



BC School Food Programs

Summary of Current State

Education Analytics Office

Sept. 2021

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Mandate Letter Commitment

To help make sure students are properly fed for learning:

- work with school districts to create more local school meal programs based on district data and priorities, and
- work with the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries to integrate Feed BC into this plan so that districts can include locally grown food.

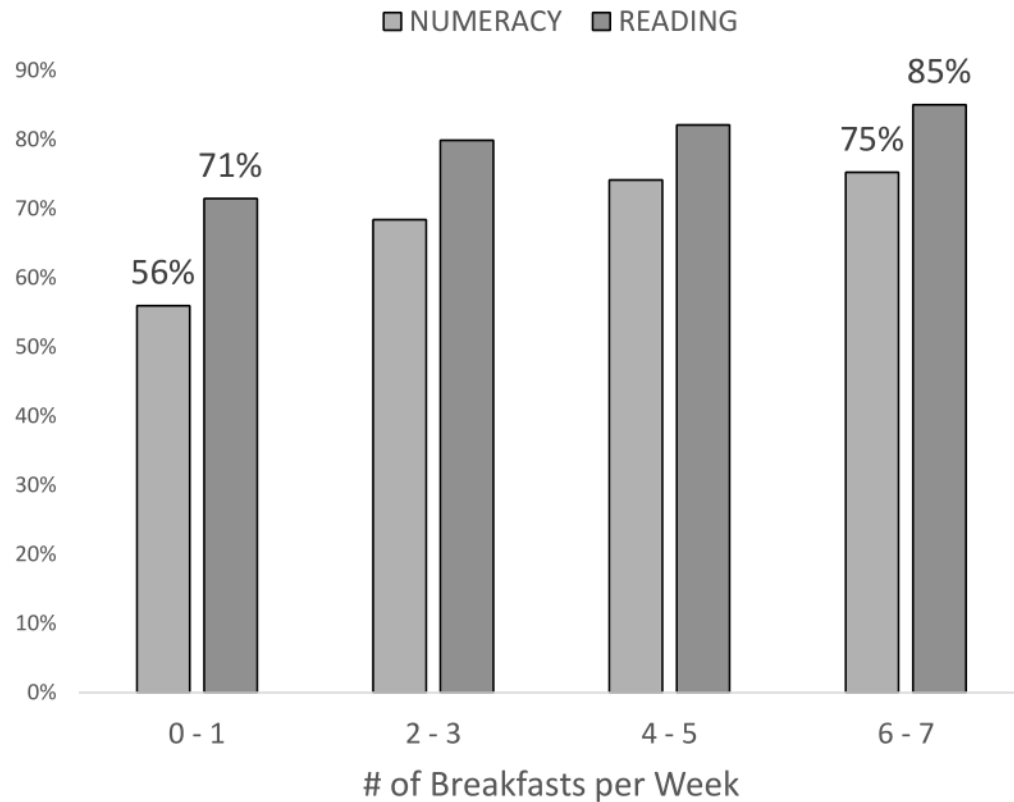
Key Insights

- Current BC food programs are strongly related to neighbourhood socioeconomics
- 58% of public schools report having a food program, 10% use an external source such as a food bank in place of a program
- An estimated 12% of students (over 60,000) access food programs throughout the year, increasing to 38% for students in the lowest socioeconomic neighbourhoods
- Most food programs are:
 - administered in house by school employees,
 - use BC food when costs aren't a factor, and
 - are aligned with BC nutrition guidelines
- An estimated 200+ schools in BC could potentially benefit from a food program based on socioeconomics and school academic outcomes

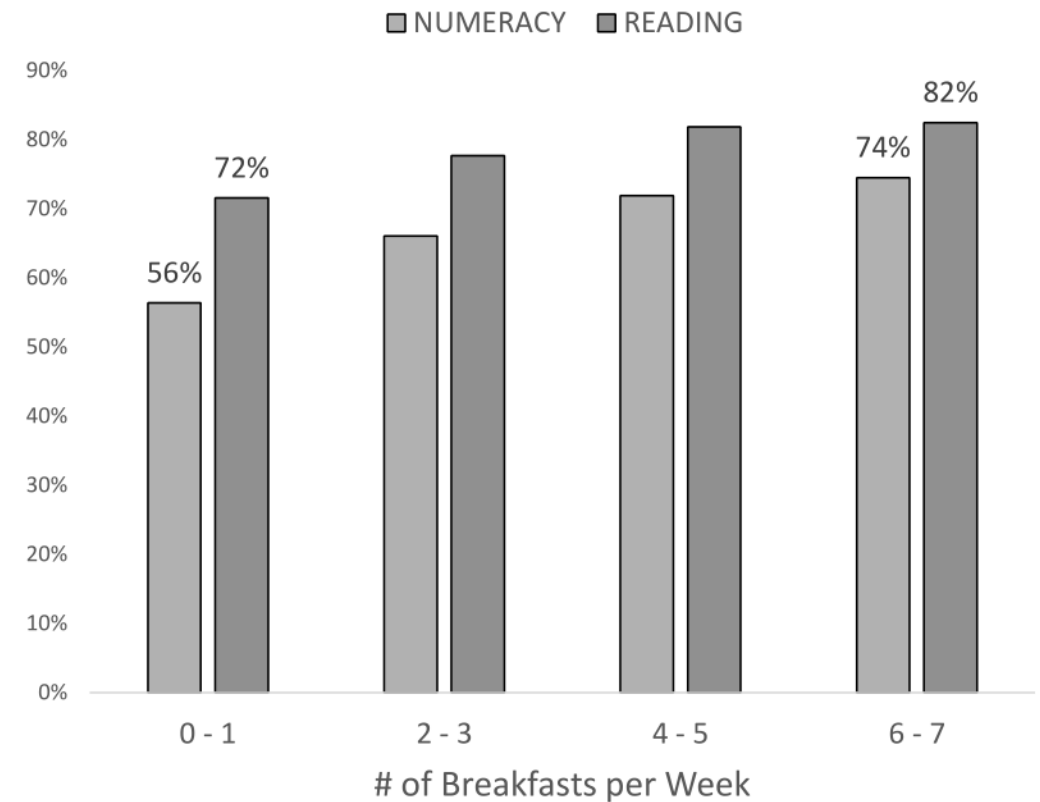
Schools, Students Eating Breakfasts and Academic Outcomes

Students who **eat breakfast** are 10-20% more likely to be **on track or extending** in their FSA scoring relative to students who do not report eating breakfast

Grade 4: Breakfasts and FSA % Meeting/Exceeding

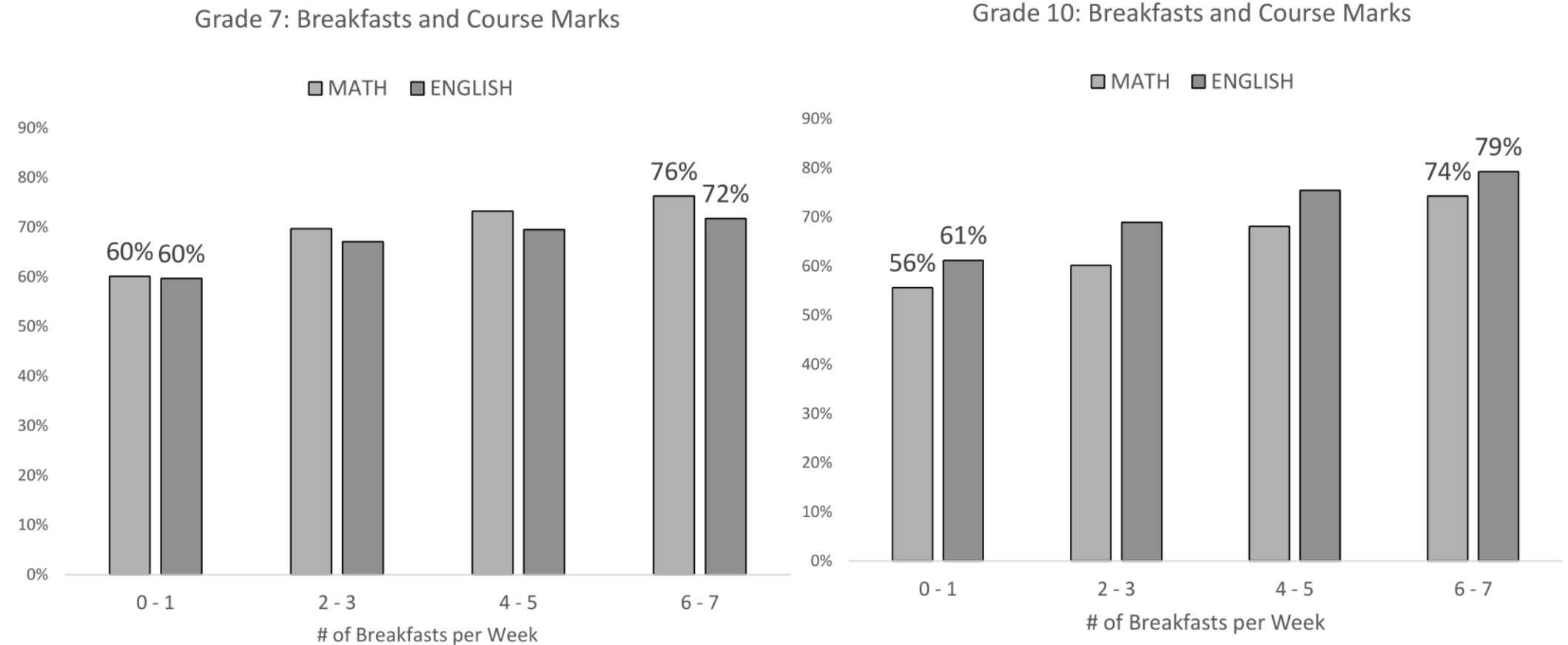


Grade 7: Breakfasts and FSA % Meeting/Exceeding



Schools, Students Eating Breakfasts and Academic Outcomes

Students who **eat breakfast** are 10-20% more likely to achieving **A's or B's in their course marks** relative to students who do not report eating breakfast

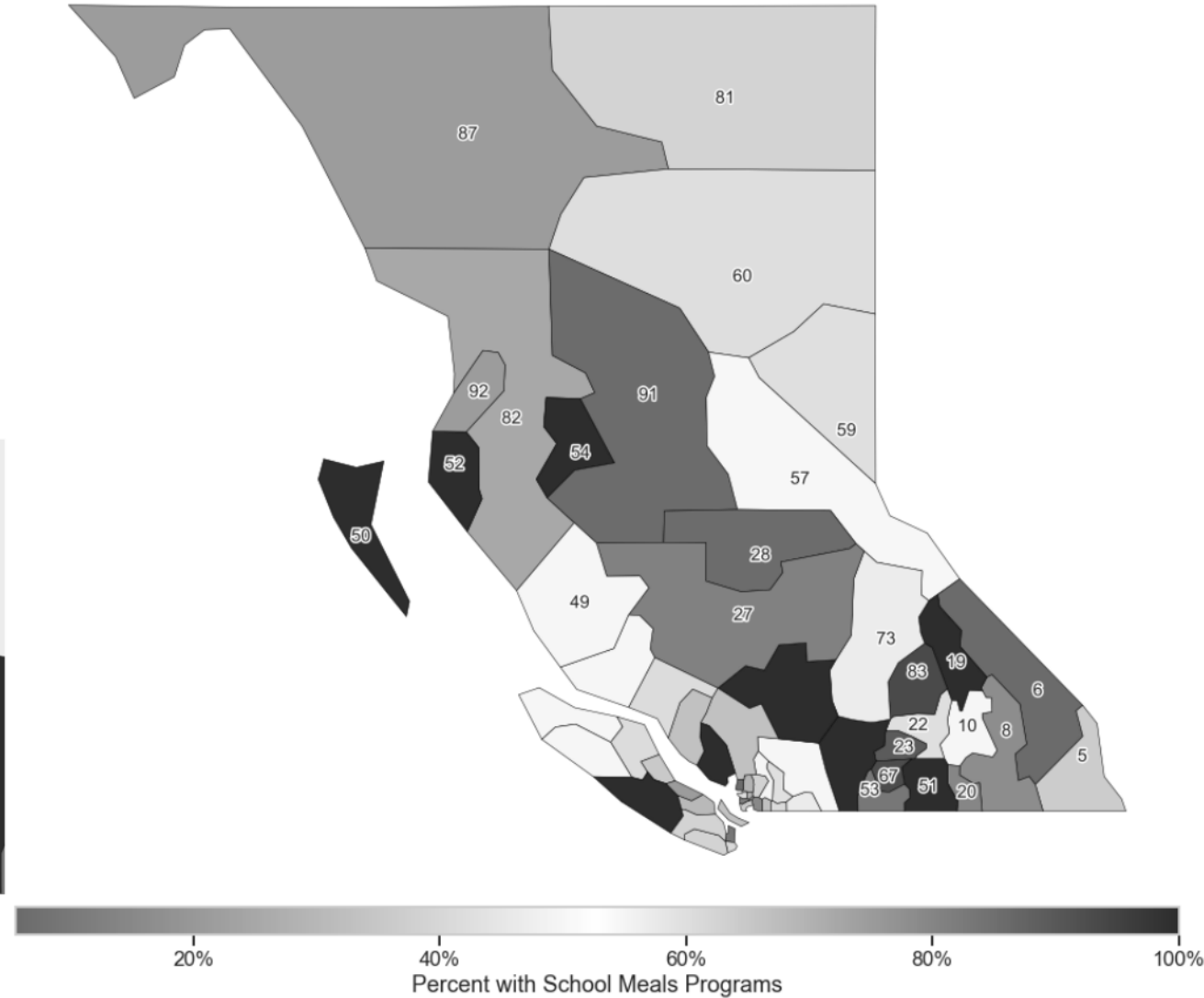
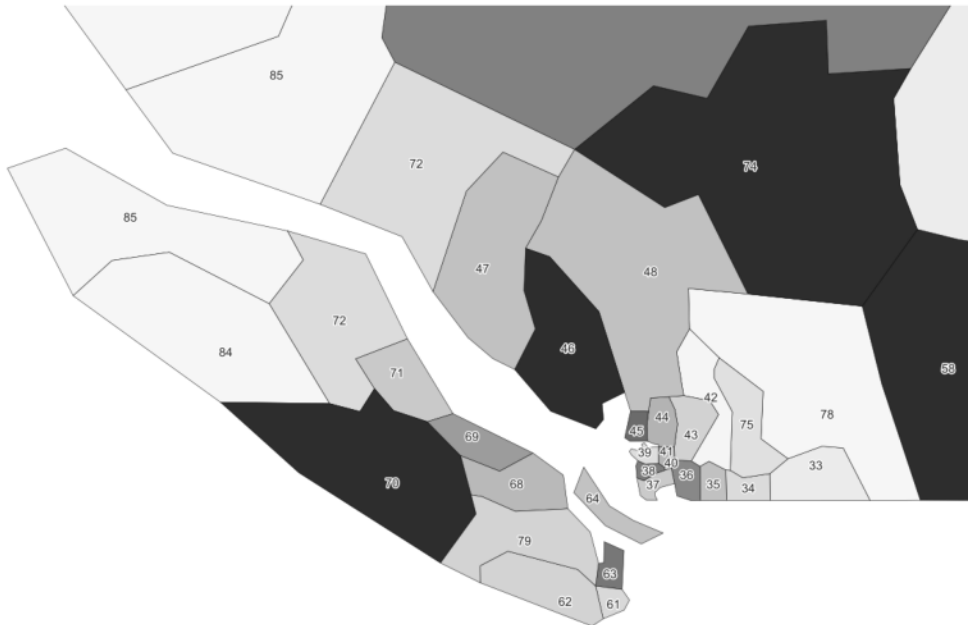


School Food Programs: Research Method

- A Cross Ministry Initiative
 - Education
 - Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
 - Health
 - Social Development and Poverty Reduction
- Literature Review – Education, Health
- Data Collection and Analysis – Education
 - School Survey from August 20 to September 24

% Schools with a Meals Program in BC

- 58% of public schools report having a food program
- 10% use an external source such as a food bank in place of a program
- 32% have no food program

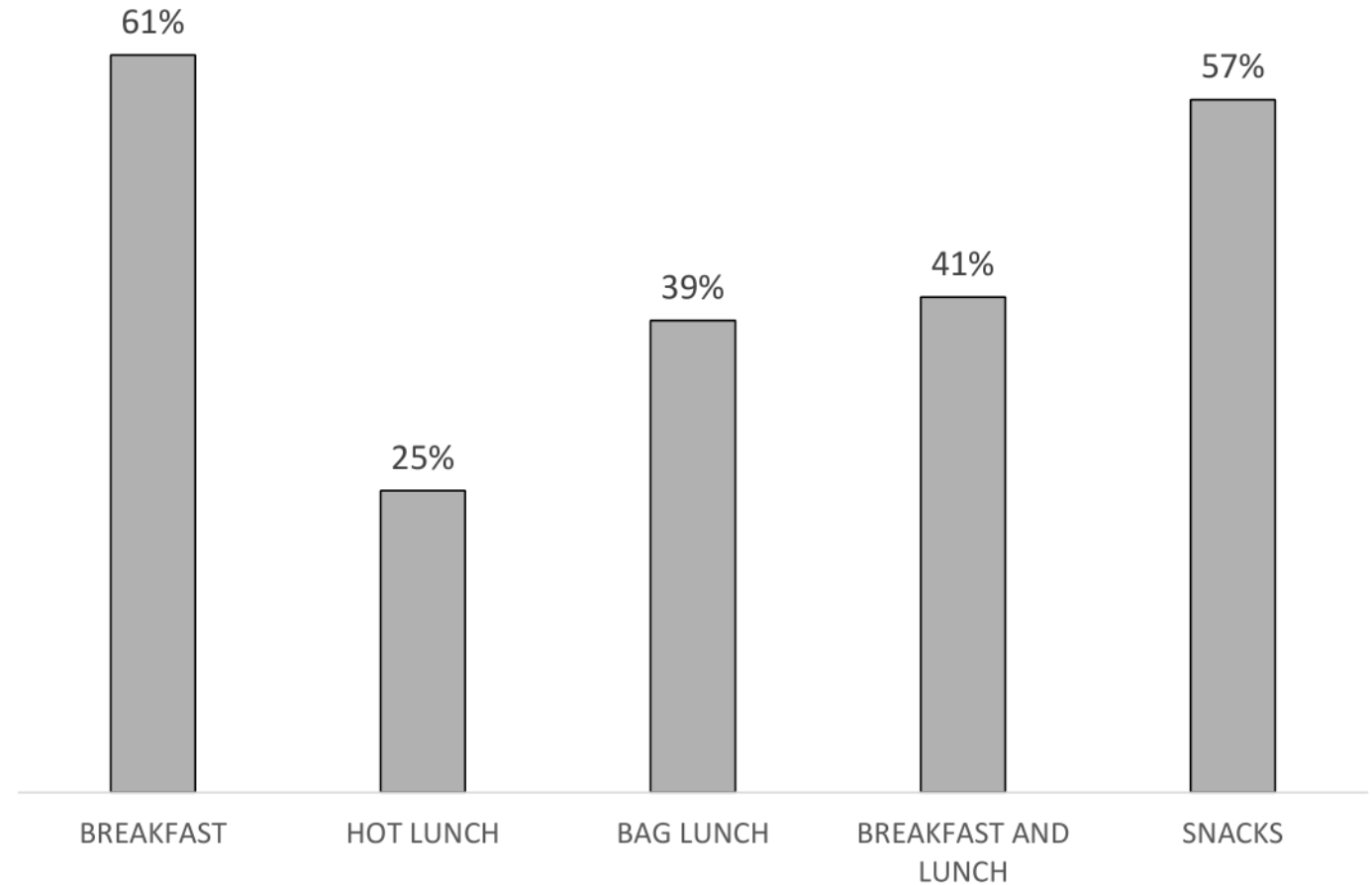


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Note: grey shading indicates <10% of the school district schools have submitted. Survey responses based on 65% of schools as of September 27, 2021.

School Food Programs: % Available Daily

- The majority of school food programs focus on lunch options (64%)
- Followed by those with a daily breakfast (61%)
- Almost half of schools with programs have both breakfast and lunch options daily (41%)
- The remaining have either breakfast, lunches or snacks available a few times per week



Survey responses based on 65% of schools as of September 27, 2021

School Food Programs: In-house vs Outsourced

- Most food programs are administered in house by school employees and/or Parent Advisory Groups
- Grocery stores are the main supplier of school food in BC

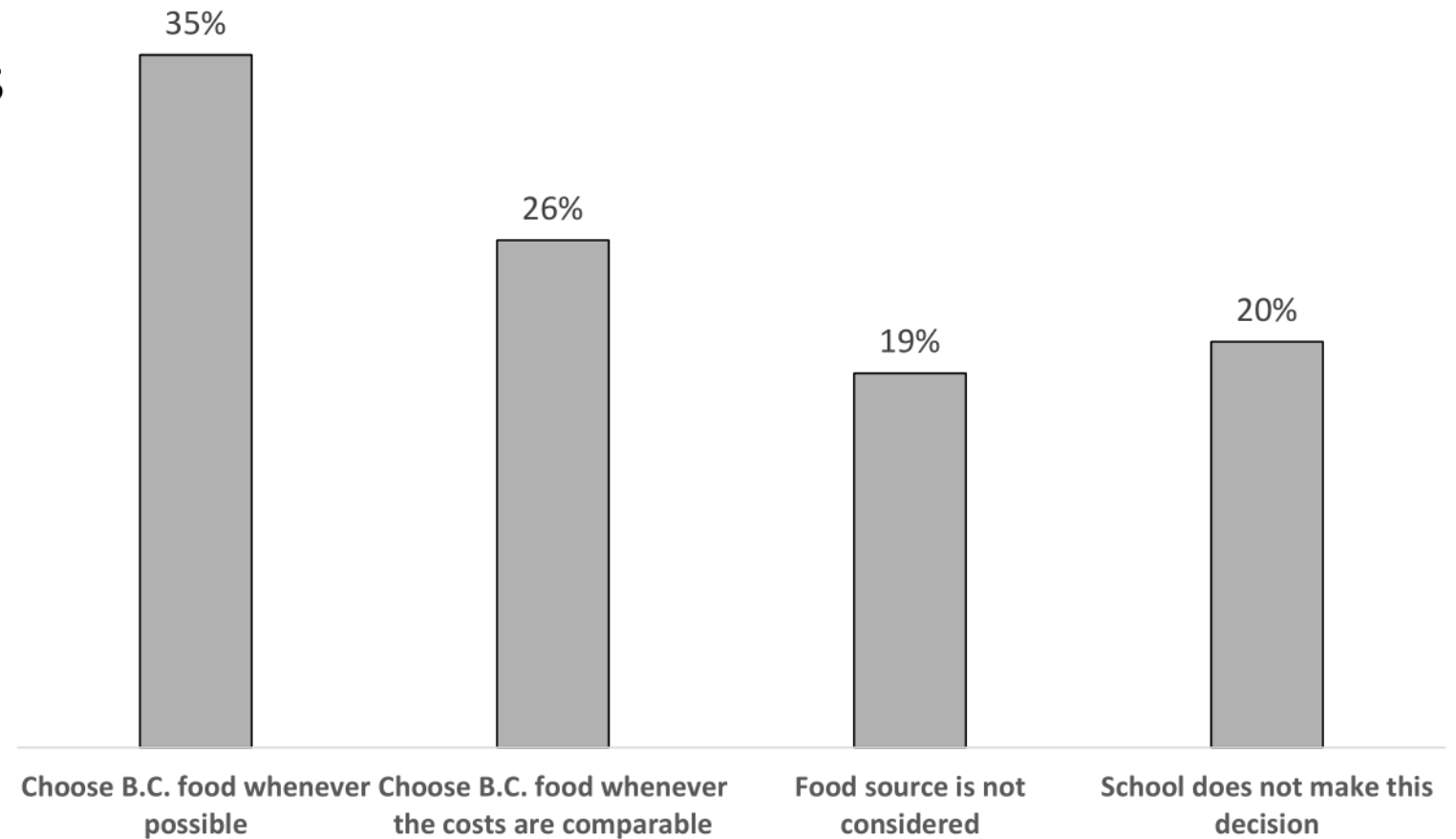


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Note: totals will not add to 100 due to multiple groups being used
Survey responses based on 65% of schools as of September 27, 2021

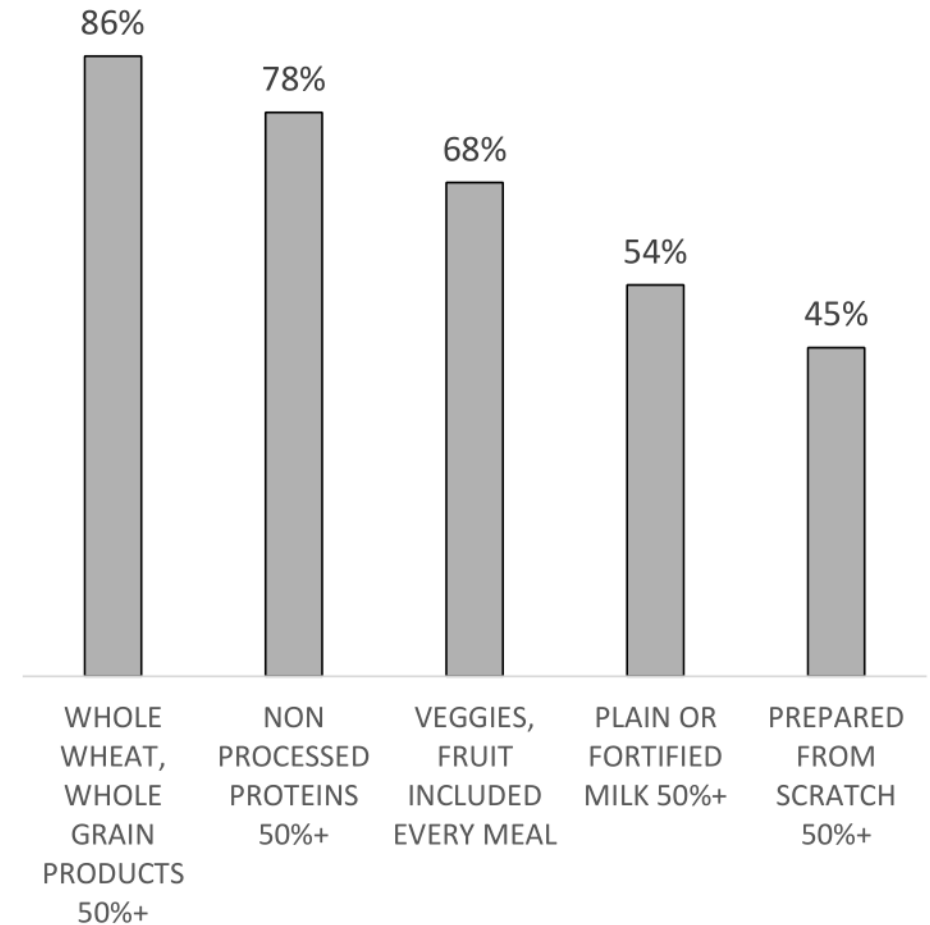
School Food Programs: BC Grown

- At least 61% of school food programs use BC food when costs are comparable.
- 35% of schools use BC food wherever possible

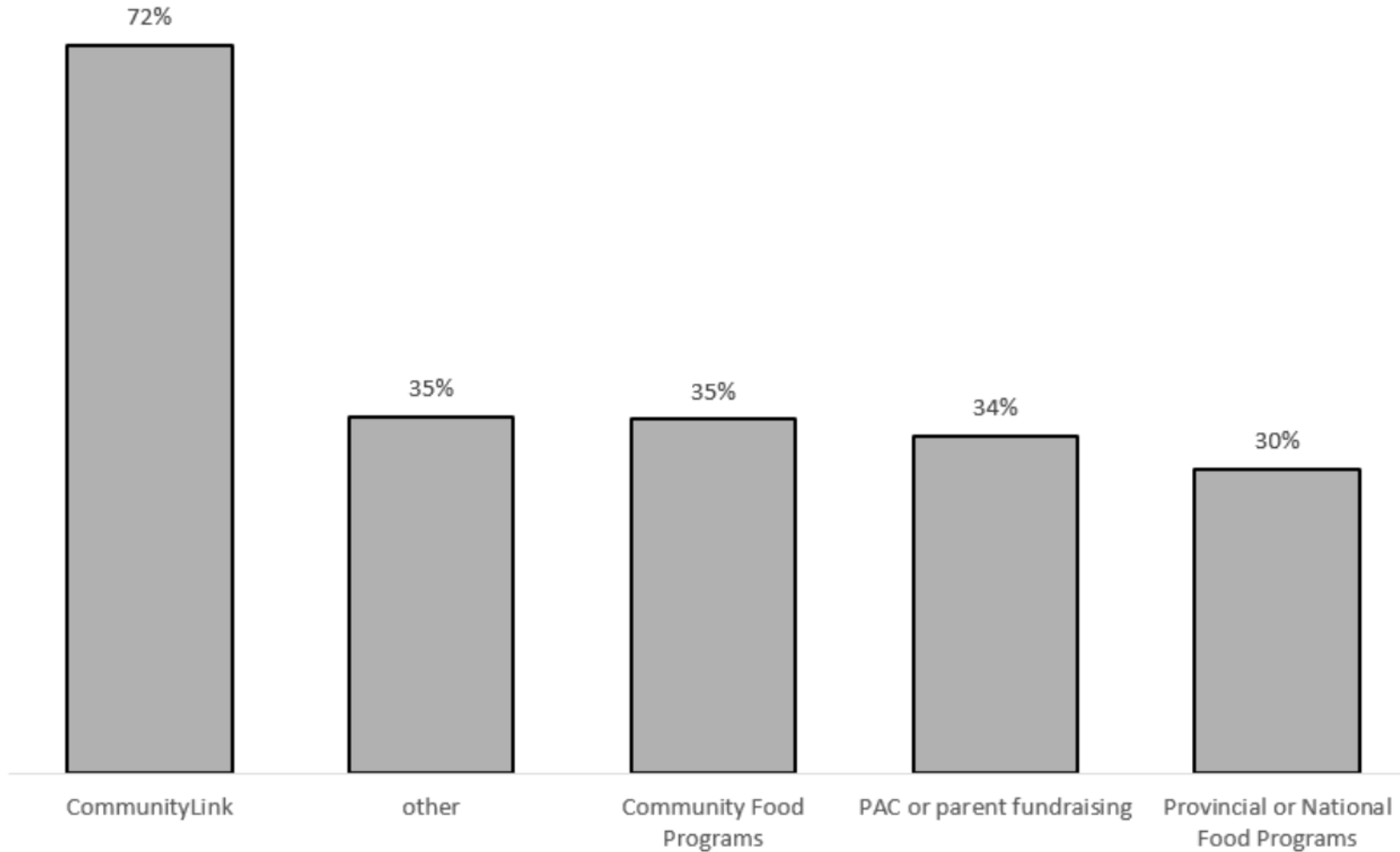


School Food & Nutrition: BC Evidence

- **School nutrition programs positively influence children's nutritional knowledge, dietary behaviour, and food intake (Colley, 2019; Everitt, 2020)**
- As advised for the Ministry of Health Chief Dietitian, a proper meal consists of:
 - fruit and vegetables
 - whole wheat and whole grains (at least 50%)
 - lower saturated fat meats, not commercially processed deli meats
 - plain milk and/or fortified soy beverages, water
 - made from scratch not pre-packaged/purchased
- **Most BC food programs currently meet BC guidelines**
 - 86% of schools report whole wheat products in every meal
 - 68% of schools report including fruit and vegetables in every meal



School Food Programs : Current Funding Sources

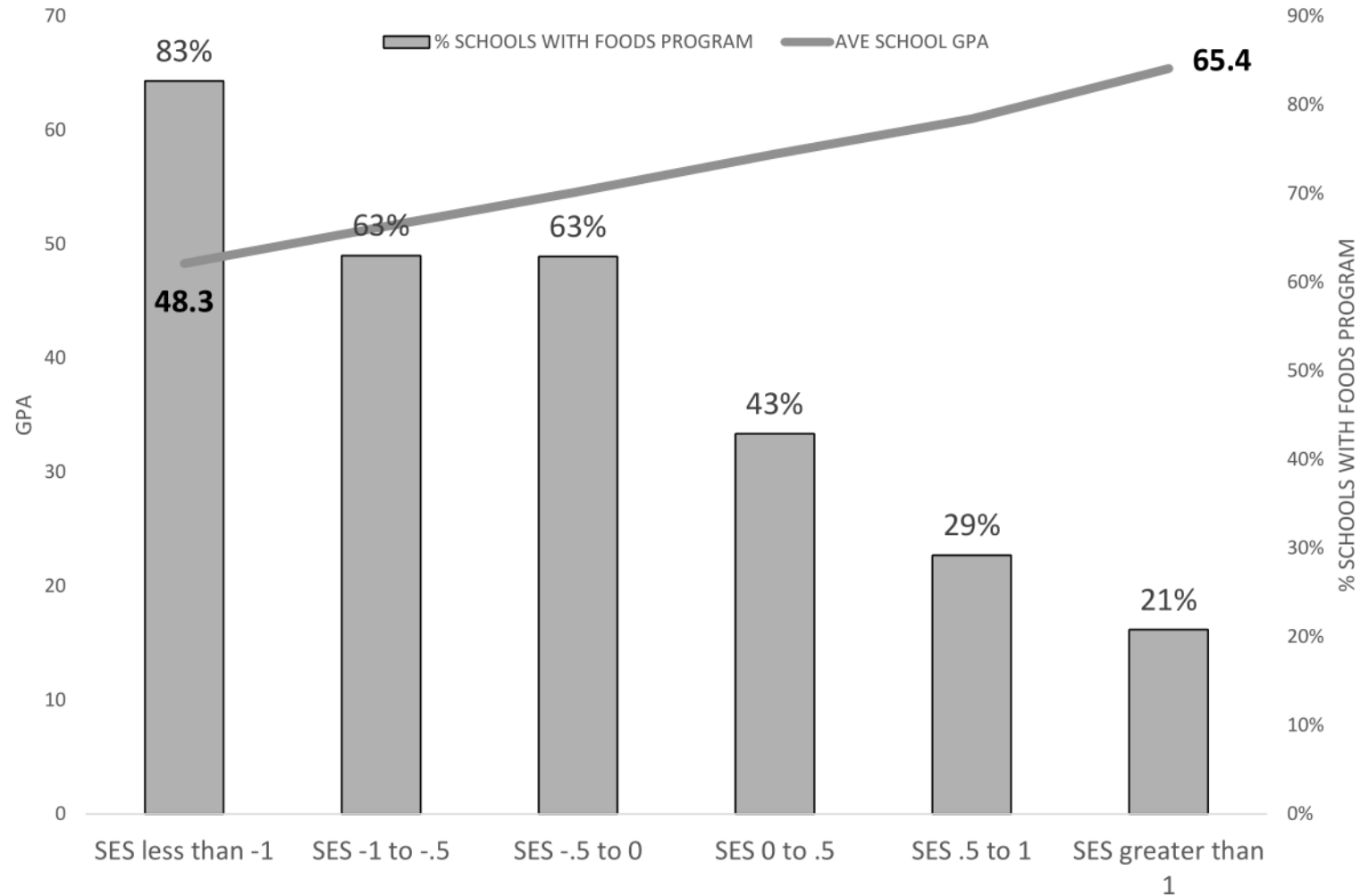


Survey responses based on 65% of schools as of September 27, 2021

- CommunityLink is the primary source of funding identified (used by 72% of schools)
- Other sources include: Donations, Community Fundraising, Breakfast Club of Canada, First Nations, Adopt a School

School Food Programs : Current Utilization

- 83% of schools have a dedicated food program in the lowest socioeconomic neighbourhoods
- 21% of schools have a dedicated food program in the highest socioeconomic neighbourhoods

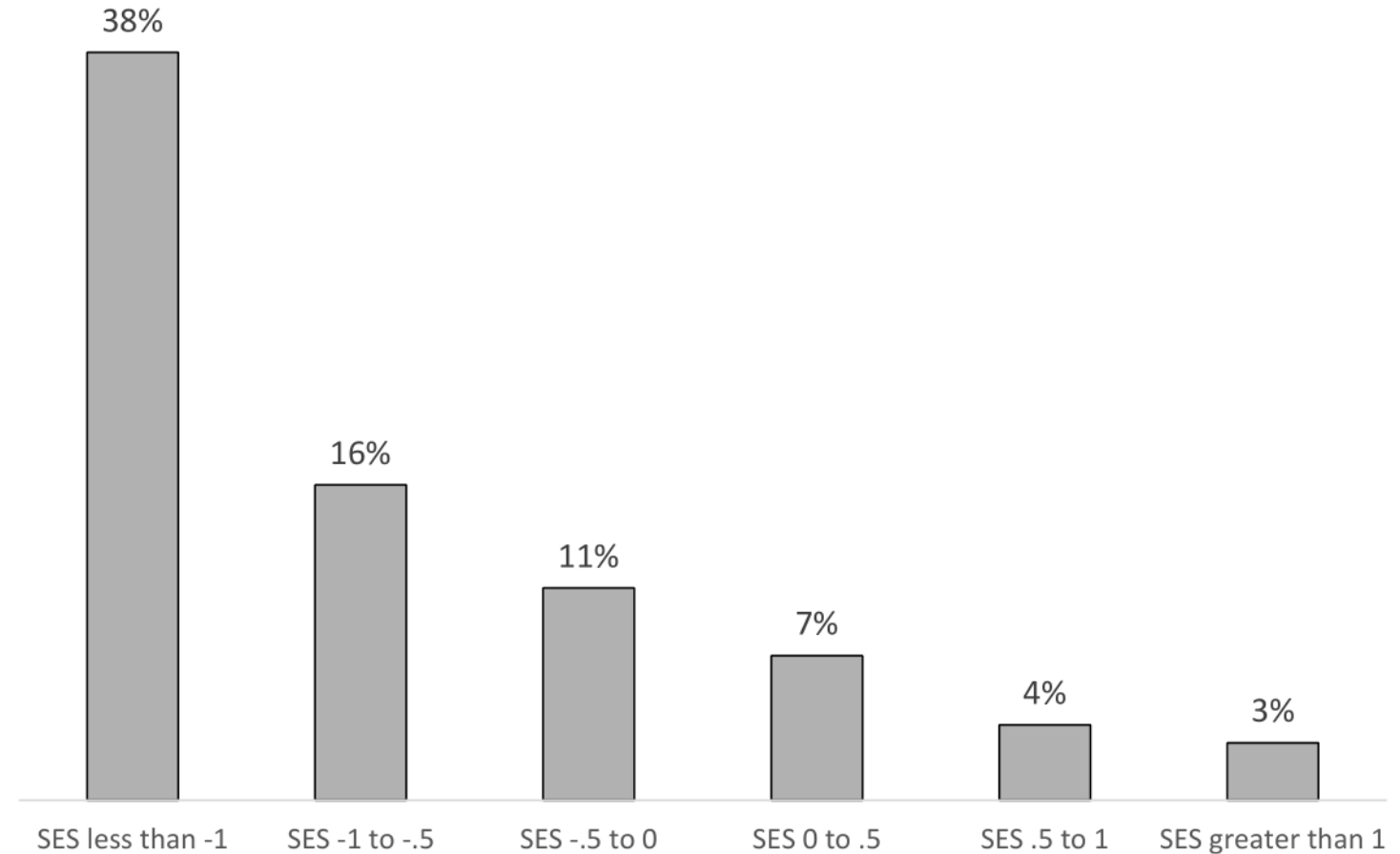


SES: Ministry of Education Socioeconomic Index (BC average =0)
 Survey responses based on 65% of schools as of September 27, 2021
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School Food Programs: Current Utilization

- An estimated 12% of students (over 60,000) access food programs throughout the year, across schools in BC
- This increases to 38% for students in the lowest socioeconomic neighbourhoods

Percent of Students Benefitting from a School Food Program by Socioeconomic Neighbourhood



Gaps – Economic Regions

SES -1.60 | 1.50
-0.05

North Coast and Nechako

Average SES:

-0.93

Percent of Schools with
Food Programs:

83% (38/46 Responses)

Vancouver Island/Coast

Average SES:

-0.55

Percent of Schools with
Food Programs:

58% (68/117 Responses)

Mainland-Southwest

Average SES:

0.23

Percent of Schools with
Food Programs:

44% (185/418 Responses)

Cariboo

Average SES:

-0.99

Percent of Schools with
Food Programs:

64% (30/47 Responses)

Thompson Okanagan

Average SES:

-0.66

Percent of Schools with
Food Programs:

73% (75/103 Responses)

Kootenay

Average SES:

-0.95

Percent of Schools with
Food Programs:

73% (32/44 Responses)

Northeast

Average SES:

-0.87

Percent of Schools with
Food Programs:

50% (17/34 Responses)

Gaps – School Districts

SD Average GPA 33.82 53.24 72.66

- School food programs are not distributed equally across the province
- Some school districts offer a fraction of programs relative to others

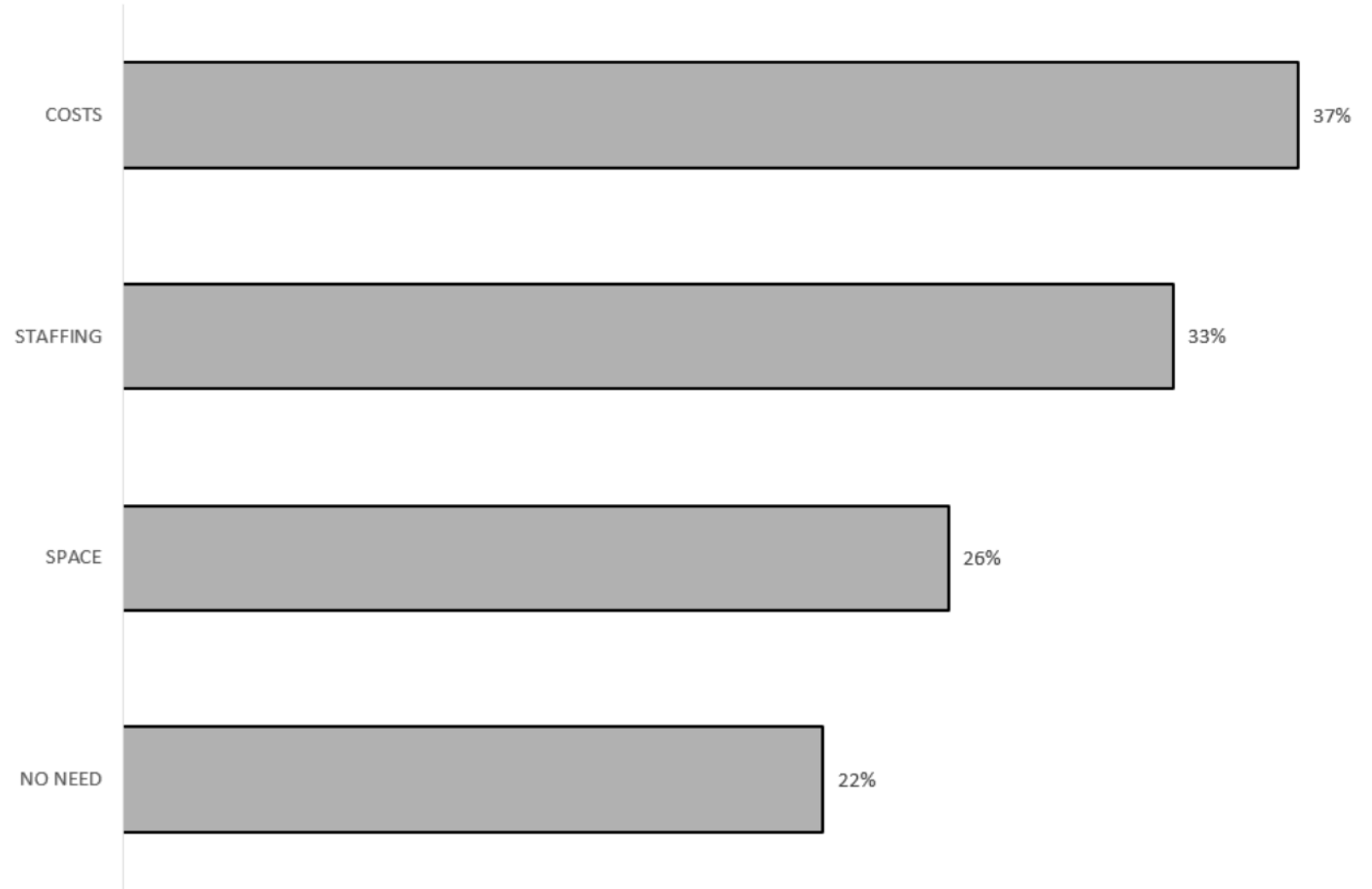


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School Food Programs: Barriers Identified

- \$14.1M in dedicated funding (2019/20) provided to select districts through CommunityLink
- Program Costs and Staffing are identified by districts as the primary barriers to expanding food programs in schools.



Summary of Preliminary Findings

1. 58% of public schools have their own food program, 10% have external food program supplier; 32% have no program.
 - Programs are most likely to be in schools located in lower socioeconomic communities.
 - Higher SES communities are less likely to have a program.
2. Lunch programs are most common (64% of schools provide either hot or bag lunch daily); 61% provide breakfasts; 41% provide both breakfasts and lunch options daily.
3. School employees (non-teaching) are most common human resource in meal provision.
4. Grocery stores are most common supplier of food.
5. At least 61% of responding schools choose BC food: 35% choose BC food whenever possible, 26% whenever affordable.
6. Meal nutrition levels are relatively high and generally aligned with BC nutrition guidelines.
7. CommunityLink is most common funding source.
8. The literature supports:
 - Universal school food programs within a school to increase equity and reduce stigma
 - Targeting programs in the specific schools or regions which are most likely to have large impacts (i.e. invest in lower socioeconomic neighbourhoods)