

# Benefits for School Communities

Farm to school gets students eating, cooking, growing, and embracing healthy local food. Through farm to school activities students connect with their broader communities and learn food literacy, all while strengthening vibrant, sustainable, economically viable regional food systems.

Implementing farm to school can be as simple as having a farmer visit a classroom, and can be as big as having students grow, cook, and serve food for their entire school.

As part of the *Farm to School: Canada Digs In!* Initiative, 86 farm to school salad bar programs were established in five provinces across Canada. Students ate local and healthy food, participated in hands-on food literacy activities, and connected with local food providers, growers, chefs, knowledge keepers, public health professionals and many other community partners.

Between 2016-2020:

**87%** of schools reported the salad bar created a greater sense of vibrancy and excitement

**87%** of schools reported they had increased connections, partnerships and participation within the school and the broader community including with Indigenous communities, local farmers and chefs, other schools, neighbouring preschool programs and seniors residences, and groups such as the local Boys & Girls Club

**85%** reported students were more excited about healthy eating

**33%** of students reported their confidence had increased

**32%** of students reported their focus in class had increased

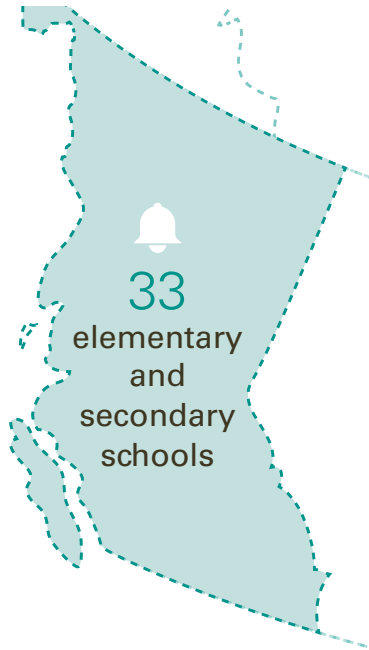
**26%** of students reported they had more desire to be at school



The Farm to School Approach

“ *The salad bar is visually appealing and teachers note some students are opting for the salad bar rather than going to the store for pop and chips. Students are better focusing in class after lunch and look forward to the salad bar.* **K – 8TEACHER**

“ *The garden is a great opportunity for my class to be out there learning about local foods and then to take these foods and prepare them in my class. This makes the curriculum so much more relevant to the students.* **SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER**



11,969 + \$361,000  
 students given directly to  
 British Columbia schools

= 33 farm to school salad bar programs

where students eat local and healthy food, participate in hands-on food literacy activities, and connect with local food providers, growers, chefs, knowledge keepers, public health professionals and many other community partners.

## Growing farm to school in British Columbia and across Canada



The lead organization championing the farm to school movement in the province of British Columbia is the **Public Health Association of BC (PHABC)**. PHABC is a member driven organization that provides leadership to promote health, well-being and social equity. PHABC is one of 11 partners in the *Farm to School: Canada Digs In!* initiative.

Learn more at [phabc.org](http://phabc.org)



Leadership and coordination of Canada's national farm to school movement is provided by **Farm to Cafeteria Canada**, a partnership-based organization that collaborates to educate, build capacity, and influence policy to put more healthy, local and sustainable food on the minds and plates of students. Farm to Cafeteria Canada manages *Farm to School: Canada Digs In!* and is proud to partner with **PHABC** and 9 other organizations on this exciting initiative.



“ We always knew the salad bar would be a great meal program to provide for the students and staff at École Robb Road, but we had no idea how excited the children truly would be to fill their plates with veggies!

ÉCOLE ROBB ROAD

*Farm to School: Canada Digs In!* is a pan-Canadian multi-sectoral chronic disease prevention initiative.



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