

**The Hon. Demetrios Nicolaidis**  
Minister of Education  
228-Legislature Building  
10800-97 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

**The Hon. Adriana LaGrange**  
Minister of Health  
224 Legislature Building  
10800 - 97 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

**The Hon. Searle Turton**  
Minister of Children and Family Services  
130 Legislative Building  
10800 - 97 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

December 18, 2024

Dear Ministers Nicolaidis, LaGrange, and Turton:

**Re: School Nutrition Program Funding and Framework**

On behalf of the Board of Trustees for Grande Yellowhead Public School Division, I am reaching out to advocate for an increase in funds for the School Nutrition Program (SNP), and for a collaborative approach at both the provincial and federal level to ensure quality, well-funded, school nutrition programming that addresses the needs of children.

Good nutrition is important for health, development, and academic performance. Because children and youth consume a significant proportion of their daily energy intake while in school, school meals improve all aspects of children's health, well-being, and behaviours, all of which impact academic performance. Especially for early learners, adequate nutrition provided in early childhood has a huge impact on child development. School meals also have shown to offer an incentive for particularly our most marginalized and vulnerable children to attend and remain in school.

As you know, inflation and food costs have significantly affected our families' access to healthy food. More families are relying on Food Banks, and more students are relying on food they receive at school to sustain themselves. At our November 20th, 2024, Public Board Meeting, our Secretary-Treasurer shared that Alberta Education provides approximately \$59 dollars per student per school year, or 0.32 cents per day per child to operate a SNP. Grocery prices and food delivery costs are so high that our schools depend on support from local businesses, fundraising activities, and/or application to additional grants. This is unsustainable.

SNP funding is critical to reduce hunger, prevent malnutrition, and provide essential nutrition that is not always available at home, yet critical to our students' ability to learn. However, the sustainability and quality of offerings for many SNPs across the province are being increasingly


threatened due to escalating costs of purchasing food supplies and resources, especially in the rural areas where higher delivery costs and availability of supplies are not as available as in the urban centres.

In a country as developed and wealthy as ours, this is simply unacceptable. In fact, Canada is currently the only country in the G7 that does not have a national school food program or national standards. Given the widespread challenges across Alberta, and Canada, and the extraordinary diversity of approaches schools/divisions take to try to support children, there is a need for a collaborative approach that includes partnership with the federal government and provincial ministries to commit to a National School Food Policy. A national policy would set a standard both for securing food for schools and ensuring it is delivered consistently, sustainably, and within a context of transformative action to end poverty, improve students' health and achievement outcomes, and build cultural and economic success.

Our Board requests that your ministries focus on the needs of children, and that you collaborate to address not only the current funding model, but also the need for a national framework and policy to maximize the support we can provide to our nation's children.

We look forward to hearing back from you on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

  
[Dale Karpluk \(Jan 8, 2025 17:12 MST\)](#)

Dale Karpluk, Board Chair

Cc: Board of Trustees for Grande Yellowhead Public School Division  
Dr. D. Parsons, Superintendent/CEO  
Mr. Martin Long, MLA for West Yellowhead  
Mr. Shane Getson, MLA for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland  
Mr. Gerald Soroka, MP for Grande Yellowhead  
Alberta School Boards Association  
Public School Boards Association of Alberta  
Rural Caucus of Alberta School Boards

