



British Columbia
School Trustees
Association

February 8, 2024

Taleeb Noormohamed

Member of Parliament
100-3077 Granville St.
Vancouver, B.C. V6H 3J9
taleeb.noormohamed@parl.gc.ca

Dear Mr. Noormohamed,

Subject: Bill C-322 – National Framework for a School Food Program Act

I am writing to you to add support, as president of the British Columbia School Trustees Association, to Member of Parliament Serge Cormier's Bill C-322, to develop a national framework to establish a school food program. I ask that you work with your caucus colleagues to seek unanimous consent of this bill.

While I am pleased to hear that the bill has passed second reading and has been sent to committee, further support from the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities is needed. The concept of a universal national school food policy and program for all public schools has wide appeal as too many children enter schools daily while lacking the nutrition needed to learn effectively. Canada remains the only country in the G7 that does not have a national school food program or national standards, and we cannot allow that to continue.

Providing nutritious food frees students to focus on learning, and addressing food insecurity has the potential to reduce related anxiety and mental health challenges. Promoting healthy eating habits and increasing food literacy will provide young people with a foundation for a healthier life and future. A program such as this would also benefit local agriculture and create opportunities to highlight local traditions, all leading to a healthier and more sustainable food system.

We lend our support to previous feedback that any federally supported program meets the following minimum requirements:

- Be present at every publicly funded school.
- Be accessible at no cost to students, caregivers, school or boards of education, school districts or related authorities.
- Be offered in a stigma-free way.
- Support culturally appropriate and local food producers.
- Avoid any marketing to children and youth.



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It is clear that there is a need for the federal government, in partnership with provincial ministries and boards of education, to commit to a National School Food Policy.

I share the view that the potential policy should be followed by the rollout of a National School Nutritious Meal Program along with the \$200 million per year that the Government of Canada committed to in 2021. Investing in a national school food program through Budget 2024 will alleviate affordability issues and support students, families and school food providers, who have all faced adversity in recent years.

As our membership has passed resolutions related to universal food programs in B.C. at our association meetings, I look forward to continuing advocacy on this important issue of national concern. I invite you to contact me directly should you wish to discuss additional details.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn Broady". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Carolyn Broady

President

British Columbia School Trustees Association

CC: BCSTA member boards of education
Suzanne Hoffman, CEO, BCSTA
BCSTA Board of Directors