

National School Food Program



WHAT IS THE ISSUE AND THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SASKATCHEWAN?

We believe in the critical importance of a stigma-free school food program to reduce the impacts of food insecurity and poverty and ensure children are not hungry or worrying about their next meal. Canada is the only G7 country without a national school food program.

A 2022 Statistics Canada report found:

- **Almost 1.8 million children live in households struggling to afford the food they need.**
- **Saskatchewan has the 2nd highest child poverty rate among the provinces, with 19.7% of children experiencing poverty.**

Our association adopted a resolution in 2023 to advocate with the Canadian School Boards Association for the development of provincial and national healthy, universal, cost-shared school food programs, funded by the federal and provincial governments in consultation with all school boards.

We conducted a recent survey of all 27 locally elected school boards in Saskatchewan to understand the current school food programs inventory in our province.

SOLUTIONS:

- **Dedicated federal funding** to support a National School Food Program. We know that provinces and territories are ready to work out agreements with the federal government on a cost-shared National School Food Program delivered to students by school boards.
- **Demonstrated commitment to school food and student nutrition** through resources from both federal and provincial governments to work with boards of education that are uniquely positioned to expand, innovate, and implement locally designed food programs that meet the needs of our school communities.
- **Community by community approach** to continue leveraging and building upon the many existing partnerships along with cultural and local expertise.

“As local public education advocates, we see the increasing struggles that our children, families, and communities are facing. When children and youth come to school hungry, it is difficult for them to focus and face their learning day. This is an unfortunate reality for far too many students in our schools. The goal is to reduce known barriers to learning, attendance and school success by supporting school food programs.”

— Jaimie Smith-Windsor, SSBA President



More than half of K-12 schools in Saskatchewan offer a school food program.



More than a quarter of all K-12 students in Saskatchewan access school food programs.



Most school food programs offer some combination of breakfast, lunch and/or snack.



Most school food programs operate on a daily basis.



School food programs cost more than \$6 million annually in Saskatchewan.



School food programs are funded mostly by school boards and partnerships.