December 15, 2010

Dear colleagues,

After just four months of full-day kindergarten, there is widespread excitement about the progress our youngest learners are making as a result of everything that can happen in a full day at school.

In October 2009, we committed to having full-day kindergarten in all elementary schools within five years. The model includes a teacher and early childhood educator working together in the classroom, and an optional, extended-day program (before and after the core school day) where children receive a consistent, high standard of care in one location from the moment they are dropped off until pick up.

This year, some before- and after-school programs are being run by school boards and others are being run by third parties, like the YMCA. We believe these third parties are doing a great job meeting the needs of families and supporting our youngest students.

That’s why we intend to introduce legislation in the new year which would, if passed, allow third parties to continue to offer the before- and after-school program beyond the current two-year transitional period, under the full-day kindergarten framework.

Subject to the Legislative Assembly’s approval of the proposed amendments, and in order to support a seamless, high-quality program across the province, third-party providers under these arrangements would be required to meet certain criteria, including:

- Meet requirements under relevant legislation (e.g. the Day Nurseries Act);
- Be located on site at schools;
- Deliver program content consistent with the ministry program standards for extended-day programs;
- Operate programs on instructional days; and
- Consider offering programs on school holidays and PA days.

We will also continue to support all boards operating affordable extended-day programs. To that end, the regulation relating to extended-day program fees has also been amended to help school boards better reflect local operating costs.
Our government is committed to giving school boards the support and flexibility they need to offer programs that reflect local needs and keep fees reasonable for parents.

Thank you for all of your hard work in implementing full-day kindergarten and for your continued support as we move forward with this exciting program. As we move ahead, we must work together and learn as we go, always focusing on what’s best for our young learners and their parents.

Sincerely,

Leona Dombrowsky
Minister of Education