

# NEWS release

September 25, 2013

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## ▶ **84% of first-time test-takers in Peel board pass literacy test, grade 9 EQAO math scores remain stable**

Of grade 10 students in the Peel District School Board who took the provincial literacy test for the first time, 84 per cent passed, compared to 82 per cent provincially. Fifty-five per cent of previously eligible students who rewrote the test were successful. EQAO math scores (levels 3, 4) for grade 9 students remain stable, with no change for applied math and down one per cent in academic math.

“Although Peel students are maintaining the high rate of success seen over the past five years, we remain focused on helping students continue to strengthen their literacy and numeracy skills,” says Tony Pontes, director of education. “It’s also important to look at students’ progress over their entire time in high school. By the end of grade 12, about 98 per cent of students in Peel schools pass the test or the literacy course that’s an alternative to the test. I continue to be proud of our students’ success rate.”

Overall, this is how grade 9 students performed on the math assessment:

	All students – levels 2, 3, 4			All students – levels 3, 4		
	2012-13 Peel	2012-13 province	2011-12 Peel	2012-13 Peel	2012-13 province	2011-12 Peel
applied	81%	79%	80%	45%	44%	45%
academic	95%	94%	96%	85%	84%	86%

Five-year trends show gains in grade 9 math scores:

- Over five years, scores are up seven per cent in grade 9 academic math and eight per cent in applied math.
- Grade 9 students with special needs have made gains over five years—up seven per cent in applied math and four per cent in academic math.
- ELL applied math scores are up three per cent over last year and up 22 per cent over five years.
- ELL academic math scores are up 18 per cent over five years to 81 per cent, down two per cent from last year.

Highlights of Peel board OSSLT results for first-time test-takers include the following:

- 10,195 Peel board students were eligible to write the test for the first time in May 2013. Of those, 9,639 or 95 per cent wrote the test—the other students were deferred or absent.
- 88 per cent of girls passed the test, compared to 81 per cent of boys. Provincially, 86 per cent of girls passed the test, compared to 78 per cent of boys.

- 78 per cent of English language learners who wrote the test passed, compared to 72 per cent provincially. This year, 11 per cent of eligible students are identified as English language learners.
- 46 per cent of students with special education needs (excluding gifted) passed, compared to 51 per cent provincially. This year, 12 per cent of eligible students are identified with special education needs (excluding gifted).
- 93 per cent of students in academic English courses passed the test, compared to 50 per cent in applied English courses, and seven per cent in locally developed English courses.

“We’ve seen a significant increase—15 per cent—in the success rate of our English language learners on the literacy test. Last year, 63 per cent who wrote the test passed. This year, our success rate is 78 per cent. We are committed to ensuring that our English language learners have the supports they need to be successful, including a strong focus on differentiated instruction. As a former English language learner, I know how important these supports are to student success,” notes Pontes.

Explains Shawn Moynihan, superintendent of curriculum and instruction support services, “What’s most important about these results is how we use them to help improve student learning. Through a continued focus on differentiated instruction and assessment for learning—all designed to help students strengthen their literacy and numeracy skills—teachers will continue to use proven strategies to boost student achievement.”

The OSSLT is a one-day test that focuses on key skills in reading and writing. It is based on the reading and writing skills expected in the Ontario curriculum across all subject areas up to the end of grade 9. It’s important for parents and the community to understand that the literacy test is not a standardized test—the test is based on the Ontario curriculum

Explains Moynihan, “Unlike a standardized test, a student’s performance on the test is not compared to that of other students. Rather, students pass or fail the test based on a standard set by EQAO, which designs and marks the test. The requirement to pass this test is clearly much higher than the normal pass mark in school.” The test includes reading selections, multiple choice and short answer questions, as well as a variety of types of writing tasks.

For a copy of the Peel board report, EQAO reports and school-by-school results, visit the Peel board website at <http://www.peelschools.org/parents/EQAO>, or go to the Education Quality & Accountability Office website at [www.eqao.com](http://www.eqao.com).

**Media contact:** Shawn Moynihan, Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Support Services, 905-890-1010 (or 1-800-668-1146) ext. 2343, [shawn.moynihan@peelsb.com](mailto:shawn.moynihan@peelsb.com)

**Reference:** Carla Pereira, Manager of Communications (acting), 905-890-1010 (or 1-800-668-1146) ext. 2814, [carla.pereira@peelsb.com](mailto:carla.pereira@peelsb.com)

**Note to media:** For highlights of Peel board results, EQAO reports, results for first-time eligible and previously eligible students, and school-by-school results, visit <http://www.peelschools.org/parents/EQAO>.