

March 25, 2022

Colleen Russell-Rawlins
Director of Education
Toronto District School Board
5050 Yonge Street
Toronto ON M5N 5N8

Dear Director Russell-Rawlins:

RE: Request Exemption from EQAO

I request that the Toronto District School Board request an exemption from the Ministry of Education regarding EQAO. This government lacks understanding about the stress and mental health impact of learning and working in a pandemic.

The effects on the mental health of our students during two years of academic instability caused by the pandemic are concerning. Furthermore, the last thing our students need right now is the intense pressure associated with EQAO. Instead, we should focus on students' well-being and mental health, not adding EQAO related anxiety and stress.

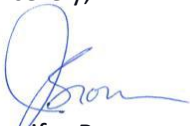
As you know, supporting staff and students' mental health and well-being is critical. But the Ministry has repeatedly ignored education partners and medical experts, and as a result, teachers and education workers continue to be experiencing burnout and other negative mental health impacts. Now that EQAO is reintroduced on a new platform, it requires learning a new platform, more PD and dealing with a myriad of other workload issues.

Proceeding with the EQAO testing when you can ask for an exemption for your staff and students who have been incredibly resilient throughout the pandemic and are already working from a deficit is unconscionable.

Teachers know best when it comes to assessing the whole child's learning. Teachers know that classroom assessment is at the heart of good teaching and student learning. In the end, the EQAO test does not reveal anything teachers do not already know about their students.

Again, school boards may ask EQAO and the Ministry of Education for an exemption. So please do the right thing for the mental health of the students and staff under your care. Please do all you can to set everyone up for success.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Brown
President

C: A. Gold, Associate Director of Education
A. Brown, TDSB Chair

JB/dd