

# Opportunities for the Ontario Ministry of Education to



## Through governance:

- **Better integrate Student Nutrition Programs within the purview of the Ministry of Education**, in particular the Ministry's Healthy Schools efforts.
- **Collaborate with a broad range of stakeholders to develop a visionary document** that acknowledges what it will take to advance a universal SNP and broader school food program.
- **Develop an accountability framework for school food programs** with clear and measurable goals, a strong evidence-based understanding of community impacts, mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation, and measures for accountability.
- **Work with MCYS to undertake a thorough evaluation of the current SNP model.** Such an evaluation would explore what gaps exist using a food literacy lens, and would suggest opportunities to align the current program with a broader vision for school food.
- **Champion an inter-ministerial working group to focus specifically on school food** and to support the achievement of targets amongst various ministries.
- **Work with other ministries to jointly invest in and market school food programs.**
- **Modify PPM 150** to make it more comprehensive (e.g. to include recreation centres adjacent to schools) and not as prohibitive.
- **Encourage school boards to develop school food policies** that drive healthy school food environments. An example could include examining purchasing and consumption patterns and designing policies to support healthy food such as local food procurement policies.
- **Support food safety guidelines** so that school boards and schools have more clarity and a consistent understanding about how school food programs can be safely implemented and to better facilitate access to healthy food, local food options, and food literacy.
- **Support harmonization and greater clarity around the multiple nutrition standards that apply to schools.**
- **Advance comprehensive school health and healthy school food environments.** The OSNPPH's Nutrition Tools for Schools sets out a strong framework for a healthy school nutrition environment and would be an excellent model to use and expand.

## Through training and curriculum opportunities:

- Encourage school boards to **provide teacher training education relating to good healthy food or to partner with community educators** to provide professional development.
- **Include food literacy training in the BEd curriculum.** This would build awareness among incoming teachers about the benefits of healthy eating, school meals, and other food literacy initiatives. This training could be tied to broader health and wellness education, as teachers are increasingly being relied upon to address health issues in the schools.

- **Encourage subject associations to support comprehensive training**, as well as to have their conferences and summer institutes include a focus on food. Ministry representatives could be asked to speak about school food at these events.
- **Support the development of resources for teachers**, including tools that highlight curriculum opportunities for nutrition education and activities to engage students.
- **Support SNPs to work with schools** to connect their programs to the curriculum.
- **Bring in and seriously consider the perspectives of a diverse group of stakeholders when reviewing the curriculum** to bring food literacy into the expectations.
- **Scale up the Specialist High School Major (SHSM) program**, which offers culinary, horticulture and agriculture specializations.

### **Through funding and in-kind support:**

- **Continue, expand and extend targeted grant programs** such as the Healthy Eating in High School Grant Program.
- **Invest in school kitchen facilities.**
- **Support portable food skills programs** that can bring properly trained staff and portable equipment into the schools.
- **Encourage school boards to fund school coordinators and/or community partners to work with school and Student Nutrition Program staff.** These dedicated staff can champion and support food programs and work to achieve goals relating to comprehensive school health. Some Ontario school boards have funded Education Assistants to support programs. Individuals could also be hired at the board level to work across schools.
- **Support the establishment of gardens, composters and food skills programs** in schools.
- **Ensure that schools allocate budgets and time towards school food programs**, including providing release time for teachers to attend training.

### **Through partnership building:**

- **Provide forums for stakeholders to engage**, better understand each other, and partner to advance school food programming.

### **By championing school food:**

- **Visit and learn about programs.**
- **Advocate for all Ontario schools to run a Student Nutrition Program** that is accessible to every child and youth every school day; help these programs to receive stable funding.
- **Support public relations, the development of communications materials, and ongoing education** about these issues to create broader awareness.