

Some of the
correspondence
+ letters etc re
Ministry of Education's
new integration committee +
new Reg. 305.
Back up letter from
Snubelen to follow by
fax.



Down Syndrome Assoc. of Ontario

270 Simonsen Blvd.
Thornhill, Ontario
L3T 4T5

August 4, 1993

Dear Ms. Martel,

Once again, the Policy Paper on Integration has been deferred -- now possibly to August 16, 1993.

Apparently, questions were raised in discussions on July 26 which required further consideration.

We think these are the only questions which need to be considered:

1. What could possibly be more important than according the right to inclusion to all students in Ontario with Down syndrome and other developmental disabilities who are now partially or totally segregated from their peers?
2. Why is your government, which has enshrined integration in its own NDP educational policy, footdragging and sending double messages to school boards?
3. Why is Ontario still playing with the futures of its citizens with developmental disabilities when your own survey showed that all the other provinces in Canada have committed to integration?
4. In times of financial restraint, why is this government not speedily implementing the integration policy, which is not only morally right, but by your own research is known to be more cost effective than a segregated system?
5. Why is your government continuing to inflict intolerable suffering on families who have been waiting for years to take for granted what every family in Ontario takes for granted for their children: a quality education in the regular classroom in the local NEIGHBOURHOOD (not "community") school, alongside brothers and sisters and friends?

We believe that you have a moral duty to fulfil your promise to our children by approving this policy paper and announcing it by your stated deadline of September, 1993. Failure to do so will in fact damage our children since school boards will undoubtedly interpret any delay on your part as lack of commitment or intent to follow through in integration.

We, in good conscience, will not tell our members that they must wait again for equality for their children.

We have told them that our implementation date remains September 7, 1993 and that families should not take "No" from their neighbourhood schools for an answer.

Many of you in cabinet and senior government positions have worked with us over the past seven years, some in the All Party Working Group on Integration in Education and some in your Ministry positions to achieve equality for our children. We know that you are fully aware of the fact that our children have been and continue to be the losers in the educational system in this province. You are no longer the 3rd party on the sidelines. You are no longer the opposition. You have the power--there is no excuse-- it is time to act!

Yours sincerely,



Louise Bailey, Chairperson of Integration Committee
Down Syndrome Association of Ontario
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Lynda Langdon, Past President
Down Syndrome Association of Ontario
Tel: 889-3783



Down's Syndrome Assoc. of Ontario

January 21, 1991

Mrs. Marion Boyd
Minister of Education
Mowat Block,
900 Bay Street, 22nd Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1L2

Attn: Gillian Sandeman

Dear Mrs. Boyd:

On behalf of the Down Syndrome Association of Ontario we would like to express our appreciation to you for meeting with us on January 11, despite having to brave the elements.

We were especially gratified to learn that at last the Ministry of Education is adopting integration as its policy for children with developmental disabilities, even though we recognize there will be a period of phasing in.

Our understanding at this point is that there is a clear intent to ensure the availability and viability of the option of integration and that placement will be by parental choice. We also understand that placement will be in the student's neighbourhood school. Do we also understand correctly that a policy paper will be ready in the spring reflecting your commitment to integration. We are hoping for legislation which will be effective for September 1991.

We have communicated the results of our meeting to our members and have received the following feedback:

1. Concern re timelines for legislative change - parents are looking toward September 1991 so that children do not have to lose another year through forced placement in segregated classes
2. There are families in Ontario who are now in the midst of litigation around the issue of forced segregation. At least one of these families has had to homeschool their child for the past three years. These families need immediate relief in the interim as they are paying an exorbitant price for their principles emotionally and financially.

3. The Ministry needs to develop a working definition of integration as a guideline for schools and parents (especially new parents) so that we can ensure integration, not dumping, is being implemented. Our working definition may be helpful to you.
4. Parents who live in parts of the province where school boards have been particularly hostile to integration (e.g. York Region, Ottawa Carlton) need to know what protection, recourse, and/or procedures are available to them if their neighbourhood school either
i) refuses to provide integration or ii) refuses to integrate with necessary program modifications and supports for the student and classroom teacher.

We would very much like to hear your position on these issues. We look forward to the impending legislative changes to provide equality and good education for our children. As we stated in our meeting, we are very willing to help. To this end, we would like to continue liaising with you through Gillian Sandeman to provide information and ongoing support.

Certainly, our local associations expressed collective relief that the battle is over at last and they can now work together with the Ministry for the benefit of their child.

Sincerely,

Louise Bailey, M.S.W.
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Down Syndrome Assoc. of Ontario

19 Royal Birkdale Lane
 Thornhill, Ontario. L3T 1V1
 October 15, 1991

Telephone: 889-3783

The Honourable Elaine Ziemba, MPP
 Minister of Citizenship with responsibility for Disability Issues
 5th Floor, 77 Bloor Street West
 Toronto, Ontario.
 M7A 2R9

Dear Ms. Ziemba:

Louise Bailey, Chairperson of our Integration Committee, and I were pleased to meet with you and your staff on September 27, 1991. We were especially delighted to hear your support for the issue of integrating students currently labelled "exceptional" into regular classes in their neighbourhood schools, and we thank you for your offer to write to Marlon Boyd and offer your support. With the change of positions today, may we request that you write to Tony Silipo in support of our position?

I am enclosing copies of the controversial article written by the Director of the York Region Board of Education and the responses that have appeared in our local newspapers recently, as you requested. We recommend that you plan to read the Cressman article ONLY when you have planned to do something cheerful and uplifting right afterwards!

Thank you for supporting our children's rights. We are counting on you for a strong voice in Cabinet and behind the scenes as the integration consultation process continues.

Yours sincerely,

Lynda Langdon, President
 Down Syndrome Association of Ontario



Down Syndrome Assoc. of Ontario

19 Royal Birkdale Lane, Thornhill, Ont. L3T 1V1 (416-889-3783)

March 10, 1992

Honourable Tony Silipo, MPP
Minister of Education
22cd Floor, Mowat Block
Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario. M7A 1L2

Dear Tony,

We were pleased to have the opportunity to meet with you on March 5 and share our concerns about integration/mainstreaming in Ontario schools.

We are writing today both to thank you for meeting with us and to verify what we discussed last Thursday.

We were delighted that you opened the meeting by reiterating your government's and your personal commitment to implementing integration as the norm in this province. And we were pleased that you and Caroline acknowledged that the Consultation Paper on Integration is seriously flawed, that the only reason it went out in its present form was to not delay the process any longer, that everything in the paper is open to consultation, including the definitions, background, summary, etc., and that you are hoping for VERY strong responses from groups such as ours.

You recognized that the real issue is equality, and that all children must be given the legislated right to integration in their local neighbourhood schools with whatever supports are necessary to realize a successful placement before the concept of parental choice can have any meaning. You also seemed to realize that the children most affected by the Consultation process are those with developmental disabilities. While you refused to re-commit to your predecessor's implementation date of September 1992, you are firm in your commitment to a September 1993 implementation date for integration in Ontario schools to be a reality. We must remind you, however, that 1992 was already a compromise date for us, and that our children cannot afford to lose another year: our families regard September 1992 as the implementation date and will be proceeding accordingly.

It was very reassuring to hear you acknowledge that you are not bound by the definitions in the Consultation Paper, and to hear

you agree that integration and mainstreaming are the same thing. Furthermore, we think you understand that we have no quarrel with groups such as LDA or ABC who wish to receive segregated services for their children; our concern is that our children are given their right to be mainstreamed.

You were most concerned about the idea that school boards are using the Consultation Paper as an excuse to

a) continue to segregate kids

b) re-segregate kids (that is, remove students who are newly integrated or integrated "under the table" to segregated placements)

c) move kids out of neighbourhood, or "home" schools.

We will do as you requested and keep you informed of any instances of which we become aware where boards are interpreting the Consultation Paper as in any way resembling a policy statement. We fully understand and agree with you that everything in the paper is for discussion purposes only and should not be seen as a reflection of your Ministry's position on mainstreaming.

May we remind you, Tony, that we have asked you to do three things:

1. Issue a policy memorandum and public statement to the effect that all students who are currently mainstreamed/integrated shall be maintained in that placement (unless the parents request otherwise).

2. Issue a policy memorandum and public statement that you will continue to act as your predecessor did in the Hysert situation; that is, you will not, in court, support a board that refuses to integrate a student.

3. Introduce our integration amendment in the spring session, 1992.

We understand that you will likely follow through on 1 and 2, but not on 3 as you would prefer to wait for the consultation process to finish. We would still argue, however, that the introduction of as-of-right legislation in the spring would not compromise the "how to" process of consultation, and we ask you to please reconsider #3.

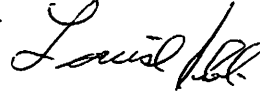
We are telling our members that we are "cautiously optimistic" after our meeting with you, and that the ball is now in your court. We look forward to receiving copies of the policy memoranda and your public statements in the very near future.

Mostly, Tony, we look forward to working with you and your staff to achieve the realization of the goal of integration as a right in Ontario as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,



Lynda Langdon, President
Down Syndrome Association
of Ontario



Louise Bailey, Chairperson of
Integration Committee, D.S.A.O.

C.C.

Caroline diGiovanni, Sr. Policy Ass't. to Minister of Education
David McKee, Director, Special Ed. and Prov. Schools Branch
Wally Beevor, Assistant Deputy Minister, Education
D.S.A.O. affiliates
Charles Beer, MPP (Liberal Education Critic)
Dianne Cunningham, MPP (PC Education Critic)
David Warner, MPP
Evelyn Gigantes, MPP
Richard Allen MPP
Marion Boyd, MPP
Elaine Ziemba, MPP
Harry Beatty, Acting Director of ARCH
Stephen Lewis
Ross Adams, Integration Action Group
Maureen Roy, Education Committee, O.A.C.L.
David Clandfield, Policy Assistant to Minister of Education