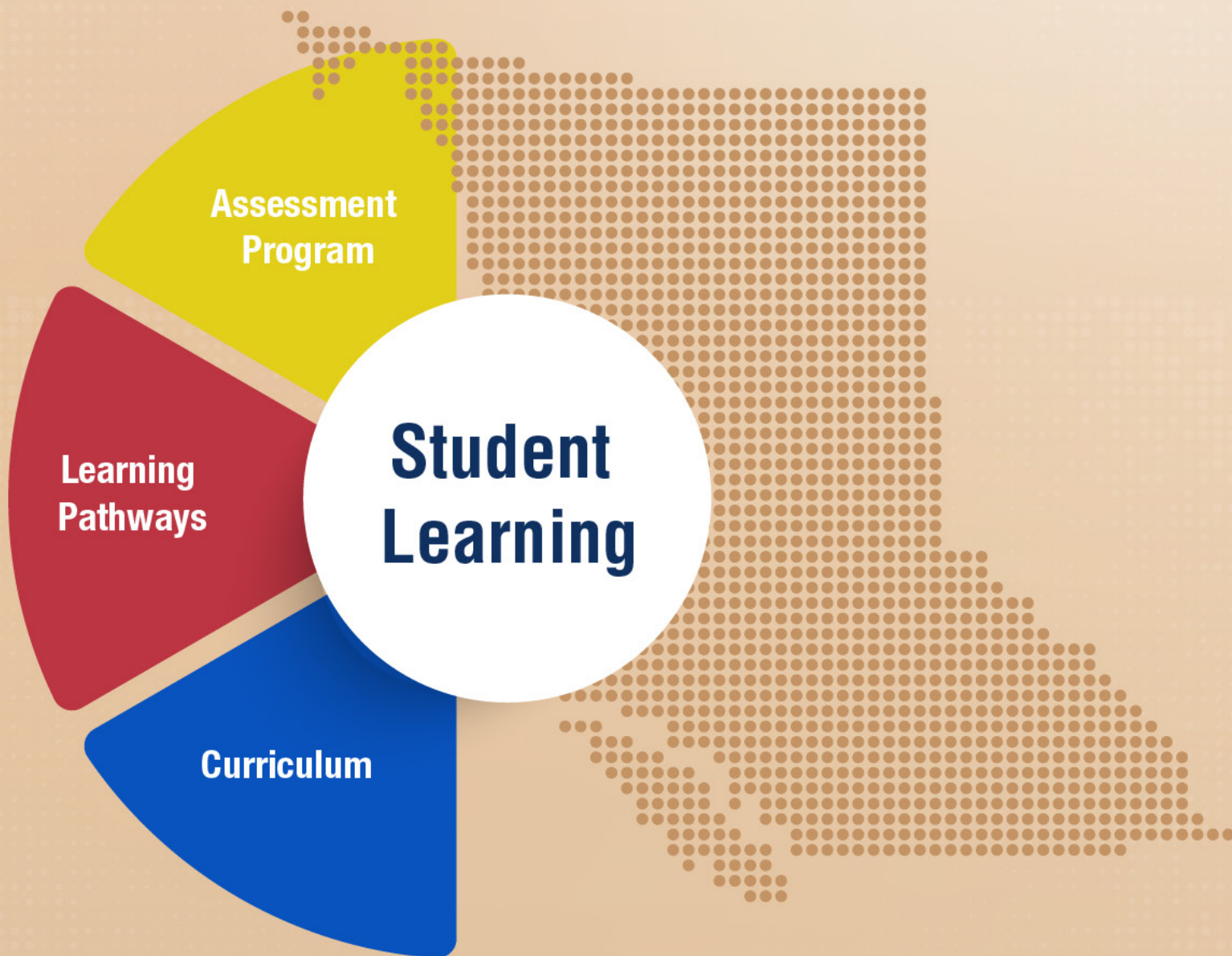


# **BRITISH COLUMBIA: A Focus on Student Learning and Improvement**



## Introduction

In a recent article<sup>1</sup>, I described British Columbia's (B.C.) reform of its provincial student assessment program, including the transition to e-assessments (in collaboration with its technology partner, [Vretta](#)), within the context of the Canadian large-scale assessment landscape and the evolution of the provincial assessments over time. During the past decade, B.C. has undergone substantial reform with regard to both its curriculum and assessment framework. The reform is intended to make education more relevant, engaging and appropriate for a modern, changing world. An explicit goal of the new curriculum is to improve school success for all Indigenous students by including the voices of Indigenous people in all aspects of the curriculum, including languages, cultures and histories. The current provincial assessment model requires that all students in Grades 4, 7, 10 and 12 complete annual assessments in numeracy and/or literacy (reading and writing) as follows: Grades 4 and 7 literacy and numeracy (the Foundation Skills Assessment program), Grade 10 literacy and numeracy and Grade 12 literacy assessments (Graduation Program). These assessments do not contribute to students' final grades or report cards; however, participation of Grade 10 and 12 students is required for graduation. Although the provincial assessments are not classified as formative or summative, the provincial, school district and school results are publicly reported and may be used for formative purposes. Formulated to be in alignment with the B.C. Curriculum and provincial student assessments, the B.C. Learning Pathways initiative provides resources that support cross-curricular literacy and numeracy learning with an emphasis on critical thinking and communication from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

The purpose of this article is to provide a high-level description of the province's approach to curriculum

and assessment. This includes the provision of data and information from provincial assessments, as well as learning resources for the "field" that together contribute to the province's focus on supporting student learning and improvement.

## Provincial Student Assessments

### Foundation Skills Assessments (FSA)<sup>2</sup>

The FSAs are administered annually in the fall (early October to early November). The assessments, which take about four hours of classroom time, include selected- and constructed-response questions/tasks. The constructed-response questions comprise writing and numeracy problem-solving tasks. The assessments have four components: collaboration activity, student booklet, online assessment and student reflection. The 15-minute, educator-led collaboration activity provides students with an opportunity to select one of two themes they would like to focus on during the literacy section of the student booklet. The student booklet consists entirely of constructed-response questions. The online component presents a variety of engaging and interactive selected-response questions. Following completion of the student booklet and online components, students respond to self-reflection questions (which are not scored) related to the assessment process. Samples of FSA assessment material can be accessed here.<sup>3</sup>

FSA reports are generated at the individual student, school, school district and provincial levels. For all assessments, students receive an overall score based on their responses, and these results are then placed into proficiency categories. The standards (cut points) for each of the categories of the proficiency scale are established through the professional judgement of educators during a standard-setting process. For FSA, students' results are placed into one of three proficiency

<sup>1</sup> Article authored by Dr. Richard Jones on October 12, 2023. Reimagining Assessment in British Columbia:

<https://rmjassessment.com/2023/10/12/reimagining-assessment-in-british-columbia/>

<sup>2</sup> Information in this section was obtained from the following source:

British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care. (2023, October 16). Foundation Skills Assessment Specifications. Retrieved December 6, 2024 from: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/assessment/foundation-skills-assessment/specifications>

<sup>3</sup> British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care. (2023, October 16). Foundation Skills Assessment Samples. Retrieved December 6, 2024 from: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/assessment/foundation-skills-assessment/fsa-samples>

levels: “Emerging,” “On Track” or “Extending” and are accompanied by performance descriptions, which are presented in the specifications document.

Interim individual student reports are ready for use by educators and students to share with parents by the end of November; the Ministry provides final reports to school districts by the end of January. These include student-level reports, as well as school- and district-level reports. The primary purpose of the FSA program is to help students, teachers, schools, school districts and the Ministry understand how well students are developing with regard to their literacy and numeracy skills. FSA results are not reported on students’ transcripts but are intended to be used in a formative way. (Information about reporting student and school results for all provincial assessments is provided in a subsequent section of this article.)

## Grade 10 Provincial Graduation Assessments<sup>4</sup>

The Grade 10 provincial graduation assessments are offered four times per school year (November, January, April, June) and are designed to be completed within two hours (extra time up to 60 minutes is provided). The assessments require students to apply literacy and numeracy knowledge and skills, acquired from their learning across subjects from Kindergarten to Grade 10, in authentic, real-life situations. Results are reported using a four-level proficiency scale: “Emerging,” “Developing,” “Proficient” or “Extending.” Detailed descriptions of each proficiency level are provided in the specifications document.

The literacy and numeracy assessments are structured into three components. For literacy, in Part A, students read a variety of texts (e.g.,

newspaper/magazine articles, blogs, infographics, social media posts) and respond to 15 marks worth of selected-response questions and write two constructed responses: a graphic-organizer and an extended response related to the texts. In Part B, students read a variety of texts, respond to 15 marks worth of selected-response questions, and select one of two writing tasks for an extended written response. In the self-reflection component, students respond to a series of four selected- and two constructed-response questions related to their experience with the assessment. Their responses are not scored. All components of the Literacy 10 assessment are administered online. In the first assessment component of numeracy, students answer a total of 24 selected-response online questions, which are computer-scored. In the second component, students choose two of four paper-based constructed-response problem-solving questions, and a self-reflection piece (similar to the literacy assessment) comprises the third component of the numeracy assessment. Samples of Grade 10 provincial graduation assessment material can be accessed here.<sup>5</sup>

## Grade 12 Provincial Graduation Literacy Assessment<sup>6</sup>

Like the Grade 10 assessments, the Grade 12 graduation literacy assessment is not course-specific but rather assesses knowledge and skills from students’ cross-curricular learning from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Designed to be completed within two hours (extra time up to 60 minutes is provided), the assessment session for Literacy 12 is offered four times per school year (November, January, April, June). The assessment measures students’ ability to use critical and reflective thinking and analysis to make meaning from a variety of continuous and non-continuous text types (e.g., newspaper/

<sup>4</sup> Information in this section was obtained from the following sources:

British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care. Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment: Specifications. Retrieved December 20, 2024 from: [https://bccpac.bc.ca/images/Documents/Resources/GLA\\_10\\_Specifications.pdf](https://bccpac.bc.ca/images/Documents/Resources/GLA_10_Specifications.pdf)

British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care. Grade 10 Graduation Numeracy Assessment: Specifications. Retrieved December 20, 2024 from: <https://bccpac.bc.ca/images/Documents/Resources/gna-10-specifications.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care. (2024, November). Grade 10 Literacy Assessment. Retrieved December 16, 2024 from: <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/provincial/grade-10-literacy-assessment> and

British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care. Grade 10 Numeracy Assessment. Retrieved December 16, 2024 from: <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/provincial/grade-10-numeracy-assessment>

<sup>6</sup> Information in this section was obtained from the following source:

British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care. Grade 12 Literacy Assessment: Specifications (Draft). Retrieved December 20, 2024 from: <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/pdf/assessment/grade-12-literacy-specs.pdf>



magazine articles, blogs, social media posts, instructions, websites, brochures, maps, charts and graphs) and to communicate their ideas or those found in the texts. Like Grade 10, the Grade 12 literacy assessment is administered in three parts. In Part A, students respond to 10 marks worth of selected-response questions related to the texts and then answer two critical-thinking constructed-response tasks: a graphic organizer question and an extended-response question associated with the texts. In Part B, students answer 15 marks worth of selected-response questions related to the given texts, and then they generate a constructed response in which they make personal connections (expressing their own knowledge and experiences) associated with the main idea of the section. Like Grade 10, students select one of two writing “pathways” for the extended written response. In the self-reflection section, students respond to four selected- and two constructed-response questions (which are not scored) related to their experience with the assessment, how they might improve their performance, and provide feedback for assessment developers to consider as they develop future assessments. All components of Literacy 12 are conducted online. Like all graduation assessments, individual student performance is described by four categories: “Emerging,” “Developing,” “Proficient” or “Extending,” described in the assessment’s specifications document. Samples of Grade 12 provincial graduation literacy assessment material can be accessed here.<sup>7</sup>

Detailed information about all aspects of the FSA, Grade 10 and Grade 12 assessments can be accessed via the assessments’ associated specifications documents.

## Student and School Reports

As mentioned previously, the provincial assessments are not defined as formative (assessment for learning) or summative (assessment of learning); they can be used together to improve student learning. It is the author’s interpretation, however, that the summative assessments are primarily used for formative purposes. The summative assessment results provide information that can be used for public accountability purposes and provide critically

important data for educators and school systems to improve future student performance. The following statement about the use of B.C. provincial assessment results is derived from summarizing the assessment specifications documents across assessments (with some adaptations by the author). Summative assessment results can be used formatively to:

- provide students with evidence of their literacy/ numeracy skills.
- support individual students by providing descriptive information for goal setting (i.e., using the information in the proficiency scales to set new learning goals).
- provide additional information for educators, allowing them to identify areas of strength and weakness.
- provide schools, districts and the ministry with system-level information regarding the extent to which students are proficient in literacy and numeracy.
- describe the proficiency levels of subgroups of a population (e.g., Indigenous students, English Language Learners, and students with a disability or diverse ability) for use by schools, districts, ministry and key education stakeholder groups.
- help inform decision making at all levels of the education system regarding literacy and numeracy.
- provide information for schools, districts and the ministry regarding performance trends in literacy and numeracy over time.

Individual student and school reports are fundamental to providing information that can be used to support student learning and improvement. Following is a high-level summary of the content of the various assessment reports. For the FSA, schools and districts can access individual student results and the school-level data report. The individual student report describes a child’s overall results separately for literacy and numeracy. The report indicates whether the student’s performance is classified as “Emerging,” “On Track” or “Extending” and is accompanied by detailed descriptions of

<sup>7</sup> British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care. (2023, August). Grade 12 Literacy Assessment. Retrieved December 16, 2024 from: <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/provincial/grade-12-literacy-assessment>

the performance categories. The school report is presented in a spreadsheet format to allow schools to create information graphs for instructional use. The report contains information about literacy and numeracy for each student in the school who sat the test. The content of the report is as follows:

- Student name
- Provincial education number
- Grade
- Number of selected- and open-response questions attempted
- Total raw score (out of the total possible)
- Proficiency level assigned
- The students' self-reflection responses are also provided (but not scored)

The Graduation Assessments reports contain information similar to those of the FSA. The individual student report indicates the overall proficiency level/classification ("Emerging," "Developing," "Proficient" or "Extending"), accompanied by detailed descriptions of each level. Raw scores, out of the total possible, are provided for each assessment component. At the school level, CVS file format and PDF reports provide proficiency scores organized by provincial education number or student name, respectively. Results, given as percentages, are provided for each component of the assessment.

Summary reports, infographics and other data at the school, school district and community levels can be accessed at: <https://studentsuccess.gov.bc.ca/>.

## B.C. Learning Pathways<sup>8</sup>

Closely aligned with the B.C. Curriculum and provincial assessments, the B.C. Learning Pathways provide educators with a series of cross-curricular literacy and numeracy support materials, which emphasize critical thinking and communication throughout the Curriculum. (Literacy and numeracy are stressed, because of their important connections with all learning areas.)

These resources help teachers create overarching learning opportunities that will support students develop these skills that comprise a large part of the provincial assessments. "B.C. Learning Pathways is an ongoing series of resources that support teachers in developing students' literacy and numeracy skills in all learning areas. The resources demonstrate how literacy and numeracy are connected with the entire K-12 curriculum, with all forms of classroom and provincial assessment, and with student reporting. Collectively, the resources support teachers in developing students who can think critically about the world around them, communicate their ideas and information clearly and authentically, and demonstrate their personal and social competencies in a meaningful way. B.C. Learning Pathways support students who learn in a variety of ways, at different rates, and in different contexts. Together, the resources support teachers with planning, teaching, classroom assessment, and reporting of student learning."

Currently, the B.C. Learning Pathways include four resources (additional materials are in development):

- B.C. Learning Pathways: A Guide for Teachers
- K-12 Learning Progressions in Literacy and Numeracy
- Curricular Connections
- Teaching and Learning Stories

## B.C. Learning Pathways: A Guide for Teachers<sup>9</sup>

The teaching and learning guide is meant to be a starting point for teachers to learn about the B.C. Learning Pathways initiative and how it supports educators by providing an overview of the resources that are available, their purposes, and how teachers can purposely incorporate literacy and numeracy learning opportunities into their teaching practice. The guide's introduction provides information about the goals of the B.C. education system and the curriculum reform/redesign. Essentially, the redesign involved moving away from a primary focus on content to an approach that balances important

<sup>8</sup> Information in this section was obtained from the following source: British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care. (2024). Learning Pathways. Retrieved October 21, 2024 from: <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/learning-pathways>

<sup>9</sup> Information in this section was obtained from the following source: British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care. (2024). Learning Pathways: A Guide for Teachers. Retrieved December 25, 2024 from: <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/pdf/learning-pathways/a-guide-for-teachers.pdf>

content with key concepts and competencies. “Classroom assessment and reporting shifted to align with these changes. Teachers are no longer primarily focused on students’ memorization of facts. They also plan for, teach, and report student learning on the competencies (skills) they demonstrate during their learning, in relation to the provincial curriculum.” (p.2) The guide explains that reporting is fundamental to student learning, and the manner of reporting is also changing to better align with the redesigned curriculum. Students in Grades K-9 receive a score on the proficiency scale and descriptive feedback, while those in Grades 10-12 receive descriptive information about their performance in addition to letter grades and percentages.

The B.C. Learning Pathways teacher guide gives high-level summaries of K-12 learning progressions in literacy and numeracy, curriculum connections, as well as teaching and learning stories. (Resources on these topics are provided separately and will be described later in this article.) The following topics are also addressed within the guide:

- Classroom planning, teaching and assessment
- How B.C. Learning Pathways help communicate student learning
- Incorporating literacy and numeracy into the classroom

## K-12 Learning Progressions in Literacy and Numeracy<sup>10</sup>

The K-12 learning progressions concept is meant to demonstrate what the continuum of proficiency looks like from Kindergarten to Grade 12, while supporting teachers to implement the B.C. Curriculum. (It highlights the cross-curricular core competencies of communication, thinking and personal and social skills demonstrated by students proficient in literacy and numeracy.) In direct alignment with the B.C. Curriculum, the K-12 Learning Progressions support teachers by helping them to “purposefully incorporate the development of key literacy and

numeracy skills into their teaching practice” and to “plan and deliver lessons and activities to provide formative assessment to students, and to communicate student learning to students, parents, and caregivers.”

Comprehensive grade-level proficiency descriptors are provided, in tabular form, by “aspects” and “sub-aspects.” For example, in literacy, an aspect is “Comprehend Texts (e.g., Makes meaning from text)” and a sub-aspect is “Interprets Texts (Examines a text or texts to support comprehension),” and in numeracy, an aspect is “Interpreting,” and a sub-aspect is “Understands the real-world problem.” The learning progressions resource also provides graphic representations of literacy and numeracy learning (presented in a circular format), which demonstrate that the student is at the centre, each aspect is of equal value for the learner, and learning is ongoing.

## Curricular Connections<sup>11</sup>

This resource states that “The curricular connections are a collection of learning opportunities developed by K-12 teachers in various learning areas. They show how aspects of literacy and numeracy connect and support students’ development of curricular competencies across different areas of learning. The Curricular Connections are intended to provide teachers with examples of how to incorporate literacy and numeracy into their classroom teaching and learning opportunities, while implementing the B.C. Curriculum. While teachers are not expected to implement the specific activities, they do provide examples and demonstrate how teachers across the province are working to develop their students’ literacy and numeracy skills in support of the learning standards of the curriculum.”

The resource provides, for each curricular aspect/sub-aspects, the grade band, learning area (subject), curricular competencies and examples of related student learning opportunities. The following two charts give one example of the type of information provided for each of literacy and numeracy among the large and diverse amount of information provided.

<sup>10</sup> Information in this section was obtained from the following source:  
British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care. (2024). K-12 Learning Progressions. Retrieved December 29, 2024, from: <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/learning-pathways/k-12-learning-progressions>

<sup>11</sup> Information in this section was obtained from the following source:  
British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care. (2024). Curricular Connections. Retrieved December 29, 2024, from: <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/learning-pathways/curricular-connections>

## Literacy

Aspect/Sub-Aspect	Grade Band	Learning Area	Curriculum Competency	Student Learning Opportunity
Comprehends text (Makes meaning from text) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interprets texts</li> <li>• Makes connections</li> <li>• Analyzes texts</li> </ul>	2-3	Science (3)	Identify First Peoples' perspectives and knowledge as sources of information	Students listen to and read multiple locally developed texts about the local ecosystem, landscape, or environment. Through small-group discussion, they analyze the texts and make connections with the place or living thing described.

## Numeracy

Aspect/Sub-Aspect	Grade Band	Learning Area	Curriculum Competency	Student Learning Opportunity
Applies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Translates scenario into a mathematical problem</li> <li>• Represents the mathematical problem</li> <li>• Develops a plan of approach</li> </ul>	4-5	Physical and Health Education (4/5)	Identify and describe opportunities for and potential challenges to participation in preferred types of physical activity at school, at home, and in the community	Students develop a survey to interview local community members (e.g., family members, other students, neighbours) to find out about local needs for better access to community spaces, such as playgrounds, parks, or gyms. Students learn about different quantitative and qualitative survey questions in order to obtain the information they need to answer their research question.

## Teaching and Learning Stories<sup>12</sup>

This resource provides a series of teaching and learning stories from educators across the province. The B.C. Ministry of Education and Child Care introduces and summarizes the resources as follows.

“Some of the most meaningful professional learning comes from connecting with colleagues. These Teaching and Learning Stories come from teachers from across British Columbia. Teachers from various learning areas and grades wanted to share examples

of how they incorporated Literacy and Numeracy into their planning, instruction, and classroom assessment processes, and show off their success.

The Teaching and Learning Stories were developed by teachers to share their experiences in using the K-12 Learning Progressions to support student growth in literacy and numeracy through their planning, teaching, and assessment. The Teaching and Learning Stories also include examples of proficient student work and the teacher's reflection as to why the work is assessed as proficient.

<sup>12</sup> Information in this section was obtained from the following source:

British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care. (2024). Teaching and Learning Stories. Retrieved December 30, 2024, from: <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/learning-pathways/teaching-and-learning-stories>

Teachers have also included additional reflections on the learning opportunity and/or how they used the BC Learning Pathways to support their planning, teaching, and assessment processes.... The stories...represent some of the wide variety of teaching and learning happening in BC schools: teaching styles such as inquiry, outdoor education, self-assessment and reflection, play- and game-based learning, place-based learning and community service.” The stories are organized by grade bands: Kindergarten to Grade 3, Grades 4 to 9, and Grades 10 to 12.

## Next Steps

In addition to the initial B.C. Learning Pathways work, the Ministry has received significant feedback from teachers, academics, and advocates regarding the need for further support to educators in teaching foundational literacy and numeracy skills. During the 2024/25 school year, the Ministry has been working with a new teacher team to develop supports for foundational language arts (reading, writing, oral language) and math skills, which will include:

- A sequence for skill development for students that aligns with the Language Arts and Math Curriculum from K-12.
- A wide range of Teaching and Learning Stories, with examples that demonstrate how to develop students’ language arts and math skills.

This work represents Phase Two of the B.C. Learning Pathways initiative and will demonstrate how the foundational skills in language arts and math can be developed alongside cross-curricular literacy and numeracy skills (covered in the Cross-Curricular K-12 Learning Progressions) developed in Phase One of the project.

## Educator Voice

It is one thing to review and summarize the descriptions of provincial curriculum and assessment initiatives from official public-facing documents, but to gain an understanding of how these programs are received and implemented in the field, it is helpful to engage in conversations with school-level persons who have experience with the initiatives. To this end, the author conducted a limited number of interviews

with educators from five public and independent school systems across the province.

The educators (classroom teachers, teacher-librarians, participants in school/school district committees, members of district central offices and those who have been involved with Ministry work) brought a variety of perspectives and experiences to the conversation. The following information emerged via the educator discussions.

## Provincial Student Assessments

The educators mentioned that schools and school districts use the provincial student assessment data from the FSA and graduation assessments for formative and student learning purposes. The Ministry provides relatively generic statements about using assessment data, and they offer webinars to various groups, such as principals, vice-principals and district administrators, as well as educators who have responsibility for staff development. The Ministry’s website contains helpful videos and materials for teachers to better understand the assessments and the value of information derived from them. The analysis of raw data from selected- and constructed-response questions, item-level analyses and trend data, provide information that is used to give insights into school- and district-wide strengths and weaknesses, which in turn can be used to adjust classroom instructional strategies and inform professional development for educators. During one discussion, for example, the school administrator discussed the challenges faced by students in literacy and numeracy in a particular school. They mentioned the students have a particularly hard time understanding charts and graphs. The school has been tracking the assessments for several years, and there has been a trend of declining numeracy proficiency. Consequently, the school is investigating the reasons behind this tendency in order to plan student learning improvement strategies. In the same school, assessment data are used to inform school growth goals, and the results are shared with other schools. During the conversations, educators expressed concerns about the apparent underutilization of provincial student assessment data across the province. They theorized that this may be due to a lack of understanding about the



availability of data and how to access, analyze and use it effectively. One educator explained that once teachers understand the data's usefulness/value, they become enthusiastic about accessing and using it. Two other examples of the use of the assessments and resulting data emerged from the discussions. The representative of one district explained that some school districts use locally developed assessments, modeled after the province's tests, that provide useful formative information that can be used to develop students' learning skills and hence prepare them for the provincial assessments. In another instance, the educator indicated that they utilize Power BI to conduct strand and sub-population analyses to provide additional supports to teachers and students.

## B.C. Learning Pathways

The Learning Pathways, introduced in the past three/four years, aim to define what student performance in literacy and numeracy looks like across the curriculum from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Although they are not mandated, they are encouraged, and it was noted that the shift in mindset required for effective implementation can be challenging, especially in secondary schools, where the focus has been on subject-area performance and the assignment of marks/grades. During this early phase of implementation, teachers are integrating the pathways into their classrooms and providing feedback to the Ministry on their effectiveness. The educators interviewed expressed the view that although awareness has increased, many teachers are still unaware of the existence of the Learning Pathways and that it is not yet widely adopted, and furthermore, it was pointed out that initially there was resistance from teachers who felt that developing cross-curricular literacy and numeracy skills outside of the English Language Arts and Math classrooms were an additional burden (an add-on to their workload). Consequently, the educators interviewed believed there is a need for more communication about the initiative's purpose and benefits and to demonstrate how it can actually support/facilitate teachers' work. It was suggested that an effective implementation model involves teachers, teacher-librarians and other educators working together

in classrooms to demonstrate Learning Pathways and cross-curricular connections in literacy and numeracy. Generally, the educators explained that they work with teaching staff in various schools and encourage them to collaborate with teachers in other departments that have similar activities and often focus on the same skills. They emphasized the importance of starting with familiar tasks and breaking them down to identify the literacy and numeracy standards being assessed. Although all of the Learning Pathways resources were considered important and valuable, many expressed a preference for certain resources that provide a good introduction to the initiative, such as the Quick Scales (in the K-12 Learning Progressions resource) and the Teaching and Learning Stories. The educators with whom the author spoke have a passion for the "Pathways" model, and are dedicated to inspire teachers to adopt it. Successful implementation is supported by avoiding introduction of all initiative details at once, taking "baby steps" (one step at a time), and winning over respected teachers in a school. Such teachers' growing enthusiasm for the program may well draw in other educators.

## Conclusion

The province's Provincial Student Assessment program and the B.C. Learning Pathways initiatives are highly interconnected. Although the assessments are considered to be neither formative nor summative, there is a clear emphasis on the formative aspect: using data to improve student learning. The Learning Pathways initiative, developed to be in alignment with the provincial assessments and the B.C. Curriculum, provide educators with resources that support students' cross-curricular literacy and numeracy learning with an emphasis on critical thinking and communication. Although there is a summative aspect in that proficiency standards are established for reporting and improvement purposes, the ultimate goal is to promote skills acquisition among students. Taken together, the provincial assessments and the B. C. Learning Pathways contribute to a coordinated focus on supporting student learning and improvement.

## About the Author

Dr. Jones has extensive experience in the fields of large-scale educational assessment and program evaluation. He has worked in the assessment and evaluation field for more than 35 years. Prior to founding RMJ Assessment, he held senior leadership positions with the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) in Ontario, as well as the Saskatchewan and British Columbia Ministries of Education. In these roles, he was responsible for initiatives related to student, program and curriculum evaluation; education quality indicators; school and school board improvement planning; school accreditation; and provincial, national and international testing.

Dr. Jones began his career as an educator at the elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels. Subsequently, he was a researcher and senior manager for a multi-national corporation delivering consulting services in the Middle East.

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