

Report of the 1999-2000 Provincial Grade 3 & Grade 6 Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics

Glen Cedar Public School

YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

ABOUT THE GRADE 3 & GRADE 6 ASSESSMENTS

The *Grade 3 and Grade 6 Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics* are conducted annually in every publicly funded Ontario elementary school under the auspices of the province's Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO). The assessments are based on *The Ontario Curriculum: Grades 1-8* and measure how well students have met the provincial expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. The students' work was marked according to four levels of achievement based on the expectations in the provincial curriculum. In the *Ontario Curriculum*, Level 3 represents the expected standard for Grade 3 and Grade 6 and identifies a high level of achievement of the provincial expectations. The work students produced during the assessment was marked by teams of specially trained classroom teachers and principals.

The assessments took place over a period of five days from May 8 to 26, 2000. For 2 1/2 hours each day, students participated in brief introductory activities with their classmates and teacher and then worked independently to read and respond to passages, to write responses and to solve mathematical problems. The use of real-world problems required students to use factual knowledge to apply, organize and communicate what they know and can do. The Grade 3 assessment was based on the concept of *Change* and the Grade 6 assessment was based on *Perspectives*.

The results of these assessments should be used to improve learning and teaching, not to rank schools. Rankings tell us nothing about why scores are high or low. They invite simplistic and misleading comparisons which ignore the particular circumstances that affect achievement in each school and they also distract people from addressing the critical issues of how to improve learning for all students.

CONTEXT FOR THE SCHOOL

Glen Cedar Public School is located in the north east quadrant of Newmarket. Glen Cedar was opened in 1979. At the time of the EQAO testing we had 350 students enrolled from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8.

During last year's testing 32 students were enrolled in Grade 3. Twenty-five percent of those students were receiving Special Education support. At the Grade 6 level, 41 students were enrolled in Grade 6. Thirty-two percent of those students were receiving Special Education support.

Glen Cedar offers a Reading Recovery program for selected Grade 1 students. Several community groups make extensive use of the school facility. Sparks, Brownies, Scouts, Reading Circle, and recreational groups use the school on a weekly basis. The School Plan for Continuous Improvement currently focuses on a welcoming environment, reflects the values and standards of the community through curriculum that is relevant and futuristic, is active in creating partnerships between students, parents, teachers and the community, and is a community where care, respect, responsibility and equity are expectations for all. The School Council and the staff share a common vision for Glen Cedar and work very hard to achieve their goals. The school's open door policy readily encourages and accepts parental input and expertise.

We also had a partnership with York University in placing teacher candidates for their practicum. These dedicated groups work toward enhancing the program and learning environment for all of our students.

NEXT STEPS

At Glen Cedar Public School we value and strive toward academic excellence as we continue to implement the Ontario curricula. Using the EQAO data from last year, we are developing a plan which will focus on a systematic approach through teaching practices, learning opportunities and parent involvement. As a result of the analysis of the data, it was decided that we revisit the School Plan for Continuous Improvement to reflect and support areas for further growth.

In response to the assessment data, Glen Cedar Public School will:

- continue to provide students with opportunities for silent reading
- develop a system to track reading at home through various programs; Borrow A Book and Home reading programs
- continue to offer the School Council supported Reading Circle
- continue to involve the School Council in making reading a school wide focus by having parent volunteers in the library and in the classrooms
- continue to run the Annual Read A Thon, which is financially supported by the School Council
- continue to build on a practice of reading for meaning through modelling
- continue to provide a variety of reading materials, i.e. non-fiction materials, poetry etc...
- use Reading/Writing exemplars as a guide for improvement and benchmarks
- provide opportunities to write in a variety of genres with specific goals through modelling and practice
- use child "interest" literature as an incentive for children to interpret analyze information and ideas from the text
- use the process of writing for a specific purpose across the curriculum i.e. math, to use clear explanations of required knowledge
- provide opportunities for students to write for different purposes
- continue to use problem solving steps; pictures, words, equations, throughout the year in "valid" or "real" situations and to model these steps
- continue to provide more resources to help students improve their ability to sequence details and to extract information from written material in order to better manage the data
- teach concepts in mathematics through investigations / hands on opportunities, concrete materials
- continue to teach students steps to manage data in a variety of formats-patterns, bar graphs, pie graphs etc...
- continue to support student achievement of identified and non-identified students through flexible heterogeneous and homogenous groupings

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