

WHY SCHOOL BOARD TRUSTEE ELECTIONS MATTER

School board trustees are key decision makers within Ontario's publicly funded school system. They influence government policy and the bargaining climate. They also set the budget for the school board to meet the demands of their constituents.

These publicly elected trustees have obligations not only to school-aged children and their families, but to the broader community at large. Trustees have a degree of autonomy to fulfill their roles and duties, they are not simply a rubber stamp of decisions taken by senior staff. While general funding is determined by the Ministry of Education, trustees are responsible for establishing the Board budget – and for operating within it. Good Trustees also advocate for more funding from the government where necessary.

They are our Employer.

School Board elections traditionally have a very low turnout which means that results can change based on very few votes. It is important for CUPE Ontario members to vote during the election on October 27, 2014. This will allow us to help choose trustees that will put the needs of the community ahead of right wing austerity. It will also allow us to ensure those elected both understand and respect our work.

Did you know the current Premier and Minister of Education, both started their political careers as school board Trustees? School Board Trustees are often viewed as testing grounds for people entering political life; many move on to higher levels of government. Having the right school board trustee now could mean having a great MPP or MP later.

The Ontario Education Act sets out the responsibilities of school boards. In practice, these include decisions on issues like:

- Where to spend money - trustees are able to shift funds between priorities and departments
- Local Collective Bargaining
- Contracting in and out of work
- School Closures
- Stopping the sale of board assets
- Community programming and community use of schools
- Policy, governing, and staffing, including HR related decisions like the hiring of Directors of Education
- Trustees also advocate on behalf of parents to ensure the school system responds to the needs of all of its students.