

Bellingham Farm-to-School Promise Priorities for 2013-2023

May, 2013

Ensure Great Teaching With Strong Support

We create a healthy school community by building the relationship between Food Services, teachers, and staff. Food Services ensures that students are well-nourished and ready to learn. Teachers and staff ensure that students are able and ready to make healthy food choices.

1. Support teachers and staff in offering consistent, innovative, progressive nutrition, food, & health education in all classrooms, at all grade levels.
 - a. Ensure that nutrition education is centered upon commonly held values of respect and responsibility around food and food choices.
 - b. Link nutrition education with hands-on, “seed-to-table” learning experiences, such as school gardens, whenever possible, so that students can have the full experience of growing, cooking, and eating healthful foods.
2. Support cafeteria staff in developing their skills as culinary professionals and educators in the cafeteria.
 - a. Reinforce the “cafeteria as classroom” concept and build capacity for all Food Services and lunchroom staff to serve as “cafeteria teachers,” promoting a positive learning environment for students.
 - b. Support professional development and training of cafeteria staff to enable them to serve the healthiest food possible, cost effectively.
 - c. Ensure that Food Services has adequate staffing and administrative support to contribute meaningfully to the Bellingham Promise.
3. Develop communication and planning systems that enable Food Services, teachers, and staff to coordinate their efforts and integrate best practices.
 - a. Establish ways for Food Services, teachers, and staff to communicate proactively about emerging issues and opportunities (e.g. allergies, snack programs, chefs in schools, etc.)
 - b. Provide nutrition and wellness information to students and families in a coordinated way, and regularly measure effectiveness.
 - c. Identify and implement best practices for improving child nutrition (e.g. recess before lunch).

Student, Family, and Community Engagement

We involve our whole community in promoting the health and wellness of our students.

1. Encourage strong parental involvement in farm-to-school programming.
 - a. Maintain a diverse and dedicated slate of community members and parents to serve on the Bellingham Farm-to-School Advisory Group.
 - b. Invite parents to school meals; cafeterias are a natural place to invite families and community members to join students in their learning experience.
 - c. Enable families to understand and support farm-to-school goals, and see how they can practice at home what students are learning about health and wellness at school.
2. Build strong connections between BPS and community partners, local experts, and supporters.
 - a. Buy food from local farmers.
 - b. Leverage funding support in the local community for all aspects of the Farm-to-School initiative.
 - c. Collaborate on menus with local chefs.
 - d. Partner with Towards-Zero-Waste efforts.
3. Ensure that BPS has a progressive District Wellness Policy that is understood and implemented by the entire school community, and fosters the diverse community partnerships essential to healthy food programs.

Early Childhood Education

We are committed to offering children wholesome and positive food experiences from the moment they enter our schools.

1. Reinforce a standard that whenever food is offered, it must be healthy food.
2. Beginning with the youngest students, explicitly teach the responsibilities that adults and children have in making food choices.
3. Build on the strengths of traditional early learning food environments:
 - a. Food is served family style in pre-K programs.
 - b. Courtesy is encouraged and reinforced.
4. Work with District leadership to establish explicit, embedded, consistent and progressive nutrition education throughout all school environments, beginning with the youngest students and continuing through 12th grade.

5. Gather data on student success, and measures such as obesity and incidence of chronic disease, to guide outcome-driven goals for the future.

Act With A “One Schoolhouse” Approach

We offer healthy food and food education to every student, throughout the school day and their school career.

1. Build capacity for a district-wide environment in which:
 - a. All children are offered healthy food in the school meal program, and any other time food is served at school.
 - b. All children are offered education that helps them understand the true value of food, and supports them in making healthy choices.
 - c. The cafeteria is the classroom where children learn about relationships and food when they eat together.
 - d. School gardens and other hands-on learning opportunities are integrated wherever possible.
2. Improve our facilities so that we can provide more wholesome, less processed meals to our students. Ideally, BPS will have a single, centralized production kitchen to prepare meals for the whole district.

Promote Innovation and Flexibility

We seek continuous improvement, encouraging students, parents, teachers, and staff to show leadership and creativity.

1. Steadily improve the quality of all meals served at school, and avoid undue financial risk by applying the following criteria to purchasing decisions:
 - 1st - Healthy
 - 2nd - Whole, minimally processed
 - 3rd - Local
 - 4th - Sustainably grown
2. Build BPS programs for service learning and vocational opportunities.
 - a. Provide opportunities for students related to agriculture, business, food, and culinary arts.
 - b. Expand opportunities for student learning both on school grounds (i.e. school gardens), and by partnering with local entities and businesses (i.e. BTC culinary school and farmers we purchase from).
3. Promote sustainable practices in the cafeteria.
 - a. Continue to reduce packaging used in school meals.

- b. Promote waste-free cafeterias.
 - c. Work with community partners to reduce the carbon footprint of Food Services.
- 4. Develop multi-cultural food experiences for our students.
- 5. Involve students in all stages of food preparation, as feasible (e.g., develop menus, serve taste tests, reduce waste).