

NEWS release

September 25, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

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 83 per cent provincially. Fifty-four 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 two per cent decrease for applied math and no change in academic math.

“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,” says Tony Pontes, director of education. “We are also proud to report that by the end of grade 12, almost 98 per cent of students in Peel schools pass the test or the literacy course that’s an alternative to the test. It’s also important to look at students’ progress over their entire time in high school.”

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

	All students – levels 2, 3, 4			All students – levels 3, 4		
	2013-14 Peel	2013-14 province	2012-13 Peel	2013-14 Peel	2013-14 province	2012-13 Peel
applied	79%	81%	81%	43%	47%	45%
academic	95%	96%	95%	85%	85%	85%

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

- Over five years, scores are up one per cent in grade 9 academic math and four per cent in applied math.
- Grade 9 students with special education needs have made gains over five years—up two per cent in applied math and six per cent in academic math.
- ELL applied math scores are down five per cent over last year and up 15 per cent over five years.
- ELL academic math scores are up 10 per cent over five years to 82 per cent, up one per cent from last year.

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

- 9,951 Peel board students were eligible to write the test for the first time in March 2014. Of those, 9,541 or 96 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, 87 per cent of girls passed the test, compared to 78 per cent of boys.

-more-

- 81 per cent of English language learners who wrote the test passed, compared to 75 per cent provincially. This year, 13 per cent of eligible students are identified as English language learners.
- 93 per cent of students in academic English courses passed the test, compared to 51 per cent in applied English courses, and seven per cent in locally developed English courses.

“We’ve seen an increase — three per cent—in the success rate of our English language learners on the literacy test. Last year, 78 per cent who wrote the test passed. This year, our success rate is 81 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 Jeff deFreitas, 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 strengthened focus on differentiated instruction and assessment for learning—all designed to help students strengthen their numeracy and literacy 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 deFreitas, “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.

Media contact: Jeff deFreitas, Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Support Services, 905-890-1010 (or 1-800-668-1146) ext. 2343,

Reference: Carla Pereira, Manager of Communications (acting), 905-890-1010 (or 1-800-668-1146) ext. 2814, 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>.