

DECLARATION

We believe every student in Ontario has the right to an equal, barrier-free education through the accessibility of supplies needed to succeed in school.

The Government of Ontario has committed to developing a Long-term Poverty Reduction Strategy. According to the 2009 Report Card on Child Poverty in Ontario by Ontario Campaign 2000, one in every nine children in Ontario still lives in poverty. The recent recession will likely increase the rate of child and family poverty beyond the province's current rate of 11.7%. Without immediate action and government support, poverty in Ontario will grow deeper.

The Ottawa School Supplies Working Group has witnessed the direct impact of poverty, particularly over the past two years, on local families through Child and Youth Friendly Ottawa's "Tools 4 School" program. Tools 4 School is a program that provides collection, distribution and advocacy of school supplies for community agencies, so that they can provide students with the appropriate tools needed to succeed in school.

To the Committee's understanding, the Ministry of Education allocates dollars to individual school boards, who then independently choose how to distribute those resources. Although the schools provided limited supplies in 2009 Tools 4 School received over 5000 requests for school supply kits, which included Ottawa Carleton District School Board elementary and secondary schools. Tools 4 School, in collaboration with community partners, only met approximately half of the demand for school supplies.

Consider the Ottawa Food Bank statistics demonstrating that 17,200 children in Ottawa require food through their services. It is obvious that if a family struggles to feed themselves, they are likely struggling to purchase school supplies.

Each year schools request that students buy more school supplies while manufacturers increase the price of their products. Child and Youth Friendly Ottawa has estimated the cost of outfitting a student with the appropriate tools for school at approximately \$100.00 per student. This particularly affects low income families who have more than one child.

We call on leadership from the Province and local school boards to recognize that school supplies are an essential need in order for students to succeed in school. By working with all orders of government, co-operating across Ministries and local school boards, and with the contributions of people living on low incomes, we can move toward creating an equal, barrier-free education through the accessibility of supplies needed to succeed in school.

The **Ottawa School Supply Working Group** is a committed group of non-profit staff from Child and Youth Friendly Ottawa, Social Planning Council, Ottawa Food Bank, Community Health & Resource Centres, Community Food Cupboards, and St. Joe's Women's Shelter. For more information on the Tools 4 School program please visit www.cayfo.ca.

If you believe what we are doing is important, please show your support by completing the endorsement form below.

Yes, I would like to endorse the declaration by the Ottawa School Supplies Working Group requesting local school boards across the province provide all essential school supplies and abolish school fees that cause barriers to students. Please include my full name and/or organization name in the declaration.

Personal Endorsement

Full Name	
Phone Number	
Street Address	
City	
Postal Code	

Organization Endorsement

Organization Name	
Phone Number	
Street Address	
City	
Postal Code	

How has this program been helpful?

What are some of the other challenges you are dealing with in terms of school supplies and school fees?

Please send completed forms to Marie-Christine Gauthier:
by fax: (613) 236-7060
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