



NIAGARA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

March 25, 2026

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier's Office
Room 281, Main Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A5

And

The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
315 Front Street West, 14th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 0B8

Dear Premier Ford and Minister Calandra,

The Niagara Catholic District School Board's Board of Trustees is writing to endorse a letter sent to you by the Avon Maitland District School Board dated March 2, 2026. In it, the board requested you delay the proposed plans to alter the governance structure of Ontario school boards to allow for fulsome public consultation.

Niagara Catholic's Board of Trustees unanimously supports this request.

We understand and recognize that governance structures evolve. However, change for change's sake, without fully considering the impact of those changes, is punitive and irresponsible. We fear by punishing us all, the government's overzealous method of addressing problems experienced by only some boards is irresponsible, will have negative repercussions for years to come, and we are united in our grievous concern with the speed in which you appear to be forcing this change through.

We ask you, respectfully, have you considered the unintended consequences of what appears to be a fait accompli?

During your March 11, 2026 press conference at Queen's Park, you each spoke passionately about your unwavering belief that funding to Ontario school boards needs to be spent in the classroom, where it has the greatest impact.

We agree. More than that; we ensure that the taxpayer dollars sent to Niagara Catholic are invested in student success. You know this, Minister Calandra, having recently recognized Niagara Catholic as one of the best school boards in Ontario. You have seen it come to life in our schools.

Trustees on our board are proud of their contributions and accomplishments. Board members include past educators, former mayors, the parent of a Catholic priest, other parents whose children went through our board system or its preceding ones, and the son of a trustee from the former Lincoln County Catholic School Board. We know that Niagara Catholic is a vibrant, thriving board focused on student success. We make sound financial decisions. We attend events supporting students every chance we get, because, like you, we believe that students deserve the very best. We ensure it is provided to them.

Premier Ford, you noted that you do not wish to paint all school boards with the same brush. And yet, your proposed plan to remove or reduce trustees at every school board does exactly that: it paints us all with the same tarnished brush.

This Board supports open, transparent conversations about meaningful, transformative change that will truly elevate student achievement in Ontario. We do not believe eliminating trustees is the solution.

As duly elected officials, we respect the democratic principle that the public must have a say in matters paid for with the public purse. And when that voice has been heard, it is incumbent upon the government to listen and concede to the will of the people.

In failing to allow Ontarians to have their say on a monumental shift in school board governance, you are sidestepping democracy.

Minister Calandra, you said in that press conference that you had yet to submit your recommendations to Premier Ford. We urge you to please add to your recommendations that the public should be allowed to have its say on this matter, just as it did during the elections that brought you, and us, into office.

This is true democracy.

Sincerely,



Danny Di Lorenzo
Chair of the Board of Trustees, Niagara Catholic District School Board

cc. Michael Bannerman, Chair of the Board, Avon Maitland Public Board
Dr. Graham Shantz, Director of Education and Secretary of the Board, Avon Maitland Public Board
Patrick Daly, Ontario Catholic School Trustees Association, Executive Director
Michael Bellmore, Ontario Catholic School Trustees Association, President
Stephanie Donaldson, Ontario Public School Boards' Association, Executive Director
Denise Cole, Ministry of Education, Deputy Minister
Bishop Gerard Bergie, The Diocese of St. Catharines
Camillo Cipriano, Director of Education, Secretary-Treasurer
MPP Sam Oosterhoff
MPP Jennifer Stevens
MPP Wayne Gates
MPP Jeff Burch
Mayors of All Niagara Region Area Municipalities
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