

# Good Food Purchasing for the Buffalo Public Schools

Jessica Gilbert

## School Food: Important in Five Ways

Consuming good food, especially during school, is vitally connected to student behavior and academic performance. Recognizing this, numerous stakeholders within Buffalo Public Schools (BPS) and the community have taken strides to improve school food. Currently, many of these stakeholders are working to bring the Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP) to Buffalo. GFPP uses food purchasing policies to promote five values: local economies, nutrition, valued workforce, environmental sustainability, and animal welfare. By drawing attention to all elements of the food system, GFPP provides a helpful framework for assessing the current status of school food in Buffalo and determining how the district can continue to make improvements.

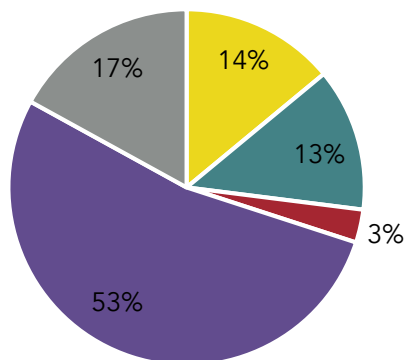
School food served per day by BPS:

- 28,000 lunches
- 25,000 breakfasts
- 5,000 snacks
- 14,000 lunches during the summer

BPS spends over \$13.5 million on food and over \$7 million on school food staff every year.

Due to the large percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price meals, BPS qualifies to have all meals reimbursed by the USDA.

SOURCES OF BPS FOOD PURCHASES



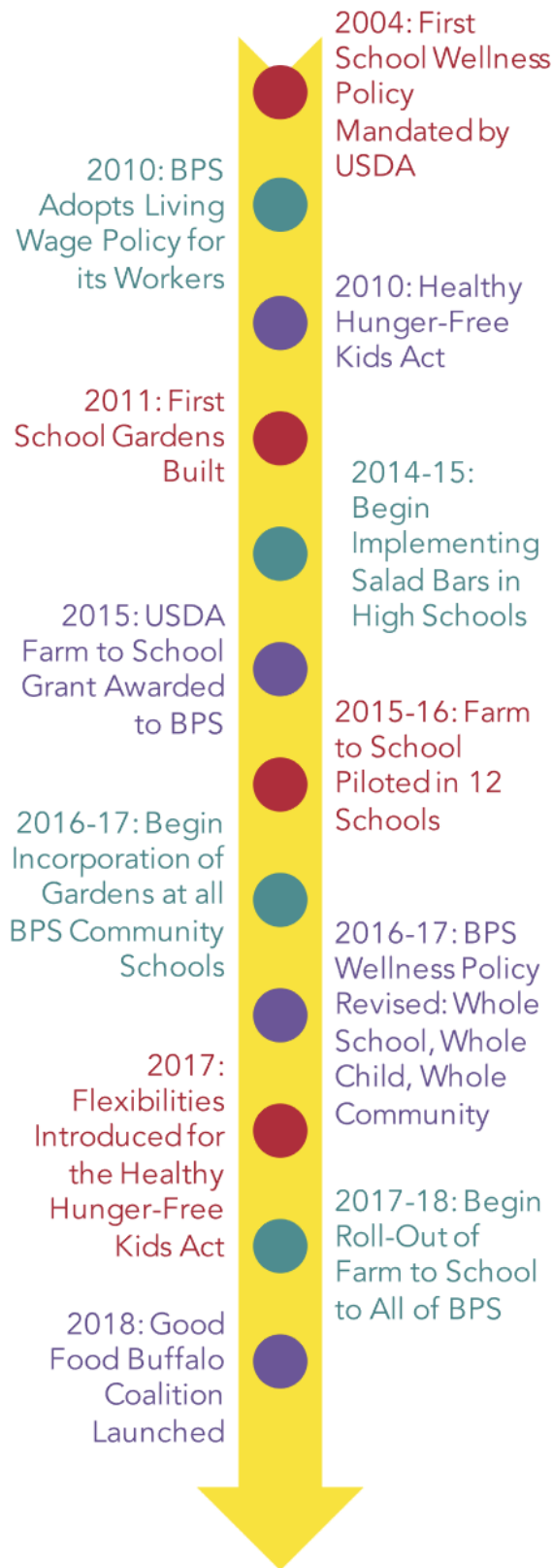
- USDA Government Commodity Program
- Latina Boulevard Produce
- Bimbo Bakery Bread
- US Foods
- Depew Dairy

This policy brief was drafted by Jessica Gilbert, research associate at PPG and PhD Candidate in the University at Buffalo's Department of Geography.

It summarizes the key points of a more extensive policy report by the same name, released by PPG in spring 2018. This brief provides a snapshot of the current status of school food at Buffalo Public Schools and several ongoing school food improvement initiatives.

Framed within the Good Food Purchasing Program's core values (local economies, nutrition, labor, environmental sustainability, and animal welfare), this brief documents success thus far and assesses where there is room for improvement. It recommends that Buffalo Public Schools expand scratch cooking, encourage whole-district engagement, and enhance collaboration with community.





## The Good Food Buffalo Coalition

In order to bring the GFPP to Buffalo, stakeholders throughout the city have united to form the Good Food Buffalo Coalition, which is comprised of partners representing all five GFPP values.

The Good Food Buffalo Coalition was initiated by the food justice working group of the Crossroads Collective, which is comprised of nine organizations working at the intersection of climate justice with economic and racial justice in western New York.





### Expand Scratch Cooking

- Expanding commissary facilities and training more staff in scratch cooking would allow BPS to cook, process, and store more of its own food.
- This will help BPS serve fresher and more local products, expand Farm to School entrees, prepare its own meat, and add more variety to menus.



### Encourage Whole-District Engagement

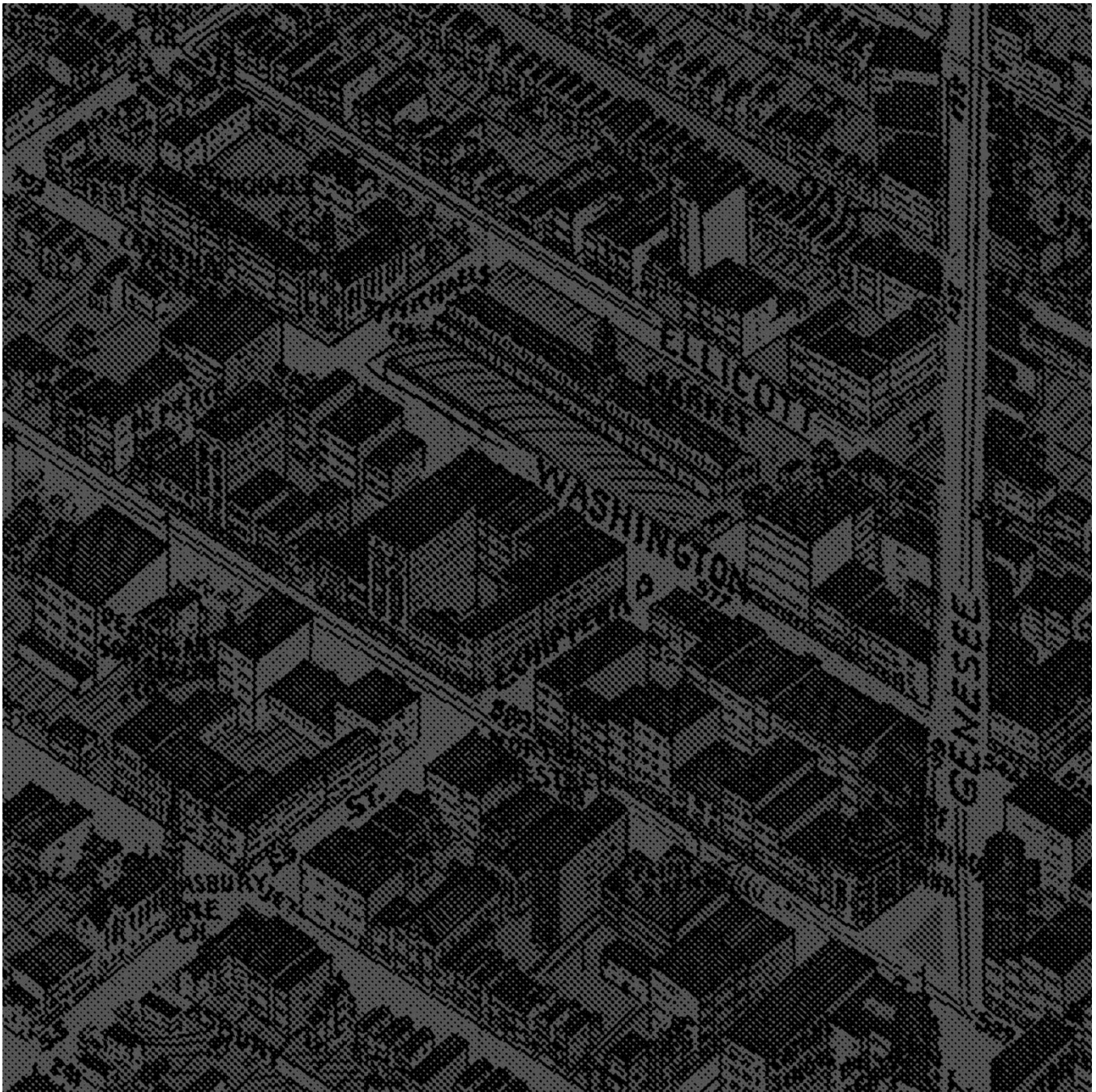
- Help BPS faculty, staff, and administration promote policies targeting the critical linkages between food, health and wellness, and student educational achievement and behavior.
- Engage everyone in BPS in school food improvement initiatives; integrate food into classroom education.



### Enhance Collaboration with Community

- Parents and the community possess valuable knowledge as to the needs of students; the District would benefit from incorporating their expertise.
- Community schools are well positioned to facilitate knowledge transfer between the district and parents, community members, and students.

GFPP VALUE	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	POTENTIAL GOALS
Local Economies	Farm to School (F2S) roll-out to all schools. Taste Test Thursdays encourage students and staff alike to try new, healthy foods.	Include entrees, not just side dishes, in F2S. Facilitate ways for more local farmers to sell to BPS directly or through distributor.
Nutrition	New federal standards in 2012. Improved access to fruits and vegetables through F2S and salad bars. Breakfast in Classroom. Food Bank programs.	Increase access to culturally diverse foods. Expand menu options for Meatless Mondays and all days. Educate students, parents, and staff.
Valued Workforce	Living wages for school food staff. New head chef at the BPS Commissary adds to oversight, training, and expanded menus.	Create more full-time, full-year jobs, more career development, and better wages and benefits for school food staff. Add worker welfare provisions to procurement policies.
Environmental Sustainability	School gardens. Commissary participation in the City of Buffalo recycling program.	Further decrease food waste, disposable packaging, and consumption of animal products. Increase purchase of sustainably farmed food.
Animal Welfare	Meatless Mondays.	Ensure that meat vendors and suppliers practice healthy/humane animal treatment.



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