

## Peel board EQAO scores jump significantly - innovative strategies credited

EQAO test scores for grades 3, 6 and 9 students at the Peel board have risen as much as 8% over last year.

"As a board, we're very pleased with these results, and we know the tremendous effort it takes to climb

by several percentage points when you are already at or above the provincial average," said Jim Grieve, director of education. "This success is absolutely a credit to our skilled staff, supported by involved parents and their

unwavering focus on helping students achieve to the best of their ability. We took a dramatically different approach to literacy and numeracy success in our board - an approach that meant a huge shift in what

we do, and don't do, as an organization.

"Our amazing Peel teaching and support staff have focused on using transformational teaching practices that we developed to help our children strengthen their

reading, writing and mathematical skills, and these results speak volumes about the success of their efforts. Every single person in the Peel board shares in the pride of this accomplishment - and the enormous benefit to

our children."

Overall, grade 3 students scored 8% higher in reading, 7% higher in writing and 5% higher in math when compared to last year.

Grade 6 students improved by 2% in reading, 3% in writing and 3% in math from last year.

Students in grade 9 scored 9% higher in applied math and 3% higher in academic math than last year.

"Over the past year, we developed a whole board focus on helping students achieve higher scores in EQAO by putting together an innovative strategy called transformational practices," said Chuck Waterman, superintendent of curriculum and instruction. "Under this action plan, specially trained teams analyzed schools that had consistent EQAO scores despite challenges such as large numbers of ESL or special education students. These practices were shared with the rest of the Peel board schools. We know educators at these schools are using many effective strategies, and we wanted to do a better job of sharing and implementing the ones that will have the greatest impact. It's clear that this approach is working and has had a significant effect on the scores."

The first step of the plan included gathering teaching strategies at schools that were making the biggest difference in boosting student achievement. Next, these transformational practices were packaged in a way that all schools could easily implement. Every elementary teacher was trained in their school about how to use the practices. In order to keep teachers focussed on working with their students in the classroom, professional development activities were site based.

Secondary transformational practices were introduced this fall to prepare students for the grade 9 math test and the grade 10 literacy test. Transformational practices will continue to be the focus for the Peel board in 2006-07 to work towards meeting the provincial target of 75% of students achieving at level 3 or higher by 2008.

The transformational practices that were included were helping students to determine important ideas in what they read; using graphic organizers and frameworks such as charts, diagrams and timelines; using manipulatives such as cube-a-links and patterned blocks as thinking tools in mathematics; vocabulary development; explicitly teaching students test-taking skills.

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