

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

September 12, 2000

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dosedall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Highest Level of Achievement Test Results: June 2000

ORIGINATOR: Gary Reynolds, Department Head

RESOURCE

STAFF: Anne Mulgrew, Lorie Welk

INFORMATION

During the two week time period of April 24 to May 5, 2000, students enrolled in grades 1 to 9 wrote the Highest Level of Achievement Tests (HLAT) in reading, and students enrolled in grades 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, and 8 were administered the writing task. The HLAT program provides student, school, and district information that is different from that provided by the provincial achievement test program. Results from the provincial achievement tests provide performance information about how well students are demonstrating provincial standards in mathematics and language arts in grades 3, 6, and 9, and in social studies and science in grades 6 and 9. HLATs provide annual grade level of achievement data for district students registered in grades one to nine, and information about student growth in reading and writing. They provide information that students, teachers, and parents can use for making individual programming decisions, as well as information that is useful to staff, trustees and members of the community for accountability purposes.

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 1998. 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.

Results

Table 1 provides information on the number of students writing by enrolment grade. Students registered in a division rather than a grade were included in this analysis by equating their year-in-school to an enrolment grade.

**TABLE 1
DISTRICT STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE
HIGHEST LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT TESTS: JUNE 2000**

Enrolment Grade	Reading						Writing					
	Wrote		Exempt		Absent		Wrote		Exempt		Absent	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	n	%
1	5287	92.7	226	4.0	191	3.3	5299	92.9	204	3.6	201	3.5
2	5461	95.9	68	1.2	168	2.9	5451	95.7	49	0.9	198	3.4
3	5808	97.1	67	1.1	108	1.8	DID NOT WRITE					
4	5776	97.0	60	1.0	118	2.0	5750	96.6	59	1.0	145	2.4
5	5827	97.4	34	0.6	118	2.0	5780	96.7	37	0.6	162	2.7
6	5742	97.1	44	0.7	128	2.2	DID NOT WRITE					
7	5708	96.3	16	0.3	200	3.4	5660	95.6	20	0.3	244	4.1
8	5719	95.3	11	0.2	273	4.5	5646	94.1	13	0.2	344	5.7
9	5743	95.0	12	0.2	288	4.8	DID NOT WRITE					
2000 Total	51072	96.0	538	1.0	1592	3.0	33586	95.2	382	1.1	1294	3.7
1999 Total	50949	96.5	592	1.1	1279	2.4	33830	96.1	378	1.1	1008	2.8
1998 Total	50728	96.0	617	1.2	1467	2.8	33805	95.8	449	1.3	1020	2.9

For the reading component, the participation rate ranged from a low of 92.7 per cent at grade 1 to a high of 97.4 per cent at grade 5. The grade 1 data is influenced by 115 of 244 French immersion students being exempted from the reading test. Overall for reading, 1.0 per cent of students were declared exempt and 3.0 per cent of students were absent. These numbers reflect a decrease in the percentage of students declared exempt but an increase in the percentage of students absent relative to 1999 data.

For the writing component, the participation rate ranged from a low of 92.9 per cent at grade 1 to a high of 96.7 per cent at grade 5. As with reading, 135 French immersion students enrolled in grade 1 were exempted from the writing task.

Analysis of Results by Enrolment Grade

The following guidelines were followed in analyzing the data:

- students registered in divisions were included with graded groups based on their year-in-school
- students exempted from either the reading or writing component were included in the data 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 are not included in the data

Reading

Table 2 provides information for 1998, 1999 and 2000 on the reading component of the HLAT. This analysis compares students' grade level of achievement in reading to the grade level in which students are enrolled.

TABLE 2
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF 1998, 1999 AND 2000 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	2000			15.3	66.1	16.5	2.1		5513
1	1999			15.0	67.1	15.8	2.1		5560
1	1998			15.8	67.6	14.7	1.9		5903
2	2000		3.1	13.1	63.6	17.2	3.0		5530
2	1999		3.5	12.5	64.7	16.5	2.8		5866
2	1998		3.9	13.1	64.1	16.3	2.6		5842
3	2000	2.1	3.9	9.2	66.1	16.9	1.8		5875
3	1999	2.2	2.9	9.5	66.9	16.1	2.4		5854
3	1998	2.2	3.8	10.1	66.0	15.8	2.1		5664
4	2000	3.2	2.6	9.8	67.3	15.0	2.1		5836
4	1999	2.6	2.6	11.9	67.1	13.7	2.1		5746
4	1998	2.5	2.8	11.7	66.2	14.5	2.3		5652
5	2000	2.9	2.7	10.2	61.0	19.8	3.4		5861
5	1999	3.1	3.1	10.9	60.6	18.6	3.7		5735
5	1998	2.9	2.7	12.0	59.8	18.9	3.7		5614
6	2000	3.5	2.0	9.7	60.3	19.7	4.8		5786
6	1999	3.4	1.8	11.4	60.0	18.5	4.9		5694
6	1998	3.0	2.6	11.3	60.2	18.0	4.9		5783
7	2000	3.0	1.7	8.8	61.8	19.6	5.1		5724
7	1999	3.6	1.4	8.3	62.1	20.0	4.6		5732
7	1998	3.2	1.4	8.2	63.6	19.0	4.6		5733
8	2000	3.4	1.4	10.8	58.9	21.0	4.5		5730
8	1999	3.3	1.5	10.6	59.9	20.2	4.5		5794
8	1998	3.0	1.5	11.2	59.5	20.1	4.7		5605
9	2000	3.0	1.7	8.3	63.6	19.7	3.7		5755
9	1999	2.8	1.7	8.9	63.8	18.8	4.0		5558
9	1998	3.3	1.8	9.4	63.6	17.7	4.2		5549
Total	2000	2.4	2.1	10.5	63.2	18.4	3.4		51610
Total	1999	2.3	2.1	11.0	63.6	17.5	3.5		51539
Total	1998	2.2	2.3	11.5	63.4	17.2	3.4		51345

* "At" Means GL Of A Equals Enrolment Grade

For the population of students that wrote the reading test or were exempted, the following generalizations can be made:

- 63.2 per cent of the students achieved a grade level of achievement in reading commensurate with their enrolment grade (a decrease of 0.4 per cent from 1999)
- 21.8 per cent achieved a grade level of achievement in reading that was higher than their enrolment grade (an increase of 0.8 per cent from 1999)
- 15.0 per cent achieved a grade level of achievement that was lower than their enrolment grade (a decrease of 0.4 per cent from 1999)

Writing

Table 3 provides results from 1998, 1999 and 2000 on the writing component of the HLAT.

TABLE 3
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF 1998, 1999 AND 2000 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	2000			17.7	81.4	0.9			5503
1	1999			16.0	83.2	0.8			5554
1	1998			16.7	82.6	0.7			5910
2	2000		3.6	6.9	88.8	0.6	0.1		5500
2	1999		3.6	6.4	88.8	1.1	0.1		5857
2	1998		3.8	7.1	88.4	0.6	0.1		5836
4	2000	3.1	3.4	7.6	85.2	0.6	0.1		5809
4	1999	2.5	4.3	9.0	83.3	0.8	0.1		5712
4	1998	2.2	3.5	7.6	85.6	1.0	0.1		5636
5	2000	3.2	4.8	8.5	82.5	1.0			5817
5	1999	3.6	4.4	8.9	82.3	0.8			5687
5	1998	3.2	4.3	6.8	84.3	1.3	0.1		5585
7	2000	6.2	3.2	5.7	84.2	0.7			5680
7	1999	6.4	4.1	4.6	83.9	0.8	0.2		5671
7	1998	5.5	3.0	4.9	84.7	1.6	0.3		5723
8	2000	6.7	2.9	6.3	83.0	1.0	0.1		5659
8	1999	6.6	3.1	4.5	85.0	0.7	0.1		5727
8	1998	5.1	2.6	6.3	83.9	2.0	0.1		5564
Total	2000	3.2	3.0	8.7	84.2	0.8	0.1		33968
Total	1999	3.2	3.3	8.2	84.4	0.8	0.1		34208
Total	1998	2.7	2.8	8.3	84.9	1.2	0.1		34254

* "At" Means GL Of A Equals Enrolment Grade

For the population of students that wrote the writing test or were exempted, the following generalizations can be made:

- 84.2 per cent of the students achieved a grade level of achievement in writing commensurate with their enrolment grade (an decrease of 0.2 per cent from 1999)
- 0.9 per cent of the students attained a grade level of achievement in writing that was higher than their enrolment grade (no change from 1999)
- 14.9 per cent of the students attained a grade level of achievement in writing that was lower than their enrolment grade (an increase of 0.2 per cent from 1999)

Table 4 provides a 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 4
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ACHIEVING A GRADE LEVEL
OF ACHIEVEMENT EQUAL TO OR GREATER THAN THEIR
ENROLMENT GRADE: JUNE 1999 AND 2000

Enrolment Grade	Percentage of Students			
	Reading		Writing	
	1999	2000	1999	2000
1	85.0	84.7	84.0	82.3
2	84.0	83.8	90.0	89.5
3	85.4	84.8	n/a	n/a
4	82.9	84.4	84.2	85.9
5	82.9	84.2	83.1	83.5
6	83.4	84.8	n/a	n/a
7	86.7	86.5	84.9	84.9
8	84.6	84.4	85.8	84.1
9	86.6	87.0	n/a	n/a
Total	84.6	85.0	85.3	85.1

From Table 4, the following generalizations can be made:

- in June 2000, the percentage of students attaining a grade level of achievement in reading equal to or greater than their enrolment grade ranged from a high of 87.0 per cent at grade 9 to a low of 83.8 per cent at grade 2
- in June 2000, the percentage of students who achieved a grade level of achievement in writing equal to or greater than their enrolment grade ranged from a high of 89.5 per cent at grade 2 to a low of 82.3 per cent at grade 1
- the percentage of students attaining a grade level of achievement equal to or greater than their enrolment grade increased 0.4 per cent for reading, but decreased 0.2 per cent for writing compared to 1999
- the percentage of students reading at or above grade level increased for enrolment grades 4, 5, 6 and 9 but decreased for grades 1, 2, 3, 7, and 8 between 1999 and 2000
- the percentage of students judged to be writing at or above grade level increased for enrolment grades 4 and 5, but decreased for grades 1, 2, and 8 between 1999 and 2000

Differences Between Reading and Writing

Although the percentages of students achieving at or above their enrolment grade were very similar for reading and writing, the distribution of scores was very different. This information is provided in Table 5.

**TABLE 5
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF SCORES
FOR READING AND WRITING: JUNE 2000**

Enrolment Grade	Reading			Writing		
	Below	At	Above	Below	At	Above
1	15.3	66.1	18.6	17.7	81.4	0.9
2	16.2	63.6	20.2	10.5	88.8	0.7
3	15.2	66.1	18.7	DID NOT WRITE		
4	15.6	67.3	17.1	14.1	85.2	0.7
5	15.8	61.0	23.2	16.5	82.5	1.0
6	15.2	60.3	24.5	DID NOT WRITE		
7	13.5	61.8	24.7	15.1	84.2	0.7
8	15.6	58.9	25.5	15.9	83.0	1.1
9	13.0	63.6	23.4	DID NOT WRITE		
2000 Total	15.0	63.2	21.8	14.9	84.2	0.9
1999 Total	15.4	63.6	21.0	14.7	84.4	0.9
1998 Total	16.0	63.4	20.6	13.8	84.9	1.3

From the information in Table 5, the following generalizations can be made:

- the percentage of students below grade level in reading ranges from 13.0 per cent (grade 9) to 16.2 per cent (grade 2)
- the percentage of students below grade level in writing ranges from 10.5 per cent (grade 2) to 17.7 per cent (grade 1)
- the percentage of students below grade level in reading has decreased over the past three years, while the percentage of students below grade level in writing has increased

This pattern of results is very similar to those obtained in the past three years, and may reflect the reluctance of staff to judge students' writing at a grade level that exceeds their enrolment grade.

Writing Scores: Grade Level of Achievement and Performance

Writing scores were analyzed to determine the distribution of performance scores (limited to excellent) based on the grade level of achievement of the writing. This information is provided in Table 6.

TABLE 6
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PERFORMANCE SCORES IN
WRITING BY GRADE LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT: JUNE 2000

Grade Level of Achievement	Limited	Adequate	Proficient	Excellent	N
<1	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1366
1	27.8	40.9	20.3	11.0	5013
2	18.9	46.2	24.0	10.9	5353
3	51.7	41.0	5.6	1.7	942
4	20.8	46.4	23.6	9.2	5660
5	16.4	43.9	26.9	12.8	5144
6	48.6	36.5	8.7	6.2	553
7	18.2	46.7	26.5	8.6	5141
8	14.8	41.7	31.5	12.0	4734
9	1.8	5.5	49.1	43.6	55
10	0.0	0.0	20.0	80.0	5
11	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	1
2000 Total	24.1	42.3	23.6	10.0	33968
1999 Total	22.5	43.8	24.2	9.4	34208
1998 Total	21.4	41.4	26.8	10.4	34254

As students enrolled in grades 3, 6, and 9 were not administered the writing task, it is difficult to identify trends. Generally, the percentage of students judged as “limited” decreases as the grade level of achievement increases. Papers judged to be at grade 3 or 6 do not fit this pattern as these papers have been judged to be at grade levels different from enrolment grade. Just over 94 per cent of the papers judged to be “grade 3” were written by students enrolled in grades 4, 5, 7, and 8 and 88 per cent of the papers judged to be “grade 6” were written by students enrolled in grades 7 and 8. The majority of these papers were given performance scores of “limited” or “adequate”.

The percentage of papers judged to be “adequate” remains fairly consistent except for those papers judged to be at a grade 9 level of achievement. All of these papers were written by students enrolled in grades 7 and 8, and were typically judged to be either “proficient” or “excellent.”

The percentage of papers judged “proficient” tends to increase as the grade level of achievement increases. As with previous categories, papers judged to be at a grade 3, 6, or 9 level of achievement do not fit the pattern.

The overall results for 2000 compared to 1999 indicate that the percentages of papers judged limited and the percentage of papers judged excellent increased. The percentages of papers judged adequate and proficient decreased.

Comparison of 1999 to 2000 Results

A by-student comparison was undertaken to compare reading and writing scores for individual students over two years. This data includes only those students who had a reading score or a writing score for both 1999 and 2000. Table 7 provides information with respect to the change in reading scores over the two test administrations.

**TABLE 7
HLAT READING
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHOSE READING SCORES CHANGED
ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES BETWEEN 1999 AND 2000**

Enrolment Grade	Number of Students	Regressed More Than 1 Grade Level	Regressed 1 Grade Level	Grade Level Stayed the Same	Grade Level Increased by 1	Grade Level Increased More Than 1
1	95	0.0	2.1	44.2	51.6	2.1
2	4926	0.0	1.2	17.2	64.7	16.9
3	5304	0.1	1.7	16.6	67.4	14.2
4	5308	0.4	1.1	17.3	67.7	13.5
5	5301	0.3	0.7	9.9	69.4	19.7
6	5291	0.4	0.7	12.7	68.8	17.4
7	5053	0.4	0.8	14.0	67.3	17.5
8	5145	0.4	0.7	15.4	68.6	14.9
9	5166	0.4	0.9	16.4	67.5	14.8
2000 Total	41589	0.3	1.0	15.0	67.6	16.1
1999 Total	41506	0.4	1.0	14.7	67.4	16.5
1998 Total	41010	0.5	1.2	15.4	67.0	15.9

The data in Table 7 indicates that 83.7 per cent of students increased their reading grade level of achievement by one or more grades between 1999 and 2000. This represents a decrease of 0.2 per cent when compared to the growth data for 1999. For 15.0 per cent of students, their 2000 grade level of achievement in reading stayed the same as in 1999. For 1.3 per cent of the students, their grade level of achievement in 2000 was one or more grade levels below their score in 1999.

A total of 95 students enrolled in grade 1 for a second time in 2000 also had a reading score in 1999. Just over half of these students increased their grade level of achievement in reading by one or more grades between 1999 and 2000. For students enrolled in grades 2 through 9, the percentage of students whose grade level of achievement increased by one ranged from a low of 64.7 per cent at grade 2 to a high of 69.4 per cent at grade 5. The percentage of students whose grade level of achievement increased by more than one grade ranged from 13.5 per cent at grade 4 to 19.7 per cent at grade 5.

Table 8 provides information with respect to the change in writing scores over the last two test administrations.

**TABLE 8
HLAT WRITING
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHOSE WRITING SCORES CHANGED
ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES BETWEEN 1999 AND 2000**

Enrolment Grade	Number of Students	Regressed More Than 1 Grade Level	Regressed 1 Grade Level	Grade Level Stayed the Same	Grade Level Increased by 1	Grade Level Increased More Than 1
2	4894	0.0	0.4	6.7	84.8	8.1
5	5227	0.1	1.4	7.7	84.1	6.7
8	5043	1.2	2.0	7.4	81.8	7.6
2000 Total	15164	0.4	1.3	7.3	83.5	7.5
1999 Total	15498	0.5	1.3	7.0	84.0	7.2
1998 Total	15151	0.5	0.9	6.2	83.0	9.4

Growth information in writing is available only for students enrolled in grades 2, 5, and 8. This is because students enrolled in grades 3, 6, and 9 are not administered the HLAT writing task as they must complete a written component as part of the Alberta Learning Language Arts Achievement Test.

The data in Table 8 indicates that 91.0 per cent of students increased their writing score by one or more grade levels between 1999 and 2000, a decrease of 0.2 percent from 1999 data. For 7.3 per cent of the students, the grade level of achievement in writing in 2000 remained the same as it had been in 1999. For 1.7 per cent of the students, the grade level in writing decreased by one or more grades.

A comparison of Table 7 and Table 8 indicates that a higher percentage of students achieved one or more year's growth in writing (91.0 per cent) than in reading (83.7 per cent) between 1999 and 2000.

Results for Students in Receipt of a Special Needs Allocation, Languages Other Than English Programs, or Alternative Programs

Data for students in receipt of a special needs allocation is provided in Tables 9 to 34 in Appendix III. Data for students registered in French immersion, or bilingual programs are provided in Tables 35 to 48 in Appendix IV. Data for students enrolled in alternative programs is provided in Tables 49 to 66 in Appendix V.

Results of the HLAT Writing Audit

Each year, three student booklets from participating homerooms are submitted for a central audit. The purpose of the audit is to determine if the writing criteria are being applied consistently across the district. Results from the July 2000 audit show that 77.6 per cent of the papers were found through the audit process to match the teacher-assigned scores. This is the highest percentage match that has been obtained since the introduction of the HLAT test program. Detailed results from the audit process are provided in Appendix VI.

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- APPENDIX I - Highest Level of Achievement Test Writing Task (Adventure)
- APPENDIX II - Evaluation: Performance Criteria and Achievement Criteria
- APPENDIX III - Results for Students in Receipt of a Special Needs Allocation
- APPENDIX IV - Results for Students in Immersion or Bilingual Programs
- APPENDIX V - Results for Students Enrolled in Alternative Programs
- APPENDIX VI - Results from the Audit of the HLAT Writing Task: 2000