

# Healthy Food in Schools Update

*SBT Community Advisory Board  
August 2023 Meeting*

Chris Iberle  
Food Policy & Programs Strategic Advisor

Gurdeep Gill  
Food Systems Design Fellow

August 2023

Office of Sustainability & Environment



**City of Seattle**

# Seattle Public Schools & OSE

## 2023 Healthy Food in Schools Initiative

### Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program

- 19+ participating schools
- Increasing nutrition education
- Increased purchasing from local and BIPOC-owned farms

### Sustainable & equitably sourced ingredients

- Fresh, culturally relevant lunch dishes, Taste of SPS
- Increasing purchases from local and BIPOC-owned farms & food businesses

### Water bottle filling stations

- Monitoring installation of remaining 15 stations
- SBT acknowledgment stickers

### Universal meals at two schools

- One-year bridge funding to extend free school meals at Beacon Hill International and Hawthorne Elementary schools

### School Meals & Food Education Working Group

- Convening stakeholders to work on actions to improve school meals, gardens, and enhance food education at SPS

### New Farm to School Specialist at SPS

- Increase local, equitable fresh food purchasing for school meals & FFVP
- Increase marketing and promotion of SPS meal programs & farm to school

# Healthy Food in Schools Initiative ~ Seattle Public Schools & OSE

## Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program

2022-23 School Year	2023-24 School Year ( <i>tentative</i> )
<b>5700</b> students at <b>19</b> participating schools	<b>7700</b> students at <b>27</b> participating schools
<b>67%</b> of students are Free & Reduced Lunch eligible	<b>72%</b> of students are Free & Reduced Lunch eligible
<b>77%</b> of students are BIPOC*	<b>79%</b> of students are BIPOC
Snacks served <b>2 days</b> per week	Snacks served <b>3 days</b> per week
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New promotional signage &amp; fliers</li> <li>• Nutrition education books &amp; posters</li> </ul>

*\* Defined by OSPI as Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander, or mixed-race students*







# Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) Evaluation

Gurdeep Gill (she/her)

Food Systems Design Fellow |  
OSE

# Background

- Funded by SBT. CAB directive.
- Inspired by federal FFVP Program.
- FFVP provides free, fresh produce snacks at schools with 35% or more students on FRL at SPS
  - Predominately serving students who are low income and students of color.
- Goals
  - Increase student consumption of fruits & vegetables
  - Expand access to a variety of produce students experience
  - Promote healthy, lifelong eating habits
  - Increase student's ability to focus and concentrate in schools
- Operations
  - 2-3x a week
  - Schools decide how to serve it. Usually, it is served in the cafeteria during lunch.
  - Raw and prepared items (e.g. bok choy in garlic sauce, beet smoothie, mushroom adobo congee)
  - 19 schools served in 2022-23 SY

# Purpose of Evaluation



ASSESS WHETHER THE PROGRAM IS  
MAKING ITS INTENDED IMPACT.



UNDERSTAND HOW VARIOUS  
STAKEHOLDERS ARE EXPERIENCING  
FFVP.



SOLICIT IDEAS TO INFORM  
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR  
IMPROVEMENT.

# Methodology

- Types of Schools Engaged
  - **Consistently** hosted FFVP since the beginning
  - Inconsistently hosted FFVP
  - Never hosted FFVP, but are eligible
- Methods used to evaluate program
  - Surveys
  - Informal Interviews/Conversations
  - Historical Research
  - Meet folks where they are at











# Findings

1. FFVP contributes to addressing food insecurity and provides access to fresh produce.
2. FFVP provides students opportunities to try new items and explore curiosity around food.
3. Observationally, FFVP helps students focus in school
4. Students enjoy the program!
5. There are some program gaps...



# 1. FFVP contributes to addressing food insecurity and provides access to fresh produce.

---

*There are a lot of families with food insecurity, school can be the only place they get fresh fruits and vegetables.*

– Bailey Gatzert Administrator

*Cool that kids get to try new foods and have access to food families wouldn't have at home. Most families buy pre-packages or canned fruits and vegetables.*

– Lowell Administrator





## 2. FFVP provides students opportunities to try new items and explore curiosity around food.

---

*Students get a better understanding of [fruits and vegetables] and learn how to eat it. Some students didn't know what beets were*

– Dunlap Kitchen Staff

*The program is helping children expand their palettes, taking risks is important!"*

– Lowell Administrator

*FFVP makes students more curious about vegetables. They're more likely to try them*

– Madrona Kitchen Staff





### 3. Observationally, FFVP helps students focus in school

---

- Kitchen staff members shared that FFVP acts as an additional snack for students throughout the day.
- At schools that allow students to pick up an FFVP snack from the office after lunch, it helps satiate hunger and helps student focus.





## 4. Students enjoy the program!

---

- *Students enjoy the program. Specifically, they love the fruits!*
  - Dunlap Kitchen Staff
- *[Students] love rainbow carrots—they only knew orange ones.*
  - Bailey Gatzert Administrator
- *Favorites: strawberries, watermelon, mangoes*





# 5. Program Gaps

## **Need to improve communications of program logistics to stakeholders**

- Kitchen staff want cafeteria signage so students and staff know FFVP is available to **ALL** students—not just those who buy lunch.
- Staff want to know what snack items students can expect to see; want increase promotion of the program to students.

## **Lack of complementary educational materials**

- Dunlap Administrator: *Create a factsheet or something. If they are unfamiliar with it, they don't want to try it. So, something to help them try it!*
- Kitchen staff members look up fun facts related to produce snack that week to share with students to get them more engaged.

## **Labor is a major barrier to school participation**

- John Rodgers Administrator: *Culinary services is doing a good job at relatively healthy, relatively tasty food. The problem is with labor... it is a challenge to have the program because of labor shortages"*
- Madrona Administrator: *Staffing is the biggest challenge we currently have 1.5 FTE kitchen staff.*

## **Program is offered only 2 days a week and at a limited number of schools (and no high schools)**

- Kitchen staff and administrators expressed desire to have FFVP served more than 2x a week
- Historically, school participation limited by staff capacity and limited outreach/promotion about the program
- No high schools currently participate due to program design (older students go off site during lunch)

# Student Survey Results: Fruit Preferences

School Name	FFVP Program Status	Love	Like	Dislike
Madrona Elementary	Inconsistent participation	84%	12%	5%
Lowell Elementary	Consistent participation	82%	18%	4%
Olympic Hills*	Consistent participation	79%	17%	5%
Dunlap Elementary	Inconsistent participation	78%	18%	4%
John Rodgers	Never participated, but eligible	50%	32%	17%

# Student Survey Results: Vegetable Preferences

School Name	FFVP Program Status	Love	Like	Dislike
Lowell Elementary	Consistent participation	59%	28%	13%
Dunlap Elementary	Inconsistent participation	41%	47%	13%
Madrona Elementary	Inconsistent participation	43%	33%	23%
Olympic Hills*	Consistent participation	39%	44%	17%
John Rodgers	Never participated, but eligible	33%	39%	28%



# Key Takeaways

1. FFVP is working
2. FFVP is generally a positive experience for schools, and they want the program (although there are some challenges)
3. There are some opportunities to improve the program and address identified gaps

# Key Takeaways

1. FFVP is working
2. FFVP is generally a positive experience for schools, and they want the program (although there are some challenges)
3. There are some opportunities to improve the program and address identified gaps

- ✓ Increase student consumption of fruits & vegetables
- ✓ Expand access to a variety of produce students experience
- Promote healthy, lifelong eating habits (inconclusive)
- Increase student's ability to focus and concentrate in schools (observationally, but needs more data)
- Students at FFVP schools tend to "love" and "like" fruits more and "dislike vegetables less than the non-FFVP school

# Key Takeaways

1. FFVP is working
2. FFVP is generally a positive experience for schools, and they want the program (although there are some challenges)
3. There are some opportunities to improve the program and address identified gaps

- FFVP is an additional program where students can access fresh produce.
- FFVP contributes to addressing food insecurity that students experience.
- Unintended outcome: Recruited more schools to FFVP through engagement process.
  - 22-23 SY: anticipated 16 schools to participate. Through engagement this increased to 19 schools.

# Key Takeaways

1. FFVP is working
2. FFVP is generally a positive experience for schools, and they want the program (although there are some challenges)
3. There are some opportunities to improve the program and address identified gaps

- Need for communications and clarity of program logistics amongst all stakeholders.
- Lack of complementary educational materials
- Program is only offered 2 days a week and at limited number of schools (and no high schools)




# Recommendations & Future Work

1. Increase communication and clarity of operations of FFVP to students, parents, school staff/admin, and kitchen staff.
2. Include education materials for FFVP
3. Expand FFVP program

# Recommendations & Future Work

1. Increase communication and clarity of operations of FFVP to students, parents, school staff/admin, and kitchen staff.
2. Include education materials for FFVP
3. Expand FFVP program

- 
- We are hosting orientation/kick off for kitchen staff and school admin/staff
  - Creating promotional materials of FFVP for students and parents

# Recommendations & Future Work

1. Increase communication and clarity of operations of FFVP to students, parents, school staff/admin, and kitchen staff.
2. Include education materials for FFVP
3. Expand FFVP program

- Working with Vida Agency to create marketing materials for FFVP, including a logo.





# Snack time just got easier!

Free for ALL, even if you don't buy school lunch

Snack of the day:



## Snack time just got easier!

Not just for students who buy school lunch

FREE fruits & veggies for all students Tuesdays, Wednesdays, & Thursdays in the cafeteria.



### MENU

(example)

Tuesday:

Fresh berries

Wednesday:

Cinnamon roasted squash

Thursday:

Pineapple



# Let's eat!

吃飯吧

Comamos

አንብላ

Aan wax cunno

Ăn thôi

ንበልዕ

Haa nyaannu

# Snack time just got easier!

FREE fruits & veggies Tuesdays, Wednesdays, & Thursdays in the cafeteria.

Even if you don't buy school lunch



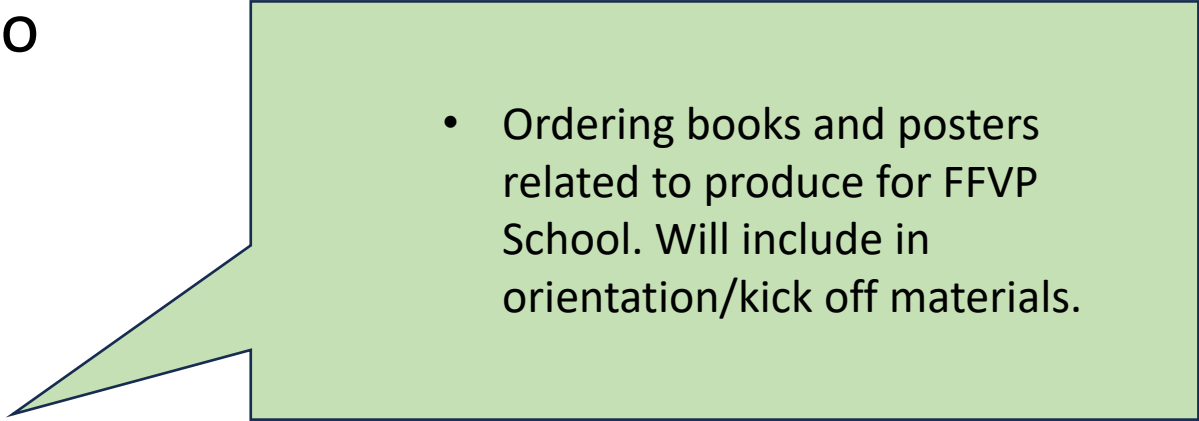
Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program



City of Seattle

# Recommendations & Future Work

1. Increase communication and clarity of operations of FFVP to students, parents, school staff/admin, and kitchen staff.
2. Include education materials for FFVP
3. Expand FFVP program

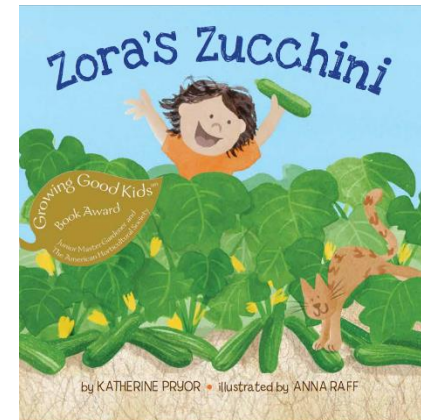
- 
- Ordering books and posters related to produce for FFVP School. Will include in orientation/kick off materials.

# Recommendations & Future Work

1. Increase communication and clarity of operations of FFVP to students, parents, school staff/admin, and kitchen staff.
2. Include education materials for FFVP
3. Expand FFVP program



• Ordering books and posters related to produce for FFVP School. Will include in orientation/kick off materials.



# Recommendations & Future Work

1. Increase communication and clarity of operations of FFVP to students, parents, school staff/admin, and kitchen staff.
2. Include education materials for FFVP
3. Expand FFVP program

- Expanding from 19 schools to 27 for 23-24 SY
- Increasing to 3 days a week
- Future work: Co-create high school version of FFVP based on FEEST recommendations



*“Anytime schools can receive food for children and families, it's a win”*

– Lowell Administrator

**Questions?**

# Healthy Food in Schools Initiative ~ Seattle Public Schools & OSE

## 2022-23 School Year Lunch Highlights



Misir wot with locally grown lentils & injera from Sebat Bakery in Rainier Valley  
(Dec. 2022)



Salmon alfredo served districtwide with 3,000lb of salmon from Muckleshoot Seafood Products  
(May 2023)



# Healthy Food in Schools Initiative ~ Seattle Public Schools & OSE

## 2022-23 School Year Lunch Highlights



**Lunch with Leaders:** Mayor Harrell & Superintendent Jones celebrate school lunch and serve chicken and edamame potstickers, fried rice, burrito bar with local beef, with persimmons and locally grown pears through FFVP (Dec. 2022)



# Healthy Food in Schools Initiative ~ Seattle Public Schools & OSE

## **Seattle School Meals & Food Education Working Group**

*Launched in 2022 to:*

- Provide space for SPS staff, agencies, students, and community leadership to develop priorities for the future
- Bring attention and mobilize resources to amplify, support and enhance meal programs, school gardens, and nutrition education within SPS
- Assess needs/gaps, develop shared goals, priorities and plan
- Identify resources, mobilize partners, engage leadership and decisionmakers about support



# Healthy Food in Schools Initiative ~ Seattle Public Schools & OSE

## Seattle School Meals & Food Education Working Group

### *2022-23 Participants:*

Community Organizations	SPS Departments & Public Agencies
Chinese Information Service Center	City of Seattle – Sustainability & Environment
District 7 PTA	City of Seattle – Human Services Dept.
EarthGen	City of Seattle – Dept. of Education & Early Learning
FEEST	City of Seattle Public Utilities
Got Green*	Public Health Seattle King County
Northwest Harvest	Seattle Public Schools - Culinary Services
Nourishian for Life	Seattle Public Schools – Dept. of Liberatory Education
Nurturing Roots	Seattle Public Schools - Resource Conservation
Solid Ground	Seattle Public Schools - Self-Help Projects staff
Tilth Alliance	United Way of King County
Y-WE Grow	



# Healthy Food in Schools Initiative ~ Seattle Public Schools & OSE

## Seattle School Meals & Food Education Working Group

### *Process & activities:*

#### Phase 1 (May - July 2022)

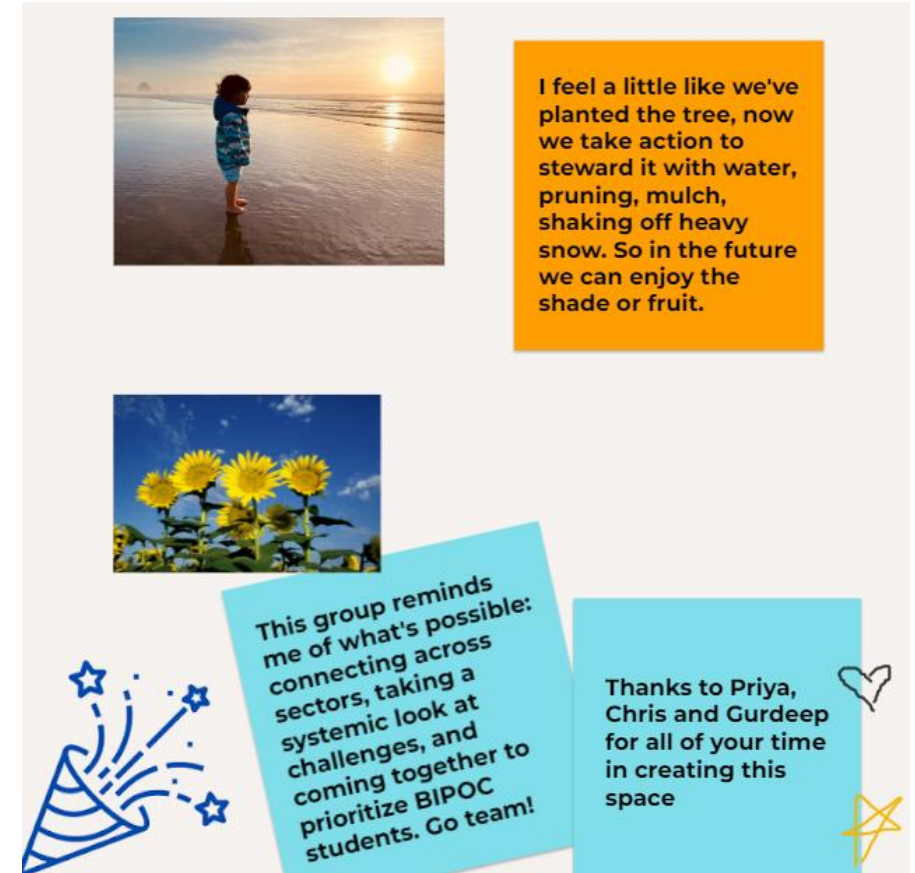
- **Facilitated rapid assessments for each work area**

#### Phase 2 (Aug – Dec 2022)

- **Developed Priority Actions and Recommendations**
- **Planning & strategizing for each Priority Action**

#### Phase 3 (Jan 2023 – Present)

- **Drafting report of recommendations for fall 2023 release**
- **Shared work on each Priority Action**



# Healthy Food in Schools Initiative ~ Seattle Public Schools & OSE

## Seattle School Meals & Food Education Working Group

### *Recommended actions*

**Action #1:** Provide high quality school meals, informed by student input, by increasing staff capacity at Seattle Public Schools Culinary Services.



Building out a written scope of SPS Culinary Services staffing needs to sustain school meal improvements, with future funding opportunities & timelines

**Action #2:** Make school food free for all students by pursuing districtwide universal meal policies



Responding to action alerts on state & federal advocacy for universal school meals

**Action #3:** Integrate more food and garden education districtwide by advocating for policy change and creating a district-level School Garden Coordinator position



- Exploring a fall/winter food systems education “meet & greet” with SPS staff & community partners
- Informing SPS’ 3-Year Outdoor Education Strategic plan currently in development





# Questions?

---



**Seattle**  
Office of Sustainability  
& Environment

**Chris Iberle**

Food Policy & Programs Strategic Advisor

City of Seattle

Office of Sustainability & Environment

*Email:* [chris.iberle@seattle.gov](mailto:chris.iberle@seattle.gov)

*Phone:* (206) 256-5451

