



**Community Living – MB
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The Honourable Ken Krawetz,
Minister of Education, Deputy Premier
Room 348, Legislative Building
2405 Legislative Drive
Regina, SK S4S 0B3

May 7, 2008

Dear Minister Kravetz;

Community Living – Manitoba has become aware of the proposed changes to your Province's Education legislation. The proposed Bill 29 Section 178 in particular appears to conflict with strong principles that support the inclusion of students with a disability in the regular education system.

Your proposed legislation is going against what research, experiences and best practice shows is action in achieving inclusive communities.

Inclusive education is expressed in the following statement:

- “The fundamental principle of inclusive education is the valuing of diversity within the human community. When inclusive education is fully embraced, we abandon the idea that children have to become normal in order to contribute to the world....We begin to look beyond typical ways of becoming valued members of the community, and in doing so, begin to realize the achievable goal of providing all children with an authentic sense of belonging.¹
- “Full inclusion means that all students, regardless of handicapping condition or severity, will be in a regular classroom/program full time. All services must be taken to the child in that setting.²

¹ Kunc, Norman *The Need to Belong: Rediscovering Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs* Paul H. Brookes Publishers 1992

² *Special Education Inclusion* Wisconsin Education Association Council, updated March 2007

- “We believe in inclusive schools and classrooms where all students:
 - attend and are welcomed by their neighbourhood schools;
 - are educated together in age-appropriate, regular classes;
 - are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of the life of the school.³

Manitoba has adopted legislation in June 2006 on Appropriate Education. We recently celebrated achievements of schools and school divisions at our Summit of Inclusive Education (Feb 2008). As a neighbouring province, we **regretfully** seem to be working on a different agenda.

Our goal is to include children with disabilities in all facets of community life and not create situations of exclusion and marginalization. I’m sure your government shares our goal. **We sincerely believe** this wasn’t your intent, but your proposed amendments could **ensure that** this action **will** be achieved in Saskatchewan.

We urge you to reconsider the proposed actions.

Sincerely,

Val Surbey
President
VS/cd

³ *School Partnerships: A Guide for Parents, Schools and Communities*, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2005 p 1.