

# Parents' Bill of Rights

In light of recent legislative activities, we wish to provide clarity regarding the “Parents’ Bill of Rights” which was unveiled by Education Minister Jeremy Cockrill in the Saskatchewan Legislature. Understanding the "Parents' Bill of Rights":

- **Purpose of the Bill:** This legislation has been designed to clearly outline the rights of parents concerning their children's education.
- **The Notwithstanding Clause:** The "Notwithstanding Clause" allows the government to pass a law that may go against certain rights protected in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, but for a temporary period. In the context of this Bill, this clause ensures that if a student under the age of 16 desires to change their gender identification within the educational environment, parental consent will be required.
- **The Emphasis on Parental Involvement:** Minister Cockrill has been vocal about the crucial role parents play in the decisions affecting their children. GSSD echoes this sentiment and has always been a champion for active parental engagement. Our longstanding commitment revolves around building stronger relationships between our schools and communities. We emphasize:
  - Fostering connections and transitions.
  - Valuing feedback from all stakeholders.
  - Transparent communication.
  - Creating partnerships that support GSSD’s main focus areas of High-Quality Teaching and Learning; Effective Policies and Procedures; Engagement of All Students, Families, and Communities; Healthy, Sustainable Physical and Social Environments.
- **Background:** This Bill builds upon the “Parental Inclusion and Consent” policy from August and is a response to a Court of King's Bench injunction that aimed to halt the said policy.

## Parents Rights As Outlined in the Bill:

We wish to assure you that GSSD's practices have long been in harmony with the rights outlined in this Bill, and in many areas, we've already established robust systems.

- **Active Participation in Decisions:** Parents have been and will remain at the heart of decision-making processes for their child’s education within GSSD.
- **Updates on Attendance, Behavior, and Performance:** Tools like EDSBY and procedures like Student Led-conferences, Inclusion and Intervention Planning, among others, ensure that parents stay informed.
- **Consultations:** Open channels with educators and staff have always been available. Your voice is vital.
- **Access to School Files:** This has consistently been a practice in GSSD.
- **Course Information:** This has always been in place in GSSD Schools. The introduction of EDSBY and the SaskDLC process further empowers parents with choice.
- **Code of Conduct and Discipline:** Every GSSD school engages with their community to develop comprehensive guidelines, ensuring respect and safety.
- **Disciplinary Actions or Investigations:** Always compliant with the Education Act and Regulations, GSSD values transparency. Systems like R360 have been used in GSSD for many years to support behaviour tracking and monitoring. Communication with parents is a key element of this program.
- **Expulsion Review:** While no student has faced expulsion in GSSD over the past ten years, parents can always seek a review. Any suspension that could result in an expulsion automatically is referred to the GSSD Student Discipline Committee. Parents are always included in the meeting.
- **School Attendance Issues:** Systems like EDSBY have strengthened our communication pathways regarding attendance. Attendance is closely monitored and tracked at the division and school level. Parents receive communication in multiple manners to ensure students are in attendance and safe when absent.
- **Consultation about Learning Capacity:** GSSD’s team of professionals always collaborate with families to ensure the best for each student. Meetings are frequently held with external partners to ensure a wrap-around approach is taken.
- **Opening Exercises:** GSSD has an administrative procedure (AP 206 Opening Exercises) in place supporting parents’ rights to excuse their child.
- **Medical or Dental Treatments:** Typically, school divisions do not engage in medical or dental procedures. However, when supporting students with complex medical needs, GSSD takes a comprehensive approach guided by the child's family and medical team. GSSD follows strict practices directed by medical professionals and parents.
- **Sexual Health Content and Gender Identity:** At GSSD, our commitment to the well-being and safety of our students remains unwavering. To elevate our administrative procedures, we've intensively reviewed the provincial curriculum to identify outcomes related to sexual health. Provincial curriculum has been available for parental review for many years. Furthermore, GSSD's report cards are directly aligned with curricular outcomes. Please be assured that as we continue to prioritize student safety and wellness, we will adhere to provincial directives. Parents are not just informed; they are active participants in the decisions that affect their children's life and education.
- **Joining the School Community Council:** GSSD has always welcomed and supported parents in our SCCs. GSSD provides support to schools and SCCs through grants, professional development, and advocacy sessions with the Board of Education. Each GSSD Board Trustee is assigned an SCC. They attend meetings throughout the year to support this important work.

In conclusion, Minister Cockrill's emphasis on parental involvement resonates with GSSD's mission. We champion a shared journey in education, where the collaboration of school, family, and community ensures the best for our students.