

MEDIA RELEASE

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Unprecedented government interference fails to address real challenges facing Ontario's education system

TORONTO, ON — With yesterday's decision to place the Peel District School Board (PDSB) under provincial supervision and put the York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB) "on notice", seven Ontario school boards are now operating under direct provincial supervision.

The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO) is deeply concerned by this significant escalation of government intervention in the education system. The growing use of supervision raises serious questions about the Ford government's priorities and does little to address the most pressing challenges facing students, education workers, and teachers.

"This level of government interference is unprecedented in Ontario's education system, and it leads us to question the government's real motives," said OSSTF/FEESO President Martha Hradowy. "For years, we have been sounding the alarm about province-wide underfunding and staffing shortages. It is not clear how provincial supervision addresses any of those issues. In fact, it risks distracting from them."

OSSTF/FEESO notes that school boards are facing increasing financial pressure as funding has failed to keep pace with inflation, while costs related to staffing, special education, student mental health, and school operations continue to rise.

"Under this government, funding for education has been cut, class sizes have increased, school violence has worsened, and more often students' needs are going unmet," said Hradowy. "These are the conditions that students, teachers, and education workers are dealing with every day. They are not being solved by placing boards under supervision."

The challenges listed by the government as reasons for taking over the school boards, including in Peel, are not isolated to individual boards, but reflect system-wide issues that require province-wide solutions.

"Staffing shortages, unmet student needs, and financial instability are the predictable outcomes of policy and funding decisions made by the Ford government over many years, not individual school boards," added Hradowy.

OSSTF/FEESO is calling on the government to shift its focus from unnecessary interference to meaningful action, including investments in education funding, improved staffing levels, and supports that reflect the real needs of students and communities.

“What is needed now is concrete action to address these long-standing concerns,” said Hradowy. “Students and education workers are paying the price for years of underfunding and policy decisions that have ignored conditions in schools. The government must act to ensure safe, learning and working environments for everyone.”

School boards currently under provincial supervision include:

- Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board (DPCDSB)
- Near North District School Board (NNDSB)
- Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB)
- Peel District School Board (PDSB)
- Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB)
- Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB)
- Toronto District School Board (TDSB)

OSSTF/FEESO, founded in 1919, has over 60,000 members across Ontario. They include public high school teachers, occasional teachers, educational assistants, continuing education teachers and instructors, early childhood educators, psychologists, secretaries, speech-language pathologists, social workers, plant support personnel, university support staff, and many others in education.

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