

**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 8, 2021

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

Dear Dr. Montgomery,

As you begin planning for 2022-23, I am pleased to write to you in your capacity as Chair of the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO). Pursuant to the requirements of the Agencies and Appointments Directive, this letter sets out my expectations for EQAO for the 2022-23 fiscal year.

Ontario's board-governed agencies are vital partners in ensuring the delivery of high-quality services to Ontarians. The work that you and your fellow board members undertake to establish the goals, objectives, and strategic direction for EQAO ensures that it supports Ontario students. It is important that this direction is consistent with government priorities, your agency mandate, key policies and directives and my directions, where appropriate. I thank you for your willingness to serve.

As part of the government of Ontario, agencies are expected to act in the best interests of Ontarians by being efficient, effective, and providing value-for-money to taxpayers. Our government's primary focus is to protect every life and every job we possibly can. Without healthy people, we cannot have a healthy economy.

This includes:

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

- operating within your agency's financial allocations
- identifying and pursuing opportunities for revenue generation, innovative practices, and/or improved program sustainability
- complying with applicable direction related to supply chain centralization and Realty Interim Measures for agency office space
- leveraging and meeting benchmarked outcomes for compensation strategies and directives
- working with the ministry, where appropriate, to advance the *Ontario Onwards Action Plan*

## 2. **Transparency and Accountability**

- abiding by applicable government directives and policies and ensuring transparency and accountability in reporting
- adhering to requirements of the Agencies and Appointments Directive, accounting standards and practices, and the *Public Service of Ontario Act* ethical framework, 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 risks, including planning for and responding to health and other emergency situations, including but not limited to COVID-19
- developing a continuity of operations plan that identifies time critical/essential services and personnel

## 4. **Workforce Management**

- optimizing your organizational capacity to support the best possible public service delivery
- modernizing and redeploying resources to priority areas when or where they are needed

## 5. **Data Collection**

- improving how the agency uses data in decision-making, information-sharing and reporting, including by leveraging available or new data solutions to inform outcome-based reporting and improve service delivery
- supporting transparency and privacy requirements of data work and data sharing with the ministry, as appropriate

## 6. **Digital Delivery and Customer Service**

- exploring and implementing digitization or digital modernization strategies for online service delivery and continuing to meet and exceed customer service standards through transition
- adopting digital approaches, such as user research, agile development and product management

## 7. **Diversity and Inclusion**

- developing and encouraging diversity and inclusion initiatives promoting an equitable, inclusive, accessible, anti-racist and diverse workplace
- demonstrating leadership of an inclusive environment free of harassment
- adopting an inclusion engagement process to ensure all voices are heard to inform policies and decision-making

## 8. **COVID-19 Recovery**

- identifying and pursuing service delivery methods (digital or other) that have evolved since the start of COVID-19
- supporting the recovery efforts from COVID-19

Building on to these government-wide priorities, I am providing the agency with the following additional priorities:

## **1. Assessment Administration and Expanding Digital and Adaptive Testing**

I would like to acknowledge the agency's commitment and contribution to-date in moving to digital adaptive assessments for Ontario students. In particular the agency was able to field test the digital Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test and Grade 9 math assessment. Please continue to work with the Ministry to move forward with digital and adaptive assessments, including the Grade 9 math assessment for the new de-streamed math course, the OSSLT, and the primary and junior assessments.

Please continue to work with the Ministry, including with the Cluster, to identify impediments and solutions that maintain security for all digital assessments.

EQAO will continue to play a vital role in supporting math education in the province by continuing to support the implementation and administration of the Math Proficiency Test (MPT). This includes developing and marking the MPT and providing results to individual test takers and reporting successful completions of the MPT to the Ontario College of Teachers. The agency will also continue to support the administration of national and international assessments.

## **2. Governance**

Additionally, I request that EQAO support the government's priority for Agency Modernization, including opportunities and planned approaches related to: the government's overall review of real estate underway by the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services; exploration of ongoing cost recovery/ revenue generation opportunities; best practices for succession planning for appointments for EQAO; and, overall operational and cost efficiencies.

Through the agency review process, the government is committed to improving agency governance by ensuring that agency board members have the expertise and knowledge needed to provide advice and guidance. As part of this initiative, EQAO is requested to update the skills matrix for the board of directors for currency and to identify areas of board expertise and any areas for strengthening. Please provide me with the updated skills matrix by December 31, 2021.

Please include the mandate for the 2022-23 year outlined above in EQAO's business plan for the upcoming fiscal year. Results will be evaluated at year-end in EQAO's annual report.

Through these measures, we can continue to ensure that EQAO is continuing to support Ontario students. Considering the impact of the pandemic on learning, EQAO's work is critical in tracking the progress of learning recovery and renewal, with a particular focus on reading, literacy and math skills and knowledge.

I thank you and your fellow board members for your continued support, and for your valuable contributions. Should you have any questions/concerns, please feel free to contact Deputy Minister Nancy Naylor at [Nancy.Naylor@ontario.ca](mailto:Nancy.Naylor@ontario.ca).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Lecce". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and a long, sweeping underline.

Hon. Stephen Lecce  
Minister of Education