



# Growing Healthy Vermont Schools, Farms & Communities



## Farm to School in every community

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

Expanding Farm to School funding in Vermont will allow more schools and early childhood programs to participate in the program and strengthen child nutrition programs.



## Our progress and impact

Since 2007, Vermont's Farm to School Grant Program has supported **105 schools and 39 early childhood programs serving over 50,000 students.**

2019 Farm to School grant applications came from **13 counties**, but available funding only met **38% of requests.**

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

**89% of Vermont schools purchase locally grown food, and 65% are connected to a local farm or farmer.**



"We see how kids who eat nutritious food learn better and live healthier lives, and how our farmers thrive when they have access to local markets... It's a smart investment that yields broad returns from healthier students, to resilient farms, to stronger communities in Vermont and across the country."

**-US SENATOR  
PATRICK LEAHY (D-VT)**

"When we serve local food in our schools, all students, regardless of their home economicsituation, are getting fresh, wholesome, nutritious food in the regular meals."

**-CORNWALL SCHOOL PRINCIPAL,  
JEN KRAVITZ**

# Vermont Farm to School & Early Childhood Outcomes

FEBRUARY 2019



## 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** is developed by age five. Healthy, nutritious food is vital to healthy brain development in young children.

**91% of early childhood providers** polled indicated they are interested in implementing Farm to Early Childhood programming.

## Fighting Hunger

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

**76 Vermont schools** provide universal breakfast and lunch to over **16,490 students**.

## 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.

## 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.

**56% of early childhood providers** are serving local food one or more times per week.

Learn more about the Vermont Farm to School Network @ [vermontfarmtoschool.org](http://vermontfarmtoschool.org)  
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