

Curriculum Connections

EQAO develops and implements province-wide testing for elementary and secondary school students. The tests assess the cumulative knowledge and skills students have gained in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of three key stages in their education. All EQAO tests directly measure student learning according to the expectations established in *The Ontario Curriculum*.

Each year, EQAO administers the following tests:

Elementary School

In Grade 3: Assessment of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, Primary Division (Grades 1–3)

In Grade 6: Assessment of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, Junior Division (Grades 4–6)

Secondary School

In Grade 9: Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics (Academic and Applied Programs)

In Grade 10: Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) (Successful completion of the OSSLT or the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course is one of the 32 credit requirements needed to obtain an Ontario Secondary School Diploma.)

Results

EQAO stresses the importance of using its data as one indicator of student achievement among many. To support the appropriate use of its data, EQAO includes demographic and environmental information in its reporting. This information can be used to understand student achievement in the proper context and to help determine realistic improvement strategies. EQAO's *Guide to School and Board Improvement Planning* provides details on the appropriate use of data.

Understanding and evaluating the quality of education requires a comprehensive picture of the unique and complex character of schools, boards and the province. Data on student achievement on large-scale assessments is therefore only useful when interpreted within each local context.

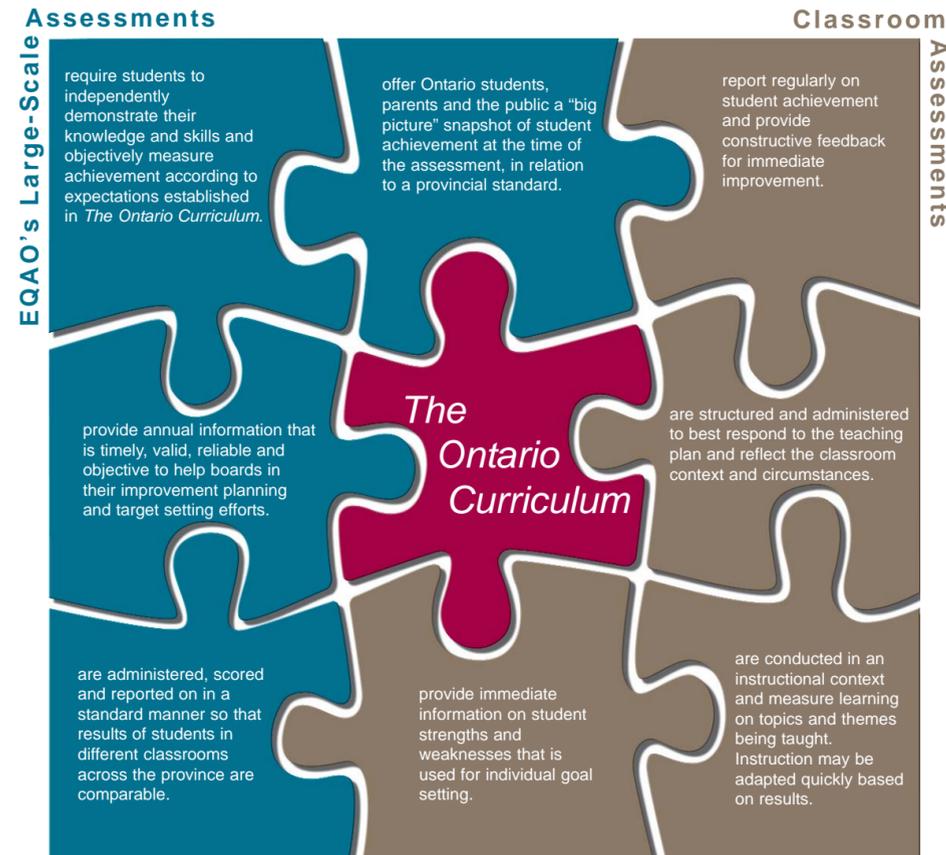


“Provincial testing is important. You start with a province-wide curriculum and you need to have some kind of assessment that goes along with it so that schools around the province can compare themselves with the standard.”

—Stephen Hopkins, Ontario Vice-Principal

Large-Scale and Classroom Assessments

For all students, feedback about what they've learned provides the foundation for progress. Large-scale assessments administered by EQAO and classroom assessments administered by teachers each provide valuable kinds of information. When used together, they provide students, parents, teachers and administrators with a valuable picture of student knowledge and skills. Objective information provides a more accurate basis for improvement planning and goal setting.



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Large-Scale Assessment With Learning in Mind

Education Quality and Accountability Office
EQAO

About EQAO

The Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) was established in 1996 based on a recommendation from Ontario's Royal Commission on Learning in 1995. The all-party Commission consulted extensively with teachers, parents, students and taxpayers. It concluded that province-wide assessments would contribute to the improvement of the quality and accountability of the publicly funded school system.

EQAO is an independent provincial agency governed by a nine-member board of directors appointed by the Ontario Cabinet. Board members bring a wide range of expertise and experience in government, education, business and social services.

EQAO plays an important role in Ontario education by conducting province-wide tests at key points in every student's primary, junior and secondary education and by reporting the results. The tests measure student performance in reading, writing and mathematics based on the expectations set out in *The Ontario Curriculum*.

Results from EQAO testing are an important indicator of student learning and measure achievement in relation to a common provincial standard. The objective and reliable information gained through these assessments adds to the current knowledge about how Ontario students are doing and has become an important tool for improvement planning at the student, school, school board and provincial levels.

As an agency, EQAO is dedicated to working with the education community so that this information is used to assist classroom instruction and support improved student achievement throughout the province. With more than 10 years of experience, EQAO is proud to be recognized as a catalyst for increasing the success of Ontario students.

Each year, over 3000 Ontario educators play a central role in creating EQAO student assessments by participating in test development, test-question review and selection, and the scoring of the assessments.

Ongoing research into national and international best practices for large-scale assessment, and regular consultation with a panel of experts in the field allows EQAO to deliver on its commitment to offering world-class assessment programs. Experts in the field agree that EQAO has developed best-of-class approaches to large-scale assessment.



“EQAO data is extremely valuable in my instructional planning because I can use the results I get from EQAO to program for individual students. When I get a student in September for example, I can look at where their strengths and weaknesses are and figure out where their resources needs will be as I program for the student for the upcoming year.”

—Lesla Williams-George
Teacher, Grade 6
Smithfield Middle School



EQAO's Steps to Supporting Student Learning

1 The Ontario Curriculum

The Ministry of Education establishes the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn at each stage of their education.

Sample of Curriculum Expectations Described in *The Ontario Curriculum: Grades 1–8, Mathematics*

Grade 6 Mathematics Expectations	
Measurement	
Measurement, Overall Expectations 1	estimate, measure, and record quantities, using the metric measurement system
Measurement, Specific Expectations for Overall 1:	Attributes, Units and Measurement Sense
	demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between estimated and precise measurements, and determine and justify when each kind is appropriate (Sample problem: You are asked how long it takes you to travel a given distance. How is the method you use to determine the time related to precision of the measurement?)
	estimate, measure, and record quantities, using the metric measurement system
Measurement, Overall Expectations 2	determine the relationship among units and measurable attributes, including

Measurement, Overall Expectations 2

determine the relationship among units and measurable attributes, including the areas of parallelogram, the area of a triangle, and the volume of a triangular prism.

2 EQAO Tests

Test questions are directly linked to the curriculum expectations and require students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills on common tasks.

Sample of an EQAO Test Question and Student Answer

Assessment of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, Junior Division (Grades 4–6) **Mathematics**

Susic wants to tile the floor of her family's rectangular play room. The tiles she plans to use are 10 cm by 10 cm squares. A drawing of the room is shown below.

How many of the square tiles will Susic need to cover the floor of the play room?

Show your work. Plan: Convert 10 m and 5 m to cm, multiply 10 cm with 10 cm, divide area of play room with area of one tile. 10 cm x 10 cm = 100 cm² (area of one tile) 10 m = 1000 cm, 5 m = 500 cm. 1000 cm x 500 cm = 500,000 cm² (area of play room) 500,000 cm² / 100 cm² = 5000 (number of tiles)

Susic will need 5000 tiles.

3 Scoring

EQAO tests are scored using rubrics, which are objective descriptions of student answers that ensure consistent scoring for all students across the province.

Sample of an EQAO Rubric Scoring Sheet

Rubric for Open-Response Mathematics Questions Junior Division	
Score Code	Descriptor
B	blank: nothing written or drawn in response to the question
I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> illegible: cannot be read; completely crossed out/erased; not written in English irrelevant content: does not attempt assigned question (e.g., comment on the task, drawings, "?", "I", "I don't know") off topic: no relationship of written work to the question
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstration of limited understanding of concepts and/or procedures application of knowledge and skills shows limited effectiveness due to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> misunderstanding of concepts incorrect selection or misuse of procedures problem-solving process shows limited effectiveness due to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> minimal evidence of a solution process limited identification of important elements of the problem too much emphasis on unimportant elements of the problem no conclusions presented conclusion presented without supporting evidence
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstration of some understanding of concepts and/or procedures application of knowledge and skills shows some effectiveness due to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> partial understanding of the concepts errors and/or omissions in the application of the procedures problem-solving process shows some effectiveness due to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an incomplete solution process identification of some of the important elements of the problem some understanding of the relationships between important elements of the problem simple conclusions with little supporting evidence
30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstration of considerable understanding of concepts and/or procedures application of knowledge and skills shows considerable effectiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> due to an understanding of most of the concepts in spite of minor errors and/or omissions in the application of the procedures problem-solving process shows considerable effectiveness due to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a solution process that is nearly complete identification of most of the important elements of the problem a considerable understanding of the relationships between important elements of the problem appropriate conclusions with supporting evidence

40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstration of thorough understanding of concepts and/or procedures application of knowledge and skills shows a high degree of effectiveness due to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a thorough understanding of the concepts an accurate application of the procedures (any minor errors and/or omissions do not detract from the demonstration of a thorough understanding) problem-solving process shows a high degree of effectiveness due to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a complete solution process identification of all important elements of the problem a thorough understanding of the relationships between all of the important elements of the problem appropriate conclusions with thorough and insightful supporting evidence
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4 EQAO Reports

EQAO reports on student achievement in relation to the provincial standard established by the Ministry of Education. Testing results are provided at the student, school, school board and provincial levels.

The collage shows various reports from the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO). Key reports include:

- Individual Student Report:** Assessment of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, Junior Division (Grades 4–6).
- School Report:** First-Time Eligible Students, Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test.
- School, Board and Provincial Results:** Results for all students by province, by school, by board, by grade.
- Summary of Results and Strategies for Teachers:** Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, Primary and Junior Divisions.
- Results over Time:** Student Participation and Success Rates.
- Ontario Student Achievement Report:** EQAO's Provincial Report on the results of the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test.

5 Evidence-Based Decision Making

EQAO test results are a reliable indicator of student performance. Together with other sources of information, EQAO results are used by:

Teachers

to identify areas of the curriculum that need additional attention and to provide an indication of the success of various learning strategies.

Parents and Students

to gain a better understanding of what students are expected to learn at key stages in their education and the level at which they are currently performing in relation to a provincial standard. This information enables students and parents to have better conversations with their schools about goal setting and improvement planning.

Schools and School Boards

to identify areas where additional attention is required to support literacy and numeracy, what resources are needed to meet the standard and whether targeted strategies are successful.

The General Public and the Provincial Government

to gauge the quality and accountability of Ontario's publicly funded education system as a whole and to assess the impact of investments in innovation and improvement.