

February 1, 2021

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford,

The Waterloo Region District School Board Trustees passed the following motion related to Quebec's Bill 21 in February 2020, but it was not able to be ratified immediately due to closures because of the pandemic.

That the Waterloo Region District School Board denounces Bill 21's intent and substance and reaffirms its commitment to its Strategic Plan and related priorities of human rights and equity, and safe and healthy workplace environments, which includes the freedom to practice one's creed or religion with dignity and respect; and

That the Waterloo Region District School Board is urging the province and provincial advocacy bodies to affirm their commitment to policies, legislation, and practices that promote religious freedom, anti-racism, as well as promote human rights, equity, inclusion, and belonging in neighbourhoods, communities, and workplaces.

[Bill 21](#), which prohibits public servants in positions of authority from wearing religious symbols, was passed by the Province of Quebec. This bill directly affects the health, well-being, and sense of belonging of members of the growing Muslim Community in Waterloo Region, and disproportionately Muslim women, who fear this bill might incite similar systemic policies, legislation, and practices in other provinces and communities, such as the province of Ontario and the Region of Waterloo. The Waterloo Region District School Board is committed to the human rights and dignity of all students, staff, parents/caregivers and the community it serves. We were concerned to learn from a [Statistics Canada](#) report there has been a 207% increase in hate crimes reported by Muslims in Ontario. We acknowledge that [Islamophobia and religious intolerance are prevalent and longstanding problems in Waterloo Region](#).



51 Ardel Avenue
Kitchener, ON N2C 2R5
T: 519-570-0003
F: 519-742-1364
wrdsb.ca



FACEBOOK.COM/WRDSB



INSTAGRAM.COM/WR_DSB



TWITTER.COM/WRDSB



YOUTUBE.COM/WRDSBVIDEO

We hope that you will also consider taking a stand against Bill 21 and taking proactive steps that affirm the social, racial and religious identities of all of our citizens, as protected by the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Sincerely,



Joanne Weston
Chairperson of the Board of Trustees
Waterloo Region District School Board

CC:
Minister Stephen Lecce
OPSBA



51 Ardelt Avenue
Kitchener, ON N2C 2R5
T: 519-570-0003
F: 519-742-1364
wrdsb.ca

