

FARM TO SCHOOL in the HEALTHY SCHOOLS ACT

The Healthy Schools Act (18-564) aims to improve the health, nutrition and wellness of Washington, DC schoolchildren. 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 in the District.



1. **Local Food Preference:** Require schools and food service providers to buy local, unprocessed foods to serve in school meals whenever costs are within 10% of conventional food costs.

2. **Financial Incentive:** Provide a financial incentive for schools in the form of a rebate tied to the purchase of unprocessed, local foods for school meals.

3. **Processing/Storage Facility:** Provide a city building for coordinating the intake, processing, storage, and distribution local, healthy foods for school meals.

4. **Food Origins:** Require public disclosure by schools and food service providers of where and how foods are grown.

5. **Farm to School Education:** Require collaboration of government agencies and community partners to integrate hands-on farm to school education into the classroom and cafeteria, and mandate a Farm to School promotional week each year.

6. **Evaluation:** Require annual evaluation of farm-to-school initiatives and recommendations for improvement by an independent, contracted organization.

Farm to school programs connect schools with local farms in order to serve healthy foods in school meals, educate kids about food and nutrition, and support the local food economy.

Farm to school programs are proven to:¹

- Increase fruit and vegetable consumption, which improves nutrition, health and prevents obesity and other diet-related diseases;
- Increase school meal satisfaction and participation, which alleviates childhood hunger and generates revenues for school food service;
- Improve academic performance, discipline, and attentiveness;
- Decrease the distance food travels from farm to cafeteria tray, which promotes community food security and reducing the school food carbon footprint;
- Increase market opportunities and job creation for local growers, as well as local food processors, distributors and manufacturers; and
- Encourage healthy eating habits in children, families and communities.

The DC Farm to School Network is a diverse coalition of advocates working 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 locally grown and minimally-processed foods in all DC schools.

For more information visit www.dcfarmtoschool.org.

¹ For more information and research about the benefits of farm to school, see the publication *Bearing Fruit: Farm to School Program Evaluation Resources and Recommendations*, available online at departments.oxy.edu/uepi/cfi/publications/BF%20full%20report.pdf