

February 4, 2022

Memorandum to: Directors of Education
Secretary/Treasurers of School Authorities

From: Nancy Naylor
Deputy Minister

Subject: **Ontario's Participation in Provincial, National, and International Assessments in 2021-22**

Thank you for your participation in provincial EQAO assessments that took place in the fall. Since the start of the 2021-22 school year, approximately 140,000 students across almost every school board participated. As a high-performing education jurisdiction, we recognize the importance of being evidence-driven and data informed. Student performance data is even more critical now to better understand the learning recovery and renewal needs of students.

Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) Assessments

EQAO results are a key source of information for the education system to understand strengths, identify areas for improvement, develop education policies, and allocate resources to support students. The ministry recognizes the continued need for adaptability and has worked with EQAO to provide greater flexibility to administer assessments this year.

School boards who were unable to administer the EQAO Grade 9 math assessment up until this point are asked to continue considering other opportunities for students to write the assessment, including scheduling administration sessions anytime during the remainder of the current school year, with a recommendation that they be as close to the end of the math course as possible. In addition to providing valuable student performance data, this will provide students with the opportunity to experience and gain familiarity with a digital assessment prior to writing the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), a requirement for graduation beginning again next year. The new testing platform is designed to support student learning needs and mental health and well-being by helping to make the testing experience less stressful and more flexible.

This spring, we will re-introduce primary and junior assessments, which have not been in place for two years during the pandemic. Assessments in reading, writing, and math for Grade 3 and Grade 6 students will provide valuable baseline information to support learning recovery.

EQAO assessments are required under the *Education Quality and Accountability Office Act, 1996*. For the remainder of the school year, it is expected that school boards will

continue to participate in all EQAO assessments. Boards must notify the EQAO and ministry if they are seeking to be exempt from administering EQAO assessments. Such requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

National and International Assessments

Ontario is recognized as a world leader in education. The province’s long-standing participation in the national *Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP)*, and the international assessments, *Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)*, *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)*, and the *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)*, has affirmed the important work carried out in Ontario schools. Our continued participation in these assessments is critical to learning recovery efforts in Ontario, as well as contributing to a global understanding of education. Thank you to all the schools that completed the PIRLS in fall 2021.

For spring 2022, a small number of schools and specific grades will be selected to participate in the PISA main study, and the PCAP and TIMSS Grade 4 field studies (see table below). As these assessments take place every 3-5 years, the upcoming administration of these assessments is a key opportunity to collect valuable system information on academic achievement and the factors that influence learning.

National/International Assessment	Age/Grade Assessed	Number of Schools in Sample
Progress in International Student Assessment (PISA) main study	15-year-olds	220 schools
Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP) field study	Grade 8	26 schools
Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) field study	Grade 4	42 schools

The Minister of Education has provided direction that school boards, with schools that have been identified to be part of the sample, shall participate in the PISA main study and the PCAP and TIMSS Grade 4 field studies, pursuant to paragraph 8(1)(3.2) of the *Education Act*. Ontario will not be participating in the TIMSS Grade 8 assessment.

EQAO will provide further information as required to administer these assessments. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Early Development Instrument (EDI)

Since 2003-04, population-level information on the developmental health and well-being of senior kindergarten students has been collected throughout the province using the Early Development Instrument (EDI). We would like to thank you for your continued support. As you know, the EDI is an invaluable data source.

The next EDI data collection will be postponed until the 2022-23 school year.

Thank you once again for your collaboration and commitment as we work together to continue to support Ontario's students.

Sincerely,

Nancy Naylor
Deputy Minister

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- Executive Director, Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques (AFOCSC)
- Executive Director, Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA)
- Executive Director, Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)
- Executive Director, Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE)
- Executive Director and Secretary-Treasurer, Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO)
- General Secretary, Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA)
- General Secretary, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)
- General Secretary, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF)
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