DIPLOMA EXAMINATIONS

Response Report

2025–2026

EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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INTRODUCTION

Edmonton Catholic Schools (ECSD) is committed to providing excellent Catholic education that supports the academic success and holistic development of every student. Grounded in our mission to inspire students to learn, live fully, and serve God in one another, and our vision of Catholic education rooted in faith, hope, and love, we strive to create learning environments where all students are supported, challenged, and empowered to reach their God-given potential.

Our Optimal Learning framework guides this commitment by emphasizing the conditions that allow students to thrive academically, personally, and spiritually. Central to this work is a shared understanding of student achievement and the use of meaningful evidence to inform decisions about teaching, learning, and continuous improvement.

This report presents an analysis of the most recent Diploma Examination results, providing insight into student achievement across subject areas and identifying strengths and opportunities for continued growth. While Diploma Examination results offer an important measure of academic achievement, they represent one part of a broader understanding of student learning. Examining these results alongside other sources of evidence allows us to better understand student progress, reflect on the effectiveness of instructional practices, and identify priorities for system-wide improvement.

Learning Services continues to collaborate with school administrators, instructional coaches, department heads, and teacher leaders to strengthen instructional practice and support student success. Guided by Optimal Learning and informed by student achievement evidence, our work focuses on responsive professional learning, high-quality instructional resources, and building the capacity of educators and school leaders. Through these coordinated efforts, we seek to strengthen consistency and coherence across the Division while remaining responsive to the unique strengths and needs of our secondary school communities.

Together, this work reflects our commitment to continuous improvement and to ensuring that students graduate from Edmonton Catholic Schools with the knowledge, skills, confidence, and sense of purpose to pursue their aspirations, contribute meaningfully to their communities, and live lives of faith and service.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 30-1 AND 30-2 DIPLOMA OVERVIEW

In English Language Arts (ELA) 30-1, ECSD students met the provincial average in achieving the Standard of Excellence and exceeded the province in meeting the Acceptable Standard as well as on the overall final exam score. School-awarded marks at the Standard of Excellence are drawing closer to the province, and we will continue to work with teachers to bring student course achievement into alignment with the provincial assessment tool.

The ELA 30-2 Diploma Examination saw a decline in ECSD student performance at both the Acceptable Standard and the Standard of Excellence. The average score on the written examination (Part A) remains above the provincial average. The reading comprehension (Part B) results indicate a need for continued support in reading comprehension.

Analysis

When considering the written examination (Part A), ECSD students in ELA 30-1 exceeded the provincial average in all scoring categories at the Standard of Excellence. In ELA 30-2, the data suggests a focus on the Visual Reflection assignment in both scoring categories.

When examining the results of the reading comprehension (Part B) examination, student performance remains reasonably consistent with provincial results.

Response to Data

- The High School Anthology is now in its third year of cultivating excellent writing in our Grade 12 students and creating opportunities for teachers to celebrate and recognize the strengths of our Division's student writers.
- The High School English Department Head Professional Learning Community (PLC) has completed and shared levelled scoring guides for ELA 10-2 and ELA 20-2 writing assignments, the implementation of which aims to target course awarded marks that better reflect students achievement and curricular outcomes. This PLC this year will focus on selecting and applying strategies to engage struggling adolescent readers.
- Development and Validation of Reading Comprehension Items will continue this year to support and complement the ongoing field testing, blueprinting, and development of multiple-choice items to deepen teachers' understanding of the reporting categories and cognitive levels of ELA multiple-choice questions.
- We will continue to provide teachers access to pedagogical resources and research through the Book Study Community of Practice (CoP), through which we will focus on teaching reading, selecting sources, and sourcing model and mentor texts for students to learn with and from.

MATHEMATICS

MATHEMATICS 30-1 AND 30-2 DIPLOMA OVERVIEW

Analysis

MATHEMATICS 30-1

ECSD students demonstrated strong achievement in Mathematics 30-1, exceeding provincial results at both the Acceptable Standard (+8.0 percentage points) and Standard of Excellence (+4.8 percentage points). Over the past four years, ECSD results have improved at both standards, and the 2025–2026 average Diploma Examination score was 5.2 percentage points above the provincial average.

Strength was evident across the examination. ECSD students outperformed the province in both the written-response and machine-scored components, across all three curricular topics and all cognitive levels. The difference between ECSD course-awarded marks and Diploma Examination marks was also consistent with the provincial pattern.

MATHEMATICS 30-2

Mathematics 30-2 results also exceeded provincial performance. ECSD was 7.4 percentage points above the province at the Acceptable Standard and 7.1 percentage points above at the Standard of Excellence. Longer-term results show sustained performance at the Acceptable Standard and notable growth at the Standard of Excellence, which increased from 13.6% in 2021–2022 to 23.9% in 2025–2026.

ECSD students outperformed the province in the written-response and machine-scored components, across all three curricular topics and all cognitive levels. These results indicate broad strength in student understanding, application, and problem solving.

Response to Data

- As part of the ongoing Common Summative Assessment (CSA) development process, data analysis is being leveraged to guide improvements to CSA questions.
- The mathematics consultant, in collaboration with teachers, has developed outcomes-based reviews for Mathematics 20-2, Mathematics 20-1, and Mathematics 30-1. These reviews are designed to support thorough student preparation for final exams. Development of similar reviews for Mathematics 10C and Mathematics 30-2 is currently underway.
- High school mathematics department heads are participating in a PLC series. This series covers a range of topics, including ongoing implementation of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework and the launch of the ECSD Mathematics Framework.
- ECSD's Division-Focused Professional Development (DFPD) series for high school mathematics teachers continues to be centered on the Division-wide implementation of the ECSD Mathematics Framework. This initiative supports consistent instructional practices and deepens understanding of the framework across all high school sites.

SCIENCE

BIOLOGY, CHEMISTRY, PHYSICS AND SCIENCE 30 DIPLOMA OVERVIEW

Analysis

Recent Diploma Examination data highlights ECSD's notable progress across several key areas in high school science, while also identifying opportunities for continued growth.

Science 30: Sustained Excellence

Science 30 continues to demonstrate sustained excellence, with ECSD students consistently outperforming the province on key Diploma Examination measures:

- In 2025–2026, ECSD exceeded the provincial results across all three Diploma Examination measures, including the Standard of Excellence by 2.7 percentage points, the Acceptable Standard by 2.9 percentage points, and the average examination mark by 1.6 percentage points.
- Participation in Science 30 also remains notably strong. In 2025–2026, 12.2% of ECSD Diploma Examination writers participated in Science 30, compared with 8.3% provincially, demonstrating the continued importance of Science 30 within ECSD's senior high science programming.

Biology 30: Significant Improvement

Biology 30 continues to demonstrate significant improvement following several years of targeted intervention and professional learning:

- Since 2022–2023, the percentage of ECSD students achieving the Standard of Excellence on the Diploma Examination has increased from 28.1% to 36.4%, a gain of 8.3 percentage points. In 2025–2026, ECSD surpassed the provincial rate of 35.0%.
- Improvement is also evident across the broader student population. In 2025–2026, 85.6% of ECSD students achieved the Acceptable Standard, compared with 82.1% provincially, while ECSD's average Diploma Examination mark of 69.9% exceeded the provincial average of 68.6%.

Physics 30: Encouraging Progress

The Standard of Excellence in Physics 30 was identified as an area of concern in last year's analysis. Following a concerted effort by Physics 30 teachers to strengthen student achievement, the multiyear data provide encouraging evidence of progress:

- The percentage of ECSD students achieving the Standard of Excellence has increased substantially from 23.7% in 2021–2022 to 36.8% in 2025–2026. While ECSD remains below the provincial rate, the gap has narrowed from 10.9 percentage points to 3.7 percentage points over the same period.
- These results suggest an encouraging upward trajectory and provide support for continuing the focused, collaborative work undertaken by Physics 30 teachers, while recognizing that sustained attention remains necessary to close the remaining provincial gap.

Chemistry 30: Priority for Improvement

Chemistry 30 now emerges as the clearest area for focused improvement, with ECSD results remaining below provincial results across key Diploma Examination measures:

- In 2025-26, 29.1% of ECSD students achieved the Standard of Excellence, compared with 39.7% provincially, representing a 10.6 percentage point gap. At the Acceptable Standard, ECSD achieved 77.6% compared with 81.9% provincially.
- ECSD's average Diploma Examination mark was 65.9%, compared with 69.5% provincially. Unlike the encouraging multiyear patterns observed in Biology 30 and Physics 30, Chemistry 30 results do not yet demonstrate a sustained narrowing of the gap with the province, identifying Chemistry as an important priority for targeted support.

Response to Data

In response to the 2025–2026 Diploma Examination data, Chemistry 30 has been identified as a priority area for targeted support and improvement. Building on the encouraging progress observed in Physics 30 following focused intervention and teacher collaboration, the 2026–2027 school year will prioritize strategic, targeted supports in Chemistry 30, including:

Subject Specific Professional Learning

To maximize impact and deliver timely, actionable, and data-driven learning opportunities, the science consultant will offer topic-specific professional learning in response to areas of need identified through Chemistry 30 achievement data. Sessions will be targeted to the teachers for whom the learning intentions are most relevant.

Communities of Practice as the Foundation for Professional Learning

In lieu of large-scale professional development, professional learning will continue to be delivered through CoPs. Within this framework, the science consultant will identify areas of concern informed by data and divisional priorities, while teachers will engage actively and collaboratively in addressing these focus areas.

The encouraging progress observed in Physics 30 provides an early indication of the potential of this focused, collaborative approach. The goal is to build on this experience in Chemistry 30 by combining divisional data with classroom expertise to identify priorities, share effective practices, and support collective improvement.

Enhanced Support for Teachers who are New to the Course

Supporting teachers who are new to high school science courses will remain a priority. Targeted engagement, resources, and ongoing support will help ensure that new teachers are well-equipped to deliver course content confidently while contributing to strong and consistent student outcomes.

SOCIAL STUDIES

SOCIAL STUDIES 30-1 AND 30-2 DIPLOMA OVERVIEW

Analysis

The 2025–2026 Social Studies 30-1 results showed a reversal of a trend that has been evident since 2022–2023, when ECSD students performed below the provincial average at the Standard of Excellence and only 1.9 percentage points above the provincial average at the Acceptable Standard. The 6.4 percentage point decline in the proportion of ECSD students achieving the Standard of Excellence relative to their provincial peers is the most notable change, shifting from 4.3 percentage points above the provincial average to 2.1 percentage points below. The Division's average percent score in Social Studies 30-1, however, was identical to the provincial average at 65.2%, and the Division School-Awarded mark (77.1%) was within one percentage point of the province's (77.7%). Furthermore, ECSD students outperformed their provincial peers on the Written Response section, averaging 63.1% compared with the provincial average of 61.7%.

Social Studies 30-2 also showed a reversal of the progress observed since the 2021-2022 school year. While students across the province achieved the Standard of Excellence at a slightly higher rate than in the previous year (15.0%), students in ECSD achieved the Standard of Excellence at the same rate as in 2024–2025 (12.2%). The proportion of students achieving the Acceptable Standard in the Division (76.3%) fell below the provincial rate (78.4%) for the first time in five years. While this reversal in progress was not as pronounced as in Social Studies 30-1, ongoing monitoring will help determine whether 2025–2026 represents an anomaly or the beginning of a new trend. Furthermore, as in Social Studies 30-1, ECSD students performed closer to the provincial average on the Written Response component (-0.7 percentage points) than on the machine-scored component (-2.6 percentage points).

Response to Data

- Frame professional learning through Optimal Learning strategies at the Department Head PLC to re-establish Division success in social studies and provide an instructional framework for teachers to support all students. While meaningful data can take years to accumulate, using this existing connection with schools will provide guidance and direction to address current school needs.
- The social studies consultant, through the curation and development of resources, will support teachers in designing multiple means of engagement. As teachers face increasing demands on their time and limited access to diverse sources, assembling new sources linked to specific outcomes provides teachers with new opportunities to optimize ownership of learning, permeation, and rigour.
- Building educational experiences for teachers and students that extend beyond the classroom and school to transfer curriculum learning to applicable and rigorous new contexts.
- In response to the discrepancy between the written-response and machine-scored portions of the exams, the social studies consultant will support teachers in the Division by:
    - » providing targeted professional learning on deriving meaning from a diversity of sources
    - » supporting a culture of reading among teachers and students through modeling positive literacy culture
- Continued work with Social Studies CSAs will also provide important professional learning. Encouraging new teachers to participate in item building and supporting department heads with analysis is continuing work. Engaging in this important professional learning that builds the knowledge of Social Studies Diploma Examination question anatomy, question types, and source varieties leads to strong pedagogy and assessment in Division classrooms.

FRENCH IMMERSION

FRENCH LANGUAGE ARTS DIPLOMA OVERVIEW

The French Language Arts (FLA) 30-1 Diploma Examination results show slightly stronger performance than the provincial average, with an average score of 67.1% compared to 65.1% provincially. While the proportion of students achieving an A is slightly lower than the provincial rate, a higher proportion earned a B, indicating strong overall achievement. In addition, no students fell into the failing category, and scores were more consistent across the cohort. These results should be interpreted with caution, however, as they are based on a cohort of only 34 students compared to 500 students provincially.

PART A

The Part A written-response results suggest that students generally performed at levels comparable to or above the provincial results across most scoring categories. Stronger performance was observed in areas such as written expression, organization, and conventions/spelling, with a greater proportion of students achieving ratings of Proficient and Satisfactory. Very few students scored in the Limited or Poor categories, and no students received an Insufficient score.

Expressive Writing

Students performed well in the expressive writing component, with a greater proportion achieving Proficient and Satisfactory ratings in both Topic Development and Writing Skills compared with provincial results. Very few students scored in the Limited range, and no students received a Poor or Insufficient rating. Areas for continued growth include increasing the number of students reaching the Excellent level and strengthening higher-level writing skills to move more students from the Satisfactory to the Proficient level.

Literary Writing

Students demonstrated strong performance across Topic Development, Organization, Style/Sentence Structure, and Mechanics, with results generally meeting or exceeding provincial patterns. Few students scored in the Limited range, and no students received a Poor or Insufficient rating. Future instructional focus will continue to target advancing more students to the Excellent category, particularly in Style/Sentence Structure and Literary Analysis, while continuing to refine conventions and written expression.

PART B

Students performed slightly above the provincial average in both Comprehension of Context and Content (31.7 vs. 30.5) and Response to Text (16.2 vs. 16.1). Strengths were particularly evident in Recognizing and Identifying (11.3 vs. 11.0) and Inferring and Analyzing (23.5 vs. 22.2), suggesting that students are able to understand texts, make connections, and draw supported conclusions effectively. Results were also more consistent than the provincial sample, as reflected by the lower standard deviations across all categories.

An area for continued growth is Evaluating (13.1 vs. 13.4), where results fell slightly below the provincial average. Future instruction should focus on strengthening students' ability to critically assess ideas, defend judgments with evidence, and engage in deeper analysis of texts. As with all comparisons, these results should be interpreted cautiously given the relatively small cohort size of 34 students compared with the much larger provincial sample.

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

Of the more than 12,000 English language learners in our Division, approximately 18% are high school students. Over the past few years, ECSD has built strong foundations to support English Language Learners (ELLs), and we continue to strengthen these efforts as our English as an Additional Language (EAL) population grows. We are focusing on tracking student progress, using teaching strategies that make learning accessible, providing ongoing professional learning for educators, and expanding specialized staff to work directly with students. These supports work together to ensure every learner develops English proficiency while succeeding in all subject areas.

Benchmarks 2.0 is implemented in all ECSD schools and provides essential data to guide programming for ELLs. Our ECSD Benchmarks 2.0 Site efficiently gathers student data and assessments to inform teachers of language proficiency levels and needs. This innovative tool allows us to track language progress over time and filter data in multiple ways, giving teachers a clear snapshot of each student's language abilities and helping them plan more intentionally.

Building on universal supports such as a focus on academic vocabulary and differentiated text, EAL consultants work with curriculum department heads to make student thinking visible and to co-create success criteria. EAL and curriculum consultants collaborate to embed these supports into professional development sessions and planning documents, ensuring that teachers have practical tools for advancing their students' academic language.

Ongoing professional learning remains a cornerstone of success. EAL designates receive training several times a year on impactful practices in language learning. Language objectives and key vocabulary are now part of locally developed curriculum resources. Sessions are also provided for school teams to emphasize the integration of language and content objectives in lesson planning so that EAL learners can access academic language across all subjects.

High school teachers are learning how to plan and differentiate for older EAL students, who face greater academic language demands. Building on the Expository English 15/25 CoP, teachers now have a clear, consistent language progression kit designed to meet all objectives in preparation for upcoming academic courses. Teachers and support staff provide explicit scaffolding and necessary UDL strategies to reach students at varying language proficiency levels in these sheltered classes.

Finally, we have 38 English Language Learner Educators (ELLEs) working in the Division, including seven in high schools with large EAL populations. These educators support students' language acquisition, offering targeted activities that help individuals and small groups develop English proficiency while meeting grade-level outcomes.

Many hands come together in faith to ensure every learner develops English proficiency and succeeds in all subject areas. Our objective is that students of all cultural backgrounds experience joy, a sense of belonging, and hope for what their future may bring.