



Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association

2012 January 16

Dear Parents:

I am writing you today so that we can give you some information on the Foundation Skills Assessment that students in grades 4 and 7 will be asked to write in the coming weeks.

Teachers in Vancouver are concerned that these types of standardized tests interrupt the educational program that has been put into place for students and do little to improve their learning. Teachers assess and evaluate their students on an ongoing basis and plan and adjust curriculum based on what they learn from these assessments. The data that the government collects using the Foundation Skills Assessment does little to inform teachers about the needs of the students and detracts from instructional time. The Province of Alberta has decided to cancel these types of tests and instead is using alternate methods to collect information to determine curriculum improvements.

With the Vancouver School Board facing a deficit every year, and the services to our most vulnerable students continually being cut, the Provincial Government allocates money for standardized testing. Vancouver teachers have the best interests of your children at heart and know that this money can be better spent. However, we need your help in advocating for public education so we can continue to provide a school system that ranks among the best in the world.

The choice whether or not your grade 4 or 7 child writes this test is up to you. Please read the information contained in this package and make a choice that you believe is in the best interest of your child. Your teacher is also sending home a letter from the Vancouver School Board giving you the option of exempting your child from writing. We believe that withdrawing your child from the FSA test is a way that you can send a message to government to spend its education dollars on services to students. Please talk to your classroom teacher if you have any questions about your child writing the Foundation Skills Assessment.

Sincerely,

Chris Harris
President

