

Vancouver School Board Food Framework



Prepared for:
Board of Education of School District
No. 39 (Vancouver)



Prepared by:
Urban Food Strategies



We are unlearning and relearning on the traditional and unceded lands of the x^wməθk^wəy^{əm} (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations

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- ✓ Amanda White, Indigenous Education Knowledge Keeper
- ✓ David Delorme, District Vice Principal, Indigenous Education

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The facilitation and preparation of the VSB Food Framework was provided by Janine de la Salle, Principal, and Julie Bull, Planning Assistant, of Urban Food Strategies.

Executive Summary | VSB Food Framework

Background

In 2022, VSB Trustees and an Ad Hoc Food Committee comprised of stakeholders and food, nutrition, and poverty food experts from outside of the VSB, worked together to create the first-ever VSB Food Framework. This Food Framework is firmly rooted in: 1) the need for a Universal School Food Program, 2) the VSB Education Plan 3) Auditor's Report Promoting Healthy Eating and Physical Activity in K-12, and 4) BC School Food Guidelines.

The Food Framework takes a wholistic view of feeding students by incorporating school food growing spaces and food literacy and culinary education as key elements. Decolonization, reconciliation, sustainable food systems, and social justice and inclusion are also part of this wholistic approach to establishing a Universal School Food program.

Vision for Food in VSB Schools

Every student has access to nourishing food at school; they develop the skills they need to choose, eat, grow, prepare, and share food through VSB School Food programs. Eating and learning about food is based on principles of a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive food system and contributes to reconciliation and decolonization. In practice, this might look like students coming to school and passing through school grounds that are alive with plants, knowing that they will be nourished in their mind, body, and spirit. Students eat together, learning the skills to grow and make food as well as the relationships, joy, and beauty that food can bring into our lives. Lifelong skills for preparing food and sharing culture through food are part of the day-to-day experience for all students. School culture is warm, welcoming, and dynamic just as school meals, school food growing spaces, and food literacy and culinary education programs are.

VSB Food Framework Guiding Principles

- ✓ Food is a human right
- ✓ The VSB Food Framework is student-centered
- ✓ Every student should graduate with food skills
- ✓ Social inclusion is paramount
- ✓ Food plays a critical role in decolonization and reconciliation
- ✓ The well-being of school staff is important
- ✓ It's about enabling food choice and a healthy relationship to food
- ✓ Every school is different
- ✓ Shifting school culture is at the root

Healthy eating is a pattern of eating that contributes to best possible health through positive relationships with food and diverse, balanced healthy food choices that meet a person's needs for nutrients and energy.
HealthLinkBC (2013). The Meaning of Healthy Eating in British Columbia.

VSU Food Framework Goals

Goals for feeding students at school are to:

- ✓ Develop a Universal School Food Program that provides sufficient, nutritious, safe, socially just, environmentally sustainable, and culturally appropriate food to all students
- ✓ Reflect the diversity of cultures of the student body and broader community in food provided and encourage universal participation
- ✓ Destigmatize who is using food programs
- ✓ Create enjoyable eating environments where students share food and eat together as part of a school community
- ✓ Foster a lifelong positive relationship with food through food choice
- ✓ Provide food that is made from scratch and uses as much local, sustainable food as possible including foods grown in school food growing spaces
- ✓ Foster an appreciation of food and the many people and environments that work very hard to make sure we have food to eat
- ✓ Limit food waste

Goals for school food growing spaces are to:

- ✓ Provide students, guardians, and teachers with a tangible connection to the land that sustains life and regular practice of acknowledging the land
- ✓ Ensure inclusive and equitable access to school food growing spaces
- ✓ Incorporate an Indigenous lens in garden design, plant selection, and learning activities
- ✓ Transmit cultural information in garden design and programming
- ✓ Foster student leadership and hands-on skill development through garden stewardship
- ✓ Demonstrate and celebrate values of equity, diversity, and inclusion
- ✓ Support conversations that respect different ways of knowing and being
- ✓ Encourage students to taste, try, and enjoy foods they have helped to grow
- ✓ Focus on food plants and medicines

Goals for food literacy and culinary education are to:

- ✓ Ensure all students leave school with basic food skills
- ✓ Increase student participation in food literacy and culinary education opportunities
- ✓ Continue to support student leadership in culinary arts, school gardens, and other food-related activities
- ✓ Enable students to be part of preparing food for students in teaching cafeterias
- ✓ Connect food literacy and culinary education to the vibrant food culture of Vancouver, including red seal Indigenous chefs, local food businesses, and Grandmas and Grandpas
- ✓ Upgrade home economics and food service facilities at every school, as appropriate for each school

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Introduction

Background

Vancouver School Board (VSB) Trustees and an Ad Hoc Food Committee comprised of stakeholders and food, nutrition, and poverty food experts from outside of the VSB, worked together to create the first-ever VSB Food Framework. The origins of the VSB Food Framework are rooted in the vision of establishing a Universal Meal Program throughout the Vancouver School District.

The VSB Food Framework is also rooted in the *Auditor's Report Promoting Healthy Eating and Physical Activity in K-12 (2018)*, which states, "Positively influencing the health and well-being of children and youth is the best way to shape the future health of the people of British Columbia. Schools are an ideal setting for promoting overall healthy living because they can reach almost every child, and by extension, their families—regardless of socioeconomic background, culture, gender, age, or ability"¹

The VSB Food Framework is aligned with other movements in the District including building relationships with Indigenous communities and learning and unlearning for reconciliation and decolonization. The Food Framework is also aligned with the Education Plan, the VSB's efforts to become more operationally sustainable, and the BC School Food Guidelines.

The Food Framework takes a wholistic view of feeding students by incorporating school food growing spaces and food literacy and culinary education as key elements. Decolonization, reconciliation, sustainable food systems, and social justice and inclusion are also part of this wholistic approach to establishing a Universal Meal Program.

It is recognized that this vision and framework must be followed up with an operational plan that details how the vision will be realized (i.e., facility upgrade requirements, staffing requirements, and other resources for successful implementation). It is also recognized that all schools are different and have different assets and needs when it comes to implementing the Food Framework.

Purpose of the VSB Food Framework

The purpose of this Food Framework is to provide an aspirational but practical 10-year vision for how the VSB can thoughtfully integrate the nine guiding principles (next section) into three core areas: feeding students, school food growing spaces, and food literacy and culinary education. The Food Framework will help to guide the resourcing and development of food-related programs, curriculum, and activities in all public schools in the District. The Food Framework is intended to provide a shared understanding of what the whole District is working towards, rather than a prescriptive approach for individual schools.

¹<https://www.bcauditor.com/sites/default/files/publications/reports/Promoting%20Healthy%20Eating%20and%20Physical%20Activity%20in%20K-12%20An%20Independent%20Audit.pdf>

Process to develop the VSB Food Framework

The process to develop the VSB Food Framework began in February 2022 and concluded in June 2022. A facilitator, Janine de la Salle, Food System Planner and Principal of Urban Food Strategies, was retained to support the Ad Hoc Committee in developing the Food Framework. Specifically, the process included:

1. Six Ad Hoc Committee workshops (on Teams except where noted)
 - Feb 22, 2022
 - Mar 08, 2022
 - Apr 05, 2022 (in-person)
 - Apr 26, 2022
 - May 31, 2022
2. June 14, 2022
3. In-person meeting with VSB Indigenous Department (April 5 2022)
4. Zoom call with Vancouver District Student Council (VDSC) (May 10, 2022)

The VSB Food Framework is an important first step

For the first time, a vision around food for the whole Vancouver District has been developed. This Food Framework builds on the momentum already in the Vancouver School District around food and provides a vision that the District and schools can orient toward over time. On a practical level, the VSB Food Framework provides:

- ✓ A tool for advocating, developing, and establishing long-term funding structures for successful implementation
- ✓ A means of communication and raising awareness around the vision for food in Vancouver's schools
- ✓ A starting point for operational planning required to implement programs and realize the Food Framework vision

Definition of Healthy Food at School

Healthy eating is a pattern of eating that contributes to best possible health through positive relationships with food and diverse, balanced, healthy food choices that meet a person's needs for nutrients and energy.²

Healthy food at school is:³

- ✓ Offering a variety of healthy foods: follow a meal plan that provides a wide range of foods that meet the BC School Food Guidelines.
- ✓ Foods offered should consider student preferences and be inclusive of cultural backgrounds.
- ✓ Cultivating eating competence and positive relationships with food by providing students autonomy to decide how much they want to eat and where possible, letting students select and/or serve their own food and beverages from those offered at mealtimes.
- ✓ Offering at least two vegetable or fruit options at breakfast. Offer at least one kind of vegetable and one kind of fruit OR two kinds of vegetables at lunch and supper. Offer at least one grain option at each meal.
- ✓ Offering at least one protein food option at each meal. Beverages that contain protein are to be provided in addition to the protein food offered.
- ✓ In addition to water, offering at least one beverage that is an excellent source of calcium and is fortified with vitamin D at all meals provided.

We recognize that healthy food at school also involves:

- ✓ Continuously evolving school food frameworks to amplify marginalized voices in creating inclusive food environments for students. This relates directly to offering a diversity of culturally- and religion-appropriate food at schools.
- ✓ Discontinuing the service of fast food as well as sugary drinks at all VSB schools. It is equally important to find substitutes that will be well-received by students.
- ✓ Encouraging plant-based meal choices including protein. This not only responds to a student culture shift but helps to reduce the carbon footprint of the VSB meal program.
- ✓ Buying as much local food as possible that contributes to the health of our local economy and the environment.
- ✓ Decolonizing food at schools while also providing pathways to reconciliation through growing food, eating food, and learning about food.

² Based on HealthLinkBC (2013). The Meaning of Healthy Eating in British Columbia.

³: BC Ministries of Health and Education (2022). BC School Food Guidelines- Confidential Draft for Consultation.

Vision and Principles for Food in the VSB

Overall Vision

Every student has access to nourishing food at school; they develop the skills they need to choose, eat, grow, prepare, and share food through VSB School Food programs. Eating and learning about food is based on principles of a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive food system and contributes to reconciliation and decolonization. In practice, this might look like students coming to school and passing through school grounds that are alive with plants, knowing that they will be nourished in their mind, body, and spirit. Students eat together, learning the skills to grow and make food as well as the relationships, joy, and beauty that food can bring into our lives. Lifelong skills for preparing food and sharing culture through food are part of the day-to-day experience for all students. School culture is warm, welcoming, and dynamic just as school meals, school food growing spaces, and food literacy and culinary education programs are.

Connections between core elements of the vision

A wholistic view of a Universal School Food Program also includes school food growing spaces and food literacy and culinary education. Although these three core elements are distinct parts of the overall vision, they all share relationships with each other. For example, school food growing spaces connect to feeding students, because familiarity with food is critical to trying and eating it and gardens can grow food for school food programs. School food growing spaces also connect to food literacy and culinary education in terms of providing tactile learning environments where students learn where food comes from, seasonality, and how to grow food, among many others. Further, feeding students is more than ensuring all students have access to food so that they can perform in a classroom setting.

It is about equity and social inclusion, as well as learning about and celebrating cultural diversity. Feeding students also links to food literacy and culinary education with teaching cafeterias and culinary programs. There are many other connections between these mutually reinforcing core elements. However, for the sake of clarity and future operational planning, the VSB Food Framework considers each element in turn.



Overall VSB Food Framework Principles

The VSB Food Framework contains nine overall principles. These principles relate to all three areas of the VSB Food Framework (i.e., school food growing spaces, feeding students, and food literacy and culinary education). The principles of the VSB food framework are:

- ✓ **Food is a human right:** Every child has the right to sufficient, nutritious, safe, socially just, environmentally sustainable, and culturally appropriate food.⁴
- ✓ **The VSB Food Framework is student-centered:** Student’s well-being and needs should drive programs, curriculum, and activities as well as foster student leadership and participation.
- ✓ **Every student should graduate with food skills:** Growing, preparing, and understanding food builds food confidence that enables students to nourish themselves after they leave home.
- ✓ **Social inclusion is paramount:** Cultural diversity, equity, and justice for all marginalized / equity deserving groups can be supported through a food lens.
- ✓ **Food plays a critical role in decolonization and reconciliation:** Learning about Indigenous seasonal food systems and reciprocal relationships to the lands and waters that sustain life is a key way to incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing - ensuring these programs are Indigenous-led.
- ✓ **The well-being of school staff is important:** The VSB Food Framework considers the well-being of teachers, operational staff, and administrators, as well as students. This directly connects to providing adequate resources for effective implementation to avoid staff burnout.
- ✓ **It’s about enabling food choice and a healthy relationship to food:** Focusing on how to integrate healthy foods with enabling food choice and positive relationship to food, is core to the understanding of food at school.
- ✓ **Every school is different:** The Food Framework must address the unique characteristics of each school while also providing a district-wide approach.
- ✓ **Shifting school culture is at the root:** The VSB Food Framework ultimately seeks to shift and grow school culture and enrich student experiences at school.

⁴Pursuant to international law including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women – all of which Canada ratified – Canada is obliged to use the maximum of available resources to progressively achieve the right to food and to perform right to food duties of immediate effect: non-discrimination, non-regression and provide the minimum amount of food to be free from hunger. This rights-based approach holds at its core the principles of accountability, access to justice and effective remedy, public participation, access to information and equity - where the most vulnerable are always considered and prioritized.

Feeding Students at School

Currently, one in five students comes to school hungry. Students wish to see more affordable meals with more variety, including vegetarian and halal options. Current challenges include a lack of availability, choice, and culturally appropriate options.

Vision for feeding students at school

All students have choice of and access to sufficient, nutritious, safe, socially just, environmentally sustainable, and culturally appropriate food at school. School food programs go beyond nutrition to provide students with an experience that nourishes mind, body, and spirit. School food nurtures connections to each other, land, water, history.

Snack and meal breaks are restorative and provide students with the opportunity to pause, eat, and socialize in a calm setting with enough time to allow for a good break before going back to classes.

The diversity of dietary needs is provided for (e.g., halal, vegetarian) and the food provided in schools reflects the cultural communities within the schools and the broader community. Breakfast, snack, lunch and after school food programs include as much local food as possible, including food grown in school food growing spaces, connect to local food businesses, harvesters, and processors⁵, as well as use recipes that represent the cultural communities of Vancouver. In this way, students learn about other cultures as well as feel at home with theirs being represented.

For all schools, food preparation and cafeteria facilities, including processing kitchens, teaching kitchens, cold kitchens, and home economics rooms are in good working order and are able to serve the needs of students. Where possible, students are involved with food preparation, and all students have relationships with cafeteria staff who are providing made-from-scratch foods. Food waste is dramatically reduced by responding to student preferences and providing for a diversity of food needs.



Goals for feeding students at school are to:

- ✓ Develop a Universal School Food Program that provides sufficient, nutritious, safe, socially just, environmentally sustainable, and culturally appropriate food to all students
- ✓ Reflect the diversity of cultures of the student body and broader community in food provided and encourage universal participation
- ✓ Destigmatize who is using food programs

⁵ <https://buybc.gov.bc.ca/about-buy-bc/learn-about-buy-bc/>

- ✓ Create enjoyable eating environments where students share food and eat together as part of a school community
- ✓ Foster a lifelong positive relationship with food through food choice
- ✓ Provide food that is made from scratch and uses as much local, sustainable food as possible, including foods grown in school food growing spaces
- ✓ Foster an appreciation of food and the many people and environments that work very hard to make sure we have food to eat
- ✓ Limit food waste

Why feeding students at school is important?

Hunger limits the ability of students to engage in learning activities. School food programs can improve nutrition, academic and behavioural outcomes, reduce food insecurity, create employment opportunities as well as support social justice, community development and environmental goals.⁶ Other reasons why school food is important include:

- ✓ It is vital in allowing students from lower income backgrounds to participate fully in all school activities
- ✓ Enable all students to learn from VSB food services staff members
- ✓ It encourages food exploration and modelling of informed food choices (e.g., reducing reliance on processed foods)
- ✓ It creates opportunities to learn about and appreciate culture, seasonality of food, interconnectedness of the land, the water, the air, the plants, and the animals and people, which all contribute in an equally important way to the food experience
- ✓ It sets a foundation for a positive relationship to food that can, in turn, prevent chronic diseases (diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer) later in life
- ✓ Food is our human common denominator - Indigenous food preparation and sharing shows that whatever our differences, good food can be celebrated in every culture and background
- ✓ It can have economic impacts from shifting to a school food model that maximizes student participation, improves dietary composition, and optimizes local procurement
- ✓ It helps to integrate learning with eating so we can better understand how what we eat impacts the land, our bodies, and our planet. For example, learning about decolonizing through food is about acknowledging and understanding the impacts that colonization has had on Indigenous peoples, food systems, and our planet
- ✓ It helps to ensure that there is a place, and a meal, for every student that can reduce mental health pressures and cultivate additional opportunities for students and teachers to engage

⁶ Dr. Jennifer Gaddis “The Labour of Lunch”. Presentation to Vancouver Food Policy Council March, 2022.

High-level operational considerations and areas for further exploration

Feeding students at school and across a metropolitan school district is highly complex from an operational standpoint. In order to successfully reach the vision and goals presented above, many operational shifts will be required. To support this, consider:

- ✓ Running a student food preference survey that identifies what foods students actually want to eat, portion sizes, and price thresholds to help inform what a universal school food program could offer
- ✓ Finding ways to amplify marginalized voices in shaping meal programs
- ✓ Being strategic on food preparation facility upgrades depending on existing assets and gaps at each school as well as district-wide (e.g., prep/production kitchens, teaching kitchens, culinary arts kitchens, home economics kitchens)
- ✓ Planning for multiple forms of food programs including hot and cold lunches provided through school cafeterias, salad bars, VSB approved on-line ordering platforms, and food programs supported by other community partners, among others
- ✓ Building on existing frameworks, such as Coalition For Healthy School Food Guiding Principles, explore creating more robust school meal guidelines that include a strong focus on culturally appropriate foods
- ✓ Involving students and faculty in decision-making related to meal programming
- ✓ Encouraging healthy food fundraiser models (e.g., seedling sales, harvest box)
- ✓ Establishing food celebration days and feasts with dedicated staff to support activities at each school
- ✓ Exploring options for providing more vegetarian and halal menu items
- ✓ Adapting food program offerings for each school
- ✓ Extending lunch times and provide classroom eating options as well as staggering meal and snack breaks
- ✓ Creating food coordinator positions for every school in addition to a District-wide food leadership team
- ✓ Securing dedicated long-term commitments from sponsors and donors

School Food Growing Spaces

There are many school food gardens already underway and growing within the Vancouver School District. With these successes and learnings, it is clear that students love gardening, growing spaces provide outdoor social and learning environments, and that school food growing spaces need resources and support to be successful.

Vision for school food growing spaces

All Vancouver School District schools have school food growing spaces. School food growing spaces, school yard farms, and other growing spaces offer a place for students and faculty to develop healthy and nourishing relationships with the land, their food, and each other. More than just an outdoor classroom, school food growing spaces are a place that promotes well-being and inclusivity for all members of the school community, a space where students can learn about their right to food. Students, through school growing spaces, have opportunities for experiential, hands-on learning and leadership that expands learning potential across all disciplines.

School food growing spaces embody Indigenous values and ways of knowing. This provides a path to decolonization and disrupting structures of racism and bullying. School food growing spaces are culturally diverse and inclusive. From a young age, students have the opportunity to learn about Indigenous food systems from knowledge holders. Garden design, plantings, and learning activities reflect the diversity of the school community.



Goals for school food growing spaces are to:

- ✓ Provide students, guardians, and teachers with a tangible connection to the land that sustains life and regular practice of acknowledging the land
- ✓ Ensure inclusive and equitable access to school food growing spaces
- ✓ Incorporate an Indigenous lens in garden design, plant selection, and learning activities
- ✓ Transmit cultural information in garden design and programming
- ✓ Foster student leadership and hands-on skill development through garden stewardship
- ✓ Demonstrate and celebrate values of equity, diversity, and inclusion
- ✓ Support conversations that respect different ways of knowing and being
- ✓ Encourage students to taste, try, and enjoy foods they have helped to grow
- ✓ Focus on food plants and medicines

Why school food growing spaces are important

Studies have shown that school food growing spaces can improve academic learning, physical activity, and social and mental well-being. Studies have also found that by engaging in growing, students' attitudes towards learning in all disciplines can become more positive. School food growing spaces also:

- ✓ Offer an opportunity for students and faculty to engage in hands-on learning and tangibly connect with the seasonality and cycles of local food systems
- ✓ Influence health, learning and school culture
- ✓ Contribute to soil health, green infrastructure, urban biodiversity, and greening of urban areas
- ✓ Promote an increased understanding of and familiarity with fruit and vegetables, leading to higher consumption and enjoyment of these foods
- ✓ Provide ways to increase social inclusion, co-operation, motivation to learn, and promotion of student achievement
- ✓ Create youth empowerment and student leadership opportunities
- ✓ Support students and faculty in better understanding the natural environment
- ✓ Provide welcoming, social spaces that help people learn about different food cultures as well as connect to each other

High-level operational considerations and areas for further exploration

The long-term success and positive impacts created by school food growing spaces requires a range of supports as well as coordination amongst many different departments at the Vancouver School Board. Other operational considerations include:

- ✓ Bringing in support for teachers and staff who currently champion and manage school food growing areas “off the side of their desks”
- ✓ Identifying systems and supports needed to ensure growing spaces are cared-for during summer and winter holidays
- ✓ Establishing District support for summer courses that use the growing spaces
- ✓ Where possible, work with non-profits, parents, and student leaders on garden stewardship
- ✓ Considering practical needs such as access to tool storage and bathroom facilities after school hours
- ✓ Locating growing spaces in areas with good solar exposure and water access
- ✓ Consider seating areas around growing spaces. Ensure growing spaces are accessible by multiple mobility types
- ✓ Exploring the feasibility for larger growing spaces (e.g., urban farms) where appropriate. These urban farms could provide food for use in cafeteria/culinary arts programming and offer skills and learning experiences for those farming
- ✓ Integrating a welcome ceremony in school gardens with students every year to set the tone for school culture

- ✓ Offer school credits for school food garden involvement and/or integrate with courses (e.g., horticulture)

Food Literacy and Culinary Education

When given the opportunity, students love to cook, especially when they get to share and enjoy the food they prepared. As a basic life skill, food literacy and culinary education are currently provided in classrooms, teaching cafeterias, and culinary arts programs as well as through non-profit organizations. Student participation and facilities can be a barrier for equitable access to food literacy and culinary education.

Vision for food literacy and culinary education

Nutritious, local, and sustainable food is in the gardens, on the plates and in the minds of all students in the VSB.⁷ At an early stage, all students learn where food comes from as well as what raw ingredients look and taste like. Every student graduates high school with the confidence and ability to shop for and prepare at least ten recipes from scratch, made with whole ingredients and on a budget. A key part of a welcoming and warm school culture, students learn how to make and taste delicious food from a wide range of cultures and ingredients. Students prepare meals for school food programs in exchange for school credits and food safe certification.

Food literacy and culinary education programs enable students to learn about current and traditional Indigenous food values through growing, buying, preparing, and serving food. Students are exposed to a range of food preparation practices that use local and seasonal ingredients where possible.



Goals for food literacy and culinary education are to:

- ✓ Ensure all students leave school with basic food skills
- ✓ Increase student participation in food literacy and culinary education opportunities (e.g., integrate food into the curricular goals of teaching)
- ✓ Continue to support student leadership in culinary arts, school gardens, and other food-related activities
- ✓ Enable students preparing food for students in teaching cafeterias
- ✓ Connect food literacy and culinary education to the vibrant food culture of Vancouver, including red seal Indigenous chefs, local food businesses, and Grandmas and Grandpas
- ✓ Upgrade home economics and food service facilities at every school, as appropriate for each school

⁷ Derived from the vision of Farm to School BC

Why food literacy and culinary education is important

Being able to prepare food for one's self and family is a basic and life-long skill that connects to greater food choice, affordability, independence, and enjoyment. Other reasons why food literacy and culinary education is important include:

- ✓ It enables people to have greater control and choice over the food they eat
- ✓ Food and practices from Indigenous cultures as well as international cultures can be integrated into curriculums, and into the actual food that is offered
- ✓ It increases students' acceptance of, exposure to, fruits and vegetables as well as what is grown locally
- ✓ BC foods in schools supports BC's economy and builds relationships between industry partners by working with local growers and distributors to bring fresh BC products to schools across the province
- ✓ It demonstrates how food is a reflection of our society - for better or worse - and that schools can help improve equality and informed food choice
- ✓ It helps to dispel the cacophony of food nutrition messages that are confusing and misleading that can lead to negative relationships to food and self-image. Understanding the benefits and value of food early on can help combat the harmful messaging of diet culture
- ✓ It connects us to the rich history of culinary accomplishments of Indigenous communities
- ✓ It helps to understand that nurturing, respecting, and honouring of all things- including the plants, the animals, the earth, the water, the air, and the people- all play an equally important role in food and eating. Indigenous wisdom recognizes interconnectedness with the food system, and food literacy and culinary education can provide a connection to this wisdom

High-level operational considerations and areas for further exploration

The implementation of the vision for food literacy and culinary arts will require further consideration of needs and assets as well as a plan for facility upgrades and program roll-out over time. Other considerations include:

- ✓ Developing of a Culinary Arts Program that is promoted and expanded to meet the needs of both students and of the restaurant, food service, tourism, and hospitality industry
- ✓ Exploring partnership(s) with already existing or new Commissary Kitchen facilities and Community Centres/ Neighbourhood houses that allow for more embedded learning with food systems and food entrepreneurs.
- ✓ Considering the feasibility of a Centre of Excellence on food literacy and culinary education that is a destination state-of-the art kitchen to showcase the art of cooking- local ingredients, red seal chefs, culture
- ✓ Exploring the possibility of expanding the LunchLAB program

- ✓ Exploring industry partnerships with BC Restaurant Association, BC Chef Association, and BC Hotel Associations to develop and deliver programs
- ✓ Establishing a range of food literacy and culinary education opportunities (e.g., expanding the practice that some teachers in elementary schools have used for integrating food literacy and culinary education into prep classes that integrates the school gardens, cooking, eating, in PE and health curriculum)
- ✓ Considering a strategic approach to facility upgrades and start with Home Economic room updates
- ✓ Considering school feast, iron chef events, and other regular celebrations to elevate culinary skills and celebrate student leadership

Ideas for next steps

Although it is the clear purview of the VSB Board and Staff to determine next steps on the Food Framework, ideas for next steps are offered here in order to support future work. These ideas for next steps are intended to help the Board and Staff in setting-out next steps for operational planning of the Food Framework.

Ideas for immediate next steps

1. **Pass motion** to adopt the VSB Food Framework by the Vancouver School Board (June 24, 2022)
2. **Direct** VSB staff to undertake next steps

Ideas for short-term next steps

3. **Establish resources for developing the operational plan:** Create a staff or contract position (s) to support the design and development of the VSB Food Framework Operational Plan.
4. **Identify scope and process for creating the operational plan:** Engage staff in scoping and designing a process to create an operational plan for implementing the VSB Food Framework (e.g., budgeting and financing, facility review and plan, student involvement, feasibility testing, detailed program plans, identifying resources needed, school-by-school considerations).
5. **Be strategic in implementation:** As part of the operational plan, consider establishing a phased implementation approach that identifies short-, medium-, and long-term actions, who is responsible, and how much it will cost. Address priority areas as well as low-hanging-fruit first.
6. **Know what is working:** As part of operational planning, establish an evaluation and monitoring framework intended to understand what is working, what is not, and strategies for improvement. This will support a responsive implementation of the Food Framework.
7. **Involve the experts:** Consider forming (or continuing) the Food Committee that can include expertise from a wide range of disciplines and experiences. The role for this group is to be a resource and sounding board for implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the VSB Food Framework. Invite people from marginalized communities and consider providing compensation.

Helpful Resources

Helpful resources on feeding students at school

The Coalition for Healthy School Food - Guiding Principles
<https://www.healthyschoolfood.ca/guiding-principles>

Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/healthyschools/2015_food_guidelines.pdf

Envisioning and Enacting the Power and Potential of Public School-Meal Programs
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1359hQQiH7jscsf6QU_Ly_w8B6z8rkMyM/edit#slide=id.p1

The Meaning of Healthy Eating in British Columbia
<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/sites/default/files/healthyeating/pdf/healthy-eating-meaning.pdf>

The Satter Hierarchy of Food Needs
<https://www.ellynsatterinstitute.org/family-meals-focus/56-hierarchy-of-food-need/>

Review and Recommendations of VSB Food Services Business Operations
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dpiiHHVSxWovDHoY1ZtqTjHrg4HfEkQj/view>

Teach Food First: An Educator's Toolkit for Exploring Canada's Food Guide with K-8 students
<https://healthyschoolsbc.ca/teach-food-first/>

True Cost of Food: School Meals Case Study
<https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/report/true-cost-of-food-school-meals-case-study/>

Free For All - Fixing School Food in America
Opportunities for Building Healthier School Food Environments in the Capital Region
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56e5a1d4e321404618f47dc7/t/6196e62bd6facc611d6f5403/1637279277037/Opportunities+for+building+healthier+school+food+environments+in+the+Capital+Region.pdf>

The case for sales of healthy foods in schools. DPAC presentation, May 2019
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Nz_GBa1I7v0Q9ns_0K3ozzFKQca7oG15/edit#slide=id.p1

Report on the impact of school lunch

<https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/news/new-report-every-dollar-invested-in-u-s-school-meal-programs-provides-2-in-health-and-economic-equity-benefits/#:~:text=The%20Rockefeller%20Foundation%20and%20the,over%2030%20million%20students%20daily.>

Helpful school food garden resources

Reasons to Garden: School Gardens Improve Academic Performance. For Teachers and Administrators

<https://rodaleinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/Reasons-to-Garden-School-Gardens-Improve-Academic-Performance.pdf>

Infographics describing the benefits of school gardens with peer-review references

<https://growingschoolgardens.org/why-school-gardens/>

The Effects of School Gardens on Children's Science Knowledge: A Randomized Controlled Trial of Low-Income Elementary Schools

<https://naaee.org/eepro/research/library/effects-school-gardens-childrens-science>

The Child in the Garden: An Evaluative Review of the Benefits of School Gardening

<https://research.childrenandnature.org/research/school-gardens-positively-impact-childrens-learning-and-behavior-2/>

A Guide to School Gardens

<https://www.durham.ca/en/health-and-wellness/resources/Documents/SchoolHealth/SchoolGardenGuide.pdf>

F2SBC 2019 Evaluation Summary Report

https://farmtoschoolbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2021/07/F2SBC-2019-Evaluation-Summary-Report_online.pdf

Youth Connecting: Mental Health and Gardens

<https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/intellect/eta/2019/00000015/00000003/art00010;jsessionid=jus7u3tch7ir.x-ic-live-01>

Indigenous Foodscape project in the VSB

https://www.vsb.bc.ca/Student_Learning/Indigenous_Education/Indigenous_Events/Pages/Indigenous-Foodscapes.aspx#:~:text=Indigenous%20Foodscapes%20is%20an%20Indigenous,bellies%20of%20children%20and%20youth

Harvest4Knowledge Project - SD61

<https://farmtoschoolbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2019/04/Lkwungen-Harvest4Knowledge-Project-Overview.pdf>

Indigenous Foodscapes - Farm to School BC

https://farmtoschoolbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2021/10/Learning-from-the-Land_Indigenous-Foodscapes.pdf

Summer Watering Schedule 2021 - Trudeau Elementary Garden Guardians

https://www.vsb.bc.ca/Repository/SBAttachments/c8ee22c2-567b-4afb-8601-2cca4825cfca_SUMMERWATERINGSCHEDULE2021.pdf

School Garden Crop Planning Resources - Farm to School BC

<https://farmtoschoolbc.ca/crop-planning/>

Summer Watering Program - Farm to School BC

<https://farmtoschoolbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2021/06/School-Garden-Summer-Maintenance-Resource-Vancouver-Program-Model-2021.pdf>

School Garden Maintenance Tips - Farm to School BC

<https://farmtoschoolbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2021/06/School-Garden-Summer-Maintenance-Resource-2021.pdf>

Sprouting School Gardens: Assessing the Development and Sustainable use of School Gardens in Victoria

<https://dspace.library.uvic.ca/handle/1828/10487>

Helpful resources on food literacy and culinary education

BC Fruit and Vegetable Nutrition Program https://www.bcaitc.ca/bc-school-fruit-vegetable-nutritional-program
Farm to school BC https://farmtoschoolbc.ca/about-us/what-is-farm-to-school/ .
Growing Chefs https://www.growingchefs.ca/
Teaching about nutrition and food at school http://www.vch.ca/public-health/children-youth-schools/school-health/supporting-healthy-eating-at-school
Teach Food First Provincial Curriculum for K-8 level https://healthyschoolsbc.ca/teach-food-first/ https://healthyschoolsbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/BC-School-Food-Guidelines_Confidential-Draft-for-Consultation.pdf