



For immediate release: Monday, January 26, 2026

Local education workers are sounding the alarm – students need critical supports and Doug Ford has strangled \$6.3 billion of funding from our schools

There is a deep sense of burnout and moral distress among everyone working in public education right now. Education Workers continue to show extraordinary professionalism and care for our students, even as they are stretched far beyond what any educator should be asked to carry. Day after day, we are compensating for the absence of critical supports including psychoeducational assessments, speech and language services, mental health supports, a variety of special education programs, autism therapies, and educational assistants to meet students where they are at. While this is not sustainable education workers refuse to give up on the children in their classrooms and it is taking a real emotional toll. We know what our students need, we advocate relentlessly, and then we are forced to watch those needs go unmet due to chronic underfunding for essential learning supports. Students and their parents are feeling it and are unnecessarily frustrated.

Since 2018, the Ford government has cut \$6.3 billion from public education. This has resulted in chronic underfunding, large class sizes, growing violence in the classroom, and a lack of special education and other supports for students and educators. This is a manufactured funding crisis of epic proportions and repercussions for our children and without intervention our students are getting left behind. When the Ministry of Education fails to fund and deliver essential supports, it is students—and the education workers who care for them—who pay the price. The growing levels of workplace violence in Ontario schools are not happening in a vacuum—they are a direct consequence of chronic underfunding and unmet student needs. When students who require assessments, mental health supports, autism programming, and educational assistant supports that are non-existent, classrooms become less safe for everyone. Education workers are being injured, traumatized, and burned out while trying to manage situations that require specialized supports the Doug Ford Conservatives have failed to provide. This is not a failure of education workers or our school boards or our democratically elected school board Trustees; it is an abandonment of students and staff by the Minister of Education Paul Calandra that is no longer meeting its most basic responsibilities.

Add to this, the recent passage of the Ford government's Bill 33, misleadingly titled the Supporting Children and Students Act, centralizes power in the Minister of Education's hands and undermines local democratic voices, putting at risk the world class, high-quality public education system that we have built. We disagree at times with our trustees but that does not mean we would discard the democratically elected important role that they bring to education in our community. We know trustees aren't perfect, but they are accessible and accountable to the Ontarians who vote them in.

If they fail to serve their communities, they can be voted out. Ontario has had publicly elected school board trustees since 1816, and this long-standing democratic representation is at risk of being lost. Doug Ford has strategically shifted the conversation to trustees and their actions rather than focusing on the \$1500 per student of funding that has been cut for the students in our community. Since the passage of the bill multiple school boards across Ontario have been 'taken over' with parents having nowhere to turn. Parents in school boards that have been taken over by a supervisor have reported that no one is returning their phone calls, parents are not receiving information, students programs are being cut and parents have lost their elected representatives and voice.

The Ford Conservatives can't be trusted. What have we learned from watching the Greenbelt scandal, the Skills Development scandal, the Ontario Place debacle and now the Bill 33 power grab at school boards - this government is not qualified to have control of our students' futures and our school boards. With control of our school board, we fear Doug Ford will sell public-school properties to his friends.

We encourage every member of the community to join us this Wednesday, January 28th, 2026, in Brantford at 3:30pm and attend the Keep Our Schools Public and Funded Education rally. Details for the rally are included below. At the rally you will hear from a local parent and representatives of every education union across the Brant Haldimand and Norfolk region.



Members of the community are also encouraged to:

- Call or send an email to your MPP and demand they protect local democracy.
 - Brantford Brant MPP Will Bouma can be reached at 519-759-0361
 - Haldimand Norfolk MPP Bobbi Ann Brady can be reached at 519-428-0446
- Speak to your friends and family about this latest attack on public education.

Together we represent over 5,500 public education workers, represented by CUPE 5100, Grand Erie Designated Early Childcare Educators, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation District 23 Teacher, Occasional Teacher and PSSP bargaining units, Grand Erie District School Board Occasional Teachers' Federation, the Ontario Elementary Catholic Teachers' Association and the Grand Erie Elementary Teachers' Federation.

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Media Contacts:

Amanda Gagnon President Grand Erie District School Board Elementary Occasional Teacher Local gedsbot@outlook.com	Joanne Defreyne President OSSTF District 23 Occasional Teachers joanne.defreyne@d23.osstf.ca	Tanya Haist President District 23 PSSP tanya.haist@d23.osstf.ca
Sarah Kuva President CUPE 5100 sarah.kuva@cupe.ca 519-732-7895	Andrea Murray President OSSTF District 23 Teachers' Bargaining Unit andrea.murray@d23.osstf.ca 519-426-8545	Carolyn Proulx-Wootton President Grand Erie Elementary Teachers' Federation cproulxwootton@geetf.ca 519-761-9219
Steph Scott President Grand Erie DECE Local granderiedece@gmail.com 519-757-9817	Carlo Fortino President Brant Haldimand Norfolk OECTA c.fortino@catholicteachers.ca 519-755-2380	Carlee Bond President OSSTF District 23 Educational Support Staff / Early Childhood Educators carlee.bond@d23.osstf.ca