

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health
Dr. Michael Clarke, CEO (Interim)

DATE: 2020 December 10

SUMMARY INFORMATION REPORT DECEMBER 2020

Recommendation

It is recommended that Report No. 059-20 re: Summary Information Report - December 2020 be received for information.

Key Points

- Food literacy is an important life skill encompassing much more than food and cooking skills and is essential for a solid foundation of healthy eating behaviours.
- The benefits of food literacy and cooking programs extend beyond healthy eating behaviours. Research indicates these programs also improve psychosocial outcomes such as resilience, socialization, self-esteem, and quality of life, which aligns with the Ministry of Education's focus on Mental Health and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Skills.
- Nutrition and food literacy are key factors that contribute to both physical and mental well-being while also reducing the risk of certain chronic diseases.
- MLHU submitted comments to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in support of Bill 216 *Food Literacy for Students Act, 2020*

Background

[Bill 216 - Food Literacy for Students Act, 2020](#) was introduced in the Ontario Legislature in October 2020 by Hastings—Lennox and Addington MPP Daryl Kramp, and has been referred to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly for consideration. Bill 216 would amend the *Education Act*, requiring Ontario school boards to offer experiential food literacy education to all students in grades 1 through 12.

Evidence demonstrates that hands-on, experiential learning about food contributes significantly to increasing vegetable and fruit consumption for students. Furthermore, youth who have self-perceived cooking skills are more likely to have positive nutrition-related outcomes later in life. Nutrition and food literacy are key factors that contribute to both physical and mental well-being while also reducing the risk of certain chronic diseases.



Christopher Mackie, MD, MHSc, CCFP, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health



Dr. Michael Clarke, PhD
CEO (Interim)