

## Province puts Dufferin-Peel Catholic School Board under supervision?

**By Brock Weir**

The Dufferin-Peel District School Board (DPCDSB) was among four Ontario school boards to be placed under supervision of the Ministry of Education last week.

The move came following an investigation into the finances of the DPCDSB, along with the Toronto District School Board, the Toronto Catholic District School Board, and the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.

The Boards in question will now be subject to a Provincially-appointed supervisor to, according to the Ministry of Education, address concerns regarding growing deficits, depleting reserves, and ongoing cases of mismanagement.

As part of its plan to protect Ontario and ensure students are prepared for the jobs of tomorrow, these actions will help the Province restore sound financial management at these school boards and ensure that every dollar invested is preparing students with practical skills for good-paying, stable careers, said the Ministry.

In a statement, Minister of Education Paul Calandra said the Boards in question failed in its responsibilities to parents and students by losing sight of its core mission ensuring student success.

We're strengthening oversight and accountability so that parents can have the confidence that every dollar is spent responsibly to directly benefit students, Calandra's statement continued. I have made it clear that if a school board veers off its mandate, I will take action to restore focus, rebuild trust, and put students first.

According to the Ministry, the DPCDSB is at risk of financial default by August 31, which would lead the Board to default on payments and financial obligations.

The report notes the Ministry-led investigation into the DPCDSB began June 5 and is the second investigation related to the Board within two years that has recommended supervision.

The DPCDSB did not elaborate on the announcement, but confirmed it was under supervision effective June 27.

Earlier this month, the Minister of Education appointed Ministry staff as a financial investigator, who recently submitted their final report to the Minister of Education recommending supervision, said the Board in a statement. Under supervision, the powers of trustees are vested in the Minister of Education who can then appoint a supervisor. A supervisor has been appointed, Mr. Rick Byers, and his mandate is to work with staff to develop and implement a plan to return the Board to a balanced financial position.

Per the Ministry, supervisors are intended to bring extensive experience in government, financial management and public accountability to the table and were chosen as a reflection of their strong track records of leadership and oversight.

These supervisors will represent the Ministry's vested control, overseeing and managing the administration of the boards, including financial management, policy implementation and operational oversight, they said. They will provide the Ministry with regular updates on their work, focus on addressing the deteriorating financial positions of the boards and identify where they can implement savings measures and improve operational efficiencies.

These actions reflect the government's continued focus on upholding public trust in Ontario's publicly funded education system and are a part of the government's plan to build a strong, accountable and well-supported public education system with a back-to-basics approach that is focused on improving student outcomes.