Education Quality and Accountability Office

EQAO

2022–2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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Message from the Chair

On behalf of the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), I am pleased to present the agency's annual report for the 2022–2023 fiscal year. The agency remains committed to supporting student success and ensuring our publicly funded provincial education system is accountable to Ontarians.

This past fiscal year, the agency pursued its multi-year digitalization and modernization initiative in accordance with industry best practices. Following government direction, during the 2021–2022 school year, the agency administered its large-scale assessments in a digital format for the first time throughout the province and reported the results of these assessments at the provincial, school and school-board levels through new interactive online channels.

Over the course of the fiscal year, the agency saw some changes in EQAO's governance. The EQAO Board of Directors welcomed new members David Belous and Mark Stewart, and bid farewell to Serge Demers, Sarabjit Kaur and Dr. Kinga Petrovai. We thank the departed members for their dedicated service and leadership and look forward to the continued work of the diverse and committed members of the board of directors.

Analysis of objective, evidence-informed data on student learning serve educators, policy-makers and other education stakeholders as they develop plans and strategies to support positive student outcomes. Throughout its history, EQAO has aligned itself with the most current advancements in large-scale assessment and data reporting. These innovations actively inform the agency's modernization, along with regular consultation with the agency's partners. As EQAO remains committed to equity, diversity and inclusiveness, it will pursue its mandate through high standards in its activities and governance to benefit the education sector and the province at large.

Dr. Cameron Montgomery
Chair, EQAO Board of Directors

Message from the Chief Executive Officer

On behalf of EQAO's staff, I am delighted to present the agency's annual report for 2022–2023. The initiatives listed in this document speak to EQAO's commitment to contributing to student learning and the improvement of student outcomes by leveraging assessment data and the latest advancements in large-scale evaluation.

The education landscape is constantly evolving. As EQAO moved forward in its transformation this past year by implementing and concluding its first province-wide online assessment administration, the agency integrated further the feedback received from its partners over the years to develop and launch reporting tools adapted to an accessible digital world. By releasing school-, school board- and provincial-level achievement results and contextual data through a modern and interactive online platform, the agency made public important pandemic-era student information in a modern and actionable manner that supports the education community.

In transforming and modernizing EQAO's operations and structure, they were made effective as they were driven by a desire to integrate the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism in every aspect of the agency's operations and culture. This year, EQAO sought a greater alignment with these principles by actively pursuing new cooperation with equity-deserving groups and Indigenous community partners, and completing a comprehensive analysis, through a fairness and inclusion lens, of the agency's internal processes and culture in conjunction with the development of a multi-year plan to address and rectify any internal issues. EQAO has placed students at the centre of its assessment program from the start. EQAO will continue to do so by working collectively with students, educators, leaders and experts from fields linked to assessment and digitalization to increase the agency's effectiveness in contributing to positive change in the outcomes of every child and youth in Ontario.

Dan Koenig
EQAO Chief Executive Officer

About EQAO

EQAO was established in 1996 following a recommendation of the Ontario Royal Commission on Learning. After consulting extensively with Ontarians and the education community, the Commission concluded that province-wide assessments would help address the desire among Ontarians for greater quality and accountability in the publicly funded education system.

EQAO is a board governed agency of the Ministry of Education that supports student learning in Ontario. Our data, research and resources empower parents and guardians, educators, policy-makers and others with the information needed to determine how best to strengthen student outcomes across the province. Throughout its work, EQAO is committed to anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion.

To help improve student learning, EQAO administers large-scale assessments that align with *The Ontario Curriculum;* contribute to education research; and assist all Ontarians and the education community at large in understanding, analyzing and appropriately using EQAO data.

EQAO is currently pursuing a multi-faceted and multi-year modernization initiative that focuses on five distinct areas:
- large-scale assessments,
- reports,
- research,
- engagement with Ontarians, and
- supporting equity, diversity and inclusion in education.

The agency's goal is to provide data and evidence-informed insights into student learning to facilitate the success of each Ontario student. EQAO strives to continually enhance its high-quality large-scale assessment program to ensure it is equitable, inclusive and reflective of Ontario's diversity so that all students can demonstrate their understanding of the provincial curriculum.

By assessing each student in relation to the learning expectations outlined in *The Ontario Curriculum*, EQAO offers independent data at key stages in students' K–12 educational journey. The agency provides schools and school boards with reports about their students' achievement and personalized reports for students who write an assessment to help support their individual learning. Additional contextual, attitudinal and behavioural information from questionnaires offers valuable insights into student attitudes and experiences, and EQAO assessment data are used by educators to improve student learning.

EQAO's data, in addition to classroom and school board information, helps the education community consider key trends through collaborative inquiries. Such insights help stakeholders make evidence-informed decisions when developing improvement plans that foster equitable and inclusive learning environments for students. EQAO's information also helps to guide the analysis and decisions of parents and guardians and policy-makers.

The agency's outreach programs help build capacity for the appropriate use of EQAO data. Through webinars, virtual conferences and other events, the agency provides tools and resources that educators, parents and guardians, policy-makers, researchers and the education community at large can use to align their strategies with best practices in assessment and education, both nationally and internationally, helping to empower educators with the resources needed to support and enhance positive outcomes for students.

Through research, EQAO investigates factors that influence student achievement, school effectiveness and best assessment practices. The agency also coordinates Ontario's participation in national and international assessments (e.g., PCAP, PISA, PIRLS, TIMSS) that test students in mathematics, science, technology, financial literacy, collaborative problem solving, and reading and writing, and that evaluate the general well-being of students inside and outside of the school environment.

Values

- EQAO values giving all students the opportunity to reach their highest possible level of achievement.
- EQAO values its role as a service to educators, parents and guardians, students, government and the public in support of teaching and learning in the classroom.
- EQAO values credible evidence that informs professional practice and focuses attention on interventions that improve student success.
- EQAO values research that informs large-scale assessment and classroom practice.
- EQAO values the dedication and expertise of Ontario's educators and their involvement in all aspects of the assessment processes and the positive difference their efforts make in student outcomes.
- EQAO values the delivery of its programs and services with equivalent quality in both English and French.

Strategic Priorities

In accordance with direction from its board of directors, EQAO develops a new strategic plan every three to five years to deliver on the agency's mandate of supporting and guiding student improvement by providing credible information about the quality and effectiveness of the province's publicly funded elementary and secondary education system. The following strategic priorities directed the agency's work during the 2022–2023 fiscal year:

- Strategic Priority 1: Digitalize and Modernize All EQAO Assessments
- Strategic Priority 2: Ensure Effective Governance and Engagement in the Agency's Operations

Strategic Priority 1—Digitalize and Modernize All EQAO Assessments

EQAO assesses important aspects of the quality and effectiveness of elementary and secondary public education in Ontario in support of student learning and positive student outcomes in a fast-evolving world. EQAO's digitalization and modernization initiative helps the agency meet the current needs of Ontario students and prepare for the future demands of the education community. By ensuring the agency's assessment program is equitable, accessible, fair and reflective of the province's diversity while aligning with the provincial curriculum, EQAO can use its data to offer an accurate measure of how the education system is doing at a specific point in time.

EQAO's K–12 Assessment Program

Through its large-scale provincial assessment program, EQAO administers curriculum-based standardized assessments at key stages in each student's educational journey. This approach
- evaluates progress over time at the school, school board, provincial and individual student levels;
- fosters discussions about improvements to learning programs in schools and school boards across the province; and
- allows policy-makers to understand system-wide trends better and make student-focused and evidence-informed decisions.

EQAO K–12 Assessments	Grade of Administration	Subjects
Assessment of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, Primary Division	End of Grade 3 (Grades 1–3 curriculum)	Reading, writing, mathematics
Assessment of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, Junior Division	End of Grade 6 (Grades 4–6 curriculum)	Reading, writing, mathematics
Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics	End of Grade 9 mathematics course (Grade 9 curriculum)	Mathematics
Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT)/ Test provincial de compétences linguistiques (TPCL)	Grade 10 (literacy skills expected by the curriculum across all subjects up to the end of Grade 9)	Literacy

Digitalization And Modernization: Improving Large-Scale Assessments to Serve Ontarians of Today and Tomorrow

The pursuit of EQAO's digitalization and modernization aims to serve Ontarians better in matters of student learning by being able to continuously adapt to the various and rapid changes that impact the education community and by placing the student at the centre of its assessment-related operations at all times. A digitalized EQAO assessment program presents stakeholders with increased flexibility in assessment administration and easy access to timely assessment results, while continuing to create large-scale assessments that meet the very best practices in quality and measurement.

EQAO's multi-year and multi-faceted modernization effectively ramped up in response to the new realities of the education landscape during the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. In line with government directives and in compliance with its mandate, the agency digitalized its operations, including its entire assessment program, at the beginning of the pandemic. The lessons learned from field testing EQAO's online Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics and the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) with students who were attending school in person in the fall of 2020 and the spring of 2021 served as a foundation for the implementation of the agency's first province-wide e-assessment administration in September 2021, as the government announced that year that provincial assessments would resume for all students learning in person during the 2021–2022 school year and would henceforth be administered online. The results of EQAO's first e-assessment administration were reported in the fall of 2022.

EQAO's online assessment system allows for the assessments to be offered according to two different models: multi-stage computer adaptive testing (msCAT) and a linear test design. The mathematics component of the primary- and junior-division Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, along with the Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics, are offered using a multi-stage computer adaptive testing (msCAT) model, where each student is presented with questions that are challenging yet align with the student's demonstrated skill set. During this type of adaptive assessment, modules (that is, groups of questions) increase or decrease in difficulty by one level at any stage, depending on the student's responses to the set of questions in the previous module. The language (that is, reading and writing) component of the primary- and junior-division Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, along with the Ontario Secondary School Literacy test (OSSLT), are designed to be administered to students as a linear test model, where several equivalent test forms of the assessment are assembled according to the same content and statistical specifications ahead of administration of the assessment; these test forms are fixed in length.

Each of these digitalized assessments has a set of accessibility tools and support materials embedded into the onscreen student toolbar, and alternative versions of the assessments are made available to students who require them. Third-party software currently supported by the e-assessments include, for instance, Read&Write for Google Chrome, Dragon NaturallySpeaking, Job Action with Speech (JAWS), Kurzweil 3000 and NVDA Screen Reader. Alternative secure access to the online assessments is also available if a chosen accessibility or accommodation software is not compatible with the e-assessment lockdown browser. Practice and sample tests, along with frameworks that provide details on how each assessment maps to Ontario curriculum expectations and

user guides that offer comprehensive information on each assessment's administration procedures, are available publicly on EQAO's website.

EQAO Assessment Development and Reporting Process

To conduct assessments with integrity, EQAO ensures its processes meet the highest standards in technical quality. The agency follows a rigorous assessment-development process to ensure that selected materials and questions are linked to curriculum expectations and are appropriate for students across the province. The data that flow from EQAO assessments are analyzed in depth, and reports are produced to provide reliable insights into student learning.

Creating Digitalized Assessments

The creation of EQAO assessments is led by Ontario educators who research, develop and review every question. Throughout this effort, EQAO assessments are developed in collaboration with psychometricians and other experts from around the world and across the education field. These invaluable committees help to ensure that EQAO assessments remain aligned with the most recent *Ontario Curriculum* and that they are equitable, inclusive and fair so that each student who takes them can fully participate and demonstrate their understanding of curriculum expectations. The development activities and committee work are undertaken by both English- and French-language experts.

Educators are selected to participate in EQAO activities based on the following criteria:
• diversity;
• geographic location, to ensure representation from all parts of the province and from both rural and urban regions;
• current elementary- and secondary-level experience (i.e., teachers, administrators, subject experts and consultants); and
• expertise in evaluation and assessment, including large-scale and online assessments.

Work groups such as the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee and the Assessment Development Committee, along with additional sub-committees on specific elements of assessment development, ensure that all questions, or items, are accessible to students, are age and grade appropriate, and align to the curriculum being measured. Once items are approved by the committees, these items become part of what is called an item bank and can then be field tested in schools across the province before becoming part of the operational assessment—that is, the assessment administered to students on a large scale, where the items are counted in the results. This elaborate process helps ensure that students will be able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum when responding to any item. The items that appeared in the language component of EQAO's 2022–2023 school year large-scale assessments were mainly those that were either field tested previously or part of an operational assessment in a previous year. The items that appeared in the Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics were those that were operational in the previous

year's assessment, while the items that appeared in the mathematics component of the primary- and junior-division Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics were items that were either field-tested or operational in the previous year's assessments.

Administering Digitalized Assessments

EQAO relies on the support and collaboration of educators to administer the assessments. For each assessment, EQAO publishes on its website an online user guide for teachers, school administrators and school board IT professionals that includes detailed guidelines and clear steps to follow to ensure consistent administration across Ontario. Additionally, the agency hosts informative webinars for teachers, principals and information technology school board contacts, and offers tailored presentations to school boards, upon request.

In the second year of implementing its online assessment program, EQAO continued to provide extended administration windows that offer school administrators increased flexibility when scheduling assessments for their students. During the 2022–2023 school year, the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) was administered from November 2 to December 7, 2022, and from March 1 to April 26, 2023. The Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics administration window was open from January 11 to February 3, and from June 7 to 28, 2023. The primary- and junior-division Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics were administered from May 10 to June 14, 2023.

Scoring Digitalized Assessments

All EQAO assessment items are scored according to established criteria, which helps to ensure the integrity and reliability of EQAO data as well as the comparability of assessment results from year to year. The item responses of the mathematics component of the online primary- and junior-division Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, and the online Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics, are scored automatically. This type of automated computer-based scoring allows for rapid information on selected-response questions. The open-response items in the language component of the primary- and junior-division assessments, and the open-response items of the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), are scored by qualified Ontario educators from across the province. Training for potential scorers of digital assessments follows strict procedures and is self-directed through an online system; all the resources required for training are available online through the system. Scorers who train and successfully complete the qualification test are invited to participate in scoring at their chosen time and from any location, providing they meet the necessary technical requirements and qualifications.

During the 2021–2022 school year, a total of 1104 educators scored the open-response items of the Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics and the OSSLT administered that year.

Reporting Results of Digitalized Assessments

EQAO endeavours to provide user-friendly access to the data derived from its large-scale assessments. The introduction of digitalized assessments has allowed for EQAO's approach to reporting student assessment results to schools, school boards and to the public to be modernized.

Standard setting for large-scale assessments ensures that assessment results remain relevant and reflect changes at all levels. To align with EQAO's e-assessment system, online scoring and delivery mode, and recently introduced provincial curricula, new standards for mathematics were set in 2022 to define EQAO assessments' levels of achievement. The assessment results that were provided for the 2021–2022 school year established new baselines for achievement data and results which will allow for comparability with subsequent years' data.

As in the past, achievement results continue to be reported by levels of achievement (that is, Levels 1 to 4) for EQAO's elementary assessments and the Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics, and by success rate (that is, successful and not yet successful) for the Ontario Secondary School Literacy test (OSSLT). Computer-scoring of the selected-response items on EQAO's e-assessments allows for faster and, in some cases, immediate reporting of results. For instance, teachers can have access to an automated report on a student's achievement on the Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics shortly after the student completes the assessment, and this report can then be forwarded to the student and their parent(s) or guardian(s). The results of the primary- and junior-division Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics and the results of the OSSLT are released after all open-ended items have been scored by trained scorers, and an individual student report is generated after the scoring of the whole assessment.

The 2021–2022 school year assessment results that were released in the fall of 2022 leveraged a new reporting system that utilizes interactive dashboards and allows educators and the public to visualize relevant EQAO data in new dynamic ways. Based on the feedback received from educators across the province, EQAO reimagined and enhanced its data reporting to fit a digital model accessible to all. The education community and the public can conveniently access information about assessments and questionnaires on their own time while continuing to obtain crucial information about student learning that schools, school boards and policy-makers can use for improvement planning. The Interactive EQAO Dashboards available on the agency's website gives the public the ability to access easily and quickly information about students' achievement and their learning perceptions. Specifically designed for educators in schools and school boards, the EQAO Data Reporting Tool, located on a separate secure site, supports inquiry-based analysis by providing more detailed information about students and their learning.

Benefitting from External Expertise

EQAO uses multiple systematic quality-assurance processes to ensure the validity of its assessment data. Processes have been developed and are in place to support the validation of each of the agency's online assessments. The agency closely collaborates

with its digital assessment services vendor and large-scale assessment experts to ensure industry standards are met for the assessments' technical performance and the integrity of the resulting data.

2021–2022 Assessments: Results and Observations

During the fiscal year, EQAO released the results of the agency's first modernized and digitalized large-scale assessments administered during the 2021–2022 school year. In the fall of 2022, EQAO assessment results at the provincial, school board and school levels were made available online through new, interactive dashboards. Due to the substantial changes to EQAO assessments that year as well as the introduction of new mathematics curricula, observations based on year-to-year trends were not available. A different EQAO assessment model necessitated that new baselines be established for EQAO assessment results, meaning that new trendlines were set in 2021–2022. Therefore, 2018–2019 results were provided only as reference points (where applicable in relation to the provincial standard) to shine a light on how students were doing after two years of a pandemic.

EQAO's student and educator questionnaires are regularly updated and are completed voluntarily during the assessment administration. Student questionnaires offer valuable attitudinal and contextual information about students' experiences and perceptions with respect to literacy and numeracy, while educator questionnaires provide helpful information about educators' experience with the online assessment in addition to their thoughts about their learning environment. This type of information is important and should be considered alongside assessment results and data from other sources to build a full understanding of student learning in Ontario.

In the 2021–2022 school year, 604 664 students from the publicly funded English- and French-language school systems were assessed in relation to expectations outlined in *The Ontario Curriculum*:
• 257 672 primary- and junior-division students;
• 74 078 Grade 9 students and
• 272 914 OSSLT/TPCL students.

A total of 3712 elementary schools and 865 secondary schools in Ontario's publicly funded education system participated in EQAO assessments that year. An additional 216 private, First Nation and international schools also participated.

Results for English-Language Schools in Ontario

Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, Primary and Junior Divisions

Primary Division (Grade 3)

According to the data from the 2021–2022 EQAO assessments, Grade 3 student achievement results, which are given in relation to the provincial standard, declined in literacy but remained stable in mathematics, relative to results from 2018–2019.

Assessment results for all participating students:

- 73% of Grade 3 students met the provincial standard in reading (77% met the standard in 2018–2019).
- 65% of Grade 3 students met the provincial standard in writing (72% met the standard in 2018–2019).
- 59% of Grade 3 students met the provincial standard in mathematics (60% met the standard in 2018–2019).

Learners' Context:

Overall, 95% of fully participating students completed the Student Questionnaire, 78% of teachers completed the Teacher Questionnaire, and 92% of principals completed the Principal Questionnaire.

EQAO's Grade 3 student questionnaire data indicated that

- 74% of respondents like to read, and 58% like to write.
- 72% of respondents think they are a good reader, and 56% think they are a good writer.
- 69% of respondents like math, and 61% think they are good at math.

EQAO's teacher questionnaire data indicated that

- 76% of respondents incorporate student development of transferable skills such as critical thinking and problem solving (e.g., addressing complex issues, making informed decisions, analyzing information) into their general practices.
- 95% of respondents incorporate student development of transferable skills such as communication (e.g., oral, writing, listening) into their general practices.

EQAO's principal questionnaire data indicated that

- 78% of respondents plan to use this year's EQAO data to identify how well students are meeting curriculum expectations.
- 79% of respondents plan to use this year's EQAO data to inform program planning, resource allocation or teaching practices.

Junior Division (Grade 6)

According to the data from the 2021–2022 EQAO assessments, Grade 6 student achievement results, which are given in relation to the provincial standard, have remained stable in reading and writing but have declined in mathematics, relative to results from 2018–2019.

Assessment results for all participating students:

- 85% of Grade 6 students met the provincial standard in reading (83% met the standard in 2018–2019).
- 84% of Grade 6 students met the provincial standard in writing (the same percentage of students met the standard in 2018–2019).
- 47% of Grade 6 students met the provincial standard in mathematics (50% met the standard in 2018–2019).

Learners' Context:

Overall, 96% of fully participating students completed the Student Questionnaire, 79% of teachers completed the Teacher Questionnaire, and 92% of principals completed the Principal Questionnaire.

EQAO's Grade 6 student questionnaire data indicated that

- 62% of respondents like to read, and 54% like to write.
- 68% of respondents think they are a good reader, and 48% think they are a good writer.
- 51% of respondents like math, and 48% think they are good at math.

EQAO's teacher questionnaire data indicated that

- 65% of respondents incorporate student development of transferable skills such as critical thinking and problem solving (e.g., addressing complex issues, making informed decisions, analyzing information) into their general practices.
- 95% of respondents incorporate student development of transferable skills such as communication (e.g., oral, writing, listening) into their general practices.

EQAO's principal questionnaire data indicated that

- 78% of respondents plan to use this year's EQAO data to identify how well students are meeting curriculum expectations.
- 79% of respondents plan to use this year's EQAO data to inform program planning, resource allocation or teaching practices.

Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics

According to the data from the 2021–2022 EQAO assessments, Grade 9 student achievement results, which are given in relation to the provincial standard, have declined in mathematics since 2018–2019.

Assessment results for all participating students:

- 52% of Grade 9 students met the provincial standard in mathematics (75% met the standard in 2018–2019, when academic and applied results for that year are combined).

Learners' Context:

Overall, 85% of fully participating students completed the Student Questionnaire, 83% of teachers completed the Teacher Questionnaire, and 80% of principals completed the Principal Questionnaire.

EQAO's Grade 9 student questionnaire data indicated that

- 53% of respondents like math, and 55% think they are good at math.
- 68% of respondents think they understand most of the math they are taught.

EQAO's teacher questionnaire data indicated that

- 83% of respondents incorporate student development of transferable skills such as critical thinking and problem solving (e.g., addressing complex issues, making informed decisions, analyzing information) into their general practices.
- 64% of respondents incorporate student development of transferable skills such as self-directed learning (e.g., perseverance, growth mindset, goal-setting) into their general practices.

EQAO's principal questionnaire data indicated that

- 61% of respondents plan to use this year's EQAO data to identify how well students are meeting curriculum expectations.
- 63% of respondents plan to use this year's EQAO data to inform program planning, resource allocation or teaching practices.

Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT)

According to the data from the 2021–2022 EQAO assessments, overall success rates on the OSSLT are high, showing stability in the literacy skills acquired by Ontario students up to the end of Grade 9. Students enrolled in academic courses showed stable literacy achievement relative to that in 2018–2019, while students enrolled in applied courses showed improvement in literacy achievement.

Assessment results for all participating students:

- 82% of first-time eligible students who wrote the OSSLT were successful (80% were successful in 2018–2019).
- 85% of previously eligible students who wrote the OSSLT were successful (50% were successful in 2018–2019).
- 91% of first-time eligible students enrolled in the academic course were successful (the same percentage of students were successful in 2018–2019).
- 50% of first-time eligible students enrolled in the applied course were successful (41% were successful in 2018–2019).

Learners' Context:

Overall, 76% of fully participating students completed the Student Questionnaire, 65% of teachers completed the Teacher Questionnaire, and 80% of principals completed the Principal Questionnaire.

EQAO's OSSLT student questionnaire data indicated that

- 53% of respondents like reading on their own time, and 38% like writing on their own time.
- 79% of respondents think they are a good reader, and 63% think they are a good writer.
- 81% of respondents think they can read fluently, and 70% think they can write fluently.

EQAO's teacher questionnaire data indicated that

- 88% of respondents incorporate student development of transferable skills such as communication (e.g., oral, writing, listening) into their general practices.

- 62% of respondents incorporate student development of transferable skills such as digital literacy (e.g., evaluating information sources, privacy and security) into their general practices.

EQAO's principal questionnaire data indicated that

- 61% of respondents plan to use this year's EQAO data to identify how well students are meeting curriculum expectations.
- 63% of respondents plan to use this year's EQAO data to inform program planning, resource allocation or teaching practices.

Results for French-Language Schools in Ontario

Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, Primary and Junior Divisions

Primary Division (Grade 3)

According to the data from the 2021–2022 EQAO assessments, Grade 3 student achievement results, which are given in relation to the provincial standard, have declined in literacy but have remained stable in mathematics, relative to results from 2018–2019.

Assessment results for all participating students:

- 81% of Grade 3 students met the provincial standard in reading (87% met the standard in 2018–2019).
- 67% of Grade 3 students met the provincial standard in writing (77% met the standard in 2018–2019).
- 67% of Grade 3 students met the provincial standard in mathematics (76% met the standard in 2018–2019).

Learners' Context:

Overall, 98% of fully participating students completed the Student Questionnaire, 84% of teachers completed the Teacher Questionnaire, and 92% of principals completed the Principal Questionnaire.

EQAO's Grade 3 student questionnaire data indicated that

- 71% of respondents like to read, and 62% like to write.
- 65% of respondents think they are a good reader, and 60% think they are a good writer.
- 80% of respondents like math, and 70% think they are good at math.

EQAO's teacher questionnaire data indicated that

- 85% of respondents incorporate student development of transferable skills such as critical thinking and problem solving (e.g., addressing complex issues, making informed decisions, analyzing information) into their general practices.
- 97% of respondents incorporate student development of transferable skills such as communication (e.g., oral, writing, listening) into their general practices.

EQAO's principal questionnaire data indicated that

- 81% of respondents plan to use this year's EQAO data to identify how well students are meeting curriculum expectations.
- 84% of respondents plan to use this year's EQAO data to inform program planning, resource allocation or teaching practices.

Junior Division (Grade 6)

According to the data from the 2021–2022 EQAO assessments, Grade 6 student achievement results, which are given in relation to the provincial standard, have remained stable in reading and writing but have declined in mathematics, relative to results from 2018–2019.

Assessment results for all participating students:

- 97% of Grade 6 students met the provincial standard in reading (95% met the standard in 2018–2019).
- 80% of Grade 6 students met the provincial standard in writing (the same percentage of students met the standard in 2018–2019).
- 50% of Grade 6 students met the provincial standard in mathematics (83% met the standard in 2018–2019).

Learners' Context:

Overall, 99% of fully participating students completed the Student Questionnaire, 83% of teachers completed the Teacher Questionnaire, and 92% of principals completed the Principal Questionnaire.

EQAO's Grade 6 student questionnaire data indicated that

- 59% of respondents like to read, and 53% like to write.
- 59% of respondents think they are a good reader, and 50% think they are a good writer.
- 65% of respondents like math, and 57% think they are good at math.

EQAO's teacher questionnaire data indicated that

- 91% of respondents incorporate student development of transferable skills such as critical thinking and problem solving (e.g., addressing complex issues, making informed decisions, analyzing information) into their general practices.
- 96% of respondents incorporate student development of transferable skills such as communication (e.g., oral, writing, listening) into their general practices.

EQAO's principal questionnaire data indicated that

- 81% of respondents plan to use this year's EQAO data to identify how well students are meeting curriculum expectations.
- 79% of respondents plan to use this year's EQAO data to inform program planning, resource allocation or teaching practices.

Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics

According to the data from the 2021–2022 EQAO assessments, Grade 9 student achievement results, which are given in relation to the provincial standard, have declined in mathematics since 2018–2019.

Assessment results for all participating students:

- 56% of Grade 9 students met the provincial standard in mathematics (81% met the standard in 2018–2019, when academic and applied results for that year are combined).

Learners' Context:

Overall, 89% of fully participating students completed the Student Questionnaire, 87% of teachers completed the Teacher Questionnaire, and 82% of principals completed the Principal Questionnaire.

EQAO's Grade 9 student questionnaire data indicated that

- 55% of respondents like math, and 54% think they are good at math.
- 69% of respondents think they understand most of the math they are taught.

EQAO's teacher questionnaire data indicated that

- 90% of respondents incorporate student development of transferable skills such as critical thinking and problem solving (e.g., addressing complex issues, making informed decisions, analyzing information) into their general practices.
- 69% of respondents incorporate student development of transferable skills such as self-directed learning (e.g., perseverance, growth mindset, goal-setting) into their general practices.

EQAO's principal questionnaire data indicated that

- 75% of respondents plan to use this year's EQAO data to identify how well students are meeting curriculum expectations.
- 77% of respondents plan to use this year's EQAO data to inform program planning, resource allocation or teaching practices.

Test provincial de compétences linguistiques (TPCL)

According to the data from the 2021–2022 EQAO assessments, overall success rates on the OSSLT are high, showing stability in the literacy skills acquired by Ontario students up to the end of Grade 9. Students enrolled in academic courses showed stable literacy achievement relative to that in 2018–2019, while students enrolled in applied courses showed improvement in literacy achievement.

Assessment results for all participating students:

- 89% of first-time eligible students who wrote the OSSLT were successful (89% were successful in 2018–2019).
- 91% of previously eligible students who wrote the OSSLT were successful (52% were successful in 2018–2019).
- 96% of first-time eligible students enrolled in the academic course were successful (the same percentage of students were successful in 2018–2019).
- 69% of first-time eligible students enrolled in the applied course were successful (66% were successful in 2018–2019).

Learners' Context:

Overall, 75% of fully participating students completed the Student Questionnaire, 85% of teachers completed the Teacher Questionnaire, and 82% of principals completed the Principal Questionnaire.

EQAO's OSSLT student questionnaire data indicated that

- 41% of respondents like reading on their own time, and 29% like writing on their own time.
- 81% of respondents think they are a good reader, and 66% think they are a good writer.
- 68% of respondents think they can read fluently, and 63% think they can write fluently.

EQAO's teacher questionnaire data indicated that

- 88% of respondents incorporate student development of transferable skills such as communication (e.g., oral, writing, listening) into their general practices.
- 63% of respondents incorporate student development of transferable skills such as digital literacy (e.g., evaluating information sources, privacy and security) into their general practices.

EQAO's principal questionnaire data indicated that

- 75% of respondents plan to use this year's EQAO data to identify how well students are meeting curriculum expectations.
- 77% of respondents plan to use this year's EQAO data to inform program planning, resource allocation or teaching practices.

National and International Assessments

EQAO coordinates Ontario's participation in national and international assessments on behalf of the provincial government. Those assessments are developed and administered by external organizations and provide a benchmark of Ontario students' learning in relation to that of students in other education systems and jurisdictions, both nationally and internationally. The results of these assessments contribute to the larger picture of student achievement in Ontario and benefit both the public as well as education policy-makers and thought leaders. During the 2022–2023 fiscal year, Ontario schools participated in the administration of the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) field tests along with the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) main study. Results of each national and international assessment are published through their respective organizations. While results from field tests are not made public, the PISA main study's results are expected to be made available later in 2023.

Research

EQAO recognizes the need for a continued collaboration with partners to develop evidence-based research programs that lead to equitable and positive educational experiences for all Ontario students. Over the years, research projects leveraging EQAO data have led to a better understanding of the variables affecting not only student achievement but also the conditions that impact students' well-being throughout their educational journey. Through its evidence-based data, EQAO aims to support initiatives that promote student success across Ontario.

Contributing to Education Research

EQAO seeks to share with education stakeholders helpful information gleaned from EQAO data. This year, an EQAO research paper on the reciprocal relationship between mathematics self-concept and achievement of students between Grades 3 and 9 was presented at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) annual meeting in May 2022. The same paper was also submitted for publication to *AERA Open*, a peer-reviewed academic journal. The agency's proposal on perceptions of school inclusiveness among Franco-Ontarian secondary-school students, teachers and principals and the implications for schools was also accepted to be presented at the spring 2023 conference of the Association francophone pour le savoir (ACFAS), a not-for-profit organization that promotes sciences in the Canadian and global Francophone community. Additionally, in December 2022, EQAO participated in the Association of Educational Researchers of Ontario (AERO) conference held in Toronto, which featured faculty and school board researchers in the field of kindergarten to Grade 12 education. Toward the end of the fiscal year, EQAO and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) signed a multi-year research partnership designed to foster and promote collaboration in the field of education, research and capacity.

Encouraging External Research

EQAO's assessment and questionnaire data inform research initiatives and discussions that pertain to the quality of education and the experience of students. During the fiscal year, the agency received and responded to 41 data requests that supported researchers and educators from local, national and international jurisdictions. Some of these requests came from EQAO partners in external research initiatives, such as the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University and the Hospital for Sick Children, for studies pertaining to child nutrition and developmental and educational outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic, and for research on early child development and later achievement. The agency also provided media professionals with information to assist their journalistic pieces and provided other stakeholders with data to broaden their understanding of student achievement and learning in Ontario.

Strategic Priority 2—Ensure Effective Governance and Engagement in the Agency's Operations

EQAO aspires to create and deliver excellent programs and services for the entire education sector, and promote a better understanding of the role and operations of the agency along with the value of the data it provides so that Ontarians can engage in thought-provoking discussions about education and the publicly funded education system. The agency recognizes the importance of being accountable to its stakeholders and is committed to transparency and best practices in all aspects of its functions to operate as a responsible and effective organization.

Connecting and Exchanging with All of Ontario

An important goal of EQAO's communication efforts is making available compelling information about student achievement and students' attitudes to all Ontarians to stimulate meaningful conversations about equity, quality and accountability in public education. Reflection and discussion prompt action that can support student success across the province.

EQAO's approach to integrated communications leverages multiple channels and fosters a partnership with schools, school boards, parents and guardians and other stakeholders. The agency receives queries from the public, the media, educators and researchers on various matters on a regular basis, and it provides timely answers and helpful guidance to facilitate a broader and deeper understanding of EQAO's contributions to student learning.

There are many channels through which the agency communicates and builds relationships with audiences, including
- EQAO's website;
- social media platforms;
- news media relations;
- EQAO's information centre;
- engagement with partners and stakeholders;
- virtual and in-person presentations to schools, school boards, faculties of education, parents and guardians and other groups; and
- conferences and events.

For the 2021–2022 school year, EQAO resumed the administration of its provincial large-scale assessment program by implementing a new online testing model, and explored ways of reporting data that would be more aligned to how stakeholders receive and access information in a digital age. The agency's wide-reaching bilingual communications campaign undertaken in the fall of 2022 focused mainly on public engagement and stakeholder relations, utilizing accessible digital communications. In the fall of 2022, EQAO reimagined and redesigned sections of its website dedicated to reporting its assessment results. The creation and implementation of

the Interactive EQAO Dashboards, a public-facing data viewing tool, was informed by the feedback received from stakeholders in the education community and beyond. The platform offers the ability to view detailed assessment information at the provincial, school and school-board levels and the ability to quickly select the type of data desired through a modern-looking, user-friendly interface. Also made available on EQAO's website is an easy-to-use search function that allows the public to rapidly access individual schools and school boards' profiles that feature, at a glance, the schools' or boards' achievement results and additional assessment data from the 2021–2022 school year. Throughout its media campaign, the agency released engaging social media posts and a short informative video featuring EQAO's Chief Executive Officer, and distributed media releases aimed at disseminating clear information about the availability of EQAO data under various formats. As with previous annual releases of assessment results, the agency continued to offer printable and accessibility-compliant highlights of its assessment achievement and questionnaire data, along with historic data and an easy-to-use definition of terms webpage, each conveniently available under one tab on the agency's website.

In October and November 2022, the media campaign conducted by EQAO
•generated more than 1100 English- and French-language news stories in traditional media, such as online, print, radio and television, and involved local and national outlets.
•increased engagement on the agency's English- and French-language social media channels and their communities (the increase was approximately 5% on Twitter, 8% on Facebook and 26% on LinkedIn).

Additionally, the fall 2022 release of EQAO assessment data helped inform government improvement programs announced shortly afterwards by the Minister of Education.

Along with promoting the release of its assessment results, the agency also produced and posted on its website short, animated videos offering an easy-to-digest overview of EQAO's elementary- and secondary-school assessments to inform parents and guardians, students and the public at large about each large-scale assessment's format, administration and scoring. During the fiscal year, EQAO continued to revise and make available sample and practice tests of each of its e-assessments, and added to its website alternative versions of its primary- and junior-division and Grade 9 mathematics digital assessments.

Supporting the Education Community and Ontarians at Large

EQAO's public-facing information centre serves as a primary point of contact, not only for the professionals who administer EQAO assessments, but also for parents and guardians, students, scorers, and members of the media and the public. The information centre responds to various queries and provides updates on assessment-administration procedures. During the 2022–2023 fiscal year, the information centre answered more than 8200 calls and replied to more than 9200 e-mails in support of its stakeholders.

EQAO's School Support and Outreach team exemplifies the agency's proactive commitment to supporting student learning by working directly with educators and other partners in the education sector. During the 2022–2023 fiscal year, to assist educators with how to navigate the recently implemented e-assessment system and to help them get the most value out of EQAO data, the agency continued to offer live webinars and self-paced learning modules that are regularly updated to reflect the feedback of previous participants. The modules, specifically tailored to educators, are located on EQAO's website and are available for access at the learners' convenience, while the webinars, developed for educators and administrators, Information Technology (IT) school board professionals and also parents and guardians, are hosted by the agency's Outreach team. During the fiscal year, more than 8000 teachers, principals and school board IT staff members attended 164 interactive webinars in English and in French offered throughout the year, and more than 800 attendees participated in 10 webinars for parents and guardians. The agency also presented at Ontario conferences around educational technology, mathematics, and special education to share the characteristics and benefits of EQAO's e-assessment program, its data and its future possibilities.

Engaging with Leaders and Expert Partners to Foster Understanding and Growth in Education

Creating and implementing initiatives that are fair to all EQAO stakeholders and that reflect their current needs remains a priority for the agency. As EQAO acknowledges the distinct educational requirements of communities across the province, it recognizes the necessity to continue promoting close partnerships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities and equity-deserving groups across the province. EQAO intends for student communities who historically have been subject to discrimination or have been under-represented to be given the opportunity to succeed. As such, the agency is dedicated to positioning itself not only as a listener but as an active, involved learner as it collaborates with its partners to enhance its capacity to establish programs that will promote and foster equity, diversity, inclusion (EDI) and anti-racism toward the best outcomes possible for each student.

This past fiscal year, EQAO concluded the thorough agency-wide internal EDI review of its current procedures, policies and culture initiated the previous year. The review and its findings will inform the agency's multi-year EDI plan currently in development. Additionally, an internal Equity team was established to improve awareness of EDI-related matters among staff through training sessions and other hands-on activities, and by welcoming external facilitators and speakers who shared their knowledge and experiences. These important conversations guide the development of long-term plans of action toward more equitable assessments and culture.

Initiatives were put in place to leverage Indigenous leaders' and educators' perspectives through the creation of a collaborative council on the collection and presentation of EQAO data, and the creation of assessment items that support and reflect First Nations, Métis and Inuit students' experience better. Throughout the year, the agency participated in Indigenous-led educational events such as Indspire's National Gathering for Indigenous Education conference and in the Ontario Mathematics Coordinators

Association symposium, which focused on exploring the power and potential of Indigenous knowledge systems in mathematics. Additionally, the agency reached out to Indigenous communities directly through live webinars and virtual meetings involving educators and partners from 14 federally funded First Nations schools and Indigenous communities' resource centres to continue to learn from and support these education stakeholders and their students with their assessment experiences. Through EQAO representatives, the agency also maintained a presence at several forums, events and working groups (such as the Council for Exceptional Children annual conference and the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education) organized by persons with disabilities and other equity-deserving groups across the province.

Committing to Excellence and Fairness in Governance and Operations

EQAO recognizes the importance of being accountable to Ontarians and is committed to transparency and best practices in governance in order to operate as a responsible, effective and fair organization. As an agency of the Government of Ontario, EQAO abides by the *Agencies and Appointments Directive* and the Memorandum of Understanding with the Minister of Education to ensure effective operations and stewardship of public funds.

This fiscal year, EQAO actively pursued the digitalization and administration of its provincial elementary- and secondary-level assessment program and continued to conduct its operations and activities with integrity.

Leading an Agency Ready for the Demands of the Future

EQAO is governed by a board of directors appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. During the 2022–2023 fiscal year, EQAO's board of directors held six official meetings to oversee the work of the agency in alignment with its mandate as defined by the *Education Quality and Accountability Office Act,* 1996 (the *EQAO Act*). Over the year, the board provided strategic direction and approved the agency's business plan, financial statements, risk assessments, contract decisions and annual report in accordance with the agency's *Delegation of Authority Directive.* The Chair serves as the ethics executive for all appointees, including the board of directors.

The board's connection to EQAO operations is through the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who is accountable to the board for overseeing the management and the operations of the agency and supervising the agency's staff. The CEO carries out the roles and responsibilities as approved by the board and communicated via the Chair. The agency operates under the direction set out in the *EQAO Act*, the Memorandum of Understanding and the applicable agency directives set out by the Management Board of Cabinet.

The CEO is delegated the duty to manage the day-to-day operational matters of the agency and serves as the ethics executive for the EQAO's staff under the *Public Services of Ontario Act* (PSOA).

Relying on Dedicated and Professional Staff

EQAO's accomplishments are made possible through the valuable contribution and continued dedication of its employees. The agency recognizes the professionalism and expertise of each member of its staff as EQAO pursues the digitalization and modernization of its assessment program and activities in support of Ontario's public education system. The successful administration and reporting of the agency's curriculum-based large-scale assessment program this fiscal year is a testament to the knowledge and commitment of staff from across the agency, who continued to adapt quickly to frequent changes due to the unpredictable nature of a peri-pandemic context.

Collaborating with Advisory Committees

EQAO's operational direction includes advice from external working groups, composed of knowledgeable experts and representatives, who help guide the agency's work and inform its thinking on different aspects of its activities:

- **EQAO Advisory Committee (EAC):** With membership from vast organizations in the education sector, this committee provides advice and opinions on agency initiatives, policies and programs. Additionally, EAC works to find feasible solutions to challenges raised by its members.
- **EQAO Student Engagement Committee (ESEC):** This committee acts as a unique forum for students to share their ideas and experiences. ESEC represents the student voice in the agency's activities, ensuring students are informing EQAO's thinking as the agency continuously improves its programs and products. ESEC is composed of 30 to 35 students from Grades 7 to 12 from across Ontario who offer insights on how EQAO can improve its assessment-related programs and increase student engagement.
- **Modernization in Measurement Advisory Panel (MMAP):** This interdisciplinary group helps shape the operations of large-scale assessments and their scoring and reporting activities. The committee is composed of experts who examine facets of assessment programs, such as the experiences of assessment users, authenticity and equity, psychometrics and technology, along with knowledge sharing and reporting.
- **Psychometrics Advisory Committee (PAC):** This committee engages psychometrics experts with the goal of improving and modernizing each of EQAO's large-scale assessments in alignment with best practices in measurement and analysis.

Managing Public Resources Responsibly

EQAO is dedicated to effective business practices, and monitors and evaluates business processes to promote the continuous improvement of its activities. In alignment with applicable government directives, the agency continues to ensure accountability in human resources, finance and procurement along with strong service delivery through all of its operations. During the 2022–2023 fiscal year, EQAO worked with the Ministry of Education to ensure the agency received the appropriate funding to support its operations. Overall, the cost of agency operations for the 2022–2023 fiscal year was approximately $25.35 million.

This 2022–2023 fiscal year, members of the agency's board of directors received an annual remuneration according to government appointments and directives. Dr. Cameron Montgomery, full-time chair of EQAO, received $140 000; Yvonne Ruke Akpoveta received $1950; Gail Anderson received $375; Martyn Beckett received $2475; Serge Demers received $825; Sanjay Dhebar received $750; Sarabjit Kaur received $75; Mandy Nwobu received $975; Dr. Kinga Petrovai received $2100; Mark Stewart received $900; and Dr. Kyle Wilson received $1800, for their governance work as part of the EQAO Board of Directors.

Mitigating Risk Across the Agency

EQAO ensures there are processes in place to control quality and diminish risk that could affect the integrity of EQAO's strategic goals including the assessment results and data, which is key to fulfilling the agency's mandate. Likewise, the agency's enterprise risk-management program applies to all aspects of EQAO's operations, and every key decision is made with the consideration of potential risks and their mitigation. Risk-mitigation strategies are in place across the agency and are reported to the audit and finance committee of EQAO's board of directors quarterly and to the Ministry of Education annually. During the past fiscal year, the agency maintained a focus on mitigating EQAO's digitalization and modernization risks and strengthening a resilient IT ecosystem, along with updating several aspects of the agency's business architecture. Additionally, EQAO continued to leverage external expertise in the areas of privacy and cyber security to ensure the agency's programs adhere to the government of Ontario's information technology standards (GO-ITS).

Financial Statements: Year Ended March 31, 2023

This section includes EQAO's audited financial results for operations ending March 31, 2023, which were funded through Ministry of Education allocations.

Financial Statements of

EDUCATION QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

And Independent Auditor's Report thereon

Year ended March 31, 2023

KPMG

KPMG LLP
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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Board of Directors of the
Education Quality and Accountability Office

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the Education Quality and Accountability Office (the Entity), which comprise:

- the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2023

- the statement of operations and accumulated surplus for the year then ended

- the statement of changes in net financial assets for the year then ended

- the statement of cash flows for the year then ended

- and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies

(Hereinafter referred to as the "financial statements").

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Entity as at March 31, 2023, and its results of operations, its changes in net financial assets, and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the ***"Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements"*** section of our auditor's report.

We are independent of the Entity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Entity's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion.

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.

We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

  The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Entity's internal control.

- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.

- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Entity to cease to continue as a going concern.

- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

- Communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

KPMG LLP

Chartered Professional Accountants, Licensed Public Accountants

Vaughan, Canada

June 7, 2023

EDUCATION QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE
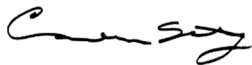
Statement of Financial Position

March 31, 2023, with comparative information for 2022

	2023	2022
Financial Assets		
Cash	$ 3,868,811	$ 2,760,494
Restricted investments - board restricted fund (note 2(b))	9,183,882	8,542,011
Accounts receivable (note 3)	167,624	291,450
	13,220,317	11,593,955
Financial Liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	1,564,395	1,179,009
Unearned revenue	38,760	–
	1,603,155	1,179,009
Net financial assets	11,617,162	10,414,946
Non-Financial Assets		
Prepaid expenses (note 4)	599,400	716,947
Tangible capital assets (note 5)	229,381	279,660
	828,781	996,607
Commitments (note 6)		
Economic dependence (note 11)		
Contingent liability (note 12)		
Accumulated surplus (note 2)	$ 12,445,943	$ 11,411,553

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

On behalf of the Board:

_____ Chair

_____ Chief Executive Officer

EDUCATION QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Statement of Operations and Accumulated Surplus

Year ended March 31, 2023, with comparative information for 2022

	2023 Budget (note 10)	2023 Actual	2022 Actual
Revenue:			
Ministry of Education:			
Base allocation payments (note 11)	$ 29,716,077	$ 25,796,569	$ 20,836,604
Other	–	590,720	126,238
	29,716,077	26,387,289	20,962,842
Expenses:			
Service and rental	15,263,175	11,372,451	8,431,906
Salaries and wages	13,217,228	13,044,927	12,236,835
Transportation and communication	142,675	142,485	110,711
Supplies and equipment (note 5)	1,092,999	793,036	924,011
	29,716,077	25,352,899	21,703,463
Annual surplus (deficit)	–	1,034,390	(740,621)
Accumulated surplus, beginning of year	11,411,553	11,411,553	12,152,174
Accumulated surplus, end of year	$ 11,411,553	$ 12,445,943	$ 11,411,553
Accumulated surplus comprises:			
Externally restricted		$ 3,262,061	$ 2,869,542
Internally restricted (note 2(b))		9,183,882	8,542,011
		$ 12,445,943	$ 11,411,553

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

EDUCATION QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Statement of Changes in Net Financial Assets

Year ended March 31, 2023, with comparative information for 2022

	2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2022 Actual
	(note 10)		
Annual surplus (deficit)	$ –	$ 1,034,390	$ (740,621)
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	–	(103,575)	(83,601)
Amortization of tangible capital assets (note 5)	221,241	153,854	207,763
	221,241	50,279	124,162
Acquisition of prepaid expenses	–	(599,400)	(716,947)
Use of prepaid expenses	–	716,947	334,321
	–	117,547	(382,626)
Increase (decrease) in net financial assets	221,241	1,202,216	(999,085)
Net financial assets, beginning of year	10,414,946	10,414,946	11,414,031
Net financial assets, end of year	$ 10,636,187	$ 11,617,162	$ 10,414,946

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

EDUCATION QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Statement of Cash Flows

Year ended March 31, 2023, with comparative information for 2022

	2023	2022
Cash provided by (used in):		
Operating activities:		
Annual surplus (deficit)	$ 1,034,390	$ (740,621)
Amortization of tangible capital assets which does not affect cash	153,854	207,763
	1,188,244	(532,858)
Change in non-cash operating working capital:		
Accounts receivable	123,824	(33,597)
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	385,388	(258,055)
Unearned revenue	38,760	–
Prepaid expenses	117,547	(382,626)
	1,853,763	(1,207,136)
Capital activities:		
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	(103,575)	(83,601)
Investing activities:		
Net change to board restricted fund	(641,871)	(64,020)
Increase (decrease) in cash	1,108,317	(1,354,757)
Cash, beginning of year	2,760,494	4,115,251
Cash, end of year	$ 3,868,811	$ 2,760,494

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

EDUCATION QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Notes to Financial Statements

Year ended March 31, 2023

The Education Quality and Accountability Office ("The Agency") was established by the Province of Ontario by the EQAO Act, June 1996. The Agency was created to assure greater accountability and to contribute to the enhancement of the quality of education in Ontario. This is done through assessments and reviews based on objective, reliable and relevant information, and the timely public release of that information along with recommendations for system improvement.

1. Significant accounting policies:

These financial statements, which have been prepared in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, as established by the Public Sector Accounting Board of The Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada ("CPA Canada") and, where applicable, the recommendations of the Accounting Standards Board of CPA Canada, reflect the accounting policies set out below:

(a) Revenue recognition:

The Agency is funded by the Ministry of Education in accordance with established budget arrangements. The Agency receives base allocation payments in accordance with the fiscal year's approved budget. These transfer payments are recognized in the financial statements in the year in which the transfer is authorized and all eligibility criteria have been met, except when a transfer gives rise to a liability.

Unearned revenue includes fees for tests to be delivered in future years. Revenue will be recognized in that future year, when the services or products are provided.

Other revenue is recognized at the time the service is rendered.

(b) Tangible capital assets:

Tangible capital assets are stated at cost less accumulated amortization. Tangible capital assets are amortized on a straight-line basis over their estimated useful lives as follows:

Computer equipment	3 to 10 years
Furniture and fixtures	5 years

For assets acquired or brought into use during the year, amortization is calculated from the month following that in which additions come into operation.

1. **Significant accounting policies (continued):**

   The Agency considers the carrying value of tangible capital assets when events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying value of an asset may not be recoverable or when a tangible capital asset no longer contributes to The Agency's ability to provide goods and services. If The Agency expects an asset to generate cash flows less than the asset's carrying value, at the lowest level of identifiable cash flows, The Agency recognizes a loss for the difference between the asset's carrying value and its fair value.

   (c) Measurement uncertainty:

   The preparation of financial statements requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities, disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the year. Such estimates include providing for amortization and impairment of tangible capital assets. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

2. **Accumulated surplus:**

   (a) Externally restricted accumulated surplus:

   The Agency receives base allocation payments in accordance with the year's approved budget. Actual expenses incurred in the year could differ from the budgeted amounts. The difference between base allocation payments received and actual expenses incurred are tracked separately as externally restricted accumulated surplus.

EDUCATION QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2023

2. Accumulated surplus (continued):

(b) Internally restricted accumulated surplus:

A board restricted fund was established by a Board of Directors' ("Board") resolution for the purpose of examining assessment processes and researching emerging methodologies in large scale assessment in order to maintain Ontario's high quality assessment programs as best of class. As at year end, the balance comprised $2,100,457 (2022 - $2,463,893) in cash and $7,083,425 (2022 - $6,078,118) of guaranteed investment certificates with maturity dates of January 2025 and interest of 5.00% per annum. The Agency has the authority to retain any revenue that is not provincial funding according to the EQAO Act, June 1996, the Agencies and Appointment Directive and the Financial Administration Act.

	2023	2022
Balance, beginning of year	$ 8,542,011	$ 8,477,991
Appropriation of other income	164,078	–
Interest income earned on funds	504,723	64,020
Cost associated with fee-based administration (note 8)	(26,930)	–
Balance, end of year	$ 9,183,882	$ 8,542,011

In a prior year, the Board approved a motion to fully restrict the internally restricted accumulated surplus for the Board-approved IT strategy.

3. Accounts receivable:

Included in accounts receivable is a transfer payment in the amount of $40,000 (2022 - nil) due from the Ministry of Education.

4. Prepaid expenses:

Prepaid expenses are paid in cash and recorded as assets before they are used or consumed. As at year end, the balance is made up of the following amounts:

	2023	2022
Prepaid expenses	$ 202,951	$ 163,532
Prepaid secondees	396,449	553,415
	$ 599,400	$ 716,947

EDUCATION QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE
Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2023

5. **Tangible capital assets:**

	Cost	Accumulated amortization	2023 Net book value	2022 Net book value
Computer equipment	$ 989,097	$ 789,566	$ 199,531	$ 272,570
Furniture and fixtures	365,172	335,322	29,850	7,090
	$ 1,354,269	$ 1,124,888	$ 229,381	$ 279,660

Amortization of tangible capital assets recorded in the current year amounts to $153,854 (2022 - $207,763).

6. **Commitments:**

The Agency leases premises under certain operating lease arrangements with expiry dates up to December 31, 2024. Under the terms of the leases, The Agency is required to pay an annual base rent, which is predetermined based on square footage rates plus operating and maintenance charges. Future minimum annual scheduled payments are as follows:

2024	$ 587,008
2025	440,256
	$ 1,027,264

7. **Financial instruments:**

The Agency's financial instruments consist of cash, board restricted investments, accounts receivable and accounts payable and accrued liabilities. Financial instruments are recorded at fair value on initial recognition. The fair values of these financial instruments approximate their carrying values due to their short-term nature.

It is management's opinion that The Agency is not exposed to significant interest, currency or credit risk arising from these financial instruments.

EDUCATION QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2023

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8. **Allocation of expenses:**

   Incremental administration expenses are allocated to fee-based administration revenue. Expenses are allocated proportionately based on the number of individual student assessments administered.

9. **Liquidity risk:**

   Liquidity risk is the risk that The Agency will be unable to fulfill its obligations on a timely basis or at a reasonable cost. The Agency manages its liquidity risk by monitoring its operating requirements. The Agency prepares budget and cash forecasts to ensure it has sufficient funds to fulfill its obligations.

   There have been no significant changes to the liquidity risk exposure from 2022.

10. **Budget:**

    The budget information has been derived from the budget approved by the Board on August 24, 2022.

11. **Economic dependence:**

    The Agency derives substantially all of its income from the Ministry of Education in the form of base allocation payments. The Agency's ability to carry on operations, realize assets and discharge its liabilities depends on the continued financial support of the Ministry of Education.

12. **Contingent liability:**

    The Agency has been named as a defendant in a legal proceeding for alleged breach of contract. Since the outcome of the litigation is uncertain, no provision has been made in the financial statements for this matter. The Agency will continue to assess the likelihood and potential amount of any future liability related to this matter.

Appendix: Performance Targets, Measures and Analysis

Strategic Priority 1: Digitalize and Modernize All EQAO Assessments			
Performance Targets			
Goals	**Objectives**	**Performance Measures**	**Performance Analysis**
A. Drive improvement in student achievement and well-being through large-scale assessment data.	Provide credible data to the education community to inform school board and student improvement.	Create, administer, score and report annually on the Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics, the OSSLT, and the Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics for primary and junior students.	Successfully completed the first digital administration and scoring of the large-scale digital primary- and junior-division Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, the Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics, and the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) in English- and French-language schools across the province. All assessment results for the 2021–2022 school year assessments were reported in October and November 2022.
B. Transform provincial assessments to embrace the contemporary classroom experience and leverage technology to provide customized and accessible assessments.	Leverage new digital assessment models to provide a more relevant and engaging assessment experience. Ensure all digital assessments follow best practice for data quality and psychometric analysis. Enhance the reporting model to	Transform the EQAO assessments so that they respond to each student's learning needs through the use of Computer Adaptive Test (CAT) technology and a testlet-based linear-on-the-fly (tLOFT) assessment model.	Developed a successful digitalized and modernized assessment program by • implementing adaptive digital testing for the Grade 9 assessment and for the mathematics component of the

	enhance the usability of the assessment results.	• Ensure that the new assessment model aligns with the provincial curriculum, and government direction, legislation and policy. • Ensure this model aligns with contemporary classroom practices and current technology. • Provide assessment windows that are flexible and better integrated into classroom instruction. • Ensure more timely and detailed reporting to support student achievement. • Develop customizable assessment tools that reflect the contemporary classroom experience and satisfy accessibility needs. • Improve timelines for the reporting of results to stakeholders.	elementary e-assessments, and a linear test design for the digital OSSLT and for the language component of the elementary-level e-assessments; • ensuring all assessment questions are aligned to *The Ontario Curriculum*; • incorporating enhancements to the e-assessment system and administration procedures that streamline and simplify administration for educators; • providing e-assessments that are accessible on multiple platforms, and ensuring security during assessment administration; and • offering flexibility in administration periods and faster reporting on automatically scored assessment items. Provided enhancements to e-

| | | Provide multiple assessment accommodations, including a paper-based option, for students who require them to complete the assessment.

Establish a psychometric review team to work alongside EQAO staff to ensure data quality and sound psychometric practices for the digital assessments.

By December 2022, implement Power BI as the reporting platform for schools and school boards. | assessments and online sample and practice tests, and additional accessible formats.

Created the Psychometric Advisory Committee to review and collaborate with the agency on best practices for the measurement and analysis of the digital assessments.

Implemented and launched the EQAO Data Reporting Tool and website dashboards to support the visualization of the 2021–2022 school-year assessment data for educators and the public in October 2022. |
|---|---|---|---|
| C. Support EQAO stakeholders through the digitalization and modernization of the assessments. | EQAO will establish resources and support materials for school boards, schools, parents and guardians and students to assist with the transition to the digital assessment platform. | Provide resources that include learning modules, webinars, videos and other appropriate materials to support school boards and schools with the digital assessment administration.

Provide digital sample and practice tests on the EQAO public website. | Developed and hosted live interactive webinars for educators and IT school board professionals about EQAO's e-assessment program and use of data.

Released products online that increase awareness and provide support to education stakeholders and the public, such as
  • updated user guides and sample and |

		Provide resources for parents and guardians on the EQAO website.	practice tests for all assessments;
			• self-paced learning modules for educators providing them with step-by-step guidance about assessment administration;
			• accessible videos for parents and the public detailing how e-assessments are designed and administered and how their results are reported.
		Support schools and school boards with data visualization tools through Power BI.	Launched the EQAO Data Reporting Tool offering interactive and customable data reports to schools and school boards though a user-friendly and engaging interface.
Strategic Priorities 2: Ensure Effective Governance and Engagement in the Agency's Operations			
Performance Targets			
Goals	**Objectives**	**Performance Measures**	**Performance Analysis**
A. Expand networks and partnerships to enhance EQAO's professional capacity and fiscal resources.	Refresh EQAO's stakeholder engagement strategy to address the goals and objectives in this business plan.	By April 1, 2022, refresh the agency's stakeholder engagement strategy in alignment with its operational goals.	Presented to EQAO's board of directors a new stakeholder engagement strategy that was approved during the fiscal year via the annual Communications Plan.

		Always maintain collaborative relationships with Ministry counterparts in alignment with the agency's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).	Continued weekly and monthly communications with Ministry of Education counterparts across the finance, procurement, policy, program, information technology (IT) and communications areas to ensure alignment.
	Identify future revenue generation opportunities for the agency.	By March 31, 2022, identify potential opportunities for revenue generation.	Researched opportunities for revenue and submitted a briefing note to the Ministry of Education on the collection of fees for full-time fee-paying international students who participate in EQAO assessments at public and private schools.
B. Identify and address the implications of integrating datasets that result in meaningful public reporting.	Establish a sector standard on the requirements and implications when integrating datasets for public reporting.	By March 31, 2023, establish a policy and procedure that sets out the authority and requirements for legislative compliance in the integration of datasets.	Developed a decision note that includes analysis on the legislation, challenges and opportunities associated with linking datasets (currently under review).
C. Engage effectively with stakeholders to continuously improve the agency's work.	Enhance partnerships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis leaders to address the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action that apply to EQAO by • learning about and understanding First Nations, Inuit and Métis needs in relation to education and	By September 30, 2022, establish an EQAO team to lead the agency's work to address all applicable calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. By March 31, 2023, ensure there are Indigenous representation and voices on	Established an Equity team that will be addressing the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Recruited partners who identify as First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) to

	large-scale assessments in Ontario. • establishing partnerships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis leaders to co-create strategies within the scope of the agency's mandate to address the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action.	all EQAO committees as well as on governing and advisory bodies.	• sit on EQAO assessment and item-development committees and share their voices at assessment advisory committees. • participate in the EQAO Student Engagement Committee (ESEC) (students from French- and English-language school boards across the province). Conducted live outreach sessions with fourteen First Nations schools and resource centres across the province to continue supporting their transition to an e-assessment platform, and arranged for staff to participate in Indigenous education conferences and events to broaden understanding of Indigenous perspectives and realities and educational needs.
		By March 31, 2023, ensure EQAO team members are trained in anti-racism and are aware of educational needs	Arranged for staff to receive training on anti-racism and awareness of educational needs of Indigenous

| | | among Indigenous communities in Ontario. Learning will take place through

• meeting sessions with Indigenous communities.
• participation in Indigenous events.
• sessions at town halls and other EQAO-organized events.
• establishing EDI initiatives as mandatory elements of individual performance plans for all staff.

By March 31, 2022, establish a working group with First Nations, Inuit and Métis partners to

• gather feedback on what education data are useful to them and how EQAO can assist with supporting their needs in education.
• direct research and the application of EQAO data as required and appropriate in service to Indigenous communities. | communities in Ontario through tailored sessions and town halls and interactive activities.

Continued to gather feedback on the education data that is useful to Indigenous communities and education stakeholders, and on how EQAO can assist with supporting Indigenous needs in education by hosting virtual meetings, including consulting with Chiefs of Ontario to ensure appropriate presentation of EQAO data.

Established First Nations, Métis and Inuit Collaborative Councils to evaluate data usefulness and EQAO's role in supporting Indigenous students and educators further. |

	Develop and implement a multi-year equity, diversity and inclusion plan for the agency by • conducting an equity, diversity and inclusion audit of the agency's work, including the agency's relationships with the field and its assessments, products and recommendations. • creating a multi-year equity, diversity and inclusion plan.	By March 31, 2023, make enhancements to • better reflect the identities, circumstances and learning needs of First Nations, Inuit and Métis students. • ensure that EQAO has built relationships and engagement with Indigenous communities to inform its assessment, reporting and research work. By July 31, 2022, conduct an equity, diversity and inclusion audit of the agency. By June 30, 2022, • review and update the current stakeholder engagement strategy to identify strategic stakeholders, objectives and timelines. • engage all key stakeholders in alignment with agency goals and the	Concluded a comprehensive internal EDI review of the agency that will inform a multi-year EDI plan currently in development. Continued to update the stakeholder engagement strategy and presented the 2023–2024 Branding and Communications Strategy to the EQAO board of directors. Continued to engage with the education sector and other stakeholders by • holding interactive and

	• implementing the multi-year equity, diversity and inclusion plan. Leverage the refreshed EQAO stakeholder engagement strategy to direct engagement with the agency's stakeholders.	objectives of the stakeholder engagement plan. • develop clear and compelling communication products for all channels to engage stakeholders and inform them of the agency's work and findings. • ensure use of stakeholder input and feedback for the agency's continuous improvement.	virtual meetings and webinars developed for specific stakeholders, including local schools and school boards, faculties of education, and parents and guardians, to increase understanding of EQAO's e-assessments and investigate school and school board needs. • contributing to parents' associations newsletters. • offering updated virtual self-paced learning modules and courses about EQAO's e- assessments. • presenting at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) to share findings and contribute to the discussion on student self-concept and mathematics achievement. • holding regular EQAO Student Engagement

			Committee (ESEC) meetings and meetings of ESEC's subcommittees, to discuss students' experiences with the new online assessments, EQAO's assessment program and related communications.
			• establishing support processes to facilitate schools and school board stakeholders' access to data and reports.
			Sent monthly memos and notices to the education community to support the delivery of timely, clear and detailed information about EQAO's activities and its modernized assessment program and way of reporting assessment data and results.
			Created and refreshed sections of EQAO's website, including a new webpage dedicated to assessment results, and released social media posts daily on Twitter,

<table>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Facebook and LinkedIn platforms, in support of assessment preparedness, key agency activities and key calendar moments recognized by a diverse and inclusive education community. These activities promoted stakeholder interaction and generated more than 2 500 000 website visits and drove an increase of almost 13% of followers across all social media platforms.

In October and November 2022, delivered a successful public media campaign that reported on EQAO's first large-scale assessment results at the school, school board and provincial levels in three years. This integrated communications initiative generated more than 1100 unique media stories and more than 25 000 impressions on social media and included a variety of compelling products such as accessible videos, clear summaries of provincial-level assessment data and engaging social media posts.</td></tr>
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			Launched new assessment data visualization tools such as the EQAO Data Reporting Tool for educators and Interactive EQAO Dashboards for the public that present EQAO assessment data in a digital, interactive and user-friendly way.
			Continued to leverage external stakeholder feedback received during webinars and through questionnaires to improve EQAO's assessment program and communications.
D. Develop and deliver an effective communication plan for each of the strategic priorities and goals.	Produce a communication plan for each of the strategic directions and goals.	Develop communication plans that outline activities for all the strategic directions and goals.	Presented to the board the 2022–2023 Branding and Communications plan, which was approved, outlining all communications activities for the fiscal year. Developed and executed the Public Release Communications plan stemming from the board-approved overarching communications strategy.
		In alignment with project timelines, include reporting on the metrics of communication products related to the strategic priorities and goals promoted publicly and among agency stakeholders across all	Shared website and social media metrics with key staff and the executive team, and sent monthly CEO updates to staff to keep all appraised of

		communication channels.	key agency news and activities.
E. Ensure effective governance and business practices.	Ensure that the internal governance and operational policy frameworks support the agency's operation in accordance with provincial legislation and government directives.	Maintain agency operations in alignment with EQAO's governance and policy framework by • reviewing all EQAO policies, procedures and guidelines to verify their alignment with provincial directives and legislation. • communicating and implementing measures outlined by the Secretary of the Cabinet. • integrating the enterprise risk-management program into agency operations. • updating the agency's records management program. • ensuring business operations comply with provincial legislation, directives and policies. • engaging with Infrastructure Ontario on future workplace planning.	Reviewed and updated all operational policies and procedures in accordance with their review cycle to ensure alignment with provincial legislation. Followed expenditure restrictions and procurement measures in accordance with government direction. Identified and monitored risks associated with the modernization and digitalization of the agency's assessments with a focus on a new scanning process, data quality assurance and reporting. Completed the update of EQAO's records series. Ensured business operations complied with provincial legislation, directives and policies, including developing and submitting business plans to the government for review and ensuring higher management is kept abreast

		• establishing a process between EQAO and the Ministry of Education to bring visibility to how EQAO data and research are used annually by the government for improvement in education.	of recent legislation related to agency compliance. Engaged with Infrastructure Ontario to complete a new lease agreement that reduces the agency's office footprint and ensures an effective hybrid workplace model. Continued to share with the Ministry of Education regularly on the agency's e-assessment system, the new reporting tools and the 2021–2022 assessment results, and on how the agency's data and research are utilized to support improvement in education.
	Ensure financial and acquisition accountability and exceptional service delivery.	Maintain accurate and timely financial reports based on Public Sector Accounting Board guidelines and have them validated by an external audit process. Monitor and report expenditures every month and conduct an analysis of variances every quarter at a minimum. Improve efficiency of service	Completed the fiscal year's financial audit with no issues identified by the external auditor. Completed and established the 2022–2023 budget based on the funding allocation from the Ministry of Education. Completed variance analyses and financial statements for all quarters, and shared reports with management.

		delivery by implementing a new collection-of-fees system (credit card) for fee-based assessment participants.	Implemented an efficient credit-card payment system for private schools.
	Ensure IT infrastructure and privacy and security posture are in alignment with applicable government standards.	Maintain an updated business architecture and ensure technological and process updates are captured in order to support program and process improvement.	Updated business architecture by • consolidating threat and risk assessments for applications and final responses to the risk mitigation response, with timelines communicated with the Cyber Security Division (CSD) at the Ministry of Education. • completing and rolling out secure and public reporting tools, and data exchange improvement with the agency's vendor.
		Strengthen the agency's I&IT infrastructure and related privacy and security posture by optimizing operations at the Guelph Data Centre in collaboration with Community Services I&IT Cluster (CSC) and Information Technology Standards (ITS).	Continued to strengthen the agency's I&IT infrastructure by • improving security and integration through successful completion of an efficient business-to-business (B2B) solution for school boards.

			• increasing security measures and cost efficiencies by reducing the Guelph Data Centre overall footprint through ongoing analysis and action plans.
F. Foster a strong organizational culture.	Lead and encourage employee engagement, collaboration and inclusion throughout the agency.	Monitor and maintain facilities as necessary to ensure a safe and healthy workplace environment for all staff, and contribute to promoting overall employee wellness.	Monitored and maintained facilities to ensure a safe and healthy workplace environment by • informing staff of COVID-19 measures and changes in a timely manner and as needed. • implementing a safe and gradual hybrid return-to-work plan in accordance with public health and government directions, procedures and guidelines, and communicating with building management regarding facility repairs and maintenance. • designing a refreshed and enhanced office floor plan in preparation for the shared workspace model.

		Promote cross-agency collaboration and alignment of work to the agency's strategic priorities. Increase staff knowledge of all departmental functions through all-staff meetings, lunch-and-learn sessions, internal resources and reference documents and feedback surveys.	Promoted cross-agency collaboration and increased staff knowledge of all departmental functions by • planning, hosting and leading cross-departmental activities, and ensuring alignment of departments in the agency's business operations. • organizing lunch-and-learn information sessions around education and agency-related topics, and conducting town hall meetings to update staff on agency news. • ensuring all staff receive regular internal updates related to team and cross-agency projects, government news and updates, noteworthy accomplishments, and equity-related initiatives. • launching extensive professional learning sessions on

			technology-based assessments for all staff to learn about guidelines and recent developments in e-assessment and evaluation, and to continue to align with best practices.
		Improve engagement for new staff in accordance with EQAO's mandate by modernizing the employee orientation program and showcasing the work undertaken across all departments of the agency.	Continued to organize and conduct virtual and in-person onboarding sessions for new staff, update resources and develop solutions to increase staff engagement in onboarding and staff events, including the creation of a mentoring process and initiative for summer students.
		Develop activities to ensure employees are engaged in the agency's mandate and feel their needs are being met by • reviewing and acting upon the EQAO and OPS Employee Engagement Survey results, and reconciling any gaps in areas identified. • developing motivational	Continued to ensure employee engagement in the agency's mandate by • leveraging the results from the OPS Employee Engagement Survey to support the initiatives of the internal EQAO Employee Engagement Committee. • disseminating documents and

		- presentations for all-staff events. - developing activities that engage all staff in agency-wide endeavours (e.g., all-staff day). - encouraging participation in EQAO and OPS events and professional learning initiatives in accordance with expenditure restrictions. - improving communication to all staff with respect to agency developments and future activities through monthly CEO updates, executive team office hours, interdepartmental meetings, operational meeting summary notes, etc.	- information regularly about the OPS employee network to encourage staff to engage in agency and OPS committees. - ramping up virtual social events for staff as an opportunity to socialize across all units.	
		By September 30, 2022, establish an EQAO team to lead the agency's work concerning equity, diversity and inclusion.	Established an Equity Team to lead the agency's work around EDI. Completed the first draft of a multi-year plan that outlines	

		By September 30, 2022, launch a multi-year equity, diversity and inclusion plan that strengthens the agency's commitment to anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion.	pillars described in the EDI review and that addresses recommendations received.
		Develop at least one activity a year that enhances one aspect of anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion in the day-to-day work of the agency.	Enhanced aspects of anti-racism and EDI in the daily work of the agency through facilitating regular information sessions, implementing social groups that encourage conversations and professional development related to EDI, and welcoming guest speakers to share their experience and knowledge with the agency staff.
		Ensure that working groups and committees (e.g., Accessibility Committee; Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee; Research Committee) report regularly to managers and teams on their work.	Ensured that managers and staff who were not directly involved in specific working groups received timely reports on the work of the agency's committees, including the EDI review working group, and internal and external assessment development and modernization working groups.