



OFIS Executive Summary -

“With Our Best Future In Mind” – Charles Pascal – McGuinty Funding Announcements – June 15 2009

1. Notable Observation From Report – “In November 2007, the Premier asked Dr. Charles Pascal to recommend the best way to implement full-day learning for 4 and 5 year olds” – note that he did NOT ask Pascal to recommend how to make education in the province more effective and productive, he asked how to implement his own idea

2. OFIS applauds this report and the Premier for their commitment to supporting parents in their roles as parents with items like:

- more parental leave time when babies are born
- additional parental leave time for non-birthing parent
- legislated job-leave days for parents (10 per year) with children under the age of 12
- expanded parental leave opportunities for self-employed parents
- streamlining resources & services between the 3 levels of government so more parents can access them with less duplication of opportunities and less financial waste (as long as parents are kept in charge of choosing their services and resources as well as directing them)

3. OFIS has concerns with this report and the Premier for the items that remove parents from their roles as primary influencers in their children’s upbringing such as:

- full day learning for 4 and 5 year olds (jk and sk)
- before and after school educational programs
- summer educational programming

*note – while OFIS is a proponent of before and after school care and summer playground programs that provide enrichment (additional experiences) for children, it is not in favour of more education opportunities over and above family experiences

-claiming sole responsibility for children’s success and adoption of appropriate life values – OFIS wonders whose values will be used?

4. OFIS has questions about the claim that these changes will help low-income families (many low to mid income families are currently served at OFIS schools)

- taxes will inevitably increase significantly (at both provincial and municipal levels) to pay for the

additional staff, school renovations and training that this will require – including taxes for low to mid income families – how will they afford more new taxes?

-despite proposed subsidies, there will be user-fees for all additional programs – how will low and mid income families afford more taxes and user fees?

*note – OFIS also takes exception to the on-going government claim that low income families are bad parents – appears throughout report

-how will parents who currently send their children to independent schools be included in the plan to blend many early learning services and resources with public schools?

Statement - OFIS continues to champion parental choice in education and government support for that parental choice as evidenced in places like Alberta and BC. We will continue to remind the government that one-size-fits-all education is not effective no matter how many more programs, hours or funding is placed around it. Any initiatives that take the primary responsibility for children out of the hands of parents is not favourable.