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February 5, 2020

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
5th Floor
438 University Avenue
TORONTO, ON M5G 2K8

Dear Minister Lecce:

On behalf of the Lakehead District School Board, I am writing to request that the current structure of the Full Day Kindergarten program remains in place. The full day program provides consistency for families and a seamless transition from childcare or home to the school setting. This current structure creates a learning environment where children have the best start in school.

Primary teachers and early childhood educators working together ensures a balanced, successful approach that capitalizes on the expertise of both staff members where children are supported by a solid understanding of a child's early years and development and knowledge of a modern curriculum and school expectations. In addition, it allows for early identification of student needs and access to early intervention, as well as special education expertise and resources, which are a critical aspect of student success.

Lakehead District School Board has demonstrated a strong commitment to leading early learning initiatives. In May 2002, the Board approved recommendations which established a full-time Senior Kindergarten pilot program in four elementary schools with later expansion to 11 full-time Senior Kindergarten sites.

The Full Day Kindergarten program has many positive impacts for parents including affordability, especially for families living in poverty. We know many parents/guardians in our community lack the financial resources to purchase childcare opportunities for their children.

It is well known that learning in the early years is a critical time for children and provides a foundation for future success. We believe that the current Full Day Kindergarten model promotes the Ministry's mandate of student achievement and well-being.

We respectfully request that the Ministry of Education maintain the current structure and staffing complement of the Full Day Kindergarten Program.

Sincerely,



Ellen Chambers
Chair
Lakehead District School Board

cc: Premier Doug Ford
MPP Michael Gravelle
MPP Judith Monteith-Farrell
MPP Kathleen Wynne, Education Critic
MPP Marit Stiles, Education Critic
Sam Hammond, President, ETFO
W. R. (Rusty) Hick, Executive Director, OPSBA
Cathy Abraham, President, OPSBA
Michael Judge, President, LETO
Harvey Bischof, President, OSSTF/FEESO
Richard Seeley, President, OSSTF Thunder Bay Branch