



November 23, 2021

Ref: 251665

Sandra Nixon, Chair
Board of Education
School District No. 38 (Richmond)
Email: snixon@sd38.bc.ca

Dear Sandra Nixon:

Thank you for your email of November 4, 2021, on behalf of your District's Board of Education about your concerns with the Ministry of Education's approach to the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) data release practices.

Under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPPA), the Ministry of Education is obligated to release FSA results, within our [masking policy](#), in part to uphold public confidence in the quality of the education system. The FSA data were never intended to be used for ranking schools; ranking schools based on a narrow set of indicators does not accurately reflect the reality in our classrooms but paints a simplistic picture that ignores myriad other factors. The Ministry no longer proactively releases school-level FSA results publicly.

To promote the proper use of the data, the Ministry securely provides district and school-level results that may be utilized in a variety of ways. For instance, they may be used to inform strategies for early interventions to enhance success in a learner's education. The results of all students are an important source of information regarding traditionally underserved students and are used by rightsholders and stakeholders to monitor the outcomes of Indigenous students and those with disabilities and diverse abilities. The FSA is a valuable tool in supporting continuous improvement to the education system, for monitoring systemic barriers to equity and inclusion, and ensuring students have the support they need to develop their literacy and numeracy skills.

Provincial assessments are an effective support for student success. Having a robust assessment program is held as global best practice for any high-performing education system. In British Columbia, there is a strong connection between FSA scores, school completion and future success. Students who participate in the Grade 4 FSA have a greater likelihood of graduating high school on-time and transitioning into post-secondary than students who do not write the Grade 4 FSA. Assessment results help shape the support needed to meet the unique needs of every student, school, and district and contribute to what happens in the classroom.

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Teachers are encouraged to use the results to shape instruction and to facilitate conversations with students. Feedback from parents indicate they value having a system-wide validation of their child's performance, driving equity and inclusion.

Provincial assessments are of value and purpose: they are important indicators to monitor educational outcomes that reflect systemic barriers to equity and inclusion as well as to monitor initiatives implemented towards continuous systemic improvement. Additionally, assessment provide valuable information to educators on how class of students are learning key concepts, and to parents on how their individual child is learning the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy. The FSA is an important check-in to ascertain potential learning impacts and to inform appropriate mitigations and responses.

Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Scott MacDonald', with a stylized flourish at the end.

D. Scott MacDonald
Deputy Minister