

York Catholic District School Board warned by Ministry of Education

The York Catholic District School Board will be placed under supervision if it doesn't appropriately respond to multiple issues, including governance and finance, Ontario's Ministry of Education warned last week.

On January 28, Ontario Minister of Education Paul Calandra said the Ministry was putting the Peel District School Board under provincial supervision with immediate effect, while the York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB) would be subject to a similar move if it did not respond to long-standing Ministry concerns.

In his statement, the Minister cited infighting, disruption and serious financial concerns that have undermined student success for years. These, he said, need to end immediately with every penny of public funding directed to support students in the classroom.

The Minister is immediately placing PDSB under provincial supervision and has halted the Board's imminent layoff plan, which would have seen 60 classroom teachers lose their jobs and caused significant learning disruption for nearly 1,400 students in the middle of the school year, said the Ministry. The Board has also run a deficit for five consecutive years, affecting its long-term financial sustainability. The Board has been given 14 days to respond to the Minister's concerns, after which the Minister will determine whether to continue with supervision.

The YCDSB has also been informed that the Minister intends to take action to place the Board under supervision if it fails to appropriately respond to the pressing governance and financial concerns in the next 14 days. The Board's years of inadequate financial management have depleted its reserves, putting its ability to serve students and the broader community at serious risk. High-risk financial assumptions in the Board's financial recovery plan, along with an alarming revolving door in leadership and ongoing governance issues, have raised doubts about the YCDSB's ability to balance its budget and put students first.

Following the Minister's announcement, the YCDSB announced local trustees and the Board's senior management were working to address the concerns.

The Board of Trustees and the Senior Team are working together to create a plan that best serves our students, staff, and families, said Maria Iafrate, Chair of the Board, and Jennifer Sarna, Interim Director of Education, in a letter addressed to the YCDSB community. As part of the process, there will be Board Meetings in the coming weeks to discuss this plan.

Please rest assured that the YCDSB's day-to-day operations will continue as usual.

The Minister's ability to take on oversight of Ontario school boards came into law with the Supporting Children and Students Act 2025, which broadened Ministerial oversight, including Board finances, governance and performance.

The Act gives the Minister of Education the authority to initiate an investigation, issue binding directions or issue an order to place a school board under supervision where there is a concern about a matter of public interest, whether on financial or non-financial grounds, to ensure accountability on behalf of parents and teachers, says the Ministry.

When a school board is placed under supervision, the Minister of Education may appoint an individual, commonly referred to as a supervisor, to exercise powers and duties of the board. Supervisors have leadership and expertise in governance, finance and/or public accountability matters. They report regularly to the ministry while working to improve stability and efficiency in school boards under supervision.

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