

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

November 7, 2006

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: L. Thomson, Superintendent

SUBJECT: Highest Level of Achievement Test Results: June 2006

ORIGINATOR: T. Parker, Executive Director

RESOURCE
STAFF: Anne Mulgrew, Lorie Welk

INFORMATION

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the Highest Level of Achievement Tests (HLATs) results for 2005-06 and, based on the results, implications for the 2006-07 school year.

The major generalizations from the 2006 administration of the HLATs are as follows.

- Compared to the 2005 administration, the percentage of students overall reading and writing at or above grade level declined slightly.
- There were no substantial changes in the percentage of students reading at or above grade level except in grade 2 (-1.9%) and grade 7 (-1.9%).
- There were no substantial changes in the percentage of students writing at or above grade level except in grade 2 (-2.6%) and grade 4 (-2.0%).
- The proportion of English Language Learners (ELL) increased by 1.2 % (506 students) in the district compared to 2005. ELL students are more likely to experience challenges in English language literacy than native English speakers.

Description of the HLAT Program

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; HLATs provide annual grade level of achievement data in reading and writing for all students in grades 1 through 9.

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 2006 Results to 2005 Results

Table 1 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 the reading and writing components of HLAT.

TABLE 1
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ACHIEVING A GRADE LEVEL
OF ACHIEVEMENT EQUAL TO OR GREATER THAN THEIR
ENROLMENT GRADE: 2005 AND 2006 HLAT RESULTS

Enrolment Grade	Percentage Of Students At Or Above Grade Level					
	Reading			Writing		
	2005	2006	Difference	2005	2006	Difference
1	89.7	89.6	-0.1	90.1	90.2	+0.1
2	87.3	85.4	-1.9	93.0	90.4	-2.6
3	86.3	85.5	-0.8	91.0	90.7	-0.3
4	83.0	83.9	+0.9	88.9	86.9	-2.0
5	83.9	84.0	+0.1	88.0	87.0	-1.0
6	84.3	84.5	+0.2	88.4	88.1	-0.3
7	87.0	85.1	-1.9	87.9	88.3	+0.4
8	83.4	83.9	+0.5	87.8	88.1	+0.3
9	85.4	85.1	-0.3	88.2	88.9	+0.7
TOTAL	85.5	85.1	-0.4	89.2	88.7	-0.5

From Table 1, the following generalizations can be made.

For Reading

- In the 2006 administration of HLAT reading, the percentage of students reading at or above grade level ranged from 83.9 per cent at grades 4 and 8 to 89.6 per cent at grade 1.
- The overall percentage of students reading at or above grade level decreased by 0.4 per cent relative to 2005.
- With the exception of grades 2 and 7, the changes in the percentages of students reading at and above grade level were insignificant.

For Writing

- In the 2006 administration of HLAT writing, the percentage of students judged to be writing at or above grade level ranged from 86.9 per cent at grade 4 to 90.7 per cent at grade 3.
- The overall percentage of students judged to be writing at or above grade level decreased by 0.5 per cent relative to 2005.
- With the exception of grades 2 and 4, the changes in the percentages of students writing at and above grade level were insignificant.

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 Language Learners Allocation

Table 2 provides information on the distribution of reading and writing grade levels of achievement for regular, special needs and English Language Learners (ELL) students for the 2004, 2005 and 2006 HLAT administrations.

**TABLE 2
DISTRIBUTION OF SCORES FOR REGULAR, SPECIAL NEEDS AND ELL
STUDENTS IN READING AND WRITING FOR 2004, 2005 and 2006**

Student Category	Year	Number	Percentage of Students Reading		
			Below Grade Level	At Grade Level	Above Grade Level
Regular	2006	41048	6.5	65.9	27.6
	2005	42344	6.4	65.9	27.7
	2004	43222	6.4	66.4	27.2
Special Needs	2006	5631	67.2	30.4	2.4
	2005	5651	67.8	29.4	2.8
	2004	5653	65.4	32.0	2.6
ELL	2006	3018	30.4	62.7	6.9
	2005	2512	31.1	62.5	6.4
	2004	2388	31.1	63.2	5.7
Student Category	Year	Number	Percentage of Students Writing		
			Below Grade Level	At Grade Level	Above Grade Level
Regular	2006	41079	3.2	96.5	0.3
	2005	42336	3.3	96.2	0.5
	2004	43160	4.0	95.5	0.5
Special Needs	2006	5640	65.6	34.2	0.2
	2005	5631	63.7	36.2	0.1
	2004	5621	65.2	34.8	0.0
ELL	2006	3024	20.9	79.0	0.1
	2005	2508	19.7	80.3	0.0
	2004	2379	23.7	76.2	0.1

The information in Table 2 shows that the vast majority of students who are coded for regular programming were reading and writing at or above grade level, with essentially no change in the results over the past three years.

Approximately two-thirds of the students in receipt of a special needs allocation are reading and writing below grade level. This is not an unexpected result. With the exception of a few categories (e.g. challenge, extensions, behavior and learning assistance), the majority of

students who are identified as having special needs receive this coding because they are working two or more years below grade level. The 2006 results show that the percentage of special needs students reading at or above grade level increased by 0.6 per cent relative to the 2005 data. However, the percentage of these students judged to be writing at or above grade level decreased by 1.9 per cent. The number of students in receipt of a special needs allocation has remained fairly consistent over the past three years.

For students enrolled in ELL programming, 69.6 per cent were at or above grade level in reading and 79.1 per cent were judged to be at or above grade level in writing. The percentage of ELL students reading at or above grade level increased by 0.7 per cent relative to 2005. The percentage of ELL students judged to be writing at or above grade level decreased by 1.2 per cent relative to 2005. It should be noted that there has been a substantial increase in the number of ELL students identified within the district between 2005 and 2006. The increase in the number of identified ELL students would have made a small impact on overall district results.

Implications for Action

HLAT data informs decisions made at the school level. At the district level, a number of district-wide initiatives have been put in place to support schools in their efforts to increase the numbers of students who can read and write at or above grade level.

1. As part of the cycle-3 AISI projects, particularly Deepening Literacy Instruction and Interagency Collaboration, schools are investigating strategies that best support students in their literacy development.
2. The English Language Services Support Centre and Multilingual Services continue to provide support and services to the district's growing population of ELL learners and their families.
3. The district, in collaboration with external agencies, is developing programs to support success for all students, but particularly First Nations, Métis and Inuit students.

The HLAT program is one way that the district monitors the impact of these initiatives, especially for students who are struggling with their literacy development.

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