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Queer Ontario questions Minister of Education and Ontario Premier on implementation of Accepting Schools Act

In light of an attempt by the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) to not permit their students the ability to form Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) or similarly-named student groups – a direct contravention of Bill 13, the *Accepting Schools Act*, passed last June – provincial social justice group Queer Ontario is asking of Minister of Education Liz Sandals and Premier Kathleen Wynne:

What is the Ministry of Education and the Government of Ontario prepared to do if, as the Toronto Catholic District School Board might do at their May 23 Board Meeting: a school board passes a motion that specifically bans LGBTTIQ-affirming student groups?

The *Accepting Schools Act* explicitly gives students in all school boards in Ontario the right to form GSAs or similarly-named groups “that promote a safe and inclusive learning environment, the acceptance of and respect for others, and the creation of a positive school climate...” Yet despite this, TCDSB Trustee Garry Tanuan tabled a motion seconded by Trustee John del Grande, seeking to challenge the Act under the claim that it undermines the Catholic faith and its teachings.

Nick Mulé, Chairperson of Queer Ontario, states that “Our hope is that the Liberal Government will unequivocally ensure compliance with *The Accepting Schools Act* from all school boards across Ontario, so that students are able to learn in a safe, inclusive, accepting, and respectful environment, regardless of what school board they’re enrolled in. Part of the reason why Bill 13 was enacted was because the Liberals failed to implement PPM 145, which also permitted the establishment of GSAs. And so, we want an assurance that the Liberal Government will stand by this carefully-developed legislation.”

The full text of Queer Ontario’s letter to Minister Sandals and Premier Wynne can be found at <http://queerontario.org/2013/05/21/bill13-letter>. The motion, ‘Anti-Bullying Clubs Policy Change’, will be debated 7:00 PM on May 23, 2013, at the Toronto Catholic District School Board Head Office.

Queer Ontario is a provincial network of gender and sexually diverse individuals — and their allies — who are committed to questioning, challenging, and reforming the laws, institutional practices, and social norms that regulate queer people.

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For interviews:

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