THE PROGRESS OF DISCIPLINE:
AN EXAMINATION OF SAFE SCHOOLS POLICIES IN ONTARIO'S EDUCATION SYSTEM (1999-2011), FROM THE POLITICS OF EXCLUSION TO THE CONDITIONS OF INCLUSION

by

Cindy Vander Meulen

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Education

in conformity with the requirements for

the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Queen's University

Kingston, Ontario, Canada

(September, 2012)

Copyright ©Cindy Vander Meulen, 2012

Abstract

In 2001 the Progressive Conservative government led by Mike Harris (1995-2002) implemented an authoritative discipline regime in Ontario schools that epitomized the law and order values of contemporary neoconservative rule in the Canadian context. Central to the character of this regime was the enforcement of safe schools through the exclusion and punishment of some of the most vulnerable students. In 2005, the Ontario Human Rights Commission initiated a complaint against the Ministry of Education, alleging that the discipline policies were disproportionately and adversely affecting racialized students and students with disabilities. In response, in 2007 the Liberal government led by Dalton McGuinty (2002 - present) introduced what it called progressive discipline policies. These policies reflect therapeutic values of early intervention and support, offering incentives for students to remain actively involved and engaged with the school community. This shift, from an authoritative to a progressive mode of discipline, is less an indication of a successful political effort to implement equitable discipline policies in education; instead, it is more an indication of the repositioning of these policies within neoliberal relations of power. I argue that progressive discipline policies do little more than change the forms through which marginalization and exclusion are carried out in Ontario schools.

Dedication

To my mother, Marilyn Evers, and sister, Katrina Davidson, who taught me how to anchor a screw in an old plaster wall. I shall invite you both to the ceremonial hanging of my degree. No assistance is required.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful for financial support provided by the Queen's Faculty of Education and funding provided by the Ontario Graduate Scholarship program in 2008/2009 and 2010/2011.

I thank Cheryl Bond and Skip Hills, two former committee members who provided guidance and support early in my graduate work. Skip, you nurtured my multifarious interests and Cheryl, you gently insisted on my having a focus. You both contributed, in harmony, to this dissertation.

I thank Abbie Bakan, who joined my committee in the later stage of my work, whose commitment to teaching inspired me to want to learn more, at a time when I thought I just wanted to be done. Abbie, you made me a better student.

Magda Lewis, when I could not articulate the reasons I withdrew from my previous doctoral studies, I read your work: *Without a Word*. I returned to graduate school. When I could not discern the subtext of my professional work with youth in schools, I read your work: "More than Meets the Eye." I started my dissertation, under your advisement. Magda, your work has changed how I understand the world. Your work is life altering. Thank you.

Table of Contents

Abstract ii
Dedication iii
Acknowledgements iv
Chapter 1 : Is better than bad, good enough? Ontario's discipline policies in education, from neoconservatism to neoliberalism (1999-present) 1
Elaboration of key terms: neoconservative and neoliberal disciplinary practices 2
Neoconservativism, law and order discipline 3
Neoliberalism, therapeutic support 5
Overview of Chapters 8
Chapter two 8
Chapter three 10
Chapter four 11
Chapter five 14
Chapter six 16
Conclusion 17
Chapter 2 : From Z to A, Zero-tolerance has Adverse Impact - The political context of the shift from Mandatory to Progressive Discipline in Ontario Schools 20
(Neo)Conservative school discipline led by Mike Harris 21
The problem of youth violence and coddled young offenders, as constructed by the Progressive Conservative government of Mike Harris 23
The Safe Schools Act (2000) 26
Opposition to the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) 31
Lack of support for marginalized youth 33
Increased suspension and expulsion rates 34
Human rights concerns regarding the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) 36
Calls to repeal the Safe Schools Act (2000) 40
The consensus agenda: Amending the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) and changing Safe Schools culture 41
The *Education Amendment Act* (2007) and related policy program memos 42
Conclusion 47
Chapter 3 : Policy is what policy does. Elaboration of methods for policy analysis 49
Discourse analysis 51

Queer theory 55
Governmentality studies 58
Critical Race Theory 61
Neoliberalism 64
Analysis: Pulling it all together 67
Conclusion 70
Chapter 4 : "That's Gay!" Homophobia as it is Contended with in Safe Schools Policies in Ontario.The Politics of Progress 71
How the issue of LGBTQ rights takes shape and is addressed in school policies in Ontario 75
An experience of harassment based on sexual orientation 77
Homophobic bullying 78
The general problem of homophobia 79
The problem with how homophobia is spoken of in safe schools policies and reports 79
Analysis of anti-homophobia discipline policies 80
Maintaining the image of a positive school climate by disciplining homophobic behaviour 81
The ways in which the image of a positive school environment is maintained: Reforming behaviour, as per *Policy Program Memorandum 145* (2007; 2009b) 84
The duty to regulate behaviour 85
Prohibiting hate speech 88
The good therapeutic subject 89
The politics involved in implementing an LGBTQ inclusive curriculum, the 2010 Health and Physical Education Curriculum 93
Conditions of inclusion of LGBTQ issues in the 2010 health curriculum 94
Victimhood as the basis of the call for curriculum inclusion 95
Curricular inclusion in a neoliberal era 98
Conservative and religious controversy over the curriculum 102
The upheaval 103
The politics of allowing Gay-Straight Alliances in Ontario schools 106
Conclusion 110
Chapter 5 : The politics of mental health literacy in schools.Neoliberalism, progressive discipline, and the unhealthy student 111
Broad political context: Neoliberalism, health care policy, and mental health in Ontario 113
Conceptual tools 118
School discipline policy directions in Ontario since 2007: Towards mental health 121

PPM 145 (2007; 2009b) as a neoliberal political rationality; the link between progressive discipline and mental health ... 122
Individualizing safe schools ... 123
Responsibilizing community members and professionals ... 124
The effect: Neoliberal programming via therapeutic initiatives and support ... 125
CAMH's mental health programs and practices as advanced liberal technologies, guidelines on how to promote mental health in schools ... 128
Mental health promotion is the preferred practice of prevention and intervention programs ... 128
Mental health promotion strategies should conform to standardized evidence-based best practice guidelines ... 130
Mental health literacy in secondary schools ... 134
The dominant version of mental health ... 137
Governing the student ... 140
Incentives students are offered for their compliance ... 143
Conclusion ... 146
Chapter 6 : Glossifying diversity, glossing over group identity. Character development in Ontario's schools ... 148
The challenge of diversity in institutions, general considerations and specific experiences ... 150
First experience ... 151
Second experience ... 152
Third experience ... 153
Analysis of the first experience ... 154
The development and use of consensus building in school communities across Ontario ... 155
Process of community consensus building is neoliberal ... 158
Further reflections on the first experience: Consensus and dialogue across differences within school communities ... 162
Problematic assumptions upon which the practice of community dialogue is based ... 163
The assumption that all voices will be given equal time and weight in dialogue ... 164
An assumption that all community members hold a desire for synchrony ... 166
The belief that there are universalizable character attributes waiting to be discovered by community members through dialogue ... 168
An assumption that representation of diverse community members alone will lead to voice and reform, the politics of presence ... 169

Analysis of the second experience 170
Second experience: Celebration of culture, a common practice in character education 170
Further reflections on my second experience: Examining how *Character Development in Action* shapes the templates available for students to implement diversity initiatives 173
The images of good feelings in Character Development in Action (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008a) 174
Showcasing diversity 176
Glossifying diversity 177
Analysis of the third experience 179
Third experience, concealing the whiteness of school cultures 179
Conclusion 182
Chapter 7 : Conclusion: Well-mannered, in good health, and respectful of diversity - The neoliberal student in Ontario's progressive discipline approach 184
References 194

Chapter 1: Is better than bad, good enough? Ontario's discipline policies in education, from neoconservatism to neoliberalism (1999-present)

In 2001 the Progressive Conservative government led by Mike Harris (1995-2002) implemented an authoritative discipline regime in Ontario schools that epitomized the law and order values of contemporary neoconservative rule in the Canadian context. Central to the character of this regime was the enforcement of safe schools through the exclusion and punishment of some of the most vulnerable students. Public opposition to this legislation heightened in 2005, when the Ontario Human Rights Commission initiated a complaint against the Ministry of Education, alleging that the discipline policies were disproportionately and adversely affecting racialized students and students with disabilities (Bhattacharjee, 2003). In response, in 2007 the Liberal government led by Dalton McGuinty (2002 - present) introduced what it called progressive discipline policies. These policies reflect therapeutic values of early intervention and support, offering assistance by way of incentives for students to self-improve and remain actively involved and engaged with the school community. This shift, from an authoritative to a progressive mode of discipline, is certainly the result of a successful political battle for change in discipline policies. However, it is less an indication of a successful effort in implementing equitable discipline policies and more an indication of the repositioning of discipline policies within neoliberal relations of power. Consequently, I argue that progressive discipline policies tend only to change the forms through which marginalization and exclusion are carried out in Ontario schools. Ultimately, I show how both approaches to discipline do little to alter underlying dominant group thinking that perpetuates marginalization and sustains inequities in the public education system.

In 2007 I started working in schools as a mental health counsellor, witnessing the effects of the new discipline policies, assisting in the implementation of new programs, and listening to the testimonies of colleagues who indeed saw these changes as progressive. I had also just started my doctoral studies in education with the intention to investigate this shift in discipline regimes as the focus of my critical work. This dissertation is the result of my theoretical reflections, critical insights, and analyses of progressive discipline policies in Ontario schools. In this introductory chapter, I shall outline the analyses contained within each chapter and discuss how the chapters are related to each other and to my larger project, a project which shows how discipline in Ontario schools has been re-positioned within a neoliberal ideological framework. First I shall elaborate upon two key terms that are central to my work, namely, neoconservative law and order discipline and neoliberal therapeutic support. The aim of this elaboration is to provide an understanding of how I shall use these terms to frame the overarching argument of this dissertation.

Elaboration of key terms: neoconservative and neoliberal disciplinary practices

The discipline policies in Ontario schools over the past decade may be understood as oscillating between two poles, authoritarian or exclusionary and progressive or inclusive. On the one hand there are those who hold to a position that is punitive, associated with law and order rhetorics that assert the right and power to administer discipline by command and through authority, to maintain order and punish, or to get rid of trouble makers. On the other hand there are those who believe that students must be engaged in taking active responsibility for their behaviour and that the school community needs to be responsible for managing their active engagement. Implementing such positive discipline reforms thus has little use for punitive consequences and aims instead for the involvement and inclusion of students in their own discipline. We see a

contradictory politics of punishment. However, we can also see here a relationship between neoconservatism and neoliberalism.

Neoconservativism, law and order discipline

The primary function of law and order as an ideological practice is the assertion of authority, which has a compelling role in the consolidation of a neoconservative state. Strict, hierarchical, and authoritarian discipline programs, based on the image of the military boot camp, involve the inculcation of obedience and conformity. It is a model that echoes the nineteenth century penal systems noted in Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1977): an array of retributive and just deserts regimes manifested in the use of torture, the death penalty, and later, chain gangs and incarceration. Such punitive practices focus on the preservation of a moral order, the celebration of legality, and the stigmatization of wrongdoers (O'Malley, 1999). Discipline is meted for the social good and here, the concept of social good, entails loyalty to traditional collectives such as the nation, the family, and later, the community. From within this neoconservative framework, law may interfere in all manner of spheres such as contracts, family relationships, personal morality and if need be, must disperse severe and ultimate penalties (Hayes, 1994) to enforce loyalty to traditional collectives and their encompassing moral orders.

Order, as it is understood within neoconservative rule, has little regard for local context, financial disparities, those who are considered non-contributors to society (such as recipients of social assistance or disenfranchised people), those occupying demeaned social positions (such as discharged prisoners or drug users), and those who commit crimes, irrespective of the moderation of their actions. Indeed, while seeking to make society safer, law and order ideologues tend to employ simplifications in their public messaging which obscures and suppresses the realities and hardships of those closer to the ground, the local, impoverished, homeless citizen who may be

struggling with an addiction and subsequently commits a crime (McElligott, 2008). Authority is asserted bluntly without consideration for social challenges such as poverty, homelessness, or compromised health. Such challenges are considered by neoconservatives to be the excuses of those who do not follow the rules of society. Authoritative measures used to achieve compliance include increased surveillance, severe penalties, stiffening the backbone of laws and regulations, and keeping the prison population high (McElligott, 2008).

Related to the context of this work, it is noteworthy that members of the Harris-led government were not shy about offering opinions on a wide variety of issues related to law and order. While these positions may have been trial balloons, or election-related rhetoric rather than serious policy proposals, even a cursory look at the public record shows at least two consistent patterns in the pronouncements of the provincial Conservatives. The first was the claim that crime, especially youth crime, was out of control, and that the federal government in Ottawa was not doing enough about it. The second offered a set of solutions borrowed indiscriminately "from the most punitive innovations in American criminal law" (McElligott, 2008, p. 135). Zero tolerance logic was one of these American imports. Vigorous prosecution of petty crimes is supposed to encourage more general respect for the law. The Harris-led government sought to extend this disciplinary campaign into education policies in order to do something about what it called the problem of youth crime (Martin, 2002). The neoconservative regime depicted school uniforms and a provincial code of conduct as a means of fighting youth crime, since these measures addressed "even minor types of behaviour that demonstrate a lack of respect … and a lack of respect for the school" (as cited in McElligott, 2008, p. 135).

Thus, undertaking a massive reconstruction of school discipline, the Harris-led government melded this endeavour with a law and order ethos to produce a stream of

disputations, arguing that being safe and feeling safe in one's school community must be a top priority, only to be accomplished by toughening up on youth and teaching them respect and responsibility.[1] The appeal of strict discipline policies is perhaps easier to understand in this context. However, one of the more troubling characteristics of strict discipline is that a disproportionate number of those on the receiving end of a range of school punishments are found to be poor and racialized children and youth (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). This overrepresentation of minority status groups in the application of harsh discipline was not a problem for a neoconservative government, bent on exacting responsibility for crime and delinquency, rather than understanding the relationship between crime or delinquency and poverty, racism, or discrimination. It is this neoconservative rationale that sought to protect the public, through systematically attacking the living standards, behaviour, and choices of "coddled welfare recipients, criminals, convicts, and youth in general" (McElliggott, 2008, p. 135). As the neoconservative story goes: more severe and higher rates of punishment for poor and racialized children and youth is appropriate because those students misbehave more frequently in a societal order that is too soft.

Neoliberalism, therapeutic support

In contrast to the law and order ideology of neoconservatism, Skiba and Peterson (1999) argue that authoritative measures of meting school discipline are politically facile get-tough strategies that will only increase the likelihood that the correctional system will become the primary agency responsible for troubled youth, in particular, racialized youth. This argument is echoed by proponents of therapeutic interventions, interventions that offer social and emotional

---

[1] In chapter two I document the numerous media sources and Hansard records to support this claim.

support for troubled youth or certain groups of youth, such as those of low socio-economic status, Aboriginal descent, or those who are racialized. In general, therapeutic programs aim to remove personal barriers that obstruct the successes of disadvantaged youth in order to ensure that all youth are given the opportunity to reach their full potential (Daniel & Bondy, 2008). The guiding principles of the therapeutic approach include: opportunity, healing, personal responsibility, rehabilitation, community involvement, restitution or restorative justice, and individual empowerment. The McGuinty-led Liberal government adopted these principles to replace the law and order policies of the Harris-led regime. These therapeutic principles, however, are noteworthy for having little or nothing to do with implementing equity schemes, addressing marginalization processes, or taking collective responsibility for social ills. This sense of individualism is in fact central to neoliberalism, providing an invitation to youth to narrate themselves in therapeutic language, language that focuses on individual suffering, rehabilitation, and personal responsibility, while obscuring the social conditions that contribute to that suffering.

Individualism is a central tenet of the neoliberal state, one aimed at creating enterprising selves, trained for freedom and enlisted as agents in their own rehabilitation and personal development. Where student discipline is concerned in a neoliberal framework, in place of a collective or traditional morality driving a process of punitive retribution, the individual victims and offenders are required to privately negotiate restitution or amends, where restitution reflects the ethic of individual accountability that envisages the victim as the customer of justice, promotes quasi-contractual market-like relations, and takes the sate out of governance (White, 1994). In this reality, the possibility of the collective good as an object of governance or as an interest guiding individual lives is excluded. That is to say, whereas the assertion of neoconservativism privileges traditional collectives and their encompassing moral order,

neoliberalism privileges the market and the individual. For neoconservatives, where the law may interfere in the private sphere to maintain order, for neoliberals, the state repudiates responsibility for moral order, devolving this to individuals who are to take part in the government of their own interests and behaviour.

Neoliberalism, briefly put, "is a theory of … practices that proposes that human well being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private rights, free markets, and free trade" (Harvey, 2007, p. 2). The theory holds emotional and conceptual allure by claiming the fundamental values of human dignity and individual freedom at its core. Neoliberalism, thus, is rooted in the belief that market individualism is the means for economic and social growth and this advances the notion that the best outcomes for society result when governments have less involvement in economic and social life. Involvement in economic and social life is viewed as distorting the market and/or breeding dependency. Thus, neoliberals favour programs that promote self-reliance over programs that promote subsidization. Where the therapeutic ethos bolsters neoliberalism's goals, is in the encouragement of individuals to focus on strengthening their self-sufficiency, psychological health, and individual resilience, which is in direct contrast to an approach that would focus on doing something about social inequalities that contribute to social and emotional problems. In short, therapeutic support is rooted in the belief that support for the individual is the means for a well-functioning and more egalitarian social order. In the context of school discipline, then, therapeutic support provides pedagogical lessons on the appropriate avenues available for support in a neoliberal era, avenues that do not reflect on mainstream or dominant privilege or societal inequalities.

Indeed, if there is common ground for both neoconservatives and neoliberals, it is their opposition to interventions that tend toward the elimination of inequalities, namely, welfare style subsidization programs. For neoconservatives, inequalities are the essential index and mechanism of Darwinian social selection (Levitas, 1986). For neoliberals, welfare style interventions are market distortions. In actuality, neoliberals focus little attention on inequalities, tending to either implement programs that rest on underlying beliefs that *presume equality* among members of the citizenry, or, making commitments to justice that have no problem with inequality as long as its beneficiaries are as diverse as its victims. Neoconservative discipline, thus, disregards social inequalities that affect individual behaviour in favour of aggressively stamping down on crime or misbehaviour, a move that has shown to perpetuate inequalities and discrimination (McElligott, 2008). Neoliberal discipline devolves responsibility for misbehaviour to the community or the individual, without putting in place the systemic supports to deal with any underlying inequalities or problems that contribute to the unacceptable social behaviours. Thus, while the adoption of neoliberal values in school discipline policies results in a move away from discriminatory punishment, clearly it does not move towards the development of policies aimed at achieving social equity.

Overview of Chapters

Chapter two

Chapter two outlines the broad policy context from which current progressive discipline policies emerged in Ontario schools. Starting with the discipline regime of the Harris-led government, I synthesize and summarize the law and order and fiscal conservative principles that were instated through the *Safe Schools Act* (2000). I show how the *Act* (2000) is representative of a much wider set of reforms that the provincial Conservatives carried out in the administration of

criminal justice, social welfare, and education. I then outline the opposition to the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) in general and in particular the concerns raised within a report submitted to the Ontario Human Rights Commission that documents how discipline in schools justified under the *Act* (2000) had a discriminatory and disproportionate impact on racialized students and students with disabilities. I discuss the impact of this report in that it informed a human rights complaint against the Ministry of Education in 2005 and received wide-spread public support, support that went beyond the concerns raised in the report and culminated in demands to repeal the legislation. I present the Ministry of Education's response under the McGunity-led Liberal government which is formulated by way of the *Education Amendment Act* (2007). I also introduce *Policy Program Memorandum 145* (PPM 145*)* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007; 2009b) which outlines the (then) new progressive discipline approach in Ontario's schools. Three of the main policy commitments that are articulated in *PPM 145* (2007; 2009b) include: preventing inappropriate behaviour through programs like bullying prevention; offering early and ongoing intervention through counselling and mental health support in schools; promoting positive student behaviour through programs like character development. I highlight these three policy commitments because they form the objects of my critiques in my three substantive chapters, chapter four, five, and six.

More specifically, the purpose of chapter two is to document the shift in school discipline policies from those deemed authoritative to those dubbed progressive. Although the changes to school discipline were initiated by widespread public opposition to the Harris-led regime and by a human rights settlement with the Ontario Human Rights Commission, the changes are justified by the Liberal government in benevolent terms that simply purport to make schools safer and more inclusive. What is missing from any official discussion of the *Education Amendment Act* (2007)

and related policy program memos, is an acknowledgement of the human rights violations, discriminatory practices, calls for equitable discipline practices, and demands for anti-oppression education in Ontario's public school system. This notable absence allows for an apolitical response to the heated politics that sparked the changes in discipline policies. However, any ensuing discussion of these policy changes within this dissertation takes as its starting point the call and need for anti-oppression principles and practices in education.

Chapter three

I outline the methodological approach and the conceptual underpinnings of my dissertation in chapter three. I explain how I go about critiquing the three main policy commitments within Ontario's progressive discipline approach to show the ways in which discipline policies, and the programs these policies support, are guided by a neoliberal framework that supports dominant group privilege and orientations. I provide the details of the methods and theorists I use to make the arguments contained in each subsequent chapter. In particular, I discuss discourse analysis and its usefulness throughout my dissertation; queer theory and its importance for chapter four; governmentality studies and its prominence in chapter five; critical race theory and how it guides the insights of chapter six; and, neoliberal rule. I also discuss how I use critical theorists of neoliberal governmentality throughout my three substantive chapters.

Given that my critique of progressive discipline policies is twofold, namely, that these policies follow neoliberal rule and flow from dominant group thinking; the theoretical and methodological approaches that I discuss in this chapter expose the embedded dominant assumptions upon which progressive discipline policies rest and the forms of marginalization and inequalities that result, as policy effects. I blend critical approaches to policy analysis with methods of interrogating the dominant culture of prejudice that provides the context for policy

formations. In so doing, I draw attention to policy silences, namely, the absences of discussions related to minority group oppression. I discuss how minority status groups are further marginalized by school discipline policies that do not acknowledge their realities of oppression, discrimination, and inequalities. The methods and theorists I use help to raise important questions about the control and production of policy and how discourse in policy shapes the way policy is put into programmatic form. I aim to discuss the ways that policy can be transformed so that individuals can act on/in their environment to challenge dominant ideologies that ultimately guide practices and perpetuate inequalities. My analyses include the examination of education policies, related reports, media accounts of school controversies, and statements and documents of community agencies related to education practices in Ontario. I situate these materials in relationship to the social context in which they are produced, and I look at why, out of all the possible things that could be articulated, only certain statements and ideas are made visible or heard in mainstream considerations of student discipline. I use the methods outlined in chapter three to show how discipline policies of the Liberal government continue to marginalize and adversely affect already disadvantaged groups of students.

Chapter four

In this chapter I examine the policy commitment to stop and to address inappropriate behaviour in schools through programs like bullying prevention. This commitment came into effect in large part after growing public and political opposition to the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) and to the fact that punishment under this legislation was meted too bluntly. Students were being disciplined for behaviour that presented as aggressive but actually resulted after situations of racial taunting or harassment by members of dominant groups. The report on safe schools written for the Ontario Human Rights Commission in 2003, made it clear that marginalized students are

often the targets of bullying in schools and that schools need to redress this problem, a problem that was identified as acts of discrimination, allowing for a poisoned school environment. In this chapter I provide a case in point of how the Liberal government's response effectively changes the ways that marginalized students suffer in schools.

I discuss the rationale for, and procedures outlined within, anti-bullying policies under the Liberal government. Specifically, as a case in point, I discuss the Ministry of Education's policy rationale and procedures for preventing and dealing with homophobic bullying. I chose to review anti-homophobia polices in large part because my experience with marginalized students in schools as a counsellor was mainly with LGBTQ youth. As a result, I was most familiar with identifying and interpreting their protections within school policies. In offering my argument that these policies and programs (or lack thereof) continue to perpetuate harm, I show how the problem of homophobia is conceptualized in terms of the psychological health of individual students and I outline the limitations of this conceptualization. In particular, I draw attention to how an individualized understanding of the problem of homophobia ignores the culture of heteronormativity in schools, leaving the problem of heteronormativity largely intact. I also show that the kind of school community that results, by design and effect, is one made up of adept neoliberal citizens, able to think of themselves as individuals first and foremost, absolved from needing to consider collective responsibilities to redress systemic inequalities, bias, or prejudice, in particular, the biases inherent within heteronormative school cultures.

I argue that anti-homophobia discipline policies assume a type of school community that easily imagines itself as liberal, tolerant, inclusive, and above prejudice by instating prohibitions on homophobic behaviour. However, I also show how such an anti-homophobia agenda constructs LGBTQ students as tragic others, in need of support, tolerance, respect, and help. I

argue that not only does this approach to inclusion perpetuate the centrality and power of heterosexual subjectivity, it also frees the school community of the need to examine its own complicity in structures of privilege.

I first discuss how the framing of the problem of homophobia in anti-bullying policies tends to understand homophobia as a problem that is perpetuated by bad students who hold personal biases and cause offence. This framing allows the larger heterosexual school community members to feel better because they can rest on the moral high ground of never perpetuating such offences, and even if they privately hold homophobic views, they may still consider themselves better than those with their crude manners who would cause offence in public. According to this kind of an anti-homophobia agenda, then, a tolerant community, it is believed, can be achieved when members of that community learn to manage themselves appropriately. The kind of management students are to learn is founded on techniques of neoliberal governmentality, techniques that turn students into ostensibly enlightened neoliberal citizens free from acting on their prejudice. Conversely, those who do act on their prejudice, homophobes, as it were, are encouraged to come out of the closet, confess and redeem themselves, in the name of personal freedom. The anti-homophobia lens stays focused on how well or poorly each community member performs their inclusive and tolerant citizenship skills.

I discuss various attempts designed to challenge the heteronormative culture of schools, such as introducing a health education curriculum that is LGBTQ inclusive and allowing students to form Gay-Straight Alliances in schools, as forms of political resistance to the individualized therapeutic approach to countering homophobia in schools. In so doing, I must note that as I write, this chapter, like none other in this dissertation, is complicated exactly by these sorts of political eruptions playing out in schools, the media, and the provincial legislature. The policies

upon which I reflect in my analysis undergo, sometimes daily, discussions in the legislature that continue for days and even weeks at a time, resting only when the provincial house and or schools break. For this reason, my analysis is anomalous, sometimes referring to failed attempts, current attempts, and re-grouped attempts to resist a culture of heteronormativity in schools. However, I shall show that the most successful break through resistances, are those in keeping with neoliberal forms of rule that de-politicize sexual diversity in ways that do not threaten dominant structures of power.

Chapter five

In this chapter I focus on the Liberal government's policy commitment to offer early and on-going intervention to students through the use of social workers, mental health professionals, and psychologists. These interventions are ostensibly aimed at providing support to assist students with their social and emotional problems. This commitment was implemented in response to the Liberal government's recognition that school discipline policies should not be used to get rid of troubled youth, as per the Harris-led regime, but instead, should work with troubled youth, to help them get back on track. I argue that the kinds of policies that are developed and implemented and the ways in which schools are instructed to work with children and youth, responsibilizes students, families, communities, and mental health professionals, rather than government funded services, to operate as key resources in assisting students. Perhaps more disconcerting, I show that the Liberal government's commitment to help students get back on track parallels the government's cost efficient goal to promote mental health in schools among the broader population, more than it links with any effort to provide support to marginalized and troubled youth. In so doing, I render explicit the relations between neoliberalism as a general public policy orientation and specific strategies for working with students in schools.

I outline a number of strategies in both the health and education sectors that align the interests of students and their counsellors in pursuing particular approaches to handling problems, with a governing interest in reducing public spending on services and supports. As my case in point, I show the ways in which the Ministry of Education's endorsement of a stress management lesson for students, aligns with the health sector's goal of promoting mental health in schools. My concern with practices that promote mental health or stress management in schools has to do with how these practices focus on the dangerousness of contemporary lifestyles, the stresses associated with contemporary lifestyles, and the ways in which individuals are perceived as being at risk emotionally, physically, and psychologically, if they do not learn how to manage their stress and adopt a healthy lifestyle. This kind of individualized approach to providing support to students not only responsibilizes students for their own well-being, it blames them for their stress and poor health. I draw out the implications of this for marginalized and troubled youth.

I discuss how the Liberal government's approach to supporting students constructs health promotion as being central to the task of delivering on the promise of implementing effective student discipline and safe schools. I am concerned with how it has come about at this particular historical juncture that the student can be so widely conceived in terms of health and stress such that the overall safety of schools hinges on students being adept at managing their health and their stress. Ultimately, I expose the processes that make it possible at this moment to link the success or otherwise of school safety to the health and well-being of individual students, and to the management of this health by social workers and psychologists. I ultimately reflect upon how the responsibilities for delivering on the promise of safe effective schools might be differently allocated.

Chapter six

In chapter six I discuss the Ministry of Education's policy commitment to promote positive student behaviour through programs like character development. Character development is an initiative within schools that holds the stated purpose of promoting the value of diversity and teaching students the importance of being inclusive. This policy commitment was made in an effort to correct homogeneous school cultures of exclusion and negative attitudes towards minority status groups and racialized students. Yet, I argue that the term diversity in character development initiatives operates to conceal minority status group identities, such as those based on ethnicity, class, race, and so forth. I show that, in so doing, the term diversity glosses over the lived realities of exclusion, discrimination, and/or racism among students of minority status groups. I also find that the term diversity neutralizes histories of advocacy, antagonism, and political struggles for equality that are inherent to particular group identities and that are invoked by the use of terms that recognize group identities, such as those based on ethnicity or race. Ultimately, I question why there is such a strong push for using the term diversity within character development initiatives, rather than using terms like anti-racism.

I argue that any notion of diversity, and any attempt to teach inclusivity, needs to take into account the unequal social relations in which groups are embedded, relations that continue to divide as a result of the growing socio-economic gaps between groups of people under neoliberal policies. I show how liberal-minded promoters of diversity discuss diversity and inclusion in ways that rarely urge school communities to acknowledge, let alone correct, the growing inequalities and cleavages under neoliberalism. Instead, liberal-minded promoters of diversity endorse values of cohesion, namely, pulling together across differences, when promoting character development initiatives. I discuss how there is an assumption of relative equality in the

definition of diversity that has poignant effects. In particular, this assumption promotes the belief that everyone has the same opportunities in society and that everyone shares a common goal within society. Ultimately, I maintain that diversity work is implicated in the transition to neoliberal forms of social regulation in schools, particularly in terms of how school communities are expected to develop and respond to growing demographic changes in school communities and emergent socio-economic differences.

Conclusion

The Liberal government's three pronged approach to progressive discipline in Ontario schools forms the focus of my substantive chapters four, five, and six. I focus these chapters more sharply by taking a policy, program, or initiative as a case in point of how the McGuinty-led government's approach to safe schools is distinctly neoliberal. I show how the Ministry of Education has learned to ostensibly embrace inclusion but yet continues to ignore inequality. Whether policies on sexual identity, programs in support of mental health, or initiatives on diversity in Ontario schools involve self-congratulation for all the progress that has been made, or invoke student self-discipline over the journey still to go, my main point is that the move towards social justice is virtually stalled. This is especially true when progress is measured against the explicit goals of anti-oppression work.

The indiscriminate exclusion of minority status groups under the Progressive Conservative discipline policies led to specific demands for redress. These demands included providing a safe environment for minority status students in schools, determining the most appropriate way to respond to inequitable circumstances that contribute to misbehaviour, and designing school cultures that are non-discriminatory. Respectively, the liberal government's

responses include implementing anti-bullying polices to protect minority status groups in schools, employing mental health professionals to mitigate the psychological circumstances that contribute to socially unacceptable behaviour, and instating character development initiatives to promote school cultures of diversity. On the face of it, these responses seem good, certainly, better than the bad that preceeded under the Harris-led government . However, as these responses are positioned within neoliberal relations of power, they work to shore up therapeutic supportive practices or under-theorized notions of inclusion that work in concert to shore up dominant notions of what it means to be safe in school.

Every practice makes some changes possible, and others, impossible. I argue that neoliberal practices make practices of social reform improbable. Neoliberal practices aim for inclusion and may thereby succeed in teaching that everyone is as important as the dominant group, but do not necessarily de-centre what is dominant, the identities that are historically privileged in society. Being inclusive of differences, protecting those who identify differently, supporting those who are disadvantaged, or adding difference to the school community does not really change teaching and learning practices that affirm a sense of normalcy or dominance. The importance of inclusion, then, lies in the ability to change the political effect of what it means to be inclusive. This involves examining what practices produce and perpetuate marginalization and inequality, in what ways, and querying and troubling those practices. I argue that the practices in schools that currently perpetuate the more insidious forms of exclusion have more to do with neoliberalism than overt discrimination. Neoliberal thinking entails the belief that if only more minority status group members can succeed within dominant structures then society will be closer to eliminating disparities. My point is that true inclusion disturbs this neoliberal sensibility that infuses school cultures, a sensibility that emphasizes personal meaning and responsibility and the

concomitant belief in the individual will to overcome obstacles, by working hard, irrespective of the politics of constraint and opportunity, or dominant privilege.

Chapter 2: From Z to A, Zero-tolerance has Adverse Impact - The political context of the shift from Mandatory to Progressive Discipline in Ontario Schools

In the spring of 2008 I had been working as a mental health counsellor in secondary schools for little more than one year when the McGuinty-led Liberal government (2003-present) announced that, as part of a new progressive discipline approach, it would be increasing professional resources available to help students. Funding would be provided for attendance counsellors, psychologists, educational assistants, social workers, speech language pathologists, and youth workers to enhance early intervention for students, in particular for students facing disciplinary action. This announcement was part of the government's strategy to make schools safer, improve student learning, and keep students in school by combining student discipline with student support (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008c). Although the government's plan was introduced within a seemingly benign context of improving learning environments and school safety, these changes were born out of years of intense political struggle and a human rights settlement between the Ministry of Education and the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Many policy theorists have shown that it is only by looking at the policy context and its impact on policy development that political ideologies and interests dominating the policy process may be identified (Bacchi, 1999; Ball, 1994; Ladwig, 1994; Ozga, 2000; Yeatman, 1998). For this reason, I shall provide the historical and political details that make up the policy context in Ontario when the Liberal government's new approach to making schools safer took shape. I shall do this in order to draw attention to the organized interests, pressures, struggles, and

ideological shifts that have influenced Ontario's safe school policies over the past decade. These factors are important to understand because they inform the policy reactions and formations that currently exist. When I later critique these policy formations, as outlined in chapter one, I shall refer back to the policy context summarized in this chapter.

I first examine the discipline policies in Ontario's public education system legislated as the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) under the Harris-led Progressive Conservative government (1995-2002). I show how the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) was set within a neoconservative discourse of fiscal conservatism and law and order discipline, which outlined mandatory punishments for bad behaviour in schools. Next I outline the organized and political opposition to the *Act* (2000) and the human rights concerns raised regarding the *Act* (2000), which culminated in public demands for the safe schools legislation to be repealed. Ultimately I discuss the response of the Liberal government by way of their progressive discipline legislation: the *Education Amendment Act* (2007) and related policies and programs. Ultimately, in this chapter I document the shift from mandatory to progressive discipline in Ontario's schools, showing how mandatory discipline was discriminatory and exclusionary and how progressive discipline proposes to correct these effects with a more inclusive and preventative approach to student discipline.

(Neo)Conservative school discipline led by Mike Harris

In the first few years of their reign of power in Ontario (1995-2002), the Progressive Conservative government led by Mike Harris cut approximately $400 million from the education budget and introduced the *Fewer School Boards Act* as well as the *Education Quality Improvement Act*(Falconer, 2008). Schools throughout Ontario had to deal with considerable cuts to their education dollars while 124 school boards were amalgamated into 72 (Falconer, 2008).

As a result of these reforms and in accordance with the general policy direction that the government under Harris represented, Ontario's education system underwent a radical restructuring process that impacted budgeting, teacher preparation time, and extra-curricular activities. As Falconer (2008) points out, “the provincial government cuts to education funding had a profound effect on all school boards in Ontario … [which] led to the elimination of many support services” (p. 22). As a result, Falconer (2008) argues, the government exacerbated the plight of marginalized youth.

The *Safe Schools Act* (2000) came to pass within this context of education cut backs and marked the beginning of a new educational policy direction that many argue is responsible for the abysmal realities that continue to face marginalized students today (Falconer, 2008). On par with other legislative reforms introduced by the Progressive Conservative government, the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) was part of a broader ideological shift characterized not only by reduced public spending but by a get tough approach on crime and the delivery and management of public services, social welfare, and criminal justice (Hermer & Mosher, 2002). This approach, dubbed the “Common Sense Revolution,”[2] resulted in the drastic claw-back of funding for health care and social services, which had adverse effects on marginalized families and vulnerable citizens, and saw the introduction of law and order legislation, which aimed to make the Harris-protected public feel safer (McElligott, 2008). The Ontario *Safe Streets Act* (1999) was one such piece of legislation. Introduced by the Ontario government as part of their wider set of reforms for the administration of criminal justice, this *Act* was the first modern provincial law to prohibit a broad range of panhandling and squeegee work in public space, activities that often intensify in relation to reductions in social services and welfare (McElligott, 2008). With willful disregard for how

---

[2]Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, 1994.

public cuts affect vulnerable citizens, central to the neoconservative character of the law and order reforms, was the construction of marginalized citizens as “disorderly people,” “welfare cheats,” “squeegee kids,” “aggressive beggars,” “violent youth,” and “coddled prisoners” (Hermer & Mosher, 2002).

In keeping with such pejorative constructions of marginalized citizens, along with the *Safe Streets Act* (1999), the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) was introduced to specifically address what was constructed as a growing problem of school violence, youth crime, and coddled young offenders. The *Safe Schools Act* (2000) ensured that teachers and principals could no longer exercise discretion over their disciplinary actions, thereby limiting the possibility that authority figures would take too soft an approach to discipline and punishment where young criminals were concerned. The *Safe Schools Act* (2000) gave teachers and principals greater disciplinary authority than they previously had and prescribed mandatory punishment guidelines for bad behaviour in schools, which included suspensions and expulsions to get rid of the trouble makers. As a result, this mandatory punishment model determined that students’ best interests would be secondary to issues of “safety and security” (Falconer, 2008, p. 405).

The problem of youth violence and coddled young offenders, as constructed by the Progressive Conservative government of Mike Harris

In the lead up to the 1999 provincial election in Ontario, Progressive Conservatives set off on an election campaign with law and order and get-tough rhetoric holding together their platform (McElliggott, 2008). Undeterred by national crime rates hitting a 20-year low, Mike Harris and the Tories promised to be tougher on crime. Jim Flaherty, then Attorney General, fought for victims' rights and a crack down on young criminals (Puxley, 2000, May 2). Dave

Johnson, then Education Minister, promised to introduce tougher legislation, stronger school trespass laws, and tighter security to keep schools safe (Talaga & Shephard, 1999, April 30). Mike Harris, then Premier of Ontario, vowed to re-instill the values of respect, responsibility, and obedience in school-age children (Mallan, 1999, February 3). These promises were premised upon rhetorical arguments that there was a violent crime wave sweeping schools, increasing opposition to authority among youth, and a lack of civility among students (Girard, 1999, April 29). Then Hamilton-Wentworth Police Chief, Ken Robertson, summarized the Tory mood: "there has been a general decline in morals and ethics and civility" because "we've been too lax with young criminals. We need to return to the society of old where we had mutual respect. We need to strengthen the family. We've got to get back to the basics" (Puxley, 2000, May 2, p. A08).

Considerable media and popular attention was being given in the late 1990s to issues of school violence and aggressive behaviour by students towards one another at school (Jull, 2000). Incidents of school violence involving weapons or gang activity, publicized threats from students to carry out another Columbine, bomb threats, death threats, found hit lists, and the beating death of adolescent Reena Virk in Victoria, British Columbia, fueled a growing moral panic (Evensen, Chwialkowska, & Humphreys, 2000, April 21). There was an overwhelming public perception that youth were becoming more violent, and that youth crime was on the rise. In a 1997 survey, 92 per cent of Canadians felt youth crime was a serious or very serious issue, and the majority of respondents cited harsher punishments as a solution to this problem (Orstad, 1997, March). The Tories mobilized these fears, despite the lack of any real evidence to support the claims (Jull, 2000).

The Tory crackdown on youth crime is an important illustration of how neoconservatism and public fears of school violence contributed to legislative and policy change (Mackie, 2000,

March 21). The *Safe Schools Act* (2000) was introduced at a time of fiscal conservatism, following five years of budget cuts to programs in schools to help students with behaviour problems, and was announced in the wake of panic about school shootings and reports of youth crime rates rising. As then Attorney General Jim Flaherty argued, "we've tried the laissez-faire approach, we've tried spending money on social programs, and what we got was a 77 per cent increase in youth crime" (Puxley, 2000, May 2, p. p. A01). Flaherty often quoted a fiercely disputed statistic, a 77 per cent increase in youth crime, to justify the tough Tory measures, measures that he promised, would "bring youth around" and "strengthen the principles of civility" (Puxley, 2000, May 2, p. A01). The measures emphasized the "basics": being polite, well-dressed, and on time, and promised zero-tolerance for poor behaviour. As Harris said: "It's simple. If you swear in school, you're kicked out … if you're rude to a teacher, you're gone" (Mallan, 1999, February 3, p. 1). The Tories also argued for tighter security, increased surveillance, and a stronger police presence in schools.

After legitimating and defending a story of moral decline of youth and capitalizing on a national mood about school violence on the rise, the Tories were able to justify the direction of their education policies. The suggestion that youth lack civility and are increasingly violent became the dominant belief guiding school discipline and formed the basic structure of organization in education. The Tories had successfully represented the state of affairs in such a way as to make their political party and their party's preferred course of action seem necessary. Reciting figures that purportedly showed how the problem of youth crime and bad behaviour was big and growing, the government motivated the public to want authorities to seize control by way of stricter policies towards crime in general and within schools in particular. Public opinion on the matter indeed showed that 40 per cent of Ontarians approved of the measures. According to

an Angus Reid group poll, the crackdown had resonance. People wanted to be safe and they wanted kids to show respect (Puxley, 2000, May 2). As a result, the Progressive Conservatives produced *de facto* policies in response to *de facto* problems.

The Safe Schools Act (2000)

After the 1999 provincial election promises of a tough, no-nonsense approach to dealing with the problem of violence and bad behaviour in schools, the newly elected Education Minister Janet Ecker introduced a province-wide *Code of Conduct* in April 2000. One month later, she introduced the *Safe Schools Act*, which proposed amending the *Education Act* (1990) to give force to the *Code of Conduct*. The *Safe Schools Act* received royal assent on June 23, 2000 and came into effect on September 1, 2001.

The provincial *Code of Conduct* (2000) was introduced as a key step in a series of initiatives put forward by the Tories to re-instill respect, responsibility, and good citizenship in schools, values that the Tories argued had been lacking among students in (then) recent decades (Ecker, 2000, June 13). Introducing the new legislation, Janet Ecker promised "clear, consistent province-wide standards of behaviour for everyone involved in the education system" (Ecker, 2000, June 13, para. 4). Such standards would include: a set of guidelines delineating what is not acceptable behaviour in schools, a list of predetermined rules that would apply to unacceptable behaviour, and an outline of explicit consequences for students who broke the rules. The discipline policies covered a series of behaviours that ranged from dress code violations, verbal threats, and physical violence. According to the Tory government, the new legislation would ensure that "regardless of where a student attends a publicly funded school in Ontario," there would

be “the same mandatory consequences for violations of the provincial code” (Ecker, 2000, June 13, para. 8) . Mandatory discipline, an important policy development, became part of an episteme of standardized solutions to complex problems in an era ushered in by the Progressive Conservative government of standardized solutions to complex problems in education (Daniel & Bondy, 2008).

The *Safe Schools Act* (2000) revised the *Education Act* (1990) to add new disciplinary infractions, expand the disciplinary power of teachers and principals, and create several infractions for which suspension or expulsion would be mandatory.The legislation gave school boards the authority to expand the list of infractions for which suspension or expulsion would be mandatory and determine additional infractions for which discipline would be discretionary. Before these reforms, the power to expel a student rested with school boards and could be imposed only if conduct was so “refractory” that the student’s presence was “injurious to other pupils or persons” (Bhattacharjee, 2003, p. 9). By contrast, the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) gave principals the power to expel a student for up to a year and expulsion became mandatory for particular offences, such as possessing a weapon, committing a physical assault causing bodily harm, and giving alcohol to a minor.The power to impose a suspension, formerly only delegated to principals, was extended to teachers, who could impose a suspension of one day.As with expulsions, the legislation created a list of offences for which suspensions were mandatory.

An expulsion was mandatory if a student committed any of the following infractions:

1. Possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm.
2. Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person.
3. Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner.
4. Committing sexual assault.
5. Trafficking in weapons or in illegal drugs.
6. Committing robbery.
7. Giving alcohol to a minor.
8. Engaging in another activity that, under a policy of the board, is one for which expulsion is mandatory. (*Education Act*, 1990, s. 309(1))

A suspension was mandatory for the following infractions:

1. Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person.
2. Possessing alcohol or illegal drugs.
3. Being under the influence of alcohol.
4. Swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority.
5. Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property at the pupil's school or to property located on the premises of the pupil's school.
6. Engaging in another activity, that, under a policy of the board is one for which a suspension is mandatory. (*Education Act*,1990, s. 306(1))

The provincial *Code of Conduct* (2000) mandated police involvement for most of these infractions, in accordance with police/school protocols.

Although the *Act* (2000) clearly stated that it was mandatory to suspend or expel a student who violated any of the listed infractions for suspensions or expulsions, the subsection "Mitigating Factors to Mandatory Discipline" (306(5)) stated that suspensions or expulsions were not mandatory in the circumstances it set out. This subsection on mitigating factors was later introduced to the *Act* (2000) (under Regulations 37/01 and 106/01) in the spring of 2001, a short time before the *Act* (2000) came into effect in September 2001. Mitigating factors to mandatory discipline included:

1. The pupil does not have the ability to control his or her behaviour.
2. The pupil does not have the ability to understand the foreseeable consequences of his or her behaviour.

3. The pupil's continuing presence in the school does not create an unacceptable risk to the safety or well being of any person. (O. Reg. 37/01, s. 2; O. Reg. 106/01, s. 1)[3]

Principals were required to consider these mitigating factors before imposing discipline. Thus, mandatory suspensions or expulsions were only mandatory in cases where the infraction committed had no specific mitigating factors as set out in the Regulations 37/01 and 106/01. If any mitigating factors existed, discipline became discretionary. However, even if mitigating factors existed, this did not mean that a principal could not impose a suspension or expulsion, it just meant that the principal was not obliged to impose such discipline. If a principal determined that a listed infraction had been committed by a student and there were no mitigating factors, the principal was obliged to impose a suspension or expulsion or refer the student's matter to the school board. Discretion was not an option.

Mitigating factors did not need to be applied when considering imposing discretionary discipline. Discretionary suspensions and expulsions could be imposed on students who engaged in behaviours that were listed in the school board policies as behaviours for which a suspension was discretionary. Many school boards chose to list the grounds for suspensions and expulsions set out in the former section 23(1) of the *Education Act* (1990), including the clause "conduct injurious to the moral tone of the school or the physical or mental well-being of others in the school" (Trepanier, 2003, p. 17). This ground provided principals with broad subjective discretion to suspend and expel students within a context of legislative changes and political rhetoric

---

[3] These factors were to be determined as *bona fide* mitigating factors and decided by both the principal and the Board Committee at different stages within the discipline process. Trepanier (2003) has pointed out that this was a rather difficult task for many principals. Part of the reason is that when examined closely, it is apparent that mitigating factors 1 and 2 are more medical questions than educational judgements.

premised on a more hard-line approach in dealing with behaviour, discipline, and school safety problems.

The question of what would happen to suspended and expelled students arose before the *Safe Schools Act* (Bill 81) was implemented. In the Legislative Assembly on June 13, 2000, Janet Ecker suggested that suspended or expelled students, were not to be “reward[ed] … with a day at the mall by kicking them out of the classroom or school” (Ecker, 2000, June 13, para. 15). Instead, they were to be required to attend “strict discipline” programs and to “earn their way back” into the classroom by learning “that good behaviour is something they [would] need to work on” if they wanted to return to the regular school program. Without strict discipline programs, Janet Ecker acknowledged that “sending these [suspended or expelled] young people out on to the streets … [would] only put … the problem somewhere else and actually create additional problems, not only for those students but also for the community” (Ecker, 2000, June 13, para. 15). After its implementation, however, the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) did not impose requirements for school boards regarding programs for suspended students; however, it did set out requirements for expelled students to attend strict discipline programs (Trepanier, 2003).[4] School boards in Ontario were placed under a legal obligation to adopt and revise policies, guidelines, and procedures in accordance with the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) andregulations and the

---

[4] Bhattacharjee’s (2003) report, *The Ontario Safe Schools Act: School Discipline and Discrimination,* found that when the *Act* (2000) came into effect in September 2001, only seven strict-discipline programs were up and running in Ontario. The Toronto District School Board, on its own initiative, ran four support programs for suspended students and one program for students on limited expulsion; it also ran two strict discipline programs. All programs, however, reportedly had lengthy waiting lists because of limited funded.

provincial *Code of Conduct* (2000). These policies, guidelines, and procedures became known as the zero-tolerance discipline regime of the Harris-led Progressive Conservative government.

The Tory government fulfilled their pre-election promises to implement strict discipline in Ontario's schools. Proponents of this get tough law and order style of discipline trumpeted its worth for: increasing respect among students through deterrence; implementing a straightforward and uniform approach to dealing with the problems of violence and disrespect among students; conferring appropriate authority upon teachers and administrators to take action in their classrooms and schools; implementing firm measures; setting high standards of accountability; clearly stating rules; and, sternly applying consequences that would be the same for everyone and apply equally to all (Daniel & Bondy, 2008). Daniel and Bondy (2008) find that the greatest appeal of the popularly dubbed zero tolerance discipline regime was that it let students know, "if you do this, if you're involved in this, there will be consequences and these are what the consequences are" (p. 8). The harsh measures were intended to send a message that the administration was still in charge. Whether the message was effectively received or actually changed student behaviour may have been less important than the reassurance that sending it provided the Tory regime.

Opposition to the *Safe Schools Act* (2000)

By the year 2000, the Progressive Conservative government was familiar with formal protests from teachers, unions, and parent groups demonstrating against legislative reforms in education. In August 1997, in what was the largest collective action by teachers in North American history, the 126,000 members of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation organized a two week strike to protest plans by the Progressive Conservative government to radically overhaul the public education system. The strike was described by the teachers as a

political protest against numerous provisions contained in the *Education Quality Improvement Act* (1997). This proposed legislation was a key part of the Tories' broader neoconservative state project, which entailed: reducing spending on publicly funded programs and services; shifting control over key aspects of funding from school boards to the provincial Cabinet; reducing secondary school teacher preparation time by up to 50 per cent; removing principals and vice-principals from the collective bargaining unit; and, replacing certified, unionized teachers with non-certified instructors in non-core areas, such as computers, music, art, and guidance (Greenberg, 2007). “The government's plans for the public education system and the unions' response established education reform as a wedge policy issue and set the tone for continuing conflict between the Tories and teachers in subsequent years” (Greenberg, 2007, p. 353).

Where the *Safe Schools Act* (2002) was concerned, opposition was immediate and on-going. Groups such as the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation, the Ontario School Board Association, parent organizations like People for Education, community and parent advocacy groups, ARCH Disability Law Centre, the Ontario Bar Association, and ultimately, the Ontario Human Rights Commission, spoke out against the Safe School approach of the provincial Conservatives, arguing that it had no place in a society that recognized that school safety can only be accomplished in partnership with social equity and human rights (Falconer, 2008). While these groups differed in their emphasis of opposition, dismantling of the Safe Schools culture under Harris was the consensus view. From the perspective of these groups, changing the culture included eradicating the one size fits all zero-tolerance mentality that accompanied the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) and implementing more supports for disenfranchised students. Opposition groups believed that a shift in thinking about school safety was required to ensure that the education system could address the different needs and experiences of diverse student

populations. In their eyes, a culture shift of this magnitude was daunting but necessary to ensure the success of all students (Falconer, 2008).

Lack of support for marginalized youth

Fundamental to the critique of the safe schools regime offered by these opposition groups was the fact that many school boards, in particular those boards consisting of large numbers of marginalized students, did not have the capacity to maintain safety, as per the *Act* (2000), and equity. This lack of capacity did not flow from a general lack of caring or insight, it was more than anything, a lack of resources. The *Safe Schools Act* (2000) did nothing to address this fundamental problem, quite conversely, the problem was built into the Conservative approach to safe schools in an era of get tough fiscal conservatism. In the media, many school administrators and teachers spoke out about the need for supportive programs in schools, rather than tough measures, to help troubled youth, thereby disputing the premise upon which the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) was based. Board staff argued that most students are indeed "thoughtful, intelligent young adults" (Girard, 1999, April 29, p. A01), and that where there are problems of youth violence, these problems are rooted in complex issues, not the least of which is "families feeling marginalized as social services in communities … [are] being cut [under Conservative fiscal rule]" (Talaga & Shephard, 1999, April 30). Where resources were lacking in communities, schools could offer no reinforcement. As Liz Sandals, then head of the Ontario School Board Association, pointed out, resources in schools, such as guidance counsellors or special education programs, to help students deal with their problems had been "stripped to the bone" by the Conservative government (Talaga & Shephard, 1999, April 30).

Daniel and Bondy (2008) outline the concerns of some administrators and teachers in the Greater Toronto Area regarding the lack of support for students who were found to be in conflict

with the *Safe Schools Act* (2000). Administrators and teachers pointed out that the students most affected by the *Act* (2000) already had "several social, socio-economic, psychological and behavioural issues that precluded them from doing well in school" (p. 9). Suspending or expelling these students was further exacerbating their emotional health, negatively affecting their graduation rates, and their life chances. Opponents of the *Act* (2000) argued that the safe schools policies were denying students the fundamental right to an education and isolating and abandoning students at a time in their developmental continuum when they most needed support (Daniel & Bondy, 2008). As one teacher simply put it: the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) " doesn't work … not for the kids who need help" (Daniel & Bondy, 2008, p. 9). The growing concern and opposition to the *Act* among teachers, administrators, and parents of suspended students, coalesced around seeking disciplinary solutions that were more socially responsible, especially in light of increased suspension and expulsion rates.

Increased suspension and expulsion rates

Not surprisingly, given that the Safe Schools reforms entailed expanded infractions, increased disciplinary authority for principals, increased police involvement, and the implementation of mandatory consequences, the number of suspensions and expulsions increased dramatically after the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) was implemented.[5]In the 2000-2001 school year, prior to the reforms, there were 113,778 students suspended. By the 2003-2004 school year, the number rose markedly to 152,626 students. In total, 229,394 suspensions were meted out in the

---

[5]All statistics cited in this paragraph are from the following news release: Ontario Ministry of Education, News Release, 2005, November 23. "McGuinty Government Releases Data on School Discipline", retrieved from: http://ogov.newswire.ca/ontario/GPOE/2005/11/23/c8925.html?lmatch=&Lang=_e.html

2003-2004 school year and 27,425 of those suspensions were meted out to students who were suspended three or more times. Of the students suspended in 2003-2004, 18 per cent were students with disabilities, representing 8.8 per cent of all students with disabilities. The data clearly showed a higher rate of suspension and expulsion for boys, about three times that of girls, and for students enrolled in northern and rural schools. Not only had the number of suspensions increased, but there was a staggeringly large discrepancy in the rate of suspensions, from 0.5 per cent of students in some school boards to as high as 36 per cent in others. Similarly, expulsions increased from 106 in 2000-2001 to 1,909 in 2003-2004. About 20 per cent (379 of 1, 909) of expelled students were students with disabilities.

Bhattacharjee (2003) documents the public concerns regarding the broader impact of the increased suspensions and expulsions of students under the *Safe Schools Act* (2000). The most commonly identified elements of concern were the psychological impact that suspensions and expulsions were having on students, the loss of education during the time away from school, the higher drop-out rates among suspended or expelled students, and the risk of increased criminalization and anti-social behaviour among students suspended or expelled. Many parents and community advocates spoke out about the marginalization effects that suspensions and expulsions were having on students who were being excluded from school. Identified among the concerns were the road blocks to high school completion that suspensions and expulsions put in place, the adverse affects on academic progress and plans to attend postsecondary school that resulted, and the kinds of trouble that kids were getting into in the community. When everyone else was at school, suspended or expelled students were often hanging out together, in a less pro-social fashion (Bhattacharjee, 2003).

Among education stakeholders and members of school communities, one of the major concerns regarding increased suspensions and expulsions was over the disproportionate impact the reforms were having on racialized students and students with disabilities (Falconer, 2008). Once the reforms were implemented, reports of disproportionate impact quickly began to materialize and mounting concern led to an investigation by the Ontario Human Rights Commission. In a report prepared for the Commission after a broad review of scholarly and stakeholder perspectives, human rights consultant Ken Bhattacharjee concluded "that in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and other parts of Ontario there is a strong perception, which is supported by some independent evidence, that the Act and school board policies are having a disproportionate impact on racial minority students, particularly Black students, and students with disabilities" (Bhattacharjee, 2003, p. i). The Ontario Human Rights Commission subsequently initiated two complaints in 2005, based on this finding: one against the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and the other against the Ministry of Education. Within the complaints, it was alleged that the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) and TDSB discipline policies were having a disproportionate impact on racial minority students and students with disabilities (Mosher, 2008).

Human rights concerns regarding the *Safe Schools Act* (2000)

A quick overview of the human rights concerns laid out in Bhattacharjee's (2003) report provides an illustration of the scope of the problems instituted under the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) and fills in part of the necessary background and context for analyses contained in subsequent chapters. Bhattacharjee (2003) found, after conducting interviews with a wide range of education stakeholders, advocacy groups, parents, students, and community workers, that the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) was being used to treat students differentially. Racialized students were not given a margin of error when facing disciplinary action, in particular in areas where the application of the

rules was more subjective and where there was greater room for racial stereotyping and bias to enter the decision-making process of disciplinary action. Dress codes specifically targeted Black and other racialized students in that hip hop clothing, baggy pants, bandannas, certain colours perceived to be indicators of gang membership, and so forth, were seen as a form of resistance to school authority. Resisting or questioning authority and being disrespectful to the teacher were common behaviours for which racialized students were being suspended.

Following are some examples of the testimonies informing (2003) these findings:

> [The Black students] compare themselves to White students. A White student does the exact same thing and remains in school. But a Black student is either expelled or suspended for thirty to forty days … If they get into an argument or something with a White student, the Black student is expelled, but the White student gets to stay in school. (p. 40)
>
> Five students -- two Aboriginal and three White students -- were caught getting high on drugs together. Under the policy, they all should have been punished equally. But what happened was the two Aboriginal students were suspended for five days, one of the White students was suspended for three days and the other two [White] students weren't suspended at all. The school told the parents of the Aboriginal students that the two White students were not suspended because they came forward first. (p. 42)
>
> In one case, a White student had attacked a Latino student. The Latino student's parents wanted the White student to be suspended, but the school just said that everyone should calm down and things could be sorted out without a suspension. I never get calls from parents because the school wants to sort things out when a Latino student has done something wrong. (p. 42)
>
> The issue of being appropriately dressed does not come up for other [non-racialized] groups. (p. 44)
>
> Black children who are being picked on are being suspended after a fight, but the White children who did the picking on are not. Black children are being suspended for things that White children are not being suspended for. Black children feel that White children are not being disciplined in the same way. (p. 40)
>
> In many of these cases, the parents … will say it is racism. Most often, they will identify the problem behind it as racism. There are fights in school that some students claim originated in racial taunting … There have been cases where the parents have complained

> that the White student had started it, but that student was not suspended. Or the parent might say, if the White student started it, why is my child suspended for the same length of time as the student who started it. They believe there is something behind the way their child is treated. (p. 39)

> The students who are from the groups that are being disproportionately impacted know what is happening. (p. 40)

Bhattacharjee (2003) also draws attention, through testimonies, to the systemic nature of some of the problems racialized students were facing in schools:

> The systemic nature of it is that the majority of teachers and principals are White and the curriculum is not inclusive. That can have an impact in terms of the students' connection to school and engagement with school. If a Black student is affected by that, and then begins to act out, that is not considered. It is not looked at as an underlying reason for the behaviour. The emphasis is only on the student's behaviour and there is no look at what is causing it. (p. 48).

> I think that systemic issues allow the individual principal and teacher to act on their stereotypes as opposed to confronting their stereotypes. No one would ever say that they suspend because of colour or race, but they don't spend time consciously thinking about why so many of the students who are getting in trouble and coming to the office are Black. They take the attitude that everyone is treated the same way, so they never ask critical questions. By never looking at why some of those things are happening, you are, in fact, perpetuating the inequality. (p. 48)

> I would speculate [as to why a White kid is allowed back into a school before a Black kid is allowed back after a fight between them] that the White parent is much more articulate than the immigrant parent who doesn't understand the system. The more you know the system, the better they treat you. The vast majority of kids who are suspended have parents who don't know the system. That is a major reason why there is this disparity. The inability of immigrant parents to advocate for their children. (p. 51)

> I find that when children come to Canada, they are having difficulties because the issue of reunification with the culture and adjustment is not being addressed. What I see is that a child may go to school with several different problems -- economic and social -- and when a behavioural issue comes up, it is seen as strange, and time is not taken out to understand what is going on … My perception is that there are racial biases. It is worse if you are in the social welfare system. A child who is known to be from a poor, Black, immigrant background is more targeted because of socio-economic status. (p. 51)

As noted in the final excerpt above, students who are poor, immigrants, or refugees also faced harsher treatment in schools. School administrators, when applying discipline for misbehaviour, were perceived as failing to take into consideration the refugee background, English speaking skills, or adverse conditions of poverty that contribute to what presents as behaviour problems in students. As the executive director of a Somali social service organization states: "The teachers follow policies which are supposed to apply to kids in normal situations … We tell the educators that the kids are not acting in a normal way because of the situation they have been in" (Bhattacharjee, 2003, p. 52).

Concern that educators were not taking into consideration the circumstances of behaviour that presents in schools was also raised regarding students with disabilities, in particular, regarding students with mental health problems, behavioural disorders, intellectual and learning disabilities, and disorders of impulse control (e.g. Tourette's Syndrome). Bhattacharjee (2003) finds that the majority of students with disabilities who were most affected by strict discipline policies were those students who were more likely to get into a situation where mandatory discipline had to be applied: students who had poor impulse control whose behaviour was interpreted as showing disrespect for authority; and, students who looked or behaved differently, thereby drawing attention from authority figures. Thus, administrators under the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) often facilitated the differential treatment of students with disabilities by ignoring that a student's disability would frequently account for that student's behaviour and suspending or expelling that student anyway. As a result, the suspension or expulsion was in direct violation of Ontario human rights law where the duty to accommodate is clearly outlined. The problem with the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) was that it did not include any discussion of the need to

accommodate students on the basis of their disability, quite conversely, the *Act* (2000) shifted protection away from the rights of students with disabilities.

Ultimately, in his report, Bhattacharjee (2003) shows that the Progressive Conservatives implemented the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) notwithstanding the known discriminatory effect that this legislation would have on students with disabilities.[6] The government also disregarded evidence from other jurisdictions that the harsh disciplinary measures contained within the legislation have a long-proven adverse effect on racialized students. It came as no real public surprise that the *Act* (2000) was being used against racialized students and students with disabilities to remove them from the public education system (Falconer, 2008).

Calls to repeal the Safe Schools Act (2000)

Reactions to Bhattacharjee's (2003) report were highly publicized, suggesting that a certain level of resistance to the *Safe Schools Act* (2003) already existed among advocacy groups and members of school communities, especially in the Greater Toronto Area. After the report, opposition to the *Act* (2000) was becoming more public and widespread. Along with parents, education stakeholders, teachers' unions, board associations, race-related and disability advocacy groups and legal clinics, provincial opposition parties also were calling for the repeal of the *Act* (2000).

---

[6]*Special Education Monograph No. 5*, circulated before the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) was instated, clearly warned against the imposition of suspensions and expulsions on students with disabilities, for disability-related behaviours. Rather than act on the recommendations made in the *Monograph*, the Harris-led Government suppressed the document and ordered the Ministry not to release it (Bhattacharjee, 2003).

In its call for repeal of the legislation, the ARCH Disability Law Centre released a paper outlining how the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) restored segregation in Ontario by suspending or expelling students with disabilities from schools. Increasingly, there were media reports of students, parents, community groups, teachers, and lawyers meeting to protest, most often in the Jane and Finch neighbourhood in northwest Toronto, to launch campaigns to end zero-tolerance and the exclusion of racialized students in schools. Media headlines referred to the "Controversial Act" that kicks students out of schools and Howard Hampton, then leader of the New Democrat Party of Ontario called the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) the "Gang Recruitment Act", referring to the fact that many youth were "being thrown out onto the street" because there were no programs to help them after being suspended or expelled (Safe Schools Act helps gangs recruit, 2005, October 31).

The consensus agenda: Amending the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) and changing Safe Schools culture

The broader agenda of opposition groups coalesced around demands to repeal the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) and invest more in educational programs so that the most marginalized and vulnerable students will get the supports that they need to enjoy their basic right to education and a bright future. Along these lines, there were calls for bullying intervention programs to protect vulnerable students. Generally, opposition groups identified the need for implementing disciplinary measures in schools that stressed early intervention for students and on-going support, with the focus being corrective rather than punitive (Daniel & Bondy, 2008). Specifically, the opposition reform approach advocated for schools to employ consequences that are developmentally appropriate and that provide accommodation where necessary, instate human rights protections and equity, take into consideration mitigating factors to student behaviour,

include opportunities for students to learn from their mistakes, and focus on improving student behaviour over the long haul (Daniel & Bondy, 2008). Recommendations flowing from opposition stakeholders for implementing safer and more equitable school environments were brought forward to the Ontario legislature for consideration and debate.

In response to the amount of opposition the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) had received over the years from activists, teachers, parents, organized groups, and the Ontario Human Rights Commission, the Ministry of Education set up a Safe Schools Action Team in 2004. Led by the provincial Liberal government (2003-present), then Education Minister Gerard Kennedy announced that the team will conduct a review of the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) which was part of a $9 million plan to resolve the problems instated under Conservative rule (McCarten, 2004, December 15, p. A10). After extensive public consultations across the province, the action team released two reports: *Shaping Safer Schools: A Bullying Prevention Action Plan* (2005), and *Safe Schools Policy and Practice: An Agenda for Action* (2006). The Liberal government also entered into terms of agreement with the Ontario Human Rights Commission to resolve the complaint regarding the *Safe Schools Act* (2000). These reports and the resolution with the Ontario Human Rights Commission informed the Liberal government's amendments to safe schools legislation in June 2007.

The *Education Amendment Act* (2007) and related policy program memos

By 2007, the political and administrative leadership of the Ministry of Education under the Liberal government had been devoting considerable attention to school safety issues given the intense public pressure on the government to do something about the controversial *Safe Schools Act* (2000). In June 2007 the *Education Amendment Act* was passed unanimously in the Ontario

Legislature and was created to replace the *Safe Schools Act* (2000). The *Education Amendment Act* (2007) came into force February 1, 2008 and is intended to support a progressive discipline approach, one which combines discipline with opportunities for students to continue their education.

The amendments to the *Education Act* (1990) remove the language of mandatory discipline that was legislated under the Conservatives and expand the number of "Mitigating and Other Factors" for administrators and boards to consider before imposing suspensions and expulsions on students. Under the new legislation, mitigating and other factors must be taken into account "if they would mitigate the seriousness of the activity" for which the student is being disciplined. The "Mitigating and Other Factors" to consider before applying discipline include the following:

1. The student's history.
2. Whether a progressive discipline approach has been used.
3. Whether the activity is related to any harassment of the student because of their race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation or to any other harassment.
4. How the suspension or expulsion would affect the student's ongoing education.
5. The age of the student.
6. In the case of a student for whom an individual education plan has been developed, whether the behaviour was a manifestation of a disability identified, whether appropriate individualized accommodation has been provided, and whether the suspension or expulsion is likely to result in an aggravation or worsening of the student's behaviour. (O. Reg. 472/07, s. 3).

Under the new *Education Amendment Act* (2007), instead of a list of *infractions* for which a suspension is *mandatory*, there is a list of *activities* for which a suspension *may be considered*. All of the infractions listed previously under the *Safe Schools Act* (2000): uttering a threat; possessing alcohol or drugs; being under the influence; swearing at a teacher; and vandalism, remain on the suspension list but do so under the new, discretionary, terms (Trepanier,

2008). Bullying has been added to this list.[7] Teachers' authority to suspend was revoked. Where expulsions are concerned, again, the same list of infractions, now termed activities, remains. However, under the *Education Amendment Act* (2007) if a student is found to be involved in one of the listed activities for which an expulsion may be considered, the principal must refer the expulsion matter to the school board. Principals' authority to expel was revoked. If a principal refers an expulsion matter to the board then the principal must suspend the student pending an expulsion review but must consider mitigating or other factors when determining the duration of the suspension pending expulsion review. The principal must assign a student who is suspended or expelled to a program for suspended or expelled students.[8]

Although the imposition of sanctions for infractions by students is no longer labelled as mandatory, nonetheless, the general structure of the discipline process remains unchanged. As was previously the case, a principal is required to follow certain steps when considering imposing discipline and there are various levels of appeals provided in respect of student discipline decisions (Trepanier, 2008). In any event, it is now clear that principals have the discretion to decide whether to suspend and that school boards have the discretion to decide whether to expel students. Moreover, under the *Education Amendment Act* (2007), suspensions and expulsions are to be on the furthest end of the spectrum of new options that are now available for imposing

---

[7] In October of 2007, the Ministry of Education released *Policy Program Memorandum No. 144*, entitled: "Bullying Prevention and Intervention" which provides direction to school boards regarding this issue.

[8] In August of 2007, the Ministry of Education released *Policy/Program Memorandum No. 141* and *142* which sets out requirements for the provision of education programs for disciplined students.

discipline on students whose behaviour disregards the provincial *Code of Conduct*.[9] The Ministry's *Policy Program Memorandum 145* (2007; 2009b) outlines some of these new options and defines what has come to be called Progressive Discipline.

Within *Policy Program Memorandum 145* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007; 2009b), Progressive Discipline is defined as follows:

> Progressive discipline is a whole school approach that utilizes a continuum of prevention programs, interventions, supports, and consequences to address inappropriate student behaviour and build upon strategies that promote and foster positive behaviours. When inappropriate behaviour occurs, disciplinary measures should be applied within a framework that shifts the focus from one that is solely punitive to one that is both corrective and supportive. Schools should utilize a range of interventions, supports, and consequences that are developmentally appropriate and include learning opportunities for reinforcing positive behaviour while helping students to make good choices. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 4)

Policy Program Memorandum 145 (2007; 2009b) stipulates that early intervention strategies may include "contact with parents, detentions, verbal reminders, review of expectations, or a written work assignment with a learning component" (2007; 2009b, p. 4). Ongoing interventions may include: "meetings with parents, volunteer service to the school community, conflict mediation, peer mentoring, and/or a referral to counselling" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007; 2009b, p. 4). In short, from the perspective of the 2007 amendments and related policy directives, progressive discipline is an approach that "enables the principal to choose the appropriate consequences to address inappropriate student behaviour" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007; 2009b, p. 4).

---

[9] This code was modified in October 2007 and released in the Ministry of Education's *Policy Program Memorandum 128* which provides direction to school boards to review and revise their codes of conduct to make them consistent with the new code by February 1, 2008.

The Ministry of Education's website offers a cursory synopsis of this new discipline strategy. It is a three pronged approach: to promote positive student behaviour, prevent inappropriate behaviour, and intervene before inappropriate behaviour worsens.

> Positive student behaviour is promoted at school through programs like character … development. Schools help prevent inappropriate behaviour through programs like bullying prevention. … Early and ongoing intervention can also help prevent inappropriate behaviour from escalating. For example, social workers and psychologists can work with schools to offer students counselling to assist with anger management or substance abuse to help them get back on track. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008c, para. 4)

Under the 2007 amendments, every school board in Ontario is required to have a progressive discipline policy. School boards are also encouraged to build partnerships with community agencies such as mental health providers, child and family services, and local police to support prevention and early intervention.

Since 2007, the Ministry of Education under the McGuinty-led Liberal government has released a number of reports, initiatives, policy modifications, and education strategies that continue along the conceptual lines of supportive inclusive intervention practices in schools. While the legislation and policy directives were introduced from the ministry's perspective of improving student learning and keeping students in school, other political factors are certainly identifiable in understanding why changes were made. Specifically, unprecedented protests and opposition among grassroots levels, community organizations, provincial advocates for racialized students and students with disabilities, and a human rights complaint against the Ministry of Education that received strong public support, helped to ensure changes to school discipline legislation.

Conclusion

The changes to safe schools policies in Ontario's Ministry of Education from mandatory to progressive discipline move the issue of student discipline from a track of punishment and exclusion to one of prevention and inclusion. This shift follows a change in provincial leadership from the Progressive Conservatives to the Liberals in 2003 and was precipitated by increasing pressure on the Ministry of Education to respond to the public concerns raised about the adverse effects of the mandatory discipline regime. The hard work and advocacy on the part of those documenting and speaking out against the harms suffered by students who were unjustly punished or discriminated against by the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) was extraordinary. Change was effected through those efforts.

In what follows in this dissertation is a critical examination of what kind of change ensued in the Ministry of Education's school safety file. While it is difficult to argue that streaming students into prevention programs or supportive counselling in order to keep kids in school is somehow problematic, an especially difficult argument to make in light of the suspensions and expulsions that preceded under the Tories. Nevertheless, I show that the direction in which the Liberal government takes the upsurge of interest in inclusive education and progressive discipline holds a particular affinity with neoliberal political doctrines, policies, and orientations, which have their own inherent adverse effects. I argue that despite the growing interest in the relationship between equity, inclusion, and discipline, not enough attention is being paid to the political context or causes of social inequities and marginalization practices, unto themselves. I show that until more attention is paid to mitigating the causes of social and political inequities, school policies will offer little more than buffering effects.

I start from the premise that inequities are neither necessary nor inevitable and must not be the place from where policies launch. Accordingly, in chapters four, five, and six, I expose and critique the places where inequities are taken as givens in discipline policies under Liberal rule. I organize my chapters along the three pronged approach to progressive discipline introduced under the *Education Amendment Act* (2007): preventing inappropriate behaviour through programs like bullying prevention, providing early and ongoing intervention by offering students counselling, and promoting positive student behaviour through programs like character development. I show that calls for the Liberal government to implement inclusive discipline practices morphed into a particular neoliberal response that governs the manners, health, and diversity of students in public education in accordance with a particular way of thinking. Where the discipline practices legislated under the *Safe Schools Act* (2000) were criticized for shifting protection away from the rights of minority status students, the reform amendments legislated under the *Education Amendment Act* (2007) may be critiqued for continuing to protect dominant group thinking and privilege.

Chapter 3: Policy is what policy does.

Elaboration of methods for policy analysis

In this chapter my purpose is to elaborate upon the methods and theorists I use to carry out my analyses of progressive discipline policies, as these policies relate to my work with youth in secondary schools. I ground my analyses in my experiences as a counsellor and focus on the embedded assumptions in policy documents and on discourses in education that pertain to discipline, health, and diversity. I blend critical approaches to policy analysis with methods of social critique in order to examine how policies and popular discourses affect those at the margins (Bacchi, 1999; Ball, 1994; Marshall, 1999; Scheurich, 1994), in particular those youth at whom discipline policies are aimed.

In chapter four I view the problem of homophobic bullying, as it is represented in discipline policies in education, through the critical lens of queer theory. In chapter five I view the problem of stress among students in schools, as it is represented in documents in the education and health sectors, through the Foucauldian lens of governmentality. In chapter six, using critical race theory, I examine the difficulties of doing diversity work in schools, as this work is undertaken in character development initiatives. In all of these chapters I employ a form of discourse analysis. My analysis focuses on education policies, legislative reports, Hansard records, news media portrayals, and broader social and economic government policies in Ontario. I present a close reading of these documents and reports to explore the neoliberal goals, aspirations, and orientations therein. My analysis points to a number of strategies that work to align the interests of students, teachers, school administrators, school boards, health care professionals, and members of the broader school community with a governing interest that

endorses personal responsibility, self-advancement, and entrepreneurship. Ultimately I seek to show how neoliberal policies benefit dominant groups although they are intended to serve historically disadvantaged and underrepresented populations in school contexts.

My analysis situates government policies and related reports in relation to society, social change, and governance in order to examine how certain discourses become hegemonic or commonsensical, under what conditions, and with what effects. Using various critical theorists, I focus on the dominant assumptions about gender and sexual identity, the nature of stress and mental health, and ethno-racial differences that are present in documents produced for the education community. I also critically examine how dominant assumptions influence discourses pertaining to inclusivity, health, and diversity in the education sector. Depending on the question I explore or problem I examine, I may focus on the use of political rhetoric, the use of illustrative materials that accompany policies, the use of expert testimonies within documents, and the positioning of policies or announcements relative to other policy plans or interests. Ultimately, I seek to reveal valuable insights into the social and political contexts in which varied approaches to student discipline take place.

In this chapter, I shall explain what I mean by discourse analysis. Then, I shall introduce the theoretical underpinnings for the following three substantive chapters four, five, and six, respectively: queer theory, governmentality studies, and critical race analysis. I shall also explain in greater detial how I use the term neoliberalism. Finally, I shall pull these analytical approaches together and outline how these methods converge within my analyses.

Discourse analysis

Gillen and Peterson (2006) write, "many practitioners of discourse analysis argue that the more one understands about the socio-historical situation of a text, the more sensitive and insightful will be one's interpretation" (p. 147). This kind of methodological analysis involves a focus upon the socio-cultural and political context in which text and talk occur. Discourse analysis, as I use it, seeks the insights that are produced by situating text. Above all, it employs a kind of critical analysis that lays bare the links, relationships, and contradictions between what is said in text and what is happening in specific social situations in particular political environments. Specifically, I am interested in discourse analysis for its value in identifying how dominant political and social ideologies are reproduced in the ways of thinking that shore up education discipline policies affecting young people's lives. My emphasis is not so much on the message of the policies themselves, but upon the elements and influences in the policy processes as a whole, influences that frame what can be said and what can be thought to make certain policies "thinkable and practicable" (Rose, 1990, p. 6).

I start from the premise that it is important not to take what is said in policy documents at face value but to ask how statements in policy are generated and how policy decisions fit into wider social and political relations at play. To do this, I scrutinize and test judgements about truth claims, explore strategic representations of policy problems, and examine how policy fits into the government's agenda for programming. I seek to uncover the normative nature of policy decisions that appear to be obvious, inevitable, or neutral. In so doing, I aim to offer points of resistance to policies that seem benign or impartial on their face, by exposing the partisan framing of policy setting or by outlining the social injustice of policy effects that go unnoticed. Thus, I invite policy researchers to re-examine, or reframe policy problems. Or, I provide policy-makers

post hoc with rationalizations for different policy options that hold more socially just policy effects.

My approach remains in keeping with the uses of discourse analysis among a group of scholars who describe policy as discourse (Ball, 1990, 1993; Watts, 1993; Phillips, 1996; Bacchi, 1999) and who emphasize the context of policy development. Policy-as-discourse analysts find discourse analysis useful in identifying the reasons progressive change proves so difficult to achieve. The difficulty in achieving change, is due, in Bacchi's (1999) view in particular, not simply because opponents of change overtly quash attempts at reform, but because issues get represented in such a way in policy, that progressive intent gets subverted. To make this point, policy-as-discourse analysts draw attention to the ways in which social problems or policy problems get shaped in discourse, or come into view through discursive practices (Scheurich, 1994). That is, following Foucault (1972), discourse theorists ask how a problem is made manifest, nameable, and describable. The following questions serve to sharpen the analytical process: By what process does a particular problem emerge? How does a problem come to be seen as a problem? What makes the emergence of a particular problem possible? Why do some problems become identified as social problems while other problems do not? By what process does a social problem emerge from a kind of social invisibility into visibility? (Scheurich, 1994).

The purpose in asking such critical questions within a policy-as-discourse approach is not only to notice how some policy problems come to be identified and spoken of, but to notice how other problems are not identified or spoken of, or, to bring silences within policy out into the open for discussion. Such revelations are deemed to be an important part of a political process of challenge. That is to say, while policy-as-discourse analysts wish to reveal the ways in which the discursive shaping of issues can make social change difficult, they tend to believe that exposing

how discourse limits what can be said, opens a space for discursive reconstruction. There is a recognition that policy analysts can make a difference to the ways in which problems are shaped, discussed, approached, and mitigated. As Watts (1993) argues, critical work must seek to revise and amend discourse, not only by resisting a particular policy initiative, but also by re-shaping the issue under consideration for policy development.

While no analyst is completely free to construct or reconstruct discourse (see Bosso, 1994), recognizing the institutional or ideological location of discourses draws attention to the political projects that discourses sustain. Furthermore, the act of exposing who produces discourse, who controls the enunciative position (Maroney, 1992), how groups and individuals position themselves and are positioned by discourse, in part, can influence whether or not policy should be accepted, rejected, or modified (Ball, 1999). As Pateman and Gross (1986) assert, particular interests are served by every theoretical position and in any textual or discursive system. Identifying such interests, revealing the taken for granted forms by which dominant political interests are established and maintained, many of which are effectively buried within discourse, is a means by which discourse analysts may challenge the uncritical acceptance of policy as status quo. Accepting status quo policies makes change implausible, problematizing policy-as-discourse, both for what it does and for what it does not do, opens avenues for resistance.

By way of challenging the status quo, it is not only important to unearth and be aware of the political commitments, values, and dominant interests inherent in the use of discourses that influence policy and practices, it is also important to be aware of one’s position as producer and reproducer of certain discourses and practices (Fox, 1991). Given that my work is motivated by my experience counselling youth, working closely with social workers, public health nurses,

guidance counsellors, educators, administrators and support staff. And, in light of what seems to me a kind of consistent liberal-minded approach to student support in schools among the professionals with whom I have worked closely. I believe it is important to examine more carefully how discourses guide the work that is done in schools and how it is reproduced by those who do the work in schools. When our work affects young lives, it is salient to consider how policies work and what they do if we are going to implement them and reproduce the ideologies contained within them. Thus, my methodology also invites reflexive practice.

For those who work with students in a supportive and guiding role, reflexive practice involves the ability to become aware of the interests discourses serve and to interrogate how we reproduce those interests in our working lives. Reflexivity thus requires a sensitivity to the manner in which policies and practices are generally accepted as common sense. Furthermore, attention to discourse is central to any activity seeking to facilitate reflexivity (Smith, 1990). Practitioners are often unaware of the social structures, relations of power, and the nature of the social practices in which they are engaged. So too are practitioners often unaware of how their practices influence social structures, relations, and struggles that surround them (Fairclough, 1992). The links between discourse, policy, practice, and social processes are generally opaque. The critical awareness of such links is directed at rendering this opacity more transparent (Fairclough, 1992). Thus, my work introduces a concern to explore the minutiae of discourses and discursive formations not only at the site of policy development but also at the site of action or practice. Reflexive practice thus includes the critiquing of taken for granted terms like responsibility, self-efficacy, taking control, risk, participation, discipline, and choice that pervade the education field, in practice. I am concerned with the constitution of student subjectivities, as

these influence the work being done with students, by looking at how some students are constituted as different, poorly behaved, in need of help, or diverse.

The point of my work is to undermine and contest accepted understandings and assumptions about discipline, health promotional practices, and diversity work, to incite critique and ask questions about dominant belief systems, and to disrupt the complacency of the discourse systems that serve the status quo.

Queer theory[10]

Queer theory attempts to maintain a critique more than define a specific identity. Just as discourse analysis examines how we talk, act, think, what is said, what can be said, who is authorized to speak, when and where, in order to expose the ways in which our lives are organized, queer theory seeks to expose the ways in which lives are discussed and organized according to heterosexual norms. In particular, queer theorists argue that heterosexual ideas about gender, sex, desire, and sexuality dominate ideas about human behaviour, including education, religion, family, politics, and so forth. Warner (1993) calls this the sexual order. Warner (1993) contends that this sexual order permeates all social institutions and argues that challenging this order is like challenging common sense ideology about what it means to be human. Queer theory, thus, works to problematize heteronormativity as the dominating form of sexuality and as the dominant order of human behaviour. To understand the different ways in which heteronormativity organizes and structures everyday life, queer theory looks at how all areas of

[10]Like any other intellectual movement, there is not one queer theory, but many queer theories advocated by many different thinkers. I shall discuss these thinkers, along the way, so to speak.

human activity embed assumptions of what counts as normal and seeks to reveal the normalizing mechanisms in human relations.

I use queer theory to argue that discussions about lesbian or gay identity and orientations in education policies leave heteronormative discourses unaltered in order to reproduce the ideology of heterosexual society within schools. This is true, I show, even when discussions about LGBTQ identity and orientations are intended as a corrective to homophobia in schools. That is, although policies in education reveal a pro-LGBTQ sexual minority rights stance, the practices legislated within policies, unintentionally seem to work against their explicit aims. Reflecting on this irony has led me to consider what policy-makers in education are doing, and what they could be doing where sexuality is concerned. It has also led me to consider how queer theory can help in this endeavour.

Problematizing heteronormativity destabilizes how normalization works (Jagose, 1996). Problematizing how schools work to shore up heteronormative assumptions is a good step towards interrupting the ways in which children and youth are guided towards heterosexuality as the normal course of sexual development. Bickmore (2002) argues that a good starting point for resisting heterosexism in schools is to take stock of what children already know about sexuality. She writes,

> They [children and youth] typically have both knowledge (not necessarily correct) and concern about sexual identity matters by early elementary school. Information and misinformation about sex and gender relations flow freely these days in public spaces, media, and peer groups. Sexuality is present and visible, although often unremarked upon, in the public images experienced by virtually all youth in the western world. One can hardly avoid seeing people kissing, dancing, or dressing in ways designed to be sexually attractive. Political campaigners, entertainers, television and movie narratives, comic strips, and billboard advertising present powerful models regarding which members of a society, and which kinds of intimate relationships are valued. … Most North American children and youth have heard words such as ‘gay‘ used as slurs, whether or not they know their definitions … Children also generally know that they risk being teased and hurt if they are known to live in unusual families … By middleschool,

> girls and boys have learned to define their gender identities in large part by heterosexual behavior. They generally believe that a girl 'must' have or seek a boyfriend, and a boy 'must' have or seek sexual relations with girls, and they know they will be tormented if they do not conform. (p. 200)

Bickmore (2002) thus examines how schools can reinforce and/or resist heterosexism. She exposes the dominant ideologies surrounding sexuality and gender that shape human social interaction and that influence student behaviour and development. She argues that problems of heterosexist harassment are embodied in the inequitable distribution of power between majority and minority sexual identities. She calls for education practices to interrupt dominant ideologies and in so doing, to mitigate the problems of heteronormativity or heterosexist harassment in schools. Using Bickmore (2002) as the standard against which to measure what education policies seek to do, I discuss how the Ministry of Education in Ontario falls short of mitigating the heteronormative culture permeating school environments.

Whereas Bickmore (2002) works to problematize and disrupt heteronormative practices in schools, Monk (2011) works to draw out the subtle and implicit heteronormative assumptions in the anti-homophobia agenda that schools take up. This perspective shifts my focus away from concerns about homophobia or heteronormativity in schools and towards the expressions of concern about homophobia in schools as these are contained in education policies. In so doing, I question what the readiness to address homophobia in schools represents. As Diduck and Kaganas (2004) argue: "While giving voice to any previously disempowered or marginalized constituency is important, and listening to children is long overdue, we must be alert to the discourses through which that voice is heard and interpreted" (p. 981). Following Monk (2011), I explore what the discovery of homophobic harms is contingent upon, discursively, and what the notion of harm itself is contingent upon as these are interpreted by education policy-makers. Ultimately I seek to reveal the centrality and power of heterosexual subjectivity that pervades

school cultures and policies while introducing the grounds for resisting heteronormative thinking that works to support this centrality and power.

Governmentality studies

The notion of governmentality, which Foucault believes has dominated political power since the eighteenth century, is quite relevant to my work, in particular, to chapter five, which examines the programmatic forms that supports and interventions take in schools. Governmentality studies incorporates an analysis of coercive and noncoercive strategies which governments and related institutions use in order to urge individuals towards certain political and social interests. In such urging of individuals, governmentality is understood as a form of discipline that uses apparent kinds of discipline (like policing or surveillance) carried out by government institutions and related agencies, in combination with techniques and practices of self-government (Rose, 1992; Dean, 2009).

Governmentality theorists avoid the idea that governments act as an overarching repressive authority. Rather, these theorists see power relations as diffuse, emerging from all areas of social life. Of course, governments are important parts of the structure of power relations, but also important are the many and varied institutions, sites, social groups, and community members at the local level whose interests and activities may align with the imperatives of government. In keeping with the notion that power relations at local levels may be interconnected with the concerns of governments, governmentality studies looks for and locates regulatory activities at all levels of society, from the family, the media, and the school, up to the bureaucratic arms such as the legislature and its ministries. Locating regulatory activities at all social levels, recognizes that while governments are definitely involved in setting the parameters and

conditions for maintaining local level interests in concert with the state, governments do not overtly dominate to that end. Indeed, the logic of governmentality has close links to the development of liberal thought, emphasizing individual freedom and rights against excessive intervention on the part of governments (Rose, 1992).

Experts and their expertise, in particular those related to the helping professions, are central to governmentality and may be located at more local levels of power relations (Rose, 1992; Dean, 2009). Practices that offer expert advice and instruction on how individuals ought to conduct themselves are what governmentality theorists discuss as normalization practices. Within these practices, as Johnson (1993) argues, "the characteristic outcome of power is not a relationship of domination but the probability that the normalized subject will habitually obey" (p. 142). Foucault (1991) traces the emergence of governmentality along with its links to normalization practices such as those offered through expertise. He shows how, by a process of normalization, attempts are made to construct a certain type of subject through the web of expert judgements surrounding the body, health, and behaviour. This expertise is employed in the measuring of populations and in the documenting and establishing trends against which individuals are compared in order to be judged normal, or not, relative to and in comparison with others. Experts play an important role in mediating between authorities and individuals, "shaping conduct not through compulsion but through the power of truth, the potency of rationality and alluring promises of effectivity" (Miller & Rose, 1990). It is the role of experts to argue that the personal capabilities of individuals can be managed to achieve socially desirable goals.

I show how education, public health, and mental health promotion may be conceptualized as governmental apparatuses. The institution of public health has served as a network of expert advice, embodied in the very experts within the field, who dispense information directed at

improving individual health through self-regulation. As Lupton (2005) argues, medicine and public health set out to shape and normalize individual behaviour in ways that are strongly coercive; however, public health is often not recognized as coercive because experts therein appeal to their wisdom and accepted norms and practices in their attempts to shape the behaviour of individuals. Control becomes invisible, lying within rationales and justifications for implementing certain practices and recommending particular behaviours. In the interests of health, individuals are self-governed, rendering force unnecessary. While individuals are rarely confined or jailed for their failure to conform, they are disciplined through other mechanisms, such as self-surveillance or being made to feel guilty, anxious, or self-repulsed, as well as by the admonitions of their peers, family, or teachers, for inviting ill health. As Peterson and Lupton (1996) show, it is not the ways in which discourses and practices seek overtly to constrain individual freedoms that are most interesting or important to examine, but the ways in which public health discourses and practices invite individuals voluntarily to conform to the objectives of good health, to discipline themselves in the interest of their health.

Using the above governmentality theorists, I show how the imperatives explicit in health promotion activities are supported and taken up by the education sector, mental health advocacy groups, and community organizations in an effort to discipline students in schools, both coercively and non-coercively. I show that it is teachers, social workers, public health professionals, and members of community advocacy groups who have come to make up the framework of experts making judgements about relative states of health and normality. Some of these experts and groups of professionals deliberately and consciously set out to uphold the concerns and activities of the provincial government, others articulate common discourses and encourage certain practices regarding the importance of health and rational decisions, un-

reflexively. All are constructing and normalizing a certain kind of student-subject, one who is autonomous, oriented towards self-improvement, self-regulated, and who seeks happiness and health.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theorists argue that the ideology and assumptions of racism and dominant white interests pervade political and social structures and practices to ensure the inferior positioning of racialized and marginalized groups (Parker & Stovall, 2004). A critical study of this phenomenon elucidates how white Eurocentric perspectives dominate research, policy, law, education, social life, and politics. For my purposes, critical race theory exposes forms of dominant white bias in education policy in Ontario and, in particular, challenges the implicit bias that white racial experience should serve as the basis for shaping diversity initiatives in schools. Such biases and assumptions only perpetuate domination. Critical race theory thus allows me to show why policy-makers and educators must listen to those who experience racism to counter dominant assumptions and implement equitable policies (as per Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lopez & Parker, 2003; Lynn & Adams, 2002; Parker, 2003; Villalpando, 2003; Yosso, 2002); and, it allows me to confirm that education policy-makers must acknowledge realities of racism and inequality that racialized students live everyday, especially so in policies that intend to promote diversity in schools.

As my starting point, I seek to understand how diversity is conceptualized within policy initiatives and programs. I argue that policy-makers, school administrators, teachers, and students who draft and implement diversity programs are ordering and constituting the cultural reality for students in schools, in particular for racialized students, through the ways in which they write

about and do diversity work. Thus, I look at who has the power to shape the rationale and worth of diversity programs. I then expose the ways in which diversity work sets up people in the dominant white culture as the primary beneficiaries of this work, which is ironic given that such work is intended to serve marginalized groups, namely, racialized students. My analysis employs the following critical questions: What are the predominant images of diversity in diversity initiatives? How are problems related to diversity represented, or not, in diversity programs? How are solutions related to diversity problems represented in diversity programs? What discourses are employed to shape these images, problems, and solutions? In short, I interrogate discursive practices shaping diversity work in Ontario's schools. I examine diversity as a subject of discourse to expose "the way in which language, or more broadly, bodies of knowledge … define the terrain and consequently complicate attempts at change" (Bacchi, 1999, p. 40).

After exposing how people of the dominant white group are the primary beneficiaries of diversity practices, I discuss how it comes about, by design, that diversity initiatives benefit the dominant group. Given that dominant groups are not directly adversely affected by social, economic, and educational inequity, inequities that often come as a result of racism and racist practices, I seek to expose the processes, structures, and ideologies that allow the dominant group to benefit from diversity programs, programs that hold the aim to mitigate racism and racist practices. In short, I show how dominant ideologies that justify and perpetuate inequalities, lodge in ministry policies. In so doing, I seek the de-privileging of mainstream ideologies and discourses. First and foremost, I seek to dislodge the notion, upon which diversity initiatives rest, that everyone in society has the same opportunity to succeed. As critical race theory points out, race, and experiences based on race are not equal, thus, the experiences that racialized people have with respect to race and racism create an unequal situation. Critical race theory recognizes

this fundamental inequality of opportunity and experience and attempts to detail the structures that underlie inequality in order to address inequality.

Ultimately I seek to notice and address the effect on racialized students and school board staff of living and working in a dominant white society that publicly acknowledges itself as diverse but holds on to its social, economic, and political privileges and notions of innate superiority. Using critical theorists in the field of diversity work (Ahmed, 2009; Crawley, 2006; Jones, 2006), and critical pedagogues (Delpit, 1988; Ellsworth, 1989; Shields, 2004), I expose how concepts of social justice and diversity operate to shore up notions of innate superiority among dominant white groups. I argue that there is a reason that terms like diversity have attained currency in political discourse and education policy. I discuss how in recent years such concepts shift away from equal opportunity models of achieving equality towards the adoption of diversity management as a strategy of organizational policy (Jones, 2006). This shift comes following the increasing recognition of the diverse nature of schools wherein there is an emphasis on the recognition and valuing of individual rather than social-group difference, something that carries profound consequences for the achievement of equality. This is a grossly inadequate approach to countering racial discrimination and disadvantage encountered by racialized students.

To draw such strong conclusions, critical race theory is a powerful tool. It is especially powerful because it allows me to uncover and unmask the persistent and oppressive nature of the normativity of whiteness in education diversity policy and programs. It allows me to discuss the ways in which policies that are offered as solutions to discrimination may not be in the best interests of marginalized groups. It exposes the forms of racial inequality in diversity initiatives in education, initiatives that are assumed to be neutral or objective. Thus I use critical race theory as

an analytic framework through which to examine the relative subordination of racialized students in education settings and how racial inequality may be reproduced through education policies.

Neoliberalism

In addition to how many of the above critical theorists draw attention to the fact that the assumed human subject of Western modern discourse is predominantly male, heterosexual, white European, and middle class. In addition to how I use these theorists to draw attention to how this assumed exclusive subject forms the basis for the interventions of education policies where discipline is concerned. School discipline policies in the Ontario context can also be understood by reference to the political rationalities that form their context, namely, neoliberalism. Burchell (1993) and Rose (1996) discuss the features and language of neoliberalism as placing an emphasis on individual and collective entrepreneurialism while simultaneously devolving responsibility for social welfare to non-government services and individuals within communities. These emphases have received widespread endorsement across the political spectrum during a period when the limits of welfare as an economic, political, and social strategy have become apparent (Gordon, 1991; Rose & Miller, 1992; Rose, 1993).

Neoliberalism, in short, reinstates liberal principles: individuals are atomistic, rational, and autonomous agents; political authorities have limited capacities to properly govern; there must be vigilance over attempts of political authorities to govern; markets must prevail over planners as regulators of economic activity; and, there is a preference for the "autonomization" of the state from direct controls over, and responsibility for, the actions of organizations and services (Rose & Miller, 1992, p. 199). Neoliberal rule and governmentality work together in that neither imposes constraints upon citizens but instead both work to "make up" citizens capable of

regulating their own freedom (Rose & Miller, 1992, p. 174). Neoliberal government, then, depends upon technologies for "governing at a distance" and in so doing, neoliberal rule seeks to create citizens capable of regulating their autonomy. Government is seen to have a role in defending the interests of the population and in creating a framework for social and economic life; however, direct control is subsumed while individual autonomy is assumed. Indeed individual autonomy is necessary for governing, since coercion works best when, as discussed above, subjects actively participate in their own government.

Petersen and Lupton (1996) show that part of the impetus for a redefinition of state involvement in everyday life originates with what they loosely refer to as the New Right, a political grouping intent on rolling back the state. However, Petersen and Lupton (1996) also show that some of the social and political changes under neoliberal rule have occurred as a consequence of the critiques and interventions arising from social movements such as the gay and lesbian rights movement, the women's movement, and other progressive and democratic movements advocating for equality. The basic tenets of neoliberal rule are fully in accordance with the progressive and democratic impulse of these social movements. Indeed, neoliberal programs draw on the language of many social movements, using terms such as self-help, equity, access, empowerment, participation, community control, and collaboration (Petersen & Lupton, 1996). In so doing, the language, co-opted by neoliberal rule, has broad appeal and is an important means by which programs achieve broad-based support while remaining closely linked to official objectives (Stevenson & Burke, 1991). The appeal masks shifting relations of power that involve a redefinition of citizenship rights and responsibilities (Petersen & Lupton, 1996).

Using critical theorists of neoliberalism (noted above), I show how discipline in education, if nothing else, is a set of discourses focusing on the regulation and shaping of students

as neoliberal citizens. That is to say, discourses within discipline policies seek to change the awareness of students such that they become more self-regulating, both in serving their own particular interests and in serving the general interests of the society within which they are embedded. Furthermore, using Roche (2002), I show that simultaneous with discourses of self-regulation is the reconfiguring of the rights and responsibilities of students via neoliberal rule. Roche (2002) argues that the concept of social rights as per the welfare state has been undermined and replaced by a duties discourse, bringing a stronger emphasis on the social obligations and personal responsibilities of citizens. This emergence of a duties discourse and greater emphasis on the duties implied by rights is reflected in many school discipline policies. School discipline policies make it clear that while every student is entitled to a safe school environment, all students have an obligation to maintain a positive school climate. This broadening of the concept of student responsibilities, with its emphasis on rights implies duties, has profound implications for student-subjectivities. I question, how, under neoliberal rule, it comes about that a healthy or positive school environment is to be achieved by the students themselves.

I show how the adoption of neoliberal discipline policies in schools results in a shift away from the provision of equity schemes in favour of promoting greater responsibility and self-efficacy among the student body. This shift substitutes for government investment in social and economic development within schools. I show how this shift is part of a larger re-ordering of politics on a broader scale. With its emphasis on free markets, individualism, deregulation, privatization, and welfare reform, neoliberalism has created new rhetorical strategies, identities, relationships, experts, and power and all of these are manifest in schools. Ontario schools, indeed, represent a microcosm of struggles among marginalized groups for recognition, power, and equality in the shifting neoliberal political economy. Worse, I suggest that it is not just the case

that inequality remains intact, but that it gets legitimated under neoliberal rule. It gets legitimated within the very discourses of anti-discrimination because to carry on about students' responsibilities to avoid and prevent discrimination is to avoid discussing the government's responsibility to do something about inequality.

From a neoliberal standpoint, embedding anti-discrimination principles into education discipline policies is a triumph, displaying as it does the great strides made toward the goal of overcoming prejudice in schools. It makes it possible to conceive of Ontario's schools as heading in the right direction. The attraction of this vision is obvious. The problem is, it is misleading. School discipline policies today may be less discriminatory than under the Harris-led government, but they fail to alleviate inequality and are compatible with the continued marginalization of certain youth in schools.

Analysis: Pulling it all together

In chapter four, in order to draw out how dominant themes like heteronormativity or heterosexism are written into education documents or reproduced in popular discussions where LGBTQ issues are concerned in schools, I apply a form of discourse analysis to the following empirical materials: anti-bullying discipline policies and related reports on homophobia in the education sector; news media portrayals of the problem of homophobic bullying in schools; Ontario legislative records; and, popular discussions of sex education and gay-straight alliances in schools in Ontario, as these are represented in on-line discussions or media reports. I outline how problems related to homophobia in schools have gained agenda status in the Ministry of Education, by what policy processes the problem has arisen, how the problem is spoken about, by whom, and what is not spoken about. In short, I discuss how the problem has become visible, is

named and described. I argue that the discursive mechanisms that make the problem of homophobia visible, also limit the range of available credible policy solutions and I discuss who benefits, and who loses, by how the problem is framed. I show how the dominant social order is re-established or reproduced by how the problem of homophobia is discussed. Consequently, I invite professionals functioning within this policy framework to question the instantiated ideologies, the purpose of which is to fashion students according to the norms of dominant heterosexual beliefs. To do this, I use queer theory. As noted, queer theory works to reveal and problematize heteronormative discourses that reproduce the ideology of heterosexual society (Filax, 2006). Throughout this chapter I show how neoliberal governmentality is used to responsibilize youth to prevent homophobia, while rendering them complicit with heternormative structures.

Chapter five situates the Ministry of Education's progressive discipline policy commitment to provide "support for students, to help them get back on track", within contemporary mental health discourses, wider provincial health policies, and health promotion practices within Ontario. I draw out the connections between the policy statement and broader neoliberal orientations while elucidating governmentality discourses of individualism, responsibilization, and personal autonomy. My research materials include: Ministry of Education discipline policy program memos; provincial health policy statements; on-line documents from community advocacy groups, associations and unions; resources from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, and newspaper stories. I interpret these materials using Foucauldian conceptual tools, distinguishing between neoliberalism as a political rationality and neoliberal technologies of government. I look at how discourses of rationality, health, community, lifestyle, choice, and responsibility, as these are borrowed from public health, are linked to strategies of

prevention, empowerment, community development, and health economics. I critique the use of discursive strategies in health promotion, including discussions of the naïve understanding of stress that is demonstrated in health promotional attempts to promote behaviours deemed stress free and health enhancing. Ultimately, I outline the political function served by the policy commitment to provide support for students in schools.

In chapter six, through the lens of critical race theory, I problematize the Ministry of Education's professed commitment to an inclusive and equitable climate for all students by critiquing the strategies used to meet the challenges of increasingly diverse school communities. I do this by looking at how discourses of diversity circulate in education policies and related materials, what image of diversity is constructed in these materials, and what effect these discourses have. My data includes the Ministry of Education's policy commitment to promote diversity in schools through character education; character education guidelines; published examplars of character education practices in Ontario schools; a sampling of school board website materials; media reports of racism in schools; and, reflections on my personal experiences in schools. My findings suggest that, without a critical race analysis of dominant white discourses that pervade diversity work, well-intentioned attempts to create a more inclusive school environment unwittingly reinforce practices that support exclusion and inequity. I anchor this finding in reports of continued racism in schools, juxtaposed with school boards generic celebrations of diversity. Ultimately I argue that it is the neoliberal framework guiding character education initiatives that is most responsible for the constraints of diversity work in schools. In particular I problematize the focus on community involvement, voice and participation, which is said to be evidence of a progressive democratic process for developing character initiatives in schools. I discuss the limitations of community participation as it is conceptualized and

prescribed by the Ministry of Education in setting up diversity initiatives. I point out the implications of this neoliberal strategy and discuss the political control of this approach.

Conclusion

Neoliberal rule allows itself a role in defending the interests of the population and in creating a framework for social and economic life. It is this framework that I seek to elucidate in every chapter because it is this framework that sets up the limits of what can be done in schools and sets up the effects of what policy does and does not do in education. While the discourses of neoliberalism are in accordance with the progressive and democratic tenor of social movements, drawing heavily on the language of such movements, neoliberal rule is regulating citizens in ways that ensure the preservation of dominant groups and continued marginalization of disadvantaged groups. To show how this is the case, I use the critical expertise of discourse analysts, queer theorists, critical race theorists, and governmentality scholars. Ultimately, these theorists and critical methods allow me to show how progressive discipline policies in education are also discriminatory in their effect.

Chapter 4: “That’s Gay!” Homophobia as it is Contended with in Safe Schools Policies in Ontario. The Politics of Progress

Over the course of my years as a secondary school mental health counsellor (2007-2011), I have seen many students who identify as gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, queer, cross-dresser, and so forth. Most of those students have struggled with the effects of homophobic harassment in schools. Some of them have approached me for information about same-sex safe sex and others have wanted to discuss safe ways of coming out to friends and family. A few students have asked for help starting a Gay-Straight Alliance. Indeed, school counsellors, health educators, and LGBTQ community groups are the front-line supports for students dealing with homophobia in schools. This support was augmented in 2009 when school discipline policies in Ontario were modified to explicitly include homophobic bullying as a behaviour that would not be tolerated. School boards were being directed to ensure that support would be given to students who wish to participate in Gay-Straight alliances. In January of 2010 a new LGBTQ inclusive Physical and Health Education curriculum was posted on Ontario’s Ministry of Education’s website and it seemed that same-sex health education would be implemented that fall. However, in April of 2010 the same-sex components of that health curriculum were revoked. In January of 2011 the Halton Catholic school board chair publicly justified her decision to ban a Gay-Straight alliance by saying: “We don’t have Nazi groups either” (Houston, 2011, January 6). There was a world spot light on gay teen suicides around this same time and it seemed that school support for LGBTQ youth was

waning. The “It Gets Better” Facebook[11] campaign offering moral support to LGBTQ youth made that very point: if you hang in there, it gets better *after* high school.

Dealing with questions of minority rights is not a straight-forward school policy initiative or process. It is political. In 2007 when the McGuinty-led government (2003-present) set out to redress the discriminatory effects of the safe schools policies of the Harris-led government (see Chapter Two), the political task of implementing equitable policies was underway. Controversy over these policies had been much in the news in (then) recent years. With evidence of the suspension and expulsion of large numbers of racialized students and students with disabilities (see Chapter Two), the issue of ensuring equitable practices in school discipline remained on the Ministry of Education’s policy front burner. Apart from the continuing concerns about the impact of safe schools measures on racialized students and students with disabilities, there was increasing pressure on the Liberal government to introduce protections for LGBTQ students in schools.[12] In response, the ensuing safe schools initiatives of the Ministry of Education would come to include concerns for LGBTQ minority rights.

---

[11] See: http://www.facebook.com/itgetsbetterproject

[12] Rayside (2010) offers an overview of some of these advocacy efforts, which include the following: A few Ontario school boards, including those in Toronto, Peel, London, and Ottawa, had been developing equity and harassment policies that included sexual diversity. The National LGBTQ group EGALE was pressing for urgent action against homophobic bullying, action that would not paper over the specificities of the harassment experienced by sexual minority students. The Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario had been emphasizing the importance of introducing policies related to sexual diversity in primary schools. Many Phys. Ed. Teachers were disturbed by the homophobic currents in schools and wanted curriculum guidance in how to address this problem. As well, students were taking their right to form Gay-Straight Alliances

As the application of pressure from school reformers and LGBTQ advocates was intensifying, the Ministry of Education was developing a multi-pronged approach to safe schools. This approach involved three significant developments: expanding upon discipline policies to deal with harassment of students belonging to minority status groups, which included LGBTQ students; implementing inclusive school curricula that specifically addressed LGBTQ issues; and, endorsing a culture of diversity and respect, which involved legislating support for Gay-Straight Alliances in schools. In this chapter I examine these developments in education policies in Ontario where LGBTQ issues are concerned. I argue that, while these developments represent a real success for LGBTQ rights organizations and advocates, the Ministry's iteration of these rights flows from a dominant understanding of the problem of homophobia in schools. That is, where the Ministry encourages a variety of voices on the important issues of prejudice and discrimination, at the personal level, it limits discussions of systemic responsibility for problems associated with heteronormativity, at the collective level.

To illustrate how this limitation results, I analyze key policies and related ministry documents that deal with LGBTQ issues in schools. Specifically, in the first section of this chapter, I outline how the issue of LGBTQ rights takes shape and is addressed in school policies in Ontario. I show that the readiness to identify these rights represents a particular kind of readiness to address them, one that is based on subtle forms of governance and heteronomative discourses. In the next section I draw out these forms of governance and dominant discourses by analyzing anti-homophobia discipline procedures contained within *Policy Program Memorandum 145* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007; 2009b). I show how these discipline procedures are

---

directly to the media to garner widespread support. In short, there was sustained pressure for LGBTQ inclusive policy action in many forms, on many fronts.

constrained, conceptually and practically, in their willingness to contend with larger systemic problems and how they are dominated by key discourses that are therapeutic, individualistic, and heteronormative. In the final two sections of this chapter, I examine the politics involved in implementing an LGBTQ inclusive curriculum and allowing students to form Gay-Straight Alliances in schools. These politics betray the extent to which dealing with LGBTQ issues in schools coheres with and is contingent upon an individualistic understanding of minority rights.

This chapter involves itself with my larger concern to show how minority status groups are marginalized through policy. Albeit, I argue that marginalization is perpetuated through different forms under a Liberal government than under Conservative rule. Under a Liberal government, marginalization effects have less to do with exclusion and more to do with governing behaviour, managing attitudes, and curtailing collective rights. To wit, I argue that the Ministry of Education's willingness to address LGBTQ issues in schools is rooted in the governance and management of certain images of LGBTQ youth. It is an approach that betrays a comfort with the image of LGBTQ students as those in need of support, as tragic others, and not as those who have sexual agency, pride, or equal privileges to the dominant group. Consequently, I argue that the ministry's approach to dealing with LGBTQ issues is intimately linked with neoliberal strategies to construct citizens who are invited to think of themselves as individuals first and foremost, absolving everyone from needing to consider collective and systemic inequalities.

How the issue of LGBTQ rights takes shape and is addressed in school policies in Ontario

In this section I show how expressions of concern for LGBTQ rights in schools have made significant inroads in discipline policies in education. However, as Diduck and Kaganas argue: “While giving voice to any previously disempowered or marginalized constituency is important … we must be alert to the discourses through which that voice is heard and interpreted (p. 981). Thus, I look at how LGBTQ rights have come to be spoken of in schools, primarily as a concern related to homophobia, and I question what is enabled when the concern over homophobia becomes the key plank for instating LGBTQ rights in schools.

In recent years homophobia in schools has received increasing attention from academics, education policy-makers, community organizations, and the media in Ontario. Homophobic bullying in particular has become a legitimate object of social concern within school environments. The mainstreaming of the issue, the fact that the concern is expressed as an obvious problem, represents a success for LGBTQ rights organizations for whom the issue has been a key platform in campaigns relating to youth. Moreover, the reliance by campaigners and policy-makers on the extensive academic literature about the issue *could* be understood as a successful example of research impact. It *could* be argued that research has revealed a problem, that this knowledge has been widely and effectively disseminated, and that this has led to the introduction of policies that will result in an improvement in the lives and wellbeing of children and youth. However, I shall show a different set of circumstances giving rise to policies related to homophobia in schools. In so doing, I implicate a different result for the wellbeing of LGBTQ children and youth.

My key starting point is to consider homophobia not simply as a neutral descriptive label for actual events but more as a complex social and political phenomenon. This is to say that the act of naming a wrong or a harm and the act of identifying perpetrators and victims of harm is a productive process that is contingent upon multiple factors. Foucault (1970) offers a method which traces *conditions of possibility* or what he terms *a history of the present* which reveals the myriad ways in which particular kinds of problems emerge as legitimate objects of social concern. By way of Foucault's method I examine the means by which homophobia has become perceived as a legitimate issue of concern in school environments. Warner (1993) seeks to understand the myriad ways in which heteronormativity organizes and structures everyday life, exploring how heterosexual assumptions are embedded in all areas of human activity, including education. As per Warner (1993) I examine the subtle and implicit heteronormative assumptions upon which discussions of homophobia in education policies are premised. With these theorists in mind, I outline the recent history of the representation of the problem of homophobia in safe schools policies in Ontario. I start by looking at how *an experience of harassment based on sexual orientation* was first identified as a problem in school policies in 2007. Then I look at how *homophobic bullying* emerged as a problem. I show how the problem of homophobic bullying came to be more generally addressed as a *problem of homophobia* in revised policies in 2009. Ultimately in this section, I argue that the readiness to speak of harassment and homophobia in schools bespeaks a specific set of assumptions and premises that reinforce a dominant understanding of what it means to be liberal, tolerant, and above prejudice within a heteronormative culture. This heteronomative culture supports a neoliberal order wherein there is no mechanism for implementing systemic equality.

First, I must note that under the Harris-led government (1995 - 2002), homophobia in Ontario schools was not seen to be a problem. Of course, this is not to say that homophobic bullying, heterosexist attitudes, and heternormative views did not pervade the school environment, curriculum, and culture of schools. These things simply were left unproblematic under the Conservative regime; they were not on the policy agenda. The problem specific to homophobia was initially formally recognized by the McGuinty-led government in the context of safe schools legislation, in the area of school discipline in particular. The impetus for recognizing the problem occurred as the Liberal government was dismantling the safe schools policies of the Progressive Conservative government that were alleged to have had a discriminatory effect on certain minority groups. New policies that incorporated human rights concepts explicitly into the student discipline and safe schools regime saw sexual orientation included as a protected ground within the safe schools file. As a result, problems related to homophobic harassment and homophobia in Ontario schools were recognized in policy developments.

An experience of harassment based on sexual orientation

The political and administrative leadership of the Ministry of Education under the Liberal government was devoting considerable attention in 2007 to the issue of suspension and expulsion policies, as these were explicitly ordered to be modified or revoked by the Ontario Human Rights Commission. The first recognition of a problem related to homophobic harassment or homophobia in Ontario's school policies occurred within this very specific context. The problem was defined as an experience of harassment based on sexual orientation; however, this problem was deemed an "other factor" that principals and school boards must consider before suspending or expelling a student. That is to say, under the *Education Amendment Act* (2007), an experience of harassment based on sexual orientation was recognized only as a mitigating factor to be

considered if the victim of the harassment reacted in such a way that their behaviour brought them to the attention of principals or school boards for disciplinary purposes. In short, being a victim of harassment based on sexual orientation was first recognized as a problem warranting policy attention only under the circumstances of applying discipline and only when it was being considered as a factor to take into account before applying discipline.

Homophobic bullying

By 2009, an experience of harassment based on sexual orientation was recognized as being a problem not only for the student who experienced such harassment but also for the student perpetrating it and in circumstances when school board employees ignored it. Harassing someone based on their sexual orientation became an overt offence for which a student committing that offence could face formal discipline (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007; 2009b). This policy process took approximately two years for full implementation and was helped along by a Safe Schools Action Team report entitled *Shaping a Culture of Respect in our Schools: Promoting Safe and Healthy Relationships* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008b). This report lead to Bill 157, which saw further revisions to the *Education Amendment Act* (2007) and introduced a new title: *Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act* (2009). Bill 157 ensured that two ministry policy program memos first introduced in the fall of 2007 were modified in 2009 such that homophobia, gender-based violence, sexual harassment, and inappropriate sexual behaviour specifically be named as behaviours needing to be addressed in schools. Subsequently, *Policy Program Memorandum 144* (2007, 2009a) entitled "Bullying Prevention and Intervention" and *Policy Program Memorandum 145* (2007; 2009b) entitled "Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour" explicitly identify the following behaviours or situations as unacceptable in Ontario's schools: homophobic comments or slurs; bullying based on differences

in sexual orientation, family circumstances or gender; and, failure on the part of board employees to protect and support students who are harassed based on gender or sexual orientation. Coinciding with these changes in policy, a more general policy on equity was being developed entitled *Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario schools: Realizing the promise of diversity* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009a). This policy was released in April 2009 and also holds implications for disciplining homophobic behaviour in schools.

The general problem of homophobia

With the introduction of the *Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act* (2009) and Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, homophobia came to be recognized as a general problem, apart from being linked to aggressive acts of harassment. The report informing these changes, *Shaping a Culture of Respect* (2008b), recommends that a comprehensive strategy be put into place to address school climate issues where homophobia is concerned. This document emphasizes the need for modifying curricula and teaching practices to address homophobia. The document was also seminal for putting forward the need for board support for students who wish to form Gay-Straight alliances. While I shall discuss all of the above policies and reports in detail later, at this point, it is important to discuss the implications of what these policies have in common: a primary concern for protecting students from the impact of bias and exclusion that is inherent to a problem spoken of and identified as homophobia.

The problem with how homophobia is spoken of in safe schools policies and reports

The policy memos and reports noted above unequivocally assert that homophobic behaviour is unacceptable in schools; that homophobia is something that creates a hostile and intimidating environment for everyone, but especially for LGBTQ students; and, that an inclusive school environment is one wherein all students should feel safe and free from discrimination and

harassment. Thus, the problem of homophobia is spoken of as though it is an obvious problem in need of redress and homophobia is represented as an unquestioned and legitimate wrong. Despite these advances made by the Ministry of Education towards recognizing the unquestionable wrong of homophobia in schools, dealing with homophobia as though it is a bad thing that should not happen and must be prevented in schools, is a limited approach to dealing with the problem. This approach may be helpful in dealing with the symptoms of the problem -- harassment, discrimination, bias, and prejudice -- but does not do much about the socio-political conditions that encourage the problem. As Bickmore (2002) shows, homophobia is a systemic problem that arises from within specific socio-political contexts: heteronormative school environments. When the problem of homophobia is dealt with outside of this context, Bickmore (2002) argues, the problem can only partially be mitigated or addressed. The ministry's approach to dealing with the problem of homophobia, rather than the problem of heteronormativity, is not only limited, it is actually advantageous for upholding hetero-dominant social structures and organizations. For under the auspices of this approach, the socio-political concerns about heteronormative cultures and orientations, heterosexist structures, and dominant privilege are silenced and ignored. No where is this statement found to be more true, as I show in my next section, than in the discipline policies that outline the procedures for dealing with homophobic behaviour in Ontario's schools .

Analysis of anti-homophobia discipline policies

Throughout this section I elucidate how the policies that outline discipline procedures for dealing with homophobic behaviour in schools tend to legitimate a heteronormative school environment. In so doing, I show how the practices promoted within *Policy Program Memorandum 145* (2007; 2009b) are premised upon key discourses that operate in accordance

with the shifts in governance in post- or advanced liberal societies. First I argue that the approach to addressing homophobic behaviour in schools largely serves to protect a particular image of a positive school climate, one wherein heteronormative orientations are naturalized and one wherein the school community understands itself as respectful of sexual diversity. I discuss how discipline procedures emphasize the ways in which this image of a positive school environment must be maintained. In this manner, I reveal some of the key governing discourses operative within the policy, which are largely neoliberal and therapeutic in nature. These discourses include: the duty to self-regulate, the duty to prohibit homophobic behaviour and speech, and the good therapeutic subject. Thus, I show how the ministry's approach to disciplining homophobic behaviour limits the capacity of school community members to contend with larger systemic problems and thereby I argue that discipline policies ostensibly support LGBTQ students alongside practices that sustain the governing status quo.

Maintaining the image of a positive school climate by disciplining homophobic behaviour

A positive school climate is defined as one wherein there is acceptance and inclusion of all members of a school community and wherein a culture of respect, caring, safety, and comfort must be maintained (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009a; 2009b). Many safe schools documents and program memos introduced by the Ministry of Education since 2007 outline the imperative to maintain a positive school climate. Such materials often focus on a student's failure to live prudently according to the standards of neoliberal citizenship, whether this means partaking in negative behaviour or, in the case of homophobic behaviour, allowing internal prejudice to get out of control. When behaviour gets out of control, transgressions require a sincere display of repentance from the guilty party and ideally result in the transgressor's

reintegration into the neoliberal vision of the good citizen. I shall show how this pattern unfolds within *Policy Program Memorandum 145* entitled "Progressive Discipline and Positive Student Behaviour" (2007; 2009b) by elucidating the ways in which students are invited to emerge as successful neoliberal citizens.

A positive school climate is said to be founded upon "the sum total of all of the personal relationships within a school" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 6). As a result, *Policy Program Memorandum 145* (2007; 2009b) constructs the "good" student as the student who preserves the image of a positive school climate and the "bad" student as one who threatens it. I argue that what constitutes the behaviour of the "bad" student is behaviour that clashes too uncomfortably with the image of a respectful school community, and thereby, it is behaviour that *must* be managed in order to allow a school community to continue to understand itself as accepting, progressive, and respectful in the face of any disruptions that might indicate otherwise. Thus, a positive school culture emanates from students who are well-behaved and from board employees who discipline students who are not so well-behaved. This model of discipline either pathologizes or rewards individual behaviour and is consistent with the ethic of therapeutics. It is also consistent with neoliberalism.

As Petersen and Lupton (1996) argue, an emphasis on the management of individual behaviour, personal relationships, the self, and individual psychology echoes the logic of what is called "the new public health." Specifically, Petersen and Lupton (1996) show how the concept of the new public health relies on the neoliberal concept of the "entrepreneurial self." The entrepreneurial self is someone who behaves in a sensible, mindful way, and takes responsibility for their choices, actions, and attitudes. This enterprising self is also someone who mitigates risk and optimizes benefit and someone who upholds and strives for the contemporary vision of a

good neoliberal citizen. Petersen and Lupton (1996) show that a successful entrepreneurial self is one who is able to self-examine and reconstruct the self consonant with the dominant vision of a good citizen, which is accomplished through hard self-work. Furthermore, the self that underlies this neoliberal vision of citizenship balances a discourse of rights with a discourse of duties. Generally, Petersen and Lupton (1996) show how this model of the new public health represents one of the primary ways in which modern liberal democracies govern their citizens, first and foremost through projects of the self.

The concept of the entrepreneurial self fits well within the templates of therapeutic narratives, narratives that frame individuals as emotional people who can emerge from difficulty or adversity through hard self-work, able to contribute to a well-functioning social order (Woodstock, 2011). The therapeutic framework locates agency, will, and responsibility solely within the individual and its key tenet holds the means of liberation (from any problem) within the ability of individuals to regulate their conduct. Indeed, within a neoliberal context, regulating one's conduct is the key to happiness, self-fulfillment, and successful citizenship (Rose, 1999). In this sense, the therapeutic narrative promises to lead to personal healing, transformation, and belonging. In a greater sense, the therapeutic framework offers something more. It emerges as a process for managing the disruptions that violate the moral boundaries of a purportedly liberal-minded society and that threaten the neoliberal order of citizenship.

For example, in the context of safe schools, homophobia may be understood as a narrative of disruption that violates the proper boundaries of what is otherwise deemed a positive school climate. A homophobic disruption, as demonstrated by a student's homophobic behaviour, threatens to reveal the continuing presence of homophobia in a purportedly tolerant community. The therapeutic framework thus emerges as a way to manage this eruption. Restoring the

hegemonic calm requires positioning the student who exhibits homophobic behaviour within a therapeutic process that obliges the student to undergo a process of self-transformation, regulating their behaviour and liberating their self from bias. The unfolding of this process of transgression, remorse, and rehabilitation is expected to redeem the student and thereby heal the rupture to the community. The process scapegoats the student's prejudice for the presence of homophobia within a school community, obscuring the systemic nature of homophobia in favour of proclamations about individual psychological health and behaviour. This kind of management of homophobic eruptions operates via *Policy Program Memorandum 145* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007; 2009b). I show that the various iterations of the discipline policy deflect attention away from institutional homophobia and toward the problem of "bad" students in need of reform.

The ways in which the image of a positive school environment is maintained:

Reforming behaviour, as per *Policy Program Memorandum 145* (2007; 2009b)

Under section three of *PPM 145* entitled "Responding to Incidents" (referring, in part, to incidents of homophobia, gender-based violence, sexual harassment, and so on), the following actions are legislated:

> The purpose of responding to incidents of inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour is to stop and correct it immediately so that the students involved can learn that it is unacceptable. Behaviour that is not addressed becomes accepted behaviour.
> Board employees who work directly with students - including administrators, teachers, and non-teaching staff (including staff in social work, child and youth work, psychology, and related areas, and educational assistants) - must respond to any student behaviour that is likely to have a negative impact on the school climate. Such behaviour includes all inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour at any time at school and at any school-related event. Such inappropriate behaviour may involve swearing, homophobic or racial slurs, sexist comments or jokes, graffiti, or vandalism ...
>
> Responding may include asking a student to stop the inappropriate behaviour; naming the type of behaviour and explaining why it is inappropriate and/or disrespectful; and asking the student to correct the behaviour (e.g., to apologize for a hurtful comment and/or to

> rephrase a comment) and to promise not to do it again. By responding in this way, board employees immediately address inappropriate student behaviour that may have a negative impact on the school climate. (p. 6)

We see here that there is a clear push to make students personally responsible for their school environment. Whereas it is believed that inappropriate and disrespectful student behaviour can negatively affect a school climate, there is an expectation that school community members properly manage and address that behaviour.

While setting limits on disrespectful behaviour may make intuitive sense and be an easy reform to implement in rule-oriented environments (Bickmore, 2002), this approach overlooks how a school culture influences student behaviour. Indeed if the heteronormative ideologies that underlie homophobia were not affirmed by the school culture, school-based homophobia would not maintain its power and persistence (Bickmore, 2002). Thus, in the process of reducing homophobia to an inability on the part of individual students to properly manage their behaviour, the policy memo seeks to maintain a positive school climate by making viable some forms of interventions at the expense of others. Furthermore, the interventions that the policy memo does make viable, follow certain neoliberal trends and discourses. One such discourse is the duty to regulate behaviour.

The duty to regulate behaviour

As Petersen and Lupton (1996) argue, the ideal neoliberal citizen is bound to refrain from the kinds of behaviours that might infringe on the safety, rights, or freedoms of others. In this mentality of rule, the central problem is not the anti-social effects of, or risks posed by, underlying conditions or overarching systems, but instead is the problem domain of the individual. As already noted, neoliberal discipline aims to govern through the behaviour and dispositions of individuals. Thus, the right of LGBTQ students to a positive school climate is not

governed by overarching or underlying changes to that environment, wholesale, but is instead constructed as the duty of individual students to uphold. This is in keeping with neoliberal practices of governing that offer citizens opportunities to participate actively in various arenas to resolve the kinds of issues that hitherto were held to be the responsibility of the state (Burchell, 1993). This process encourages citizens to conduct themselves in accordance with the appropriate or approved model of action. Indeed, the approved model of action becomes the citizen's duty. Thus, in the context of neoliberal governance, safety, rights, and freedoms are assured through a series of autonomous actions, so long as all citizens uphold their duty.

Specifically, with reference to a safe school environment, if a student upholds their duty to properly manage their behaviour, as per the model provided by the Ministry of Education, then the rights of LGBTQ students to a safe environment ostensibly will be upheld. However, the duty to self-regulate is complicated by the recognition that students are still learning how to do this. That is to say, where students are expected to make themselves into proper student-citizens who properly self-manage, there is a clear tension between inculcation into self-governance and concomitant shaping and punishment of students. The expectation of students to self-discipline does not replace external mechanisms of control but instead these two methods work in combination within discipline policies. Thus board employees are also required to focus on the management of inappropriate student behaviour. The presentation of rules blends neoliberal assumptions of autonomous, rational, self-regulating students with those of the un-self-regulated student in need of discipline. What results is that school board employees must discipline those students who fail to self-govern, clearly dividing the "good" from the "bad" students. We can see this in the policy directive to board employees to stop the behaviour of the "bad" student and in

the requirement of the student to correct their behaviour, by apologizing for or rephrasing a hurtful comment.

Those students in need of discipline, for example, those who have proved their inability to self-manage by virtue of their disrespectful homophobic behaviour, are introduced to the therapeutic rules of self-governance: play the role of remorseful homophobe, properly chastised, willing to admit guilt, ask for forgiveness, make amends, and better themselves. The "bad" student must also promise not to repeat their transgression in the future in order to quell the moral indignation that results when they fail to upkeep or uphold a positive school environment. Through this process of discipline, "bad" students must not only take responsibility for their actions but also are required to re-construct themselves in concert with the expectations of what it means to be a "good" student: the student about whom we do not hear who contains or well-manages their bias.

As a result, homophobia is managed on an individual case by case basis via apology and forgiveness. In other words, via students' self-work. It is assumed that if the process of transforming homophobic transgressions in school environments fails, it is because the individual student who has transgressed has simply not tried hard enough or has not made a genuine enough effort to make amends. If the process succeeds, we are left to deduce that it is because the individual student sincerely wishes for healing, absolution, and amends. The therapeutic framework thus encourages the school community to ignore any duty on the part of policy-makers, administrators, or board employees to challenge the centrality and power of heterosexual identity or to endorse a non-heteronormative school climate. Rather than dwelling on the systemic nature of homophobia, students can all get on with their lives and get past any sustained examination of inequality, bias, or underlying heterosexist structures.

Prohibiting hate speech

Just as the policy memo holds individual students responsible for sustaining a positive school climate, it also holds students who are speakers of homophobic slurs responsible for the ways in which words gain their force or produce harm. This ignores the ways in which hate speech cites previous utterances and contexts of injury. While speakers do revivify those contexts, they are not responsible for creating them in the first place (Butler, 1997). Rendering students the principal cause of the injurious effects of homophobic slurs, obscures the slur's historicity, thereby, it obscures the cultural components of homophobia in favour of denunciations of individual wrongdoings. In so doing, we can see how student misconduct in instances of hate speech is used as a scapegoat for problems of a much larger scale with a much longer history.

Taking a performative view of language, as Butler (1997) does, in contrast, emphasizes that hate speech works through its repetition of prior utterances and invocations of specific connotations. For example, there are certain associations with words like gay, sissy, pansy, and so forth, that carry the connotation that something or someone is not deserving of respect. These associations make up the word's historicity and imbue the words with a particular force and meaning. Hate speech thus gains its force from the way it cites these previous utterances, contexts of injury, and associations. This view separates questions of responsibility from questions of origination. As Butler (1997) argues, the subject who speaks hate speech is clearly responsible for such speech, but is rarely the originator of that speech. Responsibility, thus, must rest with both the speaker and the history that is invoked with the speech, implying that policy-makers need to consider the role of both the individual student and the larger culture in the production and circulation of homophobic slurs. The meaning and force of homophobic language, thus, cannot be

reduced to any particular student's intentions, an idea that directly contradicts the neoliberal insistence on self-control and personal responsibility.

Thus, when school board employees are directed to stop and correct the behaviour of a student who utters homophobic slurs, making them promise not to do it again, we can see that this approach ignores both the historical dynamics and power relationships that constitute language in the first place. The approach is premised upon the belief that linguistic meanings may be reduced to the attitudes of particular students who use particular words, presuming the student to be the principal cause of the harmful effect of the slur or insult. Homophobic language is thus believed to be proof of a homophobic self and a student's choice of words is believed to reveal their bigotry, bigotry that is their responsibility to fix. Again we see how student misconduct is not only believed to involve the revelation of internal prejudice, but also the revelation of a student's inability to discipline the self and manage risk to others. Instead of examining how the injuries of hate speech might be disrupted, discussed, or reflected upon rather than automatically disciplined, the policy memo skips quickly to reintegrating the transgressing student into the neoliberal vision of what it means to be a good student: one who does not speak hate. Although the culture of homophobia that gives rise to homophobic slurs remains largely unnoticed, it gains even greater power to shape student behaviour as a result of that erasure.

The good therapeutic subject

If the student who exhibits homophobic behaviour is constructed as the "bad" student within anti-bullying policies, the victim of homophobia is expected to function as the good therapeutic subject. The good therapeutic subject keeps their sexual identity safely personal and works through the impact of homophobia by accessing support, outside the school community. Thereby, the good victim is one who does not insist too stridently on challenging dominant school

norms, a stance that is safely apolitical and one which does not fixate on systemic problems. This stance preserves the neoliberal therapeutic framework in which social justice is achieved when bad individuals own up to their prejudice and LGBTQ individuals are visible, but not too much so.

If we look at Policy Program Memorandum 144 (PPM 144) entitled "Bullying Prevention and Intervention" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007; 2009a), we can see how section four entitled "Supports for Students" outlines what it means to respond to victims of homophobia in a supportive way. PPM 144 legislates the following action:

> All employees of the board must take seriously all allegations of gender-based violence, homophobia, sexual harassment, and inappropriate sexual behaviour, and act in a timely, sensitive, and supportive manner. Board employees who work directly with students are expected to support all students, including those who disclose or report such incidents, by providing them with contact information about professional supports (e.g., public health units, community agencies, Help Phone lines) and also by making this information readily available to students who wish to discuss issues of healthy relationships, gender identity, and sexuality. Boards must have procedures in place outlining how schools will support these students [victims]. In addition, principals must refer students to a community agency that can provide the appropriate type of confidential support & (e.g., a sexual assault centre, Kids Help Phone, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered Youth Line). (p. 7)

Thus, offering support to victims, as described above, makes the promise of support to those students who take it upon themselves to follow-up with referrals to their community support systems and subsequently follow the expert advice from the professionals within these systems. Here, however, it is noteworthy that the self-help industry, expert advice, and therapeutic professionals, as referenced above (e.g. help lines, health units, community agencies) have been identified as key sites for the transmission and reinforcement of neoliberal mainstream cultural norms, especially with regard to instructions on self-improvement, self-transformation, and personal resilience (Rose, 1999). As a result, support focuses on the bravery and buoyancy of a

safe LGBTQ student. This construction of what it means to support victims rests upon a narrow consideration of the conditions that cause harm: the specific actions of "bad" students towards victims. Thereby the construction of what it means to support victims ignores considerations of wider-ranging conditions that cause harm: the conditions of everyday existence within which members of a victim class function.

The aim of this kind of supportive response is to neutralize the inappropriate conduct of "bad" students by supporting victims within their role as a member of a minority group and victim class. As a result, the school culture may imagine itself as inclusive and accepting, but for the unfortunate conduct of misguided or mismanaged students. This perspective gives rise to a complacency about a school culture's moral status while it creates what Freeman (1995) identifies as a class of innocents. In this case, that class would include politicians, policy-makers, board trustees, administrators, teachers, good or well-managed students, and so forth. This class of innocents is able to evade any responsibility for the broader conditions associated with homophobia in schools, conditions that, if addressed, would indeed improve the lives of LGTBQ students. Such conditions include the climate of heteronormativity that pervades school cultures: normalized heterosexual relationships, the continual defining, defending, and embodying of a hegemonic version of masculinity and femininity that rejects homosexuality, and the maintenance of strict gender boundaries through peer pressure (Bickmore, 2002). By evading these larger issues of power and privilege, by focusing on how well students manage themselves, or not, and by ensuring a policy mechanism for students who are victims of homophobia to access supports, the school community is assured of its own benevolence and open-mindedness. After all, if the school community is willing to discipline homophobes and support victims of homophobia then the community must like and accept LGBTQ students as a whole.

However well-meaning the policy outlining support for the victim of homophobia may be, on the whole, the policy presumes a mainstream heterosexual school culture that understands itself as liberal and tolerant, above prejudice, and as having the authority to admonish the actions of individual homophobic students and to support the victims of homophobia. Although these intervention policies might grant greater visibility both to sexual minorities and homophobia, ensuring that neither remains hidden and ensuring that LGBTQ identities are recognized as legible subjects within policies, it is problematic to equate greater visibility with greater progress. Offering therapeutic support to victims has everything to do with power and playing by therapeutic rules implicates everyone involved in power relations (which I shall discuss in greater detail in the next chapter). While such intervention policies encourage a variety of supportive voices on the important issues of homophobia and its harmful impact, this support coalesces around therapeutic terms, terms that allow the larger heterosexual community to feel better, but terms that very much limit the kind of support available to LGBTQ students.

On a transitional note, it is striking when noted that the representation of LGBTQ youth within discipline policies is that of a young victimized student who is in need of support, allowing them to be classified as fitting within a deviant model which argues that they "need help" (Quinlivan, 2002). This representation simultaneously restricts the expression of positive images of LGBTQ youth. We have seen how help for LGBTQ youth who are victimized by homophobic behaviour is outsourced to therapeutic agencies, now I shall look more closely at how victimhood has a reassuring role within education policies where LGBTQ youth are concerned. If LGBTQ youth are always represented as the victims of terrible oppression, hardship, and bullying of endemic proportions, then the dominance of the victim image becomes one of the conditions of the speakability of homophobia in schools. One of the positive images that is effaced by such

representations includes the reality of LGBTQ young people's sexual agency. Although the Liberal government recently attempted to acknowledge this reality, albeit in a limited way, the attempt to implement an LGBTQ inclusive sex education curriculum met with vehement political opposition.

The politics involved in implementing an LGBTQ inclusive curriculum, the 2010 Health and Physical Education Curriculum

In this section, drawing on the 2010 Health and Physical Education curriculum and the surrounding political and religious controversy as a case in point, I shall show that the image of the tragic LGBTQ victim is useful in education policies in order to maintain the governing status quo. Empirical research about homophobia frequently identifies causal links between homophobic bullying and low school attendance and a variety of emotional disorders (Warwick, Goodrich, Aggleton & Chase, 2006). In other words, the effects of homophobia are highlighted such that discussions of LGBTQ youth coalesce around LGBTQ suffering and unhappiness. Emphasizing this image and experience of LGBTQ youth, I shall show, is a condition of possibility for the inclusion of LGBTQ discussions in education curricula. I shall discuss the extent to which this image effectively reduces the experience of LGBTQ youth to one of passive victimhood, thereby, silencing the reality of LGBTQ young people's sexual lives. For conservative religious groups, the image allows for distinguishing between protecting the sinner and condemning the sin. For a neoliberal government, the image allows for distinguishing between providing lessons on anti-homophobia and confining lessons on LGBTQ sexual activity. Where and how these distinctions ought to be made, became a heated political controversy between conservative groups and the government in the spring of 2010. First, I shall discuss how

it has come about that the tragic image is a condition of inclusion of LGBTQ issues in the 2010 health curriculum and related reports. Then I shall discuss the limits of this kind of inclusion. Finally I shall look at how the *very* inclusion of LGBTQ discussions went too far for some religious and political groups. In so doing, I argue that the price LGBTQ youth pay for their existence as legible subjects in education policies, is, at the very least, their de-sexing.

Conditions of inclusion of LGBTQ issues in the 2010 health curriculum

In January 2010 a new Health and Physical Education curriculum that explicitly discussed LGBTQ identity and sexual orientation was introduced in Ontario on the Ministry of Education's website and via a memorandum sent out to all school boards announcing it. The intention was to instate this curriculum the following September. However, in response to religious and political opposition, Premier McGuinty revoked the LGBTQ components of the curriculum in April 2010. Although revoking these components of the curriculum was in itself problematic enough, even if these curricular discussions of LGBTQ issues had been sanctioned in schools, these discussions were limited by design and rooted in representations that focused too much on the negative aspects of gay lives. This is not surprising given that the LGBTQ components of the curriculum were written and included as a response to recommendations of the Safe Schools Action Team's report entitled *Shaping a Culture of Respect* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008d). The report called for curricular prompts and discussions that would address gender-based violence, homophobia, sexual harassment, and inappropriate sexual behaviour. The first sidebar in the report made clear its focus, reporting that sexual orientation was one of the top three motivations for hate crimes in Canada, that over half of all hate crimes motivated by this factor were violent, and that the second most common locale for such crimes was educational

facilities. Data on the prevalence of homophobic bullying in Canadian schools would help bring home the urgency of action.

Where victimhood is the basis of the call for curriculum inclusion, this reflects a limited shift in thinking where inclusive education policies are concerned. I say limited because, in my experience counselling LGBTQ youth, these youth are already all too familiar with the effects of being victimized based on their difference. Where health and physical education is concerned, LGBTQ youth need information about sex and healthy development. However, the curriculum stopped short of such education. Thus, I show that inclusive education, as it is conflated by the Ministry of Education with calls to mitigate the harms LGBTQ suffer, actually continues to marginalize youth. The curriculum rests upon discussions of the LGBTQ student as a distinct and unfortunate *other* and fails to instate equal access to information about health and sex.

Victimhood as the basis of the call for curriculum inclusion

The Ministry of Education under the liberal leadership of Kathleen Wynne (2006 -2010) put forward the argument that homophobia in schools must be addressed through efforts beyond those contained within the narrow reach of discipline policies. This process started in 2007 after Wynne directed the Safe Schools Action Team with a mandate to focus on building a comprehensive plan to address homophobia in schools. The team's final report, *Shaping a Culture of Respect in our Schools: Promoting Safe and Healthy Relationships*" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008d) released a call to action that raised crucial issues relevant to the then simultaneous review of the Health and Physical Education curriculum. At that time, the curriculum had not been reviewed in over a decade and, according to the Safe Schools Action Team, the time had come to formally educate students, through curricular efforts, about the harmful effects of stereotypes and discriminatory behaviour where LGBTQ issues are concerned.

This rationale for curricular responses to homophobia, as outlined in the report *Shaping a Culture of Respect* (2008d), follows:

> Issues of homophobia and sexual harassment need to be seen in the context of bullying/harassment. According to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, one-third of students experience bullying at school, and almost one-third report having bullied someone else. Current research further highlights that bullying has serious consequences that affect individuals, families, peer groups, and the community. It can damage many types of interactions, including those within the school, with a negative impact on school safety, school climate, and student learning. Bullying/harassment can be severe, persistent, and pervasive to such a degree that it limits students' ability to participate in or benefit from an education program and creates an educational environment that is hostile or threatening for students. (p. 5)
>
> The consequences among those who report higher rates of harassment victimization can include psychological problems such as depression, loss of appetite, nightmares or disturbed sleep, low self-esteem, and feelings of being sad, afraid, scared, or embarrassed. In terms of student learning, victims of harassment also reported loss of interest in school activities, as well as increased absenteeism, decreased quality of school work, poor grades, and increases in skipping or dropping classes, tardiness, and truancy. (p. 6)

Thus, we see how the LGBTQ youth is discussed in terms specific to hardships they suffer and the psychological effects of such hardships and suffering.

The report subsequently makes a case for the need to address homophobia through the curriculum, as follows:

> We must enable schools and educators to provide and deliver curriculum that effectively addresses issues of gender-based violence, homophobia, sexual harassment, and inappropriate sexual behaviour. (p. 12)
>
> The Ministry of Education must:
>
> - Ensure that references to gender-based violence, homophobia, sexual harassment, and inappropriate sexual behaviour are included in prompts and examples in the revised [2010] Health and Physical Education curriculum and in as many other curriculum areas as possible;
> - Continue to ensure that revisions to curriculum include a commitment to equity, inclusion, and respect for all students;
> - Ensure that curriculum documents take an integrated and cross-curricular approach to educating students about healthy and respectful relationships, as well

> as gender-based violence, homophobia, sexual harassment, and inappropriate sexual behaviour … (p. 12-13)

What is most remarkable about this report's discussion is, first, the ways in which the accounts of LGBTQ lives mirrors the dominant image of the homosexual in 1950s discourses: depressed, lonely, isolated, suicidal (Rebellato, 1999). Indeed the LGBTQ youth is an ill-fated *other*. The construction of the tragic, ostracized, and scared figure allows such a figure to fit within a liberal-minded model of what it means to be inclusive of the other: accepting, understanding, and respectful. As I shall soon show, these are precisely the kinds of curricular discussions that were implemented. What is also remarkable about the report's discussion, is that the representation of this tragic figure comes to provide the rationale and context for introducing discussions of LGBTQ identity and sexual orientation in school curricula. As a result, the speakability of LGBTQ issues hinges upon considerations of what to do about homophobic bullying and how to implement anti-homophobia principles in education, thereby, other LGBTQ issues are rendered unspeakable. The most notable silence is around sex.[13] Finally, we can see how the idea of implementing anti-homophobia principles in the curriculum is starting to merge with notions of what it means to implement an inclusive curriculum.

This specific understanding of what it means to instate inclusive education practices is consistent with other ministry policies that discuss inclusion of minority status student identities in the school curriculum. Along with the release of the safe schools report, there was the release of Ontario's *Equity and Inclusive Education* strategy (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009a).

---

[13] Whereas the safe schools report makes mention of the generic need for youth to be taught the knowledge and skills necessary to exercise healthy sexuality, where LGBTQ concerns are raised within the report, the focus remains on the need for school curricula to address issues of gender-based violence, homophobia, and so forth.

This education strategy makes a broad commitment to implementing inclusive teaching practices. The education strategy states:

> We know that when students see themselves reflected in their studies, they are more likely to stay engaged and find school relevant. Revised curriculum documents must contain a section on antidiscrimination education and examples that help teachers better connect with the reality of student's lives. (p. 15)

Here we see quite clearly how the notion of inclusive education is conflated with the notion of anti-discrimination education. That is, *being inclusive* is conceptualized as *not being discriminatory*, or not being homophobic, or so forth.

Curricular inclusion in a neoliberal era

It is in this vein that the health and physical education curriculum was revised: in keeping with policy commitments to implement anti-discrimination teaching strategies. Such strategies seek to address behaviour and attitudes motivated by hate or bias and instruct individuals on avoiding social dangers. As a result, very specific discussions that were inclusive of LGBTQ identity and sexual orientation were introduced. These discussions sought to teach students how to be considerate of others, how to value differences, be open-minded, in control of one's emotional biases, how to recognize the personal effects of stereotypes, and how to be responsible not to perpetuate stereotypes or discriminatory attitudes. In general, the curriculum reinforces the neoliberal therapeutic values of being sensitive, respectful, responsible towards others' feelings, communicating openly, listening, being caring and honest, overcoming challenges, and navigating social dangers like bullying, exclusion, peer pressure, abuse, and risks. Thereby, the curriculum served to deflect attention from the hetero-dominant bent of the lessons and toward the problem of individual students who must learn to self-manage.

Specifically, the 2010 health curriculum framed its learning expectations of students in distinctly neoliberal anti-homophobic terms, terms that are individualistic, dominant group centred, and therapeutic in nature. For example, the overview of the expectations for students in grades one to three discussed the importance of young children learning, understanding, and applying basic concepts related to appreciating differences. To wit, students in grade three would learn to "appreciate invisible differences in others" and recognize that among the forms of different families, "some have two mothers or two fathers". The overview of the expectations for students in grades four to six discussed the importance of junior students learning about the psychological health of themselves and others. For example, students in these grades would be taught "how to protect their emotional safety and that of others through a better understanding of stereotyping and assumptions and ways of challenging these" (p. 115). One of the stereotypes students would be taught to challenge was the idea that people "choose to be gay". Thus, students in grade five would learn to recognize that things they "cannot control include … personal characteristics such as … gender identity [and] sexual orientation". The overview of the expectations for students in grade seven and eight discussed the importance of teaching intermediate students to make responsible decisions that affect their health.

Where the curriculum acknowledges that students by grade seven and eight may already be contemplating their sexual identity and involved in or contemplating sexual activity, and thereby would need the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about their sexual health. Lessons specific to sex education do not explicitly reference same-sex sex education and directions to teachers do not explicitly mention the importance of discussing sexual activity in same-sex inclusive terms. These absences are ever-present in the sex education lessons. Whereas all other lessons related to respecting differences or being good to others clearly reference sexual

orientation and clearly direct teachers to be inclusive of sexual diversity in their instruction of students, the sex-ed lessons are conspicuously silent in this regard. Albeit, lessons specific to sex education are presented in gender neutral terms. For example, sex is discussed as something that occurs between partners or individuals and sexual acts are defined without reference to heterosexual or same-sex sexual orientations. These gender neutral terms, however, are more indicative of how such lessons are presented to both male and female students, and the gender neutral terms remain in keeping not only with the entire 2010 curriculum, but with the 1998 health curriculum discussions of sexual activity as well, few as those discussions are in the 1998 version. As a result, in a heteronormative and male dominate school environment, LGBTQ students are left to abstract the information provided in order to apply it to themselves or their sexual circumstances. The confusion that results is something, again, I have witnessed first-hand. When students are not directly identified and engaged in their lessons, at the best of times, they find it difficult to apply the information to themselves, as something that could happen to them. Unfortunately, the only time that gay male students may well find themselves engaged directly by the lessons, is during discussions that reference sexual acts generally believed to be more common among gay male students, such as anal intercourse, which, as it turns out, is discussed in terms of risk, such as the increased risk for HIV/AIDS.

The conditions of inclusion of LGBTQ issues in the 2010 health curriculum were rooted in and motivated by negative images of what it means to be involved in same-sex relationships: being different, being bullied, feeling ostracized or misunderstood, being caricatured, or being at risk of sexually transmitted infections. Furthermore, the inclusion of LGBTQ discussions was framed by the recitation of facts and statistics, reports, and discussions of the harmful effects of bullying and stereotypes, effects measured in psychological terms and discussed in terms of their

negative impact on individuals: depression, truancy, lack of school engagement, and so forth. By way of addressing these experiences of hardship, the curriculum remained unswervingly dedicated to therapeutic pedagogical lessons on appropriate ways of understanding the self and others in a neoliberal era. In a neoliberal era, understanding the self and others falls into a predictable, narrow, and conventional realm of personal transformation and individual bonds. It is on this individual level that LGBTQ identity is legitimized and LGBTQ sexual agency remains skirted over in the health curriculum. Inclusive education, as such, fails to fully conceptualize what it is that is to be tolerated and included: sexual agency, desire, sexual relationships, pride, and so forth.

The perspective of the curriculum and related reports and policies represents a provocative challenge to the work of LGBTQ rights agendas. If emphasizing the negative images and effects of homophobia, homophobic bullying, social exclusion, or risk of sexual health raises the profile of LGBTQ identity and related issues in schools, then it is difficult to be critical of the situation. However, it matters how issues are represented and spoken of. When curriculum inclusion and discussions of LGBTQ identity are narrowly conceptualized within an agenda that maintains a focus on preventing homophobia or mitigating risk, LGBTQ inclusion is contingent upon the image of the abused or ill-treated student. This reassuring image of the tragic other subsequently fits well within therapeutic narratives that position individuals as hardy survivors and that seek to restore and reinforce the individual bonds tested during trying times. By placing the image of the LGBTQ student within the templates of therapeutic narratives, LGBTQ students are taught to frame themselves as emotionally sturdy and the rest of the student body is taught about personal responsibility and how to contribute to a well-functioning social order. There is a

failure, however, to depict and present positive images of LGBTQ youth and an oversight of the remaining conditions of exclusion of LGBTQ identity in public education.

The noted absences in the new curriculum show that what is actively not taught in schools is just as important and revealing about a culture as what is overtly taught. Explicit education about LGBTQ sex, positive depictions of LGBTQ identity, and discussions of the politics of LGBTQ rights are absent. This indeed exposes a culture that is uncomfortable with full inclusion of and well-rounded discussions about LGBTQ identity in schools. If we examine the political controversy that erupted soon after the curriculum's release, we can see more clearly what this discomfort is about and how it presented politically.

Conservative and religious controversy over the curriculum

There are no indications that Catholic educators consulted over the 2010 Health and Physical Education curriculum objected to the lessons proposed therein (Rayside, 2010). The *Pastoral Guidelines to Assist Students of Same-Sex Orientation* (Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2004) emphasize the church's teachings on remaining chaste, but also forthrightly confront homophobia and recognize the costs of schools paying no heed. It is not surprising, then, given that the curriculum is framed and delivered as an attempt to instate anti-homophobia education, that Catholic educators did not shy away from the changes to the curriculum. As already noted, framing the discussion of LGBTQ issues as efforts to prevent homophobia enables most religious groups to maintain their distinction between protecting the sinner and condemning the sin. However, when the curriculum was misrepresented by Charles McVety, president of Canada Christian College, as condoning same sex acts, for many religious groups, the curriculum had crossed the line. I shall argue that the controversy that ensued, did so in large part due to the

Liberal government's inability to get across the message that the curriculum was part of an overall coordinated policy effort to prevent homophobia in schools.

The upheaval

On April 20, 2010, Charles McVety, issued a press release denouncing the 2010 Health and Physical Education curriculum and calling for a large-scale anti-curriculum protest to be held in Toronto, Ontario the following month. He argued that the curriculum was "part of a militant homosexual agenda to normalize homosexuality in everyone's mind and thereby promote homosexuality" (Lewis, 2010, April 23). He insisted that Premier McGuinty stop "this type of corruption" of children. McVety accused Kathleen Wynne, an "out" MPP who was the Minister of Education at the time of the curriculum's review and release, of "forcing through a homosexual plot to make society believe that two men and two women having sex is normal" (Lewis, 2010, April 23). Despite the fact that the curriculum does not reference two men or two women having sex, and despite the obvious homophobia of McVety's rhetoric, two days after McVety's insistence, McGuinty revoked the controversial components of the new curriculum, these included all references to LGBTQ identity.

In the short time after McVety's press release and before he decided to revoke certain components of the curriculum, McGuinty was clearly without a comprehensive communications strategy. The new curriculum had been quietly posted on the ministry's website in January of 2010 without any official communication of its release and after McVety's attack on the curriculum in April of 2010, the government made no reference to how the curriculum fit within a comprehensive and coordinated policy commitment to prevent homophobia in schools. Ironically, however, only one week prior to the controversy, the government had celebrated Pink Shirt Day, a day of protest against homophobic bullying in schools. Liberal ministers used the occasion of

Pink Shirt Day to draw attention to their safe schools strategy, their inclusive education strategy, and in particular their anti-bullying strategy to end acts of discrimination and harassment based on homophobia and other forms of harassment. This day of celebration held all-party support. Yet, there was a clear disconnect from these policy strategies and their non-partisan support when McGuinty called for a "re-think" of the new curriculum, a curriculum whose rationale was firmly rooted in those very strategies just celebrated by his government.

Once the new curriculum became represented in the media as one that made giant leaps in sex-education, no less once it became misrepresented as providing homosexual sex-education, religious conservatism and parental concern over the moral instruction of children arose, quickly, and in a somewhat organized fashion. Where religious conservatism is concerned, there was a political alliance between evangelical Christians and groups that included Orthodox Jews, Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus. There was also clear "push back from among 'new Canadians'"; and, in particular, there was a "'big reaction' among Muslims, a community with very conservative views toward sexual diversity" (Rayside, 2010, p. 13). These groups accused McGuinty of not taking into consideration multicultural sensibilities when developing the curriculum. The curriculum was perceived as an insult to their deeply held religious values (Rayside, 2010).

The controversy around the new curriculum exposed a great deal about LGBTQ issues in the Ontario context. Where there is no public political or religious opposition to efforts that aim to prevent overt homophobic harassment in schools, there is strong resistance to efforts that aim to raise discussions of LGBTQ identity in the health curriculum, even when these discussions focus on why students should not discriminate against or bully other students based on sexual orientation and how students should all get along nicely with one another. Arguably, those

opposing the curriculum, did so based on McVety's representation of the lessons and not based on a close reading of the curriculum. Furthermore, not undertaking a close reading of the curriculum may also account for why the curriculum was not more strongly defended by McGuinty. Indeed, watching McGuinty's attempts in the media to defend the curriculum in April 2010, I clearly got the sense that he had had no briefing around the policy background to the curriculum, little time to read the curriculum, and perhaps held some fear that maybe even a matter of fact mention of a child having two mothers or two fathers was too positive an image, when taken out of context, to defend in mainstream Ontario.

Thus, as long as LGBTQ students are presented as victims suffering an unfortunate fate, they may be defended. As soon as there was any sense that LGBTQ students were visible in such a way that was not so tragic, even though the conditions of their visibility and speakability are based on the tragic image, their liberal defender thought it best to "re-think" the issue. It would seem to me, if the government had been able to present a pre-emptive communication strategy explaining how the revised curriculum is part of their well-coordinated anti-homophobia agenda, perhaps cite their reports and statistics on the harms suffered by those referenced in the curriculum, explain why it is important to have conversations about LGBTQ differences, tolerance, and respect for diversity, appealing to the broader liberal-minded public, the curriculum would have held a chance. Where the curriculum's implementation failed was in McGuinty's mismanagement of a communication strategy, a communication strategy that would have been clear about the distinction between providing anti-homophobia education and containing LGBTQ sexual agency, pride, or equal access to information for that matter.

The politics of allowing Gay-Straight Alliances in Ontario schools

The ironic optics of McGuinty being bullied by McVety into revoking the LGBTQ components of the 2010 Physical and Health Education curriculum was not lost on many of my clients who identify as queer, nor was it lost on their straight allies. Students often have a remarkable ability to incise situations. Where I have argued that it is okay to be a tragic gay but not a sexual one where health in schools is concerned, many students I have dealt with describe the politics that are playing out with their peers in the Catholic school boards where Gay-Straight Alliances are concerned, as the politics of being allowed to be gay but not too gay, or protected but not proud, or loved but not accepted.

Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) are student clubs that work to improve the school climate for all students. Their focus is on creating a union of LGBTQ and straight youth to discuss the effects of heterosexism, expose harmful assumptions and stereotypes, and alleviate the sense that LGBTQ youth are somehow different, or worse, immoral. The groups are led by youth for youth and provide education for peers regarding heteronormativity and sexual diversity and they operate as a student-led initiative to provide a space for the positive expression of LGBTQ identity. In order to be effectively implemented, GSAs require teacher, school, and board endorsement. To this end, the Ministry of Education's *Policy Program Memorandum 145* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007; 2009b), under section two, legislates that school boards must provide implementation support for GSAs. In particular the program memo states that schools must create opportunities for all members of the school community to increase their knowledge and understanding of such issues as homophobia. The memo mandates board and school support for forming GSAs as follows:

> Boards must … help school staff to give support to students who wish to participate in gay-straight alliances and in other student-led activities that promote understanding and

> development of healthy relationships. Schools must also engage their school councils and student councils to support these student-led activities. (p. 6)

Despite this clear legislative directive to all publicly funded school boards in Ontario, in January 2011, the Halton Catholic District School Board issued the decision that GSAs are harmful and the board chair subsequently issued a ban on GSAs. The school board chair rationalized the decision with her now infamous statement listing Nazi groups as another example of clubs not allowed in the district's schools while asserting that GSAs are "not in accordance with the teachings of the church" (Houston, 2011, January 6).

This controversy is only one recent display of the tensions generated for Catholic school boards by the ministry's mandate to allow students to form GSAs. In an attempt to resolve the matter, in February of 2011, trustees of the Halton Catholic District School Board approved a policy that would allow students to form groups called SIDE (safety, inclusivity, diversity, equity) spaces. This group would be run by board staff trained in the guidelines developed by the Institute for Catholic Education to assist students of same-sex orientation (Hammer, 2011, Feb. 15). While this policy indeed calls upon educators to teach and enforce anti-discrimination principles, it also articulates the church's official prohibition of sexual activity between two people of the same sex. The policy exhorts teachers to lead the homosexual student toward better sexual morality. While this policy response is woefully inadequate from the point of view that considers the intended purpose of forming GSAs in the first place, it may serve as a curious case in point of the confusing contradictions that accompany many anti-homophobia efforts in the safe schools file.

This curious phenomena is by no means isolated. In June of 2011, the media was accumulating similar reports of such obvious policy inconsistencies. One Ontario Catholic school

reportedly banned rainbow banners at an anti-homophobia school event. According to *Xtra!*, St. Joseph Catholic Secondary School, also in the Halton region, allowed its unofficial Gay-Straight alliance to hold an anti-homophobia event but then prohibited all rainbow symbols at this event, arguing that such symbols are associated with gay pride (Houston, 2011, June 7). The students got around the ban by baking cupcakes with rainbow batter. However, among other things their school banned were booklets discussing gender identity, harassment in sports, AIDS awareness, and same-sex safe sex. Furthermore the students were prohibited from donating the money from their bake sale to an LGBTQ charity. Around this same time, the Toronto Catholic Board (TCDSB) reportedly blocked a lesbian comedian from speaking at their anti-bullying school event. Topics at this event included: equity and anti-oppression, TCDSB Pastoral Guidelines on Same Sex Orientation, gender issues, and guidance services available for LGBTQ students in the school.

These situations show how ministry and school board policies can simultaneously avow and disavow queerness by taking a stance that shelters LGBTQ students from overt acts of hate while shielding the broader community from LGBTQ collective expressions of identity. In effect, the same well-meaning intentions within policies that wish to denounce discrimination and protect LGBTQ students from homophobia, prohibit LGBTQ student pride. The lesson that students shall not say hateful homophobic words to one another is hoisted upon the instruction to LGBTQ students to not use gay positive words, symbols, or role models within their schools. Queer students may be protected, but certainly not proud, and absolutely not political. Perhaps the contradictions apparent in these situations are reconciled by the belief that overt acts of discrimination, such as uttering homophobic slurs, are somehow different from actions that discriminate by reinforcing hegemonic heterosexuality. Perhaps the contradictions are reconciled

by what Bickmore (2002) suggests: “the fact that gender equity and especially sexual diversity are considered controversial issues” tends to constrain efforts that are aimed at the more subtle forms of discrimination perpetuated in school cultures (p. 199). Yet, it cannot be overlooked that policies providing LGBTQ students with individual or personal protection from the homophobic actions of “bad” students while preventing LGBTQ political action are quite consistent with neoliberal principles of anti-discrimination and inclusivity. It is the neoliberal therapeutic understanding of LGBTQ inclusivity that reinforces a safely personal form of support accorded to LGBTQ students, that enforces an individualistic form of intervention upon homophobic students, that ensures that problems like heteronormative hegemony go unchallenged. It is in this light that I view the Catholic stance: as an extension of the political erasure of a collective identity that holds the potential to challenge dominant exclusions and systemic forms of discrimination; albeit, the Catholic stance is certainly complicated by religious considerations.

My point here is to raise for consideration that although the site of the controversy surrounding GSAs is most visible within Catholic school boards, it is the ministry’s refusal to enforce its own policy to allow students to form GSAs that is at issue. The policy forms an important component of the liberal ministry’s often self-celebrated inclusive education strategy. The refusal to implement this component of the strategy could be the result of any one of a number of factors: an election in the fall of 2011 that has made the issue too risky to force; the perception that allowing GSAs in Catholic schools clashes with the magisterial of the church; the belief that an alternative form of support for students, such as SIDE clubs, sufficiently meets the policy requirement; or, simply, that the then Education Minister, Leona Dombrowsky, a former Catholic School Board Trustee from small-town Ontario, simply side stepped the matter for a combination of political and personal reasons. Perhaps, however, forcing the effort to restructure

schools and classrooms toward resisting heterosexism, an effort that would, according to Bickmore (2002) go far to democratize social participation and collective expression for sexual minorities within their school communities, just collides too stridently with neoliberal rule.

Conclusion

Until such time as policymakers, school boards, and social educators accept that schools facilitate the process of heterosexist differentiation and discrimination – steering students toward certain identities, behaviours, and collective actions and away from others, efforts to address homophobia in schools will be partial at best (Bickmore, 2002). My analysis of the safe schools effort to address homophobia suggests that the terrain may have shifted in schools to at least make space for LGBTQ identities and let homophobia out of the closet. However, if mainstream school culture has increasingly made space for LGBTQ youth to feel safe at school, it has done this by insisting that prejudiced straights come out as homophobic while systemic heterosexism remains a secret, still shut out of school discussions and practices. As a result, safe schools discipline policies and the inclusive education plan continue to marginalize LGBTQ youth; albeit, this is accomplished via well-meaning practices intended to manage individual behaviour, shape attitudes, restrict images and contain differences.

Chapter 5: The politics of mental health literacy in schools. Neoliberalism, progressive discipline, and the unhealthy student

During my time as an in-school mental health counsellor, I often was called upon to deliver mental health promotion workshops on Personal Life Management for students in secondary schools. The groups that were convened for such workshops tended to consist of at-risk students or those students who had been placed in alternative programming. Teachers and guidance counsellors mostly requested topics on healthy living: positive relationships, stress reduction, and anger management. In preparing these workshops, I was directed to use evidence-based health promotion materials that are accessible from the website of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). Many of CAMH's materials are approved by the Ministry of Education. What struck me, however, was that at some point over the course of presenting and having the students engage with these materials, I realized that the information that I was imparting was not new to them. The students knew the material well. The problem was, inevitably, at some point during the workshops students would make it resoundingly clear that the materials were not useful for them, pointing out that anger management does not work, stress does not go away, and no one is in a healthy relationship. At first blush, I was tempted to tell the students, most of whom in general presented as quite cynical, that if, for example, anger management does not work, it is because they were not trying hard enough to make it work. However, instead, I quietly wondered who the material *does* work for, if not for the intended audience.

In reflecting on this question, it occurred to me that the healthy living workshops that I was delivering in schools are part of a larger strategy to promote positive student discipline and

behaviour, as per the Ontario Ministry of Education's new approach to help make schools safer (discussed in Chapter Two). Indeed, healthy living, stress reduction, anger management, and mental health in general have received increasing attention in Ontario's schools since the implementation of the provincial Liberal party's progressive discipline policies (2007). During the same period, many of the larger social and economic policies of this government have reflected neoliberal goals and orientations. These orientations include a normative privileging of the individual, a preference for non-government funding for and provision of services, and the integration of corporate management practices into the work of government. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the points of contact between these features of contemporary social and political life within Ontario's schools. In so doing, I shall look at how mental health promotion strategies fit into the Ministry of Education's discipline policies and directions, how the ministry's discipline policies and directions align with larger neoliberal goals, who this operates to benefit, and in what ways. My analysis draws on the Foucauldian literature on governmentality and presents a close reading of select progressive discipline policies and health promotion materials concerned with healthy active living and mental health literacy in schools.

This chapter builds on the previous chapter, wherein I discuss some of the neoliberal characteristics of the Liberal government's school discipline policies, not the least of which is an individualizing preference for outsourcing support for students to personal counselling agencies. I indicated that providing therapeutic support for students has everything to do with power, implicating everyone involved in power relations. In demonstrating this position in this chapter, I shall point to a number of strategies visible in select discipline policies and mental health promotion materials that work to align the interests of students and their counsellors in pursuing particular approaches to healthy living with a governing interest in reducing public spending on

services and purging collective responsibility for student support. This analysis identifies discourses of *responsibilization* circulating in ministry policies and health promotion materials within which students, their peers, families, and communities appear as key resources in promoting the well-being of unhealthy students.

I shall outline the broad political context for my analysis in the next section. Then I shall present my analysis in three parts. In the first part of my analysis I outline key elements drawn from Foucauldian literature on governmentality in order to provide a conceptual framework within which to consider recent developments in progressive discipline policies and mental health promotion strategies in Ontario schools. This section is followed by an account of relevant policy documents and directions in education since 2007, which includes mental health support for students in schools. In the final section, I turn to a close reading and analysis of a health promotion program that is designed to teach mental health literacy in schools. The literature on governmentality directs my attention to particular textual features of these policies and mental health materials that sustain the neoliberal policy directions to which the Liberal government of Ontario is committed.

Broad political context: Neoliberalism, health care policy, and mental health in Ontario

Over the past eight years in Ontario the Liberal government has pursued a number of policies that articulate strategic commitments related to neoliberalism. These policies have included selective reductions in government funding for a range of social services, tax cuts that have disproportionately benefited large corporations such as banks and insurance companies, the use of legislation to curtail collective bargaining and freeze wages in the public sector, and an

emphasis on moving service delivery out of the realm of direct government responsibility, which includes privatization. Most recently (July 2011), initiatives have been announced that will lead to the downsizing of the provincial civil service.[14] Policy analysts, academic researchers, and community activists working in association with the Ontario office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA),[15] have documented the extensive social and personal costs that have flowed from these measures, including the negative effects that they have on equity-seeking groups and marginalized communities. Since poverty, stress, fatigue, and lack of control over one's environment are all factors understood to be associated with mental illness, it is arguably the case that these policy directions have contributed to an increase in the prevalence of mental distress among those marginalized groups most affected by the provincial measures (Stinson, Pollak, & Cohen, 2005). Conversely, since income and social status, social support networks, employment and working conditions, social environment, and health services are associated with mental health, the provincial measures do little to improve the social determinants of mental health for those most adversely affected by such neoliberal policy directions.

Services and programs for people diagnosed with a mental illness have also been affected by the direction of government policy. Activists and advocates from a number of provincial offices and associations[16] who have shown increasing frustration with the lack of political will on

---

[14] For details and analyses of these policy directions see the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) website: www.opseu.org.

[15] The CCPA is an independent, non-partisan research institute concerned with issues of social and economic justice.

[16] For example: the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, the Psychiatric Patient Advocate Office, the Coalition for Appropriate Care and Treatment, Canadian Mental Health Association, Children's Mental Health Ontario.

the part of the government to implement recommendations made in a number of the government's own commissioned reports,[17] have been further discouraged by developments in the area of mental health policy. Along with cuts in policy areas affecting people receiving mental health services;[18] and, along with the Liberal government's slow progress towards revitalizing mental health services in order to reduce the financial and additional pressures on families and informal support systems; the government most recently (July 2011) devised a plan to divest the Psychiatric Patient Advocate Office (PPAO) to the Ontario branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA). The PPAO protects and promotes the rights and entitlements of Ontarians with mental illness through advocacy, rights advice, and education. This office was established by the government of Ontario in 1983 as an arms-length agency of the Ministry of Health. The office survived 28 years of budget cuts, hospital closings, and health-care reforms under six different governments yet currently faces the possibility of being downgraded to a branch of a charitable organization by an administrative procedure.[19] These developments signal a continuing

---

[17] The government's own Select Committee, convened to develop a mental health strategy for Ontario, made a "priority recommendation" for the establishment of a single body funded by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, such as Mental Health and Addictions Ontario (MHAO), that could be responsible for prioritizing, designing, managing, and coordinating the mental health and addictions systems.

[18] For example: hospital bed cuts, funding cut-backs to valuable mental health programs and services, the closure of psychiatric hospitals, and so on. For details of these cuts in policy areas see the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) website: www.opseu.org.

[19] There was no public announcement of this decision. A memo was sent to stakeholders (employees of the agency and hospitals providing psychiatric care) from Assistant Deputy Minister Patricia Li: "I am writing to advise you of a change being planned that will improve the lives of people living with mental illness," she said. "Integrating the Psychiatric Patient Advocate

divestment of this policy area as the Liberal government steadily absolves itself of direct responsibility for mental health care. Fears and concerns among mental health advocates are growing that the ministry is chipping away at the services and rights of one of the most vulnerable groups in society under the guise of integrating health services. The biggest concern is that the government is now poised to walk away from its role as the guardian of Ontarians with mental disabilities, indicating a continued marginalization of this policy area and the needs of the community it is intended to serve.

The delivery of mental health services since 2003 has been further shaped by a significant restructuring of the health care sector. The newly-elected Liberal government moved quickly to implement the controversial Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) which amalgamated regional health services across the province into 14 integrated networks.[20] These changes were more than organizational in nature. The changes have also involved a cultural shift that has entailed a sustained effort to embed sound business practices and business management culture within the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) and the LHINs, emphasizing structured business planning and performance monitoring. In practical terms this means that,

---

Office's rights advice and advocacy services with the Canadian Mental Health Association's community-based mental health services will result in a more coordinated, patient-centred continuum of care." (Goar, 2011, July 12) After a swift response from mental health activists, the decision was made requiring this procedure to undergo judicial review before implementation.

[20] When LHINs were established, many resources of the regional offices were lost; among those resources lost were District Health Councils whose work it was, in part, to assist regional offices in planning and funding for mental health and addiction services. Since the implementation of the LHINs, there have been considerable inequities in mental health services. For example, in 2007, funding for community mental health services ranged from $19 to $123 per capita across Local Health Integration Network areas.

through Ministry-LHIN Accountability Agreements and Service Plans, the strategic priorities and operational plans and activities set at local network, service delivery, and individual levels must align with and contribute to the overall vision and service priorities of the ministry and government. The MOHLTC itself remains responsible for stewardship of the system, including planning, corporate management, and monitoring system performance, while the LHINs have been assigned responsibility for disseminating funding and planning for the delivery of health care services within the budgets established for them by the MOHLTC. LHINs are required to enter into performance agreements with the ministry on an annual basis and balance their budgets. In turn, when providing funding for services (such as long-term care homes, hospitals, community care access centres, community support programs, mental health and addiction agencies, and community health centres), the LHINs operate under similar business expectations of accountability, audit, standardization, and evidence-based practices.

The MOHLTC emphasizes, as a crucial feature of the context within which it operates, a set of ever-increasing demands on the health care system that risk rendering the system unsustainable. Thus, emphasis on the cost sustainability of providing health care is proportionally emphasized. An important component of the Liberal government's approach to dealing with the possibility of an unsustainable health care system, while also minimizing government spending, has been to encourage health promotion initiatives. To wit, in general terms, the website for the MOHLTC outlines the rationale for health promotion:

> Health promotion and disease prevention play a key role in Ontario's health system. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care works to develop community-based programs in co-operation with Public Health Units across Ontario and a wide range of local partners, such as health service providers, health and community organizations, schools, businesses, and volunteers. These programs are designed to address specific local needs while mobilizing broader community participation and resources in support of health promotion activities. (Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, 2011)

In more specific terms, health promotion outlines ways to encourage people to become more physically active, adopt healthier eating habits, avoid smoking and drug use, manage their emotional lives, stress, and personal relationships, and create environments to support these activities. These initiatives focus on school-based programs that promote active, healthy school communities. The key components of such initiatives place a strong emphasis on the personal development of self-management skills among those with chronic illness through peer-led support groups and on preventative personal life management strategies through school-based programs (to be discussed in more detail in subsequent sections). In order to support and monitor these health promotion efforts, LHINs receive funding from both the province of Ontario and local municipalities. Mental health promotion efforts ultimately directly influence individuals to both improve their health and sustain the health care system.

Conceptual tools

Theorists working within a Foucauldian framework have distinguished between neoliberalism, understood as a political rationality, and advance liberal technologies of government. For example, Rose and Miller (1992) define political rationalities as encompassing, among other things, "notions of the appropriate forms, objects and limits of politics, and conceptions of the proper distribution of … tasks among secular, spiritual, military and familial sectors" (p. 175). Key characteristics of a neoliberal political rationality include a preference for non-government sector funding and delivery of services as well as a (seemingly) logical emphasis on the individual. Governmental technologies, on the other hand, are the specific programs, practices, and procedures, "through which authorities seek to embody and give effect to governmental ambitions" (Rose & Miller, 1992, p. 175). These technologies of rule forego

coercion or direct control in favour of seeking to forge an alignment between the self-interested choices of individuals and the goals of government, thereby allowing for governing at a distance. Advanced liberal technologies of rule are a particular subset of these.

Political rationalities cannot be divorced from the mechanisms or technologies through which thinking about government is put into effect. As Miller and Rose (1990) point out: "if political rationalities render reality into the domain of thought … technologies of government seek to translate thought into the domain of reality" (p. 8). One example of how thinking about government is put into effect is noticeable in how advanced liberal technologies of rule are underpinned by a neoliberal rationality that reconceptualizes the social in economic terms. In effect, individuals come to be understood as rational, calculative actors "who [are] active in making choices in order to further their own interests and those of their family" (Rose, 1999, p. 142). What this conceptual manoeuvre involves is "the generalization of an 'enterprise form' to all forms of conduct" (Burchell, 1993, p. 275), which includes the manner in which individuals understand and manage their lives. This phenomenon is noticeable particularly in discourses of *responsibilization* that direct individuals to become "enterprising selves" -- to work on, invest in, or improve upon themselves in a variety of ways (Rose, 1998). As Lemke (2001) points out:

> The strategy of rendering individual subjects 'responsible' (and also collectives, such as families, associations, etc.) entails shifting the responsibility for social risks such as illness, unemployment, poverty, etc., and for life in society into the domain for which the individual is responsible and transforming it into a problem of 'self-care.' (p. 201)

Many theorists using a Foucauldian governmentality approach have pointed out how such discourses permeate the framing of a broad range of issues, including health, urging individuals, organizations, and communities to take responsibility for developing their capacities to respond to the needs and challenges of life, and for monitoring and managing various kinds of risks to which

they may be vulnerable -- environmental, lifestyle, genetic, and so forth (Henderson, 2005; Rose, 2007).

Dean (2009) points out that advanced liberal rule is also noticeable in a number of what he calls technologies of performance. Technologies of performance constitute a set of tools that include discourses and practices of audit, accountability, and budget discipline within professional work contexts (Rose, 1999; Rose & Miller, 1992). As Rose (1999) suggests, a governing interest is discernable in the effort to pursue cost efficiencies with respect to providing social and health services. He (1999) argues:

> [Professionals are required to] translate their activities into financial terms, to seek to maximize productivity for a given income, to cut out waste, to restructure activities that are [not] cost effective, to choose between priorities in terms of their relative costs and benefits, to become more or less like a financial manager of their own professional activities … Whilst apparently devolving more decisional power to those actually involved in devising and delivering services in local sites, [this set of technologies] renders those activities governable in new ways. (p. 152)

Thus, a primary effect of these technologies is the translation of the complexities of professional practice into standardized evidence-based form so that assessments of economic costs and benefits may be made and then displace professional discretion as the basis for clinical decisions. This is something that Rose (1999) discusses as a breach of the *enclosures of expertise*. Enclosures of expertise are the boundaries within which professionals are permitted to operate with a level of autonomy granted in their field of practice that is legitimized by their disciplinary training and knowledge. However, the disciplinary training and knowledge that legitimates expertise and the professional's autonomy within a field of practice is compromised by the requirement to apply technologies of performance that standardize practice.

School discipline policy directions in Ontario since 2007: Towards mental health

The Ontario provincial Liberal government's approach to safe schools is outlined in their progressive discipline policies which focus on promoting positive student behaviour, preventing inappropriate behaviour, and providing early and ongoing mental health intervention programs in schools. Ultimately, the Ministry of Education under the Liberal government aims to promote the health and well-being of students, believing that this will improve the overall school climate. To achieve these objectives, the ministry procures the efforts of social workers, psychologists, and child and youth workers to work with school boards. In this section I am concerned primarily with understanding what policy directions and processes in education make it possible to link the success (or otherwise) of a massive institutional process of province-regulated school safety in Ontario to the health and well-being of individual students. I am also concerned with how the health and well-being of students is divested to the mental health sector and how within the mental health sector, mental health promotion is prescribed for practitioners and educators. In order to elucidate these processes, I have chosen to examine specific policy documents and health promotion guidelines. The first of these documents, *Policy Program Memorandum 145* (*PPM 145*): "Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007; 2009b), discusses, among other things, appropriate consequences in school to address inappropriate student behaviour. In this regard, it has several important elements, including: offering support, counselling, and early intervention to students as one way to promote positive behaviour. The second set of documents that I examine are connected to *PPM 145* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007; 2009b) and are put out by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). The CAMH documents refer to supportive intervention programs designed to promote safe schools by promoting mental health. The documents outline particular

guidelines for practitioners in Ontario schools. These policy documents and mental health materials deserve a careful presentation because together they establish the foundation for key components of the provincial government's approach to mental health literacy in schools, as both an education and health concern, that follow the logic of neoliberalism. I shall show that, jointly, the ministry's *PPM 145* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007; 2009b) and CAMH's mental health promotion materials provide a useful illustration of the point of contact between neoliberalism, understood as a political rationality, and advanced liberalism, understood as particular technologies of rule.

PPM 145 (2007; 2009b) as a neoliberal political rationality; the link between progressive discipline and mental health

Rose (1993) discusses how political rationalities denote particular subjectivities that are desirable or assumed for the purposes of governing. Rose (1993) also discusses how political rationalities determine ways to disperse the nature of government by specifying a diversity of professions or systems, both state and non-state, through which political government may be exercised. Furthermore, Rose (1993) argues that neoliberal rationalities seek to govern through what he calls the vehicle of expertise, particularly the professional expertise of doctors, psychologists, and social workers. According to Rose (1993) these political manoeuvres are effective ways to both diversify and divest the activities of government and govern more efficiently. There are clear elements in *PPM 145* (2007; 2009b) that follow these neoliberal political rationalities. First, *PPM 145* (2007; 2009b) identifies as desirable a certain kind of student, in particular, that student who is adept at positive peer relations. Next the policy memo seeks to govern the tasks of promoting positive peer relations in schools by enlisting the mental health profession. In order to do these two things effectively, *PPM 145* (2007; 2009b) uses two

discursive strategies: the first strategy is to individualize the problem of safe schools and make it a matter of student well-being and positive interpersonal skills. The second is to responsibilize community members and mental health professionals in dealing with the problem of student health and well-being. The effect is twofold: government policies and practices are erased as potential sources of any problems related to deteriorating school safety; and, government is also largely invisible as a site to which students and educational professionals may turn for services or resources to address school safety.

Individualizing safe schools

In framing the problem of safe schools, *PPM 145* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007; 2009b) directs our attention to the "importance of actively promoting and supporting appropriate and positive student behaviours that contribute to and sustain a safe learning and teaching environment" rather than to the broader socio-political environment that might be understood as contributing to appropriate or inappropriate student behaviour (p. 2). The memo states:

> A positive school climate is a crucial component of prevention; it may be defined as the sum total of all of the personal relationships within a school. … Programs and activities that focus on the building of healthy relationships … and positive peer relations provide the foundation for an effective continuum of strategies within a school and school-related activities. These supportive strategies and empowerment programs are the basis for creating a positive school climate. (p. 2)

The possibility that a positive school climate may be addressed by wider policies that support fair and just social structures, healthy public practices, or equitable systems are not among the options available for discussion or development. *PPM 145* (2007; 2009b) thus effaces the role of social reform as a factor that could promote a positive school climate. To all intents and purposes, this discussion locates the principal sources of safe schools within individuals. As a result, efforts that look at the need to ensure that students have access to programs that will support them in their peer relations are fore fronted.

Responsibilizing community members and professionals

Individualizing the problem of school safety is complemented in *PPM 145* (2007; 2009b) by responsibilizing education professionals and their partners in the community to foster efforts to develop programs and activities that will support students. *PPM 145* (2007; 2009b) states the following:

> In addition to teachers and administrators, other staff such as educational assistants, Native education counsellors, social workers, child and youth workers, psychologists, and attendance counsellors all play an important role in supporting students and contributing to a positive learning and teaching environment. In schools where respectful interactions are encouraged and modelled, prevention is occurring at all times. A positive school climate also includes the participation of the school community, including parents, and the broader community, which can have a major impact on the success of all students in the school. (pp. 2-3)

The policy memo formulates a vantage point from which it comes to appear both natural and advisable that safe schools not only be framed as an interpersonal matter, but that this matter be taken up quite readily, in and through the school context, by the extended community of professionals such as social workers and other mental health providers. Indeed, the process of enlisting professional supports in the community is so taken for granted that *PPM 145* (2007; 2009b), as a matter of straightforward procedure, refers to another policy memo that outlines the protocol for developing external partnerships with professionals in the community. *Policy Program Memorandum 149*, entitled "Protocol for Partnerships With External Agencies for Provision of Services by Regulated Health Professionals, Regulated Social Service Professionals, and Paraprofessionals" (2009b, p. 9) is designed to "ensure that school boards work resourcefully with agencies or organizations that have professional expertise to provide appropriate support to students, parents, and teachers" (p. 10). In this context, *PPM 149* (2009b) may stand in as a clear example of the government's (neoliberal) commitment to reducing levels of direct government

intervention by redirecting our gaze away from government resources and towards non-government and private sources of support located in communities.

In order to provide examples of community resources and programs to which school boards *may* turn when promoting school safety, *PPM 145* (2007; 2009b) refers to a ministry safe schools report entitled *Safe Schools Policy and Practice: An Agenda for Action* (2006). This safe schools report outlines exemplary models of community based successful practices that can be emulated by school boards in their efforts to promote positive student relations. One of the programs that is highlighted by this safe schools report is provided by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) in partnership with the Ministry of Education, known as The Fourth R Program (R for Relationships). The Fourth R Program is described as a comprehensive violence prevention and healthy relationship program. This program is touted for being able to encourage students to make sound personal decisions, deter inappropriate behaviour, and thereby contribute to an overall culture of respect in schools. What we see, thus, is the responsibilization of teachers and health-related educators to seek solutions to what is a narrowly defined set of problems such as student violence, poor behaviour, and unhealthy interpersonal peer relations among individual students. However, the past decade, a period marked by large-scale social, economic, and political transformations, has witnessed increased levels of job insecurities, intensification of work, and reduced level of public services, resulting in teachers and health-related educators being effectively responsibilized for seeking solutions to an increasing range of social, economic, and political problems. This process of responsibilization emerges as a powerful technique of government precisely because it is grounded in the naturalness of therapeutic (or *psychologistic*) discourses of violence prevention and health promotion.

The effect: Neoliberal programming via therapeutic initiatives and support

The narrative that the sum total of all of the personal relationships within a school will create a positive climate if these relationships are founded in respect, employs what Ratner (2006) discusses as *psychologism*: using psychological or therapeutic principles to ultimately improve a social environment. The assumption of psychologism is that if enough individuals are helped to improve their psychological competencies and cease their anti-social behaviour, their community will be a pro-social place. This assumption is largely challenged by cultural psychologists, social anthropologists, social democratic theorists, sociologists, and philosophers who argue that the historical dimension and development of psychological phenomena, or individual mental health, must be explained in terms of specific social conditions, policies, organization, power, class, and ideologies (Ratner, 2006; Vygotsky, 1994; Durkheim, 1964; Marx & Engels, 1964, to name a few). That is to say, human psychology or mental health and interpersonal relations are understood by many social theorists as organic parts of active life-processes within definite conditions (Ratner, 2006). For example, understanding interpersonal relationships among children and youth entails a general consideration that children in families are exposed to work and social pressures via their parents. Parents' work and social experiences outside the family affect their relations with their children. Consequently, what appears to be a personal interaction between a parent and child in the home bears the imprint of socio-cultural factors. Likewise, what appears to be an interpersonal interaction between two students or a group of students in schools, bears the imprint of family, work, and social pressures and influences. However, because there is no mention in discipline policies of socio-cultural factors that influence peer relations in schools; and, because discipline policies eschew an analysis based on premises that trace the form and content of individual behaviour to broader socio-political contexts; politics and public policies are absolved of any responsibility for having an adverse effect on individual interactions.

It is the above-mentioned kind of *psychologistic* assumptions within discipline policies that allow the Ministry of Education to respond to a range of concerns about safe schools with what Rose and Miller (1992) would identify as a neoliberal program, such as the Fourth R Program. Indeed, psychologism is consistent with neoliberalism. As noted, psychologism ignores public policies (such as reductions in social services, curtailing collective bargaining, wage freezes, cost increases, job losses, corporate tax breaks) that contribute to individual stress, anger, drug use, violence, and consequently to school safety concerns. Psychologism removes the possibility that inappropriate behaviour persists among some students in schools because of a failure to address the larger-scale causes of school safety problems, including political decisions that undermine individual, family, and community well-being. Instead, psychologism focuses on promoting knowledge and empowerment programs that will help individuals, in this case students, make good choices, deal with their anger, drug problem, or stress. Proponents of psychologism teach individuals communication techniques to resolve conflicts; teach individuals how to think (develop cognitive processes) in order to conceptually reframe situations so that individuals can generate more positive emotions; teach meditation to alleviate stress, self-control to avoid addictions, behaviour modification to improve social behaviour, and so on (I shall discuss this point in full in the final section of this chapter). Thus, employing psychologistic principles in discipline policies complements neoliberalism in that, at the same time that the government's responsibility for safe schools and mental health is scaled back, the responsibilities of social workers, psychologists, and mental health community agencies are extended via a requirement to teach the psychological processes and techniques that are designed to improve peer relations.

CAMH’s mental health programs and practices as advanced liberal technologies, guidelines on how to promote mental health in schools

In 2006, the rationale for the partnership between the Ministry of Education and CAMH was as follows: “As Ontario moves from a [student discipline] system focused on zero tolerance to one of prevention, the work of CAMH's Centre for Prevention Science is poised to make a difference in the mental health of Ontario’s youth” (CAMH, 2006, para. 4). Part of the vision to make a difference in the mental health of students includes providing guidelines for educators and practitioners endeavouring to undertake prevention and intervention initiatives related to improving the mental health of children and youth. In so doing, CAMH reflects a certain interest in governing professional practice with a view to shaping practitioners’ intervention decisions in desired -- cost-minimizing -- directions. This interest is reflected in two distinct strategies. The first strategy is to assert that mental health promotion is the preferred practice of prevention and intervention where the behaviour and well-being of children and youth in schools are concerned. The second asserts that mental health promotion strategies should conform to standardized evidence-based best practice guidelines. Both discursive strategies work to constrain the discretion to which practitioners otherwise lay claim based on their expert knowledge, training, and experience; in so doing, the strategies exemplify advanced liberal technologies of rule that enable governing at a distance.

Mental health promotion is the preferred practice of prevention and intervention programs

Recall that emphasizing health promotion initiatives is the Liberal government’s approach to minimizing government health spending while finding effective strategies to encourage individuals to adopt lifelong health habits that will both improve their health and

sustain the health care system. Although CAMH is not a government agency, program, or service, the centre receives a portion if its funding from the Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network (TC-LHIN). Thus, if CAMH does not meet its performance standards or obligations, which are set within a framework of sound business practices, the TC-LHIN has the right to adjust, read: reduce, funding received by CAMH. It is worth noting as well that CAMH also receives a portion of its funding from private sources, sources that uphold business customs, standards, and culture. Thus, CAMH's rationale for health promotion initiatives is much in keeping with a business management ethos of assessments of costs and benefits. For example, mental health promotion, we are told, is beneficial because it teaches people how to cultivate positive mental health. Furthermore, we are told, people who have positive mental health experience greater resilience, miss fewer days at work, use fewer health care services, and experience lower levels of chronic conditions. Conversely, it is pointed out, people with poor mental health suffer debilitating effects that adversely affect the population's health. The examples provided to support this claim include: depression, which has one of the highest disease burdens and economic costs of any chronic condition in Ontario; mental illness, which has been shown to carry an economic burden close to $ 51 billion in 2003 across Canada; and, mental health claims which have been shown to constitute the fastest growing category of disability payments.

Thus, the key message in CAMH's comprehensive approach to mental health promotion is that anything less than flourishing mental health is associated with higher rates of chronic disease, impairment, and experiences with disability. Developing the health capacities of individuals and communities thus comes to mean that CAMH is endeavouring to lessen the burden on the health care system by reducing the number of individuals who would require costly

services. It is clear from the website that CAMH's health promotion plan is not solely an altruistic endeavour. The financial benefits procured by the population's health appear to be an appealing by-product, if not purpose, of health promotion. As we see, promoting mental health among children and youth becomes aligned with wider neoliberal political and health goals (Lemke, 2001; Rose, 1999). As such, the endeavour serves as an example of one of the "multiple and delicate networks that connect the lives of individuals, groups and organizations to the objectives of authorities" (Rose & Miller, 1992, p. 176). While this may or may not be a bad thing, it is a clear phenomenon worth noting given that it is this kind of assessment of economic costs and benefits, that well-serve the objectives of government authorities and that is used to convince practitioners within the field that mental health promotion is both necessary and effective.

Mental health promotion strategies should conform to standardized evidence-based best practice guidelines

CAMH goes beyond merely trying to convince mental health practitioners of the importance of promoting mental health, CAMH cautions against using approaches to mental health promotion that are not evidenced-based. In particular, CAMH recommends ten general practices in health promotion for children and youth that are identified as best practices. These best practices are recommended on the grounds that they are time and cost-effective, based on research findings and clinical practice, and have measurable effectiveness. These practices are said to show the utmost commitment by practitioners to providing the best possible quality care for clients. These practices are:

1. Address and modify risk and protective factors that indicate possible mental health concerns [risk factors include insecure attachment, family violence, pervasive social conflict; protective factors include social skills, family harmony, good attachments to community].
2. Intervene in multiple settings, with a focus on schools.
3. Focus on skill building, empowerment, self-efficacy and individual resilience, and respect.

4. Train non-professionals to establish caring and trusting relationships.
5. Involve multiple stakeholders.
6. Provide comprehensive support systems that focus on peer and parent-child relations, and academic performance.
7. Adopt multiple interventions.
8. Address opportunities for organizational change, policy development and advocacy.
9. Demonstrate a long-term commitment to program planning, development and evaluation.
10. Ensure that information and services provided are culturally appropriate, equitable and holistic. (CAMH, 2009, para. 3)

CAMH's practices, in their particulars, are congruent with orientations that are, again, individualizing and depoliticizing. For example, families and communities identified in these guidelines as important sites of support for children and youth are discussed as if they are able to operate in this role without financial or other resources from government sources. Where there is discussion of mentorship programs, community support programs, self-help and peer support groups that should be resourced to develop caring and trusting relationships with children and youth, these supports are presented as existing in an unproblematic way in a naturalized community. Where there is discussion of how families will benefit from education, mentoring, community support, and learning about processes of problem solving (including attention to the emotional atmosphere in the home), practical matters -- as simple as families actually having the available time and opportunities to participate in these learning processes -- are overlooked. Where there is discussion of policy development and advocacy, the proposed strategies are consistent with understanding mental health as a public health issue. Practitioners are told to be aware of and monitor upcoming legislation and government initiatives, in order to identify and influence change that incorporates a mental health promotion approach.

While on the face of it, it is difficult to argue that practitioners of mental health promotion should not take up best practice guidelines for promoting mental health, given that these are supported by evidence. However, there are key silences in these best-practice guidelines

that cause pause for concern. There is a marked failure to think about and discuss obligations and responsibilities for mental health that may attach to other sectors of the polity. Simultaneously, there is a closing down of considerations of other methods of promoting the well-being of children and youth. Indeed, other practices and methods of promoting the well-being of children and youth could focus on lobbying for policy and legislative change. Such methods could teach children, youth, and their families to critically reflect upon the broader socio-political contexts that shape their health and well-being. Children and youth could also be taught about the processes of policy development and legislation formation and ways of disrupting these processes. Upon such reflection, students could learn how policies and initiatives determine precisely what it is that they are invited to consider, and not consider, as factors affecting their mental health.

There are, indeed, several levels on which the arguments for best practices can be challenged. Indeed, the claim that *the evidence* clearly indicates *the superiority* of evidence-based or best practices has been questioned by researchers who subscribe to other interpretations of what the available evidence suggests (Parker & Fletcher, 2007; Wampold, 2006).Williams and Garner (2002) note that "the absence of evidence of effectiveness is not the same as absence of effectiveness. Not all … [interventions] are studied to the same extent" (p. 9). On a similar note, Lambert (2006) shows concern about the hierarchy of evidence within which data is collected for evidence-based practices and questions what is understood to constitute the gold standard of best practice. Lambert (2006) ultimately shows that the conceptualization of evidence, as it is understood by proponents of evidence-based practices, holds a bias toward research that focuses on individual-level variables and cost-efficient interventions which, in so doing, fails to give adequate consideration to qualitative research findings that identify a range of social, economic,

and political influences on health. Such qualitative findings often signal a need for interventions designed to address the contextual features of people's lives.

Despite the many contestable features of claims that particular health promoting activities should be supported because they are evidence-based, it is a concept that is used by CAMH as if both its meaning and its implications are self-evident. In this way, the language of evidence-based practices operates as a discursive strategy for directing the clinical choices of practitioners by undermining the credibility of a range of intervention methods that are not evidence-based and thus dubbed sub-standard, or deemed ineffective, idiosyncratic, or worse, based on opinion or folklore. There is always room, however, for practitioners who are presented with evidence-based insights, and the guidelines and protocols to which these insights give rise, to adapt the prescriptions embodied therein to accord with their own clinical insights and practice contexts (Armstrong, 2007). As a practitioner in classrooms, I would often risk surrendering the best in quality care of my clients by probing the absences found in health promotion materials. Although the discussions that such absences provoked are not standardized, measurable, or auditable, students found them useful, and I found them more empowering than evidence-based interventions that I was directed to choose. I often found students to be quite adept at developing innovative directions for health promotion. Students would sometimes conclude that the costs of equitably distributing income are lower than the costs of disability payments to individuals adversely impacted by inequitable social policies. In general, when students were encouraged to think about issues using a wide conceptual framework, they would often want to pursue actions that had less to do with developing individual capacities for resilience and more to do with social reform and collective buoyancy.

Mental health literacy in secondary schools

In the context of realizing the goal of safe effective schools, the school district has emerged as a contemporary neoliberal site for the coordination of mental health promoting activities. These health promoting activities and initiatives, I have noticed, are typically welcomed by school board employees and, as such, tend to be benignly situated and peripheral to the critical examination of educational policy. Thus, in this section, I shall centralize and critically examine one of CAMH's initiatives regarding positive mental health and stress, a curriculum resource posted on CAMH's website and available for schools. This third part of my analysis constitutes an effort to highlight the far reach of neoliberal technologies of rule by revealing how discourses surrounding health, risk, and lifestyle are deployed through school mental health programs and target children and youth. In particular I shall consider how CAMH's curriculum on positive mental health and stress operates to construct neoliberal subjects. Correspondingly, I shall show how these constructions work to align the conduct of students with the goals of government, rather than work, necessarily, to improve the lives or mental health of children and youth. Ultimately, I shall raise for consideration that perhaps when students point out that mental health promotion programs do not work, these students intuit that the programs are not designed, foremost, to work for them but are designed instead to work for the systems within which students find themselves embedded.

When critically examining how CAMH's curriculum on positive mental health and stress operates to construct neoliberal subjects, I shall frame my discussion using the Foucauldian concept of neoliberal governmentality. Following Foucault, Hansen (2004) discusses how the *governmentalization* of everyday life involves a form of discipline that is "marked by an increasing reliance on the motivation of individuals towards self-management, self-monitoring

and self-correction" (p. 160). This process includes both the manner in which individuals come to understand their lives, and the manner in which individuals come to manage and better their lives.

The manner in which individuals come to understand their lives is influenced by discourses that create and circulate dominant understandings of how individuals *should* conduct themselves. Subsequently, individuals are invited to self-examine and reconstruct the self consonant with the dominant version circulated through contemporary discourses. With specific relevance to my ensuing discussion, Galvin (2002) shows that the contemporary version of a healthy citizen within dominant health discourses is that of a neoliberal citizen: "someone who actively participates in social and economic life, makes rational choices and is independent, self-reliant, and responsible" (p. 108). Ill health, he argues, clashes too uncomfortably with this image. Thus, he states, it is no longer acceptable for individuals to exist in a physically unhealthy state. Given that physically unhealthy states are unacceptable within neoliberal societies, individuals are directed, through particular techniques, to become enterprising selves: to work on or invest in their health (Rose, 1999).

One of the ways individuals are invited to become enterprising selves is through health discourses that involve discussions of rewards and warnings of risks (Rose, 1999). For example, often health related initiatives will warn of the danger of bodily neglect while they simultaneously instil within individuals a desire to achieve biological self-betterment (King, 2003). The attempt to instil this desire for self-betterment is complemented by the use of inducements towards self reform that is lauded as being both good for the individual and for the society. That is to say, health is promoted not only for the benefits derived by the healthy person, such as longer life, fewer health-related problems, increased energy, and improved fitness. It is promoted for the benefit derived by society from a healthy person's productivity and contribution to their world.

Governmentality, in this sense, creates spaces where forms of self-care and discipline can converge under an umbrella of neoliberal rationalities with the anticipated result of producing a self-governing, healthy subject who will engage with society in industrious and beneficial ways. Implicit in this rationality is the converse message that individuals should not burden society with ill health.

As a case in point of these discursive strategies, as noted, I have chosen to examine one of CAMH's curriculum resources on positive mental health and stress. In the previous section I made reference to another of CAMH's resources, the Fourth R Program, which is approved by the Ministry of Education as a best practice in mental health promotion and school safety. The Fourth R Program, however, is costly, which, when I was delivering workshops in schools, prohibited my full access to it. Thus, when I was working in schools I opted to deliver PDF resources that I could download. One such resource is a lesson plan for grade 11 students entitled: *Grade 11 Health and Physical Education - Healthy active living education Module # 2: Positive Mental Health and Stress* (CAMH, 2000). This lesson plan meets the expectations of the mental health component of the Grade 11 Ontario Health and Physical Education Curriculum. The development of this resource was funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education in partnership with Toronto Public Health, CAMH, and the Halton District School Board. The key sections of this resource that I examine serve as an example of standard practice in mental health promotion and education in schools. Thus, I have not chosen to critique this lesson plan for any exceptional reasons. Rather, the lesson plan represents an approach that is common and pervasive in the health promotion field. I shall break down my analysis into three parts: the first part looks at the dominant version of mental health promoted in the lesson plan; the second discusses the ways in

which students are governed in their lesson; the third reveals the incentives students are offered for their compliance.

The dominant version of mental health

In the Positive Mental Health and Stress module's narrative, healthy students are explicitly positioned as resilient, happy, responsible, and productive citizens (CAMH, 2000, p. 2). Fairclough (2003) writes that what is stated in text must always be presented in light of what is not stated: "What is made explicit is always grounded in what is left implicit. In this sense, making assumptions is one way of being intertextual" (p. 17). Thus, in light of what the module states about healthy students, unhealthy students are implicitly positioned as fragile, unhappy, irresponsible, and a burden to society. This version of mental health (and ill health) may be understood by what Petersen and Lupton (1996) have to say:

> In the context of Western economies, in which expanding production and accumulation of wealth are important, 'good health' is that condition which is least disruptive of production: the 'healthy citizen' is the citizen who can work continuously over her or his lifetime. Good health, therefore, is related to virtuous citizenship because of the benefits that extend from the individual to the social body. A healthy person is able to take part, to the best of his or her physical ability, in contributing to the nation's prosperity. (p. 67)

Ultimately, Petersen and Lupton (1996) show that concepts of health and well-being are deemed important elements for being a good, that is, productive, neoliberal citizen.

In the module, students are invited early on to consider how their health affects their ability to be hard-working, goal oriented, conscientious individuals. In surprisingly unambiguous terms, students are advised that good mental health, and the ability to manage their stress, will increase their resilience, their persistence in achieving their goals, and their ability to work productively. Respectively, these traits line up with those mentioned above by Petersen and Lupton (1996): resilience is the condition that is least disruptive of production; persistence is the

ability to work continuously over a lifetime; and, working productively extends benefits to the social body. Conversely, students are informed that poor mental health, and the inability to manage stress, will increase their risk for unhappiness, illness, and accidents (CAMH, 2000, p. 2; p. 42). Furthermore, students are explicitly advised that healthy people who manage their stress well, not only care for themselves, but also take good care of others. To wit, the lesson states: "Persons who understand stress factors in others make the best bosses"; and, "People who feel alone in the world, who are uninvolved with other people and their community, run a higher risk of illness due to stress" (p. 43). In these statements, we can notice how notions of good and bad citizenship, for example: being a good boss or not being involved in the community, become linked with good and bad health states. Given the correspondence between notions of health, managing stress, and citizenship, students are left to disentangle how their health shapes their citizenship.

Students are also provided with specific (self-enterprising) tasks to manage their mental health and stress, and, thereby, to become better (neoliberal) citizens. These tasks follow what is known as "Healthy Active Living" guidelines: exercising, eating a nourishing diet, getting enough sleep, learning how to relax, thinking positive thoughts, organizing their time well, planning and thinking ahead, expressing their feelings, communicating well with others, and seeking new activities (CAMH, 2000, p. 22). There is an assumption that following such health promoting strategies is an independent accomplishment under the auspices of each student's individual purview. This message disregards that students function within complex relational environments, situations that may inhibit the accomplishment of their tasks. For example, some students may be required to take on the bulk of extended family care giving, or others may need to work after school to subsidize their family's costs of living, situations that may well prevent

their getting enough sleep or learning to relax. Furthermore, the lesson ignores that students may not *want* to "recognize and manage their feelings" or "set and achieve real life goals" in the ways in which their lesson suggests that they should.

The lesson also overlooks that mental health is mediated by a number of social factors, many of which are out of students' immediate control. Although CAMH acknowledges on their website that there are social determinants of health: housing, social status, social support and income, family history, and poverty, these insights are not developed in the lesson plan on mental health and stress. Instead, the lesson plan reduces the health of students to one single factor: personal choice. This message advances a clear push to make students personally responsible for their own health trajectories. In a similar responsibilizing effort, the lesson also reduces the impact of stress on individuals to one single factor: personal freedom. For example, when the lesson discusses stress, it states that while stress is a challenge for everyone, "each of us has a great deal of freedom to decide exactly how much impact stressful events will have on our lives" (CAMH, 2000, p. 43).

By drawing on discourses of freedom and personal choice, the lesson reinstates a number of highly problematic assumptions. First, the lesson assumes that because students can choose to be healthy by adopting appropriate behaviours, illness must be the result of choices made to engage in bad behaviours. In this way, mental and physical illness becomes "an instance of personal moral failure in contemporary times, for if we can choose to be healthy by acting in accordance with the lessons given us by epidemiological and behavioural research, then surely we are culpable if we become ill" (Galvin, 2002, p. 119). In light of this, it should be noted for mental health practitioners that the module's use (or misuse) of notions of freedom and choice could contribute to the stigmatization of students who fit the profile of an unhealthy individual.

Discrimination may occur against those who find themselves less able, for various reasons, to participate in the health-promoting activities outlined for them, which can serve as the basis for "forms of … marginalization that are most likely to affect groups already subject to social disadvantage" (Goss, 1997, p. 6). For example, that (hypothetical) student who has to work after school to supplement the family income, already disadvantaged by low income status, could well also face judgement for being stressed-out, under or over weight, sleep-deprived, or what have you.

Many of the illnesses that the module identifies as physical symptoms or serious illnesses related to stress, such as: high blood pressure, heart attack, ulcers, colitis, stroke, rheumatoid arthritis, depression, and so forth (CAMH, 2000, p. 49); are *not* discussed as *also* being related to congenital predispositions or other complex physical, social, and/or environmental factors. Instead, these chronic illnesses are unproblematically presented as "effects of stress" (p. 45). After telling students that they have the freedom to decide how much impact stress will have on their lives, the implication is that those suffering the "effects of stress" have chosen to suffer those effects, in this case, a chronic illness. In the context of Petersen's and Lupton's (1996) insights about good health equalling good citizenship, those stressed unhealthy students are positioned as bad citizens. They have broken the neoliberal contract. They have not chosen to be resilient, persistent, and productive, and thereby, they are not contributing to their social body, worse, because of their risk for acquiring a chronic illness, they are positioned as a potential financial burden.

Governing the student

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1977) claims that new forms of social discipline became a "political anatomy of detail" (p. 139). Although individuals were less likely to

experience severe punishment, they were also subject to greater rules and regulations regarding the minutia of their lives. For this new governing system to run effectively, an intimate knowledge of the individual was required. The corporeal and soulish lives of individuals needed to be rendered accessible, calculable, and exposed (Foucault, 1977), before being made governable. At the centre of the kind of disciplinary system that Foucault describes, is the goal of regulating conduct through observation and surveillance. The management of individuals is accomplished through a strategy that allows subjects to be governed by a gaze; a gaze that examines the minutia of their lives. In the Positive Mental Health and Stress module, this kind of governing and management of students is accomplished via a "Self-Survey on Well-Being" (CAMH, 2000, p. 5).

The self survey has a series of questions, 32 in total, that, when viewed through a Foucauldian analysis, may be understood as ways of rendering the corporeal and soulish lives of students accessible, calculable, and exposed (Foucault, 1977). Students are asked about their energy level, their daily activities and whether their daily activities are a source of satisfaction. Students are asked if their life has been productive, if their work has value, how they feel about sad things that happen in their lives, if they worry that something bad is going to happen, if they get tense when there is pressure on them, if they concentrate easily, if they feel regret, if they feel isolated, fearful, hopeful, or loved. Students are asked if they experience peace, if they remain calm in frightening situations, feel trapped by life‘s circumstances, and if they feel life is dull (p. 8). Students are then asked to rank, measure, and score their answers and compare this number (which may include decimals) to an average that is provided to them. Ultimately, students are told that their scores give them information about the emotions and areas in their lives where their psychological resources are strong, as well as the areas where strength needs to be developed.

The survey is a kind of appraisal in that its purpose is to identify for students their current or future mental health and stress related problems and then its purpose is to rate students according to their chances for experiencing mental health or stress related problems.

The survey can be understood as a component of the confessional, a reformative strategy. As Townley (1993) describes:

> Part of the value of the confession is that it produces information that becomes part of the individual's self-understanding. It is also important to notice that these practices shade into other practices based not on merely accessing individuals, but allowing or training individuals to assess themselves. Training enables individuals to identify what is happening within themselves in order to become more effective. (p. 536)

The survey shapes students' self-understanding in specific ways by creating categories against which students can define their thoughts, feelings, actions, or inaction. The purpose of this exercise is to show to students if the trajectory of their thoughts, feelings, activities, expectations, all the minutia of their thoughts and movements, is healthy. Thus, the lesson develops what Goss (1997) discusses as a normative governing power that creates an informal pressure to conform to the dominant standard of health. As already noted, the standard of health that is upheld for students seeks to fashion a certain type of healthy student: one who is aware of their problem areas, remains calm under pressure, is able to respond in positive ways to difficult situations, feels confident, easily stands up for themself, and has few regrets. That is, the healthy student is an individual who is knowledgeable of lifestyle risk, responsible, rational and free, which happens to be the criteria for being a good neoliberal citizen.

It is through what Turner (1992) has called "the institutions of normative coercion" that individuals in contemporary society experience discipline and surveillance in all aspects of their everyday life. Turner used the term coercive, however, not to describe a violent means of control, because institutions such as the school or mental health profession are typically seen as legitimate

means of authority. In this way, they are unproblematically able to exert a kind of normalizing coercion via moral authority through defining, diagnosing, and offering solutions for problems, illnesses, or moral weaknesses. In this sense, the survey "exercises a hegemonic authority because … [its] coercive character is … disguised and masked by … [its] normative involvement in the troubles and problems of individuals" (p. xiv). The survey, therefore, is both coercive and normative, but perhaps most important, benignly situated as a support to students.

Incentives students are offered for their compliance

To have meaning, health promotion requires something more than offering definitions and measuring and normalizing feelings, actions, and habits. Health promotion must produce a certain type of productive individual. To this end, Foucault (1977) discusses how the body must not only be made known and visible, it must be continuously and carefully scrutinized, programmed, and exercised, its activities reconstituted for efficiency and productivity. Furthermore, for even greater efficiency, such efforts must encompass the entire social body. CAMH's lesson plan on positive mental health and stress contains assignments for students that include specific tasks and activities that may be understood as a Foucauldian effort to program and exercise students and the student body. Perhaps more indicative of this Foucauldian phenomena, however, is the evaluation process that students must undergo throughout the process of completing their tasks and activities.

As part of their lesson plan on Positive Mental Health, students are expected to demonstrate their ability to use stress management techniques (CAMH, 2000). These techniques include a variety of strategies for stress reduction that target the body, such as: controlling heart rate, respiration, blood pressure, muscular tension, posture, breathing, the general level of emotional arousal due to stress, the "noise" in their life, visual images in their mind, aggressive

feelings, negative thoughts; and, students also are introduced to learning the art of laughter therapy (CAMH, 2000, p. 36). Students effectively are turned into what Foucault (1977) would call docile bodies. According to Foucault (1977) the docile body is subjected, used, transformed, and improved under modalities of control that are uninterrupted, constantly coercive, and efficient. In this case, students are expected to follow particular modalities of control, such as those listed for their choosing: relaxation techniques, physical exercises, biofeedback, mind-body connection, massage, meditation, progressive muscular relaxation, guided imagery/visualization, or hypnotism (CAMH, 2000, p. 36). Students quite clearly are not left to devise their own creative methods for improving their mental health or reducing their stress, they must instead follow the best practice standards and guidelines that work to show students the correct use of their bodies in quite specific and infinitesimal ways.

Students are then assigned a project which involves producing a pamphlet, poster, video clip, public service announcement, newsletter article, or other similar product, that assists them in communicating information to their peers about how to cope with stress and improve mental health. Again, students must disseminate information to their peers about one of the above listed stress reduction techniques, after having practiced and learned their chosen technique. Through a multiplier effect, for example, students first learn and then teach so that the assignment ultimately targets the general student body. The assignment is what Foucault (1977) discusses as the art of composing forces to obtain an efficient machine, creating a productive force that is greater than its elements. Discipline becomes an art of composing forces when an individual body, having been properly trained and exercised, becomes an element that is properly articulated and then inserted into a larger machine. Whereas Foucault uses the example of the soldier in a military,

here, students and the student body are disciplined similarly. Ultimately, under such disciplinary tactics, a leader can undertake a precise command of their forces.

The students' assignments, and the students, are evaluated with precise measurements of how well they articulate their bodies, not just when they are demonstrating the command of their newly learned relaxation technique, but also according to the way they work on and present their newly learned technique. Students are told that assessing and evaluating how they work is just as important as assessing and evaluating what they produce (CAMH, 2000, p. 28). The assessment tools to which students are subjected include a Learning Skills Observation Checklist, administered by the teacher, and a Learning Skills Assessment Reflection Tool, completed by the student. Students are required to self-reflect on their team work, independence, resourcefulness, time management, and work habits, which are further assessed through specific questions that probe students to monitor and measure their efficiency, effectiveness, productivity, persistence, self-direction, cooperation, and perseverance. The teacher is required to assess students' communication skills which includes assessing students' abilities to communicate information and ideas and students' abilities to communicate for different audiences and purposes. Teachers are to consider the following when monitoring and measuring students' skills: knowledge and understanding; ability to send verbal messages, for example using clear articulation, interesting diction, effective voice volume, eye contact, appropriate facial expression, body language and gestures, and effective pacing; ability to listen; and ability to present information with controlled use of voice and thoughtful sequencing of ideas. In total, there are five pages in the lesson plan dedicated to the surveillance and examination of the minutia of students' work habits and presentation skills.

A high score acts as a perk, a reward, for students who not only show their understanding of the material presented to them and their ability to properly communicate and disseminate this material to their peers, but who submit evidence that they have complied with a specific regime of expectations, a regime that monitors their capabilities for appropriate facial gestures and voice inflection when communicating, and a regime that serves to applaud the health conscious, stress-free individual who controls their body states. This aspect of the lesson plan speaks to what many theorists have referred to when they write of the increasing governing of everyday life (Foucault, 1991; Osborne, 1997; Rose, 1999; Rose & Miller, 1992). The assignments raise profound questions about how students are to live in an embodied, relational, healthy way, one that is reified for its usefulness to the student body; and, conversely, the assignments raise questions about the possibility of living or becoming otherwise.

Conclusion

The above analysis reveals a number of points of contact between the strategies for promoting mental health in schools and the neoliberal policy goals and orientations that the Ontario Liberal government has pursued since 2003. Various discursive strategies are visible within ministry policy documents and CAMH mental health promotion materials that allow the problematic effects of neoliberal government policies to disappear from view as significant factors contributing to the problems that children and youth make manifest through their behaviour in schools. In addition, the responsibilization of schools and communities to promote mental health in the education sector complements and facilitates provincial government efforts to reduce spending and divest government responsibility for providing comprehensive mental health support services

Having explored the links between neoliberal policy directions, strategies advocated for promoting mental health in schools, the discursive mechanisms through which practitioners are invited to align their practices with the pragmatic goals of government, it is apparent that mental health promotion programs, although positioned as benign, may be understood as a kind of neoliberal exercise. The healthy are praised, the sick are censured, and the government is alleviated from direct fiscal responsibility. Although I do not want to deny that some students may derive benefits from these programs, I do not want to overlook how these programs operate as a powerful form of neoliberal governmentality bound up in economic rationalities and constructions of the ideal healthy student. Indeed, from laughing to quieting the noise in one's life to learning how to appreciate "certain sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and feelings that have pleasant associations" (p. 36), the lesson plan on Positive Mental Health and Stress transforms the mundane and personal into political encounters with the state. Any failure on the part of the student to reform their health, is to be found within themselves. They are not working hard enough, not exercising self-control, or perhaps not laughing properly. If these programs do not work for students, the program's logic leads to the conclusion that it is because the student is not taking proper responsibility for their health. Clearly, this program works well for a government that is divesting its responsibilities.

Chapter 6: Glossifying diversity, glossing over group identity. Character development in Ontario's schools

When I was a mental health counsellor in secondary schools, I did not have to look far to see how diversity was taken up by the institution. In showcases set up to celebrate school character were pictures and artefacts from Aboriginal ceremonies, cultural fairs, cooking contests of international cuisine, maps from around the world, and snapshots of students in the traditional garb of their culture. Indeed the school's diversity would be captured and glossified, complete with a collage of happy colourful faces, a visual translation of the multicultural mosaic of their school community. Yet, the schools in which I worked were predominantly white. The clients with whom I worked, however, were not representative of the predominantly white student population but were indeed more representative of the faces in the posters on display. This is to say, in my four years of experience as a counsellor in high schools (2007 - 2011), I came to notice that a disproportionate number of diverse students landed in the office of the school mental health worker. I could not ignore the dissonance between the school's cause for celebration, and my cause for concern. As I would wait for my clients in their hallways, I set out to determine how diversity work gets done in schools. I set out to determine what, if diversity work does not necessarily appeal to our sense of social justice, is its appeal in schools.

Schools across Ontario continue to undertake a range of initiatives to build diverse and inclusive communities. Character development programs are a primary means by which schools articulate their commitment to an inclusive and equitable climate for all members of the school community. Two key ministry documents provide the policy and programmatic structure for

character development action plans: *Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008b) and *Character Development in Action, K-12: Successful Practices in Ontario's Schools* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008a). These documents are replete with statements about the importance of promoting diversity and provide concrete models of exemplary diversity initiatives undertaken within Ontario. I shall offer a critical examination of these stated aims and tendered examplars through textual analysis, theoretical and conceptual engagement, and personal reflection on three of my own experiences in schools. Ultimately, I aim to enhance understanding of how well-intentioned attempts to create a more inclusive environment may unwittingly reinforce practices that support exclusion and inequity.

After contextualizing the problematic, my analysis reveals that the very pillars of character development reinforce neoliberal principles of social harmony, community cooperation, and a shared sense of belonging. On the face of it, harmony and cooperation are good practices to want in our school communities. However, highlighting the importance of social harmony can conceal the inequalities, divisions, and cleavages that exist at systemic and institutional levels. I argue that, by obscuring such disparities, there is an adverse affect on those students who are navigating them in their everyday lives. Living a reality of inequity that is not acknowledged or mitigated within a school community silences that lived experience for some students, which may well account for why some of them would end up in my office. Thus, when I question to what school diversity policies and practices are appealing when they appeal to diversity, I elucidate what they are concealing, and why. These questions are part of a larger exploration of how Ontario's school policies and practices de-politicize and neutralize social inequalities in order to sustain the governing status quo: neoliberalism.

The challenge of diversity in institutions, general considerations and specific experiences

Benschop (2001) offers a central critique of how the term diversity operates within organizations. In contrast to terms such as race, class, or gender, which are "often represented as sources of social inequality in organizations," the term diversity does not so powerfully speak to a reality of societal inequities (p. 1166). Thus, Benschop (2001) raises a number of important questions about the politics of the turn to diversity that has led to the term diversity being used. For example, she discusses how the turn to diversity has meant that the vocabulary of equal opportunity, social justice, anti-racism, and anti-oppression are silenced or removed from policy. Given that these vocabularies have complex histories that are interwoven with political movements and struggles for social equality, the histories that accompany them also are effaced. Thus, one of Benschop's (2001) aims is to situate diversity work within organizations in relation to the longer history of political activism in the struggle against forms of social oppression.

Using Benschop's (2001) work as a starting point for my discussion in this chapter, I look at Ontario's Character Development initiative in education in order to situate it within recent political struggles for change. I examine character development precisely because this initiative is part of the Liberal government's progressive discipline strategy that was put in place in response to a human rights complaint against the Ministry of Education. The complaint brought public attention to systemic racism and discrimination within education discipline policies and school cultures. Furthermore, the complaint itself may be positioned within a much longer history of anti-racism or anti-discrimination work. It is striking, I argue, that there is no reference made within the ministry's character development initiative, designed to promote diversity in schools,

to discussions of, or historic struggles against oppression, let alone to the reality of systemic discrimination that has existed in Ontario's public education system. In light of this, my ultimate aim is to place the ministry's diversity work back within the context of the call for anti-oppression in education as discussed in the human rights complaint against Ontario's Ministry of Education.

I start with the premise that, if the term diversity is taking the place of other terms -- such as anti-racism and equal opportunity -- in education policy, then it is important to examine the specific effects of how the term diversity is used. In what follows, I choose three experiences from my time working in schools, the subsequent analysis of which will reveal how diversity is understood and how diversity practices are undertaken. These experiences, perhaps seemingly disparate, are all connected to the Ministry of Education's Character Development initiative. The telling of my experiences is not intended to be an idiosyncratic recounting of what occurred in my presence but instead is intended to make connections between my experiences and their genesis in the policies that uphold the diversity practices within character education programs. In so doing, I shall exemplify critical theorists' growing concerns that mainstream diversity programs in education are limited in how they can make a positive difference for racialized groups, First Nations, Inuit, and Metis Peoples, or members of minority status religious and ethnic groups.

First experience

My first experience is about community consensus decision making, a practice that drives character education in schools. One of the schools in which I worked has a dress code that is said to be reflective of the school's character: students are required to wear specific colours, restricted to solid white, navy, or tan khaki. It was a common occurrence for me to witness students being disciplined (which included being sent home) for their non-compliance to this code, non-

compliance that their disciplinarians would remark, spoke to the student's character. I queried why, given the regular incidents of non-compliance to the code, was such a code in existence. After all, it seemed to me that enforcing a colour coded dress policy in a publicly funded school was an unnecessary use of school resources and staff energy. It also seemed clear that, to a number of students, the code had little to do with, or for them, other than offer a point of resistance and contention. The consistent response to my questioning the purpose of the school dress code was that it was something that parents wanted. The policy had been agreed upon during consultations with the school community as part of a consensus building activity to shape school character.

Second experience

My second experience has to do with a day of celebration and awareness of Aboriginal cultures, a common practice in character education. Some of the students with whom I worked had been organizing, as part of a class project, a day of workshops to raise awareness about the issues with which Aboriginal communities have contended and continue to contend. The students wanted to focus specifically on their neighboring First Nation community. They were inviting a variety of guest speakers who could discuss the impact of residential schools, land claim contentions, the point of contact with Europeans, and the oral history of the reserve neighboring the school community. As I watched the planning of the day's events unfold over several weeks, it was clear to me that the students were being directed to be more inclusive of non-contentious discussions. As a result, the students decided, somewhat reluctantly, to include more celebratory workshops. The Aboriginal awareness day grew longer, albeit more positive, and became a day of celebration and awareness of Aboriginal cultures. Additional workshops included: teachings on traditional medicines, performances of traditional drumming and dancing, lessons on lacrosse

skills, tastes of traditional foods, and displays of Aboriginal arts. The event was lauded as a great success by the local media. It was described as a day of positive experiences that promoted awareness of Aboriginal cultures while also exemplifying the importance of positive community relations.

Third experience

My third experience relates to a news story about a school in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) wherein the student body is mostly racialized and the teachers are mostly white. When I was conducting research into school board website images of diversity, there were some sites, mostly from school boards in the GTA, that struck me as doing a particularly good job of representing and discussing school diversity. One such website is that of the Peel District School Board. The website is translated into more than 20 languages, there is a calendar of holy days and holidays to acknowledge the rich diversity of faith and cultural traditions within the various school communities, and diversity is discussed in specific terms of race, gender, faith, ethnicity, culture, class, and so forth. As an accurate reflection of the student body, most of the faces in the images on the site are racialized students and students in clothing specific to their religion or culture. When I was discussing my research with a teacher candidate who lives in the GTA, this person brought to my attention media reports about the Peel district's on-going and significant racial tensions. These tensions result from what is described as a culture of whiteness, prejudice, and racism among administrators and teachers that is having adverse effects on the predominantly racialized student body, parents, and community members.

For my purposes, these three experiences are important only to the extent that they provide the ground from which my discussions may begin about current diversity work being undertaken in Ontario's schools. The following sections are organized according to my analysis

of these experiences. The analysis of my first experience exposes how the ministry's directive for consensus building across differences emphasizes harmony and marginalizes dissent. Analysis of my second experience reveals that the resources and exemplary models made available to students regarding character development, invite students to evade realities of cultural contention in favor of cultural celebrations. Analysis of the third experience looks at how school diversity initiatives are oriented around those who are *already in place* rather than being geared towards addressing cultural conflicts inherent to emerging demographic changes in school communities. Since little attention is given to social dissention, contention, and conflict, I argue that opportunities for board staff, students, and school community members to engage with the complexities of diversity are limited.

Analysis of the first experience

In discussions of my first experience, I show that the implementation of a school dress code is reflective of how community consensus can result in policies that ensure that students, at the very least, *appear* to be on common ground. I argue that consensus building is constrained by an emphasis on transcending differences and by the presumption that a state of equality exists for all community members. I show how consensus building sets up certain parameters for dialogue that have particular marginalization effects on members of non-dominant groups, subordinating minority voices. Indeed, consensus is an ironic practice to endorse within an initiative that seeks to be responsive to the needs and aspirations of diverse communities.

The development and use of consensus building in school communities across Ontario

Recent interest in the concept of consensus building in school communities across Ontario can be traced specifically to the policy document *Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008b). This document prescribes the practice of engaging the school community in dialogue in order to build consensus around the principles and practices that will sustain character development in schools. The following excerpts from *Finding Common Ground* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008b) provide the rationale and process for community consultation:

> Character development is the deliberate effort to nurture the universal attributes upon which schools and communities find consensus. These attributes provide a standard for behaviour against which we hold ourselves accountable. They permeate all that happens in schools. They bind us together across the lines that often divide us in society. They form the basis of our relationships and of responsible citizenship. They are a foundation for excellence and equity in education, and for our vision of learning cultures and school communities that are respectful, safe, caring, diverse and inclusive. … Through character, we find common ground. (p. 3)
>
> The increasing diversity of Ontario's population creates an opportunity for us to determine the beliefs and principles we hold in common. When school boards engage a wide cross-section of their communities in building consensus on character attributes, they are, in essence, engaged in a process of finding common ground.
>
> The principles and attributes of character development are universal, based in equity and transcend differences as well as other demographic factors. (p. 6)
>
> The multiple perspectives that exist within our communities demonstrate the need for school boards to be increasingly responsive to the needs and aspirations of their diverse communities. The community consultations on character development conducted by Ontario school boards are expected to follow inclusive processes to ensure that diverse perspectives are heard and included. This ensures that groups from all walks of life achieve consensus on the universal attributes and provide on-going input into their board's character development initiative. (p. 20)

Given that consensus building is described as a way of ensuring the inclusivity of diverse community identities and perspectives, I found it highly curious that my experience with a school policy that resulted from such consensus building involved the community's agreement upon the uniformity of student expression: a school dress code.

Raby (2005) shows that school dress codes tend to be used to mask student diversity and often aim to regulate the expression of young people who are diverse in class, gender, sexuality, race, culture, and so forth. Of course, dress codes are rarely *overtly* classed, gendered, or raced, yet, they do link to class, gender, and race. For example, Leek (2000) argues that school uniforms and dress codes ignore the needs of oppressed or non-dominant groups, including those based on class identity, "to display counter or resistant social identities," evident perhaps through gang wear or presentations of self that challenge "clean" social images (p. 179). Leek (2000) also points out that the homogeneity required through dress codes may in fact be a tactic to hide material inequalities that otherwise would need to be addressed at a broader level. That is, uniforms and dress codes make invisible, and depoliticize, the diversity of a student body through normalization. Similarly, Bodine (2003) argues that banning (what are perceived as being) indicators of gang affiliation, including specific colours or bandanas, can alienate young people who are drawn to such styles and dress, who see this style being condemned, which then in turn becomes a condemnation of them. Indeed, Bodine (2003) argues that authority figures often use the rhetoric of gang clothing and gang violence to defend dress codes, which is especially disconcerting when "gangs" becomes code for "ethnic minorities" in such a way that "may intensify the distorted cultural image of menacing minority males" (p. 51).

Without a doubt, I often witnessed the regulation of student diversity under the authority of the dress code. Those disciplined would include: gay males wearing pink, which violated the

requisite school code colours; Aboriginal students wearing black, or bandannas; and, sometimes students of low socio-economic status would be given an allowance to buy “school spirit wear” if those students identified that they did not have the mandatory coloured clothing and could not afford to buy new clothes for school. I was left wondering if Muslim females who choose to wear the hijab or if a Sikh male wearing a turban would have been required to wear head coverings of school colours. My point is, I rarely saw students of the dominant group being disciplined for dress code violations and when I would point this out, I was assured that the code was enforced consistently and had been agreed upon by the community as the standard against which students must be held accountable. At that point, I was less interested in critiquing the existence or purpose of the code itself, and more interested in understanding the process of consensus building through school community action. I saw the dress code as being part of a larger concern.

McLaren (1993) shows that dress code policies, in some respects, may be understood as implementing a separation of school and street, the street corner being a place where people are classed, gendered, casual, free, relaxed and the school being a place based on the ethos of egalitarianism and work effort. Raby (2005) argues that by way of a dress code, teachers try to prevent the street from entering the classroom. Thus, the dress code has a twofold effect: first it camouflages the diversity of expression and economic disparities of the street; second, and conversely, it conceals power and privilege held in the school community. I see the dress code as being emblematic of the ministry’s guideline for consensus. Consensus, I argue, is a means by which the full cacophony of community expression is prevented from entering the school and a means by which economic and social advantage may be upheld. That is to say, where the ministry prescribes a process for community consensus, I show how this process obscures the discursively and materially rooted unequal relations in which community group members are embedded. In

short, community consensus building severs the school community from the realities of social inequality. This disconnect is my larger concern. That is to say, where Jaffe and Quark (2006) argue that neoliberalism tends to sever economic practices from social realities, I draw parallels to the ministry's education practices, in particular, the practice of consensus. My concern, thus, is over how neoliberal practices are guiding school policy.

Process of community consensus building is neoliberal

As noted above in *Finding Common Ground* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008b), consensus is described as a practice that aims to unite community group members across dividing lines. In coming to consensus on character development initiatives in schools, *Finding Common Ground* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008b) thus highlights belief in shared values, collective challenges, mutual networks, and equal opportunity among diverse community members. The document also bases the process of consensus on a sense of trust, hope, respect, and reciprocity among community members, across their differences. There is a clear emphasis on the importance of social connectedness. At first glance, this process seems to be protecting and promoting diversity and clearly aims to provide a vision of school communities that are respectful, caring, and inclusive. However, by stressing the importance of social cohesion rather than political participation, and by doing so as if equity and mutual tolerance among community members already have been accomplished, this can deemphasize the community's capacity to address enduring injustices.

As Jaffe and Quark (2006) point out, an emphasis on a common values approach to community action rarely urges societies or communities to work together to acknowledge, let alone correct, the growing inequalities that divide members of communities. Instead, community consensus building is used somewhat like a "magic bullet" that policy makers imagine will rescue

communities from the ravages of growing inequalities and "substitute for state investment in social and economic development" (Jaffe & Quark, 2006, p. 206). Jaffe and Quark (2006) show how community action, of the kind seeking to integrate constituent members and groups, has become the preferred corrective to the consequences of neoliberal policy. They state: "Neoliberalism represents a deep restructuring of the cultural, social, political, and economic relations of state, market, and society" that leaves communities "riven with cleavages along multiple axes" and leaves individuals divided along lines of inclusion and exclusion within those communities (p. 207). However, with the presumption of relative equality in the characterization of consensus building and with the suggestion that community members are engaged in a common enterprise, facing shared challenges as members of the same community, consensus building becomes the fabric for community development, notwithstanding fiscal and social disparities (Jaffe & Quark, 2006). Indeed, *Finding Common Ground* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008b) makes no reference to systemic inequalities, economic disparities, or unequal relations among hierarchically ordered social groups, only to "differences" between community members and "lines that often divide us in society" (p. 3) . Where differences and dividing lines are concerned, however, the document only acknowledges the importance of work that will transcend or bridge them, not work that seeks to account for or correct them.

In light of Jaffe and Quark's (2006) insights, in relation to *Finding Common Ground* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008b), we see that the document conceptualizes community capacity building in a way that effaces the consequences of neoliberalism. We can also discern how the document draws on forms of social regulation that are consistent with neoliberal ideas of how communities should develop and respond to change. That is to say, whereas neoliberalism is based upon the assumption that the best outcomes for society will be realized when governments

retreat from involvement in social and other programs, the kind of intervention that results is one that avoids government provision of diversity work or social programming. Instead, responsibility for diversity work is divested to communities. Although it is worth recognizing the importance of social participation and values, it is necessary to point out that the emphasis on community-based solutions is consistent with a neoliberal state that rejects its role in retributive justice, offloading social responsibilities onto families and the volunteer sector. As a result, the ground work for diversity in *Finding Common Ground* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008b) is re-imagined as a positive duty for the school community to take up, after social injustices have been kept safely from view.

We are left with a policy process that underscores how Ontario's diversity creates an opportunity for communities to learn to come together. However, with an emphasis on integrating constituent perspectives and values, this process draws attention from other valid approaches to diversity work, such as those that use a social justice or human rights framework. It also ignores that in diverse and multicultural societies, conflict is to be expected and democratic institutions must learn to manage conflict, differences, and divisions. Perhaps most disquieting for me, however, given my experience with the dress code policy that was voted in after a community consensus building consultation, is the political ambiguity of terms like social cohesion, common ground, collective values, and shared or universal attributes. These ideas can be embraced both by conservatives who want to maintain current social policies, or return to past ones, and by reformers who seek progress. In my experience, the terms *were* in fact embraced by both. The process used to instate a school dress code was that preferred by reformers (the Liberal government) yet the end result was very much reminiscent of the conservative dress codes implemented under the *Safe Schools Act* (2000). These dress codes have by now long been

critiqued for fashioning middle-class, normative, gendered citizens and marginalizing those who do not easily conform.

Perhaps it is the political ambiguity of the terms surrounding the ministry's process for finding common ground in character development initiatives that is the very appeal of such terms. However, discussions of diversity work or character development in education that *depend less on the use of consensus* as an organizing framework, *would lend themselves less* readily to policies that instate uniformity. Other terms, such as social inclusion, anti-discrimination, or anti-poverty may be found more conducive to addressing diversity and inequalities in school communities, responsibility for which must be shared by all sectors: governments, the private, and civil society. However, in the absence of a strong policy framework that builds in concepts aimed at minimizing disparities and correcting marginalization, the diversity of students' different backgrounds and circumstances will continue to be viewed as something to rise above, not something to be taken into account. As Mason (2003) shows, it is a continuing paradox of diversity work that at the same time as privileging difference it continues to promote sameness. Assimilationist ideas are never far away. As I have witnessed, a practice that aims to transcend differences can easily become a policy instating uniformity. As I reflect upon my experience with the school dress code policy, ultimately, it seemed to me that the key driver of the community consultation was a fear that diverse expressions could somehow weaken social cohesion and accentuate difference, be it socio-economic, ethnic, religious, or racial difference. Despite the ministry's guideline to respect diversity, it was the guideline to transcend differences that prevailed. In all probability this is an unintended consequence of the ministry's policy guideline, but it is a troubling consequence, nonetheless.

Further reflections on the first experience: Consensus and dialogue across differences within school communities

Whereas the ministry retreats from direct involvement in diversity programming, not only is responsibility for diversity work divested, but ministry and board accountability for the outcomes may be evaded. As a professional member of a school community, I found it impossible to publicly protest or advocate changes to a policy that community members and parents wanted. School board staff would simply assert that the policy was agreed upon at the grassroots level. Yet, community members and parents are not answerable or liable for any discriminatory effects of their decisions, nor should they be. In part, because boards are not permitted to "contract out" of legal requirements under provincial legislation, but also because community members and parents do not have the expertise that the complex work of building inclusive and diverse school communities requires. Indeed, if the school walls were crumbling, we would not call in community members to build them up.

There is a wealth of critical research on dialogical education practices that outline the complexities of doing diversity work. However, when diversity work is divested to the volunteer sector, this research and expertise remains un-accessed. As a result, attempts at dialogue across differences run the risk of giving little attention to or critical reflection upon the kinds of prevailing mindsets that enable the majority to justify their dominance in the world, as it is. It is precisely this lack of critical reflection that I believe, in many ways, may account for how a dialogue inclusive of diverse community members can result in a consensus to implement a policy that adversely affects diverse students.

Delgado (2000) defines mindsets as collections of presuppositions, received wisdom, and shared understandings which form the background against which dialogue takes place, describing

them as “eyeglasses we have worn for a long time. They are nearly invisible; we use them to scan and interpret the world and only rarely examine them for themselves” (p. 61). Thus, in what follows I shall employ the expertise of critical theorists, in particular Delpit (1988), Ellsworth (1989), Jones (2006), and Crawley (2006), who problematize dominant presuppositions and shared understandings that impact racialized members of diverse groups who participate in community dialogue, in particular dialogue about race and diversity. These theorists ground their work in their experiences with racialized and marginalized community members. My point in overtly introducing their work is to show that it is precisely this knowledge, skill, and critical reflection that is missing both within the ministry’s parameters for dialogue and, for the most part, among the general public who are invited to participate in consensus building.

Problematic assumptions upon which the practice of community dialogue is based

At first glance, *Finding Common Ground* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008b) offers a clear strategy for ensuring that disengaged and marginalized community members will have opportunities through dialogue to determine the universal attributes for character development. As *Finding Common Ground* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008b) explains, character attributes cannot be “found in a textbook, binder or manual” but instead must be “supported by [a process of] dialogue, reflection and action” that ensures that marginalized students and community members have the option to be actively involved (p. 7). Character development in Ontario’s schools, we are told, is not about “a government imposing a set of moral standards” or “schools taking over the responsibility of parents and families” nor is it about the “few” excluding “some” (p. 7). This is a laudable strategy designed to negotiate between the imposition of dominant views and the political commitment to make minority status groups autonomous of those views, minority groups being situated instead, as active participants and collaborators. The

objective is to assure that the marginalized are empowered to express their beliefs and ideas in dialogue. The goal is to develop school standards of behaviour that incorporate many traditions, beliefs, and different view points that the community finds they hold in common.

Although commendable for its intent, the strategy for dialogue perpetuates dominant group thinking. It does this by embedding certain dominant group assumptions in the prescribed practice for dialogue and consensus. These assumptions are: all participating voices in the dialogue will be given equal time and weight vis-à-vis other sufficiently articulated moral positions; all community members hold a desire for synchrony; there are universalizable character attributes waiting to be discovered by community members through dialogue; and, representation of diverse community members alone will lead to voice and reform, known as the politics of presence (Phillips, 1995). I shall expose the marginalization effects of these embedded assumptions in order to open up possibilities for thinking about other ways of engaging marginalized groups in dialogue.

The assumption that all voices will be given equal time and weight in dialogue

Ellsworth (1989) points out, "in a racist society and its institutions, … debate has not and cannot be 'public' or 'democratic' in the sense of including the voices of all affected parties and affording them equal weight and legitimacy" (p. 300). Individuals hold different amounts of power in the community and these different investments of power and privilege already favour dominant group positions in dialogue. As Crawley (2006) argues, it is often the common beliefs, perceptions, and considerations of the dominant population that set the tone and parameters for most discussions, but even more so, for dialogues around diversity. Crawley (2006) shows that, as a result of power dynamics and unequal discursive relations, discussions and interactions between dominant and racialized group members tend to end either with racialized people being rewarded

for acting in accordance with the dominant group's expectations or reproved for acting in accordance with the stereotypes held by the dominant group. Either way, dominant group perspectives continue to be subtly nurtured and maintained. As Crawley (2006) writes:

> Moral ambiguity is an aspect of racism not often admitted, even by its victims. This is particularly so in debates about diversity. At work, where black women so want to succeed, they know that they can rarely afford the indulgence of saying how they feel and so they often legitimate, or appear to legitimate, white viewpoints. (p. 172)

Similarly, Delpit (1988) shows, in dialogues designed to reach across differences, when racialized people fall silent or stop participating, usually out of their frustration over not being heard or understood, their silence is interpreted to legitimate dominant views.

Delpit (1988) explains the silenced dialogue of racialized people by pointing out that there are codes for participating in dialogue that are determined by the culture of power. Those with access to the codes, those who inhabit the culture of power, will succeed in validating their position or argument by virtue of their appropriate actions: their linguistic forms, communicative strategies, and presentations of self, or their "ways of talking, ways of writing, ways of dressing, and ways of interacting" (Delpit, 1988, p. 283). Dialogues that occur in areas where Eurocentricity prevails in terms of language, rules, and dress -- the education community providing an excellent example -- enforce Eurocentric dominance and reinforce for racialized people that their status is marginal in white civilization (Nunn, 2000). That is, those who are not familiar with the codes for participating in processes of collaboration will experience a sense that they do not belong. Those familiar with the particular codes of power can either call upon their numbers, or their access to the codes, to validate their position and thereby to establish their point and garner support. This process is insidious, mainly because, as Delpit (1988) puts it, "those with power are frequently least aware of -- or least willing to acknowledge -- its existence. Those with less power are often most aware of its existence" (Delpit, 1988, p. 282).

Thus, when the Ministry of Education sets guidelines for boards to engage in dialogue with community members across their differences, because there is no acknowledgment of the barriers to genuine participation for marginalized group members and no reflection upon the discursive advantages afforded the dominant group, the terms of reference for dialogue are designed for the dominant group. This situation will only serve to reinforce the foundations of inequality within communities, asserting how dominant group members will always retain the upper hand. An inclusive design for dialogue would take into account how conditions of participation are constrained for some and how marginalized people are often subjugated in dialogues or subsumed to reinforce dominant perspectives. Inclusive dialogue, thus, could seek to bring for attention, in particular, the perceptions and understandings of diverse and marginalized group members. This process would involve looking for opportunities to engage *exclusively* with those who Jaffe and Quark (2006) refer to as the “unusual suspects” (p. 207). The unusual suspects include those whose views are generally least likely to be sought and heard, those whose views are generally lost and often most difficult to locate. Those most marginalized and difficult to situate within dominant dialogues include a range of individuals identified along lines of division and exclusion in the community, these dividing lines being: income inequality, ethnicity, language, gender, newcomer status, class, and source of income. This method of dialogue would require multiple meetings with different groups and, of course, would require a significant investment of expertise, time, energy, money, and human resources, which would be difficult for a ministry that seeks to divest diversity work to volunteer community members.

An assumption that all community members hold a desire for synchrony

Many community members who belong to dominant groups within society want to believe that inequality will disappear if people stop highlighting difference, dissonance, or

discord in their communities (Crawley, 2006). For this reason, there is a strong preference for harmony or synchrony in dialogue, that is, in dialogue that is designed to bring community members together. This kind of dialogue makes it difficult for individuals to raise specific and situational concerns regarding their experiences of societal injustice. As Merelman (cited in Bickmore 2006) points out, in societies that see themselves as harmonious, dissenters and dissent may be unjustly marginalized. Conversely, those community members who experience but deemphasize continuing injustices in their communities could find themselves being rewarded for their silence on the matter.

Ellsworth (1989) problematizes the notion that a unity of voices and a common goal in dialogue is necessarily a good thing. She argues that there are times when inequalities must be named and addressed in dialogue, which will inevitably invite discord and disharmony in large social groups, but this can be done by constructing alternative ground rules for communication that take discord and dissent as their starting point. Regarding her experience leading a discussion on anti-racism with her students, she writes:

> … we began to see our task not as one of building democratic dialogue between free and equal individuals, but of building a coalition among the multiple, shifting, intersecting, and sometimes contradictory groups carrying unequal weights of legitimacy within the culture and the classroom. (p. 317)
>
> … it seemed that we needed times when one affinity group … could 'speak out' and 'talk back' about their experience … of racial, gender, or other injustice, while the rest of the class listened without interruption. This would have acknowledged that we were not interacting in class dialogue solely as individuals, but as members of larger social groups, with whom we shared common and also differing experiences of oppression, a language for naming, fighting, and surviving that oppression, and a shared sensibility and style. The differences among the affinity groups that composed the class made communication within the class a form of cross-cultural or cross-subcultural exchange rather than the free democratic exchange between equal individuals implied in [dialogues set up to engage people across differences]. (p. 320)

Ellsworth (1989) highlights, as a necessary component of dialogue, the importance of being able to disagree, thereby acknowledging the democratic entitlement of individuals to speak out about societal injustices, such as racism.

The belief that there are universalizable character attributes waiting to be discovered by community members through dialogue

Ellsworth (1989) discusses how conventional notions of dialogue and democracy assume rationalized, individualized subjects capable of agreeing on universilazable fundamental moral principles that become self-evident when subjects cease to be self-interested and particularistic about group rights. However, she shows that fundamental moral and political principles that are presumed to be universalizable are instead, definitions of a mythical norm that have been deployed for the purpose of setting the standard of humanness against which people are defined and assigned privilege and limitations. “At this moment in history, that norm is young, White, heterosexual, Christian, able-bodied, thin, middle-class, English-speaking, and male” (p. 323). Even individuals who most closely approximate this mythical norm experience a dissonance when confronted with it. As Ellsworth (1989) points out, her white heterosexual male colleagues have to fight to differentiate themselves from a position defined for them by the mythical norm. Oversimplifying what it means to be human will only instate categories that individuals will inevitably struggle against contextually in their self-definition. Thus, it is quite worth questioning the value of coming together as a community to agree upon attributes of character development that are “universal” and that “transcend differences”. Given that these attributes will be used to define the standards for behaviour in school communities, given that universal attributes are somewhat of a mythical norm, and given that this mythical norm has been shown to cause harm to some and privilege others in society, this prescribed process is problematic at the least, and at worse could perpetuate further harm to students.

An assumption that representation of diverse community members alone will lead to voice and reform, the politics of presence

Democratic participation in dialogue and decision making around diversity work cannot be accomplished simply by issuing an invitation to diverse community members and holding an open meeting about it (Shields, 2004). To seek inclusion premised upon a desire to engage a wide cross-section of the school community, and then to presume that a mosaic of different cultures will come together as aggregates of what will morph into a harmonious unity, is based upon an under-theorized understanding of representation, dialogue, and diversity. This approach to dialogue constitutes what Phillips (1995) has called a politics of presence. The approach may have symbolic value in that what is gained is a presence of minority groups. However, this presence is often token. The danger is that minority groups will come to serve as signifiers of what is upheld as an inclusive process of community dialogue. Whilst such initiatives espouse diversity, it is a diversity that is acted upon where it can be demonstrated to bring value and benefit to a process of inclusion. However, the process can in effect render diverse members of the community vulnerable to being used "as part of a public relations exercise" (Crawley, 2006, p. 177).

Without the expertise of critical theorists or considerations of marginalization theory, ultimately, the ministry's invitation to dialogue is more of a gesture towards dialogue, one that ensures that marginalized groups remain occupied with the ministry's concerns for a process of engagement and inclusion rather than a dialogue wherein the ministry occupies itself with the barriers faced by marginalized community members. Despite acknowledging that community capacity building is about engaging marginalized groups in particular in an effort to build inclusive and diverse schools, the forms of community engagement, dialogue, inclusion, and

so forth, endorsed by the ministry, lack political action for social change of the kind that aims for non-oppression or an end to marginalization.

Analysis of the second experience

Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008b) invites school boards to implement a planned commitment to acknowledge the diverse profile and multicultural nature of Ontario's school communities. Much of this discussion, however, averts talking about the conflicts and ruptures that are endemic to diverse societies. This section outlines how character development initiatives encourage students to learn about other traditions and cultures, but to do so on special days, or through showcases and glossy images instead of democratic engagement with socially contentious issues. Thus, whereas public schooling contributes to students' preparation for roles in a diverse society, and its inevitable conflicts (Bickmore, 2006), I show how character development in schools reinforces certain ways of thinking about and engaging with diverse societies and de-legitimates others.

Second experience: Celebration of culture, a common practice in character education

Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008b) offers the policy framework, scope, and breadth within which character development initiatives take place. *Character Development in Action, K-12: Successful Practices in Ontario Schools* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008a) offers examples of "the activities and strategies that boards and schools have used to express and live their vision of character development" (p. 3). Thus, whereas *Finding Common Ground* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008b) asserts the following: "When students learn about the traditions and beliefs of

others in their school communities, they gain an understanding of and respect for differences"; *Character Development in Action* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008a) celebrates the actual initiatives that have been designed to teach students about the traditions and cultures of others in their school community. That is, both documents work in tandem to offer policy and programmatic structure to how students can gain an understanding of and respect for traditions and cultures other than their own. Both documents emphasize that the purpose of such activities is to enhance positive interactions within schools and between communities and the guiding principle is to maintain an "explicit focus" on the teachings and practices of other cultures and traditions "that promote harmony" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008b, p. 15).

With the ministry's emphasis on celebrating harmony and common ground, as students set about organizing initiatives that teach about the traditions and beliefs of others in their community, there is little room for the airing and discussion of contentious issues between communities. The character development policy documents, instead, prioritize workshops of the kind the students with whom I worked were encouraged to develop when they were organizing a day of awareness of their neighboring First Nation community: teachings on and displays of music, sports, foods, and the arts. Banks (1988) argues that the practice of setting up special days to promote awareness of other traditions as such, tends to invite students to appreciate the exotic characteristics of the other which can actually serve to reinforce stereotypes and misconceptions. He writes, "when the focus is on the … unique aspects of ethnic [or Aboriginal] cultures, students are not helped to understand them as complete and dynamic wholes" (1988, p. 1). As a result, the workshops can have a trivializing effect on the representation and discussion of diverse peoples and cultures, appreciated perhaps only for their interesting ceremonial dress or tasty food. The workshops thus run the risk of objectifying differences, turning difference into an object of

fascination, curiosity, or examination. Ultimately, such workshops do little to bring about changed attitudes and behaviour towards those whose culture is celebrated and the one day celebration confines the knowledges and cultures of diverse others to the realm of special days, events, or pageants.

As the students with whom I worked set out to organize discussions about residential schools, reconciliation, land claims, the disparity of services on First Nation reserves, and other points of contention between Aboriginal peoples and government, they were in fact avoiding the problem of trivializing what it is to be a member of a First Nation. The workshops held real potential for teaching the varied and alternative perspectives, experiences, and identities of the First Nation peoples in particular, and Aboriginal peoples in general. Workshop discussions would introduce the history of European and government points of contact with Aboriginal peoples and the subsequent and contemporary oppression of Aboriginal peoples. This history is often made invisible by exclusion from the school curriculum, something that Kumashiro (2001) discusses as a significant component of the hidden curriculum of schools. The workshops thereby would have provided students with the opportunity to problematize the knowledge they already have or supplement the partial knowledges that are sanctioned in schools. In developing such workshops, the students were taking on the crucial issues facing many contemporary Aboriginal cultures, head on. However, in so doing, they were not undertaking a harmonious endeavour. The students were undertaking a discomforting process of facing social differences and oppressions and in so doing clearly were straying too far from the ministry's policy and programmatic mold of what it means to gain an understanding of and respect for traditions and cultures.

To wit, the initiative that is celebrated in *Character Development in Action* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008a) for enhancing understanding of the Aboriginal experience, is a

picture perfect harmony of ministry, board, and school pride. Keewatin-Patricia District School Board's "Heart and Soul" initiative is depicted by a picture of four young Aboriginal female students dressed in their traditional clothing and feathers and draped in the school board's banner. The board's Aboriginal Day events culminate with Ojibway drumming, dancing, and games. These events, again, are depicted in photographs of Aboriginal youth who are participating wearing ceremonial dress. While it is understandable that the ministry would want to promote and foster such positive images, it is unfortunate that, in my experience, when students want to offer depictions of Aboriginal peoples through a political lens, there is for some reason, less cause for celebrating. Again, I saw this experience as emblematic of a larger concern.

Thus, I set out to examine and critique how *Character Development in Action* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008a) shapes the templates and resources available for students who, in general, want to implement diversity initiatives. I wanted to see how conflict, social diversity, oppression, and injustice of the kind my students sought to contend with, are dealt with, if at all, in character development designs. In examining these resources, I note how diversity is celebrated with the help of evocative metaphors, mosaics, or rainbows. This is the case, irrespective of the persistent reality that living in a diverse society is fraught with innumerable tensions and contradictions, presents as many dilemmas as triumphs, and requires much more than enthusiasm, optimism, and good intentions.

Further reflections on my second experience: Examining how *Character Development in Action* shapes the templates available for students to implement diversity initiatives

The document *Character Development in Action, K-12: Successful Practices in Ontario Schools* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008a) reflects a certain political will to showcase and

glossify upbeat images of school inclusivity. This political will influences the selection of initiatives that school boards and students are invited to emulate when undertaking diversity work. Prominent are images of initiatives that invoke good feelings while little to no attention is given to initiatives that engage with the impasses of competing interests or difficulties encountered during cultural clashes. This lack of attention in turn limits students' opportunities to learn about or practice dealing with social tensions, political differences, or conversely, peace building. Although focusing on the dilemmas of diversity would better prepare students for the turbulent challenges presented by a multicultural society, character development in Ontario's schools retains an explicit focus on harmony.

The images of good feelings in Character Development in Action (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008a)

The artwork on the cover of *Character Development in Action* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008a) was produced in 2007 by students from a senior public school in the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board. The art is described as a friendship fence, celebrating diversity. As a variation on what Prasad and Mills (1997) identify as the rainbow, it depicts 18 people of varying skin tones painted onto what represents 18 pickets of a fence. This submission won an award at Kawartha District's Annual Equity and Diversity Gala after being selected by the Equity and Diversity Committee for best media art that comments on equity and diversity issues. A similar project is celebrated on the Ministry of Education's web site and is a variation on what Prasad and Mills (1997) identify as the mosaic. The Durham District School Board's "Heart of Ajax" project is featured for its celebration of diversity dolls. In April 2009 the "Heart of Ajax" event centred around student-made diversity dolls that were created to "celebrate the many things that make individuals unique". Some of the dolls have hand-drawn designs of flags from around the world on them, others are quite elaborate, decorated in culturally unique clothing. One

features a girl dressed in a yellow sari with a beaded purse and jewelry. A teacher dressed hers in a Spanish Flamenco dress with a Cuban flag. The dolls were displayed in showcases in school hallways across the district to reflect the diversity of the school communities.

Character Development in Action (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008a) is replete with these kinds of visual images of multicultural mosaics. There are photographs of children holding hands or youth sitting side by side in a way that denotes what it means to be inclusive. The images represent cultural hybridity, harmonious coexistence, colorful heterogeneity, and revelry in the richness of other traditions and cultures. In part, this celebration of diversity is to be applauded. It certainly stands in sharp relief to the period in Ontario's public education system when the exclusion and invisibility of racialized students and students with disabilities was acceptable practice. For the most part, however, the Ministry of Education has adopted an approach to diversity within their character development guidelines that Prasad and Mills (1997) would characterize as distant cheerleading.

That is to say, on the whole, *Character Development in Action* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008a) evokes enormously affirmative connotations of diversity without really engaging diversity work as a serious endeavour. There is a striking absence of serious considerations around the process of managing diversity on a daily basis, understanding exactly what diversity work does and how it might influence social change, how school boards and administrators can go about accomplishing diversity, or how they can set goals and targets for their work. Above all, the central question of what diversity even means, is not addressed. While diversity work for some may well be a straight forward matter of proportional representation of various demographic and social groups of the school community, for others, it may involve attempts to overcome cultural prejudice and instill new values about anti-racism in schools.

However, without a serious consideration of the multiple and possibly conflicting meanings attributed to the term, or considerations of what constitutes an effective program, we are left with, as Prasad and Mills (1997) state, “a potpourri of popular views and opinions on what constitutes … diversity” (p. 13). As a result, diversity is in danger of becoming little more than an educational buzzword, simultaneously signifying anything, everything, and nothing, efforts at which will, nonetheless, be contained in the school showcase.

Showcasing diversity

The showcase symbolizes the need for an active recognition and appreciation of the increasingly multicultural nature of contemporary school communities. The showcase, however, is a setting for displaying schools’ efforts at appreciating diversity, which is to say, it does not necessarily do the complex work of diversity. It is Prasad and Mill’s (1997) contention that the elaborate showcasing of diversity severely limits an understanding of the more complicated and problematic aspects of multiculturalism within institutions, contained within the conflict potential of having diverse schools. “A host of gender conflicts, race tensions, and cultural frictions lie hidden in the shadows of the showcase” (p. 12). Entering the shadows requires looking into interracial hostility, minority group frustrations, marginalization processes, exclusion, contempt, and all kinds of social oppression and conflicts. This gaze highlights diversity in schools and society in ways that could bring forward awareness of different political movements, inequalities, and struggles in such a way that would open up spaces in which racism, sexism, elitism, and so forth can be talked about. That is, diversity can be attended to through discussions of discrimination and social exclusion in relation to a wide range of social differences. These discussions can assist students to grapple with the ways by which differences are regulated.

Indeed, it is because colonialism, racism, and gender hierarchies continue to shape educational as well as social spaces that diversity matters. Yet, when we examine why diversity matters in *Character Development in Action* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008a), what is celebrated as mattering is the benefit to the school community of embracing diversity. Diversity is framed as a valuable practice, foremost because of the demographic force behind it that leaves schools with few options but to actively embrace it, but diversity work is also celebrated for its ability to improve the school climate through collaboration and celebration. As we see in *Character Development in Action* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008a), diversity work:

> "Brings together the entire educational community." (p. 6)
> "Engages a wide range of students." (p. 6)
> "Supports the development of a positive school culture" (p. 11)
> "Supports a collaborative culture." (p. 13)
> "Provides opportunities for students to showcase their cultures." (p. 32)
> "Creates an atmosphere of celebration." (p. 41)

These statements indeed come to serve as vivid declarations that diversity can actually work in Ontario's schools. However, diversity work has appeal on account of its many advantages for the school community, not on account of any awareness of how members of diverse groups are actually affected by these school initiatives. What remains interesting, is how school projects and showcases "present the happy face of diversity without paying much attention to what lies behind it" (Prasad & Mills, 1997, p. 12).

Glossifying diversity

If visual images of colourful happy faces are what gives diversity its value, by implication, a school will be considered diverse when racialized others are reflected in its image. Diversity can thus be accomplished by adding colour to the face of the school and diversity work will be done by the technologies that are used to glossify and publish the images. Indeed there are

many images in *Character Development in Action* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008a) that depict a proverbial colourful melting pot of students studying together or laughing and talking together in their school hallway. There are clear parallels here between how diversity work is done in *Character Development in Action* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008a) and how it is done in corporate advertising. Advertising brochures often present the now clichéd face of their company: two females, one Asian and one White, and two males, one Black and one White, the latter of whom has a physical disability, gathered together, cheerily. Whereas corporations have tremendous situational pressure on them to appear unprejudiced, this in turn leads them to publicly advertise, praise, and support diversity programs despite actually instituting exclusionary and discriminatory practices (Van Boven, 2000).

Schools arguably have a great deal of pressure on them as well to be inclusive, diverse, and non-discriminatory, especially since the Ministry of Education settled the human rights complaint in 2005. This pressure provides school boards with strong external motivations for appearing to be inclusive and as a result, there is increasing sophistication surrounding school imagery. Gewirtz (1995) uses the term glossification to describe the sophisticated images that are found in school hallways, promotional events, open days, newsletters, and so forth and he argues that it is not enough to be a good school anymore, a school must also *be perceived as* being a good school. When considering these insights in the context of *Character Development in Action* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008a), schools are, ironically, presenting sophisticated images of diversity through the use of generic templates and exemplars, in order to be perceived as an inclusive school.

As a result, diversity initiatives that defy simple encapsulation in a showcase or shiny snapshot may not connote the appropriate celebratory image of inclusivity and hence may not be

chosen as an exemplary successful practice. However, the initiatives and images that are chosen, do not always reflect the reality of school cultures, which brings me to analysis of the third experience.

Analysis of the third experience

Formal and informal educational policies and practices have hardly kept pace with the multiculturalism of school communities. Despite the rhetoric and images of diversity, schools are quite monocultural entities (Apple, 2000). The nature of diversity work, in order to plumb deeper than its image, needs to get at the structural problem of monoculturalism in schools. These are the things hidden, that, when brought to light, reveal what Ahmed (2009) discusses as the whiteness of organizations. In so far as diversity is seen to be embodied by racialized others, and in so far as diversity work is seen to be done through the inclusion of people who look different, the whiteness of school cultures will be concealed.

Third experience, concealing the whiteness of school cultures

If the appeal of diversity work is that it conceals societal inequalities, community clashes, and sometimes even a culture of prejudice, then we can expose these things by exploring those conditions of its appeal and examining some of the contradictions inherent in diversity work. Thus, whereas *Finding Common Ground* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008b) and *Character Development in Action* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008a) make diversity seem too easily doable, my third experience reveals how undoable diversity work can be.

A lack of attention to the institutional context for diversity work can significantly affect the work’s effectiveness, which is the point that my third experience exemplifies. Whereas character development initiatives focus on student inclusion and representation of student diversity in schools, the profile of the teaching body, board hiring practices, and ministry

curriculum remain, for the most part, exempt from considerations of diversity work. The consequences of this tendency, are exemplified by the Peel District School Board (PDSB). The PDSB publicly celebrates its diverse student profile and efforts to be inclusive, yet, one of its schools, Oscar Peterson Public School, has received media attention for considerable and enduring race-based problems. In particular, *The Toronto Star* followed and exposed numerous failures of the school to diversify the teaching and administrative ranks which has resulted in incidents of harassment, assault, and a great deal of anger between school board staff and school community members. Most recently, the *Star* obtained a report by MIT Consulting Group, a group that handles mediation of human rights issues, that was prepared for the Peel District School Board in June 2010. MIT was hired after an incident in which a white teacher physically confronted a racialized parent who was picking up his child from school. The MIT report sides with the racialized parent.

In general, the report finds that at Oscar Peterson Public School, where the student body is upwards of 90 per cent non-white, teachers, "most of whom are white", have displayed "resistance" to the Peel board's "vision and mission of change" as the racial/ethnic demographics of Peel have shifted dramatically (Grewal, 2011, November 7). The report goes on to state that teachers who had been at the school since it opened "formed cliques and are resisting attempts by (the board) to become inclusive of the diverse community in which the OP School is located" (Grewal, 2011, November 7). The report describes many situations of victimization of racialized members of the school community and subsequent complaints that have been filed against the school. Parents have told the *Star* that none of the complaints that have been filed has been addressed. These complaints include concerns over the lack of books in the school curriculum

reflecting the diversity of the community and the school's failure to hire, maintain, and show respect towards racialized teachers.

This particular situation serves as a larger example of how a school board's approach to diversity work can indeed hide the whiteness of school cultures but it also offers a clear example of what is being missed in discussions and guidelines on diversity work at board and ministry levels: increasing anger directed by dominant groups towards practices of inclusivity and diversity. As Prasad and Mills (1997) contend, one of the most disturbing trends in North America is the increasing antagonism being displayed towards the goals of diversity, in both the larger society and within institutions. This anger can be fueled by harsh economic conditions, increased immigration of non-European people, and the polarization of cultural differences within Ontario. Thus, any diversity initiative that aims to be useful and effective must plan for and discuss such tensions, anger, and resistance.

Resistance to and anger towards diversity work can be expected and indeed expected from many sources: school boards, administrators, teachers, parents, students, and community members at large. A great deal of work can be done to manage individual and organizational anger and resistance to change, and indeed the Ministry of Education has policies and legislation around this work. Yet, perhaps one of the most significant efforts that could be made within the context of diversity work in character development initiatives would be to showcase how resistance manifests, the reasons for it, the social and legal consequences of it, the ways to work through it, and the gaps and failures of schools in achieving their goals of diversity work. Publicizing how problems and discord arise and how these can be worked through, over time, acknowledging the distance to go, and reporting on the successes and the failures, along the way, is truly an examplar of diversity work.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have engaged with how the term diversity is being used in schools to define their social and educational character. Analysis of my experiences has shown that the politics of diversity within schools is complex, contextual, and ambivalent while the documents endorsing diversity initiatives make diversity seem easy to do. Thus, I have shown how diversity work means working with problematic terms and conditions. Conditions for diversity initiatives include unproblematized ideas around consensus building that transcends dividing lines and dialogue that reaches across differences, as endorsed by *Finding Common Ground* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008b). Furthermore, being good at diversity has become a form of school pride, circulated through the distribution of *Character Development in Action* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008a).

However, if we are to find common ground for character development that engages the politics of diversity, this work requires finding a commonality in the experience of difference without compromising its distinctive lived realities and their effects, realities and effects that certainly are not always sources of pride. The practice that could facilitate this work may be best summarized by Ellsworth (1989):

> If you can talk to me in ways that show you understand that your knowledge of me, the world, and 'the Right thing to do' will always be partial, interested, and potentially oppressive to others, and if I can do the same, then we can work together on shaping and reshaping alliances for constructing circumstances in which students of difference can thrive. (p. 324)

This kind of dialogue is grounded in a clearly articulated political agenda that raises provocative issues about the nature of action for diversity and social change. Indeed, Ellsworth (1989) identifies an approach for working against oppressive social formations, formations of the kind

identified in the testimonies of racialized people in Bhattacharjee's (2003) human rights consultation report. Responding to these political concerns with a de-politicized agenda to promote diversity using an easy template, does a disservice to school diversity, as exemplified by the testimonies of racialized community members in Peel region today.

Chapter 7:

Conclusion: Well-mannered, in good health, and respectful of diversity - The neoliberal student in Ontario's progressive discipline approach

In Ontario's school discipline policies, the polite manners, health status, and respectful attitudes of students are central themes of existence. Students are expected to take responsibility for their behaviour and bodies and to limit the harm to others by taking up certain liberal minded ways of thinking and being. Increasingly they are also expected to manage their relationships, risks, and opportunities for success in diverse school communities. With the emergence of concerns about discriminatory school environments almost a decade ago, all students are invited to confront the nature of bias and prejudice and consider what they, individually, can do to protect themselves and others in order to instate a safe school culture. Everyone within the school community is being called upon to play their part in creating a respectful, healthier, and more inclusive school environment through attention to their behaviour, lifestyle, responsibilities, and involvement in various collective and collaborative endeavours. All these concerns, expectations, and projects come together in, and are articulated through, an area of action that has come to be known as progressive discipline.

Progressive discipline policies reflect the upsurge of interest since 2007 within Ontario's Ministry of Education in the relationship between discriminatory school environments and student behaviour. Since that time, tolerating discriminatory attitudes or behaviours among students on the part of school board employees has become reprehensible and thinking of students as being responsible for managing their attitudes and behaviour has become naturalized. It has

also become common to consider it the professional responsibility of board employees to take on the task of maintaining safe school environments by disciplining discriminatory attitudes or behaviour. Central to my examination of these processes has been to highlight these forms of responsibility and obligation that are visited upon school board employees and students to govern themselves in ways that promise to make schools safe.

I have engaged with the ways in which students, teachers, and community members are constructed as being central to the task of implementing more effective schools and the ways in which the task of delivering safe schools is distinctly neoliberal. That is, I have exposed the neoliberal processes that have made it possible to link the success or otherwise of provincially-regulated school safety to the behaviour, health, and attitudes of individual students and the management of these things by school board employees. I have situated the emerging forms of responsibilities within far-reaching transformations in the ways in which governance is conceived by the Liberal government in Ontario. In particular, where progressive discipline policies are concerned, I showed how the phenomenon of bullying in schools witnesses attempts to responsibilize victims and offenders to manage their problems in order to deliver on the promise of creating and maintaining a non-poisoned environment. Where augmenting supports to students in schools is concerned, I discussed how the increased profile of mental health in schools witnesses attempts to devolve the management of student stress to teachers and counsellors who must instruct students on how to mitigate the dangers of contemporary lifestyles. Where character education around diversity is concerned, I looked at how the task of setting up and celebrating diversity in schools is passed on to community members. I have made it clear how the Ministry of Education relies upon the agency of students and school community members largely to govern

themselves, voluntarily, as particular kinds of persons in order to sustain particular kinds of school cultures.

I have also exposed how safe school environments are to be implemented within the constraints of policies and practices that reconfigure and limit the nature of provincial regulation of safe schools. I have posed questions about the diminishing responsibility of the Liberal government over institutions and services, income equality, social parity, and so forth in supporting the human, physical, cultural, civic, and health resources needed to maximize the health and safety of those who teach and learn in schools. I have argued that any consideration of implementing safe schools is tied to the fate of broader social and economic policies. Where governments are less likely to support broader resources and more likely to tolerate a high degree of income inequality, there are both psychosocial and material effects that make their way into school communities. By preventing dramatic falls in living standards, by implementing redistributive policies, providing a material base for a more equitable society, and taking responsibility for a more cohesive notion of social citizenship, governments could have a positive impact on, and provide strong models for, what it means to exist within a safe and non-discriminatory environment. I have argued that it is equality that is important in non-discriminatory environments and that the general lack of attention to inequality is as useful for what it tells us about social structures as it is for the immediate concerns of school safety. The general lack of attention to the possible determinants of inequality is, indeed, in the best interest of neoliberalism which produces both higher inequality and lower social cohesion.

If the contextualizing causes of inequality are not even examined as possible contributors to problems associated with safe schools initiatives, I have shown how the notion of reforming discriminatory school environments is premature. I have argued throughout, that examining larger

contextual factors would go a long way towards re-thinking the current Ministry of Education's causal model of discrimination: the unproblematic notion that student behaviour precipitates discriminatory environments. Student behaviour, and school environments, have for too long been viewed as somehow separate from the societies in which they are, in fact, embedded. Given the absence of a broader sense of this embeddedness, the neoliberal turn has given governments greater licence to advocate individualistic solutions to the problem of safe schools and greater reason to reduce their involvement therein. I have argued that reducing the involvement of government, has meant reducing government expenditures. It has not been about empowering school communities in ways that effect social justice.

Where direct government involvement and responsibility for school safety is rolled back, I have shown how the student body and the school environment are simultaneously conceived of in their widest sense to include psychological, social, and physical elements and have become the foci of and responsible agents for/of governance. With the development of this perspective, few areas of personal and social life remain immune to scrutiny and regulation of some kind. Given the scope of progressive discipline, and its impact on virtually all aspects of students' everyday lives, there has been surprisingly little critical analysis of its underlying philosophies and its practices. In my experience in schools, progressive discipline has been warmly welcomed by administrators, teachers, and support staff of diverse backgrounds and political persuasions and largely celebrated by policy-makers and politicians. It is represented as a strong antidote to all kinds of student problems. The uncritical acceptance of the basic tenets of progressive discipline is disturbing in light of the increased potential for the language, knowledge, and power upon which it is based, to construct and reproduce students' ways of experiencing themselves, their bodies, and their social and material worlds such that they come to serve government's goals.

I have drawn attention to the ways in which students are constructed within progressive discipline policies and, in particular, to the emergence of the concept of the entrepreneurial student; that is, the student who is expected to live life in a prudent, calculating way, and to be ever-vigilant of risks. As noted, this concept of the student has appeared during a period of retreat from welfare interventionism and of reaffirmation of the importance of markets as regulators of social and economic activity. This entrepreneurial student is the product and target of neoliberal forms of rule that employ technologies for governing at a distance, by seeking to create localities, entities, and persons able to operate a regulated freedom. With the rise of neoliberalism, and the change in political regimes governing school safety, the concept of rights, which largely took shape during the ascendancy of the welfare state (Rose, 1999), begins to appear rather limited. With the development of a duties discourse in parallel with the rights discourse, students in schools are assigned a whole range of new reciprocal responsibilities and obligations which require a phenomenal effort to fulfill. As I have pointed out at various points in my dissertation, being a responsible, healthy, and respectful student, entails diligence, self-control, and much hard work.

I have also shown how neoliberalism as a political orientation and policy framework sets up the relative subordination of minority status groups in schools; it does this by concealing privilege held by mainstream dominant groups and by presuming equality among and between various student groups. In other words, neoliberal discourses cater to and provide an advantage for mainstream dominant groups. In particular, I illuminated how heterosexuality, good psychological and physical condition, and whiteness are used as the standards in discipline policies against which to measure the success of students, exposing the inherent dominant group thinking in progressive discipline. I also revealed the heterosexism, healthism, and whiteism in

policy discourses that typically construct marginalized students as outsiders, disadvantaged, at risk, and in need of acceptance, tolerance, help, or pity. I questioned who has the power to shape these discourses and the knowledge to reproduce these inequalities in discourse. Ultimately I illuminated how well-intentioned attempts to create inclusive school environments unwittingly has reinforced practices that support exclusion and inequality. My hope has been to enhance policy-makers', educators', researchers', and practitioners' understanding about how inequality is (re)produced through educational policies, specifically, discipline policies, and how existing policies and practices can re-inscribe the problems they seek to address.

I have been quite concerned to reveal the neoliberal conditions of what, on the surface, appears to be an inclusive progressive politics around student discipline in Ontario. My concerns with progressive discipline policies, however, are greater than just my concern over how they are in accordance with governance in an advanced liberal society. I have also been particularly concerned with how the re-positioning of discipline policies within a neoliberal framework, does little to address the underlying problems that contribute to the marginalization of certain students in schools. This has been particularly difficult for me to accept in light of the fact that discipline policies in Ontario were overhauled in 2007 because of their marginalizing, discriminatory, and adverse effects on certain groups of students. This dissertation is perhaps the result of my sheer exacerbation with that fact.

However, I have come to realize over the course of my years as a counsellor in schools, having worked closely with administrators and teachers, and having met with and discussed inclusive education policies and practices with ministry policy-makers, that there is genuine concern in the education sector to make life in schools better, more equitable, and safer for minority status students. Albeit, I have learned to balance this realization with the insights I have

gained over the course of my years as a doctoral student of critical theory. Ultimately, I find that, without the analytical tools to get at the root of the problem of marginalization processes, namely, unreflexive dominant group and neoliberal thinking, certain groups of students will continue to be marginalized in school policies, practices, and environments.

Although education researchers have shed much light on the many ways that different forms of racism, classism, sexism, and heterosexism play out in schools, these insights have not led to significant changes to the underlying marginalization processes within education policies and practices. Although there have been salient critiques of the neoliberal turn and its effects in education and health in general, many educators do not know what to do about it; and, if they do, some argue, that the task of changing forms of oppression and governance should not fall on them (Kumashiro, 2000). Keeping this in mind throughout my dissertation, I have pointed to a few ways that I have sought to resist a normalizing system and dominant discourses in my work with students. Having worked within the education sector, under systems of oppression and alongside forms of neoliberal governance, I have aimed to maintain a reflexive committed resistance to a system that is normalizing and marginalizing. I do not say this to be self-congratulatory, more so, to offer a few more reflections before I conclude my work, on what can be done within the system, having already discussed its failings, and having already pointed to what needs to be done about these failings, at the policy level.

In working with marginalized youth, I have had many successes by questioning alongside them, how the system of discipline is set up in their schools. Reflecting on this system, as I have touched upon at various points in this dissertation, involves asking how it works, how it does not work, who wins, who loses, and why? It involves reflecting on expectations and responsibilities, how things are, how students can navigate how things are, or change them, given and depending

on who they are. I have often been surprised by the insights that students bring to this process and students have often been surprised by my willingness to hear their criticisms. Through this process students can examine what their possible options are for moving forward, I can assist by pointing out how some choices will be perceived and acted upon, and how others will be accepted and celebrated. Students leave this process, not necessarily empowered to make appropriate choices, and I go through this process resisting the expectation that I guide students to make “appropriate” choices; for everyone, and here I include myself, there is an increased capacity for critical thinking and thereby more avenues are opened for change. I have found that this process contributes to a broader conceptualization of what personal and collective empowerment might entail. I have seen some students go back into their school community to organize spontaneous protests, others return to apologize for and explain their actions, and still others, do not return, only to seek legal counsel and set up a board hearing.

Admittedly, this process is less than ideal for a system bent on efficiency, predictability, measurability, and that is results oriented. It is also less than ideal for a critical theorist, such as myself, who often sees the situations in which students find themselves, as problems originating in features of their inequitable social and political environments, rather than their individual personalities, ways of thinking, or biochemistry. My point is that there are resistive practices available for those working within the constraints of the education sector that are particularistic to the circumstances and needs of each individual student, irrespective of the lack of immediate avenues towards more equitable social and political environments for certain groups of students. In combination with my work that insists that it should not be incumbent upon students to secure equity through market mechanisms or hard work, rather, that equitable environments should be

ensured by government; my goal is to expose the interplay between governing and resistive practices that educators, practitioners, and students must navigate.

I shall end where I started. At a time when policy-makers and educators have been coming to terms with a reconfigured approach to discipline in Ontario schools, shifting from authoritative to inclusive practices, disciplining students has changed from overt control to kinder forms of cultivation. These forms of discipline have aligned with specific governmental aims and ideologies, namely, neoconservatism and neoliberalism. In contrast with the Progressive Conservative government's conception of discipline, in which the key objective of discipline was to secure control over students, the Liberal government has flowed discipline through a variety of networks of professional enclosures and agencies to adjust the behaviours and self-image of students, bringing them into line with socially approved aspirations and identities. That is, the neoliberal approach has been to cultivate alliances between social workers and parents, teachers and community members, neighbours and students to exercise a light and unobtrusive form of monitoring and exhortation. Students are invited to adjust their self-conception and behaviour to fit with the socially approved norm or with social types that are upheld as liberal minded, inclusive, well-mannered, in good health, and respectful of diversity.

This gentler approach to discipline assumes that misbehaviour and harm occurs in an otherwise orderly and equitable world wherein some individual student has acted in a negligent or wrongful way. Thereby, progressive discipline proceeds to make decisions about who is to blame and who should bear the responsibility. Discipline is oriented to aggregate entities and concerned with the minimization of harms, rather than with the dispensation of social justice or even with the examination of the broader contributors to harm and misbehaviour. At a time when it is

precisely the government’s broader policies that produce harms and contribute to problems in schools, we need to be careful about equating kinder discipline with greater progress.

References

Ahmed, S. (2009). Embodying diversity: Problems and paradoxes for black feminists. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 12*(1), 41-52.

Apple, M. W. (2000). *Official knowledge: Democratic education in a conservative age.* East Sussex**:** Psychology Press.

ARCH Disability Law Centre. Safe Schools Act: Restoring segregation in Ontario. Retrieved from http://www.archdisabilitylaw.ca/?q=safe-schools-act-restoring-segregation-ontario

Armstrong, D. (2007). Professionalism, indeterminacy and the EBM project. *BioSocieties, 2*(1), 73-84.

Bacchi, C. L. (1999). *Women, policy and politics: The construction of policy problems.* London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Ball, S. J. (1994). *Education reform: A critical and post-structural approach.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Banks, J. A. (1988). *Multiethnic education: Theory and practice***.**Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Benschop, Y. (2001). Pride, prejudice and performance: Relations between HRM, diversity and performance. *International Journal of Human Resource Management, 12*(7), 1166-1181.

Bhattacharjee, K. (2003). *The Ontario Safe Schools Act: School Discipline and Discrimination.* Retrieved from http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ontario-safe-schools-act-school-discipline-and-discrimination

Bickmore, K. (2002). How might social education resist heterosexism? Facing the impact of gender and sexual ideology on citizenship. *Theory & Research in Social Education, 30*(2), 198-216.

Bickmore, K. (2006). Democratic social cohesion (assimilation)? Representations of social conflict in Canadian public school curriculum. *Canadian Journal of Education/Revue Canadienne De l'Éducation, 29*(2), 359-386.

Bodine, A. (2003). School uniforms, academic achievement, and uses of research. *The Journal of Educational Research, 97*(2), 67-71.

Bosso, C.J. (1994). The contextual bases of problem definition. In D.A. Rochefort, & R.W. Cobb (Eds.), *The Politics of Problem Definition: Shaping the policy agenda*(pp. 182-203). Kansas: University Press of Kansas.

Burchell, G. (1993). Liberal government and techniques of the self. *Economy and Society, 22*(3), 267-282.

Butler, J. (1997). *Excitable speech: A politics of the per formative.* East Sussex: Psychology Press.

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. (2000). *Grade 11 health and physical education, Healthy active living education (PPL 30) Module # 2: Positive mental health and stress course profile supplement.* Retrieved fromhttp://www.camh.ca/en/education/teachers_school_programs/secondary_education/Pages/curriculum_mh_gr11guide.aspx

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. (2006). Reading, 'Riting, 'Rithmetic and Relating: CAMH's 'Fourth R' Program. *CAMH Connections.* Retrieved from http://www.ontla.on.ca/library/repository/ser/220188/2006v06no03fall.pdf

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. (2009). Best practice guidelines for mental health promotion programs: Children and youth. Retrieved from http://knowledgex.camh.net/policy_health/mhpromotion/mhp_childyouth/Pages/default.aspx#guidelines

Crawley, R. (2006). Diversity and the marginalisation of black women's issues. *Policy Futures in Education, 4*(2), 172-184.

Daniel, Y., & Bondy, K. (2008). Safe schools and zero tolerance: Policy, program and practice in Ontario. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, 70*, 1-20.

Dean, M. (2009). *Governmentality: Power and rule in modern society.* London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Delgado, R. (2000). Storytelling for oppositionists and others: A plea for narrative. In R. Delgado, & J. Stefancic (Eds.), *Critical Race Theory: The cutting edge* (2nd edition, pp. 60-70). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Delpit, L. D. (1988). The silenced dialogue: Power and pedagogy in educating other people's children. *Harvard Educational Review, 58*(3), 280-299.

Durkheim, E., & Bohannan, P. (1964). *Essays on sociology and philosophy.* New York**:** Harper & Row.

Ecker, J. (2000, June 13). "Safe Schools Act 2000". *Ontario Hansard.* Retrieved fromhttp://www.ontla.on.ca/house-proceedings/transcripts/files_html/2000-06-13_L071A.htm#P544_125901

Education Act, Revised Statutes of Ontario (1990, c. E2). Retrieved from http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90e02_e.htm

Education Amendment Act, Statutes of Ontario (2007, c. 14). Retrieved from http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/statutes/english/2009/elaws_src_s09017_e.htm

Education Quality Improvement Act, Statutes of Ontario (1997, c. 10). Retrieved from http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/statutes/english/2006/elaws_src_s06010_e.htm

Ellsworth, E. (1989). Why doesn't this feel empowering? Working through the repressive myths of critical pedagogy. *Harvard Educational Review, 59*(3), 297-325.

Evensen, B., Chwialkowska, L. & Humphreys, A. (2000, April 21). 'Shut up or I'll stab you': assailant: Teen injures 5 at school: Colorado anniversary keeps thousands of students at home. *National Post*, p. A.1.

Fairclough, N. (1992). Discourse and text: Linguistic and intertextual analysis within discourse analysis. *Discourse & Society, 3*(2), 193-217.

Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research.* East Sussex: Psychology Press.

Falconer, J. (2008). *The road to health: A final report on school safety.* Retrieved from http://www.falconerschoolsafetyreport.com/finalReport.html

Filax, G. (2006). Politicising action research through queer theory. *Educational Action Research, 14*(01), 139-145.

Foucault, M. (1970). *The order of things.* New York: Pantheon.

Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge and the discourse on language.*(A. M. Sheridan Smith, Trans.). New York: Harper and Row.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline & punish*. New York: Random House of Canada.

Foucault, M. (1978). *History of sexuality: Vol. 1. An introduction* (R. Hurley, Trans.). New York:Random House.

Foucault, M. (1991). Governmentality. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon, & P. Miller (Eds.), *TheFoucault effect: Studies in governmentality* (pp. 87-104). Chicago: University of ChicagoPress.

Foucault, M., Burchell, G., & Gordon, C. (1991). *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality: With two lectures by and an interview with Michel Foucault*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Fox, N. (1991). Postmodernism, rationality and the evaluation of health care. *Sociological Review, 39*, 907-44.

Freeman, A. D. (1995). Legitimizing racial discrimination through antidiscrimination law: A critcal review of supreme court doctrine. In K. Crenshaw, N. Gotanda, G. Pellar, & K. Thomas (Eds.), *Critical Race Theory* (pp. 29-45). New York: The New Press.

Galvin, R. (2002). Disturbing notions of chronic illness and individual responsibility: Towards a genealogy of morals. *Health, 6*(2), 107-137.

Gewirtz, S., Ball, S. J. & Bowe, R. (1995). *Markets, choice and equity in education*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Gillen, J., & Petersen, A. (2006). Discourse Analysis. In B. Somekh & C. Lewin (Eds.), *Research methods in the social sciences* (pp. 146-153). London: Sage Publications.

Girard, D. (1999, April 29). Violence doesn't respect borders; Expert predicts more school shootings in coming weeks. *The Kitchener Record*, p. A01.

Goar, C. (2011, July 12). Ontario takes a backward step on mental health. *The Toronto Star.* Retrieved from http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorialopinion/article/1023976

Gordon, C. (1991). Governmental rationality: An introduction.In *The Foucault Effect Studies in Governmentality*(pp. 1-51). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Goss, D. (1997). Healthy discipline? Health promotion at work. *Electronic Journal of Radical Organization Theory, 3*(2), 1-8.

Greenberg, J. (2004). Tories, teachers and the media politics of education reform: News discourse and the 1997 Ontario teachers' strike. *Journalism Studies, 5*(3), 353-371.

Grewal, S. (2011, November 7). Racial problems in school noted in 2010 report. *The Toronto Star.* Retrieved from http://www.thestar.com/news/mississauga/article/1082940

Hammer, K. (2011, February 15). Halton Catholic school board policy on gay-straight alliances 'side-steps' issue. *The Globe and Mail.* Retrieved from http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/halton-catholic-school-board-policy-on-gay-straight-alliances-side-steps-issue/article580835/

Hansen, S. (2004). From Common Observation to behavioural risk management. *International Sociology, 19*(2), 151-171.

Harvey, D. (2007). *A brief history of neoliberalism.* New York: Oxford University Press, USA.

Hayes, M. (1994). *The new right in Britain: An introduction to theory and practice.* London: Pluto Press.

Henderson, J. (2005). Neo-liberalism, community care and Australian mental health policy. *Health Sociology Review, 14*(3), 242-254.

Hermer, J., & Mosher, J. E. (2002). *Disorderly people: Law and the politics of exclusion in Ontario.* Halifax: Fernwood Publishing Co., Ltd.

Houston, A. (2011, January 6). Halton Catholic schools ban gay-straight alliance groups: We don't have Nazi groups either: Board chair. *Xtra! Canada's Gay and Lesbian News.* Retrieved from http://www.xtra.ca/public/Toronto/Halton_Catholic_schools_ban_gaystraight_alliance_groups-9611.aspx

Houston, A. (2011, June 7). Rainbows banned at Mississauga Catholic school, students stopped from donating cupcake money to LGBT youth line. *Xtra! Canada's Gay and Lesbian News*. Retrieved from http://www.xtra.ca/public/Toronto/Rainbows_banned_at_Mississauga_Catholic_school-10262.aspx

Jaffe, J. A., & Quark, A. A. (2006). Social cohesion, neoliberalism, and the entrepreneurial community in rural Saskatchewan. *American Behavioral Scientist, 50*(2), 206-225.

Jagose, A. (1996). *Queer theory: An introduction***.** New York: New York University Press.

Johnson, T. (1993). Expertise and the state. In M. Gane & T. Johnson (Eds.), *Foucault's New Domains*(pp. 139-53). London: Routledge.

Jones, C. (2006). Falling between the cracks: What diversity means for black women in higher education. *Policy Futures in Education, 4*(2), 145-159.

Jull, S. (2000). Youth violence, schools, and the management question: A discussion of zero tolerance and equity in public schooling. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, 17*, 1-7.

Kaganas, F., & Diduck, A. (2004). Incomplete citizens: Changing images of Post-Separation children. *The Modern Law Review, 67*(6), 959-981.

Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act, Statutes of Ontario (2009, c. 17). Retrieved from http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/statutes/english/2009/elaws_src_s09017_e.htm

King, S. J. (2003). Doing well by running well. In Z. Bratich, J. Packer, & C. McCarthy (Eds.),*Foucault, cultural studies and governmentality* (pp. 295-316). Albany: State University ofNew York Press.

Kumashiro, K. (2001). Posts perspectives on anti-oppressive education in social studies, English, Mathematics, and Science classrooms. *Educational Researcher, 30*(3), 3-12.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 11*(1), 7-24.

Ladwig, J. G. (1994). For whom this reform?: Outlining educational policy as a social field. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 15*(3), 341-363.

Lambert, H. (2006). Accounting for EBM: Notions of evidence in medicine. *Social Science & Medicine, 62*(11), 2633-2645.

Leek, G. (2000). School uniforms, baggy pants, Barbie dolls, and business suit cultures on school boards: A feminqueering. In S. Talburt & S.R. Steinberg (Eds.), *Thinking queer: Sexuality, culture and education* (pp. 177-200). New York: Peter Lang.

Lemke, T. (2001). The birth of bio-politics: Michel Foucault's Lecture at the Collège de France on neo-liberal governmentality. *Economy and Society, 30*(2), 190-207.

Levitas, R. (1986). Competition and compliance: The utopias of the new right.In R. Levitas (Ed.), *The Ideology of the new right* (80-106). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Lewis, C. (2010, April 23). Militant gay agenda seen in new sex course: Christian leader. *National Post.* Retrieved from http://life.nationalpost.com/2010/04/23/%E2%80%98militant%E2%80%99-gay-agenda-seen-in-new-sex-course-christian-leader/

Lewis, M. (1993). *Without a word: Teaching beyond women's silence.* New York: Routledge.

Lewis, M. (2005). More than meets the eye: The underside of the corporate culture of higher education and possibilities for a new feminist critique. *JCT, 21*(1), 7-25.

López, G. R., & Parker, L. (2003). *Interrogating racism in qualitative research methodology. counterpoints.* New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

Lupton, D. (2005). Contemporary health promotion and public health. *Medical Sociology: Health Care and Social Change, 4*, 251.

Lynn, M., & Adams, M. (2002). Introductory overview to the special issue critical race theory and education: Recent developments in the field. *Equity &Excellence in Education, 35*(2), 87-92.

Mackie, R. (2000, March 21) Harris Cracks Down on Student Misconduct. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A1.

Mallan, C. (1999, February 3). Ontario studies school uniforms; Code of conduct also being looked at for all schools as early as the fall. *The Toronto Star*, p. 1.

Marony, H.J. (1992). Who has the baby? Nationalism and the construction of a“demographic crisis” in Quebec, 1960–1988. In M.P. Connelly & P. Armstrong (Eds.), *Feminism in Action.* Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Marshall, C. (1999). Researching the margins: Feminist critical policy analysis. *Educational Policy, 13*(1), 59-76.

Martin, D. (2002). Demonizing youth, marketing fear; The new politics of crime. In J. Hermer & J. Mosher (Eds.), *Disorderly People: Law and the Politics of Exclusion in Ontario*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.

Marx, K., Engels, F., & Justo, J. B. (1964). *On religion.* New York: Schocken Books.

Mason, D. (2003). Changing ethnic disadvantage: an overview. In D. Mason (Ed.), *Explaining ethnic differences: Changing patterns of disadvantage in Britain*(pp. 139-152). Bristol: The Policy Process.

McCarten, J. (1999, March 1). Harris renews call for tougher Young Offenders Act. Canadian Press NewsWire. Retrieved from http://proquest.umi.com.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/pqdweb?did=413706801&sid=7&Fmt=3&clientid=22605-&RQT=309&VName=PQD

McElligott, G. (2008). A tory high modernism? Grand plans and visions of order in neoconservative Ontario. *Critical Criminology, 16*(2), 123-144.

McLaren, P. (1993). *Schooling as a ritual performance: Towards a political economy of educational symbols and gestures,* 2nd edition. London: Routledge.

Miller, P., & Rose, N. (1990). Governing economic life. *Economy and Society, 19*(1), 1-31.

Monk, D. (2011). Challenging homophobic bullying in schools: The politics of progress. *International Journal of Law in Context, 7*(02), 181-207.

Mosher, J. (2008). Lessons in access to justice: Racialized youths and Ontario's safe schools. *Osgoode Hall Law Journal, 46*(4), 807-851.

O'Malley, P. (1999). Volatile and contradictory punishment. *Theoretical Criminology, 3*(2), 175-196.

Nunn, K. B. (2000). Law as a Eurocentric enterprise. In R. Delgado & J. Stefancic (Eds.), *Critical race theory: The cutting edge* (2nd edition, pp. 71-79). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops. (2004). *Pastoral guidelines to assist students of same-sex orientation.* Retrieved fromhttp://acbo.on.ca/englishdocs/Pastoral%20Guidelines.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education, News Release, 2005, November 23. McGuinty Government Releases Data on School Discipline. Retrieved from http://ogov.newswire.ca/ontario/GPOE/2005/11/23/c8925.html?lmatch=&Lang=_e.html

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2006). *Safe schools policy and practice: An agenda for action.* Retrieved fromhttp://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/ssareview/report0626.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2007; 2009a). *Policy program memorandum 144: Bullying prevention and intervention.* Retrieved fromhttp://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/144.html

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2007; 2009b). *Policy program memorandum 145: Progressive discipline and promoting positive student behaviour.* Retrieved fromhttp://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/145.html

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2007c). *Policy program memorandum 128: The provincial Code of Conduct and school board codes of conduct.* Retrieved fromhttp://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/128.html

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2008a). *Character development in action: Successful practices in Ontario* schools. Retrieved fromwww.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/successReussie.pdf.

Ontario Ministry of Education (2008b). *Finding common ground: Character development in Ontario schools, K–12*. Retrieved fromwww.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/literacy/booklet2008.pdf.

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2008c). *Progressive discipline: A new approach to help make schools safer*. Retrieved from http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/discipline.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education (2008d). *Shaping a culture of respect in our schools: Promoting safe and healthy relationships.* Retrieved fromhttp://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/RespectCulture.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education (2009a). *Equity and inclusive education in Ontario schools: Realizing the promise of diversity.* Retrieved fromhttp://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/inclusiveguide.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2009b). *Policy program memorandum 149: Protocol for partnerships with external agencies for provision of services by regulated health professionals, regulated social service professionals, and paraprofessionals.* Retrieved fromhttp://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/ppm149.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2010). *The Ontario Curriculum*, *Grades 1-8: Health and Physical Education.* Retrieved from http://www.cfsh.ca/About_CFSH/News-and-Events/news05071001.html

Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. (2011). Retrieved fromhttp://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/hl-mvs/declaration/index-eng.php

Orstad, K. (1997, March). What are we afraid of?: The Myth of Youth Crime. *Saturday Night, 112*(2), 45-58.

Osborne, T. (1997). Of health and statecraft. In A. Petersen & R. Bunton (Eds.), *Foucault,health and medicine* (pp. 173-188). New York: Routledge.

Ozga, J. (2000). *Policy research in educational settings. A contested terrain.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Parker, G., & Fletcher, K. (2007). Treating depression with the evidence-based psychotherapies: A critique of the evidence. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica, 115*(5), 352-359.

Parker, L. (2003). Critical race theory and its implications for methodology and policy analysis in higher education desegregation. *Interrogating Racism in Qualitative Research Methodology, 195*, 145.

Parker, L., & Stovall, D. O. (2004). Actions following words: Critical race theory connects to critical pedagogy. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 36*(2), 167-182.

Pateman, C., & Gross, E. (1986). *Feminist challenges: Social and political theory.* Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

Petersen, A., & Lupton, D. (1996). *The new public health: Health and self in the age of risk.* New York: Sage Publications Ltd.

Phillips, A. (1995). *The politics of presence*. New York: Oxford University Press, USA.

Phillips, S.D. (1996) Discourse, identity, and voice: Feminist contributions to policy studies. In L. Dobuzinskis, M. Howlett, & D. Laycock (Eds.), *Policy Studies in Canada: The state of the art*(pp. 242-65). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Prasad, P., & Mills, A. J. (1997). From showcase to shadow: Understanding the dilemmas of managing workplace diversity. *Managing the Organizational Melting Pot: Dilemmas of Workplace Diversity,* **,** 3-27.

Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario (1994). The Common Sense Revolution (Pamphlet).

Puxley, C. (2000, May 2). Figuring out youth crime. *Hamilton Spectator*, p A08.

Quinlivin, K. (2002). Whose problem is this? Queerying the framing of lesbian and gay secondary students within at risk discourses. In K. H. Robinson, J. Irwin, & T. Ferfolja (Eds.), *From here to diversity: The social impact of lesbian and gay issues in education in Australia and New Zealand* (pp. 17-31). New York: Harrington Park Press.

Raby, R. (2005). Polite, Well-dressed and on time: Secondary school conduct codes and the production of docile citizens. *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue Canadienne De Sociologie, 42*(1), 71-91.

Ratner, C. (2006). *Cultural psychology: A perspective on psychological functioning and social reform.* London: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Rayside, D. (2010). Sex. ed in Ontario: Religious mobilization and socio-cultural anxiety. *Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association,* June 2010.

Rebellato, D. (1999). *1956 and all that: The making of modern British drama.* East Sussex: Psychology Press.

Roche, M. (2002). Social citizenship: Grounds of social change. In E. Isin & B. Turner (Eds.), *Handbook of Citizenship Studies*(pp. 69-86). London: Sage.

Rose, N. (1992). Governing the enterprising self. In P. Heelas, & P. Morris (Eds.), *The valuesof the enterprise culture: The moral debate* (pp. 141-164). London: Routledge.

Rose, N., & Miller, P. (1992). Political power beyond the state: Problematics of government.*British Journal of Sociology*, *43*(2), 173-205.

Rose, N. (1993). Government, authority and expertise in advanced liberalism. *Economy and Society, 22*(3), 283-299.

Rose, N. (1996). Governing "advanced" liberal democracies.In A. Sharma & A. Gupta Malden (Eds.), *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader* (pp. 144-162). MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Rose, N. (1998). *Inventing our selves: Psychology, power, and personhood.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rose, N. (1999). *Governing the soul: The shaping of the private self*. London: Free AssociationBooks.

Rose, N. (2007). *The politics of life itself: Biomedicine, power and subjectivity in the 21st century*.Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Safe Schools Act, Statutes of Ontario (2000, c. 12). Retrieved fromhttp://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/statutes/english/2000/elaws_src_s00012_e.htm

Safe Schools Act helps gangs recruit, says NDP. (2005, October 31). *Child Advocacy Project, The Toronto Star.* Retrieved from http://www.childadvocacy.ca/news/article.88380-Safe_Schools_Act_helps_gangs_recruit_NDP_says

Safe Streets Act, Statutes of Ontario (1999, c.8). Retrieved from http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_99s08_e.htm

Scheurich, J. J. (1994). Policy archaeology: A new policy studies methodology. *Journal of Education Policy, 9*(4), 297-316.

Shields, C. M. (2004). Dialogic leadership for social justice: Overcoming pathologies of silence. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 40*(1), 109-132.

Skiba, R. J., & Peterson, R. L. (2000). School discipline at a crossroads: From zero tolerance to early response. *Exceptional Children, 66*(3), 335-396.

Smith, D. (1990). *The conceptual practices of power: A feminist sociology of knowledge.* Toronto: Toronto University Press.

Stevenson, H. M., & Burke, M. (1991). Bureaucratic logic in new social movement clothing: The limits of health promotion research. *Health Promotion International, 6*(4), 281-289.

Stinson, J., Pollak, N., Cohen, M., & Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. BC Office. (2005). *Pains of privatization: How contracting out hurts health support workers, their families, and health care.* Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, BC Office.

Talaga, T., & Shephard, M. (1999, April 30). Help for troubled kids often in short supply. *The Toronto Star*, p. 1.

Townley, B. (1993). Foucault, power/knowledge, and its relevance for human resource management. *Academy of Management Review,* **,** 518-545.

Trépanier, J. E. (2003). *Student discipline: A guide to the Safe Schools Act.* Markham: LexisNexis Butterworths.

Trepanier, J. (2008). *Student Discipline: A guide to the Education Amendment Act.* Markham: LexisNexis Butterworths.

Turner, B. S. (1992). *Regulating bodies: Essays in medical sociology.* East Sussex: Psychology Press.

Van Boven, L. (2000). Pluralistic ignorance and political correctness: The case of affirmative action. *Political Psychology, 21*(2), 267-276.

Villalpando, O. (2003). Self-segregation or self-preservation? A critical race theory and Latina/o critical theory analysis of a study of Chicana/o college students. *Qualitative Studies in Education, 16*(5), 619-646.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1994). The methods of reflexological and psychological investigation.In R. Van der Veer & J. Valsiner (Eds.), *The Vygotsky Reader* (pp. 27-45). Oxford: Blackwellm.

Wampold, B. (2006). Not a scintilla of evidence to support empirically supported treatments as more effective than other treatments.In J. C. Norcross, L. E. Beutler, & R. F. Levant (Eds.), *Evidence-Based Practices in Mental Health: Debate and dialogue on the fundamental questions*, (299-308). Washington D.C: American Psychological Association.

Warner, M. (1993). *Fear of a queer planet: Queer politics and social theory.* Minnestota: University of Minnesota Press.

Warwick, I., Goodrich, R., Aggleton, P., & Chase, E. (2006). Homophobic bullying and schools-responding to the challenge. *Youth and Policy,* 91, 59-73**.**

Watts, R. (1993). Government and modernity: an essay in thinking governmentality, *Arena Journal*, 2, 103–157.

White, R. (1994). Shame and reintegration strategies: Individuals, state power and social interests. In A., C., & J Wundersitz (Eds.), *Family Conferencing and Juvenile Justice: The Way Forward Or Misplaced Optimism*, (pp. 181-191). Canberra: AIC.

Williams, D., & Garner, J. (2002). The case against 'the evidence': A different perspective on evidence-based medicine. *The British Journal of Psychiatry, 180*(1), 8-12.

Woodstock, L. (2006). Tattoo therapy: Storying the self on reality TV in neoliberal times. *The Journal of Popular Culture.*Retrieved from http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.queensu.ca/doi/10.1111/j.1540-5931.2011.00814.x/full

Yeatman, A. (1998). *Activism and the policy process.* Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 8*(1), 69-91.