



Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)

Fédération des enseignantes et des enseignants
de l'élémentaire de l'Ontario (FEEO)

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September 1, 2026

VIA E-MAIL: paul.calandra@pc.ola.org

The Honorable Paul Calandra, Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
5th floor, 438 University Avenue
Toronto, ON M7A 2A5

Re: Classroom Supplies Fund

Dear Minister Calandra,

I am writing on behalf of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) to raise serious concerns about your government's decision to select Staples as the exclusive vendor for the Classroom Supplies Fund, going against your own Buy Ontario directive. ETFO has long opposed for-profit corporations accessing and delivering education services, and this decision represents a troubling expansion of privatization in Ontario's publicly funded schools; it must be opposed.

At a time when educators and families are navigating the effects of U.S. tariffs, it is deeply concerning that your government has chosen to direct public education dollars to an American-owned corporation rather than supporting Canadian suppliers or leveraging existing school board procurement systems. This choice reflects poor judgment and a lack of understanding of how classroom resources are typically accessed and used.

Your government has repeatedly presented the Classroom Supplies Fund as a new investment. In reality, 40 per cent of the \$750 replaces pre-existing board-allocated classroom budgets. This simply redirects funding and does nothing to address the ongoing underfunding crisis in public education.

Your government's decision also replaced efficient board-level bulk purchasing with individual retail orders through a single American vendor. This shift undermines established procurement systems that prioritize cost-effectiveness and local decision-making.

Further, limiting eligibility to "homeroom teachers" excludes thousands of ETFO members who play essential roles in student learning, including non-homeroom teachers such as special education teachers, French as a Second Language, itinerant educators, early intervention staff, and the arts and physical education specialists. These educators support some of

Ontario's most vulnerable students, yet your policy denies them access to the materials required to deliver high-quality programming.

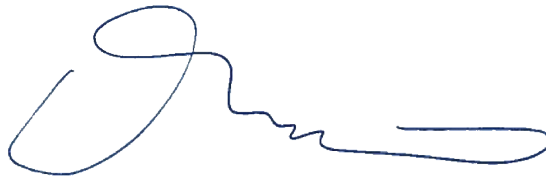
Tying funding to staffing assignments rather than student needs creates inequitable access to learning materials and specialized resources. This exclusion is inequitable and dismissive of the realities in schools.

ETFO members have expressed frustration that this program effectively outsources Ontario's classroom supply chain to the United States. Their concerns are compounded by the fact that the sole-source vendor your government selected is not just an American retailer, but one owned and controlled by a private equity firm with a well-documented record of harmful labour practices, corporate bankruptcies, and aggressive job reductions. Independent labour watchdogs consistently give Sycamore Partners poor marks for worker treatment, and its portfolio companies have been responsible for numerous serious occupational health and safety violations involving hazards that could cause significant physical harm or death.

The decision to select Staples continues your government's broader pattern of privatization, centralization, and the erosion of public services. We urge you to reconsider the sole-source arrangement with Staples, explore Canadian vendors or board-based procurement models, and ensure equitable access for all educators who require classroom materials, not only those assigned to homerooms.

We look forward to your response and to a transparent review of this program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Mastin', with a stylized, looping initial 'D'.

David Mastin
President

DM:CP:MG

Copy: Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Marit Stiles, Leader of the Official Opposition
John Fraser, Interim Leader of the Ontario Liberal Party and Education Critic
Chandra Pasma, MPP, NDP Education Critic
Mike Schreiner, Leader of the Green Party of Ontario