

# ENGAGING ONTARIO SCHOOL BOARDS IN LOCAL FOOD PROCUREMENT

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STRATEGIES TO WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SCHOOL BOARDS AND  
FOOD SERVICE COMPANIES TO PRIORITIZE LOCAL FOOD PURCHASING  
IN SECONDARY SCHOOL CAFETERIAS



# INTRODUCTIONS

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- **Soni Craik Christie – SCC Consulting; Food Systems and Sustainability Solutions**
  - Experience working with two different Ontario school boards on local food procurement; Peel District School Board, Durham District School Board. Both projects were managed by non-profit organization Ecosource
  - Other SCC Consulting projects include Serving Up Local, Serving Up Local Training Initiative, new 3 year partnership funded through OMAFRA, the University of Guelph and the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance, and Greenbelt Fund Consultancy work
- **Eli Browne – Director of Sustainability and Culinary Services; Chartwells Canada**
  - Co-creator of the new “Buy Local” program at Compass Group Canada, empowering food service staff and clients in new opportunities to support local vendors in their community

# FARM TO SCHOOL PILLARS; SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS, HEALTHY LOCAL FOOD IN SCHOOLS

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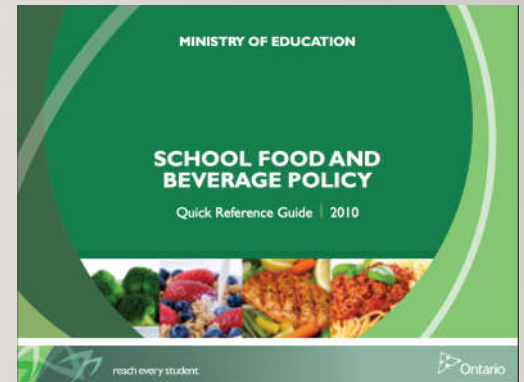
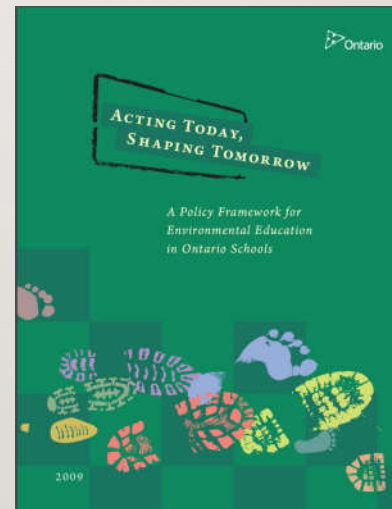




# ENGAGING SCHOOL BOARDS - FIND THE ENTRY POINT

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- Big policies released from the Ministry of Education from 2009-2011 that opened up the conversation of “WHY” look at the origin of food we are selling/feeding to our students in PDSB:
- Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow
- Schools Food and Beverage Policy – PPM 150



# PEEL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD – SCHOOL FOOD ACTION COALITION

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- Project brought together stakeholders that influence PDSB's food procurement including PDSB purchasing, Compass/Chartwell's Managers and Directors, Peel Public Health and Ecosource. Goal was to increase local food options available in secondary school cafeterias and engage students in the new food options. This was a first in Ontario.
- Project components included:
  - Monthly committee meetings
  - Local food identification in PDSB cafeteria menu's
  - Seasonal local food days complete with taste testing opportunities and menu cards Cooking Up Action Culinary Challenge – student made menu challenge
  - Farm trips and local food literacy experiential learning opportunities



# SCHOOL FOOD ACTION COALITION SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

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## Successes:

- Student created menu items available across PDSB schools
- Innovative collaborative approach using local food as an engagement tactic in students retention at the cafeterias
- Local food included as a evaluative category in new PDSB Culinary Teachers buying group
- Local food procurement included in Board RFP for food service in cafeterias
- Won the Greenbelt Fund *Local Food Champion* award in 2011

## Challenges:

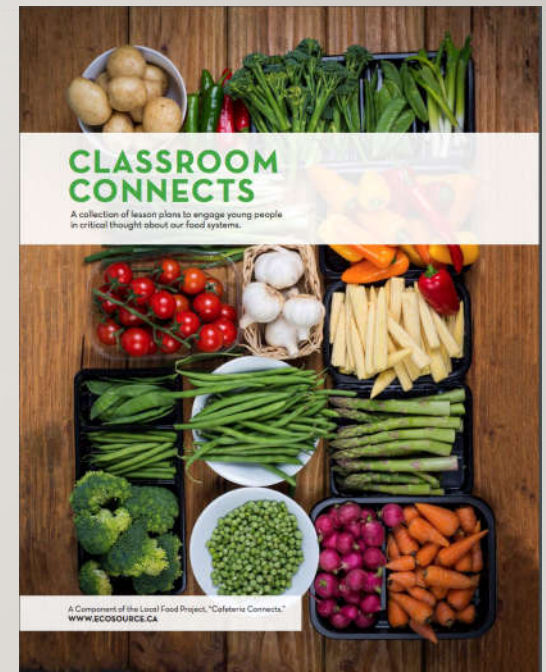
- Students still left cafeterias
- The database of product origin was still being created at Compass/Chartwells, making the identification of local difficult



# DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD – CAFETERIA CONNECTS

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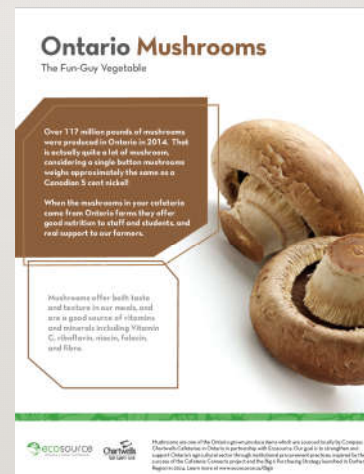
- Entry point: financial investment (Greenbelt Fund) and appealing to board embedded in a farming community
- Project brought together stakeholders from DDSB's food procurement portfolio, Superintendents of Budgets, Compass/Chartwell's District Managers and Directors, Curriculum Heads, Facilities Managers and Ecosource.
- Project components included:
  - Food system and procurement statement
  - Curriculum Guide written by DDSB teachers connecting local food to 6 different subjects
  - Local food taste tests and outreach days
  - Farmers Market at DDSB Head Office
  - The "Big 6" purchasing strategy





# THE “BIG 6” PURCHASING STRATEGY

- Working with the Compass fresh produce provider, high commodity fruits and vegetables were identified that were being ordered by cafeterias and could consistently be ordered from local farms.; Apples, Carrots, Red Peppers, Onions, Mushrooms, Cucumbers



Strategy increased fresh local food in cafeterias by 30%!



# EXPANDING THE BIG 6 ACROSS ONTARIO SCHOOLS

- 2019-2020: Monthly local food feature (aligned with monthly promotional calendar)
  - Monthly Recipe
  - Marketing Materials (menu board signage)
  - Talk tracks for supervisors
  - Social Media Messages

FEBRUARY 2019 SPECIALS				
 Mon	 Tue	 Wed	 Thu	 Fri
This month get two "Top Your Own Hot Chocolate" for the price of one!				
4  POTATO BOWL	5  Beef Taco Salad	6  Chicken Parm	7  SAVOUR	8  Flavors from Thailand
11 POPCORN CHICKEN COMBO	12  Customer Appreciation	13  Spaghetti & Meatballs	14  HAPPY Valentine's DAY	15  Flavors from Thailand
18  Happy Family Day	19  NACHO BAR	20  Baked Pasta	21  Chef Corbin Caribbean Special	22  Supervisor Special
23  POTATO BOWL	26  Taco Tuesday	27  Mac n' Cheese	28  chartwells	

# BUY LOCAL PROGRAM

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- Grassroots, community-based sourcing enabled by technology (“hyper-local”)
- Direct connection between chefs & managers and local farmers and vendors
- Food-safety assured supply
- Share the story of our local farmers and vendors





# CONTRACT LANGUAGE AND RFP'S

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- Our programs & practices align with the priorities articulated by the school boards
- Prioritize local food in RFPs with specific language and KPIs
- Challenges:
  - Tracking
  - Accountability & Follow up
  - Student Buying Power (price point)
  - Telling The Story



# ENGAGING SCHOOL BOARDS IN LOCAL FOOD PROCUREMENT

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- Find the entry point with the school board: policies, programs, initiatives, public health agencies, opportunity to show leadership – connect it to an initiative or value that the school already has
- Bring a team to the table that can support the initiative – a board representative that influences procurement, food service managers, curriculum support, community agencies working on local food access and education
- Understand the current local food purchases and make a strategic and simple procurement plan with that knowledge. Start small.
- Engage students in the changes they will see through formal curriculum learning objectives and experiential learning opportunities.
- Engage and empower the food services team at the schools, time for menu testing and vendor research.
- Include local food as a weighted category in the RFP's and food contracts at the school, identifying reporting time periods and a plan for increasing local food purchasing
- Celebrate your success and tell your story!



# CONTACTS

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