



Squamish – Whistler – Pemberton

NEWS RELEASE

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School District 48 Offers Province Solution to Full Day Kindergarten Dilemma ***New Plan Offers Full Day Kindergarten to ALL Students in January, 2011***

School District 48 (Sea to Sky) – *Home of the Olympic Corridor* - has appealed to the Minister of Education to reconsider her Ministry's initial rejection of SD48's proposed alternative Full Day Kindergarten implementation plan. If the appeal is not successful it will leave almost 40% of Sea to Sky Corridor Kindergarten students out of the program, for the full 2010-2011 school year.

Under the province's present formula, the Sea to Sky School District will receive full day provincial funding for 194 of approximately 300 eligible Kindergarten students. This shortfall presents several School Districts with significant implementation challenges, and impedes the ability of the school district to accommodate all communities, families and schools with equal and efficient Kindergarten services.

"The School District has contacted Minister MacDiarmid's office, requesting support for the implementation of an all day program for every Kindergarten student in our school district during the 2010-2011 school year", says Rick Price, Board Chair. "Many School Districts throughout the province are challenged by the current plan and we have offered the Ministry a creative solution that we hope will be supported. This School Board is committed to achieving a successful solution to this unprecedented challenge."

The Sea to Sky Board of Education has worked aggressively to address this situation, considered several options, and has designed a solution which would provide Full Day Kindergarten to all 5 year old students in the Sea to Sky Corridor, commencing in January, 2011 – at no additional cost.

The School District's plan would see the Education Ministry allow SD48 to advance its 100% Full Day Kindergarten implementation date by 8 months, from September 2011 to January, 2011. Under this scenario all Sea to Sky elementary schools would provide 1/2 day Kindergarten to all students for the first half of the school year (and full time to ESL, First Nations and Special Education students), and then, provide Full Day Kindergarten to all students for the second half of the year.

This proposal delivers the fulltime program to all Kindergarten students and provides a workable transition point for students, parents and teachers to commence the full day program after winter break. During September 2010, ESL/ESD, Low Incidence Special Ed, and Aboriginal students would begin full day, while the rest of the Kindergarten population would be half day until the second half of the school year. Along with providing an enhanced level of service, equal opportunity is preserved. As well, other education programs would not be impacted. The District's strategic solution meets the Ministry's commitment to provide some full time Kindergarten prior to September, 2011.

School District 48 will continue to pursue this matter with the goal to provide Full Day Kindergarten to all students and along with its education partners, will continue to appeal to the Education Ministry to recognize a proposal which is an educationally sound response to this difficult situation. School District 48's goal is to provide equitable and effective Kindergarten opportunities to **all** of our students and families, at no cost beyond that which the Ministry of Education has already approved.

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For more information, contact:

Mr. Price is available for media interviews.

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