



# SCHOOL DISTRICT 5

S O U T H E A S T K O O T E N A Y

January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010  
SD5 Trustee Media Release

## **Full-Day Kindergarten Coming to a School Near You**

At last night's Board of Education meeting in Jaffray trustees discussed which of the eleven district-wide elementary schools will be able to offer full-day Kindergarten beginning in September 2010. A final decision will be made at the February 9<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

In August 2009 the provincial government announced its commitment to expand kindergarten from the current half-day to a full school day with a roll out over two school years. Approximately 21,000 students province-wide will have access to full day kindergarten in year one (2010/11), followed by 36,000 in year two (2011/12).

SD5 has received a funding commitment for up to 200 full-day K students this first year, representing approximately 60% of the current kindergarten enrollment.

"We presently have 326 kindergarten students in our district schools from Elkford to Cranbrook, and we expect to have similar numbers for Sept 2010," said Board Chairperson Frank Lento. "We're pleased that the provincial government has already committed over half of the full-day kindergarten funding for the coming school year."

In October 2009 the Education Ministry provided school districts with eligibility criteria by which Boards would select elementary schools in the first year. The criteria included availability of teachers, classroom space and a focus on those community areas rated higher on the Early Development Indicator (EDI) vulnerability measures.

"The two-stage nature of the project gives us time to work at getting everything in place," Trustee Trina Ayling explained. "On the one hand, we have some schools that already meet the criteria and provide Strong Start programs, and on the other hand some schools don't have space available yet."

Ayling acknowledges that there will be other challenges as the process moves ahead but looks forward to beginning consultation with the school community and other stakeholders as soon as possible.

"I think parents see full-day K as a good thing," said Ayling. "We'll be working hard to minimize any hiccups that might arise as we move forward."

Trustee Chris Ellis anticipates a more immediate challenge with some parents wanting to stay at half-day and others wanting to have full-day.

"We currently provide half-day kindergarten in all of our elementary schools. In those schools not selected for full-day K this year, the half-day scenario continues until next year," said Ellis. "However, by 2011/12 every kindergarten class will be full-day only. There won't be a half-day option after that."

Another issue that has been brought up by some parents is when a child's catchment area school doesn't offer the full-day class this year, but they wish their child to attend full-day at another eligible school.

"According to the *School Act* and *Board Policy 3.1* placements will be restricted to catchment area students and perhaps siblings," cautioned Ellis. "Parents should register their child by contacting their catchment area school first. If a full-day classroom in a designated school has not been filled to its 22 student capacity, we may consider accepting children from other areas on a first-come, first-served wait list basis."

Information on full-day K, including a Q&A section, will be available on the SD5 website [www.sd5.bc.ca](http://www.sd5.bc.ca) in the coming weeks.

In the interim parents are encouraged to visit the provincial government's website at [http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early\\_learning/full\\_day\\_kindergarten.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early_learning/full_day_kindergarten.htm)

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