard Total Test Writing Reading						
Standard of Excellence Total Test Writing Reading						

Focus Questions

1. Compared to actual provincial results, in which reporting categories does your school performance show strength or need improvement?

2. Compared to local targets, in which reporting categories does your school performance show strength or need improvement?

3. How can these comparisons be used to improve student learning in your school?

Training Instructions for Reading Table 3: Students Achieving Standards on Total Test, by Program

Focus: *This table gives the distribution of students according to various programs and their results.*

Table 3 reports the number and percentage of students achieving standards on the total test by program. School and school authority staffs can use this table to determine if the characteristics of the students in a school are different from those of students in the province and to help determine the effectiveness of a particular program in the school or school authority.

Highlights:

For this table, students are classified according to information provided by the school or school authority to the Educational Information Exchange in March 2011. The definitions for these classifications can be found in the Student Information System (SIS) User Guide.

In some cases, a student moved from one school to another or from one program to another in the same school after the data was collected in March. In these cases, the student was classified according to the data provided in March, which likely correspond to the program where the student received most of his or her instruction in the year.

Students in an English as a Second Language program include students coded as English as a Second Language Funded, English as a Second Language Non-Funded, and Canadian-born English as a Second Language.

Students included in the Special Education category are those who were coded as exceptional students other than gifted.

Some students with special needs can complete provincial achievement tests without the use of writing accommodations, others can complete the tests with accommodations, and a few are unable to complete the provincial achievement tests. Students who were not capable of responding to the test in its original or an approved modified form, or who were unable to complete the achievement tests because participation would be harmful to them, should be excused from writing by the superintendent.

Achievement test results for a student in a special needs program are useful when the student's Individualized Program Plan (IPP) is reviewed. Therefore, the results, in addition to other forms of appropriate assessment, should be used to help determine the student's progress, and for possible revisions to the IPP goals and objectives. The results should be recorded in the IPP as well as the student's record. Accommodations provided for a student writing the provincial achievement tests should also be recorded in the student's record and IPP. A combination of assessment measures, the IPP, and other information can produce a comprehensive profile of the student's overall academic progress.

Results from the achievement tests can corroborate the year-long assessments from the classroom. When reviewing the success of a program, consideration should be given to using achievement test results as one of the performance measures.

Highlight the following when training others:

- Programs
- Footnotes & Asterisks
- Students' Writing
- Students' Achieving Standards
- For the purpose of this table, programs are determined according to designated program funding information from SIS (Fall and updated March 1st).
- For subjects other than English Language Arts, students included in the French Immersion or Francophone categories are the students in those programs who wrote a test in English.
- In reports for tests written in French, there is a table corresponding to this one.

Focus Questions

For each table, participants will focus on two questions. These questions can provide information and guidance for consideration before doing a more in depth analysis of the tables.

When reading the table:

1. What are two or three observations you can make from the information in the table?
 - across subjects in one grade
 - across grades in one subject
2. Is there information in the table that you have questions about?

Training Worksheet to Accompany Table 3

Focus Questions

1. What observations can be made about student performance in the various programs that our school offers?

Training Instructions for Reading Table 4: Raw Score Results, by Reporting Category and by Gender

Focus: *This table focuses on average scores of students on the whole test and its components, and on achievement by gender. The focus is not on standards. This table provides information about two things: how well all students did on different parts of the test and how well males and females did on the test.*

Highlights:

Unlike other tables, this table gives normative information. In norm-referenced results, interpretation is based on the comparison of test takers' performance to other people in a specified group.

In a few cases, information about a student's gender was not provided; for this reason, the number reported under "All Students" may be larger than the number of females and males together. Students who had a writing accommodation that affected scoring are not reported in this table.

To determine if students are "doing well enough," achievement tests are developed to reflect provincial curricula with established assessment and achievement standards. Consequently, most attention should be given to comparing achievement with provincial standards.

However, in addition to including the percentage of students meeting standards, each report also provides school or school authority average scores for each reporting category and for the total test. Comparisons of each of these scores with the provincial average for the same reporting category can help determine relative strengths and weaknesses in the school's or school authority's performance. Evaluating the importance of and reasons for differences between school or school authority and provincial results requires careful consideration of the practical significance of differences. Also, it is important to consider local targets for student achievement relative to provincial achievement standards.

References:

Table 5.1

Focus Questions

For each table, participants will focus on two questions. These questions can provide information and guidance for consideration before doing a more in depth analysis of the tables.

When reading the table:

1. What are two or three observations you can make from the information in the table?
 - across subjects in one grade
 - across grades in one subject

2. Is there information in the table that you have questions about?

Training Worksheet to Accompany Table 4 (English Language Arts)

Calculate the differences between raw score averages for each column.			
Complete the table below to assist in the interpretation of information presented in Table 4.			
<i>Reporting Category</i>	<i>Difference Between All Students in Province and All Students in the School</i>	<i>Difference Between Female and Male Scores (School)</i>	<i>Difference Between Female and Male Scores (Province)</i>
Total Test			
Writing			
Narrative			
Functional			
Reading			
Informational			
Narrative/Poetic			
Ideas and Details			
Text Organization			
Associating Meaning			
Synthesizing Ideas			
<i>Focus Questions</i>			
1. Identify reporting categories that show relative strengths or areas for improvement for all students, compared to provincial averages.			
2. Are achievement patterns the same for males and females? If not, where do they differ?			
3. What can we do to address the areas for improvement in our programs for the total population and for males and females?			

Training Worksheet to Accompany Table 4 (Mathematics 3)

Calculate the differences between raw score averages for each column.

Complete the table below to assist in the interpretation of information presented in Table 4.

<i>Reporting Category</i>	<i>Difference Between All Students in Province and All Students in the School</i>	<i>Difference Between Female and Male Scores (School)</i>	<i>Difference Between Female and Male Scores (Province)</i>
Total Test Multiple Choice LOC – Low LOC – Moderate LOC – High Number Patterns and Relations Shape and Space Statistics and Probability			

Focus Questions

1. Identify reporting categories that show relative strengths or areas for improvement for all students, compared to provincial averages.
2. Are achievement patterns the same for males and females? If not, where do they differ?
3. What can we do to address the areas for improvement in our programs for the total population and for males and females?

Training Worksheet to Accompany Table 4 (Mathematics 6)

Calculate the differences between raw score averages for each column.			
Complete the table below to assist in the interpretation of information presented in Table 4.			
<i>Reporting Category</i>	<i>Difference Between All Students in Province and All Students in the School</i>	<i>Difference Between Female and Male Scores (School)</i>	<i>Difference Between Female and Male Scores (Province)</i>
Total Test Multiple Choice Numeric Response LOC – Low LOC – Moderate LOC – High Number Patterns and Relations Shape and Space Statistics and Probability			
<i>Focus Questions</i>			
1. Identify reporting categories that show relative strengths or areas for improvement for all students, compared to provincial averages.			
2. Are achievement patterns the same for males and females? If not, where do they differ?			
3. What can we do to address the areas for improvement in our programs for the total population and for males and females?			

Training Worksheet to Accompany Table 4 (Mathematics 9)

Calculate the differences between raw score averages for each column.			
Complete the table below to assist in the interpretation of information presented in Table 4.			
<i>Reporting Category</i>	<i>Difference Between All Students in Province and All Students in the School</i>	<i>Difference Between Female and Male Scores (School)</i>	<i>Difference Between Female and Male Scores (Province)</i>
Total Test Multiple Choice Numeric Response LOC – Low LOC – Moderate LOC – High Number Patterns and Relations Shape and Space Statistics and Probability			
<i>Focus Questions</i>			
1. Identify reporting categories that show relative strengths or areas for improvement for all students, compared to provincial averages.			
2. Are achievement patterns the same for males and females? If not, where do they differ?			
3. What can we do to address the areas for improvement in our programs for the total population and for males and females?			

Training Worksheet to Accompany Table 4 (Science 6)

Calculate the differences between raw score averages for each column.			
Complete the table below to assist in the interpretation of information presented in Table 4.			
<i>Reporting Category</i>	<i>Difference Between All Students in Province and All Students in the School</i>	<i>Difference Between Female and Male Scores (School)</i>	<i>Difference Between Female and Male Scores (Province)</i>
Total Test Reporting Category Knowledge Skills Strands Inquiry & Problem Solving Aerodynamics & Flight Sky Science Evidence & Investigation Trees & Forests			
<i>Focus Questions</i>			
1. Identify reporting categories that show relative strengths or areas for improvement for all students, compared to provincial averages.			
2. Are achievement patterns the same for males and females? If not, where do they differ?			
3. What can we do to address the areas for improvement in our programs for the total population and for males and females?			

Training Worksheet to Accompany Table 4 (Science 9)

Calculate the differences between raw score averages for each column.			
Complete the table below to assist in the interpretation of information presented in Table 4.			
<i>Reporting Category</i>	<i>Difference Between All Students in Province and All Students in the School</i>	<i>Difference Between Female and Male Scores (School)</i>	<i>Difference Between Female and Male Scores (Province)</i>
Total Test Reporting Category Knowledge Skills Strands Biological Diversity Matter & Chemical Change Environmental Chemistry Electrical Principles & Technologies Space Exploration			
<i>Focus Questions</i>			
1. Identify reporting categories that show relative strengths or areas for improvement for all students, compared to provincial averages.			
2. Are achievement patterns the same for males and females? If not, where do they differ?			
3. What can we do to address the areas for improvement in our programs for the total population and for males and females?			

Training Worksheet to Accompany Table 4 (Social Studies 6)

Calculate the differences between raw score averages for each column.			
Complete the table below to assist in the interpretation of information presented in Table 4.			
<i>Reporting Category</i>	<i>Difference Between All Students in Province and All Students in the School</i>	<i>Difference Between Female and Male Scores (School)</i>	<i>Difference Between Female and Male Scores (Province)</i>
Total Test Reporting Category Knowledge and Understanding Skills and Processes Topics Democratic Principles Local and Provincial Government Community Involvement Ancient Athens Iroquois Confederacy			
<i>Focus Questions</i>			
1. Identify reporting categories that show relative strengths or areas for improvement for all students, compared to provincial averages.			
2. Are achievement patterns the same for males and females? If not, where do they differ?			
3. What can we do to address the areas for improvement in our programs for the total population and for males and females?			

Training Worksheet to Accompany Table 4 (Social Studies 9)

Calculate the differences between raw score averages for each column.			
Complete the table below to assist in the interpretation of information presented in Table 4.			
<i>Reporting Category</i>	<i>Difference Between All Students in Province and All Students in the School</i>	<i>Difference Between Female and Male Scores (School)</i>	<i>Difference Between Female and Male Scores (Province)</i>
Total Test Reporting Category Knowledge and Understanding Skills and Processes Topics The Political and Judicial System Individual and Collective Rights Immigration Economic Decision Making Consumerism, Quality of Life, and Political Decision Making			
<i>Focus Questions</i>			
1. Identify reporting categories that show relative strengths or areas for improvement for all students, compared to provincial averages.			
2. Are achievement patterns the same for males and females? If not, where do they differ?			
3. What can we do to address the areas for improvement in our programs for the total population and for males and females?			

***Training Instructions for Reading Table 5-1 (ELA 6 and 9 Table 5.3-1, ELA 3 Table 5.2-1):
Results for Individual Multiple-Choice Items, by Reporting Category***

Focus: *This table gives information about student performance by item.*

These tables provide results for written-response (ELA 6 and 9 Table 5.3-1, ELA 3 Table 5.2-1), multiple-choice (all subjects), and numerical response (Grade 9 mathematics and science) questions.

Highlights:

- questions are listed in reporting category order, not numerically
- this table shows the percentage of students in the school and province who chose the correct answer for each question
- look at the percentage of students who chose the correct answer
- item descriptions are given for each question
- to effectively use Table 5.1, the following must also be considered: the item descriptions, Table 4 sub-category breakdowns, and the blueprint

References:

Table 4, blueprint

Blueprints are available with the reports and can be downloaded in portable document format (pdf).

Focus Questions

For each table, participants will focus on two questions. These questions can provide information and guidance for consideration before doing a more in depth analysis of the tables.

When reading the table:

1. What are two or three observations you can make from the information in the table?
 - across subjects in one grade
 - across grades in one subject

2. Is there information in the table that you have questions about?

Training Worksheet to Accompany Table 5-1

Focus Questions

1. What are the relative strengths in students' performance?

2. What contributes to these relative strengths?

3. What are the relative areas for improvement in students' performance?

4. What contributes to these relative areas for improvement?

Training Instructions for Reading Table 5.1: Student Achievement in Writing, by Reporting Category - Narrative

Focus: *This table focuses on the number and percentage of students achieving scores across the five reporting categories for narrative writing.*

Highlights:

- Writing Standards
- Scores
 - whole marks 1–5 correspond to the scoring criteria
 - half marks result from a blending of local and central marking

On this table, each writing standard is mutually exclusive.

References:

Table 2 and Table 5.2

Grade 6 English Language Arts 2011–2012 Subject Bulletin (scoring criteria)

On the Alberta Education website (education.alberta.ca) follow the pathway *Provincial Testing > Achievement Tests > Subject Bulletin > Grade 6 English Language Arts*.

Achievement Test Multiyear Report

Focus Questions

For each table, participants will focus on two questions. These questions can provide information and guidance for consideration before doing a more in depth analysis of the tables.

When reading the table:

1. What are two or three observations you can make from the information in the table?
 - across subjects in one grade
 - across grades in one subject

2. Is there information in the table that you have questions about?

Training Worksheet to Accompany Table 5.1 (English Language Arts)

Refer to Table 2.2 What % of students in our school met the acceptable standard in writing? _____ What % of students in our school met the standard of excellence in writing? _____ Using the results on Table 5.1, complete the chart below.

Score	<i>Reporting Categories</i>									
	Content		Organization		Sentence Structure		Vocabulary		Conventions	
	School	Provincial	School	Provincial	School	Provincial	School	Provincial	School	Provincial
4.0, 4.5, 5.0										
2.5, 3.0, 3.5										
0, 1.0, 1.5, 2.0										

Focus Questions

1. In what specific reporting categories for writing (narrative writing for ELA 6 & narrative/essay writing for ELA 9) did students show strength or need improvement?
 - a) among reporting categories?
 - b) compared to the provincial results?
 - c) compared to local targets and past performance?

2. What are some patterns, and what are the reasons for these patterns?

3. Recognizing strengths and areas for improvement,
 - a) how can my school/school authority account for and support areas of strength (instruction, timetable, etc.)?
 - b) how can my school/school authority account for and address areas that need improvement?

Training Instructions for Reading Table 5.2: Student Achievement in Writing, by Reporting Category - Functional

Focus: *This table gives the number and percentage of students achieving scores across the two reporting categories for functional writing.*

Highlights:

Review notes for Table 5.1.

Table 5.2 is similar to Table 5.1 except that it shows the results for functional writing.

References:

Table 2

Table 5.1

Focus Questions

For each table, participants will focus on two questions. These questions can provide information and guidance for consideration before doing a more in depth analysis of the tables.

When reading the table:

1. What are two or three observations you can make from the information in the table?
 - across subjects in one grade
 - across grades in one subject

2. Is there information in the table that you have questions about?

Training Worksheet to Accompany Table 5.2 (English Language Arts 6 & 9)

Refer to Table 2.2 What % of students in our school met the acceptable standard in writing? _____ What % of students in our schools met the standard of excellence? _____ Using the results on Table 5.2, complete the chart below.

Score	<i>Reporting Categories</i>			
	Content		Content Management	
	School	Provincial	School	Provincial
4.0, 4.5, 5.0				
2.5, 3.0, 3.5				
0, 1.0, 1.5, 2.0				

Focus Questions

1. In what specific reporting categories for writing (narrative writing for ELA 6 & narrative/essay writing for ELA 9) did students show strength or need improvement
 - a) among reporting categories?
 - b) compared to the provincial results?
 - c) compared to local targets and past performance?

2. What are some patterns, and what are the reasons for these patterns?

3. Recognizing strengths and areas for improvement,
 - a) how can my school/school authority account for and support areas of strength?
 - b) how can my school/school authority account for and address areas that need improvement?
 - c) how well are our students doing in narrative writing compared to how well they are doing in functional writing?

The total score for a student's writing may be calculated by following the procedure below:

Narrative Writing

1. Assign a score of 1 to 5 for each of *content*, *organization*, *sentence structure*, *vocabulary*, and *conventions*.
2. Weight *content* and *organization* to be worth twice as much as the other categories by multiplying their scores by 2.

Maximum score possible for Narrative Writing = 35

Functional Writing

1. Assign a score of 1 to 5 for each of content and content management.
2. Multiply this total by 2.

Maximum score possible for Functional Writing = 20

Total Score

1. Add the narrative and functional scores.

Total score for <i>Part A: Writing</i>	
Narrative Writing	____/35 (63.6%)
+ Functional Writing	____/20 (36.4%)
= Total Score	____/55 (100%)

Training Instructions for Reading Table 6: Results on 2009 and 2010 Items

Focus: *This table gives a comparison of performance on items that appeared on the current year's test and the previous year's test.*

Table 2 can help schools and school authorities identify changes in student performance since the previous administration of that achievement test. This table shows student performance on items that appear on the previous and current versions of the achievement test. Students who had a writing accommodation that affected scoring are not reported in this table.

Highlights:

first row — refers to common items (items that appear on the current year's test and the previous year's test.)

second row — refers to unique items

Consider:

When looking at the first row, there are two types of comparisons that can be made:

(Within a year) school to province

AND

(Across years) school to school
province to province

when looking at the second row, compare only

(Within a year) school to province

Focus Questions

For each table, participants will focus on two questions. These questions can provide information and guidance for consideration before doing a more in depth analysis of the tables.

When reading the table:

1. What are two or three observations you can make from the information in the table?
 - across subjects in one grade
 - across grades in one subject

2. Is there information in the table that you have questions about?

Training Worksheet to Accompany Table 6

Calculate differences in averages between school and provincial achievement on common and unique items.

Complete the table below to assist in the interpretation of information presented in Table 6.

<i>Type of Items</i>	<i>2010 School to Province Scores Above (+) or Below (-) Average</i>	<i>2011 School to Province Scores Above (+) or Below (-) Average</i>	<i>School 2010 to School 2011 Scores Above (+) or Below (-) Average</i>	<i>Province 2010 to Province 2011 Scores Above (+) or Below (-) Average</i>
Common items				
Unique items				

Focus Questions

1. Describe your schools' performance on common items from 2010–2011.

2. Describe the province's performance on common items from 2010–2011.

3. Considering school performance on unique items, what inferences can you draw with respect to your school's performance on common items?

Training Instructions for Reading Table 7: Individual Student Results, by Reporting Category (School Reports)

Focus: *Table 7 provides information about how well each student did on each part of the test, as well as about individual student programming and any test accommodations a student used in writing the test. Students who were absent, excused by the superintendent, or had their results withheld are also included in the table.*

Highlights:

- Program information comes from the Student Information System (SIS)
 - not mutually exclusive
 - up to three accommodations may be included per student
- Special provisions
 - not mutually exclusive
 - up to three may be included per student—total test and subtest scores are prorated if certain items are dropped because of special provisions
- Asterisk
- Numbers along top line
- Totals for test, reporting categories and sub-components
- Exercise caution with sub-components of tests

References:

Table 4 and blueprint for the test

Subject Bulletins

education.alberta.ca, then follow the pathway

Provincial Testing > Achievement Tests > Subject Bulletin.

General Information Bulletin: Achievement Testing Program Grades 3, 6, and 9

education.alberta.ca, then follow the pathway

Provincial Testing > Achievement Tests > General Information Bulletin.

Focus Questions

For each table, participants will focus on two questions. These questions can provide information and guidance for consideration before doing a more in depth analysis of the tables.

When reading the table:

1. What are two or three observations you can make from the information in the table?
 - across subjects in one grade
 - across grades in one subject

2. Is there information in the table that you have questions about?

Training Worksheet to Accompany Table 7

Focus Question (Make a qualitative comparison between the results of your classroom assessments and results on the achievement test.)

1. What factors may have contributed to any unexpected results?

Training Instructions for Reading Achievement Test Multiyear Report: 2010–2011

Focus: *This table shows students' achievement over time, compared to provincial standards.*

Achievement test results provide only part of the overall picture of the province's, a school authority's, or a school's performance. Although provincial assessments are designed to assess the achievement of provincial standards, many important learning outcomes cannot be measured by time-limited paper-and-pencil tests. In addition, the interpretation of achievement test results involves considering many factors that contribute to achievement. The local school and school authority are in the best position to accurately interpret, use, and communicate provincial assessment results for the school or school authority. For this reason, information about school or school authority results should be obtained from the school or school authority.

Highlight the following when training others:

Direct comparisons from year to year are not appropriate since much can change from year to year and subject to subject; the footnotes at the bottom of the tables may provide insight on changes that happened between specific school years.

References:

School Reports from 2007 to 2011 inclusive

Focus Questions

For each table, participants will focus on two questions. These questions can provide information and guidance for consideration before doing a more in depth analysis of the tables.

When reading the table:

1. What are two or three observations you can make from the information in the table?
 - across subjects in one grade
 - across grades in one subject
2. Is there information in the table that you have questions about?

Training Worksheet to Accompany Multiyear Report

Observations and Summary Statements

1. What trends, patterns and/or anomalies can be observed in the participation over time?

2. How can we account for these observations?

3. What trends, patterns and/or anomalies can be observed in the achievement over time (consider: acceptable standard, standard of excellence, knowledge, skills, reading, writing)?

Setting Local Targets

“Defining targets is not easy, especially if we want to reflect rich, complex, and connected outcomes. There are no lists of absolute, immutable educational outcomes; these are inevitably our best judgements, and they will evolve constantly.”

Accountability in Education: Where Do Teachers Fit? L.M. Earle. Canadian Teachers’ Federation Conference Paper 1995.

Targets and Planning

A target is a desired level of measured performance to be attained by a specified time. Targets are an implicit part of any goal. While a school’s or school authority’s educational goals point out the directions for people’s efforts, targets describe in specific terms what will be accomplished by a certain time. This allows people to assess whether they are heading where they intended to go, and how well they are moving toward their desired outcomes. Assessment of progress in relation to a target may also lead to the recognition that a different target would be more helpful in guiding your school’s or school authority’s efforts toward a particular goal. By identifying immediate, reachable outcomes, targets encourage teachers, students, administrators, and their community to believe that distant goals are attainable.

Viewed in this way, targets can be a valuable part of your school or school authority plan. Your mission, mandate, values and beliefs, and long-range goals all provide a context for setting specific targets. Similarly, past accomplishments are helpful indicators of what specific targets may be most appropriate. This is why achievement test and diploma examination results, as well as results of various other local assessments, are relevant in target setting.

Local Focus

Targets for student achievement on the provincial achievement tests and diploma examinations are a required part of school and school authority education plans. Targets for school authorities provide a framework for each school in the school authority to use in setting targets. District targets will be most helpful if they reflect the variations identified in local target setting from school to school.

Systematic interpretation of school results from provincial achievement tests and diploma examinations will reveal where students need more help in order to continue learning successfully. This can be the beginning point for setting district and school targets for student performance on the tests in the next year or two. It is appropriate for school authorities to set targets that are different from provincial standards. Staff in each school will be able to identify what percentage of their students can reasonably be expected to achieve the provincial standard in a particular test or examination in a given year. An important part of this decision is agreeing on how resources and people can support the priorities that have been set locally.

Tips for Setting Local Targets

- Consider past and desired participation rates in achievement tests and diploma examinations.
- Focus on a limited number of areas. For example, emphasize one or two subjects in which weaknesses in student performance are across grades. It may be reasonable to set “hold the line” targets in other areas temporarily.
- Set targets in relation to other targets. It is important to ensure that the achievement of one target does not jeopardize the achievement of another. For example, student participation rates for achievement tests and diploma examinations should not decrease because of a desire to improve school or school authority results.
- Work collaboratively across grades in a school. Students’ performance on an achievement test or diploma examination reflects their learning over the years. Teachers in all grades can contribute important insights and assistance in setting targets.
- Use the school reports on achievement test or diploma examination results to identify what aspects of a subject or course need attention, and use this information to plan targets.
- Emphasize what students need in order to succeed, rather than focusing on problems that keep students from achieving at the levels expected provincially.
- Expect to set different targets in different grades and subjects/courses, depending on past results and current priorities and resources.
- Work collaboratively at the district level to identify areas of common strength or weakness across different schools and to determine targets for the district that can encourage all schools.
- Interpret targets to students and parents so that they are part of the school-wide effort to achieve school targets.
- Report to students and parents on student achievement in relation to targets.

Targets in Perspective

Provincial tests, though providing a common standard and important information about students’ learning, are only one of many indicators that must be used to evaluate the effectiveness of schools and school authorities. School authorities and individual schools may find it helpful to set targets related to other measures of student achievement, and to areas other than student achievement. Examples include completion of programs, satisfaction reported by students or parents, collaboration of parents or others from the community, student involvement in the community, and other types of indicators reflecting local education goals.

Through its targets, each school authority or school, together with parents and members of the community, can highlight priorities that exist locally for a given year and commit to achieving certain results. Insofar as target setting complements other strategies for improving student learning, your targets are likely to contribute to student learning and to the overall effectiveness of schooling in your community.

Achievement Test website:

education.alberta.ca

Then follow the pathway

Provincial Testing > Achievement Tests