

To: ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local Members
From: Mike Thomas, President, ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local (ETFO TVTL)
Date: November 17, 2025
Regarding: **In Response to Paul Calandra's Student and Family Support Office Letter**

Dear Members,

Every day, you do extraordinary work to support students and their families. You build relationships, solve challenges, and create classrooms where students feel seen, heard, and safe. That ongoing commitment is what makes Ontario's public education system strong - despite the increasing pressures you face.

The Minister of Education's recent announcement mandating Student and Family Support Offices is deeply concerning. While it is framed as a way for families to get help quickly, it ultimately undermines the meaningful, ongoing work that teachers, principals, and school teams already do to support students. It also sidelines the vital role of locally elected trustees - those chosen by communities to ensure accountability and local decision-making.

Minister Calandra has said that parents should first reach out to teachers and principals - the people who know their children best. Yet the creation of this new, centralized structure encourages families to bypass those essential conversations. This move risks weakening healthy dialogue and replacing it with a process that feels more like a call-centre system than genuine engagement.

We know that families do have real concerns. But these concerns are driven, in large part, by years of chronic underfunding by the Conservative government. ETFO's [Building Better Schools Funding Calculator](#) illustrates how far Ontario has fallen behind when it comes to investing in the supports students need and deserve.

There *is* an appropriate mechanism for student and family support - and it starts with the relationships already built in our schools. Conversations with teachers and principals must remain central to ensure students receive consistent, compassionate, and knowledgeable support.

We encourage community members to continue reaching out - but to the right place. Families who are frustrated with delays, gaps in mental-health supports, or lack of resources should be contacting their MPPs not the Thames Valley District School Board to demand a **properly funded public education**

system. Our students deserve the best opportunities possible, and that requires sustained investment - not political maneuvering.

Thank you for everything you continue to do. Your work is what truly supports students and families, and we will keep advocating for the resources, respect, and structures that allow you to do it.

If parents ask you about this directive or the new Student and Family Support Office model, you may direct them to:

- ETFO's **Building Better Schools** platform and Funding Calculator:
<https://www.buildingbetterschools.ca>

Encourage families to contact the following elected officials:

Premier & Ministry Leadership:

- Doug Ford – doug.ford@pc.ola.org
- Paul Calandra, Minister of Education – paul.calandra@pc.ola.org
- Paul Boniferno, Board Supervisor – paul.boniferno@ontario.ca

Local Conservative MPPs (Thames Valley Teacher Local Region):

- Steve Pinsonneault – steve.pinsonneault@pc.ola.org (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex)
- Ernie Hardeman – ernie.hardeman@pc.ola.org (Oxford County)
- Rob Flack – rob.flack@pc.ola.org (Elgin – Middlesex – London)

Families concerned about support gaps, unmet needs, or lack of resources can send a simple message such as:

"I'm concerned that the new Student & Family Support Office directive bypasses the people who know my child best—teachers, principals, and locally elected trustees. Please ensure Ontario's public education system is properly funded so that students receive the supports they need."

In solidarity,

Mike Thomas

For any questions, concerns, or simply a friendly chat, the Local ETFO Office is only a phone call away at 519-474-3150 or an email to etfotvtl@etfothamesvalley.com - we're here to help.