



Durham District School Board

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March 26, 2026

Paul Dubé
Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario
483 Bay Street, 10th floor, South Tower
Toronto, ON M5G 2C9

Sent via email: info@ombudsman.on.ca

Re: Request for Review of the Potential Impacts of Removing English Public School Trustees

Dear Ombudsman Dubé,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Durham District School Board, I am writing to request your office's review of the provincial government's proposal to eliminate democratically elected English public school board trustees. The DDSB recognizes the important role of the Ombudsman in safeguarding the principles of fairness and accountability across Ontario's public institutions, and we also firmly believe that trustees serve as a longstanding, essential democratic link between local communities and the education system. Recent public statements suggesting the possible elimination of trustees would represent a significant shift in Ontario's education governance and we have concerns with the steps taken towards this outcome to date by the Ministry of Education. Specifically the removal of English public trustees could impact:

- **Indigenous Representation and Truth and Reconciliation:** Inclusion of Indigenous voice through our First Nations trustee is essential to uphold the distinct and inherent rights and unique needs and interests of First Nation, Inuit, and Metis students and families and students.
- **Student Representation:** The loss of Student Trustees who are elected from among their peers to advocate and bring student issues forward for awareness and resolution.
- **Fairness:** Different governance structures for English public boards and French and Catholic boards could result in inequitable treatment of students and families depending on the type of education they choose to access.
- **Transparency:** The potential of fewer public meetings would reduce public awareness and transparency in decision making.
- **Accountability:** School board trustees are a direct link between local communities

and the education system. Their removal would significantly reduce local accountability in a sector that affects nearly every family in Ontario.

- **Absence of Public Consultation or Evidence of Support:** To date, there has been no indication or effort from the province or the Ministry of Education to consult the public on the potential removal of trustees. We firmly believe that Ontarians value the role of trustees and, if invited to provide feedback, would question whether the proposed changes would have any impact on improving public education.

Alongside our colleagues from other Ontario school boards, we respectfully request that your office undertake a review of the process and potential impacts of removing English public school trustees. Such a review upholds the principles of fairness, openness, transparency, and accountability that Ontarians expect and deserve.

We thank you for your immediate attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Tracy Brown
Chair, Board of Trustees
Durham District School Board

cc.

The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier
The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Education
Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) for Durham Region
Members of Parliament (MPs) for Durham Region
Regional Chair, Mayors and Council for Durham Region Municipalities
Ontario Public School Boards' Association and Members Board
DDSB Board of Trustees