



## FARM TO SCHOOL LEGISLATION OVERVIEW

Two impactful farm to school pilot programs - a farm to school grant program and local food incentive need your support to continue next year. Both bills recently passed out of the Joint Committee on Education. Together these two bills lay the groundwork for robust farm to school programming at schools across the Commonwealth. Providing schools with the resources they need to start up or expand local food sourcing and education activities is a win for our kids, our farmers, and our communities. Farm to school programs strengthen student achievement, improve nutrition, and grow the local economy.

## BILL HIGHLIGHTS

### Local Food Incentive (H.3993)

- Introduced by Representatives Domb and Vargas
- Modeled on a successful, one-time Federally funded incentive, which is set to expire in June.
- Would establish and evaluate a 3-year pilot program in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to provide public K-12 schools and licensed early child care programs additional reimbursement for meals featuring locally and regionally grown foods
- Schools would be reimbursed \$1 for every \$3 spent on qualifying Massachusetts foods
- Increases access to healthy high quality foods for all Massachusetts kids
- Directs investment to Massachusetts farmers and fishers for a more resilient food system

### Farm to School Grants (S.243/H.558)

- Introduced by Senator Comerford and Representative Pignatelli
- Builds on a successful ARPA-funded pilot (FRESH grant) with a demand 5x the amount of available funds
- 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

## TAKE ACTION

- Support passage of H.3993 and S.243/H.558
- Provide full funding for these programs in the FY25 budget: \$750,000 for the FRESH Grant Program and \$2 million for the Local Food Incentive (Line Item 7010-1192 in the DESE Budget)



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