

May 15, 2023

Hon. Kelly Regan  
Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts  
C/O Legislative Committees Office  
PO Box 2630, Station M  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3P7

Received LCO  
May 15, 2023

Dear Ms Regan:

**Re: Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

Thank you for your letter. I am pleased to provide the requested update to the committee on the progress of the discussions with the Federal Government on the universal lunch program.

We continue to actively engage with the Federal Government and reiterate to them that Nova Scotia is ready and eager to work with them on a national school nutritious meal program, as outlined in their mandate letters.

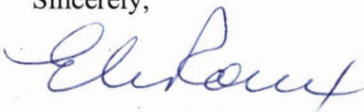
The Federal Government has not yet indicated a timeline for next steps despite regular follow ups, but we know it continues to be an active file. On November 16, 2022, the Federal Government launched a questionnaire seeking input from all Canadians who have experience with, or an interest in, school food policy and programming in Canada to inform a pan-Canadian school food policy. This questionnaire closed to input on December 16, 2022, and we hope to learn more about the results soon.

On several occasions, Minister Druhan has written to Minister Gould, the Federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, most recently on March 29, 2023, to ask about next steps in working together on school food. We have clearly indicated to the Federal Government that Nova Scotia is ready and eager to be part of a new national program.

While we work to ensure we can mobilize quickly in anticipation of more direction from the Federal Government, we recognize the importance of healthy food in schools. That is why we continue to ensure there is a universal breakfast program in all schools and that any student who needs extra food gets it. We are also working to review and update our School Food and Nutrition Policy so that we have an even stronger foundation for modelling innovations in providing a universal healthy lunch program.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this work.

Sincerely,



Elwin LeRoux  
Deputy Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development