



June 10, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Halton Catholic Board Releases Board and Individual School Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test Results 2009

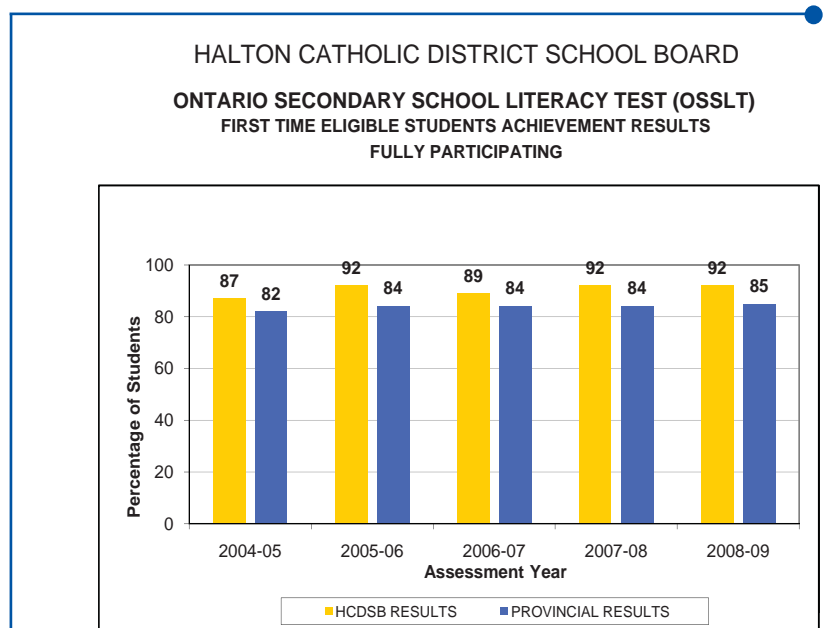
The Halton Catholic District School Board released today its Board and individual school results for fully participating students who wrote the *Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT)* for the first time. The test was conducted in April, 2009 by the *Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO)*.

“The Halton Catholic District School Board celebrates the success of all of our students and each of our secondary schools. Our students continue to demonstrate high achievement in this provincial assessment,” says Michael Pautler, Director of Education, Halton Catholic District School Board. “It is through the collaborative work of our elementary and secondary principals, teachers, support staff, students, parents, senior administration and Board personnel, that our Board is able to achieve results above the provincial average on the *OSSLT*.”

Overall, the results indicate that a significantly greater percentage of the Board’s secondary school students, compared to the province, successfully completed the *OSSLT*. In the group of students who wrote the test for the first time (i.e. students who entered Grade 10 in 2008), 92% of the 2,135 students who participated in the test did so successfully.

“The results attained by our students in this provincial assessment are due to a variety of factors,” explains Rick MacDonald, Superintendent of Education, Curriculum Services. “This outstanding achievement is due to our Board’s commitment to foundational literacy skills across the curriculum, continuous staff development and providing appropriate resources to support student learning. Our dedicated staff work diligently to ensure that student needs are met and our students are to be congratulated on their significant achievement. As well, the positive and interactive relationship between the parent communities and our schools is an important influence that is also reflected in these superb results.”

The *OSSLT* is based on the expectations for reading and writing across all core subjects in *The Ontario Curriculum* up to the end of Grade 9. Successful completion of the *OSSLT* is one of the



Fully Participating: This method provides a percentage breakdown of those students who fully participated in the OSSLT.

Source: EQAO data - June 3, 2009

requirements leading to an *Ontario Secondary School Diploma*. The test is marked on a successful/unsuccessful basis according to criteria established by the *Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO)*. Students must successfully complete both the reading and writing components of the test to be considered successful. Students who are deemed unsuccessful in their attempt (i.e., wrote the *OSSLT*, but did not pass or did not fully participate in the *OSSLT* due to absence or deferral) are eligible to retake the test during future administrations and/or participate in the *Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC)*.

The *EQAO Individual Student Reports* are used by school staff to identify students who may want to participate in the remedial assistance program and/or register in the *Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC)*.

The Halton Catholic District School Board has implemented the following strategies this past year, to provide students, parents/guardians and teachers with skills for improving literacy development:

- Explicit reading strategies across all disciplines specifically in making inferences; making connections; and to be able to identify main ideas and supporting details (worked in Professional Learning Communities with teachers of Grades 9 and 10 applied and open level courses)
  - Modeling reading strategies by doing a think-aloud
  - Modeling active reading by highlighting, annotating and using sticky notes
- Literacy *GAINS* project that focused on Writing to Learn Strategies and the use of *SMARTBoard* technology to engage students (specifically boys)
- Focus on writing strategies in the specific content areas (form, audience, purpose and organization of ideas)
- Selected family of schools Literacy Teams with representation from each elementary and secondary school to support the continued development of literacy skills - the objective of these teams is to update intermediate and secondary teachers on information regarding adolescent literacy and to share information about resources, instruction, and assessment practices used in families of schools
- Literacy Teams at each secondary school analyzed achievement data to identify students at risk of failing the *OSSLT*. Interventions were provided for students, such as the after school literacy remediation/*OSSLT* preparation course
- Implementation and teacher/student training in use of assistive technology for exceptional students
- Support services and materials for students enrolled in English-as-a-Second-Language/English Literacy Development classes
- In-service modules for professional development focusing on literacy strategies in all subject areas
- A variety of learning strategies courses for exceptional students who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- Board School Improvement Plan, which supports continuous improvement in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics from K-12 and is monitored by the School Superintendent
- Ongoing opportunities for staff development

## (OSSLT Results April, 2009 - Halton Catholic District School Board cont'd)

- Student Success Strategies:
  - student success teams at each secondary school
  - targeted teaching of reading, writing, oral communication and media literacy strategies
  - application of differentiated instruction teaching focus on higher level thinking skills for all students
  - cross curricular literacy practice

The Halton Catholic District School Board is confident that its strong commitment to literacy skills development will continue to be reflected in the improved performance of all of its students. Board and individual secondary school results are outlined in the chart below.

<b>HALTON CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD</b>		
<b>ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL LITERACY TEST (OSSLT)</b>		
<b>FIRST TIME ELIGIBLE STUDENTS ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS</b>		
<b>FULLY PARTICIPATING</b>		
<b>2009 March</b>		
	<b>Percent</b>	
	<b>Unsuccessful</b>	<b>Successful</b>
<b>Achievement Level</b>		
Province	<b>15</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>Halton Catholic District School Board</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>92</b>
Assumption	8	92
Bishop Reding	11	89
Christ the King	5	95
Corpus Christi	4	96
Holy Trinity	8	92
Notre Dame	10	90
St Ignatius of Loyola	3	97
St Thomas Aquinas	15	85
<b>Fully Participating:</b> This method provides a percentage breakdown of those students who fully participated in the OSSLT.		
Source: EQAO data -- June 03, 2009		

-30-

For further information, please contact:

Rick MacDonald  
 Superintendent of Education (Curriculum Services)  
 Halton Catholic District School Board  
 905-632-6314 ext. 123

Alternate Media Contact:

Lisa Stocco  
 Communications Services  
 Halton Catholic District School Board  
 905-632-6314 ext. 126