

# Access to Student Records

By Kathryn Craig, LLB

There is a folder containing a record of achievement for every student in the Ontario publicly-funded schools. This folder, called an Ontario Student Record (OSR), contains copies of the student's report cards and records of French instruction. Details of special health problems can also be entered in the record. In fact, it can contain anything that the principal considers useful, such as awards or outstanding achievements.

Section 237 (3) of the Education Act provides that pupils, parents and guardians are entitled to examine the record of the pupil. While parents cannot control what goes into the file, the parent or pupil may ask the principal to correct anything in the file which is inaccurate. If refused, the parent or pupil may request a hearing by a person appointed by the Minister of Education [s. 237 (4&5)].

In at least one school board (the Waterloo County Board of Education, there are two records on students. The first is the usual OSR and it is available at the child's school. The second is at the board office, and it can be much more comprehensive. Parents have the right to see both records.

I would recommend that parents review the record of any child who is having trouble in the education system, since it gives the parents some idea of how the child is viewed by the educators. Parents can be taken unawares by teachers and team members who make recommendations based on a sometimes inaccurate view of the child.

When I reviewed my disabled son's file, I found all of the educational assessments done prior to his IPRC's, none of which had been shared with me during the IPRC process. I learned that his teachers had decided that he suffered from attention-deficit disorder. Although I had previously provided a copy of a letter from his doctor stating that he did not suffer from this disorder, that letter did not appear in his file.

*This is the second in a series of columns about parents' legal rights.*