



Chilliwack
School District

Important Information for Parents: Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) Grades 4 and 7

January – February 2010



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What is the FSA?

- An assessment of Grade 4 and 7 Reading, Writing, and Numeracy (Mathematics) that takes place all across BC every year.
- Created by BC educators, including classroom teachers.
- Administered and scored by local teachers.
- Completed across January and February.
- Takes about 5 hours of student time.
- Does not count for grading or promotion.



Which students write the FSA?

- Required for all students in grades 4 and 7.
- Only Principals may excuse students.
- They may excuse **ONLY** those students:
 - Whose special/language needs keep them from participating meaningfully; or
 - Who have medical disabilities at the time of the writing.



How is the FSA scored?

- Much of the assessment is scored electronically.
- Classroom teachers score the written sections.
- Your child will be assessed as *Not Yet Meeting*, *Meeting*, or *Exceeding* the BC Performance Standards for Reading, Writing, and Numeracy.
- Your child will not receive a letter grade.
- You can read the Scoring Guide at <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa/training.htm> Click on <Scoring Guide>.



Frequently Asked Questions

- Should my child worry about the FSA?
 - No. The FSA does not count for grading or promotion, but just helps us learn what we need to do to help children across the province learn.
- Will my child get everything right?
 - Not likely. The FSA includes questions above grade level to help gather information about how many students are exceeding expectations.
- What happens if my child is “not yet meeting” expectations?
 - The school will study this information in light of the teacher’s assessments to see what support your child might need.



How do Chilliwack's students do?

- Most Grade 4 students do very well:
 - Reading: from 2004 – 2008, about 80% met or exceeded provincial standards. This is well above provincial average.
 - Writing: from 2004 – 2008, about 90% met or exceeded provincial standards. This is about provincial average.
 - Numeracy (Math): from 2004 – 2008, about 85% met or exceeded provincial standards. This is above provincial average.



How do Chilliwack's students do?

- Many Grade 7 students are struggling:
 - Reading: from 2004 – 2008, about 68% met or exceeded provincial standards. This is below provincial average.
 - Writing: from 2004 – 2008, about 80% met or exceeded provincial standards. This is about provincial average.
 - Numeracy (Math): from 2004 – 2008, about 70% met or exceeded provincial standards. This is below provincial average.



How are these results used?

- This is “low stakes” for students because the results are NOT used for grading or promotion.
- The Chilliwack School District uses these results to help make “big picture” decisions about staffing, resources, and programs.
- Schools use the results to develop plans for supporting student learning.



How can I help my child?

- Read the information at
<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa/info/welcome.htm>
- Help your child practice at
http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa/sample_tests.htm
- Show your child the sample report
http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa/results_interpret.htm
- Cheer your child on.



Backgrounder:

What is the history of the FSA?

- Introduced in 2000 by the NDP government.
- Replaced the Provincial Learning Assessment Program that began in 1975.
- Initially, administered to all students in Grades 4, 7 and 10.
- Since 2004, written only by students in Grades 4 and 7: Grade 10 students now write provincial exams.



Backgrounder:

How is the FSA developed?

- Tables of specifications are established.
- Items are written, reviewed and revised by the development teams, including practicing teachers.
- Items are pilot-tested in classrooms, then analyzed and revised as needed by teams of classroom teachers and subject specialists.
- Items that seem insensitive, too easy/difficult, or that create anxiety are removed.