

2002-2003 Grade 9 EQAO Mathematics Tests

Rank	School Board	2003 % Meeting Standard	2002 % Meeting Standard
1	Halton DSB	64%	62%
2	Upper Grand DSB	62%	61%
3	Ottawa-Carleton DSB	61%	59%
3	York CDSB	61%	59%
5	Trillium/Lake DSB	60%	59%
5	Halton CDSB	60%	58%
5	York Region DSB	60%	59%
5	London CDSB	60%	58%
9	Waterloo CDSB	59%	56%
9	Wellington CDSB	59%	59%
9	Huron-Superior CDSB	59%	39%
12	Waterloo Region DSB	58%	63%
12	Hast/PrinceEd DSB	58%	56%
12	Limestone DSB	58%	55%
15	Kenora CDSB	57%	40%
15	Renfrew County DSB	57%	54%
15	Sudbury CDSB	57%	58%
18	Ottawa/Car CDSB	56%	53%
19	Renfrew CDSB	55%	59%
19	Huron Perth CDSB	55%	52%
21	Thames Valley DSB	54%	57%
21	Avon Maitland DSB	54%	55%
23	Greater Essex DSB	53%	53%
23	Bluewater DSB	53%	51%
25	Peel DSB	52%	54%
25	Rainbow DSB	52%	57%
25	Thunder Bay CDSB	52%	53%
	Province	51%	50%
28	Algon/Lake CDSB	51%	54%
28	Hamilton/Went CDSB	51%	49%
28	St. Clair CDSB	51%	52%
28	Niagara CDSB	51%	51%
32	Dufferin-Peel CDSB	50%	46%
32	Grand Erie DSB	50%	49%
32	Nipissing/PS CDSB	50%	54%
35	Bruce-Grey CDSB	49%	54%
35	Pet/Vic/Nor/CI CDSB	49%	47%
35	Durham CDSB	49%	40%
35	Windsor-Essex CDSB	49%	48%
39	Kawartha/Pine DSB	48%	49%
39	Lamb/Kent DSB	48%	47%
39	Brant/Hald/Nor CDSB	48%	51%
39	CDSB of East Ont	48%	53%
43	Rainy River DSB	47%	51%
43	Ham/Went DSB	47%	49%
45	Simcoe/Musk CDSB	46%	42%
46	Niagara DSB	45%	45%
46	Simcoe County DSB	45%	44%
46	Upper Canada DSB	45%	49%
46	Toronto CDSB	45%	40%
50	Toronto DSB	44%	47%
50	Algoma DSB	44%	49%
52	Durham DSB	42%	44%
52	Superior/Green DSB	42%	40%
52	Lakehead DSB	42%	43%
55	Keewatin/Pat DSB	41%	45%
56	Ontario NE DSB	40%	37%
57	Near North DSB	39%	39%
58	Northeastern CDSB	24%	31%

50 Percent Math

Many students are struggling with math.
Malkin Dare

The table to the left ranks the major Ontario English-speaking school boards on the basis of their students' performance on the 2002-2003 grade 9 mathematics test.

Because the provincial testing body (the Education Quality and Accountability Office) separates its reporting into two groups — students taking Academic courses and students taking Applied courses — it conceals the overall percentage of students who met or exceeded the standard.

When the EQAO reports that approximately 66% of Academic students and approximately 21% of Applied students met or exceeded the provincial standard, most people are disappointed but not shocked because they assume there aren't all that many students in the Applied courses. In fact, approximately one-third of students fall into this category.

To find out how many of the province's students are succeeding at grade 9 math, I multiplied the overall percentage of students in each group by the percentage of students who met or exceeded the provincial standard and then added the two products together. ($68\% \times 66\% + 32\% \times 21\% = 51\%$)

My calculations revealed that just over half of the province's Applied and Academic grade 9 math students met or exceeded the provincial standard on last year's test, a very slight increase over the previous year.

My calculations did not take into consideration the fact that approximately 10% of Applied and Academic students received "accommodations" and/or "special provisions" (5% of Academic students and 22% of Applied students).

My calculations also did not reflect the number of students who are enrolled in "locally-designed" (low-level) grade 9 math courses and so do not write the provincial tests. The percentage of students in these courses may vary widely from board to board, similar to the variation in the ratio of students in Academic compared to Applied courses (from as high as 80:20 in the Ottawa-Carleton DSB to as low as 50:50 in the Superior Greenstone DSB).

If, for example, a board with 1000 students has all of its students in either Applied or Academic courses (with 68% of them enrolled in Academic math courses), and 66% of its Academic students and 21% of its Applied students meet or exceed the standard, then the percentage of successful students is 51.6%. If, however, that board has 100 students in locally-designed courses, then only 46.4% of that board's students have in fact demonstrated that they can meet or exceed the standard.

Because of the students in locally-designed courses, I was not able to calculate an exact percentage of the number of Ontario students at or above the standard. I can say only that, even with some accommodations and/or special provisions, a minimum of 49% of Ontario students (approximately 72,500 students) were not able to meet or exceed the provincial standard in 2002-2003.

Given the importance of mathematical competence for a number of occupations, from engineer to accountant to technician to dentist to computer analyst, it is unfortunate that so many students are struggling with the subject.