



FARM TO SCHOOL LEGISLATION OVERVIEW

Time is running out on two impactful farm to school pilot programs - a farm to school grant program and local food incentive. Two bills can help sustain these programs. Together these two bills lay the groundwork for robust farm to school programming at schools across the Commonwealth. Providing schools with the resources they need to start up or expand local food sourcing and education activities is a win for our kids, our farmers, and our communities. Farm to school programs strengthen student achievement, improve nutrition, and grow the local economy.

BILL HIGHLIGHTS

Local Food Incentive (H.3993)

- Introduced by Representatives Domb and Vargas
- Modeled on a successful, one-time Federally funded incentive, which is set to expire in June.
- Would establish and evaluate a 3-year pilot program in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to provide public K-12 schools and licensed early child care programs additional reimbursement for meals featuring locally and regionally grown foods
- Schools would be reimbursed \$1 for every \$3 spent on qualifying Massachusetts foods
- Increases access to healthy high quality foods for all Massachusetts kids
- Directs investment to Massachusetts farmers and fishers for a more resilient food system

Farm to School Grants (S.243/H.558)

- Introduced by Senator Comerford and Representative Pignatelli
- Builds on a successful ARPA-funded pilot with a demand 5x the amount of available funds
- Establishes a competitive grant program within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for eligible public schools and licensed child care programs
- Grants build the capacity of public schools and licensed child care programs to purchase ingredients grown and produced in Massachusetts, prepare scratch-cooked meals, and educate students about the food system
- Has cross-sector impact by updating infrastructure, providing job training, supporting local business growth, educating students, and improving public health

TAKE ACTION

- Sign on as a co-sponsor of H.3993 and S.243/H.558
- Encourage the Joint Committee on Education to vote these bills favorably out of committee before February 7th

MORE INFORMATION

Please contact Simca Horwitz at simca@massfarmtoschool.org or 413-253-3844 to learn more.

SUPPORTING FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAMS MEANS:

More money for Massachusetts' food and farm economy

Every \$1.00 spent on direct farm purchases in Massachusetts generates another \$1.12 in local economic activity. Massachusetts schools spend over \$75 million on food every year and we want more of those dollars going to Massachusetts farmers and fishers.



Increased access to high quality foods for Massachusetts school kids

Every kid in Massachusetts should grow up with local food on their lunch tray. By giving schools and early childhood programs the resources they need to buy from Massachusetts farmers and fishers, we are ensuring equitable access to high quality, local food for all Massachusetts school children.



Engaging Educational Opportunities

A farm to school grant program and local food incentive will build connections across the classroom, cafeteria, and community. These programs strengthen knowledge and attitudes toward agriculture, nutrition, and the environment, improving academic outcomes and social and emotional learning for students of all abilities.



Students & school meal programs THRIVE

A local food incentive can work to increase participation in school meals, so more students are nourished and ready to learn. When paired with universal school meals, school food programs have more funds to buy local food, sending more money back into the local economy. The Farm to School Grant program helps schools get the equipment and training they need to effectively incorporate local food into their meals.

