

Ford government blocks public livestreams of school board committee meetings

Ontario's ministry of education has ordered school boards under its watch to block public livestreams of committee meetings. As Tina Yazdani reports, parents fear this is the government's attempt to cut access to information.

By Tina Yazdani

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The Ford government is restricting public access to [school board committee meetings](#).

CityNews has learned that the province's Ministry of Education has directed school boards under its jurisdiction, including the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), to block livestreams of their monthly meetings.

The chair of the TDSB's special education advisory committee, David Lepofsky, says the government has given no reason for arbitrarily banning live streaming, and this change will be particularly difficult for vulnerable families who can't attend meetings in person.

"This can only make things harder for beleaguered parents of students with disabilities/special education needs to press for improvements in an education system that already treats them like second-class citizens," Lepofsky said.



Education Minister Paul Calandra is seen in this undated photo. THE CANADIAN PRESS.

A spokesperson for Education Minister Paul Calandra didn't elaborate on why the directive was sent out, but told CityNews, "All committee meetings remain open to the public. Committee members and delegates can still participate remotely when necessary, and all are welcome to attend in person."

The statement went on to say minutes, agendas and decisions from all committees are posted publicly "to ensure transparency and accessibility for families and the broader community."

Critics believe that this is another way the Ford government is silencing parent voices, after first removing trustee powers at five Ontario school boards.

"It's shocking," said Ontario NDP leader Marit Stiles. "It's consistent with exactly what we've been concerned about – that once the minister and his supervisors are in there controlling things, parent voices and transparency will be eliminated."