Innovations in State Farm to School Policy

June 3, 2022
Our Core Functions

We are a hub for:

- Information
- Networking
- Advocacy

Connecting people to:

- Resources
- People
- Policy
Our Mission

National Farm to School Network increases access to local food and nutrition education to improve children’s health, strengthen family farms, and cultivate vibrant communities.

Our Vision

National Farm to School Network envisions a nation in which farm to school programs are an essential component of strong and just local and regional food systems, ensuring the health of children, farms, the environment, the economy, and communities.
NFSN call to action: By 2025, 100% of communities will hold power in a racially just food system.
Our Network
Why Do Farm to School?

Kids Win!  
Farmers Win!  
Communities Win!
CORE ELEMENTS OF FARM to SCHOOL

- EDUCATION
- SCHOOL GARDENS
- PROCUREMENT

What Is Farm to School?
Farm to Early Care and Education

Farm to ECE encourages:

- Health & Wellness
- Experiential Learning
- Family & Community Engagement

It applies the same core elements as farm to school in settings for children ages 0-5

- Including in child care centers and family child care homes
- Also in preschools, nursery schools, Head Starts, Early Head Starts, programs in K-12 districts, and others
Benefits of Farm to School

- Economic Development
- Public Health
- Education
- Environment
- Equity and Community Engagement

Link: https://www.farmtoschool.org/resources-main/benefits-of-farm-to-school
Economic Development

- **Job Creation and Economic Activity**
  Up to 2.35 additional jobs in the community
  Stimulates up to $2.14 additional spending in state

- **School District and Economic Benefits**
  Increase in paid meal participation of students, teachers, and staff

- **Producer and Food System Impacts**
  Increase in stability and revenue for producers
  Diversifies relationships for more robust farm sector
Student Food and Nutrition Knowledge, Attitude, and Behaviors
When students participate in hands-on, food-based activities, students triple amount of fruit and vegetable consumption.

Healthier School and ECE Food Environments
Supports achieving wellness policies and improved food service.

Family and Community Nutrition Behaviors and Access
Supporting parents to establish healthy habits.
Education

- Student Engagement and Whole Child Development
  Important social emotional growth with experiential learning
  Increases positive school engagement
- Academic Achievement
  Supports STEM education in innovative ways
- Family, Educator, and Staff Engagement
  Positive attitudes from educators and families as F2S programs are implemented
Environment, Equity & Community Engagement

Environment
Increase in activities like composting
Increased appreciation of environmental impact and farming practices

Equity & Community Engagement
Promotes positive connections between school and community
Opportunity to engage diverse cultural knowledge and family involvement
We are a part of a Growing Movement!

Growth of Farm to School in the U.S. (1997-2014)

- 42,587 Schools
- 23.6M Students Engaged
- $789M Spent on Local Food
- 40 States with Supportive Policies
- 15,000+ NFSN Members
State Farm to School Policy Handbook

- Analysis of farm to school and farm to ECE policies in all 50 states, DC, and US Territories
- Includes introduced and enacted legislation related to core farm to school elements

- Highlight state case studies of Hawai’i, Michigan, New Mexico, US Virgin Islands, and Vermont
- Highlight issue case studies on:
  - Local procurement incentives
  - Farm to School State Policy Strategies to Support Native Food and Tribal Sovereignty
  - State Policy Responses to COVID-19 Impacting Farm to School
Use this guide to:

- **Learn** about existing state farm to school policies and programs as potential models for future efforts
- **Compare** farm to school laws, policies, and programs across states
- **Access** the full text of state farm to school legislation for inspiration and assistance in the legislative drafting process
- **Advance** new farm to school laws, policies, and programs
Policy Options

Seeding, Growing, and Sustaining Farm to School in Your State

- Proclamations
- Local Preference Laws
- Funded Farm to School Programs (including grant programs and coordinators)

- Task Forces, Councils & Working Groups
- Pilot Farm to School Programs
- Funded Local Procurement Incentives

- Databases & Directories
- Unfunded Farm to School Programs (including grant programs and coordinators)

SEEDING  GROWING  SUSTAINING
2019-2020 Bills Relating to the Core Elements of Farm to School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Bills Proposed</th>
<th>Bills Passed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Procurement</td>
<td>60 (With Funding)</td>
<td>30 (With Funding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Agriculture Education</td>
<td>40 (Without Funding)</td>
<td>20 (With Funding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Gardens</td>
<td>20 (Without Funding)</td>
<td>10 (Without Funding)</td>
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</tbody>
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[Diagram showing the number of bills proposed and passed for each category, with and without funding.]
Minnesota

Authorizes up to $400,000 each year over two years to develop and enhance farm to school markets for Minnesota farmers by providing more fruits, vegetables, meat, grains, and dairy for Minnesota children in school and childcare settings, including reimbursement of schools for purchases from local farmers.

- H.F. 4490 (2020)
Michigan

Early adopter of local preference, including:

- Directing schools to have a procurement policy
- Allowing simplified buying procedures for contracts under $100,000
- Directing state agencies to encourage and support farm to school procurement procedures

Michigan: Ten Cents a Meal

10 Cents a Meal for Michigan’s Kids and Farms is a state-funded program that matches what schools spend on Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and legumes with grants of up to 10 cents per meal.

- Intentional piloting, growth, and evaluation since 2016
- Districts spent funds with 198 unique vendors 2017-2019
- Reaching districts serving 134,00 kids

- S.B. 927 (2020)
Iowa

Policies that fund a coordinator position through the Local Food and Farm Program have helped lay groundwork for future work in Iowa.

Networking supported by philanthropy has built strength in the farm to early care and education (ECE) sector.

CARES funding for Local Produce and Protein Program grants from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship in 2020.

S.F. 609 (2019)
Case Studies

Farm to School State Policy Strategies to Support Native Food and Tribal Sovereignty

- Recognizing and honoring government to government relationships
- Long term relationship building and formal consultation
- Investment in Native producers and educators

Local Procurement Incentives: Lessons from the Field

- Policy models have benefits and challenges in implementation
- Benefits of piloting
- Leveraging federal funding
- Investment in evaluation, technical assistance, and continued improvement
- Involve state agencies and other implementing bodies early

State Policy Responses to COVID-19 Impacting Farm to School

- Challenges included the interpretation of federal guidance, the varied responses within each state, budgetary issues, and speed of response
- Previous investment in relationships and capacity increased resilience
Case Studies: State Policy Responses to COVID-19 Impacting Farm to School

- Innovations in child nutrition program delivery and purchasing were made possible through scaling up existing relationships.
- State agency capacity and familiarity with farm to school increased ability to quickly distribute federal funding sources.
- Policymaker familiarity with farm to school and local food systems issues increased likelihood of food system needs being top of mind in distributing funding.
- Resources
  - National Farm to School Network Impact Assessment, completed for USDA May 2021
  - Local Food in Covid-19 Response and Recovery, National Farm to School Network, May 2020

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Stay Informed

Join our network: FarmtoSchool.org
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Facebook: National Farm to School Network
Instagram: @FarmtoSchool

When the COVID-19 emergency closed schools and child care across the country, child nutrition programs were fully supported by temporarily providing their services to ensure children and families continued to have access to nutritious food. Schools and early care and education (ECE) sites have always been vital access points for meals for children. During this emergency, the role that schools and ECE sites play as community hubs for food access has only become more apparent. As that hub for food access, schools and ECE sites are not only at the need to feed the whole family, but also remain potential markets for local producers. With existing relationships with producers have been able to continue to realize sales for producers, even as local institutions shut down.

As producers continue to seek markets and child nutrition programs program for a different kind of feeding this summer and fall, it is an opportunity for new relationships to form. Though child nutrition programs face new and evolving challenges, including adapting to insufficient funding, managing new types of expenses (including additional labor, transportation, and packaging), and supply chain barriers, the importance and benefits of connecting with local food continues to remain as vitally important, and a key to addressing some of these potential challenges. As school nutrition providers, community leaders, and state agencies come together to support producers in accessing markets while supporting families in accessing healthy food, several themes of promising practices have emerged:

- Choose products that work best for modified feeding operations (e.g., grab-and-go, delivery, newly-pickup):
  - High-fiber, low-sugar and low-salt, require little preparation and can hold up well to transportation.
  - Individually packaged ready-to-eat foods that can fit well within meal preparation and service styles, traditional favorites like burritos and sandwiches can be frozen and sent home with families for reheating.
  - Produce-based soups and bulk products can be offered to provide meals for multiple days. Though adult meals are not reimbursable through USDA Child Nutrition Programs, many districts have used additional funding and donations to provide supplemental food for the family. This minimizes packaging and processing requirements from producers and school nutrition staff, offers access to local foods for the whole family, and has increased meal program participation and pick up in some cases.

Utilize innovative and emerging platforms for connections. In addition to the traditional “matchmaking” platforms for local foods, state agencies, non-profits, and community partners have stepped in to develop innovative platforms to connect producers with access to products to programs and organizations in need.
Interactive map of newly introduced policies in farm to school, farm to ECE, and related areas of child nutrition and producer support.
Thank You!

Contact:
karen@farmtoschool.org
Farmtoschool.org