

SCHOOLS LEADER GUIDE



The Minnesota Food Charter Schools Leader Guide is a shared roadmap developed by thousands of Minnesotans. This guide offers actionable steps for educational decision-makers, so they can build healthy food skills of young Minnesotans and offer healthy food in educational settings.



**Minnesota
FOOD CHARTER**
For Our Healthy Future



WHAT IS THE MINNESOTA FOOD CHARTER?

The Minnesota Food Charter describes the state's food-related principles and priorities for how all residents can have reliable access to healthy, affordable, and safe food to reduce the risk and cost of diet-related diseases like obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. A shared agenda developed by thousands of Minnesotans, **the Food Charter provides a roadmap for how we can provide safe, healthy, affordable food for everyone.** The Food Charter identifies challenges in three major areas—healthy food skills, healthy food environments, and healthy food infrastructure, and the policy and systems change strategies to strengthen them. These strategies encompass local, regional, state, and federal levels; any community or group can select strategies that reflect their priorities and work together to implement them.

Engagement in developing the Food Charter was broad, representing every region and many cultural communities and sectors. For more information, go to www.mnfoodcharter.com.

MINNESOTA FOOD CHARTER

SCHOOLS LEADER GUIDE

Young people in Minnesota spend a lot of time in educational institutions, including schools, universities and out of school programs. Meals and snacks made available at school and other educational programs are a primary source of food for these learners, and a major determinant of academic achievement.¹ Healthy meals and snacks support students' ability to learn by increasing attendance, concentration, and school connectedness; they also reduce absenteeism and disruptive behavior. Schools and educational programs of all sizes can be places where students learn healthy food skills, like healthy eating, cooking, or gardening.

WHAT IS IT?

The Schools Leader Guide is a companion piece to the Minnesota Food Charter. It offers a clear, detailed roadmap for the diverse types of decision-makers who influence campus and school food environments as well as food skills development of young Minnesotans. The Schools Leader Guide offers concrete, lasting solutions for how to improve food skills and increase access to healthy food for students who attend K-12 schools, participate in out of school activities, or attend colleges and universities in Minnesota. It's a recipe for a prosperous future.

HOW TO READ THE SCHOOLS LEADER GUIDE

Each section of the Schools Leader Guide describes challenges to healthy food access and food skills development, as identified by Minnesota Food Charter participants. The guide offers practical strategies for each kind of decision-maker to address these challenges. The strategies described in this guide empower leaders to change policies and systems at every level and every type of organization.



**HEALTHY
FOOD
FUTURE**

Minnesota Food Charter participants identified two important ways to ensure a healthy food future for all:

1. SUPPORTING & MAINTAINING HEALTHY SCHOOL FOOD ENVIRONMENTS
2. BUILDING FOOD SKILLS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

WHY WE NEED A SCHOOLS LEADER GUIDE

In recent years, substantial improvements to school food environments across Minnesota have laid the groundwork for further progress toward ensuring that the healthy choice is the easy choice in our schools and college campuses. Furthermore, it's crucial that young Minnesotans learn the food skills they need to make healthy choices for the rest of their lives.

Policies and systems that strengthen students' food skills and improve food environments in educational settings will improve our educational outcomes, increase our high school and college graduation rates, and reduce our state's long-term healthcare costs. Our healthier, more productive workforce will create greater economic prosperity and community vitality across Minnesota.



205,910

children in Minnesota live in households without reliable access to food—and their ability to learn suffers as a result.



38%

of children in Minnesota's public schools are enrolled in the free and reduced-price school lunch program.



33%

of college students who responded to a University of Minnesota health survey have a BMI that places them in the overweight, obese, or extremely obese categories.



POOR
EATING

Children who have less access to healthy food and greater access to unhealthy food, and who consume too many daily calories are more likely to be obese, have respiratory problems such as asthma, have high blood pressure, and experience a greater risk of negative social and psychological issues.

DEFINITIONS

WHAT ARE FOODS SKILLS?

Food skills are the knowledge and techniques for:

- Growing and preserving food
- Planning, budgeting for, and selecting healthy food
- Preparing safe, healthy food from scratch
- Trying unfamiliar foods
- Understanding basic principles of agriculture, food safety, our food system and the cultural dimensions of healthy eating, and the connections between food and health

WHAT IS A FOOD ENVIRONMENT?

Food environments in educational settings include cafeterias, vending machines, concession stands in schools, à la carte food, food provided during class time, and snacks and treats brought in to school from outside the school setting. School food environments can also include concessions provided as part of sports and other extracurricular activities, school fundraisers, and other food provided to students outside of regular school hours and off of school campuses.

SOURCES

"Overweight and Obesity: Minnesota's Response to Obesity," CDC, available at www.cdc.gov/obesity/stateprograms/fundedstates/minnesota.html.

A Growing Problem: What causes childhood obesity? <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/problem.html> (last visited 3/28/2014); see also Overweight and Obesity, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/basics.html> (last visited 3/24/2014).

Bell, J., Mora, G., Hagan, E., Rubin, V., & Karpyn A. (2013). Access to Healthy Food and Why It Matters: A Review of the Research. The Food Trust & Policy Link. Retrieved from www.policylink.org/atf/ct/{97c6d565-bb43-406d-a6d5-eca3bbf35af0}/GROCERYGAP_FINAL-NOV2013.PDF.

Healthy, United States 2011: With Special Feature on Socioeconomic Status and Health, US Dept of Health and Human Services, available at www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hs/hs11.pdf.

2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, Executive Summary, www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/DietaryGuidelines/2010/PolicyDoc/ExecSumm.pdf.

42 USCA 1788 - Chapter 13A Child Nutrition (United States Code Annotated).

PROGRESS + SUCCESS

Educational leaders have worked hard to improve food environments and teach food skills at schools, universities, and other places. Here are some examples:



BOOMING GROWTH

more gardens, healthier food, & more farm to school connections in Minnesota.

www.education.state.mn.us/MDE/SchSup/FNS/SNP/
www.co.dakota.mn.us/HealthFamily/HealthyLiving/DietNutrition/Pages/smart-choices.aspx



HEALTHY EATING STANDARDS at every YMCA in Minnesota.

www.ymcaeuc.org/content/promo/2013%2004%20HEPA%20Standards.pdfDE/SchSup/FNS/SNP/



THE FreshConnect FOOD HUB

offers full-service aggregation & delivery of locally grown food to schools in rural Minnesota.

www.lcsc.org/Domain/117



UM-MORRIS OVERHAULS CAMPUS FOOD ENVIRONMENT

www.morris.umn.edu/healthyeating/

WHAT IS HEALTHY FOOD?

“Healthy food” means different things to different people. Minnesota Food Charter participants shared their understandings of healthy food, as well as definitions used by relevant organizations and agencies. These concepts reflect various facets of healthy eating—from cultural traditions to serving sizes, nutrients, and types of food preparation.

Healthy foods are foods that are minimally processed and nutrient dense and sourced locally when possible.

RACHEL VALESANO
School Food Service Director

Broccoli and beans, vegetables and fruit, and not sugar. It's just the opposite of unhealthy food. It's good for you, because it makes you healthy. It makes you have a healthy body.

MARIN, 11-YR-OLD

Healthy foods contain nutrients essential for life, growth, and energy at levels that satiate hunger, without contributing to increased risk factors for chronic diseases.

DONNA MCDUFFIE
Minnesota Department of Health

STUDENTS, PARENTS + CAREGIVERS

Students, parents, and caregivers can strengthen students' food skills and improve school food environments by getting involved.

Parents and caregivers can use relationships with students, teachers, school administrators, school board members, and parent committees to voice concerns about healthy food skills, healthy food behaviors, and school food environments.

Students can play a leadership role among fellow students and through student organizations. They can work with teachers and administrators to create healthier food environments, food behaviors, and food skills.

Healthy choices happen by equipping people with healthy food skills.



CHALLENGES

K-12 DURING SCHOOL

Many students don't have basic healthy food skills, like growing, planning, and preparing healthy food, or a foundational understanding of basic plant biology, agriculture, and the food system.

Many schools don't have a way for students to learn how to grow, plan, and prepare healthy, safe food and lack the resources to do so.

K-12 OUT-OF-SCHOOL

Many students don't have basic healthy food skills, like growing, planning, and preparing healthy food, or a foundational understanding of basic plant biology, agriculture, and the food system.



CHALLENGES

K-12 DURING SCHOOL

Students need greater access to healthy foods and less access to unhealthy foods—in concessions, fundraisers, and vending machines.

Many school districts lack financial resources, facilities, and equipment to purchase, store, prepare, and serve healthy meals made from scratch.

Many students are reluctant to try unfamiliar, healthy foods served at school.

K-12 DURING OUT-OF-SCHOOL

Students need healthy foods when they participate in extracurricular activities, such as sports, clubs, and before and after school programs

Concession stands and vending machines serve too many unhealthy options and not enough healthy options.

¹www.pewtrusts.org/en/about/news-room/press-releases/2014/09/08/parents-support-healthier-school-food-policies-by-3to1-margin

STRATEGIES

K-12 DURING SCHOOL

Ask school districts to offer food skills-related opportunities for students of all ages, including lesson plans, district curriculum and related resources, such as school gardens, fresh food preparation, food skills and agriculture-related classes at school.

Encourage students of all ages to participate in food skills-related activities, such as campus gardens and farms, fresh food preparation, food skills and agriculture-related classes at school.

Volunteer in school-related food skills activities, such as school gardens, fresh food preparation, agricultural literacy, and food skills-related classes at school.

Support age-appropriate, curriculum and policies that enhance healthy food skills learning in classrooms and include models and examples of healthy eating; agricultural practices and how they affect food; health and learning implications of diet and food; and ways that parents and caregivers can enhance food skills learning at home.

Support school- and district-level wellness and other policies, guidelines, and programs that help students develop healthy food skills and healthy eating habits.

K-12 OUT-OF-SCHOOL

Encourage, participate in, and help extracurricular programs that support the development of healthy food skills, such as understanding agriculture as well as gardening, healthy meal planning, and cooking.

Participate in school wellness committees and support healthy food skills development in extracurricular activities.

“The vast majority of parents of school-age children support strong national nutrition standards for all foods and beverages sold during school hours”¹

STRATEGIES

K-12 DURING SCHOOL

Encourage, participate in, and support healthier food options on school grounds, including in vending machines and as part of classroom activities.

Support healthy eating and nutrition standards that increase access to healthy foods and decrease access to unhealthy foods served and sold at district-sponsored after-school, evening, sports events, and at school celebrations.

Participate in district- and school-level wellness committees charged with implementing and enforcing healthy food standards at school, using tools like school food environment assessments and wellness audits. Create plans from results to increase student food skills and access to healthy food on school grounds.

Encourage students to try new, healthier foods and incorporate those foods into meals at home.

Reduce the amount of unhealthy foods sent from home to school and provide healthy alternatives.

K-12 OUT-OF-SCHOOL

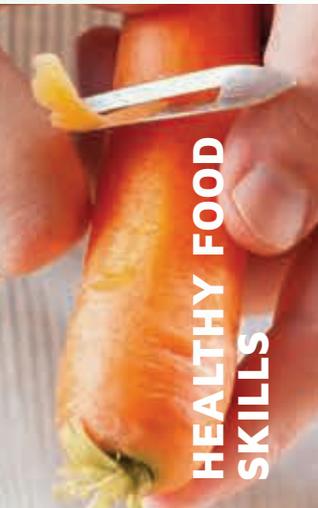
Advocate for and support district healthy eating standards that aim to decrease the amount of unhealthy foods served and sold at school-related sports events, fundraisers, and other activities.

Advocate for school fundraising activities that sell healthy foods (such as fresh fruits) or encourage physical activities.

TEACHERS + STAFF

School district staff—a group that includes guidance counselors, coaches, educational specialists, school nurses, teacher assistants, facilities managers, and other operational employees—play important roles in ensuring healthy food environments and healthy food skills development for students. Teachers and teacher assistants give students information about healthy

food and healthy behaviors, while ensuring that food made available in classrooms supports the school’s health and wellness standards. School counselors and nurses promote coordinated school health and wellness throughout the school environment. Employees responsible for facilities and school grounds are often critical to the success of school garden initiatives.



HEALTHY FOOD
SKILLS

CHALLENGES

K-12 DURING SCHOOL

Many students don’t have basic healthy food skills, like growing, planning, and preparing healthy food, or a foundational understanding of basic plant biology, agriculture, and the food system.

Federal, state, and many district educational policies and curricular requirements leave little time for students to learn food skills and healthy behaviors in the classroom.

K-12 OUT-OF-SCHOOL

Many students do not know enough about growing, identifying, and preparing healthy food.

knowledge of agriculture, gardening, healthy eating, and cooking.

In some school districts and local out-of-school educational programs, many students do not have the opportunity to participate in after-school programs that enhance their

Many school districts lack resources to provide after-school activities that support students’ food skills development.



HEALTHY FOOD
ENVIRONMENT

CHALLENGES

K-12 DURING SCHOOL

Many students still have too much access to unhealthy foods while at school.

Many students are reluctant to try unfamiliar healthy foods.

Teachers and educational staff use unhealthy foods too often for celebrations and fundraisers, as well as rewards and incentives.

K-12 OUT OF SCHOOL

There are too many unhealthy food options and not enough healthy food options available as part of out of school programs and activities.

“Teaching cooking—real cooking—in public schools could help address a host of problems facing Americans today.”¹

NY Times

¹ www.nytimes.com/2011/09/06/opinion/revive-home-economics-classes-to-fight-obesity.html
² www.health.state.mn.us/divs/oshii/ship/docs/shipfactsheet.pdf

STRATEGIES

K-12 DURING SCHOOL

Provide students of all ages with age-appropriate, evidence-based lessons in the sciences, math, language arts, and other subjects that teach about basic plant biology, agriculture and how to grow, plan, and prepare healthy foods.

Model healthy eating behaviors and share how parents and caregivers can teach food skills to students when they're at home.

Teach basic plant biology and use garden-based curriculum, beginning in early elementary grades.

Programs like Farm to School and school gardens have been shown to increase fruit and vegetable consumption.²

MN Department of Health

K-12 OUT-OF-SCHOOL

Provide food skills development opportunities—such as growing, planning, and preparing healthy foods—in extracurricular activities and programs.

STRATEGIES

K-12 DURING SCHOOL

Participate in and support district-wide and school wellness committees and related efforts to develop and implement healthy food standards at school.

Ensure that food provided to students as part of classroom activities meet district-wide healthy eating standards and policies.

Model healthy eating behaviors at school.

Support healthy eating and nutrition standards that increase access to healthy foods and decrease access to unhealthy foods served and sold at school celebrations and district-sponsored after-school, evening, and sports events.

Work with school food and nutrition services to implement “cafeteria as classroom” and school gardens as part of activities supported by a district-wide wellness committee.

Choose culturally diverse, healthy foods when serving food as part of classroom activities.

YMCA’s across the country have adopted standards for healthy eating, including Minnesota.

K-12 OUT OF SCHOOL

Include students, parents, and caregivers in developing, implementing, and evaluating healthy food initiatives in out-of-school programs and activities.

Demonstrate the preparation of new menu selections that include unfamiliar foods.

Ask students in park and recreation activities and other programs to taste test unfamiliar foods.

SCHOOL FOOD AUTHORITY

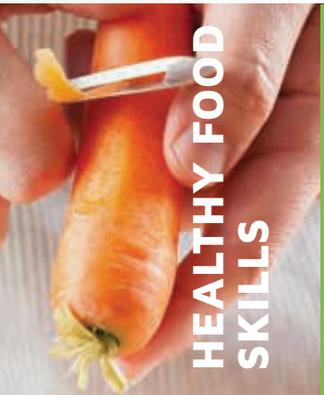
SCHOOL FOOD + NUTRITION SERVICE

The School Food Authority administers federal school nutrition programs, including purchasing and procuring food, as well as ensuring compliance with federal and state laws related to school nutrition and foodservices. School food and nutrition services staff implements school food and nutrition programs, preparing and serving food to students.



“Kids who eat well learn better”¹

Action for Healthy Kids



HEALTHY FOOD SKILLS

CHALLENGES

K-12 DURING SCHOOL

Many students don't know enough about growing, identifying, and preparing healthy food.

Many students are reluctant to try unfamiliar, healthy foods.

K-12 OUT-OF-SCHOOL

Many students don't know enough about growing, identifying, and preparing healthy food.

Many students are reluctant to try unfamiliar, healthy foods.



HEALTHY FOOD ENVIRONMENT

CHALLENGES

K-12 DURING SCHOOL

Many students are reluctant to try unfamiliar, healthy foods.

Healthy food options, such as fresh produce or food raised on nearby farms, are more expensive than unhealthy options.

Some district staff, parents, and students may not support serving healthy foods raised at nearby farms because of food safety concerns.

Some school food and nutrition services staff may have limited training and time to prepare healthy meals from scratch.

Many school districts lack financial resources, facilities, and equipment to purchase, store, prepare, and serve healthy meals made from scratch.

¹ www.actionforhealthykids.org/storage/documents/pdfs/afhk_thelearningconnection_digitalaedition.pdf
² www.health.state.mn.us/divs/oshii/ship/stories/pdf/theircarrotsbemidji.pdf

In over 3 years,
440 Minnesota schools
served locally grown fresh
fruits and vegetables
to 235,000
students.²

STRATEGIES

K-12 DURING SCHOOL

Give students and school staff opportunities to meet farmers as part of Farm to School contracts.

Provide cooking demonstrations and samples of healthy foods, including foods raised on nearby farms, to students in the cafeteria.

Combine cafeteria-based healthy eating efforts with classroom-based food skills and health education curriculum.

K-12 OUT-OF-SCHOOL

Collaborate with state agencies and other partners to explore opportunities for students to have access to school kitchens.

Work with superintendent and other administrators to allow extracurricular food skills classes and programs the use of school kitchen facilities.

Coordinate with extracurricular programs in the community to supervise their use of school kitchens for activities that promote food skills.

STRATEGIES

K-12 DURING SCHOOL

Encourage statewide school food and nutrition services professional associations to advocate for facilities and equipment upgrades as part of state and local educational funding priorities.

Ensure that the school district applies for state grants that fund school kitchen and facilities upgrades, as well as Farm to School programs.

Participate in and support district-wide and school wellness committees and related efforts to develop and implement healthy food guidelines on school campuses.

Use school districts' healthy food guidelines to create food purchasing and procurement guidelines for vendors who serve or sell food to school food and nutrition services. Establish vendor contracts based on these guidelines.

Implement or expand Farm to School efforts, such as purchasing healthy foods raised at nearby farms, preparing healthy foods from scratch, and partnering with nearby districts to jointly purchase and develop menus that use healthy foods raised on nearby farms.

Provide professional development opportunities at the district and statewide level for school food and nutrition services staff in support of creating healthy school food environments.

Ensure that food made available to students as part of classroom activities meets nutritional standards and follows established healthy eating guidelines.

Work with teaching staff to collaboratively implement a "cafeteria as classroom" initiative, such as using methods to encourage students to try unfamiliar, healthy foods in the cafeteria.

Collaborate with school-based agriculture and garden clubs and instructors to grow and serve food.

Partner with students, parents and caregivers, teachers, and school food and nutrition services professionals to integrate culturally diverse food options into school meals.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS + SCHOOL BOARD

Local school boards and administrators (such as superintendents, district curriculum directors, and principals) play an important role in providing leadership, prioritizing resource allocation, developing district-wide and school policies, course requirements, and standards (such as healthy eating standards), approving curriculum

for comprehensive food skills and health education, and creating a healthy school food environment. They can play an instrumental role in improving school food environments and ensuring that students acquire important healthy eating and healthy behavior skills.



CHALLENGES

K-12 DURING SCHOOL

Many students don't have basic healthy food skills, like growing, planning, and preparing healthy food, or a foundational understanding of basic plant biology, agriculture, and the food system.

Early grades are the ideal time to establish basic horticultural literacy, but many school districts lack adequate resources to offer early-grade curriculum on plant science and school gardens.

Federal education accountability measures do not include healthy food skills or physical activity and are thus not local or state education priorities.

Minnesota has limited state and local education policies, resources, and practices—such as graduation and course requirements, state standards and benchmarks, staff positions, training and professional development, and facilities and equipment—that support food skills development for K-12 students.

Minnesota lacks up-to-date guidelines for food skills education that can inform districts' curricular decisions.

Despite broad public support for food skills education, many school districts lack the facilities, staff, curriculum, funding, equipment, and political will to provide it.

K-12 OUT-OF-SCHOOL

Many students don't have basic healthy food skills, like growing, planning, and preparing healthy food.

Many students have easy access to unhealthy options in out of school programs.



CHALLENGES

K-12 DURING SCHOOL

School food and nutrition services and vendors need greater varieties and quantities of healthy food from their suppliers.

Many school food and nutrition services need adequate facilities, equipment, budgets, and staff to prepare and serve healthy food from scratch or food grown on nearby farms

Many school districts and their school food and nutrition services cannot get enough healthy food raised on nearby farms to serve to students, particularly because much of the growing season for fresh produce happens when school is not in session.

Concession stands and vending machines in places with out-of-school activities for students offer too many unhealthy options and not enough healthy options.

K-12 OUT-OF-SCHOOL

School food and nutrition services and vendors that serve on-site programs outside regular school hours (such as summer school and sports, theater, and musical groups) need greater varieties and quantities of healthy food from their suppliers.

Train out-of-school programs and activities staff about the importance of healthy food for student performance.

K-12 DURING SCHOOL

Budget for and offer staff support to school- and district-wide school wellness councils, encouraging them to emphasize food skills development across all grades.

Implement school wellness and other policies, guidelines, recommendations, and programs that support healthy eating and food skills development, as allowed by the school board.

Provide adequate resources for food skills, health education, and physical education.

Identify district-wide, age- and grade-appropriate academic standards, competencies, and middle-school requirements for food skills education. These may address agriculture, basic plant biology, gardening, food composting, and food preservation, as well as planning, budgeting for, and preparing healthy meals.

Support age-appropriate, curriculum and related educational

resources, policies, and standards for food skills education in classrooms.

Use early-grades and middle-school food skills curricula that encompass healthy eating and meal planning, cooking and food preservation, gardening and plant biology, and understanding our food system.

Recruit local master gardeners to train teachers in hands-on plant science curriculum for early grades.

K-12 OUT-OF-SCHOOL

Support after-school programs that teach students how to grow, plan, and prepare healthy food to use school property, including school kitchens and school gardens.

Help groups that raise funds for after-school and extra-curricular activities replace sales of unhealthy foods with healthy foods at price points that maintain or increase their fundraising capacity.

K-12 DURING SCHOOL

Support district-wide school wellness committees charged with developing and monitoring the implementation and enforcement of healthy food standards on school campuses, such as a district wellness coordinator staff position.

Authorize and support school wellness committees to conduct school wellness audits, create and execute school food environment assessments, and develop policies and systems to ensure healthy food access on school grounds.

Bid, contract, purchase, and procure school food in compliance with district and school wellness policies and guidelines, as well as federal nutrition standards or enhanced nutrition standards.

Ensure district compliance with new federal Smart Snack nutrition standards for healthy foods sold in fundraising events. Apply the nutrition standards to foods served as part of classroom activities and celebrations.

Develop policies and food safety protocols for fresh produce and school salad bars, such as requiring nearby growers who supply schools with fresh produce to follow established food safety protocol and provide food safety and handling documentation.

K-12 OUT-OF-SCHOOL

Establish district-wide school wellness committees to develop, monitor, and enforce wellness policies and nutrition standards for extracurricular activities sponsored by the school district and on the school campus.

Ask activities and athletic staff to implement and participate in healthy eating and nutrition training, use relevant resources, and help develop policies and guidelines that promote healthy behaviors.

Encourage activity and athletic staff to comply with Smart Snack standards, as well as plan and implement healthy eating initiatives and policies by evaluating concession sales, fundraisers, and food sold as part of extracurricular activities.

Ensure that healthy food sales at out-of-school programs and activities meet financial goals.

Ensure foods served by out-of-school programs and activities comply with established healthy eating guidelines.

Train out-of-school programs and activities staff about the importance of healthy food for student performance.

Give school wellness committees the authority to conduct school wellness audits, create and execute school food environment assessments, and develop plans to improve access to healthy food during extracurricular activities.

Implement healthy eating initiatives and policies around concession sales, fundraisers, and food sold as part of out-of-school programs and activities.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS + STATE ASSOCIATIONS

Professional organizations can positively influence food environments and food skills development of students in Minnesota’s schools. Professional organizations unite, inform, and educate others who work in the same or similar professions and occupational fields,

including statewide associations of teachers, such as family and consumer sciences or agricultural education; school foodservice professionals; or principals and superintendents.



HEALTHY FOOD SKILLS

CHALLENGES

K-12 DURING SCHOOL

Many students don’t have basic healthy food skills, like growing, planning, and preparing healthy food, or a foundational understanding of basic plant biology, agriculture, and the food system.

K-12 OUT-OF-SCHOOL

Many students don’t have basic healthy food skills, like growing, planning, and preparing healthy food, or a foundational understanding of basic plant biology, agriculture, and the food system.

Programs like Farm to School and school gardens have been shown to increase fruit and vegetable consumption.¹

MN Department of Health



HEALTHY FOOD ENVIRONMENT

CHALLENGES

K-12 DURING SCHOOL

Some school food and nutrition staff needs more training and time to prepare healthy, safe meals from scratch.

Many students are reluctant to try unfamiliar, healthy foods served at school.

Some school food and nutrition services staff, parents, and students may have food safety-related concerns about serving foods grown on nearby farms.

Many food suppliers offer a limited selection of healthy food, such as fruits and vegetables raised on nearby farms.

K-12 OUT-OF-SCHOOL

Many students need more access to healthy food and beverages and less access to unhealthy food and beverages at educational and recreational activities and programs in their communities.

¹ www.health.state.mn.us/divs/oshii/ship/docs/shipfactsheet.pdf

K-12 DURING SCHOOL

Update state guidelines for family and consumer sciences education to include comprehensive food skills development, including healthy eating, cooking and food preservation, meal planning and budgeting, gardening, and a basic understanding of agriculture and the food system.

Develop and promote age-appropriate, curriculum for family and consumer sciences education that includes comprehensive food skills development, including healthy eating, cooking and food preservation, meal planning and budgeting, gardening, and a basic understanding of agriculture and the food system.

Create and update state guidelines for curricular standards, requirements, and content for second-grade plant science education.

Develop and promote, basic plant science curriculum for second-graders using gardening and integrate school gardens into classroom teaching.

Support policies and programming for school gardens.

Create state guidelines for health education that include healthy eating and other relevant content on food skills development.

Identify assessment tools to establish district-level baseline of students' plant science knowledge and food skills knowledge and offer related training at annual professional conferences.

K-12 OUT-OF-SCHOOL

Create, promote, and provide training for healthy eating model policies and guidelines and food skills development activities for staff working at out of school educational programs.

Training and advocacy by professional associations play a key role in healthy food access for students.

K-12 DURING SCHOOL

Provide support and training for school food and nutrition professionals to plan and prepare healthy meals that ensure food safety and comply with federal nutrition standards and district healthy eating standards.

Give school food and nutrition staff tools and training about effective ways to introduce unfamiliar, healthy foods to students, such as taste tasting, menu development, behavioral economics and food marketing (such as fruit and vegetable displays in the cafeteria).

Provide sample policies and practices for school food and nutrition professionals, such as Farm to School procurement (e.g. geographical preferences), joint purchasing to leverage buying power and reduce food and delivery costs, or use of healthy food standards for vendor bidding and contracting.

Offer training for school food and nutrition services about how culture affects attitudes and behaviors about eating, food environments, and the food system.

Offer school food and nutrition services staff technical support around kitchen design, food handling, and strategies for improving kitchen infrastructure to prepare meals from scratch.

Feature healthy food options from diverse cultural traditions in school meals.

K-12 OUT-OF-SCHOOL

Create, promote, and provide training for healthy eating model policies and guidelines for staff working at out of school educational programs.

Create and share model healthy eating standards for foods served and sold during extracurricular activities, such as summer school and other educational and recreational programs that serve children and youth.

Train decisionmakers who oversee food purchased for and served in extracurricular educational and recreational programs about healthy eating policies and practices.

Require that foods served in extracurricular recreational and educational programs meet healthy eating standards as part of certification and accreditation processes.

Develop programming guides about healthy eating for food providers to extracurricular recreational and educational programs.

Strengthen MN School-Age Care Alliance standards to include best practices and policies for developing healthy eating and food skills.

STATE GOVERNMENT

State government, including agencies, commissioners, and the legislature, play various roles in supporting healthy school food environments and education that develops healthy behaviors and healthy food skills. State government is charged with policymaking, coordination, management, oversight, training and funding aspects

of food-related programs that serve children attending K-12 schools and college and university campuses. They play important partnership roles with school districts and their stakeholders to create healthier school food environments and support food skills development and healthy behaviors



HEALTHY FOOD SKILLS

CHALLENGES

K-12 DURING SCHOOL

Many students don't have basic healthy food skills, like growing, planning, and preparing healthy food, or a foundational understanding of basic plant biology, agriculture, and the food system.

Schools need additional information about how to incorporate age-appropriate food skills and health education during the school day.

Minnesota has limited state education policies, resources, and practices that support food skills development for K-12 students. These include graduation or course requirements in family and consumer sciences and health education, staff positions, training and professional development, and facilities and equipment.

There are no dedicated state agency staff positions in family and consumer sciences, health education, and physical education.

K-12 OUT OF SCHOOL

Out-of-school programs and activities need to include more food skills education.

Out-of-school programs and activities need resources about how to promote and incorporate food skills education.



HEALTHY FOOD ENVIRONMENT

CHALLENGES

K-12 DURING SCHOOL

Some school food and nutrition services staff and nutrition staff is unfamiliar with affordable, culturally diverse meals that meet federal nutrition standards.

School food service staff at schools has limited time to encourage students to try new foods.

Many schools need additional food preparation equipment and space to cook and serve healthy, fresh foods.

Educational decision-makers need more information about the effect of healthy school food on children's health and academic success.

Schools need better access to affordable, healthy food grown on nearby farms.

K-12 OUT OF SCHOOL

Students need access to healthy food in out-of-school activities.

Out-of school programs and activities that provide food to students need access to facilities and equipment to make and serve healthy food.

K-12 DURING SCHOOL

Encourage the federal government to establish accountability measures and metrics for healthy schools, including food skills education, health education, and physical education, as part of the federally mandated Schools Report Card.

Establish standards, benchmarks, and assessments for family and consumer sciences.

Establish standards, benchmarks, and assessments for health education.

Ensure state science standards to include basic plant science education for Minnesota second graders.

Establish staff positions at the Minnesota Department of Education for family and consumer sciences, health education, and physical education.

Ensure adequate support for state government-provided educational tools, resources, and teacher training focused on healthy food skills development.

Fund research about and development of new, age-appropriate, comprehensive food skills curriculum.

Support development of hands-on curriculum, guidelines, policies, and programming for school gardens.

Adopt the current model Food Code for Minnesota, which regulates school food safety.

Support, train, and fund school food and nutrition services staff in preparing meals from scratch.

K-12 OUT OF SCHOOL

Fund research and develop new, comprehensive food skills curriculum for out-of-school activities and programs and provide training to staff.

Promote food skills education as an important component of out-of-school programs and activities.

Provide funds to out-of-school programs and activities to offer food skills education to children and youth.

K-12 DURING SCHOOL

Promote participation in and additional funding for the federal Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program.

Provide adequate funding for school districts to obtain equipment and facilities to store and prepare healthy food for school meals.

Support research that investigates the connection between healthy diets and academic success.

Share culturally diverse menu options that meet federal nutrition standards and provide related training to school food and nutrition services staff.

Develop model guidelines for Farm to School programs, including food safety protocols, liability insurance recommendations, and other technical support for schools.

Work to increase the selection and availability of fresh, nutrient-dense, and locally grown food items available to schools via the USDA Foods (commodity) program.

Support strategies that teach children how to eat unfamiliar, healthy foods in the school cafeteria.

K-12 OUT OF SCHOOL

Provide grants for out-of-school programs and activities to buy needed equipment to make and serve healthy food to students.

Support policies and incentives for organizations that offer out-of-school programs and activities for children and youth to allow access to commercial kitchen facilities so they can make and serve healthy food.

State government can ensure the prosperity and well-being of all Minnesotans by promoting health in all policies.

COLLEGES + UNIVERSITIES

Minnesota is home to a wide range of higher education institutions and systems, including the University of Minnesota, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, tribal colleges, and many private colleges and universities. Diverse decision-makers affect campus food environments and food skills learning in higher

education settings. These decisionmakers include college and university administrators, foodservice management companies, student organizations, professors, students and staff, and other professional and non-profit organizations.



HEALTHY FOOD
SKILLS

CHALLENGES

Many students don't know enough about growing, planning, and preparing healthy food or about agriculture and our food system.

Many young people are unwilling to try unfamiliar foods.

Some students lack transportation, necessary equipment, or access to facilities where they can purchase, store, and prepare healthy food.

Many campuses do not offer necessary resources, education, equipment, or facilities for students to learn or practice food skills.

Some students are unaware of affordable, healthy foods available to them, and may not know how to choose healthy options on a limited budget.

Many campuses do not offer courses or extracurricular opportunities to develop gardening or farming skills.

Not all campuses in Minnesota have student farms or use edible plants as part of campus landscaping.

Many campuses do not offer enough food- or agriculture-related courses.



HEALTHY FOOD
ENVIRONMENT

CHALLENGES

HEALTHY FOOD AVAILABILITY

Many events sponsored by student organizations serve unhealthy foods.

On many college campuses, there are not enough healthy options and too many unhealthy choices. People would like greater and more frequent availability of healthy foods grown on nearby farms and representing diverse cultures.

HEALTHY FOOD AFFORDABILITY

Healthy foods available on or near campus are often too costly for student, staff, and faculty budgets.

PROCUREMENT + PURCHASING

Many campuses do not have healthy food guidelines that determine what types of food they procure or sell in campus dining and stores, concessions, and vending machines.

Healthy food grown on nearby farms is oftentimes not available in the amount and at the price that campus stores, foodservices, and concessions need.

CAMPUS FACILITIES , GROUNDS + EQUIPMENT

Many on-campus food service kitchens and other food preparation facilities are not equipped to prepare and serve healthy foods.

Many college and university campuses do not have adequate facilities and equipment for students to store and prepare healthy options.

TRAINING + DEVELOPMENT

Some foodservice staff and students express concerns about food safety issues for fresh foods raised on nearby farms.

Teaching food skills
and providing healthy
foods to young adults
is an investment
in our future.

Support student-run campus gardens and farms, including funding, equipment, seeds, and education on food production.

Conduct a comprehensive, campus-based educational initiative to build healthy food skills and knowledge about agriculture and the food system. Provide ongoing programming, such as presentations, seminars, and events focusing on healthy food.

Offer basic food skills courses and extracurricular activities for students, including gardening, cooking, healthy eating, meal planning, and understanding of agriculture and the food system.

Offer for-credit, undergraduate and graduate-level courses on issues related to food, agriculture, and health across many academic departments.

Fund student organizations that promote food skills development, healthy eating, and healthy, on-campus food choices.

Share healthy recipes and demonstrate healthy food preparation for students on campus, using affordable foods grown on nearby farms.

Offer students access to a campus-based nutrition specialist and resources to address healthy eating needs.

Identify on-campus healthy food advocates and resources, including students, local and national student organizations and initiatives, staff, faculty, academic programs, offices, and programs.

Create partnerships between state and local public health agencies and campuses to implement policy and systems strategies that improve campus food environments and strengthen food skills of college students, with support from programs like the Minnesota Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP).

HEALTHY FOOD AVAILABILITY

Develop and implement a plan to increase the availability of healthy food throughout the campus.

Identify on-campus locations where food is available to students, faculty, and staff.

Use products from campus farms, gardens, and landscape at campus events.

Offer more healthy options in campus dining, including fruits, vegetables, and more culturally relevant, authentically seasoned foods. Substitute healthier options—baked rather than fried potatoes, for instance—in food sold and served on campus.

Ask students, faculty, and staff to test healthy products, taste new menu items (including healthy foods grown at nearby farms), and recommend which foods to include in campus dining.

Reduce dessert serving sizes to bite-size tastes in campus dining.

Add “my healthy plate” images and icons for healthy options in campus dining sites, and label foods sold on campus with calorie content, fat, sugar, salt, fiber, and other nutrition information.

Help student organizations and other event planners serve more fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods at campus events and gatherings.

Limit on-campus food and beverage marketing that doesn't meet campus-established healthy eating guidelines.

Encourage colleges and universities to set and measure goals for efforts to increase healthy food purchases from nearby family farms and healthy food sales profits.

Support businesses that provide healthy, on-the-go convenience meal and vending items.

HEALTHY FOOD AFFORDABILITY

Price healthy foods sold on campus, so they don't cost more than unhealthy foods.

Provide funding to add fruits and vegetables to campus-sponsored event menus.

Assess students' food security and provide healthy food in food shelves that serve students.

Develop a subsidy model campus dining so foods that meet established healthy food standards are affordable.

Promote food stores that sell affordable, healthy items on or near campus.

PROCUREMENT + PURCHASING

Create campus-wide healthy eating standards for all food available on campus, including food sold in campus dining, vending machines, concession stands, catering services, campus stores, events and gatherings, and campus fundraisers.

Require healthy food purchasing and procurement guidelines in vendor specifications and contracts. Give student organizations model policies, nutrition standards, and menus to promote the sale and provision of healthy food.

Ask campus dining management and staff to explore, educate, and troubleshoot procurement of food grown at nearby farms.

Develop food safety protocols for fresh foods grown at nearby farms and served in campus dining.

Require farmers who sell fresh produce to schools to carry liability insurance, follow food safety protocol, and provide food safety and handling documentation.

CAMPUS FACILITIES, GROUNDS, + EQUIPMENT

Develop campus landscape plan that includes many varieties of edible plants.

Design and fund on-campus preparation facilities where foodservice staff can prepare fresh, healthy foods from scratch.

TRAINING + DEVELOPMENT

Give campus dining and nutrition staff training and tools about effective ways to introduce unfamiliar, healthy foods to students, such as taste tasting, menu development, behavioral economics, and food marketing (such as attractive fruit and vegetable displays in the cafeteria).

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