

ABBOTSFORD DISTRICT TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION BULLETIN

DATE: January 27, 2009

PLEASE POST

TO: All Staff Reps
Grade 4 & Grade 7 Teachers

District expectations of teachers regarding the FSA

By a provincial vote, BCTF members have taken the collective action to oppose the misuse of the FSA by refusing to prepare for, administer, and mark the FSA. Yesterday, in response to the BCTF position, the District sent letters to all grade 4 and 7 teachers that describe the District's expectations regarding the FSA. The letters do not direct teachers and are not disciplinary in any way.

Regarding preparation for the FSA: Teachers routinely prepare students for examinations by exercising sound educational practice to teach the curriculum and, if the FSA is a measure of students' curricular progress, no special preparation is necessary. Even Minister Bond has publicly agreed that special preparation is not necessary. Special preparation, in the form of cramming, is not even sound educational practice. Learning is not enhanced and actually is harmed by excessive test specific preparation. Teachers have the professional autonomy, guaranteed by the Collective Agreement, to decide the methods by which curriculum is taught and we urge teachers to exercise that autonomy by spending classroom time more productively than in preparation for the FSA.

Regarding marking the FSA: We have been advised by the District that marking the FSA will be voluntary, as it was last year. In accord with the provincial vote we encourage teachers to avoid marking the FSA.

Regarding the administration of the FSA: The District has not yet directed teachers to administer the FSA. At the present time we assume that teachers will abide by the provincial decision and not administer the FSA.

Rick Guenther
President, ADTA