

School Nutrition

School Information System: A bridge between decision makers, stakeholders and schools for healthy school environments

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Purpose: A unique and user-friendly self-diagnosis web-based platform that provides information to schools, stakeholders and decision-makers regarding the school food environment has been set up by researchers from the University of Sherbrooke, Laval University and University of Montréal.

Process: Each school is invited to complete online questionnaires about the school food environment. For each completed questionnaire, the respondent and school's principal receive an automated personalized report including the strengths and areas for improvement as well as practical suggestions related to the theme being evaluated (main food service's offer at lunchtime and meal context). Stakeholders are thus able to target the changes to be prioritized in their schools. The data compiled by the School Information System (SIS) also provides a global portrait of Quebec school environments that can serve as a scientific basis for the authorities responsible for developing relevant and effective food policies and projects.

Systematic approach: A structured partnership of university researchers and various actors and stakeholders in the school environment, situated at the local, regional, and provincial levels, allow to develop the SIS in accordance with the concerns, needs and priorities of the Quebec school network.

Conclusions: The SIS is being implemented in the Quebec school environment, facilitating the creation and monitoring of a healthy school food environment, with the support of an interdisciplinary and intersectoral partnership.

Recommendations: It is recommended to develop bridges between dietitians and researchers from other provinces to improve, adapt and deploy the SIS in relation with provincial and territorial orientations. This collaboration would make it possible to establish the portrait of the Canadian school food offer to guide future comprehensive prevention actions.

Significance: The SIS provides dietitians with the tool they need to support schools, in accordance with their needs and the challenges diagnosed, in the implementation of orientations and policies as well as in the implementation of interventions promoting a healthy food environment. This tool also facilitates the assessment of the implemented interventions by measuring the evolution of these environments.

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