



FARM TO SCHOOL IN EVERY COMMUNITY

Farm to school is a common sense approach to child nutrition that empowers children and their families to make informed food choices while strengthening the local economy and contributing to vibrant communities. Schools want to serve more local food and kids want to eat it. But outdated kitchen equipment, a need for staff training, and ways to connect with local farms are standing in their way. There's a bill to overcome these barriers, **An Act Establishing Farm to School Grants to Promote Healthy Eating and Strengthen the Agricultural Economy (S.349 and H.686)**.

Where are we now?

- 1/3 of Massachusetts K-12 students currently access local food or food education in school
- 110 farms sell to Massachusetts institutions
- Massachusetts schools spend over \$10 million annually on local foods

CORE ELEMENTS OF FARM to SCHOOL



1 in 5 kids in MA Struggles with Food Insecurity (up from 1 in 10 before COVID-19)

High quality school meals increase access to healthy food for food-insecure kids. Investing in Farm to School will ensure that these meals feature locally grown foods, improving health and academic outcomes while supporting the economic recovery of Massachusetts farmers.

BILL OVERVIEW

- Introduced by Representative Smitty Pignatelli and Senator Eric Lesser.
- Establishes a competitive grant program within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for eligible public schools and licensed child care programs.
- Grants build the capacity of public schools and licensed child care programs to purchase ingredients grown and produced in Massachusetts, prepare scratch-cooked meals and educate students about the food system.
- Has cross-sector impact by updating infrastructure, providing job training, supporting local business growth, educating students, and improving public health.
- Grant funding is subject to appropriation, our goal for FY2022.

TAKE ACTION

Contact your Massachusetts legislators and ask them to co-sponsor S.349 and H.686. Tell them why you think more farm to school activity will be good for students, for farmers, and for communities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, please contact Lisa Damon at lisa@massfarmtoschool.org or 413-253-3844.

IMPACT OF FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Farm to School is a win for students, farmers, fishermen, and communities.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Farm to School keeps purchasing dollars local. Massachusetts schools spend approximately \$75 million on food annually. Let's invest that money in Massachusetts farmers, fishermen and food producers.

Every \$1 spent on direct farm purchases in MA, generates another \$1.12 in local economic activity.

110 Massachusetts farms sell to schools and 25% have grown their businesses to meet this demand.



HEALTH & NUTRITION

Farm to School programs increase student consumption of fruits and vegetables.

Farm to School can increase participation in school nutrition programs, so more kids, especially those coming from homes that are struggling to put food on their own tables, are eating nutritious meals, which help them grow and thrive at school.

25% of Massachusetts teens are overweight or obese and farm to school can help reverse that trend, saving on future health care costs.



EDUCATION

Farm to School strengthens knowledge and attitudes toward agriculture, food, nutrition, and the environment.

Farm to School improves academic outcomes and social and emotional learning.

Farm to School provides experiential learning opportunities that reach students of all abilities.

