

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

September 14, 2004

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Highest Level of Achievement Test Results: June 2004

ORIGINATOR: B. Holt, Executive Director Instructional & Curricular Support Services

RESOURCE

STAFF: Anne Mulgrew, Lorie Welk

INFORMATION

The major generalizations from the 2004 administration of the Highest Level of Achievement Test (HLATs) are as follows.

- The percentage of students absent from HLAT reading and writing showed a slight decrease in 2004 relative to 2003, while the percentage of students declared exempt remained identical to the previous year.
- The percentage of students reading at or above grade level increased by 0.1 per cent relative to 2003.
- The percentage of students judged to be writing at or above grade level increased by 0.8 per cent relative to the previous year.
- For HLAT writing performance, the percentage of papers judged to be “limited” decreased by 2.1 per cent, while the percentage of papers judged to be “adequate,” “proficient”, and excellent increased relative to the previous year.
- There was a 0.5 per cent decrease in the percentage of students achieving one or more year’s growth in reading relative to the previous year.
- There was a 1.2 per cent increase in the percentage of students achieving one or more year’s growth in writing compared to 2003.

During the two week period from April 26 to May 7, 2004, all students enrolled in grades 1 to 9, who receive instruction in English, wrote the Highest Level of Achievement Tests (HLAT) in reading and writing. The HLAT program provides student, school and district information that is different from that provided by the provincial achievement testing program. Provincial achievement tests provide performance information about how well students are demonstrating provincial standards in core courses at grades 3, 6 and 9. Students can be exempted from provincial achievement tests, and are not included in school level data. HLATs provide annual grade level of achievement data for all district students registered in grades 1 through 9, and information about growth in reading and writing. Schools can choose to exempt students from writing HLATs, but when this occurs, students are included in the data as “not yet grade 1”. Information derived from HLAT administration assists schools in making appropriate programming decisions for students, as well as providing information for accountability purposes to staff, trustees and the community.

The reading test consisted of the reading comprehension subtest of the Canadian Test of Basic Skills. The writing test was a locally developed prompt (Appendix I) that was the same for all students. The prompt was field tested by students enrolled in grades 1 to 9 in another school district in the spring of 2003. The results from the field-testing were used to

- verify that students across this age span could successfully respond to the prompt
- provide additional samples of student work to further refine grade level writing criteria
- provide task-specific samples of student work to assist teachers in scoring

Student writing was marked by classroom teachers who submitted a grade level of achievement and a performance score for each piece of writing. A 4-point holistic scale ranging from limited to excellent was used to determine the performance score. The grade level of achievement criteria and performance rubric are included in Appendix II.

This year, grade 1 students enrolled in French Immersion programming were excluded entirely from the data. These students receive no instruction in English during their grade 1 year, and therefore are not included in the HLAT administration.

Results

Table I provides information on the number of students writing HLATs by enrolment grade. The analyzed results include all students who wrote, as well as all students who were declared exempt. Students who were declared absent are not included in the data presented in Tables 2 through 8.

**TABLE 1
DISTRICT STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN
HIGHEST LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT TESTING: JUNE 2004**

Enrolment Grade	Reading						Writing					
	Wrote		Exempt		Absent		Wrote		Exempt		Absent	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	4893	93.7	95	1.8	234	4.5	4903	93.9	78	1.5	240	4.6
2	5339	96.1	58	1.0	161	2.9	5351	96.3	46	0.8	161	2.9
3	5442	95.2	69	1.2	205	3.6	5458	95.5	59	1.0	198	3.5
4	5594	96.1	52	0.9	177	3.0	5590	96.0	51	0.9	182	3.1
5	5671	96.7	49	0.8	143	2.5	5639	96.2	51	0.8	173	3.0
6	5747	96.0	65	1.1	174	2.9	5739	95.9	64	1.1	183	3.0
7	6027	95.4	51	0.8	242	3.8	6010	95.1	53	0.8	256	4.1
8	6022	94.9	48	0.7	278	4.4	5997	94.5	50	0.8	300	4.7
9	5996	94.0	46	0.6	335	5.2	5975	93.7	47	0.7	355	5.6
2004 Total	50731	95.3	533	1.0	1946	3.7	50662	95.2	499	0.9	2048	3.9
2003 Total	51181	95.1	541	1.0	2085	3.9	51147	95.1	492	0.9	2168	4.0
2002 Total	51155	95.1	586	1.1	2058	3.8	45312	95.1	436	0.9	1919	4.0

For the reading component, the participation rate ranged from a low of 93.7 per cent at grade 1 to a high of 96.7 per cent at grade 5. Overall, 1.0 per cent of district students were declared exempt and 3.7 per cent were absent from the reading test. These numbers reflect no change in the percentage of students declared exempt and a 0.2 per cent decrease in the percentage of students absent relative to the 2003 data.

For the writing component, the participation rate ranged from a low of 93.7 per cent at grade 9 to a high of 96.3 per cent at grade 2. Overall, 0.9 per cent of district students were declared exempt and 3.9 per cent were declared absent. These numbers reflect no change in the percentage of students declared exempt, and a 0.1 decrease in the percentage of students absent relative to the 2003 data.

Analysis of Results

The following guidelines were used in analyzing the data:

- students exempted from either the reading or writing component were included in the results as “not yet 1” grade level of achievement.
- students whose raw scores on the multiple choice reading test were lower than random chance were classified as “grade level of achievement undetermined” and, for purposes of analysis, were included as being more than two years below enrolment grade in reading.
- Students who were absent were not included in the data.

Comparison of 2004 Results to 2003 Results

Table 2 provides a two year comparison of the percentage of students achieving a grade level of achievement equal to or greater than their enrolment grade for both the reading and writing components of HLAT.

TABLE 2
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ACHIEVING A GRADE LEVEL
OF ACHIEVEMENT EQUAL TO OR GREATER THAN THEIR
ENROLMENT GRADE: 2003 AND 2004 HLAT RESULTS

Enrolment Grade	Percentage Of Student At Or Above Grade Level					
	Reading			Writing		
	2003	2004	Difference	2003	2004	Difference
1	90.8	90.5	-0.3	89.6	88.9	-0.7
2	86.1	87.4	+1.3	90.7	91.2	+0.5
3	86.3	85.7	-0.6	89.2	90.3	+1.1
4	84.2	84.0	-0.2	87.9	88.6	+0.7
5	84.1	84.5	+0.4	86.6	87.4	+0.8
6	84.8	85.4	+0.6	85.8	88.1	+2.3
7	87.3	86.8	-0.5	87.0	87.5	+0.5
8	84.8	84.3	-0.5	85.2	86.6	+1.4
9	85.3	85.8	+0.5	86.5	87.1	+0.6
TOTAL	85.9	86.0	+0.1	87.5	88.3	+0.8

From Table 2, the following generalizations can be made.

- In June 2004, the percentage of students reading at or above grade level increased by 0.1 per cent relative to 2003.
- The change in the percentage of students reading at or above grade level ranged from an increase on 1.3 per cent at grade 2, to a decrease of 0.6 per cent for grade 3.
- The percentage of students reading at or above grade level increased for enrolment grades 2, 5, 6 and 9, but decreased for enrolment grades 1, 3, 4, 7 and 8.
- The percentage of students judged to be writing at or above grade level increased by 0.8 per cent relative to 2003.
- The change in the percentage of students writing at or above grade level ranged from an increase of 2.3 per cent at grade 6 to a decrease of 0.7 per cent at grade 1.
- The percentage of students judged to be writing at or above grade level increased for all enrolment grades except grade 1.

Reading Results

Table 3 provides detailed information for 2002, 2003 and 2004 on the reading component of the HLAT. This table displays students' grade level of achievement in reading compared to the grade level in which students are enrolled.

TABLE 3
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF 2002, 2003 and 2004 HLAT
GRADE LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT (GL of A)
READING SCORES BY ENROLMENT GRADE

Grade	Year	>Minus 2	Minus 2	Minus 1	AT *	Plus 1	Plus 2	>Plus 2	N
1	2004			9.5	67.0	20.3	3.2		4988
1	2003			9.2	68.3	20.0	2.5		5135
1	2002			13.2	68.6	16.3	1.9		5300
2	2004		2.9	9.7	63.4	20.0	4.0		5397
2	2003		3.4	10.5	64.4	18.4	3.3		5508
2	2002		3.3	11.4	65.6	16.6	3.1		5547
3	2004	1.9	3.7	8.7	63.9	19.1	2.7		5511
3	2003	1.7	3.6	8.4	64.2	19.5	2.6		5619
3	2002	2.2	3.5	9.7	63.7	18.5	2.4		5580
4	2004	3.4	3.6	9.0	66.9	15.3	1.8		5646
4	2003	3.2	3.6	9.1	67.0	14.8	2.3		5653
4	2002	3.0	3.3	10.2	66.5	14.7	2.3		5673
5	2004	4.1	2.8	8.6	59.5	21.0	3.9	0.1	5720
5	2003	3.8	3.2	8.9	59.6	21.0	3.5		5738
5	2002	4.0	3.1	8.8	60.1	21.2	2.8		6017
6	2004	4.5	2.6	7.5	59.7	20.4	5.3		5812
6	2003	4.5	2.5	8.3	59.6	20.1	5.0		6055
6	2002	3.9	2.3	8.3	61.6	19.3	4.6		5899
7	2004	4.7	2.0	6.6	61.9	20.2	4.6		6078
7	2003	3.9	1.6	7.2	61.6	21.2	4.5		6055
7	2002	4.3	1.5	6.9	62.8	20.1	4.4		5975
8	2004	4.5	1.8	9.5	58.6	20.7	4.9		6070
8	2003	4.6	1.5	9.1	59.4	20.9	4.5		6005
8	2002	3.9	1.6	10.2	58.6	20.7	5.0		5972
9	2004	4.7	2.0	7.4	62.6	19.3	4.0		6042
9	2003	4.5	2.1	8.2	62.6	18.5	4.1		5954
9	2002	4.1	1.9	8.0	63.5	18.5	4.0		5778
Total	2004	3.2	2.4	8.4	62.5	19.6	3.9		51264
Total	2003	3.0	2.3	9.2	62.6	19.3	3.6		51973
Total	2002	2.9	2.3	9.6	63.3	18.5	3.4		51741

* "At" Means GL of A Equals Enrolment Grade

For the population of students who were administered the reading test or who were exempted from the reading test, the following generalizations can be made:

- 62.5 per cent of the students achieved a grade level of achievement in reading commensurate with their enrolment grade (a decrease of 0.1 per cent from 2003)
- 23.5 per cent of the students achieved a grade level of achievement in reading that was either one or two grades above their enrolment grade (an increase of 0.6 per cent from 2003)
- 14.0 per cent of the students achieved a grade level of achievement that was lower than their enrolment grade (a decrease of 0.5 per cent relative to 2003)
- the percentage of students reading one grade below enrollment grade decreased for grades 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9 which may reflect the interventions put in place for “at risk” students.
- the overall distribution of reading scores for the total population is very similar to the distribution in 2003

Writing Results

Table 4 provides detailed information for 2002, 2003 and 2004 on the writing component of the HLAT. This table displays students' grade level of achievement in writing compared to enrolment grade.

TABLE 4
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF 2002, 2003 AND 2004 HLAT
GRADE LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT (GL OF A)
WRITING SCORES BY ENROLMENT GRADE

Grade	Year	>Minus 2	Minus 2	Minus 1	AT *	Plus 1	Plus 2	>Plus 2	N
1	2004			11.1	88.4	0.4	0.1		4981
1	2003			10.4	89.2	0.4			5145
1	2002			13.9	85.8	0.3			5291
2	2004		3.4	5.5	90.8	0.3			5397
2	2003		3.9	5.4	90.1	0.6			5512
2	2002		4.2	6.1	89.3	0.4			5552
3	2004	2.1	2.3	5.3	89.9	0.4			5517
3	2003	1.9	2.5	6.4	88.8	0.4			5616
3	2002	2.1	2.5	6.4	88.7	0.3			5559
4	2004	2.5	3.4	5.5	88.3	0.3			5641
4	2003	2.9	3.2	6.0	87.5	0.3	0.1		5650
4	2002	2.9	3.3	5.6	87.9	0.3			5656
5	2004	3.4	3.4	5.9	86.9	0.4			5690
5	2003	3.4	3.1	6.9	86.2	0.4			5741
5	2002	3.6	4.0	6.4	85.5	0.5			5986
6	2004	4.2	2.9	4.8	87.6	0.5			5803
6	2003	4.3	4.0	5.9	85.6	0.2			6032
6	2002	4.3	3.3	5.3	86.9	0.2			5865
7	2004	6.2	2.7	3.6	87.1	0.4			6063
7	2003	5.5	3.0	4.5	86.4	0.6			6048
7	2002	6.3	3.0	3.8	85.4	1.4	0.1		5944
8	2004	6.8	2.6	4.0	86.0	0.6			6047
8	2003	6.5	2.6	5.7	84.6	0.6			6007
8	2002	6.3	2.5	5.2	85.0	0.9	0.1		5895
9	2004	6.5	3.0	3.4	86.4	0.6	0.1		6022
9	2003	6.2	3.3	4.0	85.9	0.6			5888
Total	2004	3.7	2.7	5.3	87.9	0.4			51161
Total	2003	3.5	2.9	6.0	87.1	0.5			51641
Total	2002	3.2	2.9	6.5	86.8	0.6	0.0		45748

* "At" Means GL Of A Equals Enrolment Grade

For the population of students who were administered the writing test or were declared exempt from the writing task, the following generalizations can be made:

- 87.9 per cent of the students achieved a grade level of achievement in writing commensurate with their enrolment grade (an increase of 0.8 per cent relative to 2003).
- 0.4 per cent of students were judged to be writing above grade level (a decrease of 0.1 per cent relative to 2003).
- 11.7 per cent of the students were judged to be writing below grade level (a decrease of 0.7 per cent relative to 2003).
- generally, the grade level distribution of scores is very similar to the 2003 data

Writing Scores: Grade Level of Achievement and Performance

Writing scores were analyzed to determine the distribution of performance scores based on the grade level of achievement of the writing. Performance scores form a continuum of four levels: Limited, Adequate, Proficient, and Excellent. This information is provided in Table 5.

TABLE 5
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PERFORMANCE SCORES IN
WRITING BY GRADE LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT: JUNE 2004

Grade Level of Achievement	Percentage Of Students Achieving Each Performance Score				Number of Students
	Limited	Adequate	Proficient	Excellent	
<1	100.0				1230
1	26.2	45.0	20.4	8.4	4987
2	18.7	46.5	24.5	10.3	5636
3	18.4	47.0	25.3	9.3	5822
4	18.6	46.7	25.8	8.9	5828
5	15.4	47.4	26.3	10.9	5635
6	15.7	40.6	28.5	15.2	5575
7	15.1	48.9	26.7	9.3	5732
8	14.7	45.5	29.6	10.2	5434
9	10.3	42.5	33.3	13.9	5242
10			22.2	77.8	36
11			25.0	75.0	4
2004 Total	18.9	44.5	26.1	10.5	51161
2003 Total	21.0	43.6	25.1	10.3	51641
2002 Total	18.9	43.7	27.4	10.0	45748

Certain generalizations can be made from Table 5. These generalizations do not apply to papers judged to be at a grade 10 or grade 11 level of achievement since these papers have been judged to be at a grade level of achievement that is above enrolment grade. The following generalizations are apparent for papers judged to be at a grade 1 through grade 9 levels of achievement where, for the vast majority of the papers, grade level of achievement is commensurate with enrolment grade:

- the percentage of papers judged as “limited” tends to decrease as the grade level of achievement increases.
- The percentage of papers judged to be “adequate” or judged to be “excellent” remains fairly constant over the nine grade levels of achievement.
- The percentage of papers judged to be “proficient” tends to increase as the grade level of achievement increases.

The overall results for writing performance for 2004 show that the percentage of papers judged to be “limited” decreased by 2.1 per cent relative to 2003 results. The percentages of papers judged to be “adequate”, “proficient” and “excellent” increased relative to the 2003 results.

Growth Information

A by-student comparison was undertaken to compare reading and writing scores for individual students over a two-year time period. This data includes only those students who had a reading or a writing score for both 2003 and 2004. Table 6 provides information with respect to the change in reading scores over the two test administration.

**TABLE 6
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHOSE READING SCORES CHANGED
ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES BETWEEN 2003 AND 2004**

Enrolment Grade	Number of Students	Percentage of Students Whose Reading Scores				
		Regressed More Than 1 Grade Level	Regressed 1 Grade Level	Stayed The Same	Increased By 1 Grade Level	Increased By More Than 1 Grade Level
1	78	0.0	2.5	44.9	51.3	1.3
2	4780	0.0	0.9	15.4	65.5	18.2
3	4955	0.1	1.5	17.2	66.5	14.7
4	5090	0.3	1.4	19.2	67.6	11.5
5	5191	0.3	0.8	10.8	68.6	19.5
6	5309	0.4	0.7	13.6	68.4	16.9
7	5375	0.5	1.2	14.9	67.1	16.3
8	5521	0.3	0.5	15.9	69.3	14.0
9	5425	0.4	1.2	16.8	66.3	15.3
2004 Total	41724	0.3	1.0	15.5	67.4	15.8
2003 Total	41924	0.3	0.9	15.1	67.3	16.4
2002 Total	42001	0.3	1.1	15.7	67.7	15.2

The data in Table 6 indicates that 83.2 per cent of students increased their reading grade level of achievement by one or more grades between 2003 and 2004. This represents a 0.5 per cent decrease when compared to the growth data for 2003. A total of 16.8 per cent of the students showed no growth or regressed in reading as measured by HLAT in 2004.

A total of 78 students enrolled in grade 1 for a second year in 2004 also had a reading score in 2003. Just over half of these students demonstrated a years growth in reading between 2003 and 2004.

Of the 46 276 students in grades 2 through 6 who were included in the HLAT reading data in 2004, growth data is available for 41 724 students. This represents 90.2 per cent of the 2004 population. A total of 9.8 per cent of the 2004 population did not have an HLAT reading score in 2003.

Table 7 provides information with respect to the growth in writing scores over the last two test administrations.

TABLE 7
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHOSE WRITING SCORES CHANGED
ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES BETWEEN 2003 AND 2004

Enrolment Grade	Number of Students	Percentage of Students Whose Writing Scores				
		Regressed More Than 1 Grade Level	Regressed 1 Grade Level	Stayed The Same	Increased By 1 Grade Level	Increased By More Than 1 Grade Level
1	76	0.0	0.0	46.1	52.6	1.3
2	4780	0.0	0.3	5.4	86.2	8.1
3	4956	0.1	0.5	5.7	90.1	3.6
4	5079	0.1	0.5	5.2	89.9	4.3
5	5159	0.2	0.8	5.3	88.8	4.9
6	5315	0.1	0.8	4.8	88.3	6.0
7	5359	0.8	1.7	4.8	86.2	6.5
8	5500	0.7	1.3	5.8	86.4	5.8
9	5409	0.6	1.2	5.2	85.9	7.1
2004 Total	41633	0.3	0.9	5.3	87.7	5.8
2003 Total	41687	0.4	1.1	6.2	86.6	5.7

The data in Table 7 indicates that 93.5 per cent of students increased their writing score by one or more grade levels between 2003 and 2004, an increase of 1.2 per cent relative to the data for 2003. For 5.3 per cent of students, the 2004 grade level of achievement in writing remained the same as it had been in 2003. For 1.2 per cent of students, grade level of achievement in writing decreased by one or more grades.

A comparison of Tables 6 and 7 indicates that a higher percentage of students achieved one or more year's growth in writing (93.5 per cent) than in reading (83.2 per cent) between 2003 and 2004. One reason for this is that many students had achieved above grade level in the previous year, and achieved at grade level in the current year. Therefore, they do not "show" a year's growth in reading. However, since these students are currently reading "at" grade level, not showing a year's growth is not a significant issue. Very few students are judged to be "above grade level" for writing, so this phenomenon with the growth data for writing does not occur.

Distribution of Reading and Writing Grade Levels of Achievement for Students Receiving a Regular Allocation, for Students Receiving a Special Needs Allocation and for Students Receiving an English Second Language Allocation

Table 8 provides information on the distribution of HLAT reading and writing grade levels of achievement for regular, special needs and English Second Language (ESL) students for the 2004 and the 2003 test administration.

**TABLE 8
DISTRIBUTION OF SCORES FOR REGULAR, SPECIAL NEEDS AND ESL
STUDENTS IN READING AND WRITING FOR 2003 AND 2004**

Student Category	Year	Number	Percentage of Students Reading		
			Below Grade Level	At Grade Level	Above Grade Level
Regular	2004	43222	6.4	66.4	27.2
	2003	44129	7.3	66.3	26.4
Special Needs	2004	5653	65.4	32.0	2.6
	2003	5582	65.2	32.3	2.5
ESL	2004	2388	31.1	63.2	5.7
	2003	2262	31.0	64.3	4.7
Student Category		Number	Percentage of Students Writing		
			Below Grade Level	At Grade Level	Above Grade Level
Regular	2004	43160	4.0	95.5	0.5
	2003	44061	5.2	94.3	0.5
Special Needs	2004	5621	65.2	34.8	0.0
	2003	5576	68.1	31.9	0.0
ESL	2004	2379	23.7	76.2	0.1
	2003	2255	26.8	73.1	0.1

The information in Table 8 shows that the vast majority of students who are coded for regular programming were reading and writing at or above grade level. There was a slight decrease in the percentage of “regular” students reading and writing below grade level relative to 2003 data.

Approximately two out of three students in receipt of a special need allocation are reading and writing below grade level. The percentage of special needs students reading below grade level was almost exactly the same as in 2003; however, there was a decrease in the percentage of these students judged to be writing below grade level.

For students enrolled in ESL programming, 68.9 per cent were at or above grade level in reading and 76.3 per cent were judged to be at or above grade level in writing. The

percentage of ESL students reading at or above grade level remained almost the same as in 2003. There was a slight decrease in the percentage of ESL students judged to be writing below grade level relative to 2003.

AM:fm

APPENDIX I - Highest Level of Achievement Test Writing Task (Picture)

APPENDIX II - Evaluation: Performance Criteria and Achievement Criteria