

January 28, 2008

Ministry of Education
Minster Kathleen Wynne
Mowat Block
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Minister Wynne,

With Bill 212 being implemented on February 1, 2008 we have had the opportunity to study Bill 212 and the Safe Schools Strategy Training Manual. We were very impressed with Bill 212 and the inclusion of bullying as an infraction for which suspension must be considered. It is obvious that a great deal of time and attention went into the preparation of Bill 212 and we look forward to the action steps behind it.

The LABC has a few comments and questions regarding Bill 212 and were hoping for some clarification.

1. In the Safe Schools Strategy Training Manual, Section 8, Page 7, #7 Monitoring and Review.

In the establishment of performance indicators will there also be provisions made to ensure that when indicators show failed performance by a particular school or administration team, will there be consequences for not meeting a certain benchmark? If so, who is responsible for monitoring these performance indicators and holding below standard achievement accountable? The reason we are asking this is that currently, some administrators would rather send a child home for a day than do all the paper work required for a suspension.

2. In regards to the funds to be invested by each board to develop mandatory special programs for long term suspension and expelled students. Section 12, Page 6.

We are afraid that these "mandated" programs (which we whole heartedly support) will be under-utilized and perhaps scrapped if the students themselves are not mandated to attend. If this programming is optional, what conditions must be listed on the child's SAP, to ensure the restorative justice approach has been implemented (ie. anger management, peer mediation) Why is it not mandatory for a student to attend?

3. Section 12, Page 6 "suspended for more than 5 school days".....

Is this concurrent or cumulative? The LABC believes non-academic supports introduced in one day suspensions, will act as a preventative measure in the youth accumulating longer suspensions down the road.

4. No where in this document was there any mention of supports, in place, for the “targets” of the student suspended for bullying. Reintegration plans for the suspended student are an excellent plan. However, the target is not made aware of the reintegration and is often confronted by that person with no time to mentally or emotionally prepare for their return.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our questions. We look forward to your response at your earliest convenience.

Many Voices . . . One Vision to eliminate bullying.

Corina Morrison and Kathryn Wilkins
Co-Founders, London Anti-Bullying Coalition