



ONTARIO AUTISM COALITION

333 Glen Shields Avenue, Vaughan, Ontario, L4K 1T4 (416) 451-8315

July 24, 2017

The Honourable Mitzie Hunter
Minister of Education
22nd Floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street,
Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Hunter:

We are writing to you today to express a concern we have with the scope of the Education Accessibility Standard Development Committee. Of course, we are very pleased to see that steps are now underway to put the Committee into place. We have encouraged the members of both of our organizations to complete the survey on Educational Accessibility Standards, and of course we applaud your decision have members of the public give their input prior to the establishment of the committee.

However, in completing the survey, we noticed that only five types of accessibility barriers were being addressed:

1. Accessibility Awareness and Training
2. Awareness of Accessibility Accommodations – Policies, Processes, and Programs/Supports
3. Information, Communication, and Inclusive Decision-Making
4. Transition Planning
5. Inclusive and Accessible Learning Spaces

#AutismDoesntEndAt5

The Ontario Autism Coalition is a non-profit Ontario corporation dedicated to advocacy and political action on behalf of people with autism.
www.ontarioautismcoalition.com



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Of course, we agree that all five of these topics are very important—some of them overlap with issues raised by the Ontario Autism Coalition’s Education Recommendations Report, released in April of 2017. However, we hope that these five topics will not form the *entire* scope of the Committee. Even the August 2015 KPMG report on Accessibility in Education, prepared for your government, was able to identify more than five barriers. There are many, many other types of barriers experienced by students with disabilities, including autism and those with complex special needs, and it would be our hope that the Committee itself would be empowered to establish its *own* parameters about what it will examine.

We would welcome your assurances that the Education Accessibility Standards Development committee will not be limited to the five areas listed above.

Yours truly,

Laura Kirby-McIntosh
Vice-President,
Ontario Autism Coalition

Sherry Caldwell
Co-Founder,
Ontario Disability Coalition

Cc:

The Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Premier
The Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development
The Honourable Tracy MacCharles, Minister Responsible for Accessibility
The Honourable Michael Coteau, Minister of Children and Youth Services
David Lepofsky, Chair, AODA Alliance
Irwin Elman, Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Services
Patrick Brown, Leader of the PC Party of Ontario
Andrea Horvath, Leader of the NDP Party of Ontario

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