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York Catholic Students Continue to Be Among Tops in Provincial Literacy Test

Results released today by the Education Quality & Accountability Office (EQAO) show that 91% of first-time eligible York Catholic students who wrote the April 2009 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) for the first time were successful, compared to 85% provincially. These results represent an increase of +1% for both the Board and the province since the previous administration of the Literacy Test.

The Test measures students' reading and writing skills based on language expectations common to all subjects in the provincial curriculum, up to the end of Grade 9. Students must pass both the reading and writing components to successfully complete the Test. The Test is administered in Grade 10 and provides opportunities for students who do not pass to improve their skills and retake the Test in later years.

Highlights of York Catholic Results:

- 4,125 students wrote the test for the first time; 91% of these students were successful.
- 543 students retook the test; 64% of these students were successful.
- Both first-time eligible students and students who retook the test wrote the OSSLT on April 2, 2009.
- Of the 4,236 students who were eligible to take the test for the first time, 97% actually wrote the test and the remainder were absent on the day of the test or were deferred from writing the test. The percentage of students participating in the test has remained fairly stable over the past six years.
- When all first-time eligible students are factored into the overall success rate for the 2007/2008 Grade 9 cohort (i.e., students who actually wrote the test and students who were absent or deferred) the percentage of students who were successful is 88%. (*Deferrals are granted by school principals to students who are not ready to write the literacy test.*)
- Since the first administration of the Literacy test in 2002, the success rate for first-time eligible students who actually wrote the test has increased by 14% for the Board compared to 10% for the province.

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“We applaud the organization of our schools in preparing for the test. Our already high scores and continued positive trend is a testament to the collaboration among teachers and partnerships with parents,” said Elizabeth Crowe, Chair of the Board. “As a Board, we made a commitment to prepare our students for success on the OSSLT,” said Crowe.

Superintendent of Curriculum & Assessment Debra Cormier points to a number of strategies that were put in place at a number of York Catholic secondary schools, including:

- Students participated in subject-based literacy activities that support success on the OSSLT.
- Data was used to identify groups of students who continue to struggle, including students in applied-level and locally developed courses, Special Education, English-language learners, and boys, in order to guide instructional practices.
- School library resource centres selected reading materials that appealed to students at all levels.
- In November, parents of students in Grades 9 & 10 were invited to a session, facilitated by the board’s literacy consultants, on strategies to support students at home in preparation for the test and on the day of the test
- Targeted lessons through "Literacy Tuesdays," after-school classes and/or Saturday programs
- Additional literacy classes for students who did not pass the first time
- Special accommodations and assistive technology provided for Special Education students
- Involvement of teacher-librarians in various capacities; including the OSSLC (Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course) that provides another opportunity for students who were previously unsuccessful to pass this diploma requirement

Since the first administration of the Literacy Test (eight years ago), results indicate that there has been an increase of 14% for first-time eligible students in the Board compared to an increase of 10% for students across the province. Please refer to the table below:

Fully Participating Students	Board	Province
Apr. 2009	91%	85%
Mar. 2008	90%	84%
Mar. 2007	89%	84%
Mar. 2006	90%	84%
Oct. 2004	87%	82%
Oct. 2003	79%	77%
Oct. 2002	73%	72%
Feb. 2002	77%	75%

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OSSLT -- 2009
Fully Participating Students

	Successful	% change from 2008	% change over 6 years
Province	85%	+1%	+8%
YCDSB Students	91%	+1%	+12%
Brother Andre	93%	+3%	+5%
Cardinal Carter	90%	-2%	+8%
Fr. Bressani	91%	0%	+21%
Fr. Michael McGivney	90%	+4%	+9%
Holy Cross	88%	+4%	+21%
Our Lady of the Lake	89%	+2%	+13%
Sacred Heart	92%	-1%	+7%
St. Augustine	95%	-2%	+5%
St. Elizabeth	92%	+2%	+15%
St. Jean de Brebeuf	86%	+3%	+1% (over 4 years)
St. Joan of Arc	84%	+4%	+17%
St. Luke	68%	-1%	+19% (over 4 years)
St. Robert	97%	+2%	+17%
St. Theresa of Lisieux	92%	-2%	-2%

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