



# School Food in Saskatchewan: Growing Universal Programs?

Saskatchewan School Boards' Association  
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# History of School Food Programs Globally (Oostindjer et al. 2017)

Phase 1: 1850 to about the 1970s, established and maintained primarily to reduce hunger. Minimal focus on food quality.

Phase 2: 1970s in some parts of Europe, and in 1990s and 2000s, in the US and UK, shift towards improving food quality.

Phase 3: in infancy in most countries, focused on incorporating broader food-system and societal issues, integration with curricula and the school environment.

# Global Context

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SFP can include breakfast, lunch, and/or snacks, with or without integration into curricula.

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SFP one of the most successful drivers of improved health, education and economic growth (WFP, 2016).

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Over 368 million children in 151 countries – 77% of all countries – receive free or subsidized school meals supported by state and national governments (Rutledge, 2016).

# Canadian Context

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Research has shown that the school day diets of Canadian children across the socio-economic spectrum are poor (Tugault-Lafleur, Black & Barr, 2017).

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Canada is one of very few affluent countries without a national program – but this is about to change!

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Poor food environment, time poverty, household incomes all contribute to poor diets of children

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Food can be used for education on environmental issues, about social and political systems, and about agriculture (Stone, 2007; Weaver-Hightower 2011).

# School Food Research

- Studies focused on school food programs and academic achievement find positive impacts on attendance, tardiness, and drop-out rates.
- Attendance and tardiness appear to be most affected, but some studies have found improvements in academic achievement with the introduction of a school food program (Hollar et al., 2010; Alaimo, Olson, & Frongillo, 2001; Meyers, Sampson, Weitzman, Rogers, & Kayne, 1989; Symons, Cinelli, James, & Groff, 1997; Weitzman, Klerman, Lamb, Menary & Alpert, 1982; Pollitt, Gersovitz, & Gargiulo, 1978; Florence, Asbridge, & Veugelers, 2008; Murphy et al., 1998; Kleinman et al., 2002; Turner & Chaloupka, 2015; Anderson, Gallagher, & Ritchie, 2017).
- Universal programs may reduce education inequalities.

# School Food Research

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Children can be involved in growing and preparing food, learning how the food system works, its critical environmental and social challenges, in age-appropriate ways to integrate learning with a meal program (Cullen et al., 2015).

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Evidence on benefits of multi-component, education-integrated school food interventions especially focused on younger children (prior to adolescence) (Greenhalgh et al., 2007; Hollar et al., 2010).

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Students learn appreciation for food (especially food they have grown or prepared themselves), willingness to try new foods (Morris, Neustadter, & Zidenberg-Cherr, 2001; Dohle, Rall, & Siegrist, 2014).

# Until April 1<sup>st</sup>...

The Current

## Advocates urge federal government to commit to a national school lunch program

f t p r in e

Kids shouldn't have to worry about their next meal, community leaders say

CBC Radio · Posted: Jan 21, 2022 10:11 AM ET | Last Updated: January 21

### THE COALITION FOR HEALTHY SCHOOL FOOD IS CALLING ON PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL LEADERS TO WORK TOGETHER TO FEED SCHOOL CHILDREN



Education Ministers meet in Toronto on July 7 & 8, the Coalition for Healthy School Food is calling on provincial

Canada / News

## UNICEF report ranks Canada 37th out of 41 wealthy nations in access to nutritious food for children


Camille Bains · THE CANADIAN PRESS  
Jun 14, 2017 · June 15, 2017 · 3 minute read



FSC

### Growing resilience and equity:

A food policy action plan in the context of Covid-19



Canada's National Observer

### Finally, Liberals are putting school food programs on the menu

Healthy, delicious school food could soon be on the plates of millions of Canadian children after the federal government recently committed...

Jan 19, 2022

### FEDERAL BUDGET PLEDGES A CANADIAN SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAM BUT RECIPE REQUIRES FUNDING

Amberley Ruetz and Sara Kirk · March 25, 2019



Canada is ranked 37th of the 41 most wealthy nations in regards to child well-being and access to healthy food, according to UNICEF. (Shutterstock)

# Then on April 1<sup>st</sup>...



April 1, 2024  
Scarborough, Ontario

Politics · **Breaking**

## Federal government commits to creation of national school food program

Government commits to \$1 billion over five years

 [Christian Paas-Lang](#) · CBC News · Posted: Apr 01, 2024 11:40 AM CDT | Last Updated: 12 minutes ago



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced on Monday that the federal budget released later this month will include provisions for a national school food program. (Kristen Everson/CBC)

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The federal government says it will launch a national school food program, hoping to deliver meals to an additional 400,000 children per year.

## Trudeau announces budget funding for national school food program


CAROLINE ALPHONSO > EDUCATION REPORTER  
PUBLISHED APRIL 1, 2024  
UPDATED YESTERDAY



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau talks to 10-year-old Chakai as he cuts fruit next to chef Jason Simpson for a lunch program at the Boys and Girls Club East Scarborough, in Toronto on April 1.  
CHRIS YOUNG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

## What we know – and don't – about the national school food program

Few details about \$1B program in prime minister's announcement

 [Natalie Stechyson](#) · CBC News · Posted: Apr 03, 2024 3:00 AM CDT | Last Updated: 5 hours ago





## Good Food For Learning Universal School Lunch Program

- Two-year pilot project to implement a universal, curriculum integrated school lunch program in two Saskatoon schools in partnership
- Pre-existing lunch programs in both schools were expanded



### LUNCH PROGRAM

- Menu included a variety of vegetables and fruit, whole grains, dairy products, plant proteins, and meat served to all students and staff daily, at no cost
- Accommodations for student allergies and intolerances, vegetarian and Halal diets
- Staff encouraged to eat with students



### CURRICULUM INTEGRATION

- The school lunch program includes six food and nutrition lesson plans for each grade, Kindergarten to grade 6
  - Meet standard Saskatchewan curriculum indicators and weave across subject areas like science, social studies, health, and math
- Opportunities to participate in hands-on food and nutrition-related learning such as cooking and growing food



Canadian Institutes of  
Health Research  
Instituts de recherche  
en santé du Canada





## Baseline Nutrition Results

- Analysis based on 1/3 of daily recommendations
- 374 students from kindergarten to 6<sup>th</sup> grade, 2/3 measured twice, 1/3 measured once
- **School lunches were characterized by a low content of micronutrients of importance for childhood and a low nutrient density**
- Proportion of lunches below nutrient recommendations:
  - Vitamin A 1/2
  - Calcium 3/4
  - Magnesium 1/2
  - Vitamin D all
  - Iron ¼
  - Vitamin C 1/3
  - Folate 1/3
  - Zinc ½
  - Dietary fibre all
  - Omega-3 and Omega-6 1/2
  - ½ exceeded Sodium recommendations (likely underestimated)

# Food Literacy

- Gardening activities, sustainability walks, Indigenous food learning and visits to CHEP garden
- Grade 7 students Food Safe Certification
- Chefs In Training w/ CHEP: five sessions for grades 4-7
- Students supporting lunch program- cutting up vegetable trays, serving, preparing snack, etc.
- Tasting activities, food exploration





# Growing Food

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# Tasting the Harvest

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# Costing

|                                   |                                 | 1st year of Program |                  | 2nd year of Program |                  |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|------------------|
|                                   |                                 | School 1 (Large)    | School 2 (Small) | School 1 (Large)    | School 2 (Small) |
| Food                              | <b>Total Cost per day</b>       | \$327.7             | \$177.5          | \$295.7             | \$237.8          |
|                                   | <b>Average servings per day</b> | 175                 | 87               | 171                 | 121              |
|                                   | <b>Average Cost per serving</b> | <b>\$1.9</b>        | <b>\$2.0</b>     | <b>\$1.7</b>        | <b>\$2.0</b>     |
| Labour                            | <b>Total Cost per day</b>       | \$369.7             | \$335.2          | \$406.8             | \$274.6          |
|                                   | <b>Average servings per day</b> | 175                 | 87               | 171                 | 121              |
|                                   | <b>Average cost per serving</b> | <b>\$2.1</b>        | <b>\$3.9</b>     | <b>\$2.4</b>        | <b>\$2.3</b>     |
| <b>Total cost Food and Labour</b> |                                 | <b>\$4.0</b>        | <b>\$5.9</b>     | <b>\$4.1</b>        | <b>\$4.2</b>     |

- For second year, labour cost considers substitute nutrition workers.
- Not considered: volunteers, supervision, Community Coordinators, donations.

*School food costs in NL, PEI, SK, QC & BC for lunch in one school per province showed an average lunch cost of 6.45\$.*

# Caregivers' Views on the Lunch Program

Caregiver Interviews

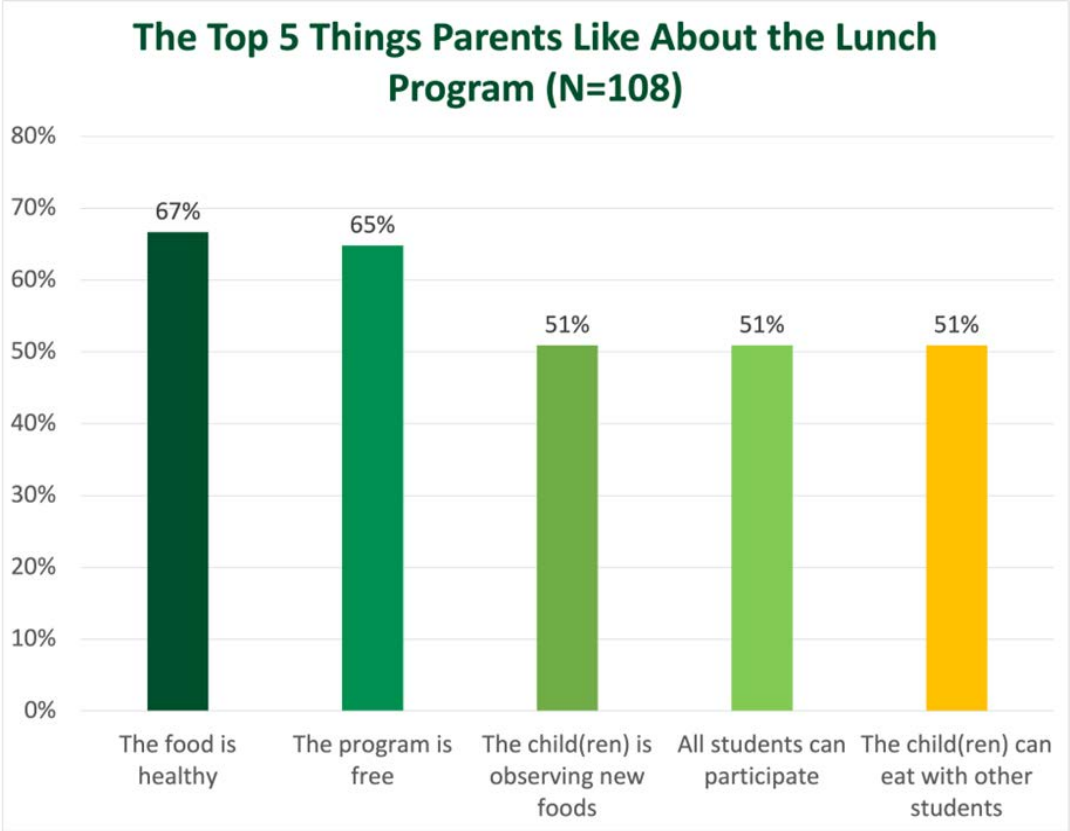
Interviews with caregivers at schools with the universal lunch

*“The lunch program helps children and parents in many ways...”*

*“An accessible lunch program is a huge need in this community ...”*

*“... has made a huge difference to my children's mood during the day”*

Caregiver Survey



# Investing in School Food Service Staff

**Investing in training school food service staff and supporting the available labor force is critical**

- Knowledge, skills and availability of nutrition worker substitutes was raised frequently as a challenge to program implementation, scalability and sustainability
- Food service staff require ongoing training in areas such as: incorporating diverse diets and foods (vegetarianism, Halal, cultural foods, etc.), scaling recipes, mentoring students in food preparation and nutrition, etc.
- Providing wages and positions where workers can professionally develop comparable to other food service establishments



# Moving Forward



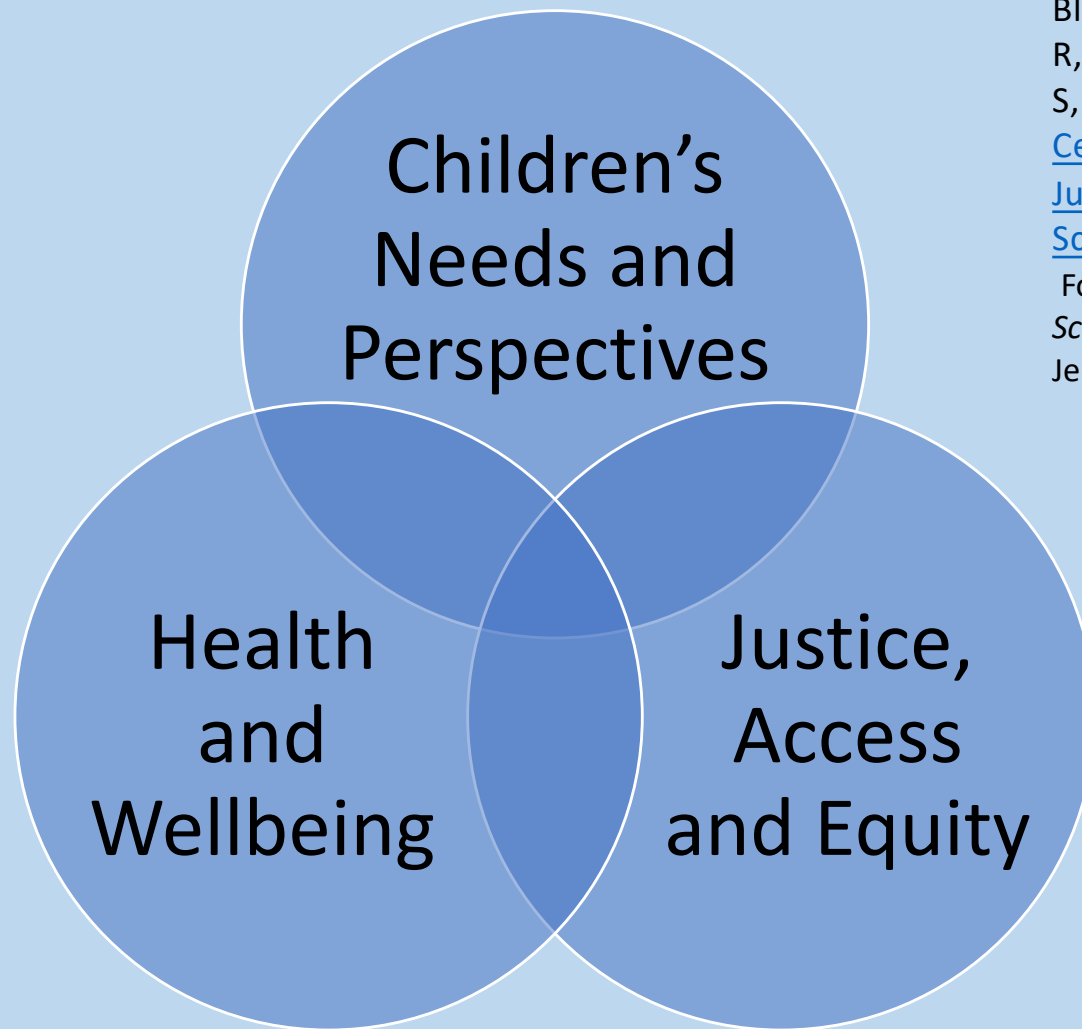


## What needs to happen next for Canada to have a successful school food program

Published: April 2, 2024 4.24pm EDT

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau next to the chef and other people at the Boys and Girls Club East Scarborough, in Toronto, before an announcement to launch a National School Food Program, April 1, 2024. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Chris Young

- 1) Outcome and implementation evaluation (prospective, free versus pay-what-you-can)
- 2) Infrastructure and training
- 3) Policies



Black J, Elliott S, Engler-Stringer R, Field D, Mansfield B, Segave S, Liné T, (2024)

[Centring Children, Health and Justice at the Core of Canadian School Food Programs,](#)

Forthcoming book *Transforming School Food Politics*, edited by Jennifer Gaddis and Sarah Robert

# School Food Typology – Production Models

| Independent Production Models   | Consolidated Production Models  |   |
|---|---|---|
|   | Regionalized  | Centralized   |
| <p><b>Independent Production:</b></p> <p><b>Cooking kitchen:</b> meals served are prepared primarily on site in that kitchen. Nearly all vendor deliveries are made to this school site, and the food served is not exclusively heat and serve. If a school district has a <b>central kitchen</b> or warehouse, this cooking kitchen site may receive minimal support.</p> <p>Staffing models:</p> <p>(a) <b>Self-catered or 'in-house':</b> run by people who are members of the school community where the SFP operates, which can be staff hired specifically to run the SFP, teachers and/or <b>school staff</b> volunteering their time, community volunteers, student volunteers, paid student interns, or a combination;</p> <p>(b) Contract Catering: outside caterer operating in the school</p> | <p><b>Central Kitchen:</b></p> <p>A production kitchen where food is prepared for surrounding schools. Food is prepared at least partially from basic ingredients and may be distributed as partially processed ingredients or as finished meals. This <b>central kitchen</b> may utilize a <b>commissary</b> (rented kitchen space).</p>   | <p><b>Large Hub &amp; Spoke:</b></p> <p>One <b>central kitchen</b> (often with a <b>central warehouse</b>) serves all other school sites (15 or more sites). The <b>central kitchen</b> may be a <b>commissary</b> (rented kitchen space).</p> <p>Staffing models: staff-led, student-led, volunteer-led, or a combination.</p> <p>Location: school, NGO, government-owned facility, etc.</p> |
| <p><b>Independent Procurement &amp; Production:</b></p> <p>Every school kitchen in the school board/district procures and prepares its own food and does not receive partially or fully cooked food from another site.</p> <p>Staffing models: staff-led, student-led, volunteer-led, or a combination.</p> <p>Location: outside caterer (both for-profit and non-profit), school, NGO, government-owned facility, etc.</p>   | <p><b>Regionalized</b></p> <p><b>Central Kitchen:</b></p> <p>A production kitchen where food is prepared for surrounding schools. Food is prepared at least partially from basic ingredients and may be distributed as partially processed ingredients or as finished meals. This <b>central kitchen</b> may utilize a <b>commissary</b> (rented kitchen space).</p> <p><b>Regional Kitchens:</b></p> <p>A few <b>cooking kitchens</b> serve a few other kitchens (rather than one single <b>central kitchen</b>, a more diffuse but still highly interconnected configuration). This model may utilize a <b>commissary</b> (rented kitchen space).</p> | <p><b>Small Hub &amp; Spoke:</b></p> <p>One <b>central kitchen</b> (sometimes with a <b>central warehouse</b>) serves all other school sites (1 - 14 sites). The <b>central kitchen</b> may be a <b>commissary</b> (rented kitchen space).</p> <p>Staffing models: staff-led, student-led, volunteer-led, or a combination.</p> <p>Location: school, NGO, government-owned facility, etc.</p> |
| <p><b>Applicability:</b></p> <p>Rural and remote contexts where centralizing is not feasible due to large distances between communities.</p>  | <p><b>Applicability:</b></p> <p>Small, medium and large cities.</p> <p>Some rural areas where communities are relatively close together.</p>  | <p><b>Applicability:</b></p> <p>Medium and large cities.</p> <p>Snack only programs in a number of sizes of communities, but especially areas of high population density.</p>   |

# School Food Typology – Service Models

| Dispersed/Decentralized Food Service Models   | Centralized Food Service Models   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <p><b>Classroom Bin Model:</b> Breakfast and/or snack bins for each classroom prepared in advance, often in single serve containers of some kind (e.g., plastic ziplock baggies, reusable cups and muffins wrappers, etc)</p> <p>Examples: programs in Ontario and Manitoba (delivered on trays to each classroom to eat in the classroom).</p> <p><b>Take-home meal model:</b> This could include meals for after school sent home in children's backpacks. These meals may be leftovers from school meals prepared during the day or prepared specifically for students to take home.</p> | Central Food Access Point   | Central Eating Space  |
|   | <p><b>'Grab-and-Go' Breakfast/snack Model:</b> breakfast and/or snack bin set up in a central location in the school. Examples include, school entrance, school library, principal's office (not ideal due to stigma). Can also include bagged lunch programs (see BC Program Handbook, pg 41)</p> <p>Example: Ontario</p> <p><b>'Grab-and-Go' Lunch Model:</b> an area(s) of the school is used for food service. Children are served and return to the classroom (with reusable or disposable <b>tableware</b>) to eat.</p> <p>Example: A program in Saskatchewan where in one school the food is served in two hallways and students eat in their classrooms.</p> <p><b>'Grab-and-Go' Lunch Model:</b> an area(s) of the school is used for food service. Children are served and return to the classroom (with reusable or disposable <b>tableware</b>) to eat.</p> | <p><b>Communal Eating Model:</b> School cafeteria, or multi-purpose school areas like the gym or entrance foyer is used to serve sit down meals</p> <p>Example: A program in Alberta sets up tables and the salad bar in the school 'gathering area' near the</p> <p><b>Communal Eating Model:</b> School cafeteria, or multi-purpose school areas like the gym or entrance foyer is used to serve sit down meals</p> |

Service models will vary based on school infrastructure



# Provincial/Territorial funding increases in 2022-24

April 2023-present:

- NS - \$18.8 million (2024-25 school yr.)
- QU - \$6.8 million (\$34 M over 5 years)
- AB - \$1.5 million; \$5 million (one-time)
- PEI - \$1 million
- SK - \$77K
- MB - \$2.9 million; Sept '24: \$30M (total)
- YT - \$500K (one-time)
- ON - \$6.1million (one-time)
- NL - \$3 (or \$10) million

April 2022-March 2023:

- BC - \$71.5 milion (214M over 3 years)
- MB - \$1.3 million
- QU - \$7+ million
- NB - \$2 million
- NS - \$2 million (one-time)
- PEI - \$2.2 million



To acknowledge the rising costs of food and services, Alberta's government is providing an extra \$5 million in additional funding to support student nutrition until





# \$284 million: Annual investment from P/T and municipal governments (including 2024-25 school year)

| Province        | Total Estimate of Annual P/T school food funding <sup>1</sup> | Total Estimate of Annual Municipal school food funding | Total number of student <sup>2</sup> | P/T contribution per student/year | P/T contribution per student/day |
|-----------------|---|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| PEI             | \$5,415,000   | \$0.00   | 21,147                               | \$256                             | \$1.37                           |
| NU              | \$1,945,092   | \$0.00   | 10,902                               | \$178                             | \$0.95                           |
| NS              | \$20,500,000  | \$100,000  | 126,428                              | \$162                             | \$0.87                           |
| MB              | \$30,000,000  | \$0.00   | 205,273                              | \$146                             | \$0.78                           |
| BC              | \$71,500,000  | \$474,280  | 586,860                              | \$122                             | \$0.65                           |
| NT              | \$710,388   | \$0.00   | 8,475                                | \$84                              | \$0.45                           |
| QC <sup>3</sup> | \$68,800,000  | \$347,747  | 991,443                              | \$63                              | \$0.37                           |
| NL              | \$3,855,744   | \$0.00   | 64,608                               | \$168                             | \$0.32                           |
| AB              | \$20,000,000  | \$0.00   | 692,643                              | \$29                              | \$0.15                           |
| YT              | \$135,175   | \$0.00   | 5,829                                | \$23                              | \$0.12                           |
| NB              | \$2,000,000   | \$0.00   | 100,013                              | \$20                              | \$0.11                           |
| ON              | \$37,600,000  | \$19,297,000   | 2,048,045                            | \$18                              | \$0.10                           |
| SK              | \$1,261,096   | \$147,942  | 202,272                              | \$6                               | \$0.03                           |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>\$264,064,495</b>  | <b>\$20,366,969</b>                                    | <b>5,063,938</b>                     |                                   |                                  |

1) Figures are the core annual P/T investment, not including infrastructure or one-time funding; P/T contribution per student based on P/T investment only; 2) Including Public and First Nation schools in Canada; 3) QU invests an additional \$26.9M in school-based health programs, some of which goes to school food.

# Partners and Funders



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# Questions

