



Ontario Home Economics Association

1760 Waddell Avenue, Peterborough, ON K9K 2G5

Nov. 12, 2021

Hon. Stephen Lecce, Ontario Minister of Education

minister.edu@ontario.ca and stephen.lecce@pc.ola.org

Daryl Kramp, MPP, – Hastings Lennox-Addington daryl.kramp@pc.ola.org

Sam Oosterhoff, MPP – Parliamentary Assistant sam.oosterhoff@pc.ola.org

Dear Minister Lecce, MPP's Kramp: and Oosterhoff:

Re: Bill 82 - Food Literacy for Students Act, 2021 (former Bill 216)

The Ontario Home Economics Association (OHEA) respectfully requests an invitation to attend the next Food Literacy Round Table discussion and thanks you all for moving Bill 82 (216) forward following prorogation. We fully endorse this important legislation.

Bill 82 aligns perfectly with the *Speech from the Throne, Oct. 4, 2021*, "Your government has been guided by the latest science and evidence when making decisions on how to keep Ontarians healthy and safe." Food Literacy for Students Act 2021 is about health and safety.

Who We Are:

OHEA is a self-regulated body of registered Professional Home Economists that promotes high professional standards among its members so they may assist families and individuals to achieve and maintain a desirable quality of life. (Bill Pr35 – Statutes of Ontario, 1989)

OHEA Has the Expertise to Support Bill 82 (216):

Professional Home Economists connect with Ontarians through diverse and influential roles as Family Studies Educators, University Professors, Food Industry Analysts/Food Label and Regulatory Consultants, Health Promoters, Food Product

& Test- Kitchen Managers, Registered Dietitians, Nutrition Consultants, Cookbook Authors, Food Writers, Speakers and Media Personalities.

Working daily with Ontario students and families, Home Economists continually observe a serious lack of nutrition knowledge and cooking skills. Bill 82 (216) will address this deficiency in the Ontario curriculum.

OHEA agrees that *“the elimination of home economics programs from Ontario schools resulted in a generation of children and young parents lacking food literacy and food skills.”* Food Literacy in Ontario, Nutrition Connections, Ontario Public Health Association, 2019.

OHEA disagrees that Home Economics was totally ‘eliminated’ from Ontario schools. Rather, it was ‘reduced and renamed’. The current multidiscipline ‘optional’ subject area, **Family Studies (FS)**, at the secondary level, is well-designed to nurture individual and family development through food, nutrition, financial literacy, and consumer education. Food literacy is deeply embedded in all seven of the current FS food-and nutrition-related courses.

Making one existing Food & Nutrition course mandatory would make good fiscal sense for your government when excellent curriculum is already in place.

“One of the existing FS Food and Nutrition Courses could be the basis for a mandatory course to save reinventing the wheel,” says Camille Naranjit, OCT, P.H.Ec. - President of OFSHEEA (Ontario Family Studies Home Economics Educators’ Association).

There is concern at the elementary level since Home Economics was largely eliminated by the Ministry some years ago and where curriculum is lacking.

OHEA strongly advocates that Food Literacy be taught by qualified Family Studies Educators to provide credible, consistent, and accurate nutrition messaging and cooking skills. It is also logical that qualified Family Studies Educators be closely involved in new curriculum development.

“Unhealthy eating is estimated to cost Ontarians \$5.6B annually in direct healthcare costs and lost productivity, including \$1.8B directly from inadequate

vegetable and fruit consumption.” Cancer Care Ontario and Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion, 2019.

OHEA believes that experiential Food Literacy education will better equip Ontario graduates with the essential life skills and knowledge to:

- select/prepare nutrient-rich food to promote growth and development, support positive health outcomes, and help reduce healthcare costs;
- appreciate local food, food production challenges, food safety, and food security;
- reduce the use of ultra-processed and convenience foods;
- promote mindful eating and family mealtime;
- manage family food budgets and reduce food waste;
- increase self-reliance, and reduce dependency on food banks especially in times of emergency or pandemic;
- prepare to leave home and make wise consumer choices for self, family and community,

“Being food literate is important to help children and adults navigate a complex food environment and enable them to make healthy food choices that satisfy their preferences, cultural traditions, and nutritional needs. Food literacy is particularly important in the early years, when children are developing the eating patterns and skills that they will carry into adulthood and pass on to future generations.” Food Literacy in Ontario, Nutrition Connections and Ontario Public Health Association, 2019.

“As the risk of COVID-19 unfurls, families face higher cost of food. OHEA predicts a greater need for essential food and life skills education.” Mary Carver, P.H.Ec., Former OHEA Food Literacy Coordinator.

Kindly invite OHEA representation to your next Round Table discussion.
info@ohea.on.ca. OHEA offers you depth of knowledge and experience in Food Literacy education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John E. ...', written in a cursive style.

Jason Eaton, P.H.Ec.,

President – Ontario Home Economics Association (OHEA)

OHEA - Partner: *Six-by-Sixteen* Project with OFA

OHEA - Partner: *Ontario Food & Nutrition Strategy*

OHEA - Presenter: *Unpacking Food Literacy*. OPHA/Nutrition-Resource-Centre

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