



## Food Access & Literacy Work Group Meeting Minutes

Fairfax Food Council

January 31, 2024

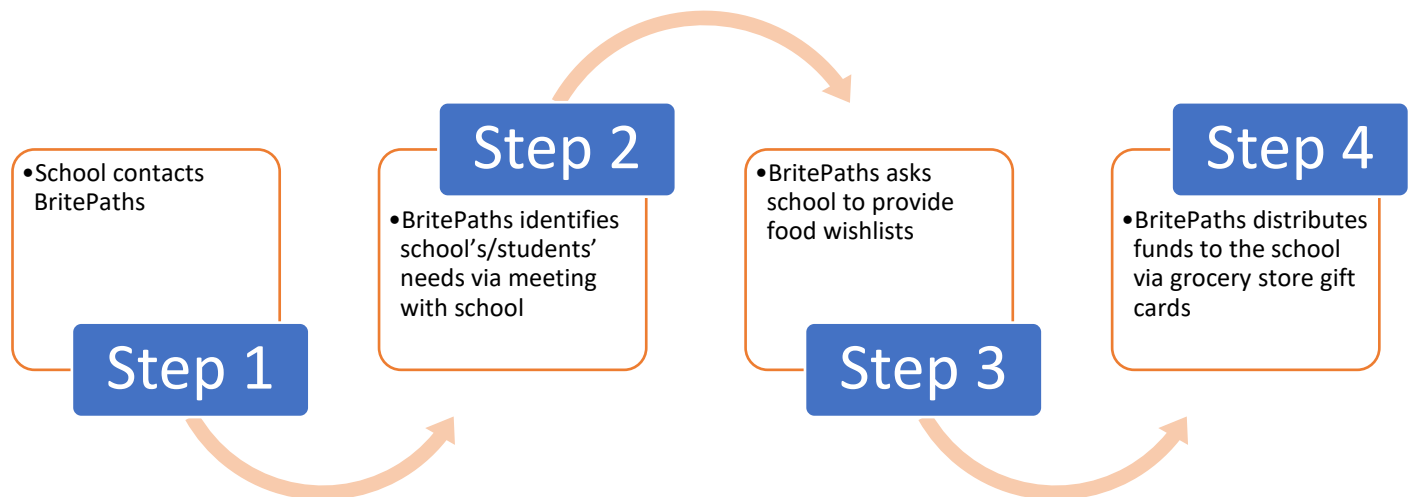
10:30 am – 11:30 am

### School Partnerships Around Food Support

**Presenter: BritePaths, Food for Others, Western Fairfax Christian Ministries**

#### **BritePaths**

Chris of BritePaths provided an overview of the Food 4 Thought (F4T) program and its history. The program is currently in 22 schools. Brenda of BritePaths helps interested schools set-up a food pantry or food packing program at their school. Here's how it works:



BritePaths' aim is not to tell the school how to run the pantry or the food packing program because the school knows their students and needs. BritePaths simply intends to advocate for healthy foods.

## Food for Others

Nikki of Food For Others (FFO) discussed the Power Pack program. During the 2022-2023 school year, FFO gave out 110,706 Power Packs!



The Power Pack is designed to serve the individual student, not the student's family. Volunteers pack the bags, inspect the donations, and distribute the packs to volunteer drivers who then take the packs to the schools. FFO finds that it is hard to provide nutritious yet shelf-stable items. Inflation is another challenge, despite FFO's large purchasing power. When they started the Power Pack program, it cost FFO \$2 per pack. Now that cost is \$4. FFO is always looking for volunteers. If you are interested, email them at [Volunteer@foodforothers.org](mailto:Volunteer@foodforothers.org).

## Western Fairfax Christian Ministries

Pamela Montesinos of Western Fairfax Christian Ministries (WFCM) shared that WFCM has a Free Food Fridge Program, and is currently partnered with 12 schools. They serve 650-700 students weekly, providing 4 weekend meals! WFCM works closely with school social workers and, together, they communicate about the kinds of meals to serve based on the students' likes, the budget, and other sources/organizations serving the same students (to prevent duplication). WFCM's goal is to provide healthy foods, so gift cards are given to food coordinators to purchase fresh items for the program. A work group member asked about the program's recycling and sustainability practices. WFCM shared that food is packaged in plastic because it's easier for teachers to distribute. However, some schools are trying to use cloth bags, but because those are not returned, there is still no reuse.

## Capital Area Food Bank School-Based Initiatives

### Presenter: Kate Ross and Chanel Carter

Chanel of the Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB) discussed two programs—the Family Market and the School Pantry program. Here are some of the key highlights of the two programs:

Family Market	Both Programs	School Pantry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market-style food distribution program that occurs on school grounds to help families experiencing food insecurity</li> <li>• New market at Ft. Belvoir Elementary School</li> <li>• Open 1x a month</li> <li>• Box of mostly fresh produce</li> <li>• Encourages use of reusable bags</li> <li>• Community resources other than food are accessible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAFB sends out a menu</li> <li>• CAFB collects data on taste/cultural preferences to eliminate food waste</li> <li>• CAFB uses data regarding student eligibility/participation in Free and Reduced School Meals programs to identify the areas and schools that have the most need</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New program</li> <li>• Open 2x a week</li> <li>• Bag of mostly shelf-stable goods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 85-90% shelf-stable goods</li> <li>○ 10-15% fresh produce (if refrigeration is available)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• CAFB provides start-up supplies</li> </ul>

## FCPS Food & Nutrition Services Update on School Meals

**Presenter: Melissa DeAngelo**

Highlights from FCPS' Food & Nutrition Services (FNS) update:

- **FNS is fully staffed** to accommodate
  - 180k students
  - 34% of students receive free and reduced meals
- **Introduced menu changes**
  - Eliminating
    - High fructose corn syrup
    - MSG
    - Pork products
    - Trans fat
  - Adding
    - New menu items
    - Whole muscle animal protein products only
    - Artificial Sweeteners
    - Strawberry Milk
    - Chocolate milk at breakfast
    - All whole grains or whole grain-rich meals
- **Increased student engagement**
  - Want to make it easier for students to elevate their voices

- Hosted taste testing event for students to actively participate in the new menu development process
- Want to ensure students feel represented in the offered foods
- **Incorporated green initiatives**
  - Transitioning to wooden, compostable, and recyclable utensils
  - Increasing scratch made meals
  - Purchasing local foods
  - Reducing food waste
  - Developing new Memorandum of Understanding for food sharing tables
  - Creating a process for signage on and tracking of share table items

[Next Food Access & Literacy Work Group Meeting:](#) February 28, 2024 at 10:30 a.m.