

North Vancouver Parent Advisory Council
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April 7, 2008

HONOURABLE SHIRLEY BOND
PO BOX 9045 STN PROV GOVT
VICTORIA BC V8W 9E2
Telephone: 250 387-1977, Fax: 250 387-3200

Dear Minister Bond,

The North Vancouver Parent Advisory Council (NVPAC) represents the PACs and parents of North Vancouver School District 44. We recognize that the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) test and the resulting use of its data has been the subject of controversy amongst stakeholder groups in the educational community for a number of years.

After consultation with our member PACs and individual parents, we believe it is unhealthy and unproductive to have a situation that creates angst and puts ongoing strain on the relationship amongst partner groups.

One concern is whether the original intent and motivation behind the FSA test is still valid and whether the results are meeting the needs of students, teachers, and administrators at both local and provincial levels. Another concern is the process currently in place for administering the FSA; a process that requires substantial time and financial commitment, but still leaves parties feeling disaffected, is begging to be reviewed to ensure its effectiveness.

In light of the situation surrounding the FSA testing, would it not be appropriate to call for a review regarding all aspects of the FSA process including, but not limited to, the following factors to determine whether:

- testing methods are appropriate. ie. test methodology and sample size;
- the data is useful for the assessment and improvement of learning outcomes of students;
- this is a good use of taxpayers' money. ie. evaluating whether there sufficient value in the FSAs to justify the cost of administering them;
- the information gathered is being used by outside organizations to discredit the public school system.

We are convinced that it is essential that the Ministry convene an appropriate representative stakeholder group which would meet to review, to evaluate, and to potentially redesign elements of the standardized testing process in order to address serious concerns with the current situation.

Simply put, the FSA is a continuing source of stress on the system and it should be looked at with the intention of improving the overall process to the benefit of our education system.

Respectfully,



Lisa Cartwright, Chair
On behalf of North Vancouver Parent Advisory Council (DPAC SD#44)

- cc. North Vancouver School District #44 – Superintendent John Lewis
- cc. North Vancouver School District #44 – Trustees
- cc. North Vancouver Teachers Association – Linda Watson
- cc. CUPE, Local 389 - Cindy McQueen
- cc. MLAs for North Vancouver - Ralph Sultan, Katherine Whittred, Daniel Jarvis
- cc. BCCPAC – President Kim Howland
- cc. North Vancouver NVPAC Executive, School DPAC Reps, and PAC Chairs