



Ontario Budget Submission 2026

October 28th, 2025





Overview

For over 30 years, Breakfast Club of Canada (BCC) has been supporting the development and implementation of high-impact breakfast programs in schools from coast to coast to coast. In partnership with Indigenous programs and Student Nutrition Ontario (SNO), BCC helps reach more than 650,000 students daily among 3,200 schools in Ontario, including 34 First Nations Student Nutrition Programs.

Canada remains a privileged country, yet a significant percentage of children and youth are unable to access the healthy food items they needed to thrive towards success. Children and youth consume a significant proportion of their daily energy intake during school hours which makes schools the optimal environment for ensuring children have access to healthy foods, as well as the promotion of good nutrition, which support optimal growth and development.

Since 1994, Breakfast Club of Canada has worked with partners across every sector to help children access a nutritious breakfast and reach their full potential. School nutrition programs do more than fill empty stomachs. Evidence shows that student nutrition programs are one of the most effective economic and social investments. They help:

- Create a caring and inclusive school community
- Improve learning capacities
- Alleviate hunger
- Improve behaviour and mood
- Foster a sense of engagement and belonging



Why your support matters

As detailed in our 2025 Budget Submission to your government, in recent years, participation in breakfast programs has grown by 30%, while food prices and inflation continues to rise. BCC acknowledges the Government of Ontario's responsiveness in being the third province to sign the National School Food Program (NSFP) bilateral agreement with the federal government in October 2024, and we thank you for the recent launch of the Healthy Students, Brighter Ontario (HSBO) 2025-2026.

Despite the progress made by the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services (MCCSS) to review the provincial program needs and invest an additional \$5 million in the Ontario Student Nutrition Program (OSNP) and the First Nations Student Nutrition Program (FNSNP) in 2023 and again for school year 2025-26, no long-term funding increase has yet been put in place.



In Ontario, when considering universal reach to all schools, public funding provides an average of \$0.14 per child per day. This leaves far too many students at risk of starting their day without food.

Following the program review led by the MCCSS in 2023, over 90% of stakeholders recommended increasing the core funding allocation to OSNP and FNSNP in the Ontario budget to address rising food costs in current programs and those on the waitlist. It is also understood that key cross-ministerial priorities for the program are as follows: food distribution, centralized purchasing, data collection and management, as well as key partnership development.

Together, we can make meaningful change

While the decentralized nature of the Ontario model enables local adaptation, it may also present challenges related to procurement efficiency, equitable access to healthy food, and coordination for partnership development, including with private-sector providers. BCC has recently gathered interest from a variety of private and community partners who are willing to join forces to strengthen Ontario's school food procurement system. Along with MCCSS's recent launch of an *Implementation Working Group*, this momentum offers a timely opportunity to explore whether—and how—responsibly facilitated public-private partnerships could support local and provincial program goals related to sustainability, efficiency, and nutrition.

Specifically, BCC has the operational and strategic capabilities to support your government through a comprehensive food procurement assessment and to propose province-wide scenarios that build on current local food procurement and supply chain practices. We are willing to collaborate with the members of the new *Implementation Working Group*, in leveraging existing models and opportunities for local partnerships to support bulk purchasing of food and consumables. Our goal is to increase food sovereignty while supporting local purchasing, sustainable development, and food literacy.

It should be noted that BCC is Imagine Canada-accredited and partners with various Indigenous communities to facilitate discussions around self-determined and culturally appropriate school breakfast programming. Our comprehensive capacity-building approach provides school and community partners with personalized support to ensure they have the tools to operate effectively. We acknowledge your government's support for the First Nations Student Nutrition Program (FNSNP) and are ready to collaborate with IAO to expand the province's reach to all First Nations across Ontario. BCC has the expertise to create proactive, adaptive, and trust-based relationships with key First Nations stakeholders, to act as a supporter and ally to communities, and to adapt its support according to specific local needs.



Priorities for 2026 – 2029

Recommendation 1 - Invest \$175,000 to map school food procurement current OSNP and FNSNP practices, identify challenges and opportunities to build on the local, regional initiatives while providing province-wide scenarios.

Following consultations with key stakeholders, we recommend that the Ontario government leverage BCC's expertise, along with its private partners and supply chain, to develop long-term solutions that will optimize logistics and food supply in collaboration with regional lead agencies and First Nations partners.

With \$175,000, BCC will:

- ▶ Develop an engagement plan and identify key procurement mechanisms, actors, and constraints in Ontario's school food value chain. Understand the appetite and concerns from public and private stakeholders about engaging in optimal practices.
- ▶ Collaborate with logistic expert to conduct a comprehensive assessment of storage and infrastructure capacities as well as turn-key solutions to food delivery adapted to regional needs.
- ▶ Submit a comprehensive report including cost estimates for proposed turn-key solutions to the Government of Ontario.

Recommendation 2 – Alleviate need in the current BCC's First Nations School network and support new FNSNP with an investment of \$5.3M over three years. This amount will allow us to provide more varied menu to 2,210 students currently supported and reach close to 2,350 new students with access to nutritious breakfasts.

Breakfast Club of Canada is currently able to invest an average of \$0.43 per breakfast – an annual total of approximately \$172K – into 34 First Nations programs in the province in 2024-2025. Therefore, we recommend that the Ontario government help bridge the gap to leverage this investment and ensure all youth are properly nourished for learning by:

- ▶ Helping BCC to increase the support provided to the 34 First Nations schools communities currently receiving access and to expand the daily support to cover the total program costs across a full 180-day school year.



► Enabling BCC to provide guidance and resources to support an additional 36 First Nations schools with the implementation of quality sustainable school food programs over the next 3 years.

► Facilitating the development of a community of practice across the FNSNP to strengthen food security strategies and foster strong relationships between communities for improved knowledge sharing. Connecting community leaders, nutrition experts, and program stakeholders will enhance the sustainability of student nutrition programs and help develop programs that better suit the specific needs of First Nations communities in Ontario.

	Projected operating costs (in thousands of dollars)	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
FN PROGRAMS	Support costs - current 34 FN programs	\$904	\$964	\$1,028	\$2,896
	Contributions from BCC donors	\$(184)	\$(190)	\$(197)	\$(571)
	Total	\$720	\$774	\$831	\$2 324
	New FN openings - 12 programs	\$281	\$299	\$319	\$899
	New FN openings - 12 programs	-	\$281	\$299	\$580
	New FN openings - 12 programs	-	-	\$281	\$281
	Equipment - new openings	\$78	\$80	\$83	\$241
	Administration	\$237	\$315	\$398	\$950
	GRAND TOTAL	\$1,316	\$1,749	\$2,210	\$5,275



Assumptions

These costs do not include any storage or delivery expenses to provide First Nations (FN) schools with food products.

- BCC's current financial support for FN programs amounts to approximately \$0.43 per student per day on average.
- For calculation purposes, a theoretical average cost of nearly \$2.00 per day was estimated for FN programs.
- Additional support costs were estimated at \$1.57 per student per day on average.
- Assumption: 180 school days per year.
- Projected growth: 3.5% average annual increase in breakfast attendance (contingent of various socio-economic factors).
- Average attendance of 65 students per new FN school.
- Inflation factor at 3%.
- An amount of \$6,500 per new FN school onboarded for equipment purposes.
- Onboarding new FN schools at a pace of 12 schools per year.

Disclaimers

- BCC did not conduct a full review of specific needs and gaps in current First Nations–supported schools. Some schools may already receive additional contributions from other sources, which could impact these preliminary projections.
- The model assumed that the type of support provided to FN schools would be through financial contribution. Should a food procurement approach be used, program cost projections would be different and could be beneficial to schools and communities.
- A coordinated annual assessment is required to ensure that BCC's contribution remain accurate, reflecting program needs and economic fluctuations. BCC's strong capacity to monitor and report results will help optimize the impact of each dollar invested by the Ministry. Any underutilization of funds, if identified as permanent after annual reviews, could be reallocated by the Ministry to address gaps identified by communities and stakeholders during the project.



Conclusion

There has never been a more critical time in Canadian history to invest in the health, well-being, and learning of our children and youth. With the current affordability and food insecurity crisis, we must ensure that all children and youth have access to the nutritious food they need to thrive, especially the most vulnerable ones.

Leveraging the Club's expertise in this realm as a trusted partner will allow the Ministries of Children, Community and Social Services, Education and Indigenous Affairs Ontario to support priority needs quickly and efficiently.

We thank the Government of Ontario for their consideration of our proposal and invite you to reach out to discuss our submission in greater detail.

Contact

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References

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