

December 10, 2020

The Office of Daryl Kramp
Room 269
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A8

Via email: daryl.kramp@pc.ola.org

Dear MPP Kramp,

Re: Support for Bill 216, Food Literacy for Students Act, 2020

The Windsor-Essex Food Policy Council (WEFPC) is writing to endorse Bill 216, Food Literacy for Students Act, 2020. We are thrilled that Bill 216 has passed its first two legislative readings, and we advocate for Bill 216 to be passed without any amendments.

Food literacy and food skills are the foundation for healthy eating. In Ontario, food literacy has been in decline over the past few decades, and the resultant food deskilling has affected all segments of society. The lack of essential food literacy skills, coupled with changes in the food environment, have made it a challenge for Canadians to practice healthy eating habits. This has led to an increase of pre-prepared, packaged and convenience foods that are higher in fat, salt and sugar. These foods are linked to a greater risk of diet-related chronic diseases.

Supporting children to develop food literacy at an early age can promote health and protect against chronic diseases in the future. The school setting provides an opportunity to support Ontario students with knowledge and food skills that will equip them to make healthy decisions in a complex food environment. While the current system makes food literacy curriculum available to students in high school, it is estimated that only one-third of Ontario students who entered Grade 9 from the 2005/06 to 2009/10 school years, earned one or more credits in a course that included a food literacy component. Therefore, food literacy needs to be part of the core school curriculum, deployed in a cross-curricular approach, starting at the elementary school level. This approach would ensure that healthy eating concepts are consistently taught, reinforced, and reflected as students move through the school years.

We strongly encourage the standing committee to pass the bill as written and move forward with third reading and passage by the legislature.

Regards,

The Windsor-Essex County Food Policy Council
Enclosed Attachment A

Attachment A: Windsor-Essex County Food Policy Council

The Windsor-Essex County Food Policy Council (WEFPC) is a network of local food system representatives. Formed in January 2018, the WEFPC strives to educate, promote, support and advocate for the improvement of the local food system and its users.

Members of the WEFPC include representatives from:

- Windsor Essex County Health Unit
- United Way/Centraide Windsor-Essex County
- VON Windsor-Essex
- City of Windsor Council member
- County of Essex Council member
- Agriculture
- Food processing
- General community members