



**VANCOUVER BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
School District No. 39  
**BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES**  
1580 West Broadway  
Vancouver, B.C. V6J 5K8  
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January 8, 2016

To the Parents and Guardians of Students in Grades 4 and 7

As the Board of Education Trustees for School District No. 39 (Vancouver), we wish to communicate our perspective on parent choice regarding student participation in the provincial Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) testing program. The FSA is given to all BC students in Grade 4 and 7 each year to assess basic knowledge and skills in reading, writing and numeracy. As a provincially prescribed program, all Grade 4 and Grade 7 students are expected to participate in FSA.

We believe strongly in the importance of effective assessment, which includes testing, to inform and guide student learning and instruction. We are therefore committed to developing and using various assessment instruments and practices that provide a combined picture of each student's performance. As a Board, we respect the right and responsibility of parents and students to determine whether or not the student's participation in the FSA is in the best interest of the student.

**Facts about the FSA**

- FSA is a set of three tests. It covers specific reading, writing and numeracy skills in the provincial curriculum.
- FSA measures skills students gain over several school years, not only in a single year.
- The reading and numeracy tests consist of multiple-choice questions and written answers. The writing section has two writing tasks – one shorter and one longer.
- FSA scores are not letter grades or percentages; they do not count towards a students' report card mark.
- Other FSA information is available at [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa) and on the BCCPAC website at [www.bccpac.bc.ca](http://www.bccpac.bc.ca)

**Participation Guidelines**

- Principals determine if students are excused from one, two or all three FSA components based on Individual Education Plans and English Language Learning (ELL) proficiency.
- Parents may request the principal excuse a student in the event of a family emergency, a lengthy illness, or other extenuating circumstances.

Board of School Trustees:  
Mike Lombardi – Chairperson  
Janet Fraser – Vice-Chairperson  
Joy Alexander Patti Bacchus Fraser Ballantyne  
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**Request to Excuse a Student from Participating**

As a parent or guardian, should you wish to request that a student be excused from participating in the 2016 FSA, please provide the following information and submit this document to the Principal of the student's school by **Monday, January 18, 2016**.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Division: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

I am requesting that the above-mentioned student be excused from participating in the 2016 FSA due to (check one):

Family emergency

Illness

Extenuating circumstance \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent / guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name

Please note: A student who is excused from participating will be marked "absent" during the testing period. His or her standing on the test will be recorded as "performance level unknown".

Should you have questions or points you wish to raise concerning the above information, please direct these to the Principal of the school involved.

Sincerely,



Mike Lombardi  
Chairperson

For information on FSA assessments from DPAC please visit: [www.vancouverdpac.org](http://www.vancouverdpac.org)