

Subject: Summary of Key Points re FSA Strategy

MEMO TO: Local Presidents
COPIES TO: Executive Committee, Administrative Staff
FROM: Irene Lanzinger
DATE: January 18, 2008
SUBJECT: Summary of Key Points re FSA Strategy

1. Teachers are opposed to the FSAs

See:

Speaking notes for presidents at

<http://www.bctf.ca/secure/AdviceToLocals/fsa/SpeakingNotes2008-01-11.pdf> .

FSA--Rethinking accountability series at

<http://bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Education/Accountability/FSA.pdf> .

2. The RA said teachers shouldn't mark FSAs The Representative Assembly has taken the position that teachers should not mark FSAs.

Marking FSAs is not our work and this is supported by legal opinions of BCPSEA (<http://bctf.ca/secure/AdviceToLocals/fsa/LegalOpinionSum.pdf>) and advice from BCTF legal counsel.

Teachers, including TOCs, are not required to--and should not--mark FSAs.
It is not appropriate for retired teachers to mark FSAs.

We have serious objections to many aspects of the FSA, therefore, we have undertaken a concerted, collective effort to oppose FSAs and are asking our members not to mark. Of

course, our members need to know if they defy a direct order they may be disciplined. However, this is a matter of conscience and there is strength in numbers. Marking is voluntary and we should be standing firm in our refusal to mark the FSA exams.

See:

Just say No to FSA Marking--School Staff Alert, November 8 (<http://www.bctf.ca/IssuesInEducation.aspx?id=14550>).

3. Teachers are entitled to distribute BCTF brochure Teachers are entitled to distribute the BCTF brochure. Details and advice about the distribution of the brochure can be found at <http://bctf.ca/secure/AdviceToLocals/SupportForTeachingAndLearning/RevisedInfoAdvice.pdf>

4. Parents have the right to request that their children be withdrawn from writing FSAs In spite of what BCPSEA and some districts are saying, parents have the right to request that their children be withdrawn from writing the FSAs. There is nothing in the School Act, Regulations, Ministerial Orders, or ministry policy that require students to write FSA tests, and the ministry's own guidelines continue to require that certain students be exempted, and provide mechanisms for parents to request that their children be excused from writing FSAs.

Parents have at least two options if their request is denied:

- a. Parents can go public with their concerns about the principal overruling their wishes by making public presentations at school board meetings and going to the media.
- b. Parents have the right, under Section 11 of the School Act, to appeal any decision of district employees to the board of education.

Details about this matter can be found at

<http://bctf.ca/secure/AdviceToLocals/SupportForTeachingAndLearning/RevisedInfoAdvice.pdf>

5. Organization of E-FSA

Teachers are not required to participate in the organization, co-ordination, or other aspects for planning for the E-FSA. These functions are the responsibility of administrators and/or support staff.

6. What teachers believe

- Teachers believe in fair, effective, and reliable assessment.
- Teachers know that students learn in different ways and at different rates.
- Teachers use many different forms of assessment to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate what they have learned.
- The overuse and misuse of standardized testing:
 - is taking time and resources away from teaching and learning
 - undermines the ability to provide meaningful learning experiences for students
 - does not help students.

7. Advice to locals

If any teacher in your local receives a direct order regarding any aspect of FSAs, please immediately contact your Field Service staff person for advice.

Irene Lanzinger, President

BC Teachers' Federation

100-550 West 6th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2 ilanzinger@bctf.ca Phone: 604-871-2152 Fax: 604-871-2290 Toll free: 1-800 663-9163