



School District 72

Campbell River, B.C.

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May 6, 2010

The Honourable Margaret McDiarmid
Minister of Education
P.O.Box 9056
Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, B.C.
V8W 9E2

COPY

Dear Minister McDiarmid:

Re: Foundation Skills Assessment Release of Results

In its March 16th public meeting, the Campbell River trustees unanimously passed a motion that “the Board of Education of School District No.72 write a letter to the Minister of Education restating opposition to the release of the school level Foundation Skills Assessment results and the subsequent misuse of the results by the Fraser Institute in ranking schools”.

As the protracted dispute between the BCTF and the Ministry of Education shows no signs of resolution, and the public has become increasingly polarized on the value of FS assessment as evidenced by a growing cohort of parents choosing to have their children opt out, the outcome of the tests has become increasingly unreliable. The Ministry’s new practice of including the results of ALL eligible students, whether or not they write the tests, further distorts the conclusions of what was already a highly unreliable standardized test due to ongoing inconsistencies and disagreements regarding preparation and administration.

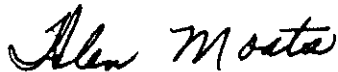
Although the ownership of the dispute is not with Boards of Education, the negative outcome very much affects their credibility and ability to get on with the heart of public education: learning. The trustees of School District No.72 are particularly concerned about the public release of questionable results and their subsequent use by the Fraser Institute to rate schools in a highly problematic and inequitable way. In a province as diverse and varied as ours, with the highest child poverty rate in Canada, one might seriously question the ethics of such a practice.

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Please give your earnest consideration to finding a solution to the unrelenting and deep-seated opposition that many stakeholders have to this provincial practice of data release. Many suggestions have been made toward a resolution which would accomplish the assessment goals of the Ministry and alleviate the concerns of trustees, parents, and educators. We urge you to seek this resolution before the next cycle of testing in 2011.

Yours sincerely,



Helen Moats
Chairperson

c: Board of Education, School District 72
Thomas Longridge, Superintendent of Schools
Lyle Boyce, Secretary-Treasurer
BCSTA for distribution to all Boards of Education
Steve Koebel, CRPVPA President
Neil Thompson, CRDTA President
Colleen Krasman, DPAC Chair
Deborah Taylor, CUPE
Claire Trevena, MLA