

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



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The Honorable Ken Krawetz,
Minister of Education,
Province of Saskatchewan

Dear Minister,

I am writing to express my concern over proposed amendments to the Education Act of Saskatchewan, specifically section 178. Long experience and research evidence tells us that this section of the Act will be used to exclude and further marginalize children with disabilities in the School system. Research tells us that not only do children with disabilities do better in integrated settings, but so do children without disabilities. Further, those who grow up with a broad diversity of people in their classrooms grow to be more tolerant and understanding of diverse needs hence, school integration is crucial to the broader inclusion of people with disabilities into society. These amendments will reverse the slow progress that has been made in achieving equality for this population.

Of particular concern are section 178(1) which states:

‘pupil with intensive needs’ means a pupil who has been assessed by a board of education or the conseil scolaire in accordance with this section and the regulations as having a capacity to learn that is compromised by a cognitive, social-emotional, behavioural or physical condition.

This is a highly retrograde statement and well out of step with current practice and knowledge. Children’s capacity is not compromised by their disability; rather they present a set of needs and challenges to the education department which require a different approach to teaching.

Subsection 11(d) which states: *(d) the cost of providing special educational services to accommodate the pupil in the regular program of instruction* as a justification for exclusion is also of grave concern. Again experience tells us that this will be the most oft used criteria and will result in marginalization, exclusion and sub-standard education for the children involved.

I am sure exclusion and marginalization is not the goal of your government or this policy, but let me assure that that will be the result if these amendments are allowed to come into force.

Respectfully Your,

Professor Tim Stainton, PhD

Research Team: *Tim Stainton (Principal Investigator), Rachelle Hole, Grant Charles, Carrie Yodanis – University of British Columbia; Susan Powell – Kwantlen University-College; Cameron Crawford – The Roeher Institute*
Project Coordinator: *Leah Wilson*

This research is being supported by the Ministry of Children and Family Development and Community Living British Columbia.

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Yours truly,

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Position

Group

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