

(1)

new Ministry
policy directive

We are pleased to be here ~~once again~~ ^{since} with the goal of integration for children with Down Syndrome ^{+ new P.S.} is finally in sight.

But we must also tell you that we are tired of having to be here still to drag appropriate legislation ~~of~~ out of this ^{House} ~~legislature~~ whose members have been keenly aware for ~~the~~ years of the ongoing injustice to our children.

Lynda and I first met and began to lobby for integrated education when her daughter Stacia was 8 months old and my daughter Andrea was 2. At that time we felt sure that our troubles would be over by the time our children started school.

My daughter was 5 when I presented, here, at Queen's Park, a brief on Integration to the Standing Committee on Administration of Justice in February 1986. Out of that presentation grew the All Party Working Group on Integration in Education ~~co-chaired~~ by Lynda ~~and me~~ which Lynda + I co-chaired for several years.

My daughter was 8 years old when I presented another brief on Integration to the Select Committee on ^{Education} ~~Integration~~ at Queen's Park on July 25, 1988.

My daughter was 10 years old when Education Minister Marion Boyd committed her ministry to integration ^{by Sept 1991} in a meeting with Lynda and me in Jan 1991.

My daughter was two months away from her 11th birthday when, in a meeting with Lynda and myself on Mar 5, 1992, Tony Selipo asserted his commitment to integration and implementation in September 1992.*

My daughter has just turned 12. ~~and~~ ^{Stacia will be turning 11 in Oct. 1992} ~~she~~ ^{They} and their friends are here again to ask you - when are you going to get this right?

* that was followed by yet another Minister of Ed. + Consultative Process and key comm. of it now to completion by Sept 1996. integrate by

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(2)

To get to the Bill - let's get the positive out of the way

- We wholeheartedly support the repeal of sections 15+16 which refer to Hard to Serve students. - then - that's done.

- Now These are our concerns:

Section 8 + subsequent sections that remove references to "trainable retarded child" and "trainable retarded pupil." We support these revisions but require ^{clear} safeguards to ensure that these children will not continue to be served as though they were still so labelled. It is ~~my~~ ^{our strong} impression that this labelling ~~is~~ is going underground in another form rather than ~~removing~~ ^{ending} a denigrating and dehumanizing ^{practice of the} subcategorization of one group of children.

In fact, this Bill itself, ~~with~~ ⁱⁿ subsections following this repeal, is replete with references to TR pupils. This Bill does not even begin, in order to be immediately clear + consistent with its intent, to refer to these children as previously labeled TR. This label should be out of existence.

(3)

Subsection 11(3), Sections 44-47 regarding the responsibilities of the Metropolitan Toronto School Board for students labelled TR.

We have been demanding for years, as have several other groups, that the Metro Tor. School Bd. ownership of children with developmental disabilities must end irrevocably.

While there is a declared deadline for transfer of students to local boards by Jan 1, 1995 - it is in fact a very fuzzy directive. In discussions with Ministry officials, it is evident that under this legislation, this school board responsibility can and \therefore will continue. This Bd. will still have control of funding and resources for this group of children who supposedly we are no longer going to identify. Local boards may attempt to purchase services or have funding transferred from this Bd. to support a student integrated in their neighbourhood school if they choose to take in a student.

Now ~~either~~ what are you really telling us here? We're no longer going to call you dirty names but everything else stays the same?

This legislation purports to be "the first steps" in integration. In fact, unless it is tightened up and very clear, it will make no real difference in the lives of ~~these~~ our precious children.

This legislation must make its intent clear - assuming its real intent is 1) to stop subcategorizing one group of children with pejorative dehumanizing labels and 2) to bring children ^{previously} labelled TR who are now beyond the Pale into their ~~local~~ neighbourhood schools in regular classes where they belong.

If ~~the~~ ^{the} intent is cosmetic change to try and keep us

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gure - we ~~can~~ ^{have} read between the lines.

Rewrite those sections so there is no room for doubt, double talk, euphemisms, and loopholes. ~~The label~~

Children with developmental disabilities will not ~~longer~~ be subcategorized. They can be labelled e.g. Exceptional-developmental, or Exceptional-Intellectual. That is sufficient. All referenced to TR students in this Bill following section 8 should ~~be referred to~~ ^{be referred to} children ~~no longer to be labelled~~ previously so labelled.

It must be made absolutely clear that by Jan 1, 1991 midway through the established time lines of the Ministry's policy directive on integration, all students presently served by the Metro T.C. School Bd. must become the responsibility of their local boards, and attend regular classes in their neighbourhood schools. The equipment, resources and funding for these students, now controlled by the Metro Bd. must be reallocated to local Bds. to enable them to support the student in the regular classroom in their neighbourhood school.

We also have alot to say about what ~~is not~~ ^{should be} in this Bill. Lynda?

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ISSUES OF CONCERN IN BILL 4:

1. Sections 15 and 16 (repeal of Hard-to-Serve): We support this revision.
2. Section 8 and subsequent sections that remove reference to "trainable retarded child" and "trainable retarded pupil": We support these revisions, but we want further assurances that the students will not continue to be treated as if they still bore the "TMR" label, and that boards of education will not be allowed to invent euphemisms for the "TMR" label. *Safeguards so*
3. Subsection 11(3) and sections 44 - 47 regarding responsibilities of the Metropolitan Toronto School Board: We support the notion of returning the responsibility for educating students now served by the M.T.S.B. back to the local Metro boards. However, we believe that the resources to do so should also be reallocated to the local boards and that every measure be taken to ensure that these students become valued members of their local neighbourhood schools.

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However we have alot more to say about what is not in Bill 4 than about what is in it that pertains to our students

OUR QUESTIONS TO YOU:

1. In view of
 - the public commitment to inclusion by the last 3 Ministers of Education
 - their persistent promises to take the first steps towards inclusion by September, 1993
 - the fact that Bill 4 is the first piece of legislation dealing with education in over 10 years
 - the fact that an amendment to the Education Act to provide for inclusion was drafted by ARCH (Advocacy Resource Centre for the Handicapped) and given to the Ministry in January, 1991
 - the lack of response from the Ministry of Education to the Proposed Amendments to the Special Education Legislation in 1986
 - the lack of response from the Ministry of Education to the Consultation Paper on the Integration of Exceptional Students in 1992,
 - the intervention of the Attorney General to support Alixe Hysert's right to inclusion in March, 1991

we are now asking why Bill 4 is so limited in its scope. Why is

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this government dragging out the process instead of streamlining it? Why does Bill 4 not include provisions to entitle all students to quality education in regular classes in their home schools with appropriate supports to ensure a successful school experience?

2. When is this government going to bring its education policies into line with its Human Rights Code?

3. When is this government going to bring its education policies into line with the policies of the Ministry of Community and Social Services? (Deinstitutionalization and community living must be accompanied by acceptance in regular classrooms.)

4. What provisions is this government taking to ensure that resources are allocated on the basis of student need, not on the basis of student label? (In one board, special education resource teachers are allocated to schools on the basis of .2 extra teachers for each student in the school with the label "Functional Life Skills", a thinly disguised euphemism for "TMR". This kind of pressure on principals and parents is intolerable.)

If this label is to disappear why is it used to identify students in other sections of this legis'n?

5. When is the policy memorandum on integration going to be approved and circulated to schools? Will it guarantee that students will be entitled to attend their local, neighbourhood schools (the school the student would attend were it not for the designation "exceptional")?

6. When will legislation be passed to guarantee the entitlement of all students to quality education in their local neighbourhood schools in regular classes with supports to ensure success?

7. Will members of this committee recommend that the Attorney General redirect her lawyers to support Becky Till's right to inclusion?

8. What guidelines will accompany Bill 4 to ensure that school boards do not replace the "TMR" label with any other label? What procedures will be enacted to ensure that students formerly labelled "TMR" will continue to receive adequate resource support? Will this government ensure that students formerly labelled "TMR" will be welcomed into their local neighbourhood schools in regular classes?

9. Will guidelines be developed to accompany Bill 4 to guarantee that will transfer FULL responsibility for students formerly served by the M.T.S.B. to the local Metro boards? What provisions will be made to transfer resource support directly to the local boards?

its not only we didn't like the words, issue of 1 category for children & D.D