

September 23, 2015

83% of first-time test-takers in Peel board pass literacy test, pass rate stable

Of grade 10 students in the Peel District School Board who took the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) for the first time, 83 per cent passed, compared to 82 per cent provincially. Fifty-six per cent of previously eligible students who wrote the provincial literacy test were successful.

"We continue to be proud of the work of our dedicated staff in helping Peel students maintain the high rate of success we have seen over the past five years on the provincial literacy test," says Tony Pontes, director of education. "At the same time, it's also important to look at and also celebrate students' progress during their entire secondary school experience."

The Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) tracked the progress of 8,164 students who wrote the junior-division (grade 6) assessment in 2011, and the OSSLT in 2015 when they were in grade 10. Results show an increase in the success rate from grade 6 to grade 10:

- In reading, 71 per cent met the provincial standard in grade 6 and were successful on the OSSLT. Thirteen per cent did not meet the standard in grade 6 but were successful on the OSSLT. Four per cent met the standard in grade 6, but were not successful on the OSSLT, and 12 per cent did not meet the standard in grade 6 and were not successful on the OSSLT.
- In writing, 72 per cent met the provincial standard in grade 6 and were successful on the OSSLT. Twelve per cent did not meet the standard in grade 6 but were successful on the OSSLT. Six per cent met the standard in grade 6, but were not successful on the OSSLT, and 10 per cent did not meet the standard in grade 6 and were not successful on the OSSLT.

Other highlights of Peel board OSSLT results for first-time test-takers include:

- 9,519 Peel board students were eligible to write the test for the first time in March 2015. Of those, 9,108 or 96 per cent wrote the test—the other students were deferred or absent.
- 87 per cent of girls passed the test, compared to 80 per cent of boys. Provincially, 86 per cent of girls passed the test, compared to 78 per cent of boys.
- 76 per cent of English language learners who wrote the test passed, compared to 73 per cent provincially. This year, 13 per cent of eligible students are identified as English language learners.
- 92 per cent of students in academic English courses who wrote the test passed, compared to 47 per cent in applied English courses, and seven per cent in locally developed English courses.

Explains Poleen Grewal, superintendent of curriculum and instruction support services, "What continues to be most important about these results is how we use them to help boost student learning. Through a continued focus on differentiated instruction and assessment for learning, staff will continue to use proven strategies to boost student achievement in literacy, numeracy

and all other subject areas.”

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.

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 highlights of Peel board results, EQAO reports, results for first-time eligible and previously eligible students, and school-by-school results, visit www.peelschools.org/parents/EQAO.

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