



Education Quality and
Accountability Office



2015-2016 ANNUAL REPORT



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**Education Quality and
Accountability Office**



2015-2016 ANNUAL REPORT

Education Quality and Accountability Office

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND THE CEO

On behalf of the Education Quality and Accountability Office, we are pleased to present this report of the agency’s activities during the 2015–2016 fiscal year—a year marked by a number of significant developments.

In our move toward the modernizing of Ontario’s provincial assessment program, we successfully undertook a number of key activities and trials. Of note, in partnership with the school system, we conducted four separate pilot tests of the online Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test in schools and boards across the province. In summer 2015, we carried out our inaugural distributed online scoring activity for the primary- and junior-division assessments and the Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics. This meant that rather than bringing educators in to score the assessments in one central location in the Greater Toronto Area, we were able to have educators log on, train and score the assessments online from their homes, wherever they were in the province. Online scoring allowed us to engage a broader range of educators across the province more easily, while significantly reducing travel, accommodation and central scoring site expenses. This approach is a key part of our transition toward a fully integrated online assessment program.

All of this preliminary work showed us the tremendous potential benefits of the online assessment program, but it also uncovered a number of technological issues that had to be addressed in order for the system to work as needed. Although by late 2015 we’d made considerable progress, the system hadn’t yet met all of our quality standards. In addition, because of the uncertainties in the secondary school system caused by the ongoing labour issues, we did not consider the climate to be optimal to launch the new online assessment. As a result, we elected to postpone the roll-out of the online OSSLT from this school year to next. In the months since, we have worked on all aspects of the online assessment program and have continued our work and consultations with school board IT contacts to pave the way for a successful implementation of the online OSSLT and a voluntary online Grade 9 multiple-choice component in the 2016–2017 school year.

A particular challenge during this fiscal year came in the form of education-sector labour disruptions that affected the administration of EQAO’s primary- and junior-division provincial assessments in all English-language school boards in Ontario. As a result, no Grade 3 or Grade 6 student in English-language public elementary schools wrote the assessment this year—a first in the history of the provincial assessment program. Similarly, at the secondary-school level, labour disruptions affected the spring administration of the Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics in four public school boards. As a result, we were not able to report provincial-level results for either elementary assessment or for the Grade 9 assessment for the English-language school system.



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This year was also notable for the development of a new strategic plan for EQAO. As an agency of the Government of Ontario, EQAO is required by the *Agency and Appointments Directive* to set its strategic direction for a period of three years. The agency's last strategic plan was for a five-year business cycle, which was extended to allow the Ministry of Education time to complete its renewed vision for education in Ontario.

In order to inform the development of EQAO's new plan, we consulted extensively with stakeholders across the province. We were pleased to conclude this process and to submit to the Minister of Education a new strategic plan for the 2016–2019 period. The new plan is both anchored to the agency's mandate, as defined by the *EQAO Act*, and reflective of the Ministry of Education's *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario*. The plan sets a direction that allows the agency to fulfill its mandate in a more comprehensive manner and to provide reliable information about a broader range of issues and about the quality and effectiveness of more initiatives in education today. The new strategic plan is not a departure but an evolution of the agency's previous strategic plan. EQAO's commitments to high-quality assessments, to research, to effective information sharing and to the responsible stewardship of public funds remain priorities for the agency. The new main areas of focus include the move toward more modern, online assessments and practices, the evaluation of well-being and of the public accountability of school boards.

As does Ontario's publicly funded school system, EQAO has a bright future filled with possibilities and promise. We look forward to moving boldly forward with focus and determination and continuing in our important role of fostering system-wide accountability as well as providing reliable information that's useful for improving the programs offered to all students in the province.



Dave Cooke, Chair



Bruce Rodrigues, CEO





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ABOUT EQAO

EQAO's tests measure student achievement in reading, writing and mathematics in relation to *Ontario Curriculum* expectations. The resulting data provide accountability and a gauge of quality in Ontario's publicly funded education system. By providing this important evidence about learning, EQAO acts as a catalyst for increasing the success of Ontario students.

The objective and reliable results from EQAO's tests complement the information obtained from classroom and other assessments to provide students, parents, teachers and administrators with a clear and comprehensive picture of student achievement and a basis for targeted improvement planning at the individual, school, school board and provincial levels. EQAO helps build capacity for the appropriate use of data by providing resources that educators, parents, policy-makers and others in the education community can use to improve learning and teaching. EQAO distributes an individual report to each student who writes a test, and posts school, school board and provincial results on its Web site.

VALUES

EQAO values giving all students the opportunity to reach their highest possible level of achievement.

EQAO values its role as a service to educators, parents, students, government and the public in support of teaching and learning in the classroom.

EQAO values credible evidence that informs professional practice and focuses attention on interventions that improve student success.

EQAO values research that informs large-scale assessment and classroom practice.

EQAO values the dedication and expertise of Ontario's educators, their involvement in all aspects of the assessment process and the positive difference their efforts make in student outcomes.

EQAO values the delivery of its programs and services with equivalent quality in both English and French.



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"Best of Class" Assessments

EQAO is committed to providing credible evidence of student learning based on *The Ontario Curriculum*.



EQAO's full-census assessment program provides one important measurement of the quality of the publicly funded education system in Ontario. It contributes to the system's accountability for student achievement to the parents who entrust it with their children's education and to the taxpayers who finance it. One of EQAO's main goals is to ensure the quality and reliability of Ontario's large-scale assessments, which are directly linked to the learning expectations of *The Ontario Curriculum*. To maintain its assessments as "best of class," EQAO continually examines its assessment model in order to ensure that it remains relevant, effective and appropriate for Ontario.



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When developing its assessments, EQAO ensures a variety of quality assurance measures are employed. The agency worked with an independent Psychometric Expert Panel, which met in May and November to examine important aspects of EQAO's assessment program. Key topics included the modernization of assessment operations, the building of OSSLT forms for 2016 and developing the 2016 primary, junior and Grade 9 assessments and the 2016 OSSLT. The members of the panel are nationally and internationally recognized experts in large-scale assessment.

The Psychometric Expert Panel has been an important part of EQAO's quality assurance processes for many years. As part of the agency's overarching move toward modernization and renewal, new processes and committees are being established to ensure we remain best positioned to meet our future goals. Moving forward, the Psychometric Expert Panel will be replaced by a Measurement Advisory Panel, whose mandate will be to offer external expert guidance in three areas: the technical quality of EQAO's assessment programs, emerging issues in measurement and best practices in assessment methodologies.

As part of its commitment to ensuring high-quality curriculum-based assessments, EQAO engages Ontario educators to write all assessment items according to specific curriculum expectations. An Assessment Development Committee, made up of teachers, school administrators, subject-matter experts and educational consultants, and a Sensitivity Committee then verify that all items are grade and curriculum appropriate and free of bias.

During assessment administration, EQAO assigns quality assurance monitors to visit a random sample of schools. During these visits, the monitors observe and gather information about the consistency of the assessment administration. Information collected through this process assists EQAO in monitoring compliance with its administrative guidelines and helps the agency refine procedures for future assessments. During this fiscal year, monitors observed test administration in a total of 147 schools: for primary and junior, 57 English and 40 French; for Grade 9, 10 English and five French; and for the OSSLT, 25 English and 10 French.

In order to ensure representative samples of schools across the province were visited, school lists were made using stratified random sampling techniques. Overall, according to the quality assurance school monitors, all assessments were administered in accordance with EQAO policies and procedures.

In addition to the provincial assessments, EQAO coordinates Ontario's participation in national and international assessments on behalf of the Government of Ontario. These assessments provide evidence of how students in Ontario are performing in relation to their national and international peers. During this fiscal year, preparations were made for the administration of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), to be administered in April 2016. PIRLS reports every five years on the reading achievement of Grade 4 students worldwide and is sponsored by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement. The previous PIRLS assessment occurred in 2011, when approximately 4000 Ontario students participated.

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Preparations were also undertaken for the administration of the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP), also to be administered in April 2016. PCAP is a program of national standardized tests of reading, math and science skills administered every three years to Grade 8 students. The information gathered in these cyclical tests of student achievement in mathematics, reading and science provides the provinces and territories with a basis for examining their curricula and improving their assessment tools.

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an international study that measures the abilities of 15-year-olds that was administered in 2015 with science as the major domain. The results of this computer-based assessment are scheduled to be published in December 2016. Results for the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) will also be published in December 2016. TIMSS is an international assessment that measures the mathematics and science achievement of students in Grades 4 and 8. In Ontario, approximately 4500 students in each tested grade participated.

EQAO Online

"EQAO Online" is a multi-year project to move EQAO's assessments from paper to computer. The project was launched in September 2014 to bring the assessments in line with the digital world we live in and the digital classroom that is an increasingly important part of a modern education. EQAO is committed to ensuring this transition is made with the agency's customary technical quality and rigour. The move will happen gradually, and the OSSLT will be the first EQAO assessment offered online.



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Four separate pilot tests of the online OSSLT were conducted in Ontario schools and boards: November 2014 and February, March and May 2015. These pilot tests were conducted in more than 500 schools from the English- and French-language school systems, with the participation of 67 of the 72 boards and more than 35 000 students from every region of the province. The purpose was to ensure the quality of the online assessment before it goes live, to test the system through which the assessment will be administered and to collect feedback from students and school staff about their experience.

A key part of the transition is online scoring. In summer 2015, the primary- and junior-division assessments were scored using an online distributed scoring model rather than the centralized scoring process that has been used in the past. Ontario educators participated by logging on to the secure online scoring application from their homes.

The newly configured EQAO item bank is used to develop, edit, review and store all items (questions) and reading passages specific to each assessment program. The item bank allows staff to generate sets of items and/or reading passages for different purposes, including item development, cognitive lab, external reviews and Assessment Development Committee and Sensitivity Committee activities. As well, the item bank is accessed by internal and external users remotely to provide electronic feedback at each stage of the development cycle.

The item bank also allows for the electronic generation of online and paper assessments, including the online OSSLT to be administered in October 2016. The English and French online junior practice tests were generated from the item bank and will be available to the public in fall 2016.

In May 2016, two sample versions of the online OSSLT will be available. One will be posted on the public section of EQAO's Web site so that all can see what the online test will look like. The other will be available to schools through the EQAO Online Kiosk, which is the secure application that must be downloaded onto each device for the actual test administration. The purpose of these versions is to provide full transparency concerning what the online OSSLT will look like and all of its functionalities.

In October 2016, students will have the opportunity to take the OSSLT online. Successful students will officially satisfy the literacy requirement for their diploma. During January 2017, Grade 9 students will have a voluntary opportunity to take the multiple-choice portion of the winter math assessment online. The regularly scheduled OSSLT will occur in March 2017. Both paper and online versions will be available.

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Supporting Student Progress

EQAO is committed to integrating a broad range of evidence that identifies where interventions can be made to ensure that all students have the opportunity to reach their highest possible level of achievement.

Reliable evidence concerning student achievement is important for the continuous review and improvement of Ontario's educational programs, whether at the school, board or system level. EQAO assessments are a valuable and unique source of insight in that they provide information about student achievement in relation to a common standard that is comparable from school to school and board to board. In making its results publicly available, EQAO is able to bring to each local school community's attention information about the areas in which their students excel and where additional attention needs to be paid.





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Provincial Assessments in Elementary Schools

Due to labour disruptions in the education sector in 2015, many students were not able to participate in the provincial assessments. Approximately 70% of Grades 3 and 6 students in the English-language school system did not participate in 2015. As a result, EQAO was not able to report provincial-level results for the elementary assessments in the English-language school system this year. Since the labour disruptions did not affect them, students in the English Catholic elementary system participated as usual and schools and boards continued to receive reports of their own students' achievement.

Results were also made available for the public and the Catholic French-language school systems, which also were not affected by labour disruptions. Provincial-level results for Ontario's French-language elementary students indicate high levels of achievement of the provincial reading standards: 82% of Grade 3 students and 90% of Grade 6 students met the standard in 2015. This represents an increase of 11 percentage points and eight percentage points in the two grades respectively over the past five years.



Unless otherwise noted, the results contained in this report apply to students and schools in Ontario's English-language system. Results for Ontario's French-language system can be found in the French version of this report.

Although writing achievement remained high among French-language elementary students, in contrast to the reading results, writing results declined in 2015. Among students in Grade 3, 80% met the writing expectations—a drop of one percentage point from the previous year. There was a four-percentage-point drop in the proportion of students meeting the writing standard in Grade 6, from 89% to 85%. Data collected from student questionnaires administered with the assessments revealed that most students are not regularly using key strategies for success in writing, such as reviewing their work and checking their grammar.

Provincial assessments have also shown steady progress in French-language student achievement in mathematics. Indeed, 81% of Grade 3 students and 85% of Grade 6 students met the math standard in 2015, representing an increase of eight percentage points and five percentage points, respectively, over the past five years.

Provincial Assessments in Secondary Schools

As in elementary schools, labour disruptions affected the spring administration of the Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics at four school boards in the English public system. As a result, EQAO was not able to report provincial-level results. All students, schools and boards that participated in the Grade 9 math assessment received their results. Fortunately, the administration of the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), written by students in Grade 10, was not affected by labour disruptions.

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In secondary schools in the French-language system, for which provincial results are available, achievement rates on the Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics dropped slightly from last year, though they remain significantly higher than five years ago.

Among students enrolled in the academic math course, 82% met the provincial standard. This is a drop of two

percentage points from 2014, though it remains 12 percentage points higher than that in 2011. Among students enrolled in the applied math

course, 49% met the provincial standard. This is a drop of two percentage points from 2014 but is also 12 percentage points higher than in 2011.

Although the success rate in the applied math course has increased from 37% in 2011 to 49% in 2015, it has remained

persistently low. More than half of the students enrolled in this course are not meeting the provincial standard.

Results from the 2015 OSSLT from English-language schools have remained steady in comparison to the previous year. In 2015, there was an 82% success rate for first-time writers. OSSLT scores have been relatively stable, showing a one-percentage-point decrease from 2014. This means that the vast majority of Grade 10 students are able to demonstrate the minimum literacy skills required. While 93% of fully participating students in the academic English course were successful, only 50% of fully participating students in the applied English course were. Due to the persistently low success rates on provincial assessments among students in the applied math and English courses, EQAO has recommended to the Ministry of Education that a review of the intent of these courses be undertaken, including a consideration of how they might better support student achievement.

ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL LITERACY TEST (OSSLT)



82%

Percentage of first-time eligible students who were successful in 2015

Results from the 2015 OSSLT from English-language schools have remained steady in comparison to the previous year.

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Building Capacity and Research

EQAO has a strong commitment to research and to building capacity for the use of data through service to educators, parents, government and the public.



Helping all stakeholders interpret and use data to support students and improve learning is an important goal for the agency. EQAO assessment results identify trends in student learning at the school, board and provincial levels and are used as a reference point by educators and system leaders to help them improve their educational programs. One of the primary ways EQAO builds capacity is through its School Support and Outreach Team, which is made up of educational leaders. Once again this year, the agency conducted a series of presentations, information-sharing sessions, seminars, learning forums, consultations and workshops on the topics of EQAO assessment practices and resources and interpreting data.



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From April 1, 2015, to March 31, 2016, EQAO's School Support and Outreach Team worked with Ontario educators in every region of the province. A particular goal of these sessions was to help educators triangulate their students' achievement results with contextual data and information about the students' attitudes toward their learning. Such rich analyses give school and board teams new insight into their students' strengths and challenges—insights that are helpful for guiding programming decisions that support improvement at the local level.

Recognizing the crucial role that parents play in supporting their children's achievement, EQAO also continued reaching out to this important group this year. In all, 24 evening parent presentations were conducted, involving 984 participants. The agency also held five presentations at a Parent Involvement Conference, attracting 90 participants. Members of the Outreach Team held face-to-face conversations with parents and community members at an information table during a conference event attended by 300. These were all opportunities to help parents better understand the role of EQAO, how to use its data and resources to support their children's learning and how to engage with their children's school in discussions about achievement and improvement planning. In addition to these presentations, math forums were held during the year. These forums attracted nearly 400 participants.



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At English-language forums for educators, Dr. Christine Suurtamm, Associate Professor of Mathematics Education at the University of Ottawa, led a full-day transition team building session relating to mathematics. For the French-language forums, Martine Leclerc, Full Professor, *Université du Québec en Outaouais*, led a two-day learning session with a focus on literacy and students with special needs. In addition, EQAO conducted 16 collaborative coaching sessions concerning the effective use of EQAO data and resources to improve teaching and learning. In total there were over 250 participants.

Over the course of the year, the Outreach Team held almost 50 sessions in schools to help them interpret and use EQAO data to inform local improvement planning. These sessions were conducted with principals and school teams. In addition, EQAO conducted 65 school board consultations throughout the year, reaching more than 700 participants. EQAO also made presentations for 20 university faculties of education, reaching 1785 teacher candidates.

Jurisdictions around the world continue to look to EQAO and its success as inspiration for supporting their own students. The agency's assessment program has a global reputation for excellence, and international delegations are highly interested in learning about its successful assessment model. Requests for EQAO presentations continued this year, and the agency received representatives from China, Denmark, Japan, Sweden and Brazil.

In August 2015, EQAO launched corporate Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn channels, as well as a Twitter feed for the CEO. The purpose of these channels is to engage in authentic conversations with stakeholders and to monitor and respond to issues raised on third-party social media channels. Since the launch of its social media channels, EQAO has assembled communities totalling some 2300 followers. More than 600 English and French tweets have been posted during the same period.

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This year's research priority was the development of an EQAO research and innovation strategy. The strategy maps out an integrated results-oriented knowledge-to-action approach to data literacy, education research and innovation that will contribute to improved student learning and well-being, more effective teacher professional practice and enhanced educational leadership across the province. EQAO has undertaken a number of transformational and modernization initiatives, including EQAO Online, a data portal for researchers, an interactive reporting tool for principals and school board directors and an examination of the inclusion of measures of well-being in EQAO data collection and reporting. These initiatives have inspired additional collaborative opportunities and provided the impetus for the development of the research and innovation strategy. Collectively, they have set the stage for a coordinated, forward-looking approach for EQAO.

This year also marked the EQAO's launch of an Alternative Practicum Experience, which hosted six Queen's University students in the B.Ed./Dip.Ed. program in its inaugural year. During the placement, students performed tasks and activities that contributed to the work of the agency and furthered the knowledge gained in their faculty programs. Their experience included an immersion in data literacy with the Data Management and Analysis and Communications units, exposure to EQAO quality assurance processes and attendance of a math learning forum with Dr. Christine Suurtamm, where the students had an opportunity to engage with Grades 3–6 math educators from across the province. This practicum was deemed successful for both the students and the agency and has established a strong foundation going forward.



Dr. Bette M. Stephenson,
Director Emeritus

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In 2009, EQAO launched the Dr. Bette M. Stephenson Recognition of Achievement program to recognize improvements in student achievement across the province. In 2015, 18 elementary and secondary schools received this distinction. These publicly funded schools were recognized for making effective use of EQAO data and evidence from other sources to enhance programming to meet students' needs. The recognized schools are representative of the many throughout Ontario that have adopted an action plan based on their unique circumstances and who have made notable improvements, as demonstrated by the positive trend in their EQAO results over time.

The Dr. Bette M. Stephenson Recognition of Achievement

Bur Oak Secondary School

York Region District School Board

Bishop Alexander Carter Catholic Secondary School

Sudbury Catholic District School Board

Centre Hastings Secondary School

Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board

Eastwood Public School

Greater Essex County District School Board

Our Lady of Victory School

Ottawa Catholic District School Board

R.L. Beattie Public School

Rainbow District School Board

St. Edmund Campion Secondary School

Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board

St. Mark Catholic School

London District Catholic School Board

St. Mary's Catholic Secondary School

Toronto Catholic District School Board

St. Paul Catholic Secondary School

Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board

St. Stephen Catholic Secondary School

Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board

Tom Longboat Junior Public School

Toronto District School Board

École élémentaire catholique Elda-Rouleau

Conseil scolaire de district Catholique de l'Est ontarien

École élémentaire publique L'Équinoxe

Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario

École catholique Nouveau Regard - Pavillon St-Joseph

Conseil scolaire catholique de district des Grandes Rivières

École Saint-Pierre

Conseil scolaire catholique du Nouvel-Ontario

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Conseil scolaire catholique Providence

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Effective Business Practices

EQAO is committed to strategically aligned business practices that enhance the agency's ability to focus on and deliver key priorities and commitments.



As an agency of the Government of Ontario, EQAO is required by the *Agency and Appointments Directive* to set its strategic direction for three years or longer. This annual report details the final year of activities in a five-year strategic cycle, which was extended to allow the Ministry of Education time to complete its renewed vision for education in Ontario.



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Consequently, one of the major activities undertaken this year was the development of a new strategic plan for the agency. In order to develop this plan, EQAO consulted extensively with stakeholders in every region of the province. These consultations included 10 sessions in eight cities, to which were invited representatives from all 72 publicly funded

school boards, including educators, trustees, parents, students and school board administrators. Workshops were conducted with EQAO's stakeholder groups, including its own Assessment Advisory Committee and Psychometric Expert Panel. EQAO also conducted a Web-based survey, which received over 7000 responses.

EQAO's commitments to high-quality assessments, to research, to effective information sharing

and to the responsible stewardship of public funds remain priorities for the agency. Going forward, the new main areas of focus include the move toward more modern, online assessments and practices, the evaluation of well-being and of the public accountability of school boards.

In *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario*, the Ministry of Education identifies "promoting well-being" as one of the renewed goals for the publicly funded education system. The Ministry has asked EQAO to play a leadership role in establishing quality measures of well-being and integrating them into EQAO's data collection, analysis and reporting.

In order to do so responsibly, EQAO will be consulting with a broad range of stakeholders, investigating what information is already being collected about students' well-being and working in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and school boards before making any decisions on how well-being is to be defined, assessed and evaluated.



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Part of EQAO's mandate, according to the *EQAO Act*, is to evaluate the public accountability of school boards and to collect information on strategies for improving that accountability. The new strategic plan's focus on the evaluation of school board accountability aligns with the Ministry of Education's renewed goal of enhancing public confidence in Ontario's education system. It also recognizes the amendment to the *Education Act* legislated by the *Student Achievement and School Board Governance Act* stating that "All partners in the education sector, including the Minister, the Ministry and the boards, have a role to play in enhancing student achievement and well-being, closing gaps in student achievement and maintaining confidence in the province's publicly funded education systems." EQAO will begin by examining how schools and boards share their provincial assessment results with the communities they serve.

“ All partners in the education sector, including the Minister, the Ministry and the boards, have a role to play in enhancing student achievement and well-being, closing gaps in student achievement and maintaining confidence in the province's publicly funded education systems. ”

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In keeping with the agency's goal to modernize all aspects of its program, we were pleased to launch EQAO's updated Web site and social media channels in 2015. The new site features improved navigation, a search function, rich media content and improved accessibility for users. It is also optimized for viewing on mobile devices such as tablets and smartphones. EQAO also launched its social media strategy in 2015. Through social media, EQAO is working to engage directly with stakeholders to build bonds of understanding and provide authoritative information about its programs and services. The ultimate goal is to help Ontarians better understand the role of the agency and the appropriate uses of the information it provides to help all, in turn, use that information to improve outcomes for students in the publicly funded education system.

EQAO's ability to deliver on its priorities and to honour its commitments is made possible by the efforts of its dedicated and knowledgeable employees. In the past year, many long-serving employees celebrated years-of-service milestones. Between April 1, 2015, and March 31, 2016, two employees marked five years of service, eight employees surpassed 10 years, and 11 employees celebrated 15 years with EQAO. The agency recognizes the value of its team members and takes pride in acknowledging their ongoing commitment.

This past fiscal year marked the end of term for a number of valued and influential members of EQAO's Board of Directors. EQAO wishes to extend its sincere appreciation and gratitude for the exceptional leadership and support provided by the outgoing Chair of the Board, Dr. Brian Desbiens, who has served on the board since 2005, most recently as chair for two consecutive terms since 2008; Jerry Ponikvar, who has served since 1997 and acted as the board's vice-chair since 2005; and Dr. Elizabeth Ford Jones, who has served since 2011. The agency is delighted to welcome Geraldine (Gerry) Connelly and Paule-Anny Pierre as the newest members of its board of directors.

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EQAO's audited financial results for operations ending March 31, 2016, were funded through Ministry of Education allocations.

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INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

To the Board of Directors of the
Education Quality and Accountability Office

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the Education Quality and Accountability Office, which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2016, the statements of operations and accumulated surplus, changes in net financial assets and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes, comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditors' Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on our judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, we consider internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

KPMG LLP, is a Canadian limited liability partnership and a member firm of the KPMG network of independent member firms affiliated with KPMG International Cooperative ("KPMG International"), a Swiss entity. KPMG Canada provides services to KPMG LLP.

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Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Education Quality and Accountability Office as at March 31, 2016, and its results of operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

KPMG LLP

Chartered Professional Accountants, Licensed Public Accountants

June 9, 2016
Toronto, Canada

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Statement of Financial Position

March 31, 2016, with comparative information for 2015

	2016	2015
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Financial Assets

Current assets:		
Cash	\$ 2,533,389	\$ 1,010,068
Cash - board restricted fund (note 2(b))	6,062,272	5,571,796
Accounts receivable (note 3)	658,445	1,297,817
	<u>9,254,106</u>	<u>7,879,681</u>

Financial Liabilities

Current liabilities:		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	2,420,695	1,602,465
	<u>2,420,695</u>	<u>1,602,465</u>
Net financial assets	6,833,411	6,277,216

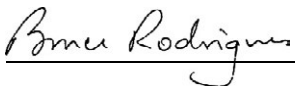
Non-Financial Assets

Prepaid expenses (note 4)	1,299,480	1,004,486
Tangible capital assets (note 5)	2,688,445	3,295,290
	<u>3,987,925</u>	<u>4,299,776</u>
Accumulated surplus	\$ 10,821,336	\$ 10,576,992

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

On behalf of the Board:

 Chair

 Chief Executive Officer

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Statement of Operations and Accumulated Surplus

Year ended March 31, 2016, with comparative information for 2015

	2016 Budget (Note 10)	2016 Actual	2015 Actual
Revenue:			
Ministry of Education:			
Base allocation payments	\$ 33,170,847	\$ 31,797,210	\$ 32,133,580
Other	—	537,532	585,128
	33,170,847	32,334,742	32,718,708
Expenses:			
Service and rental	18,344,408	17,125,105	17,509,674
Salaries and wages	11,624,226	12,098,864	11,700,123
Transportation and communication	2,219,258	1,961,348	2,625,810
Supplies and equipment	982,955	905,081	736,887
	33,170,847	32,090,398	32,572,494
Annual surplus	—	244,344	146,214
Accumulated surplus, beginning of year	10,576,992	10,576,992	10,430,778
Accumulated surplus, end of year	\$ 10,576,992	\$ 10,821,336	\$ 10,576,992
Accumulated surplus comprises:			
Externally restricted		\$ 4,759,064	\$ 5,005,196
Internally restricted (note 2(b))		6,062,272	5,571,796
		\$ 10,821,336	\$ 10,576,992

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

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Statement of Changes in Net Financial Assets

Year ended March 31, 2016, with comparative information for 2015

	2016 Budget (Note 10)	2016 Actual	2015 Actual
Annual surplus	\$ —	\$ 244,344	\$ 146,214
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	—	(31,971)	(2,914,353)
Amortization of tangible capital assets	639,032	638,816	475,161
	639,032	606,845	(2,439,192)
Acquisition of prepaid expenses	—	(1,299,480)	(1,004,486)
Use of prepaid expenses	—	1,004,486	779,608
	—	(294,994)	(224,878)
Increase (decrease) in net financial assets	639,032	556,195	(2,517,856)
Net financial assets, beginning of year	6,277,216	6,277,216	8,795,072
Net financial assets, end of year	\$ 6,916,248	\$ 6,833,411	\$ 6,277,216

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

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Statement of Cash Flows

Year ended March 31, 2016, with comparative information for 2015

	2016	2015
Cash provided by (used in):		
Operating activities:		
Annual surplus	\$ 244,344	\$ 146,214
Amortization of tangible capital assets which does not affect cash	638,816	475,161
	883,160	621,375
Change in non-cash operating working capital:		
Accounts receivable	639,372	(788,526)
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	818,230	(96,679)
Prepaid expenses	(294,994)	(224,878)
	2,045,768	(488,708)
Financing activities:		
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	(31,971)	(2,914,353)
Investing activities:		
Change to board restricted fund	(490,476)	1,947,910
Increase (decrease) in cash	1,523,321	(1,455,151)
Cash, beginning of year	1,010,068	2,465,219
Cash, end of year	\$ 2,533,389	\$ 1,010,068

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

EDUCATION QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Notes to Financial Statements

Year ended March 31, 2016

The Education Quality and Accountability Office (the "Agency") was established by the Province of Ontario by the EQAO Act, June 1996. The Agency was created to assure greater accountability and to contribute to the enhancement of the quality of education in Ontario. This is done through assessments and reviews based on objective, reliable and relevant information, and the timely public release of that information along with recommendations for system improvement.

1. Significant accounting policies:

These financial statements, which have been prepared in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, as established by the Public Sector Accounting Board of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada ("CPA Canada") and, where applicable, the recommendations of the Accounting Standards Board of CPA Canada, reflect the accounting policies set out below:

(a) Revenue recognition:

The Agency is funded by the Ministry of Education in accordance with established budget arrangements. The Agency receives base allocation payments in accordance with the fiscal year's approved budget. These transfer payments are recognized in the financial statements in the year in which the transfer is authorized and all eligibility criteria have been met, except when a transfer gives rise to a liability.

Other revenue is recognized at the time the service is rendered.

(b) Tangible capital assets:

Tangible capital assets are stated at cost less accumulated amortization. Tangible capital assets are amortized on a straight-line basis over their estimated useful lives as follows:

Computer equipment	3 to 10 years
Furniture and fixtures	5 years

For assets acquired or brought into use during the year, amortization is calculated from the month following that in which additions come into operation.

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Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2016

1. Significant accounting policies (continued):

The Agency considers the carrying value of tangible capital assets when events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying value of an asset may not be recoverable. If the Agency expects an asset to generate cash flows less than the asset's carrying value, at the lowest level of identifiable cash flows, the Agency recognizes a loss for the difference between the asset's carrying value and its fair value.

(c) Measurement uncertainty:

The preparation of financial statements requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amount of assets and liabilities, disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the year. Such estimates include providing for amortization of tangible capital assets. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

2. Accumulated surplus:

(a) Externally restricted accumulated surplus:

The Agency receives base allocation payments in accordance with the year's approved budget. Actual expenses incurred in the year could differ from the budgeted amounts. The difference between base allocation payments received and actual expenses incurred are tracked separately as externally restricted accumulated surplus.

(b) Internally restricted accumulated surplus:

A board restricted fund was established by a Board of Directors' ("Board") resolution for the purpose of examining assessment processes and researching emerging methodologies in large scale assessment in order to maintain Ontario's high quality assessment programs as best of class. The fund is currently invested in a Royal Bank of Canada current account. The Agency has the authority to retain any revenue that is not provincial funding according to the EQAO Act, June 1996, the Agency Establishment and Accountability Directive and the Financial Administration Act.

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2. Accumulated surplus (continued):

	2016	2015
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 5,571,796	\$ 7,519,706
Appropriation of other income	444,819	462,114
Interest income earned on funds	90,752	122,384
Cost associated with fee-based administration (note 8)	(45,095)	(46,032)
Costs associated to IT strategy	—	(2,486,376)
Balance, end of year	\$ 6,062,272	\$ 5,571,796

In the prior year, the Board approved a motion to fully restrict the internally restricted accumulated surplus for the Board-approved IT strategy.

3. Accounts receivable:

Included in accounts receivable is a transfer payment in the amount of \$211,988 (2015 - \$851,490) due from the Ministry of Education.

4. Prepaid expenses:

Prepaid expenses are paid in cash and recorded as assets before they are used or consumed. As at year end, the balance is made up of the following amounts:

	2016	2015
Prepaid expenses	\$ 481,200	\$ 322,308
Prepaid secondees	818,280	682,178
	\$ 1,299,480	\$ 1,004,486

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5. Tangible capital assets:

			2016	2015
	Cost	Accumulated amortization	Net book value	Net book value
Computer equipment	\$ 5,429,687	\$ 2,814,879	\$ 2,614,808	\$ 3,236,530
Furniture and fixtures	349,517	275,880	73,637	58,760
	\$ 5,779,204	\$ 3,090,759	\$ 2,688,445	\$ 3,295,290

Amortization of tangible capital assets recorded in the current year amounts to \$638,816 (2015 - \$475,161).

6. Lease commitments:

The Agency leases premises under a long-term lease that expires on December 31, 2017. Under the terms of the lease, the Agency is required to pay an annual base rent, which is predetermined based on square footage rates plus operating and maintenance charges. Future minimum annual scheduled payments are as follows:

2017	\$ 1,385,900
2018	994,500
2019	359,300
2020	329,300
	\$ 3,069,000

7. Financial instruments:

The Agency's financial instruments consist of cash, board restricted fund, accounts receivable and accounts payable and accrued liabilities. Financial instruments are recorded at fair value on initial recognition. The fair values of these financial instruments approximate their carrying values due to their short-term nature.

It is management's opinion that the Agency is not exposed to significant interest, currency or credit risk arising from these financial instruments.

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8. Allocation of expenses:

Incremental administration expenses are allocated to fee-based administration revenue. Expenses are allocated proportionately based on the number of individual student assessments administered.

9. Liquidity risk:

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Agency will be unable to fulfill its obligations on a timely basis or at a reasonable cost. The Agency manages its liquidity risk by monitoring its operating requirements. The Agency prepares budget and cash forecasts to ensure it has sufficient funds to fulfill its obligations.

There have been no significant changes to the liquidity risk exposure from 2015.

10. Budget:

The budget information has been derived from the budget approved by the Board on August 26, 2015.

Education Quality and
Accountability Office



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