



Flourish!

School Food Society

2025/26 SCHOOL YEAR

Outcome Evaluation

We imagine a region in which all students can access nourishing food and learn through immersive experiences growing, harvesting, preparing and sharing it.

Our mission is to support: efficient, nourishing school food services, hands-on food literacy programming and development of nourishing food environments in schools.

Flourish provides three key supports to schools:



Fun, nourishing meals.

We create diverse, seasonal and youth friendly lunches that schools serve buffet style.



Food aggregation and distribution.

We connect school communities with the groceries they need to ensure students and families are nourished and ready to learn.



Food literacy.

We enable hands-on-food learning and promote good practice in school food services.

When we think long term about our intended impact, we hope to:

- 01.** Strengthen school food security.
- 02.** Increase the amount of local food purchased by / consumed at school.
- 03.** Help facilitate connection, reduce anxiety and promote good mental health in children and youth.

Who “Needs” Food at School?

47.5%

of Grade 4 students and **60.2%** of Grade 12 students “never” or “almost never” felt hungry because there was not enough food to eat.

73.8%

of Grade 4 students eat breakfast 5-7 days per week.

39.4%

of students regularly eat breakfast by Grade 12.

11%

of adolescents on Vancouver Island reported that they “sometimes went to bed hungry because there was not enough money for food at home,” compared to **9%** across BC.

30.6%

of people on Vancouver Island reported they’d eaten a homemade meal “some days” in the last week.

Flourish by the Numbers

2025/26 SCHOOL YEAR

33

Schools Served

3,000 Students regularly fed

3,000 Frozen meals shared with families

468,000 Snack / breakfast servings served

211,200 Lunches served (21,120 per month)

603 Hands on workshops to support food literacy and garden engagement

22,700 lbs of free food shared at school markets

Our community has identified four outcome areas for us to evaluate.

The below bullet points provide a high-level overview of our findings from the 2025/26 Flourish school food program evaluation.

Food Access:

STUDENTS CAN ACCESS FOOD THEY LIKE WITHOUT BARRIERS OR JUDGEMENT.

- Open access to food at school reduces stigma. Allowing everyone to come and eat makes students "feel really taken care of."
- People's food needs change. Being flexible, open and responsive to changing student needs ensures students are able to access food.
- Inequitable resource distribution can create have and have not schools. Larger high schools have bigger needs that need to be adequately supported.
- Students enjoy balanced and familiar foods. "It's so healthy. It's sourced locally. It's cooked well ... kids are getting healthy food, and they enjoy it."
- Respectful serving practices and giving students choice encourages food exploration. How food is offered can be as important as what is served.
- Culturally diverse foods are desired. Continuing to diversify cultural food offerings is important to ensuring everyone is included.
- Food waste is generally low. Students seem to like Flourish's food.

Community Building:

STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS, CONNECTION AND CARE.

- Providing food without question or barrier reduces social tensions or stigmatization and makes it easier for students to seek food when they need to.
- Efforts to include diverse cultural foods and create special meals for seasonal celebrations supports connection and learning.
- School gardens can help strengthen relationships with families and the wider community and support a deepening connection between people and place.

Support Students:

SUPPORT LEARNING, EMPOWERMENT AND HEALTH.

- School food reduces dysregulation and improves engagement. School teachers, staff, and administration consistently link access to food with improved concentration, emotional/behavioural regulation, and classroom engagement.
- Meal times enhance social connection and sense of belonging. Across contexts, food was recognized as a thread that pulled people in the school together.
- Student leadership creates a sense of belonging. Getting involved in making or serving food to others promotes a sense of responsibility and feeling of belonging.
- Caring adults provide important touch points. School food service staff are not simply distributing food, but connecting deeply with students.
- School gardens are recognized as a powerful source of food literacy education, especially in those schools lucky enough to have healthy gardens.
- Food literacy requires resources. It can be difficult to talk about food in ways that don't unintentionally create shame or stigmatize.

Sustainability:

REDUCE WASTE AND SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF REGENERATIVE FOOD SYSTEMS.

- School gardens deepen a sense of care for and connection to the land and community.
- Food waste is low. The largest source of waste is disposable plates and cutlery, which may not be disposed of correctly because schools lack organics collection.