



10 July, 2020

Right Honourable Prime Minister Trudeau
P.C., M.P., Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

The [Annapolis Community Health Board](#) (CHB) was pleased and encouraged to see the government commit, in the March 2019 federal budget, to develop a National School Food Program in consultation with provinces, territories and civil society organizations. We are writing today to ask your government to continue to move this issue forward.

The Annapolis CHB is a [provincially-legislated](#) volunteer advisory group that works to improve health & wellness where we live, work, play and learn. We engage our local community in addressing factors that affect health & wellness including income, food security, housing, and sense of belonging, among others. The Community Health Board advocates for actions to promote and improve health & wellness based on what our community says is most important. In our [2019-21 Community Health Plan](#), food security was identified as one of four priority areas that impact the health of our communities.

All students need access to good food to fuel their minds and bodies, but many students come to school without food for many reasons - long commutes, early morning practices, not being hungry when they wake up, busy family routines, and household food insecurity. Grassroots organizations, charities, and provincial and territorial funding enable one in five children in Canada to access a school food program - **YET Canada is the only G7 country without a national school food program.**

A universal, cost-shared national healthy school food program is imperative to help the following issues:

- **Help kids reach their full potential in the classroom and in life.**
Nova Scotia research has identified a strong association between diet and academic performance. Without proper nutrition, children and youth's learning and skill development is significantly impaired.
- **Curb rising rates of chronic disease.**
1 of every 3 Nova Scotians are not getting enough vegetables and fruits, dramatically increasing their risk of developing chronic life-changing diseases, such as diabetes and heart diseases.



- **Support the local economy and environment.**

Our food choices impact more than our bodies, they impact our economies and our environment. Purchasing from local farmers and food producers supports local economies, decreases greenhouse gas emissions by reducing distances our food travels, and enhances awareness about eating sustainably for people and the planet.

A post-COVID 19 environment will create new opportunities as we aspire to bring the health of our economy and citizens back to abundance. As conversations about a federal stimulus are underway, we would like to propose that a National School Food Program can provide multiple stimulus opportunities as well as a legacy of improved public health and education infrastructure.

- The creation of a national school food program resonates across party lines, from coast to coast to coast in Canada as evidenced in the recent election.
- A National School Food Program could help ensure we can provide good food to all kids consistently.
- We know that investments in school food programs create social and economic benefits along with improving academic achievement.

Good nutrition impacts children's health, well-being, and learning. If children are not adequately nourished during childhood, the impact can last a lifetime. Hunger in childhood has long-term adverse consequences for health.

The return on investment for school food programs is an impressive [\\$3-\\$10 for every \\$1 invested](#).

We cannot afford not to do this.

Therefore, the Annapolis Community Health Board is calling for a funded National School Food Program to be established in Canada as per the recommendation put forward by the Coalition for Healthy School Food submitted for the 2020 Budget.

We would appreciate your acknowledgement of receipt of this letter.

If you should require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

The Annapolis Community Health Board

CC: The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister of Canada; The Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health; The Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development; The Honourable Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance; Chris d'Etremont, Member of Parliament