
2007 BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

Funding for Student Nutrition Programs (Elementary & Youth)

Issue/Background:

The increase in food costs and the growth of student nutrition programs each year since 1998 has resulted in a continual decline of the proportion of costs subsidized by the City. Elementary programs now serve 1 in 3 Toronto children from grades JK-8 and youth programs serve 1 in 16 youth, focusing on those with the greatest needs. The estimated total annual cost to operate the 480 programs currently serving 83,600 children and youth each school day is \$21.1 million dollars. Although the needs of these community-based programs are overwhelming, the City's contributions are significant to ensure sustainability. The City's current investment of \$2,599,340 provides 13% of the total costs to operate these 480 nutrition programs.

Since the City initiated funding for youth nutrition programs in 2005, over 150 new programs have emerged, in an attempt to meet growing needs. These programs serve youth who are often marginalized, at-risk, living independently or suspended from the regular school system and attending alternative educational programs. Higher food costs for youth, combined with the lack of parental involvement and fundraising challenges in at-risk communities leave these programs with insufficient funds to serve nutritious foods in adequate portions each day. The Toronto Partners for Student Nutrition, who administer the City funding, struggle with the competing priorities of ensuring food access versus the nutrient density of foods served. Adequate core funding would ensure that both of these program elements can be met without the need to compromise one for the other.

Key Points:

Nutrition Quality & Food Costs

Hunger continues to be a major issue in Toronto, with a 3.7% increase in use of food banks between 2005 and 2006. Of the 731,737 Toronto residents who used a food bank in 2006, 38% were children. Student nutrition programs can alleviate short-term hunger and give children the energy they need to be ready to learn and participate in school. Canadian rates of obesity and overweight among children and youth are now equal to those in the United States with 27% of boys and 25% of girls reported as overweight or obese. Rates of overweight and obesity are directly associated with low intakes of vegetables and fruit. Student nutrition programs in Toronto require a serving of vegetables or fruit to be offered as part of every snack or meal, providing needed nutrients to food insecure children, while modeling healthier food choices to help reduce the future risk of chronic

diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis and some types of cancer.

2007 Board of Health Recommended Funding:

a) Funding Programs for Youth at the Expense of Programs for Children

The \$200,000 allocated to youth programs for the first time in 2005, was reallocated from elementary programs. Therefore, the benefit to youth was at the expense of programs serving children. The elementary programs also felt the loss of one-time municipal funding of \$100,000 received only in 2004. The net effect is that elementary programs have been operating with \$300,000 less funding than in 2004, yet are serving 9,000 additional children each day. Additional funding of \$300,000 is being recommended by the Board of Health to restore funding to elementary programs to meet the needs of programs serving at-risk youth.

b) Programs Serving Youth

The Board of Health has approved a multi-year plan which would expand the youth nutrition programs from reaching 1 in 30 in 2005, to 1 in 16 in 2006 and eventually 1 in 8 by 2008. The youth program is pragmatic in focusing on food access to those with the greatest needs, while building on the existing infrastructure to ensure viability of existing programs. Thirty-one new programs have emerged throughout 12 of the 13 priority neighbourhoods. The higher needs of these programs for at-risk youth require an investment by the City that is greater than 13% of costs. The Board of Health has recommended an increase of \$867,956 to support the expansion in the youth nutrition programs to reach 1 in 8 or 15,000 at-risk youth in 2007/08.

The Board of Health recommended that \$1,167,956 be added to the current Community Partnership and Investment Program base budget of \$2,599,340 to address the student nutrition needs of Toronto's children and youth. This would bring the municipal contribution to \$3,767,296.

The City has recommended an increase of \$150,000 to the 2007 Operating Budget for the Student Food program, totalling at \$2,749,340 for 2007.

Provincial Funding

Provincial funding from the Ministry of Child and Youth Services for student nutrition programs for the 2006/07 school year was \$1,444,008, amounting to 7.3% of total costs. The Board of Health is requesting the Minister of Children and Youth Services to match the municipal contribution level to contribute to program sustainability. Provincial funding serves other needs unmet by municipal funding, such as new programs in the first year of operation, capital requests for equipment and/or infrastructure and staff for community capacity building.

**Toronto Student Nutrition Programs
Summary of Municipal & Provincial Funding 1998-2007**

School Year (Budget year)	Number of Participants	Total Municipal Funding	Municipal Funding to JK-8 SNPs	Municipal Funding to Youth SNPs	Total Provincial Funding
1998-1999 (1998)	35,000	\$1,310,500	\$1,310,500	N/A	\$ 802,422
1999-2000 (1999)	54,000	\$1,310,500	\$1,310,500	N/A	\$1,123,401
2000-2001 (2000)	59,000	\$1,791,800	\$1,791,800	N/A	\$1,240,656
2001-2002 (2001)	60,000	\$1,880,000	\$1,880,00	N/A	\$1,370,841
2002-2003 (2002)	60,000	\$1,955,340	\$1,955,340	N/A	\$1,527,001
2003-2004 (2003)	64,000	\$1,999,340	\$1,999,340	N/A	\$1,019,351
2004-2005 (2004)	70,000	\$2,499,340	\$2,499,340	N/A	\$ 637,501 ⁽¹⁾ <u>1,200,000</u> ⁽²⁾ \$1,837,501
2005-2006 (2005)	71,000	\$2,399,340	\$2,199,340 ⁽³⁾	\$ 200,000	\$1,439,455
2006-2007 (2006)	83,600	\$2,599,340	\$2,274,340 ⁽⁴⁾	\$325,000	\$1,444,008

- (1) one-time funding for capital infrastructure;
- (2) actual funding allocation for program operating costs; and
- (3) net decrease of \$300,000 in funding to JK-gr.8 programs due to \$200,000 reallocation to youth Student Nutrition Programs and loss of one-time \$100,000 from 2004.
- (4) \$75,000 increase allocated to JK-gr.8 programs to reflect increased food costs, but no restoration of funds lost due to reallocation to youth programs in 2005, therefore a reduction of \$225,000 to elementary programs from 2004/05.

Current Food Costs of Toronto Student Nutrition Programs for Children & Youth

	Breakfast		Lunch		Snack	
	Children	Youth	Children	Youth	Children	Youth
2007 Food Costs per child/day (including 30% for program supplies & on-site resources)	\$ 1.21	\$1.81	\$1.83	\$2.95	\$1.09**	\$1.49

Breakfast: minimum of 3 food groups served in all calculations; nutritionally superior has 4 food groups

Lunch: minimum of 3 food groups served in all calculations; nutritionally superior has 4 food groups

Snack: ** based upon 3 food groups served; nutrient analysis conducted in 2003 of foods served indicated that a nutritionally superior snack is recommended, and is achieved by adding one food group

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Date: February 15, 2007