

### **What provides EQAO with the authority to collect personal information of students?**

EQAO is an independent agency of the Ontario government with a mandate to ensure greater quality and accountability in the publicly funded school system in Ontario. EQAO provides accurate and objective information about student achievement and the quality of publicly funded education in Ontario. EQAO collects personal information to fulfill its statutory objectives as described in the *Education Quality and Accountability Office Act*, Section 3. The collection of personal information and the protection of this information are specified in the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy*.

### **How can a principal and staff avoid security breaches during the EQAO assessment?**

Many things can be done to avoid the risk of a breach. EQAO secures personal student data which is provided by the principal. Bar codes are used in place of names, on student test materials. Teachers need to ensure that the student name and bar code match for all books, activities and questionnaires. EQAO documents must be kept in a secure location. Items must be inventoried before they are returned to EQAO. The principal should maintain records of received and returned items. All students who participated in EQAO's tests receive an Individual Student Report (ISR). This report contains personal information that is protected under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

### **My school is very small and I'm concerned that personal information may be easily identified. Does EQAO consider this?**

In order to ensure the confidentiality of individual student results and to discourage generalizations about school and board performance based on small populations, EQAO has established a minimum number of participating students for the public reporting of achievement results. As a result, schools and boards with very few students will have no results posted publicly. Similarly, reports for boards and schools with very small numbers of students participating in one group may have no results provided in some sections of the public report. The minimum number of participating students for publication of achievement results is 15. The minimum number of respondents for the release of questionnaire results is six. The EQAO term for the application of these rules is "suppression".

### **Does EQAO release individual student work or individual results to the public after the assessment?**

No. Individual student work and results are strictly confidential. Student test books are not returned to schools. Individual student results are kept in an electronic file at the school for up to one year.

### **My staff and I have used EQAO results and other sources to construct a data wall. Does this strategy comply with expectations for privacy, confidentiality and information management?**

A data wall will help you monitor student achievement and improvement. Your purpose for collecting personal information in this regard has a purpose that is consistent with expectations

in this area. Ensure that the location is one where the data is not readily accessible. Somehow try to code key student information. Limit access to the area, especially by students and volunteers.

**Principal's Best Practice:** Stress the importance of accuracy and confidentiality with your team so you can meet the EQAO challenge. Check and double check your material lists and ensure that student response materials are secure.