

Deal on child care expected [CA-SK] ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Prime Minister Paul Martin will be in Regina today to announce a deal between the federal and provincial governments on child care.

But there will likely be little news on the province's No. 1 demand from the federal government -- a new equalization deal that will exclude non-renewable resource revenue from the funding formula and mean big federal dollars for Saskatchewan.

Premier Lorne Calvert said he will be with Martin today for what he would only say is "a good news announcement."

"We have no formal scheduled significant meeting time around the energy accord or equalization. I can report to you today that we have made significant progress in my view at an official's level. I've had a significant and lengthy meeting with the Minister of Finance but we are not yet at the stage where we would be making any announcement tomorrow," the premier told reporters at the legislature Thursday.

In March, Calvert won an agreement from Martin to look at equalization in an in-depth meeting between the two leaders, which hasn't yet happened. However, Calvert said he's confident a deal will be reached shortly before or after a federal election.

The federal-provincial announcement today is expected to be connected to the Liberal government's budget pledge that it would spend \$700 million on day care this year as part of a five-year, \$5-billion national child-care program.

- reprinted from the Star Phoenix

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