

Nutrition and Sustainability

Eating City Summer Campus

Katie Wilson, PhD, SNS

September 2024

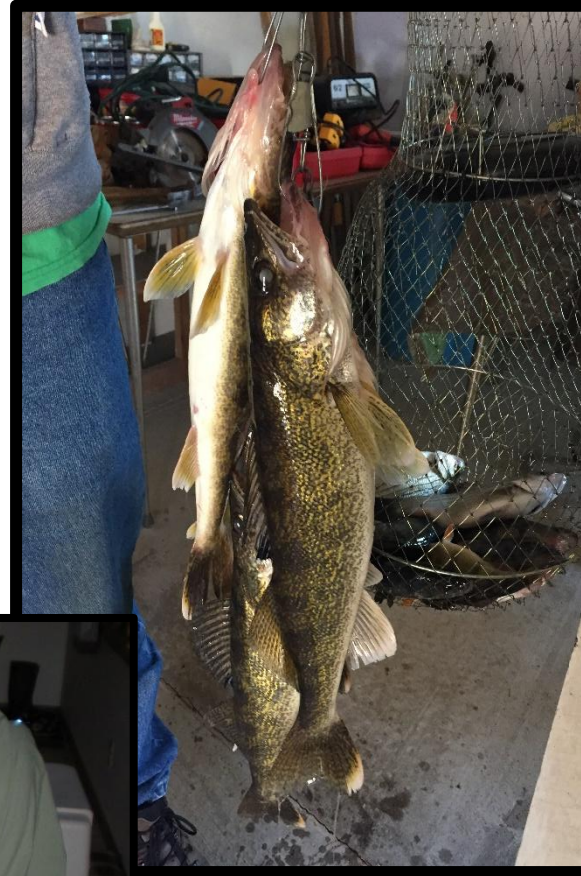


URBAN SCHOOL
FOOD
ALLIANCE



Impacting My Food Experience





Generational Impact



What do you know about school meals in the United States?

Myths

Reality





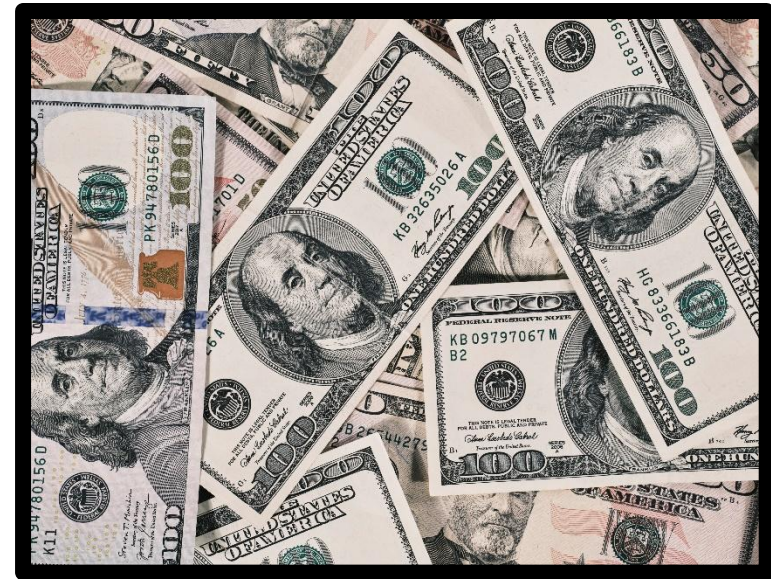
School Meals in America

- Per meal reimbursement based on family income
 - free meal 4.08 Euro
 - reduced price meal 3.72 Euro
 - full paid meal .46

Family of 4 income guidelines

- free 36,641 Euro
- reduced 52,144 Euro

Count every child, every day, in specific category



Nutrition Standards

- Federal standards – states may go stricter
- Five components must be offered – including liquid milk
- Every plate **MUST** have a fruit or vegetable in the correct portion size
- Very prescriptive when inspectors visit
- Can lose reimbursement if incorrect





Who We Are

- 19 of the largest public school districts in the country.
- Collectively we offer meal services to nearly 4.3 million students daily. 711 million meals per year.
- Annually our districts spend approximately \$971 million (877 million Euro) on food and food supplies across the country.
- Local procurement is from \$4.5 million to \$33 million per year depending on district size, most of this in produce.





Our Mission

Leveraging our collective Voice to Transform School Meals

www.urbanschoolfoodalliance.org



Three Pillars of Work

- Advocacy
- Share Best Practices
- Procurement

We have a 3 year grant from USDA to change school procurement



Procurement Practices in School Meals: Making Real Change Work for Healthier Meals



Preamble

Our core areas of work are driven by 2 factors:

1. First, the information we gather by analyzing actual purchase data from our member districts.
2. The expertise and experiences of our members and professional staff.

These two factors drives our decision making on how we can best contribute meaningfully to the field.





Areas of Focus

1. Discover core issues in school food procurement
2. Develop a plan of action based on those core issues, including training materials and regulation changes.
3. Engage farmer and produce allied organizations to better understand the needs of minority owned, small farmers.
4. Engage large urban districts in farmer/producer webinars, introducing farmers to the procurement timelines and requirements.
5. Develop a group of contracted procurement specialist and conduct TeamUp trainings around the country.
6. Collaborate with outside expertise to identify best practices for school procurement, defining new business plan ideas , including piloting these ideas.
7. Conduct presentations to national organizations involved in the business of school procurement.



Phase One

Investigative Phase

1. Create an Advisory/Work Group
2. Review procurement rules at federal, state, local levels.
3. Review procurement trainings available and identify gaps.





Phase Two

Development Phase

1. Developing a national bid template.
2. Develop trainings needed.
3. Conduct TeamUp trainings around country.
4. Webinars for local producers.





Phase Three

Piloting Change

Conducting Pilots

- - finding committed districts, state agencies, and regional offices to try using all information gathered by the work in cooperative agreement to try new ways of procuring school food.
- 2. Preparing a proposal for a new school food procurement business plan to USDA/Congress



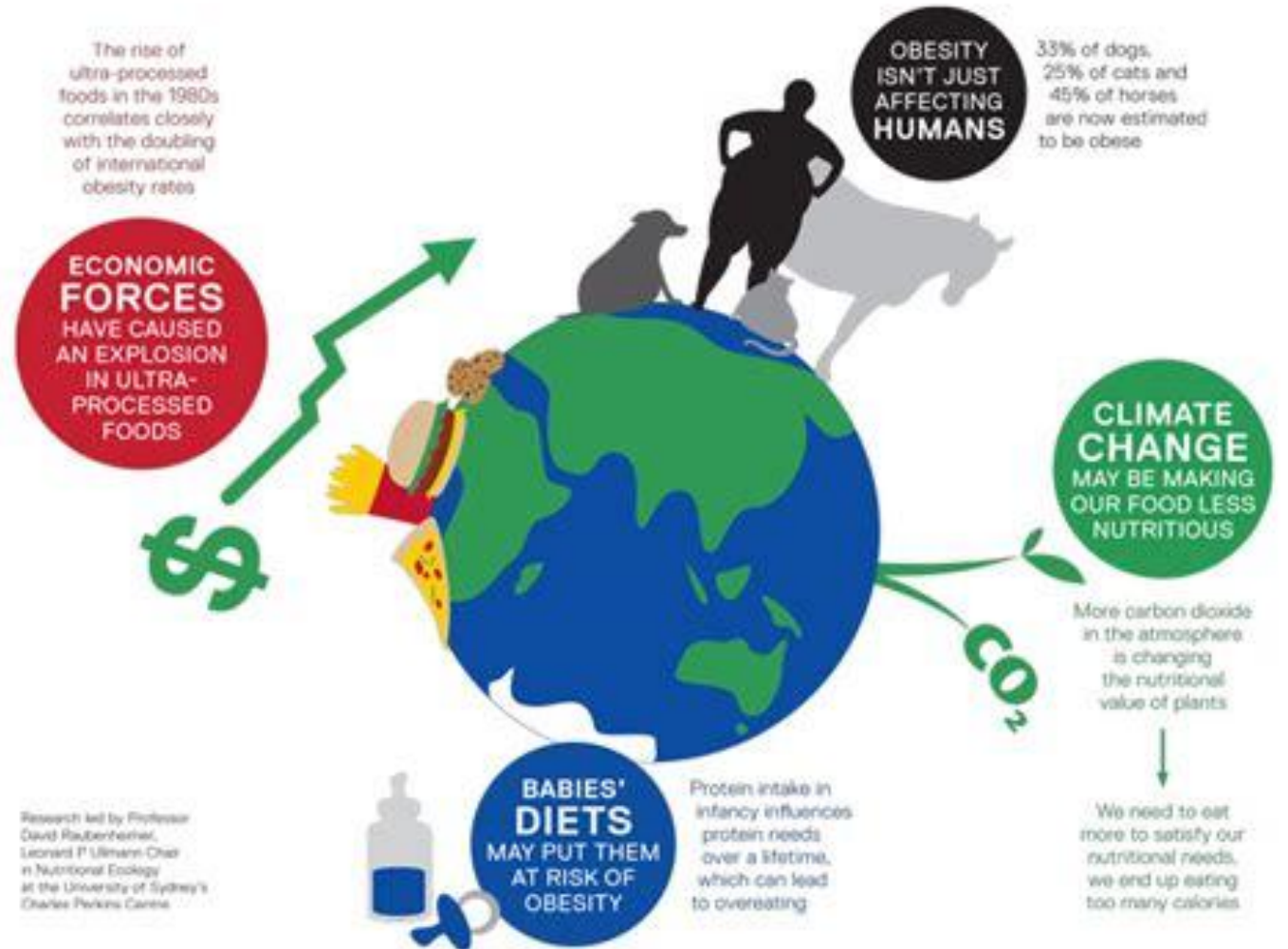


Partner Activity

- **Thinking of schools meals – if you could activate real, significant, sustainable change – what would it look like?**



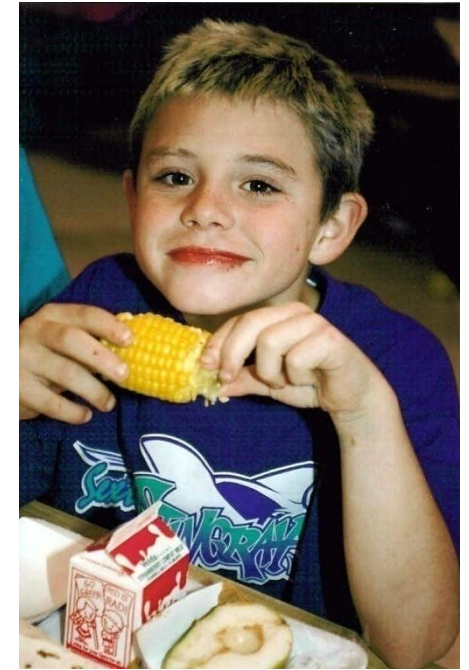
HOW THE WORLD WE LIVE IN IS DRIVING THE OBESITY EPIDEMIC







USDA Farm to School

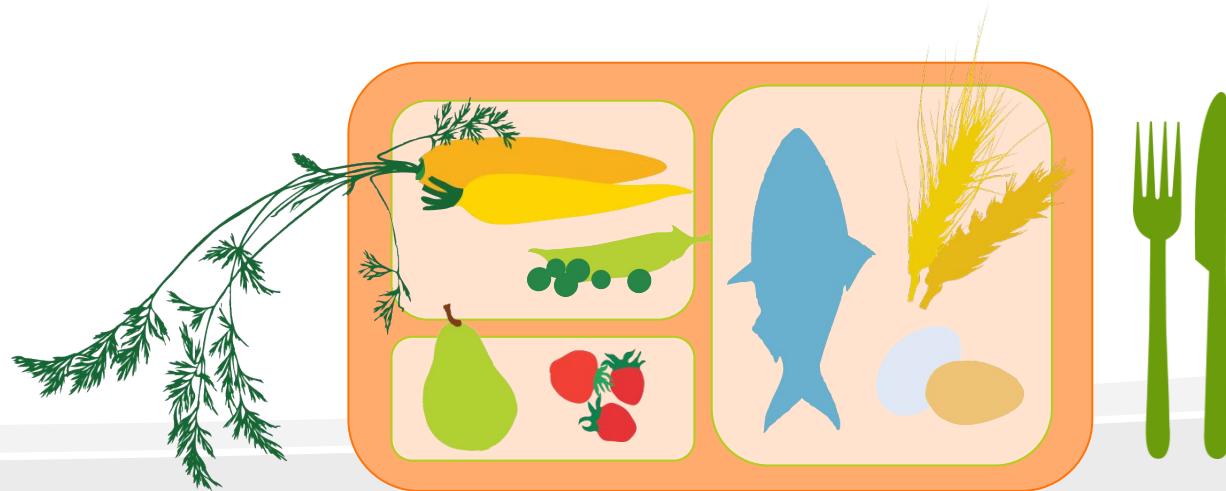




Farm To School

The term Farm To School (F2S) encompasses efforts that connect schools with local food producers in order to serve their products to children in the school cafeterias.

\$900 million dollars spent on local products from local communities



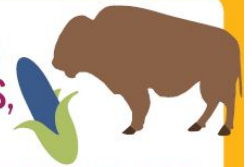


Traditional Foods



United States Department of Agriculture

BRINGING TRIBAL FOODS AND TRADITIONS INTO CAFETERIAS, CLASSROOMS, AND GARDENS



SCHOOLS AND NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES across the country are incorporating traditional foods like bison, mesquite flour, wild rice, and ancient varieties of squash and corn into school meals and providing complementary educational activities that teach students about nutrition and Native American food traditions. There are more than 560 tribes recognized by the U.S. government, each with its own food and agricultural history and culture. Operating a farm to school program in a tribal setting or in a school with a high Native American population can help connect students to this history and expand markets for local and Native American farmers. This fact sheet explores how schools and tribes are integrating traditional foods into child nutrition programs (CNPs), buying traditional foods locally, and incorporating multicultural nutrition education into classroom curriculum and hands-on lessons in school gardens.

Incorporating Traditional Foods into Menus

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) encourages Indian Tribal Organizations, along with all operators of CNPs, to serve traditional and locally grown and raised foods.

The **Child Nutrition Programs and Traditional Foods memo (TA01-2015)** explains that traditional foods may be served in CNPs and includes examples of how several traditional foods may contribute towards reimbursable meals. The **USDA Food Buying Guide (FBG)** is a great place to start when creating menus that incorporate traditional food items since it includes pricing information and portion sizes needed to meet the nutritional standards for federal reimbursement.

The **Circle of Nations Boarding School** located in Wahpeton, North Dakota, a charter under the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate tribe, incorporates bison meat from the Intertribal Buffalo Council (ITBC) Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate herd into lunch meals. Bison meat is substituted for ground beef in **Rems** such as chili and spaghetti sauce. In addition, food from the school garden is served daily on the salad bar. Lise Frdrich, School Health Coordinator, says that the students "ate her salsa verde recipe, made with traditional green comatillos, "better than guacamole!"

Meat from domesticated and wild game animals, including many traditional foods like bison and venison, may be served in child nutrition programs.

For information about serving meat, see the memo, **Procuring Local Meat, Poultry, Game, and Eggs for Child Nutrition Programs (SP01 CACFP01 SFSPO1-2016)**.

While the FBG provides a list of products commonly served in CNPs, it is not comprehensive. If a food is served as part of a reimbursable meal, but not listed in the FBG, the yield information of a similar food or an in-house yield may be used to determine the contribution towards meal pattern requirements.

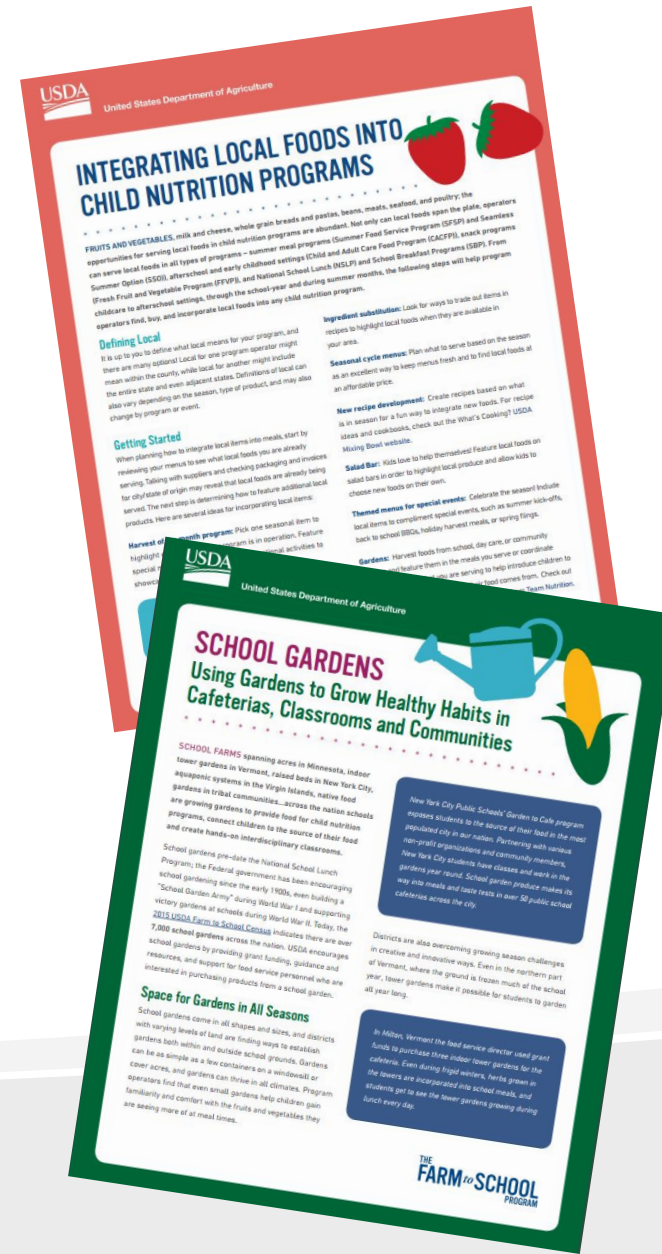
Since traditional foods may provide a different nutrient yield than the substitutes listed in the FBG, it is important to pay attention to preparation techniques and the nutritional content of the foods being substituted.

OFFICE of
COMMUNITY
FOOD SYSTEMS



Farm to School

- 65% of schools participate
- 42.8 million students impacted
- 67,369 individual schools
- 1.26 Billion Dollars spent locally
- USDA invested \$75 million this year



Why Farm to School Matters?

“Procuring food from **local sources** is a **powerful way** for school food authorities to **leverage their** collective **voice** to **transform school food** and our **broader food system.**”

From: USEA's Best Practices: Growing Local Procurement in Schools

Values in local purchasing



Local ownership

Sustainable growing practices

Educational opportunities

Employment practices

Community engagement

Commitment to racial equity



LOCAL ROOTS

CONNECTING FARMERS TO BOSTON SCHOOLS



BOSTON
Public Schools

and our local farmers in CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT

L&R Poultry and Produce

Rae Rusnak
Owner & Farmer





BALTIMORE CITY

PUBLIC SCHOOLS



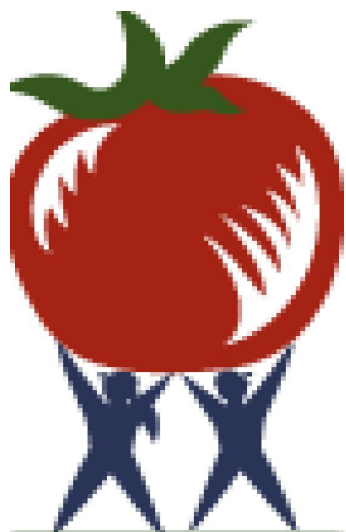
Local Purchasing \$4.7 million per year



The collage features a large map of the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States, with red pins marking the locations of several farms. The farms listed are:

- Appealing Fruit Farms** (near Philadelphia)
- Frank Donio Farm** (near Philadelphia)
- Arnold Farms** (near Baltimore)
- Fifer Farms** (near Washington, D.C.)
- Lakeside Farms (Coastal Growers)** (near Salisbury)
- Hales Farm (Coastal Growers)** (near Salisbury)
- Parker Farms** (near Washington, D.C.)
- Turkey Knob Farm** (near Harrisonburg)

Accompanying the map are two photographs: one showing a close-up of ripe apples on a tree with green leaves, and another showing a white plastic crate filled with a large quantity of red apples in an orchard setting.



**GREAT
KIDS
FARM**

**BALTIMORE CITY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**




our mission

Great Kids Farm engages Baltimore City Schools students at all grade levels to support classroom learning, participate in every aspect of food preparation, and prepare students for success in 21st century colleges and careers.



Los Angeles Unified School District





Farm to School

Small to mid-size sustainable farmers within ~250 mile radius

Current: Produce purchases through Farm to School Informal Bids (RFQs) for NNC sites

2024+: Farm to School Integration into formal RFP process for all sites

Harvest of the Month

Larger farmers and manufacturers within California

Managed and sourced via LAUSD's primary contracted distributor

Seasonal, California-grown fruits and vegetables



Minneapolis Public Schools

Local Procurement: Building Relationships with Farmers





15 farms and farm cooperatives



40 vegetables & fruits
176,000 pounds | \$225,000



Free-range turkey & grass-fed beef
\$120,000

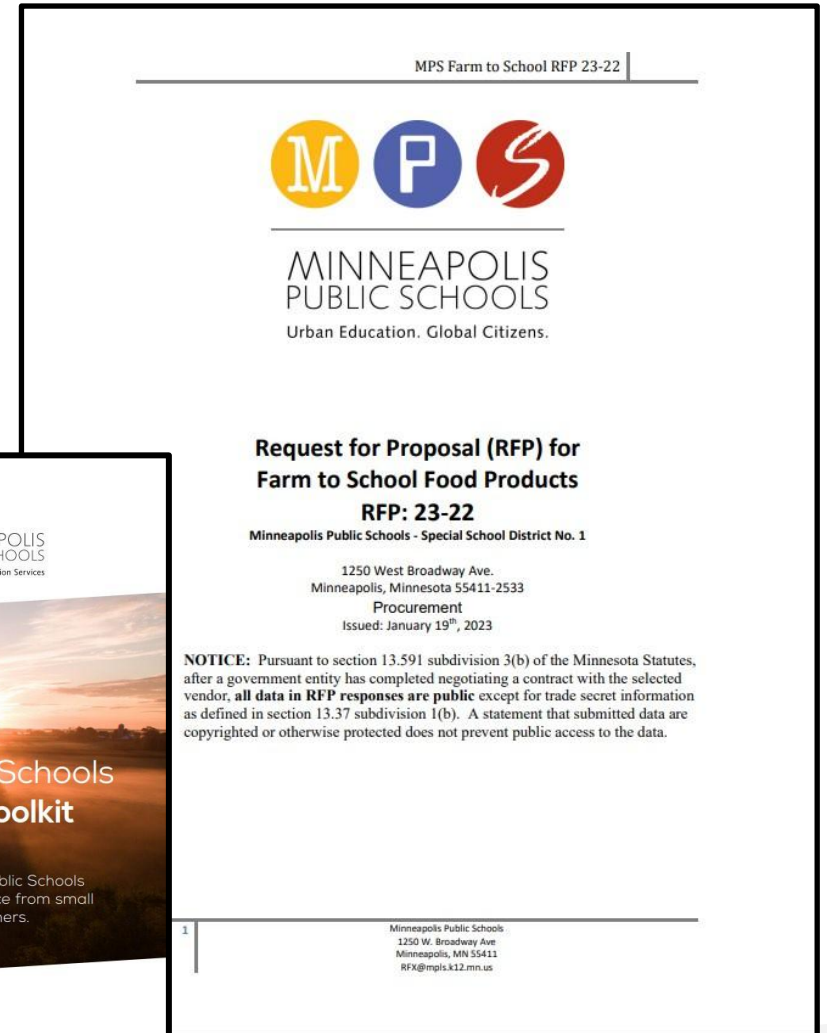
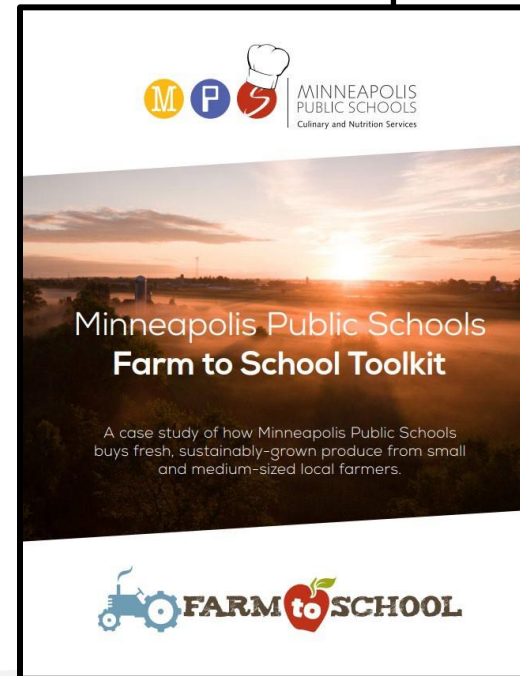




Farm to School RFP

- Request for Proposal
- Annual competitive bid process
- Open to all interested farms, farm cooperatives, food hubs, and aggregators

Available on MPS website:
<https://cws.mpls.k12.mn.us/farms>





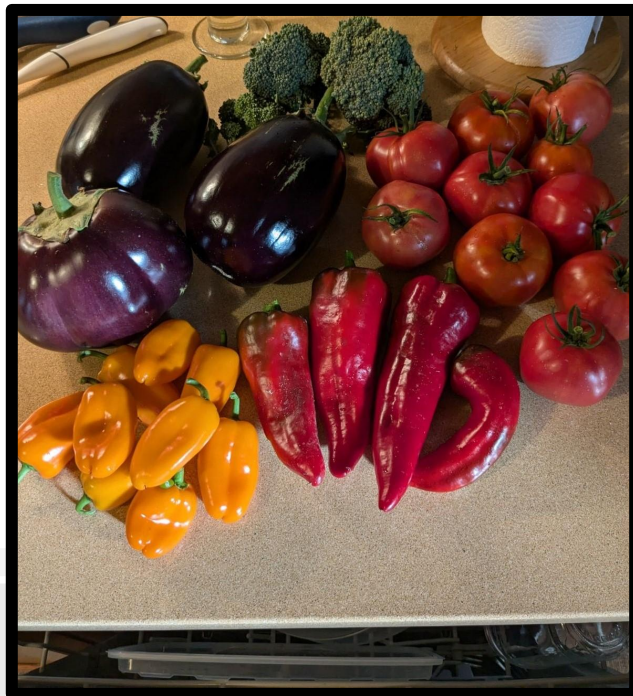
Results From Farm to School

- Local producers succeed: strengthening local communities
- Lower food costs
- Students understand where food comes from
- Students are willing to try new foods
- Less food waste
- Nutritional quality of school meals increases
- More students interested in traditional foods



Personal Path

- Think about your personal practices to obtain food.
- What can you do to practice sustainable purchasing.
- Share your ideas with a partner.





Food Loss and Food Waste

- Each year nearly 4 billion tons of food is produced worldwide.
- According to the FAO, as much as 1/3 of all food produced for human consumption never actually gets consumed.
- List issues that pertain to nutrition and sustainability impacted by the above statement.
- Whether we categorize uneaten food as “lost” or “wasted” depends on when it falls off the food chain.



Food Loss

- Food Loss: When inefficient food production, processing, and distribution exist, food can lose its nutritional value, and has to be discarded before it reaches the consumer.
- Occurs earlier in the food chain and usually behind the scenes
- **Examples**
- **Nutrition Issues**

Food Waste

- Occurs when good quality food, fit for consumption, does not get consumed, but instead is discarded, either before or after it spoils.
- Occurs at the end of the food chain
- **Examples**
- **Nutrition Issues**





USDA ChooseMyPlate.gov
United States Department of Agriculture

Let's talk **trash.**

LET'S TALK TRASH

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

REDUCING **FOOD WASTE**

WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO TODAY

An estimated **33%** (133 billion pounds) of the overall food supply was wasted at the retail and consumer level in the U.S. in 2010.

Scheduling recess before lunch can **reduce plate waste by AS MUCH AS 30%**

Extending lunch periods from **20 TO 30** minutes reduced plate waste by nearly one-third

SMARTER LUNCHROOM STRATEGIES, such as how foods are named and where they are placed in the cafeteria, can facilitate healthy choices and increase fruit and vegetable consumption by **UP TO 70%**

SCHOOLS ACROSS THE COUNTRY ARE STEPPING UP TO THE CHALLENGE WITH INNOVATIVE NEW STRATEGIES, SUCH AS:

- Allowing students to keep a lunch or breakfast food item for consumption later in the school day
- Using techniques listed on the **Smarter Lunchrooms Self-Assessment Score Card** to help reduce food waste
- Setting up a table for kids to place items they are not going to consume (packaged or pre-portioned items)
- Letting kids self-serve
- Composting food waste for school gardens
- Collaborating with local farmers on composting or food-scrap projects
- Collecting excess wholesome food after mealtimes to donate to charitable organizations
- Joining the **U.S. Food Waste Challenge** to work with an expert to measure and reduce food waste



Personal Path

- Think about the ways you waste food
- At home, restaurant, traveling
- Brainstorm ideas that you can use to reduce your food waste
- Share with a partner





Plastic Free Lunch Day USA

CAFETERIA Culture.org IN PARTNERSHIP WITH URBAN SCHOOL FOOD ALLIANCE

Will you join us on November 2nd and be plastic free in your schools too?

Coming November 2nd, 2022



Eliminating Styrofoam Trays

LUNCH LESSONS 101

Six of the country's largest school districts, advised by NRDC, will start using eco-friendly plates in cafeterias this month, dumping polystyrene trays.

Source of pollution



Made from petroleum products

225 million clog landfills every year

Made in the U.S.A. from recycled newsprint



Compostable

Drink slot in the middle to balance and prevent bending

LEARN MORE: URBANSCHOOLFOODALLIANCE.ORG





Eliminating Polystyrene Trays

- Polystyrene foam trays are used to serve hot food to Baltimore students every day, which concerns us given how the plastic is manufactured. The two most well-known chemicals used are styrene and benzene. The National Institutes of Health's National Toxicology Program deems styrene "reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen" and benzene a known human carcinogen. Styrene can leach into hot foods and can be found in elevated levels in human fat tissue. This is a sign of long-term absorption and not simply short-term presence in the body before excretion.
- Besides being found in polystyrene, benzene and styrene are both found in industrial manufacturing areas and are released into the environment through car tailpipe emissions and cigarette smoke. Sounds like something you want to eat food off of? We don't think so either.



Personal Path

- Think about single use plastic that you use at home, dining, traveling, shopping, packaging
- List ideas that you can use to reduce your use of plastic
- Share with a partner



ELEMENTS NEEDED FOR SUSTAINABLE DIETS

VALUES

- Establish a culture of healthy living
- Embrace equitable solutions
- Encourage active citizenship to steward natural resources
- Promote transparency
- Support universal food security

CONSUMERS



- Link sustainability and healthy diets
- Achieve healthy dietary patterns
- Increase demand for sustainable food
- Minimize waste

POLICY



MAKERS

- Be informed by best evidence
- Engage multiple sector stakeholders
- Implement at local, regional, national, and global levels
- Develop systems for monitoring and accountability
- Align policies to promote both health and sustainability

SUPPLY-CHAIN



PARTICIPANTS

- Conserve natural resources
- Use capital and labor responsibly
- Innovate in research and technology
- Enhance biodiversity

It Takes a Village

- Health crisis belongs to all of us
- Strong public policy
- Multicomponent interventions
- Strong, committed communities





Looking forward and boldly Accelerating Change in School Food Procurement

▪ “This is not the time to force yourself to do the thing you always did. If it is not working, accept it and give yourself permission to do it differently”. Chef Irene





Thank You!

Dr. Katie Wilson, SNS

Executive Director

Urban School Food Alliance

www.urbanschoolfoodalliance.org

