équiterre

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

Improving local food procurement in Quebec schools

In partnership with:

100

Funded by:

Québec

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Several other stakeholders and partners also provided inspiration for the content of this Guide by offering their time as well as their know-how and expertise in the field. In particular, we would like to highlight the commitment of the Farm to Cafeteria Canada team as well as the schools involved in the Farm to School : Canada Digs In ! initiative.

Finally, our sincere thanks to the dynamic and inspiring community of principals, staff, teachers, professionals, after-school service staff and students who implement these projects in their schools every day. School communities are making real progress toward the adoption of more healthy, local and environmentally responsible food, while helping to build more sustainable and resilient food systems.

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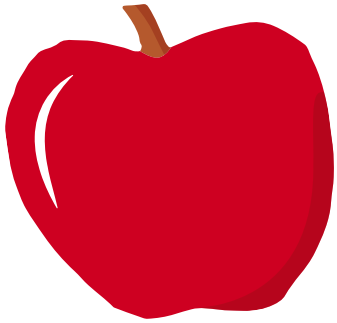
farm to Cafeteria Canada

Public Health Agency of Canada | Agence de la santé publique du Canada



“ If we want to promote healthy lifestyles for students, it is not enough to re-imagine the food we serve them. Students must, in my opinion, be involved in the process.”

– Murielle Vrins

Earl Wilcox © Unsplash

PREFACE

Since joining Équiterre over 17 years ago, I have been motivated by two main goals: getting more sustainable food into our Quebec schools and improving food literacy among young people. These objectives were also at the root of the call for projects and the *Impulsion, le parcours d'accélération de 100°* project launched by 100° which led to the production of this Guide. Through the Farm to School project in Quebec, I discovered a passionate community dedicated to investing the necessary efforts to bring about change. In the process of supporting the initiatives of a large number of schools across the province, we have witnessed strong connections that have formed between school teams, farmers, local artisanal producers and families.

Farm to School initiatives are a win-win formula for students, but they also offer many benefits for the broader community, notably by helping to build strong and resilient local food systems. Through these projects, schools give their students the opportunity to participate in purchasing, growing, harvesting, preparing, processing and serving healthy, local and environmentally responsible food. I believe that one of the most important ingredients of these initiatives is fun! It's a well-known fact that learning is easier for students when they can have fun while doing it. Moreover, participation in structured and educational projects gives kids a greater sense of belonging to their school and community and encourages healthier eating habits that have a positive impact on their development.

Our team's heart and expertise can be found at the centre of this document, and I would like to sincerely thank them all! Today, Farm to School Quebec is a movement that is gaining momentum within our province and it is my hope that this *Implementation Guide* will inspire more schools to follow in the footsteps of these pioneering institutions.

Murielle Vrins

Murielle Vrins
Program Manager,
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Three Pillars of the Approach*

The implementation of structuring initiatives in sustainable food supply and education in Quebec schools is based on three main pillars that are essential to the success of the projects.

- **access to healthy, local and environmentally responsible food** for all young people in schools in various forms through a local food supply, in particular by improving cafeteria menus, offering regular healthy snacks or a salad bar service;
- **hands-on learning** and student involvement at all stages of the project
- **developing links between youth and their community,** through partnership and collaboration, a great way to experience the complementarity between the strengths of the school project team and the community.

Farm to School Quebec

* This content has been adapted for the province of Quebec from the Farm to School Approach developed by Farm to Cafeteria Canada.

Building resilience through sustainable food in Quebec schools

The implementation of sustainable food procurement initiatives in schools generates significant benefits at several levels of society:

Health benefits: these initiatives give students and members of the school community access to a wide variety of fresh, healthy food;

Local economic benefits: they stimulate local and regional companies by encouraging partnerships with local farmers and artisanal producers, thereby also helping to build greater food sovereignty;

Environmental benefits: they encourage students to adopt eco- friendly habits while fostering an awareness of environmental issues (transportation, pesticides, food waste, packaging, etc.);

Educational benefits: they develop students' awareness of the importance of their personal food choices, notably by teaching them about the agri-food system and the path of food from the farm to the fork.

Sustainable food procurement initiatives also offer the following benefits to the schools that implement them:

Recognition: generates a sense of pride at being able to offer the very best to members of the school community and the opportunity to build knowledge, exercise creativity and assemble a strong team;

Satisfaction: they are appreciated by students and members of the school community and promote a greater sense of belonging to the school.

INTRODUCTION

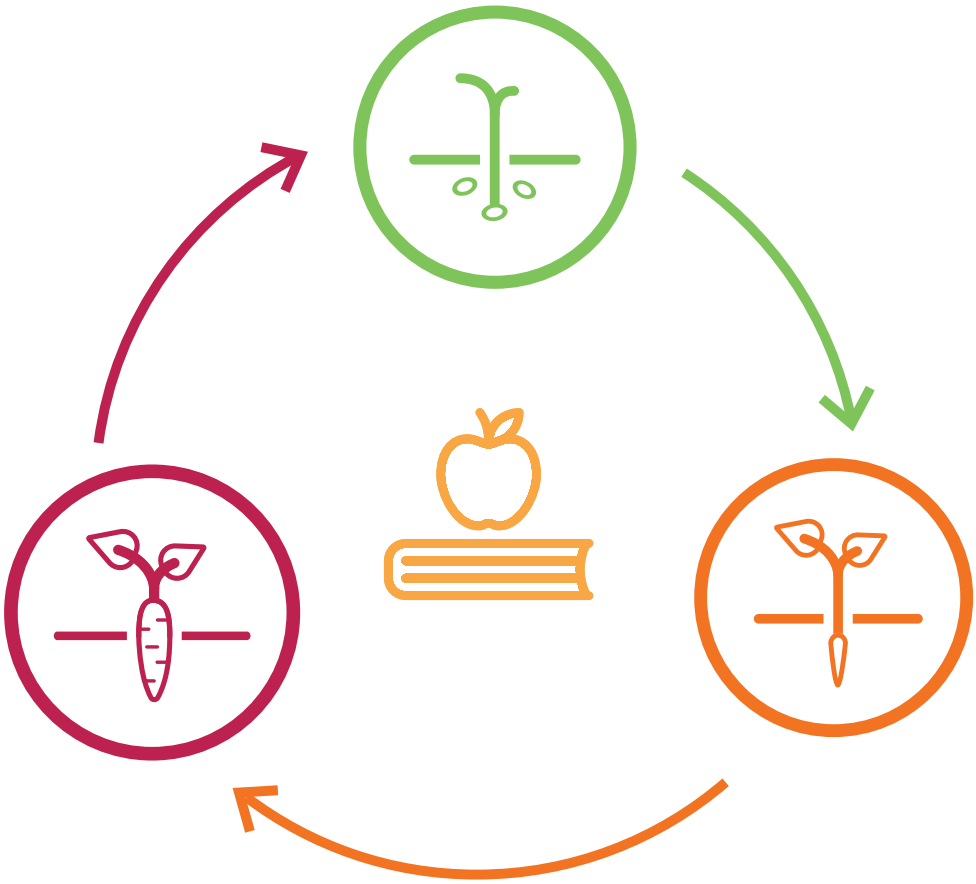
The Implementation Guide to Improving Local Food Procurement in Quebec Schools aims to **mobilize and support Quebec schools in their efforts to develop and promote healthy, local and environmentally responsible food**. It is designed as a tool to assist schools in the implementation of various local food procurement projects.

This Guide was developed by Équiterre as part of the *Impulsion, le parcours d'accélération de 100°* project and the call for projects launched by 100°, called *Alimenter nos élèves: plus d'aliments sains, frais et locaux au menu des écoles*. Made possible by funding from the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ), this call for projects is aimed at encouraging the implementation of a range of initiatives in Quebec public schools with a view to getting more local food on the plates of students, promoting the adoption of healthy eating habits and encouraging local procurement. This funding is part of the *Politique gouvernementale de prévention en santé* (government policy for prevention in health) and the *Stratégie nationale d'achat d'aliments québécois* (national strategy for the purchase of Quebec food). The aim of this provincial strategy is to substantially increase the procurement of Quebec food by our institutions and to make local food procurement a priority.

This call for projects was inspired by the Farm to School movement, spearheaded by Farm to School Canada. This national movement brings more healthy and local food into schools and offers students hands-on learning experiences that promote food literacy, while strengthening the local food system and fostering closer connections between schools and communities.

The school environment offers a unique opportunity to teach children about the important benefits of healthy, local and environmentally responsible food. In addition to educating and raising awareness among young people, a commitment to this issue within schools also has the potential to inform and educate families as well as the wider community.

Improving access to healthy, local and environmentally responsible food in Quebec schools



1 Get started

- Define the project and its goals
- Assemble your team
- Identify your needs
- Consider health and hygiene measures
- Find local suppliers
- Create nutritious, local and environmentally responsible menus
- Get inspired by others
- Make your game plan

2 Consolidate

- Establish processes for food preparation and distribution
- Ensure the sustainable management of food surpluses and waste
- Get the students involved
- Promote the project

3 Make it sustainable

- Long-term planning
- Measure results
- Document your experience
- Promote your project
- Involve and mobilize the entire school team and community

GET STARTED

- Define the project and its goals
- Assemble your team
- Identify your needs
- Consider health and hygiene measures
- Find local suppliers
- Create nutrious, local and environmentally responsible menus
- Get inspired by others

1

Photo: Myriam Baril-Tessier

Each step in the life cycle of food, from its production to its consumption, has environmental as well as social impacts. Your local procurement project should contribute to the development of your region by engaging with your community in a sustainable manner – that is, in a manner that meets the needs of current and future generations while preserving the environment and promoting social and economic equity. Your project should also encourage your students to adopt healthy eating habits by providing better access to healthy, local and environmentally responsible food products and educational activities. By integrating the principles of sustainable development and food literacy at every stage of your project, you will have all the necessary elements to implement a sustainable food system within your school.

Define the project and its goals

Determine the type of project

Successful local procurement projects are implemented with the reality of their school in mind and adapted to meet the needs of students. By analyzing the food that is already offered in your school, you and your team must pinpoint the problem you wish to address. Identifying the problem puts you in a better position to determine the type of local procurement project you want to implement to improve the situation.

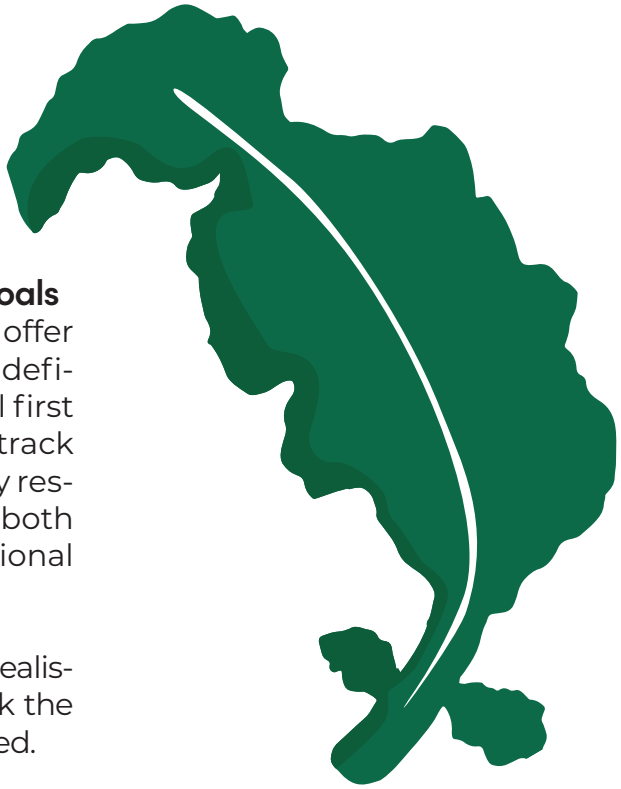
It is always better to make improvements to your school's existing food offer rather than creating a separate project from scratch.

Good to know

Examples of projects adapted to the school's reality:

- ✔ If your school is located in a disadvantaged neighbourhood and you want to prioritize access to fresh, local, and environmentally responsible food for all students, it would be a good idea to work with the existing snack program or to include measures that encourage underprivileged students to eat in the cafeteria or use the salad bar.

- ✔ If your school already works with a food service operation, the salad bar may be the best option for increasing local fruit and vegetable consumption in your school. If the cafeteria does not have a salad bar, you could focus on enhancing the menus by adding more fruits and vegetables.



Establish clear, measurable and realistic goals
Whether you decide to set up a salad bar, offer snacks or enhance your cafeteria's menu, defining the goals of your project is an essential first step. These objectives will help you stay on track and keep healthy, local and environmentally responsible food at the centre of the project, both in your procurement practices and educational activities.

The goals set must be clear, measurable and realistic. You should also include indicators to track the progress of the project and the results obtained.

Good to know

Examples of clear, measurable and realistic goals:

- ✔ When transitioning to the purchase of healthy, local, and environmentally responsible food for your school, you should aim for a gradual and permanent implementation method. For example, an initial goal could be to increase your local food procurement volume by 10% in the first year of the project and 25% by the second year. Your indicator would be the volume of local food purchased expressed in dollars. A second goal could be to make sure that vegetarian meals make up 10% of each week's menu. Your indicator would therefore be the proportion of vegetarian meals offered each week compared to your total meal offer.

- ✔ You should also plan educational activities that reflect the goals of your project. You could aim to offer one educational activity each week in the first year of the project's implementation. In the second year, the number of educational activities could be increased to two or three per week. Your indicator in this case would be the number of educational activities per week.

Find out more about evaluating your project in the section entitled **Measuring results on page 58.**

Good to know

Potential solutions for an accessible and sustainable project

- Keep costs as low as possible and offer free access to students with limited means;
- Use funds from the food aid program to enhance accessibility;
- Find sponsorships or subsidies to help lower the cost of participation (regional consultation committee, "comptoir d'action bénévole", etc.).

For more ideas on funding sources, go to page 57.

Make the project accessible
Ideally, all the students in your school should be able to benefit from the improved food menu. The more students who have access to the project, the greater its impact!

Increase the amount of local foods
We recommend that you start by including local products on your menu at least once a week. As your project gains momentum, you can gradually increase the quantity of local foods. It's better to start out slowly and build on your successes by adding more local food over time rather than set your sights too high and risk having to slow the pace later.

© Fous de Nature

Assemble your team

Building a strong team is key to the success of your local food procurement project. The involvement of each member is essential to the long-term success of the project. All too often, projects are carried by a single, highly motivated person – a kind of superman or superwoman. But the danger is that the project could collapse if this person burns out or has to resign. It's therefore important to make sure that the roles are distributed equally for successful long-term management. For example, it could be a good idea to assign the task of distributing snacks to more than one volunteer in order to ensure the project's continuity for the years to come.

Rally an enthusiastic school team

The people who make up the school project team should be central to the development and management of the project. The school team should have the following members: a project coordinator, a member of the administration, a teacher, a member of the daycare team, a food service manager, and a parent.

Below you will find examples of the roles of each member. The role of each member should be adapted based on the make-up of your school team and the project chosen.

Louis-de-France School © Équiterre

Examples of the roles of school team members

Member	Role	Conditions for success
Project coordinator	• Communicate with the team at Équiterre and M361; • Coordinate the project; • Coordinate the school team.	The project should not fall solely on the shoulders of the coordinator.
Administration	• Support the coordinator and provide the necessary tools for the project's success; • Make sure the project goals are achieved.	The administration's support must be sustained over time, so it is not limited to the submission of the project.
Teacher	• Offer students an interactive experience by ensuring continuity in activities and learning related to food literacy.	Assemble teachers of all backgrounds who are willing to participate. They will be key to getting students involved.
After-school daycare service team*	• Offer students an interactive experience by ensuring continuity in the activities and learning related to food literacy.	This team encourages the participation of students by organizing activities and outings.
Food service manager	• Choose suppliers; • Purchase, receive and store food; • Coordinate food preparation and service.	It is important to integrate your project with your school's existing food service operation. Therefore, the food service manager's involvement is key.
Parents	• Provide material; • Offer expertise or consulting services; • Volunteer their time.	Don't hesitate to reach out to parents and take advantage of their diverse expertise. Who knows, you may even find a gardening expert who can help the kids with planting or a seamstress who can make aprons.

* In some schools, the task of coordinating the project and carrying out the food service operations falls to the after-school daycare service team.

Bring together community partners

To strengthen your project and increase its impact, join forces with community partners. Be strategic: choose partners that share your goals and complement your team's expertise. Your neighbourhood offers numerous resources that can provide valuable support for your project!

Look for a concrete commitment from your partners. If possible, get them to lend a hand, not only by getting involved in discussions, but, more importantly, through actions. Invite them to help organize a cooking workshop using local food, attend your project launch, help serve food, etc. Above all, make sure your collaboration gets off on the right foot and avoid any ambiguities by being clear about the type of involvement you are looking for.

Examples of potential partners and their role

Partner	Role	Conditions for success
Your region's Table de concertation agroalimentaire (regional Agri-Food Roundtable)	• Help find local products; • Help establish partnerships with regional agri-food companies.	The Regional Agri-Food Roundtable have extensive knowledge of the agri-food sector in your region. Take advantage of their expertise!
Coordinating committee Table intersectorielle régionale en saines habitudes de vie (TIR-SHV), Regional Intersectoral Table on Healthy Lifestyles	• Direct you to the appropriate resources; • Help you find the right partners.	The coordinating committees bring together numerous partners working on shared issues. They're a great resource for finding the right partner for your project.
Organizations working with your community on food and agriculture Collective kitchen, community garden, food security initiative, waste prevention expert, specialist in environmental education, citizen initiative in urban farming	• Offer consulting services for growing, preparing and distributing food.	Choose an NPO whose mission and expertise will complement your team.
Organizations working with vulnerable populations Senior's residence, social reintegration organization (Carrefour jeunesse-emploi, Emploi-Québec), citizen advocacy organization	• Offer volunteers.	Some organizations are interested in finding activities and/or work or learning opportunities for the people they serve.
Training centre Agricultural training centre, food service industry training centre	• Offer expertise and services.	A local training centre could be interested in an exchange of knowledge and services in order to offer its clients an interesting experience in the field.
Nutritionist School board, public health authority, CIUSSS and CISSS*, organizations promoting healthy lifestyles	• Play a coordinating role with the different committees; • Evaluate the community's needs; • Help implement programs or educational activities that promote a healthy lifestyle; • Make sure menus are healthy and diverse.	Depending on your region, your school may have access to the services of a nutritionist. Some food services already have a nutritionist who can help you validate and include certain foods to the menu.
Farmers Public farmers' market, farmers' cooperative	• Ensure the continuity of food procurement; • Offer consulting services for growing food.	Choose a farm located close to the school. Local farmers can provide valuable long-term support for your project.

* Other stakeholders within the CIUSSS and CISSS, such as community organizers, can also be good resources.

Identify your needs

Now that you have assembled your team, the next step is to identify your needs in terms of material and financial resources.

Identify a location for preparing and consuming local food
When choosing the locations where students will prepare and eat local products, it's important to take into account the reality of your school.

Ideally, there should be a dedicated space for food preparation. To ensure the safety of these operations, this space should, at a minimum, have the following :

- Access to a sink
- Access to a refrigerator
- Storage space
- Be sufficiently large enough to hold a class of students

Myriam Baril-Tessier © Équiterre

École Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde © Équiterre

Be sure to check whether there is enough room in the storage areas (cold room, freezer) to hold the local seasonal products that can take up more space. All of these spaces can be shared with the food service operation.

You will also want to make sure that there is a dining space that is pleasant and encouraging of healthy eating, to ensure students have an area to enjoy the results of the project. For more information on this, see the tools developed for the training Ensemble pour des contextes de repas plus conviviaux, by the Association québécoise de la garde scolaire and the tool for evaluating dining environments in section 11 of the *Guide pratique du soutien alimentaire en contexte scolaire - Je goûte, j'apprends!*

Make a list of necessary equipment

To help prepare your budget, you also need to draw up a list of the equipment and supplies necessary for the implementation of your project. But to do this, you first have to take stock of the material you already have on hand!

In the kitchen

Below is an example of how to keep track of the kitchen equipment needed for your project:

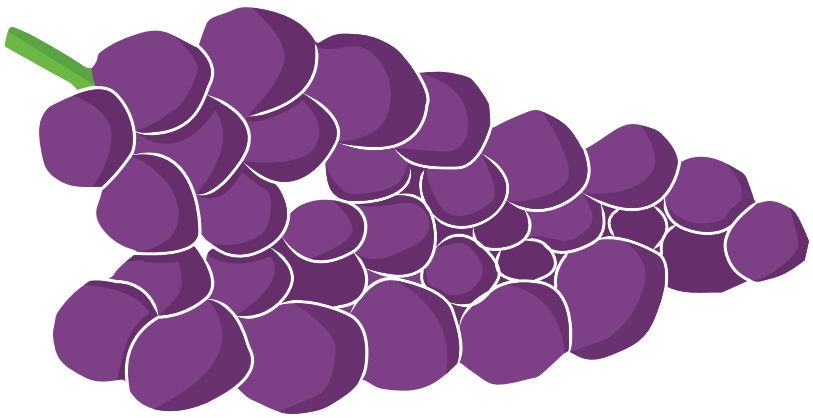
Equipment	Details	Suggested quantity	In stock	Needed	Cost
Kitchen appliances (stove, oven, refrigerator, freezer, dishwasher, etc.)					
Freezer	Commercial or domestic	1		X	$ 300
Small appliances (toaster, food processor, kettle, etc.)					
Electric mixer	Hand mixer	1	X		
Kitchen equipment					
Sub-category: recipe preparation (measuring cups, chef's knife, peeler, whisk, cutting board, etc.)					
Cutting board	Small 8" x 11½" cutting boards	20 to 30, so all students in a class can participate in the cooking workshop		X	$ 10 per unit
Sub-category: baking recipes (pots, baking sheets, baking pans, oven mitts, hot pads, etc.)					
Muffin pan	Regular or mini-muffins	4 to 5 pans holding 12 muffins		X	$ 20 per unit
Sub-category: serving and storage of food (reusable containers, bins, etc.)					
Bin	Plastic storage bin 50 L	3		X	$ 12 per unit
Dishes and utensils (plates, bowls, glasses, spoons, forks, knives, etc.)					
Small bowl	Non-breakable	20 to 30, for tasting; avoid disposable dishes	X		

For more details, see the "Tableau de spécifications et d'inventaire des équipements" in section 4 of the *Guide pratique du soutien alimentaire en contexte scolaire - Je goûte, j'apprends!* prepared by the Association québécoise de la garde scolaire.

In the garden

Below is an example of how to list the gardening equipment needed for your project:

Equipment	Details	Suggested quantity	In stock	Needed	Cost
Gardening materials (planters, pots, stakes, burlap, garden trowel, mini-rake, watering can, etc.)					
Trowel	Small steel trowel	10		X	$ 10 per unit
Greenhouse materials (optional) (tables, tool cabinet, bins, etc.)					
Tool cabinet	Tool cabinet 36" x 32" x 72"	2	X		
Seeding and planting (seeds, seedlings, soil, etc.)					
Soil	Potting soil 30 L	5		X	$ 12 per unit
Composting and recycling of green waste (composter, compost mixer, bags, etc.)					
Composter	Wooden composter 150 L	1	X		
Planning (calendar, logbook, planting labels, etc.)					
Identification labels	Reusable wooden and slate planting labels	50		X	$ 6



Establish a detailed and realistic budget

The budget is the tool of choice for planning the financial aspect of your project. To be effective, it must be consistent, aligned with the project's requirements, realistic and detailed. Use the table below and the template provided in the appendix **(Appendix 2)** to draw up your budget.

Budget evaluation grid

Characteristic	Questions to reflect on	Tips
Consistent	• Is the budget consistent with your project description? • Does the school have a budget reserved for the purchase of local food?	The expenditures listed should allow you to attain your objective.
Compliant	• Does the budget meet the requirements of the call for proposals?	Don't hesitate to consult the standards specified in your call for proposals.
Realistic	• Are the expenses listed in the budget aligned with the reality of the market?	If you are planning to purchase equipment or hire a professional, do research on prices or ask for quotes.
Resilient	• What is your method of risk assessment and management related to the project?	Integrate measures for identifying and mitigating potential risks in the different stages of your project.
Detailed	• Have you clearly listed all the expenditures necessary for the implementation of your project? • Are all revenue sources clearly indicated?	Make sure you identify all sources of revenue and all expenses.

When preparing your budget, keep in mind that your project still needs to be sustained after financial support has ended. To learn more about the best solutions for ensuring the ongoing financial feasibility of your project, see the section **Think long term on p. 55.**

École Louis-de-France © Équiterre

Consider safety and hygiene

Consider safety and hygiene measures

It is crucial to take into account food safety and hygiene measures when planning your project.

These measures are prescribed by the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation (MAPAQ) in order to ensure the safety of food at every step in the procurement chain. For more information on the required measures, please see the *Guide des bonnes pratiques d'hygiène et de salubrité alimentaires.*

If you are planning to offer cooking workshops to your students, check out the MAPAQ's useful tips. You'll also find practical information on safety and hygiene rules for students in fact sheet #5 of the guide Recette pour réussir des ateliers culinaires In order to hold cooking workshops, licences are not required.

Obtain the proper training and permits

Food safety and hygiene obligations differ depending on what type of project you are implementing and who is responsible for preparing and serving the food (ex.: school, daycare service, food service, non-profit organization (NPO), etc.).

If your objective is to sell prepared food, you will need a permit. Again, depending on the type of establishment and its operations, different types of permits are required by the MAPAQ. In addition, a staff member must take mandatory training in food safety and hygiene. This person will be in charge of enforcing safety and hygiene rules and informing the school team and volunteers of how to handle the food. [1] This includes defining the role of each person who receives, stores, prepares and distributes food; putting in place a procedure for the maintenance of kitchen facilities and equipment; and ensuring that surplus food is properly preserved and safely used.

[1] You can use the video prepared by the Breakfast Club of Canada: Food Handling, An Important Responsibility.

© Adobe Stock

To summarize, in order to know what food safety and hygiene regulations apply to your project, you will need to meticulously evaluate the following three elements:

- Where will the food be prepared?
- Who will oversee the food preparation?
- Will the food be sold?

An overview of the various MAPAQ requirements is provided in the table in **Appendix 3** but it is your responsibility to determine the specific measures that apply to your establishment by visiting the MAPAQ's website.

At all times, the recommendations and instructions issued by the MAPAQ take precedence over any information specified in this guide.

Even if it is not mandatory for your establishment, we strongly recommend that you nonetheless designate a person to be in charge of food safety and hygiene and ensure that this person receives the training offered by the MAPAQ.

What to do in a pandemic ?

- ✓ **Continue to follow safety and hygiene measures.** Food is not currently known to be a route of transmission for COVID-19 and there is no evidence that the virus can grow or multiply in food.
- ✓ Provide staff with the necessary protective equipment.
- ✓ Since the virus can survive from two hours to nine days, depending on the surface and environment, it is important to continue to properly clean, sanitize, and disinfect surfaces.
- ✓ Make sure food is always covered by the protective sneeze guard.
- ✓ Be sure to always wash fruits and vegetables with water.
- ✓ Self-service by students is not recommended in order to limit the handling of the same utensils and tongs by multiple users. Food can be served by a staff member. This person will need to be extra vigilant to ensure compliance with the hygiene measures.
- ✓ Reorganize the layout of the space to allow for as much distance as possible between people.
- ✓ Provide an area for hand-washing or use of a hand-sanitizer by all students.
- ✓ Make sure that students wait in a line, while remaining physically distanced, away from food and utensils.
- ✓ Put up posters in strategic locations (entrance, rooms, washrooms, outside doors, etc.) to remind users of the public health measures in place.

All other guidelines issued by public health authorities must be applied.

For more details, please visit the website of the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST) and the Institut national de santé publique du Québec (INSPQ).

For daycare services, please see the recommendations for best practices based on the COVID-19 prevention measures published by the Government of Quebec.

Find local suppliers

The process of choosing suppliers for local products requires research and careful consideration. These efforts must be seen as a long-term investment that will pay for itself in the long run and allow you to offer your students high-quality food products.

Get an idea of the food that is currently available

Before embarking on your mission of finding local suppliers, it is vital to get an overview of the food that is already offered at your school. Here is a list of questions you should consider:

- Who are your current suppliers?
- Does your school service centre already have a listed of approved suppliers?
- Do you have access to group purchasing?
- Is the food currently offered consistent with your school's values?
- Based on your current food procurement, is it possible to add more healthy, local and environmentally responsible food to your menu?
- Does your school have a food or sustainable development policy that could affect your purchasing criteria?
- Have you polled your school's community to get a sense of its members' interest?
- Do you already have partnerships with farms that allow you to offer educational activities to students (ex., farm visits, theme days at school, etc.)?

The School Information System offers an online questionnaire that could help give you an idea of the food being offered in your school.

Determine your purchasing criteria

What purchasing criteria are important for you?

- Type of company
- Price
- Quality (nutritional value, freshness)
- Variety of products
- Student preferences
- Availability of local, seasonal or organic products, in a short food supply chain
- Flexibility of the service offered (delivery, schedule, billing)
- Relationship with the distributor
- Presence of allergens

Choose your procurement method

When making your purchases, several procurement sources are available. Although there are advantages and disadvantages to each, some suppliers can facilitate your access to local products.

Analysis of different procurement methods

Type of supplier	Advantages	Disadvantages	Tips for finding local products
Food distributor (intermediary that buys products in bulk and redistributes them to its customers)	• Potential to order online using a pre-determined shopping list; • Well-organized delivery service; • Volume discounts	• Large order volume required; • Imposed delivery date in some cases; • Delivery area must be able to accommodate large trucks; • Steps are required to obtain local fruits and vegetables.	• Ask suppliers to identify the origin of their products and request local foods; • An additional fruit and vegetable supplier may be necessary.
Supermarket or grocery store	• Access to weekly specials; • Wide variety of fruits and vegetables and other products available; • Online ordering; • Delivery available; • Food preparation service possible (pre-cut fruit and raw vegetable platters, cheese plates, etc.); • Collaboration and donations possible (several chains have programs in place).	• Time needed to check for discounts; • Less economical for large volumes; • Time required for travel if delivery is not offered.	• Look for products with Aliments du Québec and Aliments préparés au Québec recognition; • Several regions in Quebec have developed their own campaigns and logos promoting local products. Look for them in your region! • Examples: Gaspésie Gourmande, Goûtez Lanaudière, Croquez l'Outaouais, etc.
Fresh fruit and vegetable shops	• Access to a variety of fruits and vegetables, often locally sourced and in season; • Prices can be advantageous; • Often more personalized service.	• Time required for travel if delivery is not offered; • Online ordering not always possible; • Shopping list must be prepared yourselves.	• Choose products that are in season.
School or community garden	• Access to fresh, local and low-cost fruits and vegetables; • Positive educational impact for students.	• Need to complement procurement with other supplier; • Knowledge and resources required for garden maintenance and harvesting.	• Support can be obtained from community organizations or organizations such as Croquarium.
Public farmers' market	• Access to local and seasonal fruits and vegetables, often with organic options; • Support for the local economy; • More personalized service; • Stronger ties to the community, notably through the organization of educational activities with farmers.	• Delivery not always possible or offered less frequently (verification needed); • Online ordering and shopping lists often not available.	• Farmers' markets bring together several local farmers and artisans. Don't hesitate to make direct agreements with them.

Type of supplier	Advantages	Disadvantages	Tips for finding local products
Local market garden farmer or artisanal producer	• Access to local and seasonal fruits and vegetables, often with organic options; • Support for the local economy and potentially for organic farming; • More personalized service; • Stronger ties with the community, notably through the organization of educational activities with farmers.	• Need to complement procurement with another supplier; • Online ordering and shopping lists not always available; Purchases must be picked up when delivery is not possible.	• Partnerships with local suppliers can maximize your budget and minimize order time and allow for delivery. • If your school is enrolled in a Schools Take Root fundraising campaign, check whether your farmer would be able to supply your school's food; • Your school can sign up for organic baskets from the network of Family Farmers Network and even serve as a drop-off point for the organic baskets.
Local food assistance organization	• Food preparation service often offered; • Seasonally based menu preparation; • Potential savings if the organization is able to share donations with the school; • Building connections with the community.	• Delivery not always possible or infrequent (verification necessary); • Need to verify the nutritional value of the food.	• Get in touch with the food banks in your region – they often have connections with local farms, supermarkets, distributors and other food system stakeholders; • Participate in a program sponsored by the Breakfast Club of Canada or La Cantine pour tous. They can offer you support for choosing a supplier and for your procurement.
School caterer or concession	• Possibility to create the menu; • Food preparation service possible; • Personalized contact; • Daily delivery, meaning less food storage is necessary; • Potential access to their discount program by combining purchases.	• Higher prices in some cases; • Local and seasonal food rarely offered.	• Work with companies having Aliments du Québec au menu recognition; • Emphasize the importance of your purchasing criteria.

Inspired by the table for evaluating potential suppliers presented in section 5 of the Guide pratique du soutien alimentaire en contexte scolaire - Je goûte, j'apprends! Published by l'Association québécoise de la garde scolaire.[2]

[2] This guide was developed to provide stakeholders in schools with practical tools and resources for their projects. Although the examples given refer to after-school daycare services and elementary schools, the guide is also suitable for secondary schools. The resources and tools are designed to be used in the context of a food support program, but can also be readily applied in other contexts, such as planning cooking workshops or catered school meals, or for school events or fundraisers.

Consult resources for local procurement

One of the key elements to consider when choosing your supplier is their geographic location. Keep in mind that the closer the farm or artisanal producer is located to the school, the easier your project will be for all stakeholders. By minimizing the distance food needs to travel, you can reduce distribution costs and greenhouse gases, save time, and make it easier for students to visit farms.

To find different types of local or regional food suppliers, please see our Resources page.

Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague School © Équiterre

© Équiterre

Establish win-win partnerships

The best way to develop partnerships with local suppliers is to contact them directly. Vegetable growers are often busy working in their fields, so it may be easier for them to talk to you in the evening, by phone or email. Winter is the best time to start a discussion with them because that's when they plan their next harvest season. Whenever possible, offer to visit them so you can meet in person.

To convince them to participate in your project, you have to prove to them that you're offering an appealing business opportunity.

Good to know

Here are several sure-fire arguments to help convince local suppliers to get on board. Investing in your project means:

- ✔ Building stronger relationships with the community;
- ✔ Contributing to the health of students;
- ✔ Boosting their visibility among families and staff members;
- ✔ Developing an additional marketing channel;
- ✔ Receiving a fair price for their products;
- ✔ Access to free labour for a few days every year by having students help with work in the fields;
- ✔ An market for their imperfect or off-standard products that would otherwise be thrown away.

Once you have convinced them, reach an agreement in order to determine:

- The products purchased;
- Their price;
- Purchase volume;
- Delivery period;
- Order-taking process;
- Delivery calendar;
- Packaging conditions;
- Procedures to ensure compliance with food safety and hygiene standards;
- Payment terms and procedures.

This list may seem long, but it's best to get your partnership off to a good start by covering all your bases. Put in place the necessary communication and follow-up mechanisms to ensure a healthy collaboration.

Fostering a relationship of respect and trust is key to a successful, long-term partnership. To help develop a close relationship with your supplier of local products, don't hesitate to:

- Offer awareness-raising and training activities on local procurement to school and food service staff;
- Organize awareness-raising and promotional activities highlighting the supplier's commitment to local and environmentally responsible food procurement.

To avoid being caught short, it's a good idea to reach agreements with more than one supplier. In addition to giving you access to a larger variety of products, this will help ensure your local procurement in the long term. For more information, see the New Brunswick Farm to School Guide, p.18.

Develop healthy, local and environmentally responsible menus

Encourage sustainable food

Once you have found your suppliers, the next step is to develop your menus. Make sure that they encourage sustainable foods – that is, food that is produced and distributed in a way that meets the needs of present and future generations, while ensuring environmental health and social and economic equity.[3] **You are already contributing to this mission by choosing local products. But you can do even more!**

Here are some suggestions of additional actions you can take:

Give preference to seasonal and organic local food

In addition to guaranteeing exceptional freshness, purchasing local and seasonal food is a great way to support the farmers in our regions, to protect our farmland and agricultural expertise, and to reduce the harmful environmental impacts of transportation. Not to mention, choosing organic food means choosing to support production methods that are better for both the environment and human health. Organic products represent a healthy choice, since they reduce our exposure to pesticides.

[3] FAO. Sustainable *Food and Agriculture*, [online], 2020

Myriam Baril-Tessier © Équiterre

Aim for a primarily plant-based diet

Cutting our consumption of animal proteins significantly reduces the environmental impact of the food we eat. That's because the environmental footprint of consuming animal protein is substantially higher than the consumption of plant protein, notably in terms of water and pesticide use, the amount of land cultivated and greenhouse gas emissions.[4] These are all great reasons to explore the huge variety of vegetarian and vegan recipes that replace meat with plant-based alternatives such as pulses, for example. Also, when it comes to consumption of seafood, opt for certified sustainable seafood products.

Encourage equitable food

Some foods cannot be produced locally. If you still want to include them in your menu, purchase Fairtrade certified food products when possible. The Fairtrade designation guarantees a commercial partnership based on dialogue, transparency and respect. Fairtrade products (imported bananas and fruit, rice, quinoa, coffee, coconuts, etc.) encourage the autonomy and development of communities in the South, respect for farmers and sustainable farming practices.

Encourage fair and accessible food that helps reduce waste

Sustainable food is intrinsically linked to the notion of food security. Today, food security no longer simply describes the need to feed a growing population; it refers to a commitment to offer food justice to all, notably by ensuring high-quality food that takes into account cultural diversities.

Reducing food waste on a global scale is a requirement for achieving food security. One-third of the food produced each year in the world is lost or wasted, and the social and environmental impact of this is huge.

Sustainable food can play a role in reducing wasted resources through the development of cooking skills (processing, conservation) and the recovery of residual waste (composting and recycling of waste). Additionally, optimizing resources supports the reduction of packaging in accordance with a zero-waste approach.

See the *Guide to Sustainable Menus*, an initiative led by Nourish, to learn more about other concrete steps you can take to these criteria into account when developing your menus.

[4] For more information on the importance of reducing meat consumption for the planet and human health, see the report of the EAT-Lancet Commission: COMMISSION EAT-LANCET. *Une alimentation saine issue de production locale Alimentation, Planète, Santé,* [online], 2019.

Plan according to the seasons

For a helpful chart that shows the availability of local fruits and vegetables year-round, see the Quebec Seasonal Produce Calendar. Don't hesitate to pick out the vegetables you want to emphasize and promote each season, even if it means modifying your menu throughout the course of the year. This is also important for tracking food allergies.

Benoît Demers © Équiterre

Good to know

Local procurement... even during the winter!
Enjoying the pleasures of local food is possible even in winter. To do so, you can:

- ✔ Increase the amount of cold room space to stores fruits and vegetables such as apples, squash, onions, potatoes, root vegetables, etc.;
- ✔ Increase freezer space to store seasonal local products (ex., fruits, vegetables, seafood, etc.);
- ✔ Do your own processing and/or freezing of seasonal products while they are available in abundance (ex., berries, herbs, tomatoes, bell peppers, zucchini, leafy greens, etc.).

By adopting these practices, you can order larger quantities and reduce the number of deliveries.

These recommendations are drawn from the school sector fact sheet: The Recipe for Local and Environmentally Responsible Food produced by Équiterre.

Transform your practices for long-term savings!
Price is often considered a major barrier to the purchase of locally sourced food. However, most stakeholders in the food supply chain agree that food is actually cheaper when purchased in season. In addition to their positive environmental impact, the following actions can help you save money in the long run that can be reinvested in the purchase of local and environmentally responsible food:

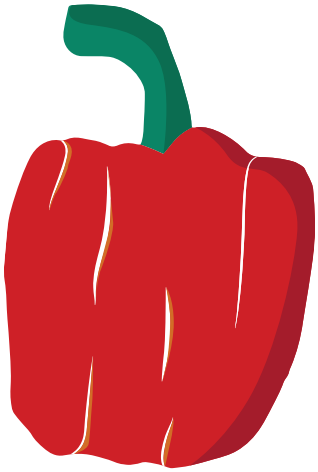
- Offer more vegetarian meals to increase your purchasing power, reduce your environmental footprint and add more diversity to your menu:
  - Increase the number of meatless meals served each week;
  - Increase familiarity by making half-vegetarian/half-meat recipes.
- Reduce purchases of processed and highly-processed foods to lower costs and improve the overall quality of the ingredients in your dishes;
- Vary procurement sources by supporting local food systems (short supply chain), such as farm-direct procurement, farmers' markets, public markets, organic baskets, purchasing groups, etc.;
- Start your own vegetable garden to reduce the cost of food from outside suppliers;
- Reduce food waste by storing food in optimal conditions, planning portions and needs, and making better use of leftovers;
- Eliminate disposable containers to reduce purchasing costs and environmental impacts.

These recommendations are drawn from the school sector fact sheet called The Recipe for Local and Environmentally Responsible Food, produced by Équiterre.

See also PURCHASING POWER: 10 Lessons on Getting More Local, Sustainable and Delicious Food in Schools, Hospitals and Campuses, produced by Food Secure Canada.

Offer a variety of colours, shapes and textures

To make sure your new menu is appealing to kids, you'll need to get creative! One good way to do that is to play with colours and shapes. You can also try offering the same vegetable prepared in different ways, some can be served raw, cooked, grated, in spirals, in a salad, sautéed, in a dessert, etc. Choose a vegetable and make it the featured food of the week! You can also develop thematic menus to highlight different holidays or events.



Keep in mind, at the end of the day, the best way to get your students to embrace the new project is get them to participate. See the section **Get the students involved** on page 49 for some great ideas on how to do this.

© Aliments qu Québec

Get inspired by champion institutions

Many public institutions, especially schools, have already made the transition to healthy, local and environmentally sustainable food. Don't hesitate to draw inspiration from their experience for your own initiatives.

- Contact Aliments du Québec and ask to be put in contact with establishments that have implemented this type of project;
- See the profiles of the schools selected to receive Farm to School Canada grants in 2018.

Get the winning formula

Schools that have implemented projects focused on healthy, local and environmentally responsible food procurement have several similarities. Their projects are:

- Realistic and based on clear objectives;
- Led by a solid team;
- Supported by a regional network of strategic partners;
- Aligned with the specific needs of the school (material and financial resources);
- Compliant with hygiene and food safety measures;
- Based on win-win partnerships with local suppliers;
- Built on menus that promote sustainable food.

Another important aspect these projects share is that they are all the result of careful planning.

Now it's your turn to get on the field and play!

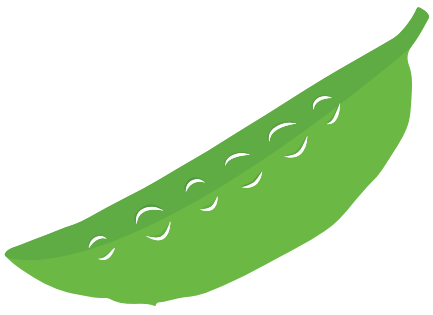
Make your game plan

The success of your project depends partially on its planning. At this stage, you should already have a good idea of what your project will look like:

- Its main characteristics (type of project and main activities);
- Its scope (number and frequency of activities, number of participants);
- The implementation team;
- The resources required to meet your goals;
- Safety and hygiene rules (training, permits);
- The local suppliers involved;
- The food products you plan to serve.

Now that all the necessary elements are in place, it's time to make a work plan. This plan should include:

- A detailed description of all the steps required to complete the project;
- The names of the people recruited for the school team and their roles;
- A timeline for each of the implementation steps and the names of the people responsible for each step. An example is attached **(Appendix 5)**.



NOTES

CONSOLIDATE

- Establish processes for food preparation and distribution
- Ensure the sustainable management of food surpluses and waste
- Get the students involved
- Promote the project

2

Photo: Myriam Baril-Tessier

Establish processes for food preparation and distribution

No matter how well planned your project is, there is always the risk of unforeseen challenges arising during its implementation. This may result in some trial and error before everything is up and running smoothly. If, after several attempts, you realize there may be a better method, don't be afraid to rethink some of your practices and adjust your plans accordingly.

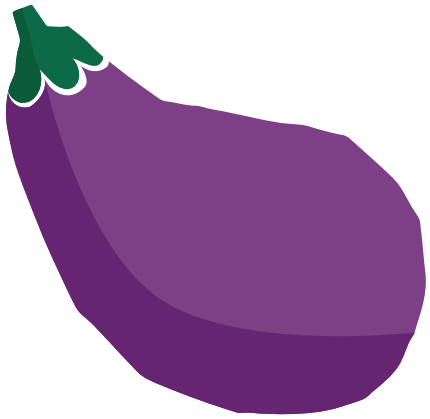
Food preparation

The key to effective food preparation is to get the students involved. The extent of their participation and the people supervising them will differ depending on the school. It's important to find the formula that works best for your situation.

Food distribution

There are as many ways of distributing food as there are projects! The important thing is to find the method that works best for your school and, as always, to keep it simple. Whenever possible, try to integrate order entry and payments into an existing process.

Responsibility for serving food can be delegated to students, a staff member of the school or the food service operation or volunteers.



Good to know

Examples of student participation in food preparation:

- ✓ On a given day, half of the students in a class, supported by an NPO employee, prepare all the food to be served in the salad bar that day;
- ✓ The students prepare some of the food for the next day's meal during cooking workshops supervised by an educator from the school's daycare service;
- ✓ The students prepare all the food during their entrepreneurship course, under the supervision of their teacher;
- ✓ The food service manager supervises food preparation by student volunteers and an employee from a job reintegration program.

For more suggestions on how to **get students involved,** see p. 49.

Ensure the sustainable management of food surpluses and waste

A pre-ordering system can help you achieve better control over quantities, allowing for more sustainable management of food preparation and distribution. It is also useful to have a planning and evaluation system so you can make adjustments as you go along, and avoid food waste.

© Équiterre

Ideas

Examples of good practices:

- ✓ Integrate orders and payment in the registration process for the school daycare service;
- ✓ Send an order form to families to receive orders in advance at a suitable frequency of your choice;
- ✓ Use the caterer's website for order taking;
- ✓ Work with the food service to plan days on which local menus will be offered and receive a portion of the revenue from the sales of each meal.

For further inspiration, check out the Farm to School Resource Centre developed by Farm to Cafeteria Canada.

Planning and evaluation worksheet[5]

Food to be prepared :	
Preparation date and schedule : *Evaluation : How long did the preparation take ?*	Prepared by :
Distribution date :	Distributed by :
Distribution dishes : *Evaluation : Adequate ? Sufficient ?*	Dishes collected by :
Portion size :* *Évaluation : La portion planifiée répondait-elle au besoin des élèves ?*	
Quantity to be prepared : By group : Total : *Evaluation : Was the quantity adequate ?*	
Total average cost : Cost of a recipe or portion : Cost per group : Total cost :	
Suggested presentation : *Evaluation : Appealing ? Easy to do ?*	
Involvement of which students :	
Feedback from students ?	
Surpluses : quantity, conservation, distribution *Evaluation : Quantity collected ?*	Surplus collected by :

* In order to adequately plan the quantities to be purchased and to avoid waste, it is essential that portion sizes be determined in advance.

[5] Table inspired by section 9 (Gérer le processus de distribution des aliments) of the *Guide pratique du soutien alimentaire en contexte scolaire - Je goûte, j'apprends !* from the Association québécoise de la garde scolaire.

Food waste

Food waste has a huge impact on the environment. If, despite your best efforts, you still have surpluses, try to get the most out of them by finding creative solutions:

- ✓ Sell them or offer them to staff members or families the next day;
- ✓ Add them to your neighbourhood's community fridge;
- ✓ Offer them to an organization in your neighbourhood that provides assistance to vulnerable people;
- ✓ Reuse them to create new dishes;
- ✓ Incorporate them into soups or smoothies;
- ✓ As a last resort, put them in the compost for future use in your school's garden.

When following these tips for avoiding food waste, it's important to always comply with food safety and hygiene measures in order to avoid any risk of food poisoning (see the section Consider health and hygiene measures on page 28).

© Adobe Stock

Get the students involved

In class

Having teachers on your team makes it possible for your students to participate in the project during school hours, in different subject areas.

Ideas

- Make posters to promote your project during an art or communication class;
- Organize an activity that tracks the farm-to-plate journey made by the local food served on your menu;
- Organize a flash mob with the dance teacher.

For more ideas on **how to integrate the project into the school curriculum**, check out page 62.

In the field

Don't hesitate to go outside of the school context to improve your students' awareness about the different elements of the food supply chain. Give them an opportunity to meet the people who provide us with our food.

Ideas

- Offer to help your farmer with the pumpkin harvest;
- Rediscover the neighbourhood cheese shop or visit an orchard that sells homemade jams;
- Visit a farmers' market;
- Lend a hand at the local food bank;
- Organize an outing to the grocery store (teach students how to make a grocery list, identify local food products, understand food marketing tactics, etc.).

In the garden

Getting students to participate in growing food is another great way to introduce them to the way that food gets from the field to the plate. Teaching gardens have many proven benefits! They also help teach students about agriculture, raise awareness about the value of food, encourage mutual aid and sharing, and provide an opportunity for physical activity.

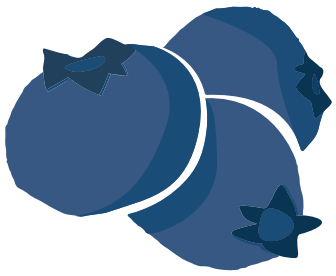
Whether you're planting in containers, an outdoor garden or a greenhouse, there are many ways you can get your students involved in growing food.

If you have a schoolyard garden, don't hesitate to invite people from your neighbourhood to help you maintain it during the summer months. Contact day camps, seniors' homes or other organizations for help.

Ideas

- Plan harvests;
- Prepare the soil;
- Use gardening tools;
- Choose seeds;
- Prepare seedlings;
- Plant seedlings;
- Tend to the garden (weeding, watering, etc.);
- Harvest and clean the food;
- Recover the seeds.

© Équiterre



In the kitchen

"The best way to get kids to like vegetables is to get them to cook!"[6]. The good news is that cooking workshops also have a number of additional benefits for children. Not only do they introduce them to a variety of nutritious foods, but they also allow them to develop cooking skills and knowledge that will stick with them throughout their life. Associating a healthy diet with the fun of cooking is an excellent way to promote the adoption of healthy eating habits. For more information, see the first fact sheet in the practical guide *A Recipe for Successful Cooking Workshops*, focusing on children's development and links with the Québec Education Program.

No matter what the students' age, there are always ways to get them involved in the kitchen. Their level of participation will depend on factors such as the time available for the activity, the comfort level of the facilitator, their experience in the kitchen, etc. For tips on age-appropriate tasks, see the fact sheet *Cuisinez avec les enfants - À chaque âge sa tâche*, developed by Les Ateliers cinq épices.

For more information on organizing and facilitating cooking workshops, see the practical guide A Recipe for Successful Cooking Workshops. You can also use the services offered by organizations such as Les Ateliers cinq épices or La Tablée des Chefs.

When conducting cooking workshops, make a point of raising students' awareness of the importance of seasonal produce and of consuming fruits and vegetables grown in Quebec. You'll find a wealth of practical information, tips and easy-to-make cooked and uncooked recipes in the series of recipe cards developed by Équiterre.

In addition to cooking workshops, there are lots of other ways to get students to participate in the preparation, serving, and processing of food.

Ideas

- ✓ Choose recipes;
- ✓ Help make a grocery list;
- ✓ Do a food inventory;
- ✓ Clean kitchen equipment;
- ✓ Serve food or drinks;
- ✓ Monitor food waste, from purchase to consumption;
- ✓ Take care of the composting.

In managing the project

If you want to be even more innovative in your approach, you can let the students participate in the decision-making process. You may be surprised by how creative and resourceful they are!

[6] Quote by Karine Desserre-Pezé, founder and president of C'est moi le chef!, an organization that specializes in cooking workshops for children. .

Ideas

- Create a student committee and integrate it in the school team;
- Hold a brainstorming session to get suggestions by students';
- Set up a kiosk at the school entrance to encourage students to participate.

Promote the project

One of the keys to ensuring the success of your project is to convince the school community to take advantage of it. In other words, you need to promote it.

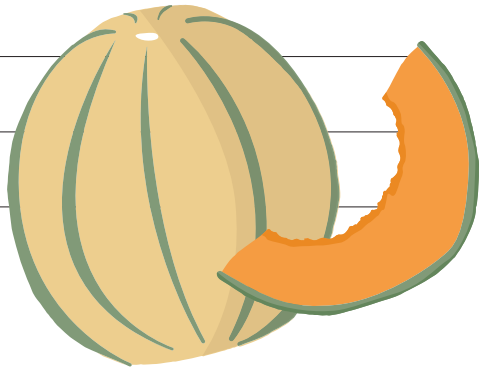
Keep the members of your school's community up to date on the progress of the project and on your successes along the way!

Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde School © Équiterre

Ideas

- Organize a small launch party;
- Organize a contest to help promote the project;
- Use the Farm to School graphic tools offered in Équiterre's toolbox;
- Spread the news on social networks, in newsletters and in announcements over the PA system;
- Advertise: create posters with your students and put them up in strategic locations;
- Offer tastings and share your recipes;
- Shine a spotlight on your suppliers (whether it's your farmer, baker or beekeeper).

NOTES



MAKE IT SUSTAINABLE

- Long-term planning
- Measuring results
- Documenting the experience
- Make your project shine
- Mobilizing the school team and community

3

Photo: Myriam Baril-Tessier

Get the students involved

It's important to think about how you can ensure the continuation of your project beyond the end of the funding period.

Aim for self-financing

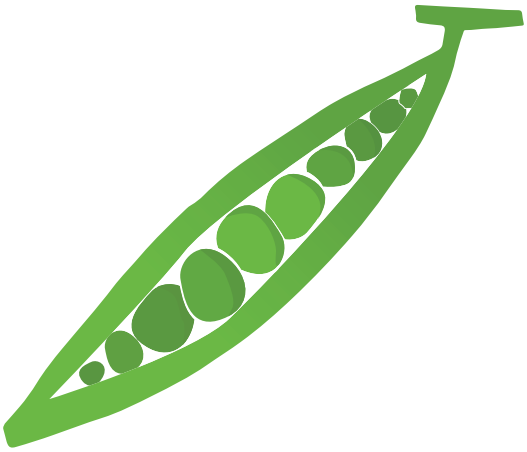
The best way to sustain your project once the initial funds have been spent is to introduce a contribution fee. Such a fee, even if it's small, can help cover the ongoing cost of running your project. To determine the amount to charge, you have to calculate the unit cost per portion. In other words, you have to evaluate the cost of preparing and serving a single portion in terms of the labour involved and the cost of the food.

To find out more about the methods used by other schools in Quebec to calculate their contribution fee, check out the Farm to School Resource Centre (particularly the section Salad Bar Logistics/ Costing out the salad bar) prepared by Farm to Cafeteria Canada.

Other means of achieving self-funding are also possible to ensure the long-term sustainability of your project.

Good to know

Self-financing methods	Details
Product sales	Self-financing can be achieved by selling prepared foods such as preserves or take-out meals.
Schools Take Root fundraising campaign	Équiterre offers fundraising campaigns for schools based on the sale of local and organic vegetable baskets delivered by your local family farmer. • $5,77 ou$7 per basket; • Registration opens in spring.
Other fundraising campaigns based on local or environmentally responsible products	Several campaigns selling local or environmentally responsible products are available (ex.: cheese, reusable snack bags, bamboo toothbrushes, etc.).
Crowdfunding	Crowdfunding is a method of funding projects by raising money from contributions by individuals, groups or companies. In exchange for their contribution, funders receive a reward in the form of an acknowledgement, an exclusive product, a discount, or an experience (ex.: **La Ruche, Haricot**).



Find additional funding sources

Another good way to ensure the sustainability of your project is to diversify your sources of funding.

It's important to keep in mind, however, that filling out funding applications is a time-consuming process and that funding often comes with "strings" attached (requirement to submit a report, a financial statement, etc.). With that being said, it's a good idea to assign a staff member or volunteer to handle this task.

École Saint-Denis © Équiterre

Funding ideas[7]

Type of funding	Suggestion	Details
Grant	Metro – Green Apple School Program	The aim of this program is to encourage students to develop healthy eating habits, notably by increasing their consumption of fruits and vegetables. • Maximum amount: $1,000 • Grants offered twice a year
	Telus Foundation – Community Grants	Grants are offered to charitable organizations that support local youth by giving them the means to succeed. Priorities: health and education. • Maximum grant: $20,000 • Three application periods a year (four in Montreal)
	President's Choice Children's Charity	The President's Choice Children's Charity empowers Canadian children by providing access to nutritious food every day. • Maximum amount: varies depending on the program • Grant offered once a year
	Farm to Cafeteria Canada – Farm to School Canada Grants	The aim of the Farm to School Canada grant program is to get more healthy and local food on the plates and in the minds of students across Canada by supporting the implementation of school salad bars offering healthy, local and sustainable products. • Maximum amount: $10,000 • Grants offered once every two years
Subsidies and financial aid	Food aid subsidy	• Measure 15012* for food aid (in French) • Several regional programs exist that offer food aid
	Subsidy for cooking workshops and teaching gardens	• Measure 15028 for after-school and secondary school activities
	Financial support programs offered by community organizations	• Breakfast Club of Canada • La Cantine pour tous
Donations	Equipment donations	Don't hesitate to put a call out to your community if you need equipment such as dishes or utensils. Some parents will be more than happy to contribute to your project by getting rid of that extra set of utensils in their drawer!
	Donations of time	Keep in mind that volunteering can make a huge difference for your project. Without basing the entire project on the work of volunteers, don't hesitate to turn to members of your community if you need occasional support for certain tasks or events.

* For more information on Measure 15012, see the Guide pratique du soutien alimentaire en contexte scolaire - Je goûte, j'apprends! produced by the Association québécoise de la garde scolaire. This table is based on that guide.

[7] For more information on funding suggestions for your projects, see the article Approvisionnement local à l'école : explorez les sources de financement pour réaliser votre projet by Murielle Vrins, published in 100°.

Measuring results

It's important to properly evaluate the impact of your project. You will most likely need to know these results when preparing your project report. Here are a few tips and tools to help make this task easier.

Measure stakeholder satisfaction

Listen to your students! After all, they are the ones who are meant to benefit from this project. You can conduct a satisfaction survey to get their feedback. By polling students once a year during the implementation of the project, you can get an idea their reaction to the adjustments made along the way.

We also recommend gathering feedback from members of the school team and your partners throughout the project.

Make adjustments!

Implementing a local procurement project comes with its fair share of challenges. You may have to test several formulas before you find the right combination for your school. Don't be afraid to use the feedback gathered from stakeholders to make any adjustments that may be necessary.

Quantify the proportion of local food

Since your aim is to increase the proportion of local food on the menu, it is important to track your progress by measuring any increases. To help you, Équiterre has produced a quantification table **(Appendix 4)** to be filled out for each service. This table allows you to keep track of each food product served, along with its origin and cost. You can also use it to calculate the total amount you spend on local food.

This may seem like a tedious task, but it is **essential** for the preparation of your project report. Not only does it allow you to measure your progress, but it also helps you identify the food categories where there is potential for further improvements. In addition, the average budget allocated to the purchase of local food can be proudly shared with the community, to educate and engage students and your partners, while promoting the importance of buying local.

Saint-Denis School © Équiterre

Documenting the experience

Documenting your experience is an important part of ensuring the continuity of your project. You will want to make sure that you describe each step of the project. Gather together all of the important information related to your project in one location, including your application, contract(s), the list of your contacts and suppliers, invoices, etc.

Pass on your knowledge and expertise to others

Having a solid team to support your project will help ensure its continuity even if someone has to leave the project. In the same vein, it's important to train several people who would be able to take over in the event of changes within your team.

To do this, your project documentation should include a description of the processes and procedures that are essential to your project's activities. You could, for example, write up step-by-step procedures for food ordering, snack preparation, etc.

Prepare a report

Keep a record of your successes, any problems encountered along the way and the challenges ahead. This will help save time when you have to write your final report. It is also a useful tool for sharing your experience with other schools and promoting your initiative.

Faire rayonner votre projet

Create a communications plan

It's important to share your experience to show off your schools' successes and inspire others to follow your example. This is the best way to ensure that healthy, local and environmentally responsible food becomes a priority in Quebec! To do this, prepare a communications plan that establishes the messages you want to put across. Also note the communication periods and your target audience.

Use every possible opportunity to promote your project and don't hesitate to invite local media to cover the launch day or the first anniversary of your initiative.

Saint-Louis-de Gonzague School © Équiterre

Good to know

You can sign up for the Aliments du Québec au menu recognition program. Joining this program gives you access to many benefits:

- ✓ Visibility and credibility, based on a consistent image;
- ✓ Recognition and promotion of your local procurement efforts;
- ✓ Ongoing support to find partners and suppliers and increase local procurement in the long term;
- ✓ A clear path forward thanks to quantified goals and benchmarks;
- ✓ The satisfaction of children and school communities;
- ✓ Organization of the entire food service team and school community around the project;
- ✓ A sense of belonging to an innovative social project through participation in a strong and unified province-wide movement.

To learn more the impact of this approach, see Salad Bars Bring Local Food to School! Recognizing Local Procurement in 9 Québec Schools, produced by Farm to Cafeteria Canada and Équiterre.

Master the art of story telling

To help get more students to participate, generate interest among parents, attract the attention of local media and find additional funding sources, we recommend getting out there and sharing your story with as many people as possible.

Good to know

Tips for sharing your story well and efficiently:

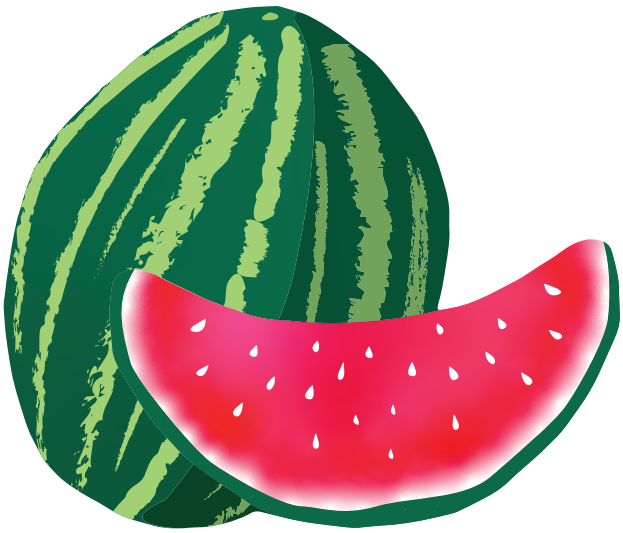
- Be clear and thorough (avoid big words and complicated acronyms);
- Be structured;
- Be concise and avoid too much information;
- Capture the reader's attention within the first few lines or words;
- Add photos illustrating your project and highlighting the participation of students;
- Appeal to the emotions and values of your target audience;
- Be authentic and add your personal touch to the story;
- Tell your story from start to finish, with all its ups and downs, and end with the "moral" of the story.

Saint-Barthélemy School © Équiterre

Mobilizing the school team and community

Incorporate the project into the curriculum

One of the best ways to ensure your project's longevity is to make it an integral part of the school's **curriculum.** Theoretical notions related to healthy, local and environmentally responsible food can be addressed by teachers in the classroom and are aligned with the requirements set out in the Quebec Education Program. For example, you could explore the origin of different fruits and vegetables in geography class, learn the various parts of plants in science class, or analyze our food system based on a farm to plate perspective.



Good to know

Suggestions for making your project part of the school's curriculum:

- ✓ Check out the Soup's On! Educational Kit for a variety of comprehensive activities;
- ✓ Engage with teachers of different subjects and school daycare service educators in order to build a global curriculum focused on healthy, local and environmentally responsible food;
- ✓ Let yourself be inspired by the agri-food educational program realized by the school Louis-de-France and the organization AgrÉcoles, which meets the requirements of the Quebec School Program and can be replicated and applied by other schools;
- ✓ Use the educational modules developed for teachers by the organization École-o-champ et Agriculture Classroom Canada!

Good to know

Type d'implication pouvant être intéressante :

- ✔ Récolte d'équipements de cuisine ou de jardin usagers;
- ✔ Aide pour les événements spéciaux (accueil, vestiaire) ;
- ✔ Entretien du jardin ;
- ✔ Appui à la réalisation d'ateliers culinaires (ex. : dons de légumes du jardin) ;
- ✔ Service des aliments ;
- ✔ Partage d'expertise (ex. : atelier de couture pour créer des tabliers).

Mobilize the community

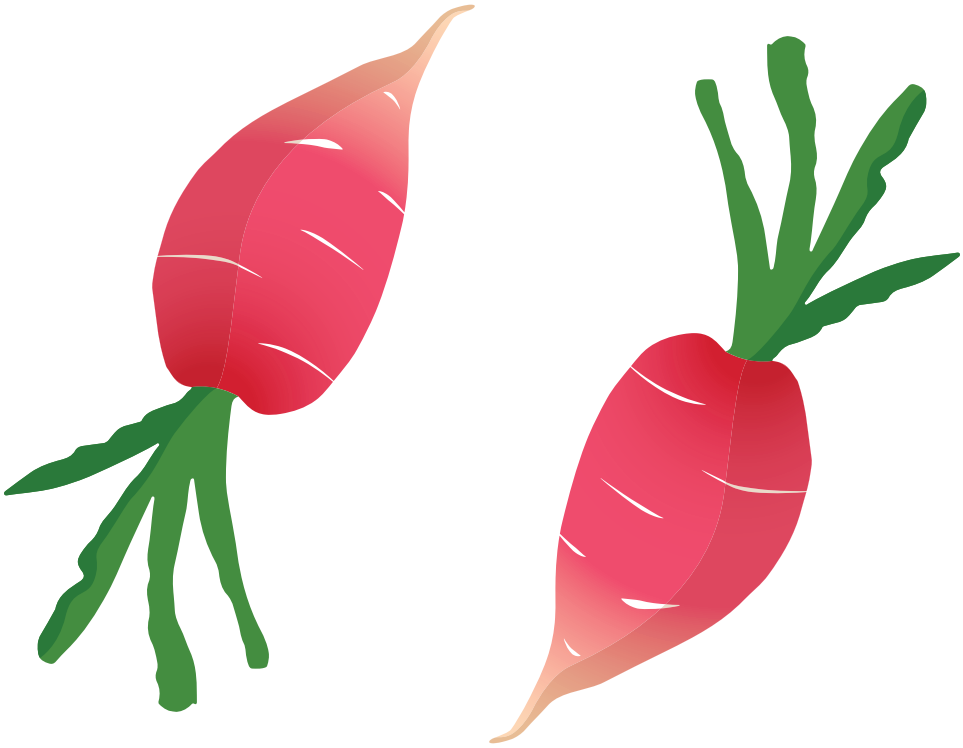
One of the goals of the Farm to School approach is to build stronger connections between schools and their communities. Take advantage of block parties and other important events in your community to inform citizens about your initiative and offer them opportunities to get involved. Put your creative talents to work and present your project in a fun way that makes people want to get involved.

To get more volunteers on board, put up posters in locations and businesses in your community (grocery stores, library, recreation centre, community centre, etc.).

Most importantly, don't forget to give back to your community. Is your local food bank in need of volunteers to collect food donations? Seize the opportunity to demonstrate the importance of community to your students.

Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague School © Équiterre

NOTES



École de l'Énergie © Équiterre

CONCLUSION

This *Implementation guide* is designed to help schools get their local procurement project off the ground and keep it on the right track. It outlines the various steps necessary to build a solid foundation that ensures the project's sustainability. Since 2018, Équiterre has helped close to 15 schools implement their local procurement initiatives by providing guidance and support for activities including schoolyard garden projects, cooking workshops, salad bars, and many other educational activities that are sprouting in schools. In 2021, with the collaboration of 100°, a M361 initiative, we will reach a new milestone by supporting a total of 50 schools! We are extremely proud of the progress made so far and look forward to continuing to work with school teams and students to improve the quality of the food served in schools.

The Farm to School approach described in this guide offers numerous benefits. It is important that we promote this *Implementation guide* to as many people as possible in order to drive a true movement and a culture change within schools so that they become a fertile ground for the development of new initiatives in collaboration with the community that support healthy lifestyles, the local economy and the environment.

Équiterre is the regional coordinator of the Farm to School movement in Quebec. For over 25 years, Équiterre has worked with citizens, farmers, organizations, think tanks, businesses, municipalities and governments to make the necessary collective transitions toward an equitable and environmentally sound future more tangible, accessible, and inspiring. More specifically, Équiterre's food program aims to accelerate the transition of organizations and institutions toward best practices in the area of sustainable food (healthy, local and environmentally responsible) by boosting food education in the childcare, educational and youth communities and by mobilizing public institutions across Quebec to increase the procurement of sustainable food in their food services. Over the years, Équiterre has assisted many public institutions in their efforts to boost their procurement of local and organic food.

United around the values of mutual support and sharing, the 100° community brings together people who are committed, mobilized and actively working to bring about change in Quebec communities in order to create more favourable conditions for human and environmental health.

Origins of the project

Inspired by Farm to Cafeteria Canada, a national leader in the movement to get more healthy and local food into institutions, the Farm to School Quebec project was established thanks to Équiterre. The project seeks to mobilize and support communities by facilitating the implementation of structured initiatives for local food procurement and sustainable food education in Quebec schools. The goal is to get more healthy, local and environmentally responsible food on the minds and plates of students across Quebec.

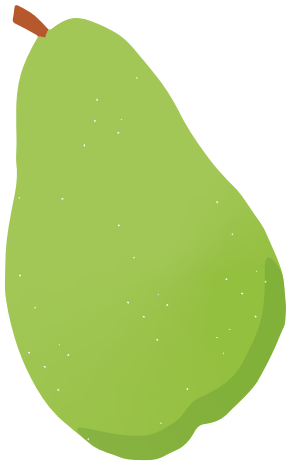
1 Get started

Projects and goals

- Determine the type of project
- Establish clear, measurable and realistic goals
- Make the project accessible
- Increase the amount of local food

Your team

- Rally an enthusiastic school team
- Bring together community partners



Needs

- Identify a location
- Make a list of equipment
- Establish a detailed and realistic budget

Health and hygiene

- Consider health and hygiene measures
- Obtain the proper training and permits
- Adapt to the COVID-19 situation

Local suppliers

- Establish a portrait of what food is currently available
- Determine your purchasing criteria
- Choose your procurement method
- Consult resources
- Establish win-win partnerships

Healthy, local and environmentally responsible menus

- Encourage sustainable food
- Plan according to the seasons
- Transform your practices for long-term savings
- Offer a variety of colours, shapes and textures

Champion institutions

- Be inspired by others
- Establish the winning formula

Make your game plan

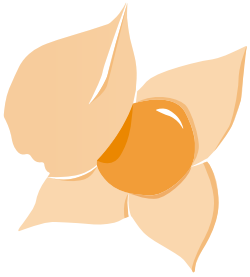
2 Consolidate

Food preparation and distribution

- Find the right formula
- Get the students involved

Environmentally responsible management

- Plan and assess any food surpluses or waste
- Avoid waste

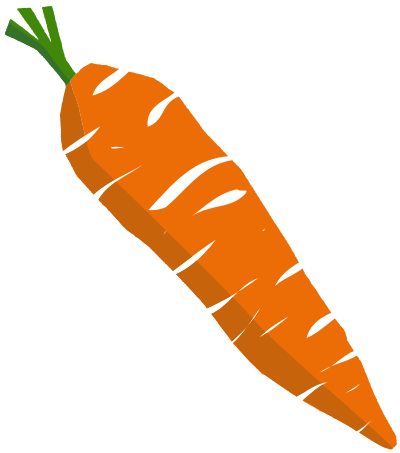


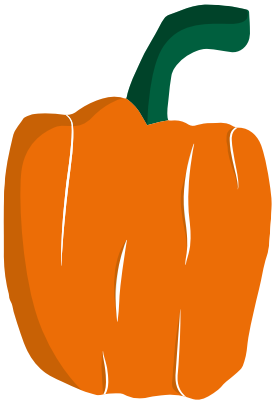
Student involvement

- In class
- In the school yard
- In the garden
- In the kitchen
- In managing the project

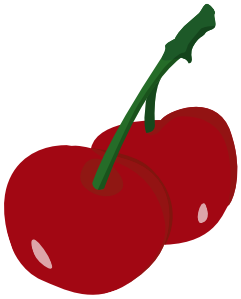
Project promotion

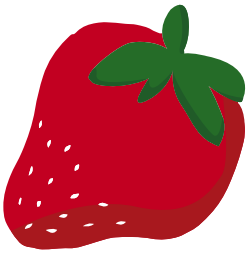
- Update the school community about the progress and success of the project
- Be creative





3 Make it sustainable





Long-term planning

- Aim for self-financing
- Find additional resources

Measuring results

- Measure stakeholder satisfaction
- Make adjustments
- Quantify the proportion of local food

Documenting the experience

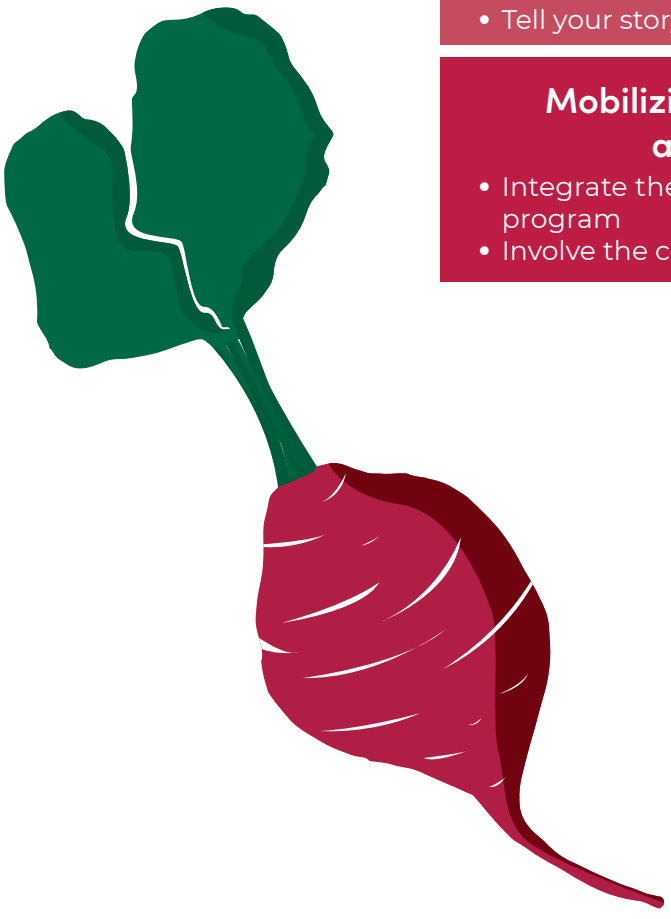
- Pass on knowledge and expertise to others
- Prepare a report

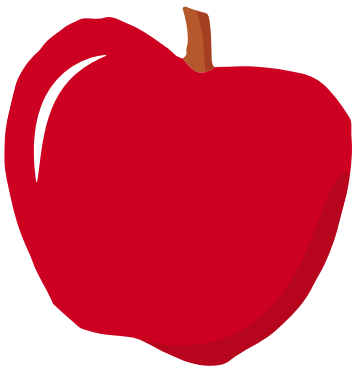
Giving the project visibility

- Create a communications plan
- Tell your story

Mobilizing the school team and community

- Integrate the project in the educational program
- Involve the community





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Appendix 1

Example of a start-up budget

Item	Description of the item	Amount	Examples
Human resources	Salaries and fees related organizing and launching the project.	$6,000	150 hours x$40/hr
Fees – community partners or organizations	Fees for individuals who provide expertise and complementary technical training and resources.	$1,000	Facilitation of workshops or activities related to cooking, gardening or nutrition (25 hours x$40/hr)
Training	Travel and accommodation costs for project coordinators to attend training.	$500	Training sessions provided by Équiterre, specific training courses on cooking workshops
Equipment	Equipment for the kitchen, food services, gardens, cooking workshops, etc.	$5,500	See the detailed list in the section *Identify your needs*
Cost of adapting the space	Costs related to modifying the food service space.	$1,000	Installation of a larger counter, sink, etc.
Promotional and/or educational material	Costs related to communications or educational material.	$300	Promotional flyers, social media ads, design of recipe cards
Meals served during the project launch	Cost of offering a free meal to students, school staff, partners, etc.	$400	$4 per meal x 100 people
Other	Provision for unexpected expenses.	$300	Unforeseen travel or equipment replacement costs
Estimated total cost of the program for the target period :		$15,000	

** Important note: If you are responding to a call for projects, make sure you comply with any additional requirements specified therein.*

Item	Description of the item	Amount	Examples
Human resources			
Fees – community partners or organizations			
Training			
Equipment			
Cost of adapting the space			
Promotional and/or educational material			
Meals served during the project launch			
Other			
Estimated total cost of the program for the target period :			

Appendix 2

MAPAQ food safety and hygiene requirements

Type of establishment	Type of permit	Type of training	Staff supervision	Record keeping
Caterer (no food preparation at the school)	Mandatory restaurant permit **for the caterer**	Mandatory food establishment manager training for the caterer	N/A on the school premises	N/A on the school premises
School daycare service (with preparation on the school premises)	Mandatory restaurant and retail food business permit **for the school service centre**	Mandatory food establishment manager training	If training is required, one of the following criteria must be met: The manager responsible for food safety and hygiene or a person who has taken the food handler training must be present on site at all times when food is being prepared or handled; or At least 10 % of the staff assigned to food preparation and the cleaning of material and equipment coming into contact with food have proof of food establishment manager or food handler training (this option does not require the presence of a person with training at all times.)	• Keep a record on site specifying: • The number of persons assigned to food preparation and to the cleaning of material and equipment coming into contact with food, including the food safety and hygiene manager; • The names of the employees who have completed the food handler or food establishment manager training.
Cafeteria with preparation and sales **Permanent caterer**	Mandatory restaurant permit	Formation de gestionnaire d'établissement alimentaire obligatoire		
NPO (with food preparation and sales)	Mandatory non-profit organization permit. A single permit is required for all points of sale in the province.	Mandatory food establishment manager training for NPO licence holders: activities lasting 30 or more consecutive days. Mandatory 3.5-hour training session for NPO licence holders: activities lasting 30 or more consecutive days. No mandatory training for special event licence holders (less than 30 consecutive days).		
Food assistance service in the context of food sales (even if the price is minimal or symbolic) or provision of services for a fee	Restaurant or retail food business permit not mandatory	Mandatory adapted training for community and charitable organizations offering food assistance (14 hours)		
Food assistance service in the context of food donations	No permit requirement in the case of food donations	Adapted training for community and charitable organizations offering food assistance (14 hours) is strongly recommended		

Appendix 3

Example of a quantification table

School's name: _____

Food supply responsible's name:

_____

Section 1: Basic information	
Date *(dd/mm/yyyy)*	
Theme (if applicable) *(e.g.: latin flavors)*	
Number of students served	
Grades served	

Section 2: What's on the menu?					
Ingredient's name *(one ingredient per row)*	Ingredient's type 1. *Single Ingredient* 2. *Processed on site* 3. *Purchased processed*	Supplier and brand (if applicable)	Distributor (if applicable)	LOCAL food? 1. Aliment du Québec 2. Aliment préparés au Québec 3. Aliment du Québec bio ou Aliments préparés au Québec bio 4. Local food (e.g. garden, farm) 5. Food from abroad 6. Unknown origin	Ingredient's dollar value ($)
				Total ingredient's dollar value? ($)	

NOTE: Please note, as much as possible, the monetary value of harvested or donated products.

Section 3 : Do you have any comments ?

Anything else you would like to add about your provided service today
(e.g. a new ingredient that was a hit, a challenge overcomed, or a goal achieved) ?

Procedures :

1. Remember to complete a quantification sheet after *each service.*
2. We encourage you to offer this service (salad bar, collations or other) as often as possible. However, if you offer it more than once a week, simply fill out the sheet **for one service per week.**
3. After your last service of the year, please send by email the completed and scanned sheets to **Équiterre team.**

Section 4 : Definitions

Ingredient's type	Single ingredient	Ingredient that has undergone none or minimal processing (e.g. fruits, vegetables, unprocessed proteins)
	Processed on site	Product processed on site (e.g. grated carrots, homemade muffin)
	Purchased processed	Product purchased already processed (e.g.: grated cheese, egg preparation for sandwiches or salads)
Brand *(if applicable)*		Distinctive product sign (e.g. Clic, Del Monte, P'tit Québec)
Supplier *(if applicable)*		Producer, producer-processor or processor (people who grow food or prepare/cook it for processing (e.g. farm, bakery))
Distributor *(if applicable)*		Wholesaler, distributor, supermarket or broker who buys goods at a large volume from suppliers and makes them available (e.g. Metro, Sysco, local grocery store)
LOCAL food?	Aliments du Québec	Verified product with Aliments du Québec certification brand
	Aliments préparés au Québec	Verified product with Aliments préparés au Québec certification brand
	Aliments du Québec bio Aliments préparés au Québec bio	Verified product with Aliments du Québec bio or Aliments préparés au Québec bio certification brand
	Local food (e.g. garden, greenhouse, farm)	Product that comes from the school, region or province but doesn't bear a certification mark (e.g. school garden or greenhouse, local farm, non-member company)
	Food from abroad	Product from outside of Quebec (e.g. bananas, rice)
	Unknown origin	No information on the origin. Please make sure to give as much information as possible in comments to allow Aliments du Québec to trace it.

Appendix 4

Example of a timetable

Steps	Sub-steps	When (weeks) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Who	Follow-up
1. Get started	1. Define the project and its goals																		
	2. Assemble your team																		
	3. Identify your needs																		
	4. Consider health and hygiene measures																		
	5. Find local suppliers																		
	6. Create nutritious, local and environmentally responsible menus																		
	7. Get inspired by others																		
	8. Make your game plan																		
2. Consolidate	9. Establish processes for food preparation and distribution																		
	10. Ensure the sustainable management of food surpluses and waste																		
	11. Get the students involved																		
	12. Promote the project																		
3. Make it sustainable	14. Measure results																		
	15. Document your experience																		
	13. Think long term																		
	16. Promote your project																		
	17. IInvolve and mobilize the entire school team and community																		

Have you started a local project?
Please let us know and share your best photos
with us by writing
to delafermealecole@equiterre.org

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