

Civil Rights In Public Education, Inc.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS



Winter 2011

Issue Number 106

“Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools”

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/inclusiveguide.pdf>

The Ministry document with which the Roman Catholic separate schools have a great deal of trouble.

Background

“ON APRIL 6, 2009, the Minister of Education released the document *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* [Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) No. 119 (2009)]. That document sets out the following vision for an equitable and inclusive education system:”

Summarized, the document sets out a vision for an education system in which “all students, parents, and other members of the school community are welcomed and respected” and “every student is supported and inspired to succeed in a culture of high expectations for learning” because the government believes that Ontario’s diversity can be its greatest asset.

The policy

A school board's equity and inclusive education policy is expected to be comprehensive, “covering the prohibited grounds of discrimination set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code” but also to acknowledge societal issues such as sexual harassment, gender-biased violence, as well as race and sexual orientation.

Although every school or board was to have an equity and inclusive education policy in place by September 2010, it recognized that achieving improvement across Ontario’s school boards would take time. The ministry has therefore provided for policy development and implementation to be phased in over a four-year period.

The Halton Catholic board

Shortly after the ministry introduced its new inclusion and equity policy that required school boards to create a gay-straight alliance (GSA) club if requested by a student, the outgoing trustees of the Halton Catholic District School Board voted in November not to permit such clubs.

School board elections were held in the fall of 2010, so the board composition for the term beginning in 2011 may be composed of different members.

While the chairperson, Alice Anne Lemay, defended the ban by listing Nazi groups as an example of clubs not allowed in the district’s schools, she later apologized for the statement with the clarification that “gay-straight alliances are banned because they are not within the teachings of the Catholic Church.”

The policy was probably determined by a letter sent to Roman Catholic school boards which raised concerns about the new equity policy. The letter urged boards to consider groups other than gay-straight alliances because such groups “imply a self-identification with sexual orientation

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that is often premature among high-school students.”

This is the second time in less than a year that Catholic beliefs have clashed with education policies developed by the Ontario Ministry of Education. In the spring of 2010 a new sex-education curriculum that introduced in early grades the notion of same-sex families was pulled for revision after religious groups raised objections.

What is a GSA?

A gay-straight alliance club is one which is devoted to creating “safe space” for gay high school students. The club provides a space where lesbian or gay students can go where they can be sure that no one will make fun of them, or try to hurt them because of who they are.

Such clubs also create an understanding between gay students and straight students. As such, they are similar to ecumenical church groups which exist to create understanding between different religious beliefs and practices.

There is an expectation that the GSAs have, and will in the future, reduce the number of shocking suicides by gay young people who feel that they would rather be dead than continue to face homophobia.

Position of the

Roman Catholic Church

The position of the Roman Catholic Church can be found in its catechism sections 2357-59 <http://www.scborromeo.org/ccc/p3s2c2a6.htm>

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states gays "must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity."

After the call for respect, the Catechism goes on to state that "homosexual persons are called to chastity." While they are to be accepted in the pews, they are clearly not to be accepted for who they are.

They are expected to recognize that they suffer a condition of “grave depravity” that they should resist all their lives. The reality of their homosexuality is not to be accepted -- either by the Catholic community or by gay Catholics themselves.

Therein lies the problem with the Catholic education community's approach to gay-straight alliances in their high schools.

They will never accept homosexuals for who they are, but only protect them from physical and emotional abuse while praying that they change their orientation or are successful in resisting it for the rest of their lives.

An article in The Chatham Daily News, reporting on the St. Clair Catholic District School Board, quoted Paul Wubben, its Director of Education, as saying that “...the local Catholic board has policies in place to foster an inclusive environment for all students.” The statement brought a strong letter-to-the-editor response by Leonard Baak, of Education Equality in Ontario, www.OneSchoolSystem.org.

Letter to the Editor

Sir: Re: "Catholic board fosters

inclusive environment," in the Jan. 26 Chatham Daily News.

St. Clair Catholic District School Board director of education Paul Wubben claims that, "What we stand for is embracing all of our students . . . The teachings of the church are that you accept people as they are."

Is that so? Is his not the same church that denies practicing (as opposed to chaste) homosexuals communion in their Churches? Is his not the same church that teaches in its Catechism that "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered" and "homosexual persons are called to chastity?" The Catechism goes on to say that "by prayer and sacramental grace, (homosexuals) can and should gradually and resolutely approach Christian perfection."

Call me crazy, but that doesn't sound like an institution that accepts gay people for who they are. Sounds more like the Moonies, hell bent on reprogramming these wayward souls to the "correct" behaviour. Sorry, Mr. Wubben, but you can't gloss over the truth -- the church does not accept homosexuals as they are. It never has.

That Catholic schools are funded by a government that fully accepts homosexuals in every other instance is a contradiction that needs to be dealt with.

Roman Catholic reaction

As reported by LifeSiteNews.com on January 26th “(Roman Catholic) evangelicals have expressed disappointment at the apparent collapse of the Ontario Catholic Church in the face of pressure from homosexual activists who successfully lobbied a Catholic school board last week to scrap a pro-family equity policy that included explicit wording to prevent

instruction that undermines Church teaching on homosexuality.” The full article can be accessed at: http://www.lifesite.com/home/print_article/news/28197/

Comments – unedited – posted after the above article include:

Posted by laurav on Jan 26, 2011

I actually felt physically sick after reading this article. The Bishops have no control over Catholic education??? Really?? Aren't they the successors to the apostles entrusted to teach the Catholic faith given to us by Jesus?

Or did I miss something? The only answer is to scrap the government funded Catholic system and begin a private Catholic school system—we may have fewer students, but at least they will be authentically Catholic. Mr. Lees is a wonderful man doing a great job for education all across Ontario. Where our Catholic leaders?

Post by familygonzalez on Jan 26, 2011

Somebody needs to call the Pope!

Posted by CatholicDad on Jan 26, 2011

Archbishop Thomas Collins statement is beyond believe and confirms my worst fears that the Catholic education is Catholic in name only.

I will be seriously looking at private Catholic schools (very limited choice) and Christian private schools (some of them are more Catholic than these sham-Catholic schools).

laurav - agreed, scrap the funding from these sham-Catholic schools

Posted by Paul on Jan 26, 2011

I have chosen Catholic Schools for my kids because I trusted in Catholic education and I pay my property taxes for them. It was on high level and this is why homosexuals want to destroy it as they did it with Public Schools.

I am surprised how trustees can betray our trust? Fire them and vote again people who keep our values. Schools are for education, not for sexual harassment to our innocent children. My son doesn't want go to school, because he wants study science, not sex. Children have to be happy in school, not scared.

Posted by Helen on Jan 26, 2011

It's outrageous, but most Catholic schools are just not Catholic. I spent a fortune to send my kids, and they learned nothing about Catholic morality - when I confronted the homeroom teacher, he said "We don't discuss chastity here." Home schooling is the only answer.

Posted by DenisR on Jan 26, 2011

The bishops have to take a stand and that is: If the Catholic school boards won't conform with Catholic teaching, then they can't call themselves Catholic school boards. It's that simple. I'm super glad that my grandchildren are being schooled at home.

Posted by doralmeister on Jan 26, 2011

It's evident that 6 of the Halton Catholic School Board members are not Catholic. It's obvious that most Canadian Catholic Bishops are Catholic-Lite. I wonder what Bishop Henry would have to say to the Halton CSB? Most Catholic schools ceased to be Catholic about 40 or 50 years ago. When I taught in a Catholic school (before Vatican II) the school board members were truly Catholics and the parish priest made sure that the school was truly Catholic. And I suspect that the Nun who was the Principal kept them all on the straight and narrow.

Posted by Catholic Mom of 6 on Jan 26,

...and, doralmeister, tax dollars didn't pay the bill. He who pays the piper and all... We take Ontario education dollars and are burden with Ontario gov't values.

My children were either sent to public school (where they knew the teaching wasn't Catholic, but also didn't expect it to be) or homeschooled. My cousins who all attended Catholic schools are now Lutherans.

Should add that Lutheran is not the problem - not being Catholic is the problem; led astray by the system that was supposed to encourage their faith is the problem.

Posted by Grumpydude on Jan 27, 2011

There is what was and there is what is. Unlike the world of the past, I believe it is well-known that many Catholic schools are Catholic in name only and that Catholic parents tend to do a lot of wishful thinking. While hope is

important, one has to occasionally do something and not expect their education system to be a panacea.

As determined by the comments, devout Roman Catholics would rather fund their own schools than submit to provincial standards under public funding.

Legal reaction

The Halton Catholic District School Board's (HCDSB) ban on gay-straight alliances (GSAs) has galvanized thousands to speak out. For many, the issue keeps coming back to a clash between fundamental rights to equality and religious freedom.

Noa Mendelsohn Aviv, director of the equality program at the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA) is calling on Canadian high school students to start gay-straight alliances at their high schools - whether Catholic or public.

Speaking strictly from a Canadian Charter perspective, students have the right to equality, she says. They have the right to get together with like-minded people in groups or clubs.

"In my opinion, yes, they are breaking Charter laws by not allowing gay-straight alliances," she says. "Even more obvious is the right to freedom of association, which says you can get together with people of your choosing."

"Those rights and freedoms belong to all people in Canada, including our youth. Part of the problem here is you have this overlap of religious authority determining educational policy at a publicly-funded school."

Catholic bishops prohibit gay-straight alliances in Ontario schools

Gay label to be 'avoided,' educators told

Justin Stayshyn and Andrea Houston / National / Friday, February 11, 2011

From: http://www.xtra.ca/public/National/Catholic_bishops_prohibit_gaystraight_alliances_in_Ontario_schools-9760.aspx

Gay clubs are prohibited by bishops at all Ontario Catholic schools, an investigation by Xtra reveals.

That contradicts what's been said by politicians, school officials and even gay lobbyists, who claim that there are gay-straight alliances (GSAs) in the province's Catholic schools.

Xtra contacted all 29 of Ontario's Catholic school boards; not a single one reported having a GSA.

Moreover, not only are GSAs prohibited by Catholic bishops, but Ontario's taxpayer-supported school system's understanding of homosexuality — and its gay students — is determined by these religious leaders, not the policies of the Ministry of Education.

According to the superintendent of education for the Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board, Gerald Casey, GSAs aren't explicitly banned by his board.

"No, I wouldn't say we ban them. We support student clubs that support inclusiveness, especially for students who might otherwise feel marginalized. But all our clubs must, however, adhere to the Catholic teachings and values," says Casey.

Could students at a Bruce-Grey Catholic school start a GSA? "The answer would be no," admits Casey.

Though they don't have a GSA at the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board, Diane Legg, director of communications and public affairs for the board, says, "It's not about if we allow or not allow them."

"As a Catholic board, we're guided by the bishops, certainly. We always have been," says Legg. "We write our curriculum based on church teachings."

All curriculum taught at Ontario Catholic schools is vetted by the Institute for Catholic Education. The institute was formed 25 years ago when the province extended full funding to Catholic high schools. Its membership is made up of associations representing Catholic principals, trustees, the teachers' union, business officials, supervisory officers, parents and the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario (ACBO). The ACBO is the

final authority in the province on what is - and isn't - determined to be "Catholic."

Sister Joan Cronin, executive director of the institute, explains. "They have the moral suasion of guarding the Catholic tradition. If you read canon law, you'll see the role of the bishop is to govern, sanctify and teach. They have the responsibility of seeing the Catholic tradition is taught," she says.

In 2004, the institute published the chief document used to inform all Ontario Catholic school teachings on the subject of homosexuality, the *Pastoral Guideline to Assist Students of Same-Sex Orientation*.

In the introduction to the 94-page directive, written by bishop Paul-Andre Durocher, chair of the ACBO Education Commission, he acknowledges the church has "not always been sensitive to the particular needs of students with a same-sex orientation." Durocher calls for the elimination of "practices like bullying and unjust discrimination" and for the development of policies to meet the "special needs" of "students with a same-sex attraction."

What follows the introduction is a guide for keeping Catholic students with "a same-sex attraction" safe from both bullying and, more importantly, gay sex. The document avoids using the label "homosexual" as, it explains, "The orientation or act is homosexual or heterosexual but the person is not." A student may have "a same-sex attraction," but no one is gay. Further, if a student is suffering from these attractions, they must never act on them: "The bottom line of church teaching on gay sexual activity is simply: Don't. Ever. This is called lifelong abstinence, or a celibate lifestyle."

Though the document serves as the principal reference on Ontario Catholic teaching on the matter of their gay students, it has never been posted online by Catholic or Ministry of Education officials.

Tracy Barill, superintendent of education for the Durham Catholic District School Board, explains these guidelines are used to inform schools' chaplaincy teams, who work with students who experience "a same-sex attraction."

For Barill, there is no conflict between the best interests of gay students and Catholic teachings on homosexuality.

"The teachings of the Ontario Catholic bishops is that we need to respect the dignity and respect of all human beings," she says. "Catholic teaching is clearly opposed to marginalization of any individual for any reason."

Asked if these mandates by the Catholic bishops might conflict with ministry guidelines on equity and inclusive schools, Legg shoots back. "We are to be inclusive, we are to be understanding, and we are to embrace all students. That's the information I have, and if you're trying to say something else I can't support that," she says.

Though the *Pastoral Guideline* is referenced in the Ontario Ministry of Education's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, no mention is made of the document's discrimination between homosexual and heterosexual sex, or its principal contention that gay identity is a myth. Instead, after lamenting the continued evidence of "racism, religious intolerance, homophobia and gender-based violence" in school communities, the ministry commends the bishops for their acknowledgement of "homosexual students" high rate of suicide and applauds the religious leaders' commitment to keeping students "free of harassment."

The ministry repeatedly refused to comment to Xtra on this issue.

In an effort to quell calls for an end to public funding of Catholic schools following the Halton Catholic School Board's outright ban on GSAs, many claimed Ontario taxpayers choose which board their taxes will support. This is factually incorrect. Catholic schools are funded according to the number of students, not the number of Catholic taxpayers.

Part of this damage control included leaving voters with the impression that the problem of homophobic discrimination was isolated to a single Catholic school board.

2011 PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATIONS

Every year the Minister of Finance hosts pre-budget town halls across the province to participate in the government's ongoing dialogue with the citizens of Ontario. Reproduced below is one of the submissions.

Please find below my submission on this matter, in English for the benefit of members of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. However, some link references lead to web sites in French.

Although I currently live in Montreal, QC, I resided in London, ON, from 1991 to 2010. I was an elected French public school board trustee from 1998 till I resigned in January 2010 when I moved to Montreal, with *Conseil scolaire de district centre-sud-ouest* (now *Conseil Scolaire Via-monde*) for the counties of Huron, Middlesex, Perth, Waterloo and Wellington. For eight years, I was also Vice-Chair of my school board, which administered a budget of \$118,202,647 during the 2009 – 2010 fiscal year. I believe I can address this matter with some degree of authority, competence and credibility.

Ontario is in a fragile economic situation and needs to manage its finances judiciously to ensure that programs most needed by its population are not hampered in the next provincial budget.

In this submission, I wish to stress that Ontario must reassess its fiscal priorities in education and must manage responsibly how it funds public education. To illustrate how much is currently wasted in public education funding, I will use the situation prevailing in Wawa, ON.

According to the 2006 Census, the township of Wawa has a population of 3,204. Of that population, **some 260 are students attending one of the four French schools.** *

Those French schools are :

- École St-Joseph Wawa (Catholic High School),

- École séparée Saint-Joseph, Dubreuilville (Catholic Elementary School)
- L'École publique l'Escalade (Public elementary School)
- L'École secondaire Carrefour Supérieur-Nord (Public Secondary School)

Those schools are under the responsibility of two school boards : *Conseil scolaire public du Grand Nord de l'Ontario* and *Conseil scolaire catholique du Nouvel-Ontario*.

Wawa also has three English schools:

- Sir James Dunn (Public Elementary School)
- Michipicoten (Public High School)
- St. Joseph French Immersion Catholic School - Elementary

Those schools are under the responsibility of two school boards: Algoma District School Board and the Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board

One does not need to be a fiscal genius to realize that seven schools for such a small concentration of students is totally ludicrous. Or that four school boards are necessary to manage seven schools. Unfortunately, this duplication is rampant across the whole province and results in costly bus-sing programs, duplication of managers, under-enrolled schools which are not cost-effective, etc... In many instances for smaller schools, it also results in doubling or tripling grades in the same classroom, which impacts negatively on the quality of education provided to students.

It can be argued that Ontario has to fund Catholic education, as stipulated in Section 93 of the Constitution. It can also be argued that an exemption from Section 93 can be obtained from the federal government, as Quebec and Newfoundland did more than a decade ago.

In a 2007 survey, "71 per cent (of Ontarians) said they oppose funding faith-based schools" for reasons detailed at the link below, which also shows that no other province in Canada funds only ONE faith, as Ontario does.

<http://en.epochtimes.com/news/7-9-28/60187.html>

Ontario must respect Minority Language Educational Rights, as stipulated at Article 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and therefore education funding should be limited to language of instruction.

Savings resulting from amalgamating Catholic School Boards with public ones would exceed **\$500,000,000 (\$500 Millions)** per year.

This is not the first time that the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs is apprised, during Pre-Budget Consultations, that education funds could be better spent.

<http://www.oneschoolsystem.org/documents/Finance2007.pdf>

But this is the first time that there is so much urgency to "fix the education system". Failure to do so before the next provincial budget will result in critical health and social programs being deprived of adequate funding, with the most vulnerable likely to pay the price.

Gilles Arpin, MMM CD

Rumblings from Alberta

A former education minister urges change to single school system

Although a little different from Ontario, Alberta also has separate school systems.

Background

In Alberta, public school boards, separate school boards, and charter schools are fully funded. The Canadian Constitution Act of 1867 specifically requires that the education rights of Protestant and Roman Catholic minorities be protected. Section 17 of the Alberta Act, 1905 guarantees that, in Alberta, the minority of either the Roman Catholic or the Protestant faith has the constitutional right to establish a separate school system.

Alberta currently has only one Protestant Separate School District and 16 Roman Catholic School Districts. Under the School Act, "The separate school electors in any public school district where a separate school district is not established may establish a separate school district within that public school district." The rights and statutes to establish a separate school apply to either the Protestant or Roman Catholic faith, whichever is the minority in the public school district. Alberta does not have different requirements for the two faiths.

Call for change

In December of 2010, David King, who served in Peter Lougheed's cabinet from 1979 to 1986, launch-ed a website and petition calling for a referendum to eliminate the publicly funded Roman Catholic and Protestant schools in the province.

"Separate school education fragments the community and under-

mines our concept of what a community is," said King, who lives in Edmonton. "If public education is where we're demonstrating to kids what it's going to be like to live in a community as an adult in Calgary, we don't serve the idea of that model well when we send some kids to one school because of their religion and other kids to another school because of their religion.

"Separate school education in Alberta in 2010 is the result of the Battle on the Plains of Abraham 250 years ago, 2,500 kilometres away," King said. "And I'm not sure that's justification for maintaining separate but equal education at the beginning of the 21st century."

In reply to King's initiative, Alberta Education spokeswoman Kathy Telfer said: "It's not on the table...what we have is one system. It's one publicly-funded school system that offers a range of choice."

King's response echoes that of most Ontarians: "I believe passionately that most little kids should be educated as Catholic kids beside Protestant kids, beside rich kids, beside poor kids, beside Indian kids, beside new arrivals. I like the idea of inclusive education."

David King was a founder of the Alberta Progressive Conservative Party in the 1960s and is now on the board of directors of the Alberta Party, but said this campaign is separate from his political affiliation. He is raising the issue now as the government looks to open the Alberta School Act in the spring.

"I think that conversation should include a discussion about the future of separate school education," said King. "The government may say they want nothing to do with the issue, but nothing prevents the people of Alberta from having the conversation, and I think the conversation is overdue."

The School Act has a provision that gives school boards the authority to create alternative programs based on language, culture, religion, subject matter or teaching philosophy.

Only three left

Only Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario have religious-based separate school systems. Quebec's school systems are based on language, and Newfoundland changed from a series of church-based systems to a single public system after a referendum in 1997.

Mary Martin, vice-chairwoman of the Calgary Catholic School District, said King won't get very far in his drive to eliminate separate school boards in Alberta.

"David's been trying to have this debate for many years and I think he's got his answer," said Martin. "Publicly funded separate education in Alberta produces really competitive young adults. They're well prepared to meet the challenges that come at them as they leave school. I would argue that we have choice and we're all better because of it."

King's petition can be found at www.separateschooleducation.ca

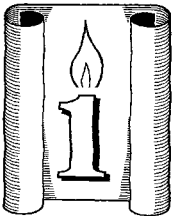
Parents seek a secular education for their kids.	Quebec bans religious teaching in daycares	CCLA on distributing the Gideon Bible
<p>In Morinville, Alberta, Donna Hunter's daughter came home from her first day in kindergarten and told her mother all that God had made. Donna's response was: "Well, it's very nice that your teacher believes in something and when you grow up, you can decide what you want to believe in." The daughter replied: "No, mommy. My teacher told me so. Why don't you believe me?"</p> <p>The Greater St. Albert Catholic Regional Division operates all four schools in Morinville, and although they are the public school system in Morinville, Hunter believes it is her children's right to a secular education free of religious instruction.</p> <p>For Hunter and her group of other concerned parents, the request is not an unreasonable one. They feel they are guaranteed a secular public education under section 2(a) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which guarantees Canadians the right of "freedom of conscience and religion," and under section 4 of the Human Rights Act.</p> <p>Dave Redman, who formed part of Hunter's delegation to the school board agrees with the group's position.</p> <p>"They are breaking the rights of the children under the Human Rights Act of Canada, and they are breaking the rights of the children under the Alberta School Act, where they have the right to a secular education from their public school system."</p>	<p>The Quebec government, next June, will ban religious teaching at all of its publicly funded daycares. Prohibited will be everything from group prayers to craft projects involving religious symbols.</p> <p>On December 17 Family Minister Yolande James released the new guide to religion in subsidized daycares. As part of the new policy, daycares will not be allowed to teach prayers or any religious doctrine. Daycares that continue to do so will face sanctions including loss of their government subsidies.</p> <p>"We clearly say that our daycare services that are subsidized are not places to teach faith," said James. She added that about 100 daycares in the province currently have a religious focus, such as those teaching the Muslim or Jewish faiths.</p> <p>The guide outlines specific cases of what expressions of religion will be tolerated.</p> <p>Religious symbols, such as a crucifix or menorah, will be allowed in daycares, she said. However, teaching the children about them would be a violation.</p> <p>Christmas trees will be allowed.</p> <p>Daycare workers will be allowed to say their own prayers or sing religious songs, but cannot ask children do the same.</p> <p>In addition, religious leaders including rabbis, imams and priests will no longer be allowed to visit public daycare centres.</p>	<p>The Canadian Civil Liberties Association is deeply concerned about a resolution passed by the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) which allows Gideons International to distribute the Gideon Bible to grade 5 students. Schools will be sending home consent forms to all students in the fifth grade and providing the Gideon Bible to those students whose parents consent.</p> <p>CCLA expressed concerns about this practice in 2009 and has written to the school board on two occasions again this year to articulate the particular problems raised by the policy and its implementation.</p> <p>While CCLA recognizes that public schools may teach children about various religions, their practices and beliefs, allowing Bibles to be distributed by a religious organization outside of the school's curriculum is, in CCLA's view, in violation of the <i>Charter's</i> protection of freedom of religion.</p> <p>The distribution of the Bible is problematic because it sends a message to children that Christianity is endorsed by the school board. Members of other religions may feel that they are somehow less accepted in this environment.</p> <p>The Bible, and the particular version used by Gideons International, also contains words that are clearly proselytizing, urging readers to read the Bible daily and "prayerfully".</p>
<p>The Alberta experience sounds much like the White River fiasco reviewed in the CRIFE newsletter for Spring 2005, Issue number 87.</p>	<p>Privately-funded daycares will not be affected.</p> <p>The Muslim Council of Montreal will support a court challenge.</p>	<p>More on this and other issues at http://ccla.org/2010/12/15/freedom-of-religion-in-the-schools-distributing-the-gideon-bible/</p>

WHO WE ARE

Civil Rights in Public Education, Inc. is an organization composed of citizens of differing backgrounds, living in more than 155 communities across Ontario, committed to one strong public education system, which offers neither privilege nor prejudice to anyone.

OUR AIMS ARE

- To serve as advocates for civil rights in public education so that the public is informed about the issue of publicly-funded separate schools.
- To hasten the day when Ontario's education policy recognizes the dignity and worth of all children, their right to equality, and their right to freedom from religious discrimination.



OUR LOGO

Our logo is composed of a background scroll representing the charters of rights which guarantee fundamental freedoms to all individuals; the numeral "1" signifies equality and social unity in one public education system for each official language; the flame above is the universal symbol for freedom.

Magazine article made the front cover.

"ParentsCanada" is a national Canadian magazine. One page of each issue is devoted to "Teacher talk back". The page solicits submissions with the note: "Are you an educator with something to get off your chest, or are you a parent with a question for an educator? Go to our website and click on the Chalk Talk Link. We want to hear from you! ParentsCanada.com"

Bruce Patterson is a school teacher in Carleton Place who believes in one public, secular school system so he submitted an article on that topic. The editors were concerned that any article content have national appeal. With publicly-funded separate school systems in Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta, and other provinces with partial public funding for some religious schools – the article passed the test.

Not only did it pass the test – the title for the one-page missive "Should governments fund two school systems?" made it to the bottom right-hand corner of the magazine cover.

For the complete article, go to:

<http://www.parentscanada.com/learning/articles.aspx?listingid=785>

A Thought to Consider

My goal is to inspire people to understand that you have an opportunity to create positive change in this world if you step into it and identify your passion.

Journalist Amanda Lindhout (Somali captive for 15 months)
Global Enrichment Foundation.

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ABOVE ALL WE MUST MAKE SURE THAT NO CITIZEN OF ONTARIO, NOW, OR EVER IN THE FUTURE, IS PRIVILEGED OR DISADVANTAGED PUBLICLY BECAUSE OF HIS/HER FAITH, OR ABSENCE OF FAITH.