



Process to Develop an Evaluation Framework for Farm to School for Canada

Discussion Guide: Public Health

November 26, 2020

Farm to Cafeteria Canada and its partners are developing an Evaluation Framework for Farm to School in Canada. We are using a modified Delphi method consisting of 3 rounds of surveys and virtual conversations to work towards identifying priority outcomes and indicators that would be valuable to measure to demonstrate the impacts of farm to school in Canada. More about this process is available at <http://www.farmtocafeteriacanada.ca/our-work/farm-to-school-canada/evaluation-framework/>

To prepare for the virtual discussion on Public Health

- 1) Review what is meant by [Farm to School](#) (our [3.5 minute intro to the evaluation framework video](#) provides a quick overview)
- 2) Think about the following overarching question (even write your reflections down if you can):
“What short or medium-term Public Health outcomes would be valuable for farm to school programs across Canada to measure?” ** Think about what evidence you might want to show, communicate or understand about farm to school programs so that you can provide or gain support for them.
- 3) Review this discussion guide, particularly the questions for discussion.

Definitions

Outcome: A change that we want to see happen as a result of farm to school activities
(e.g. **Members of the school community have more access to local food**)

Indicator: A way of measuring whether that change has happened
(e.g. **Number of days during the school year where local food is served**)

Short to medium-term: Change can be seen immediately or within the next 5 years

<http://www.farmtocafeteriacanada.ca/>

Proposed Outcomes and Possible Indicators - Public Health

Proposed List of Public Health Outcomes - Quick Summary:

1. Members of the school community consume healthier food
2. Members of the school community have more access to healthy and culturally appropriate food
3. Members of the school community learn and apply hands-on food literacy skills
4. Members of the school community have more knowledge of and interest in nutrition and healthy eating
5. Members of the school community have more knowledge of and interest in increasing access to healthy food and addressing food insecurity
6. Members of the school community have better mental health and well-being
7. Students engage in more physical activity

Questions for discussion that arose in Round 2:



- Can we include any more indicators speaking about the school food environment / school food culture?
- What community collaborations / relationships should we include in any of the outcomes?
- What other institutional support (policy / program / infrastructure / training / investment) indicators should we include in any of the outcomes?
- How else could we include concepts of food sovereignty in the indicators?
- Do we need to include more language anywhere about critical food literacy - i.e. learning about / asking critical questions about our global food system or different types of food systems?
- Which of the proposed indicators would you most like to see measured (and why)? And what tools could we use to measure them?

Proposed List of Public Health Outcomes and Possible Indicators - Full List:

Proposed Outcome: Members of the school community consume healthier food

Possible indicators:

Healthier food consumed:

- Number of daily servings of vegetables and fruit at school consumed by students
- Number of daily servings of vegetables and fruit consumed by students on a school day
- Number of daily servings of processed food consumed at school
- Number of daily servings of processed food consumed by students on a school day
- Number of daily servings of vegetables and fruit consumed by staff at school

- Number of daily servings of vegetables and fruit consumed by families
- Number or % of students that report that farm to school activities have improved their physical health

Institutional support:

- Existence of with a provincial school nutrition policy
- Percentage of schools that comply with provincial school nutrition policy

Proposed Outcome: Members of the school community have more access to healthy and culturally appropriate food

Possible indicators:

Increasing school / family access:

- Amount of food produced for the school using a school garden or greenhouse, or a community garden
- Amount of healthy food that is contributed to the school by the community
- School budget for healthy food
- Amount of healthy food purchased by families (# or %)

Healthy food served:

- Average number of days / week where healthy food is served to students
- Average number of healthy meals / snacks served to students per week
- Number or % of schools that serve fresh vegetables and fruits to students
- Variety of healthy foods served at school
- Amount (# or %) of processed and highly processed foods that are available at the school
- Perceived quality, freshness, taste, and nutrition of school food

Dignified and equitable access:

- Number or % of schools where students can access healthy food in a dignified way regardless of their ability to pay
- Perception by members of the school community that students can access healthy food in a dignified way regardless of their ability to pay

Culturally appropriate food is served and accessible:

- Amount that members of the school community perceive that food served at school, in a variety of settings, reflects the cultural backgrounds (and traditions) of the student population
- Perception by members of the school community that students can access food that is appropriate to their culture
- Amount of culturally diverse food grown in the school garden or a community garden serving the school

Healthier school food environment:

- Amount (%) of healthy food used in fundraising efforts vs unhealthy food
- Amount that staff and students report that the school food environment is one that promotes healthy foods and makes them easy to access.

Community collaboration Indicators:

- Number and level of engagement of community members that are involved in providing healthy and culturally appropriate food to the school
- Number of partnerships between schools and healthy food providers
- Amount of collaboration and monitoring of joint activities among relevant stakeholders (meetings, working groups, etc...)

Institutional support:

Policies:

- Number and quality of policies and programs that support equity in school food programs
- Number and quality of institutional policies that support access to and the consumption of healthier food in schools (higher quality policies include strong language with clear and practical approaches as well as timelines and funding)
- Degree to which healthy school food policies are implemented

Investment:

- Availability of kitchen facilities and other school infrastructure
- Amount of financial and human resource investment in programs that support healthier food to be served in schools

Training:

- Quantity and quality of training programs for teaching staff to learn to teach about nutrition and healthy eating
- Quantity and quality of training programs for school staff regarding about how to integrate culturally appropriate food and food education into the school
- Quantity and quality of training programs for food service workers to prepare healthy meals and snacks

Proposed Outcome: Members of the school community learn and apply hands-on food literacy skills

Questions for further discussion:



- Do the indicators below reflect self-efficacy / self-confidence enough? I.e. ability to feed oneself a variety of meals, maintain a healthy lifestyle related to food decisions, and in the complex food environment?

Possible indicators:

Amount that learning opportunities are offered:

- Number or % of schools / courses that teach students how to garden
- Number or % of schools / courses that teach students how to prepare healthy meals or snacks
- Number of school events that allow students to demonstrate hands-on food literacy skills

Student participation and engagement:

- Number or % of students that participate in activities where they gain hands-on food literacy skills
- Amount that students are involved in preparing food for their school's food service

- Amount that students plan, prepare and are involved in preparing more meals at home / with their family
- Amount that students garden and grow food at home
- Number or % of schools that have gardens / greenhouses or can access community gardens / greenhouses
- Amount that students preserve food at home

Student knowledge:

- Number or % of students that know how to follow / adapt a recipe and prepare healthy meals or snacks
- Amount that students know how to grow and harvest their own food
- Amount that students know how to preserve food to increase its shelf life
- Amount that students know how to shop for food / shop on a budget

Student confidence / feelings of self-efficacy:

- Number or % of students that feel confident following / adapting a recipe and preparing healthy meals or snacks
- Students' reported confidence growing and harvesting food
- Amount that students have the self-confidence / self-efficacy needed to maintain a healthy lifestyle with respect to food

Culturally appropriate:

- Amount that hands-on food skills education at the school reflects the knowledge and traditions of cultures that are representative of the student body

Community collaboration Indicators:

- Amount that staff, volunteers and students learn food knowledge and skills from members of the broader community
- Amount that community partnerships enable teachers / administrators to build capacity and learn best practices from food practitioners
- Number of partnerships that leverage opportunities e.g. working with community kitchens...

Institutional support:

- Amount that teaching staff are knowledgeable about how to connect hands-on food literacy skills to different curriculum expectations
- Amount that curriculum has been added or strengthened to support hands-on food literacy skills
- Institutional policies include stronger language to support hands-on food literacy in schools including the development of school gardens and engaging students in food preparation
- Amount of institutional support and allocation of resources for hands-on food literacy education

Proposed Outcome: Members of the school community have more knowledge of and interest in nutrition and healthy eating

Possible indicators:

Activities / events / courses offered:

- Number of lessons, activities and events that identify, celebrate and feature healthy foods

- Number of lessons, activities and events that identify, celebrate and feature culturally diverse foods
- Number of schools that host healthy farm to school fundraisers

School environment that models healthy eating:

- Number of days / week that school staff eat healthy food with the students and model healthy diets
- Amount that students report that the school food environment is one that promotes healthy foods and makes them easy to access.

Expressions of student knowledge:

- Amount that students demonstrate more knowledge about nutritious and healthy eating patterns: Students identify differences between low processed, processed and highly processed food and consequences for their physical and mental health / Students are able to mention 3 healthy eating practices/ Students are able to describe the Canadian Food Guide, components and proportion suggested / Students recognize the benefits of combining healthy eating and physical activity for optimal health / Students recognize the benefits of culturally appropriate food and local food for their health

Change in student action:

- Amount that students express a stronger preference for healthy food
- Measure of student excitement about eating healthy food
- Amount (% or #) of healthy food that students purchase during school hours
- Increase in Number of student activities outside of school hours or beyond graduation related to healthy food (e.g. jobs, hobbies, learning, recreation, purchasing)
- Students are more involved in hands-on activities that involve healthy eating or improve the food environment at school and at home

Change in knowledge and interest of food service workers:

- Amount that Food Service Workers express an understanding of healthy food
- Amount that Food Service Workers express a willingness to prepare healthy food

Change in family action:

- Amount (% or #) Families increase the percentage and quantity of healthy food that they purchase
- Amount of school communications about healthy food (on school website, social media, on posters, messaging home)
- Number or % of families that participate in healthy farm to school fundraisers
- Amount that healthy food is normalized vs unhealthy food in the school environment (posters, vending machines, events, rewards)

Community collaboration Indicators:

- Number of parents, community members and school staff that are involved in planning and implementing healthy school food initiatives
- Amount that schools and community health professionals work together to support student learning about nutrition and healthy eating
- Amount that school staff and families model healthy eating at school (e.g. through events, fundraisers, etc...)

Institutional support:

- Number of nutrition-related goals in the school action plan
- Amount of professional development received by educators

Proposed Outcome: Members of the school community have more knowledge of and interest in increasing access to healthy food and addressing food insecurity

Possible indicators:

Activities / events / courses offered:

- Number of schools that put in place / number of students who participate in activities that enhance food security

Expressions of student knowledge:

- Amount that students can describe the socio-economic underpinnings of our current food system and the root causes of current food system inequities
- Amount that students are able to describe food security / insecurity and its effects on people (including the reasons people might not be able to access healthy food)
- Amount that students can describe the intersectionality between food, race, sovereignty, justice, the climate and the environment
- Amount that students can describe the importance of food sovereignty for people’s well-being, including access to healthy and culturally appropriate food
- Amount that students are able to describe areas for action to increase access to healthy food and how this could address food insecurity
- Number of students that learn how to budget for and purchase or otherwise access healthy food food

Change in action:

- Number of students that take concrete actions to help address food insecurity at the school or in the community
- Amount that school staff / administration take concrete actions to help address food insecurity at the school or in the community

Proposed Outcome: Members of the school community have better mental health and well-being

Questions for further discussion:



- How else could we include language around using food to increase cultural understanding, remove cultural barriers, enable reconciliation and the development of meaningful relationships?
- What indicators might we want to include around wellbeing for staff, families, administration etc...?

Possible indicators:

Environment provided:

- Amount that outdoor spaces are actively used to promote mental health in students
- Amount that students eat together in a communal setting

Student reports of wellbeing:

- Amount that students report that they feel that they belong at school

- Amount that students perceive that they have access to enough healthy food at school
- Amount that students report stronger friendships and relationships with other members of the school community
- Students' perceptions of autonomy
- Amount that students report that their cultural food traditions are respected and celebrated at school
- Amount that students report and demonstrate confidence in implementing food skills and being able to maintain a healthy lifestyle related to food decisions
- Amount that students believe that they have some control and influence over their own food system
- Students' reported desire to be at school

Staff reports of student wellbeing:

- Amount that students are involved and engaged in farm to school and school food activities
- Amount of reported vibrancy and excitement at the school
- Number of conflicts between students
- Perceptions of students' mental health as reported by teachers and administrators
- Amount that students can focus in class
- Perceptions of students' character strengths including motivation, responsibility, confidence, initiative, leadership and creativity.

Community collaboration indicators:

- Number and quality of opportunities for peer-to-peer relationship building and learning among teaching staff, volunteers, administrators and community partners
- Amount that students report more interpersonal connections and meaningful relationships within the school community including across cultural differences
- Amount that students have relationships with and guidance from members of the community including elders, farmers, community partners, health professionals
- Strength of teachers' / administrators' reported relationships with families, community partners and others

Proposed Outcome: Students engage in more physical activity

Possible indicators:

- Number or % of students who are involved in gardening
- Amount of time students spend gardening
- Number or % of students who are involved in active food preparation activities
- Number or % of students who gain physical activity through building food infrastructure