


How to Excuse Your Child from the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA)

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Friday, January 09, 2015

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Test Anxiety


DIVISION OF EDUCATION SERVICES

Yes No

1. Are you aware of being really nervous on a test, maybe so nervous that you don't do your best and lose points, even though you've studied well and prepared?


2. Does your stomach ever get tight or upset before or during a test? Hands cold and sweaty? Headaches? Do you have trouble sleeping the night before a test?

3. Do you ever find your mind racing, or dull or "muddy," so that you can't think clearly while taking a test?

4. Do you ever forget material you studied and learned, maybe only to remember it later after the test is over?

5. Do you "overanalyze" questions, see too many possibilities, tend to choose the complex answer and overlook the simpler, correct one?

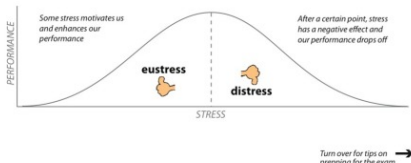
6. Do you make many careless errors on tests?



If you answered "yes" to two or more of these questions, you may be experiencing test anxiety.

Don't worry, you're not the only one.

Everyone is anxious about tests, of course. If you weren't, you wouldn't try. It's fairly obvious that too much stress is a problem. However, a certain amount of stress before the test is good. It acts as a motivator and can enhance performance.



Well, it's that time again: Foundation Skills Assessment in BC.

There are so many things wrong with the FSA tests. I won't go into them here, but you can read about many of them in these places:

1. [Foundation Skills Assessment: Another Dirty Trick](#)
2. The [BCTF on the FSAs](#).

And so you know, the BC Ministry of Education has an [information FAQ](#) for parents and a [brochure](#). Neither tells parents that/how they can exempt their students from this silly test. No surprise. While the government "says" it doesn't support the use of test results for school ranking, the BC Liberal Party is a huge fan of privatizing public services, so they're quite content to let it happen.

And if they wanted to help parents understand that the Fraser Institute school rankings are an inappropriate use of the FSA test results, they are doing an crushingly poor job of that. Which fits their ideology.

But based on this years [instructions for administrators](#), you still can simply exempt your kids without having to go to court or anything draconian. "Principals may excuse a student in the event of a family emergency, a lengthy illness or other extenuating circumstances." That means that you need to inform your student's principal of the fact that there are extenuating circumstances. Do it in a letter. And frankly, it's none of anyone's business what your extenuating circumstances are.

And if you would like a handy letter, here's one, from the Vancouver School Board's [website](#). Just copy it into a Word document, print it, fill it out and bring it to school.

Or you could use one prepared for you by the [BCTF](#), in Chinese, English, French and Punjabi.

Happy non-testing!