

Ministry of Education

Minister

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Ministère de l'Éducation

Ministre

315, rue Front Ouest
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January 23, 2023

Dr. Cameron Montgomery
Chair
Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO)
2 Carlton Street, Suite 1200
Toronto ON M5B 2M9

Dear Dr. Montgomery,

I am pleased to share our government's 2023-24 priorities for the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO). As Chair, you play a vital role in ensuring EQAO achieves its mandate to support education through developing and administering tests to evaluate province-wide student learning.

Thank you for your work with the digitalization and modernization of EQAO's assessments, transitioning to digital and adaptive testing formats. It is critical that EQAO's assessments match modern classroom practice with tests that are more personalized, more flexible and reflective of students' needs.

Following two years of pandemic-related disruptions it is critical that we focus on catching up on the fundamentals – reading, writing and math. These are fundamentals that all Ontario students deserve. The work that you and your fellow EQAO directors undertake to establish the goals, objectives and strategic direction for EQAO ensures that it performs its mandate in a responsible manner, keeping our education system accountable for these fundamental skills.

This letter sets out my expectations for EQAO for 2023-24, per the requirements of the Agencies and Appointments Directive. In fulfilling EQAO's legislated mandate, my key expectations include:

- Supporting the government's commitment to modernizing education through continuing the implementation of digitized and adaptive assessments for the Primary and Junior Divisions, the digital Grade 9 Math assessment and Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test in an accessible manner
- Supporting learning recovery in Ontario by providing EQAO assessment data to inform new baselines in student performance.

- Working closely with the Ministry and the Community Services I&IT Cluster to support educators, schools, and boards by providing assessment data to support improvement planning, including the recently introduced reporting system that allows for the visualization and analysis of EQAO data by school boards.

I look forward to discussing these priorities as they are required to be reflected in EQAO's upcoming business plan and future annual reports.

In addition, I have listed below the government-wide commitments for board-governed provincial agencies. Please see the attached guide for further details of each priority. The government wide priorities are:

1. **Competitiveness, Sustainability and Expenditure Management**

- Identifying and pursuing opportunities for revenue generation through partnerships, where appropriate.
- Identifying efficiencies and savings through innovative practices, and/or improved program sustainability.
- Operate within the agency's financial allocations.
- Complying with applicable direction related to supply chain centralization, including contract harmonization for planned and pending procurements, accounting practices and realty interim measures for agency office space.
- Leveraging and meeting benchmarked outcomes for compensation strategies and directives.

2. **Transparency and Accountability**

- Abiding by applicable government directives and policies and ensuring transparency and accountability in reporting.
- Adhering to accounting standards and practices, and responding to audit findings, where applicable.
- Identifying appropriate skills, knowledge and experience needed to effectively support the board's role in agency governance and accountability.

3. **Risk Management**

- Developing and implementing an effective process for the identification, assessment, and mitigation of agency risks, including COVID-19 impacts and any future emergency risks.

4. **Workforce Management**

- Optimizing your organizational capacity to support the best possible public service delivery, including redeploying resources to priority areas, where needed.
- Supporting the implementation of the Community Jobs Initiative (CJI) by identifying opportunities to relocate new or existing agencies to lower cost communities.

5. **Diversity and Inclusion**

- Developing and encouraging diversity and inclusion initiatives by promoting an equitable, inclusive, accessible, anti-racist and diverse workplace.

- Adopting an inclusion engagement process to ensure all voices are heard to inform policies and decision-making.

6. **Data Collection**

- Improving how the agency uses data in decision-making, information sharing and reporting, to inform outcome-based reporting and improve service delivery.
- Increasing data sharing with Supply Ontario when applicable regarding procurement spending and planning, contract arrangements and vendor relations to support data-driven decision-making.

7. **Digital Delivery and Customer Service**

- Exploring and implementing digitization for online service delivery to ensure customer service standards are met.
- Using a variety of approaches or tools to ensure service delivery in all situations, including pursuing delivery methods that have evolved since Covid-19.

Thank you and your fellow board members for your continued commitment to education in our province. Your work and ongoing support is invaluable to me and the people of Ontario.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Deputy Minister Nancy Naylor at Nancy.Naylor@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Lecce".

Hon. Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education

Attachment:

- Government Priorities for Agency Sector Chart