

Date: March 10, 2026

To: The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Education

Subject: Funding Reduction - Lifesaving Society's Swim to Survive Program

Dear Minister Calandra,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and members of Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO), we are writing to express our concern regarding the recent reduction in funding that supports the Lifesaving Society's Swim to Survive program delivered in Ontario schools.

For 20 years, the Ministry of Education has recognized the program's public safety value, funding its delivery through school grants and enabling hundreds of thousands of students to gain essential water survival skills. Swim to Survive protects children in aquatic environments while fostering confidence, physical literacy, and lifelong healthy habits that extend into the broader community.

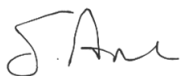
Drowning remains a leading cause of accidental death among children and youth in Canada. Programs like Swim to Survive are widely recognized as an effective, preventative public safety measure. Ensuring equitable access to water safety education aligns with the shared priorities of student well-being, physical literacy, and safe communities.

PRO members play a key role in delivering the Swim to Survive program in collaboration with local schools. Reduced funding will create significant challenges for municipalities and school boards to cover program costs, ultimately limiting access for students—particularly those from underserved communities—to this life-saving water safety education.

PRO respectfully encourages the Ministry to reconsider the funding reduction and work collaboratively with the Lifesaving Society, municipalities, and recreation partners to sustain and strengthen this critical program. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further and share insights from our members across Ontario.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued commitment to the health, safety, and well-being of Ontario's children.

Sincerely,



Sarah Ane
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Cc: The Honourable Neil Lumsden, Minister of Sport
Brian Miess, Chief Executive Officer, Lifesaving Society Ontario