

THE HEALTHY SCHOOLS ACT is a bill that was introduced in the DC City Council which aims to improve the health, nutrition and wellness of Washington, DC students.



The DC Farm to School Network thinks the following components of the bill are critical for farm-to-school programs in the District:

- 1. Local Food in School Meals** - Requires serving minimally-processed foods from sustainable growers in the mid-Atlantic region whenever possible.
- 2. Funding** - Provides an extra five cents per meal reimbursement to schools that serve local, sustainable foods, and creates grants to help schools solve farm-to-school logistical issues.
- 3. Food Origins Disclosure** - Requires transparency around where foods in school meals are grown and processed and if they were grown sustainably.
- 4. Education & Promotion** - Requires education for students and staff about the economic, environmental and nutritional benefits of farm-to-school, and farm-to-school events like Local Flavor Week and Harvest of the Month.
- 5. School Gardens** - Creates a School Gardens Program within OSSE¹ to provide training, technical assistance, and curricula, creates school garden grant, and encourages serving school garden produce to students.

We also support other components of the bill - visit www.dcfarmentoschool.org for more information.

Farm-to-school programs serve healthy, local foods in school meals and provide hands-on education to students about the connections between agriculture, food, nutrition and the environment.

Farm-to-School programs are proven to:²

- Increase fruit and vegetable consumption, thereby improving nutrition, health and preventing obesity and other diet-related diseases;
- Increase school meal satisfaction and participation, thereby reducing childhood hunger and generating revenues for school food service;
- Improve academic performance, discipline, and attentiveness;
- Decrease the distance food travels from farm to cafeteria tray, thus promoting community food security and reducing the school food carbon footprint;
- Increase market opportunities and job creation for local growers, as well as local food processors, distributors and manufacturers; and
- Encourage healthy eating habits in children, families and communities.

The DC Farm to School Network is a diverse coalition of advocates working to improve the health and well being of schoolchildren in the District of Columbia, and of our local environment and food economy, by increasing access to locally grown and minimally-processed foods in all DC schools.

For more information visit www.dcfarmentoschool.org.

¹ OSSE is an acronym for the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, which is Washington DC's equivalent to a state Department of Education, and administer the National School Lunch Program among other federal nutrition programs.

² For more information and research about farm-to-school benefits, see the publication *Bearing Fruit: Farm to School Program Evaluation Resources and Recommendations*, available online at departments.oxy.edu/uepi/cfj/publications/BF%20full%20report.pdf