

Growing Success: Building an Inclusive K-6 Farm to School Program



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The basics

- 4 schools
- K-6
- Enrollment ~ 1,100 students
- 63 raised beds (4'x 8')



Pelham
Elementary



Wildwood
Elementary

Fort River
Elementary

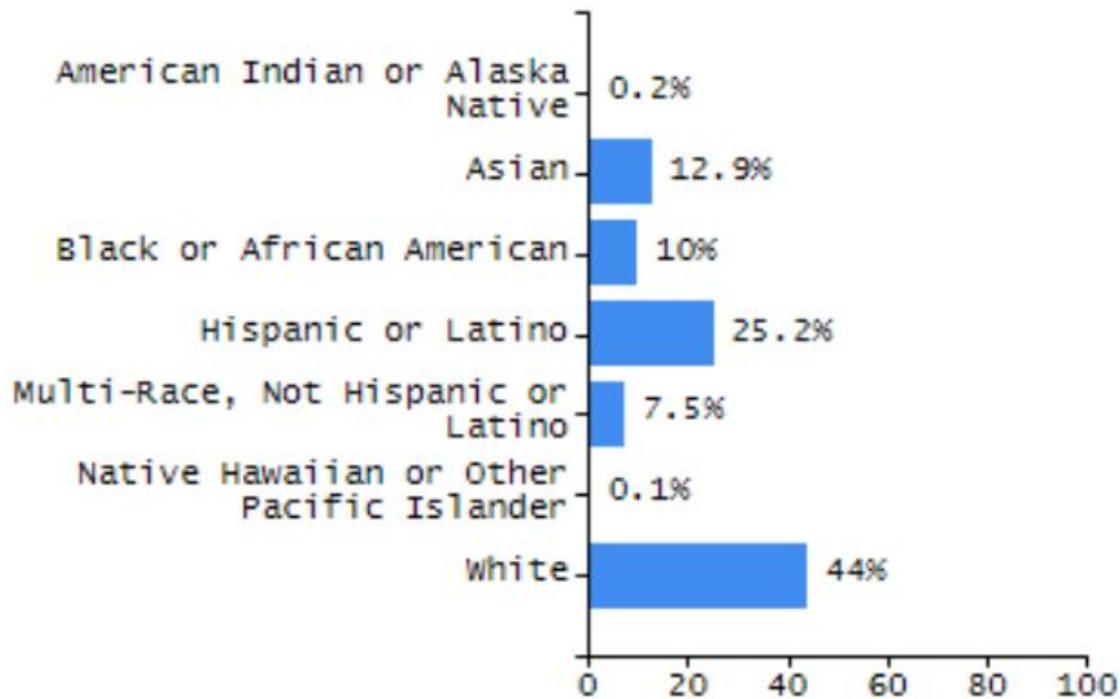


Crocker
Farm
Elementary



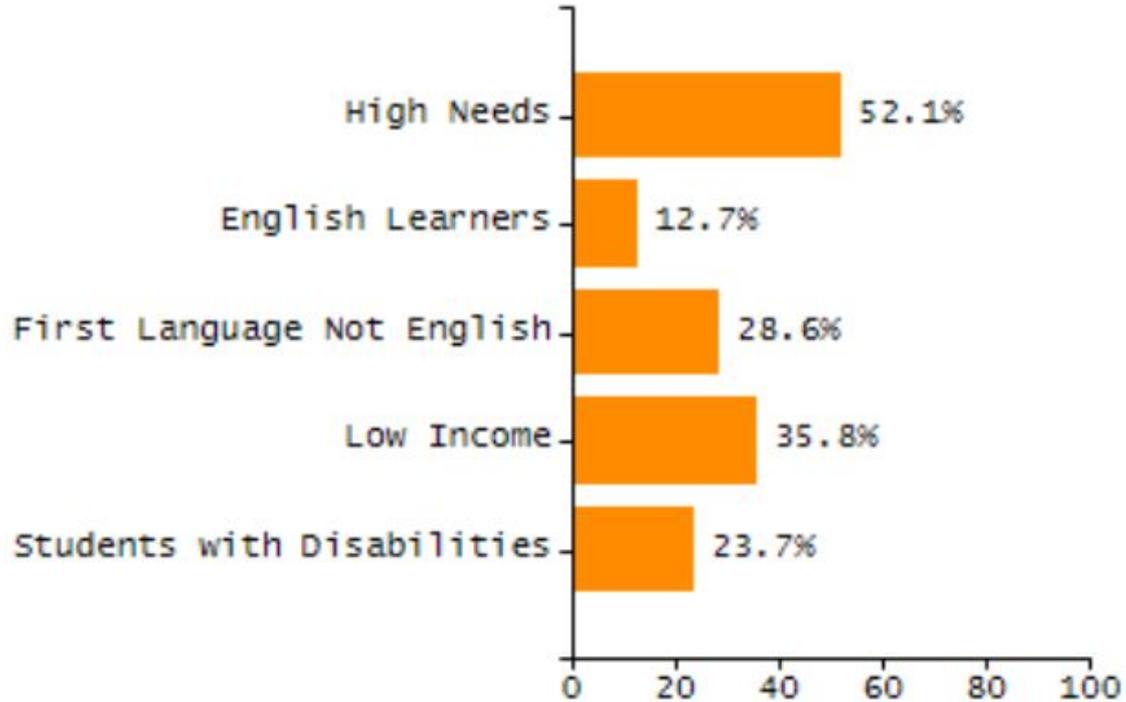
(MA DESE 24-25)

Student Race and Ethnicity



(MA DESE 22-23)

Selected Populations



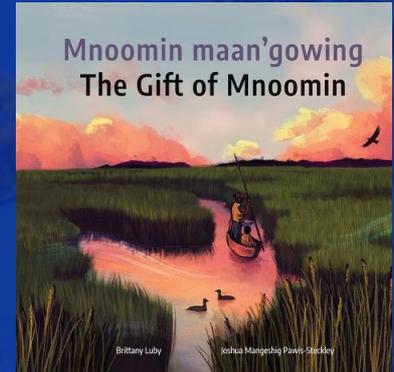
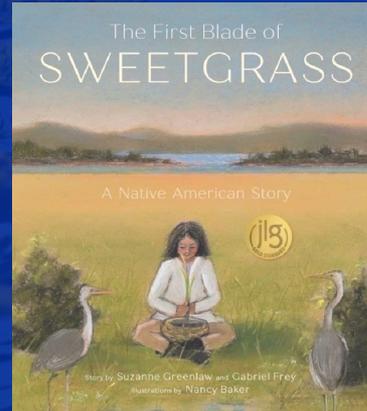
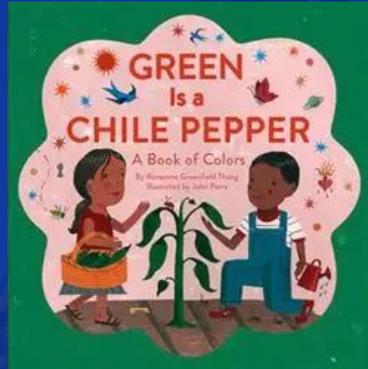
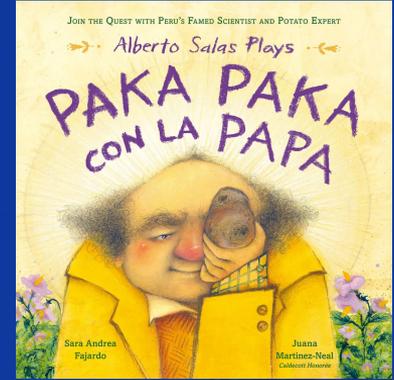
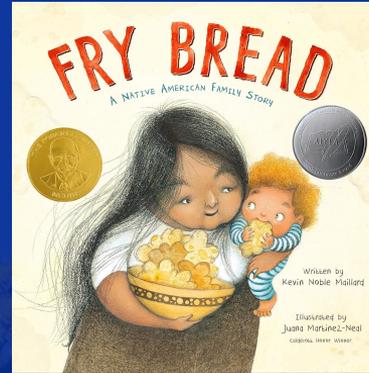
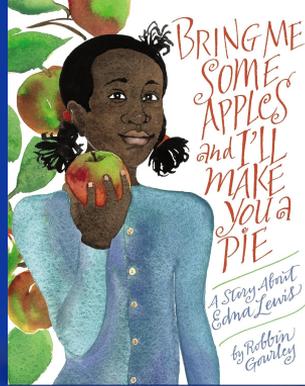
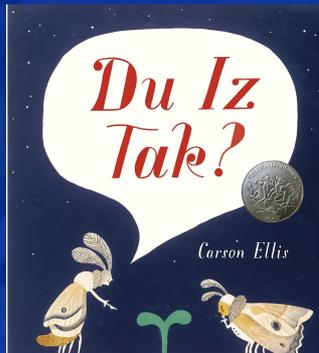
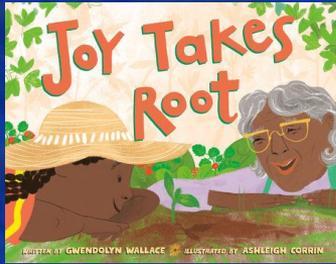
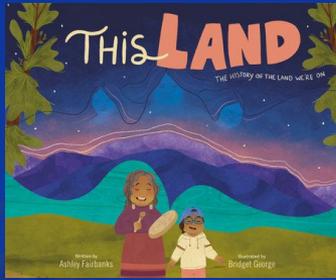
Program Goals & Values

- Equity & access
- Social justice
- Agency
- Empathy
- Connection to natural world
- Systems thinking
- Joy

Strategies for equity & inclusivity

- Program design
 - Every child participates
- Collaboration with colleagues & families
- Garden spaces
- Picture books (windows/mirrors)
- Lesson development
 - Many types of learners
- Translation of materials & lesson delivery
- Culturally Responsive Pedagogy
 - Ethnic studies course / anti-racism trainings

Picture Books:



Program Offerings

- Garden & classroom lessons
- Farm field trips
- Other community collaborations
- School Nutrition connections



Field Trips

Kindergarten -
Brookfield Farm



Fifth Grade - Book
& Plow Farm



Sixth Grade -
Wheelhouse Catering



School Nutrition Collaboration

Green Monster

Pizza



Garden Vegetable
Soup



CSA-Style
Distribution



2025-2026 Garden Curriculum

- K: Roots, stems and leaves and nutrient cycling / decomposition
- 1: Seeds / germination & in-depth exploration of plant parts and functions (roots, stems, leaves)
- 2: Soil health (tap roots, fibrous roots, cover cropping, erosion, compost)
- 3: Pollinators / Ecosystems (seeds/flowers, plant/animal interactions, ecology)
- 4: Food histories and cultures (intergenerational interviews)
- 5: Indigenous people of the area (land history, honorable harvest, milpas gardens)
- 6: Culinary explorations (Wheelhouse Catering field trip, tea making)

Lesson Spotlight

4th Grade Special Foods Interviews
& Culture Sharing

4th Grade Lesson Sequence

Lesson 1: Gardens, Food, Family, and Culture

Lesson 2: Elder Food Interview Prep

Lesson 3: Elder Food Interview Share-Out

Lesson 4: Crop Planning

Lesson 5: Spring Planting

Community collaborations:

- Mead Art Museum (& school art teachers)
- Jewish Community of Amherst

CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS: THE TEMPLATE

Question 1: What is your name?

Question 2: When and where were you born?

Question 3: What foods were special to you when you were a child?

Question 4: What foods are special to you now?

Question 5: Are there any celebrations, holidays, or other family traditions connected to those foods? Which ones?

Question 6: What was your least favorite food when you were my age? Why?

Question 7: Do you like cooking and/or baking? Why or why not?

Question 8: What are the flavors, smells and ingredients that remind you of home and/or family?

Question 9: Is there anything else about our/your family food history and culture that you would like to share?

“I LOVE COOKING -

DO YOU KNOW WHY? MAKING FOOD IS KIND OF LIKE SAYING “I LOVE YOU” TO THE PEOPLE YOU COOK FOR. AND THEN WHEN THEY SAY THEY LIKE IT, IT’S KIND OF LIKE SAYING “I LOVE YOU” BACK.”

“We had beehives and 2-3 times per year my dad would get honey from the hives.”

““ We had persimmon trees - my mother would make a persimmon dessert and persimmon cookies.””

“On Eid al-Adha we eat kabob and fattah, and rokak.”

“We made homemade ice cream with our neighbors and had a neighborhood party. Everyone got a chance to crank the ice cream.”

“We had cherry trees in my yard. My brother and mother would pick them. Then all of us would sit around the table and pit the cherries with a hair pin. We spent hours doing this.”

“Our breakfast is falafel, beans, eggs, eggplant and cheese. And for lunch the main course we eat rice, chicken or beef and vegetables.”



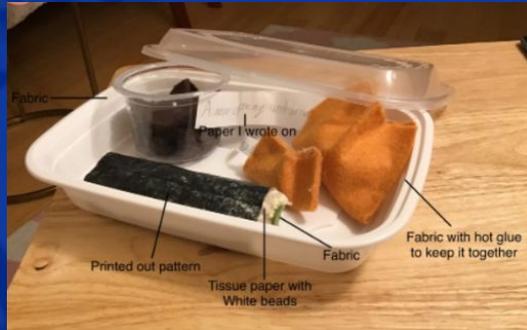
Artist credit: Nam



Artist credit: Mateo



Artist credit: Owen



Artist credit: Lena

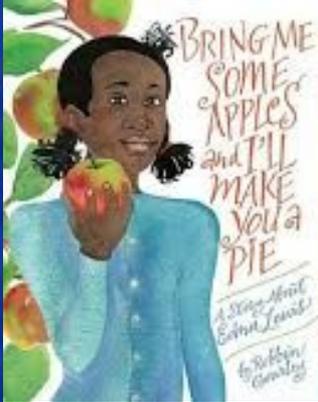


Artist credit: Betsy

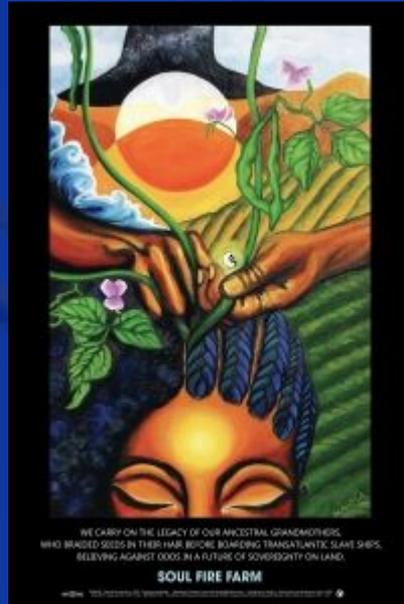


Artist credit: Oliver

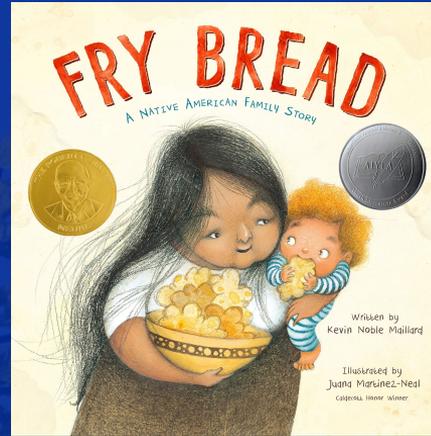
Lesson Resources



Attribution/Author
Credit: Robbin Gourley



Attribution/Artist Credit:
Naima Penniman



Attribution/Author Credit:
Kevin Noble Maillard and
Juana Martinez-Neal



Attribution/Design
Credit: Olivia Feal,
Mead Art Museum

Strategies!

Overcoming implementation challenges

- buy-in
- funding
- maintenance

Year-round garden lessons

- winter/indoor

Building community partnerships

- Internships
- field trips
- collaborations



Questions?

Thank you!

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