

## 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 But outdated kitchen equipment, a need for staff training, and ways to connect with local farms are standing in their way. A permanent Massachusetts Farm to School Grant Program would help schools overcome these barriers to success!

### *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



*Support legislation that would establish a MA Farm to School Grant Program in the next Massachusetts legislative session (2023 - 2024).*

## OVERVIEW

- Legislation to establish a permanent program will be re-introduced during the upcoming 2023-24 legislative session
- Previous legislation was introduced by Representative Smitty Pignatelli and Senator Eric Lesser in the last session
- The proposed bill will establish 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 FY2024
- \$1,000,000 in funding was included in the COVID appropriations bill in early 2022. The appropriated funds will be used to implement the first year of the program

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, please contact Lisa Damon at [lisa@massfarmtoschool.org](mailto: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.

