



Seattle School Meals  
& Food Education  
Working Group

2022-23 Report and  
Recommendations

*Collaboration to improve access to  
high-quality school meals, school  
gardens, and food systems education in  
Seattle Public Schools*

*Briefing for SBT Community Advisory  
Board*

*February 2026*



# Presentation overview

a) Introduction to the School Meals & Food Education Working Group + members

b) Overview of the group's **process** for developing these recommendations

c) Summary of the **recommended Priority Actions & 2024-2025 activities**

d) Alignment of the Priority Actions with the **FEPP Levy**

e) **Questions**

# Today's reps from the Working Group

## *Seattle Public Schools student leadership:*

- Sabi Yoon, SPS School Board Student Representative

## *Community organizations and partners:*

- Chenell Coppock, community member
- Nyema Clark, Nurturing Roots
- Madeleine Vistica, United Way of King County
- Sebrena Burr, Seattle Council PTSA
- Sharon Siehl, Tilth Alliance

## *City of Seattle:*

- Chris Iberle, [Healthy Food in Schools Initiative](#) at Office of Sustainability & Environment (OSE)

# Recent successes at Seattle Public Schools

## Providing better school meals, with a new SPS Central Kitchen



## Supporting SPS school gardens and food educators through School Learning Garden Network and workshops



## Expanded access to free school meals to 56 schools through the Community Eligibility Provision



# Intro to the Seattle School Meals & Food Education Working Group

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## What is it?

Multi-sectoral group formed in 2022 by City of Seattle Office of Sustainability & Environment & SPS staff to help guide efforts aimed at:

- Increasing equitable access to high-quality school meals at SPS
- Enhancing food & school garden education at SPS

## Why was it formed?

- Provide space for SPS staff, agencies, and community leaders to collaborate on future work
- Promote and link current progress with school meals & food education at SPS
- Assess needs, gaps, opportunities, and shared goals, in consultation with student leaders
- Identify priorities and develop plans for collaboration to support future work
- Mobilize investments, resources, partnerships, or policy changes to support school food, gardens, and nutrition education at SPS

# Intro to the Seattle School Meals & Food Education Working Group

## 2022-26 Working Group Participants

### Seattle Public Schools Departments

Culinary Services

Liberatory Education

Resource Conservation

School Board Student Representatives

Volunteer Enhancement Projects

### City of Seattle Departments & County Agencies

Office of Sustainability & Environment

Human Services Department

Department of Education & Early Learning

Seattle Public Utilities

Public Health Seattle King County

United Way of King County

### Community Organizations

Chinese Information Service Center

District 7 PTA

EarthGen

Families of Color Seattle

FEEST

Latino Community Fund

Nourishian for Life

Nurturing Roots

Rainier Beach Action Coalition

Seattle Council Parent Teacher Student Assoc

Seattle Restaurants United

Southeast Seattle Education Coalition

Solid Ground

Tilth Alliance

Y-WE Grow

# The Working Group's Collaborative Planning Process in 2022-23

## Phase 1 (May - July 2022)

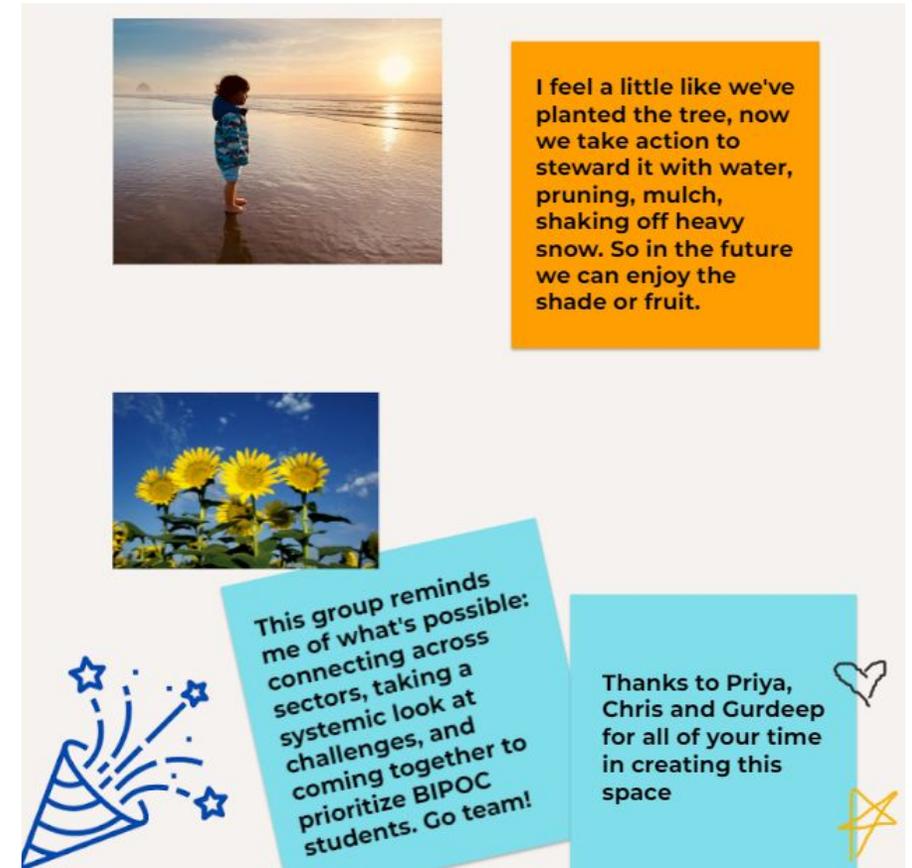
- Facilitated rapid assessments for each work area
- Consulted with Seattle student leaders on their priorities in partnership with three community organizations (FEEST, Y-WE Grow, and InterimCDA WILD)

## Phase 2 (Aug – Dec 2022)

- Developed three Priority Action recommendations
- Planned & strategized for each Priority Action

## Phase 3 (Jan 2023 – Present)

- Drafted report of recommendations released in 2024
- Collaborative work on each Priority Action



# Recommended Priority Actions

The Working Group developed three **Recommended Priority Actions** to help guide future efforts to increase equitable access to high-quality school meals, food, and garden education at SPS:



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

*This could include:*

- *New staff positions within SPS Culinary Services*
- *Increasing kitchen staff hours and pay where needed*
- *Upgrading kitchen equipment at Central Kitchen & school sites*
- *Providing additional kitchen staff training*

**“high-quality school meals”** are foods freshly prepared from scratch, delicious, culturally relevant, using local, sustainable, equitably sourced ingredients



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



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

# Priority Action Potential Impacts By the Numbers

These Priority Actions would...



Support SPS Culinary Services to provide **1.5 million** scratch cooked, culturally relevant, sustainable and equitably sourced school meals each year



Help improve academic outcomes, **increase test scores, and graduation rates** by increasing access to school meals for up to **27,000 students** at schools not currently providing free school meals for all students

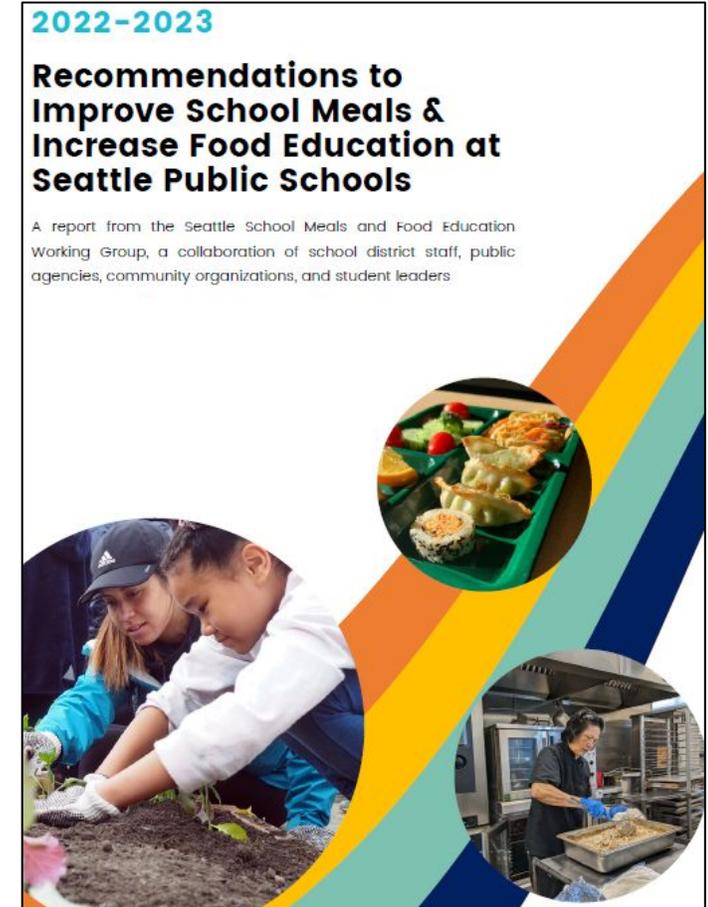


Enhance access to school gardens and food education at **all Seattle schools**, especially the **70 schools with active gardens**

# Highlights of 2024-2026 Activities to Advance the Priority Actions

Since releasing their report in 2024, the Working Group has collaborated to:

- **Brief SPS leadership in the Superintendents' Office** in Jan. 2025 to share priorities and discuss opportunities
- **Promote and share examples of the Priority Actions** via social media
- **SPS has expanded free school meal access to a few more schools** via federal and state programs
- **Submit letters to advocate for state and federal policy change** to expand free school meals to more schools
- Scope future methods for **students to give ongoing feedback to SPS** about school meals
- **Coordinated on garden education with SPS staff & community partners** through the School Learning Garden Network and Green Schoolyards cohort
- **Piloted food education workshops with Nurturing Roots** in 10-15 schools
- **Informed SPS' 3-Year Outdoor Education Strategic plan**



# Priority Actions & FEPP Levy Alignment

## *FEPP Levy Funding Categories*



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



- **Ready to Learn: K-12 Health & Safety - New “food assistance” funding category**



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



- **Ready to Learn: K-12 Health & Safety - New “food assistance” funding category**



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



- **Ready to Learn: Expanded Learning Opportunities** - Has funded school-day, afterschool and summer programming with community partners
- **Ready to Launch: College & Career Pathways** - Has funded partnerships for college & career readiness, project-based learning with industry

# Current FEPP Levy Engagement

- Requesting a stop on the [FEPP Levy Listening Tour](#)
- Circulated [FEPP Levy Survey](#) to Working Group
- Shared DEEL Community Conversations with Working Group
- Individual advocacy on other FEPP Levy Priorities (SESEC, FEEST, etc)



# Questions from the CAB for the Working Group?



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



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



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

2022-2023

## Recommendations to Improve School Meals & Increase Food Education at Seattle Public Schools

A report from the Seattle School Meals and Food Education Working Group, a collaboration of school district staff, public agencies, community organizations, and student leaders

