

Ontario's Education Unions Warn Against Passage of Bill 33

For Immediate Release

TORONTO, ON — L'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO), Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO), Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA), Ontario School Board Council of Unions (CUPE-OSBCU), and Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO) have issued the following joint statement on the expected passage of Bill 33, the *Supporting Children and Students Act*:

“Ontario's schools are facing real crises: overcrowded classrooms, rising violence, crumbling infrastructure, and deep cuts to special education. Bill 33 serves to distract from every one of these problems and will likely only make them worse.

Once again, the conservative government will weaponize its majority, not to serve students, but to silence communities and erode public trust. Bill 33 is nothing more than a hostile takeover of publicly funded education governance and a strategic attack on democracy, dressed up as modernization and accountability.

This legislation sidelines democratically elected local trustees – disempowering families, weakening transparency, and clearing the path for politically driven decisions that ignore student needs and community voices. It empowers ministry-appointed supervisors who often have no background in education, no ties to local communities, possibly no understanding of the mission of French-language schools, and no commitment to equity or human rights. These supervisors answer only to the Ford government, not to the people our schools are meant to serve. And to date, their actions speak volumes: cuts to special education, reductions in English and French Language Learner supports, and centralized arts funding that limits access. Their mission is clear: cut costs, no matter the consequences for student outcomes and well-being.

Elected trustees are not perfect. Some have stumbled, and others have failed their communities. But in a democracy, accountability belongs to the people, not political insiders. If the Ford government truly cared about accountability, it would start with its own record, one marred by scandal and a blatant disregard for public oversight.

The education minister wants Ontarians to believe trustees are the problem, but let's be clear: the real crisis is chronic underfunding of our schools. For decades, school boards have been forced to stretch shrinking budgets while student needs grow. The province has only made things worse, forcing trustees to do more with less, and then blaming them for the fallout.

The passage of Bill 33 will not be an isolated incident. It is part of a broader, deeply troubling agenda to dismantle publicly funded education and hand schools over to private interests. Ontario's educators will not stand by while this government strips power from the people, risking the futures of Ontario's students.”

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