

## FOUNDATION SKILLS ASSESSMENT (FSA) Important Information for Parents (2016/17)

### What is the Foundation Skills Assessment?

The Ministry of Education, through the School Act, requires that all students in Grades 4 and 7 in B.C. take part in the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA), an annual assessment of reading comprehension, writing and numeracy (math) skills. The assessments are based on the provincial curriculum and are developed by classroom teachers from across the province. The main purpose of the assessment is to help the Ministry of Education, school districts and schools track how well students are learning core academic skills. The information is used by the Ministry, the District and by schools in planning for improvement.

The FSA provides a snapshot of how well students have learned important basic skills at a particular point in time. The information is best used together with teacher assessments and other school information.

### When do we see FSA results?

For the current school year, the FSA will be administered in January and February. By the end of the school year, district and school-level results will be made available to schools and the public. **Individual results, along with the answer booklets, will be sent home with students during the first week of April. This will give parents the opportunity to see the assessment items as well as how their child responded and achieved according to provincial benchmarks.** Again, this is only a snapshot and does not provide a complete picture of your child's ability. That information is best obtained from your child's teacher.

### Does the FSA count towards students' marks?

No. The results show a student's skills at a particular point in time. They are not related to marks in a specific subject or grade level but show progress in the development of foundation skills across grades and curriculum areas. For example, students read in science and social studies as well as language arts and they work with numbers in activities or subjects besides math. Because the FSA does not count for marks, it is a safe way for students to prepare for taking future tests (such as driver's license tests, high-school provincial exams, post-secondary work, etc.).

### Who writes the FSA?

All grade 4 and 7 students are expected to write the FSA. Last year, 85,000 students completed the assessment. The only exceptions are: a) students who have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) documenting a learning disability that significantly impacts their performance and who cannot participate in the assessment, even with adaptations (e.g., extended time, a reader or a scribe); b) students with IEPs who would need such extensive adaptations as to create a hardship for the individual students; or c) ESL students who have not yet reached a level of proficiency for them to provide meaningful responses. **Principals determine which students, if any, are excused.** If it is recommended that your child be excused from one or more components, you will be contacted prior to the beginning of the assessment. If you wish further clarification, please consult your school principal. Students are encouraged to do their best as this helps the province and school district make informed decisions about how best to provide resources to schools in order to support learners.

### Where can I get more information?

Information will be provided by the district and your school. You can also find information on the Ministry of Education's website at <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa/>.