

Questions are often asked about the difference in EQAO scores between the Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board and the public board.

It should be stressed that while we share the same geography as our co-terminus Board we do not have a similar demographic makeup. For example, for Grade 3 - 6% of our students are ESL (like the province) but only 1% of the Catholic Board are ESL. For Grade 6, we have 4% ESL (like the province) but the Catholic Board has only 2%. These are significant factors that impact on our overall EQAO results.

Another really important demographic that impacts us is mobility – i.e. the number of times a student changes schools. Every change has a negative impact on learning. For example, at the Grade 3 level 14% of our kids have attended three or more schools since Grade 1 (provincial average is 8%) The percentage in the Catholic Board is 5%. At Grade 6, 32% of our students have attended three or more schools (provincial average is 23%) while the Catholic Board has only 14%.

When these questions were asked previously, HWDSB brought in personnel from the Catholic Board to address the strategies that they use to support improvement. We actually found that many of the things they were doing, we were doing too. We even had a joint Summer Institute one year on literacy.

But we also followed up on some of their successful strategies and implemented them here - e.g. parent newsletter (Helping Children Learn on the website).

We obviously have more work to do in this area but I think we are all feeling encouraged that our results are improving. Our focus is trying to decrease the number of students in Level 1 (which we have done), and trying to ensure more of our students are successful in their literacy and numeracy skills by reaching Levels 3 and 4.

We have our challenges in meeting those targets but we are determined to make a difference in the success of our students.

Prepared by HWDSB Corporate Communications with input from Staff from the Program and Assessment department.