

# BILL

No. 611

## An Act respecting the Rights of Students

(Assented to \_\_\_\_\_)

### Preamble

WHEREAS a good quality of education for all students is crucial to a strong, prosperous and vibrant future for Saskatchewan;

WHEREAS parents want the best quality of education for their children and Saskatchewan should aim to have the best schools in Canada;

WHEREAS teachers, educational support workers and school divisions strive to deliver the best quality of education to all students and need effective support from the provincial government;

WHEREAS one's quality of education is affected by a variety of factors including the condition of one's school, the size of one's class and access to one-on-one attention from teachers and educational assistants, access to other professional supports and access to appropriate academic resources;

WHEREAS students are entitled to welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments that embrace diversity and nurture a sense of belonging and a positive sense of self; and

WHEREAS the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* set out the immutable and persistent rights of all Saskatchewan people, including students;

THEREFORE HER MAJESTY, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows:

### Short title

1 *The Student Bill of Rights Act, 2015.*

### Interpretation

2 In this Act:

(a) “**activities and groups**” means student-led, teacher-supported events and organizations that do not infringe on time set aside for learning, including with the name “gay-straight alliance” or “gender sexuality alliance” or any other name which is consistent with the promotion of a positive school environment that is inclusive and accepting of all students;

(b) “**appropriate academic resources**” means supplies, books, technologies and instructional materials that are modern and relevant;

(c) **“bullying”** means repeated and hostile or demeaning behaviour by an individual in the school community where the behaviour is intended to cause harm, fear or distress to one or more other students, including psychological harm or harm to a student’s reputation;

(d) **“cyberbullying”** means bullying which takes place on the Internet or by mobile phone or other electronic device;

(e) **“disability”** means any degree of physical or intellectual disability, impairment or infirmity including, but not limited to:

- (i) blindness or visual impairment;
- (ii) deafness or hearing impediment;
- (iii) muteness or speech impediment;
- (iv) epilepsy;
- (v) any degree of paralysis;
- (vi) amputation;
- (vii) lack of physical co-ordination;
- (viii) physical reliance on a service animal, wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- (ix) a learning disability or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in the comprehension or use of symbols or spoken language; or
- (x) a mental disorder, including a disorder of thought, perception, feelings or behaviour;

(f) **“equitable and acceptable internet bandwidth”** means internet speed that is comparable to other regions of Saskatchewan and deemed by the Saskatchewan Telecommunications Corporation to be at least the average internet speed available in the province;

(g) **“not overcrowded”** means conditions that do not exceed specified class size limits established in consultation with teachers, as well as conditions which provide an appropriate amount of space and an appropriate number of desks for each student;

(h) **“one-on-one attention”** means attention from a teacher or educational assistant with one student at a time as part of the learning process;

(i) **“other professional services”** means counselors, social workers, psychologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech language pathologists, and nurses;

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(j) “**properly maintained facility**” means a building that is deemed to be in a state of good repair that requires only routine maintenance, rather than requiring significant repairs;

(k) “**student**” means a person who is enrolled in a school that receives public funding.

### **Student Bill of Rights**

3 The Student Bill of Rights is set out below:

**Every student in Saskatchewan has the following rights:**

1. The right to attend school in a properly maintained facility.
2. The right to learn in classrooms that are not overcrowded.
3. The right to have one’s individual learning needs met through access to:
  - a. appropriate one-on-one attention from teachers and educational assistants;
  - b. support from other professional services;
  - c. appropriate academic resources; and
  - d. equitable and acceptable internet bandwidth.
4. The right to have any disability reasonably accommodated.
5. The right to a positive and safe school environment, free of bullying and intimidation.
6. The right to have any concerns about bullying and intimidation, including cyberbullying and other harmful actions that may take place outside of regular school hours, dealt with by the school principal.
7. The right to freedom of conscience, opinion and belief, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and association.
8. The right to establish and lead activities and groups that promote a safe and inclusive learning environment and acceptance of and respect for others, including activities and groups that promote:
  - a. gender equity;
  - b. anti-racism;
  - c. respect for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures and peoples;
  - d. respect for people with disabilities; and
  - e. respect for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions.

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10. The right to have appropriate access to one's school facility for evening and weekend athletic activities, community events and programming.

11. The right to access counselling and support services to assist in planning one's future and to ensure one is ready for post-secondary education, training, and a meaningful career.

**Bill of Rights must be respected and promoted**

4(1) School administrators shall ensure that the Student Bill of Rights as set out in section 3 is respected and promoted in each school and that the Student Bill of Rights is posted in each school.

(2) School administrators shall ensure that the Student Bill of Rights as set out in section 3 is posted in each school in standard Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) print [Arial 14 font] in a location that is prominent and easily accessible to visually impaired students.

**Annual Report**

5 In accordance with section 13 of *The Executive Government Administration Act*, the President of Executive Council or designate shall account to the Legislative Assembly each year the number of students who are not able to access the rights set out in section 3 and further, the Annual Report shall specify the government's plan to ensure the rights set out in section 3 are fulfilled for all students in Saskatchewan.

**Regulations**

6 The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations:

- (a) defining, enlarging or restricting the meaning of any word or expression used in the Act but not defined in this Act;
- (b) respecting limits on class sizes;
- (c) respecting anti-bullying strategies;
- (d) respecting the parameters for student-led activities and groups;
- (e) prescribing any other matter or thing that is required or authorized by this Act to be prescribed in the regulations.

**Coming into force**

7 This Act comes into force on proclamation.

FOURTH SESSION  
**Twenty-seventh Legislature**  
SASKATCHEWAN

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**B I L L**

No. 611

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Received and read the

First time

Second time

Third time

And Passed

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Mr. David Forbes

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