



Guidelines for Interpreting Provincial Achievement Tests Multiyear Reports

Multiyear reports are embargoed and are for school authority internal use only. School authorities are not permitted to share the results publicly until after they are notified that the embargo is lifted.

1. Provincial assessments are meant to complement day-to-day classroom assessment. As such, achievement test results provide only part of the overall picture of the performance of the province, a school authority or a school. Although provincial assessments are designed to assess the achievement of provincial standards, some learning outcomes cannot be effectively measured by timed paper-and-pencil tests. In addition, the interpretation of achievement test results involves considering many factors that contribute to achievement. Schools and school authorities 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. To facilitate the use of PAT multiyear data, reports at the province, school authority and school levels are also provided in Excel format. To gain a better understanding on each column header in the Excel files, please use the PDF version of the PAT multiyear reports as references.
2. When reading this report, note the number of students who wrote the test. The fewer the students, the more carefully the information must be interpreted, as overall results for small groups can be greatly influenced by the scores of one or two individuals. Look at the percentage of students who wrote the test. If more than 10% of students did not write the test, these results may not be representative of the total school or school authority. The percentage of students in the "Absent" category includes students who were absent at the time of testing, or who wrote but whose results were withheld. For English Language Arts, this category also includes students who wrote only one part of the test. **Results on provincial assessments for individual students and for groups of fewer than six students are not publicly released.**
3. Because the difficulty of the test varies slightly from year to year and to facilitate the comparison of student performance over time, Alberta Education adjusts the cut-scores that define the Acceptable Standard and the Standard of Excellence each year. This makes it possible to identify trends in the percentage of students meeting standards across the five years for subjects where the curriculum and standards have remained the same.
4. While the percentages of students meeting the Acceptable Standard and Standard of Excellence are directly comparable over time, the average scores of tests are not, as they are based on raw scores that are not adjusted to remove the variation caused by differences in test difficulty from one year to another. Starting in 2023/2024, the migration to digital administration resulted in two different tests being administered at the same time – a paper version and a digital version that differed in terms of items, mode of delivery, use of technology enhanced functionality, and in some cases, cut scores. As a result of these changes, calculating averages that combined both the paper and digital performances for this report was not meaningful.
5. For school authorities with new boundaries, the statistics have been recalculated based on those schools that were within the new boundaries at the time of testing.
6. Part A, which requires students to complete number-operation questions without using calculators, has been added to Mathematics 6 since 2016/17 and to Mathematics 9 since 2017/18.

7. Starting in the 2017/18 school year, additional writing time is available for all students writing Provincial Achievement Tests without an application process. All students, if needed, are permitted up to twice the official time limit to write the provincial achievement test.
8. In response to a learning loss identified in a 2021/2022 school year pilot and Child and Youth Wellbeing Review Panel recommendations, Alberta Education is using a phased approach to implement mandatory literacy and numeracy screening assessments for Alberta's earliest learners. Screening assessments are mandatory for grades 1-3 and will be introduced for kindergarten students in January 2025. For details, please visit <https://www.alberta.ca/early-years-assessments.aspx>
9. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, no reportable data is available for the 2019/2020 and the 2020/2021 school years.
10. Participation in the Provincial Achievement Tests was impacted by wildfires in 2022/23 and 2023/24. Caution should be used when interpreting trends over time for the province and those school authorities affected by these events.
11. 2022/23 and 2023/24 Provincial Achievement test results do not include students who participated in the optionally implemented/piloted curriculum and were excused from writing in those subject areas.
12. In 2023/24 Grade 6 Mathematics and English Language Arts and Literature PATs were not administered and as such there are no results for these subjects during this school year.
13. The 2023/2024 results also include students who wrote the test on the new digital platform as well as those who chose not to use the digital assessment platform.
14. Security breaches occurred over last few days of the 2021/22 PAT administration window for a few Grade 9 courses including English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. To maintain the validity and comparability of provincial results, students most likely impacted by these security breaches in those courses have been excluded from the provincial cohort. However, all students have been included in school and school authority reporting and, therefore, caution should be exercised when interpreting these results.

For more detailed information on the calculation and use of this data please email the Director of Early Years Assessments and Provincial Achievement Testing at edc.pats@gov.ab or the Director of French Assessment and Canadian Adult Education Credential at french.assessment@gov.ab.ca.

