

Options studied for kindergarten [CA-ON]^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Is it full-day kindergarten, or isn't it?

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Elementary teachers say it should be provincial curriculum, taught by them, in schools, and that's certainly the perception among parents. But others say it will incorporate daycare centres and early childhood educators.

"From our perspective, the premier was very clear on this when he campaigned in the fall," said David Clegg, who heads the 70,000-member Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, the largest teachers' union in the country. "He spoke about full-day kindergarten, and parents expect the quality of program that is currently being delivered, but on an extended basis."

Educator Charles Pascal, in charge of reporting to Premier Dalton McGuinty on the plan, would not comment yesterday after being quoted in the media musing about the possibility of kindergarten classes being held off school property if boards were short of space & such as at daycare or community centres & to provide a "seamless day" where children are dropped off and picked up at the same location, and taught by both teachers and early childhood educators.

Education Minister Kathleen Wynne said the province has not committed to any one model. The program is to be implemented starting 2010 and will cost hundreds of millions of dollars.

"Charles Pascal is looking at a range of options ... so I'm not going to speculate on where we might land," she said.

...

Wynne said Pascal will have to look at the "different models in the States, different models in other parts of the country and the world" before submitting his report to the premier in just under a year.

Andrea Calver, communications director for the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, said her organization doesn't have a formal policy on full-day learning because it is still so early in the process, but "child-care programs across the province are very excited about the prospect of full-day learning ... about opportunities to build on what we have."

She said child-care centres offer a play-based curriculum taught by early childhood educators, who have at least a two-year college diploma.

"Full-day learning is a chance to have the best of both systems, and people are very optimistic that this is a real opportunity to build something."

And moving adults makes more sense than moving children, Calver added.

Clegg said teachers would have no problem with a "wraparound-type" day, where children are in school both mornings and afternoons, with child care provided before and after school, and possibly with classroom help provided by early childhood educators.

"But, in terms of the delivery of instruction and the sites, we believe parents understand that a public school with fully qualified teachers" is the best option.

- reprinted from the Toronto Star

Tags: kindergarten^[2]

staff^[3]

full-day early learning^[4]

Links

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