



**VIA EMAIL**  
Ref: 136418

January 14, 2010

Dear Parents:

If you have a child in BC's education system, then you have probably heard about the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) test for grades 4 and 7. I want to take this opportunity to explain to parents why the provincial government believes these tests are important for your children's future.

The FSA is a set of reading, writing and numeracy tests, developed by BC teachers, administered each winter to BC students. The purpose of the FSA test is to provide parents and teachers a "snapshot" of how students are performing across the province. The FSA provides important data so we can find out if student achievement is improving over time. It also allows us to track individual students to measure how they are doing in reading, writing and math problem-solving.

Since 2000, FSA has provided policy makers, school districts and parents with an ongoing measure of how well students are performing in relation to provincial standards. Every province in Canada uses assessment tools similar to the FSA and it is endorsed by leading education experts. We know that there is a very strong correlation between a child's FSA scores and their future success in completing school. In other words, the earlier that we discover there is a problem with a student's performance, the faster teachers and principals can intervene to help them.

For example, Grade 7 students who met or exceeded expectations in reading achievement obtained a completion rate ranging from 90 to 100 percent. Of those Grade 7 students who did not meet expectations for reading, only two-thirds completed high school within the six-year time frame.

As a parent, you have the right to know how your child is performing, and the province's FSA program is an essential tool to help students achieve positive educational outcomes. With individual student results, you can engage in meaningful conversations with your child's teacher about appropriate interventions to help your child succeed.

In preparation of this year's FSA, which begins this Monday, January 18, 2010, I have posted additional information for parents on the Ministry's website ([www.gov.bc.ca/bced/](http://www.gov.bc.ca/bced/)). I encourage you to review this information to learn more about how the FSA supports your child's learning. Sample questions and tests can also be found at this site.

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In short, FSA is part of the provincial government's accountability and responsibility to parents. It is an important building block for your child's future success as a student. Contrary to misinformation, the FSA is not optional—if you have any questions, please contact your child's principal.

Please ensure your child writes this year's FSA. It might be one of the most important steps you take in preparing them for their future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Margaret D.". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M" and a stylized "D." at the end.

Margaret MacDiarmid  
Minister