

Take a stand against standardized testing and hurtful school rankings: An open letter to BC families from BCTF President Teri Mooring

Dear families,

Once again, the BC government has decided to proceed with its controversial practice of standardized province-wide testing by administering the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) to all Grade 4 and 7 students across BC in the coming weeks.

What you aren't told is that *the FSA is not a required part of the BC curriculum, and that you have the right to withdraw your child from the test in the case of a family emergency, lengthy illness, or other extenuating circumstances.*

I know you care deeply about your child's education, as do their teachers. Our mutual commitment to your child is why we want to help you make an informed choice regarding the FSA.

BC teachers oppose the FSA for two main reasons: It's not helpful to students, teachers, or families; and it's making existing inequities worse. Here's what we mean by that:

- **It's not helpful to students, teachers, or parents**
 - Test results do not lead to increased supports for students.
 - Additional resources are not allocated to schools due to FSA results.
 - The test is not a reliable set of data for measuring individual student success, rather it was designed as a system-wide check.
 - Test preparation and administration takes away from valuable classroom teaching and learning time.
 - Standardized testing creates anxiety for many students.
- **It's making existing inequities worse**
 - The Fraser Institute, a right-wing think tank, misuses FSA results to unscientifically and inappropriately rank BC schools, entrenching both real and perceived inequities.
 - These tests disproportionately affect students in low-income and racialized communities, often resulting in a diminished sense of pride and community for students and families.
 - Standardized testing cannot accommodate for unique and varied student needs and may create feelings of inadequacy for diverse learners.

Teachers believe the FSA is unreliable, unhelpful, and a distraction from the important learning and authentic individualized assessment happening in your child's classroom.

We support parents having the right to make decisions for their children, especially regarding activities that fall outside of provincial curriculum, such as the FSA.

Many parents over the last several years have decided to withdraw their children from the FSA, and you can too. Please know you have the support of teachers from across the province.

Thank you for everything you do to support your child's learning. For more information and to download an FSA withdrawal letter, visit bctf.ca/fsa.

Teri Mooring
President