

NEWS RELEASE

October 28, 2010

**BC School Superintendents Optimistic
Following Premier's Address**

The superintendents of BC's 60 school districts have responded to Premier Gordon Campbell's October 27th televised address with optimism. Dr. Keven Elder, Saanich superintendent and president of the BC School Superintendent's Association (BCSSA), said, "The premier appears to be following up on promises made in the February 2010 throne speech with a specific challenge in relation to young learners. It is a challenge that we embrace. We are committed, as are teachers, administrators, trustees, parents and others province-wide, to having children experience every success, so we look forward to working with the Premier, Minister Abbott and Ministry of Education staff to do whatever it takes to have all children reading, writing and doing math at grade level by the time they leave grade 4."

As educational leaders working directly with schools and children, superintendents recognize that what prevents children from reaching expected levels is often a combination of factors including children's experiences prior to coming to school. As such, they have been very supportive of the province's focus on early learning and care that has come in the form of StrongStart centres, full-day kindergarten and a commitment to extended-day education and care programs for three and four year-olds. What will also be needed, according to Elder, is a continuation of the extensive dialogue already underway among all of the Ministries and agencies that share responsibility for the well-being of young children and families. "The problems need to be fully understood in terms of root causes and possible solutions, and the question of how to support children, families and schools, and at what cost, needs to be debated and resolved. Our children and our future are worth it."

The province's superintendents are also fully engaged in discussions around government's commitment to "modernize the education system for the 21st century", and believe that paying attention to the early years is a critical part of ensuring that all students not only graduate from secondary school, but that they do so fully equipped with the skills they need to be citizens in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

-30-

For further information, please contact:Dr. Keven Elder
BC School Superintendents Association
Tel 250.652.7332 kelder@sd63.bc.ca