

Is this mathematics assessment really necessary?

A large number of Canadians believe that we need more information about how well students are doing.

The Ministers of Education are responding to parents, educators, ministry officials and many other Canadians who want and need answers to questions such as:

- What is the level of achievement in mathematics of students in Canada?
- Has the achievement in mathematics of Canadian students changed over time?
- Do the levels of achievement meet the expectations of Canadians?

We already have some provincial and territorial data and some international comparisons, but before the implementation of SAIP assessments there had been no Canada-wide study of student achievement.

This SAIP assessment will help complete part of the picture about the achievement levels and development of mathematical skills and knowledge demonstrated by 13- and 16-year-old students across Canada.

The results will provide valuable information for decision makers to use as they plan for the future and take steps to improve our children's education.

A Personal Note to Students

This assessment cannot succeed without your cooperation and support.

We ask you to do your best.

The information gathered from this assessment will help make a difference in the schooling that you and other students receive in the years ahead.

We thank each of you in advance for participating in this Canada-wide assessment.

Funds for the School Achievement Indicators Program have been provided by participating provinces and territories through the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada and by the Government of Canada through Human Resources Development Canada.

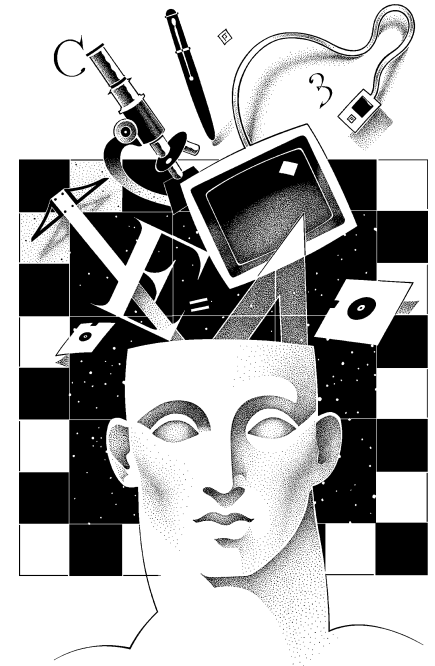
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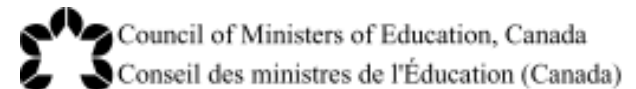
THE SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT INDICATORS PROGRAM (SAIP)

2001 Mathematics Assessment

Information for Parents and Students




Council of Ministers of Education,
Canada





What is the School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP)?




Canadians have long been interested in how well their education systems are meeting the needs of students and society.

To provide information on this issue, the provinces and territories, through the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, have developed the School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP), a testing program in mathematics, reading, writing and science.

The first two mathematics assessments were administered in 1993 and 1997; the reading and writing assessments were administered in 1994 and 1998; and the science assessments were administered in 1996 and 1999. A third Canada-wide assessment of students in mathematics will occur in April of 2001.



How can SAIP develop a Canada-wide assessment when each province and territory has its own curriculum?




School programs differ from one part of the country to another. Making comparisons of results from these various programs is a complex task.

However, young Canadians in different provinces and territories learn many similar skills in reading, writing, mathematics and science. SAIP assessments help determine whether or not students reach similar levels of performance in different provinces or territories.

Educators from all provinces and territories have participated in the development and review of the assessment materials.




Who will participate in the mathematics assessment?



A random sample of Canadian students, who were 13 or 16 years old as of August 31, 2000, will participate in the mathematics assessment.



How will the results affect student marks?




The results will not affect an individual student's academic record in any way.

Results will be reported for provinces and territories only, not for individual students, schools or school jurisdictions.



What will participating students do?




Individual students will take part in either the assessment of mathematics content or mathematics problem solving.

The students will spend up to two and one-half hours answering questions to demonstrate their levels of performance. They will also complete a questionnaire that will ask for information related to their interests, attitudes and classroom activities.

Students will write the assessment in English or French.



Will the assessment be fair to students across Canada?




The questions have been field-tested across Canada. Educators in the provinces and territories reviewed all assessment materials to ensure they are fair and appropriate, as well as free from cultural and gender bias and stereotyping. Students were also given opportunity to comment on the questions and problems.

This assessment is designed to give all students an opportunity to demonstrate their mathematical skills. Some questions will be relatively easy for many students, while others may be relatively difficult.



Do students need to prepare for this assessment?



Students need not worry about studying for these assessment activities as they would for a school exam.

Schools will receive information bulletins describing the assessment well in advance of the administration date. These information bulletins will include sample questions. Parents, teachers and students can review the sample questions if they wish.

Students participating in the mathematics assessment will need an HB pencil, an eraser, a ruler, a protractor and a calculator. Formula sheets and data tables will be provided.