

Letter to the Editor re: K / 1 Combination Classes

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The following letter was published in the Oak Bay News on June 16th, 2010:

http://www.bclocalnews.com/vancouver_island_south/oakbaynews/opinion/96429834.html

There has been little public discussion regarding the full day kindergarten and grade one combination classes that will be starting in September.

Many professionals in the education system believe this grade combination is fundamentally flawed. The kindergarten children will be expected to learn the alphabet while the grade one students in the same class will be learning to read entire paragraphs.

In addition, studies have proven that children entering kindergarten should spend their first school year in a play-based learning environment. By contrast, those in grade one require a more structured program to prepare them for higher grades. It is easy to picture the classroom management issues that will emerge as teachers juggle the needs of these two groups.

This was less of a problem before the announcement of full day kindergarten. Presently, the kindergarten students are not in attendance for part of the day, and most of the structured learning for grade one occurs during this time.

While the province is wisely investing in full day kindergarten, it has not addressed the problems created by this particular grade combination. At this point it appears that as many as six schools in the Greater Victoria School District may be forced to combine full day kindergarten and grade one in September.

If many primary teachers agree this is not a suitable learning environment, would you want your child in one of these classes?

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