



March 30, 2026

Waterloo Region District School Board

Notice of Board Meeting

The regular monthly Board Meeting of the Waterloo Region District School Board will be held in the Boardroom, Building 2, 1st Floor, 51 Ardelt Avenue, Kitchener, Ontario, on Monday, March 30, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

AGENDA

Call to Order

Territorial Acknowledgement and O Canada

Approval of Agenda

Announcements/Celebrating Board Activities

Appointment of 2026-2027 Student Trustees

Trustees S. Estoesta & C. Johnson

Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

Communications Good News Update

H. Hughes

Delegations

Lisa Weiler Haskins - Classroom Evacuations

Consent Agenda

Receipt/Approval of Minutes:

Approve Minutes - Parent Involvement Committee Meeting of January 27, 2026

Approve Minutes - Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting of February 11, 2026

Receive Minutes - Board Meeting of February 23, 2026

Approve Minutes - Student Achievement and Well-Being Standing Committee of February 25, 2026

Approve Minutes - Policy and Governance Standing Committee of March 9, 2026

Approve Minutes - Business Services Standing Committee of March 23, 2026

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Other Business

Question Period (10 minutes)

Future Agenda Items (Notices of motion to be referred to Agenda Development Committee)

Adjournment



Report to Board

March 30, 2026

Subject: Absences from Board Meetings - March

Recommendation

This report is provided for information.

Status

This report provides a summary of approved absence requests from Trustees between the period of February 20, 2026 and March 27, 2026.

Approved Absences

Trustee	Date of Request	Meeting Date	Public Meeting	In Camera	Approved	Approved By	Approval Date
B. Cody	02/23/26	02/23/26	Yes	Yes	Yes	M. Radlein (Chair)	02/23/26

Background

The [WRDSB Bylaws](#) provide guidelines for absences under Section 13.2. Request to be Absent from a Board Meeting:

13.2.2. The Board gives the Chair and Vice-Chair the authority to approve absences on behalf of the Board and will notify the board at the next Board meeting of any absences as part of the Consent Agenda.

13.2.3. Trustees shall follow the process outlined in “Request for Approved Absence from a Board Meeting” to request approval from the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board for their absence.

Financial implications

There are no known financial implications to the approval of Trustee absences.

Communications

Trustee attendance at meetings is recorded and available on the WRDSB website.

Prepared by: Manager S. Reidel for Chair M. Radlein in consultation with Leadership Council.



Report to Board

March 30, 2026

Subject: Staffing Information – Retirements & Resignations

Recommendation

This report is provided for information.

Status

The employees listed in Appendix A of this report have received acknowledgement of their retirement or resignation.

Background

The board's practice is to receive information regarding staff retirements and resignations at regular monthly board meetings.

Financial implications

Expenditures are accounted for within existing budgets.

Communications

Employees listed in this report have communicated through Human Resource Services.

Prepared by: Bill Lemon, Associate Director, in consultation with Leadership Council.

Appendix A

Staffing Statistics – Retirements Current at March 30, 2026

Retirements: Elementary Teaching Staff				
First	Last	Position/Location	Retirement Date	Years of Service
Ryder	Ball	Teacher, NA MacEachern PS	June 30, 2026	22
Lynn	Buckley	Vice President, ETFO Waterloo Region	June 26, 2026	31
Nancy	Cook	Teacher, Central PS	June 30, 2026	26
Stephen	Eadie	Teacher, Rosemount PS	June 30, 2026	27
Ingrid	Gregg	Teacher, Bridgeport PS	June 30, 2026	29
Barry	Jacobs	Teacher, MacGregor PS	March 20, 2026	23
Heather	Kehl	Teacher, Mackenzie King PS	June 26, 2026	18
Jeffrey	Langridge	Teacher, Doon PS	February 26, 2026	30
Lynne	McNab	Teacher, Bridgeport PS	June 30, 2026	21
Christine	Martin	Teacher, Saginaw PS	June 30, 2026	20
Lisa	Pfaff	Teacher, Winston Churchill PS	June 26, 2026	22
Jennifer	Schaefer	Teacher, Groh PS	June 30, 2026	33
Mediha	Siegel	Teacher, Pioneer Park PS	June 30, 2026	23
Alison	Sutton	Teacher, Bridgeport PS	June 30, 2026	35
Kelly-Lyn	Watts	Teacher, Baden PS	June 26, 2026	29
Andrew	Weinacht	Teacher, Westheights PS	March 20, 2026	23

Retirements: Secondary Teaching Staff				
First	Last	Position/Location	Retirement Date	Years of Service
Linda	Brennan	Department Head, Guidance, Preston HS	June 30, 2026	31
Cristina	Ciloci	Teacher, Cameron Heights CI	June 30, 2026	28
Carolyn	Doering	Teacher, Huron Heights SS	June 30, 2026	26
Susan	Lee	Department Head, Music, Grand River CI	June 26, 2026	28
John	Stewart	Teacher, Southwood SS	March 29, 2026	24
Timothy	Weber	Teacher, Cameron Heights CI	June 30, 2026	30

Staffing Statistics – Retirements
Current at March 30, 2026

Retirements: Administrative & Support Staff				
First	Last	Position/Location	Retirement Date	Years of Service
Gloria	Bauman	Early Childhood Educator, Riverside PS	June 26, 2026	16
Darlene	Crawley	Educational Assistant, Grand River CI	April 9, 2026	40
Amanda	Drewett	Secretary, ETFO Waterloo Region	March 13, 2026	32
Brian	George	Infrastructure Analyst, ITS	April 30, 2026	40
Shelly	Henry	Manager, Client Services, ITS	April 30, 2026	41
Jamie	Kempel	Senior Accounting Clerk, Financial Services	April 30, 2026	36
Bonny	Kovrig	Purchasing Analyst, Financial Services	April 30, 2026	35
Corrine	Lichty	Educational Assistant, Floradale PS	June 26, 2026	23
Morena-Domenica	Milivojevich	Secretary, Avenue Road PS	May 29, 2026	18
Sandra	Peacock	Library Clerk, Lexington PS	March 31, 2026	17
Christine	Regan	Educational Assistant, Kitchener CI	April 17, 2026	20
Elaine	Sandham	Infrastructure Analyst, ITS	May 1, 2026	41
Tracy	Tait	Principal, Pioneer Park PS	August 31, 2026	23
Lynda	Trudeau	Principal, Empire PS	August 24, 2026	28
Dinah	Whiteside	Early Childhood Educator, Westvale PS	September 2, 2026	14

Staffing Statistics – Resignations Current at March 30, 2026

Permanent Staff Resignations			
First	Last	Position/Location	Resignation Date
Samantha	Barta	Teacher, Clemens Mill PS	June 26, 2026
Bianca	Brock	Teacher, Waterloo Oxford District SS	June 30, 2026
Megan	Chadwick	Teacher, Margaret Avenue PS	March 20, 2026
Christa	Cooper	Teacher, Stanley Park PS	March 27, 2026
Danielle	Davey	Early Childhood Educator, Mary Johnston PS	February 27, 2026
Lucy	Donkers	Teacher, Laurel Heights SS	March 26, 2026
Vicky	Hannigan	Teacher, Elgin Street PS	March 20, 2026
Melissa	Mann	Early Childhood Educator, Trillium PS	June 26, 2026
Adunni	Oginni	Educational Assistant, WT Townshend PS	February 17, 2026
Harshita	Patel	Early Childhood Educator, Suddaby PS	February 23, 2026
Laura	Perrin	Teacher & Visual Arts Department Head, Galt CI	June 26, 2026
David	To	Vice Principal, Manchester PS	February 20, 2026
Margaret	Vanderbolt	Library Clerk, Lincoln Heights PS	March 13, 2026



Report to Board

March 30, 2026

Subject: Staffing Information – Appointments

Recommendation

This report is provided for information.

Status

The staff appointments as noted on Appendix A of this report are effective the dates indicated.

Background

The board's practice has been to have appointments presented for information at regular monthly board meetings.

Financial implications

Expenditures are accounted for within existing budgets.

Communications

Employees listed in this report have been advised of the appointments.

Prepared by: Bill Lemon, Associate Director, in consultation with Leadership Council.

Appendix A

Staffing Information – New Appointments Current at March 30, 2026

New Appointments: Elementary Teaching Staff			
First	Last	Location	Effective Date
Kathryn	Archambeault	Special Education (Itinerant)	March 3, 2026
Andrew	Braid	Oak Creek PS	March 2, 2026
Jessie	Brush	Chalmers Street PS	March 2, 2026
Sarah	Cioanca	Wilson Avenue PS	March 9, 2026
Kaitlyn	Curry	Hespeler PS	February 23, 2026
Samantha	Diemert	Grandview (NH) PS	March 30, 2026
Elizabeth	Dookram	Prueter PS	March 23, 2026
Kelsey	Hughes	Elgin Street PS	March 23, 2026
Kyle	Kukac	Silverheights PS	March 31, 2026
Makayla	Soares	Oak Creek PS	March 2, 2026

New Appointments: Administrative and Support Staff			
First	Last	Position / Location	Effective Date
Lawrence	Gbatsoma	In-School Tech, Huron Heights SS	March 23, 2026
Nissi	Vairamon	Collaboration Systems Analyst, ITS	March 23, 2026

New Hires - due to retirements, resignations or leaves and are to replace full or part time vacancies.

Human Resources & Equity Services



Report to Board

March 30, 2026

Subject: Recommendations from the Student Achievement & Well-Being Standing Committee

Recommendation

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve the recommendations from the Student Achievement & Well-Being Standing Committee meeting of February 25, 2026.

Status

Recommendations from the Student Achievement & Well-Being Standing Committee are outlined in Appendix A for Board consideration.

Standing Committee Meeting Agenda Package, Recording and Minutes

For context and background on the recommendations, please refer to the following standing committee materials:

- [Agenda Package](#)
- [Recording](#)
- Meeting Minutes (included in Board meeting package)

Background

In accordance with [WRDSB Bylaws](#), Standing Committees assist the Board in fulfilling its duties related to governance with a system wide focus by providing advice on system issues.

The Student Achievement & Well-Being Standing Committee will ensure matters related to school programs and school services are in alignment with the Board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan and operational goals.

Financial implications

Known financial implications for each recommendation are indicated within the applicable reports from the committee meeting.

Communications

Communications for each recommendation are indicated within the applicable reports from the committee meeting.

Prepared by: Manager S. Reidel for the Student Achievement & Well-Being Standing Committee in consultation with Leadership Council.

Appendix A

Student Achievement & Well-Being Standing Committee Recommendations February 26, 2026

A. Student Evacuation Quarterly Data Q2 – 2025 - 2026 ([SAWBSC Folio 09](#))

That the Waterloo Region District School Board send a letter to the Ministry of Education sharing the data in the Student Evacuation Quarterly Data Q2 – 2025 - 2026;
and

Ask that the Ministry request evacuation data collection by other school boards;
and

Request that the Ministry consider providing the additional resources to school boards and community agencies to reduce classroom evacuations.



Report to Board

March 30, 2026

Subject: Recommendations from the Policy & Governance Standing Committee

Recommendation

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve the recommendations from the Policy & Governance Standing Committee meeting of March 9, 2026.

Status

Recommendations from the Policy & Governance Standing Committee are outlined in Appendix A for Board consideration.

Policy Recommendations

For ease of reference, copies of the policies for approval have been included in the appendices. The following policies are recommended for approval:

- Board Policy 3007 - Membership in Ontario Public School Boards' Association (Appendix B)

Standing Committee Meeting Agenda Package, Recording and Minutes

For context and background on the recommendations, please refer to the following standing committee materials:

- [Agenda Package](#)
- [Meeting Recording](#)
- Meeting Minutes (included in Board meeting package)

Background

In accordance with [WRDSB Bylaws](#), Standing Committees assist the Board in fulfilling its duties related to governance with a system wide focus by providing advice on system issues.

The Policy & Governance Standing Committee will ensure Board policies, bylaws and trustee self-evaluation are in alignment with the Board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan and operational goals.

Financial implications

Known financial implications for each recommendation are indicated within the applicable reports from the committee meeting.

Communications

Communications for each recommendation are indicated within the applicable reports from the committee meeting.

Prepared by: Manager S. Reidel for the Policy & Governance Standing Committee in consultation with Leadership Council.

Appendix A

Policy & Governance Standing Committee Recommendations

March 9, 2026

A. Board Policy 3007 - Membership in Ontario Public School Boards' Association (Appendix B)

That the Policy & Governance Standing Committee recommend approval of Board Policy 3007 - Membership in Ontario Public School Boards' Association as presented at the March 9, 2026, Policy & Governance Standing Committee meeting; and

That the Waterloo Region District School Board continue with membership in the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) for 2026-2027.

B. Trustee Determination and Distribution

That the Policy & Governance Standing Committee recommend that, pursuant to Section 4(1)(b) of Ontario Regulation 412/00 of the Education Act, the Waterloo Region District School Board agrees that no areas within the Board's area of jurisdiction in the Region of Waterloo be designated as low population municipalities; and

That, pursuant to Section 58.1 (10.0.1) of the Education Act which says the number of elected trustee positions on a district school board be set at the number determined by the Board for the 2006 school board election, the Waterloo Region District School Board confirms that the number of trustees for this Board will remain at eleven (11); and

That the Waterloo Region District School Board distributes its members as follows:

- four (4) representatives for the City of Kitchener;
- three (3) representatives for the combined area of the City of Waterloo and the Township of Wilmot;
- three (3) representatives for the combined area of the City of Cambridge and the Township of North Dumfries; and
- one (1) representative for the combined area of the Township of Wellesley and the Township of Woolwich.



Board Policy 3007

MEMBERSHIP IN ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS' ASSOCIATION

Responsibility:	Board of Trustees
Legal References:	Education Act 191.2(3) – Other Expenses (Board Members)
Related References:	Board Policy 3001 - Travel, Meals and Hospitality Expenditures – Trustees Board Policy 3003 – Trustee Professional Development Expenses Ontario Public School Boards' Association's Policies and Procedures
Effective Date:	June 2000
Revisions:	June 21, 2021, May 13, 2024, DATE
Reviewed:	May 9, 2022, June 12, 2023, May 14, 2025,

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) recognizes the inherent values in maintaining a positive relationship with other public district school boards throughout the Province of Ontario through membership in the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA).
- 1.2 OPSBA represents English public district school boards and public school authorities across Ontario, which together serve more than ~~1.3~~ **1.4** million public elementary and secondary students. OPSBA advocates on behalf of the best interests and needs of the public school system in Ontario. OPSBA is seen as the expert voice of public education in Ontario and is routinely called on by the provincial government for input and advice on legislation and the impact of government policy directions.
- 1.3 OPSBA serves its Member Boards through its expertise and provincial work in the following areas:
 - Education Program Policy
 - Policy Development
 - Legislation and Regulation Monitoring and Analysis
 - Government Relations
 - Communications and Media Relations
 - Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
 - Labour Relations and Human Resources
 - Education Finance
 - Networking and Facilitation
 - Conference, Meeting and Event Coordination
 - Professional Development and Issues Awareness

2. **Application** ~~Membership Renewal~~

- 2.1 Membership in the OPSBA will be renewed annually in conjunction with the development of the WRDSB operating budget. At that time, this policy (Board Policy 3007 - ~~Membership in OPSBA~~) will also be reviewed.

3. ~~Annual Appointments/Nominations~~

- 3.1 In accordance with OPSBA's bylaws, appointments to the following positions must be approved by the Board of Trustees annually prior to OPSBA's Annual General Meeting:
 - Voting Delegate and Alternate for the OPSBA Annual General Meeting;

- Director on the OPSBA Board of Directors.

3.2 The Board of Trustees may also nominate **any eligible trustees** ~~one of their members~~ for the ~~following~~-**open** positions during the OPSBA Annual General Meeting or at OPSBA's request for nominations.:

- ~~Executive Officers – President, First Vice President, Second Vice President (any trustee from a member board is eligible for nomination);~~
- ~~Chair/Vice Chair – Black Trustee Caucus (any trustees who is black from member school boards or school authority is eligible for nomination)~~
- ~~Chair/Vice Chair – First Nations, Inuit and Metis Trustees Council (see note)~~
- ~~Regional Chair – Central West Region (any trustee from a member board in the Central West Region is eligible for nomination);~~
- ~~Regional Vice-Chair – Central West Region (any trustee who is appointed by a district school board to the OPSBA Board of Directors is eligible for nomination);~~
- ~~Regional Appointment to Core Issue Work Groups.~~

~~4. OPSBA Expenses~~

4.1 Expenses related to attendance at OPSBA events are governed by Board Policy 3003 – Trustee Professional Development Expenses.



Report to Board

March 30, 2026

Subject: Recommendations from the Business Services Standing Committee

Recommendation

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve the recommendations from the Business Services Standing Committee meeting of March 23, 2026.

Status

Recommendations from the Business Services Standing Committee are outlined in Appendix A for Board consideration.

Standing Committee Meeting Agenda Package, Recording and Minutes

For context and background on the recommendations, please refer to the following standing committee materials:

- [Agenda Package](#)
- [Recording](#)
- Meeting Minutes (included in Board meeting package)

Background

In accordance with [WRDSB Bylaws](#), Standing Committees assist the Board in fulfilling its duties related to governance with a system wide focus by providing advice on system issues.

The Business Services Standing Committee will ensure matters related to business and finance; capital planning and facilities; student transportation; and human resources are in alignment with the Board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan and operational goals.

Financial implications

Known financial implications for each recommendation are indicated within the applicable reports from the committee meeting.

Communications

Communications for each recommendation are indicated within the applicable reports from the committee meeting.

Prepared by: Manager S. Reidel for the Business Services Standing Committee in consultation with Leadership Council.

Appendix A

Business Services Standing Committee Recommendations

March 23, 2026

A. Development Areas Annual Report 2025-2026 ([BSSC Folio 01](#))

That the Business Services Standing Committee recommend approval of the updated Development Areas, shown in Appendix A of the 'Development Areas Annual Report 2025–2026,' presented on March 23, 2026, with the changes taking effect April 1, 2026.



Bluewater District School Board

351 1st Avenue North
 Chesley ON N0G 1L0
 Telephone: (519) 363-2014
 Fax: (519) 370-2909
 www.bwdsb.on.ca

Sent by email: paul.calandra@pc.ola.org

February 20, 2026

The Honourable Paul Calandra
 Minister of Education

Dear Minister Calandra:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Bluewater District School Board, we are writing to request that a formal province-wide consultation process be developed and implemented before any decision occurs that would eliminate English public school board trustees.

It is imperative that this process would seek input from students, parents, staff, and community members and include a thorough discussion of research concerning the pros and cons of eliminating local English public school trustee representation, while also promoting open dialogue and two-way conversations.

We are deeply concerned by the lack of consultation to date with those who would bear the long-term impacts of such a significant decision. English public school trustees serve the largest group of students, parents, staff, and community members in the province, all of whom stand to lose a local trustee representative and advocate. This loss of advocacy and voice means that these constituents and the school boards serving them will have no recourse or ability to share meaningful input on directives issued by the Ministry of Education at the local level.

The importance of locally based decision-making that is reflective of the unique needs of the community cannot be understated and warrants further discussion. Any proposed governance model changes should be evidence-based and only occur following comprehensive consultation with a diverse range of voices and partners. This is especially critical in a rural and geographically vast board such as ours, where some of our most vulnerable students have benefitted greatly from the advocacy of local trustees. In addition to removing these long-standing vital links between trustees and their communities, public meetings that promote government transparency and accountability would also be eliminated should this decision move ahead.

We welcome the opportunity to engage and collaborate with you and your government to ensure a path forward that is reflective of the best interests of our students. Thank you in advance, and we eagerly await your response on this timely matter.

Sincerely,

Jane Thomson
 Chair

Jan Johnstone
 Vice-Chair

cc: The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Abram Benedict, Ontario Regional Chief
Paul Vickers, MPP, Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound
The Honourable Lisa Thompson, MPP, Huron-Bruce
Alex Ruff, MP, Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound
Ben Lobb, MP, Huron-Bruce
Ontario Public School Boards' Association
All English Public School Boards in Ontario
Local Municipal Councils
Local Chiefs and Councils
School Council Chairs

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Bluewater District School Board

351 1st Avenue North
 Chesley ON N0G 1L0
 Telephone: (519) 363-2014
 Fax: (519) 370-2909
 www.bwdsb.on.ca

February 20, 2026

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

Dear Ombudsman Dubé:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB), we are reaching out to express our steadfast support of the recent [letter you received from the Waterloo Region District School Board](#) (WRDSB). We join our WRDSB peers in requesting that your office review the potential impacts of removing English Ontario public school trustees, which is currently under consideration by the provincial government.

We recognize the pivotal role of the Ontario Ombudsman in examining the policies and actions of governments with respect to fairness, openness, transparency, and accountability. The Minister of Education has stated the intention to remove the role of democratically elected English public school trustees, but that French and Catholic trustees will not be removed.

Like many other school boards across the province, BWDSB coexists with our French and Catholic counterparts in serving the students and families in our communities. Implementing inconsistent governance structures and eliminating the local voices and decision-making powers of English public school trustees creates an uneven playing field rooted in **unfairness and inequity for our students**.

The removal of English public boards of trustees would also result in the **loss of Indigenous representation** where it currently exists. In our district, this includes a vital voice for the communities of Saugeen First Nation and Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation, where a spirit of strong partnership and collaboration has been built and fostered over many years.

Additionally, a move by the provincial government to remove English public school trustees would have a **detrimental impact on the student voice** in the affected boards through the loss of student trustees. This is the sole legislated role giving voice to Ontario students in English public schools.

We are deeply concerned that there has been **no formal public consultation** to date on the proposal to remove the role of English public school trustees. This should be of dire concern to your office given your mandate to help keep government and public services accountable, protect the rights of Ontarians, and ensure fairness.

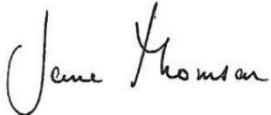
Polls have shown support for the role that trustees play as democratically elected representatives of their communities and reflect skepticism that the proposed governance changes will improve public education. We have already seen that the removal of democratically elected trustees at school boards currently under supervision has resulted in fewer open public meetings, which can lead to less accountability.

We respect the important role of the Ombudsman as an arm's length independent officer of the legislature committed to investigating matters of the public interest. A healthy democracy is one that is built on transparency and reflects, not bypasses, the voices and concerns of its constituents. Any changes to current governance models should not occur prior to a fulsome and inclusive discussion that captures the viewpoints of students, families, school boards, staff, partners, and others bearing the impact of such a sweeping structural shift.

Given the time sensitive nature of the Minister of Education's plans for a decision on this matter, we urge you to prioritize a formal review to help ensure that any new government-initiated rollouts are measured, evidence-based, and truly reflective of the best interests of our students.

Thank you for your consideration and attention to our grave concerns.

Sincerely,



Jane Thomson
Chair



Jan Johnstone
Vice-Chair

cc: The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Education
Abram Benedict, Ontario Regional Chief
Paul Vickers, MPP, Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound
The Honourable Lisa Thompson, MPP, Huron-Bruce
Alex Ruff, MP, Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound
Ben Lobb, MP, Huron-Bruce
Ontario Public School Boards' Association and Member Boards
Local Municipal Councils
Local Chiefs and Councils

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March 2, 2026

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier's Office
Room 281, Main Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A5

And

The Honourable Paul Calandra
Minister of Education, Ministry of Education
315 Front Street West, 14th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 0B8

Re: Request for Provincial Consultation and Transparency Regarding Potential Changes to English Public School Board Governance

Dear Premier Doug Ford and Minister Paul Calandra,

On behalf of the Trustees of the Avon Maitland District School Board, I am writing to respectfully request that the Government of Ontario undertake a comprehensive, province-wide consultation process before moving forward with any changes to the governance structure of English public school boards.

Recent public statements indicating that the Ministry is considering eliminating the role of democratically elected English public school trustees have generated significant concern among school boards, families, and communities across the province. Trustees serve as an essential democratic link between local communities and the public education system. Any proposal to fundamentally alter or remove this role would represent a major shift in the governance of education in Ontario and warrants careful study, thoughtful analysis, and open dialogue.

Given the magnitude of this potential change, we respectfully ask the government to clearly demonstrate how it has arrived at its current thinking. Specifically, we request that the Ministry make public the research, evidence, data analysis, policy reviews, stakeholder input, and performance evaluations that have informed its consideration of altering or eliminating the role of elected trustees. Transparency regarding the rationale, objectives, and anticipated outcomes of this proposal is essential to maintaining public trust and ensuring informed dialogue.

The Trustees of the Avon Maitland District School Board believe that decisions of this significance must be supported by transparent research and meaningful engagement with stakeholders. We respectfully request that the government initiate a formal consultation process that includes school boards, parents, educators, students, First Nations representatives, and the broader public. Such a process would help ensure that any future governance model is grounded in evidence and reflects the needs and priorities of Ontario's diverse communities.

As a board serving a large and predominantly rural geographic area, we also wish to emphasize the critical importance of the democratically elected trustee role in ensuring that rural perspectives are represented in education decision-making. Trustees provide an essential local voice for communities whose priorities and challenges may differ significantly from those experienced in larger urban centres. Issues such as student transportation, long travel distances, rural school viability, access to programming, and community connectivity are often best understood by locally elected representatives who live and work in those communities. Preserving avenues for rural representation helps ensure that provincial education policies reflect the realities of students and families across all regions of Ontario.

We are also concerned that removing English public school trustees could have unintended consequences for representation and accountability within the system. In many boards, legislated First Nations representation and student trustees play an important role in ensuring diverse voices are heard in decision-making. The loss of elected trustees could impact these mechanisms that currently provide important perspectives at the governance table.

We are aware that the Waterloo District School Board has written to the Ombudsman's Office to request an investigation into the fairness, transparency, and accountability of the process used to implement changes to the school board governance model, and we are in full support of this request.

The Trustees of the Avon Maitland District School Board remain committed to working collaboratively with the Ontario Ministry of Education and the Government of Ontario to support a strong, transparent, and responsive public education system. We believe that transparency, evidence-based decision-making, and meaningful consultation will best serve students, families, and communities across the province.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We would welcome the opportunity to participate in any consultation process or discussion regarding the future governance of Ontario's public education system.

Sincerely,



Michael Bannerman
Chair, Board of Trustees
Avon Maitland District School Board

cc: AMDSB Trustees
MPP Lisa Thompson
MPP Matthew Rae
Local Municipalities
Local Media Outlets
Ontario Public School Boards' Association and Member Boards
AMDSB Parent Involvement Committee
AMDSB Special Education Advisory Committee
AMDSB Parent Councils Chairs

Paul Brown
Chairperson of the Board

March 6, 2026

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

Re: Formal Request for Review - Proposed Removal of English Public School Board Trustees

Dear Ombudsman Dubé,

The Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board shares the commitment of your office to ensure that government and public services, including the work of school boards within Ontario, are open, transparent, and accountable to the communities they serve.

Toward that end, I am writing on behalf of the Board to formally request that your office review the potential impacts of removing English Public School Board Trustees with respect to fairness, openness, transparency, equity and accountability.

We have significant concerns that the removal of English Public School Board Trustees will have deeply impactful consequences in critical areas of the public education system, including but not limited to:

- loss of local representation for English public school board supporters. We question the fairness of this decision with the stated intention of retaining elected French and Catholic school board trustees,
- reduced transparency and accountability through the loss of open and public meetings,
- loss of representation for Indigenous students, families and staff, through elimination of the Indigenous Trustee role and damage to long-standing relationships with First Nations communities, affecting the ability of school boards to continue to engage meaningfully in Truth and Reconciliation, and
- loss of student voice and perspectives and the ability to have broad-impact decisions enriched and informed by student trustees.

Absent a broad, transparent and informed public consultation process, a decision of this significance fails to meet the standards of fairness and accountability for governments in this province.

Through the mandate of your office, we urge you to initiate an intentional and thorough review of the procedural fairness underlying the proposed changes to the educational governance model and elimination of English public trustees.

I remain available to discuss this matter with you or members of your staff at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Paul Brown
Chairperson
Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board

C: Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board Trustees
Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board Student Trustees and Student Senate
Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board Parent Involvement Committee
Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee
Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board Indigenous Education Advisory Committee
The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Education
Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) for Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board
Mayors – Communities of Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board
Chief Taynar Simpson, Alderville First Nation
Chief Laurie Hockaday, Curve Lake First Nation
Chief Laurie Carr, Hiawatha First Nation
Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) and Member Boards

March 6, 2026

The Honourable Paul Calandra
Minister of Education
5th Floor
438 University Avenue
Toronto, ON M7A 2A5

Re: Request for Province-Wide Consultation Regarding English Public School Board Trustees

Dear Minister Calandra,

At the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board (KPR), we believe that public education is the cornerstone of healthy, vibrant and welcoming communities across the province.

As locally elected trustees, we live in and are deeply connected to the communities we represent. This unique position ensures that we are well-equipped to make local decisions in the public interest that directly address the diverse needs of the students and families we serve. We are accountable and open to the families and communities that entrust us with their future.

We are writing today to share our great concern that this public trust may be forever lost as a result of the review of the school board governance model currently underway through your Ministry. To ensure a fulsome, transparent and informed review process, it is critically important that very broad, formal and direct conversations with communities across the province happen before that local representation is possibly taken away. To that end, I am writing to share that the following motion was approved at the Board's February 24, 2026, Regular Meeting:

That the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board write a letter to the Ministry of Education requesting that a formal provincial wide consultation process be developed and implemented before making a decision that would eliminate English Public School Board Trustees; and that this consultation process include province wide Town Hall meetings, surveys, virtual and in person focus groups and round table discussion that would seek input from students, parents, staff and community and also discuss research concerning the pros and cons of eliminating English Public School Board Trustee representation while also promoting open dialogue and two-way conversations; and that this motion be sent to every English Public School Board in the Province of Ontario, and to the Ontario Public School Board's Association (OPSBA).

School board trustees are the oldest form of elected representation in Ontario. Since 1807, generations of thoughtful and dedicated individuals have built an internationally recognized public education system in service of families and communities. We urge you to allow for a deliberate and purposeful review before this legacy of achievement is lost.

We remain available at any time to discuss this matter with you or Ministry of Education staff at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Paul Brown
Chairperson
Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board

C: Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board Trustees
Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board Student Trustees and Student Senate
The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) for Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board
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Chief Laurie Hockaday, Curve Lake First Nation
Chief Laurie Carr, Hiawatha First Nation
Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) and Member Boards



Small Schools Make a Difference

March 3, 2026

Dear Member of Provincial Parliament,

Subject: Protecting Local Voice in Public Education

I am writing as an elected school board trustee for Superior-Greenstone District School Board to share an important concern about Minister of Education Paul Calandra's proposals to significantly change or eliminate locally elected school trustees in Ontario.

Minister Calandra, who represents a GTA riding, has recently suggested that current school board governance is "outdated." I disagree. Local democratic representation is not outdated, especially in Northern communities like ours.

Democracy is how communities such as those within the District of Thunder Bay ensure they have a say in shaping the schools that shape our children. Elected trustees mean open meetings, transparent budgets, and accountability that residents can see. Removing trustees would silence the only direct, elected voice families currently have in public education. Without elected trustees, decisions about our schools would be made entirely at Queen's Park, often by people who have never set foot in our communities.

Trustees are your neighbours and your local champions. We live in the communities we represent and understand local priorities firsthand – from long bus routes to the importance of keeping small community schools viable, to expanding skilled trades and experiential learning opportunities for students. We are often the first point of contact for families seeking help, guidance, or advocacy.

Eliminating trustees won't reduce complexity; it will simply shift it elsewhere. Families will still have concerns. Issues will still arise. But instead of being addressed by locally elected education officials with the mandate to act, they will be pushed to MPP or municipal offices.

At its core, this conversation is about trust: trust that communities understand their own needs, trust that local voices strengthen public systems, and trust that democracy is not something to streamline away when it becomes inconvenient.

Centralized politically driven decision-making tends to stay centralized, and the loss of local voice is usually felt first and most deeply in school communities. Trustees play a crucial early-warning role, identifying transportation gaps, declining enrolment pressures, facility challenges, and service inequities before they become crises. Without this local lens, decisions will be slower, more reactive, and more costly.



Small Schools Make a Difference

Centralization also creates distance. Policies designed for urban schools do not always work for rural geography, longer travel times, smaller schools that serve as community hubs, or communities with limited broadband access. Trustees help adapt provincial direction to local reality so that implementation works on the ground, not just on paper.

Given the significance of these proposed changes, I am strongly urging you to support a government pause on this issue, and to ask them to commit to a full-scale, transparent, and province-wide consultation on school board governance models. Trustees, parents, students, educators, Indigenous partners, municipalities, and community organizations must all have a meaningful opportunity to share their perspectives before any decisions are made. Changes to democratic governance should never occur without the informed consent and input of the communities most affected.

I am asking for your support as a local leader:

- to send a letter to the Premier and Minister of Education affirming the importance of strong, locally elected school trustees
- to speak publicly in favour of maintaining elected school trustees
- to share this concern with provincial decision-makers
- to recognize the essential role trustees play in rural and Northern Ontario

Our public education system is strongest when it reflects the diversity of the communities it serves. Protecting the role of elected school trustees protects that strength now and for future generations.

Thank you for your ongoing service to our community. I would welcome a conversation with you about this issue and its local impacts and can be reached at pmcrae@sgdsb.on.ca

Sincerely,

Pinky McRae
Board Chair
Superior-Greenstone District School Board

For more information, please visit: www.democracyisnotoutdated.ca



March 11, 2026

Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario

Honourable Paul Calandra
Minister of Education

Subject: Request for Province-Wide Consultation Regarding Governance Role in English Public School Boards

Dear Premier Ford and Minister Calandra,

On behalf of the Halton District School Board (HDSB), I am writing to formally request that the Ministry of Education undertake a comprehensive, province-wide consultation process prior to advancing any legislative reforms that would result in changes to the role or number of locally elected English Public School Board Trustees. The consultation should include the voices and perspectives of students and parents, school board staff, public school board trustees, and education partners.

At the March 3 Board meeting of the HDSB, Trustees unanimously voted in favour of the following resolution:

Be it resolved that the Chair write a letter to the Minister of Education and the Premier requesting that a formal, province-wide consultation process be developed and implemented before making any decisions that would result in changes to the role or number of locally elected English Public School Board Trustees. The letter will also request that the government conduct research to ensure evidence-based decision-making regarding the best governance model to support the English Public education system, while also promoting open discussions that include Trustees from across the province, OPSBA, and other education stakeholders as required, and that this letter be sent to all MPPs, MPs, and OPSBA Member Boards.

On September 24th of last year, our Board sent you a letter inviting the Ministry to work in collaboration with School Board Trustees across the province to identify and propose solutions to systemic issues and reach province-wide consistency while respecting local realities.

Street Address: J.W. Singleton Education Centre • 2050 Guelph Line, Burlington, Ontario L7P 5A8

Mailing Address: J.W. Singleton Education Centre • P.O. Box 5005, Stn. LCD 1, Burlington, Ontario L7R 3Z2

Phone: 905-335-3663 | 1-877-618-3456 Fax: 905-335-9802

www.hdsb.ca

We support this review of the role of School Board Trustees; a periodic review with full public transparency is essential for any role in the public sector. However, conducting such a review without requesting input from the individuals who currently serve in this locally-elected office, or from families whose students will be impacted by any changes made within the education system, is not collaborative, and is not likely to result in the best solution for Ontario's students.

A strong publicly funded education system is the cornerstone of a robust society, and is critical to the success of every student and our province as a whole. Ontarians deserve the opportunity to be fully engaged in any decisions made regarding locally-elected School Board Trustees as this impacts them directly, even if they don't have school-aged children.

School Board Trustees are the only elected officials charged with the responsibility to represent students' needs and best interests by focusing on student achievement and well-being. We do not ask for this consultation to "save our jobs"; but rather to preserve democracy at the local level. Strong democratic representation at the local level results in better decision-making.

Working together makes us stronger.

Sincerely,

Amy Collard
Chair, Halton District School Board
Trustee, Burlington Ward 5

CC:
MPPs
MPs
Ontario Public School Boards' Association Member Boards



Rideau Lakes

Minister Paul Calandra
Ministry of Education
Government of Ontario
900 Bay Street, 22nd Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

MPP Steve Clark
Kingston and the Islands
Legislative Building
Queen's Park, Room 440
Toronto, ON M7A 1A8

Dear Minister Calandra and MPP Clark,

I am writing on behalf of the Township of Rideau Lakes Council to express deep concern over the recent actions by the Ministry of Education that have significantly impacted our resident's democratic rights, particularly the right to vote for school trustees. In recent months, we have witnessed the Ministry take control of various school boards, effectively removing the critical link between parents, students, and their elected representatives.

While the Upper Canada District School Board (UCDSB) is currently positioned to avoid direct intervention, we are alarmed by the fact that this fall, we may not have the opportunity to elect new trustees. The potential removal of trustees from the decision-making process would greatly diminish the voice of our community in shaping the future of our public education system.

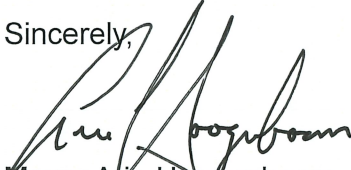
I respectfully urge MPP Steve Clark to raise this issue in the legislature and argue against the Ministry's attempt to remove elected trustees. Additionally, I ask Minister Paul Calandra to consider the severe impact this action will have on public education.

It is true that some trustees have fallen short of their responsibilities. However, for the most part, trustees play an invaluable role in supporting students and families, especially those with special needs. When all other avenues fail, trustees often become the one person parents can turn to for assistance, advocacy, and resolution. To potentially lose this critical resource—and the right to vote for those who represent us—would be an egregious misstep by the Ministry of Education.

We stand firmly in support of our trustees and believe that our right to elect them is fundamental to the integrity of our education system. We urge you to take swift action to ensure that our voices are not silenced.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to your response and action to preserve the democratic rights of our community.

Sincerely,



Mayor Arie Hoogenboom



J. Paul Dubé, Ombudsman

VIA EMAIL – maedith_radlein@wrdsb.ca

Toronto, March 17, 2026

Chair Maedith Radlein
Board of Trustees

Waterloo Region District School Board
51 Ardelt Avenue,
Kitchener, ON N2C 2R5

Dear Chair Maedith Radlein,

Re: Request for Ombudsman Investigation

Thank you for taking the time to contact my Office. You wrote to me to express your concerns about the intention of the provincial government to make changes to the governance structure for education, including, potentially, the elimination of English public school board trustees. You also requested that my Office launch an investigation into the government's intentions.

As you are aware, the government has not, at this point in time, made any official announcement of its future plans with respect to governance structures in education or the future role of school board trustees.

On January 24, 2026, I addressed the Ontario Public School Board's Association (OPSBA) annual Public Education Symposium, sharing highlights and lessons learned from my office's 10 years of oversight of all Ontario school boards. I noted in my remarks that we help ensure consistency, transparency and accountability across boards. That work is especially important when families and communities feel shut out of decisions that directly affect their children. Strong, open processes not only improve outcomes, they restore trust and help prevent problems and complaints from recurring.



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J. Paul Dubé, Ombudsman

During my presentation, many concerned trustees, students and educators spoke about the profound challenges currently facing school board governance and concerns about a loss of meaningful public voice in decision making.

As Ombudsman, I serve as an independent and impartial Officer of the Ontario Legislature with the jurisdiction to review and investigate complaints about the administrative conduct of provincial ministries and public sector organizations including school boards and the Ministry of Education. My Office can review whether an organization's policies, actions or processes were followed, and whether they were fair. If I identify concerns, I can make recommendations aimed at improving the delivery of service to the public.

Setting public policy in education, including determining governance structures and the role of school board trustees, is a matter to be determined by elected officials. My role as Ombudsman does not include setting public policy and I do not have the mandate to investigate or overturn the public policy decisions of elected officials or to make findings about anticipated decisions.

As I noted in my presentation to the OPSBA, my Office does have the power to review the administrative impact of government decisions once they are made and implemented – particularly if decisions are made behind closed doors or without meaningful public input. If the resulting administrative action is unfair, that is where we can step in. When we do, we identify the issues and root causes and recommend practical solutions that protect both rights and democratic values.

I recognize that the issues you have raised are tremendously important to you and the communities you serve. I have personally heard the deep concern and frustration from trustees, educators, students and families of the profound challenges currently facing the education sector, particularly about the perceived potential loss of meaningful public voice in decision-making.

While we will not be launching an investigation into current or future public policy decisions of the government with respect to governance in the education sector, my Office remains



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J. Paul Dubé, Ombudsman

committed to listening and to continuing the conversations about transparency, fairness and rights in education.

Thank you again for contacting my Office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Paul Dubé', written in a cursive style.

J. Paul Dubé
Ontario Ombudsman



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