

BOH 06-10-24



May 28, 2024

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Viviane Lapointe
Member of Parliament, Sudbury

Marc Serré
Member of Parliament, Nickel Belt

Carol Hughes
Member of Parliament, Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing

Dear Members of Parliament:

Re: Support for Bill C-322 National Framework for a School Food Program Act

At its meeting on May 16, 2024, the Board of Health carried the following resolution #36-24:

WHEREAS the current Ontario student nutrition program only reaches 40% of students and 71% of publicly funded Kindergarten to Grade 12 schools due to insufficient funding, rising food costs, inadequate infrastructure and human resources, and an increase in student need for proper nourishment^d; and

WHEREAS the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts passed motion [02-20](#) supporting a universal fully funded healthy school food program, and motion [61-23](#) supporting a funded national school food program in the 2024 Federal Budget; and

WHEREAS although the Government of Canada recently [announced an investment of \\$1 billion over 5 years for the national school food program](#) in the 2024 Budget to help enhance and broaden existing programs throughout Canada, more support is required to ensure a universal fully funded school food program for all students; and

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WHEREAS Private Member's [Bill C-322](#) calls for a national framework to establish a school food program that is universal, sustainable and effective, where no child is left out or stigmatized in the program due to their families' ability to pay, fundraise, and volunteer with the program; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & District commend the Government of Canada for prioritizing healthy school food in Budget 2024 and for working in partnership with provinces, territories and Indigenous communities throughout Canada; and

FURTHER THAT the Board of Health urges local Members of Parliament and other key partners to endorse Bill C-322, National Framework for a School Food Program Act and continue to uphold the commitment to the health and well-being of children and youth in Canada.

Evidence has shown that not all schools are able to implement a healthy school food program due to its inconsistent patchwork of funding via public and private contributions, and charitable donations^{i,ii,iii}. At the same time, these programs often rely on volunteers to administer the program as the funds are prioritized for covering rising costs of food and maintaining program infrastructure to deliver school meals or snacks^{i,ii,iv}.

The Board of Health is pleased to witness growing support for prioritizing a national school food policy for Canada. Many individuals from across the country also voiced the importance for programs to "embrace universality" so that a healthy school food program can positively impact student's nourishment, health and wellbeing, and academic achievement, without students, families and schools feeling stigmatized if participating in the program^v. The proposed National Framework for School Food Program Act would help ensure the development of a universal program in which students have equal opportunity to benefit from healthy meals at school everyday.

Sincerely,



René Lapierre
Chair, Board of Health



M. Mustafa Hirji, MD, MPH, FRCPC
Acting Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer

cc: Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Ministry of Finance
Honourable Jenna Sudds, Ministry of Families, Children and Social Development
Honourable Gary Anandasangaree, Ministry of Crown-Indigenous Relations

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Honourable Patty Hadju, Ministry of Indigenous Services
Bruce Bourget, Director of Education, Rainbow District School Board
Danny Viotto, Director of Education, Huron Superior Catholic District School Board
Joanne B nard, Director of Education, Sudbury Catholic District School Board
Lesleigh Dye, Director of Education, District School Board Ontario North East
Lucia Reece, Director of Education, Algoma District School Board
Paul Henry, Directeur de l' ducation, Conseil scolaire catholique Nouvelon
S bastien Fontaine, Directeur de l' ducation, Conseil scolaire public du Grand Nord de l'Ontario
Sylvie Petroski, Directrice de l' ducation, Conseil scolaire catholique de district des Grandes Rivi res
Debbie Field, Coalition for Healthy School Food
Carol Dodge, Executive Director, Better Beginnings Better Futures
Ontario Boards of Health

ⁱ Ruetz, A. T., & McKenna, M. L. (2021). *Characteristics of Canadian school food programs funded by provinces and territories*. *Canadian Food Studies*, 8(3), 70-106. <https://doi.org/10.15353/cfs-rcea.v8i3.483>

ⁱⁱ Haines, J., & Ruetz, A. (2020, March 01). *School Food and Nutrition. Comprehensive, Integrated Food and Nutrition Programs in Canadian Schools: A Healthy and Sustainable Approach*. Arrell Food Institute. https://arrellfoodinstitute.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/SchoolFoodNutrition_Final_RS.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ Bond, N. (2015, February 01). *Evaluating Universal Student Nutrition Programs: Methods, Indicators, and Outcomes*. Regions. Community Engaged Scholarship Institute. <https://atrium.lib.uouelph.ca/bitstreams/840f461a-78ab-4733-81a3-0c1c0d2ceb12/download>

^{iv} Ruetz, A.T., Edwards, G., Zhang, F. (2023). *The Economic Rationale for Investing in School Meal Programs for Canada: multi-sectoral impacts from comparable high-income countries*. The Arrell Family Foundation. https://amberleyruetz.ca/assets/uploads/ruetz-consulting_the-economic-rationale-for-investing-in-school-mealprograms-for-canada.pdf

^v Economic and Social Development Canada. (2023). *National School Food Policy Engagements – What We Heard Report*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/school-food/consultation-school-food/what-we-heard-report-2023.html>