



Kenora Catholic District School Board

We are a Roman Catholic school system dedicated to excellence in education, the Christian formation of youth, and strong partnerships with parents and the church.

004

Press Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Release

2009-004

Date:	June 10, 2009
Topic:	Literacy Results at Kenora Catholic District School Board Show Reduction in Achievement Gap for Special Needs Students
Developed By:	Phyllis Eikre, Director of Education
Release Date:	June 10, 2009
Instructions:	For Immediate Release and Communication

Communication:

Today the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) released the results of student achievement on the 2009 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), written by English-language students across the province in April. Of the Grade 10 students who wrote the test for the first time, 75% of Kenora Catholic District School Board students were successful.

This year the Kenora Catholic District School Board placed an emphasis on trying to reduce the achievement gap for students with special needs. "We had one of the highest participation rates we have ever had", says Paul White, Principal of St. Thomas Aquinas High School. "We have set a tone that says we want everyone to be able to be successful and literate, so we are expecting everyone to pass the literacy test. Of course, this means that we have to have supports in place," says White. The school conducted pre-test assessments and then created workshops to help students to improve in areas that were identified as problems for students. The OSSLT results indicated that students with Individual Education Plans scored at the same rate as the overall student population. "This is a great result! We are happy that our students, with accommodations, have had greater success and that their scores show that the gap has been reduced," comments White.

"Although our scores are lower this year, we are pleased with some of our trends", says Mary Cunningham, Curriculum Coordinator. "Provincially, the gender gap has been an issue in the OSSLT but our results show that boys are doing as well as girls in our school. We were also able to see improvements in our special needs students' scores," says Cunningham. "We are unhappy to have had lower overall scores and we are already working on how to help students who were not successful, but we also have to acknowledge our successes." Cunningham says that increased use of literacy across the curriculum, throughout the school is one of the improvements that must be celebrated. "When all teachers work together to help students see the importance of reading and writing in students' lives, we are doing something very important."

"The test is an important indicator for us at the school and board level," comments Phyllis Eikre, Director of Education for the Kenora Catholic District School Board. "We use these results to help us start important conversations about the data and how we must use this evidence to help build more capacity for teachers and greater successes for students." Eikre noted that board improvement planning will include an emphasis on continued supports for all students to become successful in literacy, numeracy and "all of the valuable skills incorporated in the Catholic Graduate Expectations. These results give us another set of tools to use to see how we are doing, and what we need to do next", she comments.

The OSSLT is a provincial standards-based test of the reading and writing skills students are expected to have acquired across all subjects up to the end of Grade 9. Successful completion of the test or of the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course is one of the 32 requirements for an Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

Today, the EQAO has released a comprehensive report entitled *Ontario Student Achievement: EQAO's Provincial Report on the Results of the 2008 – 2009 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test*, which provides contextual data, a summary of findings, strategies for success, observations from the field and profiles of successful schools.

The information is posted on the EQAO web site. <http://www.eqao.com>

Please include this communication within your announcements today.



Kenora Catholic District School Board

We are a Roman Catholic school system dedicated to excellence in education, the Christian formation of youth, and strong partnerships with parents and the church.

004

Press Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Phyllis Eikre
Director of Education

Darryl Michaluk
Chair of the Board