

EQAO #DataInAction Symposium

May 25 and 30, 2023

On May 25 and 30, 2023, EQAO held its first virtual #DataInAction symposium for school board leads working in research, data analytics and planning. Participants engaged in conversations about their work with education data, including EQAO data. Presenters from English- and French-language school boards across the province shared their approach to leveraging EQAO data to support student success. EQAO presented some of the agency's most recent work, including an overview of the newly released Math Strands and Skills reports. Attendees participated in a poll that indicated enhancing both 1) student achievement in mathematics and 2) equity, diversity and inclusion were the most common areas of focus for researchers, followed by 3) achievement in literacy and language.

Leveraging EQAO data: Opportunities for growth

Data from EQAO's Strands and Skills reports added value to discussions about students' strengths and areas of need in learning mathematics. Findings from an EQAO analysis using strands and skills data showed that in Grade 3, mastering the Number strand in particular was critical to meeting the provincial standard in mathematics, although the strand remained foundational across all grades. At Grade 6, grasping both the Number and the Algebra strands was key to success. At Grade 9,

achievement in the Algebra strand was critical, and becoming proficient in Geometry and Measurement (which includes much algebraic thinking) was also important to meeting overall curriculum expectations. EQAO encouraged schools and boards to leverage

its new data dashboard to view results for each strand or skill relative to the board and provincial outcomes in order to aid in the location of learning gaps.

EQAO's analysis also provides valuable insights into the results for Financial Literacy. It demonstrates that meeting curriculum expectations in the Financial Literacy strand in Grade 6 and Grade 9 was less dependent on meeting curriculum expectations in other math strands. Curriculum expectations for Financial Literacy focus on logical thinking, knowledge of daily financial tasks, and deductive reasoning. These skills are important in daily life, and it is good news that they appear to be mastered by many students who are still working on mastering key math abilities such as numeracy, algebraic thinking and abstract mathematical concepts at grade level. In the future, additional data will be needed across years for a better understanding of results over time.



Suggestions

Participants found the EQAO data reporting tool, including student questionnaire data and the newly published Strands and Skills reports, useful for school improvement planning in various areas. By providing a wide array of relevant indicators concerning student learning, EQAO data provide value and enhance student experiences and success in school.

Ideas discussed fall into three broad categories:

1) Integrating EQAO data with other educational data

- Triangulation of data from student report cards, student school climate survey results and EQAO assessments to obtain a more complete picture of learning and aid in the development of individual student improvement plans
- Using data to focus professional learning on both student well-being and student achievement
- Leveraging EQAO data alongside school board data to facilitate the analysis of achievement disproportionalities and possible systemic bias

2) Tracking student outcomes over time

- Continued use of EQAO data alongside classroom data to monitor the progress of students between Grades 3 and 6
- Setting improvement goals related to students' confidence and interest in math and language
- Tracking students' outcomes and achievement from elementary to secondary school to the pursuit of post-secondary education opportunities (using school- and board-collected data)

3) Links to the curriculum

- Further resources to help teachers link EQAO results to the curriculum
- Integrating broader cultural perspectives into education and seeking out sources of inspiration related to students' individual backgrounds that could prove helpful when improving student writing skills

In addition, participants from smaller school boards recommended the creation of partner research teams to collect and share resources, such as templates to analyze data, that the larger boards with research teams were using, to support staff and educators.



Conclusion

EQAO's #DataInAction Symposium highlighted the value of further exchange and collaboration among research colleagues, and the continued integration and triangulation of school, school board and EQAO data. Participants shared strategies to locate, monitor and analyze areas of improvement to strengthen student achievement. Exchanging resources and engaging in data-rich conversations about student learning and achievement can generate insights and accelerate improvements and positive change for students.