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Alberta students show strong results on international tests

Edmonton... Alberta students continue to achieve excellent results on international tests, sharing the highest scores in reading, improving from third to second in mathematics and ranking fourth in science. The results are from the 2003 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), administered by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

"These test results confirm that Alberta students are among the best in the world," said Minister of Education, Gene Zwozdesky. "I am very proud of their achievements which demonstrate that students benefit from our province's excellent teachers, high-quality centralized curriculum, outstanding learning and teaching resources, and standardized assessment program."

PISA is administered every three years and assesses the international achievement of 15-year-old students in reading, mathematics and science. In Alberta, over 2,400 students from 120 schools participated in the test. Alberta is the only province whose average scores are significantly higher than the Canadian average in every area tested.

"Participating in international testing is an important component of our learning system," said Zwozdesky. "It gives Albertans the chance to see how well our students are doing in relation to other students around the world."

In 2000, Alberta students scored the highest of all participants on the reading component of the PISA tests. Alberta students had the third highest rankings in science (behind Korea and Japan) and mathematics (behind Japan and Quebec). In 2000, the tests focused on reading and literacy. PISA 2003 focused on mathematics and a new content area called problem-solving skills. Problem-solving questions test a student's ability to solve real-life situations requiring more than one subject area, such as using a map to calculate the shortest distance between two routes.

A copy of the Canadian results published in *Measuring up: Canadian Results of the OECD PISA 2003 Study* is available from the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada at www.cmec.ca. For more information on PISA, visit www.pisa.oecd.org.

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Note to Editors: Backgrounder and charts illustrating results for each subject are attached.

This announcement is available on the Internet at: <http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/news>

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Backgrounder

PISA scores are given as averages within a range. Confidence intervals reflect the range of scores rather than the average score to account for sampling and measurement errors. This allows for a more accurate comparison of scores.

Attached are result [charts](#) for mathematics, reading, science and problem solving.

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