Office of the Auditor General of Ontario
Bureau du vérificateur général de l'Ontario

# News Release

**For Immediate Release**                                    **December 7, 2009**

## EDUCATION QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE MUST PROVIDE STRONGER OVERSIGHT: AUDITOR GENERAL

(TORONTO) The provincial agency that oversees student testing is doing a good job of measuring how well Ontario schoolchildren are doing in terms of meeting curriculum expectations, Auditor General Jim McCarter says in his *2009 Annual Report,* released today.

"However, we did find areas where the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) could strengthen its oversight of test administration," McCarter said, "especially by ensuring that it visits all school boards and schools over time during testing periods."

The EQAO was created in 1996 to develop, administer, and grade tests for students in grades 3, 6, 9, and 10 across the province's 72 school boards, and to report results. In 2008/09, the EQAO oversaw the administration of nearly 600,000 tests in 4,300 schools on a budget of $31.7 million.

Among the findings in the Report:

- The EQAO informally reviews results at the school and school-board levels, but a more formal analysis and follow-up may be required. For example, we noted that results at some schools fluctuated by as much as 50% from one year to the next, but these results were not being systematically flagged for follow-up to determine why there was such a dramatic change.

- Students with special needs or those for whom English is a second language can be exempted from writing EQAO tests. However, exempt students are included in public reporting of overall EQAO scores as having failed to meet the provincial standard. This lowers the overall scores of schools with high numbers of exempt students in comparison to otherwise similar schools with significantly fewer exempt students. Most teachers and principals we interviewed said that this practice could significantly distort reported EQAO results.

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For more information and to view the full *2009 Annual Report,* please visit www.auditor.on.ca
Copies of the report are available by calling (416) 327-2381.