

PIRLS 2006 Summary of Results

Background

- Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), a survey of reading literacy conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), was conducted in 2001 and again in 2006.
- PIRLS assesses the reading achievement of students in grade 4; this corresponds to the point in children's development at which they should have learned to read, and are now reading to learn.
- In addition to assessing the achievement of students in reading literacy, surveys on aspects relating to literary resources and reading activities were completed by the students, their parents, their teachers, and their principals.
- In the 2006 study, more than 215,000 grade 4 students in 40 countries and five Canadian provinces participated, including over 4,100 students from British Columbia.

Results for British Columbia Students

- The results of PIRLS 2006 showed that BC students have one of the highest literacy rates in the world.
- BC students performed significantly above the international average.
- Of the 40 countries and 4 other Canadian provinces that participated in the study, there were no jurisdictions that performed above BC's range in reading achievement.
- There were eight jurisdictions that performed in the same range as BC and 36 jurisdictions that performed below BC's range.
- No Canadian provinces performed above BC's range in reading achievement.
- Alberta and Ontario performed in the same range as BC and Nova Scotia and Quebec performed below BC's range.
- BC students performed higher on literary reading (i.e. stories) than on information reading (i.e. passages that deal with aspects of the real universe); a similar pattern was found in 18 other jurisdictions.
- In BC, as in every other jurisdiction, girls had a higher level of achievement than boys. However, in BC the difference between male and female student achievement was one of the smallest of any jurisdiction in the world.

Survey Results for British Columbia Students

- The results of the *Learning to Read Survey*, which was given to the parents of participating students, showed that students in BC have higher levels of engagement in early home literacy activities and higher levels of access to home educational resources than the international average.
- The results of the *PIRLS Index of Students' Attitudes Towards Reading* showed that, among all the participating jurisdictions, BC had the highest number of students reporting that they read stories or novels outside school every day or almost every day.

More information on PIRLS 2006 is available at the Ministry of Education website:
http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/nat_int_assess.htm