



What Parents Need to Know

The students of our province need more time learning and less time wasted on unnecessary, bureaucratic testing

Provincial Exams in Grades 10–12

BC Science Teachers' Provincial Specialist Association surveyed their members about the effects of the Science 10 provincial exam on students and teachers. <http://www.bcscta.ca/Sci10%20Report.pdf>

What did teachers say?

- The Science 10 provincial final exam has caused a significant decrease, or entire deletion, of lab activities in Science 10 classrooms.
- There is a preponderance of direct instruction through lectures.
- Science 10 students now rarely have the opportunity to do group work, research projects and classroom presentations, take field trips, or explore local topics or current events.
- Teachers repeatedly stated that the Science teachers in their schools no longer wish to teach Science 10.
- The provincial exam prevents the development of sound pedagogical processes such as:
 - the active participation of the student.
 - the recognition of different learning styles and rates of learning.
 - learning as both an individual and a group process.

Teachers uniformly stated that their Science 10 students: were stressed by the heavy load of the curriculum and a final exam that requires them to memorize the meanings of hundreds of scientific terms, in addition to the narrow mathematical concepts that accompany the curricular topics.

Students with learning disabilities are quickly left behind as teachers rush through the curriculum.

Many students expressed a high level of dissatisfaction with learning Science and appear less interested in enrolling in Grade 11 Science courses such as Physics and Chemistry.

The survey includes the following recommendations:

1. The BCScTA recommends that the Science 10 provincial final exam be deleted from the provincial graduation requirements.
2. The BCScTA further recommends that schools reinitiate the development of school-based, teacher-developed Science 10 final exams.
3. The BCScTA further recommends that the ministry consider redeveloping and implementing a random-student assessment of process skills and laboratory skills.

What secondary teachers are concerned about:

Teachers are concerned about the effect of the Grade 10 and Grade 11 provincial exams and are opposed to any Grade 10 or 11 provincial exams. The existence of provincial exams has tended to narrow the curriculum, has focused teachers and students on content rather than skills and processes, and has had a negative impact on student motivation and learning.

Teachers believe the current Grade 10 and 11 provincial exams serve no useful purpose. The provincial graduation requirements have changed. Entry to Canadian post secondary institutions only depends on passing the Language Arts 12 or First Nations Studies 12 exam. All other Grade 12 exams are optional because post-secondary institutions no longer rely on them for entry.

http://bctf.ca/bcsca/prov_exams.htm

As a result, the number of students writing provincial exams has been dropping every year since provincial exams became optional in 2006–07. Fewer than 10% of students wrote the Biology 12 exam in 2010. <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/exams/opt/prov.pdf>

Teachers worry that these exams will continue to have a negative effect on our most vulnerable students and increase the dropout rate. Data collection and ranking of students through provincial exams do not support student learning.

The use of authentic assessment tools such as projects, classroom tests, quizzes, and writing samples have proven to be more effective in guiding instruction and advancing student learning.

Canadian Association of Principals <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/recordDetail?accno=EJ684767>

What teachers are doing:

- Teachers are advocating for the elimination of all provincial exams.
- Teachers are speaking out and working with parents to stop the loss of instructional time to unnecessary mandated testing.
- Teachers are working to shift the focus from the current emphasis on provincial student-data collection to strategies and solutions that meet the learning needs of Aboriginal students and other vulnerable students.
- Teachers are urging the BC Ministry of Education and education partner groups to support the development of authentic, relevant, and engaging classroom opportunities that address the needs of the whole child.
- Teachers will continue to support student learning with a variety of classroom assessment methods that are integrated with instruction.

What you can do:

- Join teachers in calling for the elimination of provincial exams.
- Talk to students and teachers about the impact of provincial exams on teaching and learning.
- Join other parents in a conversation on the impacts of standardized testing.

For further information: www.bctf.ca



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