



NEWS RELEASE

Student participation rates—and scores—in provincewide tests plummet in BC high schools; less than half of Grade 10 students met numeracy standard in 2021/22

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For Immediate Release

VANCOUVER— One out of every two Grade 10 students in British Columbia failed to meet the proficiency standard in math, and participation rates in provincewide assessments have declined significantly, finds a new study released today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

“Historically, B.C. led the country in standardized testing, but major changes have essentially dismantled provincewide testing for high school students, and unfortunately, student achievement has declined,” said Paige MacPherson, associate director of education policy at the Fraser Institute and co-author of *The Collapse of Student Testing in BC High Schools*.

The study finds that participation in B.C.’s provincewide student assessments has dropped, and at the same time, fewer students are meeting the proficiency standards in numeracy and literacy.

“Ironically, the B.C. government calls the new student assessments ‘mandatory,’ but declining student participation rates show schools are not upholding this requirement,” MacPherson said.

In 2021/22, B.C.’s Grade 10 numeracy assessment had a 77.7 per cent participation rate, with only 48.2 per cent of Grade 10 students meeting the proficiency standard. By contrast, in 2015/16, 62.4 per cent of students were proficient, and the required math exam was mandatory, so all students wrote it.

Further, in 2021/22, 82.9 percent of Grade 10 students wrote the Grade 10 literacy assessment – a decline of 17.1 percentage points from the Grade 10 English exams, in which full student participation was mandatory for completing the course. In 2021/22, 76.4 percent of Grade 10 students were proficient in literacy – a drop from 80.5 percent of students who were proficient on the 2015/16 Grade 10 English exam.

“Fewer students are being tested in B.C., but the results we have demonstrate how far student performance has fallen in Grade 10,” said MacPherson.

“B.C. student performance is declining, as evidenced by weakening performance on international tests and provincial assessments, in parallel with the dismantling of the province’s formerly strong system of testing. Returning to rigorous provincewide testing is essential to getting B.C.’s education system back on track.”

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MEDIA CONTACTS:

Paige MacPherson, Associate Director, Education Policy
Fraser Institute

To arrange media interviews or for more information, please contact:
Drue MacPherson, 604-688-0221 ext. 721, drue.macpherson@fraserinstitute.org

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