

Ontario education minister appoints himself as interim supervisor of school board

By [The Canadian Press](#)

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PC MPP Paul Calandra speaks during Question Period at Queen's Park in Toronto on Tuesday, May 13, 2025. (THE CANADIAN PRESS/Cole Burston) (Cole Burston)

Ontario's education minister has appointed himself as a temporary supervisor as the province takes control of another school board.

The move by Paul Calandra comes less than two weeks after the passage of a new education law, which gives the education minister power to more easily place school boards under supervision.

Calandra had already appointed supervisors to five other boards due to what he called mismanagement, and on Monday added the Near North District School Board as a sixth.

"They are the poster child of why we brought Bill 33 forward and we're going to bring back stability into this community," he said.

“There’s a whole series of measures that we’re taking over the next number of days that will bring back stability and put the board back on the right track.”

Calandra himself will be acting as the board supervisor in the interim as he has not yet appointed one.

A government review found a fractured relationship between administration and trustees, a director of education who participated in determining his own performance rating, an “absence of leadership” from the director of education and that the actions of some trustees contributed to long delays in constructing a new Parry Sound school.

Following that review, Calandra issued 15 directives to the board with tight timelines, and he said Monday that the board only complied with five of them.

The Ontario Public School Boards’ Association said supervision should be a last resort, as local trustees give communities their voice in schools.

“Out of respect for the local governance that Ontarians expect, we await the appointment of a local supervisor as the board is now under direct control of the minister of education out of Queen’s Park,” president Kathleen Woodcock wrote in a statement.

Green Party Leader Mike Schreiner suggested many issues in schools are due to not enough provincial funding and said having Calandra as the temporary supervisor is “like putting the fox in charge of the hen house.”

While NDP Leader Marit Stiles vehemently opposed Bill 33, she conceded Monday that putting this board under supervision “might have been called for,” as parents and community members have been raising concerns for years.

One of Calandra’s first orders of business with the board will be to appoint an interim director of education, he said, though the employment status of its current — or possibly recently departed — director is unclear.

“I’ve heard everything from the existing director is on a sick leave, I’ve heard that he resigned, and I’ve also heard that he got fired,” Calandra said after question period.

“Nobody could confirm one way or another who was in charge of that board. So I will have that answer today, but I’m not going to wait.”

The government review found that the director of education had been working in an unused school three kilometres away from the head office, where facility, maintenance and sanitation staff are based.

It also found that on at least two occasions, a family member used the director's corporate credit card for personal use, which the director said he would reimburse.

The inexperience of the board, actions of some individual trustees and "absence of leadership" from the director contributed to some of the problems surrounding the long-delayed opening of a new school in Parry Sound that has angered parents and students, the report found.

The board began planning more than 10 years ago to close two elementary schools and the Parry Sound High School, and build a new JK-12 school.

Parents had been told since 2023 that the new school would open in September 2025, but they were informed just weeks before the start of this school year that wouldn't happen, the report said.

Parry Sound High School students were told one week before the start of school that they would begin the school year virtually, as the partially demolished building wasn't fit for occupancy.

The board announced they could return to school in person Sept. 15.

Calandra said he has asked an employee of the Halton District School Board's capital division to give advice on that project, and he will hire a construction manager to oversee it.

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