



VANCOUVER BOARD OF EDUCATION

School District No. 39

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

1580 West Broadway

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2012 January 06

To the Parents and Guardians of Students in Grades 4 and 7

As the Board of Education Trustees for the Vancouver Board of Education, we wish to communicate our perspective on parent choice regarding student participation in the provincial Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) program. The FSA is given to all BC students in Grade 4 and Grade 7 each year to assess basic knowledge and skills in reading, writing and numeracy. As a provincially prescribed program, all Grade 4 and Grade 7 students are expected to participate in the FSA.

We believe strongly in the importance of effective assessment, which includes testing, to inform and guide student learning and instruction. We are therefore committed to developing and using various assessment instruments and practices that provide a combined overall picture of each student's performance.

As a Board, we respect the right and responsibility of parents to determine whether or not participation in the FSA is in the best interest of the student. We therefore support the Vancouver District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) Executive's position that:

“...it is up to each family, considering what they know about their children and think is in their best interest to decide whether or not their children should participate. If a family decides that they will not participate in the test, they should inform their child's principal.”

Facts about the FSA

- FSA is a set of three tests. It covers specific reading, writing and numeracy skills in the provincial curriculum.
- FSA measures skills students gain over several school years, not only in a single year.
- The reading and numeracy tests consist of multiple-choice questions and written answers. The writing section has two writing tasks—one shorter and one longer.
- FSA scores are not letter grades or percentages; they do not count towards students' report card marks.
- Other FSA information is available at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa

Participation guidelines

- Principals determine if students are excused from one, two or all three FSA components based on Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and English-as-Second Language (ESL) proficiency. Parents must be advised of this.
- Parents may request that the Principal excuse their child in the event of a family emergency, a lengthy illness, or other extenuating circumstances.

Request to Excuse a Student from Participating

As a parent or guardian, should you wish to request that your child be excused from participating in the 2012 FSA, please provide the following information and submit this document to the Principal of your child’s school by Tuesday, January 17, 2012.

Student Name: _____

Grade: _____

Division: _____

School: _____

I am requesting that my child be excused from participating in the 2012 FSA due to (please check):

- Family emergency
- Illness
- Extenuating circumstance: _____

Signed: _____
Parent / Guardian

_____ Date

_____ Print name

_____ Email

Please note: A student who is excused from participating will be marked “absent” during the testing period. His or her standing on the test will be recorded as “performance level unknown”.

Should you have questions or points you wish to raise concerning the above information, please direct these to the Principal of your child’s school.

Sincerely,



Patti Bacchus
Chairperson
Vancouver Board of Education

cc. Steve Cardwell, Superintendent of Schools