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# Release of individual school testing results is put on hold

By **TIM WHITNELL**

*Special to The Champion*

The anticipated release of school-by-school statistics for the most recent round of elementary student testing is being delayed indefinitely by the Halton District School Board.

Board officials had announced in November that Friday was the target date for releasing all grades 3 and 6 provincial test results on an individual school basis.

However, the top administrator at the board told trustees at their last board meeting that missing data for some schools locally, and how that may have affected provincially-assigned achievement levels, is causing him concern.

Education Director Dusty Papke said it appears some data for 18 public elementary schools in Halton is missing. He doesn't know if it's demographic or test data, or both, but he said his concern is that for some students it might have resulted in a mark of zero or incomplete for part of the tests.

"We don't know what's missing, whether it's (entire work) booklets or due to faulty scanning (of results)."

He said the bottom line is the data isn't accurate.

"It would have less impact on the larger board but more on a school

or an individual student. What if part of a test wasn't scanned properly and a quarter of a test wasn't entered. You might go to a child's parents and tell them their kid achieved only at Level 1 when that score might be wrong due to inaccurate data."

For that reason Mr. Papke said grades 3 and 6 test results for individual students aren't being sent to school councils, parents or the media from the schools affected until the board is confident their numbers are complete.

"This is not opposition to the test. We just want any data (made public) used responsibly," he said.

However, Mr. Papke noted test results for pupils from the majority of unaffected schools have begun to be disseminated to the usual sources.

A superintendent with the Halton Catholic board said they have similar problems.

"We are also experiencing some delays around some individual student reports and we have some gender and contextual data (concerns) as well, which is holding up the process," said board Superintendent Elaine Hine.

From the public board's perspective, Mr. Papke noted that results from the first grade 9 provincial math test may have been compromised as well and that board offi-

cial was looking into the situation before releasing those school-by-school statistics.

"We have some concerns about accuracy from other boards so we're going to look at our data closely."

The Education Quality and Accountability Office, an agency operating at arm's length from the Ontario government, received data from the Halton public board for 3,052 grade 3 students and 3,107 grade 6s who wrote tests covering reading, writing and mathematics.

About 140,000 grade 3 pupils and another 140,000 grade 6s wrote the tests across the province in May.

An official with the EQAO said grades 3 and 6 testing data is incomplete for some school boards but denied recent media reports stating about 2,000 tests were missing across the province.

"No tests were lost, no booklets are missing. It was a screening difficulty with student answer sheets on the multiple choice grade 3 and 6 tests," said Dano Spooner, senior communications officer with the EQAO in Toronto.

Ms Spooner said in reviewing the grades 3 and 6 test data for Halton's public and Catholic boards, in her opinion it's "quite accurate" with "less than one per cent" incomplete for both.



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