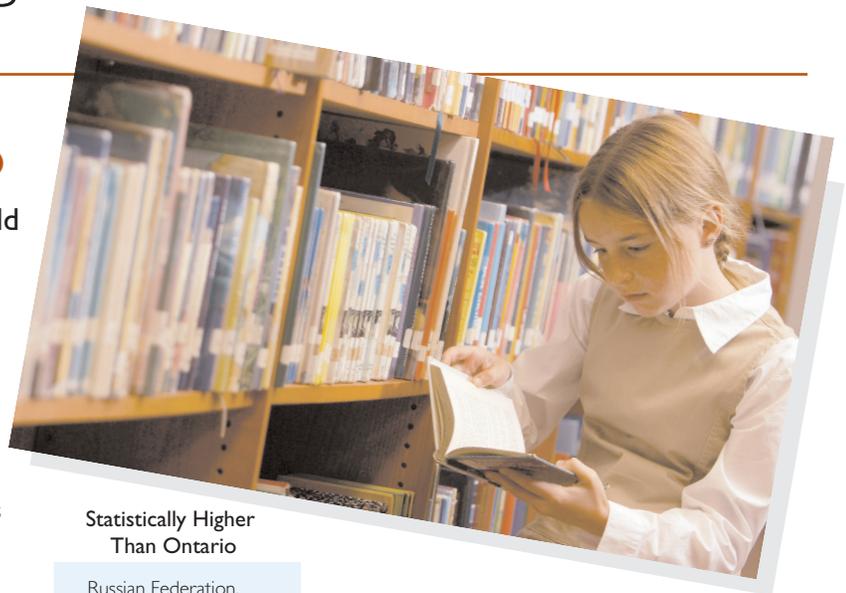


Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), 2006 Highlights of Ontario Results

READING ACHIEVEMENT IN GRADE 4 (Based on Average Scale Scores)

Ontario students among the best in the world in overall reading achievement.

- In PIRLS, achievement scores are based on samples of students and estimate the actual achievement of an entire population of students. The study therefore provides a range of scores (confidence interval) within which the actual achievement results might fall. The chart to the right factors in the confidence intervals so that the stated differences between jurisdictions are likely real and not due to chance.
- The average scores of Ontario's English-language students were statistically the same as those of the province as a whole.
- The average scores of Ontario's French-language students were statistically lower than those for the province as a whole but showed significant improvement since 2001—greater improvement than that among English-language students.
- Ontario's high standing is particularly notable given that 38% of participating students sometimes speak a language other than the language of the test at home. This is the largest such percentage in Canada and well above the international average of 29%.



Statistically Higher Than Ontario

Russian Federation,
Hong Kong

Statistically the Same as Ontario

Ontario

Alberta, Bulgaria, British
Columbia, Hungary, Italy,
Luxembourg, Singapore,
Sweden

Statistically Lower Than Ontario

Austria, Belgium (Flemish),
Belgium (French), Chinese
Taipei, Denmark, England,
France, Georgia, Germany,
Iceland, Indonesia, Iran, Israel,
Kuwait, Latvia, Lithuania,
Macedonia, Moldova,
Morocco, Netherlands,
New Zealand, Norway,
Nova Scotia, Poland, Qatar,
Quebec, Romania, Scotland,
Slovak Republic, Slovenia,
South Africa, Spain, Trinidad
and Tobago, United States

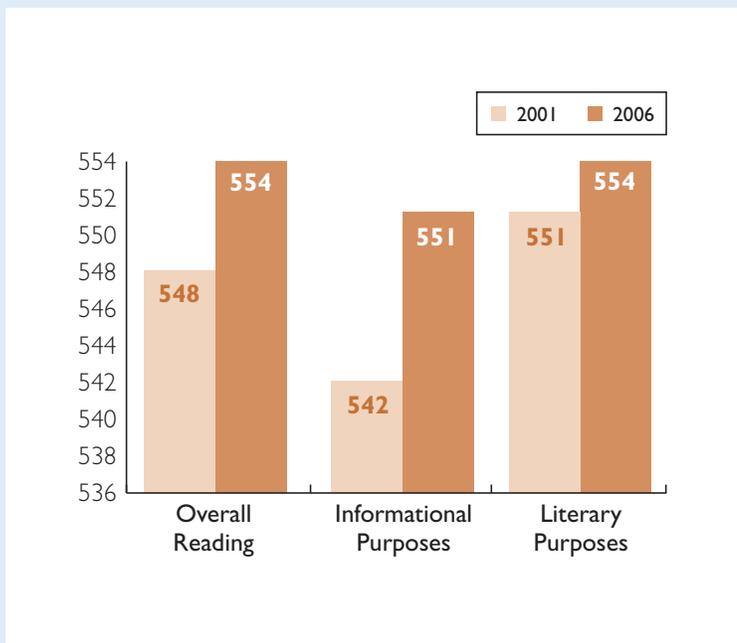
Student Achievement According to International Benchmarks

- PIRLS defines four benchmarks for student achievement. The following table gives the percentage of students reaching these benchmarks. The results for Ontario are listed, along with the results for the four other participating Canadian provinces, the other participating Group of Eight jurisdictions and Singapore.
- 16% of Ontario students reached the top achievement benchmark in the study, compared to the 7% or fewer who reached this level in the majority of participating countries (not shown on chart). Only Singapore, the Russian Federation and Alberta had a larger percentage of students achieving this benchmark.

	Advanced Benchmark	High Benchmark	Intermediate Benchmark	Low Benchmark
Singapore	19% (1.4)	58% (1.7)	86% (1.0)	97% (0.4)
Russian Federation	19% (1.5)	61% (2.0)	90% (1.1)	98% (0.5)
Alberta	17% (1.1)	57% (1.6)	89% (0.8)	99% (0.2)
Ontario	16% (1.1)	54% (1.9)	87% (1.1)	98% (0.5)
British Columbia	16% (1.3)	56% (1.6)	88% (1.0)	98% (0.3)
England	15% (0.9)	48% (1.3)	78% (1.1)	93% (0.7)
Italy	14% (1.4)	52% (1.8)	87% (1.3)	98% (0.4)
Nova Scotia	13% (1.0)	48% (1.2)	82% (1.0)	96% (0.4)
United States	12% (1.2)	47% (2.0)	82% (1.4)	96% (0.6)
Germany	11% (0.9)	52% (1.6)	87% (0.8)	97% (0.3)
Quebec	6% (0.8)	41% (1.9)	83% (1.3)	97% (0.4)
France	5% (0.6)	35% (1.2)	76% (1.2)	96% (0.4)

Trends in Student Achievement: From PIRLS 2001 to 2006

- The following graph compares the average scale scores of Ontario students from the 2001 and 2006 PIRLS administrations for the following achievement categories:
 - **overall reading** achievement, which combines the two following categories:
 - achievement in reading for **informational purposes**
 - achievement in reading for **literary purposes**
- The 2006 results show that Ontario students have made significant improvements in reading for informational purposes since the last administration of the study. Reading for informational purposes has been an increasingly important focus in the Ontario school system for the past few years, and the PIRLS increase supports the upward trend that has been apparent in Ontario's province-wide tests administered by EQAO.



About PIRLS

- PIRLS is a world-wide assessment undertaken every five years and sponsored by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement. The first PIRLS administration was in 2001.
- The purpose of the study is to assess the reading skills of Grade 4 students from around the world, determine the contexts that influence reading development, understand how young children learn to read, and assess and understand the differences among education systems in order to improve reading teaching and learning methods throughout the world.
- In 2006, 45 countries and provinces participated in PIRLS. In Canada, the provinces of Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, Quebec and Nova Scotia participated as five distinct jurisdictions.
- For each participating Canadian province, Statistics Canada randomly selected Grade 4 classes in both English- and French-language schools to take part in the study.
- In Ontario, 107 English-language schools from 42 boards and 73 French-language schools from 11 boards participated, for a combined total of 3988 Ontario students.
- Achievement results for students in each jurisdiction are presented in two ways:
 - the average scale score of students in the jurisdiction
 - the percentage of students meeting international achievement benchmarks
- PIRLS 2006 also focuses on reading behaviours and attitudes. Students were asked to complete a questionnaire on their reading habits. Parents, teachers and school principals were also asked to complete questionnaires. The responses to these questionnaires helped describe how reading is taught and learned.

About EQAO: The Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) acts as a catalyst for increasing the success of Ontario students by measuring their achievement in reading, writing and mathematics against a common curriculum benchmark. As an independent provincial agency, EQAO plays a pivotal role by conducting province-wide tests at key points in every student's primary, junior and secondary education and reporting the results. The objective and reliable facts obtained add to the current knowledge about student learning and are an important tool for improvement at the individual, school and provincial levels.