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**Queer Ontario**

**Catholic School Board’s Funding Withdrawal Latest Example of LGBTQ Suppression**

Toronto: Initially, both the London Catholic District School Board (LCDSB) and the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) decided to withdraw funds of $15,000 each to a production of “Prom Queen,” which depicts the Marc Hall story regarding the high school student who fought his Catholic school board to be able to take his boyfriend to the prom, at the Grand Theatre. Both these school boards have traditionally provided funding of $30,000 combined to an annual production. This year’s production of “Prom Queen” that looks at a historical battle between LGBTQs and a Catholic school board, was almost suppressed by LCDSB and TVDSB’s defunding. It has since more than surpassed the $30,000 in funding due to a public fundraising campaign. Recently TVDSB restored its funding of $15,000.

This is but the latest example of how *Bill 13, Accepting Schools Act*, which protects LGBTQ students, staff and teachers from discrimination within all Ontario school boards is not being adequately implemented. When a Catholic school board attempts to suppress (and arguably censor) an historical event that would be of educational value for all students, both school board trustees and administrators need to be held to account. Fortunately, the public has demonstrated its openness to such a production possibly influencing TVDSB’s reversal, yet at the expense of separate school board tax dollars being withdrawn from such an initiative.

Why are Ontario’s tax dollars being wasted supporting an institution that not only defies provincial human rights protections within its walls, but also endeavours to project that attitude beyond?

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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