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Real Food For Kids Getting Closer to Goal With Release of RFP for Food and Nutrition Services Assessment.

July 9, 2012...On June 29, Fairfax County released the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the School Board's directed, independent assessment of the Food and Nutrition Services. The primary objective of the assessment is "to assess FCPS Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) to identify cost-effective ways of making FCPS school food healthier by increasing the amount of fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and striving to eliminate processed foods."

In response to rising childhood obesity and diabetes rates, *Real Food For Kids* has been working to encourage Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) to provide healthier, more appetizing, whole foods made from scratch. According to At-Large School Board member Ryan McElveen, "This study has the potential to both improve our school food offerings and, perhaps more importantly, help students realize the importance of healthy food in their lives. The fact that the School Board, school staff and *Real Food For Kids* advocates have partnered to craft this assessment speaks volumes to the progress that can be made in the coming years by working together." McElveen and Hunter Mill District member Pat Hynes worked with the County to develop the RFP. "This study will give us a chance to model how a large, self-sustaining school food service operation can move decisively from highly-processed meals toward more healthy, whole foods. This is a collaborative effort among the school board, FCPS Food and Nutrition Services leadership and parent advocates. I look forward to getting the study off the ground!" says Pat Hynes.

JoAnne Hammermaster, President of *Real Food For Kids* expressed her gratitude for the support of the School Board. "We applaud the efforts of Ryan McElveen and Pat Hynes whose work on producing the RFP has brought us one step closer to providing FCPS children with more nutritious food," says Hammermaster.

"We are excited to see Fairfax County seeking a comprehensive, independent assessment and looking for innovative ways to move toward providing students with the healthiest food possible," says Jocelyn Hsu, Co-Founder of *Real Food For Kids*.

The \$200,000 for the assessment of FCPS Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) will come from the FNS fund reserves, which total approximately \$18 million for the 2012-2013 school year. Under U.S. Department of the Agriculture regulations, Food and Nutrition Services funds may only be used for the operation or improvement of school food services. The School Board's decisions to obtain an independent assessment does not reduce the FCPS school operating fund, which is used to pay for teachers, aides, textbooks, and other instructional expenses.

The RFP number 2000000273 can be found at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/solicitation/>. A pre-proposal conference will be held on July 12, 2012 at 1:00 p.m. in the Fairfax County Public Schools Gatehouse Administration Center I, Conference Center Room 1610, 8115 Gatehouse Road, Falls Church, Virginia. The closing date and time for RFP bids is Aug 9, 2012 @ 02:00 PM.

As the local face of the national wellness movement, Real Food for Kids is committed to working in collaborative ways to increase the quantities of healthy foods in Fairfax County Public Schools and supporting programs that educate our students and their families on making healthier lifestyle choices.