

Joint Message from Affiliates to Senior Leadership

Dear Rashmi,

Unions representing more than 23,000 education workers across the Peel District School Board are writing jointly to express serious concern with the Board's unacceptable proposed budget cuts which continue to erode front-line student supports while shielding or expanding central and management-heavy spending. Compounding these concerns, senior leadership communicated these changes with minimal notice, undermining transparency, and demonstrating disregard for the impacts on students, workers and school communities.

Moreover, the Board did not follow the standard democratic process, making significant changes to the budget and implementing cuts without trustee input, resulting in student supports being destabilized through reassignment, redeployment or the complete elimination of staff positions.

Decisions made by the Board are being justified under the guise of declining enrollment. Undeniably, declining enrollment has budgetary impacts. However, the Board's publicly available budget documents show that these planned cuts could be avoided. The reality is that the budget reflects choices about where restraint is (and is not) applied.

While schools absorb cuts, the budget shows that spending on non-front-line areas remains protected or grows. Spending on central departments such as Human Resources and Communications increases year over year. Legal and central administrative costs remain high. The introduction of new system-level spending, including a 'Public-Private Partnerships' capital line (valued at \$7 million) without any public detail or transparency, further underscores the imbalance in how restraint is being applied.

This approach strips supports from schools, where students and education workers feel it most, despite the fact that classrooms are already operating under the long-term strain of chronic underfunding, staffing shortages, and increasing student needs. We felt it first when custodial staff and office staff were cut. The PDSB cannot continue this pattern of fiscally conservative decision making. We recognize that this is a direct result of the provincial government's cuts to public education, but further reducing front-line supports under these already impossible conditions undermines student learning, care, and safety.

As unions representing the workers who support students every day, we are united in calling on the Board to change course. By moving ahead without meaningful consultation, not only is the Board disrupting student learning, it is violating its own staffing processes, undermining whatever goodwill might still remain amongst employees, and wreaking havoc on the lives and careers of the education workers who are holding this system together from one moment to the next, every single day.

We are demanding that the Board protect and stabilize front-line supports, apply restraint fairly and equitably across the system, be transparent about non-front-line spending, and

clearly account for why alternatives to front-line cuts were not considered. Meaningful consultation with unions must occur before decisions affecting staffing and student supports are implemented.

These budget decisions are not simply financial. They reflect priorities. We urge the Board to make different choices, ones that put students, education workers, classrooms, and front-line supports first.

We are requesting an immediate meeting with Board senior leadership, and would welcome the opportunity to meet with trustees as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Melody Hurtubise
President, OPSEU 2100

Allison Walker
President, OSSTF D19 OTBU

Nicola Allison
President, OSSTF D19 TBU

Aloysius Okafor
President, PEOT

Nadia Goode
President, PETL