

The what, where, who and how of a Canada-wide, Universal Healthy School Food Program

Presented to Halifax Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee, February 17th, 2022



We are on a mission to inspire every child in Nova Scotia to eat, enjoy and value food that fuels healthier people and a healthier environment.

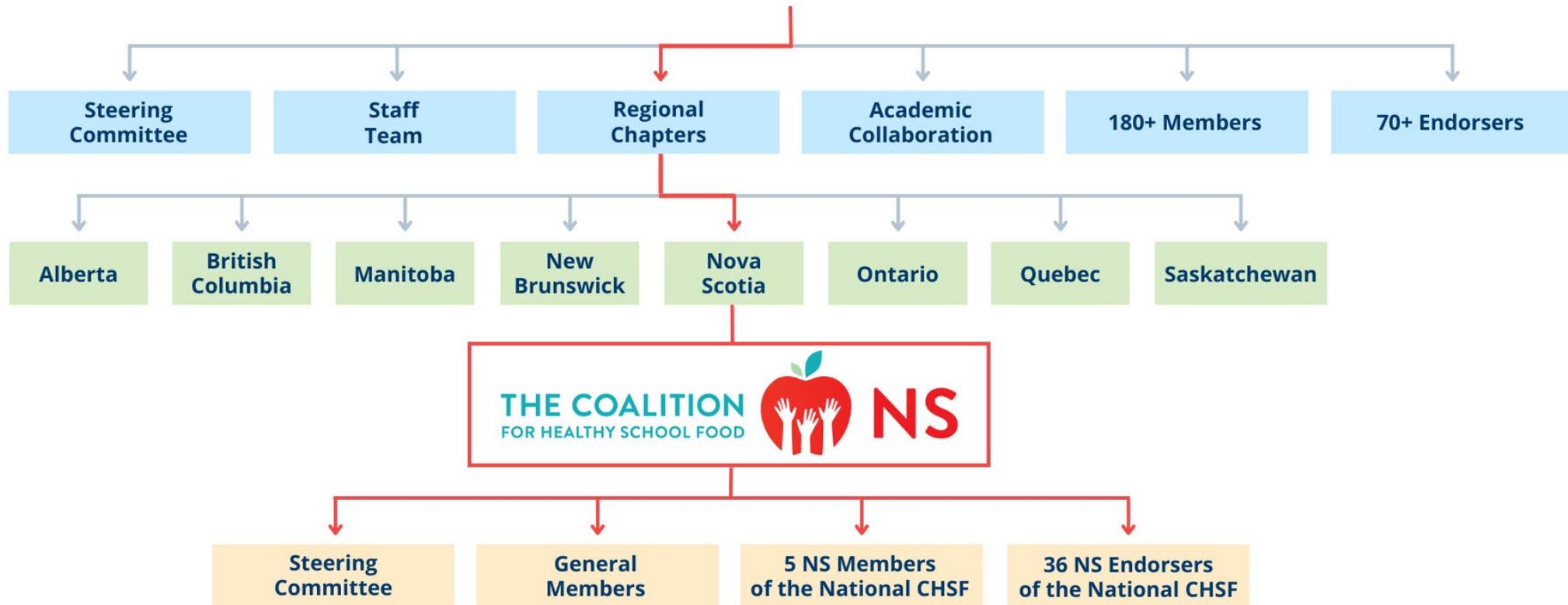
We believe our young people are the key to igniting this transformation.

By empowering children and youth with the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about their food and where it comes from, we are developing champions who demand better – for themselves, their families and their communities.

Margo Riebe-Butt, RD
Executive Director, Nourish Nova Scotia



National Coalition for Healthy School Food





- 180+ non-profit **member orgs** in every province & territory
- 70+ Endorsers including municipalities, school districts and health boards
- Thousands of experienced and passionate community-based practitioners, Indigenous leaders and national health, education and philanthropic organizations
- Academic collaboration with researchers across Canada
- Active chapters in BC, AB, SK, MB, ON, QC, NS, NB and growing
- Non-partisan

In Nova Scotia represented by over 40 plus community organizations



In HRM



Community Health Boards from Halifax, Eastern Shore
Musquodoboit, Dartmouth, Cobequid and Chebucto West

Brief History of CHSF Advocacy



2013-2019

- MP Meetings
- Great Big Crunch Events on the Hill
- Position Paper (the foundation of our ask)
- Ministerial Meetings
- Federation of Canadian Municipalities (Resolution in 2018)
- Senate Motion (Sen. Art Eggleton)
- Petition in the House of Commons

2018 budget consultations CHSF members presented in 8/10 resulting in the **2019 budget commitment:**

“ To work towards creating a national school food program through engagement with provinces, territories and key stakeholder group.”

More Recent Developments

In **December 2021**, Federal mandate letters tasked both Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister of Families, Children and Social Development with **developing a national school food policy and working towards a national school nutritious meal program.**

Our work



Advocate

Advocate for a universal, healthy Canada-wide school food program, (SFP)

Strengthen

Strengthen understanding to enhance commitment

Surface

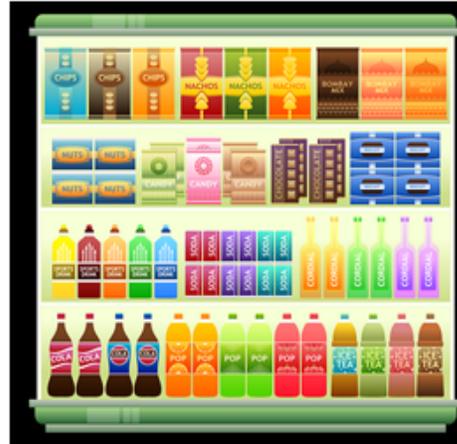
Surface the network to share knowledge, experiences and evidence-based best practices

Impacts of nourishing children at school

Canadian research shows that SFP;

- increases consumption of healthy foods, reduce the risk of chronic disease, and improve mental health, positively influencing children's nutritional knowledge, dietary behaviours, and food intake;
- improves educational outcomes and increase graduation rates by reducing hunger in classrooms, a known barrier to concentration and learning;
- helps students feel connected and that they belong—feelings that have been eroded during COVID-19;
- positively impact on families, particularly women, who invest significant time preparing food for school.

OUR CHILDREN LIVE IN A NEGATIVE FOOD ENVIRONMENT



1/4 of all calories consumed by children come from foods not included in the food guide.

Only 1/3 of Canadian children eat enough vegetables and fruit daily.



Kids view over **25 Million** food & beverage ads every year online.
4-5 ads every hour on TV.
90% of ads are for foods high in sugar, fat and salt.

Over the past 30 years, obesity has...



Food Insecurity

- **UNICEF's 2017 Report Card** ranked Canada 37th of 41 rich countries with regards to children's food access.
- In NS almost 1 in 4 children live in poverty.* Poverty is the leading cause of food insecurity.
- School food programs are uniquely positioned to deal with issues of **both ill-health and inequity.**

**Child Poverty Report Card, 2020*

A School Food Program for Canada can improve:



education outcomes



local food purchases



burden on health care



vegetable & fruit consumption



economic opportunities



Healthier Kids
Now and into the Future

#SpeakUp4SchoolFood

SFP & Economic Recovery post-Covid

Schools provide **geographic equity** across Nova Scotia, and school food programs provide the setting for job creation and industry renewal.

Consider school retrofits; kitchen & cafeteria construction; local food procurement-agribusiness; employment opportunities for cooks, chefs & food service workers; retail supplies and equipment purchases along with professional services (accounting, dietitians, architects)...

Internationally, school meals have shown to be one of the most successful drivers of improved health, education and economic growth, with the equivalent of a **\$3 to \$10 return** on every dollar invested.

Why Endorse The Coalition?

Halif**ACT** / Acting on
Climate
Together

&

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT  GOALS

Just**FOOD**

Action Plan for the Halifax Region



HALIFAX

&





Why would HRM endorse the CHSF?

- To add voice and strength to the national movement;
- To join other municipalities in recognizing that a universal healthy school food is fundamental to wellbeing of communities;
- Because nourishing children only has upsides 😊.

How can HRM support?

Join Victoria, Vancouver, Toronto and others to **formally endorse** the CHSF in advocating for a Canada-wide, universal healthy school food program;

Advocate to the Provincial government to receive Federal funds for school food;

Continue **stakeholder engagement** in HRM as part of a broader provincial school food consultation ongoing with JUSTFood;

Organize a Council Crunch as part of the “**Great Big Crunch**” to show support for Healthy School Food.



Questions
?