

February 24, 2026

To: Premier Doug Ford

Dear Premier Ford,

As Ontario approaches the one-year anniversary of the Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Dreams Delayed* report on anti-Black racism in education, **we are concerned that recent provincial supervision of school boards is weakening the very governance and equity structures needed to address those findings.** This moment calls for stronger accountability and clearer action, not less.

Ontario is home to more than half of Canada's Black population, and Black communities are younger than the provincial average. That means a significant number of Black Ontarians are school-aged children. Decisions about public education today will shape their long-term achievement, well-being, and sense of belonging.

In 2019, then-Minister of Education Stephen Lecce committed to rooting out discrimination and improving equity and opportunity for Black students and families: "*We want Black and racialized families in Peel and across Ontario to know that their government is listening and firmly committed to improving equity and opportunity for their children.*"

That commitment must continue.

Impact of Provincial Supervision on Governance and Equity Oversight

Across four OPSBA member boards currently under provincial supervision – Toronto DSB (TDSB), Peel DSB, Ottawa-Carleton DSB (OCDSB), and Thames Valley DSB (TVDSB) – at least ten democratically elected Black trustees have been removed or sidelined in their governance roles.

These trustees have historically played an important role in board-level oversight related to:

- monitoring race-based disparities in discipline and program access,
- reviewing systemic discrimination and exclusionary practices, and
- advancing equity and human rights obligations through policy and community engagement.

Provincial supervision has reduced this local oversight at a time when board data continue to show ongoing disparities affecting Black students.

Board-Specific Evidence of Systemic Disparities

In each of the supervised school boards, there is reliable, measurable evidence of instances of anti-black racism.

Toronto District School Board

The [2023 TDSB Student Census](#) indicates that 13.3% of students identify as Black, and seven in ten students identify as racialized. The TDSB Human Rights Office Annual Report (2023-24) documents ongoing racism, bias, and hate-related incidents, as well as systemic concerns related to discipline and school climate affecting Black students.

Peel District School Board

The 2023 [Count Me In Peel](#) Student Census confirms that approximately 25% of Peel students identify as Black. The [2024 Equity Accountability Report Card](#) identifies persistent gaps in discipline outcomes, access to academic pathways, and participation in specialized programs for Black students, explicitly framing these gaps as systemic in nature.

Ottawa-Carleton District School Board

The OCDSB Office of the Human Rights and Equity Advisor's [First Annual Public Report](#) identifies systemic racism and bias in disciplinary practices, inconsistent responses to hate incidents, and disproportionate impacts of policing on Black and racialized students.

Thames Valley District School Board

TVDSB's [Every Student Belongs report](#) and [2024 Equity Action Plan](#) confirm increasing racial diversity and recognize the need for sustained, intentional action to remove systemic barriers affecting Black and racialized students, grounded in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

The data is clear: disparities remain. Oversight and accountability are still required.

Concerns Raised During Provincial Supervision

Stakeholders have raised concerns about changes that may weaken equity and accountability, including:

- Reductions of staff in equity and human rights offices (TVDSB)
- An indefinite pause on meetings of the Black Student Achievement Community Advisory Committee (TDSB)
- Removal of trustees from student discipline committee hearings across supervised boards (OCDSB and TDSB)
- Cancellation of community consultation and rescinding of a trustee decision related to a program admissions policy developed as redress for historic underrepresentation of Black students in student interest programs (TDSB)
- The sidelining of Black governance leadership across four boards.

Individually, these actions may appear administrative. Taken together, they reduce the system's capacity to identify, monitor, and correct race-based disparities.

Human Rights and Legal Considerations

Education is protected under the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#). Both school boards and the Ministry of Education have a legal duty not only to avoid discrimination, but to take proactive steps to address systemic inequities. This is particularly important where data demonstrates disproportionate adverse impacts on Code-protected groups.

The [Anti-Racism Act](#), 2017 requires the province to identify and eliminate systemic racism through evidence-based action and measurable outcomes.

The [Dreams Delayed](#) report confirmed that systemic anti-Black racism continues to affect student outcomes. Yet nearly one year later, there has been no public provincial implementation plan, no identified funding, no timelines, and no clear direction to education partners.

Where race-based disparities are known and documented, reducing oversight raises serious concerns about compliance with human rights obligations.

These changes are also occurring alongside delays in Black history curriculum implementation, renewed requirements related to police access in schools, continued public concern about the safety and well-being of Black youth, and increasingly polarized public discourse. This context makes strong, representative governance more important — not less. Together, these factors heighten the importance of stable, representative governance and robust equity infrastructure.

These concerns have been raised previously with Minister Calandra, both in writing and in person. To date, we have not seen action.

Request for Provincial Action

We respectfully call on the Ministry of Education to:

1. Issue a public response to the *Dreams Delayed* report, including a clear implementation plan with timelines and accountability measures;
2. Identify dedicated funding to support implementation of anti-Black racism and Black student achievement initiatives;
3. Provide direction to boards under supervision to preserve equity offices, advisory structures, and governance oversight related to student discipline and human rights; and
4. Clarify expectations for transparent public reporting on race-based student outcomes.

Ontario cannot address systemic anti-Black racism while weakening the governance and equity structures designed to confront it. Sustaining strong oversight during provincial supervision is essential to meeting legal obligations, maintaining public confidence, and improving outcomes for Black students — and for all students.

We remain committed to working collaboratively to advance this work and welcome further dialogue.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Debbie King'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Debbie King
Chair, Black Trustees' Caucus of OPSBA

CC: Minister of Education Paul Calandra