

Farm to School, how could you not?

Sharon Elementary has been involved in Farm to School education for over 8 years. Our school has developed a reputation of providing meaningful learning experiences to our PreK-6th grade students through a variety of **Place Based** experiences. Farm to School is at the forefront of these experiences.

As an educator it is my job to engage my students in learning activities that will help them achieve knowledge set out by the current **educational standards**. **Engagement is the key**. How do I engage ALL students in a way that is meaningful and productive? Educators are always looking for "the topic" that will spark a student's interest, "the topic" that will engage the student in reading, writing, math, social studies, science, art, music, PE and other disciplines. I've found that Farm to School education, along with overall health and wellness education, is THE topic.

I've often told parents, educators and administrators that if they visited my classroom during our Farm to School/Health and Wellness times that they would see the highest level of engagement in a classroom that they may have ever seen. Children want to know about, themselves and the world around them. Teaching them about how food, exercise, rest, hydration, mental and physical wellness and more, effects them, has proven to be the richest way for myself to reach academic standards in almost every discipline.

Through the lens of Farm to School/Health and Wellness Education, children are engaged in informational text in literacy. During math, designing gardens, assessing the value of local vs non local foods, calculating carbon footprint, measuring caloric intake, using measuring skills while cooking, business planning and much more are all engaging activities that students can apply their mathematical learning. In science, students can study the chemical make up of certain foods and their interactions with the human body. They can learn about soils through the use of gardening. In Social Studies, students can study the history of foods and their impact on culture. The possibilities seem to be endless.

Then there is the impact on the food service program within our school that Farm to School has provided. Feeding our children the most nutritious lunch possible is our goal. Connecting with local farmers who can work with us to provide local produce, meats and dairy ensures that we will stay connected to our agricultural community and provide our children with quality foods that often cannot be obtained through commodities. Plus, as an added bonus, our students get the opportunity to visit our local farms to learn how food is produced. This deepens their connection with the food and in turn makes them want to eat it!

But, in order for all of these engaging activities and food opportunities to be possible it takes a lot of hard work by educators to develop curriculum and to plan how to work with our farmers. The State and Vermont FEED have been instrumental in providing funds that allow staff to engage in professional development that is meaningful and

useful. **Without these funds, I can't imagine schools getting a foothold on this worthwhile educational opportunity.**

As a native Vermonter, I'm proud that our state has developed the reputation of being "THE" Farm to School state. I'm proud of our work and hope that it can continue so that all students in our state can have this opportunity.

Sincerely and Passionately,
Keenan Haley
Third Grade Teacher
Sharon Elementary School

Vermont Farm to School Grant Recipients

2015 GRANT YEAR

Implementation Grant Recipients

Brewster-Pierce Memorial
Chelsea Public School
Newbury Elementary
Walden School
Washington South Supervisory Union

Planning Grant Recipients

Bennington School
Derby Elementary
Franklin Central School
Newport City Elementary
Peacham Elementary

2014 GRANT YEAR

Implementation Grant Recipients

Orleans SW SU
Charlotte Central School
Middletown Springs Elementary School*
Hiawatha, Fleming, Summit St, Westford,
ADL Intermediate, Essex High and CT*

Planning Grant Recipients

Newbury Elementary
Walden School
Barnard Academy
Vergennes Union HS

2013 GRANT YEAR

Implementation Grant Recipients

Berlin Elementary
Milton Elementary/Middle
Isle LaMotte Elementary
St Albans City School
Tunbridge Central School*

Planning Grant Recipients

Roxbury Elementary, Northfield Ele/HS
Lothrop Elementary
Hiawatha, Fleming, Summit St, Westford,
ADL Intermediate, Essex High and CT

2012 GRANT YEAR

Implementation Grant Recipients

Stockbridge Central School*
The Dorset School*
Weathersfield & Albert Bridge Schools
Bakersfield Elementary & Middle*
Addison Northeast SU*
Tinmouth Elementary*

Planning Grant Recipients

Brookfield Elementary
Middletown Springs Elementary School
Chelsea Public School
Colchester Middle School

2011 GRANT YEAR

Implementation Grant Recipients

Mt. Anthony Union MS*
Richmond Elementary*
South Royalton School
St. Johnsbury School*

Planning Grant Recipients

Addison Northeast SU
Bakersfield Elementary & Middle
Tinmouth Elementary
Tunbridge Central School

2010 GRANT YEAR

Implementation Grant Recipients

Cabot School*
Troy School
Woodstock Elementary
Randolph Elementary*
Twinfield Union School*

Planning Grant Recipients

Craftsbury Schools
Peacham School
Stockbridge Central School
The Dorset School
Cavendish Town Elementary
St. Johnsbury School

2009 GRANT YEAR

Implementation Grant Recipients

Dover Elementary
Lawrence Barnes Elementary
Albany Community School
Sharon Elementary
Harwood Union Middle & HS
Thetford Academy*
State Street School

Planning Grant Recipients

Mt. Anthony Union Middle School
Richmond Elementary
Cabot School
Randolph Elementary

2008 GRANT YEAR

Implementation Grant Recipients

Alburgh Elementary
Arlington School District
Bradford Elementary
Fairfield & Sheldon Schools
Lakeview Union School
Mettawee Community School
Vergennes Elementary

Planning Grant Recipients

People's Academy
Thetford Academy
Twinfield Union School

2007 GRANT YEAR

Implementation Grant Recipients

Academy, Oak Grove & Green St. Schools
Barre Town Middle & Elementary
Bingham Memorial
Blue Mountain Union
Hartland Elementary
Winooski Elementary, Middle & HS

Planning Grant Recipients

Jay Westfield Elementary
Rumney Memorial School
Salisbury Community
Ferrisburgh Central School
Washington Village School
Woodstock Union Middle & HS

**Previous Planning Grant School*



VERMONT'S FARM^{TO}SCHOOL PROGRAM

OUR PROGRESS & IMPACT ►

- Since 2007, **Vermont's Farm to School Grant Program** has supported **101 schools** (32% of Vermont public schools) and reached more than **26,000 students**. Schools use grants to integrate healthy, local food and food/farm/nutrition education into cafeterias, classrooms, and communities.
- Vermont school districts spent **\$1,380,280 on local products** in the 2011–12 school year.
- 95% of schools with Farm to School programs report serving local food: Vermont vegetables, fruit, eggs, beef/poultry, dairy products, cider, maple syrup.
- Vermont schools with Farm to School programs report twice the national average in vegetable consumption and better ability to provide a variety of vegetables in school lunch by addressing training and equipment needs.

SOURCES: UVM Center for Rural Studies; USDA Farm to School Census; Vermont FEED

OUR OPPORTUNITY ►

Farm to School is good for the Vermont economy

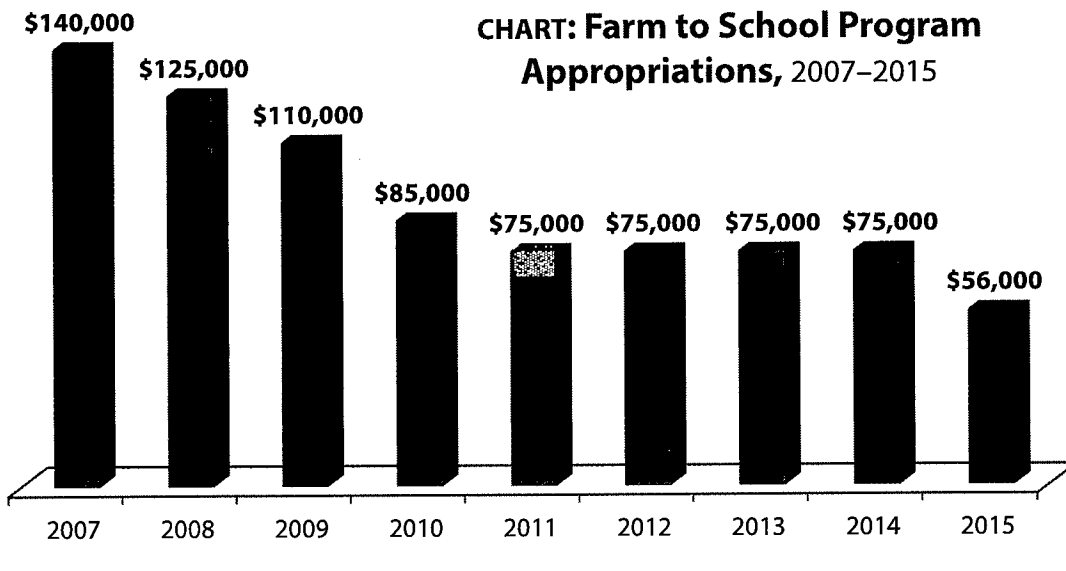
- The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets estimates that state institutions (schools, hospitals, higher ed) are a potential **\$11 million market** for local foods. At the same time, Vermont's Farm2Plate initiative has set a state-wide goal of 10% local food purchases by 2020. Farm to School programs can help the state meet this goal.
- Farm to School works directly with Vermont producers and institutional buyers to improve the supply chain and develop new market opportunities.
- A statewide grant program of \$75,000 leverages many times more in federal and private grants, as well as school and business investments.
- Vermont spends \$320 million annually on chronic disease. \$75,000 on farm to school programs can build lifelong healthy behaviors.
- It costs about \$6,000 to feed one child a daily school lunch from kindergarten through high school. It can cost \$175,000 to treat one adult for illness related to poor nutrition over their lifetime.

SOURCE: Ann Cooper, Director of Nutrition Services, Berkeley Unified School District



THE CHALLENGE ▶

State funding for Farm to School has dropped 60% while demand continues to rise!



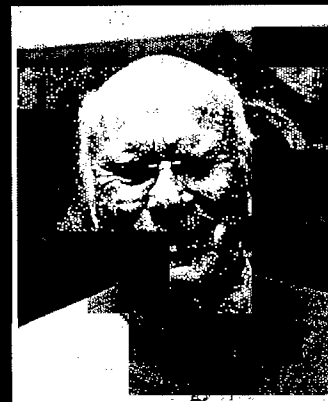
YOU CAN HELP! ▶

Restore funding for Vermont's Farm to School Program. For a small investment of \$75,000, there's a high return: more dollars back to Vermont farmers and producers and more Vermont students experiencing the value of healthy, local food.

Let's continue to expand access to healthy, local food for all and help strengthen Vermont's economy!

"Vermont has long been a pace-setter in the farm to school movement. By bringing local food to the cafeteria table and into the classroom, we improve nutrition, promote healthy eating choices, and help all children understand where their food comes from. It's a winning strategy for our farmers and our students, and Vermont is proving how well this program works."

— U.S. SENATOR PATRICK LEAHY (D-VT)



For more information: www.vtfeed.org or www.farmtoschool.org