Peel District School Board
Kindergarten Live!

2014 NSPRA National School Communications Award
Gold Medallion Award Entry
Special Projects/Campaigns

Brian Woodland, APR
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Peel District School Board
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Additional promotion materials available at:
http://www.peelschools.org/parents/kindergarten/
http://storify.com/PeelSchools/klive
@peelschools and https://www.facebook.com/#!/peelschools for various social media posts for Kindergarten Live!
Synopsis

The Peel District School Board is one of Canada’s largest public school boards with more than 153,000 students in 242 schools. We serve 1.3 million residents in three municipalities in the Region of Peel, located immediately west of Toronto.

In the past two years, the board has seen an overall decline in student enrolment. With education funding in Ontario provided on a per student basis, a key priority for the organization is to attract and retain new students – starting in kindergarten.

In September 2010, Ontario’s Ministry of Education implemented a five-year plan to bring full-day kindergarten programming for four- and five-year-old students to all elementary schools. The 2014-15 school year marks the final phase of implementation and the first year that the program will be available to all kindergarten students in Peel. In September 2014, 51 schools, more than 25 per cent of the board’s total elementary schools, will add full-day kindergarten classes with approximately 35,000 four- and five-year-old students enrolled across the system.

To promote full-day learning in Peel schools and support its business priority of attracting and retaining new students, we developed Kindergarten Live!, a multi-faceted public awareness campaign to help parents prepare their children to start school.

The three-month campaign included a series of information sessions in December 2013 where more than 300 parent participants had the opportunity to see a class in action and ask questions that were most important to them. The campaign reached nearly 100,000 parents generated more than 1.3 million positive media impressions.
Project overview

Research

The Peel District School Board is one of Canada’s largest public school boards with more than 153,000 students in 242 schools. We serve 1.3 million residents in three municipalities in the Region of Peel, located immediately west of Toronto.

In the past two years, the board has seen an overall decline in student enrolment. With education funding in Ontario provided on a per student basis, a key priority for the organization is to attract and retain new students – starting in kindergarten.

In September 2010, Ontario’s Ministry of Education implemented a five-year plan to bring full-day kindergarten programming for four- and five-year-old students to all elementary schools. The 2014-15 school year marks the final phase of implementation and the first year that the program will be available to all kindergarten students in Peel. In September 2014, 51 schools, more than 25 per cent of the board’s total elementary schools, will add full-day kindergarten classes with approximately 35,000 four- and five-year-old students enrolled across the system.

The full-day program incorporates a number of changes to the early learning approach in Peel schools, including a new play-based curriculum, a longer day, and the opportunity to enrol kindergarten students in before- and after-school programs with external child care providers—an option that was previously unavailable for kindergarten students and their families.

Although the program was first introduced in 2009, feedback collected from parents via focus groups and surveys in the Fall of 2011 indicated that many Peel parents are still confused about the full-day kindergarten program and new play-based curriculum. Attending kindergarten in Ontario is optional and many parents still choose to continue with private programs.

To understand the gaps in knowledge and perception of kindergarten programming and registration at the Peel board, the communications team consulted with the Peel board’s Early Years Advisory Committee, which includes administrators, kindergarten teachers and early childhood educators (ECE), external child care providers and parents. These consultations helped determine answers to the following questions:

• What are the deciding factors for parents when choosing a kindergarten program for their children?
• What information do parents find most important as they prepare their children for school?
• Where do parents with young children get their information?

In response to the research and to support the board’s business priority of attracting and retaining new students, we developed Kindergarten Live!, a multi-faceted public awareness campaign to help parents prepare their children to start school.
Here are the main findings about each of our main audiences and campaign partners.

Early Years Advisory Committee Consultation – September 2014
- Kindergarten teachers reported that new parents have many questions throughout the year and want to see what their children are doing at school.
- School principals and vice-principals reported frequent parent inquiries about the implementation of full-day kindergarten at their school.
- The majority of schools reported holding kindergarten information events weeks or months after the registration period, rather than during the board-wide kindergarten registration week.

External Child Care Partners Consultations – October 2014
- Child care partners were keen to partner with the Peel board on a kindergarten awareness campaign. Most were prepared to share costs.
- Child care partners reported that new parents were often unaware of the process for registering their children for school.
- Distributing kindergarten registration materials through child care partners is an effective way to reach parents with preschool children in Peel.
- Child care partners enthusiastically supported the overall initiative, but need more information and resources.

Parents/Guardians – Fall/Winter 2013
A survey was developed and distributed to parents with preschool or kindergarten students. The survey provided the following findings:
- 84 per cent said they would attend a kindergarten information night
- 83 per cent said they would find it beneficial to attend a kindergarten class in action before registering their children in school
- 75 per cent wanted to know more about the daily structure of full-day kindergarten
- 56 per cent inquired about play-based learning
- 53 per cent indicated they were interested in what school their children would attend
- 50 per cent were interested in what to pack for lunch and snack
- 42 per cent wanted to know how technology would be used in the classroom
- Most parents learned about kindergarten registration on the Peel board or school website, reading a school flyer or seeing a road sign.

According to statistics from the Peel board’s student information database, about half of our new students are new to Canada in the past three years, and more than 90 per cent of these newcomer families do not speak or read English as a first language. According to our database, only 47 per cent of our total student population speaks English at home. Past research indicates that newcomers to Canada prefer face-to-face communication in their first-language as their number one communications preference.
Analysis/Planning

In response to the research and to support the board’s business priority of attracting and retaining new students, we developed Kindergarten Live!, a multi-faceted public awareness campaign to help parents prepare their children to start school. The campaign included a series of information sessions in December 2013 where participants had the opportunity to see a class in action and ask questions that were most important to them.

The board established a small organizing committee including the director of communications, a communications officer, the superintendent of education – early years, two principals and a kindergarten teacher. The committee met bi-weekly over an eight week period to plan and execute the campaign.

Goal
To position the Peel board as the number one choice for kindergarten in Peel

Objectives
- To increase awareness of the full-day kindergarten program in Peel schools among parents with young children prior to kindergarten registration in February 2014
- To attract 250 parents to register to attend a kindergarten information event in December 2013
- To generate 5,000 page visits www.peelschools.org/parents/kindergarten from November 2013 to March 2014
- To secure $2,500 in sponsorship for the campaign by November 2013
- To generate one million media impressions mentioning full-day kindergarten in November and December 2013

Target Audiences
- parents with preschool-aged children
- parents with elementary children in Peel
- principals and vice-principals
- kindergarten teachers and ECE staff
- independent child care providers
- education and community partners
- senior administration and trustees
- local and Toronto-based media
- parent and education influencers
- kindergarten teachers and ECE staff
- child care providers
To increase awareness about the full-day kindergarten program in Peel schools among preschool parents prior to registration in February 2014

Our survey indicated that 83 per cent of parents expressed interest in visiting a kindergarten class where they could ask questions prior to registering their child for school in February. In response, the board developed Kindergarten Live!, a series of information sessions where participants had the opportunity to see a class in action and ask the questions that were most important to them.

At the launch in December 2013, we invited local celebrities, television personalities, athletes, community and business leaders and media to attend an adult kindergarten class to experience the play-based learning curriculum first-hand.

Parent participants had the opportunity to view the adult class and visit the Kindergarten Carousel, a tradeshow-style information area designed to connect parents with Peel board staff, early learning experts, and community partners. Settlement workers were available to assist parents in 20 languages to provide information about:

- what school families should register their children with based on school boundaries
- play-based learning
- how technology is used in the kindergarten program
- special education programs and resources
- how to pack healthy lunches and snacks
- busing—parents and students had an opportunity to ride a bus
- before- and after-school programs

Each attendee received a Kindergarten Live! bag to take home with school supplies and a multi-lingual post card outlining kindergarten registration dates for the 2014-15 school year in ten languages.

Following the launch of Kindergarten Live!, we offered 12 information sessions at four Peel elementary schools running the full-day program. Explore guides took parents on tours to visit a classroom and answered questions in a small-group setting. Settlement workers were on hand to help families whose first-language was not English.

Attract 250 parents to register for Kindergarten Live! information events

We partnered with Peel schools and independent child care partners to distribute Kindergarten Live! materials, including information about kindergarten registration, to nearly 100,000 parents in November and December. Materials included:

- electronic camera-ready article included in 200 elementary school newsletters in November
- full-colour promotional flyer translated into ten languages and distributed to ALL elementary parents via schools and more than 10,000 preschool parents via external child care partners and community agencies
- full-colour poster distributed to 200 elementary schools and every kindergarten class
We emailed schools and child care partners, encouraging teachers to look for the materials and begin talking to parents about the event. All elementary websites were updated with event information and a link to the Kindergarten Live! registration page.

A multi-lingual advertising buy was executed in November 2013 to promote Kindergarten Live! and generate parent interest. Advertising included 35 road signs, full-page print ads in five papers covering the three municipalities in Peel region, digital banners and Facebook ads.

➢ Attract 5,000 parents to the website

We promoted the "Kindergarten Registration" section of the Peel board's site—www.peelschools.org/kindergarten— in all campaign materials and advertisements. The site featured online registration allowing parents to sign up for a Kindergarten Live! information session. Email addresses and first languages were collected and used to remind parents about kindergarten registration in February 2014. We promoted the site on posters, flyers, gift bags, advertisements and news releases.

➢ Secure $2,500 in sponsorship for the campaign

We approached the top six child care providers in Peel schools to partner with the board on the Kindergarten Live! campaign. The partnerships generated $3,500 in sponsorship and allowed the board to distribute more than 10,000 kindergarten flyers to parents with students enrolled in preschool programs in Peel.

➢ Generate one million positive media impressions mentioning full-day kindergarten

We had eight weeks to plan and launch the campaign and set out to build campaign momentum through media relations. We pitched media, influencers and celebrities to attend the Kindergarten Live! adult class with an invite on Twitter using #KLIVE. Two news releases were also developed and posted on Canada Newswire (CNW) to extend the reach.

➢ Budget

The communications budget for this project was $35,000. This budget does not include internal resources and communications staff time. About $30,000 of the budget was used for external resources—advertising, graphic design and printing. The remaining budget was spent on the Kindergarten Live! Celebrity Edition, Kindergarten Live! Carousel and parent visits. The Peel board partnered with external child care providers to cover approximately $3,500 of campaign expenses.
Evaluation

**Kindergarten Live! – Celebrity Edition**

- Event generated 1.3 million positive media impressions including key messages focusing on full-day kindergarten and play-based learning in tier one newspapers
- More than 9,000 website hits during three month campaign
- Twenty local celebrities, athletes, business leaders, community partners and media participated in the Kindergarten Live! celebrity class and generated

Shelley White, CEO of United Way of Peel Region and Kindergarten Live! celebrity participant noted:

> “Through Kindergarten Live, I was able to dust off my book bag and go back to school – but this was so much better than before! The play-based learning strategies in place within the Peel District School Board are certainly helping our Region’s youngest citizens become strong students. This is such a great compliment to the work I am involved in. United Way is committed to helping kids be all that they can be, by supporting programs and services throughout Peel that will help kids enter school, ready to learn. I am so proud to say that, together, United Way and the Peel District School Board are helping kids get off to the right start in life!”

**Kindergarten Live! Carousel and Open House**

- Twenty Peel board departments and local community partners set up information booths and answered parent questions at the event
- Two hundred and twelve parents registered online to attend, providing their email and first-language allowing us to send future communication
- More than 400 parents visited the Kindergarten Live! Carousel or Open House and had the opportunity to speak directly to Peel board and early learning experts
- Fifty parents signed up for a Kindergarten Live! classroom visit at a school in their local community in the weeks following the event
- Seventy-five families signed up to attend Kindergarten Live! workshops in their first language

**Kindergarten Live! First Language Workshops**

In response to the overwhelming request for more direct, face-to-face communication in first languages, we partnered with settlement and outreach workers to plan 10 Kindergarten Live! workshops to take place this spring in the following languages— English, Arabic, Hindi, Mandarin, Punjabi, Spanish, Tamil, Urdu and Vietnamese.

- To date, more than 75 parents have signed up for the first-language parent sessions.
Kindergarten LIVE!

Do you have a young child that will start school in the next year or two? If so, join us for Kindergarten Live! to learn more about the Peel board’s full-day kindergarten program and how to register your child for school.

Families have many questions as they prepare their children for school. 

*What school will my child attend?*
*Where will my child catch the bus?*
*What should my child take for lunch and snack?*

That’s why the Peel board is launching Kindergarten Live!, a series of information sessions for parents where they can access important information and ask the questions that are most important to them.

**Visit a class:** In December, four elementary schools in Peel will offer information sessions where Explore Guides will take families on a tour where they will see a kindergarten class in action, learn about play-based learning and have the opportunity to ask questions. Settlement workers will be available to assist parents whose first-language is not English.

**AT THE EVENT, PARTICIPANTS WILL:**

- find out when and where to register their children for school and learn about the Peel board’s new Flexible Boundary policy
- explore a kindergarten class and find out about play-based learning
- access important information about before- and after-school programs
- have the opportunity to ask questions about special education
- get tips on what to pack for lunch and snacks

Kindergarten Live! will launch on Dec. 3 from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at Queen Street Public School, located at 20 Academic Dr. in Brampton.

For more information or to register for Kindergarten Live!, visit www.peelschools.org/parents/kindergarten.
November 6, 2013

Dear Patty,

We are excited to confirm your participation in our celebrity class at Kindergarten Live!, taking place on Tuesday, Dec. 3 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at Queen Street Public School in Brampton.

As a "student", you'll head back to school with more than 20 local athletes, television personalities, business leaders and media to find out if you really did learn everything you need to know in kindergarten. At the event, you will experience a typical before-school program and then head to class where seasoned kindergarten teachers and early childhood educators (ECEs) will lead you through a series of activities focused on play-based learning.

After dismissal, we encourage you to visit the kindergarten carousel taking place in the school gymnasium. This trade-show style information session will provide parents with the opportunity to ask questions and gain access to information as they prepare their children for school.

Below you will find important details about the event. Should you wish to tweet about Kindergarten Live! prior to attending, please use the hashtag #klive. In the meantime, do not hesitate to contact me at (905) 890-1010, ext. 2626 or by email at HYPERLINK "mailto:annemarie.brown@peelsb.com” annemarie.brown@peelsb.com with any questions or concerns.

Looking forward to seeing you on Dec. 3— don't be tardy!

Anne-Marie Brown
Communications Officer
Peel District School Board
Kindergarten Class Agenda
6:30 p.m. – celebrity "students" arrive at school
6:35 p.m. – before school program, snacks provided
6:55 p.m. – students line-up for class
7:00 p.m. – kindergarten class begins
7:45 p.m. – class dismissed

Location
Queen Street Public School is located at 20 Academic Drive in Brampton.

Driving Directions
- From the 401/407, exit at Hurontario St. and travel north to Steeles Ave.
- Take a left on Steeles Ave.
- Take a right on McLaughlin Dr.
- Turn left on Queen Street
- Turn left on Academic Dr.

Queen Street Public School is the second school on the right.

Parking
A VIP parking area will be marked off on the right side of the school parking lot. Please proceed to this area where an event ambassador will be on-hand to assist you.

Once inside the school, please check-in at the kindergarten celebrity registration table located just inside the main entrance.

Special requirements
Should you have dietary, accessibility or other special requests, please contact Anne-Marie Brown at annemarie.brown@peelsb.com or 905-890-1010, ext. 2626.
NEWS release

Nov. 29, 2013
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Peel board sends athletes, business leaders, celebrities back to school at Kindergarten Live! event
Parents can book classroom visit with ‘explore guides’

To help parents prepare their children to start school, the board will launch Kindergarten Live!, a series of information sessions in December where participants will have the opportunity to see a class in action and ask questions that are most important to them, on Dec. 3.

“Starting school is a big step and an exciting time for families. Parents tell us they have lots of questions about the kindergarten experience—from what to pack for lunch to how the curriculum is taught,” notes Brian Woodland, director of communications and community relations support services. “At the Peel District School Board, we want to do everything we can to ensure parents are confident their child’s school experience will be one filled with joy and learning. We’ve partnered with childcare providers to help provide families with additional early learning information in a fun and powerful way.”

Kindergarten Live! kicks off at Queen Street Public School on Dec. 3 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. At the event, more than 200 participants will have the opportunity to watch athletes, business leaders, media and celebrities—including Patty Sullivan from Kids’ CBC— as they head back to class. Other celebrities include: Ryan Hinds, football player with the Edmonton Eskimos, Jonathan Hood, football player with the Toronto Argonauts, and Naomi Sneickus, actress who plays Bobbi on CBC’s Mr. D.

Kindergarten Carousel, a tradeshow-style information area that evening, will connect parents with Peel board staff, and early learning and community partners who will provide information on:

- what school families should register their children with based on school boundaries
- play-based learning
- special education programs and resources
- how to pack healthy lunches and snacks
- busing—parents and students will have an opportunity to ride a bus
- before- and after-school programs
Following the event on Dec. 3, Kindergarten Live! will continue at four Peel elementary schools where Explore guides will take parents to visit a classroom and answer questions in a small-group setting. Settlement workers will also be available to help families whose first-language is not English. Information session will take place at the following schools:

- Caledon East Public School, located at 15738 Airport Road in Caledon
- Clarkson Public School, located at 888 Clarkson Road South in Mississauga
- Marvin Heights Public School, located at 7455 Redstone Road in Mississauga
- Queen Street Public School, located at 20 Academic Drive in Brampton

To learn more or to register for Kindergarten Live! parents can visit www.peelschools.org/parents/kindergarten/kindergartenlive. All registered participants will be entered into a draw for one of five backpacks filled with school supplies to get their children ready for school.

Every year, more than 10,000 students enter kindergarten at the Peel board. Children born in 2010 can start kindergarten in September 2014. Parents can register their child at the school he or she will attend on Feb. 4, 5, 6 & 7 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and on Feb. 6 from 5 to 8 p.m. Parents can call 905-890-1010/1-800-668-1146 ext. 2212 to find out which school their child will attend.

The Peel board is Canada's largest school board outside of Toronto with 153,000 students in 242 schools. The 2014-15 school year will introduce full-day kindergarten at 27 elementary schools in Brampton, 2 schools in Caledon and 20 schools in Mississauga. All 205 Peel elementary schools will feature full-day kindergarten, starting September 2014.

Media contact: Brian Woodland, Director, Communications and Community Relations Support Services, 905-890-1010, ext. 2812, brian.woodland@peelsb.com

Reference: Anne-Marie Brown, Communications Officer, 905-890-1010, ext. 2626, annemarie.brown@peelsb.com

Note to media: Kindergarten Live! Celebrity Edition will begin at 6:30 p.m. at Queen Street Public School is located at 20 Academic Drive in Brampton.
**Kindergarten Live! Celebrity edition—Class roster**

**Tuesday, Dec. 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Janet McDougald</td>
<td>Chair, Peel District School Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patty Sullivan</td>
<td>Host, Kids’ CBC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Naoimi Sneickus</td>
<td>Bobbi from CBC hit, Mr. D</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ivan Pehar</td>
<td>Senior Account Executive, Twitter Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>Livia Zufferli</td>
<td>Target Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laura Zilke</td>
<td>Reporter, Global News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosey Edeh</td>
<td>Anchor, Global Toronto News at Noon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise Brown</td>
<td>Reporter, Toronto Star</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roger Belgrave</td>
<td>Reporter, Brampton Guardian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katie</td>
<td><a href="http://www.littlemisskate.com">www.littlemisskate.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonathon Hood</td>
<td>Football Player, Toronto Argo’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryan Hinds</td>
<td>Football Player, Edmonton Eskimos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marivel Taruc</td>
<td>Reporter, CBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shamus Ferguson</td>
<td>Player, Mississauga Power Basketball Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwight McCombs</td>
<td>Player, Mississauga Power Basketball Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shelley White</td>
<td>CEO, United Way Peel Region</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arifa Musaffar</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer, Saaz ’O Awaz Broadcasting, WTOR 770 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baljinder Singh Tamber</td>
<td>President, Virasat Media</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jasvir Shameel</td>
<td>Omni</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sandip Sangha</td>
<td>SSTV</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constable Christine Lyons</td>
<td>Constable, Peel Regional Police</td>
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![Kindergarten Live! image](image-url)
## Kindergarten Live! Carousel—Community Partners

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<th>Organization</th>
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<tr>
<td>Region of Peel - Immunizations</td>
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<td>Region of Peel – Healthy Eating Program</td>
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<td>Student Transportation of Peel Region - STOPR</td>
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<td>We Welcome the World Centres</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child and Family Learning Centres</td>
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<td>Parent and Child Learning Centres</td>
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<td>School Locator</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCYI education grant</td>
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<td>Library on Wheels</td>
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<td>Peel board - Play-based curriculum/ What to bring to kindergarten</td>
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<td>Peel board - Faith Forward Program</td>
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<td>PLASP child care</td>
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<td>YMCA child care</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Day child care</td>
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School board opens kindergarten classrooms to parents

Photo by Ken Hay
Toronto Argonaut linebacker Jonathon Hood and Livia Zufferli, VP of marketing at Target turn paper plates into art as they returned to kindergarten as part of the Peel District School Board's Kindergarten Live event at Brampton's Queen Street Public School last night. The media event kicked-off a series of upcoming community open houses that will allow parents to visit an elementary school to see a full-day kindergarten class in action and ask questions about the Early Learning Program.

Back to school
By Roger Belgrave
BRAMPTON— Tuesday night, the Peel District School Board’s Kindergarten Live event transported a group of celebrities back to the future.

For a couple of hours, invited journalists, professional athletes, corporate executives, television personalities and a few others shed the trappings of adulthood to re-enter kindergarten.

Backpacks slung over their shoulders, this motley crew of men and women turned back the clock to a much simpler time when play, not work, consumed their day.