



# Frederick County Farm to School Action Plan 2018 – 2019

A Community Partnership led by  
Community FARE (Food.Advocacy.Resources.Education) and  
Frederick County Public Schools Food and Nutrition Services



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## Executive Summary

U.S. Farm to School programs give students access to fresh food from their local farms, provide farmers access to new markets, include curriculum-based learning about agriculture and food, and often incorporate hands-on learning through school gardens. The national Farm to School network has grown from a few programs in the 1990s to well over 42,000 today and reaches nearly 24 million children. Farm to School (F2S) benefits students through education about agriculture, food and nutrition, it enhances overall K-12 academic achievement, increases school engagement and social and emotional growth.<sup>1</sup>

In 2018, with USDA support, the Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) Food and Nutrition Services partnered with Community FARE to launch its own Farm to School program for FCPS students. In just one year the initiative has received financial support from 3 additional sources, and grown to include 20 organizations, 9 partnerships, and 6 business sponsors, making it truly a community program. What began as a pilot initiative focused on procurement of more locally grown fruits and vegetables for five Title I elementary schools, has expanded to include food education, elementary school gardens, and a growth plan that will eventually reach all FCPS elementary, middle and high schools. We are fortunate to be situated in a bustling agricultural region and in a county with the most farms and farmland acres in Maryland – meaning that there is real potential for ample school/farm partnerships.

This document provides the context for Frederick County's Farm to School Program, and makes recommendations for moving forward to build on what we learned during 2018-19 school year. The viability of the Farm to School program in Frederick County depends on its ability to become an integral part of the FCPS system. The F2S Leadership and Planning Teams have prioritized outreach, education, and communication about FCPS's Farm to School program in order to galvanize political support, engage FCPS families and to build community partnerships and alliances.

Of course, Farm to School will not succeed without locally farmed food, and for many reasons finding farmers able to provide fruit and vegetables at scale for FCPS has been challenging. We are continuing our discussions with local farmers to find solutions to scaling up that are within their budget and personnel. As key steps forward, Food and Nutrition Services has expressed willingness

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.farmtoschool.org/Resources/BenefitsFactSheet.pdf>

to buy small quantities of regularly needed fruits or vegetables for a single school near an individual farm, to buy as much locally produced food from the (Keany) distributor as possible, and in other cases processing local produce so that some summer crops can be utilized during the school year. In 2017-18 school year FCPS spent 2% of its food budget on locally sourced fruits and vegetables; F2S has set a target of at least 10% by 2024-25 SY. We will also be watching school lunch purchase numbers fully expecting that as more locally grown food is introduced into school meals and snacks the more FCPS families will want to partake!

The Farm to School Planning Team welcomes suggestions and further engagement from community members as we aim high to *positively impact student health, student education and economic growth of the County's agricultural sector by increasing the availability of locally grown fruits and vegetables in Frederick County Public Schools.*

## Introduction

**Farm to School Frederick County, Maryland** was launched in July 2018 with initial support from USDA Farm to School Grant Program to Community FARE (Food-Advocacy-Research-Education), a 501(c) 3 organization located in Frederick, Maryland and working in partnership with the Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS). Grant funds supported the preparation of this Farm to School (F2S) Action Plan for Frederick County Public Schools.

Frederick County Public School System is a successful school system with 67 schools in a diverse and growing community that includes rural, suburban, and urban lifestyles. Enrollment in September 2018 was 42,789 students, an increase of 585 students over last year at this time. There are 37 elementary schools, 13 middle schools, 10 high schools, 3 public charter schools, an alternative school, and a special education school. The student racial/ethnic composition is 58.9% white, 17.1% Hispanic/Latino, 12.5% Black/African American, 5.5% Asian, 5.5% 2 or more races, 0.3% American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 0.2% Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian. In the 2017-2018 school year, around 11,000 students (27%) received Free and Reduced-Price Meal services.

This “pilot” F2S initiative focuses on increasing the amount of locally grown fruits and vegetables served in five Title I elementary schools (total enrollment 3,298), where a high percentage of students utilize free and reduced-price meals. It impacts both student health and the sustainability of the County's agricultural sector, and has gone beyond to explore curriculum development, community engagement and hands-on education about growing healthy and nutritious food. We have built a framework on which we intend to build a more comprehensive program through partnerships, matching grants, business sponsorships and individual donations.

The diversity of participants in the F2S work demonstrates the many interests in building a solid and successful Farm to School program – whether for public health, education or economic success for farmers. We include (below) a compelling story from one FCPS parent and food service manager who fully supports this initiative for greater access to healthy and nutritious food for our FCPS students.

### **Compelling personal story from a FCPS Cafeteria Site Manager**

*The reason I do what I do is solely to provide the kids with the best possible meals! I love what I do but I can see that there is so much more that we could be doing and I think that we are on the way to making great things happen! I want to be as active of a member on this Planning Team as possible.*

*Here is some background about me that might help you to understand why I think Farm to School matters. I'm a single mom with two kids in the public school system and money is always tight. My kids and I depend on the free school meals. Also, I am a diabetic. When I was diagnosed with diabetes I was put on insulin. I made the decision to change my diet to get off of insulin because I knew that at my age the insulin that was keeping me alive would eventually have adverse effects. That challenge helped me to better understand the healing power of food. Food is not only essential to life but it can heal. I was able to stop taking insulin and have been able to sustain my health with diet for the last 6 years. I look at my kids and know that my path is not far from where they will journey if the meals they consume do not change. I wish that I could provide three nutritious meals a day to sustain their needs, but as I previously mentioned, I depend on the school meals more than some.*

*I don't know exactly what I can do, but I feel like this is where I am supposed to be and that I can help Farm to School. I love the idea of bringing better food to the kids by using local products. Many of the challenges and solutions we are going to tackle may require us to do things that have never been done before, but I am up for that and I am 100% committed.*

*From all of that, I hope that you know that I will work tirelessly to help Farm to School achieve this dream. Please feel free to ask me for anything to aid in this process.*

## **Background**

Since 2013, Community FARE has been working to safeguard a diverse and healthy local food economy that preserves farmland integrity and biodiversity and ensures that food grown here is accessible to residents of Frederick County and its regional neighbors. The current food system, agricultural production, and associated land use practices are often cited as culprits for damaging our soils, air, waterways and ecosystems. The current food system can also be the source of the social and economic issues that impact community sustainability, such as obesity, ill health, increased rates of cancer, petroleum based (and greenhouse gas emitting) long distance hauling of goods, and the competitive edge in subsidies and quantity sales available to the conventional large-scale farmers. In response, Community FARE has been looking closely at building a locally sourced food system that supports soil, water and human health by 1) creating institutional market access to locally grown food, and 2) building a regenerative agriculture movement so that locally grown food is healthy. FARE's research suggests strongly that producers lack both relationships with wholesale markets and time to develop them<sup>2</sup>. FARE found most farmers have an interest in diversifying markets – a strategy that could augment the economic success of their businesses. FCPS is the largest institution within Frederick County serving more meals than any other – making it a worthwhile initial target for market development!

<sup>2</sup> <https://1-cpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/FARE-ANNUAL-REPORT-CY-2018.pdf>

The Office of Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) has been sourcing apples, peaches, plums and pears from Catoctin Mountain Orchard in Thurmont for all schools in the district. While there has been no official F2S program – there is great interest in developing one. *“The economic impact of buying locally and giving money back to the local farmer is a huge benefit (of Farm to School). We’d love to buy it (locally grown food). We want to support the County and the local economy.”* Steve O’Brey, Procurement Coordinator, Office of Food and Nutrition Services, FCPS.

## Organizational Structure

In 2018, the Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) Food and Nutrition Services partnered with Community FARE to launch the Farm to School program for FCPS students.



## Farm to School Leadership Team

The **Frederick County Farm to School Leadership Team (F2SLT)**, formed in August 2018, consists of seven professionals from Frederick County Public Schools Food and Nutrition Services Department, Community FARE, Frederick Community College Hospitality Culinary & Technology Institute, Mountainside Education & Enrichment, and Fox Haven Farm. The F2SLT is a strong team of passionate people committed to the long-term success of this initiative. The relationship between Community FARE and FCPS Food and Nutrition Services is instrumental in moving this important work forward with key community partners.

### Leadership Team Members:

#### 1. **Janice Wiles, Director, Farm to School and Community FARE**

As an advocate for community sustainability, Janice introduces and advocates for change within government and communities that support economic, social and environmental health and well-being. Janice owns and operates a small organic vegetable and herb farm and native plant nursery.

#### 2. **Alysia Feuer, MPH, RD – Farm to School Program Coordinator**

Alysia is using her combined experience in public health nutrition, research, strategic planning, program evaluation and meeting facilitation to lead the Farm to School initiative. She has spearheaded many school garden projects as a Master Gardener and educated community groups as a registered dietitian. She loves to bring people together in a collaborative way to problem solve and achieve meaningful outcomes.

#### 3. **Joann Coates-Hunter, Director of Fox Haven Organic Farm, Retreat, and Learning Center**

Joann has years of experience leading and directing teams while creating and implementing long-term strategic visions. She has created many farm-based education programs for children and the community at large.



**4. Lisa Orr, Executive Director, Mountainside Education and Enrichment**

Lisa directs Mountainside Education and Enrichment, a nonprofit that teaches, demonstrates, and engages all ages in scientific explorations and environmental sustainability. She served on Maryland's Healthy Soils Consortium and seeks ways to advocate and implement regenerative agriculture practices.

**5. Stephen O'Brey, Procurement Coordinator, Food and Nutrition Services, FCPS**

Stephen is currently responsible for overseeing all purchased and commodity food ordered for Frederick County Public Schools. He has 20 years of food service experience working in hotels, private and corporate restaurants, college dining, and B & I accounts. He has worked in K-12 schools for the past 5 years.

**6. Monica Skidmore, Food and Nutrition Specialist, Food and Nutrition Services, FCPS**

Monica is a Registered Dietitian with over 18 years of diverse clinical, management, corporate, and school food service and nutrition experience. She oversees menu planning and is working with a new chef in their department to bring the Harvest of the Month program to fruition throughout FCPS.

**7. Elizabeth DeRose, Hospitality, Culinary & Tourism Institute Manager, Frederick Community College**

Elizabeth DeRose manages the Hospitality, Culinary & Tourism Institute of Frederick Community College. As a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, she is a professionally trained chef with over 25 years of experience. She also had a successful career in nonprofit leadership and is excited to combine her interests and experience in these fields to bring Farm to School to life in Frederick County.

**Farm to School Planning Team**

The **Farm to School Planning Team (F2SPT)** was established in the fall of 2018 and is comprised of a robust group of community members and professionals from Frederick County. The F2SPT was initiated to broaden the scope of understanding and support the F2S work with additional knowledge and expertise for planning and implementation. People were recruited from across the farm to school spectrum: local farmers, community leaders, educators, gardeners, culinary professionals, school administrators, cafeteria managers, and parents. Utilizing knowledge from their special area of experience, each member of the Planning Team contributes a vital role. F2SPT members openly sought guidance and advice from the F2SPT and met regularly to review progress made, strategize around challenges and barriers, and brainstorm solutions.

***Responsibilities of the F2SPT include:***

- Attend meetings and phone conferences
- Help gather data and define goals
- Participate in one of three working groups
- Offer opinions and expertise on planning and implementation
- Support communication and marketing to grow F2S, build relationships, and partnerships with stakeholders and volunteers
- Explore and assist with securing funding
- Review and approve Action Plan

Table 1: Farm to School Planning Team Members

Group/Organization	Planning Team Volunteers
Community Member	Mark Gregory, Elementary School Garden Volunteer
Farmers/Business Owners	Ben Sayler, Pleasant Hill Farm Bob Black and Katlyn Robertson, Catoctin Mountain Orchard Joanna Winkler, Good Dog Farm Greg Wilson, Agriculture Economic Specialist Kip Kelly, Full Cellar Farm MK Barnett, Open Book Farm Renee Delauter, Potomac Sprout Company Rick Hood, Summer Creek Farm Tony Brusco, South Mountain Creamery
Food Security Network	Jennifer Carpenter, Greenhouse Manager
Frederick Community College, HCTI	Carla Lemons, Hospitality, Culinary & Tourism Institute Mary Evans, Hospitality, Culinary & Tourism Institute
Frederick County Public Schools	Amy Brockey, FCPS Parent and F2S Web Design Bob Kelly, Director FCPS Food and Nutrition Services Erin Kline, Elementary School Teacher Assistant Jennifer Voltaggio, FCPS Parent and Tower Garden Business Leslie Pellegrino, Chief Financial Officer, FCPS Margie Liddick, Career and Technology Center, Culinary Arts Michael Bunitsky, Board of Education, FCPS Melanie Hoff, Assistant Manager Food and Nutrition Services Timika Thrasher, FCPS Elementary School PTA Officer Tonya Street, FCPS Communications Troy Barnes, FCPS Elementary School Principal Zoe Haughwout, Assistant Manager Food and Nutrition Services
Frederick Memorial Hospital	Suzanne Markowitz, LiveWell Frederick Initiative
Maryland State Department of Agriculture and Education	Karen Fedor, MDA Samantha Bader, MDE
Registered Dietitian	Virginia Skelly, Meals on Wheels
University of Maryland, Extension	Kelly Nichols, Agriculture Agent Haylee Staruk, Food Supplement Nutrition Education (FSNE) David Sullivan, Master Gardener (MG) Don Ludke, Master Gardener (MG) Kim Leahy, Master Gardener (MG) Margie Lance, Master Gardener (MG)

## Farm to School Working Groups

During our regularly scheduled F2SPT meetings, participants were able to work in small groups, giving planning team members an opportunity to dive more deeply into a topic area of interest and identify ways to participate and support the Farm to School initiative. This small group work became the basis for establishing three working groups to address three focus areas.

### F2SPT Working Groups

- **Farmer to School:** Leads – Janice Wiles and Kelly Nichols. This working group focuses on (1) building relationships with farmers to ultimately support farm produce production destined for FCPS, and (2) addressing farmer challenges for partnering with schools and institutions. Within that scope, this working group looks at identifying potential fruits and veggies for school purchase, exploring opportunities for local farm field trips, and recruiting farmers and produce for school taste tests events.
- **Chefs in School:** Leads – Elizabeth DeRose and Monica Skidmore. This working group explores utilizing school taste tests and ‘foodie events’ with food service staff and chefs to peak interest and create excitement about fruits and vegetables. In addition, this working group strategizes ways to integrate ‘smarter lunchroom’ concepts to boost interest, education and buy-in for school meals by school staff, food service staff, and community stakeholders.
- **Garden at School:** Leads – Kim Leahy and Frederick County Master Gardeners. This working group focuses on creating hands-on experiential learning through gardening and discovering ways to integrate and align experiential learning with classroom curriculum. Garden lessons are designed to help students connect to the parts of the plant that we eat and learn more about plant life cycles and nutritional benefits of eating healthy foods to promote health and well-being.

## Advisors & Desired New Members

### **Advisors**

Early in the planning process, the F2SLT created a Farm to School logo, website and social media presence. We gratefully acknowledge both John Henderson for his eye catching and trendy logo that captures Maryland pride in agriculture, and Amy Brockey-Rogers for the attractive and well-organized [Farm to School Website \(www.frederickmdfarmtoschool.org/\)](http://www.frederickmdfarmtoschool.org/) and social media accounts (e.g. Facebook - [@FCPSF2S](https://www.facebook.com/FCPSF2S), Instagram - [frederickmdf2s](https://www.instagram.com/frederickmdf2s), Twitter - [FrederickMDF2S](https://twitter.com/FrederickMDF2S)). These tools have helped give F2S in Frederick County an easily recognizable identity, and have showcased the relevance of the F2S initiative enabling County businesses and families to comfortably support it.



### **Desired New Members**

The F2SLT continues to engage key stakeholders to help grow the program. Additional desired members include:

- Local farmers
- Cafeteria managers and food service staff

- Parent and teacher representatives (Parent Teacher Associations)
- Elementary student leaders engaged in ‘green initiatives’
- Middle School students interested in health, wellness and food science
- High School teachers & students in Future Farmers of America
- Horticulture teachers and students
- School wellness teams and district wellness committees
- School district curriculum writers and STEM leaders
- Frederick County Farm Bureau members
- The Great Frederick Fair representatives
- Business sponsors
- Public Health practitioners

## Recommendations for Farm to School Leadership

The Farm to School Leadership Team recommends that the F2S initiative continues to embrace new community members and engage them in the work of growing the program. Despite some terrific support from volunteer professionals and leaders, it is evident that two paid positions are needed to ensure that effective coordination and communication continues into the future.

### Recommendations

1. **Formalize a Farm to School Coordinator Position with long-term funding.** Community FARE was able to secure partial budget needed to support the F2S Coordinator during the 2019/2020 school year. FARE will continue to fundraise for this position, noting that for F2S continuity, the position must be a permanently budgeted position with secure funding.
2. **Formalize a Farm to School Communication Professional Position.** FARE is looking to hire a part-time communications professional to support F2S outreach, to write and report on Farm to School related activities, and develop educational and engaging material. We recommend that the F2S Program secures long-term funding for this part time position.

## Details and Logistics of Team Meetings

### *Farm to School Team Meetings*

The **Farm to School Leadership Team** gathered for conference calls and in-person strategic planning meetings throughout the grant period.

The **Farm to School Planning Team** gathered four times during the grant period and meetings were facilitated by Alysia Feuer, the Program Coordinator. Each meeting location was co-sponsored by a different organization that was intentionally chosen to help expose participants to the spectrum of partners engaged in the initiative. Each convening had excellent participant engagement and attendance was consistently between 20 to 30 participants. Below are some highlights from each gathering. (See Appendix A: F2S Planning Team Participant Agendas and Appendix B: F2S Planning Team Summary Notes.)

The **Farm to School Communication Team** met once to begin to build a strategy for communicating the Farm to School actions and news. The FCPS Communication Department expertise and participation proved invaluable and we look forward to building upon that relationship.

**Highlights of the F2SPT Meetings:** See Appendix A for F2S Participant Agendas.

1. **November 7, 2018:** The Farm to School kick-off meeting was co-sponsored by the Frederick Community College Hospitality, Culinary & Tourism Institute.
  - Our guest speaker, Karen Fedor, Maryland Department of Agriculture Director of Farm to School, shared the history of Farm to School in Maryland. Following, participants engaged in a data walk which presented the current overview of the F2SLT's background research that established a baseline from which to move forward. The meeting ended with a valuable panel discussion with key players from across the Farm to School spectrum.
  
2. **January 15, 2019:** The second F2SPT Meeting was co-sponsored by Monocacy Elementary School, one of our pilot program schools.
  - Our second meeting provided the opportunity for F2S planning team members to learn more about the data collection plan for the initiative, work in small groups in an area of personal interest (Farmer to School, Chefs in School and Gardens at School), tour a school kitchen, and drill down to explore the challenges and solutions related to outreach and promotion for the Farm to School initiative.
  
3. **March 12, 2019:** The third F2SPT Meeting was co-sponsored by Frederick County Public School's Career and Technology Center, Culinary Arts Program.
  - The highlight of the third planning team meeting was learning about the results of the first cafeteria taste test featuring apples and a farmer from Catoctin Mountain Orchard. Planning team members reviewed the data outcomes from the taste test and shared the progress made with spreading the word about F2S. The meeting ended with a discussion and small group work around sustainability planning. Participants ranked gaining political support, partnerships, communication and funding stability as high priority areas for F2S program sustainability.
  
4. **May 13, 2019:** The fourth F2SPT Meeting was co-sponsored by Frederick Memorial Hospital's Live Well Initiative.
  - In the last F2S meeting for the school year, planning team members celebrated the accomplishments of this F2S initiative, met new F2S partners through a panel discussion, and determined next steps by spending time reviewing all of the data outcomes, discussing implications of the findings, and prioritizing action steps for the upcoming 2019-2020 school year. Planning team members were motivated to build systems to sustain Farm to School in Frederick County.

## Establishing Vision and Goals

### Background, Vision and Mission: Growing for a Healthier Tomorrow

Farm to School in Frederick County *envisions having a positive impact on student health, student education and the economic growth of the County's agricultural sector by increasing the availability of locally grown fruits and vegetables in Frederick County Public Schools.*



For nearly 10 years, FCPS' Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) has been purchasing fruit, primarily apples, from Catocin Mountain Orchard (CMO) which is located around 16 miles from the central FNS warehouse, yet there has been little institutional or public awareness of this positive partnership. The F2S initiative has already utilized this existing CMO partnership to demonstrate how we can work with farmers to benefit student education, nutrition and farmer economics. The CMO partnership serves as a useful pilot on which to grow and implement our vision.

During 2018-2019 school year, the Farm to School Leadership and Planning Teams gathered data for analysis, presentation, discussion and planning. These data guided our decisions for how to best implement our vision. In November 2018 at PT Meeting #1, members answered the question "Why does Farm to School Matter? Five themes emerged from their answers. See below.

#### Why does Farm to School Matter?

1. To educate students about where their food comes from, how it is grown and how it benefits health.
2. To excite and inspire students to try foods and expose students to different foods.
3. To increase demand and access for local foods and generate new markets for regional farmers.
4. To increase community engagement around food.
5. To decrease our carbon footprint and environmental impact.

Considering the five reasons for Farm to School, the teams have developed near-term and long-term recommendations to move ahead with Farm to School implementation.

#### Near-Term Goals & Objectives (1 – 2 years)

In Planning Team Meeting #4, Working Groups had the opportunity to review all data outcomes gathered during the pilot program and think deeply about the implications of the data, discuss as a large group, and prioritize goals and objectives that they thought should be the focus area for the next 1 to 2 years. (See Evaluation Section, page 37.)

**Farmer to School Goal:** To develop farm partnerships that include farmer visits to schools, field trips to farms and more local vegetables in school meals and snacks.

#### Objectives:

1. Network to foster relationships between fruit and vegetable farmers, FNS Central Office and sub-district schools near farms.
2. Actively search for farms within a 250 mile radius of FCPS and communicate with those growers.

3. Investigate opportunities for season extension (e.g. hydroponics, greenhouses, and high tunnels).
4. Encourage Food Service Director to designate “local” as first choice in purchasing contracts.
5. Collect personal farmer stories to educate students and the community about local agriculture and include posters featuring local farmers for schools.
6. Explore farmers’ interests in, and logistics for scaling up to grow more produce for schools

**Chefs in School Goal:** To offer taste tests and “foodie” events with chefs to peak student interest in eating nutritious foods and consumption of local foods.

**Objectives:**

1. Implement Harvest of the Month program to offer local foods monthly at 10 elementary schools, and incorporate food tasting and demonstrations.
2. Determine best practices for slicing local apples and equipment necessary to reduce food waste.
3. Identify local options for Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.
4. Integrate Smarter Lunchroom strategies in cafeteria in partnership with UMD Ext, FSNE.
5. Incorporate local produce in summer meal program.

**Garden at School Goal:** To support experiential on-campus gardening and food production in support of teacher lesson plans by working with the Frederick County Master Gardeners and community volunteers.

**Objectives:**

1. Establish regularly scheduled fall and spring garden lessons that align with curriculum to create greater opportunities for hands-on experiential learning.
2. Help parents learn more about how to prepare fresh foods by providing newsletters and recipes.
3. Investigate partnership opportunities with The Great Frederick Fair and Ag Week.
4. Establish partnerships for garden management and oversight at existing school gardens.
5. Explore middle school food science curriculum for integrating F2S recipes.

**Long Term Vision (5 – 10 years)**

Our Farm to School Leadership Team discussed a Long-Term Vision (5-10 years) for Farm to School; issues included defining our work, community engagement needs and partnership development for many years to come.

- Establish Farm to School as an integral part of FCPS and the community.
- Organize collaboration and commitment of stakeholders to empower and influence change.
- Connect people to the importance of this work for food security and health.
- Create regular promotional F2S programs that include students and staff.
- Expand Harvest of the Month program to 20 elementary schools.
- Partner with FCPS Career and Technology Center, Culinary Arts Program.
- Address challenges and solutions for farmers to partner with institutions.
- Investigate ways to connect F2S with high school agriculture and horticulture programs.
- Define ‘speed scratch’ cooking methods and ability to incorporate for meal preparation.

## Activities Completed and Progress to Date

The following activities, research and resources were employed by the F2S Teams to define and refine our vision and goals for the USDA Planning Grant, Pilot Program year. **Activities in black font** were those outlined in the grant proposal. **Activities in blue font** were tasks that went above and beyond the scope of the original proposal but were necessary to maximize research, learning, and ultimately, the success of Farm to School initiative during the 2019 – 2020 pilot program.

### **Research on regional Farm to School programs to learn their best practice opportunities.**

- Read, shared and applied findings from USDA Farm to School Planning Toolkit.
- Interviewed five Farm to School Coordinators and/or Food Service Directors.
- **Read, shared and applied findings from the *National Farm to School Network Resources Evaluation for Transformation a cross-sectoral Evaluation Framework for Farm to School.***
- **Developed a Farm to School Evaluation Plan (See page 39)**
- **Developed a Farm to School Logic Model (See page 20)**

### **Recruiting an informed and committed Farm to School Planning Team**

- Delivered a presentation to the Frederick County's Food Policy Council and recruited Farm to School Planning Team members.
- Hosted a Farm to School Planning Team (F2SPT) Kick-Off Meeting to foster team building and structure for advancing Farm to School work.
- Hosted bi-monthly F2SPT meetings (November 2018, January, March and May 2019).
- Hosted F2SLT meetings by conference calls or in person meetings throughout the grant period.

### **Increasing understanding of Frederick County Public Schools Food and Nutrition Services food procurement, storage, processing, and serving capabilities.**

- Identified potential obstacles for more local fruits and vegetables in FCPS procurement processes, storage, contracts and policy.
- Assessed opportunities for purchasing more local foods through existing contracts.
- Assed types, quantities, and price points for fruits and vegetables currently needed at the pilot project schools and district wide for long-term planning.
- Studied current menus and fresh food preparation logistics and processes at pilot project schools and determined how serving more local foods would impact logistics and processes.
- Worked with FCPS staff and UMD FSNE Educator to determine staff training needs for incorporating farm fresh items into schools.
- ***Interviewed FCPS Food Service Directors and toured kitchen facilities at 5 pilot program elementary schools.***
- ***Toured and met with Keany Produce the Food Distributor for FCPS.***
- ***Explored community partnerships with:***
  - ***University of Maryland Ext Food Supplement Nutrition Education Educator***
  - ***University of Maryland Ext Agriculture Agent***
  - ***University of Maryland Ext Master Gardeners***
  - ***Frederick Community College Hospitality Culinary & Tourism Institute***
  - ***Frederick Memorial Hospital Live Well Program***
  - ***Catoctin Mountain Orchard***
  - ***Potomac Sprout Company***
  - ***Full Cellar Farm, Summer Creek Farm and Good Dog Farm***



### **Exploring Farmer to School partnership opportunities.**

- Identified potential local farmers for pilot program, conduct interviews and farm visits.
- Planned and followed-up with potential farmers to (1) assess level of interest and distribution feasibility, and (2) identify potential foods and quantities.
- Reported back to F2SPT about potential farmer partnerships and crops for FCPS FNS.
- Sent out an announcement of *Market Opportunity for Local Fruit and Vegetable Growers* through UMD Extension newsletter to (1) the Future Harvest Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture Facebook and bulletin board, (2) Frederick, Carroll and Washington County Economic Development offices, and (3) the Frederick County Food Council.
- *The project team's original intent was to determine the acreage and extended season needs to grow food for pilot program schools and all FCPS schools. As we began to work on sourcing and procurement, we saw that such an exercise would be fruitless, as it was difficult to find farms able to supply much at all to the schools. We are working with a "Revised Approach"; see page 21.*
- *Secured additional funding support to augment farmer outreach and identify risks to scaling up to sell to FCPS.*
- *Interviews with 10 small farmers to discuss (1) selling "extra fruits and vegetables" to their local school (e.g. the school feeder closest to their farm), and (2) the marketing we could provide to support their business through local recognition.*

### **Determining the most desired locally sourced foods that complement FCPS menus.**

- Inventoried current local foods served at FCPS pilot program elementary schools and dollars spent on local foods.
- Identified menu items to transition to local products at 5 pilot program elementary schools.
- Conducted a food waste assessment and gathered baseline plate waste data at pilot school.
- Hosted a menu planning workshop to brainstorm potential for new recipe options and new food items.
- *Hosted cafeteria taste test opportunities at 5 pilot program elementary schools featuring the local farmer.*
- *Brainstormed opportunities for implementing Smarter Lunchroom strategies in partnership with University of Maryland Extension FSNE educator for 2019 – 2020 school year.*
- *Explored promotional activities and ideas for Homegrown Week and Farm to School Month for Fall 2019-2020 school year.*

### **Determining procurement and distribution systems for local foods**

- Hosted meeting with FNS and source growers. There was no need to evaluate the ordering system or review options for systems based on FARE's experience as planned for in grant proposal. In a Farmer to School winter/early spring planning meeting, the growers and FNS procurement discussed specific crops needed for FCPS schools, approximate amounts, timing, communication, delivery and invoicing.
- There was no need (at this time) to conduct a pilot project with potential F2S partners to determine the need for on-line farm to market system training as originally considered in the proposal.

### **Researching best practices for F2S curriculum integration.**

- Discovered opportunities to engage Career Technology Center's Culinary Arts students in Farm to School program.
- Researched best practices for grade-level curriculum at active Farm to School programs, USDA F2S program, National F2S Network, and other organizations.
- Identified available grade level Farm to School curriculum resources.
- *Supported elementary school teachers to implement outdoor garden activities in partnership with Master Gardeners and FSNE educator.*
- *Presented Farm to School opportunities to FCPS STEM Leaders.*
- *Developed a questionnaire to gather data from FCPS STEM leaders about most desirable components to include in Farm Field Trip experiences for students.*
- *UMD FSNE Partner provided grade level appropriate educational materials relating to Apples to all teachers at 4 pilot program elementary schools leading up to the cafeteria taste test featuring apples.*

### **Delivering Farm to School Action Plan to FCPS for final approval.**

- Developed Action Plan for review and approval to all F2SPT participants at Spring 2019 meeting. Plan includes marketing, launch, evaluation and monitoring.

### **Farm to School Logic Model**

To help communicate the goals and objectives for the F2S Pilot Project in a concise and compelling way, the Farm to School Program Coordinator drafted a Logic Model. This one page document served as a powerful tool that helped us link organizational resources (inputs) to what we were doing (activities and outputs) and how we would measure change in the short and long-term (outcomes). The Logic model assisted us with program planning and implementation as well as evaluation. Some of the groups that the F2S Logic Model was shared with include the FCPS Board of Education, the University of Maryland Ext Master Gardeners, The Rotary Club and the Men's Gardening Club.

**Logic Model Next Page.**

## Frederick County, MD Farm to School Logic Model

Project Resources	Core Project Components	Evidence of project implementation.	Evidence of Change	
INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES	INTERMEDIATE AND LONG-TERM OUTCOMES
<i>Partnerships available for doing activities.</i>	<i>What we do.</i>	<i>Direct products from program activities.</i>	<i>Changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills and opinions.</i>	<i>Changes in behaviors or actions.</i>
<p>Community FARE</p> <p>Catoctin Mtn Orchard</p> <p>FCC, HCTI</p> <p>FCPS</p> <p>-BOE</p> <p>-FNS</p> <p>-CTC Culinary Arts</p> <p>-Principals</p> <p>-Teachers/STEM</p> <p>-Communications</p> <p>-Students</p> <p>-Parents</p> <p>Fox Haven Farm</p> <p>FMH LiveWell</p> <p>Full Cellar Farm</p> <p>Mountainside Education and Enrichment</p> <p>Good Dog Farm</p> <p>Potomac Sprout Co</p> <p>Starbucks</p> <p>Summer Creek Farm</p> <p>UMD EXT</p> <p>-FSNE</p> <p>-Master Gardeners</p> <p>-Agriculture</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research regional F2S programs to develop best practices.</li> <li>2. Recruit an informed and committed F2S Planning Team.</li> <li>3. Understand the scope of FCPS food procurement, storage, preparation, processing and menus.</li> <li>4. Determine the most desired locally sourced foods that complement FCPS menus.</li> <li>5. Identify and engage local farmers and share potential F2S opportunities.</li> <li>6. Integrate F2S concepts into hands-on school garden opportunities that align with FCPS curriculum.</li> <li>7. Conduct taste tests and food waste study to increase awareness, excite students about local foods and explore serving options.</li> <li>8. Deliver F2S Action Plan and present to FCPS for final approval.</li> </ol>	<p>Quantity of local fruits and vegetables included in FCPS breakfast program, lunch program, snacks, taste tests and fresh fruit and vegetable programs.</p> <p># of local farmers with interest in pledging, growing and selling their products to food crop aggregator and/or food distributors.</p> <p># of students and teachers who participate in F2S taste testing.</p> <p># of FCPS staff and community members that complete survey about F2S.</p> <p># of F2S resources and hands-on learning activities integrated into classroom curriculum by F2S partners (e.g. UMD EXT FSNE). Farm 2 School Pilot Project Results and Action Plan</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increased understanding and awareness of the importance of locally grown food and the F2S program with FCPS admin and staff, FCPS teachers, parents, students and community.</li> <li>2. Increased partnerships and business opportunities that positively impact the percentage of locally grown foods offered in FCPS cafeterias (e.g. FCPS, Farmers &amp; Distributors).</li> <li>3. Increased understanding of administrators, food service personnel, teachers, and parents to incorporate F2S activities and help link food and nutrition to classroom.</li> <li>4. Increased student knowledge and opportunities for hands-on learning about local agriculture, farmers and nutrition.</li> <li>5. Increased business partnerships pledging varying levels of support, both monetary and administratively, for building infrastructure to integrate F2S programs long term.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Public Health Outcomes</b></p> <p>-Students have increased access to nutritious, local food that supports health and well-being for growth and development.</p> <p><b>Education Outcomes</b></p> <p>-Students and families have increased knowledge, awareness and connection of local agriculture, food and nutrition.</p> <p><b>Economic Development</b></p> <p>-Farmers gain increased financial opportunities by linking to institutional markets which strengthens the County's agricultural sector.</p> <p>-Food and Nutrition Services feeds more children because of increased attention given to fruits and vegetables offered in meals.</p> <p><b>Environmental Outcomes</b></p> <p>-Communities benefit from lessening environmental impact of food production, processing and distribution of foods.</p>
<p><b>Overall Frederick County Farm to School Goal:</b> To positively impact student health, student education and the economic growth of the County's agricultural sector by increasing the availability of locally grown fruits and vegetables in Frederick County Public Schools.</p>				

## Local Food Procurement

### Background and Progress to Date

FCPS, Food and Nutrition Services has an annual contract with Keany Produce in Landover, Maryland, a reputable and reliable company that sources locally grown food to the extent they are able. Their local sourcing radius is 250 miles and they are located 60 miles from Frederick, MD. All produce sold through Keany is grown on food safety certified farms. Keany is working to find more local growers to expand their inventory to meet the growing locally-grown demand. FNS orders the majority of their produce from Keany.

Keany recently opened a new warehouse 155 miles from Frederick MD in Richmond VA, adding a challenge to ascertain with certainty if produce fits the 250-mile local definition. Produce coming from Keany's new Richmond, VA warehouse could be sourced from farms that are more than 250 miles away from the FCPS warehouse but even with the second location, we do know that if Keany says that the product is local, that it is at least from the east coast, an improvement over the delivery of food coming from locations significantly further away.

The Office of Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) has been buying local fruit and serving it to FCPS students for nearly ten years. FNS sources apples, peaches, plums and pears from Catoctin Mountain Orchard in Thurmont Maryland – just 16 miles from the FCPS warehouse; it would like to build on this to purchase fruits and vegetables from more local growers.

*“The economic impact of buying locally and giving money back to the local farmer is a huge benefit (of Farm to School). We’d love to buy it (locally grown food). We want to support the County and the local economy.”*

Steve O’Brev. Procurement Coordinator. Office of Food and Nutrition Services. FCPS

The total food budget for the 2017-2018 school year was \$3,900,056.00 for the entire school district; of that, an estimated \$54,000 (1.4%) was spent on local fruits from Catoctin Mountain Orchard in Thurmont, Maryland and an estimated \$26,000 (0.7%) was spent on local foods (primarily cucumbers) through Keany Produce and were sourced from Parker Farms in Oak Grove, VA - 125 miles from their warehouse. FNS is committed and dedicated to finding and expanding local food sources.

When looking at specifically the schools for this Pilot Program, in 2017 - 2018 school year, a total of \$731,597 was spent on food and of that, an estimated \$40,000 was spent on locally sourced foods (\$35,000 on fluid milk and \$5,000 on fruits and vegetables). See Table 2 below.

Table 2: 2017-2018 School Year Food Budget for 5 Pilot Project Elementary Schools

Pilot Project Schools	Total Food Purchases
Hillcrest Elementary School	\$160,600
Lincoln Elementary School	\$137,584
Monocacy Elementary School	\$142,217
North Frederick Elementary School	\$145,757
Waverley Elementary Schools	\$145,439
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$731,597</b>
<b>LOCAL (with fluid milk)</b>	<b>~\$40,000 (5.5%)</b>
<b>LOCAL (without fluid milk)</b>	<b>~\$5,000 (0.7%)</b>

## Definition of “Local” or “Regional”

The Food and Nutrition Services department of Frederick County Public Schools defines local for food purchasing purposes as within a 250-mile radius from Frederick, MD and/or purchasing from any Maryland farm. Within the 250-mile radius are parts of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia and Delaware – all places FARE and our partners could search for potential grower-partners for FNS/FCPS.

## Sourcing & Procurement

During the 2018-2019 school year, several local farmers, Farm to School Planning and Leadership Team members, and the FCPS FNS Procurement Coordinator met to determine the best options for locally sourced fruits and vegetables. The group determined that procurement focus should be on local fruits and vegetables that the school already purchases and/or that can be used in recipes and require little processing or preparation by food service staff. The plan is to select foods that could be substituted and purchased either directly from a Frederick County farmer or from the current food distributor, Keany Produce.

FNS and farmers identified two vegetables, tomatoes and sweet peppers, that are often in surplus after market and they would like to sell the surplus to FNS. Producer Kip Kelley, owner of Full Cellar Farm, had planned with FNS in early 2018 to grow peppers and cucumbers for the FCPS schools, but the weather destroyed much of his crop that summer. This year he has planted peppers and cucumbers for the schools and is also looking at providing bumper crops to his local Brunswick Elementary School.

Once produce was identified, a flyer was drafted and sent to the following groups (See Appendix C: Market Opportunity Flyer).

- Farm to School in Frederick Maryland Facebook page,
- Community FARE Facebook page,
- University of Maryland Extension Small Farm Newsletter,
- Frederick County Agricultural Development listserv,
- Washington County Agricultural Development listserv,
- Future Harvest Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture (CASA),
- Beginner Farmer Training Program Facebook page, and
- Future Harvest CASA website bulletin board.

The flyer had a poor response rate and only one farm, Good Dog Farm in Baltimore County responded with interest in growing winter squash for use in the fall of 2019. The farm is around 50 miles from the FCPS food warehouse. We will continue to update the flyer and circulate with farmers in hopes of identifying more partners.

## Recommendations for Sourcing and Procurement

### Recommendations

1. **FCPS should encourage Keany to buy local.** The Farm to School Leadership Team and Karen Fedor, Maryland Farm to School Coordinator, recommends that FCPS Procurement Coordinator clarify in the Keany Distributor contract both the FCPS definition for local and its preference to purchase from local farms, if possible, making local produce the default option when purchasing from Keany. In addition, to the extent possible, FCPS should encourage Keany to source local. As Keany’s farmer partnerships continue to grow, procurement

through Keany should be an effective way for FCPS to support Maryland farms and offer healthy food options to their students.

2. **Take a revised (decentralized) approach.** The schools in Frederick County are located in rural, suburban and urban areas, but never very far from farms. The FCPS Procurement Coordinator and FCPS FNS Director both expressed interest in working at the sub-district level. This would allow the Farm to School team to engage children in farm, farmer and food education. The FCPS FNS has offered ideas that will facilitate partnerships with local farmers, both within the confines of their budget and personnel, and will work with small farms that might want to sell even a small quantity of a regularly needed fruit or vegetable (e.g. tomatoes and cucumbers) to their nearby school.
3. **Use what farmers have to sell.** FCPS might be able to buy what isn't sold at a Farmer's Market. Farmers could contact the Procurement Coordinator on Monday morning (after weekend markets) and let him know what they have.
4. **Prepare list of all fruit and vegetable farms within a 250-mile radius of FCPS and send a flyer to those farms.** Considering these factors, the F2S Leadership Team has launched a strategy to help small farmers develop a relationship with their local school so that even small/moderate quantities of produce can be utilized by the local sub-district. The F2S Leadership Team believes this would help build relationships and farmer interest in expanding his or her production for FCPS sourcing and provide a platform for farm and farming education.

#### Delivery, Processing, Storage, Challenges & Training Needs

Keany Produce provides processed produce ready for school kitchens. FCPS FNS will continue to work with Keany as the primary produce distributor with added attention given to purchasing 'local' foods. In the meantime, our Farm to School program continues to build partnerships and explore new pathways for processing local foods closer to the school warehouse. It's a challenge because almost all fresh fruits and vegetables need some form of processing before being delivered to school kitchens. Until recently, with the exception of on-farm washing facilities, finding processing in Frederick County that fits FCPS' needs were challenging. In addition, according to the Procurement Coordinator, Steve O'Brey, the biggest challenge to prepping and serving local food is limited staff labor hours. He states, *"We don't have the labor hours available to receive whole cases of broccoli, cut and bag them for each school in a timely manner."*

To address some of these challenges, Frederick Community Colleges Hospitality, Culinary, Tourism & Culinary Institute, the Culinary Manager, a member of our F2S Leadership Team, communicated that she is excited about the opportunity to provide training in "speed scratch" methods. This is a topic that will be explored in the 2019 – 2020 school year with FCPS Food and Nutrition Services.

#### **Potomac Sprout Company:**

With the partnership and participation in F2S Planning Team meetings, Potomac Sprout Company (PSC) in Thurmont, learned of the processing need for fruits and vegetables for FCPS schools and initiated the necessary steps with the Health Department to obtain a fresh food processing permit. PSC has a large refrigerated space with adequate shelving and is now planning to process 1,000 lbs. of local broccoli provided by Summer Creek Farm located in Thurmont, MD. PSC and Summer Creek are a short distance from each other and less than 20 miles from the FCPS FNS warehouse.

PSC will chop, bag and season the broccoli and have it ready to be delivered directly to the FCPS schools. This is an extremely exciting step forward for Farm to School in Frederick County!

### Helping Farmers to Minimize Risk when Scaling up to Grow for Schools

To get an understanding of the specific risks and challenges farmers face and assess ways to address them, Community FARE partnered with University of Maryland Extension (Small Farm Extension Agent) to interview five local fruit and vegetable farmers. In early 2019, FARE interviewed 5 experienced and beginning fruit and vegetable growers to understand production, financial, legal and human potential risks associated with changing production systems and meeting food safety requirements to sell to the Frederick County Public Schools.

Community FARE received support through the Northeast Extension Risk Management Education to continue the interviews and data gathering into the fall of 2019. FARE will utilize those interview answers to (1) research existing educational and support systems for addressing risk, and (2) evaluate and modify existing educational programs. Interview information will contribute to producing a Catalogue of Solutions together with University of Maryland Extension, to address producer risks associated with scaling up production to sell to FCPS. Those five farmers have agreed to review, edit and make recommendations for the Catalogue of Solutions in the fall of 2019. One farmer, Bob Black from Catocin Mountain Orchard, mentioned earlier in this action plan, has experience selling fruit to FCPS for nearly ten years.

The catalogue will be shared through University of Maryland Extension Frederick County Small Farms Newsletter and on the Frederick County Farm to School website (<https://www.frederickmdfarmtoschool.org/>). It will be used when developing proposals to fund and implement educational and support programs that can help farmers successfully scale up production with minimal economic risk. See Appendix D: Farmer Interview Guide.

## Menu Planning

### Background and Progress to Date

During the months of March, April, May and June 2019, Farm to School designed and implemented Taste Test events with FCPS FNS and community partners at the five elementary schools in the pilot program. The Taste Tests included fruit or vegetable samples, educational materials, and a visit and presentation from a farmer. The Taste Tests were hugely successful prompting the FCPS FNS Food Service Director, the Registered Dietitian, and newly hired Culinary Specialist to roll out a Harvest of the Month program in 10 elementary schools next school year! *In addition, Frederick Memorial Hospital donated nearly \$2,000 to buy produce slicing equipment for school cafeterias in order to provide staff with the tools necessary to easily and quickly prepare foods in a way that will promote consumption of fruits and vegetables.*

**Harvest of the Month Planning Meeting:** Using the [Maryland Fruit and Vegetable Seasonality Guide](#), provided by the Farm to School Program Coordinator, the Registered Dietitian and Culinary Specialist have planned the upcoming Harvest of the Month campaign with assistance from the Farm to School Coordinator. Some of the foods identified as potential options for the 2019 – 2020 school year are below in Table 3.

Table 3: Maryland Vegetables and Fruits

September - October	November - March	April - August
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sweet Corn</li> <li>• Tomatoes</li> <li>• Sweet Peppers</li> <li>• Green Beans</li> <li>• Broccoli</li> <li>• Chard/Kale</li> <li>• Herbs</li> <li>• Peaches</li> <li>• Pears</li> <li>• Apples</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Winter Squash</li> <li>• Sweet Potatoes</li> <li>• Cauliflower</li> <li>• Onions</li> <li>• Mushrooms</li> <li>• Apples</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asparagus</li> <li>• Spinach/Lettuce</li> <li>• Snap Peas</li> <li>• Onions</li> <li>• Cucumbers</li> <li>• Green Beans</li> <li>• Sweet Corn</li> <li>• Strawberries</li> <li>• Blueberries/Raspberries</li> <li>• Melon</li> <li>• Plums</li> </ul>

**Harvest of the Month will include:**

1. A featured local fruit or vegetable on school lunch menu.
2. A cooking demonstration from Culinary Specialist.
3. Interactive education during the cooking demo provided by local farmers, University of Maryland Extension Educators, the Food and Nutrition Service’s Registered Dietitian, Master Gardeners, or other local specialists.
4. Educational handouts which ideally align with grade-level curriculum.



**Menu & Recipe Development**

The FCPS FNS Culinary Specialist is working with the Procurement Coordinator and the Registered Dietitian to determine which local foods to purchase, select recipes, and draft menus. The Farm to School Coordinator has shared resources for Harvest of the Month recipes offered at other Farm to School Programs.

**Budgeting & Forecasting**

The FNS Department is working hard to purchase foods within their existing budget. There is general recognition that Farm to School could potentially increase the number of school meals sold and therefore increase revenue which could be invested back into the school meal program.



Table 4: Child Nutrition Programs, Point in Time Data

Nutrition Program	Avg Number Served	Time Period
• National School Breakfast Program	6,722 daily	March 2019
• National School Lunch Program	12,530 daily	March 2019
• Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program	1,604 weekly	March 2019
• Snack Program	185 daily	March 2019
• Supper Program	132 daily	March 2019
• Summer Breakfast Program	250 daily (M-H)	June, July, August 2018
• Summer Lunch Program	516 daily (M-H)	June, July, August 2018
• Summer Snack	58 daily (M-H)	June, July, August 2018
• A la carte sales	\$13,164 daily	March 2019

## Service & Promotion

The Farm to School Leadership Team will be presenting to the FCPS Board of Education (BOE) on August 28<sup>th</sup> asking the BOE to support F2S activities and the Harvest of the Month program by helping to create bilingual educational handouts and a promotional video.

In addition, the University of Maryland, Ext has agreed to partner with FCPS FNS and work on the Smarter Lunchrooms Scorecard which includes a variety of ways to promote the school meals program. (See Appendix E). A few suggested strategies are:

1. Fruit is offered in at least two locations on all service lines, one of which is right before each point of sale.
2. When cut, raw vegetables are paired with low-fat dip such as ranch, hummus, or salsa.
3. Students are involved in the creation of artwork or marketing materials to promote menu items.

For additional information see the Promotion and Outreach Section on page 29.

## Food Safety

### Background and Progress to Date

All FCPS Food and Nutrition Services nutrition staff are SERV-SAFE certified. Regular trainings are scheduled to keep staff up to date with knowledge and skills relating to food service safety standards. Every school has a food safety plan that includes all programs that operate under the School Nutrition Program and meets state and local health department requirements.

### Food Safety in the Kitchen

FCPS FNS does not anticipate changing food preparation at this time.

### Food Safety in the School Garden

The **Garden at School** projects are implemented in partnership with the University of Maryland Extension, FSNE and the Master Gardener program. This team uses Good Agricultural Practices

(GAP) as outlined in the UMD Extension informational handout titled: Food Safety in Your School Gardens, Classrooms, and Greenhouses to keep the garden environment healthy.

### Food Safety on the Farm and During Transport

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have developed food safety regulations for fruit and vegetable growers designed to minimize the risk of microbial contamination in both production and packing of fruits and vegetables ([FDA.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation](http://FDA.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation)). The regulations are known as Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Handling Practices (GHP). GAP refers to farming methods that reduce the likelihood of contaminating produce and the implementation of practices that address water quality, manure and compost use, worker health and hygiene, and animal contamination. GHP refers to minimizing contamination through sanitation and pest control post-harvest during handling.

In cooperation with the University of Maryland, the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) provides GAP/GHP training and assistance to any Maryland fruit and vegetable producer to develop, write and implement a food safety program that adheres to GAP/GHP standards. MDA also conducts the on-farm audits for food safety certification. Maryland producers that are USDA certified can be found at <http://apps.ams.usda.gov>. A helpful explanation and self-assessment for producers can be found here: <https://gaps.cornell.edu/educational-materials/food-safety-begins-farm/> For assistance producers can contact: Donna Pahl at UMD, 2176 Plant Sciences Building, College Park, MD 20742-4452, 301-405-4372 ([dpahl@umd.edu](mailto:dpahl@umd.edu)) or MDA's Food Quality Assurance Program, (410) 841-5769 Fax: (410) 841-2750 (). [Deanna.Baldwin@maryland.gov](mailto:Deanna.Baldwin@maryland.gov)

### Liability

In the United States, someone harmed from a foodborne illness may bring a civil cause of action against another (the producer/vendor of that food) with the claim that the foodborne illness caused harm that the producer/vendor is legally liable for the harm caused by the foodborne illness. This fact sheet clarifies the law behind food safety and some of the scenarios where the law has applied: <https://publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/phlc-fs-Det-Legal-Resp-Foodborne-Illness-2016.pdf>

### Traceability

Traceability is the ability to trace contaminated food back to the farm field of origin. This decision tree clarifies the steps required for food safety certification with respect to traceability (<https://gaps.cornell.edu/sites/gaps.cornell.edu/files/shared/documents/traceability/Traceability-Tree.pdf>).

### Recommendations for Food Safety

#### **Recommendation:**

1. For purposes of F2S Frederick County, we recommend that harvest crates or boxes with local produce be labeled with farm, field and product name, lot number that refers to the date harvested and cleaned.

## Promotion & Outreach

### Outreach to Engage our Community

The Farm to School Frederick County USDA Planning Grant announcement was published in The Frederick News Post, Frederick County's local newspaper, on August 2, 2018 in an article titled, "[More Fruits and Veggies Headed to FCPS](#)".

Shortly after the announcement, the Farm to School (F2S) Leadership Team began recruiting local farmers, community leaders, educators, gardeners, culinary professionals, school administrators, board members, cafeteria managers and parents to join the F2S Planning Team. The F2S Leadership Team recognized that a diverse and dynamic group of stakeholders can share their expertise and contribute in a unique and meaningful way towards the Farm to School Frederick County mission. In order to actively engage Planning Team members throughout the 2018 – 2019 school year, the F2S Leadership Team hosted four Planning Team Meetings with four different co-hosts to: 1) Effectively inform members about partner organizations, 2) Showcase partner resources, and 3) Advertise the F2S Program at varying locations.

See Appendix A and B or F2S Participant Agendas and F2S Meeting Summary Notes. At every meeting the Farm to School Coordinator reminded the attendees of the following two goals:

- 1. Frederick County Farm to School Goal:** To positively impact student health, student education and the economic growth of the County's agricultural sector by increasing the availability of locally grown fruits and vegetables in Frederick County Public Schools.
- 2. F2S Planning Team Meeting Goal:** To engage a wide range of community members in the research and planning of a Frederick County Farm to School Action Plan.

The Leadership Team also recognized the value of 'branding' the initiative and developing resources to spread the word about it. Two talented community volunteers designed a Farm to School logo, website and set up accounts on Facebook and Instagram.

At the second F2S Planning Team meeting, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019, members participated in a Strategic Shift exercise to explore the challenges and solutions related to spreading the word about the Farm to School Initiative. Participants were asked to think deeply about the implications for action and examine strategies, challenges and barriers to implementation and growth of Farm to School in Frederick County.

#### **Strategic Shift Goals:**

- To increase the awareness about the Farm to School Initiative with FCPS administration, school staff, cafeteria staff, parents and students.
- To increase school meal participation by spreading the word about all the ways food service is working hard to incorporate fresh fruits and vegetables that have been grown and purchased from regional and local farmers.
- To bridge the gap between school and home by brainstorming methods to reach parents with information about food with a focus on agriculture and farming, nutrition and health and fruits and vegetables.

#### **Strategic Shift Steps:**

Participants responded to the key challenge, "How do we get the word out about Frederick County Farm to School?" by answering the following series of questions:

1. What are the major obstacles to getting the word out about F2S?
2. What are the strategies to overcome the obstacles in #1?
3. What are the potential pitfalls to the strategies in #2?
4. How do you overcome the pitfalls in #3?

**Strategic Shift Highlights:**

*Table 5: Strategic Shift Highlights*

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Solution</b>
Funding	Time and capacity to find funds	Partnerships, sponsors, grant writer
Buy-In	Lack of early buy-in and support	Hire a F2S Coordinator Offer produce samples Share personal stories Begin Smarter Lunchroom Program
Audience	Identify the target audience (farmers, students, teachers, parents, administration, food service staff)	Craft messages that align with audience Create video and print materials Spread word through emails and social media and special events
Experts	Need specialized knowledge What is the theme?	Build a structured marketing campaign with experts
Sustainability	Size and scope of FCPS How to make it systematic? How to engage stakeholders?	Start small and get good at it Define goals, gather data Share successes

**Outreach to Students: Apple and Asparagus Taste Tests**

The **Chef to School Working Group** held five taste tests and potentially reached over 3,000 students, food service workers and administrators with growing, harvesting and nutrition education. We offered school-wide cafeteria Apple Taste Tests at four of the five target elementary schools. At the fifth elementary school we implemented a school-wide classroom Asparagus Taste Test utilizing the system in place for sampling foods through the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP).

The F2SLT employed a range of communication strategies to coordinate and publicize the school-wide taste tests:

- Introductory and Follow-up Email communications with School Principals and Administrators
- Introductory and Follow-up Email communications with Cafeteria Site Managers
- Email coordination with Catocin Mountain Orchard Farmer
- Introductory F2S emails sent to Parents via the school messaging system – Find Out First
- Introductory F2S emails sent to school teachers from School Principal and F2S Coordinator
- Working Group planning meeting with Taste Test Partners
- Taste Test coverage from FCPS Communication Services
- Taste Test coverage from LocalWVDM.com news program

All emails and announcements included the F2S logo and links to F2S website and F2S Facebook page.

Table 6: School Taste Test Outreach

Elementary School	Student Enrollment	Classroom Teachers and Administrators
Hillcrest	732	39
Lincoln	583	31
Monocacy	619	34
North Frederick	668	37
Waverley	517	29
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,119</b>	<b>170</b>

#### Outreach to FCPS Families

The email blasts sent to announce the school-wide taste tests were the primary outreach tool for the planning grant year. Some additional outreach methods to reach FCPS families were:

- [FCPS Food and Nutrition Services website](#)
- Back to School night at Lincoln Elementary School
- Parent Meeting at Hillcrest Elementary School
- PTA Meeting at Waverley Elementary School
- Informational table at FCPS Science and Social Studies Fair
- FCPS Facebook posts
- F2S Instagram posts

#### Outreach to FCPS Board of Education, Teachers, Food Service and Administrators

Outreach strategies to reach the Board of Education and administrators:

- FCPS BOE Member joined Planning Team meetings
- Farm to School presentation to Superintendent and Board of Education scheduled for Wednesday, August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

Outreach strategies to reach teachers:

- Two F2S articles featured in local newspaper
- FCPS Elementary STEM Leader Meeting
- Principal sent staff email introducing F2S and school wide F2S Taste Test including links to F2S Website, Facebook page, and F2S Instagram

Outreach strategies to reach food service personnel:

- F2S Cafeteria Site Manager Interviews
- F2S Taste Tests
- FCPS FNS Website

#### Outreach to Food Producers

Outreach strategies to reach food producers:

- Farmer Interviews
- University of Maryland Extension Small Farm Newsletter
- Frederick County Agriculture Economic Development Newsletter
- Future Harvest Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture bulletin board
- Washington County Agriculture Economic Development Newsletter
- Community FARE website - <https://l-cpf.org/community-fare/>

- Frederick County Food Council Meetings
- F2S Website, Facebook, Instagram
- Phone Calls

#### Outreach to Media and the Community at Large

- [Frederick County Food Council](#)
- [FCPS Communication Services](#) – Tonya Street
- [Frederick News Post - Farm to School](#) – August 2, 2018 – Announcement FCPS/FARE and F2S. More fruits and vegetables
- [LocalDVM.com News](#) – November 16, 2019 – Kick-Off Planning Team Meeting
- [Frederick News Post Farm to School](#) – December 17, 2018 – FCPS seeks local farmers for school lunch initiative
- [LocalDVM.com News](#) – April 11, 2019 - Taste Test
- [Farm to School Frederick County](#) - Website
- [FCPS Farm to School Facebook](#) – Facebook page
- [F2S Instagram](#) – Instagram

#### Looking Ahead to Farm to School 2019 - 2020 School Year

Building on the enthusiasm and guidance of the F2S Leadership and Planning Teams during this planning year, several initiatives and priorities for communication and outreach emerged.

1. FCPS FNS is rolling out a Harvest of the Month program for the 2019 – 2020 school year using the same framework as the Cafeteria Taste Tests.
2. During the final F2S Planning Team meeting participants prioritized action steps for F2S outreach and promotion. At the top of the list is to contract a Communication Coordinator to implement a structured marketing campaign and to build a team to do the following:
  - Implement regular FCPS Find out First messaging about F2S Program,
  - F2S participation in school and community events,
  - Prepare end-of-year summary report to present to Frederick County Executives,
  - Release regular F2S social media messaging to connect students, parents and community,
  - Submit articles regularly for FCPS staff newsletters and student take home folders,
  - Organize collaboration and commitment of stakeholders to empower and influence change, and
  - Collect personal stories and testimonials to connect people to the importance of this work.

#### Recommendations for Promotion and Outreach

In response to priorities laid out by the F2S Leadership and Planning Teams, the groups made the following recommendations:

##### **Recommendations**

1. Implement regular bilingual Farm to School messaging using FCPS Find Out First platform.
2. Participation of the Farm to School initiative in community and school events.
3. Prepare a Farm to School Executive Summary for Frederick County Executives.
4. Create a Farm to School video and promotional materials with community partnerships.

5. Implement a structured marketing campaign by a Communications Coordinator to inspire students, parents and the community about Farm to School initiatives. Community FARE is working to secure funds to pay a Communications Officer to address the needs and demands for both Farm to School and the Frederick County Food Council.

## School Gardens

### Background and Progress to Date

Gardens are an exciting component of the Farm to School initiative. The **Garden at School** Working Group is led by two of the Farm to School partner organizations, the University of Maryland Extension (UME) Frederick County Master Gardener Program and the University of Maryland Food Supplement Nutrition Education (FSNE) program.

#### The Goals for the Garden at School Working Group are:

1. To create a sustainable garden program that aligns with grade-level classroom curriculum.
2. To increase student understanding of where their food comes from and how it is grown.
3. To promote interest in, and willingness to try, fruits and vegetables by providing an opportunity to grow food with hands-on gardening lessons.
4. To increase understanding and importance of locally grown foods.
5. To help spread the word about the Farm to School initiative in the community.

#### University of Maryland, Master Gardeners:

The Youth Gardening Committee within the Master Gardener program fosters and nurtures interest in gardening from tots to teens. This is the Committee that works closely with Farm to School. The Committee works with teachers and youth leaders interested in learning about gardening and currently has projects in ten (primarily elementary) schools. For this planning grant, the Garden at School working group focused efforts on, and collected data from, the five pilot elementary schools designated in the grant (Hillcrest, Lincoln, Monocacy, North Frederick, and Waverley).

#### University of Maryland, Extension Food Supplement Nutrition Education (FSNE):

Maryland's FSNE programs reach students, teachers, and parents in low income communities including after-school sites, summer meal programs, and public schools where 50% or more students qualify for free or reduced-price school lunch. The goal of the FSNE school-based programs is to integrate key nutrition messages into the school curriculum, policies, the lunchroom, and family shopping and meals. The following FSNE youth programs are designed to educate students, classrooms, after-school programs and schools:

- Youth are *Growing Healthy Eating Habits* with Maryland Extension Program
- Maryland Students and Their Families *Read for Health*
- *ReFresh* Integrates Nutrition Education into All Subjects in School Curriculum
- *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* Introduces Preschoolers to Fruits and Vegetables
- *Youth Gardening for Nutrition* Trains Teachers to Grow Better Nutrition
- Dig In! Standards Based Nutrition Education from the Ground Up
- Students are making healthy choices in the cafeteria with *Smarter Lunchrooms*



1<sup>st</sup> Grade Student Planting Lettuce Seeds

## Getting Buy-In

The F2S Program Coordinator, who has nearly a decade of experience leading elementary school gardening projects, piloted the development of this initiative in collaboration with the UME Master Gardener Youth Gardening Committee and the UME Food Supplement Nutrition Education Program. School gardens were not a part of the original planning proposal. Despite the challenges to implementing school gardens, the team chose to address those challenges and include school gardens in F2S due to their importance in nutrition education.

From an early assessment of the school gardens at the 5 (pilot) elementary schools, we found:

- One school had an established an after-school garden club with first graders;
- One school had extensive garden projects in the past and was looking to revitalize their garden program;
- One school had raised beds built on the school campus during the new school construction but had not utilized the beds and were eager to begin; and
- Two schools had unsuccessful school gardens from prior initiatives but were willing to try again with the Master Gardeners and Farm to School volunteers.

## Planning & Design

We utilized the FSNE Checklist for all the garden assessments on the Frederick County Public School campuses (See Appendix F). School gardens that grow edible crops are planted in raised beds constructed with untreated wood and commercially made soil. Typically, beds are 3 feet by 8 feet and at least 8 inches in depth. Students can use garden trowels and gloves; gloves are not required. Other supplies include shovels and hoses. Students wash hands before and after gardening and before and after harvesting.

## Funding

### **FALCAN School Partnership Grants:**

To benefit the Farm to School initiative, the Master Gardeners applied for school garden funding support from the Frederick Area Landscape Contractors and Nurserymen Association (FALCAN). We received 2 start-up awards of \$250 each; these were used to start gardens at Hillcrest and Waverley Elementary Schools.

### **University of Maryland Extension – Food Supplement Nutrition Education:**

The five elementary schools where we have Farm to School gardens are Title I schools, a designation determined by the percentage of students who receive Free and Reduced Meals. Title I schools are funded to receive supplemental services, one of which is the USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program which employs a University of Maryland Extension position within the Food Supplement Nutrition Education program.

### **Community and Parent Donations:**

Community groups, businesses and parents are the primary source for garden donations. Starbucks stands out as an exceptional partner: their employees volunteer, they donate tools and time, serve as ambassadors for F2S in the community, and solicit donations to support the gardens.

## Maintenance, Staffing, & Training

During the school year, teachers and students are responsible for ongoing maintenance of gardens with the assistance of community volunteers. Training opportunities and free seminars have been coordinated and offered by the Master Gardeners. In addition, over the years, Master Gardeners



have learned that the most successful school gardens are often raised bed gardens that are planted in the spring and fall and “put away” for the summer months. School gardens that extend into the summer months can be challenging to maintain for many reasons but the two most prominent reasons are the difficulty in getting access to gardens on secure school campuses and finding volunteers to regularly weed, water, and harvest during summer months.

The Farm to School Leadership Team continues to explore opportunities to partner with community groups for school gardens, in particular the Maryland Agriculture Education Foundation Inc. (MAEF). MAEF is a 501(c) 3 non-profit, non-governmental organization established in 1989 whose mission is *to promote the understanding and appreciation of the importance of agriculture in our daily lives.*

### Using Garden Produce

The existing school gardens are very small at each campus and most of them only serve individual classes, not the entire grade. With small gardens, the quantity of produce is limited and used for educational instruction with the particular class. For example, students may plant lettuces or greens in April and harvest in June at which time they may celebrate their garden success with a salad party.

In the future we hope to expand the school gardens and send produce home with students, possibly through a partnership with the local non-profit Blessings in a Backpack. In addition, there is potential to align classroom garden projects with the Harvest of the Month program and expand education and outreach to include recipes for families on how to prepare meals with fresh garden produce.

## Education & Curriculum Integration

### Background and Progress to Date

In our first Farm to School Planning Team meeting, Karen Fedor, Farm to School Program Director from the Maryland Department of Agriculture pointed out in her opening remarks that an ongoing challenge for the work of Farm to School is making the connection from cafeteria to classroom. This became a central focus for our planning grant when addressing education and curriculum alignment.

### Smarter Lunchroom Program

The first resource that was uncovered to address strengthening the connection between the cafeteria and the classroom was the [Smarter Lunchroom Program](#). Smarter Lunchrooms is an evidence-based approach to encouraging selection of healthy foods in the school cafeteria and is implemented by making simple, low – to no-cost changes to how food is arranged, displayed and marketed on the service line. This program facilitates adoption of healthy eating behaviors by linking changes in in the lunchroom to nutrition education in the classroom. The University of Maryland Extension FSNE Educator and the FCPS Food and Nutrition Services Registered Dietitian are both looking into Smarter Lunchrooms strategies and agreed to partner on this work beginning with a staff training scheduled for August 2019, followed by additional coordination on activities beginning in the upcoming 2019-2020 school year. (See Appendix E for the FCPS Smarter Lunchroom Scorecard.)

In addition, the F2S Planning Grant provided the opportunity to research and investigate ways in which nutrition and agriculture was already being integrated into the classroom curriculum. Through interviews with the University of Maryland Extension Educators (FSNE, Master Gardeners, and 4-H) and FCPS Curriculum Directors in the areas of physical education and health, science and FCPS STEM Directors and Teachers, the F2S team learned about the successes, challenges and opportunities with respect to integrating Farm to School concepts.

### Resources for Education and Curriculum Integration:

The Farm to School Program Coordinator has met with curriculum writers and STEM leaders to explore ways to integrate and align curriculum with Farm to School topics. One of the first steps taken was to apply to be a member of the FCPS School Health Council. Additionally, STEM leaders are collecting elementary and middle school level curriculum resources in the areas of health, physical education, food science and standards for STEM. See links below.



Catoctin Mountain Orchard Farmer, Katlyn Robertson, shows students an apple blossom on a stem from her apple tree.

### Frederick County Public Schools, Curriculum:

- [Frederick County Public Schools, Physical Education and Health Curriculum](#)
  - [Essential Curriculum for Elementary School Physical Education and Health](#)
  - [Essential Curriculum for Middle School Physical Education and Health](#)
- [Frederick County Public Schools, Elementary Science Curriculum](#)
  - [Essential Curriculum for Elementary School Science](#)
  - [Essential Curriculum Middle School Science](#)
- [Frederick County Public Schools, STEM Education](#)
  - [State STEM Standards of Practice](#)
  - [STEM Frequently Asked Questions](#)

## Classroom Activities

### Food Supplement Nutrition Education (FSNE) Programs:

The University of Maryland Extension's school-based Food Supplement Nutrition Education (FSNE) programs reach students, teachers, and parents in low-income communities where 50% or more students qualify for free or reduced-price school lunch. The Farm to School Planning Team was excited to discover that the FSNE Educator provides education and resources to each of the five elementary schools in our Farm to School planning grant. However, the level of engagement differs at each school and is determined by the interest and buy-in of principals and teachers. The goal of the FSNE school-based programs is to integrate key nutrition messages into the school curriculum, policies, lunchroom, and family shopping and meals.

In Frederick County, the FSNE Educator focuses on 3 resources for providing nutrition education: [Read for Health with Edible ABC's](#) (primarily offered in pre-kindergarten and first grade classrooms), [Growing Healthy Habits](#) (primarily offered in third grade) and [ReFresh](#) (primarily offered in fourth grade). In addition, FSNE also partners with the [4H Youth Development - School Enrichment Programs](#) and offers in-school and out-of-school enrichment programs, which one might describe as in-school and out-of-school field trips. To learn more about Field Trips, see that section below.

## Garden Activities

### Gardens at School Working Group – Experiential Learning:

The Gardens at School Working group lead by the Frederick County Master Gardeners continues to partner with elementary schools to provide hands-on gardening opportunities that align with grade-level classroom curriculum. During this F2S planning grant year, each of the 5 elementary schools in the F2S pilot project had gardening opportunities. Through the partnership with the [Frederick County Master Gardener Program](#), two of the elementary schools received a start-up grant of \$250 to buy supplies, build raised garden beds, and purchase soil. The remaining three elementary schools either already had raised garden beds or else after school garden clubs, F2S and the Master Gardeners offered support and hands-on experiential learning and the FSNE Educator offered resources: [Youth Gardening for Nutrition](#) and [Growing Healthy Habits Gardening and Nutrition Education Curriculum](#).



1<sup>st</sup> grade students plant radish and lettuce seeds as part of a spring garden lesson.

## Culinary Activities

### Chefs to School Working Group – Taste Tests:

At the Farm to School Grantee Meeting, the Farm to School Coordinator and Director learned from other Grantees about the success groups had had by offering taste test opportunities either in the classroom or the school cafeteria. It was through partnerships with dynamic partners, that the taste test experience was a huge success! As part of the Chefs to School working group, F2S spearheaded four cafeteria taste tests featuring apples from the local orchard and one classroom taste test featuring local asparagus purchased from Keany Produce, the school's food distributor.

#### Taste Test Goals:

1. To partner with cafeteria staff to strategize best way to offer sliced apples for taste test and future meals.
2. To give students the opportunity to meet a farmer. The farmer that grows the apples they are eating!
3. To increase student understanding of how apples, grow (e.g. from tree, to bud, to blossom, to fruit).
4. To help students explore taste by distinguishing between tart and sweet apples.
5. To help spread the word about FCPS and Farm to School in the school community.



## Taste Test Partners

- FCPS Food and Nutrition Services Registered Dietitian
- Catoctin Mountain Orchard Farmer
- University of Maryland Ext. FSNE Educator and Small Farms Agriculture Agent
- Frederick Community College, Hospitality, Culinary & Tourism Institute Program Manager and Student Chefs
- Frederick Memorial Hospital's LiveWell Program Coordinator
- Catoctin Mountain Orchard Farmer
- School Principals and Office Administrators
- FCPS Communication's Department
- FCPS Board of Education Member
- WVDM News



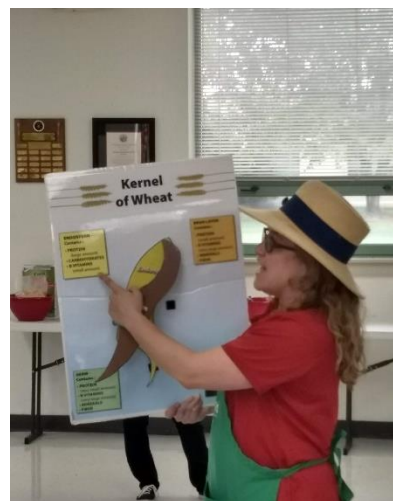
## Cafeteria Taste Test Success!

Because Cafeteria Taste Tests went incredibly well, the FCPS FNS Department is launching a Harvest of the Month Initiative in the 2019- 2020 school year at 10 elementary schools and the local hospital, Frederick Memorial Hospital, donated nearly \$2,000 to purchase apple slicing equipment in support of the program. See the Menu Planning Section on Page 23 for details on Harvest of the Month roll-out.

## Field Trips

Field trips were part of several discussions during Planning Team Meetings and the general consensus was that there should be field trips to farms and that F2S could help provide a service to help fund them and help build a core of educators to lead them. Through conversations with farmers, we learned that many farms aren't set-up to being able to host school field trips. However, [Catoctin Mountain Orchard](#), the FCPS local fruit supplier, is interested in reintroducing Farm Field Trips. This is something they have done in the past and one of their farmers is interested in getting them up and running again. In addition, there is an association of retired educators that might be a good resource from which to build a core team of farm field trip educators.

Currently, UMD Ext with FSNE and 4-H offer youth enrichment programs. According to the 4-H website, [Ag Literacy Programs](#) are designed to promote the understanding and knowledge necessary to communicate basic information about agriculture to students, producers, consumers, and the public. These programs focus on assisting educators and others to effectively incorporate



UMD EXT FSNE Educator  
Kids Growing with Grains Field  
Trip

information about agriculture into subjects being taught or examined in public schools and to better understand the impact of agriculture on society. In addition, one of the programs UMD Ext offers is [Kids Growing with Grains](#). They also host a special event titled: [Breakfast on the Farm](#).

In order to assist Catoclin Mountain Orchard and other farmers in designing Farm Field Trip experiences, Farm to School surveyed 11 STEM Leaders. The top reason stated for taking students on field trips was to provide hands-on activities to enhance classroom learning and the top reason not to go on field trips was cost. (See Table 19, page 53 for STEM Leader Interview Summary).

#### After School and Summer Activities

With respect to after school and summer activities F2S is:

1. Investigating ways to incorporate foods from the school garden at one of the elementary schools in into a summer meal program.
2. Working with partner Full Cellar Farm to procure their cucumbers in the summer meal programs.

It is through these initial steps that the F2S Planning Team believes we will be able to celebrate successes and make plans to build upon and advance this important work.

#### Evaluation

##### Background and Progress to Date

The USDA F2S Planning Grant has provided the Leadership Team an opportunity to investigate and answer the question: *What might a successful Farm to School program look like in Frederick County?* To guide our efforts in answering this question and to direct the team with a systematic data collection process in this first year, a Farm to School Evaluation Plan was drafted. To inform this work we referenced resources from the National Farm to School Network and The Evaluation for Transformation: A Cross-Sectoral Evaluation Framework for Farm to School.

- [Evaluation for Transformation: A Cross-Sectoral Evaluation Framework for Farm to School](#)
- <http://www.farmtoschool.org/resources>

**See Farm to School Evaluation Plan on next page.**

## Farm to School Evaluation Plan

Data Collection Method	Data Collection Source	Roles and Responsibility	Sample of Key Evaluation Questions	Timeline	Data Analysis and Reporting
<b>Phone Interviews with Regional Farm to School Programs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harford County</li> <li>• Washington County</li> <li>• Garrett County</li> <li>• Charles County</li> <li>• Baltimore City Schools</li> </ul>	Farm to School Leadership Team (F2SLT)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How do you define “local”?</li> <li>2. How often does your school serve local foods?</li> <li>3. What do you like MOST about your F2S program?</li> <li>4. What do you like LEAST about your F2S program?</li> <li>5. What key partners should be included in a F2S program?</li> </ol>	September – December 2018	Alysia Feuer
<b>Food Distributor Site Visit and Interview</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keany Produce</li> </ul>	F2SLT	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is your definition of local?</li> <li>2. Do you require the farmers are GAP certified?</li> <li>3. What are your greatest successes?</li> <li>4. What are your greatest challenges?</li> </ol>	October – December 2018	Lisa Orr Alysia Feuer
<b>Produce Farmer Interviews</b>  (Northeast Risk Management Extension)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catoctin Mountain Orchard</li> <li>• Full Cellar Farm</li> <li>• Pleasant Hill Farm</li> <li>• Open Book Farm</li> <li>• Summer Creek Farm</li> </ul>	F2SLT	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do you envision as the biggest challenges for providing produce to schools?</li> <li>2. What products might you be able to grow for schools?</li> <li>3. Would you be interested in expanding your production?</li> </ol>	December 2018 – May 2019	Janice Wiles Alysia Feuer Kelly Nichols
<b>FCPS Cafeteria Site Manager Interviews</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hillcrest ES</li> <li>• Lincoln ES</li> <li>• Monocacy ES</li> <li>• North Frederick ES</li> <li>• Waverly ES</li> </ul>	F2SLT	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do you enjoy MOST about your job?</li> <li>2. What do you like MOST/LEAST about school meals?</li> <li>3. In your opinion, what are the most popular vegetables and fruits with students?</li> <li>4. What makes food preparation challenging for you?</li> <li>5. If you didn’t have any constraints, what would be something that you would love to serve?</li> </ol>	October 2018	Alysia Feuer
<b>Taste Tests</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hillcrest ES</li> <li>• Lincoln ES</li> <li>• Monocacy ES</li> <li>• North Frederick ES</li> <li>• Waverly ES</li> </ul>	F2S FNS FCC HCTI UMD EXT LiveWell	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What foods should be sampled?</li> <li>2. How will foods be purchased?</li> <li>3. How will foods be prepared?</li> <li>4. Who will serve foods for taste test?</li> <li>5. How will we measure impact?</li> </ol>	February – May 2018	Alysia Feuer

Data Collection Method	Data Collection Source	Roles and Responsibility	Sample of Key Evaluation Questions	Timeline	Data Analysis and Reporting
<b>Food Waste Study</b>	Cafeteria Food Waste	F2S Mountainside Education and Enrichment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What types of foods are thrown away untouched or unopened?</li> <li>2. Would slicing apples increase consumption of apples by students?</li> <li>3. What Smarter Lunchroom strategies can be incorporated at no cost to positively impact consumption of fruits and vegetables?</li> </ol>	February – May 2018	Alysia Feuer Lisa Orr
<b>Key Player Interviews</b>	FCPS Parents/PTA FCPS Students FCPS Staff	Alysia and F2SLT and F2SPT	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do you like MOST about school breakfast and/or school lunch?</li> <li>2. What do you like LEAST about school breakfast and/or school lunch?</li> <li>3. How important is eating food grown in Frederick County to you? To your family?</li> <li>4. What is your favorite fruit?</li> <li>5. What is your favorite vegetable?</li> </ol>	September 2018 – June 2019	F2SLT and F2SPT
<b>Menu and Recipe Workshop</b>	FCPS FNS Menus	FCPS FNS UMD EXT FCC HCTI	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What fruits or vegetables are you interested in integrating into school meals?</li> <li>2. How often is it possible to offer a local food (e.g. weekly, monthly, or quarterly)?</li> </ol>	January – July 2019	F2SLT
<b>FCPS Garden Interviews</b>	Hillcrest ES Lincoln ES Monocacy ES Waverley ES	F2SLT F2S Planning Team (F2SPT)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the top 3 reasons to garden with students?</li> <li>2. What are the top 3 reasons NOT to garden with students?</li> <li>3. What have been the challenges of your spring garden project?</li> </ol>	October 2018 – May 2019	F2SPT F2SLT
<b>FCPS and University of MD EXT Interviews</b>	UMD EXT – Haley Staruk FCPS CTC Culinary Arts FCPS Elementary Science Curriculum FCPS Health and PE Curriculum STEM Leaders	F2SLT	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What types of ag experiences do you offer students?</li> <li>2. Do you offer taste tests?</li> <li>3. Garden experiences?</li> <li>4. Farm field trips?</li> </ol>	November 2018 – June 2019	Alysia Feuer

## Food Service Director Interviews

The Farm to School Leadership Team determined that it was essential to learn as much as possible from other Farm to School Programs in the region and in order to do so, we conducted phone interviews with five Food Service Directors. The focus of the interviews was to get a better idea of how different school districts implement Farm to School, to learn about greatest successes and challenges and to gain a better understanding of best practices. The interviews were very beneficial and members of the Food and Nutrition Services department were able to participate in two of the interviews. Below is a summary of key points and the complete Food Service Director Interview Summary can be found in Appendix G.

*Table 7: Highlights of Food Service Director Interview*

<b>Food Service Director Interviews (n= 5 Harford, Charles, Washington, Garrett Counties and Baltimore City)</b>	
<b>What do you like MOST about your F2S Program? What are your greatest successes?</b>	<b>What do you like LEAST about your F2S Program? What are your greatest challenges?</b>
Staff Pride Connection to Students Farm to School Partnerships Environment and Impact	Behavior Change Procurement of Local Foods Terminology – School and Farmers Price and Volume Processing Seasonality
<b>What are some examples of F2S activities offered in your school district?</b>	<b>What are your F2S Best Practices?</b>
Taste Tests Farmer Visits School Farm Field Trips Fresh Fruit Fridays (e.g. staff get fruit for free) Host MD State Homegrown Week Kick-Off F2S Partners offer Activities and Programs School Garden Activities (e.g. aquaponics, hydroponics, incorporate produce in cafeteria)	Get the teachers involved! Empower cafeteria staff Start Small Focus on Promotion and Communication

## Food Distributor Site Visit Interview

In order to gain a better understanding about food distributors, members of the Farm to School Leadership Team conducted a site visit and interview with the produce distributor for Frederick County Public Schools. The staff were very gracious provided a tour of their facility and the opportunity to sit down and learn more about their business and partnership with Frederick County Public Schools. Below are the summary notes from the site visit.



Table 8: FCPS Produce Distributor Site Visit Interview

### Keany Produce Site Visit Summary Notes

- Keany Produce has been in business for 40 years; they moved to current location in 2002.
  - Owned and operated by 4 brothers and many family members work in the business.
  - They have 500 employees and 500 – 600 suppliers.
  - Opened a new facility in Richmond a year ago for distribution.
  - Customers range from Philadelphia to North Carolina, including West Virginia.
  - There is a train to the warehouse facility from DC.
  
- Local is defined as 250 miles from either warehouse.
  - Growth: They want to extend the season for produce on both the front and back ends
  
- All Produce Suppliers must be GAP certified (extremely important).
  - Farms have to supply documentation such as their Food Safety Plan.
  - A third-party audit is a requirement for verifying food safety.
  
- School Local Food Purchases
  - Schools can set local produce (when available) as their default for procurement.
  - FCPS could opt for “always local” but sometimes there is a price difference.
  - Delivery to schools is 1-2 times per week.
  
- *Keany Operations*
  - Warehouse: Most food at Keany is kept at 39 – 40 degrees; Hot air is used in ripening rooms for tropical produce; they get a tractor trailer full daily. Each room in the warehouse is steam washed every day. It is a 24-hour operation; food is out by 5 am daily. Pulling and shipping is done at night. Inventory has a 2 to 2.5-day turn-around
  
  - Packaging: Local growers pack their foods to specific specifications provided by Keany. Farmers mostly deliver to Keany but Keany does pickup for small growers that are clustered together.
  
- Keany and Farmer Opportunities
  - Keany does not have a local source for red potatoes, onions (especially extended harvest), or carrots. They could sell these if they could get them.
  
- Possible Obstacles for some Farmers:
  - GAP Certification (first and foremost) and weather can affect supply availability.

### Produce Farmer Interviews

Four farmers have been interviewed so far. Of those four Farmers, the acreage of land they are farming on ranged from 2.5 to 100 acres and a variety of fruit and vegetable crops are grown. The Farmers reported that they currently sell at farmers markets, farm stands, through CSAs, wholesale, and pick-your-own. Only one currently sells to Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS). Below is a summary of the responses to the interview questions.

Table 9: Produce Farmer Interviews, (n=5)

Summary of Farmer Interviews to Evaluate Risk with Selling to Local Institutions
<p>1) What has been your experience selling to FCPS?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• FCPS tells the farmer how much produce is needed each week, and then the produce is delivered weekly. Flexible with delivery – produce is delivered weekly on either Fridays or Mondays to the warehouse, then FCPS distributes to schools from there.</li><li>• Requires planning ahead to have the correct amount and size of produce for all “regular” markets plus FCPS.</li><li>• Potential issue of how produce is stored and handled after the farmer drops it off</li></ul>
<p>2) What value/benefit do you see in selling to institutions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Marketing – name and logo above produce at school</li><li>• Education – how produce is grown, meeting your farmer</li><li>• Giving local food to our children</li><li>• An opportunity for farmers to have another market to sell to, if they can come up with a good arrangement that works</li><li>• Consumers would appreciate quality and freshness</li></ul>
<p>3) Are additional acres available to expand? If so, are you planning to expand?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Half of the farmers said additional acres were available.</li><li>• None of the farmers currently have plans to expand. Challenges to expansion include limit of labor (seasonality of workers) and water resources.</li></ul>
<p>4) What are the challenges/barriers for selling to institutions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Price – FCPS offers lower price than what farmers could get selling retail</li><li>• Volume – how to aggregate smaller quantities?</li><li>• FCPS has minimal processing capabilities and staff</li><li>• Labor – seasonality of workers, finding people willing to work on a farm (long hours, outside, physical labor, etc.), finding people with “soft skills” (i.e. showing up on time)</li><li>• Already have customers that buy everything they grow and do not want to expand</li></ul>

### Cafeteria Site Manager Interview

The F2S Program Coordinator interviewed the five Cafeteria Site Managers working in the elementary schools participating in the pilot program. The length of time staff had worked in school food service ranged from 3 years to 22 years. All five of the cafeteria site managers reported that what they enjoyed most about their job was interacting with the children and appreciating their personalities. Below is a complete interview summary.

Table 10: Cafeteria Site Manager Interviews, (n=5)

What do you like MOST about your school meal program?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appreciate the fact that all children get a free breakfast. (5 counts)</li><li>• Appreciate the variety of food we offer. (3 counts)</li><li>• I enjoy serving local food and telling the students and staff where it came from.</li></ul>

**What do you like LEAST about your school meal program?**

- Feeding children breakfast in their classrooms is challenging. (2 counts)
- It's hard to know what children will take and eat. One week they take a food and the next they don't select it. It's very variable. How do you get them to try new foods? (2 counts)
- Misconceptions in the general public about school meals.
- We have a lot of paperwork.

**In your opinion, what are the MOST popular fruits served?**

- Grapes (5 counts)
- Quartered Oranges (4 counts)
- Sliced Apples (2 counts)
- Strawberries (2 counts)
- Watermelon (2 counts)

**What is YOUR favorite way to serve fruit?**

- Any way that students will eat it. (3 counts)
- Fresh, it looks better, tastes better and has more nutritional value. (2 counts)

**How do you think STUDENTS prefer their fruits served?**

- Fresh (3 counts)
- Sliced and Portioned

**In your opinion, what are the MOST popular vegetables served?**

- Corn (3 counts)
- Cucumbers (2 counts)
- Carrots (2 counts)
- Potatoes (fried, seasoned, mashed)

**What is YOUR favorite way to serve vegetables?**

- I will prepare it any way they will eat it.
- Fresh

**How do you think STUDENTS prefer their vegetables prepared?**

- Fresh with dip (2 counts)
- Steamed

**What do you feel are the greatest challenges for you in serving more LOCAL fruits and vegetables?**

- Storage (2 counts)
- Not knowing in advance what we might receive.
- How would it arrive to us from farmers?
- Ripening?
- Time and preparation.

**What makes food preparation challenging for you?**

- Packaging is labor intensive and the volume is a lot to handle.
- Canned fruits are the most labor intensive for us.
- Overall time constraints.
- Early dismissal days are really challenging.

**Are there things that would make food preparation easier?**

- An apple slicer would be really helpful
- Kids might eat more fresh foods if we cut it
- Learn tips for how to do breakfast better
- How to categorize the refrigerator and freezer
- Anything that can help us save time
- No, I feel equipped and can ask for things I need

**Would you say the amount of food waste in preparation of menu items is:**

- Very little (3 counts)
- Some (2 counts)

**Do you have suggestions for reducing the amount of food waste during preparation?**

- Lettuce goes bad quickly. I think we could handle chopping our own lettuce.
- Need to use products quickly
- Taco and chili day have a lot of waste

**If you didn't have any constraints, what would be something that you would love to serve?**

- I would like to experiment with some foods to cook from scratch. Some kids may need multiple exposures, but there are some great ideas, such as roasted cauliflower
- Maybe there are more creative way to serve vegetables
- Soups and hot sandwiches are popular, especially with staff
- Wraps were popular in the summer
- The breakfast burrito was popular but the company stopped making it
- I wish there was a way to serve eggs at breakfast. What about hard boiled eggs?
- Apple cobbler may be more popular than peach cobbler

**Student Taste Test Outcomes**

Student Taste Tests were conducted at five elementary schools in the pilot program. At four of the schools, the Taste Test was conducted in the school cafeteria during their lunch period and two varieties of sliced apples were featured, Pink lady and Evercrisp. Local apples were chosen as the food of choice because Catoctin Mountain Orchard has been the Frederick County Food and Nutrition Services Farm to School partner for almost 10 years and we discovered that most parents, staff and students didn't realize the apples were from a local farm and being offered in all 66 schools in the district! What made this event extra special was that the students got to meet a Farmer from Catoctin Mountain Orchard and learn interesting facts about apples and farming. It was an exciting event for the students and schools and the overwhelming response was extremely positive.

**Student and Staff comments from the Apple Taste Test:**

- The apple tasted like heaven!
- The apple tasted wonderful.
- Apples are healthy.
- I liked the sweeter apple.
- I like both of the apples but the Pink Lady was better because I like it more tart than sweet.
- I liked that they were cut and easy to eat.
- Best apples I've ever tried!
- It was fun and exciting!
- They were refreshingly good.
- The apples were tart.

- Please come to our school more often.
- Apple trees have blossoms.
- I loved the part when we smelled the blossoms.
- I liked learning about the taste buds.
- I wish I could try the other fruits you grow.
- I am going to ask my mom to buy Pink Lady apples for us.

Table 11: Cafeteria Apple Taste Test Outcomes

	Loved the Apples	Liked the Apples	Tried the Apples but didn't care for them	Didn't Participate
<b>Lincoln Elementary School Enrollment = 583</b>				
Kindergarten	53	5	6	7
1 <sup>st</sup>	66	1	4	8
2 <sup>nd</sup>	69	4	0	7
3 <sup>rd</sup>	28	5	6	4
4 <sup>th</sup>	46	9	5	2
5 <sup>th</sup>	54	7	6	9
<b>Total (411)</b>	<b>316 (77%)</b>	<b>31 (8%)</b>	<b>27 (7%)</b>	<b>37 (9%)</b>
<b>Monocacy Elementary School Enrollment = 619</b>				
Pre-Kindergarten	14	1	0	2
Kindergarten	60	16	13	12
1 <sup>st</sup>	52	8	5	6
2 <sup>nd</sup>	32	10	4	2
3 <sup>rd</sup>	47	5	6	2
4 <sup>th</sup>	61	6	3	12
5 <sup>th</sup>	43	7	6	14
<b>Total (449)</b>	<b>309 (69%)</b>	<b>53 (12%)</b>	<b>37 (8%)</b>	<b>50 (11%)</b>
<b>North Frederick Elementary School Enrollment = 668</b>				
Kindergarten	32	15	3	5
1 <sup>st</sup>	44	12	1	8
2 <sup>nd</sup>	54	12	3	7
3 <sup>rd</sup>	55	18	13	4
4 <sup>th</sup>	*	*	*	*
5 <sup>th</sup>	*	*	*	*
<b>Total (286)</b>	<b>185 (65%)</b>	<b>57 (20%)</b>	<b>20 (7%)</b>	<b>24 (8%)</b>
<b>Waverley Elementary School Enrollment = 517</b>				
Kindergarten	46	12	1	11
1 <sup>st</sup>	55	7	7	4
2 <sup>nd</sup>	46	19	3	5
3 <sup>rd</sup>	25	4	2	6
4 <sup>th</sup>	30	15	0	4
5 <sup>th</sup>	49	18	2	1
<b>Total (372)</b>	<b>251 (67%)</b>	<b>75 (20%)</b>	<b>15 (4%)</b>	<b>31 (8%)</b>

The last Taste Test featured local raw asparagus and was offered as part of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) as a classroom taste test. Because this school participates in FFVP it provided the opportunity to explore a different way for conducting the taste test. It was valuable to “team” with the kitchen staff to conduct this taste test. The drawback was that it wasn't feasible to have a guest speaker visit each classroom. However, the teachers were provided with electronic

educational resources and encouraged to incorporate this into their classroom lessons the week of the event.

Table 12: Fresh Fruit Vegetable Program: Raw Asparagus Taste Test

	Loved It	Liked It	Tried It but didn't care for it	Didn't Participate
Hillcrest Elementary School Enrollment (n=732)				
Pre-kindergarten	15	20	54	0
Kindergarten	17	24	24	26
1 <sup>st</sup>	33	11	40	3
2 <sup>nd</sup>	6	13	23	8
3 <sup>rd</sup>	18	12	22	1
4 <sup>th</sup>				
5 <sup>th</sup>	8	14	39	5
<b>Total (436 )</b>	<b>97 (22%)</b>	<b>94 (21%)</b>	<b>202 (46%)</b>	<b>43 (10%)</b>

**Student and Staff comments from the Asparagus Taste Test:**

- It was fresh and easy to snack on and is delicious.
- It's yummy.
- It's great.
- I like the bottom.
- It's tasty.
- It smells bad but tastes good.
- I like the top.
- It's delicious.
- It's crunchy.
- I'm happy it's good for you.
- It's good.
- It's cool that it is from here.
- If it were cooked, I'd eat them.
- I tried it once and didn't like it.
- Not very tasty.
- Can it be cooked and served warm?
- Can vegetables be served with a dipping sauce?

**Food Waste Study Outcomes**

Food Waste was raised as an important issue that needs to be part of any Farm to School program – noting the large amount of food waste found in school lunchrooms. Working in partnership with Mountainside Education and Enrichment (MEE) near term goals and objectives are:

1. Divert edible food out of waste stream through partnership with food security groups and health department.
2. Begin composting at elementary schools.
3. Develop new waste management policies for student education and positive environmental impact.
4. Continue with waste audits and publicize the results.

Together with MEE, Farm to School conducted a waste sort in one of the elementary schools in the pilot project. The results of the waste sort were very compelling and educational for students and

staff. Below in Table 13, pounds of trash before the sort totaled 83 pounds. After the students separated out the liquids, recyclables and food waste, only 12 pounds of trash remained. This is an 85.5% reduction in pounds of trash being taken to the landfill. In addition, students and staff identified many unopened milk cartons in addition to whole apples and oranges. The amount of edible food waste is concerning, especially as Farm to School works to offer more fresh fruits and vegetables as part of the school meal program. One of the strategies identified in the Smarter Lunchroom Program to entice students to eat more fruits and vegetables is to offer them sliced and with dips such as hummus. In response, the local hospital has made a donation to Farm to School to buy apple slicing equipment.

Table 13: Food Waste Study

Trash Bag Weight Before Sort	Sorted Waste Diverted from Landfill
18 pounds	21 pounds of liquid
46 pounds	8 pounds of recycling
19 pounds	42 pounds of food waste
Total = 83 pounds	Total = 71 pounds

#### Parents and FCPS Staff Outcomes

Below in Table 14, 96% of survey respondents, (parents, classroom teachers, special education instructional assistants, custodians, an analyst and HR associates) responded that eating food grown in Frederick County was important to them. In Table 15, 94% of parents and staff reported that school meals are a critical point of access to healthy food for most children. This is an overwhelmingly positive response indicating there is value in local food and the demand is high for providing healthy food options for children. When asked whether students have adequate time for meals, the results were more variable with 58% agreeing that students have adequate time and 40% disagreeing.

Table 14: Importance of Eating Local Foods, (n=100)

How important is eating food grown in Frederick County to you and your family?	n (%)
• Very important	63 (64%)
• Moderately important	32 (32%)
• Not very important	3 (3%)
• Not at all important	0 (0%)

Table 15: Cafeteria to Classroom, (n=100)

How strongly do you agree or disagree....	Very Strongly Agree n (%)	Moderately Agree n (%)	Somewhat Disagree n (%)	Very Strongly Disagree n (%)
• That school meals are a critical point of access to healthy food for most children in the United States?	82 (82%)	12 (12%)	0 (0%)	6 (6%)
• That students have adequate time for student meals?	23 (23%)	35 (35%)	29 (29%)	11 (11%)
• That Farm to School activities can increase student engagement with	77 (78%)	19 (19%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)

hands-on learning? (e.g. gardening, taste tests, farmer field trips.)				
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In Table 16 below, respondents were asked specifically about the Farm to School initiative and survey responses align with the research conducted by the National Farm to School Network showing that kids win with expanded access to healthy foods and an increased willingness to try new foods, student and staff food knowledge increases and income is generated for farmers and their communities (Reference: <http://www.farmtoschool.org/Resources/BenefitsFactSheet.pdf>).

Table 16: Impact of Farm to School, (n=100)

How strongly do you agree or disagree that a Farm to School Initiative can...	Very Strongly Agree n (%)	Moderately Agree n (%)	Somewhat Disagree n (%)	Very Strongly Disagree n (%)
• Expand access to healthy local foods?	83(83%)	15 (15%)	0 (0%)	2 (2%)
• Increase students' willingness to try new foods?	72 (72%)	23 (23%)	3 (3%)	2 (2%)
• Increase student and staff knowledge about food and its impact on their health?	79 (79%)	18 (18%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)
• Increase students' knowledge of local foods (e.g. where food comes from and how it grows)?	83 (83%)	12 (12%)	2 (2%)	3 (3%)
• Generate income for the local economy?	82 (83%)	15 (15%)	0 (0%)	2 (2%)
• Generate new business partnerships?	74 (74%)	22 (22%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)

In addition to the quantitative survey results above, respondents also answered an open-ended question. Responses were categorized and themed below.

Table 17: Open-ended Responses (n=100)

Question: How do you see yourself supporting this Farm to School Initiative?
<p><b>CLASSROOM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum connections would be a great way to support this initiative (e.g. plant growth cycle).</li> <li>• The PE teachers talk about healthy eating in their curriculum.</li> <li>• In Learning for Life, we teach about healthy eating and on Fridays we try to do a cooking lesson.</li> <li>• I can help teachers implement lessons on food choices.</li> <li>• I can help my students understand where their food comes from and the benefit of healthy eating.</li> <li>• If this is implemented, it needs to be included in student education with respect to food and health connection.</li> <li>• The Montessori curriculum supports a great deal of service in the community, hands-on learning (we have a garden) and work that will promote our community in general. I would like to talk with you more about students volunteering (especially 7th and 8th grade).</li> </ul>



### **CAFETERIA**

- I can encourage students to try new foods. (7 Counts)
- I could buy lunch and eat with students to help encourage them.
- Have you considered making apples available as an a la carte item?
- Consider using parent volunteers to slice apples.
- I work in a building where our %FARM population is very high. School is sometimes the only place they get access to fresh fruits and vegetables.
- We do the Edible ABS's in our pre-k classroom and the amount of kids that try new and fresh foods is amazing. We had a student ask her mom to buy radishes at home.

### **TASTE TESTING**

- STEM night taste testing with students and parents. (2 Counts)
- I love the idea of monthly tastings and would love to have my students participate. (2 Counts)
- Green Valley Elementary School would love to host a taste test.
- I would help distribute whatever needs to be done for taste tests. Often kids don't have the chance to try new veggies and fruit.

### **GARDENS**

- I can encourage students and help with gardening. (6 Counts)
- I am from North Frederick Elementary School and we have raised beds that would be great to have vegetable gardens in.
- I could help with a school garden to promote education and importance of farms and local foods.
- We had a garden club but not this year. It was popular.
- School gardens go great with Green Schools Certification.
- I would love to bring back student gardening and partnering with a local farmer.
- We have a greenhouse and the HS students grow flowers and veggies. This could be expanded.
- I work at a small school with a relatively high percentage of FARM students. I would love to have a school garden to give students hands-on experience with healthy foods.

### **FARM FIELD TRIPS**

- Plan field trips to visit farms.
- Arrange field trips to the orchard so students get excited about F2S Initiative.

### **PROMOTION AND OUTREACH**

- I can bring the issue up to the local representatives and the school board.
- I don't work at the school, but I believe our Benefits Dept. in HR could possibly partner to bring forth information to the schools.
- Is there a way to include local produce in the Blessings in a Backpack program?
- I can help promote local farms with friends.
- I would love to help in anyway. I am at Monocacy Elementary School and think that a full belly with healthy food will help our students academically.
- I would love to see this happen in the schools; however, I feel that it would need to be more than just having food served at lunch. Having someone lead activities and lessons is a good idea but a lot of work on top of other duties.

### **GENERAL SUPPORT**

- I have a degree in Dietetics and Education.
- I am interested in supporting this F2S initiative.

- I would love to help with this F2S initiative.
- Please contact me. I have several resources that I'd like to share.
- I think you need to help parents with ideas for how to prepare local/fresh foods.
- Research local farmers impact on Frederick County economy.
- When I grew up 1/3 of the school was in the Ag program and 4-H. I'm amazed that there is not a lot of support for these programs.

### Menu and Recipe Workshop

The FCPS Food and Nutrition Services Registered Dietitian and Culinary Specialist have been working closely with the Procurement Coordinator to research, plan and kick-off a Harvest of the Month program in ten elementary schools next school year (2019 – 2020).

Table 18: Harvest of the Month Calendar

FCPS Harvest of the Month		
Month	Food	School
September	Peaches	Monocacy Elementary
October	Broccoli	Lincoln Elementary
November	Pumpkin	Waverley Elementary
November	Delicata Squash	Hillcrest Elementary
February	Herbs	North Frederick Elementary
March	Mushrooms	Butterfly Ridge Elementary
April	Asparagus	Sabillsville Elementary
May	Salad greens	Ballenger Creek Elementary
May	Strawberries	Whittier Elementary
June	Blueberries	Brunswick Elementary

Other foods that are being considered are: tomatoes, sweet corn, cucumbers, red peppers, apples, pears, strawberries, kiwi berries, green beans, onions and snap peas.

### School Garden Outcomes

Each elementary school has at least one staff that is the garden leader at their school. This staff person was asked to answer questions about their school garden experience in the spring of 2019. Respondents were gardening with students with the assistance of the Frederick County Master Gardeners and Farm to School volunteers.

Table 19: School Garden Questionnaire, (n=5)

<p><b>Q 1.) What are the TOP three reasons to garden with students in school?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share with them the love of nature.</li> <li>• Allow them to experience soil and wonders of growing.</li> <li>• Hopefully allow them to eat what they grow.</li> <li>• Hands on and engaging.</li> <li>• Matches FCPS science curriculum.</li> <li>• Real-world connection to health and nutrition.</li> <li>• It builds community within your students.</li> <li>• Exposes them to healthy food and the appreciation of how it grows and where it comes from.</li> <li>• The students really love working and growing something.</li> <li>• It gives them a sense of pride and ownership.</li> <li>• To increase awareness about healthy eating habits.</li> <li>• Even with limited space, vegetables can be grown.</li> <li>• Curriculum can be integrated into a school garden providing multiple modalities of learning to engage students.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q 2.)What are the TOP three reasons NOT to garden with students in school?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not a sustained experience connected to the classroom learning.</li> <li>• Lacks administration support.</li> <li>• Time management.</li> <li>• Behavior management.</li> <li>• Truly there aren't any real reasons not to garden.</li> <li>• I don't have a reason not to garden with students at school.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q 3.) What have been the CHALLENGES of your spring garden project?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finding the time to set it up.</li> <li>• Weather and time.</li> <li>• Deciding on which students get to participate in the garden.</li> <li>• We don't have a hose (yet).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q 4.) What have been the SUCCESSES of your spring garden project?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The plants are growing and the students are excited!</li> <li>• The students are really enjoying the garden project.</li> <li>• The students are very enthusiastic about the garden project.</li> <li>• We have been able to integrate math and language arts curriculum with planning and planting the garden boxes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q 5.) Do you have any tips for gardens at school and the garden experience?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There must be school commitment.</li> <li>• If you are excited about the project, the students will also be excited.</li> <li>• Make sure to establish some steps before taking students outside.</li> </ul>

## STEM Leaders

The FCPS STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Director invited the Farm to School Coordinator to present at two of the STEM leader workshops held during the school year. After sharing with the teachers about the Farm to School Initiative, STEM teachers were sent a survey electronically. We were interested in learning more about what makes for a successful field trip experience with students. Overall, teachers reported that hands-on activities that enhance classroom learning in order to make real life connections was the top reason to take students on

field trips. Costs of field trips were reported as the biggest barrier and other challenges are time, behavior, distance, and not related to curriculum. See Table 19 below for full summary.

Table 20: Farm Field Trip Questionnaire (n=11)

<p><b>Q 1.) What are the TOP 3 reasons to take students on field trips?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hands-on activities that enhance classroom learning, (7 Counts)</li> <li>• Real life application that is not possible in classroom, (7 Counts)</li> <li>• Enrich grade level standards, (6 Counts)</li> <li>• Expose students to new experiences and opportunities, (5 Counts)</li> <li>• To generate interest, fun and excitement with learning, (4 Counts)</li> <li>• Connect to curriculum, (3 Counts)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q 2.) What are the TOP 3 reasons NOT to take students on field trips?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost, (8 Counts)</li> <li>• Not related to curriculum, (3 Counts)</li> <li>• Possibility of being boring and not planned well, (3 Counts)</li> <li>• Not enough time, (2 Counts)</li> <li>• Behavior problems/lack of engagement, (2 Counts)</li> <li>• Too far from school, (2 Counts)</li> <li>• Difficult to find wheelchair accessible locations, 2 Counts</li> <li>• Potential danger, Coordination of field trips (dates, chaperones, etc.), Planning pre and post field trip activities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q 3.) If you were to design a Farm Field Trip, what are the MOST important components to include?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hands-on experience/able to make real life connections, (7 Counts)</li> <li>• Explain the work that goes into agriculture, (3 Counts)</li> <li>• Stages of growing/Plant cycles, (2 Counts)</li> <li>• Curriculum connections/Application of science, (2 Counts)</li> <li>• Career ideas, Inclusive of all students, Multisensory experience, Provide something to follow-up with to extend the experience back at school</li> <li>• Examples of desired activities: tasting, touch plants, animals, pick produce, scoop 'stuff'</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q 4.) What are the LEAST important components to include? What would not be interesting to you and students?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long lectures and listening to someone talk, (2 Counts)</li> <li>• Too technical and over their heads</li> <li>• Boring things that are not fun, handouts, viewing a video</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q 5.) Do you think the Farm to School Initiative is important?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, (7 Counts)</li> <li>• It is important to provide fresh fruits and vegetables that are locally grown to students. (3 Counts)</li> <li>• Many students have never experienced agriculture directly. Food experiences may be limited to the store, dinner table and restaurants.</li> <li>• There are students throughout the country that have no understanding of what a “real” farm is.</li> <li>• Many students have only been exposed to urban areas and do not have a real life experience with the importance of farming.</li> <li>• I think it’s important for students to understand where things come from and the connection to the environment.</li> <li>• It is good for the community and good for farmers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q 6.) Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It isn’t related to language arts or math</li> <li>• Many schools have their ‘usual’ field trips</li> <li>• Administrators have to make it an emphasis in their building</li> </ul>

## Using Evaluation Results

In Planning Team Meeting #4, participants had the opportunity to review all of the data presented above, think deeply about the implications, discuss as a large group and then prioritize the action steps that they thought should be the focus for next year based on the data outcomes. Once each participant chose their priority areas, a value was assigned and the F2S Program Coordinator quantified results and ranked them accordingly. The results of this end-of-program data analysis resulted establishing the near-term goals for the project moving forward and are outlined on page 14 of this report.

## Program Sustainability

### Background and Progress to Date

The Farm to School Leadership Team regularly discussed program sustainability throughout the project year and recognized the value of thinking broadly with an evidence based approach. Turning to research, the Program Coordinator identified an article authored by Sara Schell, [Public Health Program Capacity for Sustainability: A New Framework](#) and facilitated a meaningful discussion at the third Planning Team Meeting held in March 2019.

To begin the discussion, planning team members were divided into their working groups, Farmer to School, Chefs in School and Garden at School, and asked to consider the question: ***“In order for the Farm to School initiative to successfully continue over time, it needs \_\_\_\_\_.”*** Planning team members readily recognized that program sustainability includes many important factors that move beyond program funding. In Schell’s research, the author identified nine ‘Domains for Sustainability’ and for our purposes, we considered six of the domains: (1) Political Support, (2) Funding Stability, (3) Partnerships, (4) Organizational Capacity, (5) Program Evaluation, and (6) Communications.

Table 20 below outlines the six domains of sustainability, thoughts for consideration, and action steps for moving forward. The planning team also ranked political support, communication, and partnerships as priority areas with the assumption that funding was essential.

Table 21: Domains of Sustainability and Action Steps

Domain	For Consideration	Action Steps
<b>Political Support</b> High priority domain	School districts are influenced by superintendents, school boards and local politicians.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pursue Board of Education presentation.</li> <li>Personally brief every member of the Board of Education and the County Council</li> <li>Presentation on agriculture and economy for elected officials.</li> </ul>
<b>Communication</b> High priority domain	Communicating externally about F2S’s effectiveness helps the program gain greater visibility. Internally, evidence that a program works builds staff buy-in and support from organizational leaders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build partnership with FCPS communication team and CTC program.</li> <li>Develop Fact Sheet to assist Farmers with school partnership and add to website.</li> <li>Foster communication between farmers and FNS.</li> </ul>

<b>Partnerships</b> High priority domain	Building awareness and capacity for sustainability requires a strategic approach and partnerships between public and private organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft partnership agreements.</li> <li>• Expand farmer partnerships to meet needs for increased volume (spec sheet), summer meal program and field trips.</li> </ul>
<b>Organizational Capacity</b>	Strengthening our program’s internal support can increase program’s likelihood of long-term success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to cultivate internal leaders and champions who will advocate for F2S across FCPS and in community.</li> <li>• Coordinator/Backbone Organization</li> </ul>
<b>Program Evaluation</b>	Evaluating F2S builds sustainability by keeping the program on track with its goals and outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use Logic Model as roadmap and refer to often.</li> <li>• Draft Action Plan for USDA grant which addresses program goals and outcomes and present to stakeholders.</li> </ul>
<b>Funding Stability</b>	Planning for the sustainability of funding should be a strategic process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a funding plan to ensure key infrastructure is maintained.</li> </ul>

While funding stability was not the focus of our discussion, its importance should not be undervalued. Notably the high priority domains *political support, communication and partnership development* are essential components and need to be incorporated into any long-term strategy for funding stability.

The sustainability of the Farm to School program in Frederick County resides on its ability to pay for itself. We estimate it would cost \$100,000 per year for a full-time Program Coordinator and half-time Communication Coordinator. This two-person team would be responsible for community outreach to government, businesses, organizations and FCPS families for annual support to cover the salary costs and to raise funds for events and field trips.

**Policy Context**

Local and state policy could help support the F2S program expenses. New York State passed a policy in 2017 that gives school districts that buy at least 30% of their food (including milk) from NY state farms 25 cents/school lunch sold. That money could be applied to cover program costs or to enhance the program.

**Recommendations**

1. Explore developing a bill like that in NY with the Maryland Farm to School Coordinator, state legislators and organizations.
2. Frederick County BOE/FCPS evaluates the FCPS Wellness Policy for inclusion of Farm to School.

Frederick County’s FCPS Wellness Policy 409, published in 8/09/06 and updated 5/15/19 makes reference to nutrition but does not mention Farm to School. The Farm to School Program Coordinator has since joined the FCPS School Health Council Working Group for the 2019 – 2020 school year.

## Institutional Support

**Key Stakeholders:** In order to build institutional support, the F2S Leadership Team invited key stakeholders to F2S Planning Team Meetings. The Chief Financial Officer for Frederick County Public Schools attended two of the Planning Team meetings with the Director of Food and Nutrition Services, in addition, an FCPS Board of Education Member attended two of the Planning Team meetings and a F2S Taste Test event. The FCPS Board Member participated in a Panel Discussion in our last F2S Planning Team Meeting and was encouraged to see so many people invested in this Farm to School work. Since that meeting, he has arranged for Farm to School Leadership Team to present to the FCPS Board of Education in August 2019. During this presentation, the F2S Leadership Team will share key learnings from the F2S program, data highlights and next steps.

**Partner Collaboration Agreements:** Another step taken to strengthen institutional support has been to establish Partner Collaboration Agreements (PCA). The Partner Collaboration Agreement (PCA) defines the collaborative and mutually valuable work by Farm to School Frederick County and a Partner. It recognizes that partners are autonomous, brought together to share skills and resources for the greatest collective impact. Both partners recognize that it is a voluntary relationship requiring teamwork, understanding, and cooperation for the benefit of the entire Frederick County. Our first executed PCA is with Frederick Memorial Hospital's [Live Well Frederick Program](#). Their 5-2-1-0 Program focuses on increasing fruit and vegetables to 5 servings a day, limiting screen time to 2 hours or less, encouraging at least 1 hour of physical activity and eliminating sugary drinks. See Appendix H for Partnership Collaborative Agreement.

## Partnerships

- UMD Extension (FSNE, MG's, Ag)
- FMH LiveWell
- FCPS Career and Technology Center, Culinary Arts Program
- Frederick Community College – Hospitality, Culinary & Tourism Institute
- Fox Haven Farm
- Mountainside Education and Enrichment
- Catoctin Mountain Orchard
- Full Cellar Farm
- Good Dog Farm
- Summer Creek Farm
- Potomac Sprout Company

## Grants, Donations and Funding Strategy

Community FARE and the F2S Leadership Team have led the fundraising efforts that allows the continuation of the Farm to School Coordinator to work with the schools during the 2019-2020 school year with a smaller scope having reached 60% of the fundraising goal with hopes of 100% before 2019 years end. It's important to point out that the Food and Nutrition Services team is now serving as the primary lead for the Harvest of the Month initiative, which is a huge step toward F2S program sustainability. F2S received donations from the following businesses, foundations and organizations between March and September 2019:

- Frederick County Bank -general support
- Colliver Dental -general support
- Wonder Books -general support

- Wegmans -general support
- Mountainside Education and Enrichment /Bar-T -general support
- Threshold Food and Farming Fund - communication
- North East Risk Management Extension - farmer outreach
- Land and Cultural Preservation Fund, Inc. - coordination and communication
- Starbucks Foundation (proposal submitted, awaiting outcome) - general support, communication

As other potential grant opportunities arise, we will explore requesting support including the implementation grant from the USDA. Additionally, the F2S Team will build upon communication with the Frederick County community to continue to seek support from businesses, community organizations and individuals for 2019-2020 school year programming.



Appendix A: F2S Planning Team Participant Agendas



**Community FARE & Frederick County Public Schools  
Farm to School Planning Team Meeting #1 – Kick-Off**

**Date:** Wednesday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018

**Time:** Meet and Greet: 5:30 – 6:00 pm  
Meeting Time: 6:00 – 8:30 pm

**Location:** FCC - The Monroe Center,  
200 Monroe Avenue Frederick MD 21701

**Meeting Goal:** To engage a wide range of community members in the research and planning of a Frederick County Farm to School Action Plan.

**Objectives:**

By the conclusion of the meeting Farm to School Planning Team (F2SPT) members will have an increased understanding of:

- The history of Farm to School from National, State and Regional perspective.
- FCPS Food and Nutrition Services scope of services and local and non-local food purchases.
- The Farmers in our region and the potential for partnering with FCPS.
- The data driven process utilized in the development of the F2S Action Plan.
- F2SPT members' collective roles and responsibilities in this F2S initiative.

By the conclusion of the meeting F2SPT members will:

- Recognize the importance of sharing perspectives with one another in the planning process.
- Feel inspired and energized to proceed as a key partner in the development of the F2S Action Plan.

6:00 pm – Doors Open, Light Refreshments

6:30 pm – Meeting Begins

- Welcome and Introductions
- Meeting Overview
- History of Farm to School
- Frederick County Farm to School Objectives
- Data Walk
- Panel Discussion
- The Evaluation Plan
- Planning Team Members Report Out
- Next Steps

8:30 p.m. Adjourn



## Community FARE & Frederick County Public Schools Farm to School Planning Team Meeting #2

**Date:** Tuesday, January 15th, 2018  
**Time:** Meet and Greet: 5:30 – 6:00 pm  
Meeting Time: 6:00 – 8:30 pm  
**Location:** Monocacy Elementary School,  
7421 Hayward Road, Frederick MD 21702

**Frederick County Farm to School Goal:** To increase the amount of locally grown fruits and vegetables served in FCPS in order to positively impact student health, student education and economic growth of the County's agricultural sector.

**F2S Meeting #2 Goal:** To engage a wide range of community members in the research and planning of a Frederick County Farm to School Action Plan.

### **F2S Meeting #2 Objectives:**

By the conclusion of the meeting F2SPT members will:

- Recall progress made since inception of F2S initiative.
- Engage in the development of a community survey geared towards FCPS families.
- Work in small group to increase understanding and provide input for key topic areas (e.g. procurement, taste tests, gardens).
- Strategize ways to address barriers for getting the word out about Frederick County Farm to School.
- Have the opportunity to tour a school kitchen facility.
- Recognize the importance of sharing perspectives with one another in the planning process.
- Feel inspired and energized to proceed as a key partner in the development of the F2S Action Plan.

### **Meeting Agenda:**

#### **5:30 – 6:00 pm - Meet and Greet**

#### **6:00 pm – Meeting Begins**

- Welcome and Introductions
- Recap of Progress Made
- Community Survey Questions
- Key Partner Presentations
- Small Group Work
- Kitchen Tour
- Why do this work?
- Strategic Shift around Key Challenges
- Next Steps

#### **8:30 p.m. – Meeting Adjourns**



## Community FARE & Frederick County Public Schools Farm to School Planning Team Meeting #3

**Date:** Tuesday, March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
**Time:** Meet and Greet: 5:30 – 6:00 pm  
Meeting Time: 6:00 – 8:30 pm  
**Location:** Frederick County Career and Technology Center  
Spires Cafe, 7922 Opossumtown Pike  
Frederick MD 21702

**Frederick County Farm to School Goal:** To positively impact student health, student education and economic growth of the County's agricultural sector by increasing the availability of locally grown fruits and vegetables in Frederick County Public Schools.

**F2S Meeting #3 Goal:** To engage a wide range of community members in the research and planning of a Frederick County Farm to School Action Plan.

### **F2S Meeting #3 Objectives:**

By the conclusion of the meeting F2SPT members will have an increased understanding of:

- WHY Farm to School really matters.
- WHAT the F2S initiative wants to accomplish in the next year or so.
- HOW the Farm to School initiative will move forward and progress made thus far.

By the conclusion of the meeting F2SPT members will:

- Contribute to the discussion about program sustainability and gap year funding which includes challenges and opportunities.
- Feel inspired and energized to proceed as a key partner in the development of the F2S Action Plan.

### **Meeting Agenda:**

#### **5:30 – 6:00 pm - Meet and Greet**

#### **6:00 pm – Meeting Begins**

- Welcome and Introductions
- Meeting Overview
- Farm to School Progress Thus Far
- Pair Share - Why Farm to School Matters.
- Moving Forward - Sustainability Exercise
- Working Groups brainstorm goals and objectives
- Next Steps

#### **8:30 p.m. – Meeting Adjourns**



## Community FARE & Frederick County Public Schools Farm to School Planning Team Meeting #4

**Date:** Monday, May 13, 2019  
**Time:** 5:30 – 6:00 pm Meet and Greet  
6:00 – 8:30 pm Meeting  
**Location:** Frederick Memorial Hospital  
Classroom # 1, Second Floor  
400 West 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Frederick, MD 21701

**Frederick County Farm to School Goal:** To positively impact student health, student education and economic growth of the County's agricultural sector by increasing the availability of locally grown fruits and vegetables in Frederick County Public Schools.

### **F2S Meeting #4 Goals:**

1. To engage a wide range of community members in the research and planning of a Frederick County Farm to School Action Plan.
2. To celebrate the accomplishments of this Farm to School planning grant school year, meet new Farm to School partners, and determine next steps for the upcoming 2019-2020 school year.

### **F2S Meeting #4 Objectives:**

By the conclusion of the meeting F2SPT members will:

- Have had the opportunity to meet and network with other Farm to School partners.
- Feel inspired by where the F2S initiative began and where we are today.
- Feel committed to proceed as a Farm to School key partner with ideas for how to contribute.
- Have participated in prioritizing action steps for the upcoming school year.
- Be motivated to build systems to sustain Farm to School work indefinitely.

### **Participant Agenda**

**5:30 – 6:00 pm - Meet and Greet**

**6:00 pm – Meeting Begins**

- Welcome and Introductions
- Meeting Overview
- Celebrate Accomplishments
- Panel Discussion with New F2S Partners
- Data Dive and Action Steps
- Collaboration Agreements and Sustainability
- Next Steps

**8:30 p.m. – Meeting Adjourns**



## **Community FARE & Frederick County Public Schools, Farm to School**

### **Planning Team Kick-Off Meeting**

**Date: Wednesday, November 7th, 2018**

**Location: FCC – The Monroe Center**

**200 Monroe Avenue**

**Frederick, MD 21701**

### **F2SPT Kick-Off Meeting SUMMARY NOTES**

#### **History of F2S – Karen Fedor. Maryland Department of Agriculture.**

- In 2009 the MD Farm to School Program began. It has expanded into school gardens and education programs.
- Maryland ranks 9<sup>th</sup> in the country for local products in school meals.
- We encourage Food Directors to work with Food Distributors to put LOCAL in purchasing contracts.
- Region-wide there is an active F2S program. It comes down to price point.
- MD Homegrown Lunch Week in September is a partnership with Maryland Department of Education.
- Farm to School programs vary widely.
- Some school systems process in school kitchens in summer months and freeze to use during school year.
- DC buys more local food because they have more money to buy local food. They used a (plastic) Bag Tax to fund food and two positions for a Farm to School Coordinator and Farm to School Program Director.
- An ongoing challenge is making the connection from cafeteria to the classroom.
- Are there any resources in that network to help farmers? Yes, there will be a big grant to help train farmers coming out soon. Farmer's operations are so varied. They need to talk directly to the buyer for specifics. It's the relationship that builds between farmer and buy. In MD it's up to each school to figure out what works.

#### **Frederick County F2S**

- **Steve** – Once we get the kids involved, and they see where the food is grown, it creates excitement. Seeing the kids relate and learn about food is a great experience.
- **Janice** – 90% of our food is outside of Frederick County. Only .06% of acres are fruits and vegetables. Community FARE is focused on accessing institutions. Challenges: Cropland to produce enough fruits and vegetables. Distribution of food from local farmers. We need to start small. We learned in our Feasibility Study that if Farmers had access to markets then they would produce more.

- **Alysia** – Shared the 2018/2019 Planning Grant Goals and Objectives. We need to do this well for 5 schools and in the process be thinking about how we can scale this work up to cover the FCPS District. We are talking to other Districts and learning best practices and tips.

#### Data Walk –

- **FCPS Demographic Data:**
  - Where did you get the FARM %? Answer: From each schools' school profile found on the FCPS website.
  - How many schools have cooking facilities? Answer: All schools have heat and serve capabilities.
  - What are the typical cooking facilities in schools? Answer: We will tour a kitchen at our next meeting.
  - Why isn't Food Pro engaged in this? Answer: Will talk to FCPS and inquire.
- **FCPS Menu Data:**
  - A lot of processed foods (and too much sugar). **(4 counts)**
  - A lot of packaging, trash, styrofoam lunch trays. **(2 counts)**
  - How much is composted? Can you feed to pigs? What is the volume of food waste? **(2 counts).**
  - I see very limited variety. Is that all the kids' want?
  - Are these "cups" of fruits?
  - How does FCPS handle foods and product storage?
  - Define 'scratch' cooking. Could this be increased? Is it a training issue? Or equipment and time? How about "speed scratch"?
- **Local and Non-Local Charts:**
  - I'm surprised greens are so much more than other vegetable purchases because they seem the most perishable and not as popular for kids?
  - How fast does FCPS pay? Is it fast enough for farmers?
  - March, April and May is a tough to produce in this region.
  - It would be interesting to know more about production cost of foods? For example water and workers needed to grow specific foods?
  - Are the tomatoes purchased as fresh or processed as sauce? Answer: They are not processed as sauce.
  - FCPS should define "local" in produce RFP. Answer: Definitely. FCPS is working on this.
  - Seasonality Chart should be in classrooms. Answer: Will include with Garden projects.
- **UMD EXT Small Farm Data:**
  - We aren't growing nearly enough.
  - Local food is limited by local labor.
  - FYI: Federal regulations for nursing homes allow food from gardens and includes some basic guidelines.
  - I know of one state that offers local incentives, for example Kentucky. This state offers tax credits. I don't know if there is incentive for not for profit.

## Panel Discussion -

- **Tony Brusco – South Mountain Creamery CEO**

- *Building a business from the ground up takes time. What are some of the most important factors that has led to your success?* Luck. Good timing. We kept grinding at it. Stories picked up on us. The 'Buy Local' market picked up. We work with 150-200 farmers each year.
- *How do you build relationships with farmers?* Farmers are looking for the money right away. If they grow it, we will pay for it, we will sell it. You must build a reputation. Our network needs to be strong. We just started partnering with a local school in PA. The school was trying to find local farm foods. We agreed to partner with them to learn from it and see if it's something we can actually do.

- **Janice Wiles – Community FARE and Farm to School Director**

- *Are there any policies that would facilitate having more local foods in the schools?* Yes, Strive for 25. If a school district buys 25% of NY State farm food, they get 25 cents per every meal that they sell.
- *What about food grown in school yard gardens?* Can students eat the foods they grow in the school cafeteria? We need to learn more about foods grown in a school gardens.

- **Steve O'Brey – FCPS Procurement Coordinator**

- *There are many reasons to buy locally grown foods. What do you believe are the advantages of offering local foods in the school meals?* The economic impact of buying locally and giving money back to the local farmer is a huge benefit. We'd love to buy it. We want to support the county and the local economy.
- *How hard will it be to push the mindset and buy local?* In Harford County a farmer went from going to Baltimore daily to sell his produce to selling to the schools. It became a consistent sell, reduced the time he spent on the road and the money spent on fuel to go up and down the highway. We have to find ways here in Frederick County to support the school and our needs and the farmer and their needs.
- *What do you think are the biggest challenges for prepping and serving local foods?* We don't have the labor hours available to receive whole cases of broccoli and cut them and bag them, for each school in a timely manner. In Detroit an entrepreneur did a farm to freezer business to meet those processing needs between the farms and the schools.

- **Bob Black – Owner Catoclin Mountain Orchard**

- *Why did you go the extra mile to partner with FCPS?* It works for me because the farmer has to be profitable or the farmer will not be here. FCPS put a video of us picking apples on their website. It was great marketing for us. We adapted our apples to grow smaller apples based on what the dietitian said they needed. An apple is the most versatile fruit that there is. Broccoli and tomatoes are harder to do.

- What has been your biggest success or reward in doing this work? We gave FCPS Gala apples with a weekly delivery. We increased consumption because we gave them something good to eat. Those kids will hopefully be my customers for years after leaving the school system. With the schools we're able to get more sales. People aren't buying bushels of apples like they had in the past, so the schools are another market. We have a variety of apples to expose kids to. The kids are going to remember the logo and where they get the apple from. There are ways to specify in a bid the desire for local foods.
- Are you organically certified? Our farm follows Integrated Pest Management practices.
- **Elizabeth DeRose – FCC Hospitality, Culinary & Tourism Institute Manager**
  - What types of farm to school opportunities have you included in your culinary curriculum? We partner with Hungary Harvest, a local CSA for farm foods and we work them into our curriculum. We also focus on teaching students social responsibility; understanding food waste and food security. We help students figure out what their role is with food? We offer cooking camps too. Our students can become advocates for the F2S program.
  - How do you see FCC fitting into this FCPS F2S initiative? We can provide skills training and education to FCPS staff on how to prepare foods. We can show them shortcuts for cooking methods; how to cook and prepare foods quickly. Also, we know how to build that excitement. We are great at growing excitement about the programs and building traction for students and families. We can facilitate fun activities (like apple pies with sampling stations) that also offer education. We partner well with restaurants and farmers and chefs. We bring students to farms. We see ourselves as a connector!

### **On the Wall Questions and End of Meeting Questions –**

#### **In one word or two, why are you interested in participating in the Farm to School initiative?**

- Connect kids to food. Education. **(5 counts)**
- Health. Inspire kids to eat more plants for healthier diets. **(4 counts)**
- Connect kids to farming **(2 counts)**
- Local foods are the best quality foods and best tasting!
- Creating access to market for farmers.

#### **What are your best tips for encouraging students to take and eat more fruits and veggies in schools?**

1. Education in classrooms. (Teachers are busy. How do we do this?) **(2 counts)**
2. Parent Education. Connect from home to school. Translate surveys into Spanish. **(2 counts)**
3. Hands-on gardening activities. **(2 counts)**
4. Color! Bright, vibrant visuals. Taste with their eyes. **(2 counts)**
5. Farm field trips. **(2 counts)**
6. Only offer healthy whole foods. Menu planning. New recipes. **(2 counts)**
7. Getting creative with fun names, for example, 'tasty tree tops' for broccoli, x-ray vision carrots.
8. Weekly food events. Monthly food events.
9. Sliced produce. Offer with dips.



10. Make sampler plates. Offer variety. Food tastings.
11. Cooking lessons.
12. Find a celebrity or sports figure to endorse. Make it fun!
13. Incorporate into foods. For example, smoothies, quesadillas, omelets, burritos, pizza.
14. Mountainside Education and Enrichment can produce in school lessons on “harvest” as well as field trips. We have buses and drivers.

**What do you believe are the biggest challenges for schools to partner with farmers?**

1. Cost **(3 counts)**
2. Finding the right farmer with to meet needs **(2 counts)**
3. Writing menus without knowing what be or may not be available
4. Skill level of FCPS cafeteria staff
5. Seasonal availability
6. Lack of coordination
7. No cooking in cafeterias
8. Everything has to be packaged
9. Ability to further process foods

**What do you believe are the biggest challenges for farmers to partner with FCPS schools?**

1. Cost **(3 counts)**
2. Volume **(3 counts)**
3. Seasonality of crops **(3 counts)**
4. Logistics of aggregation for smaller farmers. Regulations and Certifications. Packaging.
5. Forecasting. Labor. Weather challenges.

**To you, what are the most important components that should be included in a thriving F2S Program?**

1. FCPS needs to understand Farmers’ challenges, offer flexibility (e.g. product, quantity, time, price.) **(3 counts)**
2. Getting students and parents excited (e.g. Kids and Parents need to like the product.)
3. Collaboration and Communication.
4. Benefits to students! Benefits to Community!
5. School gardens should be a feather in the cap of a school principal.

**What aspects of F2S do we really need to think about deeply when considering program sustainability?**

1. Educating students and their families about local foods **(2 counts)**
2. Simplifying logistics. What does FCPS need? What do Farmers’ need?
3. Building relationships between farmers and the schools.
4. How can we keep money in it so farmers can grow and thrive?
5. Seasonality.
6. Cost of packaging and shipping.

**What are the partnership opportunities that we might not have considered?**

- Hood College
- Mount St. Mary’s
- Local businesses – FCB and Plamondon

**Community FARE & Frederick County Public Schools  
Farm to School Planning Team Meeting #2**



**Date:** Tuesday, January 15<sup>th</sup> 2019  
**Time:** Meet and Greet: 5:30 – 6:00 pm  
 Meeting Time: 6:00 – 8:30 pm  
**Location:** Monocacy Elementary School  
 7421 Hayward Rd. Frederick, MD 21702

**F2SPT Meeting #2 SUMMARY NOTES**

**Meeting #1 Recap –**

- In 2009 the MD Farm to School Program began. It has expanded into school gardens and education programs.
- Maryland ranks 9<sup>th</sup> in the country for local products in school meals.
- MDA encourages Food Directors to work with Food Distributors to put LOCAL in purchasing contracts.
- An ongoing challenge is making the connection from cafeteria to the classroom.
- Community partners are key to the success of this initiative. The kick-off meeting highlighted South Mountain Creamery, FCPS, Catoctin Mtn Orchard, FCC and Community FARE.
- Reviewed school data from 5 elementary schools: Hillcrest, Lincoln, Monocacy, N. Frederick and Waverley.
- Overview of school meal purchases at 5 schools: ~ 2,000 breakfasts and lunches served each day out of 3,554 students. Around 19,600 summer lunches and ~19,000 after school snacks served. ~ 700 students in FFVP.
- Total food costs at 5 pilot schools is \$732,137.00 and around \$5,000 is spent on local foods.

**Progress Made Thus Far –**

<b>Data Collection</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Status</b>
Phone Interviews with Regional F2S Programs	September – December 2018	Complete
Food Distributor Site Visit and Interview	October 2018	Complete
FCPS Cafeteria Site Manager Interviews	October 2018	Complete
Produce Farmer Interviews	December 2018 – May 2019	In process
FCPS Taste Tests	February – May 2019	In process
Key Player Interviews (Staff, Parents, Students)	September 2018 – May 2019	In process
Menu and Recipe Workshop	January – May 2019	In process
FCPS School Garden Interviews	October 2018 – May 2019	In process
Food Waste Study	February – May 2019	To be planned

### **Data Review with Partner –**

- Regional Farm to School Program Interviews (n=5)
- Cafeteria Site Manager Interviews (n=5)
- Key Player Surveys to be reviewed by email. What are our key questions we want answered?

### **Key Partner Presentation – University of Maryland Extension**

- **FSNE** = Haylee Staruk
- **Small Farms Ag Agent** = Kelly Nichols
- **Master Gardeners** = David Sullivan

### **Breakout into Small Group Work –**

#### **1. FARMER TO SCHOOL, facilitated by Janice Wiles**

##### **a. Finding local produce for FCPS**

- There might be excess produce from Farmer's Markets that farmers might be willing to sell; Steve Obrey and Bob Kelly both said they would be willing to be flexible and incorporate farmer's market excess into their menu as it comes in.
- Dairy Farms – We wonder if some may transition to grow vegetables. Will explore with Kelly Nichols, UMD EXT to see if she can think of any dairy farmers that might be willing to grow vegetables?

##### **b. Farm Tours**

- Catocin Mtn Orchard used to offer farm tours but now they just don't have the staff to do it right; Katlyn at CMO would like to get them started again but it's hard to do solo.
  - Maybe utilize retired teachers through the [Frederick County Retired School Personnel Association](#).
  - Topics that could be addressed at CMO on a tour (depending on age) IPM, grafting, mating disruption, stink bug control, irrigation or water control, food safety.
  - Topics on vegetable farms: soil management and health, plant health and resistance, weed management, compost, food safety, harvest etc.
  - Example Hard Bargain Farm offered cow milking which was overnight for 5th graders.
  - Create simple videos to show what farmers do year round on the farm (not just a seasonal job).

##### **c. Partnership with Mountainside Education and Enrichment**

- Has a very popular summer harvest camp: 4 weeks of harvest and food preparation
- They got a grant for housing authority kids to attend camp; perhaps could do the same for some of the FCPS kids.

#### **2. CHEFS IN SCHOOL, facilitated by Elizabeth DeRose and Monica Skidmore**

- a. **Taste Tests:** Elizabeth DeRose explored ideas for education points offered at taste tests. Some ideas were offering apple slices with salt, lemon etc. Monica Skidmore addressed

time challenges in cafeteria and feasibility of offering these options. Suzanne Markowitz from the FMH 5210 program would like to attend.

- b. **Smarter Lunchroom Scorecard:** We briefly touched on the Smarter Lunchroom Program. Monica Skidmore explained what the program is and then shared her results from visiting the 5 Pilot Schools. She was able to categorize information into categories:
    - What FNS can do with just a little effort and change,
    - What would require more effort and change like money, equipment or policy change, and
    - What FNS can do occasionally at some schools but not regularly.
- 3. GARDENS AT SCHOOL, facilitated by Kim Leahy**
- a. **Garden Volunteers:** Everyone feels the volunteers are the lifeblood of garden projects. We talked briefly about more specific assignment of volunteers to create a feel of ownership in the volunteer. Kim Leahy will be keeping records on all of the pilot school garden progress and events and will attend many, if not all of the classroom days in the garden.
  - b. **Garden Goals:** Start small with spring and fall garden lessons paired with specific classes and dedicated teachers. Will always seek approval from Principals and include school custodians in garden planning conversation from the outset.
    - 1. **Lincoln ES:** JoAnne Coates-Hunter from Fox Haven Farm with Farmer Natasha Bowens Blair as a lead for garden volunteers at Lincoln. Natasha's husband works at Lincoln ES. Lincoln has garden beds and a history of doing garden projects. Need to connect with the right staff person.
    - 2. **Hillcrest ES:** Kim Leahy is the garden lead and Zoe Haughwout, FNS Assistant Manager, is assisting. Zoe has a group of Starbuck's volunteers who would like to help with school gardens. Will explore matching volunteers up with specific schools to help throughout school year. Will be meeting with Hillcrest on Jan 24 with Pam Wallace, first grade teacher, garden champion.
    - 3. **North Frederick ES:** MG's Dave Sullivan and Don Ludke from discussed past garden projects with the pilot schools, and mentioned North Frederick has established garden space that has potential.
    - 4. **Waverley ES:** Mark Gregory, F2S Planning Team member, is the garden lead at Waverley ES. He is working with a 3 teachers, garden champions, at this school. They are very excited and dedicated to the garden project. Planning meetings with teachers are on their way.
    - 5. **Monocacy ES:** Kim Leahy will lead with Erin Kline is garden champion and will pursue meetings with Principal and maintenance staff to discuss spring timeline and possibilities.
  - c. **FCPS and MG Partnership:** Michael Bunitsky, member of FCPS Schoolboard suggested looking into pursuing official partnership between FCPS and Frederick County Master Gardeners. Kim Leahy will explore possibilities, pros and cons of such a partnership with the Master Gardener group and follow-up with Mr. Bunitsky.

**FCPS Kitchen Tour** – Participants were given a tour of FCPS kitchen and discussed all logistics that go into serving school meals.

**Why this work is incredibly important** – **Melanie Hoff FCPS Manager**, shared her personal story about how changing her eating patterns improved her health and her desire to provide the same opportunity and lessons for her children.

**Strategic Shift** – **How do we get the word out about Frederick County Farm to School?** Full strategic shift summary on page 4 of notes.

Participants worked in groups and drilled down to explore challenges and solutions relating to spreading the word about the Farm to School Initiative. The set up went as follows:

**Key Challenge: How do we get the word out about Frederick County Farm to School?**

- What are the major obstacles to “getting the word out about F2S”?
- What are the strategies to overcome obstacles in #1?
- What are the potential pitfalls to the strategies in #2?
- How do you overcome the pitfalls in #3?

**Next Steps -**

- Next Meeting = March 12<sup>th</sup>. FCPS Career and Technology Center, Spires Café. 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.
- Food Waste Study. Will contact Mountainside Education Center.

**Other Comments -**

- Possibly identify some key connections ahead of time to solidify more concisely how groups work together, for example, partnership paperwork and requirements.



## Community FARE & Frederick County Public Schools Farm to School Planning Team Meeting #3

**Date:** Tuesday, March 12, 2019  
**Time:** 5:30 – 6:00 pm Meet and Greet  
6:00 – 8:30 pm Meeting  
**Location:** Frederick County Career and Technology  
Center, Spires Café.  
7922 Opossumtown Pike Frederick, MD 21702

### F2SPT Meeting #3 SUMMARY NOTES

#### Progress Made in F2S Thus Far:

**-Restated Frederick County Farm to School Goal:** To positively impact student health, student education and economic growth of the County's agricultural sector by increasing the availability of locally grown fruits and vegetables in Frederick County Public Schools.

**-Circled back to the 5 Pilot Elementary Schools:** UMD EXT, provided updated % Free and Reduced Meals data for each school: North Frederick 50% FARM, Monocacy 58% FARM, Lincoln 71% FARM, Hillcrest 83% FARM and Waverley 100% FARM.

**-Introduced a DRAFT of the Farm to School Logic Model:** Described how logic models are used in program planning, implementation, evaluation and implementation. Reviewed the logic model and the program inputs, activities, outputs, short-term outcomes and intermediate and long-term outcomes.

**-Restated USDA definition for Farm to School:** Farm to school enriches the connection communities have with fresh, healthy food and local food producers by changing food purchasing and education practices at schools and early care and education sites. Farm to school implementation differs by location but always includes one or more of the following: (1) Procurement: Local foods are purchased, promoted and served in the cafeteria or as a snack or taste test; (2) Education: Students participate in education activities related to agriculture food, health or nutrition; and (3) School gardens: students engage in hands-on learning through gardening.

#### Updates:

- **Procurement:** Catocin Mountain Orchard supplies a variety of fruit throughout the year which totals ~\$54,000. Tasks (1) Exploring menu options for local spring and fall foods, (2) Conducting Farmer Interviews in partnership with UMD EXT, (3) Identifying local options for Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, (4) Exploring fresh, local food options for summer meal program.
- **Education:** Farm to School is working in partnership with UMD EXT FSNE (Food, Supplement, Nutrition Education) educator, Haylee Staruk. Haylee provides nutrition education at four of five pilot schools. She is partnering with us on the Farm to School taste tests. She also is meeting with FCPS Food and Nutrition Services Dietitian, Monica Skidmore to explore working together on Smarter Lunchroom strategies.

- **School Gardens:** Farm to School is working in partnership with the Frederick County Master Gardeners lead, Kim Leahy. Four of five pilot elementary schools have school gardens planned for this spring. Farm to School is in process of identifying garden champions at North Frederick Elementary School. A Master Gardener has volunteered to be a garden leader at this school.

**-Lincoln Elementary School Taste Test Report:** Farm to School Taste Test Goals: (1) To partner with cafeteria staff to strategize best way to offer sliced apples for taste test and future meals.(2) To give students the opportunity to meet a farmer. (3) To increase student understanding of how apples grow. (4) To help students explore taste by distinguishing between tart and sweet apples. (5) To help spread the word about FCPS and Farm to School. (6) To help foster the connection from cafeteria to classroom.

Apples n=411 sampled	Loved it n (%)	Liked it n (%)	Tried it n (%)	Did not participate n (%)
Kindergarten	53	5	6	7
First Grade	66	1	4	8
Second Grade	69	4	0	7
Third Grade	28	5	6	4
Fourth Grade	46	9	5	2
Fifth Grade	54	7	6	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>316 (76%)</b>	<b>31 (8%)</b>	<b>27 (7%)</b>	<b>37 (9%)</b>

(Enrollment = 591 students.  $411/591 \times 100 = 70\%$  participation overall in taste test. \*Not every teacher turned in data sheet. Participation numbers are most likely lower than actual.)

**-Lincoln ES Taste Test Student Quotes:**

- “I liked it so much. Can they come again?”
- “The apples were good!”
- “The apples were so yummy!”
- “Thank you!”

**-Reviewed Results of Strategic Shift Summary: How to get the word out about Farm to School?**

Complete Results Table at end of Summary Notes. Challenges: Funding. Buy-in and Support. Social Media. Size and Scope of FCPS. Program Sustainability. Solutions: Community Partnerships. Business Sponsors. Dedicated F2S Staff. Testimonials. Website. Structured Marketing Campaign. Create Best Practices at 5 Pilot Schools.

**Large Group Discussion and Handout #1:**

**(1) Why does Farm to School Matter?**

- Excite and educate students about where their food comes from and how it is grown.
- An opportunity to educate students early on about good foods and healthy eating.
- To inspire students to try foods and expose students to different foods.
- To increase demand for local foods and increase access to local, healthy produce.
- To support our local farming community and generate new customers for farmers.
- To build a sense of community and increase community engagement around food.
- Decrease carbon footprint and environmental impact.

## (2) What would you like this initiative to achieve?

- To find as many farmers as possible to grow for FCPS.
- To educate students and parents about apples and farm and safety practices.
- To help students appreciate fresh produce and experience the taste difference.
- To help students learn more about how to prepare foods.
- To find permanent champions for gardens at individual schools in case school leaders change.
- Organize collaboration and commitment of stakeholders to empower and influence change.

## (3) How might this Farm to School initiative enhance your organization's capacity to provide services?

- **Senior Services Division:** We need to talk about healthy eating and healthy bodies throughout the lifespan. We need greater availability and affordability of local projects for all Frederick County residents. It would be great to generate a more public conversation about food (in all aspects).
- **Farmer:** I would like to participate in more taste tests with students. I would also like to host a "Meet the Farmer night" for parents.
- **FCC HCTI:** Our program is about culinary education so it's a natural fit for us to bring our program to assist secondary educators in starting food education early. There may be an opportunity for us to provide culinary skills training to FCPS food service staff with regard to recipe development and incorporating local foods.
- **American Fruit Grower Managing Editor:** I think we can help growers see Farm to School as an important project within their communities.
- **Food Service Assistant Manager:** I would like to increase our ability to give students fresher product that lasts longer. In addition to helping to reduce food waste and packaging. It's important to help us continuously connect food to classroom curriculum and create a greater community connection.
- **Farmer:** We would like to host school field trips and educate about alternative ways to grow foods. This initiative can help us think about a whole different clientele – kids. F2S can help us brainstorm about foods we can grow for FCPS and ways to introduce students to new foods.
- **Master Gardener:** Our slogan is "grow it, eat it" and this is something all children can do and appreciate for their own pleasure, tastes and accomplishments.
- **FNS:** This initiative can help educate students about healthy local foods and where their food comes from. If we are able to include more local foods in the school meal program and educate more about local foods, we could potentially feed more children.

### **Moving Forward. Sustainability Exercise:**

The article, "Public health program capacity for sustainability: a new framework" by Sara F Schell was used as the foundation for the sustainability discussion. The Farm to School conversation focused on the following domains: (1) Political Support, (2) Funding Stability, (3) Partnerships, (4) Organizational Capacity, (5) Program Evaluation, (6) Communications. The following chart outlines key concepts to consider.



Domain	Focus	To Consider	Next Steps
<b>Political Support</b> Ranked as a high priority domain.	No matter the level at which your program operates, the overall economic and political climate will affect your ability to get things done.	School districts are influenced by superintendents, school boards and local politicians.	-Pursue Board of Education presentation. -Presentation on agriculture and economy for elected officials.
<b>Funding Stability</b>	It's necessary to establish a consistent financial base for F2S in the short term and in the long term.	Planning for the sustainability of funding should be a strategic process.	-Develop a funding plan to ensure key infrastructure is maintained.
<b>Partnerships</b> Ranked as a high priority domain.	Cultivate a connection to all Farm to School stakeholders.	Building awareness and capacity for sustainability requires a strategic approach and partnerships between public and private organizations.	-Draft partnership agreements. -Expand farmer partnerships to meet needs for increased volume (spec sheet), summer meal program and field trips.
<b>Organizational Capacity</b>	Having the internal support and resources needed to effectively manage the F2S program.	Strengthening our program's internal support can increase program's likelihood of long-term success.	-Continue to cultivate internal leaders and champions who will advocate for F2S across FCPS and in community. -Coordinator/Backbone Organization
<b>Program Evaluation</b>	Having the ability to have a plan in place to assess program and document results with the ability to take action and adapt program to ensure ongoing effectiveness.	Evaluating F2S builds sustainability by keeping the program on track with its goals and outcomes.	-Draft Action Plan for USDA grant which addresses program goals and outcomes and present to stakeholders. -Use Logic Model as roadmap and refer to often.
<b>Communication</b> Ranked as a high priority domain.	Strategic communication with stakeholders and public about Farm to School Program.	Communicating externally about F2S's effectiveness helps the program gain greater visibility. Internally, evidence that a program works builds staff buy-in and support from organizational leaders.	-Build partnership with FCPS communication team and CTC program. -Develop Fact Sheet to assist Farmers with school partnership and add to website. -Foster communication between farmers and FNS.

**Large Group Discussion – Sustainability Exercise:**

Each Working Group answered the question, “In order for the Farm to School initiative to successfully continue over time, it needs \_\_\_\_\_.”

### Answers:

**-Farmer to School:** Presentation on agriculture and economy to public officials and decision makers. Partner with other institutions. Farmer's commitment to the school. Establishment of regular market for farmers. Communication between schools and farmers. Farm field trips embedded into schools. Get Farmer testimonials.

**-Chefs in School:** Flexibility. Availability of food during school months. Farms with green houses and hydroponic growing practices. Cost effective recipe development. Staffing trained and on-board. Inclusion of summer meal program. Processing equipment.

**Gardens at School:** Garden must tie in with grade curriculum. Must have administration and custodian buy-in. Must have teacher champion. Family engagement can be a source of help and monetary support.

### Gap Year Funding Update:

Fundraising Goal for 2019 – 2020 school year is \$30,000. Investigating grant opportunities along with business sponsorships and community donations. Two \$500 sponsorships received so far from Frederick County Bank, Colliver Dental Group; awaiting confirmation of two more.

- Fruit and Veggie Lover = \$500 tax deductible donation
- Foodie Sponsor = \$1,500 tax deductible donation
- Locavore Sponsor = \$3,000 tax deductible donation
- Local Food Movement Champion = \$5,000 tax deductible donation

### Brainstorm for Funding Options:

- Apple Crunch for Education, United Way, Community Foundation, Livable Frederick, County Executive initiatives and Sustainability Program, Mother Earth News and FNP, Wegmans, H-Mart, Common Market.

### Action Planning:

Farm to School working groups were asked to determine three areas of focus that they thought were important to consider for the 2019-2020 school year. One participant voiced the need to: (1) Get coordinator, (2) Secure funding, (3) Increase communication. Other participants worked in groups and highlighted the focus areas below:

#### Farmer to School

1. Identify and partner with at least 1 more farmer and align with school feeder patterns.
2. Curriculum development around agriculture, local food and farms (e.g. hydroponics).
3. Make Farm to School a part of Ag Week.
4. Identify risks for each of the farmers and address those risks.
5. Raise money for a Farm to School Coordinator to liaison with farmers and schools.

#### Chefs in School

1. Expand taste tests as criteria in Smarter Lunchroom Scorecard (e.g. each 1 time a year fruit, veg, entrée).

2. Expand Farmer partnerships and promote locally featured Farms through existing programs (e.g. LYNX supper, snack, FFVP).
3. Find ways for more efficient food processing with skills training and equipment.

**Garden at School**

1. Draft written parameters for beginning school gardens (e.g. teachers, admin, and volunteers).
2. For gardens in 5 pilot schools, establish regularly scheduled garden days with volunteers.
3. Have a school garden liaison that tracks data and garden coordination.



## Community FARE & Frederick County Public Schools Farm to School Planning Team Meeting #4

**Date:** Monday, May 13, 2019  
**Time:** 5:30 – 6:00 pm Meet and Greet  
6:00 – 8:30 pm Meeting  
**Location:** Frederick Memorial Hospital  
Classroom # 1, Second Floor  
400 West 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Frederick, MD 21701

### F2SPT Meeting #4 SUMMARY NOTES

#### OPENING STATEMENTS

Janice opened the meeting and gave an overview of how we got to where we are today:

- Community FARE worked with Fox Haven Farm on an analysis of farmers and their challenges. It was determined that there is not a lot of diversity in marketplace; challenges with accessing markets.
- Looked at Food Hub model for aggregation and distribution and several institutions were interested and FCPS was most interested. FCPS is challenged, however, by the amount of fresh fruits and veggies needed. FCPS happy to start small.
- Community FARE participated in Livable Frederick which sent out questionnaires; 99% of people wanted their community to produce what they ate. Why isn't this happening? Deduced it is due to lack of market.

Alysia invited key FCPS to tell the group what F2S work and grant has meant to them:

- **Monica:** When FCPS first got pulled in, at first just Steve involved. My first instinct was defensive: We have fresh fruit and veggies in FCPS lunches. We are doing this already! We do apples, peaches, plums and pears. But there is so much more we could do besides fruit! The challenge is in what we can serve; e.g. we need farmers to grow tater tots, not potatoes. Monica feels like we are starting with big plans and she doesn't want it to die. If we can do this at school, we can do it other places like FMH, and senior living facilities. We write our own menus and have a lot of flexibility. I really hope this keeps going.
- **Steve O'Brey:** Here just 4 years; once I learned the area; I thought there should be another avenue to get fresh produce but I didn't have any one to approach until I met Janice. This has been an amazing journey. I tried to line up with Full Cellar Farm last year, but weather prohibited us from getting the produce. Monica and I are on same page and our boss is on same page and we're trying to get fresh produce on the menu for the summer. We just have to find the products and the farmers.

## **INTRODUCTION OF PLANNING TEAM PARTICIPANTS:**

- **Denice Barton**, VP is co-sponsoring meeting representing Live Well Frederick
- **Steve O'Brey**, Food Purchasing Coordinator for FCPS
- **Lisa Orr**, Community FARE, Mountainside Education and Enrichment
- **Robert Black**, Owner of Catoctin Mountain Orchard. Glad F2S approached him
- **Katlyn Robinson** – Catoctin Orchard F2S coordination; excited to educate students
- **Brandon Marshall** – Catoctin Mountain Orchard
- **Janice Wiles**: Community FARE, Dolce Lume Farm
- **JoAnn Coates-Hunter** – Fox Haven Farm. Glad to realize how far we have come
- **Rene Delauter**, Potomac Sprout Co
- **Margie Liddick** – Culinary Arts at Career Tech Center; we should be involved with F2S
  - Maybe we can help with food processing and feature F2S in fundraising dinner
- **Curtis Yu** – Potomac Sprout Co. Looking to be part of F2S distribution network
- **Kelly Nichols**, Extension, Agriculture education with small farmers
- **Monica Skidmore**, FCPS, Registered Dietitian
- **Jennifer Carpenter Hood**; Greenhouse manager; Food Sec Network
- **Haylee Staruk**, UMD Ext Educator at Title 1 schools
- **Mike Bunitsky**, Former teacher and member of FCPS Board of Education
- **Dave Sullivan**, Master Gardener; Teach for Maryland Agriculture Education Foundation
- **Jennifer Voltaggio**, Art Director/Graphic Designer; L.E.A.N Certified Health Coach and has a Tower Garden Business
- **Kim Leahy**; Master Gardner ; youth gardens; works with school gardens
- **Zoe Howell**, FCPS Cafeteria Site Manager at Middletown HS and Starbucks
- **Ginny Skelley**, Works for Meals on Wheels
- **Margie Lance**, Retired, Master Gardner, neighbor of N. Frederick ES
- **Rick Hood**, Summer Creek Farm, largest organic farm in FC; manufactures soils
- **Kip Kelly**: Full Cellar Farm
- **Alysia Mason Feuer**: Farm to School Coordinator.

## **MEETING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:**

**Frederick County Farm to School Goal:** To positively impact student health, student education and economic growth of the County's agricultural sector by increasing the availability of locally grown fruits and vegetables in Frederick County Public Schools.

### **F2S Meeting #4 Goals:**

3. To engage a wide range of community members in the research and planning of a Frederick County Farm to School Action Plan.
4. To celebrate the accomplishments of this Farm to School planning grant school year, meet new Farm to School partners, and determine next steps for the upcoming 2019-2020 school year.

### **F2S Meeting #4 Objectives:**

By the conclusion of the meeting F2SPT members will:

- Have had the opportunity to meet and network with other Farm to School partners.
- Feel inspired by where the F2S initiative began and where we are today.
- Feel committed to proceed as a Farm to School key partner with ideas for how to contribute.
- Have participated in prioritizing action steps for the upcoming school year.
- Be motivated to build systems to sustain Farm to School work indefinitely.

## FRAMEWORK FOR THE ACTION PLAN

### F2S Action Plan Table of Contents

- Build a Farm to School Team
- Vision, Goals and Objectives
- Local Food Procurement
- Menu Planning
- Food Safety
- Promotion and Outreach
- School Gardens
- Education & Curriculum Integration
- Evaluation
- Program Sustainability

## PANEL DISCUSSION

- **Rick Hood:** What benefit do you see in selling to schools? There is value in showing how whole food comes to their place. What is lacking in society is self-sustainability. Getting fresh foods in schools will educate kids about what fresh food tastes like and give them appreciation and incentive to try and pursue fresh foods.
- **Monica Skidmore:** Tell us about the new staff member and Bob Kelly's vision for next year with respect to Harvest of the Month? Bob Kelly invited myself and our newly hired Culinary Specialist/Chef Sean to start a harvest of the month program. He wants Sean to do some cooking demos in school. We also think it's important to align with curriculum and connect with science teachers; Haylee from UMD Ext has helped with that for taste tests; We will start with 10 schools; 5 title 1 and 5 other ES that are not Title 1. One school each month will get the demo. If it is a local food, we can include the farmer. Kids were very excited about farmers coming in for our apple taste tests!
- **Chris Yu:** What have you decided to do at Potomac Sprout Co? We have cold space at our facility and we are setting up for food processing. We can provide basic processing and make it easier to get fresh foods into school kitchens. For example, we can process the 1000 lbs. of broccoli grown at Summer Creek, bag it and add herbs and have it ready to send to schools.
- **Kim Leahy:** Tell us about the school gardens you have been working on? Kids are a never-ending source of enthusiasm. The whole process was more focused than I expected. Students were very attentive and followed guidelines. We have already harvested the radishes at Monocacy Elementary School. Best highlight --- each kid had their own radish. They had not seen a root vegetable come from the ground and they had a lot of great questions!

- **Mike Bunitsky:** What were your impressions at the North Frederick Taste Test? It was nice to see so many people invested in this Farm to School work. The students were attentive to Katlyn’s presentation. It was great seeing someone who was not a teacher grab the attentions of a full kid audience with varying age groups and attention spans. The only thing that was disappointing was the amount of food waste.
- **Alysia:** Farm to school has the ability to make an impact on reducing food waste. F2S is a platform that can help. There is no sense getting great food into school to have it thrown away.

**FOOD WASTE AND COMPOSTING**

- Lisa Orr gave a presentation on waste sorting and composting in schools and emphasized that good food is being wasted.
- 30 – 40% of food produced in US is wasted. That’s 63 million tons.
- At home, 15-25% of food is wasted. That’s a loss of \$1,500 - \$2,500 a year.
- Most food waste in US is sent to landfills, where it emits and estimated 124 million tons of greenhouse gases per year that contribute to climate change.
- Food related strategies are ranked as one of the top 3 solutions for reducing CO2 emissions
- Waste reduction at Frederick County schools is valuable to educate students and families
- 77%-88% waste reduction in pounds to landfills documented at 4 schools by separating organics liquids and recyclables
- Discovered a large quantity of untouched, packaged food and whole fruits discarded
- Next school year, a pilot program for composting has been approved at 14 schools by FCPS superintendent with funds from Rotary and FCPS.

**Data Driven Solutions:** Provided F2S Planning Team Members an opportunity to increase understanding about all data collection and share back what concepts were MOST COMPELLING.

<b>Food Service Director Interviews (n=5)</b>
<p><b>RELATIONSHIPS ARE IMPORTANT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers – Class visits, taste tests, field trips</li> <li>• Teachers - When staff is excited students get excited</li> <li>• Cafeteria Staff – Involve and empower cafeteria staff with F2S</li> <li>• Student Organizations – Expand reach with Student Government Association and other groups.</li> </ul> <p><b>PURCHASING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add building relationships with farmers to job description of purchasing coordinator</li> <li>• Ask FCPS FNS to define ‘local’ with Food Distributor</li> <li>• Use of reusable crates over boxes keeps food cost price down</li> <li>• Need to address price, volume and processing challenges</li> <li>• Increase understand of crop seasonality</li> <li>• Address need for an ordering system that meets requirements</li> <li>• Emphasize importance of keeping money in Frederick County</li> <li>• Start small, replace a select number of items</li> <li>• Opportunity to address food security by feeding more students</li> </ul>

- Expansion of summer feeding program with local produce

**EDUCATION**

- Taste Tests are an effective educational tool
- Host regular events such as Fresh Fruit Fridays
- Host Maryland Homegrown Week Kick-Off
- Engage partners (horticulture, agriculture, food science)
- Introduce more school gardens, inside and outside
- Need support for school gardens
- Ability to educate staff, students and families at nutrition, agriculture and environment

**Cafeteria Site Manager Interview (n=5)**

**Staff**

**Prevailing question, How do we feed more hungry children?**

- Desire to prepare foods so students will eat foods
- Staff feels students prefer fresh, portioned fruits and vegetables
- Need to expand slicing fresh fruits and veggies to increase eating – look into equipment
- Staff are challenged by time to prepare foods
- Early dismissal days are really challenging for school meals
- Breakfast is valued but difficult
- Food packaging is labor intensive and abundant
- Explore mashed potatoes
- Difficulty with student’s variable eating patterns
- Need better understanding for how to handle and ripen fresh foods (e.g. pears)
- Include dips with veggies

**Key Player Farm to School Survey (n=100)**

- School meals are critical access point for healthy foods
- Supportive environment for local food and Farm to School
- Only 23% of respondents think students have enough time to eat
- Need to make curriculum connection with health and food
- Increase student knowledge of food
- Taste tests at STEM nights are great idea
- Cooking lessons for parents for preparing fresh foods would be beneficial
- Pricing needs to match local market value
- Frederick County farmers grow very little produce, mainly commodity crops (e.g. corn, soybeans)
- Involve Blessings in a Backpack
- Involve High School green houses
- Parent volunteers
- Experiential is best (garden, tasting, field trips)

**Elementary STEM Leader Questionnaire (n=11)**

- STEM leaders value this project and would like farm field trip experiences
- Experiential learning in and out of classroom is desired
- Cost of field trips is limiting



- Need to incorporate F2S concepts in all areas of curriculum
- Food experiences of students are often limited to store, dinner table, restaurants
- Many students only exposed to urban areas and no connection to importance of farming

#### **Cafeteria Taste Tests (n=1,518 students)**

- Overwhelmingly high approval rating by all grades of taste tests
- Students want to try more foods and do more taste tests
- Students learned about health and science facts during taste test
- Very engaging comments from students grasping importance of F2S
- Students were interested in taste and taste buds
- It was interesting to discover students thought the apples were different from what was served in cafeteria

#### **FCPS CTC Culinary Arts Program**

- Culinary Arts program can help process fresh foods
- The collaboration with CTC culinary arts is great!
- What a great resource for CTC students and F2S
- Harvest of the Month stands out as a great idea to partner on with CTC
- Like the idea for CTC to assist with FNS staff training
- CTC Culinary Arts have local chefs and potential to expand relationships

#### **UMD EXT - FSNE**

- Respondents were not surprised people don't know how to use WIC vouchers
- Need for incorporating WIC for stronger community outreach
- Ag and Nutrition curriculum is available. Is it being used?
- 2<sup>nd</sup> grade F2S experiences are missing. Tower garden?
- Farm Market program with assembled meals is an idea to help people use fresh foods
- Need to increase school Principal understanding of FSNE resources

**Prioritization of Action Steps: F2S Planning Team Members ranked ordered priorities in each category. Top 5 Priorities are highlighted.**

<b>Chef to School and Food and Nutrition Services</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Offer local foods monthly as part of Harvest of the Month program.</li><li>2. Incorporate local produce in summer meal program. AND Continue to offer cafeteria taste tests.</li><li>3. Determine best practices for slicing local apples from Catoctin Mountain Orchard. AND Explore training and equipment needs necessary to serve more local apples.</li><li>4. Identify local options for Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.</li><li>5. Integrate Smarter Lunchroom strategies in cafeteria in partnership with UMD EXT. AND Expose and inspire students to try new foods.</li><li>6. Create regular promotional programs that include students and staff (e.g. Fresh Fruit Fridays) AND Define 'speed scratch' cooking methods and ability to incorporate for meal preparation. AND Link classroom to cafeteria by increasing teacher understanding of foods being served.</li><li>7. Increase positive morale of food service staff by engaging in F2S planning. AND Increase knowledge of local foods with food service staff. AND Plan ways to celebrate and highlight MD Homegrown Week and MD F2S Month with food service staff.</li><li>8. Integrate new recipes that use local seasonal produce.</li></ol>
<b>Farmer to School and Food and Nutrition Services</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Network and build relationships with fruit and vegetable farmers for selling to schools.</li><li>2. Investigate opportunities for season extension (e.g. hydroponics, greenhouses, high tunnels).</li><li>3. Collect personal farmer stories to educate students and community about local farmers and agriculture. AND Encourage Food Service Director to designate 'local' as first choice in purchasing contracts with Produce Distributor(s).</li><li>4. Print posters featuring local farmers for schools.</li><li>5. Explore interest and logistics of farmers scaling up to grow more produce for schools.</li><li>6. Identify challenges and solutions for farmers to partner with institutions, which includes labor. AND Foster relationships between FCPS FNS Procurement Manager, sub-district cafeteria site managers and farmers.</li><li>7. Develop F2S fact sheet for website to assist farmers with steps for how to begin selling to schools.</li><li>8. Promote locally featured farms through existing programs (e.g. LYNX supper, snack and FFVP).</li><li>9. Make "I grow great food for school lunches" t-shirts for our farmers.</li></ol>
<b>Gardens at School and Curriculum Development</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Establish regularly scheduled garden lessons that align with curriculum for spring and fall.</li><li>2. Help parents learn more about how to prepare fresh foods.</li><li>3. Create greater opportunities for hands-on experiential learning opportunities through curriculum alignment.</li></ol>

4. Create a partnership opportunity for F2S to be a part of Ag Week and The Great Frederick Fair. AND Establish partnerships for garden management and oversight at existing FCPS gardens. AND Explore middle school food science curriculum for integrating farm to school recipes.
5. Create farm field trip experiences that align with elementary school curriculum. AND Draft written parameter for beginning school gardens.
6. Investigate ways to connect F2S with high school agriculture and horticulture programs.
7. Identify FCPS Green Schools and establish a F2S partnership with them.

### **Food Waste Recommendations**

1. Divert edible food out of waste stream through partnership with food security groups and health department.
2. Begin composting at schools.
3. Develop new waste management policies for student education and positive environmental impact.

### **F2S Outreach and Promotion**

1. Implement regular Find out First messaging about F2S through FCPS.
2. F2S participation in school and community events (e.g. fairs, PTA meetings)
3. Prepare end of year summary report for County Executives. AND Find resources for bilingual outreach and promotion.
4. Create F2S video and promotional materials such as brochures, signs, billboards and banners.
5. Release regular social media messages to connect with students, parents and community (e.g. televise chef to school channel 18). AND Submit regular articles for FCPS staff newsletters and student take home folders. AND Hire a Communication professional to build and implement a structured marketing campaign to inspire students and parents.
6. Organize collaboration and commitment of stakeholders to empower and influence change.
7. Collect personal stories and testimonials to connect people to the importance of this work (e.g. food security and health).



## Market opportunity for local fruit and vegetable growers

### *Farm to School in Frederick County MD*

**The Farm to School team is looking for farm businesses interested in growing fruits and vegetables for Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) lunches, snacks, educational events and taste tests.** There are ways to start small by selling for taste tests and Farm to School events at the schools. We are interested in learning about your farm operation and ways we can collaborate! Quantities and prices have flexibility.

Current vegetables/fruits of interest:

VEGETABLE	MONTH (S)	QUANTITY/MONTH	PRICE
Sweet peppers	September-October	75 – 85 dozen (menu)	\$2.50/lb
Cucumbers	June - September	300 – 325 dozen (menu)	\$4.00/dz
Tomatoes (slicers)	August - September	1500 – 1600 lbs (menu)	\$1.00/lb
Cherry Tomatoes	September	20 – 25 pints (menu)	\$1.50/pt
Broccoli	May, June, Oct, Nov	500 – 550 lbs (menu)	\$1.50/lb
Winter Squash	November	50 – 75 lbs (menu)	\$1.75/lb
Summer Squash	September	50 – 75 lbs (taste test)	\$1.30/lb
Snap Peas (stringless variety)	May	20 – 30 lbs (taste test/ menu)	\$2.50/lb
Sweet Potatoes	October-December	Taste test	
Strawberries	May-June (1 <sup>st</sup> week)	75 – 100 flats 8/1lb flats (menu)	\$20 - \$23 per flat
Blueberries	September	100 flats 12-1/2Pt	\$18 - \$23 per flat

Work with us as we expand our kids' palettes and find a way to simply process produce so that FCPS can buy more local. Please get in touch!



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<https://l-cpf.org/community-fare/> , <https://www.frederickmdfarmtoschool.org/>

## Farmer Questions – Evaluating Risk with Selling to Local Institutions

**Interviewee:**

**Date:**

**Purpose:** To understand and propose solutions for potential production, financial, legal, and human risk associated with changing production systems and meeting food safety requirements to sell fruits and/or vegetables to Frederick County Public Schools.

**Interviewees:** Experienced and beginner fruit/vegetable growers in Frederick County MD

1) Tell us about your farm.

*How many acres?*

*What do you grow?*

*Where do you currently sell your produce?*

*Of the acres that you are currently farm, is that enough to supply your current markets?*

2) Have you sold produce to a local institution (schools, hospitals, etc.)? If so, what has been your experience?

*What benefit do you see in selling to institutions?*

3) Do you have additional acres that you could expand production to?

*- If yes, are you currently planning to expand? If so, for what markets?*

4) What resources do you already have that you could draw upon to scale up/expand?

5) Are you interested in selling to institutions?

*- If no, what do you see as the challenges for selling to institutions?*

*- What resources would you (and other farmers) need to overcome those challenges/barriers?*



We do this  
We can do this

We may need to purchase something to do this or have policy for  
We do this sometimes

# SMARTER LUNCHROOMS SCORECARD

Date 8-11-19 School Name all 5 Schools Completed by Monica Skidmore

The Smarter Lunchrooms Scorecard is a list of simple, no-cost or low-cost strategies that can increase participation, reduce food waste, and increase selection and consumption of healthy school food.

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Review the scorecard before beginning.
2. Observe a lunch period. Check off statements that reflect the lunchroom.
3. Ask other school nutrition staff, teachers, or administration about items that have an asterisk.\*
4. Tally the score.
5. Discuss the results with stakeholders. Choose unchecked strategies to implement in the lunchroom.

[SmarterLunchrooms.org](http://SmarterLunchrooms.org)

### FOCUS ON FRUIT

- At least two kinds of fruit are offered.
- Sliced or cut fruit is offered.
- A variety of mixed whole fruits are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets (instead of stainless steel pans).
- Fruit is offered in at least two locations on all service lines, one of which is right before each point of sale.
- At least one fruit is identified as the featured fruit-of-the-day and is labeled with a creative, descriptive name at the point of selection.
- A fruit taste test is offered at least once a year.\*

Focus on Fruit Subtotal 2 of 6

### VARY THE VEGETABLES

- At least two kinds of vegetables are offered.
- Vegetables are offered on all service lines.
- Both hot and cold vegetables are offered.
- When cut, raw vegetables are offered, they are paired with a low-fat dip such as ranch, hummus, or salsa.\*
- A serving of vegetables is incorporated into an entrée item at least once a month (e.g., beef and broccoli bowl, spaghetti, black bean burrito)\*.
- Self-serve spices and seasonings are available for students to add flavor to vegetables.
- At least one vegetable is identified as the featured vegetable-of-the-day and is labeled with a creative, descriptive name at the point of selection.
- A vegetable taste test is offered at least once a year.\*

Vary the Vegetables Subtotal 4 of 8

### HIGHLIGHT THE SALAD

- Pre-packaged salads or a salad bar is available to all students.
- Pre-packaged salads or a salad bar is in a high traffic area.
- Self-serve salad bar tongs, scoops, and containers are larger for vegetables and smaller for croutons, dressing, and other non-produce items.
- Pre-packaged salads or salad bar choices are labeled with creative, descriptive names and displayed next to each choice.

Highlight the Salad Subtotal 2 of 4

### MOVE MORE WHITE MILK

- Milk cases/coolers are kept full throughout meal service.
- White milk is offered in all beverage coolers.
- White milk is organized and represents at least 1/3 of all milk in each designated milk cooler.
- White milk is displayed in front of other beverages in all coolers.
- 1% or non-fat white milk is identified as the featured milk and is labeled with a creative, descriptive name.

Move More White Milk Subtotal 2 of 5

### BOOST REIMBURSABLE MEALS

- Cafeteria staff politely prompt students who do not have a full reimbursable meal to select a fruit or vegetable.
- One entrée is identified as the featured entrée-of-the-day, is labeled with a creative name next to the point of selection, and is the first entrée offered.
- Creative, descriptive names are used for featured items on the monthly menu.
- One reimbursable meal is identified as the featured combo meal and is labeled with a creative name.
- The combo meal of the day or featured entrée-of-the-day is displayed on a sample tray or photograph.
- A (reimbursable) combo meal is offered as a grab-and-go meal.
- Signs show students how to make a reimbursable meal on any service line (e.g., a sign that says "Add a milk, fruit and carrots to your pizza for the Power Pizza Meal Deal!")
- Students can pre-order lunch in the morning or day before.\*
- Students must use cash to purchase à la carte snack items if available.
- Students have to ask a food service worker to select à la carte snack items if available.\*
- Students are offered a taste test of a new entrée at least once a year.\*

Reimbursable Meals Subtotal 2 of 11

### LUNCHROOM ATMOSPHERE

- Cafeteria staff smile and greet students upon entering the service line and throughout meal service.
- Attractive, healthful food posters are displayed in dining and service areas.
- A menu board with today's featured meal options with creative names is readable from 5 feet away when approaching the service area.
- The lunchroom is branded and decorated in a way that reflects the student body.
- Cleaning supplies or broken/unused equipment are not visible during meal service.
- All lights in the dining and meal service areas work and are turned on.
- Compost/recycling and trash cans are at least 5 feet away from dining students.
- There is a clear traffic pattern. Signs, floor decals, or rope lines are used when appropriate.
- Trash cans are emptied when full.
- A menu board with tomorrow's featured meal with creative names is readable from 5 feet away in the service or dining area.

Lunchroom Atmosphere Subtotal 7 of 10

### STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

- Student artwork is displayed in the service area or dining space.
- Students, teachers, or administrators announce today's menu in daily announcements.\*
- Students are involved in the development of creative and descriptive names for menu items.\*
- Students have the opportunity to volunteer in the lunchroom. ?
- Students are involved in the creation of artwork or marketing materials to promote menu items.\*
- Students provide feedback (informal - "raise your hand if you like..." or formal - focus groups, surveys) to inform menu development.\*

Student Involvement Subtotal 0 of 6

### SCHOOL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- A monthly menu is posted in the main office.
- A menu board with creative, descriptive names for today's featured meal options is located in the main office.
- A monthly menu is provided to students, families, teachers, and administrators.\* *online*
- Information about the benefits of school meals is provided to teachers and administration at least annually.\*
- Nutrition education is incorporated into the school day.\*
- Students are engaged in growing food (for example, gardening, seed planting, farm tours, etc.).\*
- Elementary schools provide recess before lunch.\* *Some ???*
- The school participates in one or more food promotion programs such as Chefs Move to Schools, Fuel Up to Play 60, Share Our Strength, etc.\*
- The school has a partnership with Farm to School, local business(es), or a farmer's market.\*
- Smarter Lunchrooms strategies are included in the Local School Wellness Policy.\*

School Involvement Subtotal 3 of 10

## SMARTER LUNCHROOMS SCORECARD TOTAL

Focus on Fruit	<u>2</u>	of 6
Vary the Vegetables	<u>4</u>	of 8
Highlight the Salad	<u>2</u>	of 4
Move More White Milk	<u>2</u>	of 5
Reimbursable Meals	<u>2</u>	of 11
Lunchroom Atmosphere	<u>7</u>	of 10
Student Involvement	<u>0</u>	of 6
School Involvement	<u>3</u>	of 10
<b>Scorecard Total</b>	<b><u>22</u></b>	<b>of 60</b>

### AWARD LEVEL

-  **Bronze 15-25**  
Great job! This lunchroom is off to a strong start.
-  **Silver 26-45**  
Excellent. Think of all the kids that are inspired to eat healthier!
-  **Gold 46-60**  
This lunchroom is making the most of the Smarter Lunchroom Movement. Keep reaching for the top!

For Scorecard FAQs visit:  
[SmarterLunchrooms.org](http://SmarterLunchrooms.org)

The asterisk \* indicates items that may need input from other school nutrition staff, teachers, or administration.

Smarter Lunchrooms Scorecard 2.0

© Smarter Lunchrooms Movement, Cornell University 2019  
Funded in part by USDA FNS/ERS



### DEFINITIONS

**Point of Sale (POS):** Anywhere students leave the line with food and are charged or counted, such as at a register, check-out, or PIN pad

**Point of Selection:** Anywhere students select food or drink

**Service Line:** A designated line for meal selection—deli bar, salad bar, hot lunch line, snack window, etc.

**Grab-and-Go:** A pre-packaged reimbursable meal

**Reimbursable Meal/Combo Meal:** Any meal that meets all the USDA meal requirements and is priced as a unit

**Featured Items:** A fruit, vegetable, milk, or entrée that has been identified for promotion



## Appendix F: FSNE Garden Planning Checklist

### **FSNE GARDEN PLANNING CHECKLIST**

#### Defining the Garden Project

- Does the site already have a garden?
  - If yes, who sponsors the garden?
  - If yes, what curriculum is being used?
- Who is the target audience or grade that will utilize the garden?
- How many students will use the garden?
- How many gardens are desired/needed?
- 

#### Planning the Garden

- During which months will the garden be used (spring, fall, summer)?
- Has the soil been tested (in a raised bed or in the ground)?
- Who will plant and maintain the garden?
- Is all wood, untreated wood, or pre-made raised bed kits?
- Is the site for the garden on level ground?
- Is the site for the garden away from potential contamination sources (e.g. dumpsters, bird feeders, water runoff from parking lots, road, or agricultural areas)?
- Is there a safe to drink water source nearby? No rain barrels.

#### Soil, Compost, and Fertilizer

- Use commercially made growing medium with commercially prepared (MDA certified) compost.
- Do not use animal products in the garden.
- Fertilizer may be used, but must not be applied by children and must be stored out of reach.

#### Pest Control

- Floating row covers can be used to prevent insects, birds and wildlife damage.
- No pesticides can be used in gardens – no weed killers, insecticide, or fungicide.
- Mulch, straw, newspaper and weed barriers can be used to prevent weeds around the garden.

#### Human Resources

- Who will teach the nutrition education lessons?
- Who will provide gardening expertise and training?
- Have you secured the support of the administrators, community leaders, or other authority figures at the site?
- Is the site maintenance team on board with this project?
- Who is on the garden team (e.g. staff, volunteers, community groups, Master Gardeners)?
- Who will be maintaining and harvesting the garden?
- Has a watering and maintenance schedule been established?
- Who will be building and planting the garden?

**Food Service Director Interviews – Data Summary  
(n= 5 Harford, Charles, Washington, Garrett Counties and Baltimore City)**

**1. What does F2S mean to your school(s) or district? How do you define “local”?**

- We have a produce contract with Coastal and they have their own definition of local (e.g. ~150 mile radius from their location).
- Anything you can send out and return with in a day (~4 hours / 300 mile radius).
- We define local within a 200 mile radius. We put language in our RFP with Coastal Produce that they are required to source local first. They will supplement from further away to provide desired quantity if necessary.

**2. How often on average does your school include local foods?**

- In winter months we supply local apples (2 Counts)
- We have only done Farm to School week in September
- We offer fresh corn on the cob in September
- In the spring we often get strawberries
- After first frost we purchase most from produce supplier
- We started by replacing two menu items

**3. What do you like MOST about your F2S program? What are your greatest successes?**

- **STAFF Pride**
  - More satisfaction and pride in staff.
  - Receive reports from staff with great student feedback.
  - Have really educated and strengthened the skill set of our staff. This is huge success!
  - We have 800 people on our staff and now they also know more about fresh fruits and vegetables and can take that information home to their family and communities.
- **Connection to Students**
  - Educating students on where their food comes from.
  - Being able to tell the kids that their food was grown here in the county.
  - We have connected the dots by giving kids the opportunity to eat well.
  - Provide students with access to nutritious foods!
- **Partnerships**
  - Distributors:
    - If we use our Distributor, part of our bid practice is to specify local.
    - We needed better reports from Coastal Produce to be able to track local purchases. They listened and provide us very streamlined reports with farm location and quantities
  - Farmers:
    - Building the relationship with the farmers and keeping the dollars in our county.
  - Schools:
    - Schools now are more excited to do school gardens.
- **Environment and Long-term Impact**
  - We use crates and we aren't wasting the boxes.
  - It's an investment worth making for long-term impact.

#### 4. What do you like LEAST about your F2S program? What are your GREATEST CHALLENGES?

- **Behavior Change**
  - Getting students to eat the local food provided is challenging.
  - It's hard to change routine and patterns of staff, administration and students.
  
- **Procurement**
  - Connection to Farmers and Communication
    - It's difficult to meet with farmers.
    - I (Food Service Director) stop by and talk to the farmers. It's all about relationships and we managed a great partnership by talking in person.
    - The key thing is the communication and once you commit and foster the relationship, the trust builds over the years. One must honor the commitment to the farmer, this is his livelihood.
    - Farmers are cautious with committing to school systems.
    - We communicate by email with Staff and Farmers. I send emails to my 15 managers and let them know what is available and they get their orders back to me by Wednesday at noon. I then submit the order to the Farmer on Thursday, and we get it Monday.
  
  - Terminology - Farmers use different terminology and don't understand the school bid process. Getting on the same page is critical.
  - Price - Farmers thought we had bonus money that we don't have. We have price points to meet.
  - Volume - Farmer cannot do the volume of the distributor. A Farmer can't feed my entire district.
  - Processing - We are not processing local foods yet in schools or with vendor.
  - Seasonality - The seasonal availability, the school schedule and the growing schedule doesn't match really well. None of our farmers have green houses. The farmer doesn't think the green house is worth it to them. They want to grow flowers, not produce in the winter. They say they can't afford the green house, heating, water, and cost for growing is so much more.

#### 5. Where is your F2S program MOST thriving?

- **Flexibility**
  - We don't put any limits on kids. If they want more apples or veggies, we give it to them.
  - We are receiving very fresh product, picked on weekend and we pick-up Monday.
  - Each week we see what is available. We have a system for how we order.
  - Our farmers will call and tell us about what they have and what their surplus is
  
- **Policies**
  - We have changed our Policies and that's huge, long-term success. What we do isn't an opinion of a few, it is the policy for the way we serve food. We have made changes based on previous government guidelines and we aren't going back. The hard work is done.
  
- **Veggies**
  - Salads, squash, zucchini, tomatoes, grape tomatoes, peppers, broccoli, cucumbers, cauliflower, kale.
  - Sweet potatoes: wedged, steamed and roasted (Conducted recipe development with staff)
  - Zucchini and squash we steam or sauté and put on pizza or serve as a side
  - Potatoes – We don't do potatoes because we have so many commodity potatoes

Question #5 Continued: Where is your F2S program MOST thriving?

- **Fruits**
    - Apples and pre-sliced apples
    - Watermelons
    - Slice oranges, kiwi, pre-chunked cantaloupe
  - **Other Local Foods**
    - Uncured hot dog (It has lower sodium than the turkey hot dogs, Hoffman meats.)
    - We buy local spices from Hartford Spice. They grind it that day and deliver the next day.
- 6. Where is your F2S program MOST struggling? What are your greatest needs in resources?**
- Public perception and our local definition can be very different.
  - More product availability. The summer feeding program is where we can do more.
  - In summer, packaging for cold is tricky and hot foods are easier.
- 7. What key partners should be included in a F2S program?**
- Get the educators on your side!
  - Continue ongoing discussions with PTA groups.
  - University of Maryland Extension.
  - USDA wants to work more closely with the schools and listening to the schools.
- 8. What are your TOP 3 TIPS for finding and connecting with farmers?**
- **Relationships and Trust:**
    - A lot of this work is personal relationships that need to be honored.
    - Recommend going to the farmers markets and build relationship from there.
    - It took a while to build the level of trust with farmers.
    - Using three orchards has helped us balance and share the purchasing with farmers.
  - **School Budgets**
    - Schools have budget limitations that need to be better understood.
- 9. What are some examples of your F2S activities?**
- **Taste Tests**
    - Student hospitality team leads taste test with the Student Government Association.
    - Staff conduct taste tests. Example: We featured a Washington Apple and a local apple. The local may not look as pretty but the flavor difference is tremendous.
  - **Farmer Visits School**
    - When we rolled out F2S week a farmer came in and taught the kids how to shuck corn. The kids loved it and the farmer loved it.
    - The farmer has a lot of pride and they are not recognized enough for what they do. Have the kids thank them and give them the opportunity to be recognized.
  - **Farm Field Trips**
    - A trip to Great Kids Farm has been developed for second graders which is approved and aligns with standard curriculum.
  - **Fresh Fruit Fridays**
    - We host fresh fruit Fridays and tweet out what foods are featured every Friday. We don't offer any canned or frozen fruits on Fridays.
    - Staff come down and can have fresh fruits on Fridays for free.

- **Host Maryland State Homegrown Week Kick-off**
  - MSDE in attendance
  - Get Politicians involved and have a big event.
  - Videos: We contracted with a video production group in Baltimore and made a video of our F2S work and we have used it a lot!
- **Educational Partners:**
  - Dietitians: Professionals go out and work with elementary students and talk to them about food and health.
  - Horticulture: Outdoor education center with green house hosts educational seminars with a focus on horticulture. Our local Master Gardeners volunteer there.
- **Gardens:**
  - Hydroponic gardens and vertical towers in two elementary schools. The schools did this through a foundation and partnered with the Culinary Arts Program.
  - Do not make gardens a food service thing but rather incorporate them as part of classroom.
  - Aquaponics project at an elementary school with tilapia, lettuce and tomatoes. Lettuce is sold to the cafeteria. Twice a year they will sell the fish.

**10. Overall, what would you conclude are your F2S Best Practices?**

- **TEACHERS:**
  - You need to get the teachers on your side.
  - Teachers' personal opinions can get in your way. Let them learn when they come to the cafeteria. Provide Teachers Free Samples!
- **EMPOWER CAFETERIA STAFF**
  - The staff will put the fruit crates out and showcase the different varieties of fruit as they ripen.
  - Staff will put the poster up with which local foods are available each week.
  - Cafeteria staff celebrate what is local in a variety of ways.
  - Staff at Elementary schools will cut the apples on the line using the orange wedger.
  - Staff enjoy seeing the kids get excited. We support staff and experience the changes to go local as we go.
  -
- **START SMALL**
  - We have focused on the high schools because we can do a good job with smaller number of schools.
  - We have one farmer that works with different suppliers. He delivers to H.S. and brings it to the warehouse for 5 complexes and then another drop and 4 of our Managers go straight to his stand.
- **PROMOTION**
  - Develop talking points about carbon footprint. (e.g. how much fuel is needed to transport Washington apples to Maryland?)
  - We always mark it on the menu. We have a farm to school logo.
  - We have 4 farmers that we work with and list on the menu each month.
  - Parents know what Farm is supplying their school and they like to support those farms.
  - Advertise on city buses.
  - Promote with full page ad on back to school packets.

## Partner Collaboration Agreement Farm to School Frederick County and Partner 2019 – 2021



### I. OVERVIEW

This Partner Collaboration Agreement (PCA) defines the collaborative and mutually valuable work by Farm to School Frederick County and \_\_\_\_\_. It recognizes that partners are autonomous, brought together to share skills and resources for the greatest collective impact. Both partners recognize that this is a voluntary relationship requiring teamwork, understanding, and cooperation for the benefit of the entire Frederick County community.

#### **Farm to School Frederick County**

Farm to School Frederick County is a partnership between the not-for-profit organization Community FARE and the Frederick County Public Schools Food and Nutrition Services (FNS).

**Farm to School Frederick County Goal:** To positively impact student health, student education and economic growth of the County's agricultural sector by increasing the availability of locally grown fruits and vegetables in Frederick County Public Schools.

This Farm to School Initiative is supported by three primary Working Groups: Farmer to School, Chefs in School and Gardens at School. The Working Groups develop and implement a plan of action related to their area of impact and communicate activities with Farm to School Leadership Team and Planning Team Members.

#### **Define Partner**

#### **Partner Goal:**

**Common Goal:** To achieve collective impact by mutually supporting each organization's goals and connecting with other community assets.

## II. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Community FARE/Farm to School Frederick County will:

- Recognize the responsibility and authority of each Partner through its governing body to determine its own policies and manage its own projects within the scope and spirit of this agreement.
- Provide capacity building opportunities for Partner through special invitations to planning team meetings.
- Recognize organization on our Farm to School website and other promotional materials as appropriate. This includes use of Partner logo and branded materials.
- Feature Partner in monthly partnership spotlights in Farm to School Communications.
- Inform the community about the positive impact of partnership through continuous communication (e.g. Website, Facebook page, Instagram, Newsletters, Email Blasts).
- Agree to consider data sharing opportunities as they arise, are appropriate, and within organization's policies with the goal of developing a common set of measures to evaluate performance and track progress toward goals.

### Partner will:

- Assign one individual from their organization to attend at least two Community FARE/F2S Planning Team and/or working group meetings.
- Provide capacity building opportunities for Partner through special invitations to planning team meetings.
- Involve Partner in Public Awareness Workgroup and other activities that support each organization's goals.
- Recognize organization on web, social media and promotions as appropriate. This includes use of Partner logo and branded materials.
- Agree to data sharing opportunities, as appropriate, and within organization's policies with the goal of developing a common set of measures to evaluate performance and track progress toward goals.

## III. CONDITIONS OF ALTERATION OR TERMINATION:

- Any of the signatory organizations may choose to withdraw from the Partnership Agreement by providing written notice.
- This Partnership Collaboration Agreement in no way restricts the signatory organization from participating with other public, private or nonprofit agencies, organizations or individuals.
- All activities conducted will be in accordance with state and federal law.

## IV. SIGNATURES

### Partner

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Partner Name	Date
--------------	------

---

Executive Leader Signature	Date
----------------------------	------

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Executive Leader Printed Name	Date
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Phone	Email
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**Community FARE/Farm to School Frederick County**

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Community FARE/F2S Director Signature

Date

---

Community FARE/F2S Director Printed Name

Date

---

Farm to School Coordinator Signature

Date

---

Farm to School Coordinator Printed Name

Date

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# Farm to School

## Frederick County



The goal of Frederick County Farm to School is to positively impact student health, student education and the economic growth of our county's agricultural sector by increasing availability of locally grown fruits and vegetables in the Frederick County Public Schools.

**WE HAVE THREE SPONSORSHIP LEVELS FOR YOU TO SUPPORT THIS IMPORTANT PROGRAM. WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR PARTICIPATION!**



**FARMER TO SCHOOL**

FCPS serves your children local apples, peaches, strawberries, watermelon and cucumbers.

*Funds will be used to help develop farm partnerships that include farmer visits to schools, field trips to farms and more local fruits & vegetables in school meals and snacks*



**CHEFS IN SCHOOL**

Taste tests and "foodie" events with chefs peak student interest in eating nutritious foods!

*Funds will be used to buy local food, organize events and coordinate student and FCPS family involvement.*



**GARDEN AT SCHOOL**

Kids tend to eat what they grow. Frederick County Master Gardeners and community volunteers are working with FCPS to incorporate on-campus gardens & hands-on gardening in support of teacher lesson plans.

*Funds will be used for garden supplies, seeds and program coordination.*

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### Sponsorship Levels please check sponsorship level

- FRUIT AND VEGGIE LOVER** – \$500 tax deductible donation
  - Name and logo on Farm to School website
  - Name and logo on Farm to School Facebook page
- FOODIE SPONSOR** – \$1,500 tax deductible donation
  - Name and logo on Farm to School website & Facebook page
  - Name on 2019-2020 sponsor banner displayed at Farm to School events
- LOCAVORE SPONSOR** – \$3,000 tax deductible donation
  - Name and logo on Farm to School website & Facebook page
  - Name on 2019-2020 Sponsor banner displayed at Farm to School events
  - Name and logo on Farm to School promotional materials

Please fill out this form, mail or email to address below

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Name (as you would like it to appear)

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Primary Contact (first and last name)

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Address

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Email address

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Phone number

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**Checks should be made out to Community FARE**  
Please email the logo you would want used in promotional materials to [farm2schoolfrederickcounty@gmail.com](mailto:farm2schoolfrederickcounty@gmail.com)

**GET IN TOUCH!**  
 Alysia Feuer, Farm to School Coordinator  
[farm2schoolfrederickcounty@gmail.com](mailto:farm2schoolfrederickcounty@gmail.com)  
 P.O. Box 340, Walkersville MD 21793  
[info@communityfare.org](mailto:info@communityfare.org)  
 240-626-5209

**SUPPORT OUR 2019 CAMPAIGN!**  
*a project of Community FARE a 501(c)3 non profit*



## Resources

- Green Mountain Farm to School (Vermont):  
<http://greenmountainfarmtoschool.org/>
- National Farm to School Network (NFSN) Resources:  
[Evaluation for Transformation: A Cross-Sectoral Evaluation Framework for Farm to School](http://www.farmtoschool.org/resources)  
<http://www.farmtoschool.org/resources>  
  
[Getting Started with Farm to School Handout](#)  
  
[The Benefits of Farm to School Fact Sheet](#)
- Collective Impact Forum:  
<https://www.collectiveimpactforum.org/>
- Maryland Agriculture Education Foundation:  
<http://maefonline.com/>  
  
<http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?m=1112511313239&ca=7729a2c4-a876-404c-9726-bb20fe7d384a>
- Maryland Department of Agriculture – Farm to School  
[https://mda.maryland.gov/farm\\_to\\_school/Pages/farm\\_to\\_school.aspx](https://mda.maryland.gov/farm_to_school/Pages/farm_to_school.aspx)  
[https://mda.maryland.gov/farm\\_to\\_school/Pages/Food-Safety.aspx](https://mda.maryland.gov/farm_to_school/Pages/Food-Safety.aspx)  
[https://mda.maryland.gov/farm\\_to\\_school/School%20Gardens/USDA\\_Food%20Safety%20Tips%20for%20School%20Gardens.pdf](https://mda.maryland.gov/farm_to_school/School%20Gardens/USDA_Food%20Safety%20Tips%20for%20School%20Gardens.pdf)
- University of Maryland Extension, FSNE:  
<https://extension.umd.edu/fsne>  
<https://extension.umd.edu/fsne/fsne-youth-programs>  
<https://eatsmart.umd.edu/resources/curricula>  
<https://extension.umd.edu/fsne/fsne-youth-programs/smarter-lunchrooms>  
<https://eatsmart.umd.edu/locallygrown/gardening>  
<https://eatsmart.umd.edu/resources/curricula/growing-healthy-habits>  
<https://extension.umd.edu/learn/publications/food-safety-your-school-gardens-classrooms-and-greenhouses>  
<https://extension.umd.edu/frederick-county/home-gardening/mg-happenings-seminars-plant-sale-wcwdfy>
- USDA Food and Nutrition Services:  
[USDA Farm to School Planning Toolkit](https://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/farm-school)  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/farm-school>