MEDIA STATEMENT

ETFO FEEO

Ministry supervision is failing Ontario students

Local ETFO presidents demand transparency, collaboration

For Immediate Release – March 10, 2026

TORONTO, ON – This morning, local presidents of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO), representing educators in school boards currently under Ontario Ministry of Education supervision, issued a joint letter to Education Minister Paul Calandra. The letter was also shared with ministry-appointed supervisors, directors of education at supervised boards, and the leadership of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association and the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association. It read as follows:

"As local presidents in supervised school boards, we are compelled to speak publicly about troubling decisions being made behind closed doors and the impact they are having on our public schools.

Since the takeovers of our boards, we have witnessed a pattern of choices imposed without transparency, meaningful consultation, or any clear connection to students' needs. Instead, these decisions appear to be driven almost exclusively by deep cost-cutting, with little regard for fixing the long-term funding formula consequences for learning and working conditions, or for the well-being of the communities our schools serve. In some cases, however, supervisors are not achieving savings at all, instead increasing costs through high salaries and discretionary funds. This is particularly concerning given the government's public assertion that ministry-appointed supervisors would perform better than trustees. In reality, supervisors are encountering the same systemic challenges that locally elected trustees faced, demonstrating that the issues are structural, not the result of local governance.

Educators understand the realities of fiscal responsibility, but we also know that budgets reveal what systems value, and what they are willing to sacrifice. When school board supervisors under ministry direction prioritize short-term savings, like selling unused schools, over evidence-based supports for students, the results are predictable: fewer resources and supports, reduced programming and services, and diminished capacity to meet increasingly complex student needs. These outcomes are not abstractions; they affect real classrooms, real families, and real children every day, especially those who are already our most vulnerable. You have publicly stated that if you became aware of fiscal challenges, especially as they pertain to special education, you would act on them. Yet the decisions being imposed under supervision do not address the underlying pressures that boards have repeatedly raised.

We are deeply concerned that the current decision-making process excludes the voices of educators, those who know students and schools best. Through presentations, reports, recommendations, and open questioning, board and committee meetings helped trustees and all local stakeholders see the real impacts of the district's decisions.

On behalf of the thousands of educators we serve, we have repeatedly raised concerns about the lack of consultation, only to see decisions finalized without our input. This approach undermines trust, erodes morale, and leads to poorer outcomes for students. The Ford government cannot claim to be student-focussed while dismissing the very people who work the closest with students and families daily.

-more-

Equally troubling is the absence of meaningful engagement with parents, guardians, former trustees, and community members. Families deserve to understand how and why decisions are being made, especially when those decisions directly affect their children's learning environments. Community involvement should not be an option; it is foundational to a high-quality, accountable public education system. When supervisors with little to no education sector experience move forward without broad consultation that includes educators, students, and their families, they reject their perspectives, priorities, and lived experiences. This cannot continue.

As school boards begin developing their budgets for the 2026-2027 school year, we call for a fundamental shift in approach. We expect transparency, open communication, and genuine collaboration with all stakeholders. We expect decisions to be guided by student needs, not by arbitrary fiscal targets. And we expect the Minister of Education and school board supervisors to uphold their responsibility to the communities they serve by engaging in broad, accessible, and meaningful consultation at the start of the process.

Ontario's public education system is strongest when decisions are made collaboratively, thoughtfully, and with the best interests of students as a priority. We urge the Minister of Education and our school boards' supervisors to commit to these guiding principles. Our students, members, and families deserve nothing less."

Rob Hammond, President, Near North Teacher Local
Margaret Soroye, President, Near North Occasional Teacher Local
Stephen Skoutajan, President, Ottawa-Carleton Teacher Local
Jamieson Dyer, President, Ottawa-Carleton Occasional Teacher Local
Nadia Goode, President, Peel Teacher Local
Aloysius Okafor, President, Peel Occasional Teacher Local
Mike Thomas, President, Thames Valley Teacher Local
Terry Card, President, Thames Valley Occasional Teacher Local
Diego Olmedo, President, Toronto Catholic DECE Local
Helen Victoros, President, Elementary Teachers of Toronto Local
Marisa Gallippi, President, Toronto Occasional Teacher Local

-30-

ETFO Media Relations: Carla Pereira | 416-962-3836 ext. 2332 | cpereira@etfo.org