



ONTARIO PUBLIC
SCHOOL BOARDS'
ASSOCIATION

Leading Education's Advocates

Ontario Public School Boards' Association

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Michael Barrett
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April 21, 2015

Grant Crack, MPP, Chair of the Standing Committee on General Government, and
Sylwia Przewdziecki, Clerk of the Standing Committee on General Government
Room 1405, Whitney Block
Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A2

SENT VIA EMAIL: sprzewdziecki@ola.org

Dear Grant Crack,

Re: Bill 45, Making Healthier Choices Act, 2015

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) has a strong history of advocacy for student achievement and well-being and takes pride in the contributions we have made to the shaping of education policy in Ontario. The Education Act, through 2009 amendments, clarified that school boards are responsible for not only student achievement but also student well-being. As an Association one of our priorities has been The Whole Child and Student Well-Being. We believe that improving student achievement and student engagement is directly linked to ensuring that we work collaboratively for the social, emotional, mental and physical well-being of all children and youth. This means striving to make our schools and communities healthier places for students to learn and grow. Children are spending more time than ever in and around schools either in our classrooms, playgrounds and sports fields, as well as in before-and-after school programming where it is offered. In addition, many school boards have child care centres and other community partners working within their schools and / or providing services in the community which link directly back to the school.

OPSBA is a member of the Ministry of Education's Healthy Schools Working Table where student nutrition, daily physical activity, concussion prevention, mental health, responsible digital citizenship, healthy relationships and other health related topics are discussed. We provided commentary to the Ministry's Healthy Kids Panel report that addressed the concerns expressed by many about childhood obesity, lifestyle choices and the ability to make healthy food selections. With this background, we offer our supportive comments regarding Bill 45, Making Healthier Choices Act, 2014 and its three Schedules; Schedule 1, Healthy Menu Choices Act, 2014, Schedule 2 Smoke Free Ontario Act, and Schedule 3 Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2014.

Schedule 1 Healthy Menu Choices, 2014

OPSBA supports any requirement that provides nutritional information on menus and allows parents and children to make more informed food choices. This was part of the Healthy Kids Panel recommendations that we were supportive of as it included fast food outlets, which we know are used by students (and parents).

Schedule 2 Smoke-Free Ontario

We understand that this proposed legislation would amend the Smoke-Free Ontario Act by prohibiting the sale of flavoured tobacco. OPSBA would support this extension as we see these products are promoted using strategies similar to advertising of candy in their attempt to be more appealing to young people.

Schedule 3 Electronic Cigarette Act, 2014

OPSBA supports the ban on selling of e-cigarettes to anyone under the age of 19. This schedule also prohibits the use of an electronic cigarette in a school or a child care centre. These are logical extensions of cigarette bans and make eminent sense for schools and child care centres.

We believe that healthy kids grow up to be healthy adults. These recommendations will provide Ontarians – families and children – with the information and protection needed to make choices which result in a commitment to a healthy and active lifestyle.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Barrett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Michael Barrett,
President