

EQAO results offer a snapshot of student performance

Halton District School Board

Percentage of all students achieving at or above the Provincial standard

GRADE 3				GRADE 6			
Achievement Level	Reading	Writing	Math	Achievement Level	Reading	Writing	Math
Province	65%	73%	69%	Province	74%	73%	58%
HDSB	71%	77%	76%	HDSB	79%	77%	64%
Limehouse	86%	95%	86%	Limehouse	N/D	N/D	N/D
Mackenzie S-B	71%	79%	81%	Mackenzie S-B	58%	58%	35%
Robert Little	64%	71%	55%	Robert Little	N/D	N/D	N/D

EQAO Acton results show a mixed bag

Board-wide, Halton students continue to perform above the provincial average in Grade three and six reading, writing and math, and Grade nine math, but some Acton school results are "disappointing."

The Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) tests are administered each spring to assess student achievement. The goal is to have students perform at Level three or four, equal to a "B" grade, or higher.

"Of course we're disappointed because we know that the (school) community might be concerned with the

results," said Acton District High School Principal Darlene White on Monday, adding they take the results seriously.

"We have to look at targeted strategies and look at getting the great bulk of our students from Level two to Level three," she said, adding they also have to keep the results in perspective. "This is a snapshot (of) a couple of days in the life of one of our math students in Grade nine, and not necessarily a snapshot of how they did in Grade nine math."

Separate versions of the Grade nine math test are administered to Academic and Applied math students. At Acton High, both the

groups' results are lower than the provincial and Halton District School Board results. Thirty-eight per cent of Applied students achieved a Level three or better compared with 42 per cent across the province and 53 per cent Board-wide. Eighty-one per cent of Academic math students performed at Level three or higher compared with 83 per cent in Ontario and 89 per cent across Halton.

White said they really need to improve the Applied math results and will target the 50 per cent of Applied math students, and 15 per cent of Academic students who are at level two, with a mark between 60 and 69, numbers White said are "not terrible." "That's where we need to target our energy and our school improvement plan is all about critical literacy and critical thinking skills which, of course, is critical in mathematics in the problem-solving," White said, adding they continue to use math coaches provided by the Board to help students.

GRADE 9 - MATH		
Achievement Level	Applied	Academic
Province	42%	83%
HDSB	53%	89%
Acton High School	38%	81%

Primary and Junior Results

The Grade three and six students who are performing near the provincial standard are also a focus at Robert Little School. "One of our goals is to move up those kids who are almost at Level three," Principal Bob Tadman said on Friday, adding that's done with specific instructional interventions.

"I was impressed to see the improvement in the reading and writing. Reading was up last year by 16 per cent, writing up 23 per cent and those are good gains," Tadman said, adding he takes cold comfort that across the province the math

skills lag. Board-wide, 71 per cent of students performed at Level three or four in reading and 77 per cent for writing and 76 per cent for math. At Robert Little, the reading score was 64, writing was 71 and math was 55.

Looking at the school's five-year average, both the reading and writing achievement levels have "taken a dip" Tadman said, but the numbers are trending upwards with the math results.

Tadman said in an effort to help students self-assess their strengths and weaknesses, they've developed a "rainbow continuum" which allows students to match their work with expected levels of learning to see where they are at, and what they need to do to move up.

At McKenzie-Smith Bennett School, Principal Sharon French said she wanted to "shout the outstanding results from the rooftop" because in four of six test areas, they have the highest achievement, ever.

"For the Grade threes, to be better than the Board and the province really says that work done by the whole team really came together," French said

recently, adding there's been a steady upward five-year trend for Grade three and six results.

At MSB, the Grade three students exceeded provincial and Board-wide results in reading, writing and math, but the Grade six students did not meet the provincial or Board results in reading, writing or math. "Except for math, every year our results are better," French said, noting MSB is an entry school, a regional centre for Grade six special needs students.

"This particular testing is not to their strength, and some of our kids - they don't have the ability to write and can't understand complex math problems, but their scores affect the score we're able to achieve," French said, adding 25 per cent of MSB's Grade six students, and 15 per cent of Grade three students, have a learning challenge.

French said she told the students that they and their parents and the school community need to be proud and hold their heads high because MSB now is "equal to or better than people at the Board and province."

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