

# Prospect of all-day Kindergarten could pose problems for Halton board

**TIM WHITNELL**  
Special to The IFF

Primary Class Size legislation has been one challenge for school boards with a growing enrolment, like the Halton public board, and now the prospect of all-day Kindergarten coming to Ontario's schools is adding to the dilemma of finding space for all those students.

Several Halton public school board officials have said the classroom crunch is an ongoing concern and they're not sure how the system will handle another government-legislated change that results in the need for more space in some already packed schools, many with multiple portables.

The board's superintendent of facility services said he's unsure how they will accommodate the four and five year-olds in all-day Kindergarten on top of the extra classrooms already needed to reduce maximum student capacity up to Grade 3 under Primary Class Size (PCS) regulations.

"Implementation is several years out but we need to start talking about it now because we have a couple of different studies that are under way," Gerry Cullen said of the looming JK/SK predicament.

"Critical to any sort of (pupil) accommodation study is looking into the future and looking at demo-

graphics, looking at (projected student) numbers and looking at (building) capacity, those types of things.

"We wouldn't want to make decisions based on information that we have right now for long-term solutions without incorporating the concept..."

Cullen said he's heard that all-day Kindergarten could be implemented all at once or phased in over 2010 and 2011.

The board currently has its youngest students going to JK or SK all-day on alternate days having switched from a half-day, every day model several years ago. As of Oct. 31, 2007, the Halton public board had 3,082 JK students and 3,217 SKs.

"Space is clearly (an issue) for Halton in general. There are probably neighbourhoods within Halton where this will use up space that's available; it's much more likely across Halton that this will have the impact of increasing the pressure on already full schools," said Cullen.

Taken on a case-by-case basis, the changes needed might not seem like much but it can add up to a big development requiring drastic action, he said.

"These appear to be little bites (of change) but when you put enough little bites together you potentially come up with a different delivery."

If the board needs to add to every school two classrooms for PCS, two

classrooms for all-day JK/SK and possibly one or two classrooms for delivery of the family studies/industrial arts concept, that's four or six additional individual classrooms for any given school, said Cullen.

"If you put three or four of those 4-6 classroom complements together, you wind up potentially with another school. It's quite fascinating how quickly these little pieces add up to (be) big," Cullen said.

The education ministry said a recent Rutgers University study shows that four year olds in full-time learning programs scored consistently higher in math and language skills and that full-time learning has dramatic and lasting effects on children's learning across a broad range of knowledge and skills.

The Ontario government says it has committed to spending \$200 million in year three of its mandate and \$300 million in year four to make progress on full-time learning for children

The education ministry has appointed Dr. Charles Pascal to recommend the best way to implement full-day learning for four and five year olds across the province.

"Research tells us that early learning helps children get off to the best possible start in school— so it's important that we get it right," Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty said in a news release.

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	9			3	4		1	8
		7						6
2					5	4		3
	3	8		2		1	7	
9		4	1					5
1						3		
4	8		2	6			5	
	2					6		

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4	5	7	2	1	9	6	3	8
1	2	6	5	8	3	4	7	9
2	4	9	1	3	6	5	8	7
3	8	1	7	5	2	9	4	6
6	7	5	9	4	8	2	1	3
5	1	3	4	9	7	8	6	2
7	9	2	8	6	1	3	5	4
8	6	4	3	2	5	7	9	1

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