



Food Fuels Learning in Action

Portland Public Schools Food Security Task Force

April 29, 2019



Please introduce yourself to your neighbor!



Introductions

Agenda



Welcome & Light Refreshments (6:00-6:15)

Introduction (6:15-6:25)

Address from Jessica Puzak, Cafeteria Team Leader at Rowe Elementary (6:25-6:30)

Address from Kathryn Sargent, Executive Director of the Locker Project (6:30-6:35)

Action Group Presentations (6:35-6:50)

Closing Remarks from Superintendent Botana (6:50-7:00)

Open Networking & Idea-Sharing (7:00-7:30)

- Eat!
- Sign up for updates or action groups
- Questions & meet action groups

Food Fuels Learning Values Statement



We believe that food fuels learning and all students at Portland Public Schools have the right to nutritious food that allows them to attain their full potential.



Food Fuels Learning Mission



Our mission is to build food security in schools through comprehensive research and community-based action.

Background



The Portland Public School (PPS) District provides education to 6,796 students in fifteen schools located in Cumberland County, Maine. More than half of these students (3,560) are eligible for free lunch,² which means that they live in a household at or below 130% of the poverty line. For example, if the student lives in a family of four people, the household will have an annual income between \$0 and \$31,980.³

² Maine Department of Education (2018a). % Free and Reduced School Lunch Report - ED 534 by District. Retrieved from <https://neo.maine.gov/DOE/neo/Nutrition/Reports/NutritionReports.aspx?reportPath=ED534byDistrict>.

³ Food and Nutrition Service, USDA (2017a). Child Nutrition Programs: Income Eligibility Guidelines. Retrieved from <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/04/10/2017-07043/child-nutrition-programs-income-eligibility-guidelines>.

Goals and Objectives



The PPS Food Security Task Force (hereafter referred to as Food Fuels Learning) began the project by articulating goals in five program areas:

1. **Charitable food** - Ensure that all children at risk of food insecurity have access to adequate, culturally relevant, nutritious food both at school and to supplement their diet beyond school
2. **Federal nutrition programs** - Increase overall school meal participation and reduce challenges for food service staff
3. **School gardens** - Assist every school in developing and maintaining a successful school garden and school garden programming
4. **Nutrition education** - Provide schools with the tools they need to coordinate staff and organizational partners working to provide nutrition education to students
5. **Sustainable practices** - Support schools in creating procurement, waste management, and other practices that minimize their environmental impact and encourage their investment in local communities

In pursuit of these goals, the Task Force conducted a needs assessment to explore the presence and impact of activities within each of these five areas throughout the PPS district.

Timeline



Ongoing

Action Groups convened regularly to address report recommendations

August 2018

Present completed report to full School Board



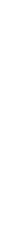
March 2019

Food Fuels Learning Toolkit presented at the Universities Fighting World Hunger Summit at USM



April 2019

Food Fuels Learning In Action: Second Quarterly Meeting



October 2018

Food Fuels Learning Transitioning to Action Meeting



February 2019

Food Fuels Learning In Action: First Quarterly Meeting



April 2019

Food Fuels Learning Toolkit presented at the Farm to Institution Summit at UMass Amherst



Process goals



- 1) Build food security
- 2) Community-led process
- 3) Prioritize sustainable systems change



Cafeteria Team Leader

Amanda C. Rowe Elementary

Jessica Puzak



Locker Project

Executive Director

Kathryn Sargent



Action Group Presentations

Leadership Team



- Submitted THRIVE 2020 grant to United Way
- Published *Food Fuels Learning Toolkit: Conducting an Assessment of School System Food Security*
 - Presented at Universities Fighting World Hunger Summit and Farm to Institution New England Summit
- Presented testimony in Augusta in support of relevant child nutrition policies
- Rebranded from PPS Food Security Task Force to Food Fuels Learning
 - Launched new website (foodfuelslearning.org) and facebook page (facebook.com/foodfuelslearning)

Charitable Food Programs (1)





Charitable Food Programs (2)

Goal: *Ensure that all children at risk of food insecurity have access to adequate, culturally relevant, nutritious food both at school and to supplement their diet beyond school*

Charitable Foods Recommendation 1 - Enhance consistent resource-sharing within, and among, school communities

Charitable Foods Recommendation 2 - Improve the reliability, efficiency, and sustainability of charitable food programs

Charitable Foods Recommendation 3 - Encourage low-barrier access and high availability of school pantries and food options

Charitable Food Programs (3)



Recommendation	Progress	Deadline
<p>1.1 Circulate Portland Community Food Resource Guide and Portland Summer Food Resource Guide to families and all school staff at the beginning and end of the year, respectively</p>	<p>1) Portland Community Summer Food Resource Guide is completed. Circulation will occur in paper form to all elementary schools and will be available on school and district websites</p>	<p>1) Completed/Ongoing</p>
<p>1.5 Strengthen communication and collaboration among organizational partners and liaisons managing charitable food programs</p>	<p>1) Use Food Fuels Learning website and Facebook page as platform to increase charitable foods program communication 2) PPS Food Security listserv in development</p>	<p>1) Ongoing 2) Ongoing</p>
<p>2.1 Ensure that there are adequate school liaisons (e.g., staff, volunteers) to manage the charitable food programs at the schools and to maintain adequate food supply</p>	<p>1) Complete school site visits to identify what each school charitable food program needs for support 2) Draft of expectations for school involvement has been developed 3) Designate charitable food program liaison staff position so that there is a point of contact within each school to ensure charitable food program sustainability</p>	<p>1) Two schools completed; Ongoing 2) Completed April 2019 3) Ongoing</p>
<p>3.1 Partner organizations collaborate with schools that do not have an existing charitable food program to prioritize what would serve their school best</p>	<p>1) Two schools identified and charitable food programs in development</p>	<p>1) Ongoing</p>

Charitable Food Programs (4)



Benchmark	Ask
2.1 Ensure that there are adequate school liaisons (staff, volunteers) to manage the charitable food programs at the schools and to maintain adequate food supply	Designate charitable food program liaison staff position so that there is a point of contact within each school to ensure charitable food program sustainability

Federal Nutrition Programs (1)





Federal Nutrition Programs (2)

Goal: *Increase overall school meal participation and reduce challenges for food service staff*

Federal Nutrition Programs Recommendation 1 - Increase overall student participation in federal nutrition programs

Federal Nutrition Programs Recommendation 2 - Encourage full participation of all eligible students in free and reduced-price meals

Federal Nutrition Programs Recommendation 3 - Cultivate a school culture of healthy and inclusive food practices

Federal Nutrition Programs (3)



Recommendation	Progress	Deadline
<p>1.1 Launch a professional school meals marketing campaign to attract more students and families</p> <p>1.2 Collect, analyze, and incorporate student feedback on menu options through districtwide taste tests and response forms</p> <p>1.5 Develop a summer meals strategic plan that includes monthly stakeholder meetings beginning in January</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Gather data from community about likes/dislikes 2) Educate 'student influencers' about importance of school meals 3) Update Food Service Facebook page 4) Create School Food Ambassador position 5) Sampling overnight oatmeal recipe 6) Monthly meetings with great community participation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Ongoing 2) Ongoing 3) Ongoing 4) Funding application decision May 25 5) May 22nd piloting on elementary menu 6) June -August 2019
<p>2.2 Continue to support families completing eligibility paperwork and implement additional best practices</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Continue with current procedures and new online system 2) Identifying and assessing additional evidence-based best practices to encourage students--especially students from families with limited resources--to eat school meals 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Summer 2019 2) Ongoing
<p>3.4 Exceed federal nutritional requirements by focusing on nutrient dense, minimally processed foods</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Vegan chili, homemade marinara and mashed potatoes 2) Testing overnight oatmeal 3) Harvest of the Month Program 4) School Food Ambassador 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Currently Serving 2) Ongoing 3) Beginning Fall 2019 4) If funded, late summer hire

Federal Nutrition Programs (4)



Benchmark	Ask
3.3 Prepare more scratch meals	Increase staff capacity at central kitchen to meet the goal of increased scratch cooking. Community Support for School Meals

School Gardens (1)





School Gardens (2)

Goal: *Assist every school in developing and maintaining a successful school garden and school garden programming*

School Gardens Recommendation 1 - Develop and implement school garden–based learning goals integrated with Common Core State Standards

School Gardens Recommendation 2 - Create a district-wide School Garden Network

School Gardens Recommendation 3 - Increase funding and infrastructure for school garden programs

School Gardens (3)



Recommendation	Progress	Deadline
<p>2.3 Maintain an online presence to promote school gardens in the district and recruit interested volunteers from the community</p>	<p>1) Create PPS School Garden Network facebook page</p>	<p>1) Launched March 19th</p>
<p>3.3 Provide stipends to school garden coordinators</p>	<p>1) Developed School Garden Coach Model for PPS. 2) Defined budget of \$32,500 to support 13 schools with garden programs to implement garden coach model</p>	<p>1) Developed for April Quarterly Meeting 2) Funding goal is for 2019-2020 school year</p>
<p>2.5 Raise awareness of and fully utilize garden-based education resources in the state</p>	<p>1) Connected to Master Gardeners 2) Representatives attend Maine School Garden Day 3) Other trainings and opportunities shared</p>	<p>Ongoing, accomplished this quarter</p>

School Gardens (4)



Benchmark	Ask
3.3 Provide stipends to school garden coordinators	Create a budget in the school district to fund \$32,500 for the 13 schools with active school gardens to have garden coach stipends for the 2019-2020 school year; with the commitment to maintain funding in following years, and expand to allow schools that are ready to develop garden programs to also receive funding.

Nutrition Education (1)





Nutrition Education (2)

Goal: *Provide schools with the tools they need to coordinate staff and organizational partners working to provide nutrition education to students*

Nutrition Education Recommendation 1 - Develop a district-wide comprehensive and equitable approach to nutrition education

Nutrition Education Recommendation 2 - Designate one person to oversee nutrition education in the district, with responsibilities as follows

Nutrition Education Recommendation 3 - Prioritize and implement nutrition education in schools

Nutrition Education (3)



Recommendation	Progress	Deadline
<p>2.1 Coordinate existing nutrition education efforts by partner organizations, eliminating redundancies and increasing reach</p>	<p>1) Creating comprehensive Nutrition Education Map with partner organizations and school staff teaching nutrition ed</p>	<p>1) Began March 2019, ongoing</p>
<p>3.1 Equip schools with the basic infrastructure to teach nutrition education</p>	<p>1) Group explores option of “nutrition education carts” with cooking resources that teachers or program staff could check out of the library</p> <p>2) Partner organizations share out what they bring with them for classes and approximate costs</p> <p>3) Draft estimate of how much one “nutrition education cart” will cost</p>	<p>1,2,3) May 7th</p>
<p>3.3 Foster greater awareness of available nutrition programs, and strengthen student and family participation</p>	<p>1) Partner organizations share about what they offer and which schools they are eligible to work in</p> <p>2) Reaching out to schools that are not being served by partner organizations and helping to make connections (UME Cooperative Extension and high schools)</p>	<p>1) March 2019</p> <p>2) May 2019</p>

Nutrition Education (4)



Benchmark	Ask
2.1 Coordinate existing nutrition education efforts by partner organizations, eliminating redundancies and increasing reach	Encourage nutrition educators to complete the electronic questionnaire (emailed out to all health, physical education, and nurses). It is also available on foodfuelslearning.org .

Sustainable Practices (1)





Sustainable Practices (2)

Goal: *Support schools in creating procurement, waste management, and other practices that minimize their environmental impact and encourage their investment in local communities*

Sustainable Practices Recommendation 1 - Develop measurable local food procurement goals for Food Services

Sustainable Practices Recommendation 2 - Follow New England Environmental Finance Center's⁵ best management practices for district-wide composting

Sustainable Practices Recommendation 3 - Institute sustainable practices in cafeteria purchases and operations

Sustainable Practices (3)



Recommendation	Progress	Deadline
<p>2.1 Involve custodial and lunchroom staff in trainings and discussions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Completed site visits at each school to understand the barriers with each composting and recycling program. 2) Spoke with custodial and lunchroom staff when possible to understand their specific challenges. 	<p>Ongoing, have visited 12 Portland Public Schools</p>
<p>2.3 Incorporate composting into education goals, and involve students in composting</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Completed site visits at each school to understand the barriers with each composting and recycling program. 2) Creating a PPS composting / recycling guide to inform schools about best practices and the successes of other schools in the district. 	<p>Beginning of school year</p>
<p>3.3 Reduce use of single-use plastic by decreasing use of plastic straws and packaged cutlery</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Working with Rowe Elementary School to eliminate plastic cutlery in their cafeteria and replace it with reusable cutlery. 2) Received a grant from NRCM to fund the materials for the silverware project. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Beginning of school year 2) Received grant on 4/27/19

Sustainable Practices (4)



Benchmark	Ask
2.3 Incorporate composting into education goals, and involve students in composting	Support the development and distribution of our PPS composting and recycling best practices guide that we will complete before the beginning of the year.



Closing Remarks from Superintendent

Xavier Botana



Reminder to contribute to the Food Fund
at the Foundation for Portland Public Schools

<https://www.foundationforpps.org/donate/>



Any questions?

Upcoming meetings



Next Quarterly Presentation: September, 2019 (exact date TBD)

Charitable Food Action Group: TBD

Federal Nutrition Action Group: Wednesday, May 29, 10:00-11:30am (location TBD)

School Gardens Action Group: Wednesday, May 22, 4-5:30, Reiche Community School

Nutrition Education Action Group: Tuesday, May 7, 2:30-4:00pm, PPS Central Office

Sustainable Practices Action Group: Tuesday, May 14, 5:15-6:30pm, East End Elementary School



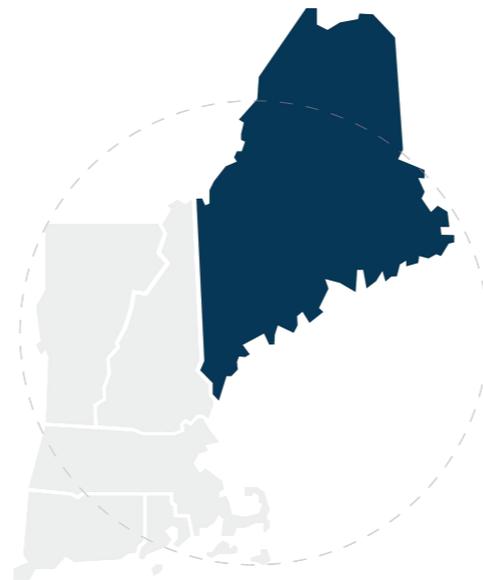
Back-up slides



Recommendations District-wide (1)

District Recommendation 1 - Develop and implement district-wide and school-specific strategic plans based on the PPS Food Security Needs Assessment:

- Develop and implement food security strategic plans that align with the PPS District Wellness Plan and Portland Promise through collaboration with PPS District Wellness Committee, schools, and partner organizations
- Use the Portland Education Foundation; Full Plates Full Potential; Farm to School grants; and other funding opportunities to support the implementation of PPS Food Security Needs Assessment recommendations





Recommendations District-wide (2)

District Recommendation 2 - Develop a yearly monitoring and evaluation plan to track progress implementing the district-wide and school-specific strategic plans:

- Develop shared indicators for schools and partner organizations for data collection and tracking
- Institutionalize data collection and data sharing practices
- Report on yearly findings at the end of each school year
- Build upon PPS food system successes in subsequent years' strategic, monitoring and evaluation plans



Recommendations District-wide (3)

District Recommendation 3 - Institutionalize and maintain a PPS Wellness Coordinator position whose responsibilities include acting as food security advocate on the PPS District Wellness Committee, as follows:

- Coordinate food security efforts by partner organizations and schools; eliminate redundancies, increase reach, oversee networks and resource sharing, and ensure equitable access to food security resources across the district
- Participate on the PPS District Wellness Committee and in development and implementation of district-wide and school-specific strategic plans
- Participate in development of school-based wellness teams
- Identify and research potential funding sources for the implementation of district-wide and school-specific strategic plans
- Provide professional development training and learning opportunities for school staff on poverty and food security
- Create and implement an outreach plan to increase awareness of student food insecurity and promote available food security resources through district-organized events



Recommendations District-wide (4)

District Recommendation 4 - Designate one or more “food security champions” on each school Wellness Team, with responsibilities as follows:

- Serve as liaison between the appropriate school staff members and partner organizations with regards to food security programming
- Participate in development and implementation of district-wide and school-specific food security strategic plan
- Oversee monitoring and evaluation of food security programming at their school
- Report to PPS Wellness Coordinator on District Wellness Committee

Recommendations Charitable food programs



Charitable Foods Recommendation 1 - Enhance consistent resource-sharing within, and among, school communities

- 1.1** Circulate Portland Community Food Resource Guide (Appendix A) and Portland Community Summer Food Resource Guide (Appendix B) to families and all school staff at the beginning and end of the school year, respectively
- 1.2** Incorporate charitable food program information into trainings for school staff. All staff should be informed on what resources are available, trauma-informed ways to help families access services, and the appropriate contact people
- 1.3** Distribute a general information packet and food security survey at the beginning of each school year to determine wants and needs and enable families to opt in to programs
- 1.4** Send home feedback forms through backpack programs to improve communication with families receiving this service
- 1.5** Strengthen communication and collaboration among organizational partners and liaisons managing charitable food programs
- 1.6** Form charitable foods provider PPS network to share resources and best-practices developed at each school

Recommendations Charitable food programs



Charitable Foods Recommendation 2 - Improve the reliability, efficiency, and sustainability of charitable food programs

- 2.1** Ensure that there are adequate school liaisons (e.g., staff, volunteers) to manage the food programs at the schools and to maintain adequate food supply
- 2.2** Guarantee stipends for the school liaisons managing charitable food programs
- 2.3** Invest in necessary infrastructure (e.g., cold storage and equipment)

Recommendations Charitable food programs



Charitable Foods Recommendation 3 - Encourage low-barrier access and high availability of school pantries and food options

- 3.1** Partner organizations collaborate with schools that do not have an existing charitable food program to prioritize what would serve their school best
- 3.2** Increase communication about charitable food opportunities at each school to students and families
- 3.3** Require no paperwork or eligibility checks for access
- 3.4** Work with partner organizations to offer free, nutritious food in more places (e.g., bowls of fruit in the classroom, Adult Ed, multicultural office)
- 3.5** Engage with partner organizations to increase the availability of fresh produce and of culturally appropriate foods such as labeled halal options

Recommendations Federal nutrition programs



Federal Nutrition Programs Recommendation 1 - Increase overall student participation in federal nutrition programs

- 1.1** Launch a professional school meals marketing campaign to attract more students and families
- 1.2** Collect, analyze, and incorporate student feedback on menu options through district-wide taste tests and response forms
- 1.3** Maximize cafeteria and lunch period efficiency to ensure students have sufficient time to enjoy and digest their food
- 1.4** Support and evaluate Child and Adult Care Feeding Program (CACFP) 2018 meal pilot and maximize this program throughout district
- 1.5** Develop a summer meals strategic plan that includes monthly stakeholder meetings beginning in January

Recommendations Federal nutrition programs



Federal Nutrition Programs Recommendation 2 - Encourage full participation of all eligible students in free and reduced-price meals

- 2.1** Continue to encourage and incentivize registration of all eligible families for free and reduced-price meals
- 2.2** Continue to support families completing eligibility paperwork and implement additional best practices
- 2.3** Fully implement the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) in every eligible school
- 2.4** Train staff on how to manage breakfast in the classroom to ensure maximum reimbursement

Recommendations Federal nutrition programs



Federal Nutrition Programs Recommendation 3 - Cultivate a school culture of healthy and inclusive food practices

- 3.1** Serve more meals, snacks, and taste tests that represent and celebrate the cultural diversity of the student body
- 3.2** Restore school budget line item that subsidizes food service, especially local food procurement
- 3.3** Increase capacity for food preparation to include more scratch cooking
- 3.4** Exceed federal nutritional requirements by focusing on nutrient dense, minimally processed foods
- 3.5** Limit access to unhealthy food options outside reimbursable school meals as specified in the District Wellness Policy and Smart Snacks regulations

Recommendations School gardens



School Gardens Recommendation 1 - Develop and implement school garden–based learning goals integrated with Common Core State Standards

- 1.1** Establish a school garden at every school
- 1.2** Institute teacher training on garden-based education as Continuing Education Unit (CEU) credit
- 1.3** Provide all teachers with a garden curriculum formulated from existing Maine-based lessons connected to Common Core State Standards
- 1.4** Maintain a resource list of existing curricula for teachers to draw from to connect to their learning goals
- 1.5** Increase garden-related summer programming for students that includes hands-on learning and maintenance

Recommendations School gardens



School Gardens Recommendation 2 - Create a district-wide School Garden Network

2.1 Establish a platform to share resources, grants, tips, and ask questions

2.2 Convene in-person quarterly meetings

2.3 Maintain an online presence to promote school gardens in the district and recruit interested volunteers from the community

2.4 Increase efficiency of produce distribution between school garden coordinators and liaisons managing charitable food programs during the growing season

2.5 Raise awareness of and fully utilize garden-based education resources in the state

Recommendations School gardens



School Gardens Recommendation 3 - Increase funding and infrastructure for school garden programs

- 3.1** Identify and utilize sources of funding for school garden maintenance and programming for all schools
- 3.2** Designate budget line in Parks & Recreation Department to support outdoor learning spaces on school property
- 3.3** Provide stipends to school garden coordinators
- 3.4** Create school garden committees at each school with representatives from the school administration, each grade, and the parent community to institutionalize gardening into school culture
- 3.5** Organize more and more-sustained support for summer maintenance

Recommendations Nutrition education



Nutrition Education Recommendation 1 - Develop a district-wide comprehensive and equitable approach to nutrition education

1.1 Establish nutrition education goals for each grade that build upon the previous year's lessons

1.2 Create and implement a nutrition education curriculum aligned with Common Core State Standards through collaboration with the academic departments and organizational partners

Recommendations Nutrition education



Nutrition Education Recommendation 2 - Designate one person to oversee nutrition education in the district, with responsibilities as follows

- 2.1** Coordinate existing nutrition education efforts by partner organizations, eliminating redundancies and increasing reach
- 2.2** Provide resources and training to teachers on how to teach basic nutrition education
- 2.3** Leverage funding opportunities among the district and partner organizations by collaborating on grant proposals
- 2.4** Convene bi-annual meetings among partner organizations

Recommendations Nutrition education



Nutrition Education Recommendation 3 - Prioritize and implement nutrition education in schools

3.1 Equip schools with the basic infrastructure to teach nutrition education

3.2 Provide a stipend to teachers who provide after-school nutrition programming

3.3 Foster greater awareness of available nutrition programs, and strengthen student and family participation

Recommendations Sustainable practices



Sustainable Practices Recommendation 1 - Develop measurable local food procurement goals for Food Services

- 1.1** Set local food purchasing goal to at least 20-25% of total food budget
- 1.2** Launch a marketing campaign to promote local food among the school community
- 1.3** Prioritize local food procurement from small Maine farms

Recommendations Sustainable practices



Sustainable Practices Recommendation 2 - Follow New England Environmental Finance Center's⁵ best management practices for district-wide composting

2.1 Involve custodial and lunchroom staff in trainings and discussions

2.2 Supply school cafeterias with additional composting and waste sorting stations

2.3 Incorporate composting into education goals, and involve students in composting

⁵Sheils, M., & Webster, S. (n.d.). *School Cafeteria Recycling & Composting*. Retrieved July 28, 2018, from <http://neefc.org/index.php/projects/school-cafeteria-recycling-composting>.

Recommendations Sustainable practices



Sustainable Practices Recommendation 3 - Institute sustainable practices in cafeteria purchases and operations

3.1 Clarify and institutionalize consistent share table practices

3.2 Purchase compostable or reusable utensils

3.3 Reduce use of single-use plastic by decreasing use of plastic straws and packaged cutlery

3.4 Use pump dispensers instead of individual packets for condiments