

# Conservative to head review of kindergarten [CA-PE] <sup>[1]</sup>

Local News, The Guardian

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## EXCERPTS

Former Conservative cabinet minister Pat Mella has been named the Island's new kindergarten commissioner &mdash; a move the Opposition Tories say won't deter them continuing to question government on its controversial decision to move kindergarten into the public school system.

As commissioner, Mella will look at the many issues affected by this move, including how to integrate early childhood educators into the school system, delivery models of the curriculum and the numerous impacts on the early childhood sector.

Mella has been contracted for a year by the province for this work. She will study kindergarten models in other provinces, assess the most current research on early childhood development and meet with all stakeholders involved in this change.

She will deliver her final report in September 2009. It will recommend a detailed action plan to move kindergarten into Island schools by September 2010.

"Yes, I was surprised when I got the call from the premier, in view of my political background," Mella said during a press conference at Province House Tuesday.

"But I do feel that I can take on this assignment."

In 1990, Mella was elected leader of the Progressive Conservative party, the first woman in P.E.I. to be elected leader of a political party. In 1993, she became leader of the Opposition and in 1996 was appointed to cabinet as provincial treasurer. She served in this capacity until 2003.

Current Opposition member Jim Bagnall said he thinks Mella was appointed to "clean up the government's mess."

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The move of kindergarten into the school system announced in the throne speech garnered government much criticism from the early childhood sector. Members of the sector were upset at the lack of consultation and that they were not informed of the decision until the public announcement in April.

Sonya Corrigan, executive director of the Early Childhood Development Association, said she hopes early childhood educators will be heavily involved in Mella's work as kindergarten commissioner.

"We look forward to the consultations that we've been promised," she said.

...

Opposition Leader Olive Crane said despite the fact Mella is a fellow Conservative party member, she will still be asking the tough questions about how this new model of kindergarten will be implemented.

- reprinted from The Guardian

**Region:** Prince Edward Island <sup>[2]</sup>

**Tags:** kindergarten <sup>[3]</sup>

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