



**ONTARIO PUBLIC
SCHOOL BOARDS'
ASSOCIATION**

Leading Education's Advocates

Ontario Public School Boards' Association
439 University Avenue, 18th Floor
Toronto, ON M5G 1Y8
Tel: (416) 340-2540
Fax: (416) 340-7571
webmaster@opsba.org
www.opsba.org

Cathy Abraham
President

W.R. (Rusty) Hick
Executive Director

April 3, 2019

To: Jean-François Roberge
Minister of Education

Dear Minister,

On behalf of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA), I am writing to express our concerns about your government's intention to abolish all elected public school boards and convert them into "service centres." We also want to unequivocally state our ongoing support for the Québec English School Boards Association (QESBA) and the Fédération des commissions scolaires du Québec (FCSQ) who represent both English and French public school boards, elected commissioners, staff and students in the province.

The most fundamental responsibility of school boards is to bring the voice of the communities they serve to publicly funded education for the benefit, success and well-being of all students.

In a publicly funded education system, democratically elected local school commissioners are the decision-makers that know their communities. They live in their communities and advocate for their community. They are the crucial link between the school board and the local community members that voted for them. While English language minority rights are protected it is important to note that for English public school boards, their advocacy role is even more vital. To silence the voices of democratically elected commissioners, whether French or English, would be to silence the voices of all taxpaying citizens, including parents of school-aged children that elected them to directly represent their interests at the school board level of government regardless of the language they speak.

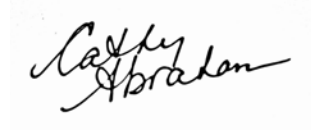
Locally elected boards contribute to a more democratic and transparent education system. The present governance structure is designed to connect locally elected commissioners to parents and the broader community and to remove any government's direct influence from local board decisions.

OPSBA continues to promote and support the role and voice of the local, democratically elected trustee – the only publicly elected official with the direct responsibility for the education of our children. We know this is equally true of our colleagues with QESBA and FCSQ who join us as members of the Canadian School Boards Association (CSBA).

School boards have a solid history of working with governments to ensure the best outcomes for students, and school boards want to ensure that the focus in education remains steadfast on

student success. In this spirit, we urge your government to revisit its decision to abolish all elected public school boards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cathy Abraham". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C".

Cathy Abraham
President
Ontario Public School Boards' Association

cc.

Dan Lamoureux, President, Quebec School Boards Association

Alain Fortier, President, Fédération des commissions scolaires du Québec

Laurie French, President, Canadian School Boards Association

Nancy Pynch-Worthylake, Executive Director, Canadian School Boards Association