

Top Reasons **Standardized Testing** in Ontario and the **United States** Are Not Comparable

People often liken EQAO's provincial assessment program in Ontario to standardized testing in the United States. In reality, the two are **very different**. Here are some of the top reasons why.



United States

Number of Tests

Students in the United States write **at least one** mandatory standardized test **every year** between Grades 3 and 8 and at least **one** in high school.



Time Spent Writing Tests

Students in the United States spend up to **50 hours each year** writing standardized tests.



Creation of Tests

Many standardized tests in the United States are **not specifically aligned** to state curriculum expectations.

The tests are often **developed by commercial testing companies**.



Stakes for Students

Standardized test results in the United States are used to make decisions about **holding students back** and about admitting students to certain schools or programs.



In high school in many states, **multiple state-wide tests** are **graduation requirements**.



Ontario

Students in Ontario write **a total of four** mandatory EQAO assessments between junior kindergarten and Grade 12.



Students in Ontario spend a **maximum of 6 hours every three years** writing EQAO assessments.



Ontario's EQAO assessments are **100% based** on *The Ontario Curriculum*.

They are created by **qualified Ontario teachers** with input from international testing **experts**.



The results of EQAO's assessments in elementary school **don't count toward report card marks**.



The Grade 9 math assessment can **count for a fraction** of a student's grade. The Grade 10 assessment is **not the only way** to satisfy the literacy requirement for graduation.

Stakes for Teachers

Standardized test results **directly affect teacher evaluation and compensation** in almost half of all states.



EQAO results **do not influence teacher evaluation or compensation**. The results help to direct the support and resources provided to Ontario schools.



Cost of Testing

The cost of state-wide standardized testing can reach as high as **\$105 per student tested**.

Spread across all students—since the results are used to improve programming in all grades—the cost is **\$55 per student**.



The cost of EQAO's province-wide testing is **\$52 per student tested**.

Spread across all students—since the results are used to improve programming in all grades—the cost is **\$17 per student**.



These are just some of the reasons standardized testing in Ontario and the United States aren't comparable. **The scope, scale and stakes are simply too different.**

In fact, Ontario's testing program has been held up as a model for the United States by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

“ (The Ontario Government) has consistently communicated the message to the field and the public that results matter, as defined by performance on the provincial assessments. However, its response to weak performance has consistently been intervention and support, not blame and punishment. One of its major successes in the early years was to reduce dramatically the number of low-performing schools, not by threatening to close them (as often happens in the U.S.), but by flooding the schools with technical assistance and support. ”

—Strong Performers and Successful Reformers in Education: Lessons from PISA for the United States, OECD 2011

Sources:

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