



UPPER GRAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
Secondary Curriculum Department
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Date: September 10, 2015

Memorandum To: Martha Rogers, Director of Education

From: Carlo Zen, Student Success Lead
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Subject: **2014 – 2015 Grade 10 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT)**

Report Classification: Information

Background

The **Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT)** is administered annually to Grade 10 students and others who have not yet met the literacy requirement for graduation. This year, the test was administered on the morning of March 26, 2015 and was written in two sessions (seventy-five minutes each). Students completed multiple choice and open-response questions.

The OSSLT is designed to assess reading and writing skills that students are expected to have learned across all subjects by the end of Grade 9, as outlined in *The Ontario Curriculum*. Successful completion of the OSSLT is one of the thirty-two requirements for an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).

All system partners in the Upper Grand District School Board focus on the preparation of students for the test so that they may approach the task with confidence. Secondary schools have literacy teams in place to assist students. School Improvement Plans include goals for improved student achievement in literacy. Professional Learning Communities are established at the school level to discuss strategies for assisting students who struggle to learn and to incorporate EQAO data in their strategic planning. A reading program for Locally Developed Compulsory Credit (LDCC) English courses is being implemented to improve key literacy skills. The Student Success Literacy Sub-Committee meets regularly to review, plan and co-ordinate literacy initiatives including the Pass the Test Program (an after-school literacy course), literacy mentor training to support targeted groups of students, and regular meetings of the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC) teachers.

Issue

To provide Trustees with an initial report on the 2014 - 2015 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) for the Upper Grand District School Board.

Recommendation

That the report entitled “**2014 – 2015 Grade 10 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT)**” dated September 10, 2015 be received.

Results

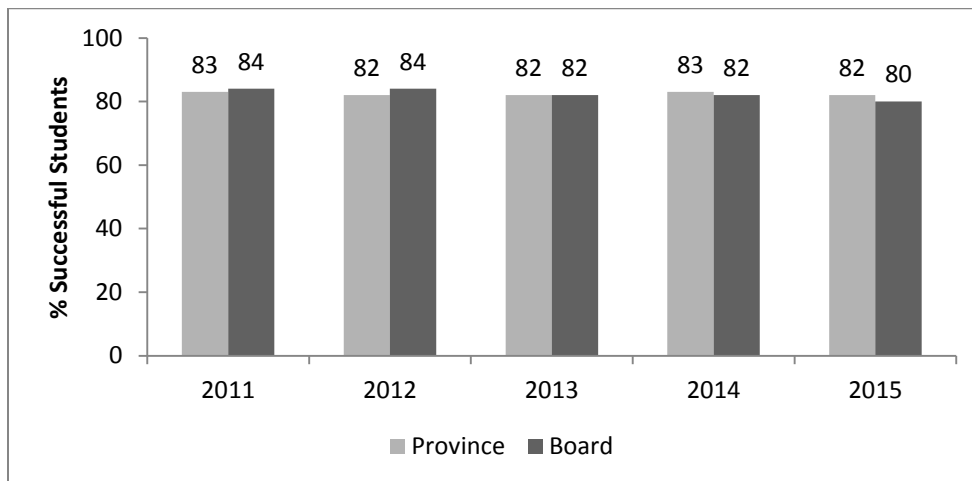
First Time Eligible (FTE) Students

Demographics: Of the 2512 UGDSB students eligible to write for the first time, 47% were female and 53% were male. English Language Learners represented 1% of this population. Identified students with Special Needs (excluding gifted) accounted for 22% of the population; 88% of the participating students with identifications received accommodations.

	Province 2013-14	UGDSB 2013-14	Province 2014-15	UGDSB 2014-15
Successful	83%	82%	82%	80%
Not Successful	17%	18%	18%	20%

Female	87%	88%	86%	84%
Male	78%	76%	78%	77%
Special Needs (excluding gifted)	51%	47%	54%	48%
Identified students With Special Needs Receiving Accommodations (excluding gifted), IEP	54%	57%	56%	54%
Identified students With Special Needs Receiving Accommodations (excluding gifted), IEP & IPRC	49%	38%	51%	47%

Program of Study (Demographic data)	Province 2013-14	UGDSB 2013-14	Province 2014-15	UGDSB 2014-15
Academic (64%)	94%	96%	93%	95%
Applied (27%)	50%	53%	50%	55%
LDCC (5%)	10%	7%	13%	9%
ESL/ELD (1%)	75%	53%	37%	58%

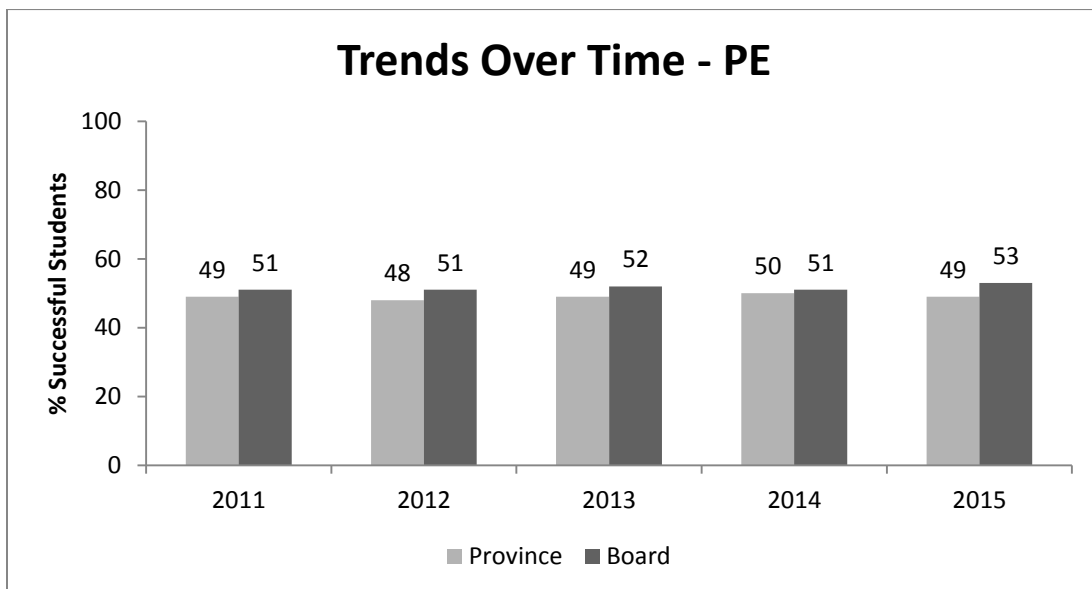


Previously Eligible (PE) Students

Demographics: Of the 985 students who were previously eligible (either absent, deferred, or previously unsuccessful), 34% were female and 66% were male. English Language Learners represented 7% of this population. Identified students with Special Needs (excluding gifted) accounted for 51% of the population; 84% of Identified Students received accommodations. Finally, 28% of previously eligible students opted for the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course as a substitution for the test.

	Province 2013-14	UGDSB 2013-14	Province 2014-15	UGDSB 2014-15
Successful	50%	51%	49%	53%
Not Successful	50%	49%	51%	47%

Female	56%	62%	54%	55%
Male	46%	45%	46%	52%
English Language Learners	51%	70%	45%	36%
Special Needs (excluding gifted)	33%	30%	35%	45%
Identified students With Special Needs Receiving Accommodations (excluding gifted), IEP	37%	35%	40%	52%
Identified students With Special Needs Receiving Accommodations (excluding gifted), IEP & IPRC	31%	29%	33%	38%



Summary

Overall, the data shows that First Time Eligible (FTE) students' results have decreased from last year's board results, and are down 2% from the provincial average. Previously Eligible (PE) students' overall results have increased by 2%, and have risen to 4% above the provincial average. FTE students in Academic courses continue to excel. Results for students in Applied courses and LDCC courses have both increased 2% compared to last year, and are similar to provincial trends. Results for students with special needs (excluding gifted) increased this year in both groups, and are above the provincial average. It is important to note that students in Applied, ESL/ELD, and LDCC courses, as well as students with special needs, will always require continuous support and early, targeted intervention. Females continue to outperform males, achieving higher success rates in both FTE and PE groups.

Rationale

The release of the results of the 2014-15 OSSLT provides important information for the system and its schools. The information offers an opportunity to conduct an analysis of the results in order to identify best instructional practices, which in turn should prompt the best possible student achievement. The collection and reporting of the data is the necessary first step in the process of critical analysis.

The next step in this process will begin with superintendent visits to all secondary schools, with an initial emphasis on schools that have had either a significant drop in scores or a downward trend in results. The curriculum support staff will work specifically with these schools and their literacy teams. School administrators, Student Success Teachers and Literacy Leads will be expected to review data and the process by which they determine students who are at-risk of not passing the OSSLT. There will also be a review of how individualized Literacy Plans are developed to ensure that plans are tailored to the unique needs of each student. Schools will again be asked to submit predictions for this upcoming year and these predictions will be compared with cohort data from grade 6. Schools will also focus on data that provides insight into how interventions such as pre-test preparation and OSSLT test day strategies impact student performance, and which strategies were effective and ineffective. Student deferral criteria are being reviewed to establish consistency across the board and to ensure that students write only when they are most prepared to do so. Schools will continue to receive funding to support OSSLT preparation activities such as mock tests, moderated marking and one-on-one mentor meetings. Interventions for remediation skills in grade 7 and 8 will be reviewed, revised and implemented in this school year.

Central staff will continue to support school teams in improving instructional, school and board-wide strategies that focus on identified areas of need specific to each site. Superintendents will be reviewing the extent to which literacy is viewed as a school wide priority, in particular for students taking applied courses. School Literacy Leads will work as mentors to share effective practices in preparation for the OSSLT and in data analysis to understand and focus on specific areas of need.