



June 19, 2026

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier's Office
Room 281, Main Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A5

The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
315 Front Street West, 14th Floor
Toronto, ON, M7A 0B8

RE: Levels of lead in school drinking waters

Dear Premier Ford and Minister Calandra,

I am writing on behalf of the Waterloo Region District School Board regarding the critical issue of lead levels in our provincial school drinking water systems.

First, we would like to formally thank you both for the concern you expressed in response to the CTV News article published on May 8, 2026, which shed light on the ongoing challenges families and school boards face regarding lead contamination. Your public acknowledgment that ensuring clean drinking water in our schools is a top priority, along with your commitment to treating this as an urgent matter, is greatly appreciated by trustees, staff, and the families we serve.

As highlighted by health and environmental experts in the aforementioned article, Ontario's current regulatory framework presents ongoing risks to student health. While Health Canada lowered its national guidelines in 2019 to 5 parts per billion (ppb) after scientific studies proved that no amount of lead exposure is safe for developing children, Ontario's acceptable limit remains at 10 ppb. Allowing double the federally recommended lead limit leaves our children vulnerable to preventable developmental risks.

Furthermore, evidence shows that short-term mitigation strategies, such as the mandated flushing of water lines, are temporary fixes that do not permanently solve the underlying plumbing and fixture issues.



To ensure the safety and well-being of all students across the Waterloo Region and the province, the Waterloo Region District School Board strongly urges your ministries to take the following actions:

- **Align with National Standards:** Lower Ontario's maximum acceptable lead limit in school drinking water from 10 ppb to Canada's federal standard of 5 ppb.
- **Increase Testing Frequency:** Implement more robust and frequent testing protocols across all school facilities to ensure immediate detection and transparent reporting of elevated lead levels and provide additional funding to support the new testing schedule.
- **Dedicate Additional Funding:** Allocate targeted, long-term provincial funding specifically designed to help school boards replace outdated plumbing, install specialized filtration systems, and further reduce possible exposure of children to lead in schools.

Premier Ford and Minister Calandra, the WRDSB shares your concern for lead levels in water and the impact this may have on child development. Thank you for your ongoing investments in the school system. We look forward to working collaboratively with the provincial government to champion health, safety, and environmental excellence in our learning spaces.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maedith Radlein".

Maedith Radlein
Chair, Board of Trustees
Waterloo Region District School Board

cc: WRDSB Trustees
Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) and Member Boards