

TO: Trustees

DATE: January 30, 2007

FROM: Gerry Connelly, Director

RE: Bill 52 – The Education Amendment Act (Learning to Age 18) 2006

The following provides a brief update on Bill 52, what it is and the impact it will have on our system. Additional information will be provided to you, as it becomes available.

HIGHLIGHTS:

1. Stay in school until age 18 (Proclaimed):

- All students stay in school until they are 18 unless they are receiving satisfactory instruction elsewhere (home or private school) or unless they get a diploma.
- This does not apply to students who have left school prior to December 20, 2006. However, if they later do return, the requirement to stay until age 18 will apply.

2. Equivalent learning programs (Not Proclaimed):

- Students will have the option of taking “equivalent learning” instead of traditional school.
- Minister given powers to define “equivalent learning”.
- Boards are obligated to provide equivalent learning programs to their pupils.
- Boards given powers to enter into agreements with outside groups/organizations/entities to provide equivalent learning. Boards can work together under joint agreements.
- Only principals can grant credit for completion of an equivalent learning program.

3. Truancy provisions amended (Not Proclaimed):

- Students can be prosecuted for not attending school till 18 (currently 16).
- Parents/guardians can be prosecuted for not sending their children to school up to 18 (currently 16).
- If person 16 or 17 years old has withdrawn from parental control, the parent/guardian cannot be prosecuted.
- If 16 or 17 year-old is convicted of truancy (habitually absent), the court has option of suspending the person’s driver’s license.
- Fines for truancy increased from \$200 to \$1,000.

- Amendments to the Highway Traffic Act requiring confirmation of attendance at school to obtain a driver's license have been removed.

4. Right to attend school expanded (Proclaimed)

- Person 18 yrs or over may attend school in a board's jurisdiction even if no parent there and even if has not resided in jurisdiction for 12 months. (The Act deletes the 12 month residency requirement.)
- Person who is 16 or 17 years old and has withdrawn from parental control has right to attend school regardless of where parent resides. This right can be restricted via regulation.

5. "Excusal" from Attendance (Not Proclaimed)

- Minister can make regulations about how persons over 14 can be excused from compulsory school attendance -- expands existing powers to make such regulations (currently known as "Supervised Alternative Early Leaving Programs")

What remains to be addressed by the Ministry?:

- Minister's authority to develop policies and standards for equivalent learning programs and providers;
- Enforcement measures, to be implemented when more programs in place:
 - Court-ordered sanctions for parents, students and employers of 16-17 year olds. Maximum fines for parents and employers up to \$1000.
 - Adds option of a court-ordered driver's license suspension for students convicted of habitual absence
- Regulation-making authority re legal excuses for non-attendance at school, including a review of SALEP;
- Equivalent Learning programs, standards and providers
- Regulations re legal excuses for non-attendance at school
 - The scoping and definition of acceptable learning activities outside of school (i.e. apprenticeship)
- Regulations regarding SALEP

What TDSB has in place:

- Student Placement Centre to advocate for and re-engage students
- Options/Alternatives for students in the TDSB
 - Alternative Schools
 - Continuous Intake Co-op
 - Alternative Programs
 - Credit Recovery in every secondary school

- Dual Credit Lighthouse and School to College to Work Projects
- Local In School initiatives through Student Success programming to rescue and recover credits
- SALEP – clarification coming regarding application to 16 and 17 year olds.
- Expanded Cooperative Education at the school level – single credit, double credit as well as four credit options. (2 – two credit packages)

For further information please contact Melanie Parrack, Executive Superintendent – Student Success via e-mail at Melanie.parrack@tdsb.on.ca or at (416) 397-3190.