

January 8, 2010

Dear Parent:

The annual B.C. Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) for all grade 4 and 7 students is set to take place between January 18 and February 26, 2010.

The following are the instructions provided by the Ministry of Education in regards to which students should write the FSA. We hope this information will be helpful to you in understanding the expectation of student participation.

Who must write the Assessment?

- ALL students enrolled in Grade 4 or Grade 7, including students enrolled in a distributed learning program, as well as students enrolled in French Immersion or programme francophone;
- All students enrolled in non-graded programs who were born in:
 - 2000 (write grade 4 level)
 - 1997 (write grade 7 level)
- English-as-a-second language (ESL) students;
- Students with special needs who require adaptations, as documented in their individual education plans (IEPs);
- Students receiving learning assistance services.

Which students do not have to write the Assessment?

- Students who have previously written the FSA. Students write the FSA for a specific grade once only. If a student is retained, she/he does not write a second time;
- Students who have IEPs documenting a disability that significantly impacts their performance in reading, writing or numeracy and who cannot meaningfully participate in all or part of the assessment, even with adaptations;

- Students with IEPs who would need extensive adaptations or who would need such extended periods of time as to create a hardship for the individual student; or
- Those students who are reported and funded as receiving ESL support who have not yet reached a level of proficiency sufficient for them to provide meaningful responses to the reading or writing or numeracy sections of the FSA.

Principals identify which students, if any, are excused from one, two or all three components of the FSA. Principals must notify a parent or guardian if they intend to excuse a student from participating in one or more components of the FSA. Such notification should be made prior to the test administration date by letter or telephone call.

Principals may also excuse a student who would normally write the assessment in the event of a family emergency, a lengthy illness or other extenuating circumstances.

As it is the expectation of the Ministry of Education that all able students in grades 4 and 7 write the assessment, we will be proceeding with testing for all students unless they meet one of the above criteria. If you feel your child has an extenuating circumstance that we are not aware of, please contact your school principal to discuss the situation. The principal will be able to determine whether or not your child may be excused from this year's testing.

If you have further questions or concerns, please contact Assistant Superintendent Sharon Cairns or Assistant Superintendent Bruce Ballantyne, both of whom can be reached at 250-561-6800.

Sincerely,

Brian Pepper
Superintendent

BP/wd