



# SCHOOL DISTRICT 5

## S O U T H E A S T K O O T E N A Y

April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Premier John Horgan  
West Annex Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Hon. Rob Fleming, Minister of Education  
Room 124 Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

**RE: BC Graduation Program Assessment**

Dear Sirs,

At our Public Board Meeting on February 12, 2019, the School District 5 (SD5), Southeast Kootenay Board of Education carried the following motion:

*M/S that the Board write a letter to both the minister of Education and the Premier of BC in support of the BCTF's letter on the BC Graduation Program....*

This motion follows considerable discussion around the letter sent to government from the BCTF, dated November 14, 2018. Our Board shares the BCTF's concern that government's additional assessment outlined in the Graduation Program was not part of the recommendation provided to government in the June 2014 Report submitted to government from the Advisory Group on Provincial Assessment (AGPA) –a group which included representatives from ALL partner groups in education—and that it should not be included as assessment requirements for the renewed BC Graduation Program.

The rationale provided by government for this additional assessment appears contrary to the findings of this Committee and its extensive work, which was the collaborative effort of all education stakeholders to co-construct BC's renewed curriculum and assessments.

This additional assessment is in fact a step backward and is counter to the amazing work our schools are doing around creating lifelong and resilient learning in our students. Learning through *timely* assessment enables students to master the necessary concepts and make corrections to their understanding of these concepts

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throughout their learning. Having an assessment at the end of Grade 12 does nothing to support this important learning —it simply allows government to “check a box” to satisfy public perception, by hitting the “easy button”.

Furthermore, according to the final report of the Advisory Group on Provincial Assessment (AGPA) past provincial assessments have been misinterpreted and that there is need for “...assessment within the educational system [to] be performed in an ethical, equitable and consistent manner.”

There is **zero** proof that when all students write an assessment, parents, teachers, schools and the province receive accurate information on how students are learning.

The MoE and stakeholders have expended years of research and expertise and considerable financial resources in order to revise the BC curriculum so that “students can succeed in the 21st Century”. **Yet, standardized testing cannot adequately capture or reflect personalized learning** (the focus of the revised curriculum), due to its inherently oppositional structure.

Personalized learning requires students to learn “by exploring their interests and passions” and then demonstrating understanding in uniquely personal ways, while standardized tests encourage and reflect “boiler-plate” learning.

In addition to the BCTF, our Board is aware that the Superintendents of BC provided very detailed feedback to the Deputy Minister at the Fall 2018 meeting, and a subsequent, meeting on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Our Board concurs with the points made by the BC School Superintendents Association (BCSSA) in a follow-up letter sent to government, dated October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018. In this letter, the BCSSA also indicated that they do not support the changes to assessment made by government.

Specifically, they noted that “the changes:

- Do not support evidence-based practices regarding student learning
- Are not aligned with previously partner-developed recommendations
- Do not align with the K-9 educational program
- Were developed in isolation rather than co-constructed in the collaborative spirit of the transformation agenda process.”

Our Board, on behalf of students and parents and stakeholders strongly adds our voice to the voices of the BCTF and the BCSSA. Like these important stakeholder organizations, we urge your government to seriously reconsider what we believe

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are unsupportable decisions regarding the important issue of student assessment within the renewed BC Graduation Program.

Sincerely,



Frank Lento  
Board Chair, SD5

cc\*: Andrew Weaver, Leader, BC Green Party  
Andrew Wilkinson, Leader, BC Liberal Party  
Tom Shypitka, MLA Kootenay East BC  
Mary Polak and Dan Davies, Education Critics, BC Liberal Party  
Gordon Swan, President, BCSTA  
BCSTA for distribution to member Boards of Education  
Glen Hansman, President BC Teachers' Federation  
Kris Magnusson, Dean of Education, Simon Fraser University (SFU) and  
Blye Frank, Dean of Education, University of British Columbia (UBC),  
for distribution to the Advisory Group on Provincial Assessment  
(AGPA) participants  
Chris van der Mark, President, BC School Superintendents Association  
(BCSSA)  
Jen Mezei, President, BCCPAC  
Shelley Balfour & Chris Kielpinski, CFTA Co-Chairs  
Tara McKee, DPAC Chair  
Aaron Thorn, President, SD5 Administrators' Association  
Catherine Shaw, FACE BC Vancouver  
Summit 107 Radio  
Drive 102.9/B104 Radio  
Black Press  
Cranbrook Daily Townsman  
Elk Valley Herald  
e-know Online News  
Fernie Free Press

\*This correspondence is public and transparent. Please feel free to share and/or respond with comment.

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