
To: Finance, Facilities & Technology Committee

Prepared By: Jason Reid
Secretary Treasurer

Subject: Feeding Futures

Date: September 5, 2023

Purpose and Background

The purpose of this briefing note is to provide an update on the implementation of school food programs and to recommend approval of funding allocations to schools.

In April 2023, the Ministry of Education and Childcare announced an investment of \$214 million over three years for school districts to create or expand local food programs throughout BC. The 2023/24 funding allocation for the Saanich school district is \$862,717.

In June 2023, we reported that we were developing criteria for a Request for Proposal to select a partner or partners to support schools in delivering food programs. However, while working in consultation with schools we concluded we were not ready to develop criteria that would sufficiently define vendor requirements while also providing the flexibility schools were looking for to meet their specific needs.

Through discussions with other school districts and at the provincial level, we've also learned that provincially school districts vary significantly in the delivery of school meals programs. Many school districts already have centrally coordinated school meal programs in place that engage external partners to prepare and deliver meals to schools. These districts are now well positioned to simply expand these existing programs, or to redirect current funding allocations elsewhere. In contrast, in Saanich schools and in many school districts, food programs exist but have developed over time at the school level and are supported through a combination of school operating funding, PAC funding, and/or other external contributions. During 2022/23, Saanich schools were able to expand these programs using one-time funding received through the Student and Family Affordability Fund (SFAF)¹. Some schools have expressed a preference to simply continue the programs that were implemented last year using the SFAF. Some schools have also noted a preference for preparing meals in-house due to the lower cost and greater flexibility, as compared to using an external partner.

¹ During the 2022/23 school year, the Saanich School District received \$737,162 in one-time targeted funding to improve students access to nutritional food, and to directly offset costs to parents, guardians and students for supplies, field trips, clothing or other school related costs.

One reason for the provincial inconsistency in school district food programs is variation in both the quantum and the use of CommunityLINK funding received by school districts². In 2022/23, the Saanich School District received \$440,482 in CommunityLINK funding, which was used primarily to fund Youth and Family Councillors (YFC) and other student support positions. Other school districts allocate less funding to counselling and instead allocated a portion of this funding to district food programs. The quantum of these funding allocations to school districts also varies widely. For example, the Victoria School District receives \$203 in CommunityLINK funding per student FTE compared with \$58 per student FTE in Saanich.

Acknowledging the variation in the readiness of school districts to expand meal programs, senior ministry staff have advised school districts that 2023/24 should be a learning year where school districts take the time needed to consult appropriately and develop programs that will best meet the needs of their school communities.

Last June we reported a tentative plan to allocate funding to create a 0.6 FTE District Support Teacher for food program coordination, however, a decision on program coordination will instead follow a review of school food program plans as discussed below.

Next Steps

In order for food programs to meet the unique needs of each school community, we propose that School Principals consult with their school community in the development of a Food Program Plan. Each of these plans will be reviewed and approved by the Director of Instruction – Diversity and Inclusion to ensure each plan complies with policy/procedure and are consistent with overall program objectives.

To provide direction in the development of food programs at the school level, Administrative Procedure 170 (Food Programs) has been developed (see attachment 1). This new AP is included with this briefing as attachment 2 and will be included on the September 20th Board Meeting Agenda as an information item. This new AP provides expectations with respect to food programs including program goals (nutrition, stigma free, etc), and food safety and compliance requirements.

I am proposing that Feeding Future funding be allocated directly to schools at this time. In the short term this will allow schools to continue with the food initiatives implemented last year using SFAF, and it will also allow each school to develop their Food Program Plan knowing what their funding allocation will be going forward. The proposed allocations are presented in attachment 2. The funding allocations are differentiated reflecting socio-economic factors and our experience administering SFAF last year including the relative number of families served in each school. At this time, we are allocating \$82,967 to district holdback. A portion of the holdback will likely be allocated to district coordination following review of school plans, with the residual being reallocated out to schools.

² The Ministry provides CommunityLINK funding to all 60 school districts to support the academic achievement and social functioning of vulnerable students. Programs and services can include breakfast, lunch and snack programs, academic supports, counseling, youth workers and after-school programs

Schools are requested to submit their food program plans by October 31st. After reviewing these plans, we will assess how schools can be best supported through district level procurement and central program coordination.

Staff Recommendation

That the proposed allocation of Feeding Future funding be approved.

With respect,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jason Reid".

Jason Reid
Secretary Treasurer

Attachments: 1 - New Administrative Procedure 170 (Food Programs)
2 - Proposed Feeding Futures Funding Allocations

Attachment 1 – Draft Food Programs Administrative Procedure

Administrative Procedure 170 – Food Programs

Background

The District is committed to creating educational environments that support students and their learning. The District acknowledges that when children are healthy they are better able to learn and that schools can be an important contributor to their overall health.

The District also recognizes the importance of food and nutrition and that effective school Food Programs have the potential to improve student nutrition, academic progress, mental health, social functioning, and long term health.

Procedures

1. The Principal is responsible for the development and maintenance of the school Food Program. The Director of Instruction – Diversity and Inclusion, has responsibility for approving all school Food Programs.
2. The development of menus for school Food Programs, including cafeterias, will be consistent with Provincial policy and guidance including the *Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools* and the *School Meal and School Nutrition Handbook*. The goal of these programs is to increase student access to healthy foods, and in particular, for students who may be identified as nutritionally vulnerable.
3. Food Programs will provide nutrition supports to students in a compassionate-informed manner that respects the dignity of students and families and does not expose them to potential stigmatization.
4. All Food Programs and food events must comply with applicable food safety standards including all requirements of the *BC Health Act Food Premises Regulation*.
5. When accepting donated foods, it is essential to ensure that the food is both safe and nutritious. The acceptability of donated foods should be discussed with a local Island Health Environmental Health Officer.
6. All school kitchens must obtain a permit to operate prior to beginning a school Food Program. A temporary permit may also be required for certain events. Guidance and an application package for a Permit to Operate can be obtained by contacting the local Health Protection & Environmental Services Location of Island Health. A permit is not required for foods prepared as part of an authorized curriculum.
7. A caterer engaged for the delivery of a Food Program is required to adhere to this administrative procedure.

Reference: BC Health Act Food Premises Regulation
Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools
School Meal and School Nutrition Handbook

Approved: September 2023

Attachment 2 - Proposed Feeding Futures Funding Allocations

	Feeding Futures Allocation	Forecasted Enrolment	Allocation per student
Brentwood Elementary	27,500	350	78.57
Cordova Bay Elementary	16,500	330	50.00
Deep Cove Elementary	16,500	325	50.77
Keating Elementary	25,000	497	50.30
KELSET Elementary	38,000	365	104.11
Lochside Elementary	45,000	432	104.17
Prospect Lake Elementary	19,250	245	78.57
Sidney Elementary	52,500	395	132.91
Total Elementary Allocation	240,250	2,939	81.75
Bayside Middle School	50,000	590	84.75
North Saanich Middle School	35,000	385	90.91
Royal Oak Middle School	44,500	603	73.80
Total Middle Allocation	129,500	1,578	82.07
Claremont Secondary	40,000	989	40.44
Parkland Secondary	30,000	446	67.26
Stellys Secondary	40,000	748	53.48
Total Secondary Supply Allocation	110,000	2,183	50.39
Secondary Staffing Allocation	200,000	2,183	91.62
Total Secondary Allocation	310,000	2,183	142.01
Alternate (ILC)	30,000	215	139.53
Online Learning (SIDES)	15,000	400	37.50
CDC/ALP	10,000		
Strongstart Programs	15,000		
Indigenous Education	30,000		
District Holdback	82,967		
Total Funding Allocated	862,717		

Note that allocation of Feeding Futures Funding to existing secondary staffing budgets was approved last spring in conjunction with adoption of the 23/24 Preliminary Budget.