

NOTICE OF MOTION

Supporting the Role of Trustees in Maintaining an Accountable and Transparent Education System

Moved by: Councillor Rachel Chernos Lin _____

Seconded by: Deputy Mayor Amber Morley _____

SUMMARY:

School trustees have existed in Ontario since 1816 and have long played an essential role in delivering accountability, reflecting local priorities and ensuring that the students they represent are receiving the resources and education they need and deserve. This role has been central to the operation of Ontario's schools since before confederacy, enshrining democratic representation as a key principle at the heart of our public education system.

In the Summer of 2025, the Government of Ontario appointed supervisors to school boards across Ontario, including the TDSB and TCDSB, supplanting the role of elected trustees in Ontario's public education system.

The appointment of these supervisors has raised significant concerns among parents about lost transparency and accountability, and what the loss of the truly local representation provided by trustees may mean for their children's education. Critical decisions affecting hundreds of thousands of students across the City were once made in meetings open to the public – now, these decisions are opaque and without public scrutiny. Under supervision, parents no longer have a local point of contact who is responsive to the specific needs of their students, or communities more broadly.

In addition to the concerns raised above, the undermining of the role of trustees is a serious concern from a municipal governance perspective. Trustees are essential points of contact for Councillors to raise and discuss pressing local issues relating to education and school sites. Provincially appointed supervisors without local knowledge and specific experience in our communities are not a replacement for trustees.

These concerns are worsened by the passing of Bill 33, which received Royal Assent in November 2025. This Bill grants the Province overriding authority over school boards – authority which they have signaled may be used to eliminate the role of trustees in Ontario's education system in part or in whole. Recent reports suggest the Province's decision on the fate of the trustee system could be shared in the very near future.

As the Province considers their next steps on this issue, it is essential that robust consultation is conducted as part of the process. Parents, teachers and others in the education sector should be a part of the conversation that will influence the lives and learning of all students across Ontario.

It is crucial that City Council join municipalities across Ontario in recognizing and reaffirming the importance of trustees to maintaining accountability, transparency and local representation for parents and students in the public education system.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. City Council express its support for the role of locally-elected trustees in ensuring accountability, representing local priorities and advocating for the needs of students.
2. City Council request that the Province of Ontario first initiate a robust, province-wide consultation on school board governance models before considering any decision that would alter the governance role of trustees.
3. City Council forward this item to the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA), Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA), Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), as well as Members of Provincial Parliament representing ridings in the City of Toronto.

Date: March 25, 2026