

Provincial School Lunch Program Summit

Wednesday, June 10, 2015

Culinary Institute of Canada

4 Sydney Street, Charlottetown, P.E.I.

Introduction

Following a series of Brainstorming sessions held in four schools across Prince Edward Island, the PEI Home and School Federation discovered that parents and teachers were talking about children's access to nutritious food and its essential connect to learning. Food fuels the brain and body. Children cannot learn on an empty stomach!

A resolution was presented and passed on April 11, 2015 at the PEI Home and School Federation's Annual Meeting calling for the establishment of a free Provincial Lunch Program for all Island students which is garnering broad support from educators, chefs, dieticians and others.

The next step forward was to hold a "summit meeting" with all interested parties to focus on the logistics of making the program a reality. A School Lunch Program Summit was held on June 10, 2015 at the Culinary Institute of Canada in Charlottetown with facilitator, Gerry Hopkirk.

Participants completed a visioning exercise where they were asked to imagine it was two years hence and PEI had just completed its first successful year of a fully implemented universal school lunch program. Through this exercise a number of descriptors were identified which will be used to create a brief vision for such a program which will be clear, compelling and hopefully shared and supported.

Participants then identified many actions which would lead to implementation. Four of these were examined more closely using a carousel brainstorming process resulting in proposed action and next steps.

Participants committed themselves to continue to work together and to bring other likeminded organizations and individuals into the ongoing process.

Participants:

Chef Austin Clement	Program Manager PEI Culinary Institute
Dr. Jennifer Taylor	Faculty of Health Sciences, UPEI & President, Healthy Eating Alliance
Joy Shinn	Executive Director, PEI Healthy Eating Alliance
Becca Harris	Summer student, PEI Healthy Eating Alliance
Tracy Michael	Registered Dietician, PEI Healthy Eating Alliance
JoAnn Pineau	Executive Director, Federation of Agriculture
Michelle Jay	Affordable Food Working Group, Food Security Network
Ann Mazer	Affordable Food Working Group, Food Security Network
Peter Rukavina	President, PEI Home and School Federation
Lisa MacDougall	Secretary, PEI Home and School Association
Jean Davis	Parent Leadership Coordinator, PEI HSF
Shirley Smedley Jay	Executive Director, PEI Home and School Fed.
Donald Arsenault	Interim Director, Carrefour de l'Isle-Saint-Jean
Melanie Giffin	Research and Liaison Officer, PEI Fisherman's Association
Gerry Hopkirk	Facilitator

Visioning exercise.....

Award Winning School Lunch Program for P.E.I.

The date is June 10, 2017. A consortium of organizations and individuals has been nominated for a prestigious United Nations international award for their successful implementation of a highly effective school lunch program which has just completed its first year of operation. MacLean's Magazine has sent an investigative reporter to tell P.E.I.'s story of success. The reporter has interviewed a number of people and asked the question, "What makes the Prince Edward Island School Lunch Program so special?"

Your task is to write *a brief phrase* that might be part of the response to the question next to each of the interviewees below:

An elementary student

A parent

A secondary student

An elementary teacher

A secondary teacher

A school principal

A school board member

A nutritionist

A farmer

A fisher

A chef

A Culinary Institute leader

The Healthy Eating Alliance

PEI Home and School Association

The Minister of Education

A school lunch employee

A school lunch volunteer

A taxpayer

Others

Now circle all of the adjectives and adverbs in your responses and share them with those at your table. Agree on six words that you think were the keys to the success of the school lunch program. Share these in the larger group.

Verbs or action words extracted from visioning exercise....

Wholesome	No child is hungry
Pride	Healthy
Foundation	Integrated
Sustainable	Relief
Community	Education about food
Inclusive	Looking forward
Universal	Equitable
Happy (children)	Secure
Value added	Respect for life
Engage	Food Culture
Quality	Local
Accountability	Food Security
Evaluation	Partnerships
Leadership	Strategy
Grassroots	Inter-connected
Built together	Enjoyment

Visioning activity “How can we” statements.....

1. Get the departments of education and health and wellness to see the connection between food/learning and health?
2. Coordinate food to table?
3. Influence the length of lunch time at school?
4. Identify and engage the stakeholders?
5. Involve, engage and gain the support from the students?
6. Ensure the school lunch program is healthy and balanced?
7. Feed lunch to all students (i.e. large schools + eating areas)?
8. Collectively agree that this will happen (i.e. suspend our disbelief and move forward)?
9. Help to engage busy families?
10. Prepare and cook healthy lunch for 18,000 students each day?
11. Create/ find central kitchens?
12. Involve/interest everyone?
13. Document the logistics / profits of present system
14. Document potential benefits?

“How can we” statements condensed to four priority areas.....

#1. How can we cook and prepare healthy lunch for 18,000 students each day?

Solutions.....

- Central kitchen that is provincially owned/operated – this could be regional
- Engage with local school communities
- Integrate with curriculum

Barriers....

- ➡ Logistics
- ➡ Regulatory – health & safety, training
- ➡ Geographical
- ➡ Training
- ➡ New education program
- ➡ Established contracts with current food services
- ➡ Capacity

Creative ways....

- ❖ Training, internet menus, flexible approaches
- ❖ Use existing connections (i.e. Healthy Eating Alliance, school districts)
- ❖ Current and potential
- ❖ Cooking distribution systems (i.e. mail, meals on wheels, etc.)

Action items....

- ✚ **Find best practices elsewhere to adapt to PEI (within PEI and outside)**

#2. How can we identify and engage stakeholders?

Solutions.....

- Identify stakeholders through the Farm Centre, Culinary Alliance, Federation of Agriculture, Fisherman's Association, Departments of Agriculture & Fisheries
- Engage: round table discussions
- Inform parents regarding issues through Home and School

Barriers....

- ➡ Apathy
- ➡ "Busyness"
- ➡ Lack of understanding
- ➡ Politics
- ➡ Disagreement regarding solutions / problems
(i.e. "parents should feed their own kids")

Creative ways....

- ❖ Use media
- ❖ Demonstrations
- ❖ Just asking
- ❖ Invitations are important
- ❖ Point to success stories that are in place now

Action items...

- ✚ **Focus on Healthy Child and Benefits to society**
- ✚ **Engage Grassroots**

#3. How can we coordinate food to table?

Solutions....

- Identifying stakeholders
- Identifying types of foods available, seasonality, costs, etc.
- Stakeholders with food system expertise
- Procurement, delivery and storage systems

Barriers....

- ➡ No central depot / food hub
- ➡ Lack processing (service)
- ➡ Lack infrastructure / school staff
- ➡ Possible loss of profit (i.e. if cost neutral)
- ➡ Loss of variety

Creative Ways....

- ❖ Opportunities for local food production
- ❖ Creates employment
- ❖ Economic benefits offsets costs

Action items....

- ✚ **Create/ find distribution hub of Farm/ Fish → Hub → Client**
- ✚ **Establish a harvest process and storage strategy that extends food past harvest season where appropriate**
- ✚ **Focus on local, seasonal sustainability**

#4. How can we get the Departments of Education and Health to see the connection between food, learning and health?

Solutions....

- Meet Ministers, etc.
- Show research evidence – what works
- Champions – for example: Sterling Carruthers
- Canada 150th Anniversary – perhaps an occasion to act?
- “Lunches” together – demonstrate/ collaborate
- Share ☺

Barriers....

- ➡ Budget line – Provincial
- ➡ Other priorities

Creative ways....

- ❖ Reallocation / value of existing funds within provincial budget
- ❖ Parental pressure
- ❖ Education of public (i.e. Participation campaign for physical activity)

Action items....

- ✚ **Prepare brief re: current evidence to parents, students, government from Home & School and partners**
- ✚ **Press release OR individual meetings at schools using Commission scolaire de langue française (CSLF) as a “unique model”**
- ✚ **Preparing a business case?**
- ✚ **Need for consistency**