

July 19, 2019

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
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The Hon. Maxime Bernier, MP, Beauce
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Jagmeet Singh, MP, Burnaby South
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Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Federal Party Leaders:

Re: Support for a National School Food Program

The Board of Health for Peterborough Public Health requests that you honour and move forward with implementing a cost-shared, national school food program, as outlined in the [Federal healthy eating policy](#) with a commitment of resources.

Universal access to healthy food every day at school could improve students' food choices and support their academic success (including academic performance, reduced tardiness and improved student behaviour). An important step towards health equity, universal healthy school meals contribute to students' physical and mental health. Its' success requires all levels of government to be engaged and supportive. Canada is the only G7 country that does not provide federal funding or resources to support school food and nutrition programs.

Our Board of Health supports initiating consultations to develop an adequately funded national cost-shared school food program. As public health experts with extensive experience working with Ontario student nutrition programs, we urge that a universal program include appropriate nutrition education and food safety training of staff and volunteers, provide an optional and culturally appropriate daily nutrition meal, use best practices in service and delivery, function in inspected and adequately equipped spaces, and provide students with the opportunity to implement Canada's Food Guide key messages; specifically, students are given the opportunity to eat more vegetables and fruit, whole grains and protein foods in a socially inclusive environment where they enjoy, prepare and eat healthy food with others.

A well designed national school food program has the potential to enable children to develop food and nutrition habits they need to lead healthy lives and succeed at school.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Councillor Kathryn Wilson
Chair, Board of Health

cc: Local MPs
Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Ontario Boards of Health