



**Central Okanagan
Public Schools**

Together We Learn

RE: Article "One-quarter of Kelowna elementary students 'below expectations'" November 26, 2020

It is disappointing to see the Daily Courier article on the Fraser Institute's ranking of schools. The flawed, narrow analysis by the Fraser Institute is a political report that has no validity in evaluating the quality of learning that goes on in our schools.

The Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) is an annual province-wide assessment of all B.C. students' academic skills in Grades 4 and 7, and provides parents, teachers, schools, school districts and the Ministry of Education with important information on how well students are progressing in the foundation skills of Reading, Writing, and Numeracy. The FSA results were never intended to rank schools as the Fraser Institute does every year.

Classroom teachers in our District use multiple assessments to determine where a child is in their learning, as this is what drives teachers' instructional planning and helps determine next steps for each child. The best way that parents can know how their child is doing is to ask their classroom teacher.

The FSA results provide only a part of the picture and only assess a portion of the broader outcomes that our students require to be successful. We know from evidence collected last year in our District that 87% of Grade 4 students were reading with fluency, accuracy and comprehension at benchmarks that are expected of children their age.

There are legitimate reasons why a student would not write the FSA. However, non-participation in the assessment results in a lower score in the Fraser Institute's analysis, which results in a deeply flawed metric to determine school quality.

The Fraser Institute is a private conservative 'think-tank' and its ranking of schools using the FSA results is broadly discredited throughout the educational community. The Central Okanagan Board of Education has requested, many times, that the Ministry of Education provide the data from the FSA directly to school districts so that it can be shared with parents, and not allow it to be misused by private organizations such as the Fraser Institute.

The Board of Education believes that it is unfortunate that the ranking of schools by the Fraser Institute is given so much attention by some media outlets.

The Board of Education applauds our staff for the work that they do every day to ensure our students have the knowledge and skills to be lifelong learners and healthy productive members of our global society.

Yours sincerely,

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