

Full day junior kindergarten programming studied [CA-ON]^[1]

Miner and News

Author: Thompson, Jon

Source: Miner and News

Format: Article

Publication Date: 28 May 2008

AVAILABILITY

See text below.

EXCERPTS

School boards representing the Northern Ontario Excellence in Learning (NOEL) and organizations administering daycare in the region met with Charles Pascal last week, the man Premier Dalton McGuinty has placed at the helm of developing programming for full day junior and senior kindergarten.

When McGuinty announced the program last November ramping up to its launch in 2010, he cited a recent Rutgers University study showing higher scores in math and language for those four- and five-year-old students engaged in full day instruction.

The unique aspect to this plan is that its accessibility will be universal.

...

Although they were implemented as an intervention designed to help disadvantaged children "catch up" to their peers through additional schooling, academic research has conclusively proven that it improves standardized test score results. Recent studies show that the increase can be as much as a month of additional schooling. From the onset, Pascal took the position that it should be available for all.

"That kind of social and ethnic integration can only happen when child care and education are offered universally to all children," the former deputy minister of both education and social services told the Toronto Star. "The moment you start making the early years expensive, you begin to divide and exclude and make it extremely difficult for those in poverty."

The politically sticky question is whether the school boards or the existing child care outfits should be administering the programs.

...

Although full day kindergarten and junior kindergarten have proven results, research as to whether those gains then carry over to subsequent grades is inconclusive. Some studies show that the gains are all but extinguished by the third or fifth grade.

School boards and teaching staff argue that administering the programming would allow professional teachers to deliver approved curriculum for a seamless transition into the primary grades.

Keewatin-Patricia District Public School Board director Janet Wilkinson spent the meeting with Pascal clearly articulating the board's strengths in oral language programming, a ground breaking approach whose potential has attracted world renowned Australian scholar Carmel Cravola.

"We believe that there is a great deal of opportunity in curriculum development to prepare younger readers for learning," she explains. "He was very moved by and saw great value in what we're doing."

Kenora District Catholic School Board director Allan Craig stressed the importance of a "seamless transition" and also leaned on the strength of local oral language initiatives.

"The curriculum must reflect commitment to oral language," he insists. "Our first option would be staffed with teachers but if this is not possible, the only suggestion I would have is that the early childhood educators have some training in oral language."

David Clegg, the president of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, stakes the claim that the decision may come down to the finances required to do the job right. At the press conference announcement of the program, McGuinty was clear that Pascal was aware of the program's financial capacity of \$500 million over two years.

"He understands how much money is available, he understands that we want to move as quickly as we can, and I look forward to his very best advice on how we might do that," McGuinty had said.

Clegg sees the funding as a potential indication that it would be too expensive for teachers to administer the programming, calling it an extension of the funding gap that already exists between primary and secondary education in the province.

"From the outset, doctor Pascal didn't believe that the amount of money could do the job that the government expected," he says.

...

Kelly Williams co-chairs the Best Start Network, a body of professionals from the region with a stake in the delivery of childcare for children under six years. Representing the Kenora District Services Board, the Ministry of Child and Youth Services, and school boards, the committee oversees a program at Ste. Marguerite Bourgeoys run by the Kenora Association of Community Living and another at Lakewood School operated by the Child Development Centre.

Williams sees the existence of programming in schools as mutually beneficial, where schools collect rent from the organizations, which are funded by other government ministries. In exchange, the schools receive "a drawing card" for their institutions as children move into the provincial curriculum and remain in a building with which they have become accustomed.

"I very much agree with what I was hearing from doctor Charles Pascal," she says.

"We need to take this and build on what each discipline has to offer. If we're going to make it full day, we need a collaborative approach. We both have something to offer. We need to not look at what we have, it's what we could have."

Pascal's offices say that as the project is still in the development stages, he is not conducting interviews with the media.

- reprinted from Miner and News

Region: Ontario ^[2]

Tags: kindergarten ^[3]

integration ^[4]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/08/05/full-day-junior-kindergarten-programming-studied-ca>
Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/08/05/full-day-junior-kindergarten-programming-studied-ca> [2]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/kindergarten> [4]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/integration>