



June 9, 2026

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

RE: Support for HWDSB's Request for Review of Proposed English Public School Board Governance Reforms

Dear Acting Ombudsman Finlay,

I am writing to express the Waterloo Region District School Board's support for the formal request submitted to your office by the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) on April 22, 2026. On behalf of our local school community, I urge the Ontario Ombudsman to undertake an independent review of the provincial government's proposed restructuring of English public school board governance and the subsequent reduction of the role of democratically elected trustees. Given your clear mandate to uphold fairness, accountability, and transparency within Ontario's public institutions, this systemic shift requires immediate and objective review.

The proposed centralization of executive authority represents a profound departure from publicly accountable governance. Re-designating the Director of Education as a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and stripping local trustees of their independent authority to amend or approve board budgets removes a critical democratic layer. School board trustees serve as an essential and accessible pipeline for families to voice local needs and values. Limiting their oversight capacity risks eroding community trust, creating democratic deficits, and compromising local education advocacy.

The lack of broad, province-wide public consultation on structural changes of this magnitude raises procedural fairness concerns. This lack of engagement directly impacts our commitments to Truth and Reconciliation as well as honourable treaty partnerships. Similarly, narrowing the administrative reach of school boards threatens to marginalize Ontario's Student Trustee model, which is the province's only formal, legislated mechanism for centering student voice in executive decision-making.



For these reasons, I echo HWDSB's request that your office review the government's decision-making process, examine whether affected education stakeholders and communities have been given a fair opportunity to be heard, and evaluate the long-term impacts of these proposed reforms on public accountability.

Thank you for your dedicated attention to this urgent matter and for your ongoing commitment to protecting the democratic rights of Ontario's families, students, and communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maedith Radlein', is written over a horizontal line.

Maedith Radlein
Chair, Board of Trustees
Waterloo Region District School Board

cc: WRDSB Trustees
The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Education
Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) and Member Boards