



Canadian  
Association for  
Community Living

Association canadienne  
pour l'intégration  
communautaire

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May 5, 2008

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

Dear Minister Krawetz,

I am writing on behalf of the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL), a federation of 10 provincial and 3 territorial associations comprising of 420 local associations and over 40,000 members working to advance the human rights and inclusion of persons of all ages who have an intellectual disability.

The Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL) joins with the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living (SACL) in urging the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately stop proclamation of section 178 of the Education Act and amend it to ensure that the rights of students with disabilities are protected and there is clear recognition that these children have a right to be included in regular classrooms with their neighborhood peers.

CACL was shocked and appalled when we learned of Bill 29 and the contemplated changes to the Education Act. The impact of such legislation would be the exclusion of students with intellectual disabilities from their rightful place in a regular classroom in their neighborhood school. The term 'intensive needs' would serve to further stereotype, label and deny children access to learning opportunities and to the best educational environment possible, along side their neighborhood peers.

Parents and advocacy associations have worked tirelessly over the past 50 years to ensure that children with intellectual disabilities have the right to attend school in their neighborhood school and to ensure that diversity does mean inclusion not exclusion. This is a matter of human rights and one which CACL truly believed governments understood and were committed to. Parents and school staffs have built strong partnerships, which have enabled students to be successfully included in regular classrooms for the past 30 years. The proposed legislation could serve to undo the inclusive practices and positive outcomes for students which have been celebrated in schools across Saskatchewan. That outcome could be devastating for all children.

As President of CACL, I have a clear vision and commitment to inclusion. I also have great pride in the vision which I saw Saskatchewan developing as a leader in this country 30 years ago. In 1977 I was employed as the first Regional Coordinator, Special Education in the Regina region. Without a doubt, the leadership of the Saskatchewan government in coordinating support for children across the Ministries of Education, Social Services and Health was state of the art in this country and throughout North America.

On behalf of the membership of CACL, I urge the Saskatchewan government to reflect on your powerful history, recommit to ensuring that legislation enshrines the right for all children to education in a regular classroom in their neighborhood school, and make the necessary amendments in Bill 29 enabling all school divisions and schools to welcome all children in their rightful place learning with their peers.

Sincerely,



Bendina Miller  
President

Cc Laurie Larson, President, SACL  
Faith Bodnar, Executive Director, SACL  
CACL Board of Directors

