

Calandra’s School Board Takeovers Are an Attack on Democracy

The move by Education Minister Paul Calandra to place the Near North District School Board (NNDSB) under supervision is simply the next step in his war on local democracy in Ontario school boards.

What’s at work here is a blatant power grab. Calandra’s claims that board takeovers will lead to “strengthening accountability and transparency across Ontario’s education system” are demonstrably false. Actions speak louder than words, and the actions of Calandra’s supervisors so far have made schools less accountable and less transparent. By seizing new powers to assume control over school boards, Bill 33 sidelines elected trustees and strips families of their voices in decisions affecting their children’s education.

We have already seen the

impact on boards under ministry supervision where trustees have been removed. Cuts to special education programs that were rejected by trustees have been reinstated. Supervisors have gained notoriety for not responding to parent and media inquiries. The minister’s directive to halt live-streaming of SEAC meetings has created barriers for families to access critical information. These difficulties are what’s in store for families in the NNDSB.

For families of students with disabilities, advocating for their children is a daily reality—fighting to ensure they receive the supports they need to learn and thrive, and for many, to even attend school at all. Trustees are a critical part of that advocacy. In our survey of the special needs community, we found that at least 28.4% of stu-

dents needed advocacy from their trustee during the 2024-25 school year. Paul Calandra is ripping that assistance away from our families.

Bill 33 must be repealed. It is a direct assault on democracy in our school boards, undermining transparency, accountability, and families’ ability to advocate for their children. The government must listen to families, educators, and advocacy organizations, and work collaboratively to ensure policies protect students’ safety, support their learning, and uphold meaningful participation in decisions that affect their education.

This terrible piece of legislation distracts from the real crisis in education: chronic underfunding that leaves students without the support they need. Individual board staff can’t raise a public

alarm about this issue out of fear for their jobs. Taking away trustees removes the last democratically elected voice that will speak out against funding cuts. Rather than providing the essential funding our education system requires, it serves only to obscure the government’s ongoing failure to make those investments.

Durham Region explains its 6.5% tax guideline for 2026

The Region of Durham has clarified that its guideline of 6.5 per cent tax increase for 2026 translates into an overall rise of 3.5 per cent in the region’s portion of a Durham resident’s tax bill. This could mean that residents may have to add another 3.5 per cent to their own municipality’s announced portion (see below) of the 2026 tax bill.

The region’s tax breakdown according to it, is:
Durham Region’s guideline: 3.5 per cent Durham Region plus 3 per cent for Durham Regional Police Services (DRPS)
Regional taxes represent about half of the total bill, so the overall impact is approximately 3.5 per cent.
Total tax increase = 6.5 per cent
“Regional Council set the vision for the 2026 budget earlier this year in which, for the average homeowner, regional property taxes will be capped at an increase of about 3.5 per cent on the overall property tax bill or an increase of \$19 per month,” said the region statement .
“Of that amount, roughly \$9 would go toward police services and \$10 supports other essential regional services like transit, housing, paramedic care, and maintaining regional roads and bridges,” it added.
The region did not say when or if the proposed increase would be discussed or deemed passed. No timeline was provided.

Proposed 2026 Durham Tax Increases
Durham Region: 6.5% (own portion 3.5%) Township of Scugog: 5.54% own portion
Township of Brock 4.87% (own portion 3.79%) City of Oshawa: 3.98% own portion
Town of Whitby: 3.49% Municipality of Clarington: 3% (own portion 0.99%)
Township of Uxbridge: 1.28% own portion







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Lorne Coe
Great news for families in Whitby and Ajax, I was thrilled to share that our government has approved the tender for the brand new École élémentaire publique Whitby-Ajax in Ajax, delivering 317 new French-language elementary student spaces and 49 licensed child care spaces for local families. This \$25.1 million project is part of Ontario's plan to build better schools and prepare our kids for success in tomorrow's workforce. Since 2018, we've invested in 169 new schools, over 9,600 child care spaces, and we're committing \$23 billion over 10 years to keep building the modern, inclusive learning environments our students deserve.

Todd McCarthy
Happy to join Ontario's Chief Conservation Executive, Hassaan Basit in Vaughan as we held local consultations on the changes to Conservation Authorities.

Great feedback as we continue working to improve service delivery and protect communities.