

Students improving: test results

Results released recently by Ontario's Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) show Halton District School Board students have improved in the grade 3 and 6 assessments in reading, writing and mathematics.

The results come from the standardized testing assessment conducted last May for 3,172 grade 3 students and 3,354 grade 6 students in the public board.

Specifically, the results show a greater percentage of students at or above the provincial standard (listed as Level 3 and 4) than the provincial average.

"Our results show an improvement over last year in all areas except grade 6 writing, which remained the same," said Gary

Sadler, superintendent of school program services for the public school board.

"This improvement is consistent with the province and a common trend with our neighbouring boards."

The information provided by the grade 3 and 6 assessments provides a focus for improving student achievement. The data is used to improve classroom instruction and tailor instruction to student needs.

"All elementary schools in the public board have incorporated the goals of improving literacy and numeracy in their school effectiveness plans," Mr. Sadler said.

"In addition to the provincially-led early reading and early math initiatives, we con-

tinue to work with our school-based literacy and math mentors to improve classroom instruction."

Mr. Sadler wouldn't discuss which school did the best. He said the results "are not valid for a year-to-year comparison and they are not valid for school-to-school comparison."

They're supposed to be used, he stressed, by individual schools to better their teachings and/or programs.

A research analyst will pore over the results and submit an analysis report to the school board hopefully in February, Mr. Sadler said.

The intent will be to see if there are any areas that need to be worked on, he added.

Sex assault case in court

A correctional officer accused of providing contraband to female inmates in exchange for sexual favours will return to Burlington court January 26 to continue his pre-trial.

The pre-trial, held to hammer out legal issues before trial, began November 10 at Ontario Court of Justice in Burlington.

Halton Regional Police charged the adult male employee of Milton's Vanier Institute for Women with four counts of breach of trust as well as three counts of sexual assault in March.

His name is being withheld to protect the safety of the victims, police said.

Festival to be up for sale, but it must sell quickly: operator

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For Adam, the festival also meant a family connection. His wife, Jennifer, operated a business there as well called Tara Hill Designs, selling everything from aromatherapy soaps to wooden games. Their 12-year-old son also came along with them to the festival and worked for various merchants.

Adam estimated their businesses combined brought in one-third of their annual income.

"Lost income aside, there was a real sense of family among the cast

and vendors at the festival, and we shall miss many of those people deeply," he said.

The local festival is owned and operated by International Renaissance Festivals Ltd., the corporation also responsible for the Maryland Renaissance Festival.

The Champion contacted Jules at his Maryland office for comment on the closure, but he had none.

His letter to merchants said he will put the festival up for sale, but believes there's a small chance it will sell.

"If the show does not operate, it

will lose momentum and become unattractive to another operator," the letter said.

"It would have to be assumed very soon to begin the preparations to open."

But, Adam said a group of merchants and performers have come together to discuss things like leasing the festival or turning it into a co-op. "It's basically a think tank to see what we can do to save the festival."

Melanie Hennessey can be reached at mhennessey@milton-canadianchampion.com.



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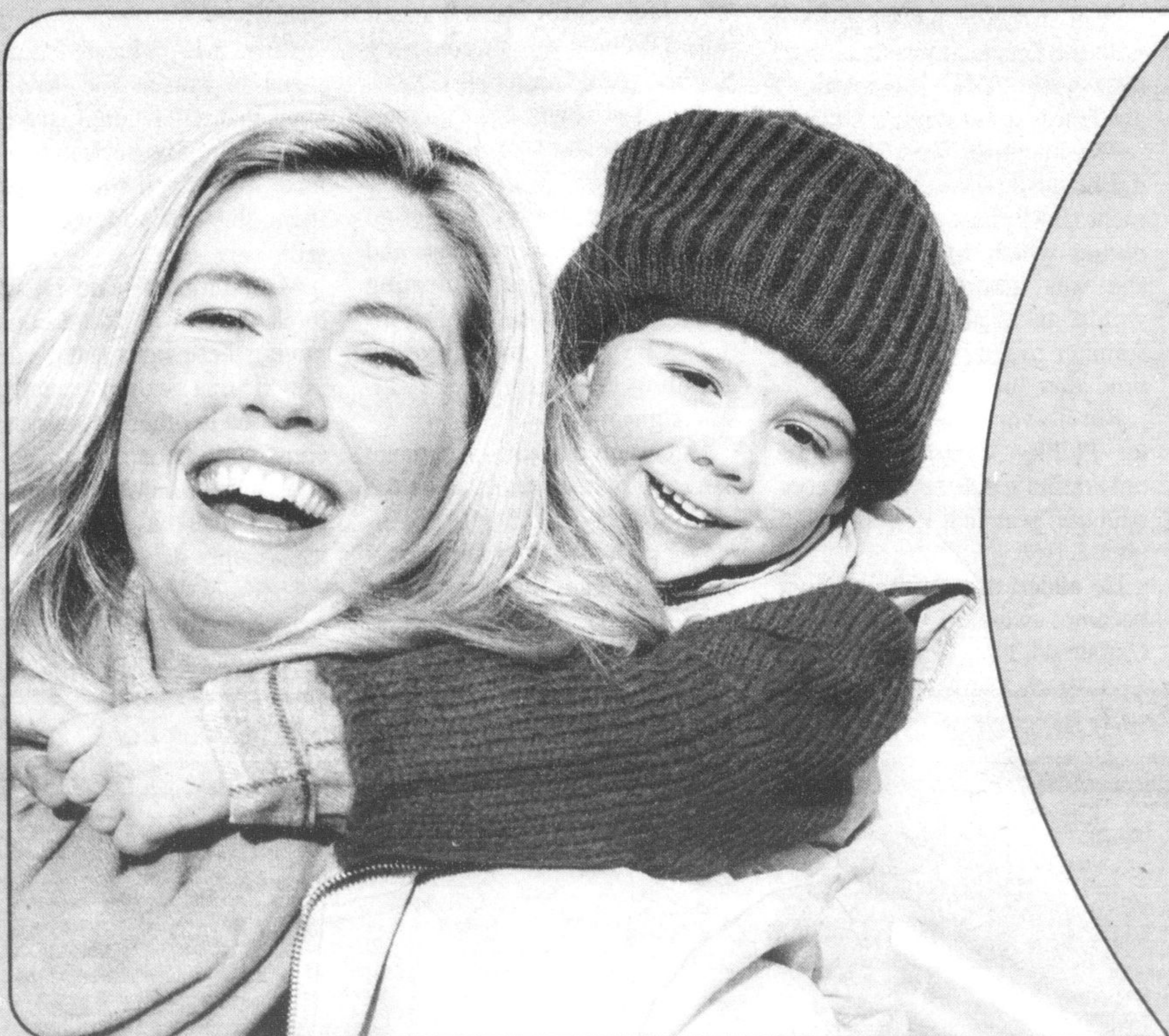
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