

Full Day Kindergarten Backgrounder September, 2010

Overview

In the 2009 Speech from the Throne, the Government of BC announced that it would be making full day kindergarten (FDK) available to all five-year-olds in the province.

Public schools in BC have offered half day kindergarten for many years. Some schools also have offered full day programs for specific groups of children (Aboriginal children, English language learners, and some students with special needs). It has been up to boards of education or individual schools to decide whether to include FDK in their education programs.

Now, MEd is phasing in universal access to FDK and FDK will be available for up to half of BC's eligible students in September 2010. By September 2011, FDK will be available across the province.

In response to this intention, FNEESC has reiterated to Minister MacDiarmid the importance of culturally-appropriate curriculum and programming, and has asserted that with the extension of FDK throughout the public system, it is critical that the efforts currently in place through the Full Day Aboriginal Kindergarten Program not be diminished.

FNEESC and Deputy Minister Gorman also have discussed this issue and have agreed that changes in FDK must not interfere with programs and services provided on-reserve, and that FNEESC must be considered as a partner in considering these changes, not as a "regular" stakeholder – a position that is consistent with the First Nations education jurisdiction agreement in BC.

The following is mentioned in the questions and answers section on the Med website:

Aboriginal kindergarten students have had access to full day programs in some schools already. What will happen to these programs once full day kindergarten is available for all children?

As they plan for full day kindergarten for all students, school districts and independent school authorities should acknowledge the valuable experiences for Aboriginal children in many existing full day programs. They should consider Local Education Agreements and Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements and continue to support the unique aspects of existing full day Aboriginal kindergarten programming such as language and culture enhancement.

FNEESC has recommended to the Education Partners that they join FNEESC in promoting the need to ensure that the benefits of Full Day Aboriginal Kindergarten Programs are not diminished with the extension of FDK throughout BC. The Partners also have been asked to include considerations of FDK as part of a comprehensive review of education enhancement agreements.