



**Public Health**  
**Santé publique**  
SUDBURY & DISTRICTS

October 27, 2023

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Honourable Chrystia Freeland  
Deputy Prime Minister and Ministry of Finance

Honourable Jenna Sudds  
Ministry of Families, Children and Social Development

Honourable Lawrence MacAulay  
Ministry of Agriculture and Agri-Food

Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos  
Ministry of Public Services and Procurement

Dear Federal Ministers Freeland, Sudds, MacAulay, and Duclos:

**Re: Support for a Funded Healthy School Food Program in Budget 2024 (Federal)**

At its meeting on October 19, 2023, the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts carried the following resolution #61-23:

*WHEREAS a universal publicly funded student nutrition program can positively impact students' nourishment, health and well-being, behaviours and attitudes, school connectedness, and academic success; and*

*WHEREAS the current provincial student nutrition program strives to offer a breakfast, snack, and/or lunch to students each school day, but not all schools have adequate financial and human resources to offer them; and*

*WHEREAS the annual monitoring of food affordability in Sudbury and districts demonstrates that some families may struggle to purchase food, and a universal fully-funded student nutrition program can help to ensure no child is left out of the program due to their family's ability to pay; and*

*WHEREAS the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts passed motion [02-20](#) supporting a universal publicly funded healthy school food program; and*

*WHEREAS although the Ontario government recently announced an additional \$5 million this year in the provincial Student Nutrition Program and the First Nations Student Nutrition Program, more support is needed to*

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*ensure a fully-funded universal student nutrition program; and*

*WHEREAS the federal government announced its commitment to work toward the creation of a National School Food Policy to help Canadian communities access healthy food in the [Food Policy for Canada](#); and*

*WHEREAS the Ontario Public Health Standards requires boards of health to support and participate with other partners in advancing school food policy and programming using population health assessment and surveillance, policy development; and*

*THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts support the [recommendations](#) submitted by the Coalition for Healthy School Food to the Government of Canada as part of advance consultations for Budget 2024:*

*Allocate \$1 billion over five years and collaborate with provinces, territories, and Indigenous partners to provide them with an initial \$200 million as soon as possible to fund existing school food programs; and*

*Create a separate School Food Infrastructure Fund grants program of, at minimum, \$50 million; and*

*Negotiate independent School Food Policy agreements with First Nation, Inuit and Métis leadership to ensure long-term and sustainable funding for Indigenous school nutritious meal programs; and*

*THAT the Board calls on the Federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development for investment in healthy school food in Budget 2024, as presented in the House of Commons' online [e-4586](#) (Food and drink); and*

*FURTHER THAT The Board share this motion with relevant stakeholders, including Ontario Boards of Health and the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (aLPHa).*

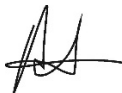
Currently, Canada is the only G7 country without a national school food program in place. In Ontario, the current student nutrition program faces inconsistent year-to-year funding, posing barriers to stability and sustainability and impacting full implementation of the program, such that all students can benefit from proper nourishment. The patchwork of funding sources compromises the quantity and quality of food served, and the availability of adequate infrastructure and human resources to offer a student nutrition program where all children are able to benefit from.

In the [Food Policy for Canada](#), the Government of Canada announced the intention to “engage with provinces, territories, and key stakeholder groups to work toward the creation of the National School Food Program”<sup>i</sup>. Despite this intention, there was no financial commitment made to establish a National School Food Program in the 2023 federal budget.

The Board of Health is pleased to join many leaders from across Canada in supporting a publicly funded universal school food program model that can positively impact student's nourishment, health and wellbeing, behaviours and attitudes, school connectedness, and academic success. The proposed universal program model with leadership by Canada, and Ontario's Ministries would enable all students to have the equal opportunity to eat healthy meals at school everyday, and that no child is left out due to their family's ability to pay.

Thank you for your attention on this important issue. Given the impact of nutrition related children's health and wellbeing, we trust you will advance this work quickly and so that no child is left out.

Sincerely,



Penny Sutcliffe, MD, MHSc, FRCPC  
Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer

cc: Honourable Michael Parsa, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services  
Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education  
Honourable Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier of Ontario, Minister of Health  
Jamie West, Local Member of Provincial Parliament, Sudbury  
France G elinas, Local Member of Provincial Parliament, Nickel Belt  
Michael Mantha, Local Member of Provincial Parliament, Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing  
Viviane Lapointe, Local Member of Parliament, Sudbury  
Marc Serr e, Local Member of Parliament, Nickel Belt  
Carol Hughes, Local Member of Parliament, Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing  
Bruce Bourget, Director of Education, Rainbow District School Board  
Danny Viotto, Director of Education, Huron Superior Catholic District School Board  
Joanne B enard, 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 ebastien 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 eres  
Debbie Field, Coalition for Healthy School Food  
Carol Dodge, Executive Director, Better Beginnings Better Futures  
Ontario Boards of Health

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<sup>i</sup> Government of Canada. (2020, November 17). *The Food Policy for Canada*.  
<https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/department/initiatives/food-policy/food-policy-canada>