

HIGHLIGHTS OF PROVINCIAL ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS

ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL LITERACY TEST, FEBRUARY 2002

STUDENT PERFORMANCE IMPROVING

- The vast majority of students are meeting the provincial standard for the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT).
- Teachers are making reading and writing a high priority, and their efforts appear to be showing good results.

OSSLT SUPPORTS QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- The OSSLT is a useful quality assurance measure that shows the extent to which Ontario students are meeting a common, basic standard for literacy across the province.
- The OSSLT is designed to assess the reading and writing skills that students are expected to have learned across all subjects by the end of Grade 9, as outlined in *The Ontario Curriculum*.
- Successful completion of the OSSLT is one of the 32 requirements for an Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

OSSLT FACTS

- 129 032 English-language students fully participated in the February 2002 OSSLT. Students are considered to have fully participated if they were present on both days of the administration.
- The OSSLT was administered over two blocks of time, two-and-a-half hours each (including breaks and instructions), one on the morning of February 14 and one on the morning of February 15, 2002.
- The OSSLT was divided into two components: reading and writing.

HIGHLIGHTS OF ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS (ENGLISH-LANGUAGE STUDENTS)

- ☆ In February 2002, 75% of students passed both the reading and the writing components of the test.
- ☆ 80% of students passed the reading component of the test.
- ☆ 84% of students passed the writing component of the test.
- ☆ 10% did not pass either the reading or the writing component.

EQAO SETS STANDARDS FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS

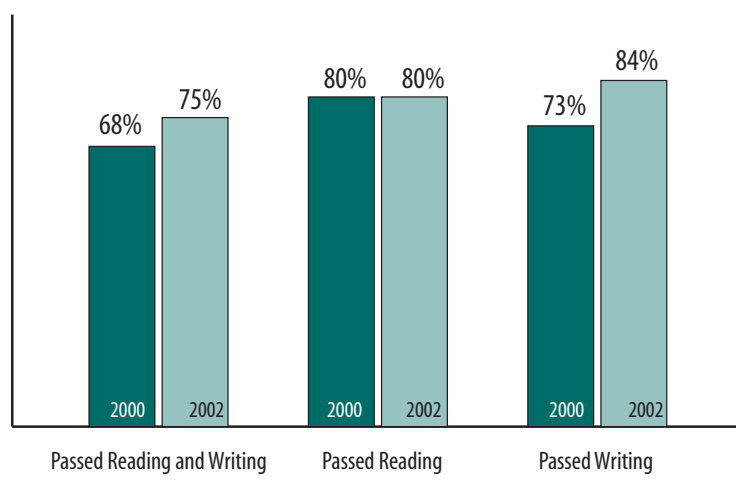
- Students must pass both the reading component and the writing component to be successful on the OSSLT.
- The standard for passing the OSSLT was established by EQAO through a rigorous standard-setting process, which included a panel of assessment experts, educators and community representatives.
- Meeting the standard, or being successful on the literacy test, means that students' work shows that most of the time they can communicate ideas in writing clearly and without errors in punctuation, spelling, grammar and organization that prevent someone from understanding their writing. In reading, students' work shows that most of the time, they can read and understand information in various formats.

OSSLT HELPS STUDENTS IMPROVE

- EQAO has published the *Guide for Accommodations, Special Provisions, Deferrals and Exemptions* to assist schools in the consistent implementation of Ministry policy. This ensures that schools are meeting the accommodation needs of exceptional students so they can demonstrate their skills on the OSSLT. The guide also outlines special provisions available for ESL/ELD students and provides procedures for deferrals and exemptions.
- Schools and boards are required to provide remediation to students who are not successful.
- Students who are not successful on one component will only be required to pass that component on the retake; however, they must be present during the whole administration, since some components are linked.

- Students who are not successful will have the opportunity to retake the OSSLT on October 23 and 24, 2002.

October 2000 and February 2002 Results



USING THE RESULTS — It is important to emphasize that the OSSLT results should be used to improve teaching and learning; they should not be used to rank schools. Ranking provides no information about why scores are high or low; it invites simplistic and misleading comparisons that ignore the particular circumstances affecting achievement in each school, and it distracts people from addressing the more critical issue of how to improve learning for all students.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

EQAO recommends

- that **school boards**, in consultation with their school communities, and using the EQAO *Guide to School and Board Improvement Planning*, incorporate the overall and specific data from the February 2002 OSSLT into their existing board and school improvement plans for developing all students' literacy skills. Boards should implement strategies for improving student achievement in reading and writing that extend across the elementary and secondary grades and across all subject areas.
- that **schools**, in consultation with their communities, incorporate the overall and specific data from the February 2002 OSSLT into their existing school literacy improvement plans and develop curriculum-wide strategies for improving student achievement in reading and writing.
- that **teachers** be encouraged to use the resources available on EQAO's Web site to assist students in preparing to write the OSSLT successfully.
- that **parents** enhance their own understanding of the reading and writing skills required for successful completion of the OSSLT and assist students in understanding the relevance and importance of literacy skills to future educational and career opportunities, and in everyday life outside school.

For more detailed information and results, please visit
the EQAO Web site at www.eqao.com