

PEEL EDUCATION WORKERS UNITED MEDIA RELEASE

PDSB Senior Leadership Advances Ford Government Agenda by Cutting Student Supports While Protecting Management

For Immediate Release – January 22, 2026

MISSISSAUGA, ON – Unions representing more than 23,000 education workers across the Peel District School Board (PDSB) are raising urgent concerns about decisions by senior leadership to reduce front-line, school-based supports for students, while management and non-frontline spending remain largely untouched. These decisions were made without meaningful consultation with unions and without the involvement of democratically elected trustees.

Senior leadership moved ahead with mid-year staffing changes that are removing teachers from system-wide support roles serving students with diverse needs and reassigning them into classrooms. As a result, occasional teachers who had been hired for full-year assignments are being displaced and moved into the daily Occasional Teacher pool, some as early as January 30, 2026. Students who rely on consistent, specialized supports will face additional instability, which impacts their success and well-being. Additional changes were planned to increase class sizes and reduce in-school education worker allocations.

After PDSB education worker unions pushed back collectively, senior leadership reversed proposed changes to class size and education worker allocations – a positive outcome. However, cuts to school-based supports are still proceeding in the form of eliminating important and specialized central teaching positions, despite the disruption they will cause for students and workers. The total savings from these frontline cuts are estimated to be \$5 million, a small fraction of the overall PDSB budget.

At the same time, PDSB budget documents show that management and non-frontline spending remain protected or continue to grow, including increases in departments such as Human Resources and Communications, ongoing high legal and administrative costs, and the introduction of a \$7 million Public-Private Partnership capital line without public explanation or transparency.

“Budget pressures do not compel school boards to cut classrooms first,” said Allison Walker, President of the OSSTF District 19 (Peel) Occasional Teacher Bargaining Unit. “That is a choice that senior leadership is making to further reduce and remove supports students depend on, while shielding management from sharing the burden of budget cuts.”

“Students with special education needs will feel this most sharply,” said Melody Hurtubise, President of OPSEU 2100, the local representing Educational Assistants in the PDSB. “After years of provincial underfunding, removing supports mid-year increases risks, undermines inclusion, and makes it harder for vulnerable students to learn safely and consistently.”

Trustees were also sidelined as these decisions were made. These individuals were elected to represent school communities and provide oversight when major staffing and budget changes are considered.

“By bypassing trustees, senior leadership is weakening democratic accountability at a time when public education needs it most,” said Nadia Goode, President of the Peel Elementary Teachers’ Local. “That erodes public trust and leaves communities without a voice.”

Peel schools are already stretched by years of provincial underfunding. Further reducing front-line supports threatens student learning, well-being, and safety, particularly for students who rely on stable, specialized services.

Education workers are calling on PDSB senior leadership to:

- immediately halt further cuts to frontline, school-based supports;
- apply restraint to management and non-frontline spending before classrooms;
- fully involve trustees in staffing and budgetary decisions that affect schools and communities; and
- engage in meaningful, early, and ongoing consultation with the unions representing its education workers.

“Public education isn’t weakened by accident,” said Nicola Allison, President of the OSSTF District 19 (Peel) Teacher Bargaining Unit. “It’s weakened when decision-makers choose bureaucracy over classrooms. Students, families, and education workers in Peel deserve better.”

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Peel Education Workers United *is comprised of the unions representing every one of the more than 23,000 unionized workers in the Peel District School Board.*

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