

Cobourg Collegiate Institute School Walkout

(Protest against Ford's policy to reimplement 1998 sex-ed curriculum to elementary and middle schools)

Cobourg, Ontario, September 21, 2018—Students at Cobourg Collegiate Institute left regular classes at 1:00 pm today, and took to the back field of the school to protest the progressive conservative government's decision to reimplement an outdated sex-ed curriculum. The 1998 curriculum doesn't include topics such as: same-sex marriage, gender identity, online safety and consent.

Tens of thousands of students from over one-hundred schools across Ontario walked out of class to draw attention to the issue of sexual education. "As a student under the age of 18, I do not have the right to vote and therefore find it difficult to have my concerns heard by the government. I took part in the walk-out today because it allowed me and my fellow students to speak out against the curriculum changes. Hopefully our voices will be heard, despite us not being able to vote, because we, as students, have a meaningful understanding of the issues of sexual-education in schools.", said Michael Liscio, student at C.C.I.

Over 200 students walked out to show their support and to sign a petition to call on premier Doug Ford to reinstate the updated 2015 sexual-education curriculum. Students also gathered to listen to 2 guest speakers who gave their personal opinions and experiences surrounding the issue. Jadein Forteau, Student at C.C.I. spoke on the subject of the LGBT student community and how important it is to have current, relevant sexual-education for all LGBT and otherwise students. Hope Kirksey, women's rights activist, spoke about the importance of teaching consent to students at a young age, which is not included in the 1998 sex-ed curriculum.

Elsa Deperasinski, student at C.C.I. and walkout organiser, was thrilled to see the support of her fellow students and was glad to see a large crowd talking and learning about this issue. "I didn't know what to expect, but the overwhelming crowd of young supporters was astounding! I want to encourage young people to always stand up for what they believe in, even if they are in the minority. It is important for students to use their unique perspectives to inspire change."