



ONTARIO PUBLIC
SCHOOL BOARDS'
ASSOCIATION

Leading Education's Advocates

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April 9, 2014

To: Valerie Quico Lim, Clerk of the Standing Committee on Social Policy,
Ernie Hardeman, Chair of the Standing Committee on Social Policy, and
Members of the Standing Committee on Social Policy

Re: Bill 135, Ryan's Law (Ensuring Asthma Friendly Schools), 2013

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) has been following Bill 135, *Ryan's Law (Ensuring Asthma Friendly Schools), 2013* as it moved through the legislative process and received media attention following the tragic death of a young student. Our Association and member boards fully support ensuring that schools are safe places for students to learn and succeed. Many children are in our schools for a large part of their day, either in our classrooms or in before-and-after school programming. We know there are schools that have many children with serious medical conditions that must be fully understood and supported to ensure needs are met on a daily basis. It's important to remember that school boards have policies and procedures in place that address student safety and provide regular staff training but the list of needs seems to be increasing.

We understand the intent behind this bill and the goal of helping children who suffer from asthma. However, we believe that this bill is limited in its scope in that it only addresses one medical condition. Earlier this year, we joined other education stakeholders by writing a letter to the Minister of Education requesting that there be a more comprehensive approach for managing multiple medical conditions.

We appreciate that the Minister listened to stakeholders and announced that OPHEA will be leading a needs assessment research project that will review how medical conditions are managed in schools. We understand that the review includes asthma, diabetes, anaphylaxis, epilepsy and other prevalent medical conditions. We believe this is an important first step and we will work and support OPHEA on the initiative.

Our recommendation to the committee would be to consider the research and the report undertaken by OPHEA before it proceeds with a standalone act. We will be asking OPHEA to also consider reviewing Policy/Program Memorandum No. 81 - Provision of Health Support Services in School Settings, which was released in 1984.

Sincerely,

Michael Barrett,
President of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) represents public district school boards and public school authorities across Ontario. Together our members serve the educational needs of almost 70% of Ontario's elementary and secondary students. The Association advocates on behalf of the best interests and needs of the public school system in Ontario. OPSBA believes that the role of public education is to provide universally accessible education opportunities for all students regardless of their ethnic, racial or cultural backgrounds, social or economic status, individual exceptionality, or religious affiliation.

Attach: Copy of letter to Liz Sandals, Minister of Education -January 2014