



September 25, 2017

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The Foundation Skills Assessment is an annual province-wide assessment of all B.C. students' academic skills in grades 4 and 7, and provides parents, teachers, schools, school districts and the Ministry of Education with important information on how well students are progressing in the foundation skills of Reading, Writing, and Numeracy.

The redesigned Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) is aligned with the [redesigned curriculum](#) and reflects the recommendations from the Advisory Group on Provincial Assessment (AGPA). The FSA has a focus on collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and the foundations of literacy and numeracy.

The FSA will be administered in Grades 4 and 7, from October 2 – November 10, 2017. This means that teachers will have their student results earlier in the school year, providing information on what students know, can do, and understand early in the school year. This information will support decision making related to interventions, planning, resource allocation, curriculum, policy, and research. A new student report format is being developed for parents to include descriptive, strength-based language. As the assessment is taking place early in the year, the assessment is based on the end-of-year profiles for Grade 3 and Grade 6.

The following information has been cited from the BC Ministry of Education document titled: **2017/18 Foundation Skills Assessment Administration Manual**. We hope this information will be helpful to you in understanding the expectation of student participation.

Who Should Write the Assessment?

ALL students in Grade 4 and Grade 7 must write the FSA. These include:

- Students enrolled in the English program, French Immersion program, Programme francophone and a distributed learning program
- Students enrolled in non-graded programs who were born in:
 - 2008 write Grade 4 level
 - 2005 write Grade 7 level
- English Language Learning (ELL) students
- Students who require accommodations, as documented in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs)
- Students receiving learning assistance services

Exceptions include:

- Students with IEPs that document personalized learning standards significantly different from the provincial curricular standards for the students enrolled grade (i.e. students with limited awareness of their surroundings, or students with moderate to profound intellectual disabilities)
- Students reported and funded as ELL students who have not reached a level of proficiency sufficient to provide meaningful responses to the reading or writing or numeracy sections of the FSA
- Students experiencing an extenuating circumstance (a family emergency or lengthy illness)

Based on the exceptions specified by the Ministry of Education, Principals have the authority to identify students who, if any, are excused from one, two or all three components of the FSA. Principals will notify a parent or guardian if they intend to excuse a student from participating in one or more components of the FSA.

There is a continued expectation of the Ministry of Education that all able students in grades 4 and 7 will write the assessment, unless they meet one of the above criteria. If you feel your child has an extenuating circumstance of which

we are not aware, 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.

For further information on this topic, including access to a Parent Information Brochure, please refer to the Ministry of Education website:

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/assessment/foundation-skills-assessment>

or contact your school principal or the School Board Office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Kaardal', written in a cursive style.

Kevin Kaardal
Superintendent of Schools/CEO