

February 24, 2023

The Hon. Adriana LaGrange, Minister of Education
Office of the Minister, Education
228-Legislature Building
10800-97 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6
education.minister@gov.ab.ca

Dear Minister LaGrange:

Re: School Nutrition Program Funding

On behalf of the Board of Trustees for Grande Yellowhead Public School Division, I am reaching out to advocate for an increase to the funds for the **School Nutrition Program**. As you know, inflation and food costs have significantly affected our families' access to healthy food. The funding is critical in that school food programs help to reduce hunger, prevent malnutrition, and provide essential nutrition that is not always available at home, yet critical to our students' ability to learn.

Good nutrition is important for optimizing 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 and well-being as well as 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 children to attend and remain in school. Kids with full tummies learn better: higher concentration skills, more energy, their memory and problem-solving skills are better, and they exhibit less disruptive behaviour.

Although school jurisdictions collaborate with local community organizations, the sustainability and quality of offerings for many School Nutrition Programs 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 may be not as readily available as in the urban centres.

Our Board requests that the ministry adjust its current funding model to account for these economic impacts in order for school jurisdictions to maximize the support provided to vulnerable youth.

Thank you for your consideration of the Board's proposal for additional funds to provide nutritious and balanced meals for the benefit of all students in Alberta. Nourished students are better prepared to learn and succeed.

Sincerely,



Dale Karpluk (Feb 24, 2023 15:57 MST)

Dale Karpluk, Board Chair

Cc: Board of Trustees

Mr. Martin Long, MLA for West Yellowhead

Mr. Shane Getson, MLA for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland

