



Farm to School Priorities for the Healthy Schools Act of 2009

The Healthy Schools Act of 2009 aims to improve the health, nutrition and wellness of Washington, DC students. The D.C. Farm to School Network feels the following components of the bill are the most important in order to create and provide incentives for farm-to-school programs.

1. **Local Food Preference:** Require schools and food service providers to buy local, unprocessed foods whenever costs are within 10% of conventional food costs.
2. **Extra Reimbursement:** Provide an extra 5 cents to schools (or school food service providers) for every \$1 they spend on unprocessed, local foods to serve in school meals.
3. **Centralized Kitchen:** Provide a city building for coordinating the purchase, transport, storage, and processing of local, healthy foods for Washington, D.C. public schools.
4. **Food Origins:** Require public disclosure by schools and food service providers of where foods are grown, and disclose how those foods are grown whenever possible.
5. **Farm to School Education:** Institute at minimum a mandatory farm-to-school promotional week each year, and require government agencies, schools, cooperative extension, private sector and community partners to promote farm-to-school and incorporate year-round, hands-on farm-to-school curricula into existing educational standards for students and staff.
6. **Evaluation:** Require annual evaluation of farm-to-school initiatives and recommendations for improvement by an independent, contracted organization.

We also support other components of the bill - visit www.dcfarmtoschool.org to learn more.

Farm-to-school programs serve healthy, local foods in schools, and provide hands-on education to students about the connections between agriculture, food, nutrition and the environment. Farm-to-school programs are proven to:

- Increase fruit and vegetable consumption, thereby improving nutrition and preventing obesity and other diet-related diseases;
- Increase school meal satisfaction and participation rates;
- Improve academic performance, discipline, and attentiveness;
- Decrease the distance food travels from farm to cafeteria tray, thus promoting community food security and reducing the school food carbon footprint;
- Increase market opportunities and job creation for local growers, food processors, distributors and manufacturers; and
- Encourage healthy eating habits in school, which spread to families and communities.

The mission of the D.C. Farm to School Network is to improve the health and well being of schoolchildren in the District of Columbia, and of our local environment and food economy, by increasing access to healthy, local, and sustainable foods in all Washington, D.C. schools.

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