

# McGuinty right about segregation

The Ottawa Citizen

Published: Sunday, September 02, 2007

**McGuinty right about segregation** - Letter - Ottawa Citizen

Re: McGuinty 'betrayed' us on school funding, Jewish leader says, Aug. 29.  
Religion and politics equals controversy. It is no different when it comes to the recent debate about government-funded faith-based schools. Premier McGuinty's characterization of faith-based schools as segregationist is appropriate.

The recent debate has overlooked two key issues; the problem with the definition of faith and the students' right to participate in a forum where ideas are freely exchanged and debated.

First, we must address the definition of faith. If funding is allowed, what is to be the basis for qualification? Does my faith have to believe in one God? Does it have to be based on a holy book? In other words, who is entitled to funding and on what basis? The lack of reasonable, fair and educated answers to these subjective questions demonstrates our unpreparedness for the idea of government-funded faith-based schools.

Second, when it comes to faith-based schools, the premise is that these schools would, to a certain extent, be given some room to promote religious beliefs or ideas. Even with the Ontario curriculum, the problem would not be so much what they would teach but how they would teach it. For instance, how would a religious teacher approach the idea of evolution or even some topics in history? Will the students be ostracized by their peers and teachers if they challenge the religious perspective on these topics? It is absolutely crucial that freedom of expression in schools, when it comes down to the subjects in the curriculum, be preserved

Without it, schools would not be able to promote the goals of education. Simply stated, the crushing reality is that religion and faith, with their inherent restrictions on knowledge and ideas, have no place in our school system, which is supposed to foster creativity and advancement among the younger generation.

Qumers Wejdan, Ottawa