

SCHOOL DISTRICT #81
(FORT NELSON)

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FORT NELSON, B.C.
VOC-1R0

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Dear Parents,

Re: Foundation Skills Testing for Grades 4 and 7

This letter is to clarify the BC Ministry of Education requirements regarding students excused from writing the FSA. You may receive a letter from the BC Teacher's Federation with a form that parents can sign to excuse their child from participation. However, as in other High School Provincial exams, students are expected to participate in the FSA in grades 4 and 7.

The Ministry of Education requires that every B.C. student in grades 4 and 7 write the FSA. The **only** three reasons that a student can be excused from the FSA are:

- a) Illness over the entire testing period – Oct. 1 to Nov. 9th
- b) Family emergency resulting in the student not being at school for the testing period
- c) Extenuating Circumstances (i.e. special needs student who is unable to read or write; a family emergency that impacts the student upon their return to school)

The school Principal must report to the Superintendent of Schools all student names who they are excusing from FSA testing base on the above criteria, along with the extenuating circumstances. The Minister of Education may request this list from the Superintendent.

The Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) is currently the only provincial-wide measure of achievement for elementary students. It is valued by many parents as the only means of determining progress using a consistently administered standards-based assessment and is used by the school system as a basis for planning.

School District #81 (Fort Nelson), has top provincial FSA scores in grade four reading and the top provincial marks in our aboriginal student scores. Our Foundation Skills Assessment results were used along with other district assessment results in the planning and implementation of programs and supports for students that have resulted in increased literacy achievement.

Provincially, the Foundation Skills Assessment scores have been found to provide a reliable prediction of a student's likelihood of completing grade twelve on time. For students who have met expectations on their Grade 7 FSA reading test, the school completion rate was 90%. For those who exceeded expectations, it was 100%. Similar patterns exist between Grade 4 FSA and completion rates.

Encourage your child to do their best without putting pressure on them. Teachers and principals have ensured that your child is familiar with the testing process and is familiar with sample test questions to help alleviate anxiety.

Yours truly,



Diana Samchuck
Superintendent of Schools
SD81 Fort Nelson

