

2005-2006 Grade 10 EQAO Literacy Tests First-Time Eligible Students

	School Board	Pass	Accom	True Pass
1	Halton CDSB	91%	9%	87%
2	York CDSB	88%	9%	84%
3	Wellington CDSB	89%	13%	83%
4	Durham CDSB	85%	6%	82%
4	Halton DSB	86%	7%	82%
6	Sudbury CDSB	84%	6%	81%
7	London CDSB	84%	8%	80%
7	Ottawa-Carleton CDSB	85%	10%	80%
7	Niagara CDSB	84%	9%	80%
7	Huron-Perth CDSB	90%	21%	80%
11	Thunder Bay CDSB	82%	5%	79%
11	Dufferin-Peel CDSB	83%	9%	79%
13	Renfrew County CDSB	83%	10%	78%
13	Upper Grand DSB	82%	7%	78%
13	BrantHaldNorf CDSB	84%	11%	78%
13	York Region DSB	84%	12%	78%
13	Avon Maitland DSB	84%	12%	78%
18	Algonquin&Lake CDSB	85%	16%	77%
18	St. Clair CDSB	85%	16%	77%
18	Durham DSB	84%	13%	77%
18	Waterloo Region DSB	81%	8%	77%
22	Hamilton-Went DSB	82%	12%	76%
22	PetVicNor&Clar CDSB	82%	12%	76%
22	Renfrew County DSB	82%	12%	76%
22	Windsor-Essex CDSB	81%	11%	76%
26	Peel DSB	81%	11%	75%
26	Huron-Superior CDSB	83%	15%	75%
26	Bruce-Grey CDSB	83%	17%	75%
26	Greater Essex DSB	81%	12%	75%
30	Ottawa-Carleton DSB	79%	10%	74%
	Province	79%	11%	73%
31	Bluewater DSB	82%	17%	73%
31	Waterloo CDSB	82%	19%	73%
31	Simcoe Muskoka CDSB	78%	10%	73%
31	Niagara DSB	77%	9%	73%
35	Eastern Ont CDSB	83%	21%	72%
35	KawarthaPineR DSB	79%	14%	72%
35	Grand Erie DSB	75%	7%	72%
35	Thames Valley DSB	76%	9%	72%
35	Trillium Lakelands DSB	77%	11%	72%
35	Lambton Kent DSB	80%	16%	72%
35	Kenora CDSB	76%	8%	72%
42	Rainy River DSB	77%	14%	70%
42	Lakehead DSB	76%	12%	70%
42	Nipissing-PS CDSB	81%	21%	70%
42	HastingsPE DSB	77%	13%	70%
42	Upper Canada DSB	80%	20%	70%
42	Near North DSB	78%	17%	70%
48	Limestone DSB	80%	21%	69%
48	Simcoe County DSB	75%	12%	69%
48	Hamilton-Went DSB	74%	10%	69%
51	Toronto CDSB	77%	17%	68%
52	Algoma DSB	73%	11%	67%
52	Ontario NE DSB	75%	18%	66%
52	Rainbow DSB	73%	13%	66%
52	Toronto DSB	70%	9%	66%
56	Superior-Green DSB	74%	18%	65%
57	Keewatin-Patricia DSB	64%	12%	58%
57	Northeastern CDSB	67%	18%	58%

Reading between the Lines By Malkin Dare

Last month, Ontario's Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) released the results of this year's grade 10 literacy test. The EQAO announced that, of the students who wrote the test for the first time, 84% were successful. Most people would probably think that an 84% pass rate means that 84% of all grade 10 students are good readers and writers. But this is not the case at all.

Firstly, only 94% of eligible students* took the test, so that the percentage of eligible students who passed was only 79% (84% of 94%).

Secondly, 11% of test-takers were provided with "accommodations" (for example, having the questions in the written component read aloud to them; up to double the time to write the test; and/or the use of a computer). About half of the accommodated students passed the test. It is probably safe to assume that most would have failed without this extra help.

The table to the left ranks Ontario's major English-speaking school boards on the basis of what I have dubbed the "True Pass" rates. The "Pass" column is the percentage of students who wrote the test, multiplied by the percentage of successful students. The "Accom" column is the percentage of accommodated students. The "True Pass" column is the "Pass" column less one-half of accommodated students.

There are a number of interesting points.

- There is **considerable variation among school boards** as to the percentage of their students who wrote the test (ranging from a high of 99% in the Halton and Huron-Perth Catholic boards to a low of 86% in the Keewatin-Patricia public board, and as to the percentage of students receiving accommodations (ranging from a low of 5% to a high of 21%).
- School boards with **low participation rates and high accommodation rates can significantly improve their apparent success rate**. The Rainy River District School Board, for example, administered the test to only 88% of its eligible students and provided accommodations to 15% of them, thereby improving its apparent pass rate from 70% to 88%.
- Consistent with past test results, **the students in the Catholic boards appear to be doing much better** than the students in the public boards. Of the top 12 school boards, 11 are Catholic.
- Province-wide, **the "true pass" rate was 73%**. In other words, fewer than three out of four children were able to pass the test.
- Although we have no way of knowing how stringent the marking was, **the test itself was not all that hard**. The sentences in the reading passages are fairly short and simple, and the vocabulary is not very sophisticated. The test itself is available [here](#).

* Even the category "eligible students" does not represent 100% of that age cohort, since some students have dropped out or been suspended from school, and others are exempted from the test because they are not working towards a high school diploma.