

900 more Ontario schools to offer full-day kindergarten in 2012: McGuinty ^[1]

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Source: Toronto Star

Format: Article

Publication Date: 2 Mar 2011

EXCERPTS.

The province has named the additional 900 Ontario schools that will offer full-day kindergarten for the 2012-13 school year.

Last October, the Star reported that half- roughly 120,000 - of all the province's kindergarten students would be enrolled in the new program by that time.

Speaking at St. Mary Catholic School in downtown Toronto on Tuesday, Premier Dalton McGuinty said the boost "is a very important commitment to Ontarians and especially to Ontario families with younger children.

"We have enjoyed some very real successes - we have more teachers, smaller classes we have peace and stability and measurable improvements when it comes to results," he said in an election campaign-type announcement.

The election is Oct. 6.

"We are very proud with the program we put in place," he said.

Full-day kindergarten began in September 2010 at 600 schools, with another 200 more added this fall.

The Progressive Conservatives say McGuinty can't reach his goal of all young students in full-day by September 2014 and say a Tory government would look at what Ontario families can afford before agreeing to expand.

The program was first implemented in schools that did not require renovations or additions and is slowly rolling out to schools that do.

The capital money pledged for the first three years is \$420 million alone, a cost that is expected to balloon as more schools are added.

Conservative critic Jim Wilson says many communities don't have the facilities for the program, and the government is facing about a billion dollars in renovation costs.

Others have warned of increased use of portables for older grades as school struggle to find space for their youngest students.

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