

FOOD ACCESS AND INSPIRE PLANNING

Investing in Neighborhoods and Schools to Promote Improvement, Revitalization, and Excellence

BACKGROUND

Through the **21st Century Schools Initiative**, Baltimore City Public Schools, in partnership with the Maryland Stadium Authority, Baltimore City, and the State of Maryland, will invest nearly one billion dollars to renovate or replace schools over the next several years. To leverage this investment and to enhance the connection between schools and surrounding neighborhoods, the Planning Department launched INSPIRE to focus on the quarter-mile area surrounding each modernized school. The plans include detailed recommendations for specific implementable public improvements, and articulate the communities' long-term visions to guide private investment, and address environmental, social, and economic conditions.

CHILD FOOD INSECURITY:

A "BETTER SCHOOLS" INDICATOR

Thirty percent of Baltimore City children live in food deserts without access to affordable healthy food—the highest rate of any age group—and a quarter of Baltimore's children are food insecure. Children cannot thrive if they are not food secure. Food insecurity is a measure of lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy lifestyle, and limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods. Food insecurity is linked to cognitive, emotional and physical delay and poor reading and math performance compared to food secure peers. Further, food insecure young children are twice as likely to be in poor health, more likely to be hospitalized, and more likely to suffer from common illnesses such as stomachaches, headaches and colds than food-secure peers, potentially leading to higher absenteeism. Due to its impact on learning and performance, child food insecurity is an new indicator for the City's "Better Schools" outcome budgeting process.

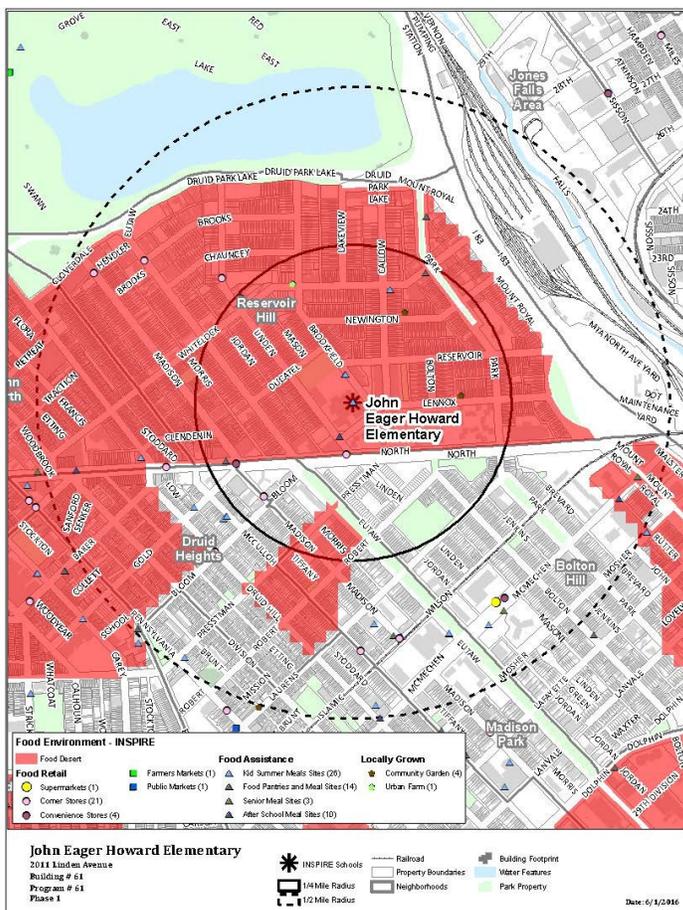


Figure 1: INSPIRE Food Environment Map

INSPIRE AND THE FOOD ENVIRONMENT

- School Food Nutrition Services plays a vital role in preventing food insecurity for many Baltimore children by providing up to three free meals per day. School kids can taste new fruits and vegetables, learn about nutrition and work in a garden.
- Food has a strong presence inside schools, but children and their families also interact with the food environment outside of school. Building on the idea that strong food environments contribute to strong neighborhoods, the Baltimore Food Policy Initiative (BFPI) is engaged in the INSPIRE process at each school.
- All INSPIRE plans will include a specific food environment map (see Figure 1) for the INSPIRE area – showing food retail, food assistance and urban agriculture – and tailored recommendations for development and programming to increase access to healthy food. BFPI hosts food environment-specific visioning sessions at schools that have high food access needs.
- Recommendations from various INSPIRE plans include suggestions for partnerships with a nearby supermarket and corner store, specific vacant lots to convert to community gardens, and ways to increase connections between the school community and nearby farmers markets and urban farms.



INSPIRE YEAR ONE SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL FOOD ENVIRONMENT

School Year 2015-2016	Food and Nutrition Services					Partners		
	ADP Lunch	ADP Breakfast	Alternative Breakfast	Salad/Salad Bar	FFVP	School Garden	Food Pantry	Summer Meals
Schools Under Construction by Fall 2016								
Arundel Elementary	87%	82%	in classroom	salad	yes	no	yes	yes
Cherry Hill Elementary	88%	34%	no	salad	yes	yes	yes	no
Frederick Elementary	83%	80%	in classroom	salad	yes	planned	yes	no
Pimlico Elementary	73%	38%	no	salad bar	yes	no	yes	yes
Fort Worthington Elementary-Middle	78%	52%	no	salad	yes	planned	yes	yes
John Eager Howard Elementary	83%	44%	no	salad	yes	partner w/ farm	yes	Rec Center
Lyndhurst Elementary-Middle	92%	59%	2nd chance	salad	yes	no	yes	no
Forest Park High	48%	23%	no	salad bar	n/a	planned	yes	no
Robert Poole/ACCE and Independence	34%	7%	grab-n-go	salad	n/a	yes	yes	no
Schools In Planning Phases								
Arlington Elementary	74%	65%	no	salad bar	yes	no	yes	yes
Calvin Rodwell Elementary	90%	40%	no	salad bar	yes	yes	yes	yes
Patterson High	91%	15%	no	salad bar	n/a	no	yes	no

ADP = Average Daily Participation FFVP = Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

School Meals: Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPSS) Food Nutrition Services uses the Community Eligibility Provision to provide breakfast and lunch for free to all students. ADP compares the number of students who take the meal to total enrollment.

Alternative Breakfast: In order to increase participation in breakfast, which has been shown to have favorable outcomes on many academic indicators, some schools offer breakfast in the classroom, breakfast later in the morning (second chance), or breakfast kiosks in the hallways where students can “grab-n-go”.

Salad and Salad Bars: Every school in the district offers fresh salad every day. Some schools have salad bars where students can serve themselves.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program: FFVP is a federal

program that provides funding to schools to introduce fresh fruits and vegetables as healthy snack options in creative ways, at least two times per week.

School Garden: School gardens vary widely in terms of size, use and funding source. Many school communities want a garden, but upkeep during the summer when school is out of session must be considered.

Food Pantry: While each INSPIRE school has a pantry, they vary significantly capacity, functionality, and in the number of families served. Food pantries can play an important role in the food environment for many students and their families.

Summer Meals: There are various summer meal providers, including BCPSS. Only schools that offer summer programs serve meals on-site but there are many summer meals sites throughout the community where kids can eat.