

ALCDSB students beat provincial EQAO averages

By Sarah Sobanski

Algonquin Lakeshore Catholic District School Board students are out-performing the provincial average in writing.

2016-'17 Education Quality and Accountability Office results were released Sept. 20. Grade 3 and 6 students are surpassing the student averages across the province in writing with 74 per cent and 80 per cent of children respectively meeting or exceeding provincial standards.

The 744 Grade 6 students in the board this year have kept up with last year's students. In 2016 they matched students across the province where 80 per cent met or exceeded provincial standards in writing. This year the provincial average dropped a percentage point and the board's students maintained their status quo.

Grade 6 students also met the provincial average where 81 per cent of students met or exceeded standards in reading ? eight per cent received a Level 4, or exceeded provincial standards ? a percentage point higher than last year.

The same couldn't be said for mathematics. Grade 6 students were five per cent behind the province this year, though they rose from 44 per cent last year to 45 per cent this year.

More than 800 students in Grade 3 are also celebrating an eight point increase from 66 per cent of students meeting reading standards last year to 73 per cent this year ? the highest result in five years. Fourteen per cent of students passed with a Level 4.

They were only a percentage point behind the provincial average this year.

Students also improved in math, up two percentage points from last year. Grade 3 students are only behind the provincial average by three per cent. Fifty-nine Grade 3 students met or exceeded provincial standards.

Girls were around 10 per cent more likely to meet or exceed provincial standards than boys in both grades.

?The Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board is pleased with our positive trends in reading and writing over the past five years as well as our improvements in numeracy over the past year,? superintendent of school effectiveness for the board David Giroux said in a release by the board on the results. ?We will continue to focus on Year 2 of our Renewed Math Strategy, which includes working directly with school leaders and math learning partners in all of our elementary schools.?

Grade 9 students were within two percentage points of the provincial average this year with 81 per cent of students meeting or exceeding provincial standards in academic mathematics. That's up five percentage points from last year. On average, 83 per cent of students in the province met or exceeded its standards.

Students in Grade 9 fell five percentage points in applied mathematics from last year's results ? 46 per cent of students meeting or exceeded provincial standards this year. They were still two per cent above the provincial average of 44 per cent of students.

There are 19 Grade 9 mathematics classes in the board, 212 students in all.

Examining the numbers

More than half of Grade 3 students in the board like mathematics ?most of the time.?

?Most of the time? is the highest on a scale of four attitudes children could pick from on a 2016-'17 assessment of student attitudes to reading, writing and math. The other three include ?sometimes,? ?never? and ?blank or ambiguous response.?

The mathematics attitude was the highest of the three categories at 56 per cent of students liking math most of the time. Students were also likely to enjoy writing, with 50 per cent responding they liked it ?most of the time.? Reading fell behind with the highest percentage of students replying they ?sometimes? liked it ? 49 per cent.

This isn't reflected in the grade's EQAO achievement results. Writing comes in first with 72 per cent of students at or above the provincial average from 2015-'17. Reading comes in second at 68 per cent and mathematics fall to last at 59 per cent.

Students might be less enthusiastic about learning by Grade 6. Writing flips with 50 per cent of students now only liking it ?sometimes.? Reading remains about the same but around 10 per cent of students no longer like mathematics ?most of the time.?

Between Grades 3 and 6, students see a 15 percentage point decrease in performing at or above the provincial averages in mathematics to 44 per cent between 2015-'17. The 49 classes in the board improve their reading skills by 22 points and writing skills by six points.

When it comes to Grade 9 applied mathematics, 39 per cent of students said they ?strongly agreed or agreed? that they liked math. A little less said as much about being ?good? at it.

For academic math, 59 per cent ?strongly agreed or agreed? that they liked math and 57 per cent said as much about being ?good? at it.

Academic mathematics students met or exceeded provincial standards at twenty-nine percentage points more than applied mathematics students between 2015-'17. Academic math students met or exceeded at 78 per cent while applied math students met or

exceeded at 49 per cent.