

# NEWS release

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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

## ▶ **83% of first-time test-takers in Peel board pass literacy test**

Of grade 10 students in the Peel District School Board who took the provincial literacy test for the first time, 83 per cent passed, compared to 84 per cent provincially. Forty-nine per cent of previously eligible students who rewrote the test were successful.

“Although the pass rate remains stable over the past five years, we remain focused on helping students in grades 7 to 12 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—and so they’re able to graduate.”

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

- 10,293 students were eligible to write the test for the first time in April 2010. Of those, 9,857 or 96 per cent wrote the test—the other students were deferred or absent.
- 87 per cent of girls passed the test, compared to 79 per cent of boys. Provincially, 88 per cent of girls passed the test, compared to 81 per cent of boys.
- 48 per cent of English language learners who wrote the test passed, compared to 63 per cent provincially. This year, four per cent of eligible students are identified as English language learners.
- 44 per cent of students with special education needs (excluding gifted) passed, compared to 54 per cent provincially. This year, 12 per cent of eligible students are identified with special education needs (excluding gifted).
- 92 per cent of students in academic English courses passed the test, compared to 52 per cent in applied English courses, and 9 per cent in locally developed English courses.

“What’s most important about these results is how we use them to help improve student learning,” says Shawn Moynihan, superintendent of curriculum and instruction support services. “Through a continued focus on transformational practices, differentiated instruction and assessment for learning, teachers will continue to use proven methods to boost student achievement.”

“It’s important for parents and the public to understand that the literacy test is not a standardized test, and it’s not a test of basic literacy skills—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,” Moynihan explains.

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. 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 or for school-by-school results, visit the Peel board website at [www.peelschools.org](http://www.peelschools.org) and look for the icon "Grade 10 literacy test" on the home page, or go to the EQAO site at [www.eqao.com](http://www.eqao.com).

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