

Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services

Student Nutrition Ontario – Vision Conference

Ministry Update

October, 2024

Ontario



Presentation Content

- 1. Program Facts**
Key facts about SNP and FNSNP

- 2. What we learned**
Review of themes from the program review

- 3. National School Food Program Policy**
Overview & alignment

- 4. What's Next**
Current Progress and next steps

Program Facts

SNP
FNSNP

Student Nutrition Program



REACH

Number of schools with an SNP program
Schools with programs reduce the stigma
as all students are eligible to participate

Over 70%



EFFECTIVE

Number of meals served
Programs use various methods of delivery
such as grab-and-go packs or sit-down
meals and are often run by volunteers

Over 95 Million



EFFICIENT

The community-based model is
unique in Canada and the 13 Lead
Agencies are pivotal to mobilizing
partnerships

\$28.2M

First Nations Student Nutrition



REACH

Co-developed with Indigenous partners, the FNSNP supports 155 Indigenous educational settings, including schools in 65 First Nations and 27 urban Indigenous communities



EFFECTIVE

The FNSNP delivers more than 1.4 million meals and snacks to Indigenous children and youth throughout the province and integrates traditional foods like fish, and berries into school meals, respecting cultural traditions and teaching students about their culinary heritage



EFFICIENT

The program is one of many community-led, prevention-focused initiatives aimed at increasing culturally appropriate services for Indigenous children and youth. Like the SNP, the FNSNP uses a community-based model to run the program.

1. What we learned from the program review

Key themes

- ❖ Effective Funding Approach
- ❖ Enhancing Supports for Local Delivery
- ❖ Streamlining Logistics and Delivery Process
- ❖ Enhancing Supply Side Supports
- ❖ Strengthening Administration and Data Management

Context: Inputs to the Key Themes

- In April 2023, the ministry engaged **KPMG to conduct a program review** and explore options for program sustainability. This review included *identifying cost drivers, assessing alternative delivery mechanisms and facilitating innovative partnerships* to expand the program's reach and improve outcomes for children and youth. KPMG engaged key stakeholders across multiple sectors including hosting focus groups and interviews.
- In July 2023, Minister Parsa hosted **stakeholder roundtables** for the Student Nutrition Program and for the First Nations Student Nutrition Program. Meeting attendees included the association of lead agencies delivering the SNP (Student Nutrition Ontario) as well as advocates and philanthropic agencies who support school food programs.
- Over the summer of 2023, the ministry also actively engaged stakeholders and received **written submissions** which also informed the program redesign considerations.
- The following slides outline the **Key Themes** around what we heard from these inputs
- These themes have been discussed with various stakeholders of the program in February and March 2024

Key Theme: Effective Funding

Key Findings

- Providing SNP Lead Agencies flexibility on the use of funding for transportation and equipment expenditures may enable delivery partners to optimize local partnerships and facilitate long-term program planning.
- Improved reporting requirements would be needed to mitigate the risk of flexible funds being used in ways that do not directly support SNP goals.
- Pay what you can model with collection from parents/caregiver electronically could both reduce stigma and support school program delivery
- A shift to a centralization of procurement at the local community level results in allocations of bulk purchases to schools with more identified need.

Current Status

MCCSS funding covers a portion of the total reported Lead Agency Program spending.

It was estimated that Ministry funds support between 12-25% of full program costs.



Funding Flexibility

Consider funding flexibility to support long-term planning and address areas with higher delivery barriers and costs (e.g., northern and remote communities).

Parent Contributions

Considering the use of 'pay what you can' models to reduce stigma and enhance fiscal sustainability

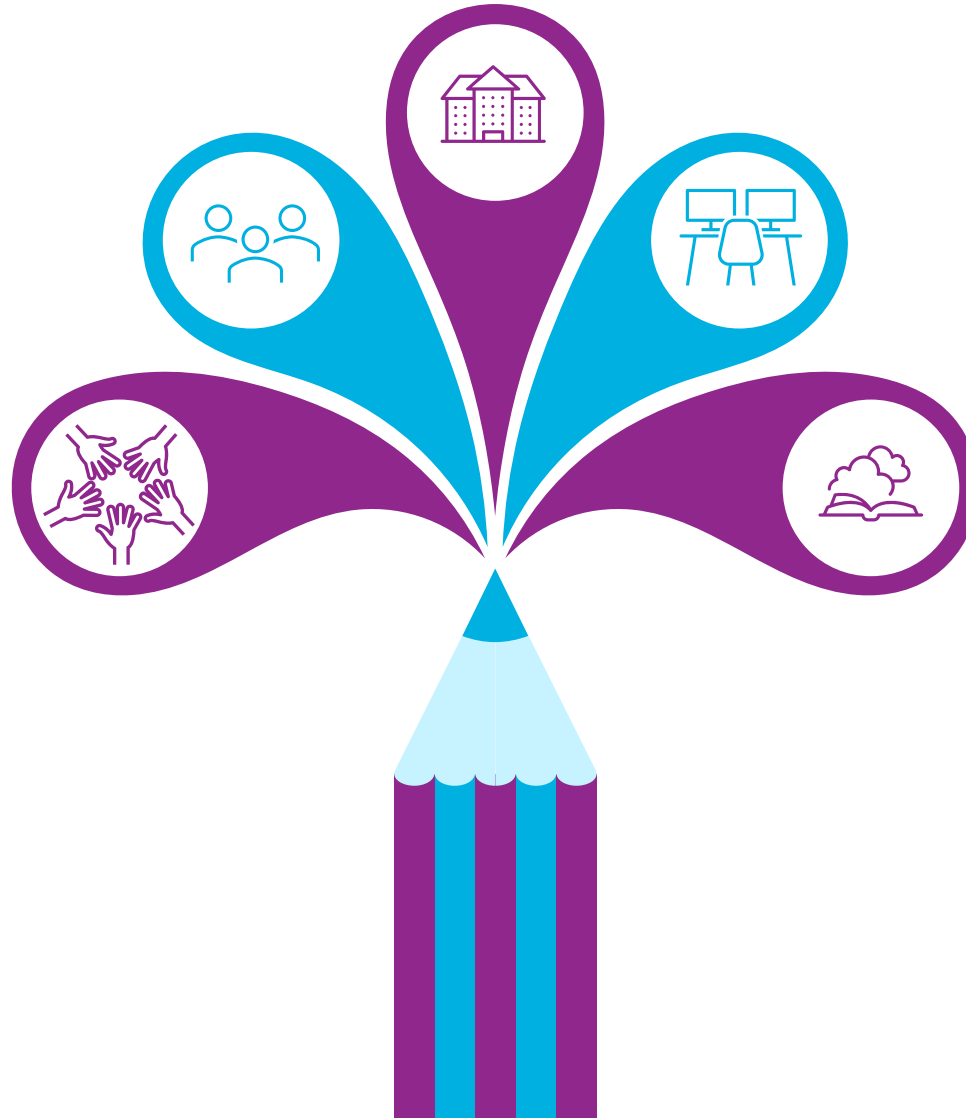
Efficient Procurement

Facilitating bulk buying to maximize funding for Student Nutrition Programs

Key Theme: Enhancing Supports for Local Delivery

Key Findings

- Supporting delivery partners that have varying success in attracting and retaining volunteers would stabilize program delivery.
- The lack of volunteers supporting administration impacts the ability of larger organizations to partner with SNP.



Volunteer enablement

Volunteers are seen as a critical support to the program but have limited supports under status quo

Linkages to curriculum

Opportunities to link program food to curriculum areas such as nutrition, biology, social studies

Key Theme: Streamlining Logistics and Delivery

Key Findings

- SNP providers may not be able to fully capitalize on charitable donations due to a lack of infrastructure.
- Aging or inadequate school kitchen infrastructure can limit what types of donated food ingredients are acceptable.
- Logistics challenges are variable by region and location of the schools and related agencies.



In-school infrastructure

Better coordination to ensure the presence of in-school infrastructure required to deliver SNP and FNSNP.

Equipment

Better coordination to ensure the presence of equipment required to deliver SNP and FNSNP.

Last mile supports

Targeted supports for northern and remote schools to access food and delivery options

Key Themes: Enhancing Supply Side Supports

Key Findings

- Incentives can be a method of engaging the private sector in the delivery of SNP
- Supporting the development of community-based approaches to program delivery may address several of the challenges in current service delivery.



Producer Incentives

Developing incentives for farmers and producers to create a stronger connection to SNPs and FNSNPs

Corporate and Philanthropic Donations

Develop relationships with corporate and philanthropic partners for cash and in-kind donations.

Local Community

Develop community relationships and partnerships to facilitate fundraising and volunteer recruitment.

Key Theme: Strengthening Administration and Data Management

Key Findings

- Diverse representation with administrative bodies can help address equity challenges in the program.
- Data collection should also consider the needs of students from diverse circumstances.



Advisory Council

A robust governance structure that leverages the voices/contributions of regional partners and builds accountability

Diverse Dietary Needs

Provide options that meet needs of students of various cultures and medical conditions.

Data Collection

A robust data governance structure that leverages inputs of regional partners and builds accountability for quality service delivery.

2. National School Food Program (NSFP) Policy

NSFP Vision

Guiding principles

Policy goals

NSFP Vision

- On April 1, 2024, the federal government announced the National School Food Program (NSFP), committing \$1 billion over five years.
- The goal is to support Ontario's existing student nutrition programs starting in the 2024-25 school year.
- The vision of the NSFP is that all children and youth in Canada have access to nutritious food at school, in an inclusive, non-stigmatizing environment that fosters healthy practices, while strengthening connections with local food systems, the environment and culture.

Guiding Principles of NSPF



Accessible

Children and youth can participate in school food programs without stigma or barriers.



Inclusive

Programs provide access to culturally appropriate, relevant, and inclusive school food programs that engage students and the broader community.



Sustainable

Programs are designed to be environmentally sustainable, and adequately resourced



Health promoting

Food served is consistent with healthy eating recommendations and supported healthy food behaviours, knowledge and skills.



Flexible

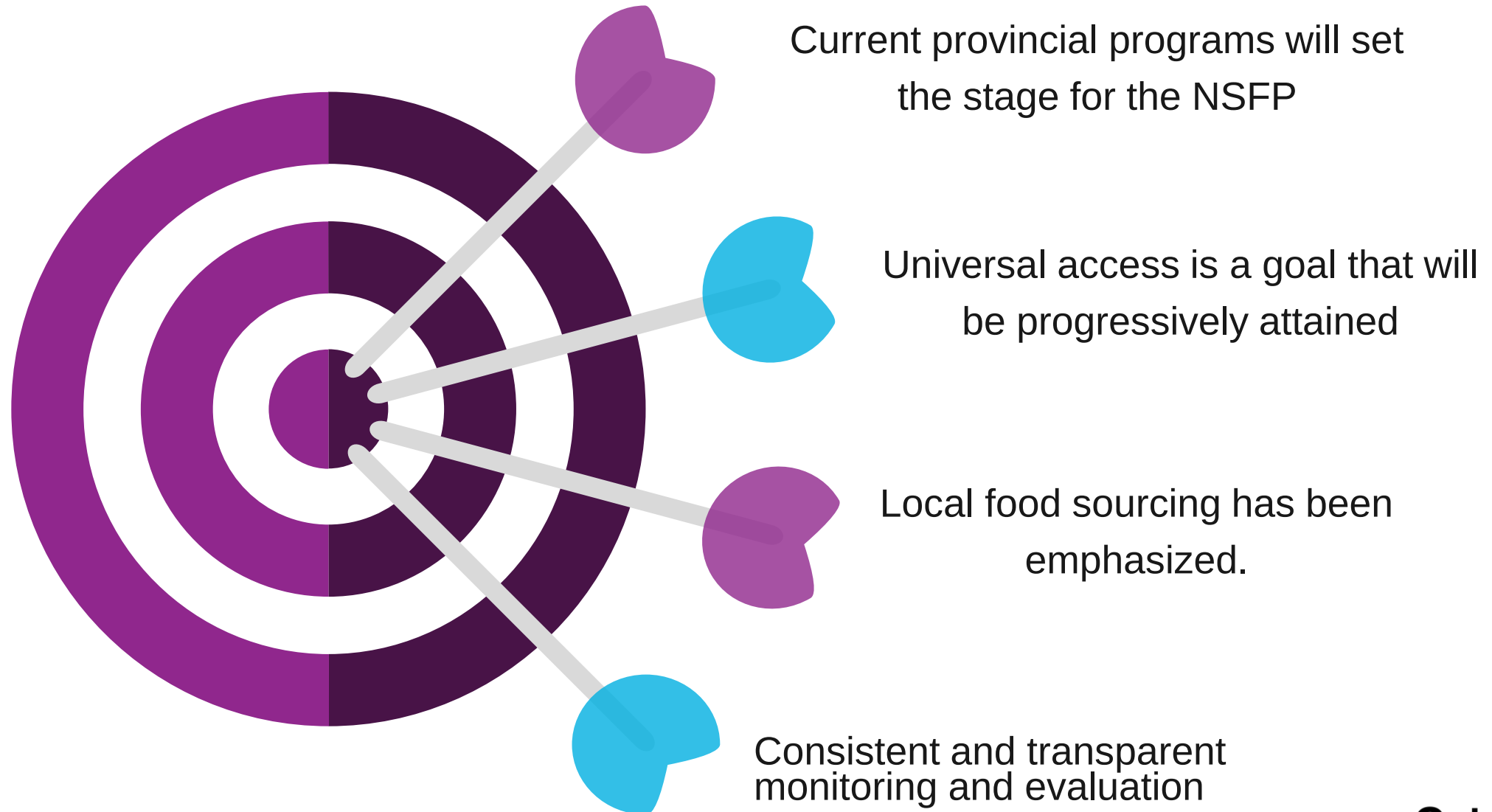
Food is locally sourced where possible and reflective of local and regional circumstances



Accountable

Consistent and transparent monitoring and evaluation to ensure that programs are achieving policy objectives.

Policy Goals – key takeaways



Current Progress and Next Steps

New Partnership



Canada as a partner

Ontario is currently in the process of negotiating a bilateral agreement with the federal government, ensuring alignment with provincial priorities and objectives.



Apply what we have learned

During these negotiations, we are drawing on insights gained from the program review to inform our approach and decisions.



Enhance program delivery

With the introduction of the National School Food Program, Ontario has an opportunity to enhance programs, expand reach, and address sustainability.

Thank you!