

**Education Quality and
Accountability Office**



2023–2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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Board of Directors

Sanjay Dhebar, Chair
February 22–February 21, 2026

Yvonne Ruke Akpoveta
November 30, 2023–November 29, 2025

Martyn Beckett
May 6, 2022–May 5, 2024

David Belous
January 19, 2024–January 18, 2026

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May 16, 2024–May 15, 2025

Virginia Roth
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Kyle Wilson
June 18, 2022–June 17, 2024

Alex Yuan
February 8, 2024–February 7, 2025

Chief Executive Officer

Dan Koenig
September 1, 2023–August 31, 2025

Message from the Chair and the Chief Executive Officer

On behalf of the board of directors and the staff of the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), we are pleased to present the agency's annual report for the 2023–2024 fiscal year. EQAO is committed to supporting student success and ensuring the province's public education system remains accountable to Ontarians. The initiatives listed in this document speak to EQAO's contribution to improving student outcomes by leveraging evidence-informed assessment data along with the latest advancements in large-scale assessment, in support of every student.

This past fiscal year, EQAO successfully administered its provincial e-assessments for the second consecutive year, ushering in a new era of trend analysis. EQAO data and research shed light on strengths and challenges in our education system and the effectiveness of strategies that support students. Examining student achievement and contextual data over years has long offered crucial insights on student learning trends, helping all Ontarians understand better how to target initiatives that make a positive difference in each student's life.

Modernizing agency-wide operations has allowed EQAO to be able to respond more adequately to time-sensitive needs from the education community and our government partners. Last year, while the agency continued to report its evidence-based data through the innovative digital platforms developed during its first large-scale e-assessment administration, EQAO made additions to its secure online platform to offer educators a more customized experience when analyzing their schools' data, especially around mathematics achievement and its relation to specific curriculum expectations, in support of new provincial legislation and directives. Although the means of delivery may have changed since EQAO's inception, the agency has remained available to support partners in exploring and utilizing the information and the data the agency's assessment program provides by continuing to offer tailored professional development sessions and workshops to partners across the province, virtually and in person.

A technically robust assessment program would be of little use to Ontarians if it weren't driven by a genuine desire to support an evolving education community. The agency's dedication to principles of fairness is guided by its goal of empowering each student to succeed; a continuous engagement with education partners and experts from related fields sustains this commitment. EQAO's work around equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) progressed last year as EQAO implemented an agency-wide multi-year plan that will ensure a stronger alignment with EDI principles in all of the agency's activities. EQAO is proud to be part of Ontario's education sector and, as such, positions itself as a lifelong learner. The agency believes that increasing its co-operation with partners from equity-deserving groups and Indigenous communities, whose contribution to and perspectives on education are not only invaluable but also necessary, will lead toward fully meeting the needs of each student in Ontario.

Change factors in every organization’s journey; this holds true for EQAO as well. Over the course of the fiscal year, the EQAO Board of Directors had the pleasure of welcoming one of its own members to the position of Chair. Sanjay Dhebar, who has been an active member of the board since 2022, was appointed in February 2024 to lead the governance of EQAO as it moves forward in its mandate of providing reliable student assessment data. As we greet Chair Dhebar, we thank Dr. Cameron Montgomery, whose commitment to education and student assessment in his role of Chair from 2019 until 2024 proved valuable to the agency’s digitalization work. Furthermore, EQAO’s board of directors welcomed new members Virginia Roth and Alex Yuan. These dedicated professionals bring to EQAO their vast sector expertise and understanding of education. EQAO also bid farewell to Mandy Nwobu and Mark Stewart this past year. The agency is grateful to the departing members for their commitment, service and leadership.

EQAO looks forward to the future. As we work together to improve student learning, the agency acknowledges the education professionals, parents and guardians, community leaders and the many experts and partners whose tireless dedication to large-scale assessment and our education system has made such a difference. By abiding by the highest quality standards in its operations and reaching for excellence in each of its initiatives, EQAO hopes to continue making a positive difference in the lifetime outcomes of each student in Ontario.



Sanjay Dhebar
Chair, EQAO Board of Directors



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. The agency's 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 digital 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.

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' kindergarten to Grade 12 education. 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 evaluate students in mathematics, science, technology, financial literacy, collaborative problem solving, and reading and writing, along with 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 2023–2024 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 ongoing 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, 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

Implementing a Large-Scale Assessment Program That Serves All Ontarians

EQAO's large-scale online assessment program serves Ontarians by supporting student learning and achievement. A digitalized assessment program presents partners and stakeholders with flexibility in assessment administration and easy access to timely assessment results, while continuing to offer assessments that meet the very best practices in quality and measurement. EQAO's online tests were first administered during the 2021–2022 school year, which serves as the baseline for EQAO e-assessment data, and the assessment results can be compared year to year for a greater understanding of results over time.

The agency's online system allows for its assessments to be offered according to two different models: multi-stage computer adaptive testing and 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 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 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 through 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 EQAO digitalized assessment presented to students has a set of accessibility tools and support materials embedded into the onscreen toolbar (alternative versions of the assessments are also made available to students who require them). EQAO online tests support third-party software that include 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, 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 from EQAO assessments are analyzed in depth, and reports are produced to provide reliable insights into student learning.

Creating Online Assessments

The creation of EQAO assessments is led by Ontario educators who research, develop and review every passage and 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. 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 Assessment Development Committee along with additional subcommittees 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 EQAO’s 2023–2024 school year large-scale assessments were items that were either field-tested or operational in previous assessments.

Administering Online Assessments

EQAO relies on the support and collaboration of educators to administer its assessments. For each assessment, EQAO publishes on its website an online user guide for teachers, school administrators and school board IT professionals that includes guidelines and clear steps to follow to ensure consistent administration across Ontario. In addition to user guides, self-paced learning modules and informative webinars are available to teachers, principals and other board staff. EQAO also offers tailored presentations to school boards, upon request. During the fiscal year, to answer questions about the e-assessment system, EQAO delivered 71 live webinars attended by more than 2600 educators.

Scoring Online 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 responses to 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 (computer-scored). This type of automated 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 follows strict procedures and is self-directed through an online system; all the resources required for training are available 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 2022–2023 school year, a total of 568 educators scored the open-response items of the Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics and the OSSLT administered that year.

Reporting Results of Online Assessments

EQAO aims to provide user-friendly access to the data derived from its large-scale assessments. In recent years, the agency's modernized approach to reporting assessment results to schools, school boards and the public was facilitated by the digitalization of its assessment program.

Achievement results are 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 OSSLT. Computer scoring of the selected-response items on EQAO's e-assessments allows for fast 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-response items have been scored by trained scorers, and an individual student report is generated after the scoring of the whole assessment.

The 2022–2023 school year assessment results that were released in the fall of 2023 leveraged a recently implemented reporting system that utilizes interactive online dashboards and allows educators and the public to visualize relevant EQAO data in dynamic ways. Users 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 EQAO interactive dashboards available on the agency's website give the public the ability to access quickly and easily 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 detailed information about students and their learning.

EQAO engages with schools and school boards to ensure educators can access and leverage EQAO data to support continuous improvement. During the fiscal year, in addition to self-paced learning modules made available on EQAO's website, the agency arranged presentations to staff from each of the 72 public school boards and hosted 26 targeted webinars and workshops aimed at helping educators gain insights into student learning. To support the public further in understanding EQAO's assessment program, its data and each individual assessment, EQAO offers webinars developed specifically for parents and guardians; this past fiscal year, nearly 2000 attendees participated in these sessions, which included a presentation by EQAO staff followed by a live question-and-answer period.

This past year, to assist schools in leveraging results from mathematics assessments, EQAO launched specialized data dashboards for educators allowing schools to see how students are accessing the Ontario mathematics curriculum's strands and categories of knowledge and skills. Additionally, the agency published on its website a series of documents based on EQAO's studies on student achievement in relation to the Ontario curriculum mathematics strands and skills, along with a collection of released mathematics questions from EQAO assessments, to enrich conversations around assessment results. The agency supported the launch of these resources by hosting 11 webinars to walk educators through the new dashboards and mathematics-related material, as well as by facilitating individual professional development sessions for schools and school boards.

Benefitting from External Expertise

EQAO uses multiple systematic quality-assurance processes to ensure the validity of its assessment data; these 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 other large-scale assessment experts to ensure industry standards are met for the assessments' technical performance and the integrity of the resulting data.

2022–2023 Assessments: Results and Observations

In the fall of 2023, EQAO released the results of the agency's large-scale assessments administered during the 2022–2023 school year, which marked the second year of the agency's reporting on the data of its digitalized and modernized provincial assessments. EQAO assessment results at the provincial, school board and school levels were made available online through interactive dashboards. Due to the substantial changes to the assessments in the 2021–2022 school year (the shift from paper-based to digital; the introduction of a new curriculum and therefore new curriculum expectations), and in the context of establishing up-to-date

baselines for EQAO’s digital assessments, new trendlines were set and first used in 2021–2022, allowing for comparability of data from year to year.

EQAO’s student and educator questionnaires 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 knowledge 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 2022–2023 school year, 607 767 students from the publicly funded English- and French-language school systems were assessed in relation to expectations outlined in *The Ontario Curriculum*:

- 276 446 primary- and junior-division students;
- 143 800 Grade 9 students and
- 187 521 OSSLT/TPCL students.

A total of 3720 elementary schools and 880 secondary schools in Ontario’s publicly funded education system participated in EQAO assessments that year. An additional 375 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 2022–2023 EQAO assessments, Grade 3 student achievement results, which are given in relation to the provincial standard, have remained stable in literacy and have increased slightly in mathematics, relative to those from 2021–2022.

Assessment results for all participating students:

- 73% of Grade 3 students met the provincial standard in reading (the same percentage met the standard in 2021–2022).
- 65% of Grade 3 students met the provincial standard in writing (the same percentage met the standard in 2021–2022).
- 60% of Grade 3 students met the provincial standard in mathematics (59% met the standard in 2021–2022).

Learners' Context:

Overall, 98% of fully participating students completed the Student Questionnaire, 2424 teachers completed the Teacher Questionnaire, and 2326 principals completed the Principal Questionnaire.

EQAO's Grade 3 student questionnaire data indicated that

- 72% of respondents like to read, and 57% like to write.
- 73% of respondents think they are a good reader, and 56% think they are a good writer.
- 69% of respondents like math, and 63% think they are good at math.

EQAO's teacher questionnaire data indicated that

- 80% 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., speaking, writing, listening) into their general practices.

EQAO's principal questionnaire data indicated that

- 88% of respondents plan to use this year's EQAO data to identify how well students are meeting curriculum expectations.
- 85% 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 2022–2023 EQAO assessments, Grade 6 student achievement results, which are given in relation to the provincial standard, have remained stable in literacy but have increased in mathematics, relative to those from 2021–2022.

Assessment results for all participating students:

- 84% of Grade 6 students met the provincial standard in reading (85% met the standard in 2021–2022).
- 84% of Grade 6 students met the provincial standard in writing (the same percentage of students met the standard in 2021–2022).

- 50% of Grade 6 students met the provincial standard in mathematics (47% met the standard in 2021–2022).

Learners' Context:

Overall, 99% of fully participating students completed the Student Questionnaire, 2123 teachers completed the Teacher Questionnaire, and 2326 principals completed the Principal Questionnaire.

EQAO's Grade 6 student questionnaire data indicated that

- 60% of respondents like to read, and 54% like to write.
- 69% of respondents think they are a good reader, and 48% think they are a good writer.
- 49% of respondents like math, and 50% think they are good at math.

EQAO's teacher questionnaire data indicated that

- 87% 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., speaking, writing, listening) into their general practices.

EQAO's principal questionnaire data indicated that

- 88% of respondents plan to use this year's EQAO data to identify how well students are meeting curriculum expectations.
- 85% 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 2022–2023 EQAO assessments, Grade 9 student achievement results, which are given in relation to the provincial standard, have increased in mathematics relative to those from 2021–2022.

Assessment results for all participating students:

- 54% of Grade 9 students met the provincial standard in mathematics (52% met the standard in 2021–2022).

Learners' Context:

Overall, 83% of fully participating students completed the Student Questionnaire, 1301 teachers completed the Teacher Questionnaire, and 546 principals completed the Principal Questionnaire.

EQAO's Grade 9 student questionnaire data indicated that

- 51% of respondents like math, and 53% think they are good at math.
- 65% of respondents think they understand most of the math they are taught.

EQAO's teacher questionnaire data indicated that

- 80% 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.
- 65% 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

- 71% of respondents plan to use this year's EQAO data to identify how well students are meeting curriculum expectations.
- 74% 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 2022–2023 EQAO assessments, overall success rates on the OSSLT are high, showing stability in students' acquisition of the literacy skills stated in *The Ontario Curriculum*. Students enrolled in academic courses showed stable literacy achievement relative to that in 2021–2022, while students enrolled in applied courses showed improvement in literacy achievement.

Assessment results for all participating students:

- 85% of first-time eligible students who wrote the OSSLT were successful (82% were successful in 2021–2022).

- 63% of previously eligible students who wrote the OSSLT were successful (85% were successful in 2021–2022).
- 91% of first-time eligible students enrolled in the academic course were successful (the same percentage of students were successful in 2021–2022).
- 55% of first-time eligible students enrolled in the applied course were successful (50% were successful in 2021–2022).

Learners' Context:

Overall, 81% of fully participating students completed the Student Questionnaire, 533 of teachers completed the Teacher Questionnaire, and 546 of principals completed the Principal Questionnaire.

EQAO's OSSLT student questionnaire data indicated that

- 48% of respondents read on their own time, and 34% write on their own time.
- 74% of respondents think they are a good reader, and 59% think they are a good writer.
- 77% of respondents think they can read easily, and 62% think they can write easily.

EQAO's teacher questionnaire data indicated that

- 91% of respondents incorporate student development of transferable skills such as communication (e.g., speaking, writing, listening) into their general practices.
- 66% 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

- 71% of respondents plan to use this year's EQAO data to identify how well students are meeting curriculum expectations.
- 74% 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 2022–2023 EQAO assessments, Grade 3 student achievement results, which are given in relation to the provincial standard, have increased in literacy and in mathematics, relative to those from 2021–2022.

Assessment results for all participating students:

- 82% of Grade 3 students met the provincial standard in reading (81% met the standard in 2021–2022).
- 68% of Grade 3 students met the provincial standard in writing (67% met the standard in 2021–2022).
- 70% of Grade 3 students met the provincial standard in mathematics (67% met the standard in 2021–2022).

Learners' Context:

Overall, 99% of fully participating students completed the Student Questionnaire, 373 of teachers completed the Teacher Questionnaire, and 197 of principals completed the Principal Questionnaire.

EQAO's Grade 3 student questionnaire data indicated that

- 69% of respondents like to read, and 59% like to write.
- 63% of respondents think they are a good reader, and 56% think they are a good writer.
- 80% of respondents like math, and 69% think they are good at math.

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.
- 97% of respondents incorporate student development of transferable skills such as communication (e.g., speaking, writing, listening) into their general practices.

EQAO's principal questionnaire data indicated that

- 90% 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 2022–2023 EQAO assessments, Grade 6 student achievement results, which are given in relation to the provincial standard, have remained stable in literacy and have increased in mathematics, relative to those from 2021–2022.

Assessment results for all participating students:

- 97% of Grade 6 students met the provincial standard in reading (the same percentage of students met the standard in 2021–2022).
- 83% of Grade 6 students met the provincial standard in writing (80% met the standard in 2021–2022).
- 55% of Grade 6 students met the provincial standard in mathematics (50% met the standard in 2021–2022).

Learners' Context:

Overall, 99% of fully participating students completed the Student Questionnaire, 269 teachers completed the Teacher Questionnaire, and 197 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.
- 60% of respondents think they are a good reader, and 48% think they are a good writer.
- 63% of respondents like math, and 57% think they are good at math.

EQAO's teacher questionnaire data indicated that

- 94% 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.
- 98% of respondents incorporate student development of transferable skills such as communication (e.g., speaking, writing, listening) into their general practices.

EQAO's principal questionnaire data indicated that

- 90% 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.

Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics

According to the data from the 2022–2023 EQAO assessments, Grade 9 student achievement results, which are given in relation to the provincial standard, have increased in mathematics relative to those from 2021–2022.

Assessment results for all participating students:

- 60% of Grade 9 students met the provincial standard in mathematics (56% met the standard in 2021–2022).

Learners' Context:

Overall, 92% of fully participating students completed the Student Questionnaire, 125 teachers completed the Teacher Questionnaire, and 98 principals completed the Principal Questionnaire.

EQAO's Grade 9 student questionnaire data indicated that

- 50% of respondents like math, and 53% think they are good at math.
- 66% of respondents think they understand most of the math they are taught.

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.
- 75% 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

- 84% 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.

Test provincial de compétences linguistiques (TPCL)

According to the data from the 2022–2023 EQAO assessments, overall success rates on the TPCL are high, showing stability in students’ acquisition of the literacy skills stated in *The Ontario Curriculum*. Students enrolled in the academic course and students enrolled in the applied course showed improvement in literacy achievement relative to that in 2021–2022.

Assessment results for all participating students:

- 91% of first-time eligible students who wrote the TPCL were successful (89% were successful in 2021–2022).
- 76% of previously eligible students who wrote the TPCL were successful (91% were successful in 2021–2022).
- 97% of first-time eligible students enrolled in the academic course were successful (96% were successful in 2021–2022).
- 71% of first-time eligible students enrolled in the applied course were successful (69% were successful in 2021–2022).

Learners’ Context:

Overall, 87% of fully participating students completed the Student Questionnaire, 82 teachers completed the Teacher Questionnaire, and 98 principals completed the Principal Questionnaire.

EQAO’s TPCL student questionnaire data indicated that

- 37% of respondents read on their own time, and 25% write on their own time.
- 65% of respondents think they are a good reader, and 56% think they are a good writer.
- 73% of respondents think they can read easily, and 64% think they can write easily.

EQAO’s teacher questionnaire data indicated that

- 93% of respondents incorporate student development of transferable skills such as communication (e.g., speaking, writing, listening) into their general practices.
- 60% 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

- 84% 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.

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 2023–2024 fiscal year, Ontario schools participated in the administration of the main study of the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and in the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP), which had science as its major component. Results of each national and international assessment are published through their respective organizations.

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.

Contributing to Education Research

EQAO seeks to share with education stakeholders helpful information gleaned from EQAO data. This past year, in May 2023, the agency presented at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) annual meeting the findings on secondary school students’ well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic and what predicts a sense of school connectedness. Also in May 2023, EQAO had the opportunity to attend the spring conference of the Association francophone pour le savoir (ACFAS), a Canadian society of francophone scholars, where a paper exploring the demographic factors that are related to perceptions of belonging among students in French-language secondary schools in Ontario was discussed. Additionally during the fiscal year, EQAO and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) continued establishing a multi-year institutional partnership that will leverage student population and literacy data, along with promoting collaboration with OISE graduate students.

Through the years, EQAO’s #DataInAction initiative has produced insightful research leading to an increased understanding of the relationship between student self-perception, learning context and achievement, particularly pertaining to mathematics. In 2023, the agency held its first virtual EQAO #DataInAction symposia for school board leads in research, data and analytics. These symposia update participants about recent EQAO research projects and create an opportunity for attendants to network with other professionals from across Ontario. The symposium held in May offered participants a forum to share their unique approach to leveraging EQAO data toward student success. The November symposium centred on insights gained from the 2022–2023 school year mathematics assessment results and new mathematics resources utilizing EQAO assessment questions to support educators. During the fiscal year, EQAO also published on its website a series of research briefs and documents based on EQAO’s studies on student achievement in relation to the Ontario curriculum mathematics strands and categories of knowledge and skills.

Promoting External Research

EQAO’s assessment and questionnaire data inform research initiatives and discussions around the quality of education and the experiences of students. During the fiscal year, the agency responded to 24 data requests that supported researchers and educators from local, national and international jurisdictions. Some of these requests came from EQAO partners in external research projects. The Hospital for Sick Children requested data to support a longitudinal study on children’s screen use and success throughout their learning journey. The Raising the Village initiative, a collaboration between the City of Toronto and the Toronto Child and Family Network, requested data to improve outcomes for children and families in the greater Toronto area. The agency also provided media professionals and other stakeholders with information to assist their journalistic pieces and 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. By promoting a better understanding of the role and operations of the agency along with the value of the data it provides, Ontarians can engage in thought-provoking discussions about education and our publicly funded education system. To operate as a responsible and effective organization, the agency recognizes the importance of being accountable and is committed to transparency and best practices in all aspects of its functions.

Connecting and Engaging with All of Ontario

An important goal of EQAO's communication efforts is making available to Ontarians compelling knowledge about student achievement and students' attitudes 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 and parents and guardians, among others. The agency receives queries from the public, the media, educators and researchers on various matters on a regular basis and 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.

During the 2022–2023 school year, EQAO administered its digitalized assessment program across the province. The agency reported its data in an interactive online manner that allows Ontarians to access information adapted to their present delivery needs. The agency's wide-reaching bilingual communications campaign undertaken in the fall of 2023 focused mainly on public engagement and partner relations, utilizing accessible digital communications.

EQAO leverages its website to deliver achievement and contextual data to the province, conveniently offering under one tab several accessible data-viewing options. The second year of reporting on its e-assessment results saw the agency enhance its EQAO interactive dashboards, a platform that displays assessment information at the provincial, school and school-board levels, where users have the ability to select through a user-friendly interface the type of data desired for a specific administration year. An additional online search function allows users to rapidly view individual schools and school boards' profiles featuring achievement results along with contextual data for that school year. As with previous annual releases of assessment results, the agency continued to offer printable and accessibility-compliant highlights of its achievement and questionnaire data, along with historic data.

Throughout its fall media campaign, the agency released engaging social media posts and distributed media releases to inform about the availability of EQAO data under various formats.

In September and October 2023, the bilingual media campaign conducted by EQAO

- generated more than 1000 English- and French-language news stories in traditional media, such as online, print, radio and television, and involved local and national outlets.
- disseminated valuable information about student learning and brought attention to current student learning issues. Examples are mathematics achievement at the elementary and secondary levels, and the relation between students' perceptions, contexts and habits and their achievement results in mathematics and literacy.

In the fall of 2023, the Minister of Education announced that EQAO data would be an important metric when developing school boards' Student Achievement Plans and Math Achievement Action Plans to support student success, in accordance with the *Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, 2023*.

This past fiscal year, aside from promoting the release of its assessment results, EQAO renewed its social media strategy to better reflect how today's population engages with online information on a daily basis. By year end, this initiative resulted in additional engagement on the agency's social media channels and their communities that translated as an increase of approximately 1% on X (formerly Twitter) 19% on Facebook and 20% on LinkedIn. EQAO also refreshed its website experience by creating a new landing page to list the agency's main resources, and a media room that seamlessly directs visitors to the agency's various informative products.

EQAO continued to produce short videos and concise one-page documents that offer overviews of EQAO's elementary- and secondary-school assessments, and information on how achievement on EQAO assessments is determined. Leveraging its partnership with students through the EQAO Student Engagement Committee, the agency developed "You've Got This," a video series featuring committee members offering advice in their own voice to fellow students about to participate in EQAO assessments. EQAO also made available revised sample and practice tests of each of its e-assessments along with alternative formats of its primary- and junior-division and Grade 9 mathematics assessments, which are all mainstays of the agency's informative products.

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 other members of the public who wish to connect directly with EQAO. The information centre responds in a timely manner to various queries and provides regular updates on assessment-administration procedures. During the 2023–2024 fiscal year, EQAO's information centre answered almost 7300 calls and replied to more than 5000 e-mails in support of the agency's partners and stakeholders.

Engaging with Leaders and Expert Partners to Foster Growth in Education

Implementing initiatives that are fair to all EQAO partners and that reflect their current needs is a priority for the agency. As EQAO acknowledges the distinct educational requirements of communities across the province, it recognizes the necessity to form close partnerships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities and other equity-deserving groups. EQAO intends for student communities who historically have been subject to discrimination or have been under-represented to be given the opportunity to succeed. The agency positions itself as an active, involved learner as it collaborates with partners 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 pursued long-term initiatives that speak to its commitment to EDI principles. The agency worked with partners toward the creation of a new Black Communities Collaborative Council to inform its assessment development activities. EQAO also finalized its multi-year EDI plan (EDI MYP) to address recommendations from a recent agency-wide EDI audit; the first pillar of this endeavour focuses on internal projects that support a safe and welcoming culture. One recent internal EDI-related initiative has consisted of facilitating several training sessions for staff involving hands-on activities to increase awareness of bias and discrimination, along with inviting external speakers and subject-matter experts to share their knowledge and experiences with the whole agency. In addition to internal work, the agency had the opportunity to meet with educators in the field to discuss how EQAO incorporates EDI concepts into its assessment program and corporate culture. EQAO also presented some of its findings and analysis at the Ontario Council for Exceptional Children Conference to support students with specific needs.

EQAO seeks to involve First Nation, Inuit and Métis partners in each aspect of its assessment program to ensure Indigenous students' learning experience is reflected more accurately in EQAO activities, which include the development of assessment items and discussions about data access and identification. This past year saw the creation of workgroups such as the First Nations Collaborative Council, the Métis Network and the EQAO Indigenous Data Stewardship Committee. Members of Indigenous communities across the province also sat on EQAO assessment development, modernization and advisory committees, including the agency's student committee. During the fiscal year, EQAO participated in educational events such as Indspire's National Gathering for Indigenous Education conference. The agency also connected individually with Indigenous education partners through live webinars and meetings involving educators and leaders from federally funded First Nations schools and Indigenous communities' resource centres across the province to continue to learn from and support these partners and their students with their assessment experiences.

Committing to Excellence 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 its Memorandum of Understanding with the Minister of Education to ensure effective operations and stewardship of public funds.

This fiscal year, EQAO actively pursued the modernization 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 Future

EQAO is governed by a board of directors appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. During the 2023–2024 fiscal year, EQAO’s board of directors held seven 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 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 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 e-assessment program this fiscal year is a testament to the knowledge and commitment of staff from across the agency, which has allowed EQAO to become the respected leader in large-scale evaluation it is today.

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 a vast range of organizations in the education sector, this committee provides advice 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 the assessment program, 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. Overall, the cost of agency operations for the 2023–2024 fiscal year was approximately \$27.80 million.

This 2023–2024 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 until January 31, 2024, received \$121 813; Yvonne Ruke Akpoveta received \$1800; Martyn Beckett received \$3408; David Belous received \$3275; Sanjay Dhebar received \$7352.50; Mandy Nwobu received \$675; Virginia Roth received \$200; Mark Stewart received \$750; Dr. Kyle Wilson received \$1862.50; and Alex Yuan received \$400, 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 its assessment results and data, which is crucial 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 modernization risks and strengthening a resilient IT ecosystem, along with enhancing several aspects of the agency's business architecture and processes. Additionally, EQAO continued to ensure that the agency's programs adhere to the government of Ontario's information technology standards (GO-ITS).

Financial Statements: Year Ended March 31, 2024

This section includes EQAO's audited financial results for operations ending March 31, 2024, 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, 2024



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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, 2024
- 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, 2024, 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.



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- 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 26, 2024

EDUCATION QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Statement of Financial Position

March 31, 2024, with comparative information for 2023

	2024	2023
Financial Assets		
Cash	\$ 3,037,195	\$ 3,868,811
Restricted investments - board restricted fund (note 2(b))	10,149,737	9,183,882
Accounts receivable (note 3(a))	473,398	167,624
	<u>13,660,330</u>	<u>13,220,317</u>
Financial Liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities (note 3(b))	1,987,417	1,564,395
Unearned revenue	56,905	38,760
	<u>2,044,322</u>	<u>1,603,155</u>
Net financial assets	11,616,008	11,617,162
Non-Financial Assets		
Prepaid expenses (note 4)	685,252	599,400
Tangible capital assets (note 5)	229,985	229,381
	<u>915,237</u>	<u>828,781</u>
Commitments (note 6)		
Economic dependence (note 11)		
Contingent liability (note 12)		
Accumulated surplus (note 2)	<u>\$ 12,531,245</u>	<u>\$ 12,445,943</u>

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, 2024, with comparative information for 2023

	2024 Budget (note 10)	2024 Actual	2023 Actual
Revenue:			
Ministry of Education:			
Base allocation payments (note 11)	\$ 29,010,901	\$ 26,840,185	\$ 25,796,569
Interest income (note 2(b))	–	769,487	504,723
Other	–	271,265	85,997
	29,010,901	27,880,937	26,387,289
Expenses:			
Service and rental	14,910,663	12,616,993	11,372,451
Salaries and wages	13,186,189	14,437,193	13,044,927
Transportation and communication	187,162	151,312	142,485
Supplies and equipment (note 5)	726,887	590,137	793,036
	29,010,901	27,795,635	25,352,899
Annual surplus	–	85,302	1,034,390
Accumulated surplus, beginning of year	12,445,943	12,445,943	11,411,553
Accumulated surplus, end of year	\$ 12,445,943	\$ 12,531,245	\$ 12,445,943
Accumulated surplus comprises:			
Externally restricted		\$ 2,381,508	\$ 3,262,061
Internally restricted (note 2(b))		10,149,737	9,183,882
		\$ 12,531,245	\$ 12,445,943

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

EDUCATION QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Statement of Changes in Net Financial Assets

Year ended March 31, 2024, with comparative information for 2023

	2024 Budget (note 10)	2024 Actual	2023 Actual
Annual surplus	\$ —	\$ 85,302	\$ 1,034,390
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	—	(118,014)	(103,575)
Amortization of tangible capital assets (note 5)	119,029	117,410	153,854
	119,029	(604)	50,279
Acquisition of prepaid expenses	—	(685,252)	(599,400)
Use of prepaid expenses	—	599,400	716,947
	—	(85,852)	117,547
Increase (decrease) in net financial assets	119,029	(1,154)	1,202,216
Net financial assets, beginning of year	11,617,162	11,617,162	10,414,946
Net financial assets, end of year	\$ 11,736,191	\$ 11,616,008	\$ 11,617,162

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

EDUCATION QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Statement of Cash Flows

Year ended March 31, 2024, with comparative information for 2023

	2024	2023
Cash provided by (used in):		
Operating activities:		
Annual surplus	\$ 85,302	\$ 1,034,390
Amortization of tangible capital assets which does not affect cash	117,410	153,854
	<u>202,712</u>	<u>1,188,244</u>
Change in non-cash operating working capital:		
Accounts receivable	(305,774)	123,824
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	423,022	385,388
Unearned revenue	18,145	38,760
Prepaid expenses	(85,852)	117,547
	<u>252,253</u>	<u>1,853,763</u>
Capital activities:		
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	(118,014)	(103,575)
Investing activities:		
Net change to board restricted fund	(965,855)	(641,871)
Increase (decrease) in cash	(831,616)	1,108,317
Cash, beginning of year	3,868,811	2,760,494
Cash, end of year	<u>\$ 3,037,195</u>	<u>\$ 3,868,811</u>

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

EDUCATION QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Notes to Financial Statements

Year ended March 31, 2024

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 ensure 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.

Interest income is recognized on an accrual basis.

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

EDUCATION QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2024

1. Significant accounting policies (continued):

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

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, 2024

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 \$3,065,353 (2023 - \$2,100,457) in cash and \$7,084,384 (2023 - \$7,083,425) 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*.

	2024	2023
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 9,183,882	\$ 8,542,011
Appropriation of other income	265,714	164,078
Interest income earned on funds	769,487	504,723
Cost associated with fee-based administration (note 8)	(69,346)	(26,930)
Balance, end of year	\$ 10,149,737	\$ 9,183,882

3. Accounts receivable and accounts payable and accrued liabilities:

(a) Accounts receivable:

Included in accounts receivable is a transfer payment for the following amount:

	2024	2023
Ministry of Education	\$ 392,571	\$ 40,000

EDUCATION QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2024

3. Accounts receivable and accounts payable and accrued liabilities (continued):

(b) Accounts payable and accrued liabilities:

Included in accounts payable and accrued liabilities are the following amounts for services in the normal course of operations:

	2024	2023
Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery	\$ 335,384	\$ 313,617
Ministry of Infrastructure	–	74,162
	<u>\$ 335,384</u>	<u>\$ 387,779</u>

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:

	2024	2023
Prepaid expenses	\$ 280,922	\$ 202,951
Prepaid secondees	404,330	396,449
	<u>\$ 685,252</u>	<u>\$ 599,400</u>

5. Tangible capital assets:

			2024	2023
	Cost	Accumulated amortization	Net book value	Net book value
Computer equipment	\$ 1,107,112	\$ 900,692	\$ 206,420	\$ 199,531
Furniture and fixtures	365,172	341,607	23,565	29,850
	<u>\$ 1,472,284</u>	<u>\$ 1,242,299</u>	<u>\$ 229,985</u>	<u>\$ 229,381</u>

Amortization of tangible capital assets recorded in the current year within supplies and equipment expenses amounts to \$117,410 (2023 - \$153,854).

EDUCATION QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2024

6. Commitments:

The Agency leases premises under certain operating lease arrangements with expiry dates up to December 31, 2026. 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:

2025	\$	604,043
2026		661,457
2027		497,670
	\$	1,763,170

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.

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 2023.

EDUCATION QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2024

10. Budget:

The budget information has been derived from the budget approved by the Board on June 7, 2023.

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.

13. Comparative information:

Certain comparative information has been reclassified to conform with the financial statement presentation adopted in the current year.

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/TPCL and the Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics for primary and junior students.	Successfully completed the second online administration and scoring of the large-scale primary- and junior-division Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics; the Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics; and the OSSLT in English- and French-language schools across the province. All assessment results for the 2022–2023 school year were reported in September and October 2023.

<p>B. Transform provincial assessments to embrace the contemporary classroom experience and leverage technology to provide customized and accessible assessments.</p>	<p>Leverage new digital assessment models to provide a more relevant and engaging assessment experience.</p> <p>Ensure all digital assessments follow best practices for data quality and psychometric analysis.</p> <p>Enhance the reporting model to enhance the usability of the assessment results.</p>	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p>Continued realizing a successful digitalized and modernized EQAO assessment program by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implementing adaptive online testing for the Grade 9 mathematics assessment and for the mathematics component of the elementary e-assessments. • implementing a linear test design for the online OSSLT and for the language component of the elementary-level e-assessments. • ensuring all assessment questions are aligned to <i>The Ontario Curriculum</i>. • enhancing the e-assessment system and administration procedures to streamline and simplify administration for educators.
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop customizable assessment tools that reflect the contemporary classroom experience and satisfy accessibility needs. • Improve timelines for the reporting of results to stakeholders. <p>Provide multiple assessment accommodations, including a paper-based option, for students who require them to complete the assessments.</p> <p>Engage the psychometric review team to work alongside EQAO staff to ensure data quality and sound psychometric practices for the digital assessments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing e-assessments that are accessible on multiple platforms, and ensuring security during assessment administration. • offering flexibility in administration periods and prompt reporting on automatically scored assessment items. <p>Provided enhancements to the e-assessments as well as to their accommodations, online sample and practice tests, and provided additional accessible and alternative formats.</p> <p>Continued engagement with leading psychometric experts to ensure alignment with best practices and research for the assessments. This included professional development sessions and workshops.</p>
<p>C. Support EQAO stakeholders through the digitalization and modernization of the assessments.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Provide resources that include learning modules, webinars, videos and other appropriate materials to support school boards and schools with the</p>	<p>Continued developing and hosting live interactive webinars for educators and IT school board professionals about EQAO's e-assessment program, the use of the secure</p>

		<p>digital assessment administration.</p> <p>Provide digital sample and practice tests on the EQAO public website.</p> <p>Provide resources for parents and guardians on the EQAO website.</p>	<p>data reporting tool and the utilization of data.</p> <p>Released products online that increase awareness and provide support to education partners and the public, such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • updated user guides and sample and practice tests for all assessments; • self-paced learning modules for educators, providing them with step-by-step guidance about assessment administration; • accessible videos and one-pagers for parents and guardians and the public on how e-assessments are designed and administered and how their results are reported, including insights on the achievement levels used to measure students' literacy and mathematics skills.
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		Support schools and school boards with data visualization tools through Power BI.	Enhanced the secure online, interactive EQAO data reporting tool by offering, through its user interface, additional customizable data reports to First Nation, private and public schools as well as to school boards.
Strategic Priority 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 30, 2023, refresh the agency's stakeholder engagement strategy in alignment with operational goals and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Always maintain collaborative relationships with Ministry counterparts in alignment with the agency's MOU.	Presented to EQAO's board of directors a new detailed stakeholder engagement strategy that was approved during the fiscal year through the annual Communications Plan. Continued weekly and monthly communications with Ministry of Education counterparts in alignment with the terms outlined in the MOU.
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, 2024, establish a policy and procedure that sets out the authority and requirements for legislative compliance in the integration of datasets.	Continued engagement and exploration of data-linking opportunities with external partners, and approved specific operational and security aspects related to the integration of datasets.

<p>C. Engage effectively with stakeholders to continuously improve the agency's work.</p>	<p>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</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learning about and understanding First Nations, Inuit and Métis needs in relation to education and 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. 	<p>By June 30, 2023, establish an EQAO team to lead the agency's work to address all applicable calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.</p> <p>By December 31, 2023, ensure there are Indigenous representation and voices on all EQAO committees as well as on governing and advisory bodies.</p> <p>By March 31, 2024, ensure EQAO team members receive training in anti-racism and that they are aware of educational needs among Indigenous communities in Ontario. Learning will take place through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meeting sessions with Indigenous communities. • participation in Indigenous events. 	<p>Established an Equity team to address the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.</p> <p>Continued to recruit partners who identify as First Nations, Métis and Inuit to sit on and share their voices on EQAO assessment, item-development and modernization, and assessment advisory committees, including on the EQAO Student Engagement Committee (ESEC).</p> <p>Arranged for staff to participate in Indigenous education conferences to broaden understanding of Indigenous perspectives and educational needs.</p> <p>Trained staff on anti-racism, and increased awareness of educational needs of Indigenous communities in Ontario through tailored sessions and town halls, interactive workshops and</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sessions at town halls and other EQAO-organized events. • the establishment of EDI initiatives as mandatory elements of individual performance plans for all staff. <p>By June 30, 2023, establish a collaborative council with First Nations, Inuit and Métis partners to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gather feedback on what education data are useful and relevant to Indigenous communities and how EQAO can collaborate authentically. • direct research and the application of EQAO data as required and appropriate in service to Indigenous communities. <p>By March 31, 2024, identify the assessment-related needs of First Nations, Inuit and</p>	<p>attendance of Indigenous-led events.</p> <p>Established the First Nations Collaborative Council and the Métis Network to inform assessment item development and evaluate data usefulness along with EQAO's role in supporting Indigenous students and educators further.</p> <p>Continued to gather feedback on the use, governance and reporting of the education data relevant to Indigenous communities and on how EQAO can assist with supporting Indigenous needs in education by meeting with Indigenous partners (to be continued in the next fiscal year).</p> <p>Continued to work with the First Nations Collaborative Council and the Métis</p>
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		<p>Métis partners; the implications of EQAO reporting; and the use of the data for these partners.</p> <p>By December 31, 2023, in collaboration with Indigenous communities, develop the agency’s action plan to respond to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, including making the necessary assessment enhancements.</p> <p>By September 30, 2024, identify and develop research using EQAO and other relevant data to unpack and address areas of interest identified by Indigenous communities.</p> <p>By March 31, 2024, make enhancements to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • better reflect the identities, circumstances and learning needs of First Nations, Inuit and Métis students. • ensure that EQAO has built relationships and engagement with 	<p>Network to inform assessment item development and evaluate data usefulness along with EQAO’s role in supporting Indigenous students and educators further. An action plan is to be completed during the next fiscal year.</p> <p>Continued to identify and develop research and build a relationship with partners by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing the EQAO Indigenous Data Stewardship Committee as well as training staff on Ownership Control Access and Possession (OCAP) principles. • consulting with Indigenous internal committees and external partners to determine areas of interest for research
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	<p>Leverage the refreshed EQAO stakeholder engagement strategy to direct engagement with the agency's stakeholders.</p>	<p>Indigenous communities to inform the agency's assessment, reporting and research work.</p> <p>Engage all key stakeholders in alignment with agency goals and the objectives of the stakeholder engagement plan.</p> <p>Develop clear and compelling communication products for all channels to engage</p>	<p>with respect to Indigenous data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collaborating with research partners, including with the Ministry of Education's Indigenous Education and Well-Being Division, to begin investigating potential research studies. • developing a framework for using provincial assessment data for First Nations schools. • conducting live outreach sessions and holding meetings with First Nation schools and Indigenous resource centres across the province to provide information about the e-assessment platform. <p>Continued to engage key stakeholders by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • updating the agency's stakeholder engagement strategy and communications plan for the fiscal year.
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		<p>stakeholders and inform them of the agency's work and findings.</p> <p>Ensure the use of stakeholder input and feedback for the agency's continuous improvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completing communications and social media audits to inform current and future stakeholder engagement plans. • updating EQAO's social media strategy based on the recommendations of the communications audit. • publishing on the EQAO website accessible informative and engaging online videos and one-pagers for students, parents and guardians and the public throughout the year. • calling for representatives to sit on the Black Communities Collaborative Council. • launching the EQAO #DataInAction symposia to foster networking among school board research leads and conversations around
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			<p>the effective use of data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• holding interactive webinars developed for specific stakeholders, including 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 newsletters of parents and guardians' associations.• updating virtual self-paced learning modules and courses about EQAO's assessments.• holding regular EQAO Student Engagement Committee (ESEC) and subcommittee meetings to discuss students' experiences with EQAO's assessment program and gather feedback on EQAO products and
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			<p>communications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing support processes to facilitate the access to data and reports by stakeholders from schools and school boards. <p>Sent memos and notices to the education community to support the delivery of timely, clear and detailed information about EQAO’s activities, assessment program and assessment data reporting.</p> <p>Created and refreshed sections of EQAO’s website, and released timely social media posts on X (formerly Twitter), 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, generated more than 2 600 000 website visits and drove an increase of approximately</p>
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			<p>6% of followers across all social media platforms.</p> <p>In September and October 2023, delivered a successful public media campaign that reported EQAO's large-scale assessment results at the school, school board and provincial levels. This integrated communications initiative generated more than 1000 unique media stories and more than 32 000 impressions on social media and included the diffusion of a variety of compelling products such as accessible videos, clear summaries of provincial-level assessment data and engaging social media posts.</p> <p>Enhanced assessment data visualization tools, such as the EQAO data reporting tool for educators and the EQAO interactive dashboards for the public, that present EQAO assessment data in a digital, interactive and user-friendly way.</p> <p>Continued to leverage external stakeholder feedback received</p>
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			during webinars and meetings 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.	<p>Develop communication plans that outline activities for all the strategic directions and goals.</p> <p>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 communication channels.</p>	<p>Presented to the board of directors the 2023–2024 branding and overarching communications strategies outlining all communications activities for the fiscal year. Developed and executed the communications plan and the public release communications plan stemming from the overarching communications strategy.</p> <p>Shared website, media and social media metrics with key staff and the leadership team.</p>
E. Ensure effective and equitable governance and business practices.	Ensure that the internal governance and operational policy frameworks support the agency's operations in accordance with provincial legislation and government directives.	<p>Maintain agency operations in alignment with EQAO's governance and policy framework by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reviewing all EQAO policies, procedures and guidelines to verify their alignment with 	Reviewed, updated and developed, as needed, operational policies and procedures in accordance with their review cycle and emerging needs to ensure alignment and compliance with provincial legislation and general OPS-wide direction.

		<p>provincial directives and legislation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 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. 	<p>Followed expenditure, procurement and HR measures and restrictions, in accordance with government direction.</p> <p>Continued to identify, monitor and report risks according to directives, and integrated operational risks and issues in a new project management tool to ensure seamless and prompt follow-up and resolution.</p> <p>Ensured approval of EQAO's records series and implemented record management training for staff.</p> <p>Ensured business operations complied with provincial legislation, directives and policies by, among other activities, submitting the business plan and annual reports to the government for review and posting approved documents on EQAO's website.</p> <p>Continued engaging regularly with the Ministry of Education</p>
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			on the agency's e-assessment system, the reporting tools and the 2022–2023 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.	<p>Maintain accurate and timely financial reports based on Public Sector Accounting Board guidelines and have them validated by an external audit process.</p> <p>Monitor and report expenditures every month and conduct an analysis of variances every quarter at a minimum.</p> <p>Improve efficiency of service delivery by implementing a new collection-of-fees system (credit card) for fee-based assessment participants.</p>	<p>Completed the fiscal year's financial audit with no issues identified by the external auditor.</p> <p>Established the 2023–2024 budget based on the funding allocation from the Ministry of Education; completed variance analyses and financial statements for all quarters.</p> <p>Completed implementation of an efficient credit-card payment system for private schools.</p>
	Ensure the 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 to support program and process improvement.	<p>Updated business architecture by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implementing a new project management tool to assist with project planning and tracking, and ensuring

		<p>Strengthen the agency's Information and Information Technology (I&IT) infrastructure and related privacy and security posture by optimizing operations at the Guelph Data Centre in collaboration with the Community Services I&IT Cluster (CSC) and Information Technology Standards (ITS).</p>	<p>that there was a smooth onboarding process for staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completing a cybersecurity audit conducted by an external vendor on behalf of the Ontario Internal Audit Division (OIAD), where EQAO was the top performing organization out of the ones reviewed. • adding enhancements to management systems to support better service and access to Ontario's education community. <p>Continued to strengthen the agency's I&IT infrastructure by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working with CSC and ITS to establish an enhanced and federated operational model that includes operational support and project management. • aligning with government standards to implement agency-wide reliable business
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			intelligence and performance management applications.
F. Ensure effective IT operations and security measures are in place.	Continue to implement security measures to mitigate cyber threats and protect EQAO data holdings.	Optimize EQAO's IT processes as they relate to security, software development, governance, operations, capacity management and disaster recovery planning.	<p>Optimized EQAO's IT processes by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancing the monitoring of server security and network connectivity. • reviewing and tightening database access regularly. • providing cybersecurity awareness material along with regular IT and security updates to all staff. • ensuring secure access and prompt responses to schools and school boards in relation to data reporting applications. • reviewing regularly the cybersecurity operations centre alerts, and taking actions to address vulnerabilities. • developing an IT-specific disaster recovery plan.

		Ensure incident management procedures and protections are in place for cyber events.	Developed incident management procedures for cybersecurity, and continued reviewing recommendations from the completed cybersecurity audit.
	Review the renewed EQAO data lifecycle and implement measures for greater efficiency.	<p>Conduct an internal and external review of current data lifecycle processes.</p> <p>Implement measures to improve data lifecycle efficiency both internally and with external vendors and partners.</p>	<p>Engaged in the second phase of the external review of the data lifecycle processes to conduct a maturity assessment and chart a roadmap for future improvements.</p> <p>Implemented measures to improve data lifecycle efficiency by continuing to develop reports and dashboards to enhance the visibility of the data lifecycle and improve operational capabilities.</p>
G. Foster a strong organizational culture founded on a sense of inclusion and belonging.	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.	<p>Continued to monitor and maintain facilities to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all staff by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring a hygienic and safe office space for staff working in the shared workspace model. • updating wellness information on the agency's internal

		<p>Promote collaboration and increase staff knowledge of all departmental functions through all-staff meetings, lunch-and-learn sessions, internal resources and reference documents and feedback surveys.</p>	<p>database to ensure accuracy.</p> <p>Promoted cross-agency collaboration and increased staff knowledge of all departmental functions by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organizing socials to provide opportunities for staff from different teams to engage with one another. • conducting monthly town hall meetings to update staff on agency news. • inviting guest speakers and equity-related subject-matter experts to share their knowledge in support of professional and personal development of staff. • ensuring staff receive communications such as monthly CEO updates and other regular internal communications related to team and cross-agency projects, government news, noteworthy
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		<p>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.</p> <p>Develop activities to ensure employees are engaged in the agency's mandate and feel their needs are being met by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reviewing and acting upon the EQAO and Ontario Public Service (OPS) Employee Engagement Survey results, and reconciling any gaps in areas identified. • encouraging 	<p>accomplishments, and equity-related initiatives.</p> <p>Improved engagement for new staff by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organizing and conducting onboarding sessions. • updating resources and developing solutions to increase staff engagement in onboarding and staff events. • creating a centralized resource section for summer students on the agency's internal database. <p>Continued to ensure employee engagement in the agency's mandate by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Multi-Year Plan (EDI MYP) and Employee Engagement Committee to monitor the progress of the EDI MYP and lead the work based on the results of
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		<p>participation in EQAO and OPS events and professional learning initiatives in accordance with expenditure restrictions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <p>By April 30, 2023, establish an EQAO team to lead the agency's work concerning equity, diversity and inclusion.</p> <p>By May 30, 2023, develop a multi-year plan that addresses systemic barriers.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>the Employee Experience Survey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> organizing regular informal social gatherings. disseminating documents and information regularly about the OPS employee network to encourage staff to engage in agency and OPS committees. <p>Established an active Equity Team to lead the agency's work around EDI.</p> <p>Completed the EDI MYP and released it to staff.</p> <p>Enhanced aspects of anti-racism and EDI in the daily work of the agency by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> facilitating year-round learning sessions and
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		<p>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.</p>	<p>workshops developed for all staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implementing social groups that encourage conversations related to EDI matters, such as a book club and a film club that feature works immersed in EDI principles. • welcoming guest speakers to share their experience and knowledge in an interactive manner with the agency staff. <p>Continued to ensure that managers and staff received timely reports on the work of the agency's committees, and that creation of new committees followed established internal and external committee procedures.</p>
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