



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Progress Report: Meeting Current Nutrition Needs of Toronto's Children and Youth

Date:	January 15, 2007
To:	Board of Health
From:	Medical Officer of Health
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report documents progress since 2005 in achieving access to student nutrition programs to meet the current nutrition needs of Toronto's youth. In September 2005, when student nutrition programs served only 1 in 30 youth, the Board of Health endorsed a multi-year plan to expand the program to reach 1 in 20 youth by 2006 and 1 in 10 youth by 2008. In January, 2007 the programs are on track to meeting this goal, serving 1 in 16 youth. To provide access to 1 in 10 youth in 2007, an additional \$623,981 needs to be added to \$325,000 currently allocated to youth nutrition programs, bringing the total municipal contribution to \$948,981.

Elementary programs have also expanded since 2005 and now reach 1 in 3 children from grades JK-8. In 2005, the Board of Health endorsed restoration of funding to these programs that was lost by cuts (\$100,000) and reallocations to youth (\$200,000). Restoration of these previous cuts to elementary programs would cost an additional \$300,000, bringing the total municipal contribution to \$2,574,340.

In total, service level changes to meet the BOH approved incremental approach to addressing the student nutrition needs of Toronto's children and youth would require an additional \$923,981 to be added to the current Community Partnership and Investment Program base budget of \$2,599,340. This would bring the total municipal contribution to \$3,523,321. Ongoing and adequate provincial funding is also essential to program quality and sustainability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Medical Officer of Health recommends that:

1. the Board of Health endorse continued planned growth of student nutrition programs currently serving 1 in 16 youth to reach 1 in 10 youth by 2008 at an additional municipal cost of \$623,981;
2. the Board of Health endorse 2007 municipal funding for the programs serving children in grades JK-8 of \$2,574,340, to restore the \$200,000 reallocated in 2005 to address youth programs, and the \$100,000 funding reduction from 2004 (a net increase of \$300,000);
3. the Board of Health request the Minister of Children and Youth Services to contribute to program sustainability by increasing its support from 7% of total program costs to a level matching the municipal contribution level; and adjusting future funding to keep pace with current food costs;
4. the Board of Health reiterate its request to the federal government to provide core funding for a national universal student nutrition program, including funding allocated for monitoring and evaluation of the program; and
5. the Board of Health forward this report to the Budget Committee, the Community Development and Recreation Committee, the Toronto District School Board, the Toronto Catholic District School Board and the Toronto Food Policy Council.

Financial Impact

To help meet the current nutrition needs of Toronto's youth and continue the planned growth endorsed by the Board of Health in 2005, the City's investment for 2007 requires expanded funding for youth programs of \$623,981 and restoration of funding to elementary programs of \$300,000. When added to the current Community Partnership and Investment Program base budget of \$2,599,340 for student nutrition programs, it would bring the total municipal contribution to \$3,523,321.00.

Summary of Financial Impact

Focus of Investment	Recommendation	Net Increase
Planned growth of student nutrition programs for youth	Endorse continued planned growth of the student nutrition programs serving 1 in 16 youth to 1 in 10 by 2008, at an additional municipal cost of \$623,981, for a total municipal contribution of \$948,981.	\$623,981
Restoration of funding reductions to nutrition programs for children in grades JK-8	endorse 2007 municipal funding for the programs serving children in grades JK-8 of \$2,574,340, to restore the \$200,000 reallocated in 2005 to address youth programs, and restore the \$100,000 funding reduction from 2004 (a net increase of \$300,000);	\$300,000
	Total net increase recommended	\$923,981

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer have reviewed this report and concur with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

In 2005, the Board of Health requested the Medical Officer of health to provide a plan to expand the Student Nutrition Program for 2006 and beyond and assess the effectiveness of adding youth nutrition programs in neighbourhoods which are identified as priorities in the Community Safety Strategy. The Board of Health endorsed a multi-year plan to address these needs at its September 26th, 2005 meeting. This report documents progress to date in implementing this plan and the resources required to meet the 2007 objectives.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In 2005, there were 350 student nutrition programs serving 71,000 students (67,345 children and 3,655 youth), with a base municipal budget of \$2,399,340. The municipal contribution to the total cost of the program was 15.5%. In January, 2007, there are 480 student nutrition programs serving 83,600 students (76,064 children and 7,536 youth) with a base budget of \$2,599,340. The municipal contribution to the total current costs of the program is 13%.

While the City provided leadership in initiating municipal funding for youth nutrition programs for the first time in 2005, the rate of growth of the program exceeded expectations, and few programs are adequately funded today. Over 150 new youth

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.

Student Nutrition Programs operate within the context of universal access to avoid stigma and promote healthy eating to all participating children and youth. While the elementary program has grown to almost truly universal access with programs in every City ward, the youth program is pragmatic in focusing on ensuring food access to those with the greatest needs, while building on the existing infrastructure to ensure viability of existing programs.

A comprehensive universal student nutrition program would cost \$20 million just to serve the children and youth participating in existing programs (see Appendix A). In the context of very limited municipal dollars, a balance must be achieved between reaching those in need, ensuring program sustainability and program effectiveness through the nutritional quality of foods served. The Toronto Partners for Student Nutrition, who administer this program, 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. Without any program promotion by City staff, community groups are identifying the need for local nutrition programs for children and youth, mobilizing parents, volunteers and community partners, and approaching Public Health for staff assistance and monetary support.

The City's investment of \$325,000 in youth programs is not meeting the current nutrition needs of Toronto's at risk youth. Adequate core funding, reflective of current costs, is essential for sustainable student nutrition programs for youth. Elementary programs should not be penalized due to the emergence of youth programs, and the City should restore the investment that was cut from these programs in 2005.

COMMENTS

(A) Nutrition Status of Toronto's Children and Youth

Hunger continues to be a major issue in Toronto, with a 3.7% increase in use of food banks between 2005 and 2006 (1). Of the 731,737 Toronto residents who used a food bank in 2006, 38% were children. Although parents do their best to shield their children from hunger, children still go hungry because the family income is not sufficient to pay for rent and buy food. While student nutrition programs are not a substitute for adequate income support, they 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 in 2004 (2). Of those Canadian youth who are overweight, only half perceive their own health to be excellent or very good. The rates of overweight are directly associated with the number of servings of vegetables and fruit consumed each day. Among those children and youth eating fewer than 3 servings of vegetables or fruit each day, 29% are overweight or obese. Student nutrition programs in Toronto require a serving of vegetables or fruit to be offered as part of every snack or meal. Access to these nutritious foods in schools on a daily basis can help create healthier eating habits and prevent obesity and the related early onset of chronic diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Even among the healthy weight population of children and youth, the trends in eating habits are troublesome. The Canadian Community Health Survey (2004) reports that 7 out of 10 children aged 4 to 8 do not eat the minimum recommended 5 servings of vegetables and fruit each day and older children ages 9 to 13 fare only slightly better. One-third of children aged 4 to 9 do not have the minimum recommended two daily servings of milk products and by ages 10 to 16, 61% of boys and 83% of girls do not have the minimum recommended three servings per day. “Other foods”, the category of foods that do not belong in any of the four food groups, including soft drinks, candy and chips, now account for 25% of Canadian teens’ daily caloric intake. The poor eating habits that begin in childhood only worsen as children enter adolescence, leaving out nutrient rich foods such as vegetables, fruit and milk from their diets (3).

(B) Nutrition Quality and Food Costs

While the cost of nutritious food did not change significantly in the past year in Toronto (4), programs struggle financially to offer a variety of vegetables and fruit throughout the school year. The higher costs of imported produce in the winter and early spring make it difficult for many programs to include these in their daily menus.

Vegetables, fruit and milk products need adequate refrigeration and food preparation facilities, such as multiple sinks, which are often a costly barrier for programs located in schools. Toronto Public Health staff have developed menus for programs with limited food preparation facilities, yet they lack the variety and nutrition quality that could be prepared if adequate facilities existed. The Province of Ontario provided some funding for capital improvements to nutrition program sites in 2005, but much more is needed to ensure all sites meet current public health regulations for food premises.

(C) Student Nutrition Programs Serving Youth

Community response to municipal funding for youth student nutrition programs has been swift and overwhelming. Since 2005, when the youth funding was first announced and only 1 in 30 youth had access to a nutrition program, the program has grown to reach 1 in 16 youth. There are now 150 programs serving 7,536 youth each day and thirty-one new programs have emerged throughout 12 of the 13 priority neighbourhoods.

Community-based Student Nutrition Programs serving youth that are structured and supervised in the after-school hours, continue to be effective strategies for promoting community safety. American statistics consistently show that after-school is the peak time for youth to commit crime, be a victim of crime, be in a car accident, smoke, drink alcohol or use illicit drugs. The single hour most likely for a teen to commit a violent crime is between 3:00 and 4:00 pm, the first hour that most students are dismissed from school (5). Quality, supervised, after-school programs have been proven to reduce crime, prevent other risky behaviours, improve school outcomes and teach positive values and life skills (6). Offering food in these programs attracts participants and keeps them coming back on a regular basis.

Due to the limited funds available, active promotion of these programs by Public Health staff has been limited to the priority neighbourhoods. The community is actively engaged in student nutrition and continues to ask for support in developing more programs to serve more youth. This demonstrates that the City's goal of reaching 1 in 10 youth can be achieved if adequate funds are available.

In 2007, an additional \$673,816.00 is required to ensure 1 in 10 youth have access to a high quality nutrition program in their community.

(D) Provincial Funding

Provincial funding from the Ministry of Child and Youth Services for student nutrition programs in Toronto was \$1,444,008 for the 2006-07 school year, amounting to 7.3% of total costs. The provincial proportion of total costs has fallen to this level from 21.5% of total program costs in 1998 (see Appendix B). This funding is shared among all elementary and youth student nutrition programs. Although no funding announcement has been made regarding the provincial commitment for 2007 or beyond, provincial funding, matched at a minimum to municipal contribution levels, is essential to program stability.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Real Cost of Providing Toronto Student Nutrition Programs in 2007

Attachment 2: Toronto Student Nutrition Programs Summary of Municipal and Provincial Funding 1999-2007

References

Attachment 1

Real Cost of Providing Toronto Student Nutrition Programs in 2007

Original Equation to Calculate Municipal Core Funding (1998)

(Average cost per student) x (number of students participating) x (number of school days program operates) x (municipal proportion of costs) = core municipal funding

Current Food Costs of Toronto Elementary Student Nutrition Programs

	Breakfast	Lunch	Snack
2007 Food Costs only per child/per day	\$0.85	\$1.28	\$0.76
2007 Food Costs per child/per day (including 30% for program supplies & resources)	\$1.21	\$1.83	\$1.09

Breakfast: minimum of 3 food groups served in all calculations
Lunch: minimum of 3 food groups served in all calculations
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.

Using 2007 Program Costs

Average cost/student is calculated using a weighted average of the program types and costs:

85 Breakfast programs costing \$1.21/student
44 Lunch programs costing \$1.83/student
203 Snack programs costing \$1.09/student

Average cost per student in 2007 = \$1.22
Number of students participating = 76,064
Number of school days program operates = 185

Total Estimated Cost of Student Nutrition Program (elementary) = \$1.22 x 76,064 x 185 = \$17,167,644

Historical municipal contribution of 24% of total program costs = \$ 4,120,235

Attachment 1 (continued)

Current Food Costs of Toronto Student Nutrition Programs for Youth

	Breakfast	Lunch	Snack
2007 Food Costs only	\$1.27	\$2.07	\$1.04
2007 Food Costs (including 30% for program supplies & resources)	\$ 1.81	\$2.95	\$1.49

Food costs are based on the average daily energy needs of a moderately active 15-year-old male (2756 Calories) weighing 60 kg, using 10% of daily Calories for a snack and 25% of daily calories for a meal (World Health Organization, Basal Metabolic Rate Tool, 2001).

Breakfast & Lunch: minimum of 3 food groups
Snack: 2 food groups + milk/calcium-rich alternative

Using 2007 Program Costs

Average cost/student is calculated using a weighted average of the program types and costs:

72 Breakfast programs costing \$1.81/youth
44 Lunch programs costing \$2.95 /youth
35 Snack programs costing \$1.49/youth

Average cost per student in 2007 = \$2.07
Number of students participating = 7,536
Number of school days program operates = 160

Total Estimated Cost of Student Nutrition Program (youth) = \$2.07/youth x 7,536 youth x 160 days/year = \$ 2,495,923

Proposed Plan for Growth

To reach 1 in 10 in 2007/2008
Total estimated cost = \$2.07 x 12,063 youth x 160 days/year = \$3,995,266.00
Municipal portion @ 25% = \$998,816.00

Attachment 2

Toronto Student Nutrition Programs Summary of Municipal & Provincial Funding 1999-2007

Year	Total Municipal Funding	Municipal Funding to JK-8 SNPs	Municipal Funding to Youth SNPs	Total Provincial Funding
1999-2000	\$1,310,500	\$1,310,500	N/a	\$1,123,401
2000-2001	\$1,791,800	\$1,791,800	N/a	\$1,240,656
2001-2002	\$1,880,000	\$1,880,000	N/a	\$1,370,841
2002-2003	\$1,955,340	\$1,955,340	N/a	\$1,527,001
2003-2004	\$1,999,340	\$1,999,340	N/a	\$1,019,351
2004-2005	\$2,499,340	\$2,499,340	N/a	\$ 637,501 ⁽¹⁾ <u>1,200,000</u> ⁽²⁾ \$1,837,501
2005-2006	\$2,399,340	\$2,199,340 ⁽³⁾	\$ 200,000	\$1,439,455
2006-2007	\$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 \$100,000 overall funding reduction from 2004-2005.
- (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.

References:

1. Daily Bread Food Bank (2006). Who's Hungry? 2006 Profile of Hunger in the GTA.
2. Statistics Canada (2004). Nutrition: Findings from the Canadian Community Health Survey. Overview of Canadians' Eating Habits. Ottawa.
3. Dietitians of Canada and Dairy Farmers of Canada, 2004 Report on Healthy Eating for School Age Children and Youth.
4. Cost of the Nutritious Food Basket – Toronto 2006. Presented to Toronto Board of Health January 29th, 2007.
5. Fight Crime: Invest in Kids New York. www.fightcrime.org. Accessed January 8th, 2007.
6. Targeted Outreach: Boys and Girls Clubs of America's Approach to Gang Prevention and Intervention (2002). Accessed at http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/148_publication.pdf on January 8th 2007.