

Ministry of Education

Minister

315 Front Street West
Toronto ON M7A 0B8**Ministère de l'Éducation**

Ministre

315, rue Front Ouest
Toronto ON M7A 0B8

October 16, 2024

Sanjay Dhebar
Chair
Education Quality and Accountability Office
2 Carlton Street, Suite 1200
Toronto, ON M5B 2M9

Subject: EQAO's Letter of Direction for 2025-26

Dear Mr. Dhebar,

I am pleased to share our government's 2025-26 priorities for Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO).

Agencies are a part of government and are expected to act in the best interests of the people of Ontario and ensure that they provide value for money to taxpayers. Agencies are also required to adhere to government policies and directives.

Per the requirements of the Agencies and Appointments Directive, agencies are required to align goals, objectives and strategic direction with our government's priorities and direction. As Chair, you must ensure that EQAO's business plan demonstrates the agency's plans in fulfilling the expectations and government priorities below and that progress and achievements are reported through your annual report. Compliance with these requirements is reported to Treasury Board/Management Board of Cabinet annually.

This letter sets out my expectations for 2025-26 that EQAO is innovative, sustainable and accountable through the following direction:

Innovative

1. Simplify client/customer interactions
2. Expand and optimize digital service offerings
3. Improve client/customer satisfaction
4. Share data with Supply Ontario, when requested, regarding procurement spending and planning, contract arrangements and vendor relations to support data-drive decision-making

Sustainable

5. Strengthen public service delivery by optimizing organizational capacity and directing existing resources to priority areas
6. Use public resources efficiently and
 - a) Operate within agency's financial allocations
 - b) Prudently and responsibly manage workforce size. Where an agency requires a material increase in workforce size, the agency must provide the Minister with an HR plan for approval that provides the rationale based on government priorities and/or agency mandate

Accountable

7. Develop and report on outcome-focused performance measures to effectively monitor and measure performance
8. Protect individual, business or organization data by actively managing data and cybersecurity and reporting Artificial Intelligence uses
9. Report all high risks including effective mitigation plans
10. Align hybrid work policies with the OPS and identify and assess office optimization opportunities to reduce office realty footprint and find cost reductions.
 - a) Collaborate with the Ministry of Infrastructure (MOI) to identify office space opportunities
 - b) Align with the MBC Realty Directive and the OPS Modern Office Space (OMOS) Standards.
11. Develop and encourage diversity and inclusion initiatives by promoting an equitable, inclusive, accessible, anti-racist and diverse workplace
12. Increase non-government, non-fare, non-fee revenue by a percentage to be decided by the Minister in consultation with the Chair

These are the government-wide commitments for board-governed provincial agencies. Please see the attached guide for further details of each priority and the accompanying performance measures that can be utilised if measurements are not currently in place.

I am also sharing several priorities specific to EQAO:

- continuing the implementation of digitized and adaptive assessments for the Primary and Junior Divisions, the Grade 9 Math assessment and Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test in an accessible manner;
- continue with the implementation and the delivery of the Math Proficiency Test (MPT) to ensure that the MPT certification requirement target of February 1, 2025, can be met;

- supporting the government's commitment to building students' foundational skills by providing assessment data to support improvement planning and accountability, including the reporting system that allows for the visualization and analysis of EQAO data by school boards;
- working closely with the Ministry and the Community Services I&IT Cluster to manage and address IT and system-related risks, including privacy risks.

At our next meeting, I would be pleased to discuss these priorities, and I look forward to hearing how they will be reflected in the agency's upcoming business plan and in ongoing agency operations.

Thank you and your fellow board members for your continued commitment to EQAO. Your work and ongoing support is invaluable to our government and the people of Ontario.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Deputy Minister Denise Cole at Denise.A.Cole@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,



The Honourable Jill Dunlop
Minister of Education

Attachment: Government Priorities for Agency Sector Chart

cc: Dan Koenig, Chief Executive Officer, EQAO
Denise Cole, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education
Louis Dimitracopoulos, Chief Administrative Officer/Assistant Deputy Minister,
Corporate Management and Services Division, Ministry of Education
Yael Ginsler, Assistant Deputy Minister, Student Achievement Division, Ministry
of Education