

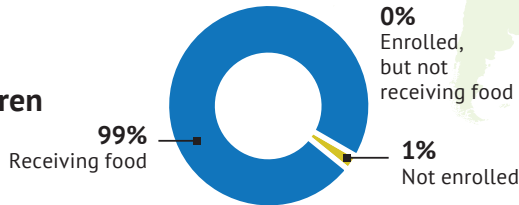


REPUBLIC OF Korea

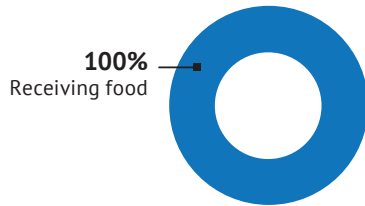


School Meal Coverage (2022-2023)

All Primary and Secondary School-age Children



Only Enrolled Primary Students



| School Level | Total | # Enrolled | # Receiving Food |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Preschool | 1,049,383 | 996,562 | 995,565* |
| Primary School | 2,700,592 | 2,672,550 | 2,671,157 |
| Secondary School | 2,687,978 | 2,648,065 | 2,640,576** |
| TOTAL | 6,437,953 | 6,317,177 | 6,307,298 |

* The numbers of preschool children are inclusive of children at childcare institutions (daycare centers).

** The numbers of secondary school children are inclusive of children in Special Education schools.



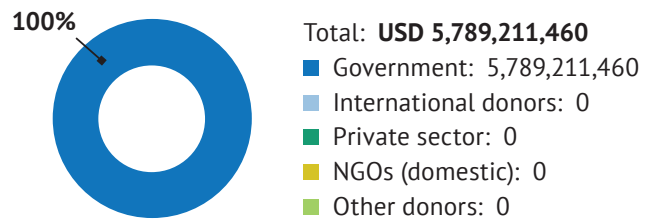
National Laws, Policies, and Standards

- 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



* In addition to government funding for the School Food Service program, the families of students in boarding schools allocated USD 419,296,269 to cover the cost of breakfast and dinner.

- Line item in the national budget for school feeding

School Foods and Beverages

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

Prohibited food items

Only food items that met the quality standards outlined in the 'School Meals Ingredient Quality Management Criteria', as mandated by the School Meals Act, were allowed.

Food Sources

- Purchased (domestic)
- Purchased (foreign)
- In-kind (domestic)
- In-kind (foreign)

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...

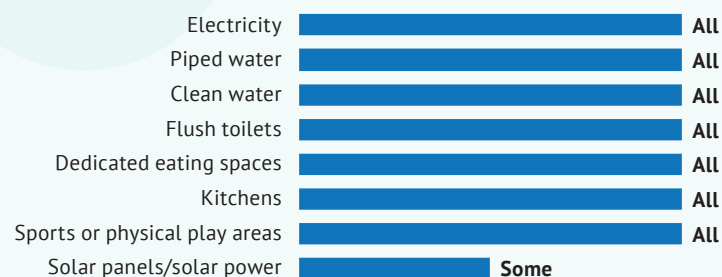
- On school grounds**
- To school age children**

Additional Information

During the 2022-2023 school year, approximately 13,357 nutritionists were involved with the School Food Service Program, employed by regional and local government. Each school provided a balanced variety of high-quality food ingredients to meet the nutritional needs of growing students. School meals mainly used natural or seasonal foods, and drinks containing excessive amounts of non-nutritive or artificial sweeteners were limited. To prevent or mitigate overweight/obesity, there were nutritional requirements for school meals; restrictions on food and/or beverages on or near school grounds; limited food and/or beverage marketing to children; and education on food and nutrition, health education, and physical education.

Infrastructure, Employment, and Complementary Features

Share of Schools with ...



Employment

Total number of cooks/caterers: **69,147**

- 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 ingredients used in school meals were supplied by local government-run school food service distribution centers. In areas where there were no school food service distribution centers, high-quality ingredients were supplied through contracts with food ingredient distributors through open bidding.

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

Additional efforts to limit food waste included (1) ordering appropriate quantities of ingredients and preparing and distributing meals to meet students’ nutritional needs, and (2) providing dietary education and guidance to reduce food waste. To limit packaging waste, there was a restriction on the use of disposable items. To target “climate-friendly” foods, the program expanded the utilization of domestically sourced and locally produced ingredients. And to reduce the distance between where school food was produced and the school, local production and procurement were increased.

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 School Food Service program was not affected by any emergencies during the 2022-2023 school year.

Successes and Challenges

Successes

1. The Korean School Food Services excel in quality. In accordance with the School Meals Act established in 1981, all kindergarten, elementary, middle, and high schools (20,000 in total) provided balanced nutrition, utilized high-quality ingredients, and implemented systematic hygiene management. This significantly contributed to the health promotion of students during their growth years.
2. The School Food Services were an integral element of educational activities. With the introduction of the nutrition teachers system in 2006, schools have nutrition experts placed as nutrition teachers to conduct systematic meal management and nutrition education. This contributed to the health promotion of students and the formation of lifelong dietary habits.
3. School food information was transparently disclosed. According to the School Meals Act and guidelines, schools published information on meals provided daily (menu, nutritional content, origin of ingredients, food allergy information, meal photos) on their websites. This allowed students and parents to easily access information about school meals.
4. School meals (lunches) were provided free of charge to all students, contributing to the promotion of educational welfare for students and alleviating economic burdens for parents.

Challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the unprecedented suspension of in-person schooling for a considerable duration, resulting in the temporary cessation of school meal services. This interruption in school meal provision led to many challenges, including nutritional imbalances among students, operational hurdles for agricultural producers and enterprises, and increased familial burdens associated with meal preparation. In response to these exigencies, the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs and regional educational authorities, embarked on a policy initiative aimed at ameliorating the prevailing circumstances. This endeavor involved the distribution of agricultural produce parcels to students' households during the period of suspended school meal services in the first half of 2020. This intervention effectively mitigated the collective hardships confronting students, parents, agricultural stakeholders, and commercial entities. Consequently, this policy initiative garnered widespread acclaim from the population, serving as a commendable exemplar of proactive measures for navigating the challenges precipitated by the COVID-19 crisis.

School Food Service

Management

- Lead implementer(s): Ministry of Education
- The program was managed with both centralized and decentralized decision-making (Semi-decentralized).
- Individual schools procured the food

How Many Students Received Food

| School Level | # of Students | % Girls | % Boys |
|------------------|------------------|----------|----------|
| Preschool | 995,565* | — | — |
| Primary School | 2,671,157 | 49% | 51% |
| Secondary School | 2,640,576** | — | — |
| TOTAL | 6,307,298 | — | — |

* The numbers of preschool children are inclusive of children at childcare institutions (daycare centers).

** The numbers of secondary school children are inclusive of children in Special Education schools.

Foods and Beverages

- ✓ Whole grains
- ✓ Refined/milled grains
- ✓ Blended grain-based products
- ✓ Legumes
- ✓ Nuts and seeds
- ✓ Eggs
- ✓ Dairy
- ✓ 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

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 meet nutritional and/or health goals
- To prevent or mitigate obesity
- To meet agricultural goals

Modalities of Providing Students With Food

- In-school meals

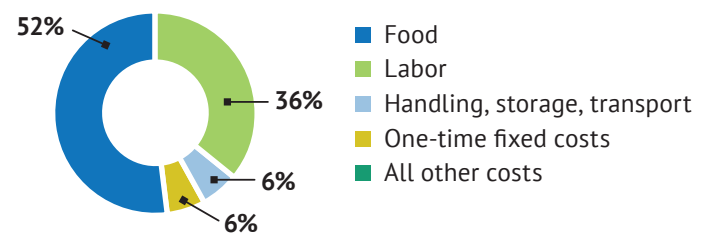
Frequency and Duration

- 5 times per week
- During the school year

Targeting

- Universal

Expenses



Food Sources

95% Purchased (domestic)
5% Purchased (foreign)

0% In-kind (domestic)
0% In-kind (foreign)

Additional Information

The School Food Service program began operating in 1953, and in the 2022-2023 school year, the program reached over 15,000 public schools and over 5,000 private schools. The community was engaged through gathering parental opinions on the school food service and monitoring the school food program. Students' preferences were integrated into the program through a School Food Survey. The Ministry of Education collaborated with provincial offices of education to develop and disseminate various programs necessary for school meal operation (e.g., hygiene management, menu and nutrition management, food quality control, dietary education), thereby enhancing school support.

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, South Korea.

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