



Sudbury & District

Health Unit

Service de
santé publique

*Make it a
Healthy
Day!*

*Visez Santé
dès
aujourd'hui!*

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November 30, 2004

Via Electronic Mail

The Honourable Dalton McGuinty
Premier of Ontario
Room 281, Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier:

RE: Healthy School Nutrition Environment

Please be advised that at its October 21, 2004 meeting, the Sudbury & District Board of Health passed the following motion #86-04, and is seeking your urgent attention to this matter:

WHEREAS adequate nutrition is essential for the optimal growth and development of both children and youth, and for avoiding nutrient deficiencies; and

WHEREAS under-nourishment impacts children's behaviour, school performance and their ability to concentrate and perform complex tasks; and

WHEREAS one in four children (2-6 years) lack a varied diet¹, less than 10% of local children (Grades 3 to 6) eat a well-balanced breakfast² and less than 40% of youth (12-19 years) consume the recommended five or more servings of vegetables and fruit per day³, a majority of children do not eat nutritionally balanced or adequate diets; and

WHEREAS the risk of developing childhood obesity, malnutrition, Type 2 diabetes, iron deficiency anemia, or dental caries all increase as a result of poor eating habits⁴; and

WHEREAS 30% of Northern Ontario children (2-6 years) are overweight¹ and 28.4% males and 21.2% females (12-19 years) are obese³, childhood overweight is a risk factor for adult overweight and a precursor to several chronic diseases (e.g., Type 2 diabetes, heart disease); and

WHEREAS the current school nutrition environment is a significant public health issue that requires urgent action at both the local and provincial levels;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Sudbury & District Board of Health endorse the Call to Action: Creating a Healthy School Nutrition Environment, Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health, March 2004; and

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Centre agréé d'enseignement en santé*

FURTHERMORE THAT the Sudbury & District Board of Health support the North Bay and District Board of Health and Northwestern Board of Health motions regarding Call to Action: Creating a Healthy School Nutrition Environment, and write to the Premier of Ontario to request that the government implement the proposed Call to Action recommendations for achieving a Healthy School Nutrition Environment, including implementing mandatory Food Standards for all Ontario elementary and secondary schools; and

FURTHERMORE THAT copies of this letter be forwarded to the Ministers of Northern Development and Mines, Education, and Health and Long-Term Care, the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Association of Local Public Health Agencies, the Ontario Public Health Association, all Ontario Boards of Health and all school boards in the Sudbury & District Health Unit catchment area.

1. ***Northern Ontario Perinatal and Child Health Survey, 2003***
2. ***Nutrition Survey for Grade 3-6 Students, Partners for Student Nutrition, 2003***
3. ***Northern Ontario Child and Youth Health Report, June 2003***
4. ***Call to Action: Creating a Healthy School Nutrition Environment, Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health, March 2004***

Additionally, we would encourage that future initiatives taken by the province acknowledge the public health mandate by: (1) inviting Ontario public health nutrition professionals to participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation processes, and (2) ensuring communication and dissemination plans are in-line with local boards of health processes.

Local boards of health are required to “work with school boards...to develop and implement guidelines that support healthy eating...(including) providing information, consultation and support to establish healthy eating guidelines...” (p. 25, Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines, 1997). As such, extensive and comprehensive work has been done at the local and provincial levels on school nutrition. Furthermore, it is our local responsibility to offer and provide assistance to school boards as they interpret and implement healthy eating guidelines, including guidelines for vending machines.

The Sudbury & District Board of Health is seeking your support and immediate action towards the implementation of the recommendations made by the proposed *Call to Action*, as well as the implementation of Food Standards for all Ontario elementary and secondary schools.

Working together towards our common goal of a healthy school nutrition environment,

Yours sincerely,

Original signed by

Penny Sutcliffe, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer

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c: Minister Rick Bartolucci, Ministry of Northern Development and Mines
Honourable Gerard Kennedy, Minister of Education
Director, Algoma District School Board
Director, Asquith-Garvey District School Area Board
Director, Conseil des écoles séparées catholiques de Foleyet
Director, Conseil scolaire de district catholique du Nouvel-Ontario
Director, Conseil scolaire de district du Grand Nord de l'Ontario
Director, Foleyet District School Area Board
Director, Gogama District School Area Board
Director, Gogama Roman Catholic Separate School Board
Director, Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board
Director, Rainbow District School Board
Director, Sudbury Catholic District School Board
Honourable George Smitherman, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Dr. S. Basrur, Chief Medical Officer of Health and Assistant Deputy Minister
Ms. Elizabeth Leach, Executive Director, Ontario Public Health Association
Ms. Ingrid Parkes, President, Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Ontario Boards of Health