Bullying Prevention

Bullying at school has been an issue as long as there have been schools. Society has however changed and we now believe that permitting bullying at ‘school’ has serious negative repercussions not only on schools, but on society at large. The importance of addressing “school-yard” bullying is clear when we examine the efforts to reduce these behaviours.

Education Act Revision - Bill 45 - May 16, 2012

Anti-bullying Week - Sept 24-28, 2012

Anti-bullying Coordinators hired - Nov 19, 2012

Anti-bullying day proclaimed as Dec 17,2012

Although not all bullying centers on acts of discrimination, those that have the most alarming results do. Therefore it is important that teachers are aware of the two laws that articulate the grounds for discrimination complaints.

Notes:

1. The *Human Rights Act* of New Brunswick currently protects against discrimination (and implicitly harassment) based on 14 grounds: age, marital status, religion, physical disability, mental disability, race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, national origin, social condition, political belief or activity, sexual orientation and sex, including pregnancy (and gender identity).

In the New Brunswick Human Rights Act, there are no explicit protections for “gender identity” and “gender expression” as grounds of discrimination. However, the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission considers discrimination of a person’s sex to include gender identity.

1. Policy 703 was amended to expand the criteria that constitutes a positive learning and working environment

“positive learning and working environments … are inclusive, safe, respect human rights, support diversity and address discrimination regardless of real or perceived race, colour, religion, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, place of origin, language group, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, social condition or political belief or activity”

## Anti-bullying Day

**17 December 2012**

FREDERICTON (GNB) – Students, community leaders and anti-bullying activists were joined today by Premier David Alward and Education and Early Childhood Development Minister Jody Carr in wearing blue to observe New Brunswick's fourth annual Anti-bullying Day.

"I am pleased to see our communities and schools involved in working to reduce and prevent bullying," said Alward. "Our government supports initiatives such as Anti-bullying Day, which give students, parents, school staff and communities the opportunity to show our support and to be united in our stand against bullying."

The provincial government designated Dec. 17 as Anti-bullying Day in 2009. The event provides an opportunity for schools and workplaces to take a stand against bullying.

"Our priority is to create positive, inclusive learning environments," said Carr. "Together with our partners, including districts, school staff, students, parents and communities, we will continue to address bullying and ensure that everyone feels safe, welcome and respected in their school."

As part of the three-year $62-million *Strengthening Inclusion, Strengthening Schools*, the inclusion action plan to ensure healthy, safe and inclusive learning environments, the provincial government has introduced a comprehensive set of initiatives to address bullying in schools, including:

●    creating a provincial Anti-bullying Awareness Week to give students, school staff

 and parents the opportunity to openly discuss bullying and ways to prevent and

 reduce it;
●    implementing anti-bullying legislation which places greater emphasis on prevention,

 reporting, investigating and taking action when bullying occurs in schools; and
●    hiring two bullying awareness and prevention coordinators to oversee and co-

 ordinate prevention and awareness across schools and districts.

 **Anti-Bullying Awareness Week**

14 September 2012

FREDERICTON (GNB) – Anti-Bullying Awareness Week will be observed in all schools in New Brunswick Sept. 24-28.

“Solving the problem of bullying requires everyone to work together,” said Education and Early Childhood Development Minister Jody Carr. “This week offers the opportunity for students and staff to have an open dialogue about bullying in their schools and to work together to reduce and prevent bullying.”

Each school will plan its own anti-bullying activities for staff and students and with support from the school districts and the department. There are a variety of educational and awareness activities planned that are tailored to the needs of the students. The week also presents an opportunity for staff to plan bullying prevention and intervention strategies for the academic year.

“I encourage students and staff to get involved in the activities in their school and even propose new activities for their class or school to participate in during the awareness week,” said Carr. “Take the opportunity to learn more about what resources are available to you to help deal with bullying.”

The awareness week is part of a comprehensive set of initiatives the provincial government is undertaking to address bullying in schools, including the creation of two anti-bullying co-ordinator positions and implementing anti-bullying legislation which places greater emphasis on prevention, reporting, investigating and taking action when bullying occurs in schools.

“Our government supports anti-bullying initiatives at all levels of the school system by working with districts, schools, principals, educators, students, parents and communities on a multi-phased approach to create a positive, inclusive learning and working environment,” said Carr.

**Bully victim's mother tells of 'suicide box'**

Posted: Feb 16, 2012 11:35 AM

A mother who [**hired a bodyguard to protect her bullied daughter**](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/story/2012/02/15/nb-bully-bodyguard.html) says the girl had prepared a "suicide box" in case the violence became unbearable.

The incidents of bullying happened three years ago when the girl was a student at Fredericton High School. Fredericton High School has not commented on the case.

In one incident, the girl called her mother in tears from the school. The mother left work and rushed to the school. She found her daughter huddled under a payphone. Students had ripped her shirt off and smashed her prized flute.

The mother said she had little luck getting help from the administration of the school at the time. She pulled her daughter out of classes and took time off work. She decided to paint her daughter’s room a brighter colour to cheer her up.

"I hit a ceiling tile with the roller handle and it moved. And out of the ceiling tile fell a box. It was a shoe box and in it were a bunch of notes that she had written about things — basically a journal on scrap paper about all the different people who had bullied her and how they had bullied her," the mother said.

"There were broken shards of glass and razor blades. And it was her suicide box. It was a suicide box. It was a box that she was going to use when she couldn’t take it anymore. She wrote me an ‘I’m sorry letter,’ ‘I love you mommy you’ve been the best,’ and she said, ‘I can’t do it anymore. I can’t go to school; you’re making me go to school and I can’t be with these people anymore.’ And to know that the baby that you held in your arms was contemplating leaving the earth."

CBC News has agreed not to identify the mother to protect her daughter.

### Mediation sessions make it worse

The mother said she finally learned who was bullying her daughter.

She and her daughter attended a mediation session with the bully and her parent. The victim’s mother said the bully’s parent said: "Well, you have to realize that your daughter is a bit of an oddball. She plays the flute."

In the mediation, the victim’s mother says the bully’s parent said that if her daughter hadn’t drawn attention to herself, if she had been more outgoing and gone to school dances, she would have more friends and the bullying would not have happened.

The victim left the session at that point.

"As I chased her down the hallway, she said, ‘You’re only making it worse. I’m going to meet with them and every tear I shed will be held against me.’ She said, ‘Everything I say we will be repeated amongst their clique and it will only get worse. You are not making this better.’"

The mother said the abuse continued. Her daughter eventually started getting detentions because she felt safer there. She would go to detention before lunch started and after school ended.

"No more getting pushed down the stairways, no more being exposed to slurs, no more being called horrible things. She could be safe," her mother said. "She’d skip class to go to detention, she didn’t submit work to get detention — whatever she could do to get detention, because that is where she felt safe."

### Victim drops out, struggles to get GED

The attacks and insults overwhelmed her.

She switched to another school, adding an hour’s commute to her day, and eventually dropped out in her final year.

She did not graduate and struggled to get her GED. The girl, now a young woman, was accepted to university, but was reluctant to go.

"She is finally going to go to university, but has the scars. I’m trying to convince her that university is a totally different environment free of that type of bullying and that type of hurt and she said, ‘But Mommy, I trusted you that I’d get through school.’"

She said the administration at Fredericton High School offered little help.

"I almost had to understand that bullying happens, that bullying is commonplace. We address it, you stand up to the bully and it goes away," she said.

"I felt like they failed completely to address what was going on. Even when they recognized the steps they were taking at mediation weren’t helping, there was no extra offer of support."

She said even switching schools was difficult. "I ended up … begging the district to allow me to move her to get her away from the problems and even then the school was, ‘What do you want us to do?’"

### 'My child lost out on an education

She said the school should have put the burden of ending the bullying on the bullies, not her daughter. She said if they did not respond to the mediation and did not stop attacking her daughter, they should have been removed from the school.

"Maybe if the parents had had to suffer some consequences for their child’s actions, if parents had to take their child to another location to have them tutored so they could maintain their grades, and it was an inconvenience to them, maybe they would have gotten the point that this was serious. Instead my child lost out on an education because she wanted to play the stupid flute and study in the library," she said.

The mother said the nightmare was reawakened last year when her middle daughter started middle school. That was when her eldest daughter started being bullied.

"I cried for two weeks before school started because I was terrified to send her. But she is more outgoing, she is in drama, she is very social. She tends to be a little tougher. She is the one when she sees someone being bullied goes over and says, ‘Hey, my sister was bullied and you are not going to do this to another child,’" the mother said.

The mother offered advice to other parents of students being assaulted and insulted at school. She said experts urge parents to give their children space, but she found she had to stick even closer as her daughter pulled away.

"Every time they push you away is the time that you have to cling to them closer," she said.

"I think it is critical that they know that you love them and they have value because the only thing that saved our kid from the most extreme circumstances was the fact that she didn’t want to hurt us and she knew that we loved her."

She said she offered support while the teachers and even the bullies derided her daughter for her sinking grades. If she had joined in, "she would have nothing left to live for and I would have buried her."

She reiterated that she is going public three years after the abuse to reach out to other students who are facing attacks and humiliation today.

"If it gives one family the strength to continue to fight, it is worth it," she said.

### Abuse wouldn't happen today

CBC has spoken to education experts in New Brunswick.

They say the system has been changed to the point where an incident like this one would not happen today.

CTV Atlantic
Published Friday, May 3, 2013 6:22PM ADT
Last Updated Friday, May 3, 2013 7:11PM ADT

**Gay New Brunswick teen pleads for bullying to stop**

A gay New Brunswick teen hospitalized after a suicide attempt is speaking about being bullied to the point of no return.

Adam Roberts says things got so bad he didn’t want to live anymore.

“I think the words that they say to me are worse than the physical aspects of this," says the 16-year-old Salisbury boy. “It just makes me feel so worthless and unsafe.”

Adam Roberts says he has attempted suicide several times due to bullying because he is gay.

Roberts has been hospitalized for five weeks for observation and treatment.

“Fear. Paralyzing fear that he’s not going to make it,” says his mother, Melanie Campbell.

Child psychologist Charles Emmrys says schools can be a part of the solution.

“I think the school has to communicate a very strong message of gay acceptance,” says Emmrys. “If they can, they should be highlighting role models in the community.”

The Anglophone East School District says bullying is being taken seriously, with support from the province and individual schools.

“We have teacher committees at those schools, we have student committees at those schools,” says Superintendent Gregg Ingersoll. “We have a district level committee that oversees that work and does the training for all of our staff members.”

“He (Roberts) is seeking help, but there simply is no help for him at the present time,” says Sebastien Bezeau, an advocate for the LGBT community. “This is a crisis in itself and our elected officials are the ones who need to stand up to this.”

Campbell says other parents have an important role to play too.

“I think kids live what they learn and I think they model and they role what’s going on in the house,” she says.

Roberts recently wrote an open letter describing what he is going through, and a Facebook page has been set up with people from across the country sharing their stories.

Roberts says despite the outpouring of support he has felt this week, he still struggles to see a positive future. He says he is hopeful, however, that the therapy he is receiving will help him improve his self-image.

“It will get better eventually, but what scares me is the eventually part. How much more do I have to go through in order to get better?”

November 19, 2012 **Updated :** November 19, 2012 | 12:20 pm

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# New Brunswick hires anti-bullying staff

By Staff - The Canadian Press

FREDERICTON – The New Brunswick government has hired two co-ordinators to oversee bullying awareness and prevention efforts in the province’s schools.

Education Minister Jody Carr says there will be one co-ordinator for the English school system and one for French schools.

In a statement, Carr says they will help organize and manage anti-bullying activities in public schools.

He says he encourages students, staff and parents to talk about what can be done to prevent and reduce bullying.

Education and Early Childhood Development
Office of the Premier

## Anti-bullying Day to be observed in New Brunswick

13 December 2013

Michael Wesson, communications, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 506-453-2539.

FREDERICTON (GNB) – The provincial government is encouraging all New Brunswickers to mark the province's fifth annual Anti-bullying Day on Tuesday, Dec. 17.

“Our government believes in celebrating diversity, promoting acceptance of others and tolerance of people's differences, and working together to build a more inclusive society in our province,” said Premier David Alward. “I invite all New Brunswickers to observe Anti-bullying Day. It is a great opportunity to join together in opposing bullying, supporting inclusion, and promoting a better quality of life for everyone.”

Dec. 17 was designated by the provincial government as Anti-bullying Day, also known as Blue Day. To mark the occasion, people are encouraged to show their support of anti-bullying awareness and education in schools and workplaces by wearing blue clothing.

Education and Early Childhood Development Minister Marie-Claude Blais said bullying is a complex issue that requires a multi-faceted solution implemented by society as a whole.

“Everyone deserves to feel safe, respected and welcome among his or her peers in school and at work,” Blais said. “In New Brunswick, our government is committed to promoting positive and inclusive working and learning environments, especially at our public schools. Our students must be free from bullying so they can feel accepted, focus on achievement and reach their full potential.”

As part of its three-year, $62-million action plan to ensure healthy, safe and inclusive learning environments, the provincial government has introduced a comprehensive set of initiatives to address bullying in schools.  These include:

●    creating a provincial Anti-bullying Awareness Week to give students, school staff and parents the opportunity to openly discuss bullying and ways to prevent and reduce it;
●    implementing anti-bullying legislation that places greater emphasis on prevention, reporting, investigating and taking action when bullying occurs in schools; and
●    hiring two bullying awareness and prevention co-ordinators to oversee and co-ordinate prevention and awareness across schools and districts.

In addition, the provincial government promotes observation of and participation in activities related to Pink Shirt Day every year in February.

“Individually and collectively, all New Brunswickers can play a role in reducing and preventing bullying in our schools, workplaces and communities,” Blais said. “I especially urge everyone who see cases of bullying to report it and to support targets of bullying. In these ways, people can have a direct and positive impact against bullying and in support of those who need help.”