

# Catholic students do well in recent literacy testing

The Halton Catholic District School Board is crediting a system-wide collaboration for the successful showing of its high school students in their first Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT).

"The Halton Catholic District School Board celebrates the success of all of our students and each of our secondary schools," said Director of Education Lou Piovesan.

"It is through the collaborative and combined efforts of our elementary and secondary teachers, students, parents, administration and board staff, embracing the Ministry of Education initiatives which focus on literacy, that the Halton Catholic District School Board is able to achieve results above the provincial average on the OSSLT."

The test was conducted in October, 2004 by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO).

Overall, the results indicate that more of the board's secondary school students, compared to the province, successfully completed the OSSLT.

In the group of students who wrote the test for the first time (i.e. students who entered grade 9 in 2003), 86 per cent of the 2,058 students who were eligible to write the test (Method 1) did so successfully and 87 per cent of the 2,027 students who completed the test (Method 2) did so successfully.

Locally, Bishop Reding had an 83 per cent success rate in the Method 1 category and an 84 per cent success rate in the Method 2 category.

"The results attained by our students in this provincial assessment are due to a variety of factors," said Elaine Hine, superintendent of education (curriculum services).

"Our board's commitment to foundational literacy skills across the curriculum, continuous staff development, providing appropriate resources to support student learning, and our involvement with home and church, are accountable for this outstanding achievement. Our dedicated staff work diligently to ensure that student needs are met and our students are to be congratulated on their achievement."

The OSSLT is based on the expectations for reading and writing across all core subjects in the Ontario curriculum up to the end of grade 9. Successful completion of the OSSLT is one of the requirements leading to an Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

The test is marked on a successful/unsuccessful basis according to criteria established by EQAO. Students must successfully complete both the reading and writing components of the test to be considered successful. Students who are deemed unsuccessful in their attempt (i.e. wrote the OSSLT but didn't pass or didn't fully participate in the OSSLT due to absence or deferral) are eligible to retake the test during future administrations and/or participate in the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC).

The OSSLC is offered at each of the board's seven Catholic secondary schools.

## Public school students surpass average

The Halton District School Board (HDSB) is pleased with its grade 10 students' results from the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT).

The numbers show that 88 per cent of participating students passed the test on their first attempt, which is above the provincial average of 82 per cent.

Locally, 88 per cent of Milton District High School grade 10 students that participated passed, while E.C. Drury saw 87 per cent of its pupils who took part successfully complete the test.

The test was administered over the course of two days last October. To suc-

cessfully complete the literacy test, the Educational Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) required that students pass both the reading and writing components of the test.

"Overall, we are pleased with our results. The 88 per cent pass rate for students writing the test for the first time is a three per cent improvement over last year," said Gary Sadler, superintendent of program services for the HDSB.

"This progress demonstrates that results can be achieved when parents, teachers and administrators all work together."

Mr. Sadler noted school staffs worked

hard to prepare students for the test.

"After-school remediation programs were offered in the fall before the October test. Students received coaching on how to write large-scale tests and all schools simulated the test-taking situation to help prepare students for writing the test."

In mid-March, students who wrote the test received a two-page summary of their results including ways to improve in reading and writing.

Further information and provincial results are available on the EQAO Web site at [www.eqao.com](http://www.eqao.com).

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