



## Rutland Elementary School

620 Webster Road, Kelowna, British Columbia, V1X 4V5  
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January 9, 2014

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Each year, grade 4 and 7 students participate in the *Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA)*, the B.C. Ministry of Education's annual assessment of reading comprehension, writing and numeracy (mathematics). This year's assessment will take place in several sessions between February 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014. The components are as follows:

- Part 1: Reading Comprehension – administered electronically (60 minutes) in the computer lab
- Part 2: Reading Comprehension Written Response Question (30 minutes) done in a classroom
- Part 3: Short Writing (30 minutes) – administered in a classroom
- Part 4: Long Writing (60 minutes) – administered in a classroom
- Part 5: Numeracy – administered electronically (60 minutes) in the computer lab
- Part 6: Numeracy Written Response (30 minutes) – administered in a classroom

### **Purpose of the FSA**

The main purpose of this assessment is to help the province, district and schools assess how well reading, writing, and numeracy are being addressed and to make plans for improvement. A secondary purpose is to give teachers, students, parents and guardians a limited, yet additional source of information about a student's performance in these important foundation skills.

### **Limitations of the FSA:**

The FSA provides a "snapshot" of how the province, district, schools, and individual students are doing in these assessment areas. FSA is only one of a wide range of strategies used in your child's school to assess their progress. Public school results should be discussed directly with school Principals who can put the results in context. Ranking schools or districts based on FSA results invites misleading comparisons that ignore the particular circumstances that affect achievement in each school.

### **Who Writes the FSA?**

According to the BC Ministry of Education legislation, all students are expected to write. Principals do not have the authority to excuse students unless he/she meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Students that are BC Ministry of Education 'designated' special needs students with an Individual Education Program (IEP). The student's disability must significantly impact their performance in reading, writing, or numeracy and cannot meaningfully participate in all or part of the assessment, even with adaptations.
- Students with IEPs who would need extensive adaptations or who would need such extended periods of time as to create a hardship for that student
- Students who seriously ill and are not able to attend school for an extended period of time

- Students who have previously written the FSA
- Students from families where there is a death, serious illness or other critical incident in the family (extenuating circumstances.)
- Students on an extended absence from school due to a vacation or a family trip
- Students who are reported and funded as receiving ESL support who have not yet reached a level of proficiency sufficient for them to provide meaningful responses to the reading or writing or numeracy sections of the FSA.

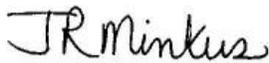
Principals are the ones who identify which students, if any, are excused from one, two or all three components of the FSA. Principals will notify a parent or guardian if they intend to excuse a student from participating in one or more components of the FSA.

You may subsequently receive information from the BC Teachers' Federation or local Teachers' Association expressing their concerns with the FSA. From the District's perspective, the intent of this letter is to clarify that it is the expectation of the Ministry of Education that all able students in grades 4 and 7 will write the assessment, unless they meet one of the above criteria.

If you feel your child has an extenuating circumstance (see list above) of which we are not aware, please contact me to discuss the situation. If you make the decision to withdraw your child from participation, it is important to note that you are then responsible for their supervision of your child during the scheduled administration of the assessment. A schedule of times when the FSA is to be written will be made available to your child's classroom teacher.

Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Sincerely,



James Minkus  
Principal

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### Rutland Elementary School Goal:

To exhibit a strong sense of individual moral courage and leadership to achieve a positive learning environment for all students.



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### School Mission Statement

Our mission, in partnership with parents and the community, is to provide a safe, positive environment where all students can experience success as they develop independence, pride in accomplishment and the self esteem to achieve their potential as life-long learners and responsible citizens.