

Alberta Education Report: The Right Angle

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Curriculum Branch

Alberta Education is providing leadership for the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol (WNCP) in making revisions to the WNCP Common Curriculum Framework (CCF) for K–12 mathematics. A publishers' draft for Kindergarten to Grade 7, based on feedback received during consultations, is on the WNCP website at www.wncp.ca with the final consultation report. Outcomes for Grades 8 and 9 will be finalized in conjunction with ongoing revisions to the Grades 10–12 CCF to ensure a smooth transition from junior high to senior high school.

New Alberta programs of study will be developed based on the revised K–12 CCF. Implementation timelines are published in the *Implementation Schedule for Programs of Study and Related Activities* on the Alberta Education website at www.education.gov.ab.ca.

Alberta Education, in cooperation with WNCP partners, met with educational publishers in July to discuss developing student and teacher resources to support the implementation of programs of study derived from the WNCP CCF for K–9 Mathematics. Alberta Education intends to have resources available for Alberta schools in both English and French prior to provincial implementation.

The Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia (ARPD) is continuing the series of workshops on key topics in Grades 7, 8 and 9 mathematics. During the 2005/06 school year, workshops will address the following topics:

- Teaching algebra in junior high
- Teaching measurement concepts
- Strategies for enhancing understanding in the mathematics classroom

In addition to these workshops, the ARPD will be offering workshops to K–3 and Grades 4–6 teachers in the spring. These workshops will address the following topics:

- Developing number sense
- Teaching pre-algebra concepts

For more information on the availability of these workshops, please contact your local regional consortia.

Learner Assessment Branch

Maintaining Consistent Standards Over Time

Alberta Education plans to make diploma examination results directly comparable from session to session, thereby enhancing fairness to students across administrations. To achieve this goal, a number of questions—called anchor items—remain the same from one examination to the next. Anchor items are used to find out if student populations writing in different administrations are differing in achievement. Anchor items are also used to find out if the unique items (questions that are different on each examination) are different in difficulty from the unique items on the baseline (the first examination to use anchor items). A statistical process, called equating, adjusts for the differences in examination form. The resulting examination scores can be equated regardless of when and to whom the examination was administered.

Baseline examinations were written in Chemistry 30, Physics 30 and Pure Mathematics 30 in January 2005. In January 2006, baseline examinations will be written in Applied Mathematics 30 and Biology 30. For all of these courses, students who write a diploma examination in a later administration will have their marks directly equated to the baseline examination. Examination marks may be adjusted slightly upward or downward depending on the difficulty of the examination written relative to the baseline examination. These equated marks will be reported to students. As a result of equating to the baseline examination, students' marks will accurately reflect their levels of achievement, regardless of the examination administration in which the students wrote.

Due to the security required for fair and appropriate assessment of student achievement over time, both Parts A and B of the January 2006 Applied Mathematics 30, Pure Mathematics 30, Biology 30 and Chemistry 30 diploma examinations will be secured and not released at the time of writing. The June 2006 Applied Mathematics 30 and Biology 30 diploma examinations will also be secured. Only one

form of the examination will be written in each administration.

Once again in the autumn of 2006, Alberta Education will provide schools with print copies of released items from past diploma examinations. Alberta Education will also provide assessment highlights to educators, students and parents on the department's website (www.education.gov.ab.ca). Teachers will continue to be able to peruse copies of these examinations during examination administrations.

Learning and Teaching Resources

New Applets and Interface for Applied Mathematics Multimedia Resources

Eleven new discovery applets that address outcomes in applied and pure high school mathematics have been added to the LearnAlberta.ca website. These applets allow students and teachers to manipulate parameters and visualize concepts being

addressed. This resource has also adopted a new and improved user interface. In addition to grouping the applets according to strand and substrand, the new interface will allow the user to select applets according to the relevant course and grade: pure math or applied math at the 10, 20 or 30 level.

New Preview Zone launched on LearnAlberta.ca

The Preview Zone is now available on the LearnAlberta.ca website. This zone offers learning resources that are in the final stages of technical development. These resources will be available in the Preview Zone to authorized users on a temporary basis during development and testing. New resources will be added as they become available. Go to the What's New section or the Teachers page on www.learnalberta.ca for a link to the Preview Zone. Your feedback on these resources is valued and encouraged.