



Strategy Guide

RISE.



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PHILADELPHIA

About Us

At the RISE Lab, we believe everyone should have the chance to live a healthy and fulfilling life, no matter their background. We use hands-on, community-focused approaches to enhance health promotion programs with an emphasis on reducing inequities.

Our current project focuses on studying how school meal policies are put into action in the School District of Philadelphia. We want to identify the challenges and supports for implementing and participating in the Universal School Meals program. Our work prioritizes fair policy implementation, using tools based on equity and implementation science.

We actively involve community members in a collaborative process to create local materials that share our study findings. This approach emphasizes shared power and decision-making to strengthen community partnerships for long-term success.



Goals for Collaboration



Develop goals and plans to increase student participation in school meals.

Figure out what works and what needs improvement with the meals and/or culture around meals

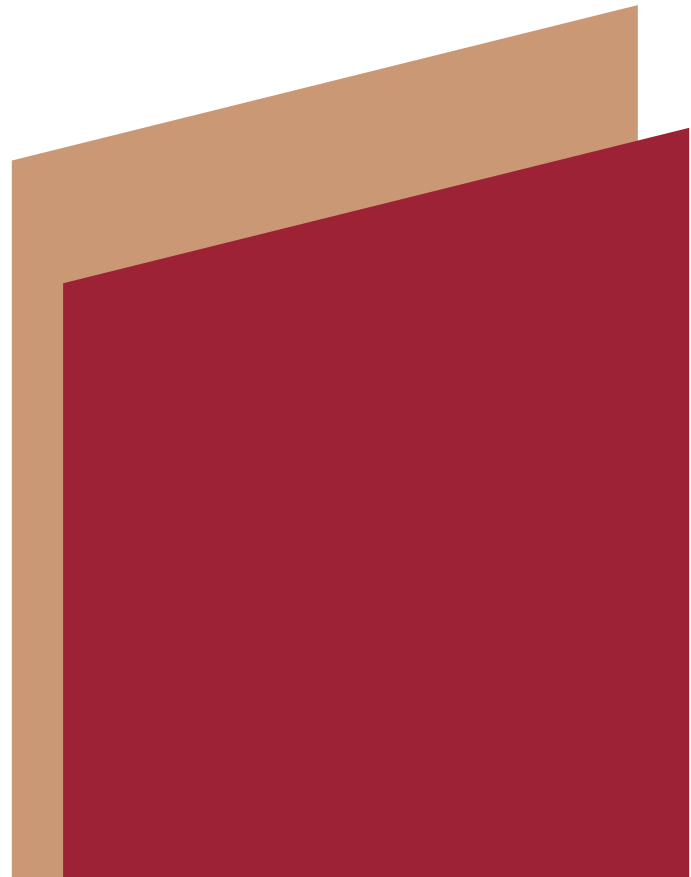
Learn about the experience of the students and families who participate & the staff who deliver school meals.

Include perspectives of students, parents, food service, teachers, school staff, and administrators



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What to think about for this collaboration:

- What do you picture school meals looking like in your school?
- What do you hope to get out of this collaboration?
- What do you want to see happen to improve meals?

Meeting 1: Determining Goals



Review findings from the needs assessment



Explain the goals of implementation mapping



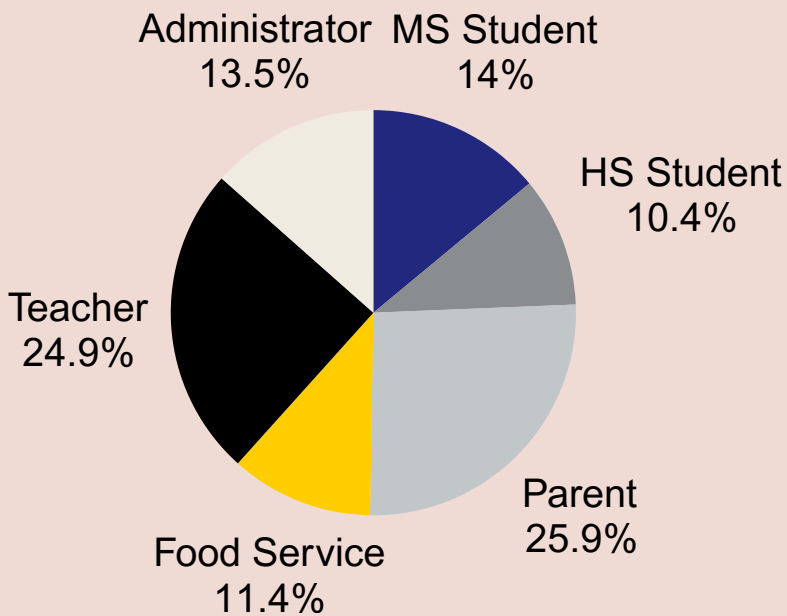
Identify key outcomes through group discussions.



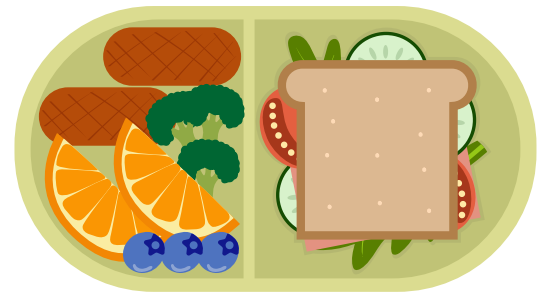
Brainstorm and envision what a successful school meals program looks like.

Data on School Meals from 2023-24

Who did we talk to?



We learned from 193 participants across 8 schools (6 elementary-middle, 2 high) in the district. Participants were varied in terms of race, ethnicity, and we had an equal distribution of roles.



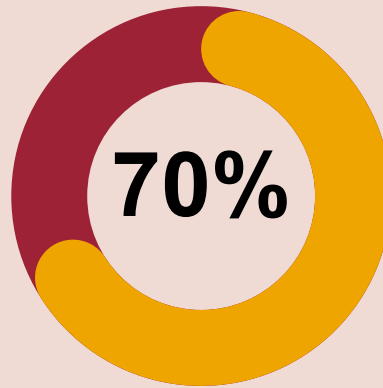
What do students, staff, and parents think about meals in your school?

What we found from students, staff, and parents...

55%

Of students feel that the school food is healthy (answered either “agree” or “strongly agree”)

STUDENTS



Of students feel that they do not have a say in the foods included in the program

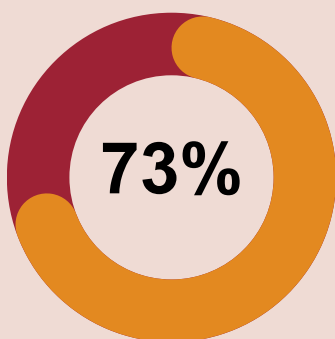


8 out of 17 administrators believe the school meals program takes the culture of the local area into account

PARENTS

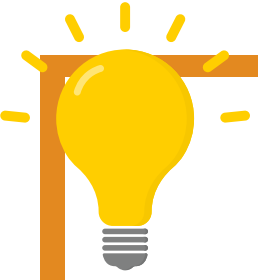


Of parents believe the school meals program takes their beliefs/interested into account



of parents believe the program somewhat/really helps students struggling with food insecurity

Does anything from the infographic stand out to you? Why?



What are some challenges or concerns around school meals in your school?



Themes that emerged from the interview data

District/Broader Setting



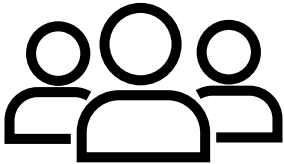
Local attitudes, Local environment, Local culture and food customs

School Setting



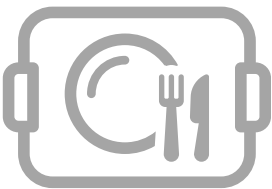
Cafeteria culture, available resources

People at School



Students and families, School leadership

School Meals



Program elements, Perceived impact of free school meals



What area in this chart will have the most impact on meal participation?

Impactful Quotes from the School Community

Quotes about experiences with school meals were collected through semi-formal interviews with students, staff and parents.

These are some of the quotes that we used to identify the themes above.

Insights from Students - *responses to stigma and culture around school meals in their school.*

“

They call it a freebie...It's like, oh, you're getting you're getting the free lunch. You suck.' - School Setting, Cafeteria Culture

”



Insights from Parents - reflecting the evolving local attitudes around school meals, following district-level changes.



“

‘In the last two years, it's become very inclusive....serving...falafels and stuff... so I know that the district as a whole it is reflecting different cultures.’ - *Local Attitudes*

”

Insights from Staff - Perceptions of the impact of free meals on students

“

..I think that today, when they eat it, they're more focused. Clearly, they need it...Because they maybe haven't eaten yet. And it just gives them that little boost.’ - *Perceived Impact of Meals*

Meals

”



What influences the meals inside and outside the school?

External Influences (outer context)

School-District communication?
Menus?



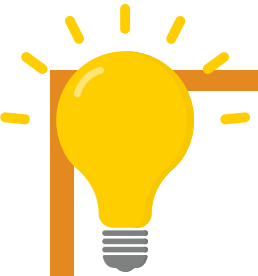
Internal Influences (Inner context)

Stigma?
Time of Meals?
Cafeteria?

Are there any strategies that you have in your school already? Where do you think they fall on this chart?



What aspect of school meals can I influence in my school community?



OVERVIEW OF THE SCHOOL MEALS PROJECT

Fall 2023/Spring 2024

Fall 2024/Spring 2025

Fall 2025-Spring 2027

**1 - Assess
challenges
and supports**



Visit schools and learn what the challenges and supports to school meals are

**2 - Determine
Goals**



Decide as a group what the goals for improving schools meals are

3 - Develop Plan



Choose which areas to focus on and develop an implementation plan

**4 - Decide roles
for plan**



Decide how often plan will be delivered and who is responsible for what

**5 - Understand
impact**

Test the plan and collect information to see if it's working well

OVERVIEW OF THE SCHOOL MEALS PROJECT

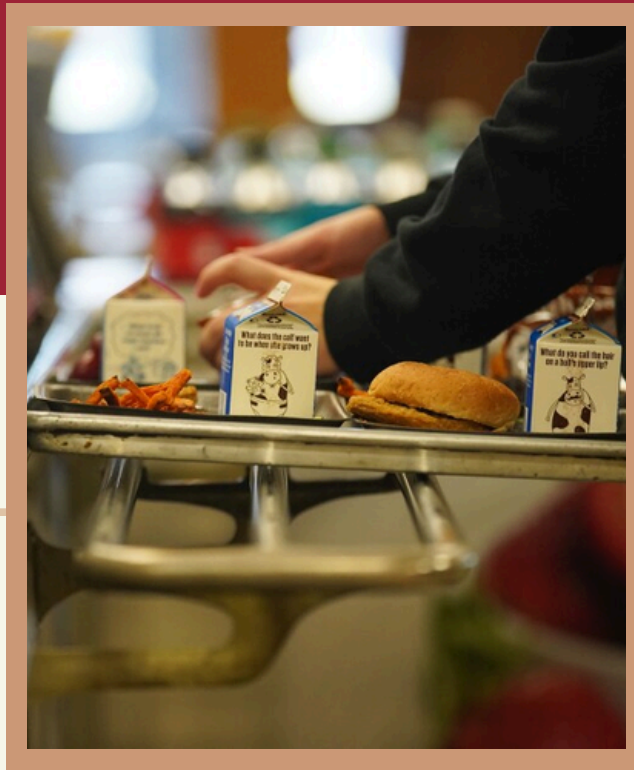
<p><u>Step 1:</u> Needs Assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completed during 2023–24 school year• Aimed to understand challenges and supports in school meal programs.• Conducted interviews and observations to assess the school food environment.
<p><u>Step 2:</u> Determine Outcomes (Meeting 1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review 2023–24 school needs assessment report.• Set priorities to improve school food climate over the next few years.• Understand implementation mapping process.• Identify what improvements we would like to see in the school food climate.
<p>NEXT STEP <u>Step 3:</u> Choose and develop strategies (Meeting 2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choose action steps to guide our strategies• Identify how the strategy will be adopted in the school setting.• Organize steps into a realistic plan for implementation in different contexts.
<p><u>Step 4:</u> Develop Implementation Plan (Meeting 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Select necessary action to guide strategies.• Identify strategies to use in the school setting.• Organize steps into a practical and adaptable plan for implementation.
<p><u>Step 5:</u> Rollout of strategy and evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schools will begin testing the plan in the 2025–26 school year• Monthly check-in meetings will be held to address challenges and concerns





SCHOOL MEALS COLLABORATION GUIDE

PLANNING MEETING #2



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ABOUT

Planning Meeting #2: Select & Design Strategies

During this meeting we will select strategies that answer the following questions:

- 1.) What do we want to target with these strategies?
- 2.) What roles and support do we need to implement each strategy?
- 3.) What do we need to maintain each strategy?

We will begin by identifying specific areas within the school setting that can be used. Then, we will create specific goals for how we could improve these areas. Then, our objectives will be “mapped” onto strategies that can be realistically carried out in your school.

The strategies may be linked to several levels such as the classroom, cafeteria, at-home, or outside the school/school community.

OVERVIEW OF THE SCHOOL MEALS PROJECT

Fall 2023/Spring 2024

Fall 2024/Spring 2025

Fall 2025-Spring 2027

**1 - Assess
challenges
and supports**

**2 - Determine
Goals**

3 - Develop Plan

**4 - Decide roles
for plan**

**5 - Understand
impact**



Visit schools and learn what the challenges and supports to school meals are

Decide as a group what the goals for improving school meals are

Choose which areas to focus on and develop an implementation plan

Decide how often plan will be delivered and who is responsible for what

Test the plan and collect information to see if it's working well

Types of Strategies



Assistance from Research Team

Identify specific solutions to issues with a certain person overseeing implementation and establish support and assistance.



Collaborative Relationships

Network with partner organizations, leadership, and school meal recipients to identify existing programs that are successful and build support in training and preparing for implementation.



Train & Educate

Create educational and training materials in different formats (i.e print, video, powerpoint, etc.) for all implementers. Training support will come from RISE team.



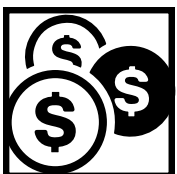
Support Educators

Support educators through sharing existing resources and improving communication between implementers, and support their well-being.



Engage Families and Community

Involve students, staff, and families in implementation by expanding opportunities to review and provide feedback, encouraging active participation, and provide a platform to advocate for change.



Financial Strategies

Identify new funding or resources to support school interventions.



Change Infrastructure

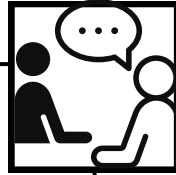
Altering environment to reduce barriers to meal participation.

Strategy Examples



Technical Assistance

Communicate with local organizations who can provide support personnel and organize a plan for providing help.
(Support from Eat Right Philly)

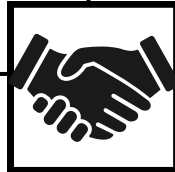


Facilitation

Monthly consultations with RISE to discuss any challenges.

Academic Partnership

Bring on RISE Team and collaborators to think through challenges in implementation.

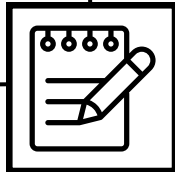


Include leaders

Have school leaders and administration promote new practices among staff. Have student leaders promote strategies among students.

Educational Materials

Have written training materials and sessions for teachers and students on stigma and ways to promote school meals.

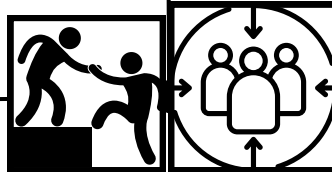


Ongoing Consulting

Schedule regular check-ins to address challenges in implementing school meal strategies.

Revise Roles

Adjust role descriptions and compensation of food service to accommodate plan.



Use Mass Media

Reach people and promote meals through social media and email campaigns.

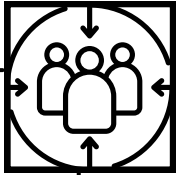


Strategy Examples



Involve Students, families, other staff

Include students, families, and staff in strategies through community gathering events to promote school meals

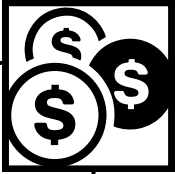


Prepare Active Participants

Empower students and families to advocate and give input to leadership on how they would like to see school meals improve.

Remove burdensome documentation

Remove the need for unnecessary documentation and unused data forms.



Mandate for Change

Promote new practices and attitudes for school meals. Food service delivering meals alongside students, teachers encouraging meals, announcements of school meals.



Change/alter environment

Change layout of cafeteria/classroom, scheduling, repurposing space.



Rank how easy or hard it would be to implement each strategy and list any barriers you can think of.

Strategy

Barriers



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Using the strategies that were chosen, list where you think they will be most impactful. Then, list whether you think the changes will be made immediately or over time.

OUTER SETTING

Changes in the district, neighborhood, local environment

Immediate/long-term

INNER SETTING

Changes that happen within the school (i.e. cafeteria layout, menu announcements, schedule, etc.)

Immediate/long-term

OVERVIEW OF THE SCHOOL MEALS PROJECT

Step 1: Needs Assessment

- Completed during 2023–24 school year
- Aimed to understand challenges and supports in school meal programs.
- Conducted interviews and observations to assess the school food environment.

Step 2: Determine Outcomes (Meeting 1)

- Review 2023–24 school needs assessment report.
- Set priorities to enhance school food climate over the next few years.
- Understand implementation mapping process.
- Identify what improvements we would like to see in the school food climate.

We are here

Step 3: Choose and develop strategies (Meeting 2)

- Choose action steps to guide our strategies
- Identify how the strategy will be adopted in the school setting.
- Organize steps into a realistic plan for implementation in different contexts.

Next Meeting

Step 4: Develop Implementation Plan (Meeting 3)

- Select necessary action to guide strategies.
- Identify strategies to use in the school setting.
- Organize steps into a practical and adaptable plan for implementation.

Step 5: Rollout of strategy and evaluation

- Schools will begin implementing the plan in the 2025–26 school year
- Monthly check-in meetings will be held to address challenges and concerns



School Meals Collaboration Guide

Meeting #3: Developing a Plan

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About Meeting 3: Creating A Plan

This meeting focuses on outlining responsibilities for each strategy we selected during the past meeting. We will be discussing (1) necessary actions to implement each plan, (2) who will lead, (3) and what support is necessary to make this sustainable.

Our discussion will follow these steps in order to develop our strategic plan:

1. Review Final List of Strategies
2. Specify what is needed for each (materials, training, funding, support)
3. Identify leaders and support personnel
4. Plan out timeline of intervention (developing protocols, purchasing supplies)

STEP
01

Expanding on Ideas

Specify what is needed for each strategy to take place

Strategy:			
Materials	Funding	Training	Support

Strategy:			
Materials	Funding	Training	Support

Strategy:			
Materials	Funding	Training	Support

Strategy:			
Materials	Funding	Training	Support

Strategy:			
Materials	Funding	Training	Support

Strategy:			
Materials	Funding	Training	Support

STEP

02

Identifying Leaders & Support

Specify who will be leading each strategy

What do we need to do to implement these strategies?

What support and/or resources do we need?

Outline the name and title of leaders for each strategy, then assign support.

School Administration	Parents

Students	Staff

Strategy	Requirements	Frequency
	<p>Outline action steps (what needs to happen? Think about preparation, training, etc.):</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> One-Time <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing <p>When do we begin implementing?</p>
	<p>Outline action steps (what needs to happen? Think about preparation, training, etc.):</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> One-Time <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing <p>When do we begin implementing?</p>

Outline action steps (what needs to happen? Think about preparation, training, etc.):

- One-Time
- Ongoing

When do we begin implementing?

Outline action steps (what needs to happen? Think about preparation, training, etc.):

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- Ongoing

When do we begin implementing?

Outline action steps (what needs to happen? Think about preparation, training, etc.):

- One-Time
- Ongoing

When do we begin implementing?

STEP

04

Organize strategies into timeline

