

23 September 2021

Board of Education,  
School District 68 Nanaimo-Ladysmith  
395 Wakesiah Ave.  
Nanaimo, BC.  
V9R 3K6

Dear Trustees,

I write to you today to request that Trustees reaffirm the position taken last year with regard to parental withdrawal of their children from the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA), and extend the following motion for another school year:

***That the Board of Education support parents' right to free and informed consent regarding their child's participation in the Foundation Skills Assessment through the direction to Principals to not contact parents in response to the withdrawal of their child from the Foundational Skills Assessment (for the school year 2020/21).***

While stakeholders are having meaningful discussions about ways to transform the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) to better meet the Ministry of Education's intent in administering it and to safeguard the ethical use of the data generated, the format of the test remains unchanged for this year. Therefore the FSA continues to be problematic for all the reasons thoroughly canvased in previous correspondence, including, but not limited to:

- the unethical and unfair use of data to rank schools,
- the lack of alignment of the FSA to Ministry curriculum and the learning that is happening in the classroom,
- the lack of utility of the results in generating learning supports for schools and classrooms,
- the extensive teaching time lost to administration of the FSA,
- the lack of technology infrastructure to prevent crashes and freezes,

I would be remiss not to mention the mental health impact of the FSA on children, as well. During a regular year, it is not uncommon to hear about test anxiety, that is often amplified by the administration of these assessments on computers that are prone to crashing and freezing. This is an unnecessary, and potentially unhealthy stress to be putting on students at any time and especially during a global pandemic where stress levels are high, resilience is

low, and both the Ministry of Education and School District Board of Education have recognized mental health as a significant concern.

The NDTA supports those parents who recognize the faults in the Foundation Skills Assessment, its model and administration, its potential detrimental impact on student well-being; and the right of parents' to make private decisions unfettered by principals' questioning or coercion. We hope that Trustees will again put the same trust and support into parental decision making regarding the FSA that was given last year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy Inscho', with a large, loopy flourish extending to the right.

Jeremy Inscho  
NDTA President

Cc: Karen Matthews, Manager – District Administration Centre  
Mark Walsh, Secretary Treasurer.