

Quebec students falling behind in reading, science

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Students in Quebec get top marks in math, but are well below the average in science and reading, according to a report released Monday.

The Pan-Canadian Assessment Program, based on a standardized test administered every three years, [also found](#) boys across the country are losing ground in literacy and middle-school students across Canada are performing well in math.

About 32,000 Grade 8 students from 10 provinces and one territory, Yukon, took the test in 2010. It is meant to determine if they are at the level expected of them in math, science and literacy.

PHOTOS



Students at Hampstead School are part of a unique Success for All reading program.

Ontario and Alberta scored in the top three for all three categories.

In math, Quebec students excelled and placed first in the country. They faltered in reading and science, however, placing seventh and ninth, respectively.

Quebec's Minister of Education Line Beauchamp said she was surprised by the lower scores.

"Honestly it's difficult to explain, as Quebec's school programs haven't changed since the last evaluation," she said.

Beauchamp announced new measures Monday to boost reading in schools, including new vocabulary lists and more student evaluation.

The test results are not shocking, said Steven Erdelyi, the principal of Hampstead School.

"I would say I'm a bit surprised by those results but not shocked. I think literacy is a concept that hasn't been emphasized as much as it should," he said.

While the English Montreal School Board has launched a large-scale literacy program, Hampstead School has gone further, implementing a unique the Success for All program that supplements Quebec's basic curriculum.

The program runs for 90 minutes daily, and students read at their level, said Success for All facilitator Paula Cook.

"An important piece is that when kids come in they are tested and placed at their reading level," she said.

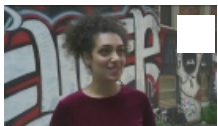
Teacher Patricia Wilkin said the program was a success.

"What's really effective for the student is that there's a lot of repetition within the program. There's a lot of action," she said. "There's a large social component, so we're working a lot on oral language."

The province's science program will be put under the education ministry's microscope before any changes are made.

With a report from ctvnews.ca

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