

Please Support Expanding Vermont Farm to School

Dear Vermont Policy Makers:

We, the undersigned, collectively write to ask you to support expanding Farm to School in Vermont to allow more schools to participate in the program, increase participation in and sustainability of child nutrition programs in schools, and to include childcare programs in Vermont Farm to School. Specifically, we ask you to support a base appropriation of \$500,000 for Vermont Farm to School, through the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets.

We know that Farm to School is a great investment for Vermont. Every \$1 spent on local food in Vermont schools contributes 60¢ to the local economy. Vermont schools spent a total of \$16 million on all food in the 2013-14 school year – that same year \$915,000 of that total was spent on local food, which is 5.6% of the total. If we doubled the amount of local food purchased for Vermont school meals, that could mean \$2.1 million contributed to local economies across the state.

We also know that establishing healthy eating habits early in a child's life is critical for preventing diet related diseases later in life. Currently, 26% of VT teens are overweight or obese, and Farm to School can help to reverse that trend. Farm to School programs help schools serve healthier, local food, which has been proven to increase participation in school nutrition programs. That means more kids, especially those coming from homes that are struggling to put food on their own tables, are eating nutritious meals which help them grow and thrive at school. And, the impact of Farm to School goes beyond the school day – these programs also provide important nutrition education and help students to learn healthy habits. Farm to School also provides opportunities for students to experience and to develop a taste for fresh and local foods.

Finally, we know that our communities are stronger when we have strong connections between our families, our schools, and our farms. Farm to School programs help these connections grow stronger, and help to provide opportunities for community members to learn about where their food comes from, and how to connect with local farmers in meaningful ways.

We hope you will support the expansion of the Vermont Farm to School program, with a base appropriation of \$500,000. We fully support this request, and ask for your support.

Sincerely,

<http://vermontfarmtoschool.org/>

NAME	ORGANIZATION	SIGNATURE	PHONE	EMAIL

Please return signed letter to: Vermont Farm to School, c/o PO Box 551, Montpelier, VT 05601.
Or email a scanned copy to cindy@action-circles.com - Thanks!

<http://vermontfarmtoschool.org/>