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Leo Glavine, MLA
Education Critic

GOVERNMENT'S PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION PLANS MUST BE MADE PUBLIC

(Halifax, NS) It's time for the Minister of Education to tell school boards and parents if her department plans to expand a pre-primary pilot program for four year olds that expires at the end of this school year, says Liberal Education Critic Leo Glavine.

In 2005, as part of Learning for Life II, the government introduced the program in each of the province's eight school boards. The program offers a full day activity-based curriculum for up to eighteen children. Each classroom is staffed with two early childhood educators.

"The end is nearing for this pilot," says Glavine. "For over a year I have been calling on the government to be clear about their intentions and tell everyone involved whether this program has a future in our classrooms."

"If the government does not intend to renew this program they should do the right thing and notify parents so they can make alternate accommodations for their children. School boards and parents have to plan and they can't do that unless they know what they are planning for."

Glavine says one thing is clear when it comes to pre-primary education: the province has to do better. "Nova Scotia doesn't have a strong early childhood education program. If this pilot is not going to be expanded to a universal program the government should be looking at other options to strengthen pre-primary education in this province."

He says Nova Scotia's children deserve a better pre-school system whether in a public or private setting. "Research shows that early childhood education has many social and economic benefits. These returns include reduced special education costs, reduced juvenile crime and increased life-long productivity. Some studies have shown a \$7 return on each dollar spent on high quality early education and care."