



**Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)**

Fédération des enseignantes et des enseignants  
de l'élémentaire de l'Ontario (FEEO)

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**M E M O R A N D U M**

**TO:** Local Presidents  
Executive Members (For Information)

**FROM:** Lorna Larmour, Deputy General Secretary  
Tara Zwolinski, Executive Assistant, Professional Learning/Curriculum Services

**DATE:** February 14, 2024

**RE:** **Updated Communication to Members about Rights Regarding EQAO  
Withdrawal**

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**Background**

At the 2014 Annual Meeting, the following motion was passed:

(5-1) That ETFO communicate to its members with children in grades 3 and 6 their  
AMR 54 rights regarding their children and EQAO testing.

At the December 2014 Executive Meeting, the following motion was passed:

(59) That ETFO communicate to its members their rights regarding their children and  
withdrawal from EQAO testing through information on the ETFO website, the e-  
newsletter and information to local presidents.

**ETFO's Position on EQAO Testing**

It is ETFO's position that EQAO be eliminated completely. The Federation views province-wide testing of every student in grades 3, 6, 9 and 10 as both a misuse of student time, and an ineffective use of funds that should be redirected to support students' learning. The consistent trend within the media of ranking schools by assessment results has been unfair to students. ETFO believes that teachers' ongoing daily assessment is far more meaningful and efficient for students and parents.

**Information for Members**

In Ontario, there is no legal way to withdraw students from EQAO. It is a mandated program according to the *EQAO Act, Ontario's Education Quality and Accountability Act*, 1996 states that all students in publicly funded schools are legally required to write the provincial tests

unless formally exempted. EQAO has an exemption policy that is very narrow in scope. EQAO assessments are the legally mandated program that must occur during the specified test administration time. Under the *Education Act*, there are obligations around compulsory attendance and duty of attendance.

Starting in 2021-2022 a new digital format of EQAO standardized tests was implemented. This digital format includes two changes that may affect how a member navigates withdrawing their child from EQAO.

- The assessment window has increased from two weeks to five weeks. The test window for the 2023-2024 EQAO primary and junior standardized tests is from Wednesday, May 8, 2024 to Wednesday, June 12, 2024.
- The allotted time for students to complete the digital assessment has decreased from six hours to three and a half hours. However, all students are provided as much time as they need to complete the standardized tests.

The information below outlines how ETFO members may attempt to withdraw their own children from the testing:

- There is no formal procedure to withdraw children from the testing under the *Education Act*.
- A member may choose to write a letter to the school administration requesting the withdrawal of their child from the EQAO assessments. The letter should request the withdrawal from the testing and include the expectation that the child receive in-school accommodation when students are participating in EQAO, within the five-week window, see Appendix A.
- The request for withdrawal may be denied.
- There have been a few principals who have not been aware of the legislation and have not demanded that the child write the assessment and have allowed the child to remain at school. This has only occurred in a few isolated situations.

Prior to the digitization of the EQAO standardized tests, ETFO members were also advised that school administrators may demand that the child is kept at home throughout the EQAO assessment period and that members would be solely responsible for the childcare and safety of their children throughout the assessment period. This advice has become less feasible with a five weeklong EQAO window and a digital platform that allows for students to write in small groups.

### **Communication to Members**

This information and a template letter will be made available on the [members.etfo.ca](https://members.etfo.ca) website and shared with members in an upcoming e-newsletter.

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Appendix A

**Sample Letter for request of child's withdrawal from EQAO**

Dear Principal,

As a member of ETFO and a parent, I am requesting the withdrawal of my child from the EQAO standardized test. It is my expectation that during the administration of the EQAO tests, alternative programming will be provided for my child's learning at school.

Please excuse my child, <<insert name>>, from all components of the EQAO tests and provide appropriate programming for them throughout the administration of the test.

Thank you for your co-operation and for respecting my request.

Sincerely,

<<insert name>>