

support every child  
reach every student

accompagner chaque enfant  
appuyer chaque élève

Legalization of non-medical Cannabis  
OPSBA Update  
September 08, 2017

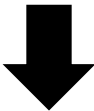
# Purpose

- To provide an update on the Ministry of Education's (EDU's) work in relation to the expected legalization and regulation of non-medical cannabis, including:
  - Proposed federal legislation
  - EDU's goals and priorities
  - Existing EDU supports
  - Health effects of cannabis use
  - Stakeholder engagement plan
  - Next steps

# Federal Bill Introduced April 13, 2017: Overview

The proposed Cannabis Act would, if passed, strictly regulate and restrict access to non-medical cannabis. Highlights include:

## proposed federal and provincial roles and responsibilities



### Federal

- set a minimum age of 18 for the sale and supply of cannabis
- set adult and youth possession and distribution limits
- regulate production (including type and potency of products)
- set health and safety standards
- establish criminal prohibitions
- strengthen impaired driving provisions (for alcohol and cannabis)
- determine minimum standards for distribution and retail sale
- establish marketing rules

### Provincial / Territorial

- may increase the minimum age of sale
- may change the possessing, consuming and sharing limits
- oversee the distribution and sale of cannabis (subject to federal minimums)
- control pricing and taxation
- regulate where cannabis may be used
- amend provincial traffic safety laws

## numerous proposed provisions focused on protecting youth



Two new **criminal offences**, with maximum penalties of **14 years in jail**:

1. Distributing or selling cannabis to youth
2. Using a youth to commit a cannabis-related offence

### Marketing restrictions, e.g.:

- Prohibiting products that are appealing to youth
- Limiting packaging, promotion and display of cannabis to protect youth

### Youth Penalties, under the Youth Criminal Justice Act:

- Sale, cultivation, production, and import/export of cannabis
- Youth possession or distribution of more than 5 grams of dried cannabis

If passed, the federal government has committed to bring the legislation into force no later than **July 2018**



## Provincial Work to Date

### Ontario's Approach

- The provincial government has established the Ontario Legalization of Cannabis Secretariat led by the Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG)
- The Province is working on the development of a provincial regulatory framework needs to build on and align with the federal framework
- The legislation of cannabis is a significant initiative. Provinces and territories have their own decisions to make on the use, sale, and public health and safety impacts of this change
- Key areas of focus include:
  - minimum age
  - possession,
  - places of use,
  - public education,
  - youth and young adult prevention and harm reduction

# EDU's Goal and Priorities

## Overarching Goal

To prevent and/or delay cannabis use among youth and promote healthy decision-making and student safety

## Key Priorities

- Ensure EDU **legislation and policy** is aligned with new regulatory framework
  - Non-medical cannabis possession, consumption and sharing is currently and will remain **prohibited in schools** if the new federal legislation comes into effect. For instance, suspension must still be considered for the possession, consumption and/or sharing of non-medical cannabis.
- Provide **targeted resources** to specific groups, including:
  - Reliable information for **students** to make informed decisions (e.g. positive lifestyle impacts of avoiding cannabis use and impact of use on cognitive development, career and relationships)
  - Support for **parents** seeking information on prevention and healthy decision-making
  - Support for **education sector** to assist students and their families, such as information related to cannabis and other substances
- Use best available **evidence**, and contribute to ongoing data monitoring and research efforts



# What EDU Supports Exist Now?

## Support for Parents



- An overview of the HPE curriculum that makes reference to cannabis use and addictions, as well as grade by grade information.<sup>1</sup>
- Guides for parents on suspension and expulsion and the Ontario Code of Conduct.<sup>2,3</sup>

## Support for Education Sector (educators, principals, etc.)



- Three-year funding starting in 2018-19 school year to support student well-being, such as, increasing support to school boards' local well-being priorities, increasing funding for School Mental Health ASSIST, new and expanding programming to support staff well-being and classroom violence prevention, and funding for other programs and supports to promote student well-being.
- A memo to support schools on the Legalization of Cannabis sent to Directors of Education on April 19, 2017 ([www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/memos/april17.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/memos/april17.html)) which include links to:
  - Resources for all school board leaders and employees on progressive discipline and reporting/responding to incidents that could lead to suspension or expulsion;<sup>4,5</sup>
  - Promoting universal mental health which contributes to protective factors that can help reduce the likelihood of a student developing a substance use problem; and
  - Evidence-based information for educators, such as signs for substance use and strategies for creating supportive environment.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/multiLanguages.html> <sup>2</sup> <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/suspexp.html> <sup>3</sup> <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/code.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/keepkidsafeschool.pdf> <sup>5</sup> <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/SupportResGuide.pdf> <sup>6</sup> <https://smh-assist.ca/blog/2016/11/14/creating-and-sustaining-mentally-healthy-classrooms>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/SupportingMinds.pdf>

# Purpose for Action: The Health Effects of Cannabis Use



**21.3%** of Ontario students in grades 7 to 12 reported **past year cannabis use**

❖ Average age of initial use was just over **15**



**28%** obtained cannabis from a friend



**10%** of students in grades 10 to 12 with a driver's licence reported **driving after using cannabis** at least once in the past 12 months

❖ Only 5.1% of students reported driving after consuming 2 or more alcoholic drinks



**2%** of students in grades 9 to 12 reported symptoms of **cannabis dependence**

*Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS) through the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), 2015*

## Potential Health and Social-related Harms Include:

### Impaired brain development

- Cognitive deficits resulting from chronic cannabis use may be reversed after a month of discontinued use in adults; however, the same may not be true for those who start using cannabis in early adolescence.

### Dependence (addiction to cannabis)

- Approximately **17%** of cannabis users who initiate **cannabis use during early adolescence will develop dependence** (compared to approximately 5-9% of overall users who develop cannabis dependence).

### Risk of first-episode psychosis

Frequent and early users of cannabis are at **increased risk for psychosis and psychotic symptoms** (especially those who are already prone to psychosis due to family history, etc.).

*The Effects of Cannabis Use during Adolescence, Canadian Centre of Substance Abuse (CCSA), 2015*

According to Health Canada,  
**35% of youth consider  
cannabis 'low risk'**

# EDU-Led Stakeholder Engagement

- EDU will engage stakeholder groups over the fall/winter 2017/18 on EDU specific issues and discuss the potential supports the education sector may need to address non-medical cannabis legalization concerns.

EDU Potential Areas of Consultation	Timing and Products
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What the legislation means for the school community, including roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>• Reliable information for students to make their own decisions (e.g. Positive lifestyle impacts of avoiding cannabis use, impact of use on cognitive development, career and relationships).</li> <li>• Support for education sector staff assisting students and their families, such as information related to cannabis and other substance use.</li> <li>• Support for parental awareness in supporting their children to make healthy lifestyle choices.</li> <li>• Support for certain populations (e.g. Indigenous youth, justice-involved youth, rural/remote youth, racialized youth, newcomer youth, youth living in poverty) at a higher risk for cannabis misuse.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fall/winter 2017/18 engagements (e.g. Parent Involvement Committee Symposium, Healthy Schools Working Table)</li> </ul>





# EDU-Led Stakeholder Engagement

## EDU Targeted Stakeholders

In addition to engaging stakeholders through existing tables, e.g. Parent Involvement Committee Symposium, Healthy Schools Working Table, Minister's Principals Reference Group, the Ministry will also be reaching out to partners including

- Directors of Education
- Association des directions et directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes
- Ontario Public School Boards' Association
- Ontario Catholic School Trustee's Association
- Ontario Student Trustees' Association
- Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health
- Ophea
- Indigenous partners
- Mental Health ASSIST; mental health leaders
- targeted student well-being experts
- Principals' Associations
- Teachers' Federations
- Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario
- Association franco-Ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques
- Minister's Student Advisory Council
- Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education
- Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations
- People for Education
- Parents partenaires en éducation

## Next Steps: Fall 2017

- EDU work with other ministries to finalize the proposed Ontario legislative/regulatory decisions on non-medical cannabis legalization to ensure that minimum age, places of use, and youth possessing, consuming and sharing limits are established for July 1, 2018 implementation date.
- EDU-led stakeholder engagement with the education sector on youth prevention.
- EDU communication updates to Directors of Education and other key Education Sector partners.
- EDU to begin developing/updating resources and products to support the education sector for Spring 2018 and beyond.

# Discussion/Questions

- What are some important considerations from your perspective that we need to think about as we continue to prepare for the legalization?

