

Haida Gwaii School District creates a new district principal role to take on childcare ^[1]

Leighann Rodger will be leaving her current role as principal to fill the new position

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Excerpts

Haida Gwaii School District (SD 50) welcomed Leighann Rodger to the district office in a newly created role, District Principal of Early Learning and Childcare, Manu Madhok, interim superintendent announced.

In the spring of 2022, the provincial government moved the responsibility of childcare from the Ministry of Children and Family Development to the Ministry of Education.

The public education sector is now accountable for kids from birth to when they graduate, Madhok said. Districts are working to figure out how they will incorporate these new responsibilities into their organizational structure.

“Funding came from the ministry because they recognized that it had to sit on somebody’s desk. And so, most districts across the province have now created a similar kind of role, just to have somebody in charge looking at childcare,” Madhok said.

Rodger is currently the principal at Sk’aadgaa Naay Elementary School and has been at SD 50 for 14 years. She has worked as a classroom teacher, a learning resource teacher, a vice principal and a principal.

“Given the Ministry of Education & Childcare’s expanded role, we are fortunate to have an educational leader with Leighann’s experience take on this important work on behalf of Haida Gwaii families and pre-schoolers,” Madhok said.

Specifics of the new role are still unknown, he said.

“But one of the first tasks for the school district is to do a scan of what does the context of childcare look like on Haida Gwaii. Is there a shortage of space? Where is it working? Where is it not working? Are there rooms and schools to offer some kind of before school and after school daycare? It’s a bit of trying to get a sense of what the reality is and that’ll be the first piece of the work plan.”

However, Madhok is looking forward to the opportunities this new role could create in the future.

“I think we’re learning a lot about human development and brains. We know lots of good stuff that can happen before kids get to school so some pretty exciting possibilities,” he said.

Rodger will also stay in her current role as principal of Sk’aadgaa Naay Elementary until the district can find a replacement.

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