

## EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

September 28, 1999

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dosedall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Highest Level of Achievement Test Results: June 1999

ORIGINATOR: G. Reynolds, Department Head

RESOURCE

STAFF: Anne Mulgrew, Lorie Welk

### INFORMATION

During the two week time period of April 26 to May 7, 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: May 1999**

Enrolment Grade	Reading						Writing					
	Wrote		Exempt		Absent		Wrote		Exempt		Absent	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	n	%
1	5353	93.6	207	3.6	161	2.8	5374	93.9	180	3.1	168	3.0
2	5774	96.5	94	1.6	114	1.9	5796	97.0	61	1.0	121	2.0
3	5778	97.3	76	1.3	83	1.4	DID NOT WRITE					
4	5700	97.8	46	0.8	83	1.4	5670	97.3	42	0.7	115	2.0
5	5690	98.0	45	0.8	73	1.2	5647	97.4	40	0.7	112	1.9
6	5646	98.0	48	0.8	71	1.2	DID NOT WRITE					
7	5703	96.5	29	0.5	176	3.0	5641	95.7	30	0.5	226	3.8
8	5769	95.9	25	0.4	221	3.7	5702	95.2	25	0.4	266	4.4
9	5536	94.5	22	0.4	297	5.1	DID NOT WRITE					
<b>1999 Total</b>	<b>50949</b>	<b>96.5</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>1279</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>33830</b>	<b>96.1</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>1008</b>	<b>2.8</b>
1998 Total	50728	96.0	617	1.2	1467	2.8	33805	95.8	449	1.3	1020	2.9
1997 Total	50139	96.4	667	1.3	1192	2.3	33441	96.1	448	1.3	918	2.6

For the reading component, the participation rate ranged from a low of 93.6 per cent at grade 1 to a high of 98.0 per cent at grades 5 and 6. The grade 1 data is influenced by 103 of 238 French immersion students being exempted from the reading test. Overall for reading, 1.1 per cent of students were declared exempt and 2.4 per cent of students were absent. These numbers reflect a decrease in the percentage of students declared exempt and absent relative to 1998 data.

For the writing component, the participation rate ranged from a low of 93.9 per cent at grade 1 to a high of 97.4 per cent at grade 5. As with reading, 124 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

This analysis compares students' grade level of achievement in reading and writing to the grade level in which students are enrolled.

## Reading

Table 2 provides information for 1997-99 on the reading component of the HLAT.

**TABLE 2**  
**PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF 1997, 1998 AND 1999 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
<b>1</b>	<b>1999</b>			<b>15.0</b>	<b>67.1</b>	<b>15.8</b>	<b>2.1</b>		<b>5560</b>
1	1998			15.8	67.6	14.7	1.9		5903
1	1997			16.9	65.8	14.3	3.0		5952
<b>2</b>	<b>1999</b>		<b>3.5</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>64.7</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>2.8</b>		<b>5866</b>
2	1998		3.9	13.1	64.1	16.3	2.6		5842
2	1997		3.6	14.0	62.6	18.0	1.8		5668
<b>3</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>66.9</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>2.4</b>		<b>5854</b>
3	1998	2.2	3.8	10.1	66.0	15.8	2.1		5664
3	1997	2.2	3.2	10.6	65.0	16.5	2.5		5704
<b>4</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>67.1</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>2.1</b>		<b>5746</b>
4	1998	2.5	2.8	11.7	66.2	14.5	2.3		5652
4	1997	2.5	3.0	11.8	66.6	13.6	2.5		5577
<b>5</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>60.6</b>	<b>18.6</b>	<b>3.7</b>		<b>5735</b>
5	1998	2.9	2.7	12.0	59.8	18.9	3.7		5614
5	1997	2.7	3.0	12.2	58.7	19.5	3.9		5767
<b>6</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>60.0</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>4.9</b>		<b>5694</b>
6	1998	3.0	2.6	11.3	60.2	18.0	4.9		5783
6	1997	3.2	1.9	10.6	62.0	17.8	4.5		5810
<b>7</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>62.1</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>4.6</b>		<b>5732</b>
7	1998	3.2	1.4	8.2	63.6	19.0	4.6		5733
7	1997	2.1	1.6	9.3	62.9	19.5	4.6		5592
<b>8</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>59.9</b>	<b>20.2</b>	<b>4.5</b>		<b>5794</b>
8	1998	3.0	1.5	11.2	59.5	20.1	4.7		5605
8	1997	2.3	1.8	11.0	61.2	19.0	4.7		5512
<b>9</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>63.8</b>	<b>18.8</b>	<b>4.0</b>		<b>5558</b>
9	1998	3.3	1.8	9.4	63.6	17.7	4.2		5549
9	1997	2.8	2.2	9.8	63.4	18.5	3.3		5224
<b>Total</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>63.6</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>3.5</b>		<b>51539</b>
Total	1998	2.2	2.3	11.5	63.4	17.2	3.4		51345
Total	1997	2.0	2.2	11.9	63.1	17.4	3.4		50806

\* "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:

- 63.6 per cent of the students achieved a grade level of achievement in reading commensurate with their enrolment grade (an increase of 0.2 per cent from 1998)
- 21.0 per cent achieved a grade level of achievement in reading that was higher than their enrolment grade (an increase of 0.4 per cent from 1998)
- 15.4 per cent achieved a grade level of achievement that was lower than their enrolment grade (a decrease of 0.6 per cent from 1998)

## Writing

Table 3 provides results from 1997, 1998 and 1999 on the writing component of the HLAT.

**Table 3**  
**PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF 1997, 1998 AND 1999 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
<b>1</b>	<b>1999</b>			<b>16.0</b>	<b>83.2</b>	<b>0.8</b>			<b>5554</b>
1	1998			16.7	82.6	0.7			5910
1	1997			20.9	78.1	1.0			5953
<b>2</b>	<b>1999</b>		<b>3.6</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>88.8</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>0.1</b>		<b>5857</b>
2	1998		3.8	7.1	88.4	0.6	0.1		5836
2	1997		4.5	9.8	84.5	1.1	0.1		5653
<b>4</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>83.3</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.1</b>		<b>5712</b>
4	1998	2.2	3.5	7.6	85.6	1.0	0.1		5636
4	1997	2.8	4.2	8.9	83.1	1.0			5526
<b>5</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>82.3</b>	<b>0.8</b>			<b>5687</b>
5	1998	3.2	4.3	6.8	84.3	1.3	0.1		5585
5	1997	4.1	4.5	9.7	80.2	1.4	0.1		5730
<b>7</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>83.9</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.2</b>		<b>5671</b>
7	1998	5.5	3.0	4.9	84.7	1.6	0.3		5723
7	1997	4.7	2.8	5.4	84.8	2.2	0.1		5535
<b>8</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>85.0</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.1</b>		<b>5727</b>
8	1998	5.1	2.6	6.3	83.9	2.0	0.1		5564
8	1997	5.4	2.9	5.4	83.9	2.0	0.4		5492
<b>Total</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>84.4</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.1</b>		<b>34208</b>
Total	1998	2.7	2.8	8.3	84.9	1.2	0.1		34254
Total	1997	2.8	3.1	10.2	82.4	1.4	0.1		33889

\* "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:

- 84.4 per cent of the students achieved a grade level of achievement in writing commensurate with their enrolment grade (an decrease of 0.5 per cent from 1998)
- 0.9 per cent of the students attained a grade level of achievement in writing that was higher than their enrolment grade (a decrease of 0.4 per cent from 1998)
- 14.7 per cent of the students attained a grade level of achievement in writing that was lower than their enrolment grade (an increase of 0.9 per cent from 1998)

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**

Enrolment Grade	Percentage of Students	
	Reading	Writing
1	85.0	84.0
2	84.0	90.0
3	85.4	n/a
4	82.9	84.2
5	82.9	83.1
6	83.4	n/a
7	86.7	84.9
8	84.6	85.8
9	86.6	n/a
<b>1999 Total</b>	<b>84.6</b>	<b>85.3</b>
1998 Total	84.0	86.2
1997 Total	83.9	83.9

From Table 4, the following generalizations can be made:

- 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 86.7 per cent at grade 7 to a low of 82.9 per cent at grades 4 and 5
- 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 90.0 per cent at grade 2 to a low of 83.1 per cent at grade 5
- the percentage of students attaining a grade level of achievement equal to or greater than their enrolment grade increased 0.6 per cent for reading, but decreased 0.9 per cent for writing compared to 1998

Figures 1 and 2 on the following two pages provide information on the average grade level of achievement in reading and writing in 1999 based on enrolment grade. For reading, the average grade level of achievement is equal to or higher than expected at grades 1, 2, and 7 and slightly lower than expected at grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 9. For writing, the average grade level of achievement is less than expected at all six grade levels that were tested. The

difference between the average grade level achieved and the expected grade level for writing tends to increase as enrolment grade increases. As well, the average grade level of achievement in writing is lower than the average grade level in reading at all six grade levels.

### 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 1999**

Enrolment Grade	Reading			Writing		
	Below	At	Above	Below	At	Above
1	15.0	67.1	17.9	16.0	83.2	0.8
2	16.0	64.7	19.3	10.0	88.8	1.2
3	14.6	66.9	18.5			
4	17.1	67.1	15.8	15.8	83.3	0.9
5	17.1	60.6	22.3	16.9	82.3	0.8
6	16.6	60.6	23.4	DID NOT WRITE		
7	13.3	62.1	24.6	15.1	83.9	1.0
8	15.4	59.9	24.6	14.2	85.0	0.8
9	13.4	63.8	22.8	DID NOT WRITE		
<b>1999 Total</b>	<b>15.4</b>	<b>63.6</b>	<b>21.0</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>84.4</b>	<b>0.9</b>
1998 Total	16.0	63.4	20.6	13.8	84.9	1.3
1997 Total	16.1	63.1	20.8	16.1	82.4	1.5

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

- the percentage of students below grade level in reading ranges from 13.3 per cent (grade 7) to 17.1 per cent (grades 4 and 5)
- the percentage of students below grade level in writing ranges from 10.0 per cent (grade 2) to 16.9 per cent (grade 5)
- a higher percentage of students were “at” grade level in writing than in reading
- a higher percentage of students were above grade level in reading than in writing

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 which 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 1999**

Grade Level of Achievement	Limited	Adequate	Proficient	Excellent	N
<1	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1289
1	26.9	43.8	19.3	10.0	5156
2	19.1	45.9	23.2	11.8	5691
3	41.3	49.7	6.5	2.5	1007
4	17.3	44.9	26.9	10.9	5505
5	18.6	44.0	27.5	9.9	5087
6	42.8	42.4	8.9	6.0	484
7	16.5	47.9	27.9	7.7	5016
8	11.9	46.2	31.7	10.2	4915
9	6.1	10.2	38.8	44.9	49
10	0.0	0.0	14.3	85.7	7
11	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	1
<b>1999 Total</b>	<b>22.5</b>	<b>43.8</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>34208</b>
1998 Total	21.4	41.4	26.8	10.4	34254
1997 Total	24.2	42.6	24.1	9.1	33889

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. Almost 94 per cent of the papers judged to be “grade 3” were written by students enrolled in grades 4, 5, 7, and 8 and 90 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 1999 compared to 1998 indicate that the percentages of papers judged limited or adequate increased, and the percentages of papers judged proficient or excellent decreased.

## Comparison of 1998 to 1999 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 1998 and 1999. 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 1998 and 1999**

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	104	0.0	2.9	48.1	47.1	1.9
2	5244	0.0	1.0	16.0	66.1	16.9
3	5277	0.2	1.5	15.8	67.3	15.2
4	5167	0.3	1.2	16.2	67.8	14.5
5	5189	0.4	0.7	11.6	67.0	20.3
6	5214	0.5	.08	13.5	66.9	18.3
7	51.0	0.8	1.1	13.4	67.3	17.4
8	5198	0.5	0.8	14.5	70.3	13.9
9	5010	0.5	1.2	15.7	67.3	15.3
<b>1999 Total</b>	<b>41506</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>67.4</b>	<b>16.5</b>
1998 Total	41010	0.5	1.2	15.4	67.0	15.9
1997 Total	40073	0.4	1.1	13.7	68.5	16.4

The data in Table 7 indicates that 83.9 per cent of students increased their reading grade level of achievement by one or more grades between 1998 and 1999. This represents an increase of 1.0 per cent when compared to the growth data for 1998. For 14.7 per cent of students, their 1999 grade level of achievement in reading stayed the same as in 1998. For 1.4 per cent of the students, their grade level of achievement in 1999 was one or more grade levels below their score in 1998.

A total of 104 students enrolled in grade 1 for a second time in 1999 also had a reading score in 1998. Fewer than half of these students increased their grade level of achievement in reading by one or more grades between 1998 and 1999. 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 66.1 per cent at grade 2 to a high of 70.3 per cent at grade 8. The percentage of students whose grade level of achievement increased by more than one year ranged from 13.9 per cent at grade 8 to 20.3 per cent at grade 5.

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

**TABLE 8**  
**HLAT WRITING**  
**Percentage of Students Whose Writing Scores Changed**  
**According to the Following Categories Between**



## 1998 and 1999

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	5233	0.0	0.3	6.0	84.1	9.6
5	5134	0.2	1.5	8.8	83.8	5.7
8	5131	1.2	2.2	6.3	84.1	6.2
<b>1999 Total</b>	<b>15498</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>84.0</b>	<b>7.2</b>
1998 Total	15151	0.5	0.9	6.2	83.0	9.4
1997 Total	14886	0.5	1.5	7.9	81.0	9.1

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 Education Language Arts Achievement Test.

The data in Table 8 indicates that 91.2 per cent of students increased their writing score by one or more grade levels between 1998 and 1999, a decrease of 1.2 percent from 1998 data. For 7.0 per cent of the students, the grade level of achievement in writing in 1999 remained the same as it had been in 1998. For 1.8 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 years growth in writing (91.2 per cent) than in reading (83.9 per cent) between 1998 and 1999.

### **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 32 in Appendix III. Data for students registered in French immersion, or bilingual programs are

provided in Tables 33 to 46 in Appendix IV. Data for students enrolled in alternative programs is provided in Tables 47 to 68 in Appendix V.

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