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Ontario Government Trustee Reform Can't Hide Cuts to Kids Education

(TORONTO, ON) – The Toronto & York Region Labour Council won't let the Ontario government's recent trustee reform detract from their billions of dollars in underfunding of education.

As predicted, the Ford government backed down from abolishing school board trustees. Instead they've gutted trustee representation, limited decision-making and centralized power to the Province to be able to better sell off school board lands to developer friends.

This is simply a sham to divert attention from their constant underfunding of children's education in Ontario. It won't work.

"As a parent of two kids in the TDSB, I am very disappointed at Minister Calandra's decision to keep gutting my kids' education and simply reduce the number of democratically-elected school board trustees," said Safraw Hanif. "The loss of 600 teachers, along with critical language and literacy programs, will have a significant negative impact on the quality of education for all students."

Currently 40% of school boards are grappling with a deficit with \$6.3 billion effectively cut from the system since 2018. The result has been catastrophic to the education system: larger class sizes, cuts to education programs and classrooms that are like saunas every time the heat soars.

The Province appointed a number of supervisors to take over various school boards and recently directed them to implement unpopular cuts. These have included:

- 600+ teachers eliminated in the Toronto Public System
- The elimination of all Elementary positions to support students in our most marginalized communities
- 180 education support workers, and 40 vice principals eliminated
- Destruction of the International language program at the Toronto Catholic
- Cancelling of the Early Literacy Intervention Program at the Toronto Catholic System
- Cutting 6% of frontline staff in York Region, resulting in the elimination of 78 custodian positions
- 330+ teachers eliminated in the Peel board along with 52 educational assistants

"Every kid in Ontario should have the best education. Cutting teachers, janitors and literacy programs while, increasing class sizes, doesn't get you the best," said Ruben Da Silveira, a student trustee at the Toronto Catholic. "It leads to an education system shaped more by politics than by the needs of students."

While the Ford government has largely sold their attack on trustees as being related to finances, Education Minister Calandra's own expense reports show that since 2023, he's billed taxpayers over \$50,000 for "hospitality". Calandra has faced past allegations of fraud from his family surrounding his mother's estate.

Eight School Boards remain under supervision in Ontario, with some supervisors getting over \$400,000 a year.

For more information, visit www.fundourschools.ca.

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