

York students beat EQAO average

BY MITCHELL BROWN
Staff Writer

York Region students continue to outpace the provincial average in the Grade 10 literacy test.

Results released Wednesday by the York Region District School Board showed 82 per cent of York Region students who wrote the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) last October passed both the writing and reading portions, compared to the provincial average of 77 per cent.

"We are pleased that students enrolled in York Region's public secondary schools are continuing to demonstrate improvement as shown by the 5-per-cent increase over last year in the number of students who passed," board chairperson Bill Crothers said.

Of the 7,927 Grade 10 students who wrote the test, 6,481 passed. Eighty-seven per cent passed the reading component, while 89 per cent passed the writing component.

The test, which must be passed before a student is allowed to graduate, was written by both "first-time eligible" students and "previously eligible" students. Students who had previously failed the test.

Of the 2,601 previously eligible students who wrote the exam, 64 per cent passed.

Board spokesperson Ross Virgo said students who don't pass will have another

chance to complete the test or will have the option of enrolling in a literacy course that, upon completion, will allow students to get their diplomas.

While the education quality accounting office, which administers the tests, says it is pleased with the improvement in test scores, the president of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation urged officials not to "sugar coat" the results.

"Tens of thousands of students will not graduate from Ontario high schools solely because of this test," Rhonda Kimberley-Young said.

"Data provided by the EQAO shows that approximately 28,000 previously eligible students have not passed the test.

"Adding this to the approximately 33,000 who did not pass the most recent test administered in October 2003, more than 60,000 students are now in danger of not graduating from Ontario high schools."

Annie Kidder, spokesperson for Toronto-based People for Education, said the figures do not take into account the number of students who have dropped out of school in frustration.

Individual school results will be published on the board's website (www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca) May 19.

The York Catholic District School Board plans to release its results May 26.

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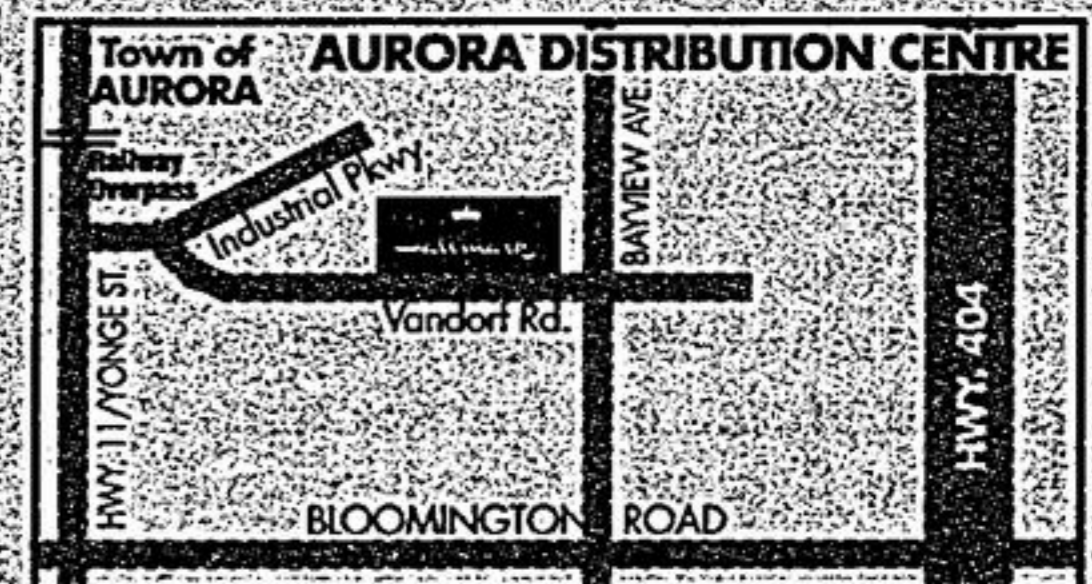
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