

Langstaff Secondary a model

Students kept on toes with continuing testing of reading, comprehension skills

BY TERESA LATCHFORD
Staff Writer

York Region high schools can learn from Langstaff Secondary School when it comes to literacy testing.

The Richmond Hill high school is one of 12 Ontario schools selected by the Education Quality and Accountability Office to be profiled based results of this year's Ontario secondary school literacy test (OSSLT).

"The school has been selected because of its improvement (of results) over time," EQAO chief assessment officer Victoria Hemming said.

Since first giving the test in 2002, Langstaff Secondary School has increased the rate of success among fully participating first-time eligible students by 14 per cent and of those in applied classes by 17 per cent. In the report, school staff will discuss what the results of the testing and other data have taught them about their students as well as the innovative approaches used to address specific learning needs.

"Data from the OSSLT is used to provide the school with a baseline for student literacy achievement," principal Peter Milovanovic said.

"We use the information to identify areas of strength and areas needing improvement."

In addition to having a common literacy focus across all subject departments within the school, one of the keys to suc-

cess in the local school is a staff literacy committee, he added.

Consisting of members from across the school's departments and administrators, the committee's responsibilities are to analyse data, such as EQAO results, identify which initiatives are working and address gaps through the development of an action plan.

"We also have targeted instruction specific to literacy in the classroom," he said. "We think it is important to have our students prepared."

To prepare students for the literacy test, activities modelled after those on the test are conducted in one Grade 10 period over a span of two weeks. For example, a Grade 10 science class may read a selection of text and then be asked to write a paragraph to assess their comprehension of what they have read.

"It's a refresher for students," he explained. "The teacher will then give them feedback to what they have completed."

Preparing students also includes pointing out the practice options on the EQAO website, lunch hour instructional sessions for students who are not in Grade 10, but still need to successfully complete the literacy test and a five-week after-school program.

"It's a good way for our students to brush up on their skills," Mr. Milovanovic said.

"Ideally, we would like to see 100 per cent of our students be successful on the test. We aren't there yet, so we still have work to do."

The school is continuing to collect data about the students in order to identify needs and trends.

Langstaff has surveyed asking students about literacy habits outside of school.

Once analysed, the data could provide

information such as learning styles specific to gender and what interests could be used to further engage students.

"By profiling schools such as Langstaff in the provincial report, other schools can identify geographically with one another," Ms Hemming said. "The schools can then look at the successes of those similar and identify initiatives which might work for them."

For the OSSLT results for your school, visit www.yorkregion.com and click on the EQAO link.

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Durham/York Residual Waste Environmental Assessment Study Public Information Session

SCHEDULE CHANGE

- Health Risk Assessment Feasibility Study -

On June 19th, 2007, York Region will be hosting an information session to present and discuss the progress of the Environmental Assessment (EA) to date and the findings of the preliminary health and ecological risk study associated with the recommended energy from waste facility. Additional information sessions are also planned in Durham Region.

For more information on the Durham/York Residual Waste EA Study or to review the draft report, please visit the Study website at www.durhamyorkwaste.ca or contact us at 1-866-398-4423.

The following Information Session will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
A formal presentation will begin at 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2007
Roman Palace Banquet Hall
1096 Ringwell Road
Town of Newmarket

Please note that a duplicate session originally scheduled for Thursday, June 21, 2007 has been cancelled due to a scheduling conflict.

Please register in advance of this session by calling 1-866-398-4423.



Residents are encouraged to attend the Town of East Gwillimbury's Green Bin Collection Open House on Thursday, June 21, 2007 at the Town's Civic Centre, 19000 Leslie Street, Sharon, Ontario from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.



The Town of East Gwillimbury is targeting 75% waste diversion.

YRT / Viva Public Information Centres

YRT / Viva invites you to attend one of our two upcoming Public Information Centres. Come out to review the draft 2008 Service Plans and offer your valuable feedback.

NORTH LOCATION

WHEN: Tuesday, June 26, 2007, 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
WHERE: First Floor Seminar Room
York Administrative Centre
17250 Yonge Street, Newmarket

SOUTH LOCATION

WHEN: Thursday, June 28, 2007, 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
WHERE: First Floor, Corporate Learning Rooms A & B
York Region South Service Centre
50 High Tech Road, Richmond Hill

For more information, call YRT / Viva at 1-866-MOVE-YRT (668-3978) or visit the YRT / Viva website at www.yrt.ca

York, connected.



For more information on the Durham/York Residual Waste EA Study, please visit www.durhamyorkwaste.ca or call 1-866-398-4423.



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