



**June 26, 2023**

# **Feeding Futures Funding Engagement Summary Report**

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## Introduction

### *Feeding Futures Grant*

The Ministry of Education and Child Care will invest \$214.5 million over three years to enable school districts to create or expand local food programs in schools. The funds will be used to purchase food and hire dedicated staff to coordinate meal and snack distribution to students.

The program will address the immediate need of feeding students and builds on the progress made with the Student and Family Affordability Fund to help reduce the challenges of rising food costs for families who need it most.

For 2023-24, the Ministry will allocate \$71.5 million, with the Vancouver School District's allocation being \$5,566,910. The 2023-2024 school year is considered a foundational year, allowing districts the flexibility to use the funding to address the immediate need of feeding hungry students in a stigma and barrier-free manner.

## Background

### *VSB meal programs:*

There are currently 700 students in the District who receive breakfast each day and more than 3,100 students who receive lunch each day in one of the 69 schools that have a VSB meal program. Every effort is made to source food locally and use food that is in season. Breakfast programs at seven elementary schools and eight secondary schools are prepared on site. Lunches are prepared at two commissary kitchens, located at Templeton and Britannia secondary schools. Templeton currently prepares hot lunches and Britannia prepares cold lunches. An equipment upgrade planned for Britannia this summer will enable the preparation of hot lunches starting September 2023. Funding from the Feeding Futures grant will ensure more students are fed daily.



*Commissary kitchen staff at Templeton Secondary School.*

## VSB Food Framework

In 2022, VSB trustees and an ad hoc food committee worked together to create the first-ever [VSB Food Framework](#). This Food Framework is 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 informs the implementation of the District's food programs. The first guiding principal of the VSB Food framework states that, "Food is a human right." The framework first and foremost puts an emphasis on feeding children who would otherwise go hungry at school. VSB is committed to alleviating food insecurity for students and supporting them to fully take part in all school activities. There are currently 69 VSB schools that participate in lunch meal programs.

## Public Engagement Overview and Approach

To obtain feedback from a variety of voices across the District, staff invited representatives of VSB's formal stakeholder groups to share feedback about how the Feeding Futures grant money should be spent for the 2023-2024 school year. Students from the Vancouver District Student Council (VDSC) were also invited to provide feedback about their experiences with food offered in their schools as well as about the District's proposed spending plan.

VSB's Food Framework and the Education Plan provided helpful context for stakeholders as they reviewed the proposed spending recommendations put forward by District staff.

It was also important for the District to seek Indigenous perspectives about the proposed spending plan. Staff sought feedback from the Indigenous Education Committee (IEC) and from representatives from the three host Nations, x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish) and səliwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations to hear directly from them about what was important when delivering food to students in need.

The engagement set clear parameters for stakeholders and rightsholders, informed on exactly how much money was up for discussion and outlined clear spending parameters for the grant.

## Proposed Spending Plan

VSB's 2023-2024 annual budget used \$1.80 million of the \$5.56 million funding to offset food program costs in the operating fund. Staff recommended the following spending plan for the balance of \$3.76 million:

- **\$1.00 million** – to expand the hot meal production at Britannia Secondary School. With the planned equipment upgrade there is an opportunity to use this funding to add a third oven during the renovation at a minimal overall cost which would provide the capacity to feed an additional 800 students starting September 2023. There would be additional food costs, staff time and an additional coordinator position will be required.
- **\$1.11 million** – to offset food program costs in CommunityLINK. The District receives \$9.87 million in CommunityLINK funding and allocates \$3.11 million to support food programs. By

reducing the CommunityLINK allocation, the \$1.11 million can be redistributed to support other student support programs. CommunityLINK currently provides support to students facing barriers and includes after school programs, summer programming and more. According to the Ministry, we can expect CommunityLINK funding to continue and, if food programs are already robust, school districts can redirect this funding to other student supports.

- **\$0.25 million** – to provide funding to replace elementary school kitchen equipment that will enhance student food programs.
- **\$0.20 million** – to continue working with community partners to deliver food literacy programs. Community partners include Fresh Roots, Growing Chefs and Indigenous partners who provide food literacy programs for students.
- **\$1.20 million** – funding to increase meal production at Templeton Secondary School. Like Britannia, funding will provide the capacity to feed an additional 800 students starting September 2024. The funds would also be used to prepare for District staff to take over the operation of seven third party operated cafeterias, providing more nutritious meals for students.

## Executive Summary

With the Ministry's announcement about the grant and its requirements made in April, the engagement was held during June of 2023 so feedback could help inform a proposed plan for the Board to consider at its last meeting of the school year on June 26, 2023.

In total, seven of the 10 formal stakeholder groups were represented in the engagement, these groups included students, unionized and non-unionized staff as well as parents. A separate discussion group was held with students who had previously requested separate engagement as a distinct group. Discussion questions were provided to representatives from the three host Nations to encourage feedback.

### *High cost of living*

With rising costs due to inflation and the cost of living in Vancouver among the highest in the country, many struggle with daily and monthly living expenses. It is estimated that 18 per cent of children in British Columbia live below the poverty line. VSB food programs administered by schools help to alleviate this burden on many families and reduce stigma. Parents/caregivers of students are given the opportunity to enrol their children in the program, regardless of need. Menus and envelopes are sent home with students each month. Families then make their payments (or the amount they can afford) and return envelopes to the school. No one is refused food because of finances.

Through food, there is an opportunity to address some of the impacts of systemic racism on Black, Indigenous, people of colour and newcomers to the country. This reality paired with the District's commitment to equity, propelled the District to explore ways in which students' basic nutritional needs are taken care of so that they are able to more fully participate in school activities.

## Key Themes

Throughout the engagement, participants discussed their experiences with VSB food programs, their own relationship to food and contributed ideas about how to enhance and grow VSB food programs to make them accessible to more students in need.

Theme	Details
Support for feeding more students	Participants were in favour of increasing the number of students fed and thus supporting those families in need. Stakeholders were in favour of making investments in equipment to achieve this goal.
Support for healthy options	Participants agreed that food services should offer healthy options, incorporating an abundance of vegetables and other nutritious foods.
Enhance Indigenous and diverse food cultural learning	Participants were in favour of Indigenous and land-based learning for students. They also favoured expanding food selection beyond vegetarian and offering diverse cultural options and options that celebrated various cultures.
Increase compostable packaging	Stakeholders and students emphasized a need to continue the use of and even increase compostable packaging both in delivered meal programs as well as with food sold at school cafeterias.
Increase food literacy	Participants were in favour of increasing food literacy by incorporating lessons on gardening and sourcing local foods.

Participants were in agreement that this funding should firstly be used to alleviate food insecurity for students. Secondly, participants were vocal about the need for meals to provide nutritional benefits to students. The themes above echo the District's proposed spending plan for the Feeding Futures grant which is focused on leveraging existing assets and building capacity to feed more students with nutritious food now and into the future.

## Engagement Goals

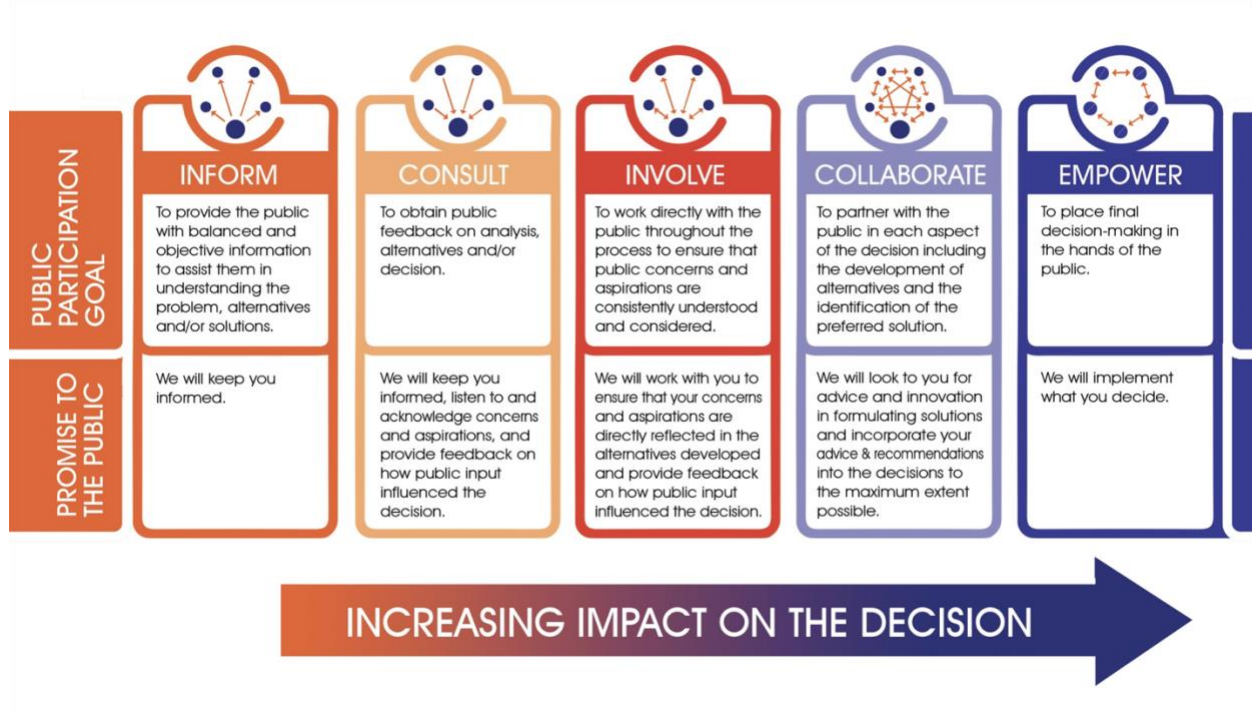
- Inform engagement participants about the spending parameters as per the grant, specifically
- Receive input from stakeholder groups about the District's proposed spending plan for the Feeding Futures grant.
- Meaningfully engage with students and listen to their ideas.
- Prioritize the needs of students who identify as Indigenous by making informed decisions and engaging in open communication with rightsholders and stakeholders.



- Actively fight systems of oppression through relationship building, ongoing communication and transparency.

### Engagement Spectrum

The District follows best public engagement practices as outlined in the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) and is committed to open, clear and transparent engagement. The District’s [Administrative Procedure 106: District Public Engagement](#) guides all engagement activities. This this engagement initiative rests on the “consult” area of the engagement spectrum.



The following engagement activities were utilized to gather feedback.

### Stakeholder Workshop

The stakeholder engagement workshop was held on Monday, June 12 at 12:00 pm. In total, six stakeholder groups participated in the workshop, including:

Stakeholder group	Number of participants
Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 15 (CUPE Local 15)	1
District Parent Advisory Committee (DPAC)	1
International Union of Operating Engineers, Local Union No. 963 (IUOE)	2
VSB Professional and Administrative Staff Association (PASA)	2

Vancouver Elementary Principals and Vice Principals Association (VEPVPA)	2
Vancouver Secondary Teachers Association (VSTA)	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>

Participants were each provided a meal that students who partake in VSB meal programs receive. Each meal contained two to three ounces of protein, two ounces of vegetables and two ounces of a grain (portions recommended for elementary-aged children). Older students are provided with two meals. This was supplemented with a small portion of fruit and either a juice box or small carton of milk. Vegetarian options were also provided.

The workshop began with an opening exercise in which participants were posed the question: “Why is it important to have food programs in schools?” Responses are represented in the word cloud below.



Next, staff provided a presentation starting with an overview of what the funding is for, the programs the District currently runs and an overview of the proposed spending plan. Participants were invited to ask clarifying questions throughout the staff presentation.

Participants then divided into two groups and took part in a group activity. One person from each group was nominated as a scribe and another as the spokesperson. Groups were given a total of 40 minutes to complete the following two exercises. After each exercise, the spokesperson shared the group’s responses.



### *Group Activity #1:*

Having heard the information in the presentation in your groups, please provide feedback about the spending plan.

#### **Questions to ponder:**

- What aspects of the proposed spending plan do you find most promising in terms of addressing the nutritional needs of children?
- How well do you think the proposed spending plan aligns with the needs and preferences of the children who benefit from these food programs?
- Are there any specific areas in the spending plan that you believe require further attention or improvement?



*Stakeholders engaged in discussion during the Feeding futures workshop.*

### *Group Activity #2*

Are there other challenges or opportunities to expanding VSB meal programs the District has not yet identified?

#### **Questions to ponder:**

- What improvements to VSB Food programs would you like to see come from the Feeding Futures grant?
- How can we use best use principles of sustainability, resilience and inclusive food in our food programs?
- How can our food programs contribute to reconciliation and decolonization?

Stakeholders were largely in favour of the proposed spending plan and were happy to see that the funding would help expand the capacity of already established District food programs.

*Feedback from stakeholders included the following key themes:*

Theme	Details
Support for increasing internal capacity and number of students fed	Stakeholders agreed that funds should be put toward investments that would increase the capacity of existing commissary kitchens, particularly kitchen equipment that would allow for more meals to be prepared.
Support for food produced by VSB staff	Stakeholders were in favour of seeing food produced by VSB staff. Some noted the better quality of care for students that resulted in cafeterias that were operated by VSB staff as compared to the cafeterias that were contracted out to third-party vendors.
Sourcing food locally	Stakeholders strongly favoured sourcing local food and food in season where possible. Some workshop participants were in favour of expanding school gardens to aide the local production of food.
Accommodating different cultures	Stakeholders favoured supporting students who have cultural or other dietary restrictions along with making a point to celebrate diversity throughout the year i.e.: Lunar New Year, Vaisaki, etc.

The workshop concluded with staff presenting next steps providing time for additional questions from stakeholders. All stakeholder representatives were sent a copy of the workshop presentation and invited to provide written feedback. No additional feedback was received by the time this report was finalized.

**Student Discussion Group**

A student discussion group was held with members of the Vancouver District Student Council (VDSC), a group comprised of student representatives from secondary schools across the District. Students were asked about the food programs in their schools and what could be done to expand or enhance them.

Feedback from students included the following key themes:

1. Offering healthy and affordable/accessible options to students. Providing free healthy snack options and including healthier options in vending machines
2. Ensuring the use of more sustainable food packaging
3. Ensuring freshness in food served
4. Providing breakfast options in schools
5. Providing a greater variety of vegetarian options as well as culturally diverse food options

Students with VDSC were also invited to participate in a focus group to provide specific feedback on the proposed spending plan for the Feeding Futures grant, however, none replied prior to the registration deadline.

### Feedback from the three host Nations

Background information about the VSB’s Feeding Futures grant along with the proposed spending plan was sent to representatives from the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), Sḵwəxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish) and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. Along with this, representatives were given the following two questions and asked to provide feedback.

1. What do you envision for this program?
2. What would you like to see targeted funds spent on?

Nation	Summary of Feedback
x <sup>w</sup> məθk <sup>w</sup> əyəm (Musqueam)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community planning – food security is prevalent everywhere and grocery bills higher than ever before</li> <li>• Growing vegetables and fresh fruit are important life skills</li> <li>• Bigger gardens at school sites and a VSB garden with a gazebo with the four corners for visiting and learning</li> <li>• On the Vancouver west side, it would be nice to see more food programs there</li> <li>• Introduce canning fruits and vegetables programs for both students and community. Particularly with the cost of food and shortages, families will learn cost effective ways to have canned food for winter seasons</li> <li>• Students’ Farmers Markets – all-encompassing program from food growing to commerce</li> </ul>
Sḵwəxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See this program having two focusses:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• food security for students and their family</li> <li>• introducing students to growing and procuring their own food to prepare and eat</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Right now, the co-creation of resources for the schools, with a focus on the three host First Nations’ stories and languages, as the best use. After that it would be a focus on engagement/connection with students and families and retaining that connection to schools. My perspective is that numeracy and literacy fall under core programming.</li> </ul>
səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives from Tsleil-Waututh Nation did not respond to requests for feedback before this report’s publication.</li> </ul>

**Feedback by VSB’s Indigenous Education Committee**

In addition to collecting feedback from representatives of the host Nations, feedback was collected from the District’s Indigenous Education Committee (IEC). After being provided an overview of the Feeding Futures grant, IEC members were asked the following two questions:

1. What do you envision for this program?
2. What would you like to see targeted funds spent on?

Committee members provided the following feedback:

Theme	<i>Selection of Comments</i>
Alleviate food insecurity/support families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for students and the needs within families and community</li> <li>• Dignity for students and families while aiding food insecurities</li> <li>• Incorporate more food literacy programs with families in the afternoons so students can take food home to eat with family – building connections to school</li> </ul>
Improve nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Go beyond the snack – increase fresh fruits and vegetables</li> <li>• Whole holistic food</li> </ul>
Increase food literacy in schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching youth to harvest what is in season and learning about what grows when</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food learning and gathering brings a strong sense of belonging to students and families</li> <li>• Enhance LunchLAB program (a collaboration with Fresh Roots and VSB) with more fun, educational food programs that serve healthy, delicious lunches prepared by a chef-in-residence, student chefs, and their teachers</li> </ul>
Indigenous food workshops and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Britannia transformed into an Indigenous kitchen</li> <li>• Connecting to land</li> <li>• Add the cultural component with food including Indigenous and other cultural recipes</li> </ul>
Student choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student voice when menu planning</li> <li>• More food that students like</li> </ul>
Budget reallocation based on student need/equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shift funding from current operating budgets to the Feeding Futures School Program Fund</li> <li>• Redistribute food monies already spent to meet other needs (examples: fees, extracurricular learning, boundary setting, SEL)</li> <li>• equity in allocation, based on school needs – not all schools have an equal amount of families with income barriers</li> </ul>
School-based gardening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gardening expansion throughout the district with increased plant-based learning</li> <li>• Farmers market visits and the VSB creating our own market for students to learn the full cycle of producing and selling fresh fruits and vegetables</li> </ul>

Feedback was also provided by the student chair, a Grade 11 Indigenous student:

- Make food students enjoy
- Provide food for students during after school programming
- Provide food hampers for families in need
- More field trips/land-based learning opportunities
- Indigenous and other cultural food learning

## Conclusion

Hunger greatly limits the ability of students to fully engage in learning activities. School food programs can also help improve nutrition for students who may otherwise not have access to nutritious foods at home. By addressing food insecurity, the District helps to create a more equitable learning environment for all students while also helping to ease the stress of families who are in need.

The Board will consider the approval of the proposed spending plan. The finalized plan will then be sent to the Ministry of Education and Child Care.

Through this engagement, participants helped to identify priorities for the administration of a District-wide food program. Discussions with key stakeholders and rightsholders in workshops, discussion groups and through written feedback will continue to inform the District's ongoing work in growing a robust and inclusive food program for VSB students.





# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOP

## Feeding Futures Funding

June 12, 2023



## INDIGENOUS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Please join me in acknowledging that we are unlearning and relearning on the ancestral and unceded lands of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətaʔ (Tseil-Waututh) Nations

x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm  
(Musqueam)

Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh  
(Squamish)

səliłwətaʔ  
(Tseil-Waututh)

# Agenda

Introductions

Opening exercise

Staff presentation

Group activity

Closing comments

## Opening Exercise

Why is it important to have a food program in schools?

Scan the QR Code to enter your answer

<https://app.sli.do/event/cMBbUgrnZupDJ19cv6cyt1>



# What is the Feeding Futures School Food Programs Funding?

OUR VSB

VSB Vancouver School Board

## Purpose

The province has committed \$214.5 million to 60 school districts over three years to ensure all students are fed and ready to learn, by expanding school food programs in districts and schools that already have them and creating new ones in districts and schools without.

- The District has been provided with \$5.56 million to be used over the next three years.
- The 2023-24 Annual Budget used \$1.80 million of the \$5.56 million funding to offset food program costs in the Operating Fund.
- The balance is \$3.76 million to be spent in the 2023/24 year.

# What can this money be used for?

- 1. Food**  
Maintaining programs, increasing students served, increasing nutrition of food.
- 2. Staff**  
Flexibility to hire up to one School Food Coordinator or offset costs of existing Food Coordinator.
- 3. Other (for foundational year)**  
Small appliances or equipment to prepare, store, cook and transport food. Continuity supports that improve student food security (gift cards, food for weekends/school closures).

## Clarifying Questions?

OUR VSB





## VSB meal programs

- 700 students receive breakfast each day
- 3,100 students receive lunch each day
- There are 69 VSB schools that participate in our lunch meal programs
- Breakfast programs at seven elementary schools and eight secondary schools prepared on site



## VSB commissary kitchens

- Lunches are prepared at two commissary kitchens, located at Templeton and Britannia Secondary. Templeton is preparing hot lunches and Britannia is preparing cold lunches.
- An equipment upgrade planned for Britannia this summer will allow it to prepare hot lunches starting September 2023.

# Clarifying Questions?

OUR VSB





## VSB Proposed Spending Plan

### 1. **\$1 million to expand hot meal production at Britannia**

A third oven will provide capacity to feed an additional 800 students starting September 2023

Additional food costs, staff time and an additional coordinator is required.

## VSB Proposed Spending Plan

### 2. **\$1.11 million to offset food program costs in CommunityLINK**

The District receives \$9.87 million in CommunityLINK funding and allocates \$3.11 million to support food programs.

By reducing the CommunityLINK allocation, the \$1.11 million can be redistributed to support other student support programs.

## VSB Proposed Spending Plan

### **3. \$0.25 million to replace elementary school kitchen equipment**

Funding will enhance elementary student food programs.

## VSB Proposed Spending Plan

### **4. \$0.20 million for programs with community partners**

Funding will enhance food literacy programs with community partners.

# VSB Proposed Spending Plan

## 5. \$1.2 million to increase capacity at Templeton

Funding will provide the capacity to feed an additional 800 students starting in September 2024.

Funds will also be used to prepare for District staff to take over the operation of seven contracted cafeterias, providing more nutritious meals.

# Clarifying Questions?

OUR VSB

# Group Activity #1

Having heard the information in the presentation in your groups, please provide feedback about the spending plan.

### Questions to ponder:

- What aspects of the proposed spending plan do you find most promising in terms of addressing the nutritional needs of children?
- How well do you think the proposed spending plan aligns with the needs and preferences of the children who will benefit from these food programs?
- Are there any specific areas in the spending plan that you believe require further attention or improvement?

# Group Activity #2

Are there other challenges or opportunities to expanding VSB Meal Programs the District has not yet identified?

### Questions to ponder:

- What improvements to VSB Food programs would you like to see come from the Feeding Futures grant?
- How can we use best use principles of sustainability, resilience and inclusive food in our food programs?
- How can our food programs contribute to reconciliation and decolonization?

## Next Steps

- Feedback from this workshop will be collected and presented in an Engagement Summary Report at the June 26, 2023 Board Meeting
- The Board will consider approval of the proposed spending plan.
- Plan will be sent to the Ministry.

**VSB** Vancouver  
School Board

## Clarifying Questions?

**OUR VSB**



**Thank You!**