



Education
Quality and
Accountability
Office

HIGHLIGHTS OF PROVINCIAL RESULTS

ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL LITERACY TEST, 2004–2005

THE OSSLT SUPPORTS QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- The Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) is a quality assurance measure that shows the extent to which Ontario students are meeting the minimum literacy standard expected by the end of Grade 9.
- The test assesses the reading and writing skills students are expected to have learned across all subjects as outlined in *The Ontario Curriculum*.
- Successful completion of the OSSLT is one of the 32 requirements for an Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

STANDARDS FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS

- The 2004 OSSLT results are reported as a single literacy outcome. The reading and writing standards required as part of that single outcome have remained consistent since the OSSLT began, in February 2002. The concerted effort of Ontario educators has led to continued improvement over the years, as demonstrated by the results.
- Meeting the standard in writing means that the student's work shows that he or she can communicate ideas and information in writing clearly and without distracting errors in punctuation, spelling, grammar or organization most of the time.
- Meeting the standard in reading means that the student's work shows that he or she can read and understand information and ideas in a variety of written texts most of the time.

OSSLT FACTS

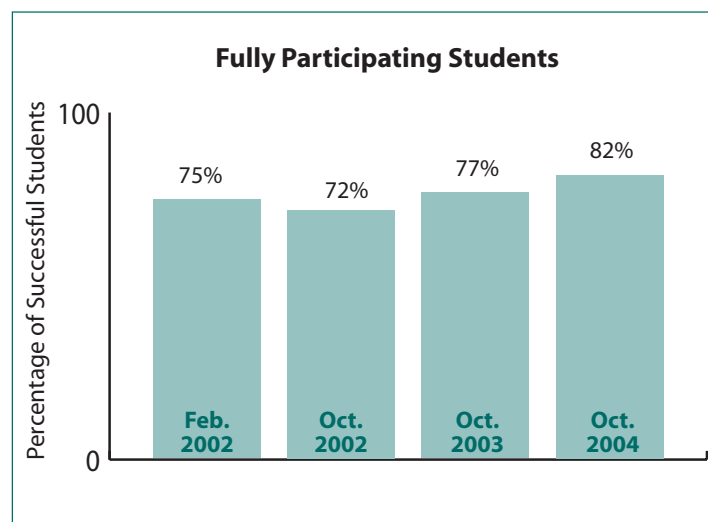
- Students across Ontario wrote the test on October 27 and 28, 2004.
- Of the 147 781 students who wrote the test for the first time, 82% were successful.
- 92% of this year's first-time eligible students wrote the test.
- Of the 38 628 students retaking the test, 62% were successful.

HIGHLIGHTS OF ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS (FIRST-TIME ELIGIBLE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE STUDENTS)

FULLY PARTICIPATING STUDENTS

- ☆ There has been a steady improvement in the percentage of students succeeding on the OSSLT since its inception, with a success rate of 82% for English-language students on the October 2004 OSSLT.
- ☆ The success rates for both males and females have increased by 6%. There has been a sustained gender gap of 7% in favour of females, which reflects national and international results.
- ☆ This year, 50% of English as a second language and English literacy development learners passed the literacy test, up from 42% last year.
- ☆ Students with special needs are improving on the literacy test. Overall, the success rate of students with special needs (excluding gifted) rose 11%, from 46% in October 2003 to 57% in October 2004.
- ☆ Students in academic English courses continued to show high success rates, with an increase from 90% in 2003 to 94% in 2004.
- ☆ 62% of students in applied English courses passed the literacy test, up from 49% in 2003.

PERCENTAGE SUCCESS RATES



THE OSSLT HELPS STUDENTS IMPROVE

- Test results can inform school and board planning efforts to improve literacy.
- Schools can use the results of this test and other information, such as report card marks, to develop strategies to strengthen student achievement.
- Schools and boards use EQAO data to focus their work with students to help them find success in acquiring the reading and writing skills set out in the curriculum.

USING THE RESULTS

It is important to emphasize that the OSSLT results are meant to be used to improve student achievement and learning, not to rank schools. We encourage the use of data to identify successful schools and gain an understanding of how these schools' approaches are working. Their successful strategies can then be transferred to other schools to improve student learning. For these reasons, EQAO encourages the use of data to support dialogue at the school-community level about what and how improvements can be made.

SUCCESS STORIES

We continue to hear from teachers and educators across the province about the strategies they are introducing to assist students in reaching high levels of achievement. EQAO is privileged to have gathered a number of local stories from school communities that exemplify the many successful learning environments in publicly funded schools across the province. Several key themes emerged from the 18 success stories included in this year's report.

One of the 18 schools is St. Joseph's Catholic Secondary School in Cornwall. Its success rate on the OSSLT has steadily improved, rising from 62% in 2002 to 82% in 2004. St. Joseph's concentrates on cross-curricular training and makes literacy a priority. The school also uses smaller classroom settings for writing the test to be more supportive of students, because teachers found that a significant number of students didn't function well in large groups.

Another example is South Huron District High School in Exeter, a rural school with just under 800 students.

The school's success rate for first-time eligible students has risen from 86% in February 2002 to 90% in 2004. The school uses EQAO results and its own Grade 9 results to guide school improvement planning each year and to set annual targets. Data are used to pinpoint the areas requiring focused attention. Rather than provide intensive preparation before the test, it has built the skills and knowledge into the Grades 9 and 10 curricula across all subjects.

The complete set of success stories may be found under **Case Studies: School Success Stories** in the report; they illustrate how positive trends in OSSLT data relate to school strategies and teachers' concerted efforts.

EQAO commends and celebrates the efforts of all Ontario educators, parents and members of the public as they work together for the benefit of all students across the province.

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