



Healthy

School

Toolkit

**A resource
for co-creating
your school food
environment**



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About

FoodCorps

OUR MISSION

Together with communities, FoodCorps serves to connect kids to healthy food in school.

OUR VISION

We are creating a future in which all our nation's children—regardless of class, race, or geography—know what healthy food is, care where it comes from, and eat it every day.

WHAT WE DO

We partner with school communities across the country to help create healthy school food environments with staying power. Our national service program focuses on three areas: hands-on learning, healthy school meals, and a schoolwide culture of health. Together, the best practices within these areas have the power to create and sustain a healthy school food environment.

WHY SCHOOLS?

We know that healthy food is essential for kids. Good nutrition positively affects children's physical, social, and emotional health; their attendance at school; and their academic achievement. But millions of kids in the United States—especially children of color and children from low-income communities—face ongoing barriers to getting the nourishment they need:

- › 9 out of 10 children don't eat enough vegetables (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2014).
- › 6 out of 10 children don't eat enough fruit (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2014).
- › 1 out of 3 children—and 1 out of 2 children of color—are on track to develop diabetes in their lifetime (Narayan et al. 2003).

Schools have an opportunity to help close that nutrition gap. Today, over 50 million kids go to school in the United States. More than 30 million of those students eat school lunch, and more than 14 million eat school breakfast (United States Department of Agriculture 2018). By creating healthy food environments, schools can start all students on a healthy path to success.

OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

In pursuing our vision of connecting all children to healthy food, FoodCorps embraces equity, diversity, and inclusion as strategic and moral imperatives in our work. As an organization, we seek to overcome health disparities that take an unfair toll on children of color and children growing up in low-income households. We recognize and help our stakeholders name and understand the structural inequalities and the cycles of discrimination based on place, race, and class that both reinforce and are reinforced by the problem we are trying to solve. And we are convinced that for FoodCorps to be effective, we must not replicate the inequality we see in society at large, but to the extent our resources allow, we must become a model for the change we seek. That's why:

We Set Strategy through an Equity Lens

FoodCorps does its work within the context of a food system in which people of color and low-income families are more likely to experience diet-related disease and have limited access to healthy foods. Our understanding of the correlation between race, socioeconomic status, and health outcomes for America's children guides our strategy as it relates to where we serve, who we select as service members, what partners we work with, and how we train and communicate with all members of the FoodCorps community. This perspective has shaped the FoodCorps program and will continue to inform how we grow and evolve, putting equity at the center of the change we seek and the path we take to achieve it.

We Foster Diversity on Our Team and Across Our Network

We are more innovative and responsive when our staff, board, service members, and partners represent a diversity of perspectives and life experiences and feel empowered to raise their voices, offer opinions, and be engaged. We invite individuals from diverse races, ethnicities, viewpoints, experiences, economic backgrounds, genders, and sexual identities and orientations to participate in and shape our program. By so doing, we ensure that our approach is relevant to and supported by the varied communities we serve. Further, we attract

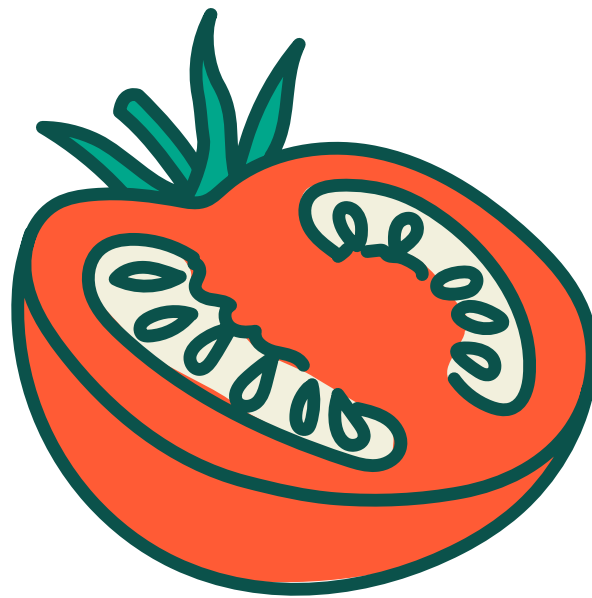
and maintain talented individuals in our network, creating alignment of understanding and purpose at all levels of FoodCorps.

We Ensure Sustained Impact Through the Inclusion and Leadership of Local Voices

FoodCorps strives to make lasting change that endures beyond an individual service member's time with FoodCorps. To do that, we recognize that ownership of this important work must live not with our service members or our national organization but with the school communities we partner with and serve. Accordingly, we invest time, resources, and focus in building partner and stakeholder networks and including the voices of those we serve in our decision-making process; we build and

harness volunteer, parent, and neighborhood investment in our cause; we encourage local recruitment of service members; and we train leaders so that they remain engaged in this work post-FoodCorps, often in the same communities they served.

As a national network of partners and individuals, we are well-positioned to create a platform for ongoing opportunities for dialogue and reflection on this topic. We take this seriously and are privileged to learn from the experiences of our peers and partners who have created a foundation for this conversation to take place. We acknowledge that this work is not easy, and our process will evolve as we continue to learn the best ways to create a more inclusive organization and to build an equitable school food system for all children.





Toolkit

Overview

WHAT IS THIS TOOLKIT?

This toolkit is a set of resources designed to:

- › Take a snapshot of your current school food environment.
- › Guide your school community in creating a vision for the future.
- › Document your action plan for working toward that vision.
- › Evaluate and celebrate your school community's history and progress over time.

Note that this toolkit was originally designed for FoodCorps AmeriCorps service members working in partnership with schools and has been adapted for a broader audience.

HOW DO I USE IT?

Read the Toolkit Timeline (p. 10) for an overview of the process and follow instructions throughout the toolkit.

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?

Your healthy school team! To learn about who should be part of your team and how to best work together, read the Build a Team section (p. 13).

WHAT IS A HEALTHY SCHOOL FOOD ENVIRONMENT?

A healthy school food environment has activities taking place in three areas: hands-on learning, healthy school meals, and a schoolwide culture of health.



HANDS-ON LEARNING

- A** – Ongoing cooking, tasting, and garden-based lessons
- B** – Field trips and farmer & chef visits
- C** – School garden development & maintenance



HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS

- D** – Salad bar & meal line design
- E** – Taste tests
- F** – Cafeteria role modeling
- G** – Local sourcing & recipe development
- H** – Schoolwide healthy food promotion



SCHOOLWIDE CULTURE OF HEALTH

- I** – Celebrations, events, rewards & snacks
- J** – Family, staff & community education
- K** – Making curriculum connections
- L** – Healthy school food champion & team support
- M** – School administration support
- N** – Food service director/manager support
- O** – Teacher support
- P** – Parent support

TOOLKIT TIMELINE



1

GET TO KNOW YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY.

- › See p. 41 for tips on getting to know your community.
- › See p. 43 building relationships in schools.

2

BUILD YOUR TEAM.

- › See p. 13 for what makes a great healthy school team.
- › See p. 45 for resources on facilitating meetings with your healthy school team.

4

SET SCHOOLWIDE GOALS.

- › With your school team, choose goals to work on this year and complete your Action Plan (p. 34). This tool will help you plan the steps you will take toward your goals and how you will define success, choose who will lead and support each project, and decide when/how you will check on progress throughout the year.

3

UNDERSTAND THE CURRENT SCHOOL FOOD ENVIRONMENT.

- › With your school team, complete the Healthy School Progress Report (p. 16) to learn about what is already happening at your school.

5

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS.

- › Schedule team meetings throughout the year to review your schoolwide Action Plan.
- › Celebrate and share your successes along the way.

6

CELEBRATE SUCCESS AND LOOK FORWARD!

- › With your school team, document what changes happened over the past year by updating the Healthy School Progress Report.
- › Celebrate your achievements this year!
- › Update your Action Plan and talk about the team's vision for next year.
- › Complete your School & Community Guide (p. 38).



Before

Getting

Started

BUILD A TEAM

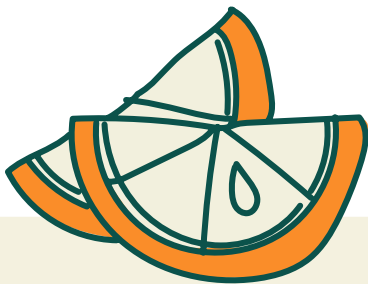
The first step in the process is to build a team from your school community to work with. You might be helping to build a new team or working with an existing team like a school wellness committee, farm to school group, or parent-teacher group.

TIPS FOR BUILDING A TEAM

- › Include people who are motivated to support a healthy school food environment.
- › Engage people who have both new energy and historical knowledge of school practices. Both of these perspectives bring great value.
- › Welcome a variety of perspectives. This will help you develop an action plan that truly reflects the school community.
- › Share decision-making as you build your team so that all participants are invested and responsible for the goals you set together.
- › Set clear expectations for participation on the team. For example, “We will have an initial meeting to set goals. We will then meet monthly throughout the school year to check in on our progress and support one another.”

TIPS FOR WORKING WITH AN EXISTING TEAM

- › Identify who is already leading the team. Listen to what motivates the team.
- › If you aren't already part of this team, do your research: What has the group already accomplished? Understand how they function, what their goals are, and what they have already achieved. Be respectful and honor that.
- › Be clear about what you are asking: Do you want to participate in their meetings? On a one-time basis or in an ongoing way? Do you share common goals?
- › Highlight your shared goals. Consider how you will work with the group to reach common goals without them getting off track. What can you bring to the group?
- › If you decide that joining an existing group isn't the best strategy, communicate the reasons. Then continue to engage and build trust with that group so that you are not perceived as competition when you build your own team.
- › Try not to ask people who are already involved in an existing group to join your team. People have limited time and energy.



A Great School Team Could Include

- › a decision-maker from school leadership, like the principal
- › teachers and staff
- › food service staff
- › facilities maintenance staff
- › students
- › parents
- › school community members

KNOW YOUR STATE & DISTRICT POLICIES

The choices schools can make about their food environment are often governed by policies at many levels: federal, state, district, and school, and these policies can directly influence students' experiences of and decisions about food in school. These policies may make it easier—or harder—for your school community to make certain changes, so it is important to understand what policies are in place and how you might be able to influence them.

Below is a list of some of the policies that are helpful to know.

KNOW YOUR STATE & DISTRICT POLICIES WORKSHEET

STANDARDS AND PREFERRED CURRICULUM

1. Do the state and/or district academic standards include specific standards for nutrition education?

- The state has nutrition education standards.
- The district has nutrition education standards.
- There are no known nutrition education standards.

2. Does the district have a preferred nutrition curriculum? If so, how is it used?

- All grades use preferred curriculum and fully implement it.
- All grades use preferred curriculum but not all fully implement it.
- Some grades use preferred curriculum (fully or partially).
- One grade uses preferred curriculum (fully or partially).
- No grades use preferred curriculum.
- It is unknown how much grades use preferred curriculum.
- There is no known preferred curriculum.

3. Does the district have a preferred garden education curriculum? If so, how is it used?

- All grades use preferred curriculum and fully implement it.
- All grades use preferred curriculum but not all fully implement it.
- Some grades use preferred curriculum (fully or partially).
- One grade uses preferred curriculum (fully or partially).
- No grades use preferred curriculum.
- It is unknown how much grades use preferred curriculum.
- There is no known preferred curriculum.

DISTRICT WELLNESS PLAN OR POLICY

4. All school districts are required to have a Wellness Plan or Policy in place. What is the status of the school district's Wellness Plan/Policy?

- A Wellness Plan or Policy is in place, and the district has updated it in the past two years.
- A Wellness Plan or Policy is in place, but the district has not updated it recently.
- There is no known Wellness Plan or Policy.

5. Wellness Committees were originally required to implement district Wellness Plans or Policies. Is the Wellness Committee in the district active?

- Yes, it meets regularly.
- There is still a committee, but it does not have regular meetings.
- There is no current committee.

6. Does the district Wellness Plan/Policy cover a wide variety of topics related to the school food environment? What content is included?

- Healthy eating and nutrition
- School gardens
- Food policies (e.g., for celebrations, rewards, bake sales, or fundraisers)
- Promoting local foods
- Unknown what content is in the plan/policy
- No known plan/policy

LOCAL FOOD PROCUREMENT

7. Does the state and/or district have a policy about geographic preference for local food procurement? (Geographic preference provides a competitive advantage to local, minimally processed foods.)

- Yes, at the state level
- Yes, at the district level
- No known geographic preference policy

8. Is the state and/or district policy for geographic preference regularly used?

- Products from local growers or distributors are regularly requested or sought out in bids or orders.
- Products from local growers or distributors are sometimes requested or sought out in bids or orders.
- Local products may be supplied but are not specified in bids or orders.
- Policy exists, but is not implemented.
- No known geographic preference policy.

The background is a solid teal color with a repeating pattern of faint, white line-art icons of various fruits and vegetables, including lemons, watermelon slices, carrots, broccoli, and grapes.

Healthy

School

Progress

Report

INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1 (FALL) Fill out the Healthy School Progress Report based on what happened during last school year.

STEP 2 (SPRING) Update the Healthy School Progress Report based on what happened during the current school year.

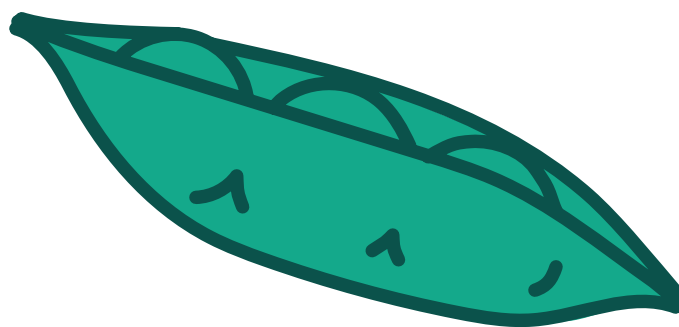
KEEP IN MIND

The Healthy School Progress Report covers a variety of school food environment areas. It includes

- › general information about the school
- › questions about current practices that create a healthy school food environment
- › questions about key people and practices that help a school create a culture of health that has staying power

You are not expected to do everything in this Progress Report! The Healthy School Progress Report includes many practices that help create a healthy school food environment, but schools aren't expected to do everything. The important thing is to make lasting improvements over time.

Do you want to know why the Progress Report is important? Read the Healthy School Progress Report Background at the back of this toolkit.



PROGRESS REPORT AREAS



AREA ONE: HANDS-ON LEARNING

- A ONGOING COOKING, TASTING & GARDEN-BASED LESSONS
- B FIELD TRIPS AND FARMER & CHEF VISITS
- C SCHOOL GARDEN DEVELOPMENT & MAINTENANCE



AREA TWO: HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS

- D SALAD BAR & MEAL LINE DESIGN
- E TASTE TESTS
- F CAFETERIA ROLE MODELING
- G LOCAL SOURCING & RECIPE DEVELOPMENT
- H SCHOOLWIDE HEALTHY FOOD PROMOTION



AREA THREE: SCHOOLWIDE CULTURE OF HEALTH

- I CELEBRATIONS, EVENTS, REWARDS & SNACKS
- J FAMILY, STAFF & COMMUNITY EDUCATION
- K MAKING CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS
- L HEALTHY SCHOOL FOOD CHAMPION & TEAM SUPPORT
- M SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT
- N FOOD SERVICE DIRECTOR/MANAGER SUPPORT
- O TEACHER SUPPORT
- P PARENT SUPPORT

SCHOOL INFORMATION

1) School name _____

2) School city _____ 3) State _____

3) # students enrolled in the school _____

4) Do students have recess before lunch?

- All grades
 Some grades
 No grades

5) Does your school participate in any of the following programs? (check all that apply)

- School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program Supper and/or Snacks (CACFP)
- Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program (FFVP)
- Alliance for a Healthier Generation Healthy Schools Program
- Cooking Matters
- Coordinated School Health
- HealthierUS Schools Challenge: Smarter Lunchrooms
- Team Nutrition
- USDA Farm to School Grant Program

6) Please list and briefly describe other food, nutrition, gardening, and wellness programs in your school.

7) Who is your healthy school team?

What is their role?

School admin	Teacher	Food service	Other school	Student	Parent	Community partner
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What was in place over the past year?

8) **Nutrition education standards have school or district support for following them.** (check all that apply)

- Yes, standards and school district had staff to offer guidance and monitor compliance.
- Yes, standards and school had a teacher or other staff to offer guidance and monitor compliance.
- Yes, there are standards but no support offered.
- Not applicable; there are no known nutrition education standards.

9) **Nutrition education standards are met by the school.** (check all that apply)

- All grades met standards (fully or mostly).
- Some grades met standards (fully or mostly).
- One grade met standards (fully or mostly).
- One or more grades partially met standards.
- It is unknown whether grades met standards.
- Not applicable; there are no nutrition education standards.

10) **The school uses the district's preferred nutrition curriculum.**
(choose one answer)

- All grades use preferred curriculum and fully implement it.
- All grades use preferred curriculum but not all fully implement it.
- Some grades use preferred curriculum (fully or partially).
- One grade uses preferred curriculum (fully or partially).
- No grades use preferred curriculum.
- It is unknown how much grades use preferred curriculum.
- There is no known preferred curriculum.

11) **The school uses the district's preferred garden education curriculum.**
(choose one answer)

- All grades use preferred curriculum and fully implement it.
- All grades use preferred curriculum but not all fully implement it.
- Some grades use preferred curriculum (fully or partially).
- One grade uses preferred curriculum (fully or partially).
- No grades use preferred curriculum.
- It is unknown how much grades use preferred curriculum.
- There is no known preferred curriculum.

Who was it communicated to in the past year? (check all that apply)

12) **The district wellness plan or policy is communicated to the full school community.**

- School administrators
- Teachers
- School staff
- Food service staff
- Parents
- Students
- Don't know or not communicated to anyone
- Not applicable; there is no known plan or policy

What was in place over the past year?

13) **School garden produce is allowed to be used in school meals.**

- Yes No Unsure

Answer for the past school year.

Pre-K K 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th After school

14) **Which grades are in the school?**

15) **How many classes are in each grade?**

16) **Of those classes (question 15), how many of them received nutrition-, food-, and garden-based lessons focused on fruits and vegetables over the past school year? Lessons are defined as those at least 20 minutes long. "Focused" means at least part of the lesson. "Garden-based" means any activities related to growing food.**

17) **Of those classes that received lessons (question 16), how many lessons did each class receive (on average) over the past school year?**

* After-school programs are configured differently in each school. Do the best you can to fill in the total number of different after-school groups that meet, which may be by grade, clubs, topic area classes, etc.

If the school has split classes or rotating classes, note here how you counted them for question 17:



AREA ONE: HANDS-ON LEARNING

In the classroom; in the garden; and before, during, and after school, students grow, cook, and taste new foods, which builds their skills and changes food preferences.

Below, you'll see a list of best practices and activities that are shown to encourage and support students making healthy food choices. Please read each statement and indicate whether, and/or to what extent, your school or school community did that practice over the past school year.

A

ONGOING COOKING, TASTING & GARDEN-BASED LESSONS

1) This school dedicates a space to food-related activities such as cooking, gardening, and nutrition education.

Devoted indoor space Devoted outdoor space/garden None right now

For all classes that received lessons in the past school year, did the lessons include this practice? (check the boxes below if yes)

Pre-K K 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th After school

2) Lessons and activities use best practices in nutrition-, food-, and garden-based education.

a. Include opportunities to eat fruits and vegetables through *tasting or cooking* (e.g., chopping, mixing, adding ingredients).

b. Create *positive social norms* through activities that make fruits and vegetables “cool,” and allow students to share their favorites.

c. Focus on fruits and vegetables that include opportunities to *decrease fears of trying new foods*, such as stories about how kids “tried and liked it!” or smelling herbs before tasting.

d. Focus on the *health benefits* of fruits and vegetables (e.g., some help the brain think better; red ones are good for your heart).

e. Compare the *nutritional value* of healthful and less healthful snacks (e.g., showing the added fat and sugar in snack foods or how healthful snacks have more nutrients).

A

ONGOING COOKING, TASTING & GARDEN-BASED LESSONS, CONT'D

For all classes that received lessons in the past school year, did the lessons include this practice? (check the box if yes)

Pre-K K 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th After school

f. Use MyPlate as a visual to encourage students to make half of their plate fruits and vegetables at every meal. If making meals with students, follow MyPlate proportions.

g. Focus specifically on eating more fruits and vegetables at school lunch, such as where to find fruits and vegetables or how to build a colorful salad at the salad bar.

h. Focus on setting goals for increasing eating fruits and vegetables.

i. Focus on monitoring progress toward the goals of eating more fruits and vegetables.

j. Share recipes that students can take home and prepare with their families.

k. Include activities that incorporate appreciation for how certain cultures traditionally cook fruits and vegetables.

l. Create appreciation for plants, including life cycles and what plants need to grow.

m. Have students work in the garden, doing things like planting, weeding, watering, and nurturing plant growth.

n. Harvest what is growing in the garden.

o. Introduce the process of composting and/or provide experiences composting in the garden.

p. Focus on how our “farm to plate” food system works and how eating more locally produced, less processed, and less packaged food is good for the environment.

q. Focus on how some neighborhoods do not have equal access to healthy food and how there are programs and resources to help achieve equity.

B

FIELD TRIPS AND FARMER & CHEF VISITS

Did this happen in the past year?
(check if yes)

1) Invite **local heroes to dine with students** in the cafeteria (e.g., farmers, chefs, politicians, sports heroes, media personalities).

2) Arrange **classroom visits** with farmers, chefs, and others who work in food.

3) Take **field trips** to farms, community gardens, farmers markets, composting facilities, or other food-centered businesses.

C

SCHOOL GARDEN DEVELOPMENT & MAINTENANCE

Did this happen in the past year?
(check if yes)

1) Have a **garden care plan**, including during the summer.

2) Host regular **volunteer work days** in the garden.

3) Run a **garden composting program** (e.g., compost school meal waste, families bring scraps from home to school garden compost, compost garden weeds and leftovers).

Please share important notes or explanations about these Hands-On Learning practices:



AREA TWO: HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS

The cafeteria experience steers students toward the healthiest options and gets them excited to try new, healthy foods.

Below, you'll see a list of best practices and activities that are shown to encourage and support students making healthy food choices. Please read each statement, and indicate whether, and/or to what extent, your school or school community did that practice over the past school year.

D SALAD BAR & MEAL LINE DESIGN

Did this happen in the past year?

Never Seldom Often Most or all days

1) Make lunch a respected part of the school day by having behavioral expectations consistent with the rest of the school, and have teachers and administrators present during lunch.

2) Make sure the cafeteria is clean and at a reasonable noise level (e.g., no regular fighting, yelling, or whistle blowing).

3) Decorate the meal line and cafeteria to make it inviting (e.g., signs on the salad bar or meal line, student artwork, colorful posters, colorful paint on the walls).

Yes No

4) The school serves lunch to students.

Yes No

If so, the school can:

Did this happen in the past year?

Never Seldom Often Most or all days

a. set up the meal line so that fruits, vegetables, and meal choices look appealing (e.g., bright, fresh, and not wilted).

b. pre-plate vegetables to establish taking and eating them as a social norm.

c. display fruit in bowls or baskets that are easy for students to reach.

d. make sure that vegetables and fruits are the right size for students to eat (e.g., cut into halves or quarters).

e. highlight fruit and vegetable recipes, menu boards, and signs with creative, appealing names.

D SALAD BAR & MEAL LINE DESIGN, CONT'D

No salad bar 1–2 days/wk 3–4 days/wk Every day

5) The school offers a salad bar at lunch.

If so, the school can:

Did this happen in the past year?

Never Seldom Often Most or all days

a. Have the salad bar as part of the lunch line so that students do not miss it.

b. Make sure the salad bar is the right height for students to easily put down their tray while taking salad.

c. Fill the salad bar with at least three different fresh fruits and vegetables.

d. Refill the salad bar as needed and keep it tidy and appealing.

e. Make sure that salad bar spoons and tongs are the right size and type for the students using them.

E TASTE TESTS

1) The school has tastings of the fruits and vegetables that are offered during school meals.

Yes No

If so, the school can:

Did this happen in the past year?

Never 1–5 times 6–9 times 10+ times

a. Set up the taste test in high traffic areas.

b. Have students taste or prepare foods that will be offered in school meals.

c. Hold taste tests with families during events and before or after school.

d. Have principals, teachers, staff, and students serve the foods.

e. Share voting results widely on posters, bulletin boards, and the school website as well as in newsletters and email.

F

CAFETERIA ROLE MODELING

Did this happen in the past year?

Never Seldom Often Most or all days

1) **Older students act as role models or mentor younger students to eat fruits and vegetables.**

2) **School staff and food service staff encourage students to eat fruits and vegetables.**

3) **Adults stand by the salad bar to help and encourage students take salad.**

4) **Adults model salad bar eating behavior and bring items on a plate around for students to try.**

G

LOCAL SOURCING & RECIPE DEVELOPMENT

1) **Aim for more local food being served in school lunch.**

“Local food” does not have a set definition. Some base it on the number of miles, others on state boundaries, etc. Use whatever your school or district defines as “local food.” Please add a comment in the notes section on the next page explaining how your school defines local foods and what local foods were most commonly served.

How often did this happen in the past year?

(Please do not include milk in these counts.)

- The school did not serve local food.
- The school served local food 1–2 times during the year (e.g., as part of a harvest celebration).
- The school served local food 3–9 times during the year (e.g., once a week through the harvest season or every day during a week-long harvest celebration).
- The school served local food about 10–20 times during the school year (e.g., once or twice a month throughout the school year or many harvest celebrations).
- The school served local food about 21–39 times during the school year (e.g., several times a month or once a week or more during a long harvest season).
- The school served local food at least 40 times during the school year (e.g., at least once a week).

2) **Add new recipes or items on the full menu that feature local ingredients, school garden produce, and/or student-tested dishes.**

Never 1 time 2 times 3 times 4+ times



SCHOOLWIDE HEALTHY FOOD PROMOTION

Did this happen in the past year?
(check if yes)

- 1) Announcements by and for students share meal options in exciting/fun ways to promote a respect for healthy eating and knowledge of seasonality or where foods come from (e.g., school gardens, a specific farm nearby).
- 2) Students work with food service staff to give school meal items creative and descriptive names.
- 3) The school hallways, cafeteria, and display cases feature food- and garden-related work by students and/or promote wellness and healthy eating.
- 4) Signs in the school and cafeteria advertise what is served at school meals and which foods are sourced locally through the seasons (e.g., Harvest of the Month posters).

Please share important notes or explanations about these Healthy School Meals practices:



AREA THREE: SCHOOLWIDE CULTURE OF HEALTH

As a whole, the school community celebrates healthy food.

Below, you'll see a list of best practices and activities that are shown to encourage and support students making healthy food choices. Please read each statement, and indicate whether, and/or to what extent, your school or school community did that practice over the past school year.



CELEBRATIONS, EVENTS, REWARDS & SNACKS

Did this happen in the past year?

Never Sometimes All/most of the time School doesn't have

- 1) Healthy food is the main choice for classroom snacks.
- 2) Healthy food is the main choice for snacks and meals at schoolwide events.
- 3) Celebrations and rewards incorporate healthy foods and/or non-food items, such as extra recess or game time.
- 4) Vending machines have healthy options as the main choice or are not available.
- 5) Fundraisers have healthy foods and/or non-food items as the main choice (including healthy options promoted at bake sales).

J

FAMILY, STAFF & COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Did this happen in the past year?
(check if yes)

1) **The school has a dedicated space with resources about food access, cooking, and gardening for the school community and families.**

2) **Family newsletters and emails feature tips on growing, shopping for, cooking, and serving fruits and vegetables at home and how to access healthy foods in the community.**

3) **Families and community members have the opportunity to volunteer in the cafeteria, garden, and at food- and garden-based lessons and events.**

4) **Parent or family workshops cover growing, cooking, and serving fruits and vegetables at home and accessing healthy foods in the community (e.g., cooking, gardening, and eating on a budget; healthy eating; or sharing food from families' cultural backgrounds).**

5) **Staff have the opportunity to learn about growing, cooking, or preparing food (e.g., staff cooking workshops with a guest chef, staff-only garden work day, regular taste tests at staff meetings).**

Please share important notes or explanations about these Schoolwide Culture of Health practices:

K

MAKING CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

In what ways did this happen in the past year?
(choose one)

1) **Teachers work deliberately to connect nutrition-, food-, and/or garden-based learning to the curriculum.**

- There was no nutrition-, food-, and/or garden-based education.
- Teachers did not connect nutrition-, food-, and/or garden-based education to curriculum.
- Teachers actively worked to connect nutrition-, food-, and/or garden-based education to the curriculum (but it is not connected now).
- Teachers connected nutrition-, food-, and/or garden-based education to the curriculum (but it was not specifically designed to meet standards).
- Teachers connected nutrition-, food-, and/or garden-based education to the curriculum and specifically designed it to meet the standards in one core subject (e.g., Common Core Standards [English and Math], Next Generation Science Standards, state-level standards, or local "scope and sequence").
- Teachers connected nutrition-, food-, and/or garden-based education to the curriculum and specifically designed it to meet the standards in 2+ core subjects (same examples as above).



HEALTHY SCHOOL FOOD CHAMPION & TEAM SUPPORT

How many champions did the school have in the past year?

1) The school has healthy food, nutrition, and gardening “champions” (e.g., a person who promotes healthy food issues and gets others excited to support improvements/changes; it could be teachers, staff, parent, etc.).

- 1 champion 2 champions 3+ champions

2) School staff members—not including teachers, administrators, and food service staff—support a healthy school food environment and/or the school’s gardening program (e.g., nurse, office staff, security guards, custodians).

- No, school staff have not shown support in the past year.
 Yes, school staff have shown support but were not actively involved in the past year.
 Yes, school staff have shown support and were actively involved in the past year.

3) The school has a group devoted to wellness or healthy food topics, like a wellness committee, team, school garden group, or other healthy school team.

- There was no known group last year.
 Yes, but the group met irregularly and/or distributed health-related resources (no planning or implementing activities).
 Yes, the group met regularly to plan and implement healthy food-related activities for the school.

4) Wellness committees or other teams have a variety of active members.

Who were the participants in the past year?
(check all that apply)

- Administrators
 Community partners
 Food service staff
 Parents
 Students
 Teachers
 Other school staff

M

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT

Did this happen in the past year?
(check if yes)

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1) Provide professional development time for teachers to learn about leading nutrition-, food-, and garden-based activities. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2) Provide support to teachers (e.g., additional pay, class release time, time and support to write grants) for nutrition-, food-, and garden-based lesson development and/or school garden maintenance. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3) Participate in nutrition-, food-, and garden-based activities (e.g., visiting classrooms or the garden during lessons). | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4) Support the food service director in making changes to school lunch (e.g., procuring local food, tweaking line design to nudge students to healthier options). | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5) Provide ample staff in the lunchroom for managing students so they focus on eating lunch. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6) Act as a role model in the cafeteria (e.g., encouraging students to eat healthy, eating with students). | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7) Provide resources to teachers and parents about which foods are acceptable for serving in the class and at school events and which are not. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8) Enforce serving only healthy foods in the classroom and at school events. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9) Restrict or limit fundraisers from selling unhealthy food (e.g., candy bars). | <input type="checkbox"/> |

N

FOOD SERVICE DIRECTOR/MANAGER SUPPORT

Did this happen in the past year?
(check if yes)

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1) Dedicate time and effort to procuring food from local sources. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2) Prepare recipes from scratch for school meal offerings. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3) Avoid use of prepared, processed food items. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4) Support a salad bar with a wide variety of items. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5) Support use of food grown in the school garden for school meals. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6) Make changes that will nudge students toward healthy options (e.g., changing line arrangement and placement, decorations, creative names for fruit and vegetable dishes). | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7) Encourage all food service staff to get students excited about eating healthy school meals (e.g., use the creative names of fruit and vegetable dishes, remind students which foods are local or from the garden, encourage students to try new foods). | <input type="checkbox"/> |



TEACHER SUPPORT

How many teachers participated in this practice in the past year?

None A few Many Most or all

1) Use “prep periods” to plan for teaching nutrition-, food-, and garden-based lessons.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2) Make classroom time to teach nutrition-, food-, and garden-based lessons.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3) Share successes, challenges, and strategies with other teachers about conducting nutrition-, food-, and garden-based activities (e.g., at grade-level meetings).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4) Maintain the garden and/or take part in the school garden committee or club.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5) Remind students what is being served for lunch, and encourage them to eat fruits and vegetables.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6) Ask students what foods they tried or what they thought about lunch when they return to the classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7) Spend time with students during school meals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



PARENT SUPPORT

How many parents participated in this practice in the past year?

None A few Many Most or all

1) Raise funds to support nutrition-, food-, and garden-based education and the school garden.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2) Encourage administration and teachers to make time for nutrition-, food-, and garden-based education.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3) Assist during nutrition-, food-, and garden-based activities (during the school day).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4) Encourage administration and teachers to institutionalize the school garden and its use.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5) Maintain the garden program (e.g., work in the garden, participate in the garden committee/club, or help when classes are in the garden).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6) Work with food service staff on how to create healthy meals (e.g., participate on a nutrition committee, review menus).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7) Volunteer to help during school meals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Action

Plan

INSTRUCTIONS

The school team should create the Action Plan together.

STEP 1 (FALL) Using your Progress Report, choose which goals your team would like to achieve this school year. You must choose at least one goal per area.

STEP 2 (FALL) Choose goals that are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-Bound.

STEP 3 (FALL) For each goal, decide how your team plans to achieve it.

STEP 4 (FALL) Choose which individuals or teams are responsible for working on each goal. Spread lead roles across the team to share the work.

STEP 5 (SPRING) Return to your Action Plan to review progress made, and discuss goals for next school year.

KEEP IN MIND

The Action Plan is designed to

- › improve the school food environment over time,
- › help your team set key schoolwide goals,
- › define success for improving the school food environment during the school year,
- › plan the steps your team will take this year and into the future, and
- › decide who will be responsible for leading and supporting each project.

It is important to revisit these goals on a regular basis to check progress and make adjustments as necessary. You can record your team updates in the Status column. At the end of the Action Plan, you will find a space to write notes about long-term plans and ideas for sustainability. This section includes a great prompt for discussion about what this year's goals will look like in the future.

SCHOOL-YEAR GOALS

Complete in the fall and review progress in the spring.

PROGRESS REPORT LETTER(S)	GOAL(S)	ACTION STEPS & TIMELINE	ROLE	RESOURCES NEEDED
Write Progress Report section(s) by letter for each goal. For example: Section H – Schoolwide Healthy Food Promotion	Choose at least one goal in each Progress Report area. What does success look like?	What needs to be done? What are the key milestones?	Who is the lead for each goal? Who else will be involved?	What contacts, materials, or resources does the team need?

1) HANDS-ON LEARNING

2) HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS

3) SCHOOLWIDE CULTURE OF HEALTH

LONG-TERM PLANS

Complete in the spring. As you reflect on your progress this year, discuss the vision you see for these projects and activities in the future. Think about the following questions, and write your notes below.

- 1) Reflecting on this year's progress, how might you make these projects and activities sustainable in the long term? What would it take to get there?
- 2) What other goals/projects/activities would you like to focus on in the future?

1) HANDS-ON LEARNING

2) HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS

3) SCHOOLWIDE CULTURE OF HEALTH

The background is a dark grey color with a repeating pattern of white line-art icons representing various food items. These include fruits like watermelon slices, lemons, and grapes; vegetables like carrots, onions, and leafy greens; and other items like a chili pepper, a bunch of mushrooms, and a piece of bread. The icons are scattered across the entire page.

School &

Community

Guide

The School & Community Guide is intended to store important school and community information. We encourage teams to update it on an ongoing basis and to complete it at the end of each year so that anyone in the school community can use it as a resource in the future.

The way you format your guide is up to you and should be based on what is most practical for your school. You can create it as a hard copy or digitally as long as it is easily editable and shareable, and it includes the components listed below.

SCHOOL & COMMUNITY GUIDE

Key Questions to Consider

- › Who are the people, and what are the resources in your school community, that can help achieve the goals established in your Action Plan?
- › What information is necessary to easily access those resources? For example, what is a key contact's preferred method of communication?
- › What other reflections or tips will be useful for a future healthy school team member?

School Information

- › School name and address
- › School policies, including safety procedures

- › Contact sheet for key people and partners, including teachers, administrators, volunteers, and staff
- › Classes taught, sequence of lessons
- › Cafeteria programming
- › After-school programming
- › Schoolwide events and service member involvement
- › Fundraising activities, lead contacts, and approximate value of proceeds earned

Garden Information

- › Location and format of garden (courtyard, raised bed, window box, tower garden, etc.)
- › Water access
- › Storage access
- › Soil quality
- › Planting history
- › Summer care and usage

Community Information

- › Contact sheet for key people and partners
- › Relevant organizations and businesses
- › Volunteers
- › Events
- › Press

The background is a solid light brown color with a repeating pattern of white line-art icons representing various food items. These include fruits like watermelon slices, lemons, oranges, and apples; vegetables like carrots, broccoli, and eggplants; and herbs like basil and oregano. The icons are scattered across the page.

Resources

GET TO KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY

Asset-Based Community Development Strategies

Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) strategies focus on leveraging existing strengths within the community (a glass-half-full approach). This approach contrasts with needs-based community development, which emphasizes local deficits and looks to outside organizations for resources (a glass-half-empty approach).

John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann developed the ABCD approach, and the Asset-Based Community Development Institute supports it. It emphasizes that solutions to community problems already exist within a community. The institute highlights the following principles that guide ABCD strategies (Rowland 2008):

- › *Everyone has gifts:* Each person in a community has something to contribute.
- › *Relationships build a community:* People must be connected for sustainable community development to take place.
- › *Citizens at the center:* Citizens should be viewed as actors—not recipients—in development.
- › *Leaders involve others:* Community development is strongest when it involves a broad base of community action.
- › *People care:* Challenge notions of “apathy” by listening to people’s interests.
- › *Listen:* Decisions should come from conversations where people are heard.
- › *Ask:* Asking for ideas is more sustainable than giving solutions.
- › *Inside-out organization:* Local community members are in control.
- › *Institutions serve the community:* Institutional leaders should create opportunities for community member involvement, then step back.

Rowland, Stan (26 April 2008). «What is Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)» (PDF). Collaborative

of Neighborhood Transformation.

Using these strategies, you can play an important role in changing the school food environment. As you get to know your school, keep in mind that all community members bring something to the table. By asking questions and listening to the needs of the community, you can develop strong schoolwide goals and service goals.

Community Demographics and Access

Learning about the demographics, histories, and cultures present in your community is an important first step in preparing to offer students culturally appropriate food and activities. This knowledge is also key to sharing accessible resources, like take-home recipes, with your students and their caregivers. Keep in mind that demographic statistics are a one-dimensional method to get to know a community. When you have the opportunity, listening to people’s personal accounts is one of the richest ways to understand their backgrounds and experiences.

To better understand your community’s demographics, you can research the following:

- › Percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-cost school lunch programs
- › Average household income
- › Transportation access to grocery stores
- › Languages spoken within the community
- › Percentage of people in the community who utilize the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Community History

It is important to take time to understand your community from multiple perspectives. Consider the perspective you bring to your community, and make an effort to spend time in areas that you don’t know. Reach out to individuals who can share a variety of perspectives. Learn the local narratives that might not be formally

documented. How have neighborhoods changed? What are the local gatherings, festivals, and celebrations? Where have people of various cultures traditionally congregated? Is there community trauma that you should learn about and navigate with compassion? Who are the local leaders; elected officials; and people with personal, political, or economic influence? Who are the people who may not have influence but are equally important to engage? It takes time to learn about any community, and setting intentions about your strategy for doing this is important.

Local Grocery and Agricultural Landscape

Understanding your city or town's local agriculture context is incredibly helpful to understand what people eat and where they get their food. Questions to consider include the following:

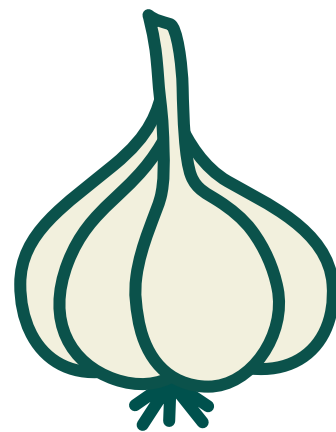
- › What does local food production look like? Are there farms you might visit? What do they grow and sell?
- › Are there local farmers markets? Do they accept SNAP funds, electronic benefits transfer (EBT) cards, or the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) funds? Do they offer produce vouchers and rewards that your students' families might use?
- › Explore a variety of places to get food within your community. Where do locals go? This can include farmers markets, grocery stores, and corner stores.

Communication

Communicating effectively and appropriately with people in your community is important in building

successful relationships. As you develop relationships in your school, consider these tips for being a thoughtful communicator:

- › Are there any language barriers that might shift the manner in which you communicate? If you do not speak a community member's language, how might you find the resources to communicate as best and as thoughtfully as you can? School and district staff, like a school administrative assistant, can help you find local resources to communicate across multiple languages.
- › Learn the best methods of contacting community members because not all community members may have access to a phone or email. Use in-person conversations to ask people about the best way to stay in regular contact.
- › It is important to speak to community members in a way that respects their narratives and stories. Be mindful to listen, and refrain from making assumptions about an individual's background and needs. If needed, follow up with thoughtful and respectful questions.
- › Use inquiry. Seek to understand the experience and points of view of the people you are speaking with.



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS IN SCHOOLS

As you engage with members of your school and the broader community, remember that building relationships with your school principal, cafeteria staff, and teachers is especially important.

Relationship with the Principal

The principal is the key decision-maker or gatekeeper at every school. This person supervises the school's instructional program; maintains order and discipline; enforces federal, state, and district rules, policies, and laws; evaluates and supports teachers; and represents the school to parents and the community. To make an impact in the classroom and garden, it will be important to establish a respectful, collaborative relationship with the principal. Remember to include the principal as a key person to share successes with, as referenced in the Tips for Celebrating and Sharing Success section on p. 46.

Relationships with Cafeteria Staff

These staff members are in charge of navigating child nutrition programs—including the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and others—to develop a menu for students, and they have great influence on how students make choices in the cafeteria line. Just as a teacher sets the tone for expectations in the classroom, cafeteria staff can choose to influence the tone during meals. Building a positive relationship with cafeteria staff is key to everything from leading successful taste tests to your ability to borrow equipment such as trays needed for classroom-based cooking lessons. Cafeteria staff are sometimes undervalued within a school's culture, so it is important to acknowledge their hard work and essential role in student health. Here are some tips for success:

- › Spend time in the kitchen to build relationships.
- › Collaboratively set expectations for working in the cafeteria.
- › Be consistent and reliable with how you show up to help.

- › Listen to challenges, ask questions, and identify opportunities to support their work.
- › Give assistance, not demands.
- › Be humble, not the expert.
- › Acknowledge barriers and successes.
- › Connect and relate personally.
- › Eat the food served in the cafeteria.
- › Be appreciative!

As you are building your relationships, consider asking cafeteria staff these questions:

- › How can we stay in touch? (Email? What is the best time to call?)
- › What are your important kitchen logistics?
- › What foods do you want to serve?
- › How do you plan your menu?
- › How are contracts and decisions made?

Just as it's important to understand how learning standards influence classroom curriculum, a key part of doing your research when building relationships with cafeteria staff is understanding the National School Lunch Program and National School Breakfast Program (see Glossary on p. 53 for more details). These programs provide the basic structure and parameters under which cafeteria staff operate.

Relationships with Teachers

It is important to get to know the teachers in your school. The more you can develop a partnership and level of trust with the teachers, the easier it will be to meet the team's goals.

- › Lead with empathy, and remember that teachers care about their students. Teachers have a lot on their plates. It is important to recognize their hard work.
- › Ask what the norms of the classroom are and what the teacher's behavior management structure is.

What strategies and systems does the teacher use to reward positive and redirect inappropriate behaviors? It may be helpful to spend time in the break room or teachers' lounge and chat with teachers during their planning period (although be aware this is valuable teacher time!).

- › Understand the daily schedule. What times are best to meet? Are there grade-level or curriculum meetings you could attend?
- › Understand what guides teachers. What are the broad school goals, curriculum parameters, and standards that inform classroom instruction? How is their performance being evaluated, and can you help them succeed?
- › Ask what concepts and skills the teachers are passionate about. What is their favorite topic to teach? Why did they start teaching? What are their favorite memories from being a student?
- › Seek teachers' advice and feedback. Is the teacher willing to review the lesson you're thinking of

teaching before you teach it? Does the teacher have advice on how to ensure it goes smoothly? Also ask the teacher to observe you teaching the lesson and give critical feedback.

- › Find out what responsibilities teachers have besides leading their class. For instance, do they act as a recess monitor or participate on a school committee? How can you be a resource to teachers during their often maxed-out time?
- › Ask what topics the teacher might not feel confident or comfortable teaching. How can you provide support and help the teacher, just as he or she is helping you?
- › Ask what motivates each teacher. What does each teacher enjoy about his or her students? What can you learn from watching the teacher teach?
- › Ask how each teacher prefers to communicate. Does the teacher want to hear from you by email, by phone, or by you dropping by their desk?



FACILITATION GUIDE

Good facilitation is key to ensure that your meetings use time well, that you have clearly shared your goals, and that the meeting creates space for all members of the group to participate. Below are some tips for success.

Meeting Planning Tips

- › Location: Where will you be meeting? How is the room set up?
- › Food: Bring food! Well-fed people are happy and engaged.
- › Notes: Consider asking someone in the group to be the notetaker so that you can focus on facilitation. How will this person take notes? On a flip chart or chalkboard? (We recommend transferring notes to a computer after the meeting.)
- › Timing: Start and end on time to value all meeting participants' time.
- › Materials: Be sure to print important materials, especially if participants haven't had time to review important information ahead of the meeting.

Meeting Agenda Tips

- › Decide on the *purpose* and *outcome* of the meeting. Make sure to share them with the group. The purpose is the broad *meeting goal*, and the outcome is *what you hope to get done* by the end of the meeting.

- › Consider what you will cover during the meeting. Is the goal of the meeting to collect information, have a discussion, make a decision, or all three? How often will the group meet? What can the group realistically accomplish within the time you have?
- › If members of the group don't already know each other, lead a short icebreaker activity. For example, ask participants to share their favorite fruit or veggie or favorite food memory.
- › Use a variety of information-sharing techniques, depending on group size. For example, "round robin," "think-pair-share," and "shout out/popcorn."
- › Remember to leave time to discuss next steps.

Meeting Facilitation Tips

When you facilitate a meeting, you are guiding the conversation. If you are new to facilitation, keep the following tips in mind:

- › Practice neutrality: Let your own opinions take a back seat so that you can take a neutral point of view, and guide the conversation according to what other participants think and feel.
- › Develop a way for people to participate in the conversation so that everyone's ideas can be heard.
- › Help the group come to an agreement or compromise so that they can make a decision.

TIPS FOR CELEBRATING & SHARING SUCCESS

Remember to take time to celebrate each success, big or small! It will be important to schedule time throughout the school year for you to take a step back and look at what you and your team have achieved so far. These moments are important for group morale and to promote teamwork. It is also important to share the successes from within your school with the broader school community. The more you share the positive results of your collaborative efforts, the more you are able to honor and celebrate your relationships, and the more long-term support you will gain.

Involve Students

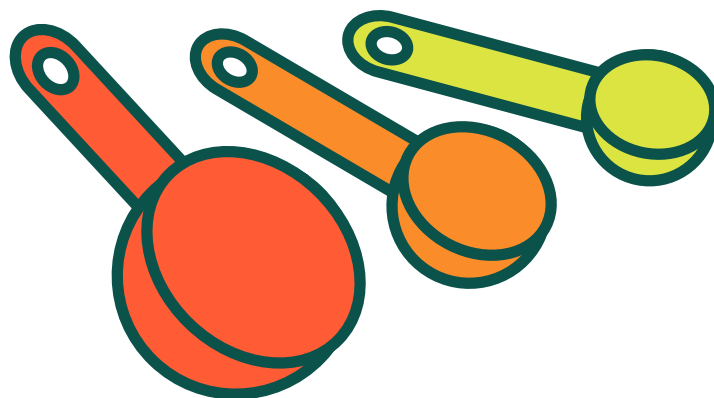
It is important for students to have a sense of ownership and responsibility in building a healthy school food environment. Ask students about what they are proud of and what successes they want to share. They will be the best at representing their personal efforts in the larger school community goals. They're also very popular with local media!

Celebrate the Small Things

What may seem small is actually big! When you come to a seemingly small milestone, like building the first raised bed, growing the first tomato, or successfully navigating the first cafeteria taste test, share these successes. People will be excited to learn about what you are doing! Take photos, get quotes, and document your milestones. Post updates in the hallways, include them in the school newsletter and morning announcements, and share successes at schoolwide meetings and family events.

Share Your Story

Once you reach these milestones, connect with the local newspaper, radio, or TV stations. Highlight your success along with your overall goals. Feel-good stories are always popular with local news media, and you never know who may want to lend a hand (or provide a donation) after they learn about your efforts.



HEALTHY SCHOOL PROGRESS REPORT

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

The following pages provide an overview of the four areas of best practices in the Healthy School Progress Report. This overview is followed by the evidence for each practice.

SCHOOLS AS HEALTHY PLACES

Making each of our nation's schools a place that teaches and models healthy eating patterns is an important public health, educational, and societal goal. FoodCorps believes that children should be educated to have the motivation, knowledge, and skills to make food choices that promote health, ecological sustainability, and social justice. Imagine the potential impact if all schools made healthy food the easy and desired choice. And imagine if students learned about food—how it is grown, its impact on health, and food workers' rights. This shift is critical for the next generation to be able to decrease health-care costs, mitigate climate change, and move toward a more equitable society (Koch, 2016). Schools can accomplish this through creating strong, comprehensive wellness policies. The updated rule for school wellness policies, released in July 2016, calls for wellness policies to have specific plans for nutrition education and to have community engagement in developing and implementing the policies. (United States Department of Agriculture, 2016).

HEALTH ALONGSIDE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

FoodCorps believes every school should be a healthy school, and every child—regardless of race, place or class—deserves to be well nourished and ready to learn. Over the past decade, schools have demonstrated that programming that promotes academic performance and

programming that promotes health can coexist and be successful. “Concurrent with the increased emphasis on standardized test performance, programs involving school meals, nutrition education, and school gardens have arisen to creatively address health concerns” (Berezowitz, Bontrager Yoder, & Schoeller, 2015). The federal education policy, the Every Student Succeeds Act, supports increasing academic performance alongside promoting health with suggestions for school policies, practices, and curricula. Despite this national objective, school administrators and teachers often view the addition of health-related programming in opposition to programming that promotes academic achievement (Berezowitz et al., 2015; Leardo, 2016). Thus, we need a greater understanding of the “possible synergies between dietary and academic outcomes resulting from school-based interventions aimed at improving student health” (Berezowitz et al., p. 508). One way to accomplish this goal is through nutrition experts working with school administrators to increase research that can determine if creating hands-on learning experiences in the classroom and garden, healthy school meals, and a schoolwide culture of health has the potential to enhance, not compromise, academic achievement (Leardo, 2016). A review of garden education has shown that it can improve both health outcomes and academic achievement (Berezowitz et al., 2015).

FOUR AREAS OF THE HEALTHY SCHOOL PROGRESS REPORT

HANDS-ON LEARNING

Hands-on learning in the classroom and garden includes nutrition, food, and garden education that builds excitement and teaches skills about eating well. It includes activities such as classroom lessons, garden activities, cooking sessions, tastings, field trips, and visits from farmers and others who work in the food system.

Although FoodCorps is broadly interested in students eating more health-promoting, ecologically sustainable, whole, local, culturally meaningful, and socially just foods, the focus of the Progress Report is on best practices that will specifically help increase students' consumption of fruits and vegetables.

Evidence has shown that several factors can increase students' consumption of fruits and vegetables:

- › First, the education has to be **about fruits and vegetables**, such as **cooking, growing, and tasting them**. As many classes as possible need to receive this education, aiming for the goal of at least ten sessions in the classroom or garden per class. Fruit and vegetable consumption is also increased when the education
 - › **enhances motivation** by increasing students' desire to eat fruits and vegetables, through teaching about their benefits and creating positive social norms;
 - › teaches students **knowledge** and **skills** about how to eat more fruits and vegetables (e.g., how to create a colorful salad at school lunch); and
 - › creates **student action plans** that help students plan how they will eat more fruits and vegetables in their day-to-day lives.
- › Second, **field trips** and **visits from farmers or chefs** provide exciting, hands-on experience with fruits and vegetables can help students consume more.

- › Third, **establishing and maintaining a school garden** as an educational space can help increase consumption of fruits and vegetables.

HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS

School meals are the most consistent experience that students have with food in schools. Students learn about eating, food, meal etiquette, and the value of health during school meals—whether this learning is intentionally planned or not. Many practices can create a cafeteria atmosphere conducive to eating fruits and vegetables. Evidence has shown that several factors can promote fruit and vegetable consumption in the school cafeteria setting:

- › First, the cafeteria should have a **meal line** that is set up to make eating fruits and vegetables the easy and default option.
- › Second, the cafeteria should have a **salad bar**.
- › Third, the **cafeteria atmosphere** should be conducive to eating.
- › Fourth, the cafeteria should provide opportunities for students to **taste** fruits and vegetables served in school meals.
- › Fifth, the cafeteria should serve and promote **local and seasonal foods**.
- › Sixth, the school should **promote fruits and vegetables** through posters, signage, and announcements.

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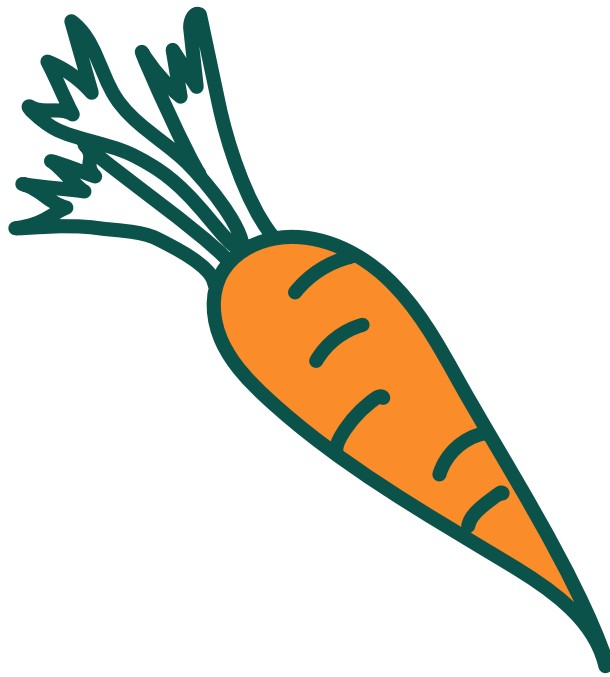
Evidence has shown that for students to eat enough fruits and vegetables, they need an environment in which fruits and vegetables, as well as other healthy foods, are available, valued, and encouraged.

- › First fruits and vegetables should be available at all classroom and school **celebrations and events**. They should also be used as **snacks** and **rewards** instead of other less healthy foods.
- › Second, **fundraisers** should focus on non-food items, or if they do include food, make them healthy options.

- ▶ Third, there should be opportunities to **educate family, school staff,** and **community** so they encourage students to eat fruits and vegetables. The combination of encouragement from many sources is powerful.

A schoolwide culture of health also needs to decrease access to unhealthy foods. Whenever and wherever food is offered in school, make the healthy choices easy, accessible, celebrated, respected, and normative.

Finally, community support is the necessary foundation for a healthy school food environment to have staying power. Staying power means a healthy school food environment stays strong after FoodCorps leaves a school. It is strongest when people from all parts of the school community work together.



Evidence for Best Practices in the Progress Report

HANDS-ON LEARNING	
<p>A. Ongoing cooking, tasting & garden-based lessons</p> <p><i>Within Section A there are seventeen best practices (a–q). Evidence for these best practices is divided into four groups:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ <i>tastings and cooking</i> ▶ <i>enhance motivation</i> ▶ <i>knowledge and skills</i> ▶ <i>action plans</i> 	<p>EVIDENCE: Studies on nutrition education found that classroom lessons that teach children about eating fruits and vegetables have increased consumption of fruits and vegetables among students (Contento, 2016; Evans, 2012; Kann et al., 2007), as have nutrition education lessons in the garden (McAleese & Rankin, 2007; Ratcliffe et al., 2009; Wright & Rowell 2010; Langellotto & Gupta, 2012)</p> <p>Nutrition education is more effective when it is “behaviorally focused” (Contento, 2016; Roseman, Riddell, & Haynes, 2011). This means that what students learn and practice in class should directly address the behaviors we want them to develop. If we want students to eat more fruits and vegetables, teaching the benefits of eating them, along with actually growing, cooking, and eating them, has the potential to be more effective than teaching more generally about food groups and a healthy diet.</p> <p><u>More lessons, more behavior change:</u> Research has found that programs with more total lessons, as well as lessons spaced over a long period of time (e.g., over most or all of the school year), are more likely to be effective at increasing fruit and vegetable consumption (Sobol-Goldberg, Rabinowitz, & Gross 2013; Shaya, 2008; Van Cauwenberghe et al., 2010). There is also evidence that garden-based interventions that include more visits to the garden are more likely to increase fruit and vegetable consumption (McAleese & Rankin, 2007; Ratcliffe et al., 2009; Wright & Rowell, 2010; Langellotto & Gupta, 2012 [information on number of lessons is collected in School Information, questions 15–16]).</p>
<p><u>tastings and cooking</u></p> <p>a. opportunities to eat fruits and vegetables through tastings or cooking</p>	<p>Research has shown that opportunities to eat fruits and vegetables in educational sessions helps students like fruits and vegetables and eat more of them. Studies have found that <u>tastings</u> with fruits and vegetables make students like fruits and vegetables more (Wong et al., 2012; Chu et al, 2013). Other studies have found that <u>cooking</u> fruits and vegetables leads to increased consumption (Liquori, Koch, Contento, & Castle, 1998; Baxter & Thompson, 2002; Cullen et al., 2003; Brug, Tak, te Verde, Bere, & Bourdeaudhuiji, 2008; Di Noia & Byrd-Bredbenner, 2014).</p>

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<p><u>enhance motivation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. positive social norms c. decrease fears of trying new foods d. health benefits e. compare nutritional value k. appreciation of culture l. appreciation of plants p. how our “farm to plate” food system works q. equal access to healthy foods 	<p>Research has shown that <u>enhancing motivation</u>—getting people inspired and excited to change—is important for getting students to eat more fruits and vegetables (Contento, 2016). In most nutrition education research studies, many of these motivation-enhancing best practices are combined and studied as a theory for changing behavior. One such theory, which has been used extensively in school-based nutrition education, is called social cognitive theory. A review that looked at many studies using social cognitive theory found this theory is modestly successful at increasing fruit and vegetable consumption in school-aged students (Gaines & Turner, 2009).</p> <p>Researchers have also used social cognitive theory in evaluations of farm to school (Roche et al., 2012; Berlin, Norris, Kolidinsky, & Nelson, 2013). Roche et al.’s (2012) study found that (a) decreasing fear of trying new foods (neophobia), (b) increasing perception that it is socially desirable and acceptable to eat vegetables and fruits (social norms), and (c) increasing confidence in abilities to eat fruits and vegetables (self-efficacy) are important for increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables. This study also found that students respond well to having “food system knowledge” as the base of their nutrition education (2012). Berlin et al. suggested including all these best practices (from social cognitive theory) in farm to school programming (2013).</p>
<p><u>enhance motivation</u> (cont.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. positive social norms c. decrease fears of trying new foods d. health benefits e. compare nutritional value k. appreciation of culture l. appreciation of plants p. how our “farm to plate” food system works q. equal access to healthy foods 	<p>Additionally, two more recent analyses of many nutrition education programs in schools have suggested that using a combination of these best practices for enhancing motivation would help increase consumption of fruits and vegetables, and they suggest that doing so can increase students’ confidence (also called self-efficacy) in their own ability to eat fruits and vegetables (Di Noia & Byrd-Bredbenner, 2014; Diep, Chen, Davies, J. C. Baranowski, & T. Baranowski, 2014).</p>

HANDS-ON LEARNING

<p><u>knowledge and skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> f. make half their plate fruits and vegetables g. focus on eating more fruits and vegetables at school lunch (where to find them, how to build a colorful salad) j. share recipes students can take home and prepare with their families m. work in the garden n. harvest from the garden o. composting 	<p>Research has also shown that providing <u>knowledge</u> (e.g., making half your plate fruits and vegetables can help you be healthy) and procedural <u>skills</u> (how to make a colorful salad from the salad bar) helps increase consumption of fruits and vegetables (Contento, 2016).</p> <p>One study that directly linked school lunch to classroom education found that students who prepared vegetable recipes from the school lunch menu in their classrooms were more likely to eat these foods in school lunch than either students who received education about the importance of vegetables, but did not include cooking, or students who received no education (Liquori et al., 1998). Another study found that when students are given recipes to prepare at home, those children who prepared the recipes with their families had positively changed their eating behaviors (Cullen et al., 2007). Additionally, a qualitative evaluation of a kitchen garden program in Australia indicated that when students were involved in kitchen garden activities, their willingness to try new fruits and vegetables increased, and many children reported talking about their cooking experiences with their families (Gibbs et al., 2013).</p> <p>A recent review (Berezowitz et al., 2015) of twelve well-designed school garden studies found that all twelve improved predictors that may lead to students eating more vegetables. Predictors include willingness to taste, preferences, attitudes, choosing fruit over candy or chips, and knowledge. Seven of these studies measured consumption of fruits and vegetables through self-reports, five of these studies showed improvement. Four studies measured whether garden interventions improved academic achievement, with two showing improvement of science achievement and one showing improvement of math scores. This review provides evidence that gardens may help improve both academic and health outcomes.</p>
<p><u>action plans</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> h. setting goals i. monitoring progress toward the goals 	<p>Research has also shown that when students create action plans, they are more likely to eat more fruits and vegetables (Contento, 2016; Armitage, 2004; Cullen et al., 2001; Shilts, Horowitz, & Townsend, 2004).</p> <p>Student action plans have been found to be most effective when they have three parts: 1) setting a goal, 2) listing steps for how to achieve the goal, and 3) tracking progress toward the goal (Contento, 2016). For guidance on creating student action plans, see Student Action Plans: Successfully Changing Eating Behavior in the FoodCorps Toolshed.</p>

HANDS-ON LEARNING

<p>B. Field trips and farmer & chef visits</p>	<p>EVIDENCE: Although there is minimal research that specifically examines the benefits of field trips and farmer and chef visits, these activities fit into the best practices of nutrition education because they are inherently motivational, inspirational, and memorable (Contento, 2015). One study concluded that role models who encourage students to eat fruits and vegetables at school lunch can increase intake (Perry et al., 2004). Another study examined a combination of Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH) and farm to school, operationalized in this study as a tour of a farm. All students received CATCH, and some students participated in the farm tour. Self-reported fruit and vegetable intake was the same for students who received the farm tour as those who did not, but a plate-waste examination of school lunch showed some evidence that students who received the farm tour were consuming more fruits and vegetables and wasting less food (Moss et al., 2013).</p> <p>Working with farmers and chefs can also increase gardening and cooking skills. Additionally, many of the seventeen best practices in “A” (above) can be incorporated into field trips to help these experiences lead to increased consumption of fruits and vegetables in addition to being exciting and fun.</p>
<p>C. School garden development & maintenance</p>	<p>EVIDENCE: When garden programs are integrated into the core curriculum, it enables teachers to spend more time in the garden (Lineberger, 1998). Only when “teachers perceive school gardens as outdoor classrooms critical to teaching the skills and content they’re responsible for imparting” will students be able to spend classroom time in the garden” (Hirschi, 2012).</p> <p>Research on how school gardens become well-integrated into schools has shown that to have a garden woven into the curriculum and become part of the school culture, what must be done first is to establish the resources and support needed for the garden (e.g., networks and partner organizations, budget and funding, administrative support, professional development, and organizational structure), followed by establishing the physical garden (e.g., planning and establishing the garden, determining garden characteristics, having a plan for garden care and upkeep, increasing crop vitality and diversity, and conducting evaluations and collecting feedback [Burt, Koch, Uno, & Contento, 2016]).</p>

HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS

<p>D. Salad bar & meal line design</p>	<p>EVIDENCE: Introducing a salad bar in the lunchroom has led to increased fruit and vegetable intake (Adams, 2005; Slusser et al, 2007).</p>
<p>E. Taste tests</p>	<p>EVIDENCE: In the nutrition education literature, there is evidence that providing tastings of fruits and vegetables can increase preferences and consumption (Baxter & Thompson 2002; Cullen et al., 2003; Brug et al., 2008; Di Noia & Byrd-Bredbenner, 2014; Wong et al., 2012; Chu et al., 2013).</p>
<p>F. Cafeteria role modeling</p>	<p>EVIDENCE: One well-designed study on a promotional program based on role modeling (with both people and cartoon characters) found that fruit and vegetable consumption significantly increased above baseline levels over two years (Hoffman, Franko, Thompson, Power, & Staillings, 2010). Additionally, having school staff, educators, and school administrators serving as role models “not just in academics but also with regard to lifestyles” is an important part of a comprehensive school wellness policy (Public Health Law Center, 2008). A qualitative study on middle school students found that the role models who have the most influence over which fruits and vegetables students eat are those students can relate to, such as friends, music stars, and athletes (Cullen et al., 2005).</p>
<p>G. Local sourcing & recipe development</p>	<p>EVIDENCE: The foundation of the farm to school movement is to provide students with experiences eating local foods (Taylor & Johnson, 2013). Although there is not much research that directly links serving more local food to increasing fruit and vegetable consumption, tastings of local foods can build increased preferences, which can increase consumption. Local foods can also be used to enhance motivation, making connections with where it was grown to get children excited about eating the food.</p>
<p>H. Schoolwide healthy food promotion</p>	<p>EVIDENCE: Decreasing the marketing and promotion of less healthful foods while promoting healthful foods can help promote positive eating behaviors (Institute of Medicine, 2005).</p> <p>One study showed that a social marketing campaign could be a method for increasing fruit and vegetable consumption (Thompson, 2007). Other studies have found that combining social marketing with creation of a positive physical environment can also be a way to reinforce the education and experiences students have with healthy food.</p>

SCHOOLWIDE CULTURE OF HEALTH

<p>I. Celebrations, events, rewards & snacks</p>	<p>EVIDENCE: The food that is available at classroom and school events can have a powerful influence on students’ eating habits (Briefel, 2009; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Bridging the Gap Research Program, 2014). Research has shown that decreasing how often foods—such as sugar-sweetened beverages—are available can decrease intake of these less healthful foods, while simultaneously increasing the availability of fruits and vegetables can increase student intake of these healthier items.</p>
<p>J. Family, staff & community education</p>	<p>EVIDENCE: A review of what makes nutrition education programs effective at changing behavior found that family involvement, particularly for children in elementary grades, was effective at changing behavior (Roseman, 2011).</p> <p>To create a culture of health in schools, both administrators and teachers need to be receptive to and embrace a culture of health (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011). Additionally, administrative and teacher support has been found to be a key factor in developing successful school garden programs (Ozer, 2006).</p>

SCHOOLWIDE CULTURE OF HEALTH

<p>K. Making curriculum connections</p> <p>L. Healthy school food champion & team support</p> <p>M. School administration support</p> <p>N. Food service director/manager support</p> <p>O. Teacher support</p> <p>P. Parent support</p>	<p>EVIDENCE: Research on twenty-one schools that had extensive nutrition education concluded that schools are likely to continue programming if they address four key elements (Porter, Koch, & Contento, 2013):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build motivation, buy-in, and interest across all members of the school community through framing the programming as fitting into a whole-child approach, using the programming to build school identity and pride and to set the school apart. 2. Help schools choose appropriate programs that will fit into their mission, structure, schedules, and resources. 3. Expand schools' capacity for nutrition education through engaging the principal and school community members, developing multiple champions or teams of champions, fitting the programs into the school routines, and establishing clear roles of who does what. 4. Help schools legitimize the programming through engaging all school community members in active roles; weaving the programming into the school curriculum; and making certain curriculum, experiences, or programs a rite of passage for students in certain grades. <p>These elements are addressed through the community support questions.</p> <p>In one study researchers found that issues related to staying power improved food availability in schools. Specifically, this study found that elementary schools with high nutritional capacity and resources (e.g., number of staff involved in food preparation and management, eating facility, access to nutritionist, access to vendors with healthy food options, opportunities to make healthy food choices at school) had significantly higher availability of fruits and vegetables in the school compared to schools with low nutritional capacity and resources. However, the study was limited in that it only looked at fruit and vegetable availability and not consumption.</p>
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GLOSSARY

Teaching Terms

- › **5 Es:** A model of instruction developed by Biological Sciences Curriculum Study used to plan lessons and units. The 5 Es are Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate.
- › **cooperative learning:** Placing students into small groups and having them work together toward a common goal.
- › **CTE:** An initialism for *career technical education*.
- › **curriculum:** A sequential, progressive course of studies that conveys content to students to help them achieve their academic goals, as designed by a school district or state.
- › **curriculum standards:** A description of regulations for what students should know or be able to do (e.g., Common Core, Next Generation Science).
- › **enduring understanding:** Statements summarizing important ideas and core processes that are central to a discipline and have lasting value beyond the classroom; they synthesize what students should understand—not just know or do—as a result of studying a particular content area: “The big idea.”
- › **essential question:** A part of the “backwards design” curriculum planning process. It is open-ended and typically will not have a single correct answer.
- › **experiential learning:** The process of learning through experience. It’s more specifically defined as “learning through reflection on doing.”
- › **formative evaluation:** Evaluation that takes place between the introduction of material and its conclusion.
- › **I-Can statements:** Daily formative assessments tied to content.
- › **Inquiry-based science:** Students experience something first, often working in groups, and draw conclusions of their own without teacher involvement. This happens before the teacher provides any new knowledge or facts.
- › **lesson:** A period of learning and teaching.

- › **pacing guide:** A plan for what is covered when throughout the academic year.
- › **scope:** The breadth and depth of content in a lesson or unit.
- › **sequence:** The order in which content is learned in a lesson or unit.
- › **STEM:** An acronym for *science, technology, engineering, and mathematics*.
- › **STEAM:** An acronym for *science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics*.
- › **unit:** A series of lessons with scope and sequence designed to build student knowledge toward answering an essential question.

Cafeteria Terms

- › **after-school snack program:** Cash reimbursement offered through the National School Lunch Program to provide snacks to children enrolled in programs that provide them with regularly scheduled educational or enrichment activities in a supervised environment after their school day ends.
- › **audit:** Periodic verification by the state agency that the requirements of the school nutrition program are being met.
- › **catering:** Preparation of food and beverages for special occasions; this may also be called “special functions.”
- › **child nutrition director:** A person who directs, supervises, or coordinates the school nutrition program at the school district level. School districts use varied position titles for those employed in this position. Throughout the history of child nutrition programs, other titles have also been favored, such as school lunch director and food service director. The term may be used interchangeably in this course depending on the context.
- › **CNP:** An initialism for *child nutrition programs*—programs authorized by the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act and The Child Nutrition Act of 1966, including the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program,

the Summer Food Service Program, and the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.

- › **commodity:** Food commodities donated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for use in nonprofit lunch programs.
- › **competition:** Any food or beverage sold on school grounds that competes with the USDA reimbursable school meals and after-school snacks.
- › **competitive food:** Any food sold at a school other than meals served through the USDA's school meal programs—school lunch, school breakfast, and after-school snack programs.
- › **CSHP:** An initialism for the *Comprehensive School Health Program*. It's designed to protect and promote the health and well-being of students and staff and has eight components that promote the health of students, faculty, and the community—health education, a healthful school environment, health services, physical education, nutrition services, counseling services, community and family involvement, and health promotion for faculty.
- › **dietary guidelines for Americans:** Science-based advice to promote health and to reduce risk for major chronic diseases through diet and physical activity. An advisory committee to the Department of Health and Human Services and the USDA reviews and updates the guidelines every five years. Recommendations of the dietary guidelines are targeted to the public age two years and older and are based on scientific and medical knowledge that is current at the time of the committee's report. The dietary guidelines form the basis of federal food, nutrition education, and information programs. They must be applied in menu planning in the School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program.
- › **direct costs:** Costs that can be identified as used solely by the food service operation. Examples include food, labor, and equipment.
- › **FNS:** An initialism for *Food and Nutrition Services*—an agency of the USDA. It's the federal agency responsible for administering the nation's domestic nutrition assistance programs and helps to address hunger in the United States.
- › **FBMP:** An initialism for *food-based menu planning*. The two food-based menu planning approaches that the USDA established, Traditional and Enhanced, that require specific food components in specific amounts for specific age/grade groups.
- › **food safety:** A plan to prevent unintentional contamination of the food supply.
- › **food service management company:** A commercial enterprise or nonprofit organization that the school food authority may contract with to manage any aspect of the school food service.
- › **free meals:** Meals served at no charge to students from households whose income and family size meets eligibility requirements for such benefits or because the household receives food stamps or Aid to Families with Dependent Children benefits and for which neither the student nor any member of the household is required to work .
- › **FFVP:** An initialism for *Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program*, a federally assisted program providing free fresh fruits and vegetables to children at eligible elementary schools during the school day. Its purpose is to increase fruit (both fresh and dried) and fresh vegetable consumption in elementary and secondary schools. It also encourages healthier school environments by promoting nutrition education.
- › **income eligibility guidelines:** Family-size income levels prescribed annually by the USDA for use in establishing eligibility for free and reduced-price meals and for free milk. Schools, institutions, and facilities participating in the child nutrition programs use these guidelines, which are intended to direct benefits to those children most in need. They are revised annually to account for changes in the consumer price index and are effective from July 1 through June 30 every year.

- › **meal cost:** The cost of producing a meal. It's determined by dividing total expenditures by total meal equivalents during the same period; expenditures include food, labor, and supply costs.
- › **meal equivalent:** The number of breakfasts, snacks, and volume of à la carte sales prepared and served equal to one reimbursable lunch. It's used to allocate costs and determine staffing needs based on a reimbursable student lunch.
- › **meal patterns:** A term formerly used to describe the components and items required in a reimbursable menu. Since School Meals Initiative, the word "patterns" has been replaced by meal planning approach to describe the requirements to be considered in meal planning.
- › **National School Lunch Program:** The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted meal program to provide nutritionally balanced low-cost or free lunches to students. It operates in over 100,000 public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions.
- › **school administrators:** Personnel responsible for making policy and procedures that affect all that happens in a school, including scheduling, pricing, employment, and compensation. School administrators include central office personnel, principals, and other administrative persons at the school level.
- › **SBP:** An initialism for *School Breakfast Program*. A program that the Child Nutrition Act authorized. It is designed to meet specific nutrition goals for children. The SFA has the legal authority to operate the program. New terminology used in place of the SFA is the Local Education Agency (LEA).
- › **SFA:** An initialism for *School Food Authority*, the governing authority responsible for the administration of one or more schools. It has the legal authority to operate the program. New terminology used in place of the SFA is the Local Education Agency (LEA).
- › **SNA:** An initialism for *School Nutrition Association*. A national, nonprofit professional organization representing more than 57,000

members who provide high-quality, low-cost meals to students across the United States.

- › **Team Nutrition:** An integrated, behavior-based, and comprehensive plan for promoting the nutritional health of the nation's school children, using a team or multifaceted approach. The USDA's Team Nutrition Program provides technical assistance and training to enable school nutrition personnel to prepare and serve healthy meals that meet SMI requirements and provides nutrition education resources that encourage children to choose healthy meals.
- › **UFBP:** An initialism for *Universal Free Breakfast Program*, which provides a free breakfast to every child in attendance at school, regardless of family income.
- › **vending:** À la carte foods sold in a vending machine. By their nature, sales may be made in a variety of sites.

School Terms

- › **accommodation:** A device, material, or support process that will enable a student to accomplish a task more efficiently.
- › **ADA:** An initialism for *average daily attendance*. It's used for determining funding levels and is calculated as the total number of days of student attendance divided by the total number of days in the regular school year.
- › **alternative school:** A school that is frequently geared toward students who are at risk of dropping out of school. It offers a flexible, nontraditional approach to teaching and learning.
- › **at-risk student:** A term applied to students who are at risk of educational failure due to lack of services, negative life events, or physical or mental challenges.
- › **bell time:** School time, as opposed to before- or after-school time.
- › **charter school:** A school run independently of the traditional public school system but receiving public funding. It is run by groups such as

teachers, parents, or foundations, and in some cases for-profit businesses. It is exempt from many state and local rules, policies, and regulations; but a public entity, often a local or state board of education, must approve its charter .

- › **coordinated school health program:** A model that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention developed to connect health and education. It consists of eight interactive components: health education, physical education, health services, nutrition services, health promotion for staff, counseling and psychological services, healthy school environment, and parent/community involvement.
- › **ELL:** An initialism for *English language learner*. A student who is unable to communicate fluently or learn effectively in English, often comes from a non-English-speaking home and background, and typically requires specialized or modified instruction in English and in academic courses.
- › **emergency plan:** A dynamic document required for all schools that details contingencies and plans for a variety of possible crises or acute or ongoing threats to safety that might occur within a school.
- › **FAPE:** An acronym for *free and appropriate public education*. A standard defined under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requiring that students with disabilities have access to the same quality public education as their nondisabled peers.
- › **IEP:** An initialism for *individualized education plan*. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, every qualifying student receives this personalized plan that details all the services and educational components required to help the student meet his or her academic goals. It guides actions for families and school personnel and should be updated and changed as needed.
- › **LRE:** An initialism for *least restrictive environment*. The educational placement for students with disabilities that is as close to the mainstream classroom as feasible. Required by the

federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act law, LRE means that students with disabilities should be educated with students who are nondisabled, and removal from the regular education environment should occur only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be satisfactorily achieved.

- › **magnet schools:** Schools with strong emphasis in a particular subject area (e.g., music, science, drama, math). In some districts, students may be selected for admission to a magnet school through an application process rather than being assigned based on residence.
- › **para or para-pro (paraprofessional):** An adult assigned to work with a student with special behavioral or academic needs. They also assist teachers and work alongside teachers.
- › **PLC:** An initialism for *professional learning community*—teacher planning time.
- › **PTA:** An initialism for *parent–teacher association*. An organization of parents in a school (affiliated with the National PTA) who organize projects, raise funds, and otherwise support the school.
- › **PTO:** An initialism for *parent–teacher organization*. An organization of parents in a school (not affiliated with the National PTA) who organize projects, raise funds, or otherwise support the school. It's also called a Home and School Association.
- › **resource teachers or super subs:** Extra personnel for a school (e.g., someone who comes in and takes over a class so the teacher can have time to plan).
- › **continuing education (or CEU, an initialism for continuing education unit):** A unit of credit equal to ten hours of participation in an accredited program designed for professionals with certificates or licenses to practice various professions.
- › **school choice:** Any policy that allows children to attend schools outside their local district boundaries (or to different schools within a district outside their neighborhood). Some choice programs

are restricted to public schools (including charter, magnet, and traditional schools), while others focus on choices among public and private/parochial schools.

- › **school improvement plan:** A document that a school develops and the local education agency approves to serve as a blueprint for guiding the school's continuous improvement and progress toward identified student achievement objectives and targets.
- › **SIP:** An acronym for *school improvement plan*. It provides a framework for analyzing problems, identifying underlying causes, and addressing instructional issues in a school that has not made sufficient progress in student achievement.
- › **specials:** Classes usually designated as nonacademic. They typically include art, physical education, library, and music. During a special, teachers might have planning time, so this is a good time to request to meet with them. The school office will most likely have a "specials schedule" for your reference.
- › **special education:** This broad term describes the range of educational and supplemental services provided to students with disabilities who need individualized plans and specialized services to help them realize their full academic, social, and developmental potential.
- › **SEA:** An acronym for *state education agency*. The state agency that is responsible for the supervision of public elementary and secondary schools. The official name within a state may be the State Department of Education or the State Office of Public Instruction.
- › **unions:** An organized association of teachers formed to protect and further their rights and interests.

Government Programs and Legislative Terms

- › **BIE:** An acronym for *Bureau of Indian Education* schools. The BIE's mission is to provide quality educational opportunities from early childhood

through life in accordance with a tribe's needs for cultural and economic well-being, in keeping with the wide diversity of Indian tribes and Alaska Native villages as distinct cultural and governmental entities.

- › **CEP:** An initialism for *Community Eligibility Provision*. A USDA program that allows schools that predominantly serve low-income children to offer free, nutritious school meals to all students through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.
- › **ESEA:** An acronym for *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*. Originally passed in 1965, the ESEA is the law that governs many educational activities in the United States and provides the authority for the US Department of Education. It includes provisions for setting academic standards; testing students; providing information to parents; and disaggregating data to show true academic gaps between racial/ethnic groups that all states, districts, and schools receiving federal K–12 education funds under Title I of the act must adhere to.
- › **IDEA:** An acronym for *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004*. The federal law that ensures that students with disabilities from birth to age twenty-one have access to the same educational quality and services as their nondisabled peers. The IDEA has provisions that provide formula funding to states to provide services to students with disabilities, including high-level medical services in some cases as well as technical assistance and support to parents and caregivers both at home and at school.
- › **local wellness policy:** Overseen and monitored by the US Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service, all districts participating in the National School Lunch Program are required to have a local wellness policy that meets specific criteria related to nutrition and physical activity.
- › **TANF:** An acronym for *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families*. A federal program that provides financial assistance to low-income families (welfare) through the Department of Human Services.

- › **Title I:** Part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. A school that is designated as low-income by the US government. Title I (pronounced “Title one”) provides funds to SEAs, which in turn provide funds to districts and schools with demonstrated financial need. Forty percent of children must be considered low-income for a school to be considered for Title I. Once a school is determined to be a Title I school, it receives additional resources to help students and families (e.g., a Title I school might have a family involvement liaison on staff to help organize events for families to connect them to their child’s education and provide day-to-day resources, outreach, and guidance for parents and guardians).
- › **Title VII (Title 7):** Part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. A Bilingual Education

Act that provides instruction in English and in the native language of the student to allow the student to progress effectively through the educational system. It provides assistance to schools with Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native populations.

- › **Title IX (Title 9):** Part of the federal education law that prohibits any entity receiving funds from the US Department of Education from discriminating on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment, the failure to provide equal opportunity in athletics, discrimination in a school’s STEM courses and programs, and discrimination based on pregnancy.

Source: FoodCorps has adapted some of this glossary from *How Schools Work and How to Work with Schools*, National Association of State Boards of Education.



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