

Updated immunization services will help keep Halton children healthy

As part of its commitment to keeping our children safe and healthy, Halton Region is making it easier than ever to request an immunization record, receive immunizations and submit immunization records through a new online photo immunization reporting system.

"While the majority of families in Halton immunize their children to protect their health, many are unaware they need to notify the Halton Region Health Department about any required immunizations or exemptions their children have," said Halton Region's Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Hamidah Meghani. "Local health departments are responsible for confirming student immunization records and students who have not provided up-to-date immunization information are at risk of school suspension. We want to make

it as easy as possible for families to update their records and avoid suspension which is why we are introducing the photo reporting system."

At halton.ca/immunize, parents can now update their child's immunization records by taking an electronic photograph of the record and submitting the file online or they can submit immunization records by completing an online form. Immunization records can also be updated by dialing 311 or dropping off the record in person at 1151 Bronte Road in Oakville.

Halton has also created a convenient online immunization records request form if families are unsure of the immunization records the Health Department has on file for their children. By requesting up-to-date immunization records for their children, parents can ensure their children are following the

recommended immunization schedule to protect against vaccine-preventable diseases, as well as complying with the provincial *Immunization of School Pupils Act* (ISPA). The online request form is available at halton.ca/immunize, halton.ca/311 or people can dial 311 to request their records.

Beginning in the 2016-17 school year, Halton is partnering with the provincial government to offer the Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine free of charge to all boys and girls in grade seven, in addition to girls in grade eight.

Shifting the HPV school-based immunization program from grade eight to grade seven aligns with expert, scientific recommendations to immunize children between the ages of nine and 13 when the vaccine is most effective, in order to protect more youth against HPV.

Halton Hills Fire Department holds successful recruitment night

By: Dawn Brown

The Halton Hills Fire Department held a Part Time Firefighter Orientation Information Night this past Thursday, September 22 at the Acton Fire Station. The second of two sessions—the first held at the Georgetown Fire Station on Maple Avenue on September 20—provided interested individuals with the opportunity to learn about the recruitment process as well as speak to recent recruits and other firefighters.

"Having this face to face opportunity, we allow them to come in and look at the trucks and talk to some of our firefighters," explained Commissioner and Fire Chief John deHooge. "It's a more personal interaction. They get to see what The Halton Hills Fire Family looks like."

The department has twelve openings available



Commissioner and Fire Chief John deHooge

between Georgetown and Acton. While the process can be challenging, this year's recruitment process has eliminated the aptitude test.

"We found last time when we did a recruitment there were a number of people that just missed the cut-off that we felt would have made great firefighters," deHooge said.

Applicants will still have to go for a physical and perform the Candidate Physical Assessment Test (CPAT).

deHooge went on to explain that applicants should obviously want to provide emergency service, helping people in their worst time of need, but they also should be committed to serving their community. As well as responding to calls, firefighters also do a great deal of volunteer work within the community.

"You have to have that desire to give back to the community," deHooge said.

With approximately 50 people attending the first session in Georgetown and nearly a full house at the Acton Station, deHooge was happy with over all turn out.

Applications are available on The Halton Hills Fire website and must be received by October 11 at 9 a.m. Applications will be reviewed and candidates notified for an interview between October 11 and 14. The start date for new recruits will be November 23.

HDSB experiences large gains in Grade 3 Reading and Grade 6 Writing - well above provincial averages

Grade 3 and 6 results released from Education Quality and Accountability Office

Results released today from the Ontario Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) show Halton District School Board students continue to perform above the provincial average, with significant gains experienced in Grade 3 Reading and Grade 6 Writing levels. These results

were based on assessments completed in the 2015-2016 school year for primary and junior students in Reading, Writing and Mathematics.

The results in 2015-16 are being compared to results in 2013-14, as EQAO was not administered in public school boards last year.

In Grade 3:

- **Reading:** Results show a three-percentage point gain in Reading from 76 per cent to 79 per cent of students achieving at or above the provincial standard, while the provincial average was 72 per cent.
- **Writing:** 78 per cent of students attained the provincial standard, a decrease from 81 per cent. The provincial average was 74 per cent, decreasing from 78 per cent.
- **Math:** Overall, provincial

results declined from the previous EQAO assessment. In Halton, 70 per cent of students – compared to 74 per cent – exceeded the provincial standard. The provincial average was 63 per cent, a four-percentage point drop. The decrease in Halton and Ontario was the same.

In Grade 6:

- **Reading:** Results remained at 85 per cent of all students achieving at or above the provincial standard, while the

provincial average was 81 per cent. The past five years have seen growth of 6 per cent overall in Junior Reading.

- **Writing:** Results showed an increase to 85 per cent from 82 per cent of all students achieving at or above the provincial standard, while the provincial average was 80 per cent. The past five years have seen an increase of 8 per cent overall in Junior Writing.

- **Math:** Results decreased by five percentage points to 56 per cent of students achieving at or above the provincial standard. The province saw a decrease of four percentage points in Grade 6 Mathematics with 50 per cent of students achieving at or above the provincial standard.

While the Board is pleased with the overall EQAO results, having achieved higher than the provincial results in all six categories of the primary and junior assessments,

HDSB recognizes the need to improve particularly in the area of math.

"The Board continues to focus on its robust early literacy plan in all schools and is proudly making continuous gains in Grade 3 Reading," said David Boag, Associate Director of Education for the Halton District School Board. "The Board's Junior Reading and Writing scores improved as well, with the highest results ever in Grade 6 Writing."

Junior Math results continue to decline for the Halton District School Board as well as for the province. While Halton continues to achieve above the provincial average in this category, the Board recognizes Junior Mathematics is an important area of focus.

"To improve math results, the province announced a revised math strategy this past spring. Halton is revising its Math Plan to reflect that strategy by developing goals to close the student achievement gap," Boag said.

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