

# In Mission B.C., all-day kindergarten is about native culture <sup>[1]</sup>

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## Excerpts:

In a small school district in southern British Columbia, full-day kindergarten is about more than just longer days, lunch periods and a more thorough exploration of the alphabet. It's about cultural awareness.

Four schools at the Mission Public Schools district, those with higher proportions of aboriginal students, have offered full-day kindergarten for nearly a decade in a culturally enhanced program that incorporates first nations art, books and music.

This school year, that program is being introduced in more than 20 classrooms in the district, as part of B.C.'s rollout of full-day kindergarten for all.

Three provinces are introducing full days to tens of thousands of students this school year, but Mission school district is unique in the way it has added a cultural element to its program.

"We took all the best pieces [of the aboriginal curriculum] that we knew teachers would be able to use very easily, and we put together some really nice literacy bags and gave it to all of the teachers," said Colleen Hannah, the district's principal of aboriginal education. ".... It has been a much easier transition I think for us, because we knew what to expect, what a full-day classroom could look like."

B.C.'s Ministry of Education has long provided full-day funding for aboriginal, English-as-a-second-language and special-needs students. About 10 per cent of the approximately 7,000 students in Mission Public Schools are aboriginal, and the funding allowed the school district to introduce full-day kindergarten classrooms at schools located in areas where first nations families were concentrated.

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Ms. Hannah said both the full-day program and its first nations focus have been well-received by parents.

- reprinted from the Globe and Mail

**Region:** British Columbia <sup>[2]</sup>

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

kindergarten <sup>[4]</sup>

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