**EDITORIAL: Anti-bullying efforts fall short**

April 10, 2013 - 10:34pm [By THE CHRONICLE HERALD](http://thechronicleherald.ca/author/by-the-chronicle-herald-5)

REHTAEH Parsons, her loved ones and, indeed, all of us deserve more than handwringing from authorities.

Beyond the grief and horror, there’s a huge sense of anger and frustration out there that more hasn’t been done.

That widespread sense is right. More can and more should be done. And we even know what some of those things are.

Rehtaeh’s tragic story has quite literally gone around the world.

People have been touched and outraged by her mother’s account of an alleged sexual assault on her 15-year-old daughter, followed by months of relentless harassment, much of it online.

There are two aspects to the terrible wrongs inflicted on Rehteah. The alleged assault, and photos taken at the time and shared online, are matters falling under criminal law.

The subsequent bullying and cyberbullying are examples of the very pernicious phenomenon the province has spent the last two years trying to effectively tackle through studies, legislation and a new provincial strategy.

Justice Minister Ross Landry initially did a poor job Tuesday of attempting to explain why police and the Crown were unable to lay any charges. In arguing against second-guessing police and prosecutors, his comments seemed bloodless and out of touch with the gravity of just what had transpired.

Rightly, by Tuesday night, he had realized his error and asked justice officials to present him with options for reviewing the handling of the case.

Earlier, Mr. Landry did appeal to the public to help bring forward any further evidence for police to follow.

There are people who have untold information that would help reopen this case. They should find the courage and humanity to do the right thing.

As for bullying and cyberbullying, there’s a terrible irony that Rehtaeh was mercilessly victimized in the midst of a high-profile provincial campaign to protect children from this scourge.

The province’s efforts, including appointing a co-ordinator, requiring beefed-up student conduct codes and providing proactive educational programs and services for both bullies and victims, have been well thought out and useful. But they are not enough.

The province has largely implemented only one side of the approach advocated by Dalhousie law professor Wayne MacKay’s task force report issued last spring.

What’s missing are the tougher measures he recommended to give school boards greater powers to hold bullies responsible for their actions, on and off school property.

Bullies need help, but they also need to know there will be firm consequences for their abusive actions.

There were also thoughtful recommendations on consulting the federal government on possible changes to the Criminal Code and regulations governing Internet providers.

Rehtaeh’s case cries out for consequences to be put in place for those who bully. The provincial government has no excuse for not implementing that portion of Mr. MacKay’s recommendations.

None of this will be a panacea. But what’s been done to date is not enough. Rehtaeh’s loved ones and the public have a right to demand better.