

PAN-CANADIAN ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (PCAP) 2013

Results for Alberta

Alberta's Grade 8 students achieved the highest marks in the country in science, second highest in reading, and third highest in math, according to the latest national test results.

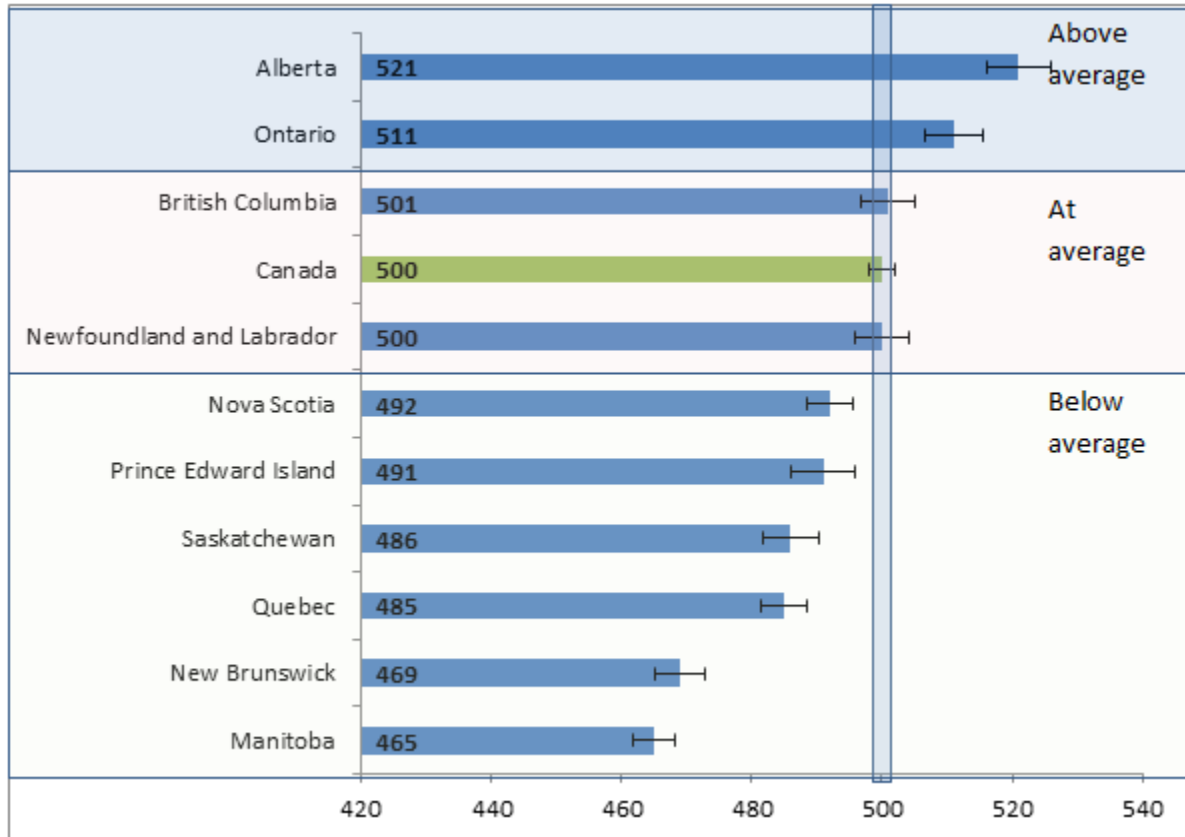
Alberta maintained its first place ranking in science achievement among Canadian provinces, scoring well above the national average. Alberta students remained on par with the Canadian average in math, ranking third in Canada behind Quebec and Ontario. In fact, Alberta's math score saw a statistically significant improvement from 2010. While Alberta students scored below the Canadian average in reading, results have remained steady and are tied for second with Quebec and British Columbia, behind Ontario.

Approximately 3,000 Alberta students from 156 schools participated in the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP) test, conducted by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) in 2013. The test assesses the national achievement of Grade 8 students in reading, math and science, with a major focus on one subject per test year. Science was the focus for 2013.

PCAP scores are expressed on a scale with a national average of 500 points and a standard deviation of 100 points. A margin of error due to sampling and measurement errors is always associated with each score. Therefore, a range of scores, called a confidence interval, is used to reflect this margin of error. When the confidence intervals don't overlap, real differences in scores exist.

As indicated in Chart 1, Alberta ranked highest in science among all provinces in Canada. Only Alberta and Ontario scored above the Canadian average in science.

Chart 1: PCAP 2013 Science Average Scores by jurisdiction



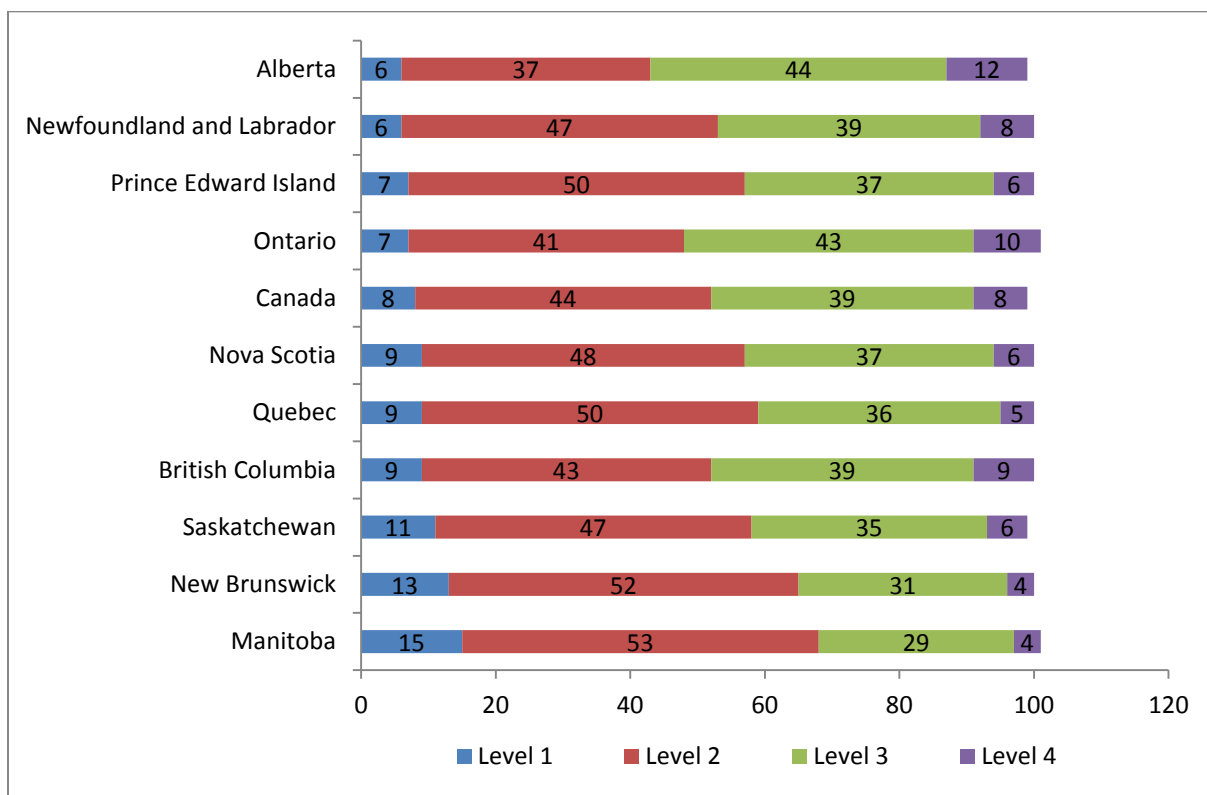
The lines at the end of each bar ($\overline{\pm}$) indicate the 95% confidence interval of the average score.

As shown in Chart #2, results in science are reported using four levels of achievement, with level 1 being the lowest and level 4 the highest.

Based on the standard setting held by CMEC, level 2 is designated as the Canadian standard for Grade 8 students and is also referred to as the target level.

94 per cent of Alberta Grade 8 students achieved the Canadian standard (level 2 or above), the highest in Canada and above the Canadian average in science.

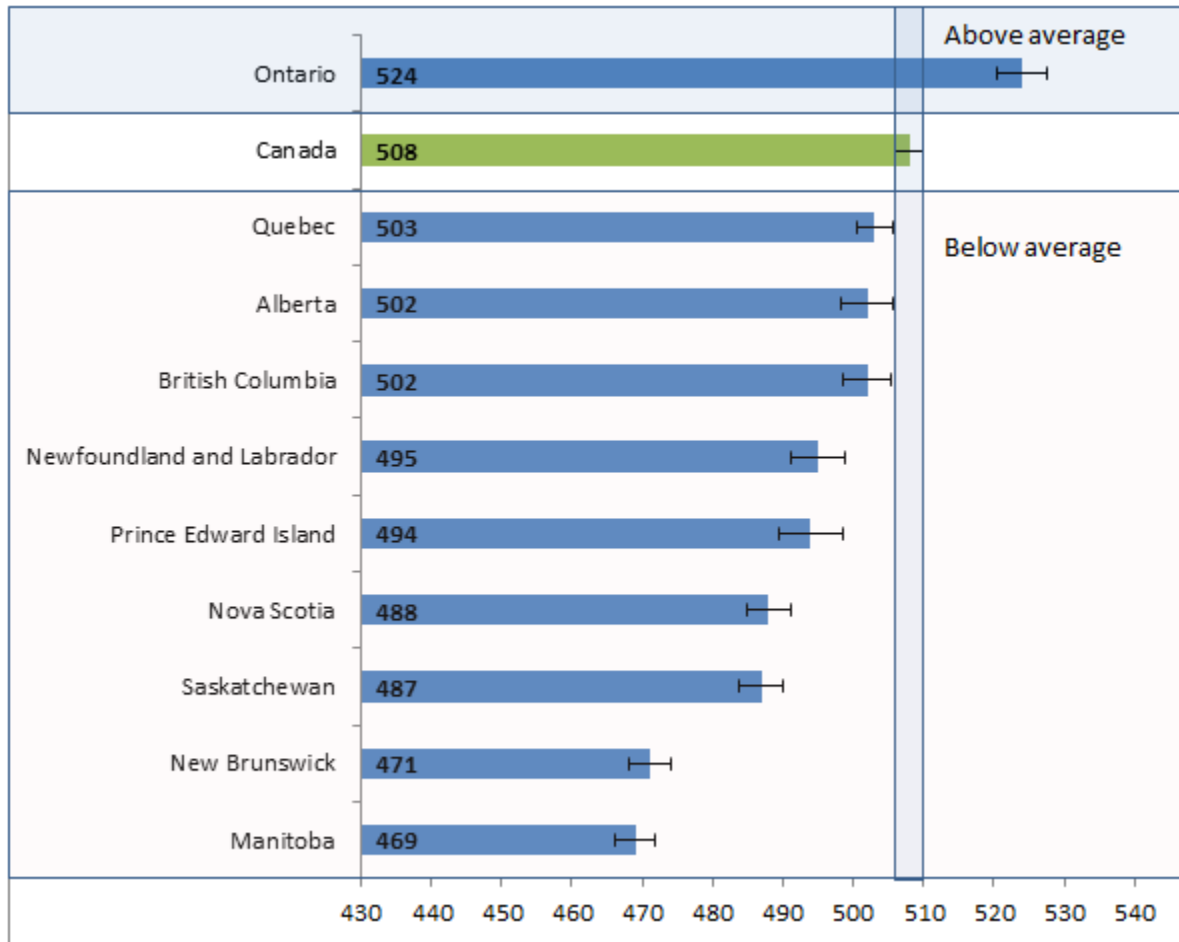
Chart 2: Distribution of students by level of performance in science¹



¹ Totals may not sum to exactly 100 per cent because of rounding.

Only Ontario is above the Canadian average in reading as indicated in Chart 3. Alberta is tied with Quebec and British Columbia for second place in reading, behind Ontario.

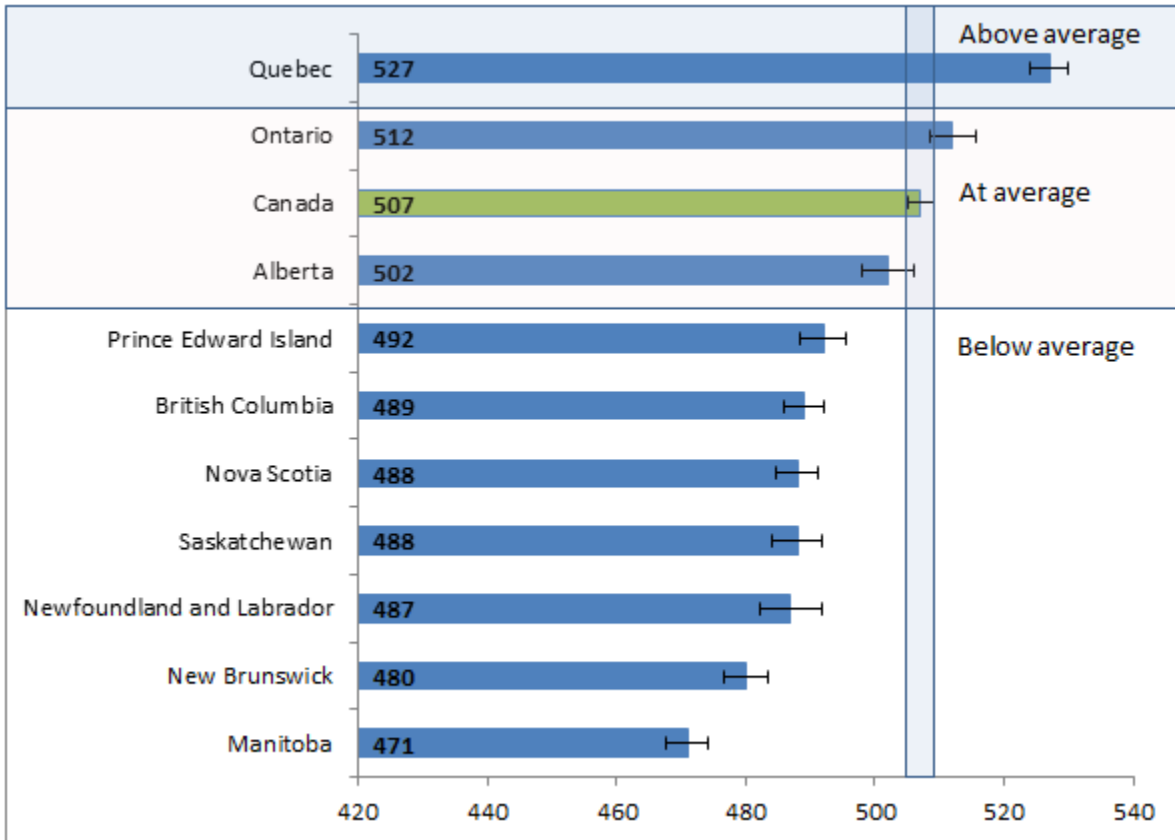
Chart 3: PCAP 2013 Reading Average Scores by Jurisdiction



Note: A weighting is applied for each population when calculating the Canadian mean. Ontario represents a larger proportion of the total number of students. Because Ontario’s students also performed very well, they had more influence on the Canadian average.

As indicated in Chart 4, Alberta scored at the national average and ranked third in mathematics when compared to other provinces.

Chart 4: PCAP 2013 Mathematics Average Scores by Jurisdiction



PCAP 2013 results show improvement in mathematics achievement over the 2010 (baseline) results. This improvement is statistically significant. As indicated in Chart 5, the mathematics average for Alberta in 2013 (502) was up from the previous average of 495 in 2010. However, the Canadian average for 2013 has also risen from 500 (2010) to 507 (2013).

Chart 5: Changes in PCAP Mathematics Average Scores between 2010 and 2013

