

ETFO condemns government takeovers of Ontario school boards

For Immediate Release – January 30, 2026

TORONTO, ON – The following is a statement from David Mastin, President of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO):

“ETFO is once again raising urgent concerns about the Ford government’s escalating and unjustified takeovers of democratically elected school boards across Ontario. These interventions represent egregious government overreach, a troubling centralization of power, and a direct threat to local democracy in Ontario’s public education system.

There is growing concern that these takeovers are part of a broader plan to seize control of school board finances and real estate across the province. This treats public education as a profit-making enterprise rather than a vital public service meant to serve every child. Parents and communities must join us and act now to prevent lasting damage to our high-quality public education system.

Elected trustees are a critical link between communities and publicly funded schools. They provide local accountability, represent and elevate diverse perspectives, and make decisions that reflect the needs of the students and families they serve. Replacing them with supervisors, government insiders with little to no education sector experience, strips communities of their democratic voice and hands control over to a government that has repeatedly shown disregard for public education.

Government-appointed supervisors answer only to the premier and the education minister, not to parents, not to students, not to communities. The Ford government’s willingness to replace elected representatives with political appointees is a profound betrayal of public trust. To date, the following school boards have been placed under provincial supervision:

- Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board
- Near North District School Board
- Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
- Peel District School Board (PDSB)
- Thames Valley District School Board
- Toronto Catholic District School Board
- Toronto District School Board
- York Catholic District School Board (on notice)

This action follows the same failed playbook Ontario has seen before. After three years of government supervision, the promised improvements at the PDSB did not materialize. Did its financial situation improve? No. Did students receive better supports? No. Did learning and working conditions improve? No again. If government-imposed supervision failed then, what justification exists for believing it will succeed now?

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This egregious overreach is not an isolated decision; it is part of a broader, deeply troubling agenda to privatize public education in Ontario. ETFO will not stand for a system that prioritizes corporate profits over equity, access, and the public good.

Placing a board under supervision is not about improving student outcomes or strengthening school board governance. It is a deliberate political maneuver designed to consolidate power in the hands of the Minister of Education while distracting from this government's record of cuts and neglect. About \$6.3 billion has been removed from public education since 2018, when the Ford Conservatives took office.

Instead of investing in solutions, the government is choosing surveillance, control, and political interference. Our message to Premier Doug Ford and Education Minister Paul Calandra is clear: end these takeovers, restore local democratic school board governance, and invest adequately in public education."

[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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