

Research REPORT

The opinions and recommendations expressed in this report are those of the author/s and may not be in agreement with Association officers but are offered as being worthy of consideration by decision makers.

Funding for the development and distribution of Saskatchewan School Boards Association Research Reports is provided by Saskatchewan boards of education. Saskatchewan school divisions may duplicate this report for their own use. Each copy should acknowledge the Saskatchewan School Boards Association as the source.

A copy of this report can be ordered from the Association for a nominal fee or viewed on the Association website.

Saskatchewan School
Boards Association
400-2222 13th Avenue
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4P 3M7
Fax: (306) 352-9633
Email: admin@saskschoolboards.ca

Look us up on our website
www.saskschoolboards.ca

Food For Thought School Nutrition Policy

by
Kelly Berlinic

This report was commissioned by the Saskatchewan School Boards Association to assist boards of education and school community councils in reviewing nutrition practices and policies.

Study this resource to learn more about:

- ✓ The rationale for a school focus on nutrition practices and policies.
- ✓ Sample school division policies.

Research Report # 07-08

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
1. What's Eating Us?	5
2. Battle for the Bulge: Dealing with Resistance to Change	9
3. Recipes for Success: Saskatchewan Practice and Policy	13
Prince Albert Roman Catholic Separate School Division	15
North East School Division	15
Holy Trinity Catholic School Division	16
Good Spirit School Division	17
Horizon School Division	17
Division Scolaire Francophone	18
Northern Lights School Division	18
Prairie South School Division	19
Prairie Valley School Division	20
Saskatoon Public School Division	21
Regina Catholic Separate School Division	22
4. Guide for Creating School Nutrition Policy	25
Form a committee	25
Set goals	25
Educate	25
Write policy	25
Implement	26
Assess, evaluate, change if necessary	26
Conclusion	27
References	29
Appendix A	31
Prince Albert Roman Catholic Separate School Division Nutrition Policy	31
Nutrition Guidelines for Schools	33

Introduction

This report was commissioned by the Saskatchewan School Boards Association for Boards of Education, School Community Councils, school administrators and staff to utilize as they review the current nutrition practices within their school or division. It is intended to serve as a resource to encourage and assist them as they consider developing nutrition policies, initiatives and best practice.

Research has shown a direct correlation between good nutrition and academic performance. Children who are well nourished perform better in school, are more energetic and have longer attention spans. Undernourished children have difficulty focusing on tasks, have lower self-esteem and are absent more often from school. Studies indicate that periodic hunger caused by skipping meals results in diminished brain function in children. We know that many school nutrition programs have evidenced improved school performance and nutrient intakes as well as improved attendance rates and reduced tardiness.

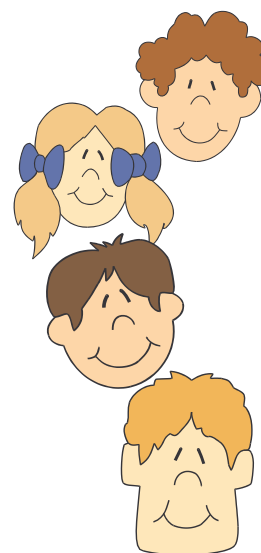
Proper nourishment is essential to the healthy growth and development of children. Poorly nourished children are at an increased risk of serious health concerns such as diabetes, obesity, heart disease, iron deficiency anemia, osteoporosis and dental caries. Nutrition also plays a significant role in mental health and behavioral performance.

The daily eating habits of our students often do not provide them with adequate nutrients. In the recent *Report Card on Child Nutrition* commissioned by Breakfast for Learning, 46% of Saskatchewan students surveyed scored a “D” for fruit and vegetable consumption. These same students reported that they consume one or more servings of regular soft drinks per day.

- Each additional daily serving of a sugar-sweetened beverage consumed by children over a one-and-a-half year period increases the risk of becoming overweight by 60% (Ludwig et al.,2001)

.....

*A direct correlation
between good
nutrition and
academic
performance.*



The issue of poorly nourished children in school is both a food security concern and a reflection of unhealthy nutrition choices. Many families who are well able to afford nutritious food are not consuming the required nutrients on a daily basis. Results from the 2004 Canadian Community Health Survey found that members of families from the highest income bracket were more likely to eat foods prepared from fast food outlets than lower income groups.

Poor food choices are only one part of the equation. For many students, the choice to eat nutritious meals on a regular daily basis isn't an option.

Recent data released by Statistics Canada indicates that there are 43, 680 children living in poverty in Saskatchewan.

The incidence of children living in poverty in Saskatchewan is 20.1% or one in five. The Canadian national average is 17.7%, slightly less than one in six.

Living in a food insecure household increases a child's risk of physical and mental illness, the incidence of multiple chronic disease and diminishes the child's sense of well-being

The costs of providing nourishment to students is insignificant compared to the future costs that are likely to be incurred should children fail to become productive members of society. (Levenger, 1984)

.....

An environment that encourages good nutrition, promoting healthier lifestyles for students and their families.

In their proposal for a nationally funded school nutrition program, the Children's Health & Nutrition Initiative, Breakfast for Learning states, "*Health Canada estimates that diet-related cases of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and certain forms of cancer among adults rob the national economy of \$6.6 billion annually due to health care costs and lost productivity.*" Research indicates that proper nutrition during childhood and adolescence enhances disease resistance and reduces the incidence of adult-onset chronic disease.

Child development is significantly influenced during the school years. We know that students eat at least one meal per day at school. The hidden and parallel curriculum provide excellent opportunities to

reinforce what is taught in the classroom by encouraging students to practice healthy eating. Schools are an ideal environment for promoting healthy lifestyle choices.

Teachers and Boards of Education have an obligation to ensure the health and well-being of their students while at school. By creating an environment that encourages good nutrition, the school is promoting healthier lifestyles for students and their families. Sound nutrition policy will ensure the positive messages taught in the classroom are not negated by informal school practice.

“When a child’s stomach is empty, everything else is secondary. Before developing a thirst for knowledge and a hunger for learning, one must first satisfy the body’s thirst and hunger. This is the challenge faced by our society.”

**Romeo LeBlanc,
Former Governor General of Canada**



1. What's Eating Us?

Proper nutrition is an essential component in the development of healthy children. A child's growth and development, disease resistance, mental health and academic performance are all impacted by the foods that they eat.

Research clearly indicates the link between student nutrition and school performance. Children who do not eat well are less able to perform complex tasks, their concentration is diminished as is their overall school performance and behaviour.

We are seeing an alarming trend in the nutritional choices that students are making. Busy family lifestyles are supported by convenience and fast foods that provide little or no nutritional value. Media also plays a significant role in the food choices that children make and often undermines family influences. Mass-marketing and the increasing availability of foods that have little or no nutritional value are supplying our children with a constant source of negative messaging and choices that do not support healthy lifestyles.

Many Saskatchewan children are living in food insecure households and attending school without having the daily nourishment they require.

Proper nourishment is vital to the health and well-being of our students.

- Yet 7 out of 10 children aged 4 to 8 do not eat the recommended daily servings of fruit and vegetables.
- Only 36% of children between the ages of 12 to 19 consume five or more servings of vegetables or fruits per day.
- Over a third of children, aged 4 to 9 did not have the minimum recommended servings of milk per day.
- 61% of boys and 83% of girls aged 10 to 16 did not meet the recommended daily minimum servings of milk.
- One quarter of the reported vegetables consumed by children were French Fries (King et al., 1999)
- Approximately 25% of Grades 6, 8 and 10 students consume candy and chocolate bars daily (King et al., 1999)

Overweight and obesity is a serious health concern. Childhood obesity increases the risk of chronic disease and health problems both in childhood and later in life. Overweight and obesity rates among children have increased substantially.

According to Statistics Canada (2004):

- Adolescents aged 12 to 17 overweight rates more than doubled from 14% to 29% and their obesity rate tripled from 3% to 9% in the last 25 years.
- 18% of Canadian children aged 2 to 17 are overweight and just over 8% are obese. The combined total of overweight/obese children in this age group is 26%.
- 19% of Saskatchewan children aged 2 to 17 are overweight and 10% are obese. The combined total of overweight/obese children in this age group is 29%.
- Saskatchewan's overweight and obesity rates in children aged 2 to 17 are 3% higher than the national average.
- Children and adolescents who consume 5 or more servings of fruit and vegetables a day are significantly less likely to be overweight or obese.
- Physical activity reduces the risk of overweight and obesity.

Saskatchewan ***in motion*** is a province-wide movement aimed at increasing physical activity for health, social, environmental and economic benefits.

To learn more about Saskatchewan ***in motion*** visit their website at <http://www.saskatchewaninmotion.ca/>

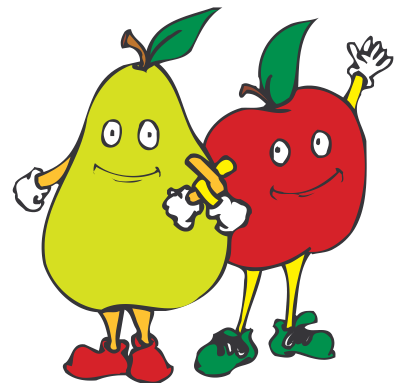
Type 2 diabetes, once considered a disease of middle-aged adults, is now being diagnosed in children of elementary school age. There is a serious concern over the prevalence of diabetes that remains undiagnosed- for years in some cases. Left untreated or poorly managed, diabetes is a significant health risk.

- The prevalence of type 2 diabetes among children and adolescents is increasing (American Diabetes Association, 2000)
- Today, 85% of children with type 2 diabetes are either overweight or obese at diagnosis (American Diabetes Association, 2000)
- The symptoms of type 2 diabetes can be overlooked for years

- 1 in 3 people who have type 2 diabetes do not know they have it
- In 2004/05, there were 888 cases of children aged 0 – 19 diagnosed and living with diabetes in Saskatchewan. (Canadian Diabetes Association. National Diabetes Surveillance System. SK health data)
- Diabetes increases your risk of heart and kidney disease, eye disease, and nerve damage
- Scientists believe that lifestyle changes can help prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes (Canadian Diabetes Association.2007)

***“LET FOOD BE THY MEDICINE, AND
LET THY MEDICINE BE FOOD”***

Hippocrates



2. *Battle for the Bulge: Dealing with Resistance to Change*

Providing students with healthier foods at school will have many champions but you will also face many concerns over the proposed changes. Below is a list of the most common arguments and some suggestions on how to address them.

Argument: Right of Choice

“Students have the right to choose what they want to eat or drink while at school.”

You might respond to this by saying...

“We need to make healthy choices the easy choice.”

- Students are learning and growing and need to be supported in developing skills around healthy decision making
- Schools have the responsibility to teach students how to make healthy choices
- Healthy choices are rarely available and less frequently promoted than non-nutritious food choices
- Healthy choices need to be equally available and as appealing as unhealthy choices

Argument: School Finance

“The profit made from the sale of non-nutritious food and beverage items is used to fund student programs.”

You might respond to this by saying...

“The expense associated with student programs remains the same regardless of whether the parents pay outright or subsidize the costs through fundraising.”

- Fundraising with the sale of non-nutritious food items in order to enhance the student experience is a contradiction that undermines healthy lifestyle lessons taught in the classroom
- Healthy foods and fundraising activities can be financially lucrative
- Many parents are uncomfortable being asked to support unhealthy choices/activities as fundraisers
- Working with businesses to create win/win situations that support student health and school finance is of benefit to all

Argument: Availability

“They will just go down the street and buy it.”

You might respond to this by saying...

“Students are constantly learning while at school whether in the classroom or the hallway. It is incumbent upon our schools to ensure healthy messaging and to promote healthy lifestyle choices.”

- Product placement and availability significantly contributes to impulse purchasing and consumption
- Many schools have found that giving students healthy food choices impacted the students choices elsewhere and saw an improvement in the nutritional value of foods brought into the school
- The student’s ability to purchase outside the school would justify the sale of any number of unhealthy products and contradicts the nutrition and health lessons taught in class
- Schools have both the opportunity and the duty to act as a counterbalance to the mass-marketing of non-nutritious food products to students

Argument: Parental Responsibility

“Parents are responsible for what their children eat.”

You might respond to this by saying...

“Students spend much of their waking hours at school and are significantly influenced by the school’s choices.”

- The existence of unhealthy nutrition in the home provides a strong argument in support of providing students with healthy choices while at school
- It is the school’s responsibility to model the healthy lifestyle choices taught in the classroom
- Marketing and peer pressure influence food choices. Schools need to model and encourage good nutrition choices
- Schools have significant influence over their students
- Many students consume up to 1/3 of their daily caloric intake while at school
- Parents are often concerned by the lack of control they have over the non-nutritious food choices students are making while at school

- Students who are well nourished perform better in school. Providing students with the tools to support and enhance educational outcomes is the responsibility of the school.

Argument: Infrequent Consumption

“It is just an occasional treat.”

You might respond to this by saying...

“Consider the standard food and beverage choices offered to students at venues and events that target children as the intended audience.”

- Unhealthy nutrition choices are often the only choice available to students
- Teachers, neighbours, grandparents, coaches, relatives and even parents often assume that they are the only adults offering the child a “treat” on any given day.
- Food and beverages consumed as snacks account for more calories than breakfast and about the same amount of calories as lunch (Canadian Community Health Survey. 2004)
- By rewarding or celebrating with unhealthy foods or beverages, we make these foods seem more desirable
- Many healthy foods are very appealing and widely accepted as celebratory offerings (fruit kebobs, seasonal berries, yoghurt parfaits, cheeses, chocolate milk, corn on the cob, veggies and dip)

“The day will come when the progress of nations will be judged not by their military or economic strength... but by the well-being of their peoples and by the protection that is afforded to the growing minds and bodies of their children.”

United Nations Children’s Fund

3. Recipes for Success: Saskatchewan Practice and Policy

Since the days of Tommy Douglas and Medicare, Saskatchewan has been a national leader in health reform and health promotion. In recognition of the important role nutrition has on student health and well-being, the government of Saskatchewan funds school-based nutrition programs in designated Community Schools. Approximately 12% of all provincially funded schools in Saskatchewan have been designated.

“Community Schools in partnership with families, local community and other human service organizations, deliver food services and nutrition education to meet the needs of children, youth and their families in their school community.”

Saskatchewan Learning

In 2004, the Saskatchewan School Boards Association partnered with the Public Health Nutritionists Working Group of Saskatchewan to create *Nutrition Guidelines for Schools*. This document provides schools and education stakeholders with a comprehensive assessment tool that strengthens the awareness of links between nutrition, health and school performance and provides a framework for developing nutrition policies in schools.

Nutrition policy in Saskatchewan schools falls under the purview of Boards of Education. While this approach may be less regulatory than other jurisdictions, it needs to be noted that excellent policies, practice and initiatives exist in many, if not most, of our schools. Saskatchewan is celebrated for its cooperative spirit and an environment which encourages grassroots initiatives. Saskatchewan educators and health care professionals recognize that schools significantly influence our children and are an essential component of health promotion in our society. By involving all stakeholders in the development of nutrition policy, our schools create an environment that promotes ownership and encourages greater implementation of desired change.

Saskatchewan resources available to
assist in policy development:

Nutrition Guidelines for Schools
Saskatchewan School Boards Association. 2004

Healthy Foods in Schools Tool Kit
Public Health Nutritionists of Saskatchewan
Working Group. 2005

In 2005, the Saskatchewan School Boards Association partnered with Breakfast for Learning to create the Saskatchewan Nutrition Advisory Council for Kids. S.N.A.C.K. includes provincial representatives from education, health, community service groups and business, all of whom are concerned with the nutritional health of our students. Council members work together to promote healthier learning environments. Their mission is to *work towards ensuring all children in Saskatchewan attend school well nourished and ready to learn.*

In 2007, the Saskatchewan Nutrition Advisory Council for Kids collaborated with business and government to create the Extreme School Makeover Challenge. The Challenge provides schools with the opportunity to showcase and expand upon the many *made in Saskatchewan* initiatives that are actively underway in our province. The Extreme School Makeover Challenge promotes healthy school environments for all students through encouragement and by the sharing of great ideas.

To learn more about S.N.A.C.K. and the Extreme School Makeover Challenge visit their website at www.snackbfl.ca

Breakfast for Learning is a national non-profit organization that supports child nutrition programs. In 2006, Saskatchewan Breakfast for Learning distributed over \$146,000.00 to 77 school nutrition programs serving almost 10,000 students daily. The Saskatchewan Nutrition Advisory Council for Kids is responsible for the distribution of Breakfast for Learning Nutrition Grants in our province.

Breakfast for Learning provides national quality standards for child nutrition programs in Canada. These best practices, better known as the “*Keys to Success*” were awarded the Sharing the Flame Award for Health and Learning by the Canadian Council on Learning.

To learn more about Breakfast for Learning and Keys to Success visit their website at www.breakfastforlearning.ca

There are many excellent examples of Boards of Education shaping policy and direction for improved student nutrition and health in Saskatchewan. Education and health professionals are working collaboratively to promote healthy school environments. Partnerships exist between Boards of Education, health regions, parent and student groups, business, non-government organizations, service groups, churches and others concerned for the nutritional well-being of our students.

Prince Albert Roman Catholic Separate School Division

Prince Albert Roman Catholic Separate School Division approved a comprehensive nutrition policy in January of 2006. This document was the result of many stakeholders working together to shape a policy that incorporates current research and information to serve the best interest of students. It is widely recognized as an exemplary nutrition policy for boards of education.

To view the complete policy, see Appendix A

North East School Division

North East School Division is actively engaged in the promotion of healthy student nutrition. They currently operate formal feeding programs in approximately half of all their schools. Informal feeding programs exist in most, if not all, of their facilities. A significant challenge is the lack of equitable funding available to schools not designated but who show a high need. Disparity between what is available and what is required is a concern. Currently, a process for the costing of nutrition programs is underway.

Developing practice to better determine the indicators of effective programs will take place over the next year. Monitoring and assessment to analyze the educational outcomes of operating feeding programs will unfold as part of the greater Continuous Improvement Plan.

School Community Councils have been entrusted with the responsibility of developing school nutrition policy. Assessment, creating or revising existing policies all fall within the mandate of the North East School Division School Community Councils. This is considered to be part of the overall School Improvement Planning that councils will utilize to achieve improved student outcomes.

Division-wide Board of Education nutrition policy is not being considered at this time.

Holy Trinity Catholic School Division

The directive of the Board of Education for Holy Trinity R.C.S.S.D. has been to actively promote education and awareness on the issues of student nutrition. The process has been a collaborative effort on the part of superintendents and school administrators. The results of this informal team effort have been tremendously successful in creating healthier learning environments for students.

All schools in the Holy Trinity R.C.S.S.D. have some form of school food policy in place. Staff members are part of a team currently working to create a Food Charter for Moose Jaw. This charter will form the basis for School Community Councils to revise, redevelop and create school nutrition policy.

An initiative hosted in one of Holy Trinity's schools has helped shape the nutrition policy and practice of several others. This project came about as a result of the Board of Education directive to promote education and awareness on student nutrition. The school principal and superintendent engaged parents, community, students and health care professionals to create a healthier school environment. Their success has been exemplary with two more schools in the division participating in similar initiatives.

Six of the ten schools in the division have formal feeding programs in place. All schools receive some funding from the division for nutrition. The division currently employs two nutrition workers to facilitate programs at the school level.

Good Spirit School Division

Good Spirit School Division is currently engaged in the process of creating division level nutrition policy. A staff member is doing research on school and school division nutrition policies as part of her graduate studies. This research will guide the direction of future division nutrition policy. It is hoped that the Board of Education will have a draft policy prepared by January 2008.

The unique approach of Good Spirit School Division is yet another example of the many ways Boards of Education are working to enhance the nutritional health and well being of their students.

Horizon School Division

The Horizon School Division, in partnership with the Saskatoon Health Region, developed a Nutrition Positive Pilot Project that began in January 2007. The project operates in four schools within the division and will continue through the 2007/08 school year. The goal of the Nutrition Positive Pilot Project is to *“take the nutrition curriculum beyond the classroom in the Horizon School Division”*.

The Nutrition Positive Program consists of three components:

- Curriculum Enhancement: incorporating nutrition into other subjects; produce a play; make a video; cook healthy food.
- Healthy Food Environment: use healthy food or non food items for classroom incentive/rewards; replace pop with water, milk and 100% juice in vending machines; use fundraisers and extra-curricular activities to reinforce healthy eating message; have only healthy foods at classroom events and parties; school staff act as role models for students by eating healthy food; promote and utilize locally grown foods.
- Healthy Food Policy: write and implement healthy food policy about classroom incentives and rewards; “hot” lunches; fundraising; classroom events; school activities; vending machines; cafeteria/canteen; food programs; all foods served or sold in the school.

The Public Health Nutritionist from the Saskatoon Health Region and the Public Health Nurse from each of these communities committed to work with the school staff. They, along with other concerned stakeholders, are working together to create healthy food environments in schools.

There is also an aspect of the project to work with the Board of Education to create healthy food policies. As a start to this process, the Public Health Nutritionist made a presentation to the Board of Education and the School Administrators in May, 2007.

Division Scolaire Francophone

While fully appreciating the important role good nutrition plays in the health and well-being of students, the Division Scolaire Francophone has not currently engaged in Board level initiatives or nutrition policy setting at this point in time. The expectation is that this will unfold in the near future.

Currently they have one school that has implemented comprehensive nutrition policy which could be interpreted as an informal pilot project. They are working their way through the many challenges of implementation and are happy to report success.

Northern Lights School Division

The NLSD Nutrition Program is community based and designed according to the needs of each school within the division. Programming ranges from simple nutritional refreshments to meals made completely from scratch. In one NLSD school, granola bars, pizza pops, soups, etc. are all homemade.

Milk and meal tickets are available to students at moderate rates. Menu choices for students are in accordance with the Canada Food Guide. Proper nutritional choices are partnered with activities to ensure students receive daily physical activity. In one school there is a 15 minute **in motion** activity each morning before the snack is served. It has been reported that, *“This routine has not only been essential in providing the students with the energy their brains need in order to be more successful in their learning, but also teaches them lifelong, healthy habits.”*

NLSD has linked with other partners such as the Diabetes Coalition, Northern Human Services Partnerships, Social Services and other service providers in order to provide their nutrition programming. Funds are received through a grant process and, in some circumstances, an anonymous donor. Most schools have implemented a *“NO POP/CHIP”* policy and have had the vending machines taken out of the school premises.

The nutrition program is greatly appreciated by the students and the teachers. Teachers have provided positive feedback on the benefits of the program. A nutrition coordinator states, *“With the rise in diabetes*

and obesity in the North, we feel it is very important to raise our student's awareness of the benefits of healthy eating. Providing them with a daily nutritious snack of healthy food choices can go a long way to improving over-all diet. Being a northern community means a considerable increase in the cost of fresh produce and milk products so many students receive a minimal amount at home. This grant money is of great benefit in educating our students on nutrition."

The nutrition program provides learning in other areas such as home economics, wellness programming, safe food handling and hands-on learning for students.

Prairie South School Division

Prairie South School Division made a commitment to participate in the Five Hills Health Region Initiative to provide healthy food choices in schools. The goal is to have only healthy food choices available within a three year window.

During year one, school administrators participated in professional learning that included discussion of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association *Nutrition Guidelines for Schools* and an interactive presentation with the health region nutritionist on the issues of youth obesity, diabetes and fitness.

Administrators then began a process to provide only healthy food choices at their school. Most schools have involved their Student Representative Council and School Community Council. Several changes have occurred including the removal of junk food from vending machines, changed machine signage and an increase in healthy food choices at concessions and food sales.

Riverview Community School has been an exemplary model in changing food choices to match the Saskatchewan School Boards Association *Nutrition Guidelines for Schools*. They are pleased to report that students and staff love the choices.

A division nutrition committee has been established to write protocol which will be shared with schools in fall 2007.

During year two, schools will establish their own school protocol that supports the division protocol. They will also continue steps to provide healthy food choices.

By year three, the intention is to have healthy food choices available at all Prairie South School Division schools, as established in *Nutrition Guidelines for Schools*, in keeping with school division and individual school protocols.

Prairie Valley School Division

Nutrition Policy/Practice

Preamble

The health and wellbeing of children is critical to their learning success. Consequently, Prairie Valley School Division supports in principle, and through all school division policy and operational procedures, practices which enhance student wellbeing including the ongoing implementation of the Six Effective Practices of School^{Plus}.

Nutrition

School Division policy and practice regarding nutrition is embedded in various aspects of the Board Strategic Plan, the Prairie Valley School Division System Goals and Operational Procedures.

1. Board Strategic Plan: As of its inception in January 2006, the Prairie Valley School Division Board of Education has established and adhered to a three year strategic plan.

The operation of the school division and all program offerings and supports to learning follow from the Board of Education's strategic plan and align with the vision, mission and guiding principles detailed there (a copy of the strategic plan is attached).

Guiding Principles identified in the Board Strategic Plan highlight eight specific shared values. One of those eight values is ***Diversity***. The strategic plan states:

We strive to create equitable environments
which are physically, emotionally, intellectually,
socially, and spiritually safe and secure.

This statement by the Board of Education sets a context in Prairie Valley School Division for the provision of initiatives which address the nutrition of children.

Curriculum Implementation: Health Education Curriculum

Prairie Valley School Division supports the provincial health curriculum and nutrition is addressed through curriculum implementation in all PVSD schools.

The philosophy of the health education curriculum in our schools is about education for health, with nutrition woven throughout the grades. The curriculum advocates an integrated approach so that

issues are not addressed in isolation but rather linked across a variety of topics to reinforce the idea that no single factor causes people to be healthy or not healthy. A wide variety of skills are incorporated that promote the adoption of health-enhancing behaviours.

Specifically related to nutrition a few examples of topics across the grades are:

Grade 1: Choosing Healthy Snacks
Grade 2: Following Canada's Food Guide
Grade 3: Choosing What We Eat: Reading Labels
Grade 4: Aids to Good Digestion
Grade 5: Good Nutrition in Adolescence
Grade 6: Body Image and Nutrition
Grade 7: Healthy Eating
Grade 8: Eating Disorders
Grade 9: Promoting a Healthy Food School Policy
Wellness 10: Healthy Eating
Life Transitions 20, 30: Life Balance & Health Self Care

2. Operational Procedures

Prairie Valley School Division has developed operational procedures that will be implemented in the 2007 and 2008 school year. The operational procedure which addresses "Student Welfare" states that:

Prairie Valley School Division requires all employees to concern themselves with the physical, social, and emotional welfare of each student. Abuse or neglect of children and youth must not be left unchecked by persons charged with the care of students. The division affirms that employees will be active partners with other agencies in supporting the needs of children.

Many schools in PVSD have initiated nutrition programs supported by community members and organizations.

Saskatoon Public School Division

Saskatoon Public Schools are actively engaged with the Saskatoon Health Region in support of the Nutrition Positive program in schools. An Advisory Committee coordinates Nutrition Positive with representation from Saskatoon Public School Division, Saskatoon Catholic Schools, Child Hunger and Education Program (CHEP), Saskatoon Health Region Public Health Services, University of Saskatchewan, and community members.

“Nutrition Positive helps students eat better, feel better and be in a better learning situation. It’s a great way to get the whole school involved in promoting healthy eating,” (Captain Carrot, the Nutrition Positive mascot)

Saskatoon Public Schools engaged in the Nutrition Positive program have created a Healthy Food Environment to change awareness, education, behaviour, policy and long term health of students and staff. Teams are created within the school, with staff, students, parents and a health nurse, to plan and promote healthy choices, activities and curriculum connections to healthy eating. Workshops are organized by Saskatoon Health Region to provide free resources and materials. Newsletters are sent out to all schools with healthy tips for students, staff and families. Teachers collaborate to share tried and true ideas which are then shared with all schools in the Division.

For more information on the Nutrition Positive Program contact the Saskatoon Health Region

Regina Catholic Separate School Division

Regina Catholic Separate School Division is actively engaged in providing for the nutritional needs of their students. Their school division and schools have followed their own best past practices to meet the needs of students. They are currently engaged with several community partners to review best practice in nutrition program delivery, identify current practice and any challenges or barriers to maintaining best practice standards. They are also investigating the potential for group purchasing, clarifying the role of nutrition programs and identifying outcome measures which will guide further actions. Their goal is move towards common nutritional standards, increased efficiencies, common strategies and purposes. As a result of the information gathered, RCSSD brought together all the division employed nutrition workers, coordinators and home economists for professional development. They are also providing the Food Safety Training Course to all division nutrition workers and will require all new hires to possess this certification.

R.C.S.S.D. has seven designated community schools that have a nutrition program and nutrition worker that follow Saskatchewan Education requirements and policy. With the exception of these

designated community school programs, they have not implemented written policy for nutrition programs.

As is the case in many school divisions, they have schools that have high needs that do not have provincial designation. These schools receive funds from the division for a food snack program and have food available for children based on need. Several of their schools have EFAP Programs that also require food and are funded by the school division.

All of Regina Catholic Separate School Division schools have food supplies available in the school for students who need something to eat during the course of the day. The principals of these schools use their school based budgets to cover these costs.

O'Neil High School is a designated community school that receives funding from both the province and the division to support their nutrition initiatives. Miller High School, while not designated, has been recognized by the division as high need and its cafeteria receives funds from the school division to help cover the costs of this program. St. Luke is a High School re-entry program and also houses two behavioral classrooms that feed students on a need basis. Jean Vanier School is a special needs school that also feeds students daily and is funded by the division.

Saskatchewan Public Health Nutritionists are available to facilitate workshops and provide advice on menu planning.

The Saskatchewan School Boards Association and SK Learning will assist in providing policy direction

***Students learn best when they are well nourished,
have safety and stability in their families and
communities, are respected for who they are,
and when their needs are being met***

Saskatchewan Learning, 2005

4. Guide for Creating School Nutrition Policy

Form a committee

Identify key stakeholders and stakeholder groups. Look for people who share a passion for student nutrition and health. Your committee should have representation from parents, students, teachers, administrators and health professionals. You might also consider including supporters from within business, service groups and food service providers.

Existing School Community Councils are a terrific starting point for your nutrition committee. Research clearly indicates the link between student nutrition and academic performance. School Community Councils should consider developing nutrition policy as part of their School Improvement Plan.

Set goals

Clearly define the process that will be utilized to develop policy. Discuss the intended purpose of the policy and set clear goals. Carefully consider your priorities and ability to fully implement the desired changes.

Careful consideration of stakeholder feedback is critical at all stages of policy development.

Educate

Utilize the process of policy development to educate about nutrition. By keeping the lines of communication open, your policy development will serve as an educational tool for those involved. You will enhance ownership of the policy by giving careful consideration to all stakeholders' input and by providing informed feedback. Ensuring the understanding and support of stakeholders early on in the process will secure greater implementation once the policy is in place.

Write policy

After careful consideration of all the issues and having identified strategies to overcome the challenges, you are ready to begin. A comprehensive policy that considers all aspects of the hidden and parallel curriculum will ensure healthy messages and choices that promote good nutrition throughout the school.

Implement

The value of good nutrition policy will be measured, in part, by its implementation. The best nutrition policy will have no impact on student health if it is not being fully implemented. Time and consideration should be given to create workable strategies for the implementation of your policy.

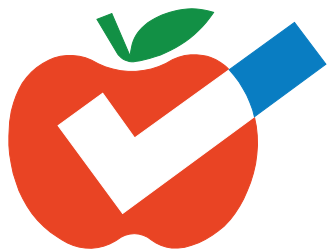
Assess, evaluate, change if necessary

All policy needs to be properly assessed and evaluated to ensure it is achieving the desired outcomes. Regular evaluation and revisions where necessary will keep the policy alive and workable. By staying current with your policy, you can capitalize on the many continual advances occurring in nutrition research. This will also provide the opportunity to create ongoing dialogue to inform and educate your stakeholders on nutrition.

Canada's Food Guide, information and interactive tools are available online at: www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide

***Improving child nutrition results in improved
educational outcomes for all students***

Saskatchewan Nutrition Advisory Council for Kids



Conclusion

Research has evidenced a strong relationship between a student's nutritional intake and educational outcomes. Behaviour, concentration and academic performance are all impacted by the foods that children eat. Many schools have shown increased attendance and reduced tardiness as a result of implementing breakfast programs.

Schools have a role in health promotion for their students. It is not enough that we teach healthy lifestyle choices in the classroom. Schools must ensure that nutrition messaging and choices throughout the facility support the formal curriculum. Fundraisers, community events and extra-curricular activities should model and encourage healthy choices. Nutritious food and beverages made available in canteens, cafeterias and vending machines provide students with an excellent opportunity to practice healthy eating.

“A school cafeteria should smell like Grandma’s kitchen on a holiday, not like a fast food chain.”

**Dalmeny High School,
Extreme School Makeover Challenge submission**

Children do not have a say in food insecurity but they must live with the consequences. All children would prefer to have abundant food for themselves and their households if given the choice. Beyond the rights and needs of the individual child, certainly it could be said that teachers and fellow classmates would benefit if all students were well nourished and ready to learn.

Households that can well afford proper nourishment are not ensuring their children consume the daily required nutrients outlined in Canada's Food Guide. All too often, it would seem our society has lost sight of the importance of good nutrition and our children are paying the price. By allowing our students to consume a constant diet of non-nutritious food and beverages, we are supporting the dramatic increases in nutrition related illnesses and loss of productivity.

There are many fine examples of Saskatchewan schools and Boards of Education working in partnership with their communities and other education stakeholders to create school environments that are health promoting. Just as consumer demand is beginning to drive the markets towards healthier food choices, so too can schools drive the health promotion of our students to new heights.

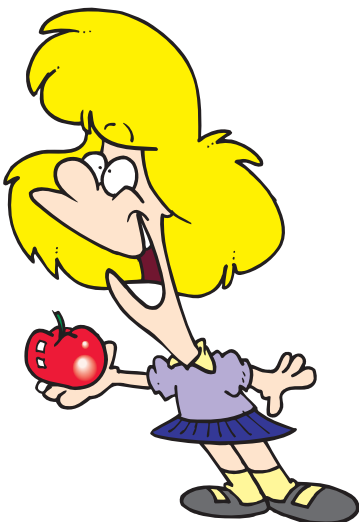
As schools formalize best practice into policy and begin the work of educating their stakeholders on the importance of good nutrition, the daily consumption of non-nutritious food choices will be diminished. In the 2005 CUISR report, *Breakfast/Snack Programs in Elementary Schools: Evaluating Benefits, Barriers, and Essential Skills*, Dr. Henry states,

“The children’s willingness to eat different, and often more nutritious foods, at school affects the eating behaviours of the parents. As well students ate foods at school that parents had previously tried unsuccessfully. This study provides evidence that the nutrition program at schools contributes to the knowledge of good nutrition and this knowledge is transferred from the school to the home to the community.”

The common goal of educators is to properly prepare students to become productive, healthy members of our society. Nutrition and health education are essential components to achieving that goal. By working together we can create learning environments that promote improved nutrition and health for all children.

***“When I get food to eat, I feel great and better inside.
It is a good feeling. When you get food to eat, you
feel alert and ready to learn. You don’t feel mad or
hungry anymore. I like the nutrition program.”***

**Child participant,
Dr. Brass School Nutrition Program**



References

- American Diabetes Association. 2000. *Type 2 Diabetes in Children and Adolescents*. Diabetes Care, 23(3):381-389
- Berenbaum S. 2004. *Nutrition in Saskatchewan Schools: Policy, Practice and Needs*. Heart and Stroke Foundation of Saskatchewan.
- Breakfast for Learning. 2007. *Children's Health & Nutrition Initiative*. Available at: www.breakfastforlearning.ca
- Breakfast for Learning. 2006. *Report Card on Nutrition for School Children*. Available at: www.breakfastforlearning.ca
- Canadian Diabetes Association. 2007. *Is Diabetes Serious?* http://www.diabetes.ca/Section_About/thefacts.asp
- Henry CJ. 2005. *Breakfast/Snack Programs in Saskatchewan Elementary Schools: Evaluating Benefits, Barriers, and Essential Skills*. University of Saskatchewan
- King AJC, Boyce WF, and King MA. 1999. *Trends in the Health of Canadian Youth*. Ottawa. Health Canada.
- Ludwig DS, Peterson KE, and Gortmaker SL. 2001. *Relation Between Consumption of Sugar-Sweetened Drinks and Childhood Obesity*. Lancet, 357:505-598
- Monahan H, 2004. *A National Scan Relating to School-based Feeding Programs*. Nova Scotia Office of Health Promotion
- Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health, School Nutrition Working Group. *Call to Action: Creating A Healthy Eating Environment*. 2004
www.osnp-ph.on.ca/pdfs/call_to_action.pdf
- Papamandjaris A. 2000 *Breakfast and Learning in Children: A review of the effects of Breakfast on Scholastic Performance*. Breakfast for Learning. Canada. www.breakfastforlearning.ca/english/resources_a3/materials/papa_report.pdf
- Public Health Nutritionists of Saskatchewan. 2006. *The Cost of Healthy Eating in Saskatchewan*
- Public Health Nutritionists of Saskatchewan Working Group. 2005. *Healthy Foods in Schools Tool Kit*. The kit is available for loan from your public health nutritionist or online at www.heartandstroke.sk.ca

- Saskatchewan School Boards Association. *Nutrition Guidelines for Schools*. Research Report #04-01:2004. <http://www.saskschoolboards.ca/>
- School Nutrition Advisory Coalition. *Feeding the Future: School Nutrition Handbook*. Calgary Health Region. 2005. www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/hecomm/nal/ProgramsServices/SchoolNutritionProgram/2005-Introduction.pdf
- Statistics Canada. *Overview of Canadians' Eating Habits*, in *Nutrition: Findings from the Canadian Community Health Survey:2004*. www.statcan.ca/bsolc/english/bsolc?catno=82-620-MIE2006002
- Statistics Canada. *Overweight Canadian Children and Adolescents*, in *Nutrition: Findings from the Canadian Community Health Survey: 2004*. www.statcan.ca/bsolc/english/bsolc?catno=82-620-M20050018061
- Tufts University Center on Hunger, Poverty & Nutrition Policy. 1994. *Statement on the Link Between Nutrition and Cognitive Development in Children*. Tufts University, Medford MA.
- University of Regina. Social Policy Research Unit. *Report Card on Child Poverty in Saskatchewan*. 2006. Regina

“I never thought a man could save his soul if his belly was empty or that he could think about things like beauty and goodness if he had a toothache.”

Tommy Douglas, 1982

Appendix A

Prince Albert Roman Catholic Separate School Division Nutrition Policy

PRINCE ALBERT ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL DIVISION NO. 6

POLICY ITEM: Nutrition

CODE: EF

LEGAL STATUS: Board Motion 04.06

DATE APPROVED: 09 Jan 06

Background:

The Board of Education is committed to supporting healthy lifestyle choices and as such believes in promoting and offering nutritious foods in its schools. A diet of nutritious foods contributes to academic achievement and better health. Healthy eating patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth, and lifelong health and well-being. Schools share the responsibility with the home and community in educating children on the need for healthy, nutritious foods.

POLICY:

The Board of Education directs all schools to offer and serve healthy, nutritious foods in its snack and lunch programs and at any other school function or venue where food is served to students.

Guidelines:

1. The choice of foods offered and served in our schools, and at any school approved event shall adhere to the guidelines as outlined in the Saskatchewan School Boards Association *Nutrition Guidelines for Schools*. See Appendix A.
2. The foods offered and served in our schools will complement the learning objectives of Saskatchewan Learning.
3. Nutritious foods will be competitively priced and appropriately promoted and advertised.
4. School Fundraising (door-to-door) does not include the sale of non-nutritious foods.
5. Vending machines (drinks/snacks) will be limited to the high school and will provide a 75% majority of nutritious choices.

6. Nutritious foods or non-food items will be offered most often as rewards or treats, or at school celebrations.

Procedures:

1. Each school shall establish a *Nutrition Committee* that will oversee the implementation of this policy, and the development of a school-based nutrition policy.
2. Inservicing will be provided for those who serve and handle foods in each school, and for other members of the school's *Nutrition Committee*.
3. At the beginning of each school year, principals are to inform all families of the school division's nutrition policy and how it applies to their respective school.
4. During the year, schools are encouraged to continually inform parents re: nutritional information and education.
5. As staff members are role models, staff members are encouraged to set an example.

Nutrition Guidelines for Schools

The following food lists were developed¹ for use in Saskatchewan schools that offer regular snack and/or meal service. All schools that serve regular meals or snacks should have a written menu plan. The plans should follow the principles outlined in *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating* and *Canada's Guidelines for Healthy Eating*:

- ✓ Enjoy a VARIETY of foods
- ✓ Emphasize cereals, breads, other grain products, vegetables and fruit
- ✓ Choose lower-fat dairy products, leaner meats and food prepared with little or no fat
- ✓ Achieve and maintain a healthy body weight by enjoying regular physical activity and healthy eating
- ✓ Limit salt and caffeine

A **meal** should contain at least one serving from each of the four food groups of *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*.

A **snack** should contain at least one serving from two food groups of *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*.

While all foods can fit into a healthy diet, some foods should be served less often than others. Use the following “food selection categories” when deciding on snack and meal options. These guidelines will help students meet minimum nutrition requirements while limiting the amount of salt, fat and/or sugar.

“SERVE MOST OFTEN”

Most of these foods are good sources of one or more of the nutrients iron, calcium, vitamin A, C, or D, and/or are high in fibre. They are generally low in fat, sugar and salt.

These foods may be served without restriction. ***They should be served every day or “most often”.***

1. Grain Products

- *Whole grain* bread, rolls, buns, bagels, pita bread, tortillas, cracker, baked bannock,
- *Whole grain* muffins, loaves, pancakes, waffles,
- *Whole grain* unsweetened or low sugar breakfast cereals with:
 - ≥ 2 g fibre/serving and

¹ This resource was developed by the Public Health Nutritionists of Saskatchewan Working Group in co-operation with the Saskatchewan School Boards Association.

- < 8 g sugar/serving
- Cooked *whole grain*, unsweetened cereals,
- Corn bread,
- *Whole grain* pasta, noodles,
- Barley, couscous,
- Brown or converted (parboiled) rice.

Whole grain products are preferred over enriched grain products.

2. Vegetables and Fruit

- Fresh/frozen/canned vegetables and fruit prepared without added sugar or salt
- Vegetables prepared with little fat
- Fruit canned in juice
- 100% fruit and/or canned vegetable juices
- Vegetable soups
- Vegetable/fruit salads
- Unsweetened applesauce
- Frozen 100% fruit juice bars

Choose dark green and orange ones often.

3. Milk Products

- 2%, 1% or skim milk
- Yogurt
- Cheese
- Cottage Cheese
- Milk-based soups
- Skim milk powder
- Soy beverage – fortified and low fat
- Smoothies made with yogurt and milk

Offer water for thirst!

4. Meat and Alternatives

- Roasted/baked/grilled chicken, turkey, fish, seafood, beef, liver, pork, lamb
- Fish canned in water
- Lean ground beef
- Wild meat (if butchered in an approved facility)
- Cooked dried peas, beans, lentils
- Eggs prepared with little added fat
- Tofu and soy based alternatives (i.e. veggie burgers)
- Peanut butter
- Nuts and seeds

“SERVE SOMETIMES”

Most of these foods are sources of one or more of the nutrients iron, calcium, vitamin A, C, or D, but are also high in fat, sugar or salt or low in fibre. This makes them less nutritious. **If a food from this category is served it should be combined with a food from the “Serve Most Often” group.**

Since foods in this group are not as rich in nutrients as foods in the “Serve Most Often” group, these foods should be limited. **Only 2 – 3 foods from the “Serve Sometimes” category may be served per week.**

1. Grain Products

- Enriched (white) bread, pita, bagel, rolls, tortillas
- Biscuits, scones
- Breadsticks
- Breakfast cereals:
 - ≥ 8 g sugar/serving
 - < 2 g fibre/serving
- Sweetened instant oatmeal, cream of wheat
- Granola, granola bars/cereal bars (not dipped)
- Pancake, waffles (made with enriched flour)
- Fruit loaves, muffins made with enriched flour
- Whole grain cookies made with oatmeal, peanut butter, or dried fruit
- Croissants
- White or instant rice
- White or enriched pasta, noodles
- Sesame bars, rice cakes, plain popcorn
- Pretzels, baked chips, taco shells

2. Vegetables and Fruit

- Canned vegetables with added salt
- Fruit in syrup
- Dried fruit
- 100% fruit leather or 100% fruit and vegetable bars
- Vegetables with sauces
- Sweetened fruit juice
- Fruit crisps, cobblers
- Salsa

3. Milk Products

- Whole milk
- Fruit shakes/milkshakes

- Flavoured milks (i.e. chocolate)
- Yogurt drinks
- Milk-based puddings and custards
- Frozen yogurt, ice milk
- Hot chocolate made with milk
- Processed cheese slices, cheese spread

4. Meat and Alternatives

- Lean deli meats (ham, corned beef, turkey roll, pastrami, etc)
- Canned fish (packed in oil)
- Preformed hamburger patties

5. Combination Foods

- Pizza
- Pasta salad, taco salad
- Submarine sandwiches

To serve these foods more often use ingredients from the “Serve Most Often” category.

“SERVE LEAST OFTEN”

These foods are low in nutrients and fibre and also high in fat, sugar and salt. *These foods are not appropriate for school nutrition meal/snack programs.*

If you choose to use them, limit these to one food from this list no more than twice in a four-week period.

- Pastry, danishes, doughnuts
- Cakes, sticky buns
- Cake muffins, muffins and fruit loaves from mixes
- Cookies (with sweet filling or icing)
- Dipped granola bars
- Flavoured popcorn
- Rice Krispie cake/puffed wheat cake
- Instant noodles
- Packaged soup noodles
- Pre-sweetened breakfast cereal with >8 grams sugar/serving
- Cream cheese
- Wieners/sausages/bologna, salami/pepperoni, beef jerky, kielbasa etc.
- French fries/onion rings
- Deep fried vegetables
- Bread or battered chicken or fish
- Ice cream and sherbet

Beverages/Snack-Type Food

- Soft drinks (regular and diet)
- Slushes
- Fruit flavoured crystal drinks, fruit beverages, cocktails nectars, drinks, punches, blends, “ades”
- Sports drinks
- Coffee, tea, iced tea
- Hot chocolate made with water
- Marshmallows
- Cheezies
- Chips, taco chips
- Chip dip
- Candy, chocolate, gum
- Fruit flavoured snacks
- Frozen ice treats (i.e. popsicles)
- Flavoured gelatin (i.e. jello)

Condiments

These foods should be used in small amounts (i.e. 1-2 teaspoons).

When used in small amounts, they may be served more often.

- Syrup, honey
- Jam, jellies
- Cream, whipping cream
- White and brown sugar
- Salad dressing, vegetable dips
- Gravy
- Sour cream
- Non-dairy creamers and whipped topping
- Ketchup, mustard, relish
- Pickles
- Soya sauce
- Bacon bits