

July 15, 2020

Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Foods
Government of Canada
Confederation Building, Suite 407
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Honourable Rob Fleming
Minister of Education
Government of British Columbia
Room 124 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Honourable Bibeau and Honourable Fleming,

Re: Universal Food Program

The Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows school district is a suburban district that supports the learning needs for over 15,000 students of all ages. Over the last few years our district has witnessed a growing need for food security in our student population. We have tried to meet that need, by working with non-profit organizations in our community, to offer breakfast, lunch, snack, and after-hours food programs. During the COVID-19 pandemic the demand escalated significantly and the school district was asked to feed over 480 students (190 families) weekly. We are committed to making sure students have the nutritional supports they need to learn, but the need continues to increase and children continue to go hungry.

The last few months have shown us just how critical it is to come together as a community, Province, and Country to invest in our citizens, and especially our youth. Access to a healthy food program is necessary for students to be able to maintain mental wellness and increase scholastic success in an equitable environment.

In June 2019 the federal government announced that they would begin working alongside provincial governments and non profit organizations towards the creation of a national school food program. The time to implement this program is now and I am writing to you today to request that the Federal Government of Canada and the Provincial Government of British Columbia work together to create, and fully fund, a universal food program for K-12 public schools.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Korleen Carreras, Chairperson
Board of Education

Cc: *The Board of Education, School District No. 42 (Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows)*
Ms. Sylvia Russell, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Flavia Coughlan, Secretary Treasurer
The Honourable Lisa Beare, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture
Mr. Bob D'Eith, MLA Maple Ridge-Mission
Mr. Marc Dalton, MP Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows
All Boards of Education c/o BC School Trustees Association