

## **LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS FROM BILL 13, ACCEPTING SCHOOLS ACT, & SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINES**

Bill 13, the *Accepting Schools Act, 2012* comes into force on September 1, 2012.

School boards are already addressing some of the legislative requirements found in Bill 13 such as having equity and inclusive education policies. The ministry believes that several requirements will result in boards making adjustments to their local procedures or more substantial changes to their local policies. Some of the requirements can only be implemented after school boards have received policy direction from the ministry. Boards are expected to make changes to some of their local policies and procedures for implementation in **September 2012** working towards full implementation of all Bill 13 obligations by **February 1, 2013**. However, it is expected that boards will communicate Bill 13 changes at the beginning of the school year to parents, students and staff.

Requirements such as board bullying prevention and intervention plans may take more time as the ministry consults with stakeholders, including the Institute for Education Leadership (IEL), and the Accepting Schools Expert Panel on an evidence-informed Provincial Model Plan.

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***The following is a summary of the legislative requirements arising from Bill 13 along with target dates for implementation.***

The ministry believes that the following new obligations will require adjustments to current local board procedures and are expected to be in place in **September 2012**.

- Principals' duty to investigate any incident reported under s. 300.2.
- Principals' notification to parent/guardians of students who engaged in behaviour for which the student could be suspended or expelled and which resulted in harm to another student.
- Principals' duty to invite parents of victims and parents of those students who have engaged in any behaviour for which the student could be suspended or expelled and that resulted in harm to another pupil to discuss with the principal the supports that will be provided to their children.
- Support for students who want to establish and lead activities or organizations that promote a safe and inclusive learning environment, the acceptance of and respect for others and the creation of a positive school climate. This may include activities and organizations that promote gender equity, anti-racism, awareness and understanding of and respect for people with disabilities and people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, including organizations with the name Gay-Straight Alliance or another name.
- Requiring organizations using school property to follow standards consistent with the Provincial Code of Conduct.

The ministry expects that the following legislative requirements will result in school boards making more significant changes to their local policies and procedures. For this reason, it is expected that these requirements will be operationalized by **February 1, 2013**, to give boards time to provide training to principals and notice to students and parents regarding new consequences. These include:

- New definition of bullying
- Changes to Section 310(1) of the *Education Act* (which set out the circumstances in which a pupil must be suspended and considered for possible expulsion) which now includes certain circumstances related to bullying and to activities that are motivated by bias, prejudice or hate.
- Amending board multi-year plans to include the goals set out in Bill 13 around positive school climate and bullying prevention.

Bill 13 has a number of legislative requirements that cannot be accomplished until the ministry has provided policy direction to school boards through changes to Policy/Program Memoranda 144 (Bullying Prevention and Intervention) and 145 (Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour). The ministry expects to get these policy changes to boards shortly, and boards will be expected to have their revised policies in place by **February 2013**. Some of these include:

- Principals' duty to communicate with teachers and where appropriate, other board employees who reported an incident for which suspension and expulsion must be considered, following a principal's investigation.
- Reporting by professionals such as psychologists and social workers
- Conducting school climate surveys of their students, staff and parents at least every two years.
- Supports for students; awareness raising opportunities for parents.
- Professional development programs for teachers and other staff.