



May 6, 2022 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

PETERBOROUGH - The Ontario Home Economics Association (OHEA) and other organizations involved in the Ontario Coalition for Healthy School Food ask all provincial candidates to commit to healthy children through school food and nutrition programs and food literacy education.

As Ontario works toward pandemic recovery and the June 2nd election, OHEA urges all candidates to be informed and supportive of school food and nutrition programs and engaging children and youth in food literacy.

Connecting children and youth with healthy food, through school meals and education, has tremendous potential to improve the future of our province. Studies show that children and youth learn better when they are well-nourished and not hungry. Providing healthy and culturally appropriate food in school programs and teaching about growing, selecting, preparing, eating, and valuing food can play a critical role in promoting health and reducing chronic disease while strengthening Ontario's economy and supporting the agri-food sector.

Educators know that students learn best when they are actively engaged in experiential education. When practical food activities are incorporated into curriculum students (children and youth) learn how their food is grown, raised, or produced, how to be good stewards of the land preserving and sustaining the environment, how to prepare and use food for healthy lifestyles, the importance of cultural diversity, and the value of collaboration. Essential life-skills are instilled.

"The inclusion of Food Literacy in the new Science Curriculum Grades 1- 9 is an important first step in Food Literacy education and experiential learning. Professional Home Economists encourage secondary school students to opt for at least one of the excellent Food & Nutrition courses already existing within Family Studies Curriculum (Social Sciences and Humanities) where Food Literacy is fundamental." Jason Eaton, P.H.Ec., President, Ontario Home Economics Association (OHEA).

School food initiatives create community connectedness. They bring together community members and partners including local food providers, educators, chefs, families, seniors, Elders and Knowledge Keepers, and socially excluded or vulnerable groups. Food connections

create inter-generational relationships, build knowledge and skills, and support student and community health and well-being.

During the 2022 Ontario pre-election period OHEA asks all candidates to commit to:

1. **Increase Ontario's annual investment in the Student Nutrition Program** to accommodate the rising food costs for the program and greater demand for the program in light of COVID. This will work towards the goal that all children and youth in Ontario can access a healthy and culturally appropriate meal or snack, in a non-stigmatizing manner, at school each day. If virtual learning continues in Ontario, we ask that you provide additional funding to reflect the costs of accommodating vulnerable at-home learners.
2. **Invest in school food infrastructure and capacity building funding** for schools or community organizations that provide programs in schools including improving kitchens, food service areas, gardens, and other infrastructure so that school food programs can serve healthy food and teach food literacy while supporting job creation.
3. Consult with Indigenous Nations and leaders and **provide additional funding to Indigenous Nations and communities in Ontario** to advance Indigenous-led school food initiatives.
4. Support the spirit of [Bill 216, the Food Literacy for Students Act](#), and **invest in food literacy education**. This includes reintroducing and passing the bill, establishing and expanding school food granting programs, investing in teacher training on how to use the curriculum to teach food literacy, and supporting community-based partners that provide food education in schools.
5. **Prepare to accept matched funding from the federal government** and negotiate a cost shared school food program.

Ontario Coalition for Healthy School Food - [Learn more](#)

Ontario Curriculum changes – [Learn more](#)

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[**#VoteONFood**](#) | [**#SchoolFoodProgram**](#) | [**#FoodLiteracy**](#)

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