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Council of
Ministers
of Education,
Canada

Conseil des
ministres
de l'Éducation
(Canada)



Ministry of
Education

April, 2017

Dear Parents/Guardians,

In 2003, the provincial and territorial ministers of education, through the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), agreed to undertake the development of the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP) to assess the knowledge and skills of students across Canada in the core subjects of reading, mathematics, and science. The reports for the PCAP assessments are available on the CMEC Web site (www.cmec.ca).

PCAP is administered to Grade 8 students, and, whenever possible, intact classes are selected in order to minimize the disruption to classrooms and schools.

Until now, the PCAP assessment has been conducted on paper, but there are strong arguments for converting to computer-based assessment (CBA).

Students today interact extensively with technology, both in the classroom and in their daily lives. This interaction is now a permanent, pervasive aspect of our society, and on that basis alone there is a compelling reason to introduce CBA: it is what “feels natural” for students. Yet the advantages of CBA encompass numerous other positive features. These include:

- introduction of new test elements that are unique to computers;
- increased student engagement with the test;
- better accessibility for special-needs students;
- better test security;
- environmentally friendly by reducing paper and shipping
- increased administrative efficiency.

The proposed PCAP mode study administration is slated for April 24 to May 19, 2017 and will be administered by school staff.

Students will complete half the test on paper and the other half on a computer. This will take approximately 90 minutes. They will respond to questions in all three domains.

British Columbia is participating in the PCAP 2017 mode study. Nine Anglophone schools and two Francophone schools have been selected to participate. In each of these schools, one or two classes of Grade 8 students have been randomly selected to participate.

In order to ensure confidentiality, CMEC does not report on the results by school board/district, by school, or by student. The results of this study will be used to identify the opportunities and challenges in transitioning to a computer-based assessment for PCAP.

Thank you for supporting your child's participation in the PCAP 2017 mode study.

On behalf of CMEC, PCAP, and the British Columbia Ministry of Education, we would like to thank you for your cooperation and for contributing to the success of this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy Walt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "N" and a trailing flourish.

Nancy Walt
Executive Director
BC Ministry of Education