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Community – University Institute for Social Research

***Breakfast/Snack Programs in
Saskatchewan Elementary Schools:
Evaluating Benefits, Barriers, and Essential Skills***

**by Carol J. Henry, Carol Vandale, Susan Whiting,
Flo Woods, Shawna Berenbaum, and Adrian Blunt**



Building Healthy Sustainable Communities

Community-University Institute for Social Research

CUISR is a partnership between a set of community-based organizations (including Saskatoon District Health, the City of Saskatoon, Quint Development Corporation, the Saskatoon Regional Intersectoral Committee on Human Services) and a large number of faculty and graduate students from the University of Saskatchewan. CUISR's mission is "to serve as a focal point for community-based research and to integrate the various social research needs and experiential knowledge of the community-based organizations with the technical expertise available at the University. It promotes, undertakes, and critically evaluates applied social research for community-based organizations, and serves as a data clearinghouse for applied and community-based social research. The overall goal of CUISR is to build the capacity of researchers, community-based organizations and citizenry to enhance community quality of life."

This mission is reflected in the following objectives: (1) to build capacity within CBOs to conduct their own applied social research and write grant proposals; (2) to serve as a conduit for the transfer of experientially-based knowledge from the community to the University classroom, and transfer technical expertise from the University to the community and CBOs; (3) to provide CBOs with assistance in the areas of survey sample design, estimation and data analysis, or, where necessary, to undertake survey research that is timely, accurate and reliable; (4) to serve as a central clearinghouse, or data warehouse, for community-based and applied social research findings; and (5) to allow members of the University and CBOs to access a broad range of data over a long time period.

As a starting point, CUISR has established three focused research modules in the areas of Community Health Determinants and Health Policy, Community Economic Development, and Quality of Life Indicators. The three-pronged research thrust underlying the proposed Institute is, in operational terms, highly integrated. The central questions in the three modules—community quality of life, health, and economy—are so interdependent that many of the projects and partners already span and work in more than one module. All of this research is focused on creating and maintaining healthy, sustainable communities.

Research is the driving force that cements the partnership between universities, CBOs, and government in acquiring, transferring, and applying knowledge in the form of policy and programs. Researchers within each of the modules examine these dimensions from their particular perspective, and the results are integrated at the level of the Institute, thus providing a rich, multi-faceted analysis of the common social and economic issues. The integrated results are then communicated to the Community and the University in a number of ways to ensure that research makes a difference in the development of services, implementation of policy, and lives of the people of Saskatoon and Saskatchewan.

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ABSTRACT

This study shares the findings and experiences of various stakeholders, perceived benefits of and barriers associated with the delivery of breakfast and snack programs in Saskatchewan elementary schools, and the essential skills needed by nutrition coordinators to deliver these programs. This study also seeks to better understand the involvement of community partners associated with the breakfast/snack program's delivery. Seventeen schools participated in this study, and individual and group interviews were conducted with two sample sets of stakeholders.

Stakeholders in the first sample set were: children participating in the breakfast/snack programs; parents of children participating in the breakfast/snack programs; volunteers; teachers; nutrition coordinators; Community School coordinators; and principals. Schools were selected from a list provided by Breakfast For Learning (BFL) of schools currently receiving or which had previously received funding support from BFL. In-depth interviews were conducted with stakeholders to explore three central research questions: (1) what are the perceived benefits for student participants in breakfast programs? (2) what barriers exist for supported breakfast programs? and (3) what strategies can be used to overcome identified barriers?

The second sample set of schools came primarily from a list provided by CHEP [Child Hunger and Education Program] Good Food Inc. (hereafter CHEP). A shorter interview process with nutrition coordinators from twelve schools addressed three further research questions: (4) what are the roles of community-based partnerships associated with these programs? (5) is there a clear delineation of the program's "capacity building" component? and (6) what essential skills are needed by nutrition coordinators to deliver the breakfast/snack programs?

Several stakeholders, including children, parents, school volunteers, and staff, indicated that other nutritional, educational, social, and economic benefits, to name a few, derive from the breakfast/snack programs. Nutritional benefits include increased food security, access to healthy food choices, new food experiences, and improved nutrition knowledge. Educational benefits include better classroom management and an ability to connect the food provided with improved learning capacity and well-being. Economic benefits include support for local agriculture and grocers, employment for nutrition coordinators, and added support for families whose food budgets are depleted.

Resources, funding mechanisms, and school dynamics appear to influence whether a school provides breakfast or snack programs. Funding support is received from a vari-

ety of sources, such as government agencies, charitable organizations, and community groups. Schools designated as Community Schools receive a set amount of funding support for nutrition programs. In some schools, universal snacks are offered as a school division policy initiative.

The study identifies several challenges to the long-term sustainability of the programs, namely, access to adequate resources, vulnerability to loss of funding and changes in priorities for funding sources, increasing number of families in need, and community indifference or unawareness of local need. Strong partnerships between the school and the community, including parents, funding agencies, and other stakeholders, were viewed as vital to the long-term sustainability of these breakfast/snack programs.

This study recommends that government agencies, schools, and community partners continue to strengthen an interagency and community-based approach to the delivery of children's nutrition programs in schools. This recommendation is based on the perceived importance of nutrition programs as a community capacity-building strategy to assist the vulnerable and food insecure, and the need to ensure that "every child comes to school ready to learn." Integral to this are the efforts of organizations such as BFL and CHEP, which strengthen breakfast/snack programs not only as funders but also as leaders in setting "best practice" goals to ensure program quality. There is a need for a united voice to advocate for more stable funding, acknowledgement of and investment in nutrition coordinators, and development of an integrated nutrition programming policy within schools. To reduce stigmatization, a discourse on universality (i.e. programs that serve all students, not just the hungry) would also be beneficial. The study finds that nutrition programs have the potential to be change agents in the schools and communities where they exist.

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The authors would like to acknowledge the valued participation of the many individuals, students, parents, nutrition coordinators, school staff, and community stakeholders. Thanks are also extended to the various school divisions and individual schools that gave permission to be included in this study. Without the ongoing involvement of each stakeholder, this study would lack broad insights as to the benefits and barriers associated with the delivery of breakfast and snack programs in Saskatchewan elementary schools.

Acknowledgement is also noted of the financial support made by the following partners: Thought For Food Essential Skills - CHEP Good Food Inc. research partnership; Breakfast For Learning Canadian Living Foundation; and the Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR). Breakfast For Learning made the initial call for the study as they saw the need for an in-depth qualitative study that would explore the

perspectives and perceived benefits and barriers associated with breakfast program delivery from a variety of stakeholder groups within selected Saskatchewan elementary schools. The study was later broadened to include other schools offering breakfast/snack programs, such as those administered by CHEP Good Food Inc.

Finally, special thanks is given to this study's partners, Breakfast For Learning, CHEP Good Food Inc. and the Thought For Food Essential Skills Research Group for their assistance in fine-tuning the research protocol.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Research has shown that children who eat breakfast are more likely than those who do not to meet their daily nutritional requirements. Skipping breakfast may lead to dietary inadequacies that are not compensated for through other meals (Nicklas, Bao, Webber, and Berenson, 1993). In schools, the breakfast/snack programs exist to address students' nutritional needs. Studies have shown that children who eat breakfast or participate in School Breakfast Programs (SBP) experience improvements in school performance, dietary status, health, and school attendance (Nicklas, Reger, Myers, and O'Neil, 2000; Pollitt and Mathews, 1998; Wahlstrom and Begalle, 1999). Although children who eat breakfast have a better overall diet (Basiotis, 1999), the rate of school-aged children skipping breakfast ranges between 5% and 31% (Nicklas et al, 1993; Nicklas, Farris, Bao, and Bereson, 1995). A major concern for children who participate in school breakfast/snack programs is a fear of being considered poor by their peers.

The availability of breakfast programs within schools appears to increase the likelihood that children from low-income households will eat breakfast, making it less likely that they go hungry for the day (Devaney and Stuart, 1998). School Breakfast Programs also result in a better overall diet quality for these students than those who either eat breakfast at home or skip breakfast altogether (Basiotis, 1999). The positive effects of school breakfast programs on academic performance, as well as reduced rates of absenteeism and tardiness, are affirmed by other authors (Meyers, Sampson, Weitzman, Rogers, and Kayne, 1989; Murphy, Pagano, Nachmani, Sperling, Kane, and Kleinman, 1998).

Breakfast consumption is also inversely related to body weight and total blood cholesterol levels, two risk factors for cardiovascular and other chronic diseases (Resnicow, 1999). The School Dietary Assessment Study (Burghardt, Devaney, and Grodon, 1995) found that children who participated in SBP had higher intakes of both macro and micronutrients, such as energy, riboflavin, phosphorus, and magnesium, than those who did not participate. Researchers have reported that hungry children and those at-risk for hunger suffer from impaired mental function and increased hyperactivity (Murphy et al, 1998) and are more likely to have clinical levels of psychosocial dysfunction than those

who are not hungry. Anxiety and aggression, in particular, have been found to be closely associated with hunger (Kleinman, Murphy, Little, Pagano, Wehler, and Regal, 1998).

Despite the benefits of SBP, barriers to implementation have been reported (Food Research and Action Center, 2002), including: student unwillingness or inability to arrive at school early; opposition from teachers and/or administrators to breakfast provision in the classroom; insufficient time for students to eat their school breakfast; lack of parent awareness of the academic and behavioural benefits of school breakfast; and a stigma associated with participation. A pilot study with students in grades four through six who were receiving a universal free breakfast perceived a lack of time and not being hungry in the morning as barriers to eating breakfast (Reddan, Wahlstrom, and Reicks, 2002).

Child nutrition programs in Canada, including breakfast programs, are not mandated and generally fall under the purview of formal school structures. Consequently, availability and participation vary, as do attitudes towards the establishment of these programs. Studies have shown that the quality of human and financial resources can influence the operation and long-term viability of such programs. In Saskatchewan, nutrition programs operate in many schools and are administered or funded by various charitable organizations and government agencies or they are self-funded.

Because schools provide a means of reaching youth, they are the most systematic means available to improving children's health by establishing healthy dietary behaviours through promotion of positive lifestyles and development of effective decision-making skills (American Dietetic Association [ADA], 2003). Schools provide an opportunity for children to learn about healthy eating behaviours by making food choices during school mealtimes and through nutrition-related activities.

Understanding perceptions related to the benefits and barriers associated with breakfast/snack program participation may assist planners to design successful comprehensive health education programs and approaches for promoting school breakfast/snack programs. This study works under the premise that local sustainable community building opportunities are beneficial.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This study uses a multidisciplinary approach to gain insight into: the experience and perceived benefits and barriers associated with breakfast/snack participation among elementary children; the role of school-community partnerships in capacity building; and the role of and essential skills needed by nutrition coordinators and volunteers to deliver the breakfast/snack programs.

Research questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- (1) What are the perceived benefits for student participants and non-participants in breakfast programs?
- (2) What barriers exist for supported breakfast programs?
- (3) What strategies can be used to overcome identified barriers?
- (4) What are the roles of community-based partnerships associated with these programs?
- (5) Is there a clear delineation of “capacity building” component in the program?
- (6) What essential skills do nutrition coordinators need?

School Meal Programs: The Saskatchewan context

In Saskatchewan, there are no specific policies or legislation governing school meal provision. Rather, the approach to nutrition programming has been multifaceted. While many nutrition programs have been initiated to alleviate hunger, undernourished children in Saskatchewan may not always be “hungry”—that is, they eat foods that do not provide necessary nutrients for growing and developing to their full potential. Nutrition programming seeks to address this with the support of various funding sources.

Within the Saskatchewan school system, some schools are designated as Community Schools. The first Community Schools in Saskatchewan were designated in 1980 specifically to address poverty and other complex social issues through community education principles, which, in turn, are rooted in community development. The Community School program serves student populations who are “at risk,” as well as First Nations and Métis students (Saskatchewan Learning, 2005). In 2004, there were ninety-eight designated Community Schools representing 12% of publicly funded schools in Saskatchewan. Collaboration between schools, parents, and the community at large is viewed as essential to ensuring appropriate education and children’s health and well-being (Saskatchewan Learning, 2005).

Because children learn best when they are nourished (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004), nutrition programs such as universal snacks are a part of the Community School philosophy and are therefore funded. Nutrition remains a priority service area in the new conceptualization, School^{Plus} (2001), which embraces community education principles and actively seeks to involve agencies and community members in helping all Saskatchewan schools to become centres of learning, support, and community for the children and families they serve (Government of Saskatchewan, 2003).

In those designated Community Schools, nutrition programs receive a set funding formula of \$10,000, with an additional \$40.00 for each student beyond an enrollment of two hundred. This average allocation formula suggests that larger schools, as well as rural and northern schools, particularly those in areas where the cost of food is higher,

may find it difficult to meet the nutritional needs of students. Community and nutrition coordinators also work to seek further resources.

Other funding sources are available to both Community and non-Community Schools, namely, Prevention and Support Grants, which are the community component of Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Children, and periodic community initiative grants. The Department of Community Resources and Employment (DCRE) also funds nutrition programs through a child development program. Funds are also available by applying to both charity- and community-based organizations (Henry, 2000).

For example, Breakfast For Learning (BFL), a national, non-profit organization dedicated to supporting child nutrition programs across Canada, supports many Saskatchewan schools. Unique to Saskatoon and vicinity is the involvement of CHEP Good Food Inc. (hereafter CHEP), formerly the Child Hunger and Education Program, which provides support such as funds and supplies to school meal programs and highlights the use of local resources.

Some band schools (i.e. First Nations reserve schools) also incorporate much of the the community education philosophy in their programs. Band schools receive federal funding through the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs.

Saskatchewan nutrition program participants

Community School coordinators

Community School coordinators, an intrinsic part of the Community School philosophy, are hired to oversee nutrition programming activities within the school and surrounding neighbourhood or town. In terms of meal programs, coordinator duties and responsibilities include supervision of the nutrition coordinator and management of the budget for food and facilities. There are, however, a few exceptions. In some schools, nutrition coordinators may be responsible for food budgeting, menu planning, and shopping. In most cases, because of their roles and close ties with the community, Community School coordinators are assigned responsibility for liaising with the research team throughout the data collection process.

Food/nutrition coordinators

Most schools in Saskatchewan have community members who deliver breakfast/snack programs. The position is referred to as a food coordinator or a nutrition coordinator. These coordinators may be strictly volunteers who receive no monetary compensation, volunteers who receive some sort of honorarium, or a teacher/education associate employed by the school division to perform some or all the aspects of a nutrition coordinator. For the purposes of this study, the term nutrition coordinator (NC) is used.

Students often refer to them as the “lunchroom lady.” All NC’s interviewed for this study were women. Nutrition coordinators often live in the neighborhood where their school is located and are selected because of their commitment to the delivery of food service in schools. Many are drawn to the program by a desire to be more involved with their children’s school experience. Even though the title of the position varies, many of the basic duties are the same: to organize, prepare, and deliver nutrition programs in the schools. Nutrition program delivery ranges from serving breakfast, morning and/or afternoon snacks, noon lunches, and even some supper meals.

Volunteers

In some locations, NC’s are referred to as volunteers. Strictly speaking, however, they are hired through a tripartite agreement between CHEP, the school, and community/parent association. They receive an honorarium from the community/parent association for services associated with the school meal program. There are other volunteers involved in the nutrition programs, namely family members of the student body or members of the wider community, who support the work of the nutrition coordinator but do not receive any recompense. Most of the participants interviewed indicated that there are challenges in both finding and keeping volunteers.

Teacher associates/education associates

School divisions use different terms to refer to the three additional positions for teacher/education associates (TA/EA) that are given to Community Schools in addition to special needs TA’s. Some schools, as indicated in this study’s sample schools, have given some or all NC duties to these TA/EA’s. Some schools are seeking a distinct designation for this position, namely an education associate of nutrition (EAN).

School-community-university partnerships

According to the American Dietetic Association, school-community partnerships share the responsibility for providing children with access to high quality foods so as to encourage healthy eating behaviours (ADA, 2003). Collaborative efforts with government agencies, professional organizations, and the private sector represent a first step to the successful implementation and sustainability of child nutrition programs in schools. Local community involvement, including that of parents, is essential. There have been increasing calls for universities to assume a role that helps inform the community and school system of the present state of affairs in children’s nutrition programming, define the shifts in the community-school relationship, make recommendations on policy and program changes, and contribute to Canadian academic data on breakfast/snack programs. The interaction of researchers and stakeholders (BFL, the Community-University Insti-

tute for Social Research (CUISR), Thought For Food Essential Skills Research Group (ESRP), and CHEP) has provided further opportunity to enrich the dialogue and critical discourse around the benefits and barriers associated with breakfast/snack programs delivery, as well as the changing roles of child nutrition programs in strengthening the capacity of children, their families, and communities to sustain healthy behaviours.

Breakfast For Learning (BFL)

Breakfast For Learning is an organization that advocates at the national level for child nutrition. Their mission is “to ensure that every child in Canada attends school well nourished and ready to learn” (Breakfast For Learning, 2005). In Saskatchewan, BFL provides financial resources to schools to help assist with the delivery of school meal programs, including breakfast/snack programs. Schools interested in nutrition programming initiatives may access support through an application process. Best practices standards for child nutrition programs are also available to programs to help ensure food quality, financial accountability, food safety, parental involvement, and efficiency in program management. The BFL model encourages local partner engagements and ownership of local programming. In Saskatchewan, BFL has had a long relationship with CHEP, which seeks to broaden the delivery of child nutrition programs in Saskatchewan through the former Saskatchewan Child Nutrition Network (SCNN, 2002). The first sample set of five schools selected for an in-depth study [does this refer to this study or a different one?] of stakeholder groups was selected primarily from a list of schools that indicated that they had received financial support from BFL.

An important BFL contribution has been to research that links nutrition and learning. To this end, BFL initiated the call for this study in an effort to gain insight into the perceived benefits and barriers of breakfast and snack programs, as well as to strengthen local initiatives

CHEP Good Food Inc.

As previously stated, CHEP is a non-profit organization that has been pivotal in initiating, developing, maintaining, and advocating for children’s nutrition programs in schools in Saskatoon and vicinity. Today, CHEP’s mandate has been broadened to include several programs designed to reduce child poverty and hunger. Along with providing needed resources to support school meal programs, including funds and supplies, the CHEP model stresses the use of local resources and community-based research. This study, therefore, reflects CHEP’s goals, as it is the result of a partnership with academics, CUISR, and ESRP.

In Saskatoon, CHEP, the school, and a community or parent association hire, train, and support the nutrition coordinators through a tripartite agreement. CHEP organizes

this partnership and administers funds to the community/parent association, who then pay the nutrition coordinators and purchase food. As mentioned previously, people refer to the nutrition coordinators as volunteers because the honorarium is nominal and does not reflect the many extra hours and expenses that coordinators give to their work. CHEP has also provided consultation, support, and training (as requested) to schools and communities outside Saskatoon for various types of nutrition programming initiatives.

Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR)

CUISR is a partnership between various community-based organizations, faculty, and graduate students from the University of Saskatchewan (Community-University Institute for Social Research, 2005). They provide academic resources and community support to organizations and individuals pursuing more community-based research studies. CUISR awarded a teaching release stipend to the Principal Investigator for work on this research study.

The Thought For Food Essential Skills Research Group (ESRP)

The Thought For Food Essential Skills Research Group (ESRP), funded by Human Resource and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC, 2005) and delivered by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, has identified nine essential skills that cumulatively comprise the capacities required by an individual to participate fully in the workplace and the community. Over two hundred occupations, which require anywhere from less than a high school diploma to a technical certificate, have been analyzed and occupational profiles developed to identify the essential skills required for the successful performance of each occupation. One of the main goals of this study is to explore community applications of essential skills. As a new human resource development technology, the ESRP extends workplace job analysis and training into a broader consideration of literacy, embeds work tasks, promotes a new approach to the identification of workforce training needs, and develops more authentic learning resources and curricula. However, as a new instrument for workforce capacity development, the ESRP has not yet been subjected to widespread empirical validation or critical analysis. This study intends to apply the reality of a local context to the criteria and structure of the essential skills program.

STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This section describes the design and methodology used to assess the benefits, barriers, and essential skills needed by NC's to deliver the school breakfast/snack programs. This section also details the objectives and research questions, the schools surveyed, the methodology used in the data collection, and the analytic approach.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study is exploratory in nature and employed qualitative in-depth interviews to investigate perceived benefits and barriers to breakfast/snack program delivery, as well as the essential skills needed by NC's and volunteers.

Study sample

Seventeen schools participated in this study, with data collected from two sample sets of schools. The first sample set of five schools was selected for an in-depth study of seven stakeholder groups: children who participate in the breakfast/snack programs; parents of breakfast/snack participants; NC's; Community School coordinators; volunteers; teachers; and principals. Schools chosen in this group were selected primarily from a list of schools that were either receiving funding support from BFL or had done so previously. Three of the five schools (one urban, one rural, and one band) indicated that they had received funding support from BFL. The remaining two urban schools received some of their overall funding through the tripartite agreement between CHEP, the school, and the parent/community association. An overlapping of funding is not uncommon in Saskatchewan because both BFL and CHEP have had a long-standing relationship of collaborating in the delivery of breakfast programs, primarily in Saskatoon.

The main purpose for selecting these five schools was to address the first three research questions:

- (1) What are the perceived benefits for student participants and non-participants in breakfast programs?
- (2) What barriers exist for supported breakfast programs?
- (3) What strategies can be used to overcome identified barriers?

In the second sample set of schools, NC's from twelve schools were approached to participate in the study. The primary purpose for the selection of these schools was to address the three remaining research questions:

- (4) What are the roles of community-based partnerships associated with these programs?
- (5) Is there a clear delineation of "capacity building" component in the program?
- (6) What essential skills do nutrition coordinators need?

This group of schools was chosen primarily from a list of schools provided by CHEP, who are currently administering funds for children's nutrition programs in Sas-

katoon. All study participants, however, were given an opportunity to respond to questions pertaining to each of the six research questions. For example, children were asked about the “lunch lady,” and both principals and Community School coordinators were asked to provide their perceptions of the skills needed by NC’s to provide appropriate breakfast/snack program delivery. In turn, NC’s, because of their relationship with the breakfast/snack programs, were invited to comment on the operation of these programs and the benefits and barriers to program delivery. (See **Appendix A** for a comparison of the questions asked of each stakeholder group.)

Initially, the study’s goal was to explore the perceived benefits and barriers associated with breakfast programs. During the process of selecting the schools, however, it became evident that schools providing snacks also needed to be included. A total of six schools (two in Sample Set I and four in Sample Set II) provided snacks without breakfasts and were included in the study. The researchers also intended to include schools that had once provided a breakfast program, but since, for a variety of reasons, switched to providing only snacks. This will be discussed later in the profiles of Sample Set I schools.

INTERVIEWS

Sample Set I

In Sample Set I, individual and focus group interview techniques were used to collect information from the seven stakeholder groups invited to participate in the study. The stakeholder groups were: children who participated in the breakfast/snack programs (three focus groups); parents of participating students (five individuals, one focus group); NC’s (six); Community School coordinators (four); teachers (five); principals (five); and non-nutrition coordinator volunteers (two individual interviews, one focus group). A snowballing technique was used to locate interview participants within the stakeholder groups. The method adopted for this study was to begin with a selected informant at each school, often the principal or Community School coordinator, who, in turn, pointed to other information-rich sources. This approach allowed for access to sample interviewees who were interested in the provision and service of breakfast/snack programs, but also permitted a better understanding of the school’s governance as it relates to community-school partnerships. Seven schools, two of which declined, were invited to participate in this in-depth study of the breakfast/snack programs.

Sample Set II

In Sample Set II, interviews focused on NC’s from twelve CHEP supported schools. Nine of the twelve interviews were with NC’s from Community Schools while three worked

in non-Community Schools. In these schools, NC's were selected primarily to meet the goals of the research questions regarding training history, needs, and perspectives.

The interview protocol developed for this inquiry sought to address research questions identified earlier within the conceptual framework. The interview guides included questions intended to probe:

- (1) program characteristics;
- (2) perception of benefits related to breakfast/snack programs;
- (3) participants' view of the challenges and opportunities in maintaining appropriate practices related to the delivery of programs;
- (4) community-school partnerships; and
- (5) the essential skills needed by NC's for the delivery of such programs. Prospective participants, including students, parents, and teachers, received a letter of information requesting their participation. All stakeholders signed a consent form agreeing to participate in the study. Alternate interviewees replaced persons who decided not to participate.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Researchers conducted individual interviews and focus group discussions in spring 2005 for Sample Sets I and II. Each session was held at a location and time convenient to each participant group. Interviews were conducted in conversational form, which, according to van Manen (1990), is part of gathering "experiential material":

The conversational interview method ... [serves] as an occasion to *reflect* with the partner (interviewee) of the conversational relation on the topic at hand. ... [It] turns increasingly to a hermeneutic interview as the researcher can go back and again to the interviewee in order to dialogue with the interviewee about the ongoing record of the interview transcripts. The hermeneutic interview tends to turn the interviewees into participants or collaborators of the research project (63; emphasis in original).

Each focus group lasted between 30-45 minutes for children and 45-60 minutes for adults. The principal investigator and/or the research assistant moderated these sessions. The sessions were taped, transcribed, and entered into a computerized data analysis program.

This study utilized a procedure sensitive to community-based research work. In Sample Set I, the researchers arranged individual visits to the schools. In Sample Set II, researchers attended monthly NC meetings to present the goals and procedures of the study. The purpose of these visits was to develop a relationship with school personnel in order to build trust and awareness of the researchers' intent, thereby enabling capacity building through community education opportunities.

During these visits, arrangements were made for return trips to the schools when necessary. This proved to be valuable because the stakeholders were able to reflect on the study's purpose as well as their own responses and participation in the research. Follow-up was done through visits, phone calls, and submitting transcripts for review.

Interviews were professionally transcribed. The researchers coded and synthesized data into descriptive reports of each school site with a summary analysis for emerging and recurring themes and patterns in the responses relating to benefits and perceived barriers to participation, as well as strategies for overcoming barriers. Selected verbatim quotes that capture participants' sentiments, views, and opinions are included in the text of this report.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ETHICS

The University of Saskatchewan's Advisory Committee on Behavioural Ethics in Human Experimentation approved this study. Permission was also sought from appropriate school divisions to approach this study's participating schools. Participation was wholly voluntary and anonymous. Participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time. Transcripts were sent to each participant to assure data accuracy and to secure permission to use selected passages from the interviews. Child-informed consent, adult-informed consent, and teacher-informed consent were obtained from all participants before the beginning of the study.

TRIANGULATION

Triangulation of data happened in a variety of ways, including: comparison with the literature; comparison of the questions, responses, and issues across different types of schools (rural, urban, and band); and comparison across different stakeholders, including NC's, Community School coordinators, students, teachers, principals, parents, and volunteers. Interview transcripts were returned to participants for feedback and to request changes where necessary.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOLS: MODELS AND APPROACHES TO BREAKFAST/ SNACK DELIVERY

Data from the interviews and observations, including field notes, were used to develop an observationally-based description of the breakfast/snack programs participating in the study.

To protect participant anonymity and confidentiality, the following designations are used for reporting the findings. Sample Set I schools are identified as schools A-E, while principals (A-E), Community School coordinators (A-E), and nutrition coordinators (A-E) are identified accordingly where appropriate. All references to Sample Set II NC's are identified as F-Q. Three of the schools were in urban areas, while one was rural and the fifth was a band school. Of the three urban schools, one was from a religious minority school division. Four of the five schools were designated Community Schools. **Table 1** summarizes the schools' characteristics, including types of school meal programs offered, years of operation of the meal programs, and key funding sources.

Table 1. Characteristics of Sample Set I Schools.

Schools	Grades	School	Program (s)	Years of Operation	Funding Partner(s)
A	Pre K-8	Urban	Breakfast	25	Community School, BFL, CHEP
B	Pre K-8	Urban	Breakfast Snack	14	Community School, CHEP
C	Pre K-12	Rural	Snack (informal toast and fruit stations)	5	Community School, BFL
D	Pre K-8	Urban	Snack	6	Community School,
E	Pre K- 9	Band / First Nations	Breakfast (2001-02)		BFL (2001-02), Band, Other

PROFILE OF THE SCHOOLS

School A

School A is an elementary Community School—one of the first designated Community Schools in Saskatchewan—and is located in a large urban centre with a population of 205,000 people. The neighbourhood where School A is located is considered a “rough” area with a concentration of drugs, sex trade workers, and gang activity. Children often come to school on their own motivation. Many families struggle to provide for their children and desire to live in a safe and dignified environment. A key goal of School A's breakfast program is hunger relief for all students in need.

School A has an average student population of 280 children, offering classes for pre-kindergarten to grade eight. The nutrition room is equipped with a full kitchen, including two dishwashers and numerous fridges, stoves, and freezers. There is enough space to seat approximately fifty people at one time. Approximately 20% of the student body participates in the breakfast program, which is served from 8:45 to 9:20 AM. The school has an alternate day schedule, which runs from 9:20 AM to 3:00 PM, with two five-minute recesses and a shorter lunch break. This schedule attempts to reduce the number of students who might leave school grounds during the day and also relieve playground stress. On the day that the researchers visited, roughly twenty students from grades four, five, and six ate a breakfast of oatmeal porridge, milk, a piece of fruit, and toast.

Children who arrive at school late after the breakfast service, and are hungry can access a snack by either asking their teacher or going to the nutrition room. Lunch is served to 70-85% of the students. Funding is received from the provincial government through Saskatchewan Learning, and a portion of this money is used to fund the breakfast program. Respondents stated that organizations such as BFL and CHEP provide valuable resources such as equipment and supplies. This school is also involved with several community and business partners.

Two NC's manage the school meal program—both breakfast and lunch—on a part-time basis and receive a small honorarium from the parent/community association. Other decisions related to the program are generally made by the Community School coordinator, who is responsible for budgeting, nutrition programming, and food purchasing. Details about the NC's position are more fully described later in the section titled, "Essential Skills and Training Needs of Nutrition Coordinators."

School B

School B serves a pre-kindergarten to grade eight student population of 280 in an urban Saskatchewan school division. Principal B explained that although more than half the students are from the surrounding middle class neighbourhood, the school also enrolls children from homes in a lower socio-economic neighbourhood. The school represents a minority religious population and is a designated Community School. In previous years, students were bussed from the surrounding vicinity and served a dual population with Ukrainian immersion and English stream students.

Principal B explained that the primary goal of the nutrition program is to ensure "that there aren't any hungry children in the school for the whole day." Approximately twenty-five to thirty students participate in the breakfast program, although breakfast is available to all students in need. Breakfast is served from 8:45 to 9:15 AM and includes a variety of foods, including cereals, porridge, bagels, pancakes, yogurt, milk, juice, and fruits served. Cold cereals are made available to hungry students who arrive after the

breakfast period. The breakfast program has been in operation for seven years; previously, the school offered a snack program.

As a designated Community School, School B receives funding from Saskatchewan Learning, a portion of which is used to fund the breakfast programs. CHEP assists in funding a bagged lunch program that is available to students in need. In order to gain access to the lunch program, students may self-identify or teachers, nutrition coordinators, and others may assist in identifying those who need a lunch. There is a paid teacher assistant who helps with meal preparation and service, but it is the volunteer nutrition coordinator who continues to be responsible for food and supply purchases for the meals served. A few teachers, of their own volition, also serve snack food in their classrooms when there is a need.

A unique feature of this school is its kitchen and dining area, called the “servery.” This room has a medium-sized kitchen with a dishwasher, stove, some fridges and freezers, and seating for approximately thirty people. The facility appears welcoming with good lighting, bright colours, and food posters. Lunch service is a bagged lunch provided to children in their classrooms. The school also provides “take home” food for those children who have requested additional support. The principal explains that food program staff or a member from administration will often bag leftovers or donated foods so that children who express a need for additional support can take supplies home for supper. This generally happens at the end of the month when family food budgets are depleted. Without this service, some students would almost certainly go hungry.

In general, the school purchases food from approved grocery stores so as to provide “fresh” foods to students; very little donated food is used. School B has also chosen to be a “Nutrition Positive” school, which means that it has adopted a positive philosophy towards nutrition through specific food activities. The impetus for the Nutrition Positive philosophy came from concerned parents and community members interested in encouraging and maintaining a healthy nutrition environment in schools. Various community partners, including CHEP, the Saskatoon Health Region, the Dairy Farmers of Saskatchewan, the Saskatoon School Divisions, and the University of Saskatchewan, support the program.

School B receives funding from CHEP, part of which provides the NC volunteer with a small honorarium. This NC has been involved with the school food program even before the school first received the Community School designation. The NC is responsible for menu planning, budgeting, shopping, and some food preparation. Interestingly, the volunteer coordinator’s parents also serve as volunteers (albeit without an honorarium) in the kitchen. The principal explained that this family has lived in the neighbourhood for three generations and has been an integral part of the school’s life for much of that time. The support provided by the NC and her family is much appreciated because the school has found it a challenge to attract other parent and community volunteers for a sustained period of time.

Finally, School B takes a team approach to offering good food experiences, nutritional education opportunities, and other programming that provides food to students in their school and neighbourhood. The following people are involved in the delivery of the school nutrition programs and other numerous community meals: a volunteer nutrition coordinator with ties to CHEP; a paid teacher assistant who aids in the delivery of the breakfast program; and a Community School coordinator who is responsible for overseeing the nutrition programs and other administrative and organizational duties. The school also has a home and school liaison worker, a position paid for by the school board. This individual is involved with community meals, class cooking, and other community-based projects.

School C

School C is a designated Community School (as of 2000) and is located in a rural school division. It serves an average of 280 students from pre-kindergarten to grade twelve, with a majority being those of Aboriginal descent. Snacks are provided daily to all students, with a hot lunch available on special days. Both meals receive partial funding from Saskatchewan's Community School program and through Saskatchewan Learning, which includes funding for a nutrition coordinator who manages the meals. Financial support from external sources such as BFL is also vital to the program's delivery.

While the school does not offer a structured breakfast program, each classroom is equipped with a toaster and the children are offered bread, condiments, and fresh fruit daily. Students are allowed to prepare their toast or bagels before the beginning of class (9:30 AM), at recess, or during work periods if they are hungry. Teachers explained that they found the arrangement workable. Teachers and staff reported that there has been little abuse of this program either in terms of wasted food or over-consumption. Everyone, including staff, is encouraged to participate so as to minimize stigmatization. During the course of this study, the researchers visited the classrooms and observed children picking food from a fruit basket. When asked what they liked about the snack program, both focus groups of children explained that they liked the "good food" that was served.

A unique feature of this school's food program is a lunch program called the Health Hut. At lunchtime, elementary students are served food in their classrooms, but high school students are allowed to purchase food from the Health Hut canteen. The main course is priced at two dollars and consists of an entrée. Milk, salad, and dessert, which is generally a fruit or home-baked product, are extra. School personnel are also able to purchase lunch, but at an increased cost. Lunch at the Health Hut is available on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. On Mondays, the Student Representative Council (SRC) hosts a fundraiser lunch; lunch is not served on Wednesdays. Charging a minimal price for the lunch meal has allowed the school to offer a more nutritious menu. Elementary

teachers pre-order the lunches that they will need. Elementary students who cannot afford to pay for their lunch are given it at no cost.

To alleviate the problem of high school students purchasing foods with higher levels of fat, sugar and sodium from the local café or loitering in the nearby downtown, the “Health Hut Coupon Solution” was recently implemented. A package of coupons for a free lunch were given to all school staff, including janitors and bus drivers, to be handed out to students as rewards and incentives or as needs arise, including hunger. Teachers reported that the solution has been successful in that more youth are choosing to eat at school, thus lessening the amount of time spent downtown. The coupon program has also helped reduce the stigmatization associated with the lunch program. Notably, the SRC also stopped the sale of junk food and soft drinks in their vending machines. To support healthier beverage choices, water coolers were installed in all hallways for all to use.

A NC is hired part-time from the extra assistant positions (referred to as an educational associate) designated to the Community School. The NC plans the menu, manages the budget, shops for groceries, prepares the food, and coordinates the delivery of the meals. The community coordinator assists in shopping and menu planning. The coordinators also shop locally, thereby supporting local producers and grocers. The NC also seeks opinions from children and staff for menu ideas and food service delivery options. This person is highly regarded by staff and students as someone who provides good food, a safe and inviting environment, displays a caring attitude to all students. Although there are a few regular community and parent volunteers, enticing more people to help with food service delivery is a challenge.

School D

School D is located in a small urban centre and was designated a Community School in 1999. The school is situated in an inner-city neighborhood with a diverse cultural mix of children. Prior to 2003, School D had dual French immersion and English stream programs and a much larger student population. Currently, the school provides pre-kindergarten to grade eight classes to an average of 240 children and primarily serves the surrounding neighbourhood. School D operates on a regular day program from 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM.

This school offers a universal snack program, which is a school division policy for all Community Schools. Snacks are served to every child in each of their classrooms. As with other Community Schools, funding is received from Saskatchewan Learning. Student volunteers take bins of snacks to their classrooms where the teacher assists with distribution, usually before or after recess. With everyone participating, it is not as likely that less fortunate children will be singled out and stigmatized, and all students

then benefit from the healthy and varied snack menu. The kitchen is equipped with a dishwasher, two stoves, fridges, and freezers, as well as a small preparation area.

The NC, an education associate hired by the school division, plans the menus, shops for groceries, and prepares food as part of her half-time paid position. Other duties include assisting the community coordinator and providing some classroom nutrition programming with children and adults. Part of their challenge is to include more parents and community members in school activities.

School E

School E is located in a First Nations community. It does not have Community School designation, and offers classes from pre-kindergarten to grade nine, with an average of 240 students. High school students are bussed to a neighbouring rural town. School E does not currently offer a breakfast/snack program, but Principal E indicated that in 2001-2002 the school received a BFL grant that supported a universal morning snack program offering toast, muffins, and fruit to students in their classrooms. This program and grant was not renewed due to changes in staff and administration. However, school staff and community are hopeful that the program would be reinstated. Nevertheless, children of families in great need are encouraged to come to the kitchen for breakfast food. Additionally, children in kindergarten and grades one and two receive toast every morning.

This school does, however, offer a lunch program. Funding for this program comes via reinvestment dollars from casino profits. In the past, the lunch program has been offered to community members at a nominal cost. However, a lack of proper kitchen facilities and dining area has made providing these lunches very difficult. Nevertheless, lunches are made for children and are distributed in the classrooms. They have a paid lunch coordinator who is sometimes assisted by community volunteers.

Summary

All five schools utilized in Sample Set I demonstrate different approaches to implementing child nutrition program in their schools. Resources, funding mechanisms, and school dynamics appear to influence whether a school provides a breakfast or snack program. Those designated as Community Schools receive set funding, a portion of which supports nutrition programs. In some Community Schools, universal snacks are offered as a policy initiative of the Community School program. Hunger relief, nutrition, and community building appear to be the primary goal of the programs studied.

BENEFITS OF AND BARRIERS ASSOCIATED WITH BREAKFAST/ SNACK PROGRAMS

This section describes participants’ perceptions of the benefits of and barriers associated with breakfast/snack delivery. Issues that became apparent through the interview and analysis process, as well as distinctions across schools, are explored.

STRENGTHS / BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAMS

Interviewed participants were very passionate about the impact that their respective program is having on the children, families, and community in which the school is located, and expressed a variety of benefits associated with their participation in the program. **Tables 2** through **8** present the comments of each stakeholder group in Sample Set I. Summaries will highlight significant themes for each group of participants.

Summary of children’s perceived benefits

Table 2. Children’s Perceived Benefits.

School	Meal Programs Offered	Comments
A	Breakfast Lunch	“That there is a food program here at the school and it’s available if you don’t have lunch at home or if you forget to bring a lunch.” “Vegetables is [<i>sic</i>] healthy food. [What’s considered not healthy food?] Chips, chocolate, candy bars.” “Different foods, right on.” “They try to make something different every day.”
B	Breakfast Snacks	“We get to help.” “Can eat two helpings sometimes three if I’m really hungry” “The lunch lady is nice ... very nice. But she does put her foot down sometimes.”
C	Snacks Lunch	“You can eat as much as you want.” “Always fresh good food—awesome.” “It has vitamins.” “The food they give us is healthy, tasty, and it’s pretty fun.”
D	Snacks Lunch	“They serve lots of good food.” “I like the food here.” “I eat it because it’s healthy for you.”

Children were interviewed exclusively in focus groups. By this means, the researchers were able to see the meal program through the eyes of the children. It is evident that these children do not take their meal programs for granted, nor did they make any distinction

between the benefits of one meal type over another. However, they are very aware of the benefits of these food programs, as well as the effort made by others to prepare and serve them. Most students said that they felt comfortable asking for additional portions or food when they were hungry. The children were eager to talk about their food experiences and their access to good food. They are evidently proud to be able to help in the kitchen, and it is believed that through this experience values such as respect, manners, and responsibility are reinforced, along with some nutrition education. Students displayed evidence of their knowledge of nutrition concepts by volunteering information about vitamins and other nutrients in their food.

In general, students were very positive and enthusiastic about their school’s nutrition programs. They gave high praise for their NC’s and quality of food served, “It tastes good. It’s not, like, it’s always cooked right. It’s never, it’s never, like, cooked bad or nothing ever wrong with it. It’s always fresh and tastes good” (Student C). They were specific about personal likes and dislikes of food, but many expressed a willingness to try new foods. “Oh, I had cornflakes and I asked them to kind of put strawberries and prunes and it was actually very good” (Student B). Students gave the impression that their classmates had a range of views of the program, mostly around choosing to participate in the program and food quality. One student’s question indicated a strong awareness of the nutrition program’s purpose: “Do you write things like the breakfast and the lunch program is important and that we need it here?” (Student A).

Summary of parents’ perceived benefits

Table 3. Parents’ Perceived Benefits.

School	Meal Programs Offered	Comments
A	Breakfast Lunch	“It does meet the needs of the community, with very little financial support from us ... allowing us to pay for other personal things at home.” “It also provides partial income for lunch lady.” “The kids eat more of a variety and they are willing to try new foods and, of course, I have to try to if they’re trying and some stuff I still don’t like. Like they like yogurt and I can’t stand, I think it’s the grossest thing and I can’t believe they eat it but they do and it’s good for them though and that’s okay. And it’s like certain vegetable I won’t eat but, you know, they’ll eat them and because of them I eat broccoli now and I eat cauliflower and I never used to.”
B	Breakfast Snacks	“But there are times that we just don’t have food at home, we send them so they can have it here”. “At home if I would have bought [different foods], they probably wouldn’t even try it, but here at school they’ll try it and they realize they like it”. “It’s usually healthy food that they eat.”

C	Snacks Lunch	<p>“When you run out of something you know that you can’t send a healthy snack, it’s nice to know that it’s going to be offered there.”</p> <p>“I like the program, there is a variety and my kids all love it.”</p> <p>“The food programs are convenient.”</p> <p>“My kids choose healthier snacks at home now.”</p>
D	Snacks Lunch	<p>“They offer variety of snacks.”</p> <p>“I’m pretty happy with the way it works.”</p> <p>“I like that my kids come home and say “We tried this, can we do it here?”</p> <p>“It’s presented in a different way at school.”</p>

The parents were interviewed both individually and in focus groups. School A parents spoke of the meal programs as meeting a need in their community. They were grateful that the meal programs were at no cost to them and they felt that paying for periodic fundraising meals was enough. These parents regarded the local hiring of a NC as evidence of community capacity-building values.

Parents from other schools with a lower socio-economic status did not focus on the community, but rather emphasized access to food at school. School D parents indicated a willingness to pay a nominal amount for their children’s lunches. They appreciated the convenience and were relieved to know that there was nutritious food at school for their children.

The children’s willingness to eat different and often more nutritious foods at school has affected parents’ eating behaviours as well. Furthermore, students now ate foods at school that parents had previously and unsuccessfully tried to feed them at home. This study provides evidence that school nutrition programs contribute to the knowledge of good nutrition, from the school to the home and the community.

Parents were generally appreciative of the nutrition program in their school, but they all struggled with the negatives perceptions associated with accessing food in school. “I think some people feel that it’s just kind of like a hand out, don’t do it or whatever. But I believe that if you need it, it’s there and it’s to be used” (Parent B). Some parents were very conscious of the benefits of the program to their children. “They did do cooking class in grade two. Like we had started cooking classes here years ago when we had funding just to teach kids simple things, and they would all get together and it was like collective kitchens. And they would cook once a week and then they’d take that home for supper. And now my child is a teenager and he’s learnt from that how to cook” (Parent D).

Summary of volunteers' perceived benefits

Table 4. Volunteers' Perceived Benefits.

School	Meal Programs Offered	Comments
A	Breakfast Lunch	"They cover all the four basic food groups, which is good." "They don't get all that food choice at home." "Yesterday's lunch is probably the last time they had something to eat."
B	Breakfast Snacks	"Lots of support from administration." "Children feel free to talk to us." "Call us Grandma / Grandpa."
C	Snacks Lunch	"Children enjoy food tremendously." "Some can really use a good meal." "They look forward to it."
D	Snacks Lunch	"Program shows how to choose a healthy snack over other food." "Everyone gets the snack."

The volunteers referred to here are not NC's, but rather assist the NC's in the preparation and delivery of meals. They are very committed to their work and most have been in their position for a number of years. Many have seen their children or grandchildren go through the school in which they work. They are involved because they had either experienced scarcity in their own lives or witnessed it first-hand in others'. Volunteers from School A are more interested in access to good food and children's nutritional needs, but other volunteers, such as in School B, are more aware of the social benefits of having children participate in meal programs. The support of the volunteers undoubtedly strengthens nutrition programs. For example, they often provide a listening ear for children. All volunteers lived in their school's neighbourhood and stated that their reason for being involved was to meet the needs of hungry children.

Summary of teachers' perceived benefits

Table 5. Teachers' Perceived Benefits.

School	Meal Programs Offered	Comments
A	Breakfast Lunch	"I am able to connect to classroom learning about food preparation and nutrition." [is this quote correct?] "Children eat nutritious food."
B	Breakfast Snacks	"There's laughter, a kind of warm homey atmosphere in the servery." "Children get more than food; they get some human contact." "I like the opportunity to take the special needs children to help in the kitchen."

C	Snacks Lunch	<p>“Before, they were hungry so the parents would just keep them at home—they don’t even hesitate to let me know as a teacher that they need lunch today.”</p> <p>“I like the fact that our meals are homemade.”</p> <p>“Since the meal programs began, the attitudes of teachers have changed—they are more supportive and understanding.”</p> <p>“Nutrition education is not just a reading and writing lesson—the kids get to experience it.”</p>
D	Snacks Lunch	<p>“The snack program provides us with a wide variety of food choices.”</p> <p>They are exposed to new foods—this is one of the first places I’ve seen where kids love veggies and dip.”</p> <p>“They are good at offering snacks that don’t take a great deal of time to eat.”</p>
E	Snacks Lunch	<p>“Access to good food is necessary for children.”</p> <p>“Some come without proper supper or breakfast. They come in here hungry and tired, so we feed them.”</p> <p>“Letting kids eat helps keep some problems from getting bigger. ... Food affects the total school environment.”</p>

Teachers were unanimously positive in their views about the educational value of the nutrition programs. They commented on the ability of children to access good, nutritious food, and the ability of teachers to connect teachable moments to the food that they were eating. They stated that benefits related to children’s ability to learn, focus, and behave better was because of their participation in the meal programs. One Teacher C stated:

I think that the students here have so many things on their minds about what is happening in their home life that taking away that hungry feeling in their tummies allows them to focus more on the task at hand. I think it’s like any of us, if we’re hungry we have trouble concentrating, you know, and so it’s hard enough for these students to focus. So at least if we can feed them something, a little bit of their troubles are alleviated. Most of them like the academics.

One teacher mentioned that when children, including special needs children, help with meal preparation and delivery they learn both nutrition concepts and positive social and behavioural values. Another believed that food quality and the curriculum is an important part of the food program. She also equated learning about good food with the homemade meals on site:

I like the fact that our meals are homemade meals. I find it interesting. I just watched that movie [*Super Size Me*] with my grade twelves, and

one section there shows the mistakes the schools [make] and the way the meals are cooked. It's really never a home cooked meal of any sort. It's always something that came out of a box, that's [*sic*] it's just add water or just add this to it. So one thing that I like is it is often a home cooked kind of meal. I think that's really good (Teacher C).

Teachers who were interviewed indicated that they were very aware of the hunger that children experienced. "I know from the students that I teach that a large number of them come without breakfasts so there are growling tummies and hungry kids that [need] breakfast" (Teacher A). They also noted that teachers and community members who do not see the need or complexity of the socio-economic situations affecting some families were generally not as supportive of the role that nutrition programs play in the daily lives of children.

All the teachers interviewed expressed a need that nutrition programs be consistently linked to classroom nutrition lessons. They stated that the NC plays a vital role in helping make the food service-classroom link. As one teacher pointed out, "the nutrition coordinator is not someone who just does [bakes and serves] the muffins. ... [T]hat person can assist in providing nutrition information ... so children can integrate nutrition lessons learned" (Teacher D).

Summary of nutrition coordinators' perceived benefits

Table 6. Nutrition Coordinators' Perceived Benefits.

School	Meal Programs Offered	Comments
A	Breakfast Lunch	"We get that trust for each other. ... [I]t's a friendship and it's like feeding your own children after awhile." "The most basic part is that the kids are being fed and there has been studies done, like children think better when they have something in their stomach—I see this happening." "I make sure child goes to class fed and feel good."
B	Breakfast Snacks	"The best thing about the program is there is no stigma here. Kids feel free to walk in." "They call me Aunty because they all know me." "Whatever food we have, we share—we try to respect on another in sharing so everybody gets something."
C	Snacks Lunch	"We buying our food from the grocery store in town. It's cheaper and supports local businesses." "It's gratifying to have a relationship with the kids—they have a sense of belonging." "The community pride that they feel they are giving so ... it's going to establish new volunteers for the future."

D	Snacks Lunch	<p>“I like that I get to meet the parents.”</p> <p>“I’m starting to develop a liking for baking homemade food. ... [T]hey look forward to my cooking/baking.”</p> <p>“I find kids are not as grouchy at recess.”</p>
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Both Sample Sets I and II are combined in **Table 6** as they expressed similar views. Most significant for the NC’s is the opportunity not only to help the children access nutritious food but also to develop healthy and valued relationships with them. Such relationships, they claim, are often long lasting. One NC mentioned that high school students often “come back to say hi to her” after graduating (Nutrition Coordinator D). NC’s also said that they saw the food service as a means of building a warm, inviting, comfortable atmosphere for children, noting that children are more willing to talk about troubled home lives in such an accepting environment. They also indicated that the program was a great help to the community and local economy because it provides jobs and, in some cases, a steady supermarket clientele. Improving the local economy helps to ensure the programs’ sustainability.

Although some volunteers are members of the neighbourhood or community, several volunteers are students ranging from grades four to eight or, in one case, high school. NC’s identified the opportunity to teach food service skills and nutrition through demonstration and experience as an important benefit.

But we let students come in. ... [T]he ones that show an interest can help. ... I try to explain why we do everything, you know, cleanliness. A lot of the kids will ask, you know, ‘How come you buy this and why don’t you get this?’ Then I will try and explain that, so we try and teach them about food safety, food handling, safety, about the nutrition, the Canada Food Guide, why I use brown bread rather than white (Nutrition Coordinator B).

In fact, all respondents exhibited enthusiasm when they spoke about students gaining knowledge and experience of food and food skills, and that they are training good volunteers for the future.

When asked about the food served, most NC’s indicated that their top priority was to feed fresh, nutritious food to all children regardless of need. “The most important thing, I think, is making sure that the needs of the kids are being met first before anything else. Never turn a child away” (Nutrition Coordinator C). “If they are hungry, you have to feed them and you can’t turn them away for that” (Nutrition Coordinator A). Feeding kids good food at school is important “because some families don’t have the good,

nutritious food in their homes” (Nutrition Coordinator C). “I mean, they might have a pop tart or, you know, that cold bowl of Frosted Flakes in the morning and, sure, that is something to put into their stomach, but it’s not good for them and they need to have that proper nutrition in their bodies” (Nutrition Coordinator B).

Some interviewees appreciated that the food was prepared on site, noting that they would be able to control the quality of recipe items used. “We need to be able to make what we need homemade so that we’re making sure that everything is low-fat and high nutrient” (Nutrition Coordinator J). Other NC’s, however, felt they could not offer homemade selections due to time and energy restraints. “Don’t have the time. Like, there’s just three of us down here, and when you don’t have any volunteers, it doesn’t give you much time to try and get things done” (Nutrition Coordinator M). Some community coordinators, however, expressed concern about the increased cost of serving homemade meals.

Summary of Community School coordinators’ perceived benefits

Table 7. Community School Coordinators’ Perceived Benefits.

School	Meal Programs Offered	Comments
A	Breakfast Lunch	“I’m really proud of the hot meals with more funding.” “This year was the first time I got a grant from somewhere else, so we can focus on some nutrition education.” “The most important thing is the dignity and that they can get themselves here and even if it’s late, go to the kitchen for food.”
B	Breakfast Snacks	“The really awesome thing about having a universal kind of program where everyone can eat no matter what their situation.” “I think a lot of these kids want to come where they sort of feel safe and welcome, and they can sit and nicely eat and not have any problems going on around them. It’s calm generally, and we try and do the odd different breakfast.” “If a little six year old asks me for a second bowl I know that child hasn’t eaten since the day before, so I feed them until they’re full.”
C	Snacks Lunch	“Charging a minimal cost for meal is fine—it helps the budget, and where would you get that sausage and that bun for two dollars?” “I go out and walk the hallways and see if there’s any waste or fruit thrown around, and, no, the kids are very respectful. They enjoy the food.” “Kids do respect things a lot more when they do put out a little bit of money. It’s created some ownership by paying a little bit.”

D	Snacks Lunch	<p>“We don’t just feed kids, and that takes care of the problem. We need to teach people that this [program] is important and that it’s brain food.”</p> <p>“Seeing the kids try different things and even the staff. . . . I always suggest the staff need to model eating new snacks.”</p> <p>“Kids need to eat and eat well in order to learn or it becomes a problem down the line.”</p>
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The Community School coordinators felt that nutrition programs were beneficial but were more concerned about stable funding support to assist with program provision. They valued and appreciated the new provincial policy initiatives that allocated additional funding to nutrition programs. This funding provided not only better access and quality food, but also opportunities to teach nutrition education and social values. The additional funds received from community organizations and other funding agencies has been seen as crucial to helping to ensure that the programs are able to meet a variety of student needs. For example, in the case of Schools A, C, and D, two meals are provided. Funds, such as those received from BFL and CHEP, provided valuable support for the purchase of supplies, food, and equipment.

Principals’ perceived benefits

Table 8. Principals’ Perceived Benefits.

School	Meal Programs Offered	Comments
A	Breakfast Lunch	<p>“Sense of belonging.”</p> <p>“Meet basic need for food.”</p> <p>“Welcoming environment of nutrition room.”</p> <p>“Caring relationship with NC-parent in community.”</p>
B	Breakfast Snacks	<p>“We’re a Community School and with that recognition and honesty the kids come and talking about food. We have students who approach different ones of us at different times when things are difficult at home.”</p> <p>“Encourage everyone to access serveries—less stigma.”</p> <p>“In general, the staff recognize that a simple healthy breakfast is going to assist learning and I see in general quite good support for both breakfast and lunch. Recognition that there are kids who need that healthy start and food at some point in the day.”</p> <p>“Our goal is not one hungry child in the building as well as positive food experiences to increase their understanding of good, healthy, nutritious food.”</p>

C	Snacks Lunch	<p>“Kids can access lunch if needed.”</p> <p>“Proper nutrition.”</p> <p>“Organized not to take away from teaching time.”</p> <p>“Teach social skills like courtesy, respect.”</p>
D	Snacks Lunch	<p>“Try to rebuild independence and responsibility with children.”</p> <p>“Nobody picks or chooses students—everyone eats.”</p> <p>“Breakfast was communal, interactive, bonding.”</p> <p>“Better attendance.”</p> <p>“Open kitchen—less stigma.”</p>
E	Snacks Lunch	<p>“Meal coupons—incentive to access hot lunches.”</p> <p>“Universal in-class snacks.”</p> <p>“Pride in growth of new program.”</p>

Some principals indicated that the nutrition program provided children with better access to food, a nurturing eating environment, and a caring attitude. Positive staff attitudes encouraged students to speak more freely about their food needs. For example, children willingly talked about stressful home situations or a lack of food at home. This information was often shared with staff members, such as the principal, teachers, or community or nutrition coordinators, who would then prepare a food package for the child to take home at the end of the school day. Principal B shared this anecdote:

Like the little boy [who] just shared the example of saying that there isn't food at home. There's never been a protection concern there. [He has] a single [parent] dad. He actually lives on the edges of our boundary. He should be attending another school but we have open boundaries, so he walks a considerable distance and he has always found a staff member who will support him around food. And he doesn't like entering conflict with his father ... so it's always done, you know. He just doesn't want us to say anything to Dad and we think out of dignity we shouldn't, so it's kind of self-identified.

All the principals expressed a commitment to the children's nutrition program in their schools. They also identified problem areas such as a need for better integration of classroom nutrition education lessons with food served in existing nutrition programs. They spoke about the need to increase staff support as program requirements increased. For example, Principal B felt that foods that meet nutritional standards provided opportunities for children to learn basic menu planning skills and how to include foods from other cultures, skills that were transferable to foods at home. The role of the school as professional parents was also evident in the following statement:

We should be supportive because it's the child who's indicating that they are hungry. Yes, we may have families who could afford to purchase a lunch who aren't, but our goal is not one hungry child in the building should go hungry. As well, positive food experiences [are needed] to increase their understanding of good, healthy, nutritious food (Principal D).

OVERALL SUMMARY OF THE BENEFITS OF CHILDREN'S NUTRITION PROGRAMS

All interviews supported the notion that access to good nutritious food was critical to children's development, health, and academic well-being. Food helps teachers with classroom management and in teaching values such as cleanliness, responsibility, and a sense of community.

Findings from this study suggest that the primary reason why nutrition programs are initiated is to relieve hunger. However, once initiated the programs provide several other benefits to children, parents, school staff, and NC's. The benefits of building community, nutrition education, and personal empowerment become the drivers of nutrition programming in schools. Children, staff, and community members attested to the certainty that hunger is visible, acknowledged, and should be dealt with in the school-community setting. Most interviewees felt that children, especially those from low-income households, would go hungry without the support of school nutrition programs. As one principal pointed out, it is good to "see a little guy or a little girl with a full stomach and a smiley face knowing that they've had a good nutritious breakfast." Overall, the sustainability of the nutrition programs is based on more factors than hunger alone.

Children in the focus groups commented on food quality, reflecting their enthusiasm for the "good food" that they received. Only a few students in one school expressed any concern about the food served.

The ability to meet the needs of hungry children without embarrassing, stressing, or dehumanizing them was identified as essential. Schools serving universal snacks were quite clear about their efforts to minimize the stigmatization of students who needed the program. For example, in School A, the snack program was available to all students. Unique to School C was the implementation of a free meal coupon program to try to promote older students' use of meal programs. All schools, however, struggled with making sure that hungry children participated without feeling bad about eating at school.

Staff, parents, and community members indicated that providing breakfasts/snacks offered an opportunity for children to learn in a safe, caring, and welcoming environment. As one NC said, "Just to make sure that the children are fed and fed nutritiously and just so they have a comfort zone to come to, which is really important to children" (Nutrition Coordinator P).

It is important to couple learning with nutrition, whether the learning is for the student or taken home to be experienced within the family. Most participants indicated that having an opportunity to teach children nutrition education principles was an important benefit of offering the breakfast/snack program. Nutrition education was carried out by demonstrating, modeling, or instructing about food quality, preparation, and safe food handling. School staff are highly aware that they teach social as well as life skills when they include children in the preparation and delivery of meals, to “not only teach the importance of nutrition and so on, but you also teach some social skills around how do you receive things ... with a please and thank you” (Parent B).

BARRIERS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROVISION OF PROGRAMS

Although participants were passionate about the benefits of the meal/snack programs, they were equally, if not more, passionate about barriers to successfully meeting goals for the children’s nutrition programs. **Tables 9 to 15** present the comments of each stakeholder group for each of the Sample Set I schools. Summaries with additional material are presented following each table. A concluding summary explores significant overall themes.

Summary of children’s perceived barriers

Table 9. Children’s Perceived Barriers.

School	Meal Programs Offered	Comments
A	Breakfast Lunch	“There is some wasting of food.” “Some kids don’t like the food.” “Some kids I know are shy to come to the lunchroom.”
B	Breakfast Snacks	“Other kids are shy or scared at first to go to breakfast.” “More strawberries.”
C	Snacks Lunch	“There’s something that I’d like more and that’s pineapple, more/less chocolate chips.” “More changes probably, more often instead of every second day.”
D	Snacks Lunch	“We could have seconds.” “I wish they’d bring back the wraps that they made.” “I want more cheese and tomato tacos. You could get little tacos that were on a bun.”

As enthusiastic as the children were about the benefits of the meal programs, they also called for specific improvements, namely more variety, more food, and better quality. Another barrier to successful programs, as noted by Schools A and B, was the apparent

fears of students to participate in the meal programs. This barrier is also well known to staff. Many of these children are from transient families and are new to the school. All the community schools reported a high turnover of children registering throughout the school year. The principal who took the researchers on a tour of individual classrooms in School B took the time to ask students whether they had breakfast that morning. A few indicated that they had not. When asked for greater detail, those students said that even though they were aware of the breakfast provisions in the “servery,” they had no desire to go to there for breakfast. It is likely that stigmatization exists even in schools where universal programs are available.

Summary of parents’ perceived barriers

Table 10. Parents’ Perceived Barriers.

School	Meal Programs Offered	Comments
A	Breakfast Lunch	<p>“They could serve more traditional foods like moose meat, wild rice, geese, duck, or partridge.”</p> <p>“There needs to be more community input.”</p> <p>“People need to become more personally responsible for their kids. I am concerned that there might be some abuse of the food program.”</p> <p>“The most challenging part is to get the ones that don’t want to be in there yet.”</p>
B	Breakfast Snacks	<p>“If parents became more involved they’d understand the school better.”</p> <p>“I wouldn’t mind paying a little for [a] meal that would be okay—if it meant a better lunch at school.”</p> <p>“Hard to get through the month sometimes—so to make sure that they have the best that they need, that they have a good snack.”</p>
C	Snacks Lunch	<p>“It would be great if they would offer lunches every day.”</p> <p>“I am on the school board and I do hear that some families really need help.”</p> <p>“Sometimes our nutrition coordinator, now she’s just, she’s gone to half- time now. You know, and she’s really trying to get the kids pumped up and trying different things, but it’s hard.”</p>
D	Snacks Lunch	<p>“The new lunch lady has changed snacks and time served.”</p> <p>“I would like to see an afternoon snack.”</p> <p>“I could see where a full-time nutritionist in the school division could really help our kids. They could learn more about eating better.”</p>

Overall, parents had few concerns about the breakfast/snack programs served in their children’s school. A few indicated that funding, staff turnover, meal frequency (e.g. a

daily lunch), and greater parental input and responsibility were problematic to the availability of nutrition programs. One parent further suggested greater inclusion of culturally diverse foods in the food programs.

Summary of volunteers' perceived barriers

Table 11. Volunteers' Perceived Barriers.

School	Meal Programs Offered	Comments
A	Breakfast Lunch	"I don't like to see kids wasting food." "Some kids don't know how to share food." "Breakfast could be earlier for children coming early." "Somehow we have to get stragglers to come earlier."
B	Breakfast Snacks	"It's important to make sure food is the best possible, and that's a challenge for them." "We as a community need to meet the need of hungry children." I think that the quality [is] okay, but it is just a snack."
C	Snacks Lunch	"I don't drive, so it's a little hard to get to the school. My husband drives me in from the farm." "I think we could use more volunteers."
D	Snacks Lunch	"I think they could offer more food." "Maybe have some kind of hot meal for lunches." "I think we could look at a lunch paid for by parents, say an X amount per month and your child gets a hot lunch, a nutritious hot lunch."

For volunteers, most were satisfied with the program administration and their involvement in the program. A few suggested that funding support and access to resources (e.g. food preparation training) limited their involvement in the delivery of breakfast/snack programs. They also suggested a need for greater community involvement to sustain the programs.

Summary of teachers' perceived barriers

Table 12. Teachers' Perceived Barriers.

School	Meal Programs Offered	Comments
A	Breakfast Lunch	"I notice that the variety of food is limited to funding." "I would like to invite parents to come in and learn cooking, even the parents of the kids in my class." "I think that paid meals would be very difficult here. Many parents just couldn't afford it."

B	Breakfast Snacks	<p>“Our [food coordinator] puts in way more hours than she is paid for.”</p> <p>“It takes extra time and energy to offer variety and nutritious food with limited funds.”</p> <p>We try to make the best with what we have. . . . [There are] not enough funds to offer variety.”</p>
C	Snacks Lunch	<p>“I’d like to see a lunch program available everyday.”</p> <p>“We all have a big job to do to change community members’ attitudes, especially about how kids need for good food.”</p> <p>“I see that programs like this are beginning to create differences between towns—the haves and the have nots.”</p>
D	Snacks Lunch	<p>“Some days snack takes more time than others. I know they need the nutrition in order to learn, but it also cuts out part of the learning time.”</p> <p>“Paid lunches would not work.”</p>
E	Snacks Lunch	<p>“We try to deal with food issues at staff meetings, but it’s hard with limited funds.”</p> <p>“We would like better meat and fresher produce.”</p> <p>“A lot of our children don’t like processed meat. With better storage facilities they could cook a good roast, cut it up, and then freeze some.”</p>

Scheduling and logistics seemed to be the most common concerns for teachers. Although they valued the nutrition programs, some stated that delivery interfered with regular teaching time. Funding, appropriate facilities, serving good quality food at all times, and getting “buy-in” from other teachers were also identified as program delivery barriers.

Summary of nutrition coordinators’ perceived barriers

Table 13. Nutrition Coordinators’ Perceived Barriers.

School	Meal Programs Offered	Comments
A	Breakfast Lunch	<p>“Sometime I find it hard to prepare for the different numbers of kids that come here.”</p> <p>“We find it hard to follow [the] Canadian Food Guide when there are financial cutbacks, poor food, or no control over budget or shopping.”</p> <p>“Sometimes I find that delivered produce and donated food is often bad quality.”</p>
B	Breakfast Snacks	<p>“Sometimes difficult when we’ve had funding limits for everyone to respect one another in sharing.”</p> <p>“We are really lacking the foods we need because of the money. We would like to serve eggs in the morning sometimes.”</p>

C	Snacks Lunch	<p>“I’d want a real lunch program where we could offer five lunches per week for K to 12.”</p> <p>“If I had a wish list, it would be for a real cafeteria.”</p> <p>“Extra funding would be wonderful. Not only for buying, but to make homemade food so that we’re making sure that everything is low-fat and high nutrient. We read labels like crazy.”</p>
D	Snacks Lunch	<p>“I want to get more parents in here.”</p> <p>“I want to work more with individual classes and have more classrooms come in here. Bringing kids in to learn something as kind of a side by side with the teachers.”</p> <p>“The most difficult part of this job is figuring out the quantity and the budgeting.”</p>

NC’s were very clear about connecting the nutrition programs with nutrition education and literacy:

There is a literacy program called “stone soup.” ... There's different versions all over the world, but it basically boils down to some stranger coming into town, wanting something to eat, people won't feed him, so he tricks them into making him stone soup, saying, ‘I have stones and I can make this wonderful soup with it.’ He tricks the townspeople into bringing vegetables and meat and that kind of thing to make enough soup for everybody and give himself some as well. When I volunteered here before I got hired, a particular teacher that I volunteered with in her classroom, she did that with her class. They read the story, they did different literacy exercises built around the story, and a conclusion to it was to make stone soup in the classroom (Nutrition Coordinator G).

A few NC’s mentioned problems of funding-to-student ratios. For example, funds received from the community school initiatives are not applied by a set standard, but, rather, individual schools make their own decisions about how funding allotted to nutrition programs is disbursed. Consequently, meal provision varied with each school; some provided snacks, while others served breakfast. Some were even able to provide lunch with support from other sources. Meals also varied in terms of variety and food quality (fresh produce and other food versus convenience or donated food that is often high in sugar and fat).

Interview participants also suggested that having appropriate financial support would help school staff respond to emergency food needs such as students who are

hungry but missed the allotted meal times and students in homes with no food. For some students, food provided at school was the only meal that they received for the day. Participants indicated that “the Share & Care program, where children would put excess or unwanted lunch items on a table rather than throwing it in the garbage, that was run by the lunch supervisors, [it] was just not enough” (Nutrition Coordinator K).

School staff said that they are often faced with a perception of schools as “baby-sitters.” School personnel saw themselves as trying to change their image, to be more inclusive and to invite other community members into the schools, including parents and other community members. “I don’t see [the school] as a parent. I just see [the nutrition program] as something safe where the kids know that they can get something if they are hungry” (Nutrition Coordinator D). In School E, community members are invited to participate in the mealtime, which helps to further remove the stigmatization of using the program.

An important barrier to improving nutrition programming was a lack of adequately paid personnel. “I’d like to see nutrition coordinators get paid what they’re worth” (Parent A). Several volunteer NC’s stated that they would like to be compensated for mileage and out-of-pocket expenses. Many participants advocated for NC’s to be full-time paid positions. “Probably the biggest one is the funding. . . . I could do a lot more if I was paid more and if it was a regular position, if it wasn’t just sort of a volunteer position with an honourarium” (Nutrition Coordinator I). CHEP director Karen Archibald commented that some volunteer NC’s who received social assistance had some of their honouraria clawed back, thereby making their personal financial situation even more challenging. Other NC’s expressed a desire to have more control or support over menu planning and budget. For example, one NC stated, “A lot of our kids, that’s all they get, is sandwiches. . . . So I try to do different meals and I try to do hot meals, especially in the winter when it’s cold” (Nutrition Coordinator J).

Summary of Community School coordinators’ perceived barriers

Table 14. Community School Coordinators’ Perceived Barriers.

School	Meal Programs Offered	Comments
A	Breakfast Lunch	“We are such a high need school, we’ve never had funding for more nutrition education.” “We really lack kitchen supplies.” “We’ve had our biggest staff turnover that I’ve seen and just the knowledge and the learning of working with our kids from our families and just understanding that those basic need aren’t being met—it’s a challenge for us.”
B	Breakfast Snacks	“We’d increase the budget, and incredibly.” “It’s challenging to get people to volunteer.” “Buying nutritious food is expensive.”

C	Snacks Lunch	<p>“At first, the community didn’t understand child hunger, child nutrition. So we implemented this two-dollar lunch and it satisfied everyone.”</p> <p>“We want to try new menu items.”</p> <p>“It will be important as our program grows to increase the hours for the [Nutrition Coordinator’s] position.”</p>
D	Snacks Lunch	<p>“We need to do better by encouraging parents to come in, and that’s a really tough area.”</p> <p>“We would like to do more parenting cooking and life skills classes.”</p> <p>“We used to have a full-time EAN [Educational Associate of Nutrition—not a current designation] and we had to relieve part of our staff, that that’s one of the cuts. It would be so nice to have a full-time person there and we could do more of a breakfast and more with the nutrition.”</p> <p>“Just trying to get a nutritious snacks at the cost of what we have, we’re struggling.”</p>

Funding support, access to available resources, and being able to meet children’s food requirements while they are in school appear to be the priority concerns of Community School coordinators. Within each school, the need for a breakfast/snack program has varied. While some schools had strong participation, others had few students participating in the breakfast/snack programs. Community School coordinators suggested a need for a pricing formula that would recognize need instead of current enrollment numbers so that financial support could be distributed more equitably:

Funds are a big thing. We get the money from Sask Learning for our groceries and our supplies and that, and it was always dispersed between the Community School according to the school numbers rather than the need. So, even though our numbers are low, our need is very high and so we would be scraping by, being, we didn’t have very much to give to the kids, you know. And you go to the next school and they’d be having this really nice meal, and so, finally, this is our first year, what we decided to do is each Community School was allotted X amount of dollars. The same amount, but then what was left over from that was thrown into a big pot, and then who needs money to carry through the year can dip into that pot. So, even though we’re still strapped financially ‘cause we couldn’t survive without our donations, and that, this year, it’s been a big positive change (Community School Coordinator D).

Summary of principals' perceived barriers

Table 15. Principals' Perceived Barriers.

School	Meal Programs Offered	Comments
A	Breakfast Lunch	<p>"The ongoing uncertainty about future funding. Once this becomes an expectation of the community and our school, it would be extremely difficult if the funding was ever pulled to explain it to our families that we no longer had the money to provide the breakfast program."</p> <p>"I would like to see them run breakfast program longer in the morning."</p> <p>"How to set up the kind of program where it actually benefits everybody in a good way?"</p>
B	Breakfast Snacks	<p>"Our nutrition coordinator stretches [the] budget to the limit."</p> <p>"I am very specific about kind of donated food I accept in here."</p> <p>"I would like a full-time nutrition worker, and I would advocate strongly that it be the current nutrition coordinator because of her volunteering experience."</p>
C	Snacks Lunch	<p>"We have a lot of ideas about how we could make improvements inside of our broad communities, inside of homes, but we're limited, we can only do so much, so how do we time leverage?"</p> <p>"Now there's the added administrative and support staff capacity in order to coordinate and manage new programs."</p> <p>"Sometimes the community doesn't get what [a] Community School is about."</p>
D	Snacks Lunch	<p>"We are juggling meeting the food needs of the children and their learning time."</p> <p>"It takes so much of the EAN's time to plan and shop for groceries weekly."</p> <p>"I would advocate for more training for the nutrition person."</p>
E	Snacks Lunch	<p>"We need a larger food prep area."</p> <p>"We need more nutritional food and better access to it for less cost."</p> <p>"We need better storage facilities."</p>

School administrators expressed concern that although nutrition programs are vital, they require extra support staff, time, and energy. However, this did not diminish their support for the current program. In School E, breakfast was only provided during a period when they were able to receive specific funds targeted for that program. No further contact was made to or by the organization that initiated the program even though children were still "coming to school hungry." There may be a need for further research to identify

those programs that for various reasons have discontinued the program due to a lack of financial support.

OVERALL SUMMARY OF THE BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES OF CHILDREN'S NUTRITION PROGRAM

Children, parents, school staff, and volunteers receive many benefits from school nutrition programs. However, the programs still face many challenges, including a need for adequate resources to address students' growing nutritional needs. Although schools admit that they benefit from funds provided from government and local agencies, such as sponsoring school divisions, charities, or special interest groups, this funding is normally limited to operational costs and only rarely stable. Community Schools, however, are the exception as they receive funding from the Community School Initiative and Saskatchewan Learning. However, even with this program there are calls for a reevaluation of the funding formula to apportion funds by need and not necessarily enrollment.

One challenge cited by all respondent groups was stigmatization. In this study, respondents indicated that the breakfast/snack programs were open to all students. However, it was observed that in some programs an "identification of need" was required, while in others students were required to go to a specific location, such as the school's "servery" to access the program. At other schools, students automatically received the daily snack or breakfast within their home classroom. In the first two models, students said that they were less likely to access the program if they were new to the school, shy, or scared. In the third model, all students ate together in their own classroom as part of the daily routine. Models that may reduce student participation may also reduce the possible benefits of the nutrition program to students' learning and developmental needs.

School staff also identified the nutrition program's value for learning. The challenge for teachers was to justify the time taken from other required subjects for nutrition program delivery. One possible solution may be to integrate the nutrition program into the curriculum whereby it becomes a teaching resource in terms of lifestyle choices and health promotion.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS AND TRAINING NEEDS OF NUTRITION COORDINATORS

As discussed previously, one goal is to identify essential skills that NC's may need to make purchases, as well as preparation and service decisions related to the delivery of nutrition programs. Findings for this sub-section seek to address research question six: What essential skills do NC's need? NC's were asked to describe their education

and experience, food safety knowledge, job expectations, and training requirements, as well as provide self-evaluations and others' evaluations of their work. As indicated in the introduction, NC's do not have an essential skills profile that may help make their important work more visible within the community.

Education and experience

The education and experiences of the NC's varied. Seventeen out of twenty NC's (more than one in a few schools) possesses at minimum a grade twelve education (see **Table 16**). One NC completed a technical program but did not have a grade twelve certificate. Most had worked in a service position and expressed a desire to work with children. In a few cases, the NC had retired after working for many years in the restaurant and food industry and called this their "retirement career." Several NC's indicated that the only training they received was the food safety course, which was a requirement of the job. The teacher associates stated that they were not given specific training to undertake various aspects of the food program and mostly learned on the job. Notable exceptions to this, however, were those volunteer NC's who were associated with CHEP because they had already received some training and support through that organization. CHEP training covered the areas of nutritious food choices, menu planning, specific diet requirements (e.g. diabetes), and networking opportunities through regularly scheduled meetings.

Nutrition coordinator evaluations

The NC's work environment, facilities, and relationships with staff and community play significant roles in how well they think that they are accomplishing their job. Overall, NC's rated themselves quite high (between 7-10 out of 10). Other interviewees for this study rated their work equally highly, although many also spoke of a need to find more supports and resources for NC's. All participants also spoke positively about their NC's passionate commitment to children and delivering as good a food program as possible under the circumstances.

Table 16. Characteristics of the Nutrition Coordinators.

School	Education	Years Involved
A1	Grade 12	4
A2	Grade 12	1
B1	Grade 12	15
B2	Post-Secondary	1
C	Post-Secondary	3
D1	Post-Secondary	6

D2	Teacher Assistant Diploma	New
E	N/A	N/A
F	Grade 12	16
G	Grade 12	1
H	Post-Secondary	1
I	Post-Secondary	N/A
J	Post-Secondary	1
K	Grade 12	4
L	Post-Secondary	9
M	Partial Grade 12	16
N	Grade 11+ Post-Secondary	10
O	Teacher Associate Certificate (1 yr)	6 months
P	Grade 12	4
Q	Post-Secondary	2

SKILLS AND TRAINING NEEDS

NC's identified several areas of training necessary for adequately delivering the breakfast/snack programs. These included networking and food preparation skills, and general nutrition education.

Networking skills

NC's possessed a strong desire to be able to share their successes and challenges with others in the field through regular forums. They stated that networking and professional development opportunities are important means of improving their skills and growing professionally.

Getting the proper information out is very important. And then, next, I would say is getting information together, even if we did networking with all the coordinators. Let's get together on a Friday afternoon, everybody bake, and then you'd take all this to your school or something and how can we help each other out. Even if it was just simple, this is how I make a dip out of scratch or this is how I'm changing recipes. Some kind of network that you're there to help each other out because a lot of times coordinators, I have never been to a meeting that all of us have been able to attend a meeting at the same time. So a lot of brainstorming there has to do with networking together because we're

all trying to accomplish the same thing. We're all doing basically the same thing, just in different ways (Nutrition Coordinator L).

For the CHEP volunteer coordinators, periodic meetings, monthly or otherwise, are held for networking and professional development purposes. Although coordinators see this as an essential part of their work and learning, they also mentioned that more intensive workshops or conference opportunities would be helpful:

I do often wish maybe there was a two day, three day thing you know in the city that I could attend just to pick up more ideas and more information on you know health wise" (Nutrition Coordinator C).

Some NC's stated that most of the information provided through education and community school conferences, though providing important information for school operation, was not specific to food and nutrition services. In cases where it was offered, it was only in small doses:

But when we go to conferences, so much of it is just education-related. Here they'll offer maybe a mini-session on food nutrition, but it could be a whole two-day event (Nutrition Coordinator C).

Food preparation skills

Although there was strong evidence that NC's had innate talents for menu planning and food preparation, many respondents indicated that talent alone was insufficient. Several respondents commented that although the NC's were great cooks, training in areas such as nutritional content and food preparation methods (e.g. low fat cooking, utilizing leftovers) was needed.

Integrating nutrition education

Many responses cited a need for more nutrition education for NC's so that they can fully participate in the children's educational processes. If more nutrition education was provided, it was expected that the NC's role would be broadened to include a greater focus on teaching children to eat healthily, not just to feed them. One principal mentioned a need for more intensive training opportunities: "what kind of summer programs are available, so if [NC's name] wanted to go and upgrade her skills this summer, would they [school boards] support that? Because if we get organizations doing that, then that comes back to [benefit] the school" (Principal C).

SUMMARY

Presently, some NC's have paid positions within the Community and non-Community School systems. The skills and training needs identified, although not directly related to the nine essential skills identified by HRSDC, may have further implications for developing community-based essential skill profiles. This study recommends that NC's undergo a certification process with a strong emphasis on experience and community capacity building awareness. Community-based organizations, or people working directly with community programs, might be best situated to deliver a more comprehensive and recognized training program.

COMMUNITY-BASED CAPACITY BUILDING

School-based nutrition interventions offer the most systematic approach to improving the health and well-being of children. They do so by promoting a positive lifestyle and assisting children in developing effective decision-making skills (Kolbe, 1993). Greenfield and Kreuter (1991) explain that health personnel and school personnel have different mandates and priorities. For health professionals, the primary focus is health maintenance and disease prevention, given the acknowledged link between diet and chronic diseases. However, for school officials, the strongest justification for nutrition intervention and services in schools is its effect on students' cognitive performances and educational achievements. Knowledge gained about school nutrition interventions over the past decade has provided further justification for the implementation of comprehensive nutrition interventions and services. This comprehensive environment includes not only the foods and beverages sold or served on school premises but the involvement of community players such as parents, government agencies, and community organizations interested in the health and academic well-being of students. School nutrition policies and practices that support healthy food choices are considered components of the comprehensive nutrition food environment.

Communities are becoming increasingly involved in the school decision-making processes. A recent American Dietetic Association (2003) report suggests that schools and communities have a shared responsibility to provide children access to high quality foods and positive nutrition experiences that will have a lifelong impact on their health and education. This challenges schools to involve parents and others in their organizational structures and processes. School^{Plus}, a program and policy strategy of the K-12 education system in Saskatchewan, may provide impetus in this province.

School^{Plus}: A Vision for Children and Youth: The Final Report of the Task Force and Public Dialogue on the Role of the School to the Minister of Education, Government of Saskatchewan (Tymchak, 2001) is a recent policy statement that addresses the role of the school in contemporary society. Among other directives aimed at off-load-

ing excess work and non-schooling expectations from teachers and administration, this document states a need for inclusive approaches to education and schooling by exploring the relationships between educational systems, human-service agencies, and community-based organizations. In particular, the document calls for “*a public policy initiative that encompasses all of the human services, and third party and community agencies as well*” (Tymchak, 2001: 52; emphasis in original). School^{PLUS} embraces community education principles and actively seeks to involve agencies and community members in helping all schools in Saskatchewan to become centres of learning, support, and community for the children and families whom they serve (Government of Saskatchewan, 2003). However, there is some criticism regarding the implementation of this policy. The community may be invited into the realm of the school but only at the discretion of the administration. The community-school partnership is not yet equal and in some respects NC’s are caught in the struggle to define new relationships. This is perhaps the most significant barrier to sustainable capacity building in communities, and one that underlies all those previously mentioned.

While School^{PLUS} model is promoted in Saskatchewan, currently only the designated Community Schools have access to increased programming and funding resources for children’s nutrition programs from Saskatchewan Learning. The base funding of \$10,000 per community school helps deliver children’s nutrition programs. With an increase to ninety-eight community schools in the province, diverse approaches to nutrition intervention in elementary schools have evolved. As described earlier, the different approaches reflect the local neighborhoods and communities. In some schools, the use of food-related events, such as First Nations feasts, work to establish stronger community ties and provide opportunities for growth. This growth is about building a strong community with established school-community partnerships moving towards meeting school-community goals.

In Saskatoon schools, an informal partnership exists with organizations such as the CHEP. The CHEP model, unique to Saskatoon, involves community members in the delivery of nutrition interventions in schools. Interventions such as school meals programs, breakfast, snack, lunch, and nutrition education, and the Nutrition Positive program, have been part of CHEP’s mandate for years. Volunteer NC’s are contracted from the community/neighbourhood through this initiative. The BFL model of nutrition delivery provides funds and other support to selected schools in Saskatchewan. Support is generally awarded upon request to those schools meeting the BFL criteria for funding. Initiatives require parental involvement in order to receive funding as this helps to encourage community ownership and program sustainability. Community linkages supported through the CHEP and BFL initiatives help to ensure the long-term viability of breakfast/snack programs, as well as the continued participation of the volunteer sector.

Increased activities over the past five years suggest that the problem of feeding needy children is much deeper and more complex than previously known. Despite commitments from government agencies to reduce child poverty, one in four children in Saskatoon live in economically unstable and unacceptable situations, and there is growing concern about widening gaps along social, economic, and cultural divides. The majority of children participating in the breakfast/snack programs, both targeted and universal, were from Aboriginal homes and generally in lower socioeconomic neighborhoods. These social and environmental forces are likely to lead to dire future consequences for children and their families. Concern is growing that the increasing availability of competing and profit-making foods and beverages of minimal nutritional value in schools is compromising students' nutritional intake and undermining their health and nutrition education. A major challenge, then, is to maintain the nutrition integrity of school food and nutrition programs. To provide all students with the opportunity to develop and practice healthy eating behaviors, schools must adopt and enforce policies that support the availability of nutritious foods and beverages wherever and whenever they are offered at school.

We have a window of opportunity to address students' growing nutritional needs. Schools have access to a majority of children and youth and, correspondingly, to their families and community members. The school system provides one of the primary locations for responding to students' overall nutritional needs. However, it will take a redefinition of the role of schools and their relationships with community stakeholders to break the patterns of food insecurity and poverty seen in schools. The traditional approach to feeding children where food delivery is left to individual community organizations or school staff will not be able to address these challenges.

We are here to teach each others' children. ... I think it could start in a Community School. ... We could be part of that change. We [need to] become a community that cares about one another, that we want our community to succeed (Community Coordinator D).

Community partnerships have long been supporting nutrition initiatives for children in Saskatchewan schools. Many participants in the study discussed the importance of parental involvement in school initiatives. They saw school nutrition programs as a means of including parents and families in the life of the school. By including parents, community involvement would become stronger, which would allow schools to become more attuned to larger community issues and better able to address the growing complexities of students and local neighbourhoods. As one NC suggested, the nutrition program provides "a nutritious snack for students each day, and also [serves as] an outreach program for the parents that are in our community to teach them how to cook and bake, and just participating in school life [with greater emphasis]" (Nutrition Coordinator D).

In many cases NC's became involved with the school nutrition program for personal reasons—that is, to assist their children who were attending that particular school. However, as they gained confidence, they began volunteering within the larger community. Even those NC's who are teacher associates had a desire beyond meeting the immediate need of feeding hungry children to involving other members of the community, mostly the parents, in the learning experience and accessing good food.

In addition, there is an important role for community-based organizations working with schools and nutrition programs to help ensure that the nutrition children receive is safe and appropriate.

A clear link was made between the life of the school and the life of the community; a strong nutrition program in schools is a significant part of building a strong community.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: THE SHIFTING LANDSCAPE OF FOOD SERVICE DELIVERY IN SASKATCHEWAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Overall, participants indicated that they had gained important benefits from participating in the breakfast/snack programs. Meeting the nutritional needs of students is by no means the only identified purpose of breakfast/snack programs as they may also help advance educational purposes by encouraging attendance, facilitating classroom management, and enhanced learning. Access to good nutritious food is critical to children's development, health and academic well-being, and also helps the teacher pass on values such as cleanliness, responsibility and a sense of community. Various economic benefits were also identified, including impact on local agriculture and other commodities. Broad social purposes were also identified, such as increased social support to families and enhanced self-esteem through participation in activities related to food service. Children liked the “good food” that they received for breakfast or as a snack. School staff perceived as a key benefit the ability to meet the needs of hungry children without embarrassing, stressing, or dehumanizing them. Staff, parents, and the community all appreciated an opportunity for children to learn in a safe, caring, and welcoming environment.

A lack of adequate resources, both financial and human, has been identified as a critical barrier to these programs' long-term sustainability. These barriers, however, may also have policy implications. There may be a need to address how resources are allocated to individual breakfast/snack programs, particularly for schools in areas of high socio-economic need. The study found disparities in both compensation, and training and development of NC's. This suggests that funds directed at these nutrition programs may also need to address compensation and training and development needs. One outcome

of training could be a process of certification that would allow existing NC's to better cope with the barriers they face. Given the important role that the volunteer NC plays in the delivery of nutrition, intervention efforts should be directed to ensuring that they receive compensation on par with NC's in paid positions. The identified skills and training needs, although not directly related to the nine essential skills identified by HRSDC, may have implications for developing community-based essential skills profiles.

This report portrays a shifting landscape in the way breakfast/snack programs are delivered in Saskatchewan elementary schools. This shift is particularly evident in Saskatoon where CHEP was at the forefront of nutrition program delivery. The introduction of other funding agencies such as BFL, the increased numbers of designated community schools, and the implementation of the School^{Plus} approach may have implications for the way that nutrition programs are delivered in the future. The School^{Plus} model is intended to create “a new kind of institution dedicated to the needs of children and youth,” one that promotes collaboration among all service providers (Tymchak, 2001: 44). The model recognizes “powerful change forces” such as poverty, food insecurity, shifting demographics, and pupil mobility, all of which impact schools and children's lives. School^{Plus} also calls for a re-imagining of the function, purpose, and power of school for children, their families, and their community. Organizations such as CHEP have an important role to play in developing a blueprint for the delivery of nutrition programs in Saskatchewan as the pressure to include nutrition programs in the school grows, either by clearly identified needs due to hunger and food insecurity or as a strategy of the province-wide implementation of School^{PLUS}. The history and national involvement of BFL in providing resources for child nutrition programs may also add a critical perspective. As Levenger (1984) points out, the costs of providing nourishment to students is insignificant compared to the future costs that are likely to be incurred should children fail to become productive members of society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

“Students learn best when they are well nourished, have safety and stability in their families and communities, are respected for who they are, and when their needs are being met” (Saskatchewan Learning, 2005).

As a result of the findings, this study makes the following recommendations:

1. More stable funding for nutrition programs should be provided, thus allowing schools to work towards healthier choices that will further promote health and contribute to children's well-being. For Community Schools, basic recommendations are currently included in the framework document, *Building Communities*

of Hope (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004). Those nutrition programs receiving funding from CHEP or BFL have similar criteria intended to guarantee food and program quality.

2. The idea should be acknowledged and fully supported that integration of the nutrition program into the curriculum provides children, and by extension their families, with a stronger nutrition knowledge base from which to make informed decisions about food. Long-term secure funding will support this integration.
3. Awareness should be increased of the vulnerability within the school and community about stigmatization, keeping in mind that universal programming alone does not necessarily eradicate stigmatization issues. Within this research, three models of universality were observed. Exploring the definition and practice of universality may also enhance program delivery.
4. There should be an emphasis on including all stakeholders in setting priorities, raising issues, and taking action, as well as providing opportunities and funding for training and support that builds the capacity of students, parents, school staff, and community members to participate. This positive and proactive approach increases the possibility of sustainable community growth.
5. Nutrition programs should be regarded as a change agent for communities and become a vital component of the local school life. As seen in this study, the benefits of nutrition programs far outweigh the barriers. Schools should tap into the commitment of many NC'S, school staff, parents, community members, and organizations to ensure the nutrition programs' sustainability.
6. There should be a commitment to invest in the NC's position. This study shows that students, parents, volunteers, teachers, and principals agree that the role of the NC is critical to the continued success of breakfast/snack program delivery. Consequently, there is a need to provide opportunities for training and growth. Perhaps a certification process whereby NC's could strengthen their knowledge of nutrition and the nutrition-related health issues of children, as well as learn about community development and capacity building models. Most importantly, the work of all NC's needs to be recognized and fully compensated.

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Appendix A. Cross-Referencing Interview Questions

Key

NC: Nutrition coordinators and other volunteers

S: Staff (including principals, community coordinators, and teachers)

P: Parents

C: Children

Number	Interview Question	Stakeholders
Characteristics of the Program		
1.	When did the breakfast/snack program first start?	NC, S
2.	What reasons did the community/school have for starting a breakfast program?	NC, S
3.	Can you tell me a bit about the program? What are its aims? What are its goals?	NC, S, P
4.	What time does your school serve breakfast in the morning? How long do you serve breakfast?	NC, S
5.	How many children do you have who participate in the school breakfast/snack program? What are the ages of your children? Boys/girls?	P
6.	How did you learn about the program? [<i>PROMPTS: School newsletter? Letter addressed to parents? Other parents? Your/other kids? School staff? Someone else?</i>]	P
7.	Pretend my kids come here. They are news student at the school. They know nothing about the program and they asked you about it. What would you tell them about it? What would you say about: a) the food there? b) the size or amount of food you get? c) the way the food tastes? d) about the place program is (location/room)? e) what you learn there about food? f) what other things would be important to tell new kids so they could decide if they wanted to go? g) What do you think about the breakfast/lunch lady?	C
8.	I am going to go around the room, and I want each person to tell me how they found out about the program? Who first told you about the program, and what did they say?	C
Student Participation		
1.	Have you noticed any changes in your child/children since they started participating in the program? [<i>Changes in grades? Attendance? Attitudes towards school? Eating habits at home?</i>]	P
2.	What made you decide to have your child in the program? Does the fact that your school offers a breakfast program influence you to send your children to the school?	P

3.	I want to ask you some questions now about the children who participate in the program. Outside of the breakfast program, what do you know about what the children are eating? What role(s) do you think the program plays in children's eating habits/ nutrition for learning and growing?	NC
4.	To the best of your knowledge, what is the main reason that students participate in the breakfast program?	S
5.	Are some students who should be here not here? Why do you think they don't come?	NC, S
6.	Do you come with your younger or older brothers or sisters? Do you help anyone at the breakfast or lunch program who is younger than you? Does anyone help you to come to the school or the program?	C
7.	Are there some days when you can't attend? How do you feel on those days?	C
8.	Do you have friends who would like to attend but don't? Why do you think they don't?	C
9.	Is there stigmatization (i.e. embarrassment or shame felt by students participating in the program) associated with participating in the program? If yes, please comment on possible reasons why this is happening.	P
10.	What do you think people in general say about parents who sign up their children for the program?	P

Operational

1.	I am sure you have thoughts about what the program does well or could do better. Can you tell me what you like about the program? What things would you like to see changed about the program? <i>[PROMPTS: serving portions? Food quality? Food variety? The time? Location of meal service? How the program is administered?]</i>	NC, S, P
2.	Of all the things you just spoke about, what would you rank as the 3 most important benefits of the program? What are the 3 things most in need of change? <i>[PROMPTS: Serving portions? Food quality? Food variety? The time? Location of meal service? How the program is administered?]</i>	NC, S
3.	Do you order/buy the food, assist in meal planning or have any other duties in relation to the food program?	S
4.	Tell me three things you like about the program? Are there other things you like that you want to tell me about?	C
5.	Tell me three things you don't like about the program? Are there other things you don't like about the program that you want to tell me about?	C
6.	In other parts of Canada, some parents contribute to a portion of the cost of the meal. Do you think some parents can afford to contribute to the cost of the program? Do you think it would be a good idea to ask these parents to contribute to the cost of the program? Has anyone ever talked about this issue within your school before?	NC, S, P

Nutrition Coordinator Roles

1.	How long have you have you been involved in the breakfast program?	NC
2.	Other than wanting to provide nutritious food for children, do you see any benefits for you to participate in the program? <i>[Skills, friendship, links to other jobs]</i>	NC
3.	Please describe the most difficult part of being involved with the breakfast program in your school.	NC, S
4.	Please describe the most rewarding part of being involved in the breakfast program in your school.	NC, S
5.	Do your own children participate in the program? Why did you decide to become a volunteer for the program? What is your role in the breakfast program?	NC
6.	Do you know the names of the people who work at the program? What are they?	C
7.	Is it a fun thing to do? Would you rather have breakfast/lunch at home?	C
8.	Kids sometimes talk about different things in the school, like the library or music program or other things—what kinds of things have you heard other kids who go the breakfast/snack program say about it? <i>[PROMPT: Good things or bad things? What did you think about what the kids said?]</i>	C
9.	Sometimes kids who don't even go to the program will say things about it. What kinds of things (if any) do other kids who do not eat at the program say about the program? <i>[PROMPT: Positive and Negative things? What did you think about what the kids said?]</i>	C
10.	Based on your interaction with parents in your community, what do you feel is their perception of the breakfast program?	S

Community Involvement

1.	What other food programs or community programs have you been involved in?	NC
2.	How are parents involved in the program? How are you as a parent involved in the program?	P
3.	Have your children taken part in other good food activities in the school? If yes explain.	P
4.	As a family in the neighborhood, are you involved in any other good food program in the community? Explain.	P
5.	Have you ever heard of CHEP? What does CHEP do?	P
6.	Community organizations typically contribute to food programs in one or two ways. Donations can either be financial (i.e. monetary contributions) or “in-kind” (i.e. volunteer time, food, utensils or supplies). Which community organizations contribute financially to your school’s breakfast program and how much do they contribute? Which community organizations make in-kind donations to your school’s breakfast program and what have they donated? <i>[PROMPT: CHEP?]</i>	S

7.	What, if any, contributions are made by the school? [<i>In-kind or monetary?</i>]	S
8.	Do funds allocated for “nutrition” get used specifically for the nutrition program, or are they also used for special school events that include food? [<i>Hot dog sales, pizza days, community BBQ’s</i>]	S
9.	What, if any contributions are made by government agencies? [Education, health]	S
10.	Knowing that community partnerships are limited, what can be done to strengthen existing community linkages with you school?	S

Volunteer Participation

1.	Do students participate in providing the breakfast program? If so, what is their contribution? [<i>Food preparation, clean-up, other</i>]	S
2.	Please describe the level of volunteer participation in your school’s breakfast program [<i>plenty, just enough, a need for more</i>]	S
Nutrition coordinator Knowledge, Training and Support		
1.	On a scale of 1-10 how would you rate the nutrition coordinators’ (or your own) knowledge and skill level for providing the breakfast program? Why? How would you rate the volunteers’ knowledge and skill level for providing breakfast programs? Why? How would you rate that of school staff? Why?	NC, S, P
2.	In your opinion, what do you perceive as current or future knowledge/skills that are needed by the people who work directly with the breakfast and morning snack program?	S
3.	What kinds of training have you taken for your work with the breakfast program? [<i>PROMPTS: Food Safe, Healthy Eating/Active Learning</i>]	NC
4.	What other sorts of information or skills do you think would help you/your nutrition coordinator with your/their work in the breakfast program?	NC, S
5.	Are there other kinds of training have you taken that are related to this program? If so, what?	NC
6.	What might make it difficult for nutrition coordinators/volunteers to learn the things they need to know?	NC
7.	How would you describe the role of the community school coordinator in the breakfast program? How would you rate their involvement/understanding/support for the program?	NC
8.	What is your educational background? [<i>School grade finished, two year college, four year college, four-plus year college, other college/tech program</i>]	NC
9.	In your opinion, what do you perceive as the knowledge/skills that are still needed by people who work directly with the breakfast and morning snack program?	P



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