

Ministry of Education

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Memorandum to: Directors of Education

From: Denise Dwyer
Assistant Deputy Minister
Indigenous Education and Well-Being Division

Date: November 06, 2017

Subject Legalization of Cannabis Update

I am writing to provide you with an update on the proposed legislative changes regarding cannabis for non-medical purposes and how this legislation would, if passed, impact school boards and schools across Ontario.

On November 1st, 2017, the provincial government introduced legislation setting out the legislative and regulatory framework for possession, sale and use of cannabis for non-medical purposes in Ontario. This legislation would provide a framework for the province, in response to the federal government's April 13, 2017 announcement to legalize cannabis for non-medical purposes by July 1, 2018. The [news release](#) is included here for your reference. Please note that the government remains committed to ensuring that retail stores are located away from schools.

Under the proposed legislation, cannabis use by students at any age on school grounds and during school-related activities would remain an activity that could lead to suspension (except for cannabis used for medical purposes). The proposed legislation would amend the *Education Act*, as follows:

- suspension would be considered for a student under the influence or in possession of cannabis;
- suspension would be required and expulsion would be considered if a student shares cannabis with anyone under the age of 19 years old; and
- the provincial code of conduct would be updated to discourage the use of cannabis.

With these changes, cannabis for non-medical purposes would be treated in the same manner as the *Education Act* currently treats alcohol. As a result, the ministry and school board policies would need to be updated to align with the legislative changes.

To support the education sector, the ministry is planning to provide resources that are linked to the Ontario curriculum, mental health supports, and the government's approach to well-being.

Additionally, the ministry will continue to engage education and community stakeholders throughout the fall 2017 and spring 2018 to obtain input in the design of additional supports/resources that the education sector requires to prevent and/or delay cannabis use among youth, promote healthy decision-making, and student safety.

This input will inform the development and/or adaptation of evidence-based materials throughout 2018 to promote education and awareness among students, parents and the broader education sector both in advance and post cannabis legalization.

We remain committed to working collaboratively with school boards and educational partners to provide support in preparation for federal legalization by July 2018. To that end, the Ministry of Education will continue to work in partnership with other ministries across government to ensure that well-being, safety and an emphasis on the whole learner continue to inform our approach and collective efforts as we prepare for the legalization of cannabis for non-medical purposes in Ontario.

Recognizing that school board policies will require timely revisions to reflect the proposed legislative changes outlined above, we will continue to engage with you and keep you apprised of developments on this important file.

In closing, I am providing the link to my April 19, 2017 [memo](#), Q&As and resources to assist you in answering questions from educators, parents, students, and other members of the school community.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Denise Dwyer
Assistant Deputy Minister
Indigenous Education and Well-Being Division

c: Council of Ontario Directors of Education