

## **The Ottawa Network for Education mobilizes its School Breakfast Program to serve families in need during COVID-19 school closures**

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On a normal day, the Ottawa Network for Education's (ONFE) School Breakfast Program provides more than 13,500 free, nutritious meals to students who arrive at 190 Ottawa schools hungry. But these are not normal times. Schools are closed, and children and youth are still hungry. The need is greater than ever before to ensure that students have access to the nutritious food they normally rely on each day at school to keep on learning and growing.

Following the announcement of extended public-school closures, ONFE and Ottawa's 4 publicly-funded school boards have been in contingency planning mode, working diligently with our provincial, national, and local partners to create a strategy that will continue supporting students and families during school closures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Today we are launching our first model to address the new learning-at-home landscape: ONFE's School Breakfast Replacement Kits.

**ONFE's School Breakfast Replacement Kits** contain items from 3 food groups, including fresh fruit and 2% milk tetra packs, cereal or bagels, wholegrain crackers, unsweetened applesauce, and granola bars. Each kit includes 18 days of school meals and costs \$22 (including distribution). The food items are shelf-stable and individually prepacked in a HACCP-certified facility to ensure the highest level of food security and traceability in this COVID-19 environment.

We are prioritizing communities with schools that have the highest student needs and that can receive the first wave of distribution. But we know - because of our 29 years of providing meals at school - that food insecurity can be found in every neighbourhood in Ottawa. We are continuing urgent work to finalize models to expand our reach to our students and their families across the entire city.

While redirecting nutrition funding for this school year, the Ottawa Network for Education is calling on the Ottawa community to help us meet the greatest need ever. Help keep our children and youth supplied with the nutritious food they need to learn and grow by visiting [bit.ly/ONFEfeedskids](https://bit.ly/ONFEfeedskids).

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