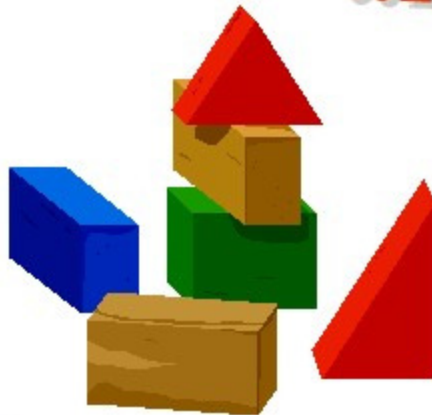


School District # 73 Parent Survey
Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA)

District Parent



Advisory Council
SD 73

February 10, 2009

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Executive Summary

The District Parent Advisory Council for School District 73 (DPAC) hosted an information night to provide information to parents on the issue of Foundation Skills Assessment. Subsequent to this information session, a web-based survey was launched on January 15, 2009 and ran until February 02, 2009 to gather input from district parents on the issues and perspectives being communicated by the various interested parties. This report provides a summary of the survey results and provides recommendations for further action by DPAC.

One hundred and twenty six (126) surveys were completed and provided representation for high schools (70% represented) and elementary schools (58% represented) throughout the District. Respondents felt they understood the issue adequately, with over 79% stating that they felt they knew something about the Foundation Skills Assessment. Newspapers were the most popular source of information with school principals, the District Parent Advisory Council, Parent Advisory Councils and/or the respondents' own children's experience with FSAs also being key sources of information (>50% of respondents).

Overall, respondents "support the use of standardized testing as means to measure that [their] children are receiving a quality education". When asked specifically about Foundation Skills Assessment, the majority of respondents do not feel that the test is harmful to students, nor that it causes stress in the family, nor that it is a distraction from the learning process by reducing instructional time. Instead, respondents support the use of FSA, in combination with other assessment tools, to inform the school, district, and provincial level planning. Respondents believe the FSA plays an important role in measuring the effectiveness of the public education system and holding the system accountable.

The BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) position on Foundation Skills Assessment does not align with the respondents' perspective. While respondents acknowledge the BCTF may have legitimate concerns with the current FSA process, the respondents do not support the process (boycotting) being used by the BCTF to resolve these concerns. As well, respondents do not support the Fraser Institute's use of the FSA results to rank schools through out the province.

Based on the survey information gathered and the fact that the majority of respondents favour the use of standardized testing, including the FSA, this report recommends that:

1. DPAC write a letter to Minister of Education advising that parents in School District 73 support the administration of Foundation Skills Assessments.
2. DPAC work with education partners to express concern with the inappropriate use of the FSA data by the Fraser Institute.
3. DPAC share the survey results with parents in the District and other education partners.
4. DPAC formulate an official position on FSA that articulates continued support for standardized testing and the continuation of FSA tests in the province and the belief that the Fraser Institutes use of FSA data is inappropriate

Background

The Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) is a test mandated by the Ministry of Education to be given to all grade 4 and 7 students in public and provincially funded independent schools in the province.

As described on the Ministry of Education website:

“The Foundation Skills Assessment is an annual province-wide assessment of British Columbia students’ academic skills, and provides a snapshot of how well BC students are learning foundation skills in Reading Comprehension, Writing, and Numeracy.

The main purpose of the assessment is to help the province, school districts, schools and school planning councils evaluate how well students are achieving basic skills, and make plans to improve student achievement. FSA is designed and developed by British Columbia educators. The skills tested are linked to the provincial curriculum and provincial performance standards.”¹

The Foundation Skills Assessment has been in place for almost 10 years. In 2007-08, the administration of the test was moved from May to February. For the first time, individual FSA results, and the students’ actual written answers were available to parents, teachers, and schools by the end of March, in the same school year the test was taken.

Recently, the BC Teachers Federation (BCTF) has launched a public awareness campaign raising concerns about the use of the test and has publicly stated that it does not support the use of Foundation Skills Assessments. Furthermore, the BCTF held a vote in December 2008 and reported that 85% of teachers opposed the government’s Foundation Skills Assessment². The press release also stated that BCTF members would not prepare for, administer, or mark the FSA exams in February 2009 unless the government moved towards random sampling. BCTF President Irene Lanzinger stated, “The FSAs drain much-needed time and resources away from teaching and learning. This particular standardized test is unfair, does not help students learn, and is not an accurate measure of student progress.” The BCTF aggressively campaigned against the FSA tests, directing their members to boycott the administration of the test. The British Columbia Public School Employers’ Association challenged the BCTF position at the Labour Relations Board on February 02, 2009.

The Labour Relations Board ruled, “the administering/supervising the FSA tests is *prima facie* work which teachers are obligated to perform. Consequently, the BCTF is ordered, on an interim basis, to do the following:

1. cancel its direction to members not to administer/supervise FSA tests and to take reasonable steps to communicate that cancellation to its members as soon as possible and no later than 4:00 PM on February 4, 2009; and
2. cease and desist from authorizing or directing its members not to administer/supervise FSA tests”³

¹ <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa/>

² Press Release dated December 11, 2008, BC teachers vote to oppose Foundation Skills Assessment, British Columbia Teachers Federation. <http://www.bctf.ca/NewsReleases.aspx?id=17168>.

³ <http://www.bcpsea.bc.ca/access/publications/aissue/2009/ai2009-07-lrbdecision.pdf>

The BCTF has advocated that random testing would be an acceptable alternative to the FSA process. The BCTF also believes that the Fraser Institute's ranking of schools based on FSA results is an inappropriate use of the survey data.

"The results are used by the Fraser Institute to rank schools and erode confidence in our public schools. This type of test and subsequent ranking is based on an American-style ideology that has already been widely discredited south of the border"⁴.

The Fraser Institute describes their report card as follows:

"The *Report Card on British Columbia's Elementary Schools 2009* collects a variety of relevant, objective indicators of school performance into one, easily accessible public document so that anyone can analyze and compare the performance of individual schools. By doing so, the *Report Card* assists parents when they choose a school for their children and encourages and assists all those seeking to improve their schools."⁵

FSA test results are used in the compilation of the school rankings.

The annual report cards are published in March-April for BC Secondary Schools and April-May for BC elementary schools.

To help SD 73 parents better understanding the issues surrounding the FSA, an information workshop was held January 13, 2009 at the Henry Grube Education Centre. This workshop was sponsored by School District 73 District Parent Advisory Council and was attended by approximately 20 parents.

Assistant Superintendent Karl deBruijn and Kamloops Thompson Teachers' Association President David Komljenovic provided different perspectives on the issue. This information night was advertised and the outcomes of the evening were subsequently reported in the local media.

Commencing January 15, 2009, School District 73 District Parent Advisory Council undertook an online survey to gain feedback from parents on FSA tests. The goal of the survey was to provide sufficient information that DPAC could formulate a response to the current debate and best represent parents' interests.

This report provides the results from the DPAC #73 survey.

⁴ Press Release dated December 11, 2008, BC teachers vote to oppose Foundation Skills Assessment, British Columbia Teachers Federation. <http://www.bctf.ca/NewsReleases.aspx?id=17168>.

⁵ <http://www.fraserinstitute.org/researchandpublications/publications/6485.aspx>

Methodology

An electronic survey⁶ was developed and posted at:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=jiUX26qZdrhNCAB_2bXWoTaw_3d_3d between January 15 2009 and February 2, 2009. For parents without Internet access, a paper copy of the survey was made available and DPAC volunteers then manually entered the data into the electronic survey database. Results were tabulated using the summary functions available through Survey Monkey.

Notification to parents was done through direct e-mail, posters posted in schools by PACs, notices in either school newsletters or PAC bulletins, and word of mouth between parents.

A copy of the questionnaire is included as Appendix A.

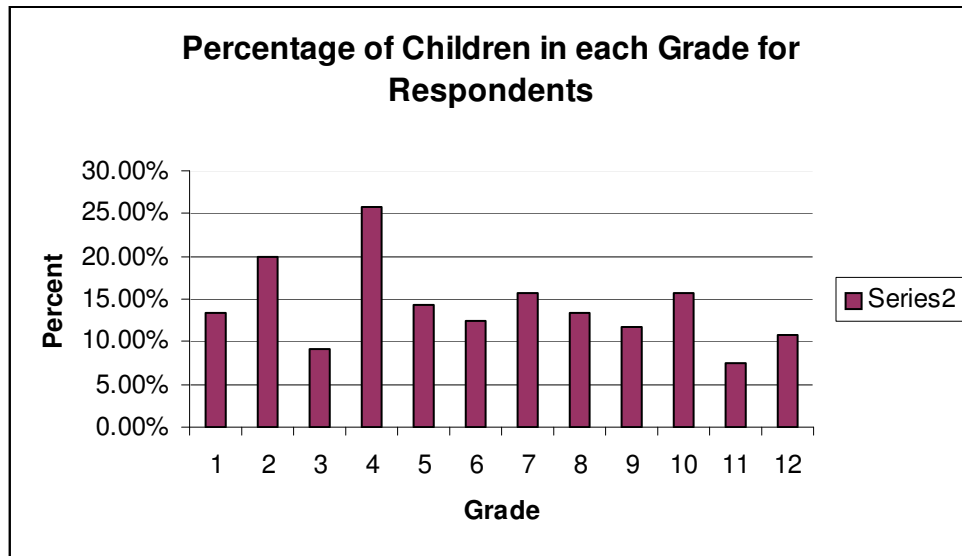
Survey Results

Parent Demographics

School District #73 has 10 high schools and 36 elementary schools within the District with a current enrolment of 14,217 students. From this student population, parents completed 126 surveys. Of the primary grade (K-7) schools in the district, 58% were represented in the survey. These schools represented 61% of the total respondents. The secondary grade level (8-12) was represented by 7 of the 10 high schools in the district with 49 responses (39%) attributed to this group.

⁶ SurveyMonkey at www.surveymonkey.com was used for collecting and compiling results from survey.

The distribution of children, by grade, represented by the parent respondents is shown in the table below.



Six respondents chose not to indicate which grade their child(ren) was in. The majority of respondents have children attending a public school (99%) while the remainder attend private school. Less than 1% of respondents reported that they home school their children.

The majority of parents (68%) reported that their children have written the Foundation Skills Assessment.

When asked whether they have served on Parent Advisory Councils (PACs), School Planning Councils (SPCs) or District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC), parents responded that 64% have served on a Parent Advisory Council, 26% have served on a School Planning Council and 6% had served on District Parent Advisory Council.

Issues Knowledge

When asked to rate their knowledge of the issues/dialogue surrounding the Foundation Skills Assessment in British Columbia, the majority of respondents rated themselves as very knowledgeable (32%) or somewhat knowledgeable (47%). An overwhelming 79% felt they knew something about the Foundation Skills Assessment issue.

Respondents indicated that they used the following sources of information (in order of most popular to least popular) to gain knowledge about the Foundation Skills Assessment:

- 1) Newspapers (75%)
- 2) School Principal (55%)
- 3) DPAC/PAC (54%)
- 4) My student's experience with FSA (53%)
- 5) Teachers (49%)
- 6) Other Parents (42%)

- 7) BC Teachers Federation (34%)
- 8) TV (29%)
- 9) Radio (27%)
- 10) Websites (6%)

Websites cited in the survey include the Fraser Institute, Ministry of Education, School District, British Columbia Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA), British Columbia Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils, BC Teachers Federation, and School Planning Council. Of these websites, the Ministry of Education was the most frequently cited.

When asked if parents would like more information on this and similar topics, the majority reported no (53%). However, a significant portion of the respondents indicated yes and further commented that they would prefer the information to be provided in written form (62%) with e-mail or website the next most popular form of communication. Only 25 percent favoured an additional workshop setting.

Standardized Testing

When asked about standardized testing, respondents indicated the following agreement (strongly agree or agree) to the following statements:

Statement	% agree or strongly agree
I support the use of standardized tests as a means to measure that my children are receiving a quality education	75
I believe standardized tests provide for accountability in the education system.	71
I support the use of standardized test results as a data source to be used by School Planning Councils.	75
Standardized test results are valuable in evaluating school goals for reading, writing and numeracy.	75

The statement with the strongest support was "I support the use of standardized tests as a means to measure that my children are receiving a quality education" with a strongly agree rating of 37%.

Opinions on the Foundation Skills Assessment

Respondents were asked to rate the following statements as to whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed. The combined percent total for agree or strongly agree respondents is shown in the table beside each statement.

Statement	% agree or strongly agree
I support the Foundation Skills Assessment process in its current form.	61
The Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) test is a valuable tool for assessing student achievement against Ministry of Education standards.	68
FSA tests harm students.	21
FSA tests create stress in the family.	26
FSA tests are important to measure the effectiveness of the public education system.	65
FSA tests makes the education system more accountable.	62
I believe parents should continue to receive individual FSA results for their child.	75
I believe FSAs are effective in evaluating student skills in math and reading.	64
I believe the marking of the FSAs is fair and consistent	73
The full cost of FSA tests should be funded by the province, separately from annual school budgets.	93
Feedback on student answer sheets are helpful in identifying areas that require further study by the student	76
FSAs distract from the learning process by reducing instructional time.	33
FSA tests are reliable indicators of a student's progress.	56
I support the use of FSAs, combined with other assessment tools, to inform school, district, and provincial planning.	75
I support the use of FSAs as one method to give parents, teachers, and principals information about individual student progress.	68

Forty two percent strongly disagreed with the statement that “FSA tests harm students” while the statement with the largest strongly agree response at 57% was that “the full cost of FSA tests should be funded by the province, separately from annual school budgets.”

Opinions on Foundation Skills Assessment and BC Teachers Federation

When asked about their opinion on the BC Teachers Federation perspective on Foundation Skills Assessment, respondents indicating their agreement (strongly agree + agree combined) to the following statements:

Statement	% agree or strongly agree
I believe the BC Teachers Federation has legitimate concerns with the current FSA process.	50
I support the decision of BCTF to boycott FSAs despite the 2002 Labour Relations Board ruling.	34
I believe the BC Teachers Federation concerns with the FSA testing process is a labour issue and should be dealt with at the bargaining table.	41

The majority of parents do not support the BCTF position to boycott FSA tests. However, half of the respondents (50%) do feel that the BCTF has legitimate concerns.

Opinions on Fraser Institute

When asked their opinion on the Fraser Institute, respondents indicated their degree of agreement (strongly agree + agree combined) to the following statements:

Statement	% agree or strongly agree
The Fraser Institute's use of the FSA test scores to rank schools in the province is an appropriate usage of the test results.	34
The Fraser Institute ranking was a consideration in choosing which school my child would attend	13
The Fraser Institute rankings are an important tool for creating accountability in the school system.	36
The ranking of schools creates additional, often unhealthy stress on students, teachers, and parents especially for those schools that rank low.	62

Overall, respondents felt that the use of FSA test results by the Fraser Institute is inappropriate and that the way they are used to rank schools causes unhealthy stress.

Discussion

There was good representation across the spectrum of elementary and secondary schools, with 60% of the schools in the District being represented in the survey results. The majority of respondents have children in the elementary schools (61%). As well, the majority of respondents (68%) have children who have experienced Foundation Skills Assessments in either grade 4 or 7. The majority of respondents felt they were knowledgeable about the issue and dialogue occurring about FSA tests. The demographics of the survey respondents showed that over 62% were from a population of highly engaged parents (having participated on PAC, DPAC, School Planning Council, etc). This may be due to greater awareness of the survey within this group as they were the primary target of e-mail messages. Access to the survey may have been more challenging to parents than previous surveys. (e.g. School Fees 2007)., Unless they received the survey link via e-mail, the survey address had to be manually typed into a web browser (the address was given in printed newsletters). The DPAC should review this communications weakness for future surveys.

The survey also highlighted the effectiveness of written communication as a key vehicle to communicate with and engage parents. Attending workshops had very low appeal to respondents. This fact should be considered when planning or hosting future educational events of this nature. In particular, the Board of Education should note that engaging parents by public meeting might not be the most effective method to obtain meaningful feedback. The survey conducted by DPAC garnered far greater participation by parents than the information workshop.

Standardized Testing

Respondents overwhelmingly see (>70% agree/strongly agree) standardized tests as a means to measure that their children are receiving a quality education and ensure that the education system has accountability. Further, respondents believe the use of standardized test results are important to School Planning Council work and in evaluating school goals for reading, writing, and numeracy. Overall, respondents support standardized testing.

“standardized testing is the only practical and objective manner to compare the academic performance of my child to the provincial average. Both parents and educators need to understand where deficiencies exist so remedial action can be taken”.

“As long as standardized tests are used within the schools to further educational goals, I am strongly in favor of the testing. I cannot think of another way to measure and assess what our children are learning and where schools need to place focus”

However, support was not unanimous:

“Standardized tests used to rank order children or their schools are unethical in my view. If there was a glimmer of hope that they were used as formative assessment I wouldn't object to their use. FSA tests written by my children have never provided data that was not already well known.”

When examining a specific type of standardized testing, such as the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA), respondents noted that they do not believe that the test:

- ❑ Harms students;
- ❑ Causes stress in the family; nor.
- ❑ It is a distraction from the learning process by reducing instructional time

Instead, the majority of respondents (>70%) felt that:

- ❑ Marking is fair and consistent;
- ❑ Full costs of the test should be funded by the province separately from the annual school budget;
- ❑ Feedback on student answer sheets are helpful; and,
- ❑ That parents should continue to receive individual FSA results for their child.

Most importantly, respondents support the use of FSAs, combined with other assessment tools to inform the school, district, and provincial level planning. Further, they agree that the use of FSAs is one method to give parents, teachers, and principals information about individual student progress. Again, the respondents' voices were clear: they support the use of the FSA in its current form, recognize the FSA as a valuable tool for assessing student achievement against Ministry of Education standards, believe that the FSA test is important in measuring the effectiveness of the public education system, and feel FSAs make the system more accountable.

Respondents agree that FSAs are effective in evaluating student skills in math and reading and are a reliable indicator of a student's process.

In summary, respondents want information about their child's educational progress benchmarked against known standards, accountability in the educational system, and a process to use the information to improve the education system.

"As a parent I want my child to take this test to know where my child is at against the Ministry of Education standards"

Respondents do not believe the FSA tests cause undue stress, take away from instructional time, or are harmful to students, three key arguments presented by the BC Teacher's Federation opposing FSA tests.

Respondent support for the BC Teachers Federation position to boycott the FSA process is weak with only 34% of respondents supporting this position. Respondents are split (50%) as to whether the BC Teachers Federation has legitimate concerns. As to whether this is a bargaining issue to be dealt with through collective agreement process, support was weak and inconclusive. The data suggests that on balance, parents do not agree with the BC Teachers Federation position on Foundation Skills Assessment.

Respondents overwhelmingly reject the Fraser Institute's use of FSA test results to rank schools throughout the province with a majority of respondents indicating that ranking can create additional, often unhealthy, stress on students, teachers, and parents (especially for those schools that rank low). Respondents do not feel the Fraser Institute's rankings create accountability in the school system.

Only a small minority of respondents (12%) indicated that they used the rankings as one of the considerations in choosing that school their children would attend.

“Speaking professionally, as a psychologist and a researcher, the actions of the Fraser Institute are misleading and reprehensible”

“This is a harmful and political misuse and misrepresentation of data”

Summary and Recommendations

Summary

Respondents tended to be well informed about the topic of Foundation Skills Assessment and the survey results highlight that the majority of respondents:

- Support standardized testing;
- Support the use of the FSA;
- Do not believe the FSA causes stress or is otherwise harmful to students;
- Believe the FSA is a valuable tool for accountability in the educational system;
- Believe the Fraser Institute is using the data inappropriately;
- Do not support the BCTF boycott of FSAs.

The survey was successful in gathering a cross section of views and opinions on the FSA tests.

Recommendations:

1. DPAC write a letter to Minister of Education advising that parents in School District 73 support the administration of Foundation Skills Assessments.
2. DPAC work with education partners to express concern with the inappropriate use of the FSA data by the Fraser Institute.
3. DPAC share the results with parents in the District and other education partners.
4. DPAC formulate an official position on FSA that articulates continued support for standardized testing and the continuation of FSA tests in the province and the belief that the Fraser Institutes use of FSA data is inappropriate

Appendix 1 – Survey Questions

Foundation Skills Assessment Parent Survey 2009

1.

Welcome to the the SD 73 District Parent Advisory Council survey on Foundation Skills Assessments (FSAs).

SD 73 District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) is seeking your input and opinions on the current Foundation Skills Assessment process. Given recent media coverage of this issue, it is important that the parent voice be understood and heard. In order for SD 73 DPAC to provide appropriate comments on this topic, we need your input and guidance.

2. Parent Demographics

1. What school(s) do your child(ren) attend? (check all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A.E. Perry Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> George Hilliard Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> Raft River Elementary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aberdeen Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> Haldane Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> Ralph Bell Elementary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arthur Hatton Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> Heffley Creek Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> Rayleigh Elementary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arthur Stevenson Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> John Tod Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> Sa-Hali Secondary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Barriere Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> Juniper Ridge Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> Savona Elementary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Barriere Secondary | <input type="checkbox"/> Kay Bingham Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> South Kamloops Secondary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beattie School of the Arts | <input type="checkbox"/> Lloyd George Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> South Sahali Elementary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bert Edwards Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> Logan Lake Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> Stuart Wood Elementary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blue River Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> Logan Lake Secondary | <input type="checkbox"/> Summit Elementary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brennan Creek Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> Marion Schilling Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> Valleyview Secondary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brocklehurst Secondary | <input type="checkbox"/> McGowan Park Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> Vavenby Elementary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chase Secondary | <input type="checkbox"/> NorKam Secondary | <input type="checkbox"/> Westmount Elementary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clearwater Secondary | <input type="checkbox"/> Pacific Way Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> Westsyde Secondary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dallas Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> Parkcrest Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> Westwold Elementary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> David Thompson Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> Pinitan Elementary | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dufferin Elementary | <input type="checkbox"/> R.L. Cleminson Elementary | |

3. Parent Demographics

2. What grade(s) are your school-aged child(ren) in? (check all that apply)

☐ 1☐ 7☐ 2☐ 8☐ 3☐ 9☐ 4☐ 10☐ 5☐ 11☐ 6☐ 12

3. Do you have any children attending private school?

☐ Yes☐ No

4. Do you homeschool any of your children?

☐ Yes☐ No

5. How many children (school-aged or younger) do you have living at home?

6. Have any of your children ever written the Foundation Skills Assessment (Grade 4 or Grade 7)?

☐ Yes☐ No

7. Have you served on a (check all that apply):

☐ Parent Advisory Council (PAC)☐ School Planning Council (SPC)☐ District Committee (please specify)

4. Foundation Skills Assessment Process Knowledge

Information regarding FSAs is available from a variety of sources. SD 73 DPAC would like to know where parents are accessing the majority of information.

8. Knowledge of Issues

	Very knowledgeable	Somewhat knowledgeable	Not very knowledgeable
How would you rate your knowledge of the issues/dialogue surrounding Foundation Skills Assessments in British Columbia?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. What are your sources of information regarding Foundation Skills Assessment? (check all that apply)

- ☐ Newspaper
- ☐ TV
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ DPAC / PAC
- ☐ Other Parents
- ☐ School / Principal
- ☐ Teachers
- ☐ BC Teachers Federation / Kamloops-Thompson Teachers' Association
- ☐ My students' experience with FSAs
- ☐ Websites (which ones?)

10. Would you like to have more information on these and similar issues?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes - how would you like the information (e.g. written, workshops, etc)

5. Standardized Testing

A standardized test is a test administered and scored in a consistent manner. The tests are designed in such a way that the questions, conditions for administering, scoring procedures, and interpretations are consistent and are administered and scored in a predetermined, standard manner.

11. Please rate the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I support the use of standardized tests as a means to measure that my children are receiving a quality education.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe standardized tests provide for accountability in the education system.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I support the use of standardized test results as a data source to be used by School Planning Councils.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standardized test results are valuable in evaluating school goals for reading, writing and numeracy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Standardized Testing Comments:

6. Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA)

FSA is a set of tests in reading, writing, and numeracy. FSA measures important skills in the provincial curriculum. It measures skills students have gained in several school years, not just a single year. The FSA is administered in Grade 4 and Grade 7. It requires approximately 4 hours to complete (usually split over several sessions) and costs approximately \$7.50/student. (Source: [Ministry of Education](#))

13. Please rate the following:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I support the Foundation Skills Assessment process in its current form.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) test is a valuable tool for assessing student achievement against Ministry of Education standards.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
FSA tests harm students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
FSA tests create stress in the family.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
FSA tests are important to measure the effectiveness of the public education system.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
FSA tests makes the education system more accountable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe parents should continue to receive individual FSA results for their child.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe FSAs are effective in evaluating student skills in math and reading.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Foundation Skills Assessment (continued)

14. Please rate the following:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I believe the marking of the FSAs is fair and consistent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The full cost of FSA tests should be funded by the province, separately from annual school budgets.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feedback on student answer sheets are helpful in identifying areas that require further study by the student.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
FSAs distract from the learning process by reducing instructional time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
FSA tests are reliable indicators of a student's progress.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I support the use of FSAs, combined with other assessment tools, to inform school, district, and provincial planning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I support the use of FSAs as one method to give parents, teachers, and principals information about individual student progress.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. Foundation Skills Assessment Comments:

8. Foundation Skills Assessment & BC Teachers' Federation

"The British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF), established in 1917, is the union of professionals representing 41,000 public school teachers in the province of British Columbia, Canada. All public school teachers belong to the BCTF and their local teachers' association." The BCTF has taken a position against the use of FSA tests. (Source [BC Teachers' Federation](#))

In April 2002, the Labour Relations Board (LRB) issued a decision concluding that supervising FSA tests is work which teachers are obligated to perform and ordered the BCTF to suspend its direction that members not supervise the test. (Source: [BC Public Schools Employers Association](#))

In December 2008, BCTF released a statement that members had voted overwhelmingly to support the position that "BCTF members will not prepare for, administer, or mark the FSA exams next February unless the government moves towards random sampling...with neither schools nor students identified". (Source [BC Teachers' Federation](#))

Ministry of Education (Q & A) states that: "A sampling approach will not provide information at the school or district level about:

- specific groups like aboriginal students, ESL students, students with special needs by category, children in care and other vulnerable students
- school districts and schools
- Individual student achievement levels for all parents and teachers.

These pieces of information are only provided by taking a census approach." (Source: [Ministry of Education](#))

16. Please rate the following:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I believe the BC Teachers Federation has legitimate concerns with the current FSA process.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I support the decision of BCTF to boycott FSAs despite the 2002 Labor Relations Board ruling.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe the BC Teachers Federation concerns with the FSA testing process is a labour issue and should be dealt with at the bargaining table.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. Foundation Skills Assessment and BC Teachers' Federation Comments:

9. Foundation Skills Assessment and Fraser Institute

The Fraser Institute is "an independent international research and educational organization with offices in Canada and the United States and active research ties with similar independent organizations in more than 70 countries around the world." One of the areas of research is on School Performance. The Fraser Institute's "School Report Cards" include detailed tables for each school that show how it has done in academics over a number of years. The Fraser Institute uses "objective, publicly-available data to rate the schools, such as average scores on provincial tests provided by provincial education ministries" Source: [Fraser Institute - Who Are We?](#)

Dialogue continues regarding whether ranking schools based on the snapshot assessment provided by the FSA results is an appropriate or accurate use of the FSA data.

18. Please rate the following:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The Fraser Institute's use of the FSA test scores to rank schools in the province is an appropriate usage of the test results.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Fraser Institute ranking was a consideration in choosing which school my child would attend.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Fraser Institute rankings are an important tool for creating accountability in the school system.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ranking of schools creates additional, often unhealthy stress on students, teachers, and parents especially for those schools that rank low.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. Foundation Skills Assessment and Fraser Institute Comments:

10. Additional Information

Additional information regarding Foundation Skills Assessments can be accessed at:

[Ministry of Education](#)

[Fraser Institute](#)














[BC Teachers' Federation](#)




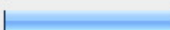





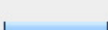


[BC School Trustees Association](#)


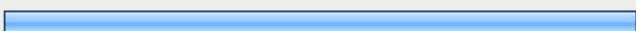
Appendix 2 – Results



Foundation Skills Assessment Parent Survey 2009

1. What school(s) do your child(ren) attend? (check all that apply)		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Barriere Elementary	0.0%	0
Blue River Elementary	0.0%	0
Brennan Creek Elementary	0.0%	0
Haldane Elementary	0.0%	0
Raft River Elementary <input type="checkbox"/>	0.8%	1
Heffley Creek Elementary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2.4%	3
Aberdeen Elementary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2.4%	3
A.E. Perry Elementary	0.0%	0
Arthur Hatton Elementary	0.0%	0
Arthur Stevenson Elementary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2.4%	3
Beattie School of the Arts <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7.1%	9
Bert Edwards Elementary <input type="checkbox"/>	0.8%	1
Dallas Elementary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	13.5%	17
David Thompson Elementary	0.0%	0
Dufferin Elementary <input type="checkbox"/>	0.8%	1
George Hilliard Elementary <input type="checkbox"/>	0.8%	1
John Tod Elementary	0.0%	0
Juniper Ridge Elementary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	12.7%	16
Kay Bingham Elementary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	12.7%	16
Lloyd George Elementary <input type="checkbox"/>	0.8%	1
Marion Schilling Elementary	0.0%	0
McGowan Park Elementary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2.4%	3
Pacific Way Elementary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2.4%	3
Parkcrest Elementary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4.8%	6

Ralph Bell Elementary		0.0%	0
Rayleigh Elementary		0.0%	0
R.L. Cleminson Elementary		1.6%	2
South Sahali Elementary		4.0%	5
Stuart Wood Elementary		0.0%	0
Summit Elementary		2.4%	3
Westmount Elementary		1.6%	2
Logan Lake Elementary		0.0%	0
Pinitan Elementary		0.0%	0
Savona Elementary		0.8%	1
Vavenby Elementary		0.0%	0
Westwold Elementary		0.8%	1
Barriere Secondary		0.0%	0
Chase Secondary		0.0%	0
Clearwater Secondary		0.0%	0
Brocklehurst Secondary		3.2%	4
NorKam Secondary		1.6%	2
Sa-Hali Secondary		15.1%	19
South Kamloops Secondary		7.1%	9
Valleyview Secondary		6.3%	8
Westsyde Secondary		4.0%	5
Logan Lake Secondary		1.6%	2
<i>answered question</i>			126
<i>skipped question</i>			0

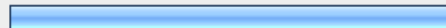

2. What grade(s) are your school-aged child(ren) in? (check all that apply)		
	Response Percent	Response Count
1 	13.3%	16
2 	20.0%	24
3 	9.2%	11
4 	25.8%	31
5 	14.2%	17
6 	12.5%	15
7 	15.8%	19
8 	13.3%	16
9 	11.7%	14
10 	15.8%	19
11 	7.5%	9
12 	10.8%	13
<i>answered question</i>		120
<i>skipped question</i>		6




3. Do you have any children attending private school?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes 	0.8%	1
No 	99.2%	120
<i>answered question</i>		121
<i>skipped question</i>		5

4. Do you homeschool any of your children?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes 	0.8%	1
No 	99.2%	120
<i>answered question</i>		121
<i>skipped question</i>		5


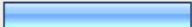
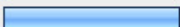
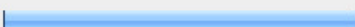
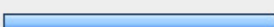
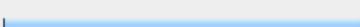
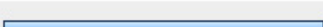
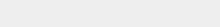


5. How many children (school-aged or younger) do you have living at home?		
	Response Count	
	121	
<i>answered question</i>		121
<i>skipped question</i>		5



Number of children living at home	Number of respondents
None	8
One	25
Two	69
Three	14
Four	4
More than 4	1
Total	121

6. Have any of your children ever written the Foundation Skills Assessment (Grade 4 or Grade 7)?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes 	68.0%	83
No 	32.0%	39
<i>answered question</i>		122
<i>skipped question</i>		4

7. Have you served on a (check all that apply):		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Parent Advisory Council (PAC) 	64.1%	50
School Planning Council (SPC) 	25.6%	20
District Committee (please specify) 	10.3%	8
<i>answered question</i>		78
<i>skipped question</i>		48

8. Knowledge of Issues					
	Very knowledgeable	Somewhat knowledgeable	Not very knowledgeable	Rating Average	Response Count
How would you rate your knowledge of the issues/dialogue surrounding Foundation Skills Assessments in British Columbia?	31.4% (37)	46.6% (55)	22.0% (26)	1.91	118
<i>answered question</i>					118
<i>skipped question</i>					8

9. What are your sources of information regarding Foundation Skills Assessment? (check all that apply)		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Newspaper 	75.6%	90
TV 	28.6%	34
Radio 	26.9%	32
DPAC / PAC 	54.6%	65
Other Parents 	42.0%	50
School / Principal 	55.5%	66
Teachers 	49.6%	59
BC Teachers Federation / Kamloops-Thompson Teachers' Association 	33.6%	40
My students' experience with FSAs 	52.1%	62
Websites (which ones?) 	5.9%	7
<i>answered question</i>		119
<i>skipped question</i>		7

10. Would you like to have more information on these and similar issues?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes 	47.9%	56
No 	52.1%	61
If yes - how would you like the information (e.g. written, workshops, etc)		49
<i>answered question</i>		117
<i>skipped question</i>		9

If yes - how would you like the information (e.g. written, workshops, etc)
written (<i>18 respondents</i>)
workshops, info sessions
e mail information
workshops, written
workshops, e-mail
workshop
Info sent home with students or on school websites
email briefing notes
From Teachers that have written, administered, and marked the FSAs. Written will do, but Workshops better.
Email
forums, articles
emails
email
already receiving the info
e-mail
I have no idea what the Foundation Skills Assessment is - I've never heard of it before?
Written - newsletters or emails
posted to website
workshops, newsletters from school
written - via newsletter
newsletters or unbiased web links??
notice home from school
emailed; written
written. or parent information nights
workshops, emails, website
Written information or workshop
written or workshops
written, email
written documentation
news letter
meetings
I would like the gov. to consider teachers opinions

11. Please rate the following statements:						
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rating Average	Response Count
I support the use of standardized tests as a means to measure that my children are receiving a quality education.	36.8% (42)	37.7% (43)	16.7% (19)	8.8% (10)	1.97	114
I believe standardized tests provide for accountability in the education system.	34.8% (40)	35.7% (41)	20.9% (24)	8.7% (10)	2.03	115
I support the use of standardized test results as a data source to be used by School Planning Councils.	35.1% (40)	39.5% (45)	19.3% (22)	6.1% (7)	1.96	114
Standardized test results are valuable in evaluating school goals for reading, writing and numeracy.	30.7% (35)	43.9% (50)	18.4% (21)	7.0% (8)	2.02	114
answered question						116
skipped question						10

12. Standardized Testing Comments:	
	Response Count
	44
answered question	44
skipped question	82

Standardized Testing Comments:

As long as standardized tests are used within the schools to further educational goals, I am strongly in favor of the testing. I cannot think of another way to measure and assess what our children are learning and where schools need to place focus.
I believe they tell a snapshot of what is happening in school, district and province, but don't tell the entire story.
Randomized samples might tell me something about the school system as a whole, but nothing about my child specifically.
<p>Standardized tests CAN be useful tools for measuring schools' progress in meeting universally accepted (province-wide) reading, writing, and numeracy goals. The Ministry of Education must clearly state, however, how the FSA is to be used (what it is to measure and why), and the FSA must be designed to specifically and effectively measure that clearly stated goal.</p> <p>There are a number of factors that impact the FSA's ability to effectively measure such progress:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The FSA is by design a lag measure. A school that uses leading measures is best placed to effectively measure its progress. The FSA is not conducted with sufficient frequency to be an accurate measure of the individual student's progress. The FSA is not conducted with sufficient frequency within the elementary/intermediate or secondary school systems to be an accurate measure of those systems' effectiveness. Other variables (particularly environmental variables such as room lighting, quality of ADP equipment used for testing, etc.) affect the FSA's ability to accurately measure student progress. <p>Ultimately, the individual school through the PAC and SPC is best placed to measure its progress in relation to its goals, school goals hopefully having been identified in concert with the PAC and SPC.</p>
I feel that standardized testing only tells us what the student doesn't know and not what they do know.
I think the FSA testing is really the ONLY way we can assure that our children are getting the same education as other children in the Province.
Not all kids fit into the standardized test stream and I therefore think it puts unnecessary stress on a child that is different.
If all students in every grade were to be tested and the results used to prepare for their education in subsequent years I would strongly agree with the above. Since results are received too late for remedial work they are useless, also since Kamloops does not have a middle school system the grade 7 results are pointless.
I believe the education system needs to have an unbiased unit of measure for its effectiveness. I think parents also need to have a unit of measure if only to open up discussion or ask additional questions of our children.
<p>I feel there needs to be standardized testing throughout the province to make sure that there are foundational skills being taught and met. Reading, writing and math skills are essential, used every single day in adult life.</p> <p>Right now the BCTF is saying the testing is not accurate. If the FSAs need to be changed as to what and how the questions are being asked then the BCTF needs to discuss this with the practicing teachers that write it. The issues of marking can be resolved as well in order for this test to become more reliable.</p> <p>There may be some children that have an "off" day, but I can't see that every child in the province will have an "off" day at the same time, during the same week.</p> <p>New parameters of how test scores are to be used and for what purposes need to be discussed. Are they for the benefit for the classroom teachers? If so then it needs to occur earlier in the year. This would also help School Planning Councils. If it's for Provincial Study then it could be administered throughout the teacher's curriculum.</p> <p>The FSA is the only test measuring the Provincial Education System and should be a benefit for Teachers, Students, Schools, Parents and the Provincial System. It needs to be there to raise the level of education, to see the needs of the young population.</p> <p>Our Children are our Future Leaders. They deserve an Educational System that works and works well.</p> <p>We can't work together on this without a standardized test. Even Finland does it!</p>

<p>Standardized testing per se is not a problem, but the FSA test is a tool that is improperly set up and has no validity due to the constant changing of the test structure. As well, if the purpose of the test is to help teachers identify where students need further assistance, it should be done earlier in the school year. Receiving the results in April, when the school year is practically over, is counter-productive. Also, the time taken out of the school day to prepare for the test and to practice how to take the test, is a waste of instructional time that has already been reduced because of the increase in curriculum over the past few years (Heath & Career Planning, Daily Physical Activity, etc.).</p>
<p>I support so sort of testing but not through FSA in which results are not acted upon nor are the results used in any beneficial way to the students who are not obviously meeting the goals.</p>
<p>I believe standardized testing is very important from the standpoint of ensuring that the students are getting taught what they supposed to be learning, that the Teachers are actually being held accountable for teaching what they are supposed to teach, and finally, to help schools and School Boards understand where more funding is required if there are deficiencies.</p>
<p>They are just one measure, but are objective.</p>
<p>I don't see the need for the Fraser Institute to rank the schools based on these tests (they could just be used by the schools) - admittedly I don't know much about this portion of the process.</p>
<p>standardized testing is the only practical and objective manner to compare the acedemic performance of my child to the provincial average. Both parents and educators need to understand where deficiencies exist so remedial action can be taken.</p>
<p>Since all students write the tests, results are dependent on the make up of the class.</p>
<p>The results all depend on so many non-controllable factors, it is all such a moment in time.....one child not feeling weel and therefore not doing welll on the test could totally throw the statistics. A lot of the time the FSA results are used to come to conclusions that are not necessarily correct. Wouldn't it be more efficient to make teachers teach according to standard guidelines at standardized levels?</p>
<p>I believe it is in our interest to provide a relatively standardized education across the province. Certainly there is a need for individual teachers to have autonomy within their classrooms to best meet their students' needs and their own satisfaction, but the overarching factor is that all our children need to learn the basic curriculum. There is no way of identifying gaps if we do not use a census-based standardized test of some sort.</p>
<p>I do not agree with the Standard testing used to compare shools in the province or district.</p>
<p>I do not agree with the Fraser Institute's use of FSA results to rank schools.</p>
<p>Why are given the repy options to these questions as agree, disagree etc I would like them to read soley, partially, not at all etc</p>
<p>In my 9 years serving on two elementary school PACs the principal has communicated the results for our schoo and the plans for improvment - this is a useful process. When my daughter (an A student in math) took her FSAs in grade 4 there was material that she had not covered in class. She noted on her exam each section that had not been taught. It is my hope that this information would also be useful in providing improvements for the future.</p>

<p>I do not object with the tests in and of themselves. They seem to reflect the learning outcomes of the curriculum and do not present students with anything they are not expected to already learn. What is different about them than regular classroom assessments is that they call on students to perform tasks in a manner they do not usually use -- i.e. reading on the computer and completing a large number of math questions on the computer. This is not the way the learning outcomes and suggested achievement indicators in the IRPs would have students show their understanding of concepts. Having to perform 50 math questions is also beyond what is normally asked of a grade 4 child. The amount of time to 'practice' on how to complete such a test takes away from meaningful learning. While it is not on extreme, it is a challenge for some students to complete the tests in the manner required.</p> <p>I don't believe standardized tests measure whether my child is receiving a quality education. It is just a single tool and no more accurate than any other assessment tool than teachers already use. It is not truly standardized in that it is marked by human beings who use subjective judgements in forming decisions about the level of the test-writer, often with a cursory reading of the tests (as attested to by teachers who have been trained to mark FSAs). With my own older child (who graduated last year), scores on the FSAs did not reflect her school performance in two of the three subjects. Her school performance was in a much higher range than the tests showed, and she went on after grade 7 to win top student awards and be a district honours student. Her scores on the writing test showed her to be simply meeting expectations, yet the next year she was advanced a whole grade in English because she has received 100% in her English classes in both grades 7 and 8. So what did that writing score tell the government or the stakeholders? Nothing accurate and nothing as meaningful as what her teachers had already reported to us as parents and to the government on her standings.</p> <p>With regard to School Planning Councils, data does give a snapshot that can be useful in helping formulate school goals. However, data should not be analyzed for individual students and should never be used to rank schools against one another. While it is apparent it is an outside group (Fraser Institute) that does that, the government itself should be very vocal in speaking out against this practice (in huge headlines and frequent on-air commentaries). Schools and children are richly complex, and one test should not be given so much weight in evaluating their progress.</p>
<p>There needs to be a means of assessing our children's education on a consist basis. Year-to-year comparisons based on a random sample may not be meaningful or useful. We also need to have some means of assessing whether or not teachers are performing - whether they like it or not. Everyone else is assessed in their workplace,</p>
<p>Standardized tests used to rank order children or their schools are unethical in my view. If there was a glimmer of hope that they were used as formative assessment I wouldn't object to their use. FSA tests written by my children have never provided data that was not already well known.</p>
<p>I strongly believe that testing is an important first step to evaluation, but I am not confident in what the resulting information is being used for and the actions/outcomes of the results. BCTF has stated their dissatisfaction and distrust, but .</p>
<p>while I think the above statements are true, the issue with the FSA is that it is administered to the entire school population rather than a small random sample. It is a waste of time and resources.</p>
<p>I believe that standardized testing is only one way of evaluating schools and students. I'm sure most parents and the public realize that there is a measure of inaccuracy, as there is in all testing, and to take the results with a grain of salt. There's nothing wrong with Grade 4s and 7s preparing for a test such as this, they'll need those skills in high school for final and provincial exams. Teachers in the high school help the students prepare for these exams why can't the elementary teachers do the same for the FSAs. As a parent I would never judge the teachers or a school solely on the results from these tests however it's nice to have some idea of how the students and school are doing compared to other schools. In the end the true indication is found in your own home with your own child and in that case every situation is different and each parent deals with it their own way.</p>
<p>Should not be shared with organizations such as the Fraser Institute or if they are public domain, then the system should supply a disclaimer to the effect that the standardized testing is not a good tool to evaluate the quality of schools as compared to each other.</p>

I strongly support random administration of FSA's as outlined by the BCTF. Test results should be made available only to the schools/district/ministry (not to the public to be used for school ranking/comparison) to assist in evaluating school goals and to provide funding and resources. FSA's should be regarded as only one form of evaluation and other tests/evaluations done in the classroom are as equally if not more important when looking at how to improve student success.
Standardized tests are only part of the picture. Naturally classroom based evaluation is most important and gives the most comprehensive and accurate account of a child's progress. That said, however, FSA's are important in terms of gaining an overall picture of how we're doing as schools (and a district) in covering the basics. I personally appreciated seeing where my kids scored in comparison to others.
Standardized testing is the only way we have to test our children's literacy, numeracy and reading skills. That being said, I agree with the teacher's position that this is a very narrow reflection of actual learning. However to test 'everything' is virtually impossible...I see this as the best option at this time
I do think that all children learn differently, and at different speeds. the use of standardized tests is a good measure of the average, but not the individual needs. I believe that individual needs are more solely relied upon by the teachers and parents. If a student is having difficulty in certain aspects of learning then the teachers should be able to evaluate and discuss these needs with the parents.
The teachers at my children's school already assess their learning on an on-going basis. I think FSA's do not take everything into account and are very narrow. I think their information can be valuable in measuring provincial achievement in a random sample but think they are a waste of valuable class time that has already been diminished by lack of SSW help and new programs like the DPA!
Even if used correctly, these tests can only give a very general idea of how students are doing. The classroom teacher is the only one who can provide the detailed reporting necessary to truly evaluate school goals.
I think the tests are a tool to evaluate how well a child/group of children are grasping certain subjects. I also believe the results should be used to evaluate the methods of delivery, and looking at ways to improve or change those methods. I don't think the Fraser Report Rankings are the best way to make the information public - statistics can be vague and not necessarily show what underlying problems exist. For example, inner city public schools and schools where there are higher incidences of substance abuse/poverty cannot be accurately compared to private schools who have extensive access to funds. The Fraser Report should be ranking public to public, private to private. It should not be pointing fingers at whose fault it is that the children are not succeeding. Perhaps they should do some followup research before publishing the results, allowing for additional information to temper what could be a bad outcome with a "why it could be" as opposed to just relying on statistical data for a definitive outcome. Regardless, I do believe tests are a part of life and the earlier our children learn how to confidently approach a test the better. I think the money the BCTF is spending on advertising against standardized testing makes me think the protest too much - if they have enough money to spend on full page newspaper ads province wide, maybe they should look at putting that money to better use. Maybe they could look at funding a better way to evaluate whether children are getting the education they are entitled to - isn't that why most became teachers??? Instead of being part of a problem I would like to stop listening to the BCTF complain and put a plan into action. STOP waiting for someone else to do it - STOP wasting money on newspaper ads - START doing what the BCTF should be doing TEACHING!
I believe if the teachers are covering the appropriate materials and ensuring the children are understanding the material, then the students should have no problems passing the test. I would like to know if my child is receiving an adequate education.
As far as testing goes, it should be a standard test that all the schools participate in. Various questions from all grade 5 teachers should be compiled together, and then all the grade 5 students will write the same test from the district. Using grade 5 is just for an example.
I find that the evaluation process on marking is somewhat non-accurate. One student with a low mark will affect a small rural school, with smaller class sizes. It makes the school marks lower than the norm. The teachers, support workers and administration are doing the proper work but the one mark divided among these couple of students makes them look as if they are below the average. They need to re-evaluate this marking process. Small schools are suffering because of this. Parents will move students to bigger community schools for they think that the smaller rural schools aren't teaching the proper foundation to their children. They are wrong!!! We have wonderful teachers at our school and it is a shame that these FSA's show results like they do.

some areas or regions may have socio-economic differences that would skew the data
I think they are critical in providing parents and teachers with an objective measure of where children stand relative to their grade and age peers. I strongly support the testing.
I agree to disagree.
I think it takes up too much time to teach the students on how to take the test.

13. Please rate the following:						
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rating Average	Response Count
I support the Foundation Skills Assessment process in its current form.	23.8% (25)	37.1% (39)	21.9% (23)	17.1% (18)	2.32	105
The Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) test is a valuable tool for assessing student achievement against Ministry of Education standards.	28.8% (30)	39.4% (41)	23.1% (24)	8.7% (9)	2.12	104
FSA tests harm students.	6.7% (7)	14.4% (15)	36.5% (38)	42.3% (44)	3.14	104
FSA tests create stress in the family.	7.8% (8)	18.4% (19)	37.9% (39)	35.9% (37)	3.02	103
FSA tests are important to measure the effectiveness of the public education system.	24.3% (26)	42.1% (45)	22.4% (24)	11.2% (12)	2.21	107
FSA tests makes the education system more accountable.	24.8% (26)	37.1% (39)	25.7% (27)	12.4% (13)	2.26	105
I believe parents should continue to receive individual FSA results for their child.	35.2% (37)	40.0% (42)	19.0% (20)	5.7% (6)	1.95	105
I believe FSAs are effective in evaluating student skills in math and reading.	24.0% (25)	40.4% (42)	26.0% (27)	9.6% (10)	2.21	104
answered question						108
skipped question						18

14. Please rate the following:						
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rating Average	Response Count
I believe the marking of the FSAs is fair and consistent.	13.8% (13)	59.6% (56)	17.0% (16)	9.6% (9)	2.22	94
The full cost of FSA tests should be funded by the province, separately from annual school budgets.	56.7% (59)	36.5% (38)	4.8% (5)	1.9% (2)	1.52	104
Feedback on student answer sheets are helpful in identifying areas that require further study by the student.	22.2% (22)	53.5% (53)	15.2% (15)	9.1% (9)	2.11	99
FSAs distract from the learning process by reducing instructional time.	14.3% (15)	19.0% (20)	36.2% (38)	30.5% (32)	2.83	105
FSA tests are reliable indicators of a student's progress.	7.8% (8)	48.0% (49)	23.5% (24)	20.6% (21)	2.57	102
I support the use of FSAs, combined with other assessment tools, to inform school, district, and provincial planning.	32.4% (34)	42.9% (45)	15.2% (16)	9.5% (10)	2.02	105
I support the use of FSAs as one method to give parents, teachers, and principals information about individual student progress.	27.9% (29)	40.4% (42)	19.2% (20)	12.5% (13)	2.16	104
	answered question					107
	skipped question					19

15. Foundation Skills Assessment Comments:	
	Response Count
	28
	answered question 28
	skipped question 98

Foundation Skills Assessment Comments:

I support the assessments as a medium for school planning and to look at overall strengths and weaknesses for the entire grade not as testing for individuals. A broad test is not a fair medium for individuals rather a guideline for areas to focus on. When our children attended Vavenby Elementary, an area of weakness in the grade 4 testing was identified in math because there had been strong focus on literacy. By identifying this trend, the school was able to make adjustments to ensure balance. The testing can point out areas where classes might have missed something along the way. Last year, my daughter was in grade 4 and by the time Christmas had come along, she had 3 different teachers in the classroom. Her primary teacher required a leave of absence starting at the end of September and the disruption was huge to the class as a whole. The FSA results will likely reflect this disruption but allows the school to take notice and plan accordingly for future years and in partnership with other teachers. If this information was used to "compare" schools, it's unfair because not all schools and classes had the same disruption. Using the FSA as a comparison between schools demeans the efforts of teachers and undermines the variable factors that every school and classroom faces throughout the school.
My daughter was stressed about doing the FSA last year but the stress seemed to be coming from the teacher.
Individual results are important to individual parents, collective results are important to society.
I left a couple of answers blank because I do not know the answers.
It's not possible to accurately answer questions in items 13 and 14 having received additional information on the FSA's.
Prior to this school year, I home schooled my children. My oldest child was in grade 7 last year. I gave her the FSA test. I felt that it took about 2 weeks of strictly teaching to the test in order to teach my child things that she was going to be tested on. I felt it used up valuable teaching time that I could have used on teaching other things that met the learning outcomes. If I had not taken the time to teach to the test, like many teachers may not have this time, my child who is a straight "A" student probably would have done very poorly on it. One of the reasons may have been that the wording in the questions were different than what she was used to.
I know it would be so disappointing to her and us if she had done poorly on the exam. What would those results really have meant? Once again, I would like to say that I do not agree with standardized testing because I believe the results of the testing tells us what the student doesn't know and not what they do know!
Question 13 and 14 can not be answered. In the previous question (12?) I said I do not know enough about FSA, so I can not answer these questions.
I think the FSA test rate the schools and the children on an even keel so strengths and weaknesses can be evaluated and acted upon.
Key to the above is that they are only 'one method' to evaluate individual progress, therefore schools should not be judged on this method alone.
It is important that children learn at a very early age that testing is an important requirement in life. The notion that the FSA tests are stressful is only indicative of their presentation. All tests are stressful and the earlier children learn how to be tested the earlier they will be comfortable with the process.
As a parent I want my child to take this test to know where my child is at against the Ministry of Education standards.
No other current means of assessment allow me to compare the academic level of my children relatively against other students from other schools. When my child graduates, we will have to compete with other student's for a position in a college or university (or other post-secondary institution) and of course, in the workforce. As a parent, I need to know early in my child's education where he stands relative not only to the expectations of the Ministry (and his teacher), but to the other students against which he will "compete" against in the future for higher education and in the job market. I realize that a single test is the "be all, and end all" in evaluating progress towards educational goals, but it certainly a useful tool allowing comparison beyond the subjective assessment of 1 teacher, and beyond the comparison of students from a single classroom.
Of lesser importance to me is the fact that FSA does provide a level of accountability at the school board level, the school level, and even the classroom level. Again, we must be careful making blanket assessments based on the results, but clearly, consistent results well below expectations could indicate problems within the system at some level that need to be addressed.

Accountability of marking of the test does not seem to be taken into consideration. Public is not informed of random sampling results to check marking done by district which could make individual students results invalid. Do parents have any recourse if they do not agree with results?
These tests were never a big deal to my 2 children, they should be regarded same as any other test. The BCTF has decided since June to use this as a political statement and wants to get their ads in before the election is called and the limits on ads start.
While FSA's provide a snapshot of an individual child's progress, they are far more useful as an analytical tool for the system as a whole. Too much stock cannot be placed in an individual child's results, since it's possible that child was having an "off day", or conversely, was having an uncharacteristically great (or lucky) day. Teachers use several different tools when assessing individual students, so they are a more reliable source of information about individuals than FSA results. However, the FSA's should align relatively closely with teacher's results for a given child -- if not, parents have the right to seek answers. FSA's are most useful as a planning tool, not as a means of identifying individual weaknesses for immediate remediation.
Needs to be used in combination with other assessment tools.
I can't answer most of these questions because I don't know anything about the FAS tests...
There are some questions where I can only answer for my family such as stress - the question should be worded that way. Also there should be an option for do not know. How would I know if they are marked consistently
These tests never accurately reflected any of my childrens' individual abilities or progress. Teachers I have known who have marked these tests have told me they are not marked fully or carefully. They do not take into account so many other factors which have an impact on results. I highly object to the purpose for which the Fraser Institute has used these results. The only purpose I can see is to give a general snapshot of how a group of children is doing compared to other groups. Individual results have no credibility in my view.
again, the issue with the FSA is that it is administered to the entire school population rather than a small random sample. Given that the great majority of students are performing adequately, of what practical use are their scores to them?
I do not know enough about the system and analysis of the results to answer all the questions.
Please refer to response # 12.
In its present form, the FSAs are not worth the time and effort. There are much better ways to achieve the same goals and to actually help the teachers teach and students learn.
Report cards these days are vague and don't say much, constructive or not. Teachers are afraid of parent retaliation, and maybe don't give some feedback that should be given. As a result, if parents get the FSA results for their child it should help them identify areas of improvement or success. If they want to address these things with the teacher they can.
I need more information before I can answer any of these questions. When you only have those four answers nothing applies to how I feel.
people are different, they react to stresses in their lives and mature at individual rates, they may be weak today and strong tomorrow
give teachers more credit for their work and time to teach skills rather than rote standards.
I feel the stress is in the class room between, the teachers and students that have a timeline that this test must be done, with no regard to class situations .

16. Please rate the following:						
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rating Average	Response Count
I believe the BC Teachers Federation has legitimate concerns with the current FSA process.	20.0% (21)	30.5% (32)	31.4% (33)	18.1% (19)	2.48	105
I support the decision of BCTF to boycott FSAs despite the 2002 Labor Relations Board ruling.	20.2% (21)	14.4% (15)	27.9% (29)	37.5% (39)	2.83	104
I believe the BC Teachers Federation concerns with the FSA testing process is a labour issue and should be dealt with at the bargaining table.	12.0% (12)	29.0% (29)	29.0% (29)	30.0% (30)	2.77	100
answered question						107
skipped question						19

17. Foundation Skills Assessment and BC Teachers' Federation Comments:	
	Response Count
	35
answered question	35
skipped question	91

Foundation Skills Assessment & BCTF Comments:

Teachers need to be careful that they leave this issue out of the classroom. The classroom is for teaching and not airing their complaints.
I do think maybe the test could be modified to be less stressful for everyone but I do believe we need standardized testing. I would rather have this testing than a christmas concert.
Students should not necessarily be identified. But I think it's a worthwhile assessment tool.
The BCTF is way off base with this. Clearly they are out of touch with what parents expect.
Teaching our children (the next generation) is not a "labour issue"; it is an ethical responsibility.
I was a child who made it to high school with a grade 3 reading level. there was no fsa at that time. I would think that it would have been dealt with earlier if some form of testing was completed and the teachers were accountable.
I believe that the teachers are concerned for the children and truly want the best for them. This is not a labour issue.
I think the teachers don't object to the FSA's. I think they object to them being released. If a particular school is doing poorly it reflects badly on the teacher, with no other reasons as to why the school is doing poorly, ie demographics, social unrest, population influx, etc, you can not accurately assess the results on a provincial level.
I am a strong Union person, but I still believe that Teachers - because how well they teach our children affects all our futures - need to be accountable for their work. We should only have the best teaching our children. Bad teachers should not be 'hidden' by their Union and continue to expose our children to their poor methods. We should be rating our teachers and only the best be allowed to continue to teach our children. My children have had both good and bad teachers and you can really tell.
I believe that the teachers' dispute is not about childhood education but caters to the desires of a group of teachers. Seems that the reporting of results by the Fraser Institute is the major issue which has nothing to do with the FSA's nor the school board.
Most of what I have heard form the BCTF and understand is their problem with the ranking of schools and the Frazier institute. They need to take things up the them not the test.
The BC Teachers and the BCTF have shown over the years that they are prepared to break the law to prove a point or get what they want from the Government. I believe that once a law or act is in place that all Citizens are required to respect that. I understand the importance of the bargaining position between the BCTF and the Government. I would like to see the BCTF self regulate their members better to ensure that they are indeed doing their jobs effectively. I feel VERY strongly that the BCTF should never support the obstruction of laws as the message is the wrong one, especially when our Children are the ones learning from the message.
Taking this test is legislation that cannot be ignored. It is in the best interest of each school and happens during school hours and so therefore the teachers should oversee it. It is curriculum that should already be being taught and therefore should be no problem for the students to take it.

<p>The most important aspect of the FSA for me as a parent of a grade 4 student (and future grade 4 student) is the INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENT result. Random sampling will not provide this critical data. I believe parents shall have the right to opt-out of receiving the data if they so choose, but all children should be required to take the test for statistical comparison purposes. Since most grade 4 class sizes are already relatively small, moving to random sampling will further reduce the statistical significance of the data and make it subject to even more statistic deviation/error. Depending on how the "radom" selection was made, there would be even more room for abuse that could alter the results (selection of strongest candidates only to improve overall results etc.).</p>
<p>Like any other employer, the Ministry of Education should have overriding power to establish standards, accountability measures, and student assessment practices. The BCTF should be consulted regarding these matters, however, the future of our children is not an item to be "bargained" with. BC Teachers who chosse to boycott the FSAs are not performing their job as per the instructions of their employer and as such should face the same consequences that any other employee that failed to do their job would face (official reprimand, loss of pay, etc.).</p>
<p>One premise that teachers put forth against FSA is that it causes harm in the way of fear in the students. The only harm that has been created in this regard is the negative propaganda that they have served to students themselves (at least in the case of our son). The teachers are creating the fear of the test, not the test itself! I am not impressed with the BCTF's use of students as part of their propaganda against FSA. They should communicate directly with parents who can discuss with their children to form their own opinion rather than delivering their message through the children who are easily influenced by their teacher's opinion.</p>
<p>I believe the BCTF has picked FSA's as a political stand in view of the upcoming election.</p>
<p>I believe the BCTFederation concerns should be dealt with at the bargaining table. No. It should not be in their purview to judge, any more than they should be able to decide that they don't want to administer the Provincials.</p>
<p>Teachers have taken a political approach to this problem, at the risk of decreasing public confidence in our educational system and causing needless conflict with educational partners. They aren't even clear about their own reasons for opposing them. At times, they are against the entire concept of standardized testing, at times they say it's a problem of administration (i.e. everything would be fine if the government would only move to a random sample basis), and at other times, their only concern seems to be with the Fraser Institute use results to rank schools. Which is it? The fact that only 40% of teachers voted when this decision was made leads me to question whether most teachers even agree with the stance their union is taking. Either way, I think that teachers are against the FSA mainly because They see it as a challenge to their professional autonomy. Also, it's a tool that could potentially identify underperforming teachers. Maybe if the teachers did a better job of holding themselves accountable, I wouldn't feel so strongly about this issue, but the way things are right now, I feel we need the FSA to give parents peace of mind that their children are getting a quality education.</p>
<p>I feel teachers are resistant to any feedback. It is ashame we can not, as parents, supply positive and constructive feedback to improve our teachers and our schools. I don't agree that the results of school comparisons should be publicised and instead should be communicated to the parents at each individual school</p>
<p>I think the BCTF concerns are legitimate, but some aspects are overstated. I don't believe much class time has to be spent preparing, and my children never found the process stressful at all. It has definitely become a contest of wills, and both sides should be a bit more flexible in resolving this issue.</p>
<p>The concerns are valid in the BCTF's request for random selection of data. The misuse of the data in such a public waay is, in my view, unethical.</p>
<p>Teachers need to stop putting the students and their parents in the middle of their disputes, this should be resolved between themselves and the Ministry!</p>
<p>Speaking professionally, as a psychologist and a researcher, the first two points made by the Ministry are simply untrue. As for the third point, the scores are of no practical use to students who are performing adequately, as I said earlier. Finally, also speaking professionally, the wording of the items is biased, rendering the results of the survey invalid. It's very clear what you want to hear.</p>
<p>I am not well informed about the BCTF's concerns about the process or outcomes.</p>

If the teachers were sure they had taught the material within the FSA;s testing then they should have nothing to worry about. The material within the tests is stuff the children should have learned by this point. And if they haven't' then this is a good source for follow-up.
I think that this is a political issue and our children are being caught in the middle
Refer to #12
More than a labour issue, I believe the concern is accountability and the fear a teacher or school will be labeled as "below average" when in reality many factors contribute to poor test results, as teachers well know-- Socioeconomic situations, among others. Most teachers already put in far more hours and go well beyond the call of duty educating and caring for our kids but perhaps if the public were better educated in the process and reasons for FSA's (particularly that they are only part of the assessment picture), teachers would feel less pressured and parents/kids would be less stressed.
I acknowledge the teacher's concerns with the Fraser Institute and the historical use (perceived or actual) of FSA results to compare schools. I believe a better more productive approach would be for the BCTF to educate the public about what FSAs mean to dispell this perception. Let's put our energy into celebrating and showcasing the many good things that our local schools and students accomplish!
I removed my child from the FSA's last year and think it is a ridiculous rule to say that if they show up they must write.
I agree with the BCTF. As a child I know I failed some tests on purpose. They were not an indication of my teacher's ability to teach.
Teachers should not have to bargain for something that could undermine the public education system and lead to more private schools. Everyone with children should be supporting teachers and what they believe is wrong for the children. Who best knows what is right for the children in B.C.,your child's teachers, or politicians who make decisions in Victoria and never set foot in classrooms?
This has been a part of the school system for over 30 years, do they have a better way to evaluate all students' grasp of the basics?? This is a necessary thing, and if they don't like the method of evaluation maybe they should offer a better one.
GIVE TEACHERS A SAY!
I believe the great teachers of our province, need to have someone listen to what they are saying , They are the ones who devote every day to educating our students..

18. Please rate the following:						
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rating Average	Response Count
The Fraser Institute's use of the FSA test scores to rank schools in the province is an appropriate usage of the test results.	6.6% (7)	27.4% (29)	31.1% (33)	34.9% (37)	2.94	106
The Fraser Institute ranking was a consideration in choosing which school my child would attend.	1.0% (1)	11.5% (12)	32.7% (34)	54.8% (57)	3.41	104
The Fraser Institute rankings are an important tool for creating accountability in the school system.	6.7% (7)	28.6% (30)	28.6% (30)	36.2% (38)	2.94	105
The ranking of schools creates additional, often unhealthy stress on students, teachers, and parents especially for those schools that rank low.	36.3% (37)	26.5% (27)	27.5% (28)	9.8% (10)	2.11	102
answered question						107
skipped question						19

19. Foundation Skills Assessment and Fraser Institute Comments:	
	Response Count
	29
answered question	29
skipped question	97

Foundation Skills Assessment and Fraser Institute Comments:

It is unfair to use these tests to compare all schools around the province. There are too many exterior factors that play into the education system and a broad comparison wrongs children and schools unnecessarily. The variables in communities, families and social dynamics are too great. I would also like to add that the seniority system of the teachers makes it near impossible to make constructive changes to a school or classroom setting and thus exceptionally unfair if a weak teacher for that one year clouds the reputation of an entire school. Say what you will, not all teachers are created equal.
Great for accountability of the system. Poor judgement to use as a school ranking tool!!
The biggest indicator of academic success in a student is the level of educational attainment of the parents (mostly the mother) combined with family income and other factors. A child with well educated parents having a high income will do well in any school.
Don't take into account many other variables that contribute to school culture and success.
There are many factors that determine a school's effectiveness; student performance on standardized tests gives a very narrow view of a school's overall performance.
Some schools really do need to improve their teaching methods. I do agree that demographics need to be looked at. English as a second language is a huge factor in some of the schools poor performances.
It may cause stress on those that rank low, but how can you improve if you don't know where to raise the bar for your students?
I believe that without the publication of this information the information regarding schools still gets out. Without the FSA testing a school could be labelled in a City as an "undesirable" school. There is no way without the FSA scoring and the Fraser Institute publication of the scores for those schools to change the facts and prove that they are indeed improving their results. I believe that it is a very positive thing. People choose schools for different reasons. The scores may be a starting point but they will also look at the programs offered. Good, well-rounded programming leads to high achieving children.
Perhaps teachers should be tested as to prove their skills at teaching rather than students being tested. Teachers move around alot in the system, class sizes are way over crowded, and parents need to be there for their shildren more that one hour per day.Paying attention to the learning process and not putting the whole responsibility on teachers.
Parents are less interested in school rankings than in knowing that every school is a good school!
I think the ranking is one part of the overview of each school. To find where a problem exists and fix it. Maybe publishing for everyone to see is a good thing but with the add-on that this is only one part of a school snap-shot, not the whole picture.
Out of more than 900 schools, only 12 ranked lower than my child's school. The results are abyssmal. I believe that there are too many factors involved to suggest that this poor performance is due to the school board, school administrators, or the teachers. In fact, with only few exceptions, I have been very impressed with the calibre of my child's teachers, despite the school's poor rating in the most recent published data. I do not believe that too much emphasis should be placed on this data, although the data can be used to highlight schools that are consistently over or under performing for the purpose of helping these schools identify weaknesses or burdens, and correcting them. I think parents should use the school rankings very cautiously and look mostly at the longer tem trends. Once year of poor data should not be cause for panic. Use of the FDA data to compare schools can be used as an accountability measure to ensure that teachers are meeting education objectives and standards set by the Ministry and the BCTF but only to the extent that other factors such as socio-economic data, special needs and ESL composition, etc. are also taken into account in the calss or school performance.
Fraser Institute's use of FSA results isn't accurate enough. The statistics are skewed too easily with small schools, for example 3 kids in a class of 25 is 12%. I am interested in what the Fraser Institute is going to do with high schools, with only the Gr 12 Eng. exam being mandatory and students choosing not to write the other exams.
While I disagree with the Fraser Institute's rankings because I feel that schools can't be adequately judged on such a narrow basis, I think parents as a group are smart enough to realize that the results show only part of the picture. We know that there's much more that goes into a healthy learning environment than what the Fraser Institute looks at, and we understand that Fraser Institute rankings correlate more closely with socio-economic factors than anything else.
accountability is a must

That stress may be imposed by the teaching staff but there are other things they can do well
The Fraser Institute's use of the FSA test scores constitutes my biggest objection to the test. It is absolutely inappropriate and doesn't reflect so many things that contribute to a school's performance (family stability, socio-economic status etc.).
It probably doesn't come as a surprise for schools that do not rank highly in this process. The change in ranking from previous years is however, important.
This is a harmful and political misuse and misrepresentation of data.
Perhaps we should all remember that these assessments are only one method of evaluation, if parents are involved with their children and their schools they'll know whether there is a real problem that needs to be dealt with. The province should also make sure to obtain more information from parents via parent surveys when assessing the results from the FSAs.
Speaking professionally, as a psychologist and a researcher, the actions of the Fraser Institute are misleading and reprehensible.
Once again if the teachers were teaching the material in which they are supposed to there should be no concern. But on that note you need to remember that each school has new staff and administration every year and the results could be different based on that.
FAS should be used to help with curriculum/how a student is doing and NOT for ranking schools!!
I'm sure ranking schools adds unhealthy pressure for those that score low but there needs to be a body of data to which parents can refer when comparing/contrasting schools...that said, a school's ranking by the Fraser Institute should NOT be solely based upon FSA's.
I have known that the Fraser Institute scoring exists but in talking with teachers in the past about their relevancy...I see them as a tool for schools and administration to work together to achieve education goals
I think that trying to rank the system is wrong, the school system is supposed to be standard in the curriculum that is being taught. So if students learn at different levels and speeds, ranking the school just puts added pressure on the teachers and students which is unnecessary.
Only the government can put a stop to the ridiculous ranking of schools. They have the power to make and change laws. If they truly cared, they would have already put a stop to the rankings.
I think if the information is used correctly, it should reflect how the students are grasping the basics, and how successful the methods are.
Does the Fraser Institute get paid for this project, and if so, how much?