

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MONDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2006

RAINBOW SCHOOLS MAKE SIGNIFICANT GAINS IN READING, WRITING AND MATH

Students in Rainbow Schools made significant gains on reading, writing and math assessments administered in the 2005-2006 school year. Results released by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), which were presented to Trustees at the regular Board meeting held on Monday, October 23, 2006, confirm that learning and teaching strategies are having a positive impact on student achievement.

In the elementary panel, the most significant gains were in the area of writing. In Grade 3, an increase of 6 per cent of students achieved at or above the provincial standard in writing. In Grade 6, an increase of 8 per cent of students achieved at or above the provincial standard in writing.

A comparison of the same group of students as they progressed from Grade 3 (in 2003) to Grade 6 (in 2006) shows significant improvements in all areas, a clear indication that teaching strategies are having a positive impact on student achievement over time. There was a 16 per cent increase in reading, a 17 per cent increase in writing and an 8 per cent increase in math.

In the secondary panel, there was a marked improvement in Grade 9 Math. In Applied Math, an increase of 15 per cent of students achieved at or above the provincial standard. In Academic Math, an increase of 8 per cent of students achieved at or above the provincial standard.

“We are particularly pleased with our progress in writing which gained tremendous momentum in the past year,” said Jean Hanson, Director of Education for Rainbow District School Board. “Our EQAO results continue to show steady improvements in academic achievement over time, good news for students and staff in Rainbow Schools.” Hanson thanked classroom teachers and instructional leaders for their efforts and commended parents/guardians and the broader school communities for supporting student success.

“The results reflect the effectiveness of strategies implemented in the past few years,” said Hanson. Professional learning in the 2005-2006 school year focused on *‘Reading to Write. Writing to Learn. Success for All.’* Using data to inform student achievement remains a key focus for professional learning in 2006-2007. “As always, we will provide teachers with the training and the tools to develop strong literacy skills in students of all ages,” said Hanson. “We will continue to use the EQAO results in conjunction with our school-based information and classroom assessments to improve reading, writing and math.”

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The *Success for All* literacy project, which was launched last year, has since been expanded to all elementary schools. Through team teaching, literacy resource teachers are building capacity in reading and writing in the classroom. Teachers are working collaboratively during literacy blocks and dialoguing as professional learning teams. Tracking boards are also being used to monitor student progress. Ongoing reading assessments help teachers make daily decisions about classroom practice, enabling them to adjust instructional strategies to meet the needs of all students. In addition, schools are engaging parents/guardians and the community at large in literacy learning through family reading nights, literacy days, drama presentations and special events.

The Rainbow District School Board has traditionally exceeded the provincial results in both Grade 9 Academic and Applied mathematics and the long-term trend remains positive. "The Applied Math curriculum was revised to better meet the needs of students," said Hanson. "This has clearly had an impact on the overall results." Rainbow District School Board has been leading provincial efforts to implement the newly revised intermediate math curriculum. Teachers continue to receive training on the use of manipulatives and technology to make abstract math concepts more concrete. Rainbow District School Board teachers and administrators are visiting Lighthouse classrooms where new techniques are being modeled.

EQAO results are an important tool for assisting schools and boards in identifying areas for continuous improvement. They provide a measure of how well students understand the expectations outlined in The Ontario Curriculum. Student assessment is most effective when data are interpreted in context, examined over time to determine trends in performance, and used to inform professional dialogue and school improvement planning.

"Assessment results are used to enhance student learning," said Hanson. "The data helps us determine areas of focus in literacy and numeracy for school and board improvement planning by answering two important questions: *How are we doing?* and *What can we do next to improve student learning?*"

Grade 3 and Grade 6 Reading, Writing and Mathematics tests were written at the end of May 2006. There were 1,005 students in Grade 3 in Rainbow Schools and 968 students wrote the test. There were 1,099 students in Grade 6 in Rainbow Schools and 1,065 students wrote the test. Very few students were exempt from the assessments.

The Grade 9 Mathematics test was administered in January and June 2006. A total of 1,512 students participated in the assessment, including 945 students in Academic Math and 567 students in Applied Math.

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The Ministry of Education has set level 3 as the provincial standard. Students in Level 4 have demonstrated a very high to outstanding level of achievement (80% to 100%). Achievement is above the provincial standard. Students in Level 3 have demonstrated a high level of achievement (70% to 79%).

EQAO results are available at www.eqao.com.

**Grade 3 Reading, Writing and Mathematics
2005-2006 Assessment Results
Percentage at Levels 3 or 4**

	Reading	Writing	Math
All students RDSB	53%	51%	64%
Participating students	55%	53%	67%

	Reading	Writing	Math
All students Province	62%	64%	68%
Participating students	67%	68%	72%

**Results from 1998-2006
Percentage at Levels 3 or 4
Shows steady improvements in academic achievement over time**

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Reading	36%	36%	49%	46%	45%	45%	51%	50%	53%
	41%	37%	53%	51%	50%	50%	57%	56%	55%
Writing	37%	41%	52%	44%	43%	41%	43%	45%	51%
	41%	43%	55%	48%	47%	45%	47%	49%	53%
Math	34%	44%	58%	59%	55%	52%	66%	61%	64%
	38%	45%	61%	64%	59%	56%	71%	65%	67%

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**Grade 6 Reading, Writing and Mathematics
 2005-2006 Assessment Results
 Percentage at Levels 3 or 4**

	Reading	Writing	Math
All students RDSB	61%	58%	60%
Participating students	63%	60%	62%
	Reading	Writing	Math
All students Province	64%	61%	61%
Participating students	67%	65%	64%

**Results from 1999-2006
 Percentage at Levels 3 or 4
 Shows steady improvements in academic achievement over time**

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Reading	44%	51%	53%	55%	57%	55%	57%	61%
	45%	54%	56%	58%	61%	59%	61%	63%
Writing	46%	49%	48%	47%	47%	45%	50%	58%
	47%	51%	51%	49%	51%	49%	54%	60%
Math	44%	52%	59%	55%	55%	58%	62%	60%
	46%	55%	62%	58%	59%	63%	65%	62%

**Comparison of Same Student Body
 Data expressed as participating students
 Shows improvements in reading, writing and math**

	Grade 3 (2003)	Grade 6 (2006)
Reading	45%	61% (+16%)
Writing	41%	58% (+17%)
Math	52%	60% (+ 8%)

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**Grade 9 Mathematics
 2005-2006 Assessment Results
 Percentage at Levels 3 or 4 - Academic**

	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006
All students						
RDSB	60%	75%	68%	70%	66%	74%
All students						
Province	50%	63%	66%	68%	68%	71%

**Grade 9 Mathematics
 2005-2006 Assessment Results
 Percentage at Levels 3 or 4 - Applied**

	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006
All students						
RDSB	17%	28%	24%	27%	19%	34%
All students						
Province	13%	21%	21%	26%	27%	35%

EQAO assessment results are reported in two ways – “All Students” and “Participating Students”. The “All Students” method reports results that are based on all students registered in the program. The “Participating Students” method excludes students in the “exempt” and “no data” categories of the assessment.

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Media Contact:
Jean Hanson, Director of Education,
Rainbow District School Board, 705-674-3171, ext. 215.