

From: patti smith [pattisvt@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 08, 2017 10:18 PM
To: Rebecca Buck; Theresa Utton
Subject: written testimony concerning increased funding of Farm to School

Hello to you from Bristol, Vermont. I am a home childcare provider~educator. I was one of the fortunate people in Addison County to partake in a series of workshops that introduced me to the Farm to School Program run by Jed from Shelburne Farms with ACORN & others by his side. It was an unique, important, & wholesome experience. The Farm to School Program should be gifted to every Vermont child.

This letter is one of four ways I have chosen to ask that a base appropriation of \$500,000. for Farm to School through the Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets be included in the state budget. I so appreciate your time reading my testimony and a little bit of why I feel this is so important for the smallest children in Vermont.

There are many reasons why Farm to School for our youngest Vermonters is necessary: 1. Is that there are too many hungry children & families in Vermont, the US, & the World. We need to find ways to feed our children Healthy foods. Young children Need an adequate healthy farm fresh food supply to develop strong growing bodies, develop intelligent, functioning brains, and have happy, comforted souls. This is required so that the littlest can grow & learn to their fullest potential without suffering from the lack of basic human needs. Especially since most development happens in the younger years. 2. Availability of local Vermont, farm raised products are critical as they are the best for babies and children for proper growth. They deserve the best because they Need it and Vermont Has it! 3. Education, developing healthy habits and wise food choices is best started in the early years. This is an investment that will put Vermont's children at a great advantage throughout their lives. Naturally there is much more I could add. However, trying to keep this brief.

From my own personal experiences as a childcare provider, nanny/governess, educator and volunteer in public and private schools from preschool through grade 12, I can stand firm on how important healthy food & life style are & the positive effects they have on the functioning of school age children. This also applies to babies & toddlers. I have been a caretaker of gardens for private homes, greenhouses & vegetable/fruit farms. I also was the head person in charge of the Middlebury Community Garden for 3 complete years when my own children were young. Speaking of my children & others who have lived with me, to this day they make wise, healthy food decisions based on what I taught and provided them. They are strong,

healthy, intelligent, generally well balanced & productive, with content souls. They are responsible contributors in their communities. For over 50 years I have raised & nurtured kids, and have grown wholesome organic foods!

Thank you so much for your time reading this 'brief' testimony. Facts are Facts. Time shows solidly the many benefits of healthy living. The time to continue on the right path is now. We need to do the very best we can for our small Vermonters, their families, & our wonderful communities.

Sincerely Submitted, Patti Smith