



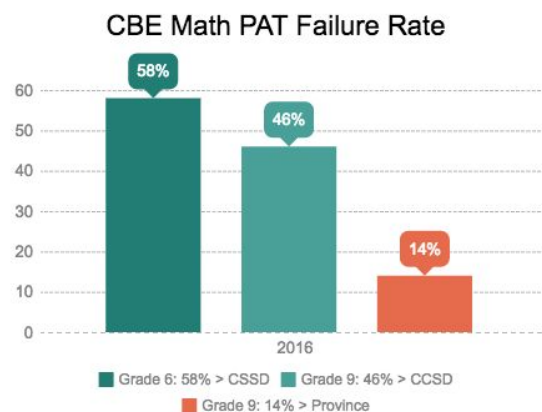
## CBE's math performance far below Calgary Catholic School District; urgent action needed

CALGARY, AB (February 2, 2017) - Kids Come First, a new education advocacy non-profit organization, has evaluated the relative math performance among students at the Calgary Board of Education (CBE) and Calgary Catholic School District (CCSD). "The results are very troubling," says Kids Come First founder Lisa Davis.

The CBE now has more children failing grade 6 math than achieving excellence – an alarming reversal under current leadership that is not shared at the Calgary Catholic School District (CCSD). Despite the stark data on declining math performance, CBE Trustees voted down a motion last June that would have acknowledged grade 6 math as a problem. "Teachers are doing their best with the direction they are given," says Davis. "It is the trustees and leadership at the CBE who are failing students."

The CBE's results are far below CCSD. For example:

- Grade 6 Math PAT: CBE's failure rate is 58% higher than CCSD
- Grade 9 Math PAT: CBE's failure rate is 46% higher than CCSD
- Grade 9 Math PAT: CBE's failure rate is 14% higher than the provincial average.



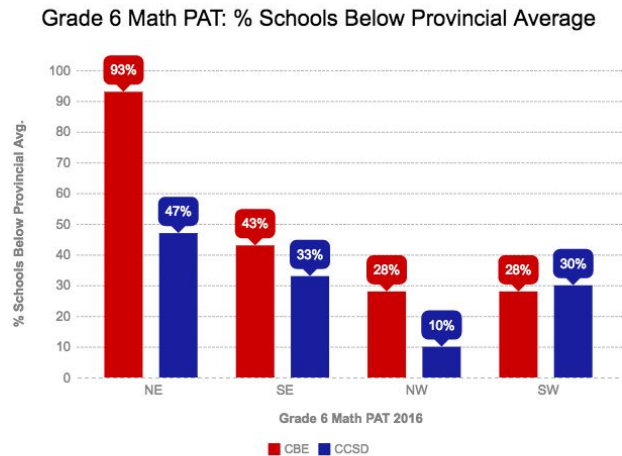
Note on the data: For the Grade 6 Math PAT, the CBE failure rate was 21%, thus 58% greater than the CCSD failure rate of 13%. For the Grade 9 Math PAT, the CBE failure rate was 28%, thus 46% greater than the CCSD failure rate of 19%.



Data source: Alberta Education

In Calgary's northeast, the differences in results are particularly alarming. While 93% of CBE schools fall below the provincial average in math, only 47% -- less than half -- of CCSD schools do. If this was a demographic issue, achievement would be the same in both school boards. Furthermore, 100% of CBE schools in Calgary's northeast are below the grade 9 provincial average.

“The disparity of results in Calgary’s northeast is clearly a social justice issue,” says Davis. “These students deserve support -- and now. Our Kids Come First Action Plan on Math offers four practical recommendations that can start making a difference for students in the next 60 days.”



Data source: Alberta Education

The main causes for the disparity between boards stems from the CBE’s aggressive move to inquiry-based math along with its high administrative spending relative to the Catholic Board. Kids Come First analysis shows that an additional \$110 million would reach classrooms every year if the CBE adopted a more school-based approach similar to the CCSD. View the funding report at <https://kidscomefirst.ca/2017/01/17/education-funding/>

According to Davis, “High administrative spending has a negative impact on both students and educators. This underperformance in math is one serious consequence. Poor performance in math has a significant impact on a student’s ability to move onto the next grade with needed skills and ultimately restricts the programs they can enter after high school”

Kelly van Weber attended a recent CBE math engagement session as a representative of his child’s School Council. “The CBE admits to a five year decline in math, so parents were hoping the CBE would be bringing forward real solutions, not just consultations. CBE’s math experts were asked what they thought the problem was and didn’t have an answer. It is distressing,” says van Weber.

Dr. Vladimir Troitsky, a math professor at the University of Alberta has seen the degradation of skills of incoming engineering students firsthand. “Marking about 800 midterm papers for a first year engineering math calculus course, we see that approximately 30% of students have trouble with simple math calculations such as 4x8,” says Troitsky. “The situation is urgent and real fixes need to be implemented now.”

Dr. John C. Bowman recently presented to the Alberta Government’s curriculum working group on math. His report states that: “Students are not coming in with the same level of skills that they used to. Exams that were the norm 20 years ago are too difficult these days.” His data showed that average mid-term marks for first year honors calculus have eroded from 70% to 55% in the last ten years, with the same professor teaching.

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**Reports**

The full “Math 911” report can be found at:

[https://kidscomefirst.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/KidsComeFirst\\_MathReport\\_Feb2017.pdf](https://kidscomefirst.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/KidsComeFirst_MathReport_Feb2017.pdf)

The full “Funding the Front Lines” report can be found at:

[https://kidscomefirst.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/KidsComeFirst\\_EducationFundingReport\\_Feb2017.pdf](https://kidscomefirst.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/KidsComeFirst_EducationFundingReport_Feb2017.pdf)

**About Kids Come First**

*Kids Come First is an independent not-for-profit organization advocating for quality K-12 education across Alberta. Our mission is to build a better future for students by improving math education, advancing STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) learning and ensuring as much education funding as possible is reaching the classroom.*