



Mr. Daryl Kramp - Member for Hastings - Lennox and Addington  
Room 269, Legislative Building  
Queen's Park  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A8

January 13, 2021

**Re: Bill 216 – *Food Literacy for Students Act***

Dear Mr. Kramp,

On behalf of Sustain Ontario and Sustain's Ontario Edible Education Network I'm writing to express our enthusiastic support for [Bill 216](#), the *Food Literacy for Students Act*. We would like to start by expressing a big thank you for introducing this important Bill into the Ontario Legislature.

Sustain Ontario is a province-wide, cross-sectoral alliance that promotes healthy food and farming. Our mission is to provide coordinated support for productive, equitable and sustainable food and farming systems that support the health and wellbeing of all people in Ontario, through collaborative action. Sustain Ontario hosts the Ontario Edible Education Network, which supports individuals and organizations across the province to share resources, ideas, and experience and to better undertake food literacy efforts to get children and youth eating, growing, cooking, celebrating, and learning about healthy, local and sustainably produced food.

In 2016 Sustain Ontario [provided feedback](#) to inform the Ontario Ministry of Education's Community-Connected Experiential Learning Policy Framework. We shared how food and hands-on food literacy education can act as powerful catalysts for students to acquire the academic skills and personal skills that contribute to long-term success including critical thinking, innovation, collaboration, problem-solving, numeracy, literacy, communications, and thinking about complex issues including health, the environment, the economy, and our place in the broader food system.

We also spoke about how those who provide experiential food-based learning in the province regularly confirm that hands-on experiences that let students connect with food are exciting, engage students who are less enthusiastic about school than others, and help make learning real. Food literacy education brings curriculum material—including math, science, the arts, history, geography, social studies and language—to life, and makes the curriculum much more accessible because everyone eats and has a connection to food.

In 2016 we advocated for the Ministry of Education to mandate experiential food literacy programming in schools. We are now very pleased that Bill 216 has been put forward to ensure that this critical issue is made a priority for children and youth in the province.

Food literacy education is an investment in our children and youth that will have far-reaching benefits. The [Potential of School Food Initiatives Diagram](#) that I developed articulates impacts that have been demonstrated in research as a result of food literacy education in schools. These impacts include shifts in food preferences, increased consumption of vegetables and fruits, increased food skills, and improved student behaviour. I would be pleased to provide a list of references for any of the impacts that have been shared in the diagram and also to share videos of teachers and students speaking about the impacts that they've experienced from food literacy education initiatives.

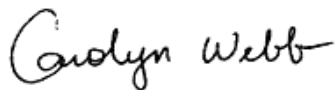
We know that the successful implementation of Bill 216 will depend on a number of factors. It will be critical to allocate funding to support the work of teachers and program staff. Staff must also be given adequate training so that they can effectively deliver hands-on food literacy education to their students in a safe and engaging way. I invite you to access our 2014 policy options document [Advancing Good Healthy Food in Schools: Envisioning How a Healthy School Food Environment Could be Moved Forward in Ontario](#) for ideas to support the implementation of the bill.

**We would welcome an opportunity to address the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly in support of Bill 216.** Along with a diversity of other stakeholders, Sustain Ontario would also be delighted to offer support once Bill 216 has been passed to inform the curriculum development and/or implementation phases to ensure that the implementation of this bill is as strong as possible.

We join many [organizations from across the province](#) who endorse the *Food Literacy for Students Act*. We are thrilled that the bill has passed its first two legislative readings and we advocate for Bill 216 to be passed without any substantial amendments.

Thank you again for initiating this bill in the Ontario Legislature. We are eager to see the successful implementation of this piece of legislation so that students across the province can learn the critically important life skills taught by experiential food literacy.

Sincerely,



Carolyn Webb  
Coordinator, Sustain's Ontario Edible Education Network

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Cc:

- Hon. Christine Elliott, Minister of Health, [christine.elliott@pc.ola.org](mailto:christine.elliott@pc.ola.org)
- Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education [minister.edu@ontario.ca](mailto:minister.edu@ontario.ca)
- Hon. Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs [minister.omafra@ontario.ca](mailto:minister.omafra@ontario.ca)
- Hon. Lisa Thompson, Minister of Government and Consumer Services [LM.Thompson@ontario.ca](mailto:LM.Thompson@ontario.ca)
- Premier Doug Ford -- [James.Wallace@ontario.ca](mailto:James.Wallace@ontario.ca) (Chief of Staff)

Members of the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly:

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