Dig In! Seed Grants

27 schools
up to $3,000 per school
10,031 k-12 students
9 provinces &
1 territory

$75,350
given directly to schools

5 Regions*
1. Ontario
2. Quebec
3. Atlantic
4. Prairies
5. Territories**

*BC schools were directed to the PHABC Farm to School Seed Grants
**included Northern regions of provinces

♠ School

Map markers:
- YK: 2
- AB: 3
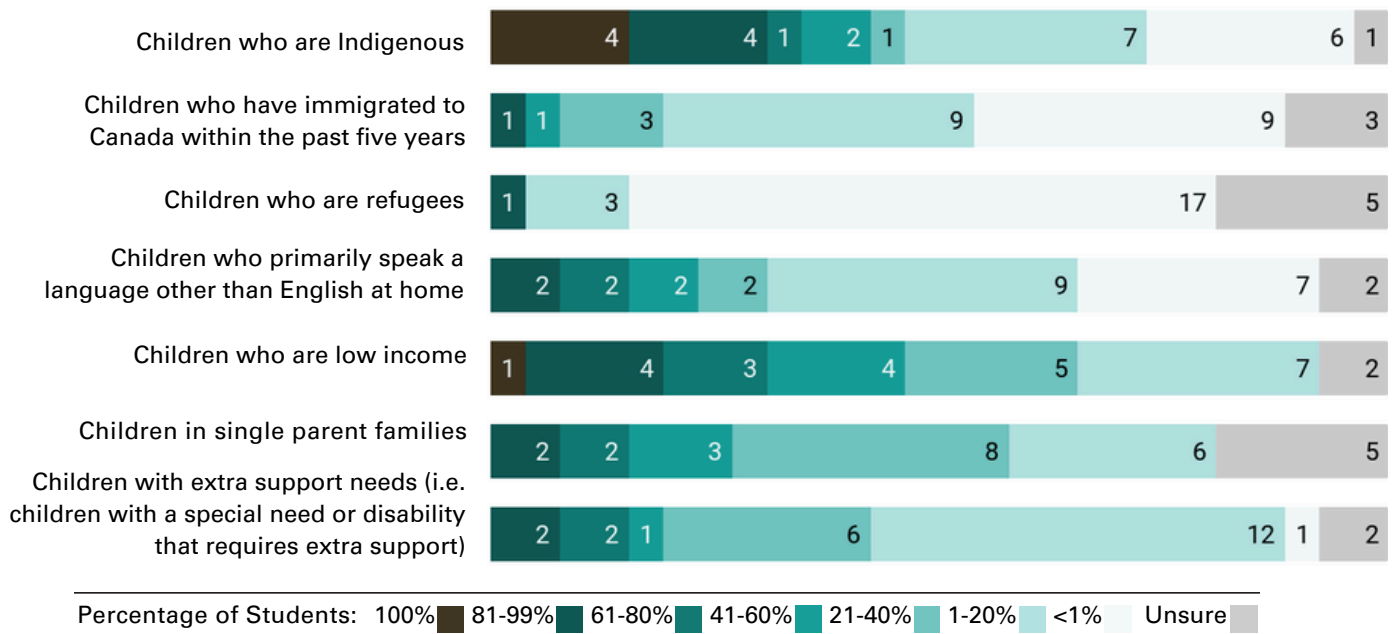- SK: 1
- MB: 2
- ON: 9
- QC: 5
- NFL: 1
- PEI: 1
- NB: 2
- NS: 1

Seed Grants provide schools with access to funds, knowledge and inspiration to 'Dig in' to farm to school by making small, positive changes in their school food environments over a school term (about 5 months).

Schools that serve...

Category	100%	81-99%	61-80%	41-60%	21-40%	1-20%	<1%	Unsure
Children who are Indigenous		4	4	1	2	1	7	6	1
Children who have immigrated to Canada within the past five years			1	1	3	9	9	3
Children who are refugees			1			3	17	5
Children who primarily speak a language other than English at home			2	2	2	2	9	7	2
Children who are low income		1		4	3	4	5	7	2
Children in single parent families			2	2	3	8	6	5
Children with extra support needs (i.e. children with a special need or disability that requires extra support)			2	2	1	6	12	1	2

Percentage of Students: 100% | 81-99% | 61-80% | 41-60% | 21-40% | 1-20% | <1% | Unsure

The figure above shows student population demographics of 26 of the 27 2023/24 grant recipient schools. The number on each bar section indicates the number of schools who selected that category.

During the grant term, students:

- Tasted local foods
- Gardened at school
- Visited a farm, fisher, forager, or other producer
- Composted food waste
- Cooked/preserved local food

Impact Statements

" Children are developing cultural knowledge, pride and skills as they interact with foods and medicines."

" We are a project pilot for schools and communities."

" The students have been extremely engaged throughout this project. [I've] never seen such great collaboration, teamwork and pride. The pure joy of discovering new food and tasting a fresh vegetable for the first time."

" [We are] able to secure more healthy foods for students by having a larger fridge space to store it."

Grant Activities

schools' grant activities took place between January and June of 2024.

85% of schools engaged students in hands-on learning.

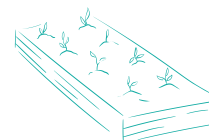**85%** of schools were able to purchase equipment to facilitate school food activities.

100% of schools plan to continue food literacy activities after the end of the grant term.

Obstacles...   ...& Strategies to Overcome

Program Sustainability

" We were able to get a great start on purchasing equipment and supplies to get up and started, but will now need to find funding to maintain the program."

Supply Chain Delays

" We didn't receive our hydroponic system until the end of the school year due to supply issues and shipping delays. This meant we could not start any growing."

Facilitating Connections

" Tapping into support and collaboration with other community members, organizations, etc. Once they see us starting these initiatives on our own there is more interest to support us."

Program Flexibilty

" Knowing that we can grow next year! We're all excited about it!"

Grant Impacts

Public Health

93% of schools increased students' **awareness of nutrition and healthy eating**.

78% of schools improved the **school food environment** to better promote healthy foods and make them easy to access.

67% of schools increased students' ability to **access healthy food in a dignified way** regardless of their ability to pay.

Education & Learning

93% of schools increased the **number and quality of opportunities for students to learn and demonstrate food skills** (ex. gardening, food preparation, etc.)

89% of schools **created a greater sense of vibrancy and excitement** in the school

Environment

81% of schools increased student **knowledge, awareness and interest about environmental and ecological issues**

89% of schools increased the amount of students that are **engaged in their local food system** while at school

Community Economic Development

59% of schools increased the **amount of local food they procure and provide** to students.

Stories

❝ In Garden Club I learned that plants are just like us. They need food, water, sunshine, just like us. But also, some plants don't work out. They can die if you don't take care of them. Our parents take care of us. So, we are like parents to the plants. We take care of the plants like our parents do to us" – Megan [Read the full story](#)

❝ HERB has added a unique touch to the school's culinary program. It now not only allows students to create food for the community. But also to learn about the time and effort behind growing produce." – Maia Bailey [Read the full story](#)

▶ Growing Together at Dalhousie Regional High School ([click to watch](#))

▶ William Gillett Academy Greenspace ([click to watch](#))

Planting activities at Champlain School. [Read the full story](#) (in French).

Find more stories [here](#).

Growing mentors at Oilfields High School. Read the full story.

Hands-on food literacy activities at H.M MacDonald. Read the full story.

Capacity Building Impacts

In F2CC's work, we strive to grow capacity in 7 key ways:

- **Knowledge** & **skills** about key themes related to school food
- Ability to **influence policy** (federal, provincial, or local)
- **Funding** and fundraising capacity
- **Relationships** and connections
- **Validation** & i**nspiration** around the importance of the work

Dig In! Seed Grant recipients shared that their grant experience increased their capacity in these areas:

Knowledge 78%

Inspiration 90%

Skills 89%

Building capacity to transform how food is experienced, learned and celebrated in schools

Validation 85%

Policy 22%

Relationships 85%

Funding 59%
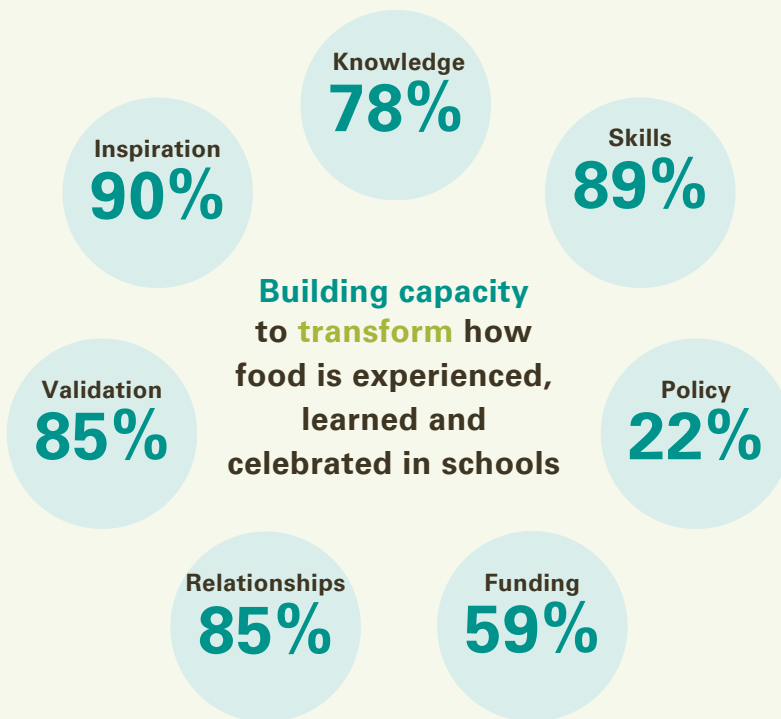
Thank You!

We're so proud of the 2023/24 Dig In! grant recipients and inspired by their achievements! A very big thank you and congratulations to the participating school communities including educators, administrators, parents, volunteers, community partners & STUDENTS for their dedication and hard work in bringing these initiatives to life.

We would also like to extend sincere gratitude to The Schad Foundation for their generous support of the Dig In! Seed Grant Program. We look forward to welcoming a new round of grant recipients for the 2024/25 school year and to watching their programs grow.

THE SCHAD FOUNDATION

Appendix: A complete list of program impacts as reported by recipients of the 2023/24 Dig In! Seed Grants.

This section provides a fuller set of evaluation data using the indicators in the Farm to School Evaluation Framework for Canada. **The Framework, along with other evaluation tools and resources can be found here.**

Please note:
- All Farm to Cafeteria Canada grant recipients report on impact areas defined in the Evaluation Framework. Some outcomes may be achievable in the short-term, while others are expected to be medium to long-term. Progress reported is expected to vary depending on the scope and term length of the individual grant stream.
- **[Brackets]** after a statement reflect a specific Framework indicator that has been determined to be a "priority" indicator, and therefore assigned a unique identifier.

Public Health

Receiving a Dig In! Seed grant has impacted our school community in the following way(s):

Impact	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unsure
Increased the amount of healthy food that our school procures and provides to students.	7	10	5	3		2
Increased the amount of healthy food that our school procures and provides to students	7	11	6	1	1	1
Increased students' willingness to try new vegetables and fruits	15	7	3	1		1
Increased students' awareness of nutrition and healthy eating	10	15	1			1
Increased students' excitement about healthy eating	14	9	3			1
Increased the amount of food produced or harvested by members of the school community and served at school [PH 2.4]	8	9	7	2		1
Improved the school food environment to better promote healthy foods and make them easy to access [PH 2.5]	7	14	4	1		1
Increased students' ability to access healthy food in a dignified way regardless of their ability to pay [PH 2.8]	8	10	5	3		1
Increased the amount of food grown and/or served at the school that reflect the cultural backgrounds and traditions of the student population [PH 2.0]	3	14	6	2		2
Increased the amount that students' cultural food traditions are respected and celebrated at school [PH 3.3]	4	11	7	1	1	3
Increased the number of hours that students spend on garden and other land-based activities [PH 4.1]	9	8	4	1	2	3

Legend: Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Unsure

Education & Learning

Receiving a Dig In! Seed grant has impacted our school community in the following way(s):

Increased the number and quality of opportunities for students to learn and demonstrate food skills (ex. gardening, food preparation, etc.) [EDU 1.4]
12 | 13 | 1 | 1

Increased students' hands-on food literacy skills (e.g. growing, harvesting off the land, preserving and cooking, and composting food)
9 | 12 | 4 | 1 | 1

Increased students' understanding of their local food system, local foods, local food providers and foods in season [EDU 3.3]
8 | 10 | 6 | 1 | 2

Increased students' understanding of foods belonging to different cultures [EDU 4.1]
4 | 9 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 4

Increased the number of students who share their cultural food traditions at school [EDU 4.2]
5 | 8 | 9 | 2 | 3

Increased how often cultural ceremony in relation to food is demonstrated within the school community [EDU 4.3]
2 | 4 | 15 | 2 | 4

Increased students' understanding of diverse traditional Indigenous food systems [EDU 5.2]
5 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 4

Created a greater sense of vibrancy and excitement in the school
13 | 11 | 1 | 1 | 1

Increased connections, partnerships and participation within the school and the broader community (e.g. with the Parent Advisory Council, community groups, growers or harvesters, chefs, local authorities, community organizations etc.)
9 | 8 | 8 | 1 | 1

Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Unsure

Environment
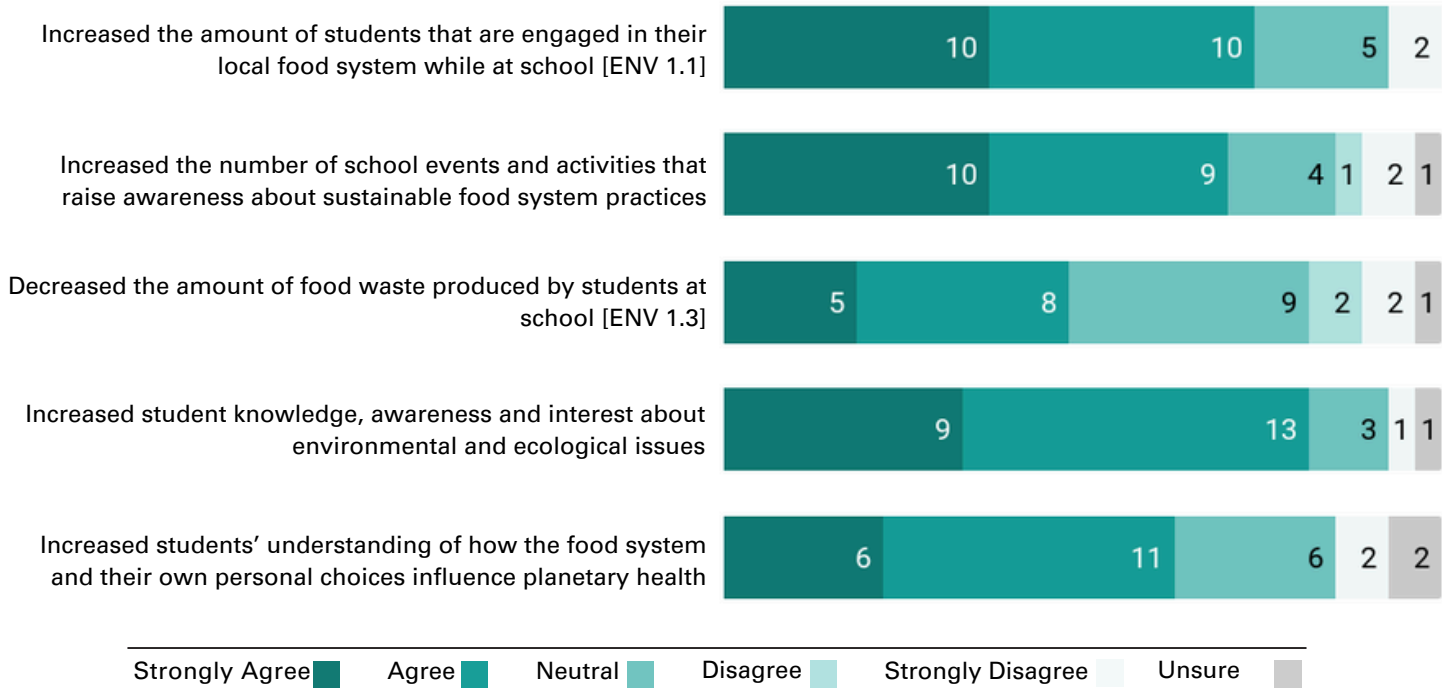
Receiving a Dig In! Seed grant has impacted our school community in the following way(s):

Increased the amount of students that are engaged in their local food system while at school [ENV 1.1] — 10, 10, 5, 2

Increased the number of school events and activities that raise awareness about sustainable food system practices — 10, 9, 4, 1, 2, 1

Decreased the amount of food waste produced by students at school [ENV 1.3] — 5, 8, 9, 2, 2, 1

Increased student knowledge, awareness and interest about environmental and ecological issues — 9, 13, 3, 1, 1

Increased students' understanding of how the food system and their own personal choices influence planetary health — 6, 11, 6, 2, 2

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Unsure

Community Economic Development

Receiving a Dig In! Seed grant has impacted our school community in the following way(s):

Increased the amount of local food that our school procures and provides to students — 6, 10, 6, 3, 2

Increased food sales — 1, 4, 10, 4, 3, 5

Has led our school to be a leader among other institutions in the procurement of healthy, sustainable, local foods — 2, 4, 12, 2, 3, 4

Increased the number of hours that food service workers and providers are engaged in the school's food activities (e.g. planning menus, supporting local supply chains, supporting a school garden, training students in knife skills, etc.) [CED 3.2] — 6, 10, 2, 2, 7

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Unsure