

**Ontario Supporting Students with Special Needs**

*Proposed Legislation Would Provide Consistent, Fair and Transparent Access to Service Animals in Schools*

October 30, 2018 8:00 A.M.

Ontario's Government for the People has proposed a legislative amendment which, if passed, would support students and their families when making requests to bring their service animals into schools and classrooms across the province. Today only 39 of 72 school boards across Ontario have policies in place to address the need for service animals in schools, leaving students vulnerable and parents facing challenges to support their child's special needs.

The proposed amendment would provide guidance on service animals to school boards when developing their own policies to ensure families of students with special needs experience a fair and transparent process when requesting that their children be able to bring a service animal to school.

"Families of students with special needs deserve a clear and transparent process for requesting that service animals be able to accompany their children, no matter where they live," said Lisa Thompson, Minister of Education. "Every family in this province should feel supported when it comes to ensuring their child has access to a meaningful education."

If this legislation is approved, all members of the public - including families, education partners, advocacy groups and community agencies - will have the opportunity to provide input on the policy directive that would be issued to boards.

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