

**The group gathered at Carl Cozier Elementary School at noon to share in the daily school lunch before traveling off-site to continue the meeting.**

**Call to Order:**

J. Marie Riche, Communications Facilitator, reconvened the meeting at 1:00 pm.

Others present: Margaret Gude, Mea Tyas, Nora Klewiada, Mark Dalton, Elizabeth Van Niekerk, Rob Rienstra, Brianna Pugh, Jozlin Peterson, Sue Webber, Mardi Solomon, Simone Sangster, Laura Plaut, Patrick Warner, Jessica Sankey, Rob McElroy, Mylo Allen, Nikki Lockhart, Heidi Rodriguez

**Review Agenda**

J.Marie walked through a review of the afternoon’s agenda, welcoming suggestions.

**Reflection on school lunch**

Members talked in small groups about their experience of lunch at Carl Cozier, using the photo of the student activity ([chalkboard image](#)) from the group’s first meeting to guide the conversation.

**Elements of the school lunch that participants liked:**

- Quality of lettuce and the salad
- seeing the principal engaging with kids
- designated peanut free area
- pleasant lunchroom monitor and custodian - not a “scolding culture”
- kids seemed happy – “controlled chaos”
- seeing salad and veggies in line for kids to take
- kids looked like they enjoyed lunch

**Critiques:**

- Kids seemed hurried
- wished more variety in fruit and veg (and in season)
- more beverage options than milk (there is a water fountain)
- fattier milk options are good, especially for younger kids (USDA requires 1% or lower)
- no food smell (wish there were, to increase appetite/appeal)
- pizza was not visually appealing
- portion seemed large (especially for pizza for elementary kids), contribute to post-lunch slump?
- hot and cold item were too similar for any real choice

**Reflections from Thursday’s meeting and the homework assigned**

J.Marie asked the group to reflect upon what they’ve learned since last week, first in small groups and then with a report-out to everyone. What were a few of the most important issues/ideas?

- It seems like an expensive venture to provide better food, but necessary to give best choices
- Limits to choices of entrees are positive
- Greater variety of fruits and vegetables to choose from (salad bars), which is a good way to begin the transition right now

- Feeling good about all of the good work that has been done so far and the comparison to our district with Berkeley which has a similar size district and number of students
- During transition, we may initially see a decrease in amount of food consumed, but it should pick up as years go by and palate.
- Variety in the hot meals over the month – exposes kids to more kinds of foods
- Time constraint for eating; how can it be more efficient, how can it be more instructional?
- Cafeteria as a classroom – more signage around healthy food choices – doesn't have to wait for the new kitchen!
- Increasing on the things were are already doing towards the transition – eat local, salad bars – keep making steady progress
- Creating and increasing relationships with farmers
- Marketing larger scale with the healthier options/less waste
- Focus group comments were not surprising – whole food, less processed, sustainable, organic when we can
- Small steps, prioritizing changes – for example just having ovens in the schools would have improved the quality of today's pizza, its appearance, the smell wafting through, etc.
- Differences in way schools are operating will be a challenge to overcome - differences in training of food service staff, differences in school facilities, etc
- Avoid contradiction – educate what is healthy and serve the same
- Age appropriate portions, especially elementary
- Reduce waste
- Engage everyone
- Food safety is important when doing scratch cooking

#### **Background and orientation to the [Farm-to-School Priorities](#) document**

Jessica Sankey, BPS Wellness Director, oriented the group to the four-page Farm to School (F2S) Priorities document, which supports and adds detail / context to the F2S Promise brochure.

She reported that F2S came together five years ago, and the F2S Advisory Group decided to structure its own vision around The Bellingham Promise (as shown in the F2S Promise brochure). Jessica noted that the district also publishes an annual “Priorities for Progress” document that describes work priorities and tracks outcomes related to The Bellingham Promise. To mirror that, F2S created the F2S Priorities documents. In revisiting this, it is fun to see how well those priorities have held up.

Specifically, she noted:

- #2 support cafeteria staff as culinary professionals
- acting with a one-school house approach: everything we serve is an endorsement of that item; be sure the food we serve supports what we are teaching about food
- best programs in early childhood, do a great job of serving food to kids (for example, Head Start serves food family-style and encourages conversation about food). Also, roll programs up. Pilot with our youngest kids and build up.
- Prioritize choices: healthy, whole /minimally processed, locally available, sustainably grown
- Work to be done – have an operational definition of “healthy”

J.Marie noted that the focus group feedback reflected many of the same thoughts that are in F2S Priorities document. She also commented that all the F2S work is providing a wonderful springboard to the work being done here.

### **Farm-to-School Priorities Document**

The team divided into tabletop teams to talk about the Farm-to-School Promise and Priorities documents and identify their likes, concerns, and areas that might be missing. They reported out:

#### **F2S Likes**

- alignment w/ promise and strategies
- strong students and adult learning theme
- about all of us learning
- strong commitment to partnerships
- natural place for family engagement
- commitment to involve kids in all stages
- document is about growing capacity rather than re-inventing
- topics tied to the Promise
- waste-free
- invite to eat at school (parents/staff)
- multi-cultural
- healthy = nutritious, not processed, fresh, less sugar, no hfcs
- training of all staff
- build local connections; cafeteria as classroom (eg. Salad bar use, learn lunch system)
- school gardens (family education and support families)
- promote innovation and flexibility
- vocational opportunities

#### **F2S Concerns**

- whose priorities are they?
- how does BPS adopt and implement a food source and food education vision
- getting more adults in the cafeteria
- achieving cafeteria as classroom
- the definition of healthy (who decides what this means? What defines this?)
- too long
- Sustainable?
- To what level? How do we go about keeping up with this term?

#### **F2S Missing**

- compost/waste
- education
- how does this happen?
- professional development/resources?
- nutrition ed. into other aspects of core curriculum
- food education is same thing (knowledge) kids will use every day of their lives
- food choices and food prep

- free lunch for all
- flavorful/tasty
- colorful, textures, smell
- closed campus
- time for lunch esp. grade school, recess before lunch, arrival at school ( grab & go/ break in classroom)
- train students
- suggestion: early childhood education
- Change responsibility to privilege
- teaching manners i.e. respecting food allergies
- Is it the school's responsibility to make sure kids have access to food at school and home?

**Brainstorm Activity: Key Concepts/Words**

The group brainstormed a list of key concepts or words to consider for use in the vision statement. Some words or concepts that seemed related were then grouped together.

- Educate
  - Classroom to cafeteria connection
  - Signage / food education in cafeteria
  - Family engagement / home connection
  - CTE/Vocational/Horticulture Gardens (practical knowledge)
- Nourishment/Nutritious
  - Only good choices “serving it = endorsing it”
  - Whole foods/“Real” foods
  - Quality foods
  - Local/Regional
  - Few Preservatives
- Delicious food
  - Variety
  - Fresh
  - Colorful
  - Smell/Tasty/Appeals to the senses
- Environment
  - Noise level
  - Atmosphere
  - Fun / joyful
  - Real silverware, plates, cups
- Equity / Access
  - Remove hunger as a barrier to learning
  - Food available throughout day, late arrivals, summer, dinner programs
- Significant improvement/Higher Standards/Exceed Expectations
- Sustainable
  - Doable, feasible
  - Fiscally sustainable
  - Continuous improvement / building over time
  - Family Engagement

- Community support / partners
- Marketing / outreach / communications
  - Possible taglines: “Real Food 4 Real Kids” “Food 4 Thought” “Every student, every day”
- Culturally diverse
- Food safety
- Waste/ composting

The group prioritized their list to the following words or concepts that they wanted to expand upon: educate, delicious food, whole food, nutritious, equity, significant improvement, and fiscally sustainable.

Each of these words or concepts were put at the top of a large page; the group split into small teams and walked around the room, adding definitions, context, and comments to each of the key concepts.

### **Educate**

- k through 12 ->continues education -> why important (food)
- family involvement (1 star)
- coordination b/t garden -> classroom-> cafeteria-> home and community (walking the walk)
- vocational opportunities/real world
- staff support/staff training/professional development
- cafeteria etiquette
- food preparation ->teaching and learning lifelong skills (1 star)
- diverse ethnic food opportunities
- community of learners around food
- the cafeteria is a classroom -> nutrition education but also downtime (1 star)
- exposure/“retraining” taste buds/ learning to appreciate and want the good food

### **Delicious (Whole) Food**

- appealing to children
- tastes good
- quality
- presentation; packaging (color/texture/shape, real plates)
- colorful, eye-catching, smell
- keep it simple
- allow kids to tailor, fine tune w/ add-ons (1 star)
- keep it hip
- variety (1 star)
- Samples: try new things, taste tests
- Diverse, culturally inclusive
- Whole foods
- Variety of foods reflects diversity of population

### **Whole foods**

- fresh
- limited ingredients
- known/recognizable ingredients

- close to natural
- minimally processed/unprocessed
- no MSG, HFCS, hydrogenated oil, other ingredients of concern
- in-season fruits/veggies, variety in prep
- food allergy choices (gluten free, dairy free, etc))
- pronounceable
- no re-heating, making food from scratch, need prep/cooking options on each site
  - Way down the line? (Central kitchen at Sehome means this has to happen, though, right?)
- Fruits/veggies
- introduce children to new food

### **Nutritious**

- whole food (2 stars)
- real food
- fresh
- Diversity of food types; fruits / veggies (in season), grains, protein (fat's where it's at), etc.
- Breakfast, too (good quality protein, brain fuel)
- variety
- avoid highly processed (1 star)
- scratch cooked
- daily salad bar (variety) at every school
- simple choices -> w add-on options
- vitamins & minerals
- food as fuel/energy/vitality
- balance of building blocks (protein, carbs, fats); less carbs from grain
- non-dairy based protein (ex: natto); non- meat protein
- quality fats ex: olives, olive oil, avocado, avocado oil, coconut oil
- nourishing (differs from nutritious, which is mostly physical; nutritious speaks to the "whole child," including physical, emotional, meta-physical, social, caring for self and others)
- water as a beverage choice
- No flavored milk as a beverage choice

### **Equity**

- quality food available to every child, every day, every meal
- over time, increase participation to 100% (make education relevant)
- Free lunch to all; everyone eats school lunch (BPS cultural norm)
- no hungry kids (1 check mark)
- Free meals = same meals
- decrease unhealthy home lunches
- universal snack program (all programs, all schools)
- Good food (not just chips in vending machines) available all day
- additional dinner program (advertise dinners at Shuksan 4 nights a week)
- provide free/reduced summer meals (community partners?)
- culturally diverse food choices

### **Significant Improvement**

- regular evaluation of meal quality
- survey participant satisfaction (1 star)
- student feedback (2 stars)
- USDA Reg. as minimum (seek to be better!) meeting standards of the most discerning customers
- Constant evolution- taking risks, trying new things (be creative, have fun)
- continuous sustainable changes/improvement (2 stars)
- Will drive community engagement
- Baby steps: what can we do now as a district
  - o “low-hanging fruit”
  - o Salad bars
  - o Water dispensers (spa water)
  - o Milk dispenser

### **Fiscally Sustainable**

- doable, feasible
- supported by the district community
- not defined by what we presently do
- income producing options (Vending, Food trucks, Participation growth, Kitchen rentals)
- rotate days present, close campuses, boost school lunches eaten on other days (1 star)
- long-term commitment/promise
- improve quality and improve operation and maintain fiscal plan
- wide-scale buy-in/participation/broad appeal
- Continuous improvement
- multi-faceted investment -> time; energy; funds
- sustainable, Encompasses financial, program, and food sourcing

### **Reaching consensus on key concepts**

Participants reviewed their work together, talked about the meaning / intention behind each of the key concepts, and modified their list of key words accordingly. “Delicious” was seen as too subjective, so “flavorful” was suggested in its place. “Nourishing” was noted as being more inclusive of the whole experience than the word “nutritious.” And the team felt that the concepts of significant improvement and fiscally sustainable could be combined into a phrase like, “continuous, sustainable improvement.”

J.Marie asked the group if, upon reflection, they believe that anything was missing. Did the group want to reconsider any of the other key words they had brainstormed earlier? Participants brought up the following possibilities to reconsider: Culturally inclusive, Environment, and Joy/Fun. They decided that inclusivity is important and ties in nicely with the topic of equity. They felt that while environment is important, it doesn’t need to be called out in the vision statement. They agreed that while the concepts of joy and fun are also important, this could be addressed more by the tone of the overall writing (aim for light-hearted) and those words don’t necessarily need to show up in the vision statement itself. They also decided that while equity is key, it might work better in this context to speak to “access” or being inclusive.

After discussion, they agreed that the following words or concepts are important to include in the vision statement:

- educate / education
- flavorful whole food
- nourishing
- continuous, sustainable improvement.

**Volunteers for a Writing “Teamlet”**

Margaret, Mardi, Heidi, and Jozlin volunteered to work together to develop the first draft of the vision statement. They will meet off-line, develop a draft, and that draft vision statement will be shared with the full advisory group. It will also be shared with Chef Ann’s team, and they may have feedback for this group to consider.

**Next and final meeting:**

December 10, 2015, 3:00 – 5:00 pm

Meeting Evaluation:

- Opportunity to work with different people was great
- Space was lovely
- Lunch at the school was a good idea
- Got done early

**Closing: 4:46 pm**