

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Confidence in math results remains high

Slight fluctuation in Grade 9 math scores no cause for alarm

(Windsor, Ontario, Oct. 28, 2015) – Despite a recent fluctuation in Grade 9 math scores, administrators at the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board remain confident in the overall performance of their students.

“You have to expect that you’re going to see year to year variances when you’re already achieving at a very high level,” said Director of Education Paul Picard. “Over the last five years we’ve been on a consistently upward trend, so it’s only natural that you may get slight fluctuations some years.”

According to the latest results from the Education Quality and Accountability Office, 88 per cent of WECDSB academic level students met the provincial standard of Level 3 or 4 on the Grade 9 standardized mathematics test they wrote last school year, marking a three per cent decrease from 2014. It was the first dip in academic level scores the board has seen in four years.

At the applied level, 49 per cent met the provincial standard of Level 3 or 4, marking a five per cent decrease from 2014, and the first decrease in four years.

The good news, according to mathematics curriculum consultant David Petro, is that in tracking the cohort of students from Grade 6 to Grade 9, 13 per cent rose to the standard at the academic level, while at the applied level, 32 per cent rose to the standard, meaning the board more than doubled the number of students who achieved at that level compared to Grade 6.

“That indicates we’re doing a better job of helping students improve as they move up through their grades,” he said, adding that in 2006, 38 per cent of applied students achieved the provincial standard, compared to 72 per cent at the academic level. “Considering where we were almost a decade ago, we’ve made vast improvements. A score of 88 per cent is still exceptional, but we’re never satisfied with our scores, so we’re always trying to find new methods to improve. We never rest on our laurels.”

Board Chair Barbara Holland said that although she’s concerned with this year’s fluctuation, she’s still confident in the board’s administration, teachers and students.

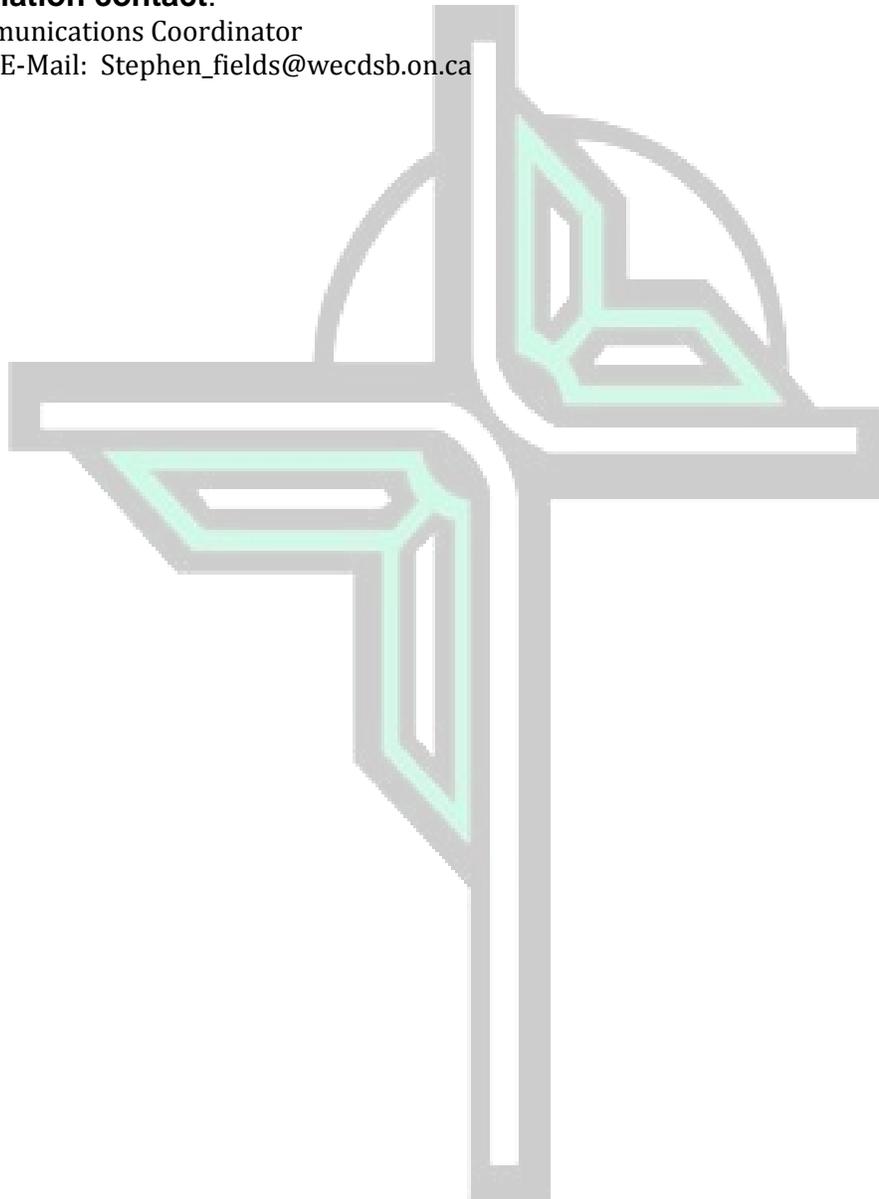
“I’m certain our superintendents and curriculum consultants will take a hard look at the results and determine whether we need to do anything differently in order to correct this anomaly,” she said.

Unfortunately, WECDSB administrators have no way of knowing how their students compared to others across Ontario. Provincial data will not be available because students in the some boards did not write the test due to work-to-rule job actions.

“That information would be helpful to see how we compare, but ultimately we’re really interested in improving our own results from year to year,” said assessment and evaluation consultant Heather Best. “If results had fluctuated right across the province, then we may have been part of an overall trend, but we’ll have no way of knowing that for certain.”

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