



AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE MASSACHUSETTS FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM (S.311 / H.565)

LEGISLATION OVERVIEW

Farm to school programs strengthen student achievement, improve nutrition, and grow the local economy. A Massachusetts Farm to School Program within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will support the infrastructure investments, staff training, and educational initiatives that lead to farm to school program success and sustainability. It will help schools and early education programs consistently offer students healthy, locally grown foods as part of school meals. 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

- Introduced by Senator Comerford and Representatives Duffy and Vargas
- Builds on successful federally-funded pilots (the MA FRESH grant and Northeast for Schools Program)
- Establishes a permanent competitive grant program and permanent local food incentive within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for eligible K-12 schools and licensed child care programs
- Directs investment to Massachusetts farmers and fishers for a more resilient food system
- Builds the capacity of public schools and licensed child care programs to purchase ingredients grown and produced in Massachusetts, prepare scratch-cooked meals, and provide experiential food education
- Increases access to healthy, high quality foods for all Massachusetts kids
- Has cross-sector impact by updating infrastructure, providing job training, supporting local business growth, educating students, and improving public health

TAKE ACTION

Support the passage of the omnibus FARM bill, H.4854 out of the House Ways & Means Committee and include language (from H.565 & S.311) establishing a permanent farm to school grant program & a local food incentive program.

*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.

