



## FARM TO SCHOOL LEGISLATION OVERVIEW

Farm to school programs strengthen student achievement, improve nutrition, and grow the local economy. The farm to school FRESH Grant Program supports the infrastructure investments, staff training, and educational initiatives that lead to farm to school program success and sustainability. With over \$4M in funding requested during the first two application rounds, additional funds are needed to fully support 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.

## BILL HIGHLIGHTS

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

- Introduced by Senator Comerford and Representative Pignatelli
- Builds on a successful ARPA-funded pilot (FRESH grant) 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

- Support passage of S.243/H.558
- In the FY25 DESE budget (Line Item 7010-1192) please support level funding of \$1 million for food literacy to sustain the farm to school FRESH Grant program.

Please contact Simca Horwitz at [simca@massfarmtoschool.org](mailto: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.

