

Welcome

By Marguerite Jackson, Chief Executive Officer

I'm pleased to welcome you to our redesigned Web magazine, *EQAO Connects*. This new version allows us to continue providing Ontario educators with relevant and engaging content while taking better advantage of the multimedia capacity of the Web.

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School Effectiveness: Eight Key Factors

By Ruth Calman



[Audio interview with Ruth Calman about School Effectiveness](#)

Running time: 09:42

There is a considerable body of research in the areas of school effectiveness and school improvement that has identified key aspects of effective schools that can present educators with important ideas for enhancing school improvement efforts. This article summarizes eight key factors that contribute to school effectiveness.

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How Would You Score This?

Try Your Hand at Scoring a Student Response!

Take a look at this mathematics item and student response from the Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics. How would you score it?

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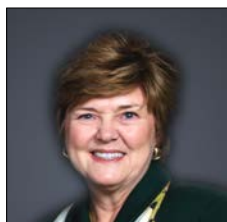


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I'm pleased to welcome you to our redesigned Web magazine, *EQAO Connects*. This new version allows us to continue providing Ontario educators with relevant and engaging content while taking better advantage of the multimedia capacity of the Web. You will notice fewer articles, in recognition of the reality of today's busy professionals. Our popular feature "How Would You Score This?" continues, as well as links to relevant resources.

This issue shines the spotlight on a recent study, conducted as part of EQAO's research program, that supports our objective to explore the many factors influencing education quality and student achievement. I'm certain this article, which outlines eight key factors of school effectiveness, will be a good refresher for many and will provide some new insights and ideas for others.

I trust you will continue to find this Web magazine of real value. As always, we will be pleased to receive your feedback about the content and also about the new format. ■



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School Effectiveness: Eight Key Factors

By Ruth Calman

Ruth Calman is a research consultant who has worked extensively with various Toronto area boards of education. She formerly served as EQAO's Director of Data and Support Services.



[Audio interview with Ruth Calman about School Effectiveness](#) | Running time: 09:42

There is a considerable body of research in the areas of school effectiveness and school improvement that has identified key aspects of effective schools that can present educators with important ideas for enhancing school improvement efforts. I was recently commissioned by EQAO to provide an overview of the research coming out of Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom, with an emphasis on information that would be of immediate and practical interest to Ontario educators. The study was a literature review of major school effectiveness and improvement studies over the past 25 years and of the more than 200 school case studies EQAO has published over the past several years.

The literature review confirmed a number of factors that can provide a foundation to guide educators in their school-improvement efforts. This article summarizes eight key factors that contribute to school effectiveness originally identified by Reynolds and Teddlie (2000) and Teddlie and Stringfield (2007) and confirmed by the current EQAO review.



Research Report



This review will likely reflect information that is familiar to many of you, provide support for some of your schools' current practices and beliefs and present new ideas and strategies that you may want to consider incorporating in your own unique contexts.

1. Strong and effective principal leadership

First and foremost, the literature suggests that strong and effective principal leadership has a profound influence on student achievement—and is second in this regard only to classroom teaching. Such leadership involves firm and purposeful behaviour that “puts children first” and is based on a strong belief in the capabilities of students and teachers. It also involves sharing leadership responsibilities and exhibiting instructional leadership by maintaining high visibility, actively supervising instruction, protecting instructional time and providing a supportive work environment. In addition, effective principals monitor staff performance, recruit talented staff and promote professional development in their schools.

2. Sustained focus on instruction and learning

A pervasive focus on instruction and learning is also central to school effectiveness, according to the research.

Effective schools focus on academics by ensuring high curriculum coverage that offers rich learning opportunities for students, and they maximize learning time at both the school and classroom levels. Such schools also focus on the mastery of key learning skills and create blocks of time for literacy and mathematics.

3. Safe and positive school climate and culture

The literature suggests that establishing a school climate characterized by shared goals, safety and a positive student culture supports effectiveness. Creating a shared vision and a collaborative learning community and maintaining an orderly environment in which learning can take place lead to effectiveness. Research has identified positive reinforcement as an important contributor to the development of positive student attitudes toward school and school staff. Reinforcement that is specific, varied, timely and consistently applied has been found to be most effective.



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4. High expectations for all students and staff

The literature consistently points to the importance of setting high—and appropriate—expectations for both students and school staff. In the case of students, these include expectations for both achievement and behaviour, which should be clearly communicated to students and parents. Where staff are concerned, these include expectations for participation in professional development, time management, prioritizing academic achievement and monitoring student work and achievement.

5. Effective use of student achievement data

The literature identifies the effective use of data at both the school and classroom levels as contributing to school effectiveness. This use includes rigorous, regular monitoring of student progress in order to provide both differentiated learning experiences and appropriate support to meet the needs of students. In effective schools, staff members have access to both outcome and process

data, and these are used to evaluate whether or not school goals are being achieved. When data are being used effectively, both student- and school-level decisions are grounded in analysis.

6. Teaching practice

The literature suggests that a variety of teaching practices correlate with effective schools. These practices include maximizing the use of class time, preparing lessons in advance that provide for different student needs, communicating clearly with students about the purpose of lessons and what the students are to do and working with manageable curriculum units. Effective schools also provide a balanced, relevant and stimulating curriculum that is shaped and presented to match students' needs, and set high standards for teaching.

7. Productive parent involvement

The literature points to the importance of involving parents productively. Effective schools engage parents in activities that offer the greatest impact on student achievement, such as becoming involved in their children's school work.



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Other useful approaches to involving parents include an "open door" school policy, parent assistance in the classroom and on field trips, and the mutual sharing of student progress information with parents.

8. Building staff skills

School effectiveness is strongly correlated with the provision of high-quality on-site staff development. Practical professional development opportunities closely synchronized with school-development

priorities, and collaborative learning communities that take shared responsibility for student outcomes are key. ■

For more information

These highlights are a useful starting point for examining current practice and developing school improvement plans. To access the full literature review and the full reference list, as well as much other useful research, visit www.eqao.com.

eqao research in the news

Ruth Calman's research study was featured in similar articles in the fall 2010 editions of the Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario's magazine, *Principal Connections*, and the Association des directions et directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes' magazine, *Connexion Direction*. An article was also sent to members of the Association des gestionnaires de l'éducation franco-ontarienne. A longer article about this research appeared in the Ontario Principals' Council's magazine, *The OPC Register* (Vol. 12, No. 3). Permission to adapt the *OPC Register* article was received from OPC. EQAO thanks all of these organizations for their partnership in sharing this information with educational leaders across the province.

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Your feedback helps us improve.

Please take a moment to answer our [survey](#) about this issue of EQAO Connects.

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Opportunities for Ontario Educators

Grade 9 Mathematics



How Would You Score This?

Try your hand at scoring a student response!

Using the annotations on the right, determine how you would score the student response below.

Fill 'Er Up

The table below shows the cost of water for three customers. They each pay the same cost per litre.

Amount (L)	Cost (\$)
10 000	8.60
20 000	17.20
30 000	25.80

$$17.20 - 8.60 = 8.60$$

$$25.80 - 17.20 = 8.60$$

Frank pays \$36.12 for water at the same rate.

Determine the number of litres of water that he purchases.

Show your work.

Each 10,000 L, the cost goes up \$8.60.
 Since for 40,000 L it costs \$36.40, he
 would probably use about 42,000 L of water.

Annotations

[View sample student responses.](#)

Code	Description
10	Problem solving process demonstrates minimal evidence of a solution process; determines the cost per L (3 times) but no evidence of proceeding further.
20	Problem solving process demonstrates an incomplete solution process; determines the cost per 10 000 L, and uses this to determine the cost of 40 000 L but the extra \$1.72 is not dealt with.
30	Problem solving process demonstrates a considerable understanding of most of the important elements of the problem; determines the cost per 10 000 L, and uses this to determine the cost of 40 000 L and 50 000 L, attempt is made using proportional reasoning to reach \$36.12 but conclusion of 40100 L is incorrect.
40	Problem-solving process demonstrates a complete solution process; determines unit cost per 1 L (\$0.00086/L) and calculates that 42 000 L costs \$36.12.

[View Correct Score Code](#)

Check out [additional examples](#) taken from past years' assessments, available on EQAO's Web site.