

March 27, 2025

Hon. Paul Calandra
Minister of Education
5th Floor, 438 University Ave,
Toronto, ON M7A 2A5

Sent by email: minister.edu@ontario.ca

Dear Minister Calandra,

RE: Congratulations & Working Together to Strengthen Ontario's School Libraries

On behalf of the Ontario Library Association (OLA) and the Ontario School Library Association (OSLA), we would like to extend our congratulations on your appointment as Ontario's Minister of Education. We enjoyed a strong and collaborative working relationship with Minister Dunlop and her team and look forward to continuing to build on this to support student success and help achieve Ontario's foundational literacy goals.

This past November, we had a very positive meeting with the Chief of Staff and senior staff team in the Minister's Office regarding changes made through the introduction of the Core Education Funding model for school boards. The introduction of this new funding model de-enveloped all the protected funding for school libraries, leaving individual school boards with sole authority to decide how to fund school libraries – if at all. We collectively agreed to continue these discussions after gathering information about how funding decisions are made at the Board and School level.

The eliminated enveloped funding was a critical baseline for school libraries across Ontario. It was the only provincial funding explicitly allocated for school libraries at the school board-level, and the strongest demonstration of the Ministry of Education's commitment to the importance of school libraries and library staff. As a result, school libraries and literacy-focused programs are at risk. These programs and the teacher-librarians who administer them, have been shown to have a direct impact on student success, according to Grade 3 and Grade 6 Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) testing results.



∴ ontario library association



∴ ontario school library association

The Core Education Funding model also merged all funding for school libraries – including teacher-librarians and library technicians – into a shared funding category with inanimate school materials.

The Ministry's introduction of the Core Education Funding model coincided with the elimination of important school board accountability and reporting mechanisms that Minister Lecce introduced in 2021. OLA and OSLA had worked very closely with the Ministry of Education to see this reporting introduced as an important transparency mechanism for parents and students on local school library funding.

We believe that there are reasonable opportunities to appropriately protect school library funding while maintaining flexibility for school boards to make decisions that respond to local needs. Furthermore, restoring accountability to how this funding is spent will directly contribute to Ontario's literacy priorities and provide greater transparency and confidence for parents.

We appreciated the pre-election opportunity to begin substantive conversations regarding these changes for the next school year. We will be seeking to re-engage on these issues with you and your office in the very near future as we look ahead to the 2025-26 school year.

Sincerely,

Michelle Arbuckle
Executive Director,
[Ontario Library Association](https://www.accessola.com)
marbuckle@accessola.com

Wendy Burch Jones
President,
Ontario School Library Association

Founded in 1900, the **Ontario Library Association** (OLA) is the oldest continually operating non-profit library association in Canada. With more than 3,500 members, the OLA is the largest library association in the country. We offer opportunities for learning, networking, and providing input into public policy. The **Ontario School Library Association** (OSLA) is a division of OLA consisting of 1,000 members who work in Ontario's school libraries.