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Local schools receive Fraser ?report card?

By Mark Pavilons

While 75 of the province's high schools improved their grades in the annual Fraser Institute report, some elementary schools are either holding their own, or have dropped in the rankings.

The GTA boasts seven public schools and six Catholic schools that are among the top 20 fastest-improving secondary schools in Ontario, according to the Fraser Institute's annual school rankings.

?Our report card consistently shows that school improvement is occurring all over Ontario, from Timmins in the north to Chatham in the south and from Sault Ste. Marie in the west to Hawkesbury in the east,? said Peter Cowley, Fraser Institute director of school performance studies.

?Every school is capable of improvement, regardless of its geographic or socio-economic challenges. With individual school results going back five years, the Fraser Institute's annual school rankings help parents and educators measure improvement in specific subject areas and prioritize improvement plans for the year ahead.?

The Report Card on Ontario's Secondary Schools 2013 rates 725 public, private, and Catholic secondary schools based on seven academic indicators using data from the annual province wide tests of literacy and math managed by Ontario's Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO).

The report card also includes important information about each school's make-up, including parents' average income, the percentage of ESL students, and the percentage of special needs students.

King City Secondary?School placed an impressive 94th out of 725, shooting up from its previous ranking of 141/691.

The school boasts a 7.8/10 score, or a solid B+. That compares to 6.3 in 2008 and 7.4 in 2011. The average parental income is pegged at $121,100.

Of the 20 Ontario secondary schools showing the fastest academic improvement over the past five years, 10 are public schools where the parental income is below average. At four of those schools, special needs students account for more than 20 per cent of school enrolment.

King Township's Elementary Schools

Schomberg Public School had a respectable score of 7.2/10, finishing 676 out of 2,714 schools. The school showed a marked improvement from its score of 6.1 in 2011, moving up in all but one category - Grade 6 reading. The income level for this school is put at $71,000.

Kettleby Public School was 777/2,714, for a score of 7/10. This school showed improvement over its 6.1 score in 2011 and improved in all areas but Grade 6 math. Parents' income at this school is estimated at $152,000.

King City Public School is steady, and improved slightly to 6.3/10, from 6/10 in 2011. The scores stayed the same, with a noticeable improvement in Grade 3 writing. The school placed 1,239/2,714. The parents' income is put at $169,500.

St. Mary Catholic elementary school in Nobleton earned a score of 6.6/10, placing 1,016/2,714. The score fell slightly from the 7/10 mark they received in 2011, despite holding their own in the academic tests. Income levels in this area are estimated at $211,800.

Holy Name Catholic elementary school in King City had a very solid score of 8.2/10, good for an A. That placed them 251st in the rankings. Despite the solid score, they actually dropped from the 9.5/10 they earned in 2011. The parental income at this school is $187,100.

St. Patrick Catholic elementary school in Schomberg earned a solid 7.9/10, finishing 356/2,714 and improving over the 7.4/10 they earned in 2011. The biggest rise in test scores occurred in Grade 6 writing and grade 6 math. The income level at this school is pegged at $92,100.

?Only the Fraser Institute report card ensures that school success stories like these become widely known. If educators want to help students learn and improve, they should be talking to these schools,? Cowley said.

The complete results for all 725 secondary schools are available at www.compareschoolrankings.org.

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