

Funding gap forces Peel to scale back full-day kindergarten roll-out^[1]

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EXCERPTS

The Peel District School Board has decided to roll back the number of sites that will begin offering full-day kindergarten next fall and is calling on Ontario's Ministry of Education to provide more funding for its Early Learning Program.

Trustees reviewed a report that calculated the funding gap for the first year of the full-day program, which was implemented this fall, at approximately \$1.3-million. The key reason cited for the shortfall was higher-than-projected enrollment that required that 10 additional full-day classes be opened.

The Peel board is "hopeful that if the additional ministry funding is confirmed in time, the sites may still offer full-day kindergarten next year," chair Janet McDougald said in a statement.

The ministry approved 11 sites and 45 classrooms in the Peel board to introduce the program for the 2011-12 school year, the second phase of a five-year roll-out that will see the full-day option offered in every classroom across the province. Trustees voted Tuesday to defer launching the program at five of those sites, representing nine classes, until the 2012-13 school year.

"We have...a fiscal responsibility to our community to run full-day kindergarten without overrunning our budget," Ms. McDougald said. "All we are asking for from the province is to cover the real and proven costs of the program."

The affected schools include Dorset Drive Public School, Terry Fox Public School, Hartsdale Avenue Public School, Willow Glen Public School and Credit View Public School.

Premier Dalton McGuinty has already promised \$200-million for this school year, \$300-million for the second year, and \$245-million toward renovations and school additions - and on projected economic returns. The Ministry of Education could not be reached for comment.

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