



April 1, 2026

The Honourable Neil Lumsden
Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport
Government of Ontario
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON

Dear Minister Lumsden,

SUBJECT: Coordinated Provincial Leadership Needed to Address the State of Sport in Ontario

On behalf of the Ottawa Sport Council and the many community-based sport organizations we support, I am writing to share the *Future of Sport in Canada* report released Future of Sport in Canada Commission, and to seek your leadership in addressing the systemic challenges it highlights across the sport sector.

The report, released on March 24, 2026, outlines troubling trends: declining participation rates, widening inequities, increasing financial and operational pressures on community clubs, and a system that—despite the passion of volunteers and professionals—lacks coordinated direction across governments and sectors.

Here in Ottawa, those findings mirror the realities we are seeing on the ground. Many sport organizations, municipalities, and school boards are working tirelessly to deliver safe, inclusive, high-quality programming. Yet without a province-wide strategy, our collective impact is constrained. As I noted in a recent reflection (https://www.linkedin.com/posts/activity-7442307534729859072-IVR3?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop&rcm=ACoAAARXEy4BcDR0LvCNcvSpkwSAkvoqkUcN310), we are at a pivotal moment: while Canadians increasingly recognize the physical and mental health benefits of sport and recreation, families face growing barriers to participation, and organizations are struggling with sustainability, standards, accessibility, and workforce pressures.

To move toward an Ontario where every resident—regardless of age, postal code, income, or ability—can participate and thrive in sport, our sector needs clear direction and coordinated alignment. The Province of Ontario is uniquely positioned to drive that alignment across the ministries of Sport, Health, Education, and Municipal Affairs.

We respectfully request your support in:

1. **Validating the report's findings and assessing how they reflect Ontario's realities.**
Community stakeholders across the province see the same trends identified in the national report.
2. **Working with partner ministries in Ontario to develop a sport system framework aligned with the call for a multisport sport framework.**
A multi-ministerial approach is essential to address facilities, school-based programming, public health outcomes, equity of access, and municipal partnerships.
3. **Providing guidance on a provincial mechanism for coordination with municipalities, school boards, public health bodies, and the sport sector.**
Ontario needs a coherent structure that supports collaboration, reduces duplication, and enhances the long-term sustainability of community sport.
4. **Engaging community sport organizations in the policy development process.**
Those delivering sport daily—often with volunteer-driven capacity—must have a voice in shaping solutions.

Ontario has an opportunity to lead the country in modernizing the sport system so it is inclusive, resilient, and aligned with provincial health, youth, and community-building priorities.

The Ottawa Sport Council and our partners across the city stand ready to collaborate and contribute to this important work. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your officials to discuss how Ontario can advance a coordinated approach that supports both community well-being and sector sustainability.

Thank you for your attention and for your ongoing support of amateur and community sport in our province.

Sincerely,



Mathieu Fleury
Chair, Ottawa Sport Council

CC:

The Honourable Sylvia Jones, Minister of Health
The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Education
The Honourable Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
His Worship Mark Sutcliffe, Mayor of Ottawa
Marc Bertrand, Directeur de l'éducation et secrétaire-trésorier, CECCE

Christian-Charle Bouchard, Directeur de l'éducation et secrétaire-trésorier, CEPEO
Stacey Kay, Director of Education, Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB)
Mary Donaghy, Director of Education, Ottawa Catholic School Board (OCSB)