

Advocating for a Universal School Meal Program in B.C.

Vancouver Food Policy Council (VFPC):

An official civic agency that works to help improve food sustainability in Vancouver by providing advice to Vancouver City Council

What is a universal school meal program?

- ✓ A cost-shared program that enables all students in B.C. to have access to healthy meals at little or no cost
- ✓ Includes food education to serve culturally appropriate, local, sustainable food²



15.8%

of children live in food insecure households in B.C.³

Children in B.C. Experience: Poor diet quality and inadequacy

Food insecurity³

Approach

Environmental scan of school food programs and resources in B.C.

1) Web-based () 2) Keywords ()search

- UBC library
- Google



- British Columbia
- Vancouver - School meal/food
- program - Children

3) Summarize and organize

information on policies,

resources, programs into an excel sheet

Objective

Support policy making of the universal school meal program

Why it Matters

537,589 students in K-12

1.566 schools

89

districts

of children aged 12-17 overweight/obese⁵

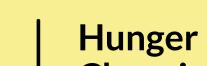
Obesity costs B.C. ~860M annually 6

26%

Healthy eating behaviours: 1

Cognitive development Academic performance Psychosocial outcomes Consumption of fruits + vegetables







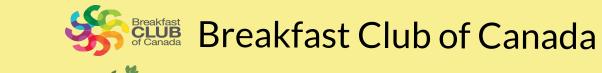
Findings

What are some policies?

- ✓ Guidelines for Food & Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools
- School Meal and School Nutrition Program Handbook

Types of meal programs

- ✓ What: Breakfast, lunch, and snacks
- ✓ Who: organizations includes:



✓ Where: Schools around B.C



Farm to School



FUEL catering



Mavacilious KidsEat

Funding models

- √ Non-profit organizations
- √ Catering (3rd party)
- ✓ Parents advisory committee (PAC)
- **√** Government

Limitations of findings

No policies in place regarding school meal programs



Future research should include community based assessments

Universal School Meal Program

Should we advocate for it?



Why?

Provide opportunities for children to eat low cost, healthy food and support local farmers

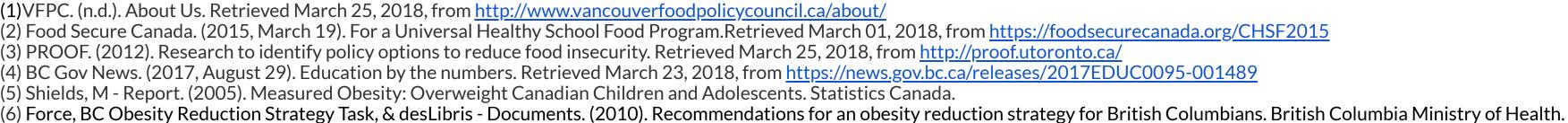
Emotional/social barriers that may prevent some low-income students Trom participating in meals program

Take Home Message

- Different meal programs across every school which is **not** sustainable
- A cost-shared universal school meal program is needed to help address issues of food insecurity and poor diet quality²
- Collaborative work with stakeholders and all levels o **government** is needed²







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