



September 24, 2025

Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario

Honourable Paul Calandra
Minister of Education

Re: School Board Trustees and request for public consultation

Dear Premier Ford and Minister Calandra,

At the September 16 Board meeting of the Halton District School Board, Trustees unanimously voted in favour of the following resolution:

Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees direct the Chair to write a letter to Premier Doug Ford and Minister of Education, Paul Calandra, with a copy to MPPs, Ontario Public School Boards' Association, OSTA-ACO, Presidents of Provincial Unions, and the media, regarding the work of School Board Trustees and Student Trustees in fulfilling the mandates of the Board as set out in the Ontario Education Act, and that the Minister conduct a public consultation before making any changes to the Education Act regarding the role of Trustees.

The position of School Board Trustee is the longest-serving democratically elected position in what is now known as Canada, serving our communities since 1816. Trustees are the only elected representatives whose primary responsibility is student achievement and well-being. We carry out our role and fulfill the mandate of our elected position through our deep connection and familiarity with the needs of the communities in which we live and whom we serve.

The requirement that Trustees must live in the area we serve, and bring the concerns of the community to the attention of the board, ensures that Trustees represent their communities' interests and needs while acting as liaisons between the families we represent and the provincial government. When we reach out to our community for their input and feedback, we get genuine engagement that is relevant and meaningful.

Trustees are responsible for the oversight of their local school board through the Education Act and associated Regulations. We support the Ministry by ensuring the implementation of the provincial curricula, strategies and mandates, supporting the Ministry's consultation needs, and by bringing local

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and provincial issues and concerns to the Ministry's attention while keeping student achievement and well-being in sharp focus.

We are the greatest advocates and supporters of Ontario's publicly funded education system, always cognizant of our responsibility to uphold public support of publicly funded education.

The families in our communities know we are very familiar with their schools and neighbourhoods, and that we will listen to their perspectives to arrive at the best possible decisions, whether setting the school board's strategic direction through the Multi-Year Strategic Plan or focusing on our fiduciary responsibilities by leading evaluations into program viability, special education, school boundary reviews and (prior to 2017) school closures.

We engage with all key stakeholders in meaningful and extensive consultations, respond to parents' concerns and sometimes opposition, navigate challenging community dynamics, and support students who are struggling in the school system.

On a daily basis, Trustees help students and their families navigate the education system, whether they are concerned about academics, have questions about program placements, want to report bullying, need mental health resources, or are seeking information about special education, all with the goal that no student be left behind.

Trustees are often the greatest — and sometimes the only — ally for a student and their family as we collaboratively begin to address their concerns and sort out issues, facilitating a connection to the staff person best equipped to assist them.

We chose to become Trustees because we care deeply about providing excellent public education in Ontario, and have a passion to fulfill our role with a deep sense of responsibility and dedication to every student and their success. This is what grounds and inspires us to do the very best we can for every student. By doing so, Trustees support their respective school boards and the provincial government in delivering on the mandate to provide the best possible learning experience for students.

The role of the school board Trustee was recently summarized by an HDSB Student Trustee in the following manner; she said, "How do we uphold democracy within our educational system? As locally elected representatives, Trustees serve as a structural avenue for accountability, transparency, debate, and most importantly for student priorities to be heard."

As elected representatives, we have an opportunity to continue working together in partnership — Trustees and MPPs — to focus on the bigger picture. Working as a team we can build a better, stronger public education system in Ontario. We would like to invite the Ministry's collaboration with

Trustees to identify and propose solutions to systemic issues and reach province-wide consistency while respecting local realities.

For all of the reasons mentioned above, we strongly recommend that the Minister engage in public consultations regarding Trustees' continued role in strengthening public education prior to making any changes to the Education Act.

Ontario has a great opportunity here and now. Let's all work together.

Sincerely,

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

Cc:
MPPs
Ontario Public School Boards' Association
OSTA-ACO
Presidents of Provincial Unions
Media