

November 9, 2023

Fabio Costante, Board of Health Chair
Dr. Kenneth Blanchette, Chief Executive Officer
Windsor-Essex County Health Unit
1005 Ouellette Avenue
Windsor, ON
N9A 4J8

Re: Investing in a Sustainable Federal School Food Policy

Dear Chair Costante and Dr. Blanchette,

At the October 19, 2023 meeting, under Correspondence item [d](#)), the Middlesex-London Board of Health moved to endorse the following item:

Date: September 21, 2023

Topic: Investing in a Sustainable Federal School Food Policy

From: Fabio Costante, Board of Health Chair and Dr. Kenneth Blanchette, Chief Executive Officer, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit

To: Honourable Federal Ministers Freeland, Sudds, MacAulay and Duclos

The Middlesex-London Board of Health received a report in April 2023 titled “[Monitoring Food Affordability and Implications for Public Policy and Action](#)”. This report noted that local food affordability monitoring is a requirement of the Ontario Public Health Standards. It also provided an update on the Middlesex-London Health Unit’s 2022 Nutritious Food Basket survey results, which demonstrate that incomes, particularly when dependent on social assistance, are not adequate for many Middlesex-London residents to afford basic needs, and that food insecurity has a pervasive impact on health; and there is a need for income-based solutions.

A federal school food policy would support students in the Middlesex-London region, while also supporting families of those students navigating financial strain and inflation while purchasing food at the grocery store. It is noted that the correspondence from Windsor-Essex County Health Unit highlights that public health and many school communities do not have resources to support food programs at schools. The Middlesex-London Health Unit supports our colleagues from Windsor-Essex in advocating for a federal school food program that includes the following aspects:

- Serve tasty, nourishing, culturally appropriate foods;
- Ensure that ALL students in a school can access the program in a non-stigmatizing manner;
- Be a cost-shared model, including federal support;
- Be flexible and locally adapted to the context of the school and region, including commitment to Indigenous control over programs for Indigenous students;
- Support Canadian farmers and local food producers;
- Provide conflict of interest safeguards that [prevent programs from marketing to children](#); and
- Promote food literacy.

The Middlesex-London Board of Health supports the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit in advocating to the federal government for a federal school food policy for a universal, cost-shared school food program in schools. To view more resources, please visit the Middlesex-London Health Unit’s website page regarding [Food Access in Schools](#).

Sincerely,



Matthew Newton-Reid
Board Chair
Middlesex-London Health Unit



Dr. Alexander Summers MD, MPH, CCFP, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health
Middlesex-London Health Unit



Emily Williams BScN, RN, MBA, CHE
CEO, Secretary and Treasurer
Middlesex-London Health Unit

CC: Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister
Honourable Mark Holland, Minister of Health
Honourable Jenna Sudds, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development
Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Public Services and Procurement
Board Member Skylar Franke