

HWDSB

Program Committee

Thursday April 6, 2017

Room 340-D

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
20 Education Court, P.O. Box 2558
Hamilton, ON L8N 3L1

AGENDA: 5:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Student Learning and Achievement report
5. Adjournment

curiosity • creativity • possibility

Executive Summary

Topic: Student Learning and Achievement Report

Context

HWDSB's Board of Trustees have approved new Strategic Directions for 2016-20 and staff has developed an Annual Plan for 2016-17. The five priorities are positive culture and well-being, *student learning and achievement*, effective communication, school renewal and partnerships.

Mission: We empower students to learn and grown to their full potential in a diverse world.

Commitment: We are committed to learning, equity, engagement and innovation

Priority: [Student Learning and Achievement](#) *We will improve student learning and achievement through effective instructional strategies.*

Summary

The following report includes:

- Student Learning and Achievement Report: the current implementation of the strategic direction priority as part of the 2016-17 HWDSB Annual Plan (including interim measures)
- Appendix A: a summary of the 2015-16 Student Achievement work plan (including related aspects of the Student Engagement and FNMI work plans)
- Appendix B: examples of impact of the 2015-2016 Student Achievement work plan

Executive Council has developed goals, set targets and started implementing the strategies found in the new HWDSB Annual Plan for the [Student Learning and Achievement](#) priority. For this reason, this report provides an update on the implementation of Student Learning and Achievement within the 2016-17 HWDSB Annual Plan as well as a summary of the 2015-16 Student Achievement strategic plan.

Once again, our greatest cause for celebration is the fact that more students are graduating or are on track to graduate than in past years. The five year graduation rate of 80% for those students in the 2010/11 cohort (staying in HWDSB) speaks to the positive impact that our secondary program strategy, re-engagement efforts and a strong emphasis on learning enhanced through digital approaches is having at HWDSB. Similarly, we are encouraged by the indicators that suggest that through the establishment of more precise monitoring and supporting efforts, this upward trend in graduation rates will continue. We believe that we are on-track to meet the annual plan target.

Mathematics remains an area of attention, particularly in the elementary grades. Achievement results for grades 3 and 6 continued to lag behind the province in 2015/16 by a significant amount. However, the gap was less pronounced by grade 9 with nearly four out of five students demonstrating performance rates at or above the provincial standard. There remains a strong commitment to professional learning and supports, as outlined in the HWDSB Math Strategy, to ensure that all students improve in math. We believe that we are on-track to meet the annual plan target.

We know that a key component of success in school is a solid foundation in reading at an early age. This is why our expectation is that at least three out of four students will demonstrate reading proficiency by the end of grade 1. While results indicate that more students achieve at this level by June compared to February, overall, less than two-thirds of grade 1 students are reading by the end of the year and this gap is even wider for students attending high needs schools. We believe that we are not on-track to meet the annual plan target. This suggests a need for a different and more intensified approach to addressing our reading goal.



HWDSB Annual Plan Report

Name of Report: Student Learning and Achievement Report

Date: April 2016

Priority: Student Learning and Achievement

We will improve student learning and achievement through effective instructional strategies

Goal #1: All students reading by the end of Grade 1.

Strategy: Leverage effective instructional practices on comprehensive literacy and interventions in all Kindergarten to grade 8 classes.

If daily, dedicated, evidence-based comprehensive literacy strategies are utilized **then** most students will be able to read at standard and demonstrate improved learning and achievement.

Throughout the 2016-17 school year we would expect that all schools have dedicated daily literacy blocks (100-120 minutes) timetabled and that literacy is infused throughout the day in kindergarten. There is a focus on the implementation of comprehensive literacy strategies as described in research-informed resources such as the Ministry of Education's [A Guide to Effective Instruction in Reading, K-3](#). Guided reading, using appropriate levelled-reading resources should be evident along with other early reading instructional approaches and interventions that develop the necessary foundational skills like letter/sound recognition. Specific interventions such as [Empower Reading](#) continue to be implemented to support those students that are experiencing challenges with reading beyond Grade 1.

Superintendents of Student Achievement monitor the strategy through school visits (approximately every 4-6 weeks). Interim progress results (Term 1 Report Card grades) indicate that implementation of the strategy, as a whole, is not on-track. Most students are not on track for reading at standard (approximately 50% of grade 1 students) and there remains considerable variability with respect to the implementation of comprehensive literacy strategies in the primary grades. This would suggest a need for a different and more intensified approach to support this strategy.

Strategy: Invest in people through professional learning opportunities on comprehensive literacy strategies.

If there are multiple, differentiated opportunities for professional learning **then** educators will be able to further develop their ability to implement evidence-based comprehensive literacy strategies.

A variety of job-embedded, after-school and online professional learning opportunities and resources are made available on the various elements of comprehensive literacy. This strategy recognizes that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach is inconsistent with the understanding that staff are at various points in their own learning with respect to supporting students in becoming proficient readers and communicators. Leadership and Learning staff including Early Year, Special Education, Speech & Language, ELL, FSL, and Psychological Services provide an interdisciplinary approach to this learning. Specific training to Learning Resource Teachers continues to be provided for the delivery of the Empower Reading program.

Superintendents of Leadership and Learning and Superintendents of Student Achievement monitor the strategy through participation rates and school visits. Implementation of the strategy, as a whole, is on-track.

Strategy: Refine our measures of students' reading comprehension over time.

If reading comprehension levels are monitored for all students on a regular basis **then** gaps in student learning can be identified and addressed in a timely manner.

Baseline reading levels for students, K to grade 8 are established, using a variety of assessment strategies through teachers' professional judgement by the PA Day in the Fall. This informs the improvement strategies and targets as reported in each school's annual plan. As part of the continuous learning and improvement process, progress through educator generated evidence as well as achievement levels on report cards is reviewed regularly.

Superintendents of Student Achievement monitor the strategy through school visits (approximately every 4-6 weeks). Interim progress results (Term 1 Report Card grades) indicate that implementation of the strategy, as a whole, is not on-track. This suggests a need for additional support and a revised approach to assist educators, principals and support staff in the use of assessment information on reading progress and the early identification of gaps in learning.

Staff are **not on target*** to have at least 75% of Grade 1 students achieving a B (provincial standard) or higher on their June 2017 report card.

***NOTE:** The forecast on the stated target is based on interim report card data from Term 1, February 2017. Students currently enrolled in French immersion programs (grade 1) are not included as they do not receive a reading grade until June. Based on previous year patterns between Term 1 (winter) and Final (June) report card grades it is reasonable to expect that there will continue to be improvement and potentially significant improvement. However, if the pattern is consistent with previous years it is anticipated that the target shortfall will be approximately ten percentage points (65% at or above standard by June).

Goal #2: Improvement in Mathematics.

Strategy: Leverage effective instructional practices on comprehensive math strategies in all grades.

If daily, dedicated, evidence-based comprehensive math strategies are utilized **then** most students will be able to do math at standard and demonstrate improved learning and achievement.

Elementary

Throughout the 2016-17 school year it is expected that all grades 1-8 have a scheduled math block of at least 60 minutes per day (300 minutes over 5 days in some instances). The focus will continue to be on using strategies that are informed through research such as those provided in the province's [Renewed Math Strategy](#). There is a deliberate emphasis on the development of mathematical concepts in the early years including embedding math learning as part of the inquiry-based experience in kindergarten. Throughout the elementary grades, conceptual and procedural areas of math are developed with a particular focus on questions that are open-ended.

Secondary

The identification and narrowing of skill gaps for students in grades 9 and 10 is a focus for the 2016-17 school year. This is especially significant for students enrolled in applied courses. Using assessments to inform the areas of greatest need, it has been evident from first semester information that the mathematical processes

involved in problem solving and communicating about mathematical thinking are two key areas that need to be addressed.

Superintendents of Student Achievement monitor the strategy through school visits (approximately every 4-6 weeks). Interim progress results (Term 1/Semester 1 Report Card grades) indicate that implementation of the strategy, as a whole, is on-track.

Strategy: Invest in people through professional learning opportunities on math concepts, assessment, and instruction.

If there are differentiated opportunities for professional learning **then** teachers and principals will improve their understanding of math concepts, assessment and instruction.

A component of the province's Renewed Math Strategy is the identification of schools requiring additional or intensive support based on previous years' performance on EQAO math assessments. For HWDSB this includes (14 additional and 11 intensive – elementary; 8 additional and 3 intensive -secondary). Intensive support schools receive direct assistance from a Math Facilitator including professional learning for principals and vice-principals on math-specific instructional leadership strategies. Additional support schools receive an increased number of days for educator learning as well as opportunities for principal and vice-principal coaching.

In addition to job-embedded, school-based learning, school teams and dedicated professional activity day opportunities focused on math continue during the 2016-17 school for elementary and secondary staff. Where appropriate, math specific examples form part of professional learning for staff involved with our 21st Century Learning initiatives (1:1 and/or class kits).

Superintendents of Leadership and Learning and Superintendents of Student Achievement monitor the strategy through participation rates and school visits. Implementation of the strategy, as a whole, is on-track.

Strategy: Refine our measures of students' math progress over time.

If the understanding of math concepts is monitored for all students on a regular basis **then** gaps in student learning can be identified and addressed in a timely manner

The identification of students' strengths and gaps in learning begins with the establishment of a baseline at the outset of the school year or semester and monitored regularly. It is expected that this will occur for students using a variety diagnostic assessments based on teachers' professional judgement. Similar to reading, this information informs improvement strategies and targets as reported through each school's annual plan. As part of the continuous learning and improvement process, progress through educator generated evidence as well as achievement levels on report cards is reviewed regularly.

Superintendents of Student Achievement monitor the strategy through school visits (approximately every 4-6 weeks). Interim progress results (Term 1/Semester 1 Report Card grades) indicate that implementation of the strategy, as a whole, is on-track.

Staff are **on target**** to have at least 65% of students achieving at or above provincial standard as measured by 2016-17 EQAO (total number of students in Grades 3, 6 and 9).

****NOTE:** The forecast on the stated target is based on interim report card data from Term 1, February 2017 for grades 3 and 6 using the number sense and numeration strand grade. Final grades were used for grade 9 students completing math in the first semester. The assumption is that report card grades will approximate EQAO achievement results.

Goal #3: All students graduating.

Strategy: Leverage effective instructional practices to provide diverse opportunities to meet the needs of all students.

If a variety of opportunities are provided for students to participate in 21st century learning **then** student achievement will increase and more students will graduate

The focus for 2016-17 remains on establishing practices that blend teaching and learning approaches between the physical and digital worlds. In addition to existing initiatives as outlined in the Board's [21st Century Learning Report](#) this includes 1:1 devices for all grade 9 students and classroom kits for grades 4 to 6.

While learning through experiential opportunities remains an effective engagement strategy for students at-risk of not graduating it is also an approach that may benefit all students. Efforts are made to provide expanded experiential/co-operative education opportunities across secondary schools.

Superintendents of Leadership and Learning and Superintendents of Student Achievement monitor the strategy through participation rates and school visits. Implementation of the strategy, as a whole, is on-track.

Strategy: Invest in people through professional learning on improved learning environments, relationships, and learning opportunities.

If deep learning strategies are implemented **then** most students will have greater learning opportunities and will be more likely to graduate.

Elementary and secondary staff, including principals/vice-principals are provided a variety of opportunities to deepen their understanding about teaching and assessment practices using digital resources and inquiry-based learning. This includes a continued focus on developing and enhancing literacy and math skills.

The transition years from elementary to secondary (grades 7 to 9) remain a critical time to ensure that students are engaged, have access to programming and outreach supports and are connected to at least one staff member while at school. Leadership and Learning staff provide resources and professional learning for those involved including the establishment of a student success/transitions network within each family of schools.

Superintendents of Leadership and Learning and Superintendents of Student Achievement monitor the strategy through participation rates and school visits. Implementation of the strategy, as a whole, is on-track.

Strategy: Refine our measures of students' progress towards graduation over time.

If student graduation progress is monitored for all students on a regular basis **then** gaps in student learning can be identified and addressed in a timely manner

Increasing the graduation rate occurs one student at a time. Building on the success of the previous year's approach, secondary school teams of educators and administrators use system provided data along with school-based information to closely monitor and support the progress of students towards graduation. This work focuses on those students in their fifth year (2012-13 cohort). Individually-tailored efforts including re-engagement and programming supports are utilized.

A pilot initiative, expanding on the success of the work with fifth year students, looks at understanding and defining some of the early indicators of challenges often experienced by students that struggle to graduate.

Superintendents of Student Achievement monitor the strategy through school visits (approximately every 4-6 weeks). Interim progress results (credit accumulation, community hours and literacy requirement as of the start of semester 2) indicate that implementation of the strategy, as a whole, is on-track.

Staff are **on target***** to have at least 82% of the 2012-2013 cohort (staying in HWDSB) graduate within 5 years (by August 2017).

***NOTE: Reporting on the stated target will occur in Spring 2018 following the release of the province's graduation information for the 2016-17 school year.

Appendix – A

Summary of 2015-16 Work Plans

(Student Achievement, Student Engagement, First Nations, Métis, Inuit Student Achievement & Well-Being)

A focus on student learning and achievement including an emphasis on engagement and Indigenous education was evident in elementary and secondary school classrooms and board training sites throughout the year.

The following highlights the actions that were taken from the Student Achievement; Student Engagement; and First Nations, Métis, Inuit Student Achievement & Well-Being work plans as they relate to the Student Learning and Achievement goals. Additional information about the [Student Engagement](#) and [First Nations, Métis, Inuit Student Achievement & Well-Being](#) work plans may be found in the respective reports presented earlier.

GOAL #1: ALL STUDENTS READING BY THE END OF GRADE 1

“Reading success is the foundation for achievement throughout the school years. There is a critical window of opportunity from the ages of four to seven for learning to read. Children who successfully learn to read in the early primary years of school are well prepared to read for learning and for pleasure in the years to come.” [The Report of the Expert Panel on Early Reading in Ontario, 2003](#).

Kindergarten – Grade 1

The development of literacy skills during kindergarten is embedded throughout the day in all learning contexts. Gathering times and small/large group instruction are short in duration with provisions made for those who are not developmentally able to sit for such lengths of time. As students move into Grade 1 a more structured and dedicated block of time (100-120 minutes) is provided daily with a particular emphasis on reading development. Throughout these years students gradually acquire the skills to make sense of how combinations of symbols represent words (*learning to read*) and how various assortments of words combine to provide meaning (*reading to learn*). It is important that learning experiences allow students to understand that all forms of communication help them make sense of their world. Seeing themselves and their interests reflected amongst the available resources and activities is also key to sustaining engagement.

Once again in 2015-16 schools that faced particular challenges with K-Grade 1 reading achievement levels were supported with staffing dedicated to Primary Reading Intervention (28 FTE). This teacher worked directly with a small group of students providing additional reading instruction.

Professional learning opportunities supported by board staff comprised of Instructional Coaches and staff from areas such as: Early Years, Special Education, Speech & Language, ELL, FSL, Psychological Services and E-Best were provided in various forms throughout the year (job-embedded; after-school; summer and online). Early literacy instruction and assessment topics included:

- A Tiered Approach to Literacy Assessment, Instruction and Intervention (K-2)
- [Developmental Reading Assessment 2 \(DRA2\)](#)
- Print Concept Assessment
- Letter/Sound Knowledge Assessment
- Phonological Awareness Screen
- [DOCit](#)
- Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills ([DIBELS[®]](#))
- A Guide to Developing the Skills Necessary for Early Reading and Writing

Beyond Grade 1

While the goal is to support students in achieving at the Provincial standard (Level 3 or B) by the end of Grade 1 some continue to require additional, targeted interventions in later grades. Throughout 2015-16 schools provided specific assistance with reading through programs such as [Empower™ Reading](#). This intensive year-long support was delivered by specially trained Learning Resource Teachers (LRTs) at each school. Approximately 1100 students were enrolled in Empower Reading during 2015-16.

GOAL #2: IMPROVEMENT IN MATHEMATICS

“This technology-driven world is changing rapidly, and students must have a wide range of skills and knowledge to succeed. Mathematical knowledge is a critical component of success.” [Ontario Ministry of Education - Renewed Math Strategy, 2016.](#)

Early Years/Primary Grades

The focus in Kindergarten and Grade 1 was on the development of early number sense along with addition and subtraction skills. This included participation in a project funded through the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (C.O.D.E.). Over the course of five sessions (1/2 days), all schools participated in learning on topics that included: early number sense; diagnostic approaches; pedagogical documentation; using manipulatives; big ideas for addition and subtraction as well as French Immersion specific resources.

Junior Grades

The focus for 2015/16, as outlined in the math strategy was on grade 4. Once again, through five sessions (half-days), educators together with principals/vice-principals participated in learning on topics that included: using digital tools such as ‘explain everything’ in the math classroom; fractions; diagnostic approaches, misconceptions in math, use of manipulatives and resources specific to French Immersion.

Transition Years/Grades 7-9

Continuing to leverage expertise from the math community, grades 7 and 9 educators along with student success teachers/teacher mentors and principals/vice-principals participated in three days of focused learning with Dr. Ruth Beatty (Lakehead University) using the resource, *“From Patterns to Algebra”*.

GOAL #3: ALL STUDENTS GRADUATING

“Many international thought leaders and business leaders – and many young people, too – are increasingly asking education systems to prepare students with *21st century* competencies that will enable them to face complex challenges now and in the future. These competencies – knowledge, skills, and attributes that help children and youth to reach their full potential – are additional to the important foundational skills of literacy and mathematics, and to the core learning in other subjects.” [Towards Defining 21st Century Competencies for Ontario, 2016.](#)

Throughout the 2015-16 school year the emphasis remained on three key areas in support of this goal: high-quality and diversified programming; early detection and supports for struggling students and re-engagement efforts for early leavers.

High Quality and Diversified Programming

Learning enhanced through a digital approach continued to be piloted at Nora Frances Henderson Secondary School (all students) and was expanded to include students in grade 9 at both Sir John A Macdonald and Delta Secondary Schools. Students and teachers were provided with individual tablet devices and supported through Leadership and Learning staff.

Specialized High Skills Major (SHSM) programs were expanded in 2015-16 to include an additional Hospitality and Tourism program, bringing the total number of programs offered to 25 across 13 different sectors.

The NYA:WEH program, a stay-in-school initiative, directed to assist and support First Nation, Métis and Inuit students in secondary education continued as did the Aboriginal Student Engagement Program at Sir Winston Churchill that provides support for indigenous learners to promote student engagement and a positive school experience. Students in the Strengthening Hamilton Aboriginal Education (SHAE) program work towards their OSSD in a culturally-rich environment, where they are able to access multiple services while addressing their academic, social/emotional, cultural, and economic needs.

Supports for Students Struggling/In-Risk

Students struggling or in-risk of not obtaining their credits were monitored and supported by the student success team at each secondary school. This included access to additional support for literacy and math as well as peer-mentor tutoring and a connection to an in-school caring adult. A particular emphasis continued to be placed on the transition from elementary to secondary school for those students considered to be most vulnerable. School administrators, guidance counsellors, student success, learning resource, and classroom teachers from both elementary and secondary schools worked to establish the most favourable conditions for these transitions.

Re-Engagement

Together with system-level support, schools continued to reach-out to welcome students back into a learning environment at either a secondary school, a system experiential learning program or alternative education programming. These are some of the various strategies and programs utilized:

Outreach strategies such as: phone calls to families; home visits; regular check-in meetings; connections to interests, clubs or teams; community agency referrals; and social work involvement.

Programming supports such as: alternative education; e-Learning; experiential learning; co-operative education; dual credits; specialized timetables; peer tutor mentors; community and continuing education; and literacy/numeracy after-school sessions.



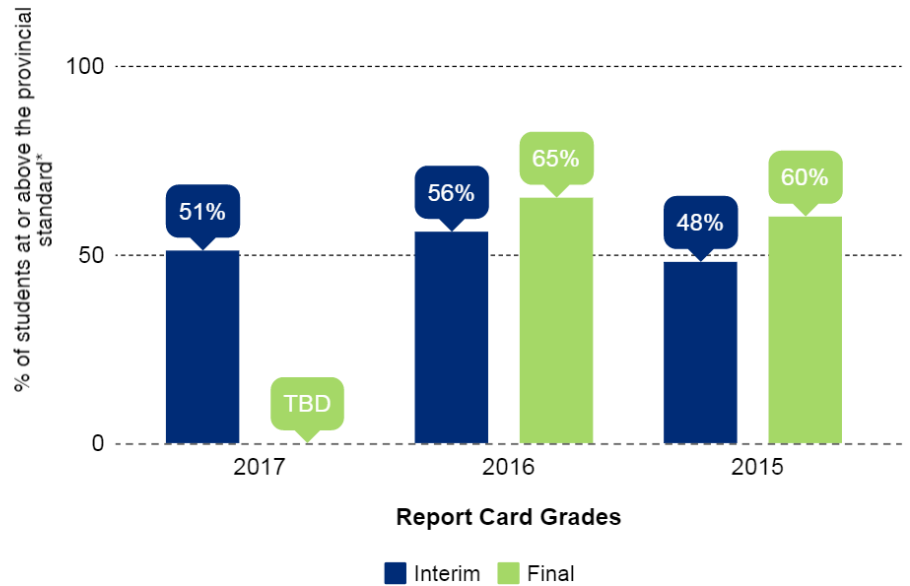
ALL STUDENTS READING BY THE END OF GRADE ONE

TARGET: At least 75 per cent of Grade 1 students achieving a B (provincial standard) or higher on their June 2017 report card.

Key Points

More students are reading at standard by the final report card compared to the interim. This is consistent for English Language Learners. While students with special needs continue to make progress, less achieve at standard at each reporting point.

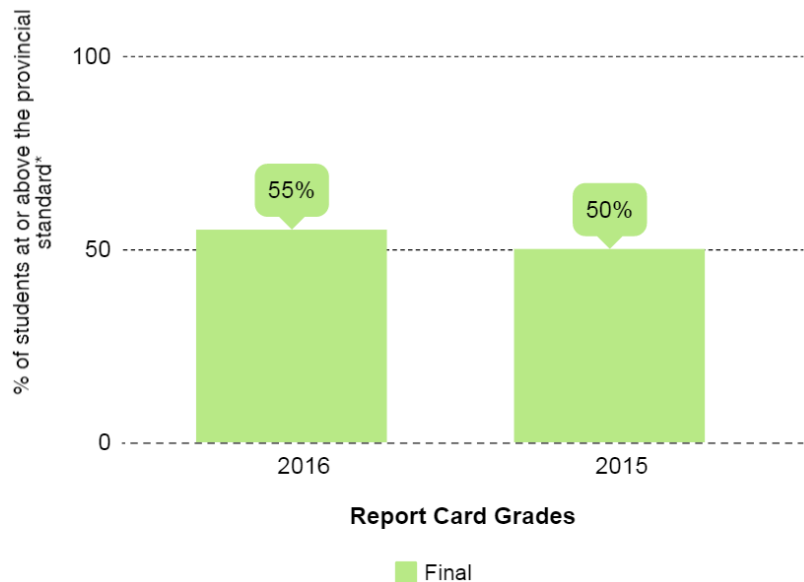
Grade 1 Reading Achievement



Key Points

The EDI is an important predictor variable when we identify high needs school communities.

Grade 1 Reading - High Needs Schools



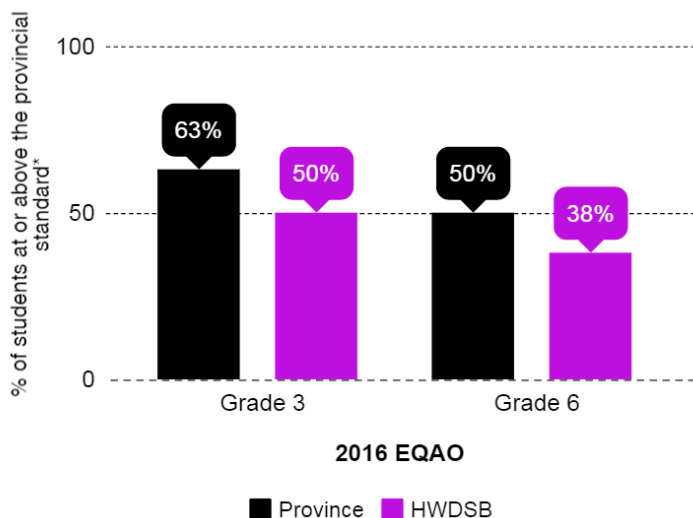
* Provincial Standard is "B"



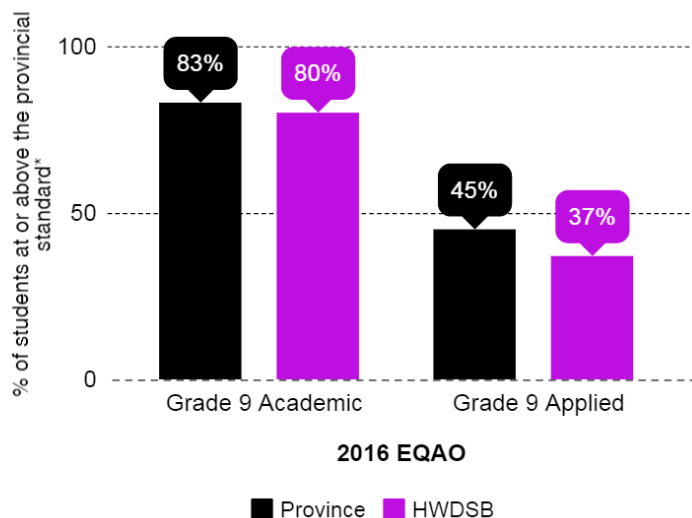
ALL STUDENTS IMPROVING IN MATHEMATICS

TARGET: At least 65 per cent of students achieving at or above provincial standard as measured by 2016-17 EQAO (total number of students in grades 3, 6 and 9).

Grades 3 & 6 - Math Achievement



Grade 9 - Math Achievement



**Students Achieving at or above Standard
(grades 3, 6 and 9 math)**

**Total Number of Students
(grades 3, 6 and 9)**

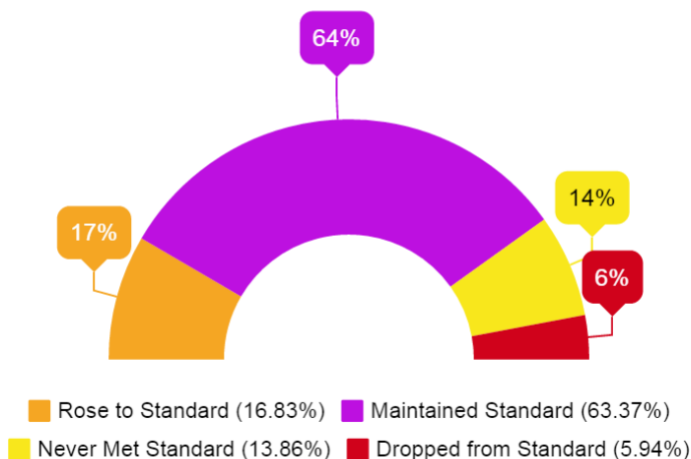
= 52%

Key Points

Achievement patterns in math for English Language Learners and for students with special needs are consistent with those found in Grade 1 Reading.

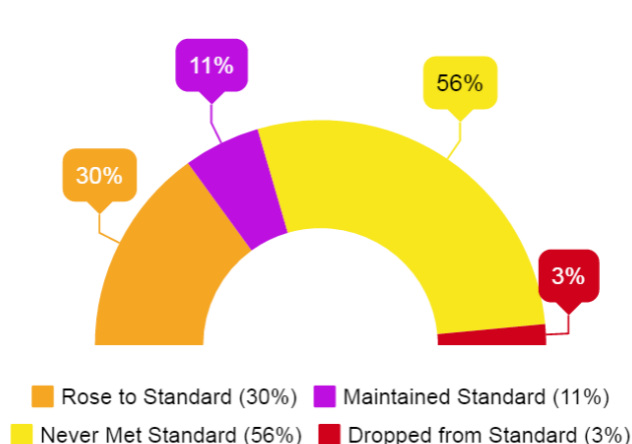
Cohort Achievement - ACADEMIC

Grade 6 (2013) to Grade 9 (2016)



Cohort Achievement - APPLIED

Grade 6 (2013) to Grade 9 (2016)



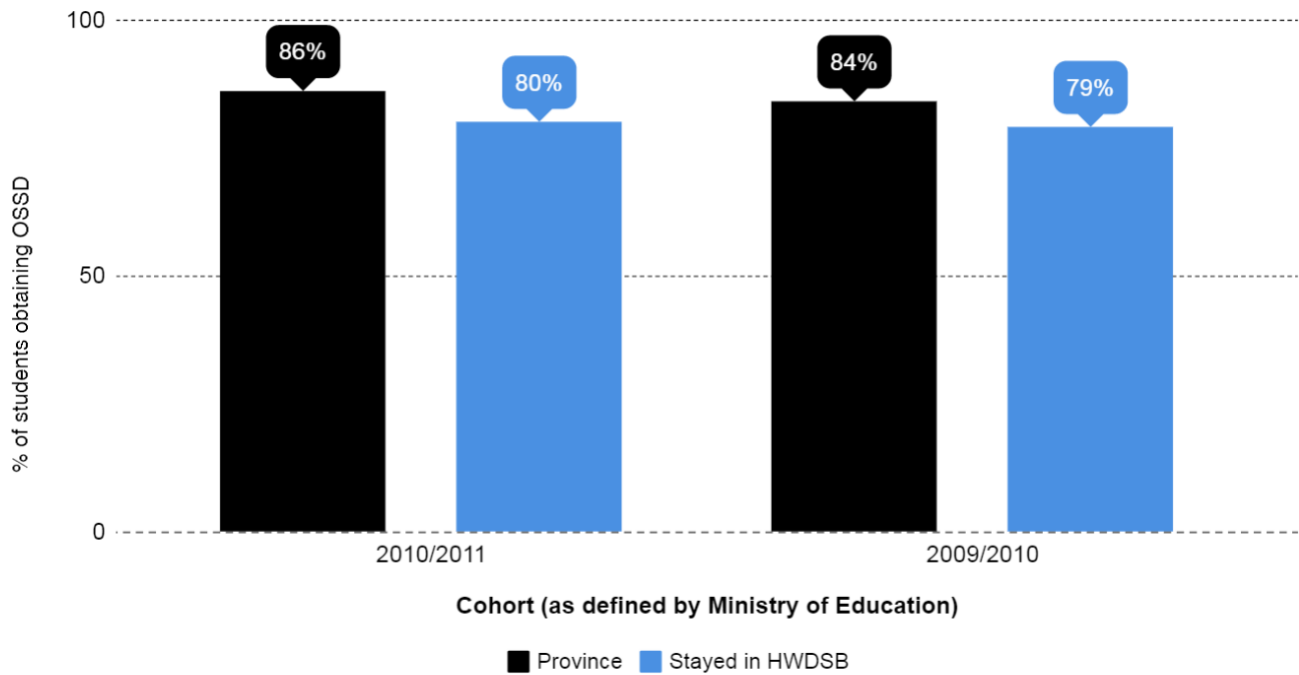
* Provincial Standard is a Level 3



ALL STUDENTS GRADUATING

TARGET: At least 82 per cent of the 2012/13 cohort (staying in HWDSB) will graduate within five years (by August 2017).

Graduation Rate - 5 Year



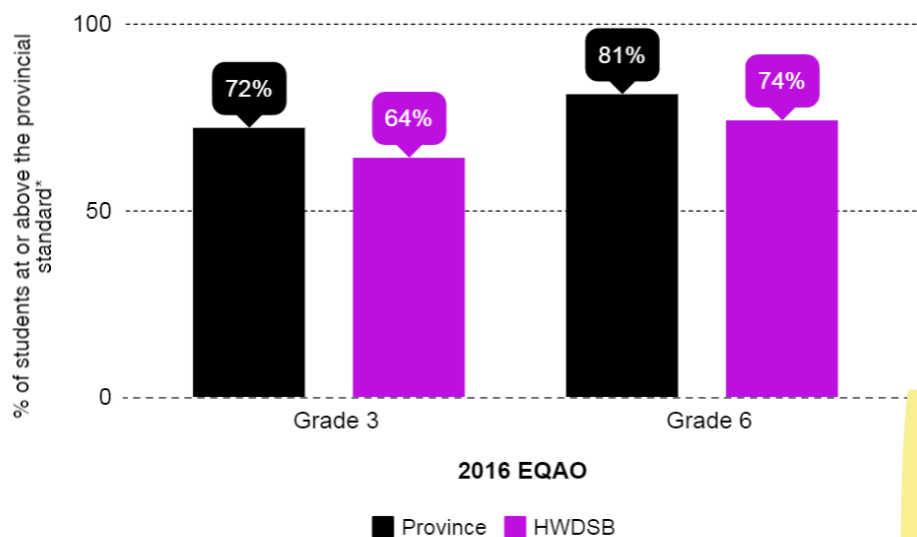
Key Points

Each year the Ministry of Education releases graduation rates in the Spring. The most recent graduation rate shows how many students starting grade 9 in 2010/2011 and staying in HWDSB graduated within 5 years.



OTHER EQAO RESULTS

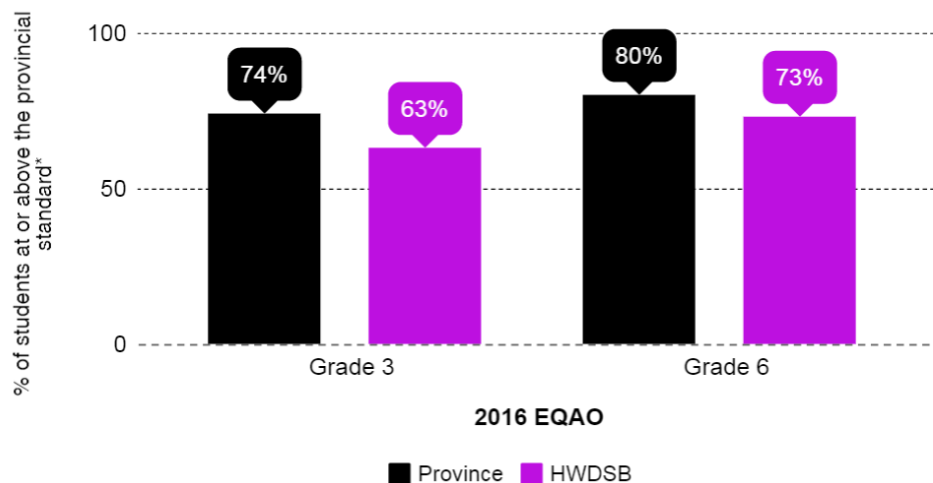
Grade 3 & 6 - Reading Achievement

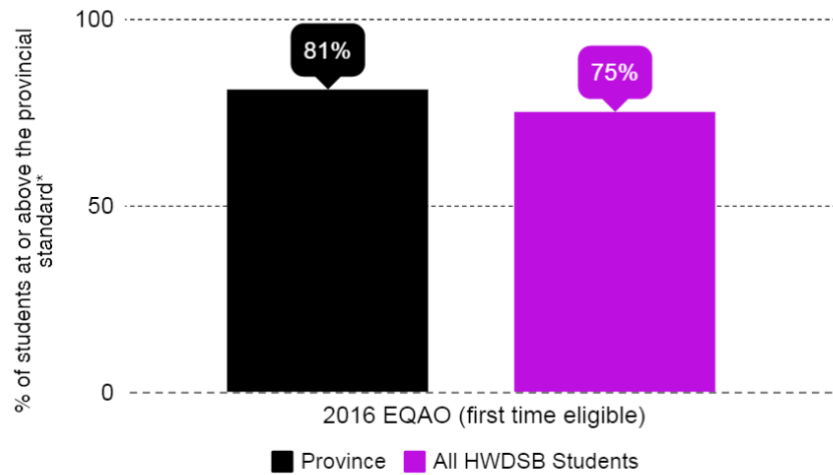


Key Points

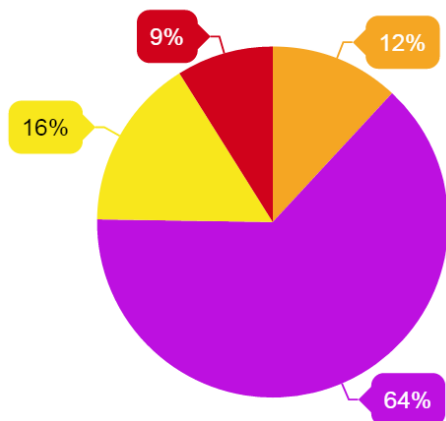
Achievement patterns for English Language Learners and for students with special needs are consistent with those found in Grade 1 Reading.

Grade 3 & 6 - Writing Achievement



**OTHER EQAO RESULTS****OSSLT****Cohort Achievement - WRITING**

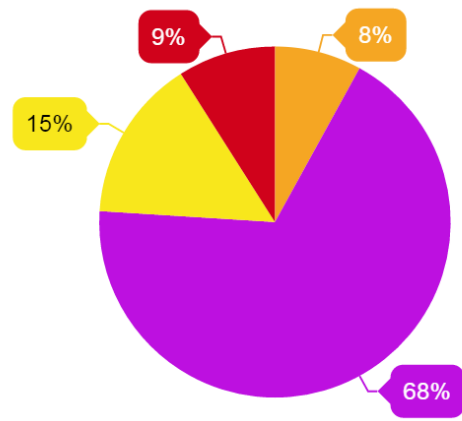
Grade 6 (2013) to OSSLT (2016)



■ Rose to Standard (11.88%)
 ■ Maintained Standard (63.37%)
■ Never Met Standard (15.84%)
 ■ Dropped from Standard (8.91%)

Cohort Achievement - READING

Grade 6 (2013) to OSSLT (2016)



■ Rose to Standard (8%)
 ■ Maintained Standard (68%)
■ Never Met Standard (15%)
 ■ Dropped from Standard (9%)

* Provincial Standard is a Score of 300

