

NEWS RELEASE

More than 60% of B.C. parents unable to correctly identify new 'descriptive' grading terms in schools

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For Immediate Release

VANCOUVER—The vast majority of parents in British Columbia easily understood letter grades on report cards but are now confused by the provincial government's new "descriptive" grading in schools, finds a new study published today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

"Parents in B.C. are clearly confused by the government's new grading system, which includes vague terms open to interpretation," said Paige MacPherson, associate director of education policy at the Fraser Institute and author of *B.C.'s Descriptive Grading on Report Cards Has Parents Yearning for the ABCs*.

In September 2023, the B.C. government replaced letter grades—such as A, B, C, D, etc.—on K-9 report cards with a "proficiency scale," which includes the descriptive terms "emerging" and "extending."

According to a new poll (conducted by Leger), 91 per cent of B.C. parents said the letter grade "A" was "clear and easy" to understand while 84 per cent said the letter grade "C" was "clear and easy" to understand. (For the sake of brevity, the poll only asked respondents about these two letter grades.)

Conversely, 66 per cent of B.C. parents were unable to correctly identify the meaning of the descriptive grade "extending" and 64 per cent of B.C. parents were unable to correctly identify the meaning of the descriptive grade "emerging."

"By switching from letter grades to descriptive grading, the government has made it much harder for parents to understand how their children are doing in school," said Michael Zwaagstra, a senior fellow at the Fraser Institute.

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