April 16, 2008

To: All Principals and Vice-Principals of BC Independent Schools

Re: Foundation Skills Assessment 2008

Over the past two months, many of you, especially those whose schools have Grade 4 and 7 students, have devoted considerable time and energy to the administration and scoring of the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA). I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation for your leadership and dedication to the students of British Columbia.

The changes to the FSA, including the February timing, the online sections, the school-based scoring and the new formats for reports to parents and reports to the public have all been made in order to give you, your school’s teachers and your students’ parents more timely and helpful information. Parents will receive not only a snapshot of their child’s performance in relation to provincial standards but also the written responses their child gave to specific reading, writing and numeracy questions.

The implementation of such significant changes will give schools and the province a new baseline—a new starting point—so we can see how we are improving our children’s learning in three important areas: reading, writing and numeracy.

Change is never without its challenges, and I would like to acknowledge that there have been challenges over the past few months in implementing the FSA. I sincerely thank you for your patience and perseverance. We will consult closely with you over the coming weeks and work hard to ensure that we learn from these challenges as we prepare for 2009.

As it is now April, some parents may have questions about the individual student FSA results that are being sent home. You may have questions about the FSA in general or about what information will be coming later this spring. Some helpful Ministry of Education websites are listed below. If you have additional questions, please phone the Measurement, Evaluation and International Languages Department (250-356-1320). Your call will be directed to the staff member in the best position to assist you.

Once again, I would like to thank you for all that you do every day to ensure that British Columbia’s children have the very best learning opportunities possible.

Sincerely yours,

James Gorman
Deputy Minister

Attachment