

ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL LITERACY TEST, OCTOBER 2002

OSSLT SUPPORTS QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- The OSSLT is a quality assurance measure that shows the extent to which Ontario students are meeting the basic literacy standard expected by the end of Grade 9 across the province.
- The OSSLT is designed to assess the reading and writing skills 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.

EQAO SETS STANDARDS FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS

- A student 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 involved a panel of assessment experts, educators and community representatives.
- Meeting the standard means that the student's work shows that most of the time the student can communicate ideas in writing clearly and without errors in punctuation, spelling, grammar and organization that prevent someone from understanding the student's writing. In reading, the student's work shows that most of the time, the student can read and understand information in various formats.

OSSLT FACTS

- 136 028 first-time eligible and 33 308 previously eligible English-language students fully participated in the October 2002 OSSLT.
- The OSSLT was administered over two blocks of time, two-and-a-half hours each (including breaks and instructions), one on the morning of October 23 and one on the morning of October 24, 2002.
- The OSSLT was divided into two components: reading and writing.

HIGHLIGHTS OF ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS (ENGLISH-LANGUAGE)

FIRST-TIME ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

- ☆ In October 2002, 72% of first-time eligible students who wrote the test passed both the reading and the writing components.
- ☆ A further 4% of first-time eligible students passed the reading component of the test, bringing the total percentage of students who passed reading to 76%.
- ☆ A further 13% of first-time eligible students passed the writing component of the test, bringing the total percentage of students who passed writing to 85%.
- ☆ The pattern of results for October 2002 is similar to the pattern for February 2002.
- ☆ More students were successful in the writing component than in the reading component.

PREVIOUSLY ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

- ☆ 33% of previously eligible students who needed to pass both components of the OSSLT were successful in both.
- ☆ 34% of previously eligible students who needed to pass both components of the OSSLT passed one component.
- ☆ 51% of previously eligible students who needed to pass only reading did pass reading.
- ☆ 87% of previously eligible students who needed to pass only writing did pass writing.

TRACKING THE 2001 COHORT

97 227 (69%)	16 027 (11%)	27 807 (20%)
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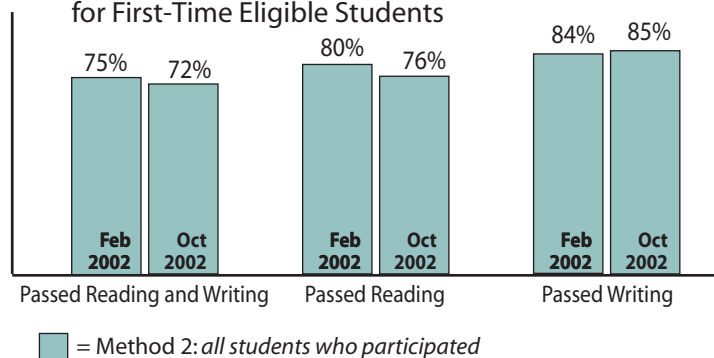
- Successfully completed in February 2002
- Successfully completed in October 2002
- Need to pass one or both components in October 2003

- After two administrations, 80% of the 2001 student cohort have successfully completed the OSSLT.

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 of Education policy. This ensures that schools are meeting the accommodation needs of exceptional students, so that 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 were not successful on the test.
- Students who are not successful on one component will be required to pass only that component on the retake.
- Students who were not successful will have the opportunity to retake the OSSLT on October 22 and 23, 2003.

February 2002 and October 2002 Results
for First-Time Eligible Students



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 from addressing the more critical issue of how to improve learning for all students.

OVERALL KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the October 2002 test, EQAO recommends

- that **school boards**, in consultation with their school communities, using the *EQAO Guide to School and Board Improvement Planning*, incorporate the overall and specific data from the October 2002 OSSLT into their existing board and school improvement plans for developing student literacy. 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 October 2002 OSSLT into their existing school literacy improvement plans and develop curriculum-wide strategies for improving student achievement in writing and, especially, in reading.
- that **teachers** be encouraged to use EQAO's resources 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 education and career opportunities, and in everyday life outside school.
- that **school boards** and **schools** offer professional development opportunities for teachers in literacy instruction, especially in reading.
- that **school boards** and **schools** offer proven remedial programs or courses, including the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC), to students who have not successfully completed the OSSLT.
- that **school boards** encourage their schools to identify and share cross-curricular strategies and practices, in both elementary and secondary schools, that effectively prepare students for the OSSLT.

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