

September 17, 2024

Dear Parents, Elders, Guardians, and Community Members,

The Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) was introduced in 2000 for students in Grades 4, 7, and 10. It measures key skills in reading, writing, and numeracy, providing data that informs educational improvements. While standardized testing, including the FSA, has faced criticism over the years for flaws in standardized tests and the Fraser Institute rating schools from highest to lowest. Concerns about the FSA have meant that some students do not participate, which makes overall results less valid for schools and school districts to understand and support struggling students.

The First Nations Education Steering Council (FNESC) has raised concerns over declining FSA participation. FNESC supports the FSA as it provides essential data. It still creates some province-wide measures that FNESC and others can use to help understand where support may be needed locally and provincially. The results can guide policymakers in making informed decisions regarding funding, resources, and educational initiatives.

The Mission Public Schools Board of Education has discussed the FSA's importance annually since 2021, particularly in relation to FNESC's needs. While the British Columbia Teachers Federation (BCTF) has been effective at messaging parents to have their child/children to not participate in the FSA, as this undermines the students who could really benefit from the Assessment, the data is still utilized at both the School District and Provincial level for evidence-based decision making. It continues to be reported home to parents. Identifying students who are struggling allows for early intervention, which can lead to better academic outcomes.

In November of 2021, the First Nations Leadership Council, the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations, the First Nations Summit, and the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs submitted a letter to the Minister of Education and Childcare to express their concerns regarding the ongoing targeted campaign to cancel the FSA in BC public schools, emphasizing its importance for upholding legal commitments to Indigenous communities.

Therefore, the Mission Public Schools Board of Education would like to express its support for the position of FNESC and encourage all students to participate in the Foundation Skills Assessment as part of the ongoing efforts to improve the education of all students in our community.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to trustees@mpsd.ca to discuss further.

Sincerely,



Shelley Carter – Board Chair
On behalf of the Mission School Board of Education

- <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/pdf/assessment/fsa/en-foundation-skills-assessment-for-parents-and-caregivers.pdf>
- <http://www.mpsd.ca/Programs-Services/parents/FSA>