COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

For consideration at the Standing Committee on City Finance and Services meeting on November 18, 2026

1. Sustainable School Food Funding

Submitted by: Mayor Fry

WHEREAS

1. Vancouver's Healthy City Strategy emphasizes the importance of a healthy, just, and sustainable food system, and aims to increase access to healthy, affordable food for all residents;

2. Access to nutritious food is critical to the health, learning, and overall well-being of school-aged children, with extensive research demonstrating links between healthy school meals;

3. Since 2015, due to the absence of a senior government funded school food program, the City of Vancouver has provided funding to the (VSB) Vancouver School Board's school meal program, mainly its daily lunch program, "Food4Schools" for students experiencing food insecurities;

4. Since 2020 in addition to advocating for the senior government to establish a universal healthy food program, the City has provided $325,000 from the Operating Budget in annual funding through to June 2025;

5. In July of 2024 anticipating substantial new Provincial investment through the "Feeding Futures" Fund and federal funding through a National School Food Program for VSB food programs, VSB were informed that the City's 2025 budget would sunset the City's contribution to Food4Schools, concluding at the end of the 2024/2025 school year;

6. In March 2025, the B.C. Government entered into an agreement with the Government of Canada through the National School Food Program (NSFP), providing approximately $39 million over three years in additional school food program funding to complement Feeding Futures;

7. In April 2025, VSB learned the expected funding allocations would be substantially reduced based on a provincial formula socioeconomic status index. Needs assessments can inadvertently exclude some individuals who may not meet strict eligibility criteria but still experience food insecurity. This can lead to gaps in coverage and prevent the program from fully addressing the needs of the community. In the case of Vancouver, this represents a shortfall for the existing needs of the Food4Schools program and VSB students experiencing food insecurities;

8. In May 2025, Vancouver City Council committed $325,000 for the 2025/26 school year and directed staff to work with VSB staff to determine steps to secure alternative funding to meet the needs of VSB students experiencing food insecurities;

9. In a November 2025 memo ahead of grant allocation staff advised council that: *Beyond the 2025-26 school year, future year grant recommendations related to the*

School Food Program will depend on outcomes of VSB efforts to secure alternative funding[1]; and

10. Necessary funding for School Food has not yet been determined in the City's 2026/27 budget.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff to report back on any necessary allocation of resources to continue City funding to VSB school food programs at a level consistent with prior support ($325,000 annually) for the 2026/27 school year, and continue working with VSB staff to determine steps to secure alternative funding to meet the needs of VSB students experiencing food insecurities;

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to engage with the Vancouver School Board to clarify and report back on outcomes of VSB efforts to secure alternative funding, and how school food program funding is being allocated and spent;

AND FURTHER THAT Council:

a. Reaffirm the City's strong support for a Universal Healthy School Food Program; and

b. Request the Mayor report back on requested advocacy to senior government, including the Minister of Education and Child Care, the Premier of British Columbia, and Vancouver-area MLAs to communicate the City's aligned position, emphasize the urgent need for equitable, appropriate, and sustainable funding to support VSB students facing food insecurity, and express concern regarding the ongoing downloading of social services onto local governments.

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[1] Vancouver RTS 18009 | Memo: Update on School Food Grant Funding to Vancouver School Board https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/2025-11-17-coucil-memo-memo-update-on-school-food-grant-funding-to-vancouver.pdf