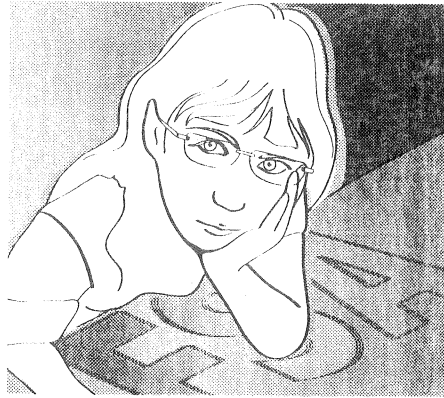


A message to parents about the Foundation Skills Assessment



Teachers and parents know that teaching is a complex process. We understand that children and youth need time to create, experience, learn, and grow. Students learn in different ways and at different rates.

Teachers work with students every day. We put our students' needs first.

Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts.

—Albert Einstein

Testing? You bet Assessment must support learning

Classroom teachers are the best judges of student learning.

Because no single test or assessment strategy is completely reliable, teachers use a wide variety of assessment tools and strategies such as projects, presentations, goal-setting, quizzes, classroom tests, writing samples, and much more.

What is the FSA?

- FSA is given to 9- and 12-year olds each February (Grades 4 and 7).
- The FSA is a test given over five days, requiring five full mornings.
- Sections of the FSA are done by computer, with technological problems interfering with results. Often computer labs are unavailable or not working.
- It started as a random sample evaluation of the system but became province-wide.
- No additional resources are ever given to schools identified as needing assistance.

Teachers would like you to know that:

- the Foundation Skills Assessment tests do not help teachers teach, students learn, or parents understand their child's progress.
- they take valuable time and resources away from teaching and learning.
- the FSA results are misused to rank schools based on a very narrow measure and set up a false impression of public schools, teachers, and students.
- the FSA and overuse of standardized testing narrow the curriculum and reduce the opportunities for students to engage in richer, deeper, and meaningful learning experiences.

Why are teachers saying "No more!"?

Teachers know how to assess, when to assess, and what kinds of assessment to use to support student learning.

Choose the best answer:

- a. test
 b. teach

More ideas on supporting your child's learning are available at www.bctf.ca (click "for parents").

We know the FSA is damaging to students' learning and teaching. We have a professional responsibility to refuse to administer tests that we know do harm to our students' learning and to our teaching.

For far too long, concerns about the FSAs have been voiced over and over by teachers, parents, trustees, researchers, academics, and others. The solution is obvious. The FSAs should only be administered on a random, sample basis. This would meet the government's stated need to assess the system while protecting a quality public education experience for students.

Yet, the minister of education and the provincial government continue to deny this solution and assist in the erosion and privatization of public education. With 177 public schools closed in BC, 10,000 overcrowded classes and special needs neglected, the government appears only interested in measuring, ranking, and finding fault with public schools, teachers, and students.

Supporting your child's learning

- Take time to talk to parents and others about teaching, learning, and the importance of assessment that helps students succeed.
- Talk to your child about what they have learned. Use questions that avoid "yes, no or nothing" answers. Instead, start your question with "tell me about _____," "what is the same or different between _____," "how would you explain _____."
- Take time to talk to your child's teacher about the teaching, learning, and assessment used in the classroom.
- Consider making an appointment to talk about how your child is doing.
- Ask yourself, who or what will give me the best information as to how my child is doing?

Teachers are very proud of the first-class public education system in BC. Please talk with your child's teacher for a comprehensive and meaningful assessment of your child's progress.

Kids matter Teachers care

whenwilltheylearn.ca