



A look at anti-bullying legislation in Canada

Standing up to bullying

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Here's a look at some of the anti-bullying legislation and initiatives around the country.

Ontario: The proposed Accepting Schools Act, proposed by the governing Liberals in November, would bring tougher consequences for bullying and hate-motivated actions — including expulsion. It would also require school boards to support students who want to lead activities that promote gender equity, anti-racism, understanding and respect for people with disabilities and people of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

British Columbia: The B.C. Teachers Federation recently lost its effort to force school boards to impose provincial anti-bullying programs ordered four years ago. The union claimed the Public School Employers Association was breaking the teachers' collective agreement because not all school boards have implemented the programs — called student codes of conduct — as required by the provincial government in 2007.

Alberta: In 2009, Bill 206 was introduced in the Legislative Assembly. The legislation introduced educational measures programs that bullies would participate in. The legislation required that all incidents of bullying be reported to the principal. The principal would then consult with a police officer and the school board, which would report all incidences to the Minister of Education before the end of the school year.

However, some school officials didn't support the bill for being clearly defined enough or cover funding needed for new programs. The Alberta School Boards Association has called for changes to the provincial School Act and in a paper suggested that "public education opens its arms to all children regardless of nationality, belief or ability and, through this openness, models respect for diversity and the important role that each person holds in building a caring community and society."

Nova Scotia: The suicide of 15-year-old Jenna Bowers-Bryanton last January prompted one parent to lead a charge for a new law against bullying, Jenna's Law. Marsha Milner, whose two children were friends of Bowers-Bryanton's, joined Nova Scotia Parents Against Bullying, which would like to see a new law that requires counselling for bullies.

Manitoba: In 2004, the province of Manitoba legislated the Safe Schools Charter, which says that bullying, or abusing physically, sexually or psychologically — orally, in writing or otherwise — is unacceptable. The Charter requires that all schools develop codes of conduct and emergency plans in consultation with school advisory committees.

Quebec: Chantal Larose, whose 15-year-old daughter Marjorie Raymond committed suicide in November after being bullied, called for more services for victims. Premier Jean Charest said he's receptive to new ideas on how to stop bullying.

With files from The Canadian Press