

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

September 30, 2003

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Highest Level of Achievement Test Results: June 2003

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

RESOURCE
STAFF: Anne Mulgrew, Lorie Welk

INFORMATION

Executive Summary

The major generalizations from the 2003 administration of the Highest Level of Achievement Test (HLATs) are as follows.

- The percentage of students absent from HLAT reading and writing remained identical to 2002.
- The percentage of students declared exempt increased by 0.2 per cent relative to the 2002 administration, primarily because all grade 1 French Immersion students were declared exempt from the 2003 administration.
- The percentage of students reading at or above grade level increased by 0.5 per cent relative to 2002.
- The percentage of students judged to be writing at or above grade level remained the same as in 2002.
- For HLAT writing performance, the percentage of papers judged to be “limited” increased by 2.1 per cent, while the percentage of papers judged to be “proficient” decreased by 2.3 per cent relative to the previous year.
- There was a 0.8 per cent increase in the percentage of students achieving one or more year’s growth in reading relative to the previous year.
- There was a 0.6 per cent decrease in the percentage of students achieving one or more year’s growth in writing compared to 2002.

During the two week period from April 21 to May 2, 2003, students enrolled in grades 1 to 9 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 2001. 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 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.

TABLE 1
DISTRICT STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN
HIGHEST LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT TESTING: JUNES 2003

Enrolment Grade	Reading						Writing					
	Wrote		Exempt		Absent		Wrote		Exempt		Absent	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	5043	89.7	343	6.1	234	4.2	5091	90.6	305	5.4	224	4.0
2	5402	94.4	106	1.9	213	3.7	5426	94.8	86	1.5	209	3.7
3	5564	95.7	55	0.9	195	3.4	5561	95.7	55	0.9	198	3.4
4	5604	96.2	49	0.8	173	3.0	5560	96.1	50	0.9	176	3.0
5	5687	96.0	51	0.9	183	3.1	5688	96.1	53	0.9	180	3.0
6	5990	95.8	65	1.1	196	3.1	5966	95.4	66	1.1	219	3.5
7	6017	95.8	38	0.6	223	3.6	6007	95.7	41	0.7	230	3.6
8	5958	93.9	47	0.7	339	5.4	5958	93.9	49	0.8	337	5.3
9	5916	94.2	38	0.6	329	5.2	5850	93.1	38	0.6	395	6.3
2003 Total	51181	94.7	792	1.5	2085	3.8	51147	94.6	743	1.4	2168	4.0
2002 Total	51155	94.9	722	1.3	2058	3.8	45312	94.8	572	1.2	1919	4.0
2001 Total	51173	96.1	621	1.2	1437	2.7	33965	95.9	420	1.2	1041	2.9

For the reading component, the participation rate ranged from a low of 89.7 per cent at grade 1 to a high of 96.2 per cent at grade 4. The grade 1 data is influenced by all 251 French Immersion students being exempted from the HLAT reading test. Overall, 1.5 per cent of district students were declared exempt and 3.8 per cent were absent from the reading test. These numbers reflect a 0.2 per cent increase in the number of students declared exempt but no change in the percentage of students absent relative to the 2002 data.

In 2003, all students in grades 1 through 9 were expected to participate in the HLAT writing. It was optional for grade 9 students in 2002, and no one in grades 3, 6, or 9 wrote in 2001. For the writing component, the participation rate ranged from a low of 90.6 per cent at grade 1 to a high of 96.1 per cent at both grades 4 and 5. These numbers reflect a 0.2 per cent increase in the numbers of students declared exempt, but no change in the percentage of students absent relative to the 2002 data. As with reading, all French Immersion grade 1 students were exempted from the writing task.

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 what could have been achieved by random guessing 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 2003 Results to 2002 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: JUNE 2002 AND 2003 HLAT

Enrolment Grade	Percentage Of Student At Or Above Grade Level					
	Reading			Writing		
	2002	2003	Difference	2002	2003	Difference
1	84.6	86.6	2.0	84.0	85.5	1.5
2	85.3	86.0	0.7	89.7	90.7	1.0
3	84.6	86.3	1.7	89.1	89.2	0.1
4	83.5	84.1	0.7	88.2	87.9	-0.3
5	84.1	84.1	0.0	86.0	86.6	0.6
6	85.5	84.8	-0.7	87.1	85.8	-1.3
7	87.3	87.3	0.0	87.0	87.0	0.0
8	84.3	84.8	0.5	86.1	85.2	-0.9
9	85.9	85.2	-0.7	NA	86.5	NA
TOTAL	85.0	85.5	0.5	87.1	87.1	0.0

From Table 2, the following generalizations can be made:

- in June 2003, the percentage of students reading at or above grade level increased by 0.5 per cent relative to 2002
- the change in the percentage of students reading at or above grade level ranged from an increase on 2.0 per cent at grade 1, to a decrease of 0.7 per cent for grades 6 and 9
- the percentage of students reading at or above grade level increased for enrolment grades 1, 2, 3, 4, and 8, remained the same for students enrolled in grades 5 and 7, and decreased for enrolment grades 6 and 9
- the percentage of students judged to be writing at or above grade level remained the same as in 2002
- the change in the percentage of students writing at or above grade level ranged from an increase of 1.5 per cent at grade 1 to a decrease of 1.3 per cent at grade 6
- the percentage of students judged to be writing at or above grade level increased for enrolment grades 1, 2, 3, and 5, remained the same for enrolment grade 7 and decreased for enrolment grades 4, 6 and 8

Reading Results

Table 3 provides detailed information for 2001, 2002 and 2003 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 2001, 2002 and 2003 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	2003			13.4	65.1	19.1	2.4		5386
1	2002			15.4	66.8	15.9	1.9		5436
1	2001			12.6	68.2	16.7	2.5		5552
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
2	2001		3.5	11.5	63.5	17.7	3.8		5545
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
3	2001	2.3	3.7	8.9	63.7	19.0	2.5		5601
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
4	2001	3.4	3.8	9.6	67.1	13.9	2.2		5960
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
5	2001	3.5	2.9	8.5	60.0	21.3	3.8		5859
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
6	2001	3.6	2.2	9.3	60.9	19.1	4.9		5904
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
7	2001	3.4	1.6	7.5	62.5	20.1	4.9		5892
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
8	2001	3.5	1.4	10.4	58.8	21.3	4.7		5751
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
9	2001	3.5	1.9	8.6	63.5	18.8	3.8		5730
Total	2003	3.0	2.3	9.2	62.6	19.3	3.6		51973
Total	2002	2.9	2.3	9.8	63.2	18.4	3.4		51877
Total	2001	2.6	2.3	9.6	63.1	18.7	3.7		51794

* "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:

- 62.6 per cent of the students achieved a grade level of achievement in reading commensurate with their enrolment grade (a decrease of 0.6 per cent from 2002)
- 22.9 per cent of the students achieved a grade level of achievement in reading that was higher than their enrolment grade (an increase of 1.1 per cent from 2002)
- 14.5 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 2002)
- there was a substantial increase in the percentage of grade 1 students reading above grade level relative to the previous year
- there were small increases in the percentage of students reading above grade level at enrolment grades 2 and 3
- the overall distribution of reading scores for the total population is very similar to the distribution in 2002

Writing Results

Table 4 provides detailed information for 2001, 2002 and 2003 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 2001, 2002 AND 2003 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	2003			14.6	85.0	0.4			5396
1	2002			16.0	83.7	0.3			5427
1	2001			13.8	85.7	0.4			5558
2	2003		3.9	5.4	90.1	0.6			5512
2	2002		4.2	6.1	89.3	0.4			5552
2	2001		4.3	6.8	88.4	0.5			5541
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	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
4	2001	3.1	3.9	8.7	83.8	0.5	0.1		5925
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
5	2001	4.1	4.1	6.9	84.4	0.4	0.1		5830
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	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
7	2001	6.3	3.0	5.0	84.8	0.8	0.1		5831
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
8	2001	6.1	3.5	5.9	83.5	0.8	0.1		5700
9	2003	6.2	3.3	4.0	85.9	0.6			5888
Total	2003	3.5	2.9	6.5	86.6	0.5			51890
Total	2002	3.2	2.9	6.8	86.5	0.6	0.0		45884
Total	2001	3.3	3.2	7.8	85.1	0.6	0.0		34385

* "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:

- 86.6 per cent of the students achieved a grade level of achievement in writing commensurate with their enrolment grade (an increase of 0.1 per cent relative to 2002)
- 0.5 per cent of students were judged to be writing above grade level (a decrease of 0.1 per cent relative to 2003)
- 12.9 per cent of the students were judged to be writing below grade level which is exactly the same per cent as in 2002
- there was a 1.5 per cent increase in the percentage of grade 1 students judged to be writing at or above grade level

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. Students who are judged to be “not yet 1” grade level of achievement, are automatically designated “limited” for performance. This information is provided in Table 5.

**TABLE 5
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PERFORMANCE SCORES IN
WRITING BY GRADE LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT: JUNE 2003**

Grade Level of Achievement	Percentage Of Students Achieving Each Performance Score				Number of Students
	Limited	Adequate	Proficient	Excellent	
<1	100.0				1845
1	26.6	43.2	19.5	10.7	5210
2	19.4	46.9	23.5	10.2	5772
3	18.0	44.1	25.6	12.3	5866
4	20.7	46.8	23.6	8.9	5894
5	21.0	43.8	25.7	9.5	5701
6	18.7	41.6	27.5	12.2	5704
7	19.5	46.0	26.1	8.4	5777
8	14.9	46.7	29.1	9.2	5355
9	12.2	42.6	31.7	13.5	5087
10			29.7	70.3	37
11				100.0	1
12				100.0	1
2003 Total	21.3	43.4	25.0	10.3	51890
2002 Total	19.2	43.5	27.3	10.0	45884
2001 Total	22.4	44.5	24.2	9.0	34385

Certain generalizations can be made from Table 5. These generalizations do not apply to papers judged to be at a grade 10, 11 or 12 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 2003 compared to 2002 shows that the percentages of papers judged to be “limited” and “excellent” increased, while the percentage of papers judged to be “proficient” decreased. The percentage of papers judged to be “adequate” remained almost identical to 2002. The performance category that showed the most change, “limited”, increased by 2.1 per cent.

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 2002 and 2003. Table 6 provides information with respect to the change in reading scores over the two test administrations.

TABLE 6
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHOSE READING SCORES CHANGED
ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES BETWEEN 2002 AND 2003

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	76	0.0	2.6	35.5	57.9	4.0
2	4891	0.0	0.5	15.3	65.5	18.7
3	5022	0.2	1.1	15.8	66.3	16.6
4	5079	0.1	1.3	17.8	67.9	12.9
5	5177	0.4	0.8	10.8	68.2	19.8
6	5537	0.3	0.6	13.7	67.8	17.6
7	5306	0.4	1.2	13.7	67.2	17.5
8	5424	0.5	0.8	15.8	68.4	14.5
9	5412	0.5	1.1	17.5	66.6	14.3
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
2001 Total	41672	0.3	1.0	14.9	67.6	16.2

The data in Table 6 indicates that 83.7 per cent of students increased their reading grade level of achievement by one or more grades between 2002 and 2003. This represents a 0.8 per cent increase when compared to the growth data for 2002. A total of 16.3 per cent of the students showed no growth or regressed in reading as measured by HLAT in 2003.

A total of 76 students enrolled in grade 1 for a second year in 2003 also had a reading score in 2002. Just under 62 per cent of these students demonstrated a years growth in reading between 2002 and 2003.

Of the 51 973 students who were included in the HLAT reading data in 2003, growth data is available for 41 924 students. This represents 80.7 per cent of the 2003 population. A total of 19.3 per cent of the 2003 population did not have an HLAT score in 2002.

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 2002 AND 2003

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	35.5	64.5	0.0
2	4881	0.0	0.4	5.3	85.3	9.0
3	5011	0.1	0.5	5.8	88.9	4.7
4	5064	0.2	0.8	6.3	88.9	3.8
5	5165	0.1	0.9	6.6	87.6	4.8
6	5508	0.4	0.9	6.3	86.7	5.7
7	5276	0.8	2.0	5.8	85.6	5.8
8	5415	0.6	1.4	7.4	85.2	5.4
9	5291	0.6	1.8	5.8	84.9	6.9
2003 Total	41687	0.4	1.1	6.2	86.6	5.7
2002 Total	26031	0.3	0.8	6.0	86.3	6.6
2001 Total	15164	0.4	1.2	6.6	84.4	7.4

The data in Table 7 indicates that 92.3 per cent of students increased their writing score by one or more grade levels between 2002 and 2003, a decrease of 0.6 per cent relative to the data for 2002. For 6.2 per cent of students, the 2003 grade level of achievement in writing remained the same as it had been in 2002. For 1.5 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 (92.3 per cent) than in reading (83.7 per cent) between 2002 and 2003.

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 2003 test administration.

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

Student Category	Number	Percentage of Students Reading		
		Below Grade Level	At Grade Level	Above Grade Level
Regular	44129	7.3	66.3	26.4
Special Needs	5582	65.2	32.3	2.5
ESL	2262	30.9	64.3	4.7
Student Category	Number	Percentage of Students Writing		
		Below Grade Level	At Grade Level	Above Grade Level
Regular	44060	5.2	94.3	0.5
Special Needs	5576	68.1	31.9	0.1
ESL	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. A slightly higher percentage of regular students (7.3 per cent) are reading below grade than are judged to be writing below grade level (5.2 per cent). Approximately two out of three students in receipt of a special needs allocation are reading and writing below grade level. For these students, a slightly higher percentage were judged to be below grade level in writing than in reading. For students enrolled in ESL programming, 69.1 per cent were at or above grade level in reading and 73.2 per cent were judged to be at or above grade level in writing.

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- APPENDIX I - Highest Level of Achievement Test Writing Task (Journal)
- APPENDIX II - Evaluation: Performance Criteria and Achievement Criteria