



PEI Healthy School Food Program

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Who we are...

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History

- 2002-15: School Nutrition Policy, Breakfast/Snack Programs etc...
- 2015: PEI Home and School Federation (PEIHSF) resolution calling for a “...*universal free school lunch program*...”
- 2015-18: PEIHSF hosted a variety of school food summits, public consultations, student think-tanks, and demo projects
- 2017-18: Dept. of Agriculture funded three school projects to promote healthy eating and improve menu options

History

Agriculture funded projects:

- Well received and warranted further research
- School Board hired a School Food Coordinator to:
 - Examine programs in other jurisdictions/provinces
 - Conduct consultations with various partners

January 2019:

- Demonstration projects were held at two elementary schools
- Evaluations proved the projects were successful and well received

History

June 2019:

- PEI Healthy School Food Program was initiated with the Premier's Speech from the Throne and Mandate Letter to Minister of Education and Lifelong learning

February 2020:

- Pilot program in six schools to inform future implementation of an Island-wide program

Pilot Programs

Two simultaneous pilot programs (planned Feb-June 2020)

- Model 1: In-house Food Service (3 schools)
 - Hub and Satellites
- Model 2: Internal/External Vendor (3 schools)
 - Internal Catering Company, External Catering Company, Internal Community Kitchen

These pilots ran for approx. six weeks before they were shut down due to the pandemic – with no time for formal evaluations

COVID-19 Food Security Program

March - August 2020

- Support was provided to families experiencing food insecurity
- Partnered with six external food service providers to prepare meals
- Cold meals delivered to homes, twice weekly, to be reheated
- At program peak 1,000 students were receiving meals

2020-21 PEI Healthy School Food Program



September 2020

- The goals of the new Program were to:
 - Make healthy and affordable meal options available for all students; while using local food whenever possible;
 - Provide support to ensure equitable access for all students (i.e. providing a pay-what-you-can option); and
 - Provide food literacy opportunities for all students.

2020-21 PEI Healthy School Food Program

- ELL staff developed and operated the program using three different models of school food service:
 - **In-house:** Chefs prepared meals for students at one school and delivered meals to three other schools.
 - **External vendors:** Restaurants/caterers delivered meals to 52 schools each day.
 - **Internal/external vendors:** Six schools provided approved meals as 'specials'; that include a PWYC option in non-stigmatizing ways.

2020-21 PEI Healthy School Food Program

- Was not intended to replace existing school lunch programs (e.g. cafeterias, hot lunch days etc.).
- Provided healthy meal alternatives for all families/students, delivered to school each day, with a PWYC option to help food insecurity.
- Provided meals that met nutrition criteria outlined in the newly developed *School Food Environment Guidelines*.

How did the Program work?

- Parents, student, teachers register for the program on-line
- The on-line platform was used to order meals over two week cycles
- Set meals/recipes for all vendors to help ensure consistency
- Meals were \$5 – with a ‘pay-what-you-can’ (PWYC) option
- The PWYC option was provided also provided through other means (e.g. paper orders, card system) for schools not on the platform
- Orders reports were created for vendors and schools
- Meals (protein/veggie) were delivered to schools each day
- Vendors invoiced gov’t for meals + delivery

Program Numbers

- 62 Schools with ~20,000 students
 - In-house Model – 4 schools
 - External vendors – 52 schools (15 vendors)
 - Internal/external vendors – 6 schools
- The program operated for 38 weeks
- 410,000+ meals were provided to students (and some staff)
- Average of 2,230 meals provided each day
- Average of 11.4% student population participated (range 8.3–16.2%).

Program Successes

- Overall acceptance and support of the program and it's goals
- The availability of healthy/affordable meal options for all students
- Ensuring equitable access for all students through the PWYC option
- School food vendors using local food whenever possible
- Financial support for the local economy (i.e. producers, suppliers, vendors)

Program Challenges

- Vendors
- Online ordering platform
- Menu
- Funding
- Equipment
- Purchasing local food from local distributors

PEI School Food Inc.

- Non-profit to assume responsibility and delivery of program in July
- 4 member BOD in place representing
 - The Culinary Institute of Canada
 - PEI Home and School Federation
 - PEI French Health Network
 - Community Dietitian
- Currently in transition phase for September
- Fall program will be similar with adjustment where needed
- Focus will be on quality, safety, and accessibility

PEI School Food Inc.

- Key commitments of the new non-profit during the 2021-2022 transition period are to:
 - enhance food quality with a focus on healthy, safe, and affordable meals;
 - strengthen food service delivery specifically where there have been service challenges in the past; and
 - build relationships with key influencers within all schools and school boards.



Questions?