In Pursuit of Good Food II: Localized Strategies for School Food Reform at the Boston Arts Academy

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Chapter One: In Pursuit of Good Food II: Localized Strategies for School Reform at the Boston Arts Academy

The Boston Arts Academy (BAA) first partnered with a Tufts University Field Projects team in 2010, in order to help the BAA administration better understand the complex issues that inform school food policy, the government programs involved in feeding students, and student preferences and behavior with respect to school food. This report is an extension of the 2010 report, and focuses on localized strategies to achieving school food reform.

Based on specific research questions posed by the BAA, the Field Projects team identified research subject areas which include regulatory research, school food environments, school food service workers, and food justice and youth engagement. Throughout the project, a variety of research tools were used to address these research questions, including Internet research, an interview, student surveys and focus groups.

The results of our research indicate that there is significant room for improvement concerning issues that the BAA can influence, such as students’ familiarity with food justice, school food service worker/student relationships, nutrition education, increased communication between the BAA and Boston FNS, and other localized strategies for improving school food and cultivating students’ interest in food issues.
Executive Summary

The Boston Arts Academy, a tuition-free pilot school in Boston’s Fenway neighborhood, first partnered with a Tufts University Field Projects Team in 2010 in order to explore the issues surrounding school food, demystify school food policy regulations, and determine strategies for improving school food. The 2012 report is an extension of the 2010 report, and focuses on more localized strategies to achieving school food reform.

Chapter I, the Introduction, provides a further description of the objectives and conclusions of the 2010 project, and the goals for the 2012 project. Chapter II, Methodology, details the research tools employed throughout this project, which include Internet research, an interview with the FNS Field Coordinator for the BAA, student surveys and student focus groups. Based on the research questions developed by the BAA, the field projects team identified research subject areas, which include regulatory research, school food service worker/student relationships, the school food environment and food justice and youth engagement. The methodology chapter is organized into these four sections, and describes the various tools employed to address each area of interest.

Chapter III, the Literature Review, provides context for the key areas of inquiry outlined in the methodology section. The literature review is organized into four sections: 1) Regulatory Research, 2) The School Food Environment, 3) Food Justice and Youth Engagement, and 4)
School Food Service Workers. Regulatory Research contains a review of the structure and function of school food programs and policies, and information concerning what major changes have taken place at the national, state and local level with respect to school food policies and reform since the 2010 Report was published. The School Food Environment describes the types of foods and venues that students are exposed to throughout the school day. The Food Justice and Youth Engagement section provides a background on food justice, and youth participation in food justice themes. The final section of the literature review, School Food Service Workers, explores the literature surrounding the role that school food service workers play in influencing student participation in and satisfaction with school food programs.

Chapter IV, Results, is organized by the research tools employed and the results ascertained from each method. The first part of this chapter details the interview with Debra Korzec, the Nutrition Education Coordinator and a Field Coordinator for fifteen Boston Public Schools, and contains information concerning new policies regarding school food reform and future goals of Boston FNS. During the interview, we determined that scratch cooking is a goal of the new FNS director Michael Peck, and that the BAA can achieve more scratch cooking training through getting certified in food safety procedures. Further, it was revealed that students and BAA faculty can have more of a voice in choosing items served in school meals through increased communication with the Boston FNS office. Through the student surveys and focus groups, we discerned that many students are unsatisfied with the BAA food because of either the specific food items served or the way the food is prepared, and that many choose to eat off campus at McDonalds, CVS or Burger King. We also determined that there is significant room for improvement concerning the relationship between the cafeteria staff and the students, and that the majority of students are unfamiliar with the term food justice.

Chapter V, Discussion, highlights and expands on the themes revealed throughout the results chapter and literature review, which include the BAA students’ desire for more choice and agency with respect to their food choices, as well as the need for increased communication within the BAA and between the BAA and Boston FNS concerning school food.

Chapter VI, Recommendations, details our three final recommendations for the BAA based on our literature review, interview, student surveys, and focus groups. These recommendations, which are expanded on in Chapter VI, include 1) increasing professional development for school food service workers 2) integrating food justice into the BAA curriculum, and 3) creating additional avenues for communication about school food.
Chapter One: Introduction

Project Background

The Boston Arts Academy (BAA), located in Boston’s Fenway neighborhood, is a tuition free pilot school operating within Boston’s public school system. The BAA was founded in 1998, with the distinction of being the city’s “first and only high school for the visual and performing arts,” and offers concentrations (or majors) in the field of Dance, Instrumental Music, Vocal Music, Theatre and Visual Arts.

In recent years, The Boston Arts Academy has focused on the need for more nutritious and better-tasting school food. In 2010, the BAA worked with an Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning (UEP) Field Projects Team from Tufts University in order to determine and understand tools needed to reform school food on the BAA campus. The BAA asked the 2010 Field Projects team to help their administration “understand the complex issues that inform school meal programs, including student preferences and behavior, as well as multi-tiered government programs that are responsible for feeding students” (UEP Field Projects team, 2010).

The 2010 Field Projects study determined that individual schools like the BAA are generally unable to make systemic change in the quality of school food because they are required to operate within the constraints of the federal school meals program. Nevertheless, the BAA has been able to make a few significant improvements, including...
distributed to 37 advisory groups. The Field Projects team received a total of 209 surveys, 23 of which were invalidated due to lack of signatures. The two student focus groups were conducted on March 16, 2012 during advisory period and consisted of a Dance advisory group comprised of 7 students, and a Music advisory group comprised of 8 students. The interview with Debra Korzec, the BPS Nutrition Education Coordinator and Field Coordinator, was conducted on March 30th, 2012.

Research Questions
The following research questions were developed by the Tufts 2012 Field Projects Team in collaboration with the BAA administrators in order to guide the direction of this research project.

- What federal, state and local regulations concerning school food have changed since the 2010 Field Projects Report?
- How might student participation in school lunch programs increase if communication between students and cafeteria staff were to improve?
- Would participation grow with more and better-trained cafeteria staff? Can the BAA implement scratch cooking?
- How would student perception of the relationship among food, nutrition and agriculture change as a result of food justice education?
- Would school lunch participation increase with greater student involvement in food choice and preparation?
- Would participation in or knowledge of food justice increase students’ engagement in and ownership of programs focusing on healthful and unhealthful foods?

Methodology
This section of the report details the specific questions posed by the BAA and the research tools used to address these points of interests. Based on the research questions, the Field Projects team identified research subject areas, which include regulatory research, school food service worker/student relationships, the BAA school food environment and food justice and youth engagement.

In order to answer the set of research questions posed by the BAA, the Field Projects team employed a number of research tools, including Internet research, an interview, student surveys, focus groups and case studies. The student survey was conducted on March 19, 2012 and the introduction of a salad bar, and is looking to continue advancing forward in the fight for good food. As the 2010 Field Projects report noted, “change will require inspired leaders and devoted organizational coalitions to improve upon the unsatisfactory food the federal meals program provides.” The BAA believes that it has its share of inspired leaders, and is now looking to identify and join forces with other groups and coalitions across Massachusetts and beyond that are devoted to the pursuit of good food for young people.

The BAA requested the assistance of the 2012 Field Projects team to help identify strategies to meet its mission of improving the taste and quality of school food, and recommend ways of creating a climate of food activism on the BAA campus. Rather than exploring the complex workings of government programs involved in feeding students, this research is focused primarily on strategies the BAA can implement in a more localized context to achieve school food reform. A short section of this report contains information on regulatory programs that govern school food to provide context for this particular study, and to accommodate for changes in programs and policies since the publication of the 2010 report.
• What community programs are committed to providing healthful food and nutrition? Is this commitment part of their mission or programmatic goals/initiatives?

Research Subjects and Instruments

a) Regulatory Research- Local, State and National Level

The 2012 Field Projects team conducted research on determining what changes have been made at the national, state and local level concerning school food policy and administration. In addition to Internet-based research, we conducted an interview with Debra Korzec, BPS Nutrition Education Coordinator and Field Coordinator, in order to determine local changes in policy relating to school food, challenges in achieving the BAA’s goals, and future directions of Boston FNS.

b) The BAA School Food Environment

Increasing participation in the school food program will require a better understanding of the BAA school food environment, in other words, all the food options available to the students throughout the day. In order to understand all of the food options available to BAA students throughout the school day, the BAA Field Projects team conducted research concerning “off campus” options, such as food trucks and fast food restaurants, and the laws that govern food truck vendors in Boston and other major cities. To determine information concerning the BAA students’ school food environment, questions were included in the student survey concerning off campus options, vending machines and the overall environment of the BAA cafeteria. Further, two student focus groups were conducted in mid March and attended by 7 Dance students and 8 Music students to discern information concerning school food at the BAA.

c) Engagement in Food Justice and Culinary Programs

The BAA is interested in creating a climate around food justice in school. To address this interest, the Field Projects team conducted research concerning ways in which public schools are incorporating themes of food justice and nutrition into the classroom. Furthermore, the student survey contained questions concerning the BAA students’ familiarity with the term and themes of food justice, and their interest in becoming involved with food justice at school. Finally, the Field Projects team conducted two focus groups, which also included questions concerning student familiarity with and interest in food justice themes. To address the BAA’s interest in engaging students in culinary arts programs, we interviewed Debra Korzec concerning the feasibility of after-school cooking programs at the BAA.

d) School Food Service Worker/Student Relationships

The relationship between students and school food service workers is often overlooked, but is a crucial aspect of creating a healthier school food environment. The Field Projects team conducted web-based research concerning how improved relationships between students and cafeteria staff can impact student satisfaction with school food and participation in the school lunch and breakfast programs. Information concerning BAA school food service workers and student relationships was obtained through the student survey distributed to BAA students. Finally, the Field Projects team designed a survey for BAA cafeteria workers concerning their relationships to students and perceptions of their work that may be implemented by BAA staff in the future (Appendix B). The 2012 Field Projects team was unable to implement the survey due to time constraints.
Chapter Two: Literature Review and Background Research

The aim of the literature review is to provide context for the key areas of inquiry outlined by the research questions in the methodology section. Section I, Regulatory Research, contains a review of the structure and function of school food programs and policies, and information concerning what major changes have taken place at the national, state and local level with respect to school food policies and reform. Section II, The School Food Environment, details the types of foods and venues that students are exposed to throughout the school day. The Food Justice and Youth Engagement section provides a brief background on food justice, and youth participation in food justice themes. The final section of the literature review, School Food Service Workers, explores the literature surrounding the role that school food service workers play in influencing student participation in and satisfaction with the school food programs. It is our hope that this chapter illuminates the literature surrounding these key areas of interest, and provides a framework for the recommendations presented in Chapter five.

Regulatory Research

Introduction

The local Food and Nutrition Service office manages BPS food
services, and decides which foods are served at the schools in the district. However, they must work within certain budget, program and nutrition guidelines. BPS schools take part in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), which subsidizes meals at public schools for students from low-income families. This program is administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), but is regulated at the state level. FNS works with the Massachusetts Department of Education (MDOE), to coordinate NSLP commodity food distributions and cash reimbursements for subsidized meals. The Food Service Agency and the Agricultural Marketing Service provide additional assistance in procuring commodities for schools.

School food services work as not-for-profit organizations. Unlike other departments’ food distribution programs, FNS does not receive a set amount of funding for their yearly purchases, but rather is reimbursed for every subsidized meal it can serve. It receives a cash reimbursement along with state commodity foods. The cash reimbursements and commodity foods are given to FNS by the MDOE to distribute to each school food services department. Food services receive different reimbursement rates for free, reduced, and full price meals served. Student eligibility for free or reduced meals is based on family income as a percentage of the poverty line.

NSLP Nutrition Standards

In order to participate in the NSLP, a school’s food service must follow the nutrition guidelines set by the USDA. The NSLP is a major source of nutrition and calories for at least 60% of children in public schools (Poppendieck, 2010). These nutrition standards make the NSLP a key tool in helping children develop healthy eating habits.

While there have been some major changes in the regulations concerning the National School Lunch Program at the federal level, the majority of changes to school food policy and programs in the Boston Public School System have been developed and implemented at a more local level through the Boston FNS office.

In January 2012, the USDA changed the NSLP nutrition standards to require school food services to meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. This increased the number and variety of vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat or reduced fat milk required (Figure 2). At the same time, it decreased the sodium, trans-fat and saturated fat allowed in school foods. The guidelines were also calculated for more narrow age groups in order to be more accurate. These changes were largely based on the recommendations of the Institute of Medicine (2009) in their report, “School Meals: Building Blocks for Healthy Children.” Food services must begin to comply with these new standards by July 2012 (FNS, 2012).

“We have been implementing the guidelines slowly over the last 10 years,” -Debra Korzec

Figure 2. Nutrition School Lunch Program nutrition standards. Adapted from “Rules and Regulations,” by Food and Nutrition Services, 2012, Federal Register, 77(17).
began introducing whole grains into their schools more than a decade ago (Korzec, D. personal communication, March 30, 2012). These schools now have whole grain in their bread, pasta and rice products (Korzec, D. personal communication, March 30, 2012). Examples of how these types of foods have been added to school meals can be seen in Figure 3. FNS has also increased BAA’s vegetable offerings through the Farm-to-School program and the addition of a salad bar (Korzec, D. personal communication, March 30, 2012). Prior implementation of these changes has given the BAA a head start on the new guidelines. Not only has the BAA built the infrastructure necessary to support these new standards, but it has also given the students time to get used to the different tastes. The biggest change for BAA food services is that the new regulations will require students to take either a fruit or vegetable as part of their meal whereas before these items were offered, but students were not required to accept them (FNS, 2012).

Commodity and Commercial Foods

The commodities that schools receive from the USDA are called “entitlement foods.” If there is a surplus of certain food items, schools may also receive these “bonus foods.” States select the foods that then become available to schools from a list of commodities that the USDA has purchased (FNS, 2011). Every month FNS receives these commodities from the state for each BPS school. FNS offices do not have control over what foods they are given, they simply decide whether they want the foods for their district’s schools or not. These commodities are often non-perishable foods such as dried pasta, rice, or canned fruits and vegetables. FNS does not always know what foods it will get ahead of time, but tries to build these items into the menu for the next month.

USDA commodities make up 15 to 20 percent of the products served in school meals (FNS, 2010). FNS is also entitled to a quantity of meat and cheese per school which is redirected for processing and then delivered.
Low participation rates in the school meal program at the BAA are of concern because low participation rates limit BAA food services’ budget, which in turn constrains purchasing options. FNS, in cooperation with BAA food services, has made several attempts to increase participation, but has yet to make a significant difference in participation rates. Participation increased slightly since the BAA became a partially closed campus, whereby it does not allow underclassmen to leave the campus for lunch. However, participation rates did not improve as much as the administration had hoped they would. There are also concerns that many students who previously ate off campus are now choosing to forgo lunch rather than buy food at the cafeteria.

The School Food Environment

The term “school food environment” is used to discuss the food that young people are exposed to during school and en route to and from school. This term recognizes that school food extends beyond the food provided by national school food program and policies. In order to increase student satisfaction with meals served at the BAA, it is important to understand the other options available to students, and what drives them to make these choices.

The reasons why students choose to pursue off-campus dining options or vending machine products during meal times are as diverse as the student body of the BAA. However, one of the most attractive factors, particularly with respect to off campus meals, is the impressive amount of choice and flexibility that fast food restaurants and convenient stores appear to offer students.

This notion of “choice” in the U.S. food system is one that many good food activists have been combating for years. Are students really making “choices” if they are being targeted? In 2006, fast food companies spent approximately $300 million dollars in marketing...
specifically designed to reach children and teens (FTC, 2008). In 2007, the average teen (age 12-17) watched 4.1 commercials on television per day for fast food marketing (Powell, 2010). Young people are particularly targeted in school environments, as spatial mapping of fast food restaurants has revealed that these restaurants tend to cluster around schools (Austin et al., 2005).

Apart from being targeted by media and in school environments, students perceive the illusion of choice because the products of fast food restaurants seem to offer variety. However, Freeman (2007) argues that this “illusion of choice in food consumption is a particularly powerful and entrenched social myth” (Freeman, 2007: 2246). Many food advocates, such as Stuffed and Starved author Raj Patel, argue that the illusion of choice is mostly derived from a small handful of agricultural commodities, such as corn or soybeans, disguised and uniquely packaged to provide a mirage of variety (Patel, 2009).

**Historical Overview: Fast Food and Soft Drink Companies**

Historically, fast food and soft drink corporations have infiltrated the American school system, particularly underfunded public schools, through advertising and marketing strategies (Freeman, 2007; Nestle, 2000). Beginning as early as the 1960’s, school districts contracted with fast food and soft drink companies for money and equipment in exchange for companies’ rights to sell their products on campuses and to have their logo on schools’ equipment and facilities. These contracts were permitted by amendments to the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, which in turn amended provisions of the National School Lunch Act of 1946 (Nestle, 2000). The relationships between market forces and government structures in respect to the regulations for sales of soft drinks and other “competitive” foods (foods that compete with items from school food programs) illustrate the ways commercial concerns influence Congressional decisions about matters that affect the health of children.

**Fast Food: Accountability and Restrictions**

Fast food restaurant accountability has and can take place in the form of land use requirements. Freeman (2007) notes that local governments impose land use requirements on fast food restaurants that can reduce their appeal and availability to children by: 1) prohibiting the distribution of promotional toys and games and the location of playground equipment and arcade games in fast food restaurants, 2) requiring that fast food outlets maintain minimum distances from schools and playgrounds, and 3) placing a cap on the number of fast food outlets in one community and limiting their proximity to one another. Yet young people’s exposure to fast food advertising has only increased over the years, with teens viewing 39% more TV ads for fast food restaurants in 2009 compared to 2003 (Harris et al., 2010). Therefore, the effects of land use restrictions are often limited by the exorbitant amount of resources spent on food marketing to young people.

**Food Trucks**

A food truck is a mobile venue that sells food. While some peddle healthy, fresh cuisine, others carry items high in fat and calories that mirror those served in fast food restaurants.

The National Policy & Legal Analysis Network (NPLAN) has created a model ordinance for cities and advocates looking to use regulatory measures against food vendors who provide unhealthy options for children. In 2011 NPLAN created a model “Healthy Food Zone Ordinance,” that prohibits new fast food restaurants from locating within a certain distance from any school or other designated location children are likely to frequent, such as parks, playgrounds, or youth centers. The option to prohibit mobile vendors is also a part of a “Healthy Food Zone.” This model references cities like Stockton,
Food Justice and Youth Engagement

According to the New York-based organization Just Food, food justice is “communities exercising their right to grow, sell and eat [food that is] fresh, nutritious, affordable, culturally appropriate, and grown locally with care for the well-being of the land, workers and animals” (Just Food, 2011). While this definition varies between food justice groups and advocates, the principles of food justice are rooted in an understanding of the issues of race and class that influence the food system in every step from production to consumption. Further, the food justice discourse highlights the “illusion of choice” referred to in the School Food Environment portion of the literature review.

Young people have been identified as one of the most vulnerable groups within food insecure communities (Allen, 1999; Cammarota & Ginwright, 2002; Cannuscio, Weiss & Asch, 2010). Although many recent nutrition interventions have highlighted the role of school meals in youth obesity prevention, it is also important to examine opportunities beyond school boundaries (Gebauer & Nelson, 2011). For example, research indicates that food retailers cluster around high schools, providing additional food purchasing opportunities for students before, during, and after school. Convenience stores located in close proximity to junior high and high schools represent an important and understudied component of the youth food environment, particularly in urban areas, and should be a part of future efforts to improve school food (Zenk & Powell, 2008).

A student body that is knowledgeable about food justice will have a more complete understanding of how to improve school food. Students that are 1) cognizant of the ways in which they are wrongfully targeted, 2) concerned about where their food comes from, and 3) given a space to discuss their experiences around food and food systems, will only strengthen the school food dialogue. There are multiple organizations in the Boston area that are operating within a
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In this study, Meyer and Conklin surveyed 1,823 students from nine schools representing four geographic regions. The study reported that SFW behavior, such as smiling and greeting students, was highly correlated with overall student satisfaction with the school food service program (Meyer & Conklin, 1998). In their conclusion, Meyer and Conklin argue that because High School students are sophisticated and are exposed at an early age to a variety of dining experiences “it is not enough to prepare healthful, good tasting food” (Meyer & Conklin, 1998). In order to maintain participation levels, factors such as SFW behavior and marketing must be adopted into strategic planning to influence student participation (Meyer & Conklin, 1998). Another study, conducted by Perry et al. (2004) reported that verbal encouragement by SFWs was directly related to increased consumption of fruit at lunch. These studies suggest that through both behavioral and verbal cues, SFWs have the potential to influence student participation in and satisfaction with school food services.

Perception of School Food Workers of their Influence on Student Food Choices

Fulkerson et al. (2002) conducted a study to identify perceptions and behaviors of high school SFWs concerning their interactions with students during school lunch. More specifically, the study attempted to assess SFWs perceptions of their influence on student food choices. The study showed that roughly half of surveyed SFWs believe that influencing what students choose at meal times is an important part of their job, but only one fourth perceived that they had a significant influence on student purchases (Fulkerson et al., 2002). Further, 73.8% of staff surveyed indicated that they would be willing to suggest healthful foods to students, 91.9% noted that they would be willing to give positive reinforcement to students for choosing healthy options and 67% indicated interest in receiving training about healthful eating for teenagers (Fulkerson et al., 2002). Though only a quarter of SFWs participating in the survey indicated that they had a significant

Case Study: San Antonio High School & Food Justice

The San Antonio High School Food Justice program is a hands-on, interdisciplinary class focused on building community around sustainable food. Since the fall of 2010, students have planted, maintained, and harvested over 3,200 square feet of raised bed gardens. The class educates at-risk youth about healthy food choices and food justice politics by reading and discussing articles and watching videos related to current food justice, health, and environmental issues. San Antonio students partner with Claremont College interns, work with a professional chef to develop recipes and cooking skills, and a master mason to build an outdoor classroom. The program promotes skill and knowledge building, and youth leadership development (TESP, 2011).

School Food Service Workers

School food service workers (SFWs) are often overlooked as potential sources of influence on student health and nutrition. While the role of SFWs has traditionally focused on planning, purchasing, preparing and serving meals to students, studies have shown that SFWs also play a crucial role in influencing student participation in school food programs and daily food choices through certain behavioral and verbal cues. SFWs can also increase student engagement and satisfaction with school food service programs through further developing their culinary skills.

SFW Behavior and Student Participation

A study by Meyer and Conklin (1998) demonstrates how students’ overall satisfaction with school meals is connected to SFW behavior.

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food justice framework, most notably, The Food Project, which has been engaging youth in agriculture, food policy and advocacy since 1991.
impact on student purchases, 16 students were observed asking for recommendations, and all but one purchased the recommended product (Fulkerson et al., 2002). Both the Fulkerson et al. (2002) and Perry et al. (2004) studies suggest that SFWs can influence student school food choices (Cullen and Watson, 2007).

The Need for SFW Professional Development

As the demand for healthier foods in schools increases, attention has turned to the culinary skills of the personnel that prepare it. Kristen Wyatt, reporting for the Huffington Post, writes “what good are fresh local produce and grass fed beef, for example, if the lunchroom employees know how to make only canned vegetables and frozen fish sticks?” (Wyatt, 2008).

“What good are fresh local produce and grass fed beef, for example, if the lunchroom employees know how to make only canned vegetables and frozen fish sticks?” -Wyatt (2008)

The Denver, Colorado Public Schools are one of many public school systems working to improve cooking techniques in food service staff. The city issued 600 SFWs chef’s coats and hats, and is attempting to have all SFW trained in basic knife skills. In the summer of 2008, Denver Public Schools offered its first “scratch cooking” training, where 40 women spent three weeks learning to cook food from scratch and how to better use their meager resources to do so (Wyatt, 2008). These kinds of trainings are springing up through the country, and are often referred to as “Culinary Boot Camps.” The Colorado Health Foundation funded four Denver Culinary Boot camps in 2010, using $400,000 in federal stimulus money channeled through the U.S. Center for Disease Control (Bruske, 2010).
Interview

The following information was obtained during an interview conducted on March 30th, 2012 with Debra Korzec, the Nutrition Education Coordinator and a Field Coordinator for fifteen Boston Public Schools.

Menu Planning

In general, FNS serves the same menu at each BPS school. Ms. Korzec writes the menus for the 15 schools she is responsible for as their Field Coordinator. She constructs these menus based on surveys from the food service managers throughout the district. Having a consistent menu throughout the district allows FNS to serve students at different schools equally well and to buy school food items in bulk, thus conserving FNS funds.

While FNS creates a district wide menu, schools can have a “Manager’s Choice” item that is unique to their school, as often as once a week. An example of this can be seen in Figure 3. FNS is open to having students send in recipes from home to try at the school, and would even name it “so and so’s mom’s dish.” These dishes would be incorporated into the menu as “manager’s choice” items.
Culinary Arts in Schools

FNS allows students to use the kitchen after daily food service operations are over for a cooking class or club. A paid kitchen staff member is required to supervise and show students how to use all of the equipment safely. Students can help prepare a meal for the school lunch provided they used foods from approved sources. If students wish to cook with foods from their home or other non-approved food sources, BAA would have to have a separate refrigerator to hold these items. Though students can use the non-approved foods in their cooking classes and consume these foods themselves, they cannot serve them as part of a school meal.

All foods used in NSLP food service come from approved food sources. This means that FNS knows that a provider uses all of the food safety precautions they require. This includes keeping the food at a certain temperature while it is transported and properly inventoried when it arrives at a school. This food inventory system limits waste by making sure foods are used before their expiration date and keeps expired foods from piling up in a school’s refrigerator where they could accidentally be used.

Scratch Cooking

FNS’s primary concerns with offering more meals cooked from scratch are 1) food safety, 2) training, and 3) time. Foods like raw chicken are covered in bacteria, and exposure to raw meat can increase the chances of students becoming sick. Before working with raw food, it is necessary that kitchen staff have proper training. Most BPS schools do not currently have enough cafeteria staff who are ServSafe Certified to offer meals cooked from raw meat. However, Boston FNS will pay for food safety certification and scratch cooking classes for schools that are interested in increasing the

Changes to BPS Food Services

The addition of the salad bar was an important step forward for BAA food services, as not many schools in the BPS system have this amenity. Though students may take as much as they like from the salad bar, students who use the salad bar may not choose an entree as well (students choose between an entree and the salad bar). When the salad bar was first implemented, approximately 120 students per day were using it. This number has since dwindled to about 70 students per day.

Produce from the Farm-to-School program is served every Thursday. The produce is from Czajkowski Farm in Hadly, MA and Lanni farms in Worcester, MA. BPS FNS is in the second year of the program and over 40,000 lbs of fresh produce has been served in BPS schools over the past two years. Some schools have made colorful signs and actively advertise their farm-to-school produce to encourage students to eat it.

In early March, FNS Director Michael Peck pulled all of the finely textured lean beef from use. Boston FNS had become aware of the fact that these products are treated with ammonia. Since the USDA considers the use of ammonia a “process” and not an ingredient, it is not labeled on the beef they were receiving from the USDA. While the Boston FNS program will not be reimbursed for the $700,000 dollars worth of finely textured lean beef it removed from the menu, the district believes that this change was necessary to protect the health of its students. BPS was the first school district in the United States to eliminate this product.
amount of scratch cooking in their cafeterias. Apart from staff training, another difficulty with scratch cooking is that it can take more time to prepare, and may be a cumbersome responsibility for SFWs, who are already pressed for time. Nevertheless, culinary training opportunities can give SFWs the tools they need to cook from scratch in a time effective manner.

“FNS can provide Food Safety training and scratch cooking training.” -Debra Korzec

Two major benefits from scratch cooking include food that is fresher and food that is less processed. The former will take some time to address. Although BAA must receive pre-cooked meats, FNS can provide foods that are less processed. Here, less processed means more simply prepared foods, for example, bone-in baked breaded chicken pieces instead of chicken patties. BAA can currently ask FNS for raw non-meat foods.

FNS Goals: Future Directions

FNS Director Michael Peck would like to move towards having more scratch cooked meals in BPS, yet as previously discussed, scratch cooking poses numerous food safety concerns. FNS’s primary concern is to ensure that school food is safe for consumption, and has begun taking steps to address this concern.

For example, as of March 2012, every food service manager in the BPS system became Level One Certified by the School Nutrition Association, meaning that all participants have completed 10 hours of nutrition training, 10 hours of sanitation training, and have passed the ServSafe Food Safety Certification test. The next step will be to work towards getting assistant managers and other staff members food

“We are always feeding kids. That’s our business. That’s what we do. Nobody does it better than us. Can we do it better? Yes, Absolutely.” -Debra Korzec

students’ satisfaction with the food served in the cafeteria, as well as their opinions on the salad bar and off-campus food, their relationships with the cafeteria staff, and their interest in both food justice and school food involvement.

Student Commentary on BAA Food

BAA students provided varied responses about their satisfaction with the cafeteria food. 11% of students are satisfied with school lunch; 43% of students are not satisfied and 46% of survey respondents are neutral (Figure 9). The survey results indicate that 25% of students never eat at the school cafeteria, a little under half eat there from time to time, and only a third eat there almost every day (Figure 10). When asked about the reasons why they disliked cafeteria food 49% of students indicated that they
dislike the cafeteria food because of the way it is prepared, 35% do not like the specific foods served or want more variety, 6% of the students surveyed indicated that the portions are too small, and 4% said the foods conflict with their diet (Figure 11). The 4% students who said BAA foods conflicted with their diets were mostly vegetarians or vegans who are having difficulties finding foods that met their dietary restrictions.

Most students surveyed do not use the salad bar. About 15% of students use the salad bar regularly while 25% of students use it from time to time (Figure 12). 31% of students are satisfied with the salad bar options and 26% are dissatisfied with the salad bar items, however, the majority of students are neutral concerning the available options at the salad bar (Figure 13). Many students expressed frustration around the quality of the lettuce, noting that “the lettuce is dry.” Students who identified as vegetarian or vegan said there are not any vegetarian protein options available at the salad bar.

The School Food Environment

A majority of BAA students indicated that they never eat off campus. However, BAA students in the 9th and 10th grade are not allowed to go off campus during lunch hours. In order to factor this into our survey results, we calculated the number of surveys completed by upperclassmen and underclassmen. For example, though the survey results indicate that 63% of students never eat off campus (Figure 14), 67% of the students who participated in our survey were underclassmen. These results indicate that most upperclassmen eat off campus regularly. It is also interesting to note that some of the underclassmen are still getting food from off campus sources despite regulations to the contrary. In the focus groups, some of the students mentioned ordering food to be delivered to the school or asking the older students to bring food back for them as a way in which to get around this policy.

Of the students who eat off campus, many voiced their satisfaction with the off-campus choices. For example, most students, who do eat off campus eat at Burger King, a food truck that sits right outside of the school, CVS, and/or Subway. This was reflected in the focus groups that we conducted as well: “I like the location of all the restaurants... you have so much choice” and “you have variety.” There were also statements from the students in the survey that related their reasoning for going off-campus to the natural environment: “I like to enjoy the outside especially with a friend and going out the school relaxes and helps refresh me” and “I like to go outside when the weather is nice.”

Food Justice and Youth Engagement

Almost half (41%) of BAA students are neutral concerning getting involved in improving school food, while 20% are interested and 39% are not interested (Figure 15).

In the focus groups, when asked to define food justice, students’ responses varied. Some students believe that “food justice existed at the BAA because there is always fruit and salad.” One student saw food justice as means to involve local farmers in the school system: “It shouldn’t just be Whole Foods or a little farmers markets here providing fresh foods, it should be in the school system because food is so connected to how you function. It is your fuel and what you put into your body is really what you get... its not good eating the school food and then going to dance class.” However, while a few students seem to have a good idea of what food justice is, the majority of students were unfamiliar with the term.

While there was no clear consensus, students suggested a variety of creative ways to engage students in improving school food. One student believes that education is a big component of getting students.
engaged, stating “education on local farms and the differences between processed foods and organic food, because some people think its just food and its no big deal, but it can be life changing what you eat.” Students also expressed interest in working with food services to learn about the process of ordering and preparing school food. As one student noted, “I would like to be involved because you don’t really know what’s going on, I just want to get to know them and what they do, and see and know... because all I know is they hand you food, you pay, and then you leave the line.”

**School Food Service Workers/Student Relationships**

While 41% of students were neutral concerning their relationship with cafeteria staff, 38% do not have a good relationship with cafeteria staff while 21 % of students report a good relationship (Figure 16). A handful of students who reported that they did not have a good relationship with cafeteria staff indicated that cafeteria staff “played favorites.”
Chapter Four: Discussion

The discussion section aims to reflect on the literature review and the results section, and illuminates the thematic findings of our research. The major themes that appear throughout the discussion section are communication, choice and variety, agency and relationship building.

Regulatory Research- BPS and BAA officials

Communication

Through engaging with the BAA students and administration, as well as our interview, we have noticed inconsistencies in information that seems to stem from a lack of clear communication between all parties. Ms. Korzec was very interested in several of the food service changes BAA administrators are looking for; however, she notes that she has not received the information from the BAA that she would need in order to implement these changes.

Many of the changes that FNS has made to food services, such as working with Farm-to-School, have gone largely unnoticed and under utilized by the students. Maximizing the number of students that take advantage of these improvements helps students get the best meal they can, and encourages FNS to make more investments in BAA food services.

Students are demanding healthier foods, but do not necessarily know what healthy food looks like. In the focus groups, students who said...
they didn’t eat at the cafeteria because it was not healthy also said that if the cafeteria pizza was more like Domino’s pizza, they would eat at the school cafeteria all the time. In fact, the pizza served in the BAA cafeteria is healthier than Domino’s pizza, as the BAA’s pizza is made with whole wheat flour and low-fat mozzarella cheese.

Surveys

FNS sees concrete data on student food preferences as essential to changing the foods in the schools it serves. An example of this data would be to conduct a comprehensive survey asking students what foods in the current menu they like and don’t like. This type of data could help Ms. Korzec change the specific foods that are sold in BAA’s cafeteria.

Improving Food Quality

The BAA expressed concern about the quality of food served in their cafeteria. The BAA administration is looking to improve the school food by having more food cooked from scratch and fewer highly processed, pre-cooked foods. FNS relies on pre-cooked/pre-baked foods because its kitchen staff is often not sufficiently trained in food safety. Food preparation and food type appear to be the major reasons students dislike the food at the cafeteria.

In the student surveys, poor preparation accounted for almost half of the responses concerning why students dislike the cafeteria food. Specifically, receiving under or over cooked food was a very common survey response. When pre-baked food is not heated appropriately it may be unappetizing, however, under cooking raw ingredients will make students sick. Though FNS is open to using scratch cooking, the BAA kitchen staff will need to receive more safety training before they can be given raw meats to ensure that the food is safe for consumption.

The School Food Environment

The fast food restaurants and convenience stores available to BAA students may present students with a perception of choice and a variety of options that they may not feel exist within the BAA’s cafeteria. While students may eat off campus because they want to be outside or get away from the school environment, an overwhelming amount of students may eat off-campus because it provides them with an element of choice and decision-making. Throughout the focus groups and surveys, students underscored how choice and variety are things they strongly value. Burger King, Subway, CVS, and Panera were some of the main food vendors that students said they frequent. Most students expressed satisfaction with their off-campus options, with statements such as, “I like the location of all the restaurants you have so much choice” and “you have variety.” With respect to other school cafeterias, one student mentioned a neighboring school cafeteria and how there is a variety of different sections separated by food themes, such as grilled foods, vegetables, fruits, and pizza.

In discussing the salad bar, students also expressed a desire for increased variety in the food items presented. For example, one student who eats at the cafeteria regularly stated that, “The salad bar that’s pretty good, they have ham, chicken, cheese, they make you feel like you have a variety of stuff, I like it.” By contrast, some students stated “What’s available to put on the salad bar is not that healthy, there’s the lettuce that’s healthy but then there’s bacon and cheese” and “Ok there’s the salad bar and then there is the regular school lunch that’s really greasy...what if we don’t want salad?” This may show that some students see choice and variety not simply as more options but as more healthy options. This may disrupt the perception that students choose to eat off-campus in place of the cafeteria, because they want less healthy foods (for example, fast food). Quite the contrary, students who do not eat at the cafeteria and would rather eat off-campus may be concerned with choice and variety concerning healthier, rather than
In Pursuit of Good Food II: Localized Strategies for School Reform at the Boston Arts Academy

lacks. Multiple students discussed their disappointment with the lack of healthy options available in the cafeteria, though others did express a desire for more fried foods as well.

Food Justice and Youth Engagement

The Food Justice discourse illuminates the lack of choice in the food system and the illusion of choice that the industrial food systems that feeds our public schools has created. The desire for choice, autonomy, healthier communities and justice is fueling the interest of young people throughout the United States in food justice themes and activities.

The student surveys and focus groups reflect the desire of BAA students for choice and autonomy in their daily food choices. In the focus groups, students were often most engaged in the conversation when discussing themes relating to agency. One student noted that “We know that the school gets [the food] from other sources so we feel like we don’t really have a choice in what they decide to buy for us because the school of course like any other corporation or business wants to go through the cheapest way.” As previously noted, students were also dissatisfied with the portion size offered by the BAA at meal times, and expressed a desire to choose their own portion sizes. Perhaps, among other reasons, to recapture a sense of choice and agency, many students pursue off-campus options at lunch time, at venues such as convenient stores and fast food restaurants. As the literature review emphasizes, this choice is an illusion created by the industrial food system. The food justice discourse aims to illuminate this distortion of reality, and resonates well with young people, who are often seeking autonomy and agency.

Agency is another theme that was prevalent in our investigation of the school food environment. Throughout the focus groups, students expressed a desire to be able to make their own decisions, for example “We can make our own personal decisions,” “Don’t make the decision for us,” and “If you can trust us to choose between school food and McDonalds then why not let us choose between juice and chocolate milk?” However, students must be aware that these decisions are not necessarily entirely their own, and that they have been targeted by powerful marketing forces with respect to their food choices. The food justice framework seeks to reveal this false perception of choice, and may speak to the many BAA students who express the desire for agency regarding food choices.

Another way in which students assert their need for choice and autonomy is through the desire to choose their own portions at meal time. Some students believe that the portion sizes are too small, while other students see food being wasted, and therefore would like to be able to choose their own portion sizes.

The students expressed frustration with the lack of preparation that goes into the cafeteria food. This lack of preparation, according to the students, is evidenced by the amount of fried and pre-heated foods as well as the lack of flavor in the food: “I would say that 90% of the food, at least, is frozen or opened with a can opener and then just cooked and it’s either still cold or over cooked.” Multiple students noted that they believe that most of the food is not actually cooked by cafeteria staff.

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Boston is home to a variety of successful urban agriculture and food justice projects that integrate youth into their mission, specifically. The Food Project. Youth at The Food Project are thinking creatively about ways to restructure the food system so that it is more just and more sustainable. In addition, Sociedad Latina, a Roxbury-based organization that cultivates leaders among Latino youth, has already expressed an interest in collaborating with the BAA concerning the possible development of a food justice curriculum, and is another organization that can provide resources and serve as an effective partner for the BAA. While youth engagement in agriculture and the food system has a variety of tremendous benefits, a key outcome is that youth often become more aware of their own diets, and of the food environment that provides these dietary options (or lack of options). If BAA students are inspired by the food justice discourse, this will likely lead to improved eating habits, as well as an interest in food justice themes, which extend to the cafeteria. One of the most exciting aspects of the food justice movement is the remarkable participation and leadership of youth. Creative and inspired students at the BAA are a fantastic pool to pull from in the search for new food justice activists and enthusiasts.

School Food Service Workers

The literature review reflects the positive impact that school food service workers can have on student participation in and satisfaction with school food programs. One relatively simple way in which SFWs can increase satisfaction with and participation in school food programs is through better relationships with students. Our results indicate that 38% of students feel they do not have a good relationship with the BAA SFWs, and only 21% of students believe they do have a good relationship with BAA SFWs (the remaining percentage of students were neutral).

An important yet challenging way in which SFWs can increase student satisfaction with and participation in school food programs is through scratch cooking. The results of the BAA student survey and focus groups indicate that one of the primary issues students have with the cafeteria food is the way it is prepared (i.e. heated up rather than cooked from scratch). While scratch cooking requires professional training, schools throughout the United States are having tremendous success with SFW trainings and “boot camps” that give SFWs the skills needed to cook food from scratch in a timely manner. Michael Peck, the new FNS director of BPS, has named scratch cooking as a goal for BPS schools, but expects that this goal will take time to realize.
Chapter Five: Recommendations

Drawing from the literature review, the interview with Debra Korzec, student surveys and student focus groups, we have developed three recommendations for the BAA concerning steps it can take to increase student satisfaction with school food and engage students in school food reform and food justice themes. These recommendations include 1) facilitating professional development for school food service workers, 2) integrating food justice into the BAA curriculum, and 3) creating additional avenues for communication about school food.

Recommendation 1: Professional Development for School Food Service Workers

The literature review reveals that student satisfaction with school food tends to increase with culinary training of cafeteria staff, which helps provide school food service workers with the skills necessary to cook from scratch. As the student surveys demonstrate that many students are unhappy with the school food because of the way it is prepared, increased culinary training for cafeteria staff will be an instrumental piece of improving student satisfaction with school meals at the BAA. The BAA can start moving towards scratch cooking by contacting FNS concerning ServSafe training for all kitchen staff. FNS will provide training in food safety as well as culinary training for BPS cafeteria staff free of charge. Debra Korzec indicated that moving towards scratch cooking is a priority of Boston FNS, and that the BAA should be able to achieve this in the future. Until the BAA staff receives training in food safety and scratch cooking, the BAA should request
that Boston FNS purchase less processed, pre-baked goods. Ms. Korzec is able to influence these purchases, and it will be important to communicate with her concerning the procurement of these food items.

Training in food safety and culinary skills will not only increase student satisfaction with and participation in school food programs, but will provide SFWs with marketable skills that they can develop and use if they wish to seek careers outside of school food services in the future. Though the “culinary boot camps” are time and resource intensive, school districts such as the Denver, Colorado district have had tremendous success with these programs. As culinary boot camp style trainings are gaining popularity and attention as a result of their success, the BAA and FNS might consider discussing the feasibility of such a program for BPS SFWs.

**Recommendation 2: Integrate Food Justice into the BAA Curriculum**

Our research concerning the food justice movement revealed that the food justice discourse resonates with young people, and that the youth voice is a critical component of this movement. While youth around the United States are joining in and leading the fight for good food, the majority of students at the BAA are currently unfamiliar with the term food justice. Despite being unfamiliar with the concepts of food justice, many students indicated the desire for choice and autonomy with regard to their food choices. In this respect, the food justice movement may resonate with BAA students because, among other goals, it seeks to dispel the myth of “choice” in the food system, and unveils how vulnerable populations, particularly young people, are targeted by fast food and soft drink companies. A food justice curriculum can provide students with the appropriate framework and space for discussing their experiences with healthy food and food access.

There are numerous resources available to help the BAA develop a food justice curriculum. The City of Boston is home to a number of Food Justice organizations with active youth components. The Food Project is a nationally recognized food justice organization that may serve as an excellent resource for BAA staff and students interested in integrating food justice into the BAA curriculum. An organization such as the The Food Project may also be able to present information concerning youth and food justice to BAA students in an assembly style format.

Further, the Wellness Department of FNS offers to train teachers across various disciplines to integrate nutrition into their curriculum through the Planet Health interdisciplinary curriculum. This nutrition education training could be paired with a food justice curriculum or assembly, thus enabling BAA students to make healthier, more informed food choices. Finally, Sociedad Latina has expressed a desire to partner with the BAA to develop a food justice curriculum. Though collaboration with Sociedad Latina seems to be temporarily on hold or delayed, the BAA should continue to pursue this partnership.

Finally, food justice programs and schools such as San Antonio High School, highlighted in the literature review section, have had tremendous success in getting students excited about healthy food and food justice through hands on gardening experiences. The BAA is situated across the street from Boston FNS, which provides an opportunity for the BAA to benefit from the resources and expertise that are available at Boston’s only community gardening center, the Fenway Victory Gardens. The Fenway Victory Gardens is an urban agriculture project that provides hands on gardening experiences for young people and adults alike. By partnering with the Fenway Victory Gardens, the BAA can provide students with the opportunity to learn about food justice through hands on gardening experiences.
from the Fenway Victory Garden; a community garden that has garden plots available to the BAA if it chooses to use them. We spoke with the president of the Fenway Garden Society, Mike Mennonno, who informed us that if the BAA wishes to use the plots, the garden can provide all the tools necessary for gardening, as well as a curriculum that their master gardeners can teach the students. He also directed us to the Students Learning through Urban Gardening (SLUG) program at the Boston Natural Areas Network, which also offers to teach garden-based education to students and faculty. Furthermore, the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy in Boston, MA has a graduate program in Agriculture, Food and Environment, whose students may be interested in completing an internship through the BAA concerning garden based education. If the BAA wishes to engage students in gardening activities, but does not have the time to help maintain specific plots, the students are welcome to attend volunteer days, where instruction for beginners is often provided by partnering organizations (Appendix D). While it might be a little late in the growing season for the BAA to utilize this resource for Spring 2012, we recommend that this opportunity be pursued during the upcoming academic year.

Recommendation 3: Create Additional Avenues for Communication about School Food

Through our work on this project, we discovered that BAA and FNS have similar aspirations for a school cafeteria with healthy, appealing food and increased student use and satisfaction. Here, we recommend several strategies for aligning these visions and opening up additional avenues for communication between BAA, the cafeteria staff, FNS and students around school food improvements.

The BAA administrators seem to believe that they lack serious influence on issues relating to change in the school cafeteria, for example, the ability to take full advantage of the kitchen facility by increasing the amount of food prepared from scratch. However, our interview with Debra Korzec revealed that she has similar aspirations for the BAA kitchen, but does not feel that there has been sufficient follow-up by the BAA administration. To ensure that the BAA and Boston FNS are aware of their shared goals for the BAA food services, we recommend regular meetings throughout the school year for all parties involved in school food improvements. In these meetings, the parties should discuss what changes they would all like to see with respect to school food, and the specific steps necessary to achieving these goals.

In the student focus groups and surveys, some students voiced their lack of satisfaction with food at the BAA. Many students indicated that they disliked school food because of the types of food served. Ms. Korzec can make changes to the menu, but before this can happen, it would be helpful for her to have data concerning the specific foods students like or do not like. Ms. Korzec suggested that the best way to do this is by surveying students on whether they like or dislike each of the foods on the monthly menu. The results of the surveys should be reported to Ms. Korzec, who can use them to implement changes to the menu.

After reviewing the surveys and the information gathered from the focus groups, we believe that many students may lack the knowledge necessary to make healthy food choices. Further, the same students who refuse to eat at the BAA cafeteria because they believe the food to be unhealthy claim to frequent fast food restaurants in place of the cafeteria at meal times. Therefore, we recommend that there be an effort towards making students aware of the healthy options available in the school cafeteria, and perhaps more aware of nutritious foods in general. As the BAA is an arts school, students may find creating decorative displays for the healthy options a fun way to become more aware of and excited about healthy food. Another way to increase student involvement in school food is to create a “napkin board,” a
large push-pin board where students can post napkins with questions, comments or suggestions about the school food. The Food Service Manager posts responses to these questions under the napkins so that all students can benefit from the information, and students feel that they have an impact on school food. This napkin board can also be positioned outside of the cafeteria, therefore soliciting students who may not eat school meals but may want to add their voice to matters involving school food.
While, as the 2012 project concluded, the BAA may not be able to influence national or state policies regarding school food reform, there are a number of steps that the BAA can take at a more local level to impact the quality of school food and student engagement in food related issues. Our final recommendations include facilitating professional development for school food service workers, integrating food justice into the BAA curriculum, and creating additional avenues for communication concerning school food. These conclusions were drawn out from both the literature review and original research, and provide a road map for future, feasible steps the BAA can take towards school food reform.

While we would have liked to interview FNS director Michael Peck, and cross reference some of the information gained through our interview with Ms. Korzec, Mr. Peck and other food service personnel were unfortunately unable to meet with us within the time constraints of this project. Therefore, we recommend that the BAA cross-reference some of the information gained throughout the interview with either Mr. Peck or with BAA Food Service Manager Lyndr Thomas before moving forward with this information.

While we believe that our research and recommendations concerning more localized strategies for school food reform will help the BAA move forward in its quest for good food, it is important to note that many of the issues addressed in this report are inextricably linked to
much larger issues that play a role in the food system, specifically, race and class. Teaching students about healthier foods, and entering into a discussion of food justice, should be considered with these larger issues in mind.

With its dedicated staff and talented students, partnerships with local organizations and the support of Boston FNS, the BAA is in a unique position to make significant improvements to its school food program. A key component of this change will be student engagement and participation in these changes, and more broadly, food justice. Throughout the United States, young people are getting excited about school food reform, and food justice in general, and we encourage the BAA to support and inspire its students to join in this new and exciting movement.
References


In Pursuit of Good Food II: Localized Strategies for School Reform at the Boston Arts Academy


Appendix A: Student Survey and Consent Form

Consent Form

Dear BAA student:

This survey is part of a project conducted by the staff of the Boston Arts Academy and students from Tufts University to help inform and improve the quality and taste of food served in the BAA cafeteria. We greatly appreciate your time and effort. Thank you in advance for your valuable feedback!

Purpose:
The purpose of this project is to better understand how school food can be improved at the BAA.

Procedures:
The Field Projects Team will be conducting surveys about BAA food environment (attached).

Risks and Discomforts:
This project is of no risk and/or discomfort to students.

Benefits/Compensation:
There are no direct benefits to you for your participation; it is the Field Projects team’s hope that the research will bring attention to school food within the BAA.

Confidentiality:
Any information that is obtained in connection with this project and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission.

Signature:
In Pursuit of Good Food II: Localized Strategies for School Reform at the Boston Arts Academy

You are making a decision whether or not to participate. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to participate.

______________________________  __________________________
Student’s Signature            Date

I allow myself to participate in the attached survey:    YES □   NO □

Withdrawal of Participation:
If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice.

Request for more information:
If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to the Field Projects Team. We can be reached at Brytanee.Brown@tufts.edu. In addition you may contact Lara Sloboda at Lara.Sloboda@tufts.edu at the Tufts IRB office. You will be offered a copy of this form to keep.

TUFTS UNIVERSITY UEP FIELD PROJECTS
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Boston Arts Academy Student Survey, 2012

I. Cafeteria

1. How often do you eat in the cafeteria?
   □ 0 days/week  □ 1-2 days/week  □ 2-4 days/week  □ >4 days/week

2. Please indicate if you have any food allergies and your dietary lifestyle: (i.e. Vegan, Vegetarian, etc.)

3. What do you like most about the food served in the cafeteria at the BAA?

4. What do you like least about the food served in the cafeteria in the BAA?

5. Do you use the salad bar? Why or why not?

6. How often do you use the salad bar?
   □ 0 days/week  □ 1-2 days/week  □ 2-4 days/week  □ >4 days/week

7. I am satisfied with the ingredients offered at the salad bar (Please circle a number)

   Strongly Disagree 1  Disagree 2  Neutral 3  Agree 4  Strongly Agree 5

Comments:

8. How could the BAA improve the salad bar? If you don’t use the salad bar, what improvements would it take to get you to use it in the future?
9. How often do you eat off campus?
   □ 0 days/week  □ 1-2 days/week  □ 2-4 days/week  □ >4 days/week

   a. If you eat off campus, where do you go?

   b. Why do or don’t you like to eat off campus?

   c. How much do you pay on average for off-campus food per meal?

10. Do you eat the food in the BAA vending machines? Why or why not?

11. How many times a week do you eat the afternoon snack Mr. Handy gives out?

12. Do you like the cafeteria environment? Why or why not?

13. Do you have any suggestions for improving the cafeteria environment?

14. I am satisfied with the quality of BAA’s cafeteria breakfast. (Please circle a number)
   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree
   1  2  3  4  5
   Comments:

15. I am satisfied with the quality of BAA’s cafeteria lunch. (Please circle a number)
   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree
   1  2  3  4  5
   Comments:

16. I care about the quality of the BAA cafeteria food. (Please circle a number)
   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree
   1  2  3  4  5
   Comments:

17. Cafeteria food has an impact on my performance at school. (Please circle a number)
   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree
   1  2  3  4  5
   Comments:

18. I would like to be involved in improving school food. (Please circle a number)
   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree
   1  2  3  4  5
   Comments:

II. Cafeteria Staff and Culinary Arts

1. I have a good relationship with the BAA cafeteria staff:
   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree
   1  2  3  4  5
   Comments:

2. It is important to me that I have a good relationship with the cafeteria staff.
4. Do you have any friends involved in food justice organization or activities?
  □ Yes □ No

5. Would you be interested in getting involved in food justice issues at school?
  □ Yes □ No

6. Do you feel that the food served in the BAA is in any way related to food justice?
   If yes, please expand on your thoughts.

Thank you!

III. Food Justice at the BAA

1. Have you heard the term “food justice” before? If yes, where?

2. What does the term “food justice” mean to you?
   “There are many definitions for the term “food justice.” One of which is “communities exercising their right to grow, sell and eat [food that is] fresh, nutritious, affordable, culturally appropriate, and grown locally with care for the well-being of the land, workers and animals” (Just Food, 2010).

3. Are you involved in any activities that may relate to food justice inside or outside of school? If yes, please describe them.
Appendix B: Sample Food Service Worker Survey

School Food Worker Survey
Boston Arts Academy
March, 2012

Dear BAA Food Service Staff Member,

This survey is part of a project conducted by the Boston Arts Academy and Students from Tufts University concerning school food, student involvement in school and community food and the possibility of increasing student involvement in culinary arts. We greatly appreciate your time and effort.
Thank you in advance for your valuable feedback!

I. Work History

1. How long have you been working at the BAA?

☐ Less than one year
☐ 1 to 5 years
☐ 6 to 10 years
☐ 11 to 20 years
☐ 21 years or more

2. How many days per week do you work at BAA? How many hours per week do you work?

☐ 1 day/ week
☐ 2 days/ week
☐ 3 days/ week
☐ 4 days/ week
☐ 5 days/week

total hours/week________
In Pursuit of Good Food II: Localized Strategies for School Reform at the Boston Arts Academy

3. Do you work in more than one school?
   □ Yes
   □ No

4. Did you work in school food service prior to your position with BAA?
   □ Yes
   □ No

5. Why are you working at the BAA? Why not another food service industry (for example: fast food, restaurant, hotel)?

II. Culinary Skills.

6. Do you have any formal culinary skills training?
   □ Yes. If so, describe______________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   □ No

7. Please respond to the following statement, using the scale below: I have acquired new skills since I began working with BAA.

   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree
   1                    2                     3                           4                           5

   Comments:

8. What new skills (if any) have you acquired since you began working with BAA?

   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree
   1                    2                     3                           4                           5

   Comments:

9. Please respond to the following statement, using the scale below: I have acquired new skills since Chef Kirk worked in the BAA kitchen.

   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree
   1                    2                     3                           4                           5

   Comments:

10. What new skills (if any) have you acquired since Chef Kirk worked in your kitchen? Of these skills, which do you find most valuable in your daily work and why?

11. What new skills would you like to develop?

12. I would welcome the opportunity for compensated culinary skills training

   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree
   1                    2                     3                           4                           5
Comments:

13. Are you satisfied with the meals you are able to prepare for the students?
☐ Yes.
☐ No.
Please explain __________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

III. School food and Student Engagement

14. Are you satisfied with the ingredients provided by the food service provider?
☐ Yes
☐ No
Please explain:__________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Please respond to the following statements for questions 15-17 using the scale below.
If you strongly agree or disagree, please feel free to comment:

15. I believe that the food served in the cafeteria is nutritious.

Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree
1                  2                  3                  4                  5

Comments:

16. The students at the BAA are satisfied with the school food

Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree
1                  2                  3                  4                  5
Comments:

17. I would welcome the opportunity to work with BAA students in the kitchen

Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree
1                  2                  3                  4                  5
Comments:

18. I would be interested in collaborating with students around school food options

Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree
1                  2                  3                  4                  5
Comments:
Appendix C: Key Contacts and Resources

Contacts

Fenway Victory Garden
Contact: Mike Mennonno, President of the Fenway Garden Society
Website: http://www.fenwayvictorygardens.com/
Phone: (857) 244-0262
Note: Contacted directly by Field Projects team. Expressed interest in working with BAA students. If BAA wishes to use the plots, the garden can provide all the tools necessary for gardening, as well as a curriculum that their master gardeners can teach the students.

City of Boston Office of Food Initiatives
Contact: Christina DiLisio, Food Truck Coordinator at the City of Boston, Mayor’s Office.
Website: http://www.cityofboston.gov/business/mobile/
Email: Christina.DiLisio@cityofboston.gov
Note: Contacted directly by Field Projects team. Food truck coordinator interested in having information about the food trucks that locate near BAA schools.

The Food Project
Website: http://thefoodproject.org/
Email: info@thefoodproject.org

Health & Wellness Department (Food & Nutrition Services), Boston Public Schools
Contact: Jill Carter, Health & Wellness Coordinator
Email: jcarter@boston.k12.ma.us
Note: Author of Planet Health: An Interdisciplinary Curriculum for Teaching Middle School Nutrition and Physical Activity
Food & Nutrition Services
Contact: Kim Szeto, Farm to School Coordinator
Email: tfp.vista@gmail.com

Resources

(Report)
Model Healthy Food Zone Ordinance: Creating a Healthy Food Zone Around Schools by Regulating the Location of Fast Food Restaurants (and Mobile Food Vendors) (2009)
Written by The National Policy & Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity (NPLAN)
www.nplanonline.org

(Program)
Cooking up Change
Developed by Healthy Schools Campaign
Cooking up Change is a national competition where student-chefs are challenged to create a healthy, great-tasting school meal that meets high nutrition standards and budgetary guidelines comparable to those in school food service. Cooking up Change engages students across the nation and the broader community in a dialogue about school food reform and the need for more resources for our nation’s school meal program.
http://www.healthyschoolscampaign.org/event/cookingupchange/2012/natl/

(Book)
Lunch Money: Serving Healthy School Food in a Sick Economy
Written by Kate Adamick
“This book provides effective money-saving and revenue-generating tools for use in any school kitchen or cafeteria. Included in this practical how-to book are examples, diagrams, charts, and worksheets that unlock the financial secrets to scratch-cooking in the school food environment and prove that a penny saved is much more than a penny earned” (cookforamerica.com, 2011).
### Appendix D: Sumarized Data

#### How often do you eat in the cafeteria?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 days/week</td>
<td>44 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 days/week</td>
<td>18 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 days/week</td>
<td>27 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5 days a week</td>
<td>31 (16%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### How often do you eat off campus?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 days/week</td>
<td>31 (63%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 days/week</td>
<td>32 (64%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 days/week</td>
<td>21 (42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5 days a week</td>
<td>13 (26%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Reasons why you dislike food?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>84 (49%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portion</td>
<td>11 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific foods</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dietary restrictions</td>
<td>8 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>11 (6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### How often do you use the salad bar?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 days/week</td>
<td>10 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 days/week</td>
<td>59 (47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 days/week</td>
<td>19 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5 days/week</td>
<td>7 (6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### I am satisfied with the ingredients offered at the salad bar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>22 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>19 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>66 (43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>36 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>10 (7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### I am satisfied with the quality of BAA’s cafeteria lunch?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>28 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>48 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>80 (46%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>18 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>11 (6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Cafeteria food has an impact on my performance at school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>20 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>26 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>62 (38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>34 (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>29 (17%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### I would like to be involved in improving school food.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>34 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>35 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>74 (41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>26 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>9 (5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### I have a good relationship with the cafeteria staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>41 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>29 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>71 (41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>22 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>13 (8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Due to time constraints not all data collected were analyzed. For a complete table of our raw data, please see supplementary CD.