

Dufferin-Peel students continue to outperform in literacy

The Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board has some pretty literate students.

Results from the 2014-2015 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), administered by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), indicate that Dufferin-Peel students exceeded the provincial success rates by between three and five per cent.

The percentage of Dufferin-Peel students passing the OSSLT on their first attempt continues to exceed provincial performance and highlights the ongoing excellence of Dufferin-Peel students in terms of literacy skills.

Additionally, among students who were previously unsuccessful on the OSSLT, Dufferin-Peel demonstrated much higher success rates than did the province as a whole. Whether attempting the OSSLT for the first-time or tackling it in subsequent years, Dufferin-Peel students, as a board, have exceeded the provincial average on the OSSLT for the last five consecutive years. Eighty-five per cent of Dufferin-Peel students who wrote the OSSLT for the first time, successfully completed the test. This success rate for fully participating, first-time eligible Dufferin-Peel students writing the March 2015 OSSLT represents a very high level of achievement for the board, despite a decline over the previous year's high performance. Success rates among students who were previously eligible also declined in 2014-2015. In the context of historical perspective, this year's results continue to support the high levels of achievement of Dufferin-Peel students over the last five years of the OSSLT.

"Dufferin-Peel Catholic schools have a long established record of academic success, and our EQAO results are but one indicator of that success," said Director of Education John Kostoff. "Moving forward, we remain strongly committed to improving student learning, achievement and well-being among all learners. It is the good work, support and commitment on the part of many professional educators, support staff, trustees and stakeholders in our system that makes Dufferin-Peel a system that works."

"We are proud of our record of academic excellence, including the historical upward trend of our EQAO results," said board Chair Mario Pascucci. "Our EQAO success is one of many indicators that our students are achieving. The fact of the matter is that Dufferin-Peel is a system that delivers on its promise."

The OSSLT assesses students' proficiency in reading and writing. Successful completion of the Literacy Test (or the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course) is one of the 32 requirements necessary to obtain the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). The OSSLT results are provided for two groups of students: those eligible to write for the first time in Grade 10, and those who were previously eligible to participate but who were unsuccessful in a prior year.

"We are encouraged by the continued high rate of success that our students have displayed through this year's test results, and are now taking some time to analyze these results in greater detail," said Associate Director of Instructional Services Sheila McWatters. "This will enable us to provide better support to schools, parents and students to ensure that even more students meet or exceed the provincial standard."

Each school has its own plan to support literacy learning, which will be reviewed in the context of the test results, to improve students' reading and writing skills in all subject areas. School plans include strategies to assist all students, including remediation for students who did not successfully complete the OSSLT.

Board and individual school results will soon be available on the board website at www.dpcdsb.org

Additional information on the OSSLT and other assessments can be obtained through the EQAO website at www.eqao.com