

# VERMONT FARM TO SCHOOL NETWORK

Growing healthy Vermont schools, farms, & communities



## FARM TO SCHOOL IN EVERY COMMUNITY

- Expanding Farm to School funding in Vermont will allow more schools and childcare programs to participate in the program and increase participation in and sustainability of child nutrition programs in schools.

- **Please support a base appropriation of \$500,000** for Vermont Farm to School through the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets.



## OUR PROGRESS & IMPACT

- Since 2007, Vermont's Farm to School Grant Program has supported **157 schools and 22 childcare programs serving 46,000 students.**

- 2018 FTS grant applications came from all **14 counties**, but available funding only met **32% of requests.**

- Local food purchased by schools contributed **\$1.4 million** to Vermont's economy in a single school year.

- **92%** of Vermont schools report serving locally grown food, **75%** have school gardens, and **63%** conduct taste tests.

"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)

"With the right interventions, we can give every child a chance to get the nourishment and support they need to thrive and grow. When our children eat healthy foods, we know that they grow stronger brains and they're better able to learn. When children are well fed, they have fewer discipline incidents and are able to engage in learning. We know that the best food we can give them is fresh food: unprocessed, full of nutrients straight from our farms to their plates."

— VT Secretary of Education,  
Rebecca Holcombe

# VERMONT FARM TO SCHOOL OUTCOMES

— February 2018 —

## Growing the VT Economy

**Every \$1 spent** on local food in Vermont schools contributes an **additional 60¢** to the local economy.

Vermont schools contribute **>\$1.4 million** each year to the state economy by purchasing local food.

FTS helps keep food purchasing dollars within the Vermont economy; if schools double their local purchasing, FTS will contribute **\$2.1 million** to the Vermont economy annually.

The VT Agency of Agriculture estimates that Vermont institutions — schools, hospitals, and colleges — are a potential **\$11 million market** for local foods.

Vermont spends **over \$2 billion annually** on chronic disease! An investment in FTS can help save on health care in the future.



## Strengthening Education

In schools with universal meals, nurses report improved academic performance and improved focus in class, declines in absenteeism, declines in school nurse visits as high as **72%**, and at least **10%** declines in behavioral referrals.

**1 in 7** Vermont children face the adverse childhood experience (ACEs) of hunger. Helping more kids eat school meals is crucial to helping all children to grow up healthy and succeed in school.

**90%** of the brain has developed by age five. Healthy, nutritious food is vital to healthy brain development for young children.

## Improving Health & Nutrition

Vermont schools with FTS programs have reported **2x the national average** in vegetable consumption.

Students who know a farmer or grow their own food eat more fruits and vegetables.

FTS helps schools serve healthier, local food, which increases participation in school nutrition programs and teaches kids lifelong healthy eating habits.

## Fighting Hunger

Childhood hunger rates **declined 37%** from 2010-2015; a major contributor is the success of FTS and school nutrition programs.

In 2017, **65 Vermont schools** provided universal breakfast and lunch to **over 13,500 students**.

Thanks to the new FTS grants helping schools increase participation in their nutrition programs, over **1,700 students** have access to at least one universal meal each day at school.