

May 26, 2021

Hon. Dominic Cardy
Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development
Place 2000
P. O. Box 6000
Fredericton, NB
E3B 5H1

Re: Bill 35 Amendments to the Education Act

Dear Minister Cardy,

The Learning Disabilities Association of Prince Edward Island would like to echo concerns shared by the New Brunswick College of Psychologists, the New Brunswick Association of School Psychologists, the Association of Canadian Psychology Regulatory Organizations, and the Learning Disabilities Association of New Brunswick, among others, regarding Bill 35 Amendments to the Education Act.

Psychoeducational assessments, completed by a trained psychologist, are much more comprehensive and incorporate assessments of not only the student's academic and reasoning skills, but also intellectual abilities, memory, attention, and executive functioning skills, as well as social-emotional and behavioral functioning. An initial consultation with parents\guardians is another crucial component of the psychological assessment process as it helps to identify if any medical, environmental, or hereditary factors may contribute to a student's learning challenges. Culmination of these assessment results with thorough interpretation by a trained Psychologist can lead to a variety of outcomes and / or diagnoses and related recommendations that are not within the scope of a teacher's training. Erroneous or misidentification of a child's challenges could, in fact, be of potentially significant harm for the child and their family.

For many students, educational assessments completed by a Resource teacher are sufficient to support individual program planning for a current learning plan; however, for some students, a thorough and comprehensive psychoeducational assessment, completed by a School Psychologist, is required so that long term planning for a student can occur. This planning would include not only academic accommodations but



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also recommendations to support daily functioning skills and social-emotional-behavioural functioning.

As previously explained, assessments completed by trained Resource teachers in the Education system serve a very important, yet different role than Psychoeducational assessments completed by trained school Psychologists. Educational assessments completed by Resource teachers help to pinpoint where a student may be experiencing difficulty in understanding and/or applying skills in reading, writing or arithmetic. Results from these academic based assessments help to support decision making for intervention planning and adaptations or modifications to a student's learning plan. Educational assessments are a snapshot of the student's current skills and do not provide deep insight regarding cognitive or other factors that may cause the student to experience learning difficulties

The training required to administer, score and interpret psychoeducational assessments cannot be completed in one or two courses. It is a whole area of study at the Graduate and post-Graduate levels. Many ethical issues surround the administration, interpretation and reporting of psychoeducational assessments as the results from these assessments not only affect the student in their current academic training but also in their post secondary training, in their chosen career path, and their well-being.

It is for these reasons that we ask you to collaborate with educators and psychologists to consider alternate options to ensure psychoeducational assessments are completed by professionals specifically trained in this very specialized area

Kind Regards,

Martin Dutton,
Executive Director, LDAPEI