

# Public school board tests beat provincial average

Officials at the Halton District School Board are pleased at above average results achieved by their Grade 3 students in provincial testing last spring.

"We're glad the students are doing well," said Kit Rankin, a superintendent with the Halton District School Board. "We're very pleased with the progress of the students."

She said one pleasant surprise in Halton was math, where there were disappointing results across the province in the 1997 tests. (Students were also tested in reading and writing).

Afterwards, more focus was put on math by teaching, administration and program staff.

"The kids seem to have done well in math," said Ms Rankin. "We think there's growth in

that area."

The testing covered 3,051 Grade 3 students, with two sets of results. One total was for all those completing tests, while the other figures included cases where there were exemptions or lack of data.

There were four levels of rankings, with Level 1 being the lowest and Level 4 the highest.

Levels 3 and 4 were considered the provincial standard. In most cases, 50-60 per cent of students completing tests made the standard.

Percentages of those making the standard were as follows: Reading, 56.2, writing, 56.6; mathematics (problem solving, concepts etc.), 50.0; mathematics strands (numerical sense, geometry, algebra, etc.), 51.6.

Top results were in overall reading and writing achievement, where 60 per cent made the standard in each category.

Worst results came in math, where only 43 per cent made the standard in problem solving and 38 per cent made it in communication of required knowledge.

Results were slightly lower when exempt and incomplete tests were factored in.

Teachers and parents are to be informed of school results first before they're being released to the media, said Ms Rankin. Parents will receive their children's results, plus school, board-wide and provincial totals for comparison.

Ms Rankin said provincial testing is helpful because results can suggest where a board

should focus next and the external feedback is good.



"It is independently assessed. Instead of being done by the classroom teacher, it's done by someone who doesn't know the child."

This year's testing was based on new language and math curriculums. It was done over five half-days in May, while 1997 tests were completed during 10 full days in March.

Ms Rankin said tests involve more than writing out answers on paper. "There are a series of activities," said the superintendent. "There are things like language activity and answering problems. It's intended to be enjoyable."

Next year's testing will be expanded to include students in both Grades 3 and 6.



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