



**CAMPBELL RIVER**  
School District 72

November 10, 2020

Honourable Rob Fleming  
Minister of Education  
PO Box 9045 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Re. Foundation Skills Assessment

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Dear Minister Fleming:

During the past several years the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) which is administered to students in grade 4 and 7, has come under attack from various groups. The Board of Education for SD72 (Campbell River) supports the use of the FSA for its intended purposes. However, the Board has serious concerns about how the results of the FSA have been used by outside parties in ways for which it was never intended.

Originally, the FSA was designed to provide a 'snapshot' of student achievement across the province to better inform decisions on instruction in districts and in schools. The Foundation Skills Assessment is based on the BC Performance Standards which are recognized world-wide as some of the best descriptors of student learning.

The purposes of the FSA are to:

- provide system level information on student performance.
- provide districts and schools with information on student performance.
- provide parents with a snapshot of how their children are performing in reading, writing, and numeracy.

The Foundation Skills Assessment meets its purpose by providing parents and school districts with important information about how well students are progressing in the foundation skills of Reading, Writing, and Mathematics. It allows SD72 to triangulate data provided by classroom teachers and SD72's assessments in these areas at the district and school levels. The FSA was designed by teachers in BC using the BC Performance Standards to ensure that the assessment results are both valid and reliable.

The results of the FSA over the years have guided districts across the province to set goals and have supported SD72's contention that Indigenous Education needs special attention and support from the province. FSA results partially informed the first goal of SD72's Strategic Plan – Improve Student Achievement. FSA results are included in one of the goals of the plan –*Staff will provide parents and the community with clear and consistent achievement data.*


However, the purposes of the FSA have been corrupted and misinterpreted by the Fraser Institute. This organization's interpretation of the limited data that it receives from the Ministry of Education has been used in ways that are far from the purposes of the assessment and which have been published province-wide in order to rank schools, with public schools almost always ranking below private schools. The resulting impression is that the public education system is inferior to private schools. SD72 has significant concerns about the use of FSA data to rank schools because it is the Board's contention that the ranking of schools is not purposeful, productive, accurate or advisable.

The misuse of data by the Fraser Institute could expose the identities and results of students in smaller schools and could threaten students' and parents' expectations of confidentiality.

The Board of Education for SD72 (Campbell River) suggests that the Ministry of Education consider the following recommendations:

- that individual student results should be shared with individual parents
- that results of the assessment should be shared with district administration on a district basis and not on a school by school basis
- that data should be presented in a manner that allows it to be disaggregated to allow districts to be informed of the progress of Indigenous students
- that data should be presented in a manner that allows it to be disaggregated to allow districts to examine student progress on a gender basis
- that the ministry of Education develop and disseminate a public information campaign that explains the purposes and intended uses of the Foundation Skills Assessment

The FSA is a valuable tool in determining student progress and achievement but it is a 'snapshot' that should only be used as a point of triangulation with district assessments and the ongoing and professional assessment of the classroom teacher. It was never intended to be used to rank schools and should never be used for that purpose.

  
John Kerr  
Chair  
SD72 Board of Education

cc: Honourable John Horgan, Premier  
Honourable Michele Babchuk, MLA , North Island  
Ms. Stephanie Higginson, President, BCSTA  
Ms. Candace Spilsbury, President, VISTA  
Mr. Dave Harper, President, CRDTA  
Mr. Laird Ruehlen, President, CRPVPA  
Ms. Andrea Craddock, President CUPE 723  
BCSTA members via email

