

Ontarians reject Ford government overreach: majority support elected trustees

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TORONTO, ON – A new province-wide poll commissioned by the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) shows that twice as many Ontarians want to keep elected school board trustees (49 per cent) as want to eliminate elected trustees (24 per cent). Support for elected trustees climbs to 59 per cent among parents with school-aged children. These results indicate strong public support for local democratic control of school boards.

The Ford government's proposed Bill 33 would allow the province to replace elected school board trustees with government-appointed supervisors whenever it determines it is in the "public interest". The Minister of Education has further threatened to get rid of elected school board trustees entirely, prior to scheduled elections on October 26, 2026.

"There is widespread concern about the erosion of local representation," warns ETFO President David Mastin. "Eliminating elected trustees is not just a bureaucratic shift; it's a direct attack on democratic governance. It centralizes power, undermines equity, silences marginalized voices, harms students, and strips communities of their right to shape public education. This is a dismantling of democracy in real time. Let's mobilize and defend our schools and our students."

Respondents were asked whether Ontario should keep elected school board trustees or move to a system where the provincial government manages school boards directly. Key findings include:

- Forty-nine per cent support keeping elected trustees, including 21 per cent who "definitely" support and 28 per cent who "probably" support the current system. The number rises to 59 per cent among parents of school-aged children.
- Only 24 per cent support removing trustees, with just 10 per cent "definitely" in favour.
- Twenty-seven per cent "don't know enough to say", underscoring a lack of awareness.

Adds Mastin, "The elimination of local trustees is a direct threat to Ontario's public education system. As the impact of the Ford government's cuts to public education continues to be felt by students across the province, without elected trustees, parents and families will be left with nobody to turn to. We must act." ETFO is calling on Ontarians to [contact their elected representatives](#) and urge them to withdraw Bill 33.

The online survey results come from INNOVATIVE's Canada Omnibus survey, which collected responses from 2,531 Ontario residents aged 18+ between September 4 to 28, 2025. Results were weighted to a sample size of 2,300 using Statistics Canada Census data. While the sample is representative, margin of error statements do not apply to most online panels.

[ETFO](#) represents approximately 84,000 members, including public elementary teachers, occasional teachers, designated early childhood educators, education support personnel, and professional support personnel. Visit BuildingBetterSchools.ca.

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