



SCHOOL DISTRICT No.69 (QUALICUM)

January 11, 2019

Hon. Rob Fleming
Minister of Education
1020 Hillside Avenue
Victoria, BC V8T 2A3

via email: minister.educ@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Fleming:

At the December 2018 Regular Board Meeting of the Board of Education of School District 69 (Qualicum) Trustees passed the following motion:

THAT the Board Chair, on behalf of the Board of Education of School District 69 (Qualicum), write a letter to the Minister of Education requesting that the Ministry review how they share the data from the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) with the view to keeping the identity of school districts masked.

We understand that the issue of how FSA results are used and interpreted is not new and that the Minister would be fully aware of the concerns of many boards in BC. Premier Horgan himself has said "*students should be focused on a whole host of other issues, not writing tests that largely end up being used by think tanks to grade schools.*"

School Boards and other education stakeholders had high hopes that when the newly revised FSA was rolled out and implemented in the fall of 2017 that there would be protective measures in place to avoid abuse of data and information. Unfortunately that has not happened.

The BCSTA, on behalf of all school boards in BC had written your Ministry in Oct 2017 to "*ask that individual school results not be publically released. Any public circulation of school results inevitably leads to the public ranking of schools by outside groups. This ongoing practice is certainly harmful and unfortunate.*"

The response from the Deputy Minister stated, "*The Ministry does not endorse the use of FSA information to rank schools. I can assure you this issue is taken seriously and the Ministry is actively looking into options to preserve the value and intent of the FSA.*"

Also, many other school districts in the province have advanced the question of validity and reliability of FSA results to your Ministry with responses that the approach "*must be well informed and proactive*" and the first step to this approach was an "*analysis of the legal framework of collection and release of FSA information as it relates to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA), a review of policy, technical and program design and the identification of constraints and opportunities*".

/2

Two revised-FSA cycles have come and gone and Boards of Education still have no assurances that information for public consumption will be masked or otherwise unidentifiable of individual schools and districts.

After being aware of this problem and actively looking into options for more than a year, can your Ministry please inform us of the steps that have been taken to protect the value and intent of the FSA and mask results so they are not open to abuse?

Thank you,



Eve Flynn
Board Chair

c: Board of Education of SD69 (Qualicum)
Keven Elder, Interim Superintendent
Gillian Wilson, Assistant Superintendent

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