



NEWS NEWS NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Halton Catholic Board Confirms Selection of Host Schools and Registration for Full-day Early Learning Program

The Halton Catholic District School Board has confirmed that it has received approval from the Ministry of Education of the Board's seven host schools for implementation of the first phase of Ontario's plan for a province-wide full-day early learning program (FD-ELP) for four and five year olds, commencing September, 2010.

The provincial government will be phasing in the full-day early learning program for junior and senior kindergarten students over a five year period.

The Board's host schools for implementation of this new initiative in the first phase in September, 2010 are: **Our Lady of Fatima and St. Peter Catholic Elementary Schools in Milton; Holy Rosary, St. Patrick and St. John Catholic Elementary Schools in Burlington; and St. Luke and St. James Catholic Elementary Schools in Oakville.**

Registration for phase one of the full-day early learning program will take place at the Board's seven designated host school sites at the same time as the system-wide half-day junior and senior kindergarten early registration that will be held on **January 26 and 27, 2010.**

The full-day early learning program, like half-day kindergarten, is optional, as school is not mandatory in Ontario until age six. Parents who choose to opt out of the full-day early learning program can make a cross boundary application to any elementary Halton Catholic District School Board school that provides a half-day program. Transportation will then be a parent responsibility.

"During the first year of the phased implementation of this program, our Board will offer 19 classes to 494 students at seven school sites across our system," explains Michael W. Pautler, Director of Education. "Full-day learning for four and five year olds provides a head-start to our youngest students to develop the academic and social skills necessary for school. Our Board will continue to work very closely with both the Halton Region and the Halton District School Board to co-ordinate our efforts to establish a full-day early learning program that will best meet community needs and the criteria established by the Ministry for this initiative."

A new curriculum will be developed by the Ministry of Education for full-day early learning. Through instruction and play-based learning, children will develop their capacity in language and mathematics, build a strong foundation for future learning, engage in healthy physical activities and the arts, and develop socially and emotionally through interaction with their peers and the adults who teach and guide them.

The core program will be delivered Monday through Friday during the instructional day (for example, 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.) by certified teachers and registered early childhood educators, who will work together to help young students learn and grow. These educators will complement each others' skill sets and create a learning environment able to adapt to the unique needs of each child. With two qualified professionals in the classroom for the full school day, more students will get one-on-one attention and opportunities to learn together in small groups. The class size for the Early Learning Program will be funded based on a Board-wide average of 26 students.

Full-day learning for four and five year olds also provides an opportunity to create a comprehensive service system for younger children and their families.

The regular school day portion of the full-day early learning program for four and five year olds will be part of Ontario's publicly funded school system. There will be no cost for this part of the child's day.

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(HCDSB Confirms Selection of Host Sites and Registration for Full-day Early Learning Program cont'd)

Schools will also offer programs before and after regular school hours led by early childhood educators. If parents choose to enrol their child in the extended programs offered before and after regular school hours, they will pay a reasonable fee, which is still to be determined. It is anticipated that the fee will be calculated based on the interest in the extended programs and the registration numbers for the early learning program. Subsidies will be available through the Ministry for some families, based on financial need.

“The Halton Catholic District School Board is pleased to implement the initial phase of this exciting new educational program that will benefit students and families at the host site schools of the full-day early learning program,” notes Board Chair, Bob Van de Vrande. “Providing children with a stronger start in their learning at our Christ-centred schools will improve their reading, writing and math skills, provide a foundation in the Catholic faith curriculum, as well as a smoother transition to Grade 1. The program will be available in additional schools in the coming years as more funding is received from the Ministry.”

For additional information about the Early Learning Program, please visit our website at:
www.hcdsb.org/earlylearning.

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About the Halton Catholic District School Board

The Halton Catholic District School Board, a provincial leader in student achievement in literacy and numeracy, as well as in Special Education, provides the best of Catholic education to over 29,000 students of all ages at 50 faith-centred learning communities in Burlington, Halton Hills, Milton and Oakville. Committed to servant leadership, continuous school improvement planning and the preservation of the enduring gift of Catholic education, the Board is an exciting and dynamic system in which to learn, grow and work.

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