

CHAPTER 7: PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS

In high school, public examinations are required in selected Level III courses in mathematics, sciences, social studies and languages. These examinations are different from school-based exams in that all students registered in the course write the same examination. Once completed, examinations are returned to the Department of Education for grading by an independent marking board. This chapter will explore how high school students fared on the June 2013 public examinations. Provincial trends over the past five years will be also be reported. Unless otherwise noted, the course's final mark is reported and not the examination mark. A course's final mark is a composite measure using 50 per cent school mark, and 50 per cent examination mark.

There are five courses not included in this chapter because of the small number of students registered but the results are reported in Appendix A. These are:

- three courses only offered in the CSFP, Mathématiques 3231(3 students), Biologie 3231 (2 students) and Chimie 3239 (2 students), and
- two courses offered across the province with a small number of students enrolled the CSFP = Histoire mondiale 3231 (8 students) and English 3201 (5 students).

While only provincial five year trends in student performance are reported in this chapter, district level data is included in Appendix A.



Mathematics

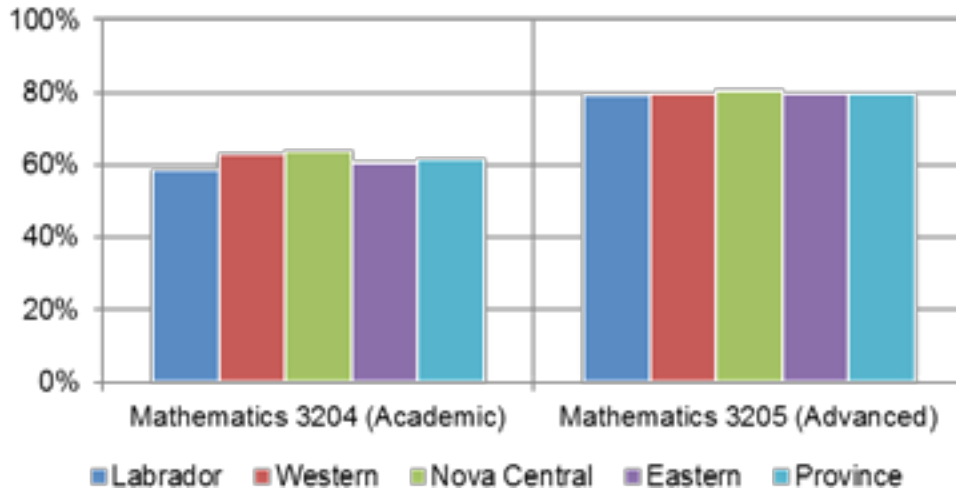
Public examinations occur in two mathematics courses: Mathematics 3204 (Academic) and Mathematics 3205 (Advanced). Differences in achievement for these two courses must be interpreted with caution. Students who excel in mathematics or who plan on studying mathematics at the post-secondary level are typically encouraged to select advanced mathematics courses in high school rather than the academic mathematics courses.

Provincially, the average course mark was 61.3% in Mathematics 3204 (Academic) and 79.7% in Mathematics 3205 (Advanced). At the district level, the average course mark was similar across the four districts ranging from 58.5% to 63.7% for Mathematics 3204 (Academic) and from 79.5% to 80.4% for Mathematics 3295 (Advanced) (see figure 16a). Along gender lines, girls performed better than boys with female average mark was about 20 percentage points higher than the male in both courses (see figure 16b)

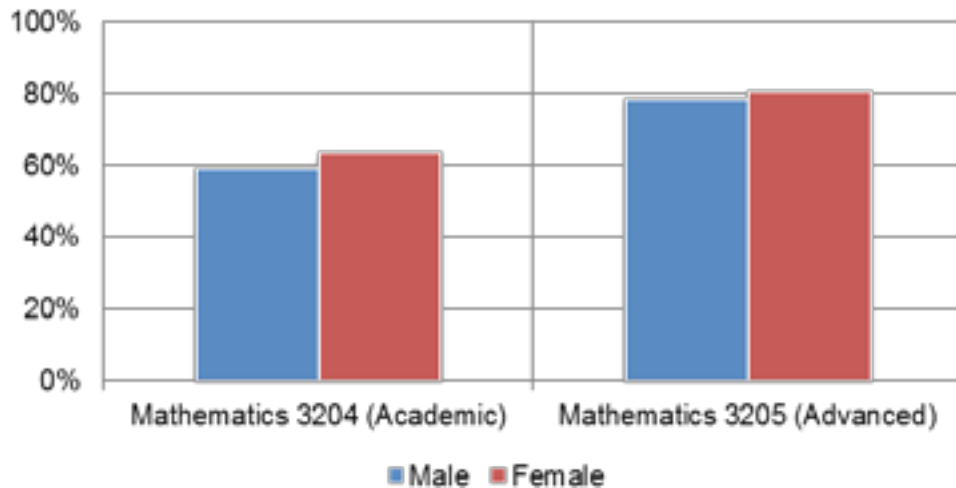
Overall, there has been little change in the average final course marks between 2007/08 and 2012/13 with only one or two percentage points separating the highest and lowest marks in both courses (see figure 16c).

Figure 16: Average final course mark in mathematics courses

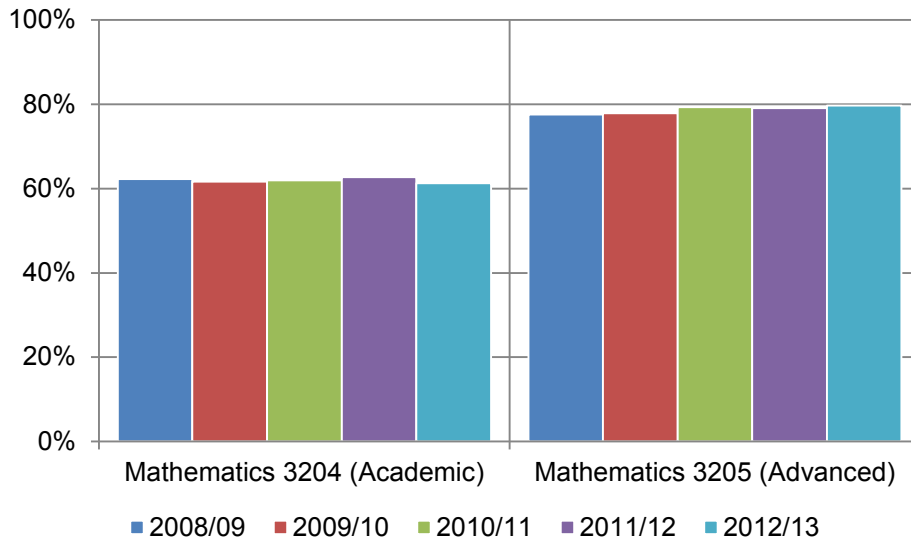
(a) District and provincial performance (2012/13)



(b) Gender differences (2012/13)



(c) Provincial trends (2008/09 – 2012/13)



(Source: Table 16)



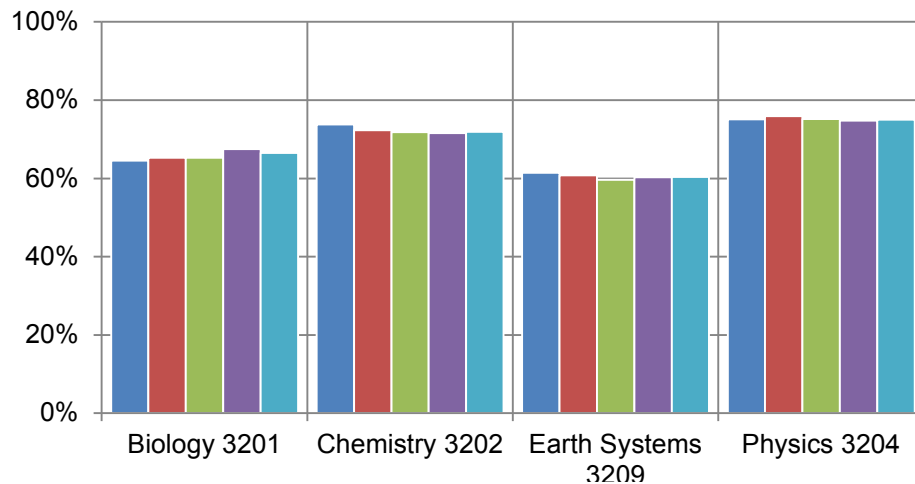
Sciences

Four science courses have public examinations - Biology 3201, Chemistry 3202, Physics 3204 and Earth Systems 3209. Provincially, the average final course marks ranged from 60.4% in Earth Systems 3209 to 75.0% in Physics 3204. Higher average final course marks occurred in chemistry and physics as compared to biology and earth systems. This was also seen across the four districts (see figure 17a). Along gender lines, there was little difference between average final course marks in each of the science courses (see figure 17b).

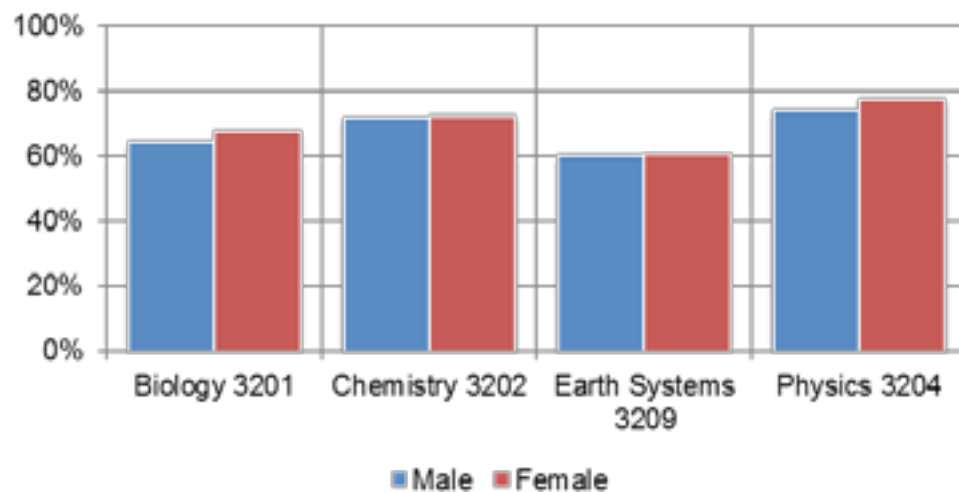
A gradual upward trend can be seen in the average final course mark over the past five years. The only exception was in Earth Systems 3209 where the 2012/13 average mark dropped slightly from the previous year (see figure 17c).

Figure 17: Average final course mark in science courses

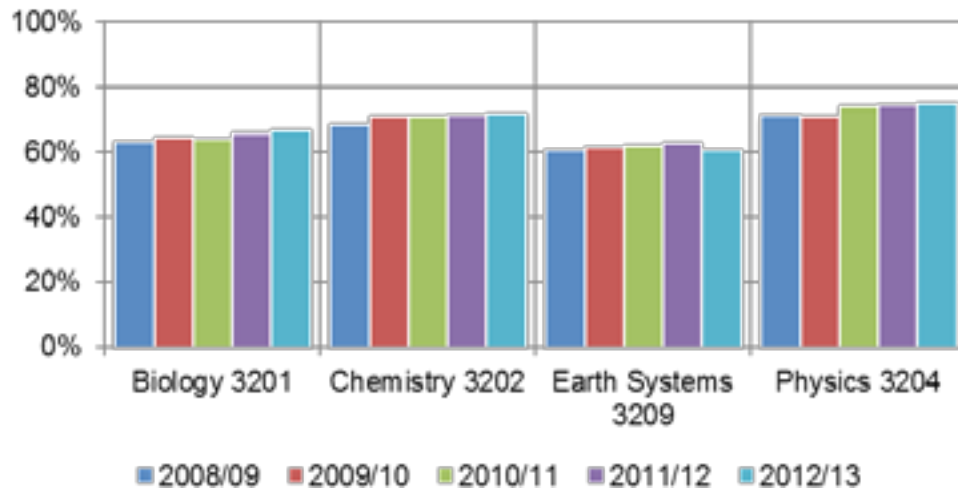
(a) District and provincial performance (2012/13)



(b) Gender differences (2012/13)



(c) Provincial trends (2008/09 – 2012/13)



(Source: Table 17)

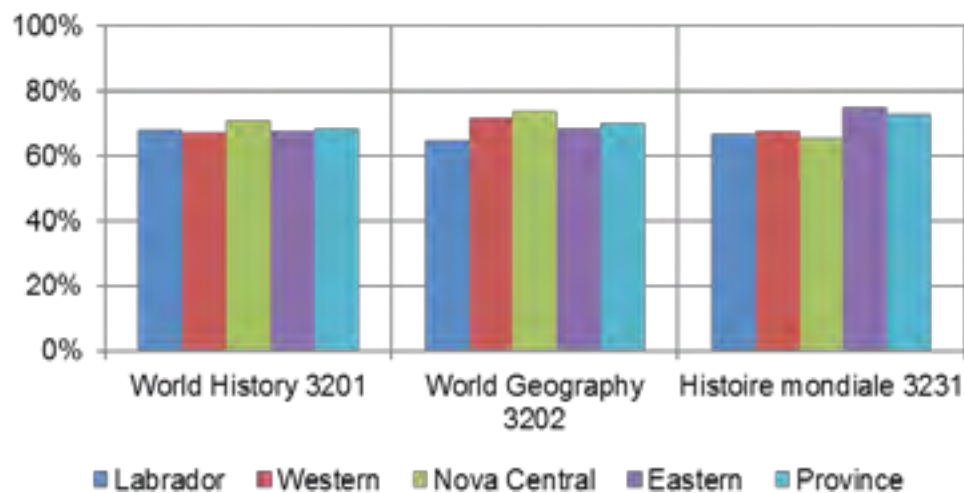
Social studies

Three social studies courses have public examinations: World History 3201, World Geography 3202 and Histoire mondiale 3231. Provincially, the average final course grade was similar in these courses, ranging from 68.5% to 72.7%. At the district level, there was a small degree of variability in student performance in World Geography 3202 and Histoire mondiale 3231 with approximately nine percentage points separating the highest and lowest marks (see figure 18a). As shown in figure 18b, there was virtually no gender difference in the average final grade in these courses.

Provincially, average final course marks have been similar over the past five years with less than six percentage points separating the highest and lowest average course marks (see figure 18c).

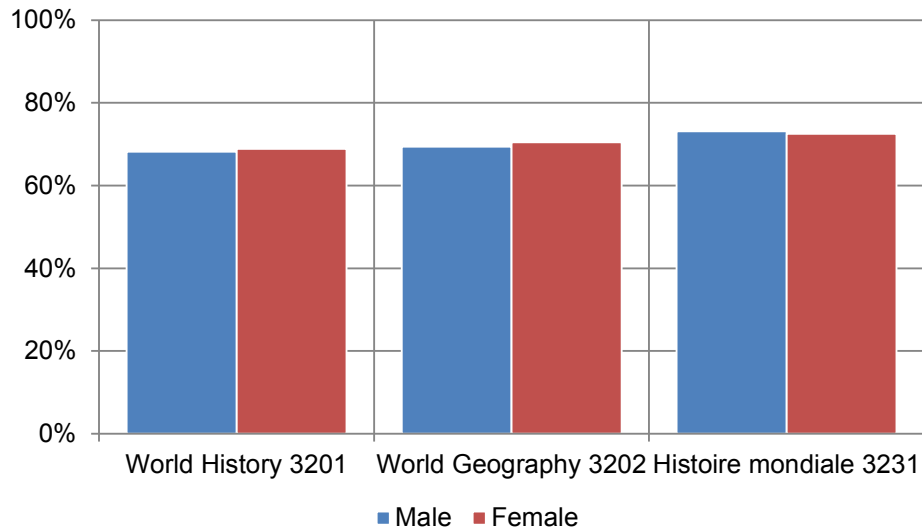
Figure 18: Average final course mark in social studies courses

(a) District and provincial performance (2012/13)

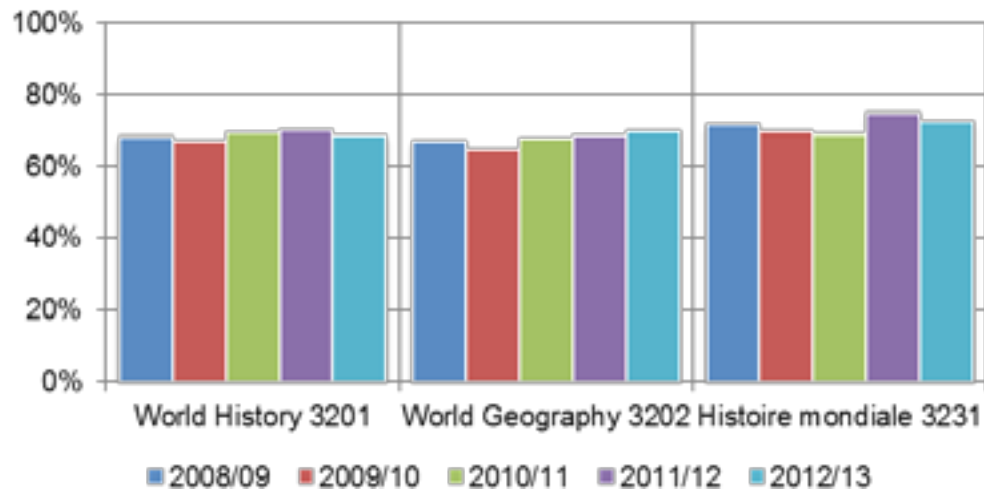




(b) Gender differences (2012/13)



(c) Provincial trends (2008/09 - 2012/13)



(Source: Table 18)

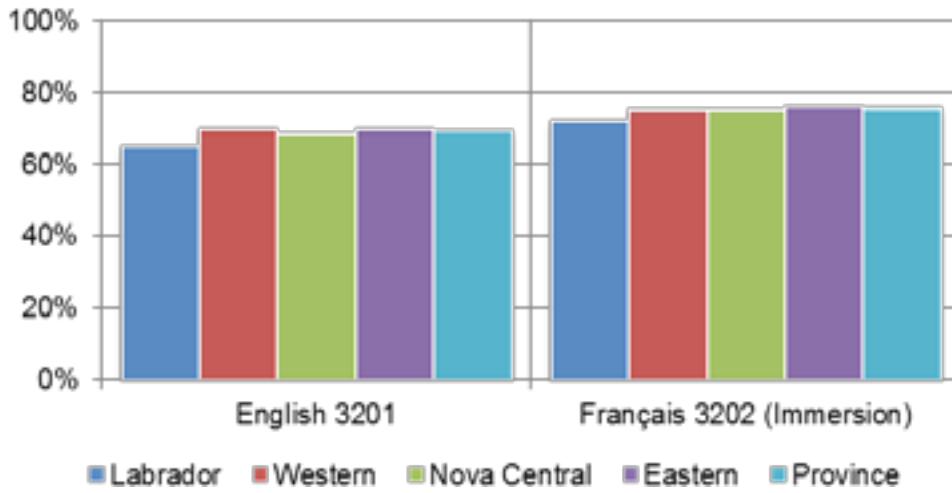
Languages

English 3201 and Français 3202 (Immersion) are the two language courses with public examinations. Provincially, the average course marks were 69.4% in English 3201 and 75.7% in Français 3202. On a district level, there was little variation in student performance with less than five percentage points separating the highest and lowest average marks (see figure 19a). For English 3201, marks ranged from 65.0% to 69.9% and for Français 3202 it was between 72.0% and 76.0%. While the female average course mark was slightly higher for English 3201, there was little difference between the male and female marks in Français 3202 (see figure 19b).

Over the past five years, a gradual upward trend has occurred in the average final marks in both courses (see figure 19c). In English 3201, the average final course mark increased from 64.2% in 2008/09 to 69.3% in 2012/13. For Français 3202, it increased from 73.3% to 75.7% during the same time.

Figure 19: Average final course mark in language courses

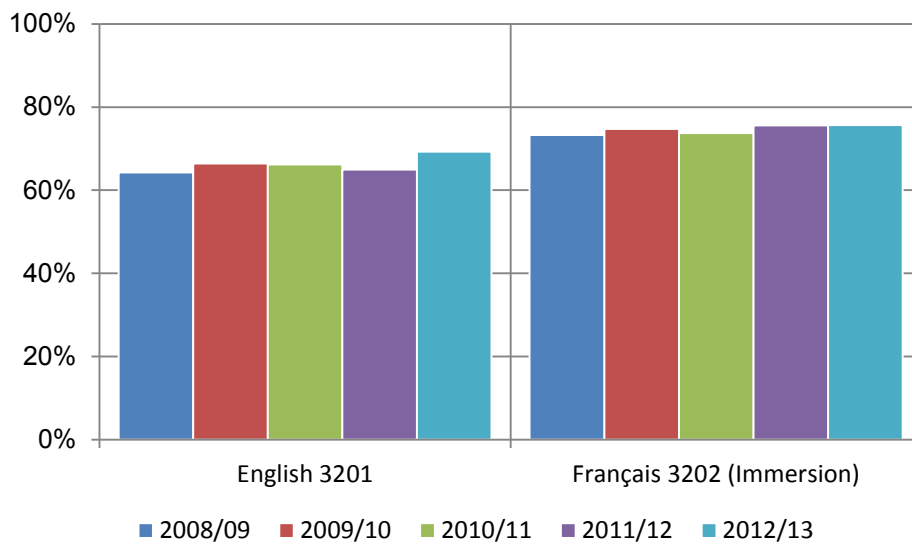
(a) District and provincial performance (2012/13)



(b) Gender differences (2012/13)



(c) Provincial trends (2008/09 – 2012/13)



(Source: Table 19)