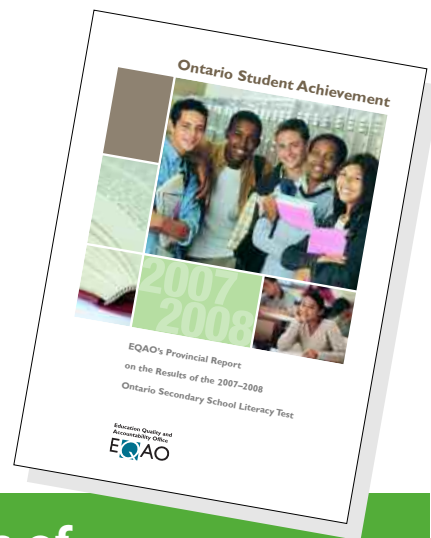


Highlights of the Provincial Results

English-Language Students

ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL LITERACY TEST, 2007–2008

- The purpose of the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) is to determine whether a student has the literacy (reading and writing) skills required to meet the standard for understanding reading selections and communicating in a variety of writing forms expected by *The Ontario Curriculum* across all subjects up to the end of Grade 9.
- Successful completion of the test or of the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course is one of the 32 requirements for an Ontario Secondary School Diploma.
- The 2007–2008 OSSLT measured the same literacy skills and maintains the same standard of achievement as in previous years. The standard was established by panels of educators, assessment experts and members of the public.
- Results from EQAO testing are important indicators of student learning that measure achievement in relation to a common provincial standard. The objective and reliable information gained through these assessments adds to the current knowledge about how Ontario students are doing and has become an important tool for improvement planning at the student, school, school board and provincial levels.
- EQAO tests are developed by Ontario teachers, and all aspects of EQAO's assessment programs are reviewed and validated by experts in the field of large-scale assessment. EQAO results are valid, reliable and comparable from year to year.



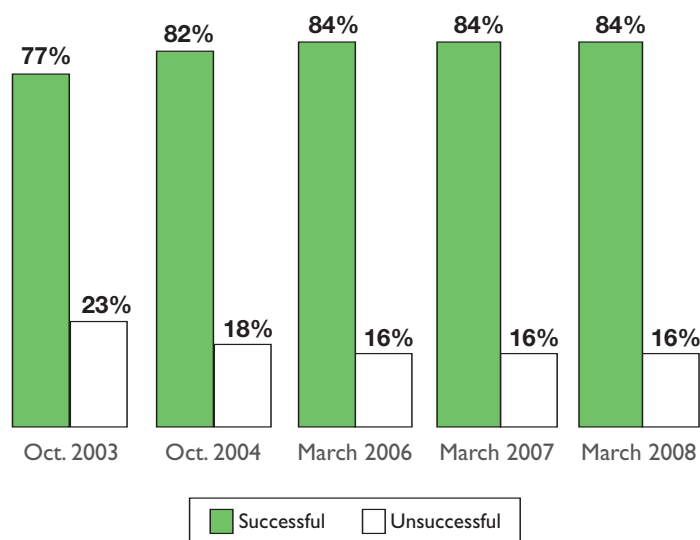
Highlights of Achievement Results

FIRST-TIME ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

The following are observations about this year's results in light of those of the past five years:

- 84% of students taking the test for the first time were successful, compared to 77% in 2003.
- The success rate for students enrolled in an academic English course increased by five percentage points, from 90% in 2003 to 95% in 2008. This is the fifth straight year results from this group are 90% or higher.
- The success rate for students enrolled in an applied English course increased by 13 percentage points, from 49% in 2003 to 62% in 2008. Over the past four years, the results from this group have been over 60%.
- The success rate for boys increased by seven percentage points, from 73% in 2003 to 80% in 2008. The success rate for girls also increased by eight percentage points, from 80% in 2003 to 88% in 2008.
- The success rate for English language learners increased by 17 percentage points, from 42% in 2003 to 59% in 2008. For the past four years, the results of this group have been 50% or higher.
- The success rate for students with special needs increased by six percentage points, from 46% in 2003 to 52% in 2008. For the past four years, the results of this group have been 50% or higher.

Success Rates on the OSSLT over Five Years for First-Time Eligible Students



USING THE RESULTS

Feedback about what students have learned provides the foundation for progress. The large-scale assessments administered by EQAO and the classroom assessments administered by teachers each provide valuable kinds of information. When used together, they provide students, parents, teachers and administrators with a valuable picture of student knowledge and skills. Objective information provides an accurate basis for improvement planning and goal setting.

While EQAO results are an important indicator of achievement according to curriculum expectations, they are only one source of information. For this reason, it is not appropriate to make judgments about a school's quality based solely on this one indicator.

EQAO encourages the use of data to identify schools that have shown improvement over time and to gain an understanding of how their approaches are working. Their successful strategies can then be used by similar schools as a model to improve student learning. EQAO promotes the use of its data for engaging school staff and parents in dialogue about student improvement.

OSSLT Facts

- Students across Ontario wrote the test on March 27, 2008.
- 93% of students who were eligible to take the test for the first time wrote the test.
- Of the 145 603 students who wrote the test for the first time, 84% were successful.
- Of the 30 413 previously eligible students taking the test, 51% were successful.
- Students who do not pass the OSSLT have another opportunity to write the test or to participate in the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course.

Case Studies: School Success Stories

Of the 785 publicly funded secondary schools in Ontario in which students wrote the test, EQAO has selected three from across the province to profile in this year's provincial report on the OSSLT. These schools are notable for their success in improving the literacy skills of their students as demonstrated by their OSSLT results over the years.

Each school discusses the successful approaches they're using to address areas for improvement and what EQAO data and that from other sources have taught them about

their students. The schools profiled represent just a few of the many remarkable and inspiring stories across Ontario's publicly funded school system.

EQAO is pleased to highlight the accomplishments of these schools and to celebrate the exemplary work of school teams making a remarkable difference in their communities. We hope their stories serve as a source of ideas and encouragement for other schools across the province.

For more detailed information and results, for access to the success stories EQAO has collected over the years and for the online version of the 2008 OSSLT, please visit the EQAO Web site, www.eqao.com.

Test Your Literacy Skills

Trying the OSSLT yourself is the best way to see what students are expected to learn based on *The Ontario Curriculum*. Try your hand at answering questions that appeared on the 2008 OSSLT. To see how you would have done, visit www.eqao.com.

About EQAO: The Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) acts as a catalyst for increasing the success of Ontario students by measuring their achievement in reading, writing and mathematics against a common curriculum benchmark. As an independent provincial agency, EQAO plays a pivotal role by conducting province-wide tests at key points in every student's primary, junior and secondary education and reporting the results. The objective and reliable facts obtained add to the current knowledge about student learning and are an important tool for improvement at the individual, school and provincial levels.