

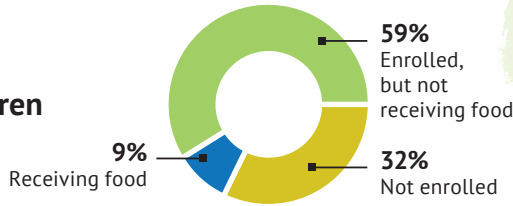


COMMONWEALTH OF THE
Bahamas

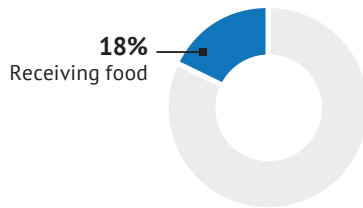


School Meal Coverage (2022-2023)

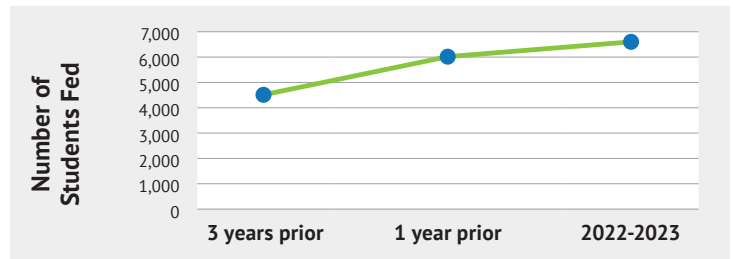
All Primary and Secondary School-age Children



Only Enrolled Primary Students



School Level	Total	# Enrolled	# Receiving Food
Preschool	6,180	3,744	195
Primary School	36,480	23,301	4,196
Secondary School	35,270	25,332	2,282
TOTAL	77,930	52,377	6,673



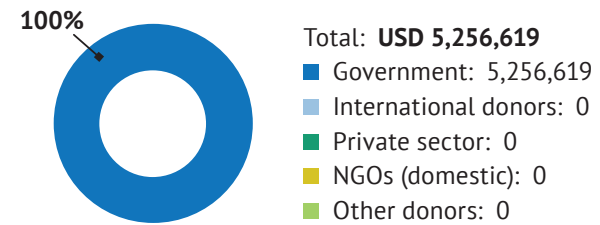
National Laws, Policies, and Standards

- National school feeding policy
- Nutrition
- Health
- Food safety
- Smallholder farms
- Agriculture (apart from smallholders)
- Climate/environment policy
- Private sector involvement

The country had ...

- Inter-sectoral coordination committee for school feeding
- National system for monitoring school feeding

Budget



- Line item in the national budget for school feeding

School Foods and Beverages

- Whole grains
- Refined/milled grains
- Blended grain-based products
- Legumes
- Nuts and seeds
- Eggs
- Dairy
- Poultry and game meat
- Red meat
- Processed meat
- Fish and shellfish
- Deep orange vegetables and tubers
- White roots and tubers
- Fruits
- Dark green leafy vegetables
- Cruciferous vegetables
- Other vegetables
- Deep-fried foods
- Sweets
- Liquid oils
- Semi-solid and solid fats
- Salt
- Dairy milk
- Yogurt drink
- 100% fruit juice
- Other fruit drink
- Tea
- Other sugar-sweetened beverages

Prohibited food items

Fried foods, sugar-sweetened beverages

Food Sources

N/A

Special Notes: None

Nutrition

School feeding program(s) include/involve the following

- Fortified foods
- Bio-fortified foods
- Micronutrient supplements
- Nutritionists involved**
- Special training for cooks/caterers in nutrition
- Objective to meet nutritional goals**
- Objective to reduce obesity

Limitations on food and beverage marketing...

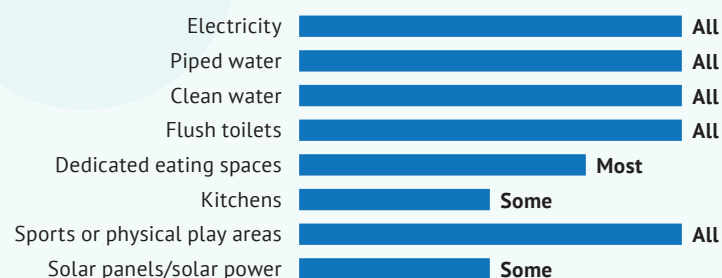
- On school grounds**
- To school age children

Additional Information

Nutritionists employed by the national government participated in the National School Lunch Programme during the 2022-2023 school year. The school lunch menus were created with consideration of their nutritional composition, as well as the preferences of Bahamian children. One of the objectives of the National School Lunch Programme was to meet nutritional and health goals, and several strategies were implemented to prevent or mitigate overweight and obesity. These included setting nutritional requirements for food baskets, setting food and beverage restrictions on or near school grounds, providing food and nutrition education, and offering health and physical education.

Infrastructure, Employment, and Complementary Features

Share of Schools with ...



Employment

Total number of cooks/caterers: **171**

- At least 100% paid
- 75-99% women

There was a focus on creating job opportunities for...

- Women
- Youth
- Other Groups

Complementary Activities

- Handwashing with soap
- Height measurement**
- Weight measurement**
- Testing for anemia
- Deworming treatment
- Eye testing/eyeglasses**
- Hearing testing/treatment**
- Dental cleaning/testing
- Menstrual hygiene
- Drinking water
- Water purification
- School gardens

Complementary Education Programs

- Food and nutrition**
- Agriculture**
- Environment/climate/sustainability
- Hygiene**
- Health**
- Reproductive health**
- HIV prevention**
- Physical education**
- Mental health**

Additional Information

The private sector participated in school feeding through catering. Approximately 171 cooks, paid by the national government, were employed in the National School Lunch Programme, and a large majority of the cooks and caterers were women. Cooks received annual professional development training, along with special training in food safety and hygiene.

Environmental Sustainability

Targeted climate-friendly foods

- Yes No

Steps taken to limit food waste

- Sealed food storage**
- Fumigation/pest control in storage area
 - Use of hermetic bags or larger hermetic storage system
 - Routine testing/monitoring of dry food storage
 - Use of nearly-expired food
 - Use of usable but “imperfect” commodities or produce
 - Campaign to reduce how much food students throw away

Steps taken to limit package waste

- Re-use of bags/containers
- Recycling
- Use of compostable materials**
- Use of “bulk serve” containers
- Prohibiting specific types of packaging**

Additional Information

To limit food waste in the National School Lunch Programme, food handlers implemented the FIFO (First In, First Out) system and utilized proper storage facilities. Compostable materials were used for food packaging, and at the same time, specific types of packaging—such as plastics and non-recyclables—were prohibited in order to reduce packaging waste. Additionally, the national government imposed a ban on styrofoam products.

Emergencies

Experienced disruptions to school feeding due to emergencies

- Yes No

Strategies to address the impact of emergencies

- Seek alternative food sources or suppliers
- Changes in numbers of students fed
- Negotiate better prices with existing suppliers
- Establish alternative supply routes or transportation methods
- Source different or alternative food
- Release of food reserves
- Increase funding or budget allocation for school feeding
- Collaborate with local producers or suppliers to reduce dependence on global supply chains
- Changes in delivery method
- Changes in feeding modality
- Changes in feeding frequency
- No particular strategy was used**

Additional Information

The Bahamas did not experience any emergencies during the 2022-2023 school year, and there were no interruptions to school meal activities.

Successes and Challenges

Successes

1. The programme has developed a strong professional development plan for food handlers and caterers.
2. Collaboration with the School of Hospitality at the University of The Bahamas has been strengthened.
3. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has provided (and continues to provide) technical support for the programme.

Challenges

1. The programme continues to struggle with a lack of human resources/personnel.
2. This is often manifested in a limited ability, on the part of the central office, to undertake monitoring and evaluation of food handlers and caterers.

National School Lunch Programme

Management

- Lead implementer(s): Ministry of Education & Technical & Vocational Training
- The national government managed the program (Centralized decision-making).
- Caterers procured the food

How Many Students Received Food

School Level	# of Students	% Girls	% Boys
Preschool	195	69%	31%
Primary School	4,196	52%	48%
Secondary School	2,282	61%	39%
TOTAL	6,673	56%	44%

Foods and Beverages

- Whole grains
- Refined/milled grains
- Blended grain-based products
- Legumes
- Eggs
- Dairy
- Poultry and game meat
- Red meat
- Fish and shellfish
- Deep orange vegetables and tubers
- White roots and tubers
- Fruits
- Dark green leafy vegetables
- Cruciferous vegetables
- Other vegetables
- Salt
- 100% fruit juice

Elements of Home-Grown School Feeding

- Objective for small-scale farmers to benefit from access to a stable market
- Local food sourcing
- Small-scale farmers involved by selling directly (or through their farmer organization) to the program or the schools
- Additional support provided to small-scale farmers
- Country had a law/policy/standard related to small-scale farmers and school feeding programs
- Preferential treatment for small-scale farmers/small farmer organizations/small companies in tendering procedures
- Effort is made to reduce food miles

Objectives

- To meet educational goals
- To provide a social safety net
- To reduce hunger
- To meet nutritional and/or health goals

Modalities of Providing Students With Food

- In-school meals
- In-school snacks

Frequency and Duration

- 5 times per week
- During the school year

Targeting

- Individual characteristics (students from a lower socioeconomic background as assessed by the Department of Social Services) and grade levels

Expenses



Food Sources

N/A

Additional Information

The National School Lunch Programme began operating in the early 1980s and targeted public school children. The office of the National School Lunch Programme collaborates with other intergovernmental agencies such as the Department of Social Services, Department of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

The Global Survey of School Meal Programs® collects data from government sources and is funded, in part, by the United States Department of Agriculture. Contact info@gcnf.org for more information.

Citation: Global Child Nutrition Foundation (GCNF). 2024. Global Survey of School Meal Programs Country Report, Bahamas.

<https://gcnf.org/country-reports/>