

Math scores down, reading up, in GTA schools

Across Greater Toronto, math scores are slipping while reading and writing continue to climb, standardized test results show.



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Kids from the grade 3 class at Regent Heights Public School in their math class Sept. 17 with their teacher Sharon Ramnaresh are happy about their EQAO results.

By: Kristin Rushowy

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Grade 3 and 6 students across Greater Toronto continue to make improvements in reading and writing, but math remains a struggle, the latest round of standardized tests show.

Results from the Education Quality and Accountability Office, released Wednesday for the literacy and numeracy tests held last spring, showed slightly more than half of all Grade 6 students are meeting provincial standards — equivalent to an A or B — in math.

The Toronto public board posted increases, with 71 per cent of Grade 3 students reaching the standard in reading, 80 per cent in writing and 71 per cent in math.

By Grade 6, those making the grade in reading was 77 per cent, writing 80 per cent and math dropping to just 59 per cent.

Christopher Usih, executive superintendent of student success, said the board is pleased with the literacy results.

“That shows the work and strategies that we’ve been working on” are paying off, he said. “We need to keep the focus there and make sure the results continue to move in the right direction.”

For math, schools are now looking at gaps in student learning with the assistance of newly hired math coaches.

“We looked at Grade 6, and we looked at (the same students’ results back in Grade 3), and the challenge continues to be to apply basic mathematical operations,” he said.

Kids know the basics, but the tests are all about applying concepts to solve problems, “so the key focus is working with the application of mathematical knowledge and skills in problem-solving so that students in classes across the district are exposed to multiple ways of solving problems,” he said.

Schools with “significant gaps” will receive more support, he added, and the board will be closely monitoring all schools’ progress.

In the Toronto Catholic board, 70 per cent of Grade 3 students met reading levels, 81 per cent in writing and 66 per cent in math.

In Grade 6, 74 per cent met expectations in reading, 81 per cent in writing but just 53 per cent in math.

“Given that the same patterns (in math achievement) have been evidenced across the province, we will continue to work closely with the Ministry of Education and other school boards on strategies to improve student success in this area,” said Director of Education Angela Gauthier in a written release.

The Peel District School Board recently announced a massive effort to overhaul student performance in math, making numeracy the main focus in every school for the next few years, along with more training for teachers and an attitude adjustment for all when it comes to numbers.