

Think & Eat Green @ School

SCHOOL FOOD ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT

Think & Eat Green @ School is a



Community-University Research Alliance with the goal to support healthy and sustainable school food systems.

Think & Eat Green @ School works with elementary and secondary schools in the Vancouver School Board to support learning innovations and research in growing, preparing, sharing and composting food.

This is a report of what we found from a research project called **School Food Environment Assessment**



PHOTO: Matthew Kemshaw

What did we want to learn?

- What practices and policies do Vancouver schools use to support healthy and sustainable eating?

What did we do?

We visited 17 elementary and 14 secondary schools. School administrators and other key stakeholders (e.g. food service workers) were interviewed about the food and learning environment, practices, and policies. We also observed the food environment and compliance with Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools.

What did we find?

Participants stressed the importance of healthy and sustainable foods, but were not always certain how to provide these foods affordably, or how to promote them to students.

Schools all said they followed the Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales. However, researchers observed the sale of foods in the 'Not Recommended' and 'Choose Least' categories of the guidelines. This was possibly from a lack of clear definition regarding who is responsible to implement and maintain compliance with the guidelines, and conflicts between responsibilities (for example, the production of 'Not Recommended' foods as part of education programs).

More support for training on following the Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales, healthy food purchasing and balancing the complex needs of various stakeholders may benefit many schools.

For more information, please contact:

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