Communicating the Importance of Farm to School with Administrators

Insert Name of Presenters
Peer Leadership Network

National Farm to School Network - Nourishing Kids and Communities
This training is brought to you with support from the National Farm to School Network.

Established in 2007, National Farm to School Network seeks to create strong and just local food systems that ensure the health of children, farms, the environment, the economy and communities. NFSN provides vision, leadership and support to connect and strengthen the Farm to School movement, which now includes more than 12,500 schools spanning all 50 states.

National Farm to School Network (NFSN) provides vision, leadership and support to connect and strengthen the Farm to School movement across the country. NFSN sets national priorities and policy goals, generates a research agenda, creates and aggregates resources, provides technical assistance, convenes gatherings and promotes the movement. NFSN includes national staff, eight Regional Lead Agencies, 50 State Leads, a 16-member Advisory Board and thousands of on the ground Farm to School supporters.
Farm to School
Peer Leadership Network

Goal: Strengthen farm to school training and technical assistance for stakeholders through peer learning.

• 20 Peer Leaders selected in 4 stakeholder groups:
  • Farmers
  • Child Nutrition Directors
  • Educators / Teachers
  • Early Child Education Providers
• 12 peer trainings developed and shared nationally
• Peer leaders available to provide one-on-one assistance
• The Peer Leadership Network is a project of the National Farm to School Network.
• The project is supported by Newman’s Own Foundation

This training is part of the Peer Leadership Network supported by the National Farm to School Network

Note to Presenter:
Briefly explain to attendees that this training is part of a series from the Farm to School Peer Leadership Network. This training was created by professional educators to conduct farm to school activities, and was created with their peers in mind. This training, and two other trainings designed for educators is available on the National Farm to School Network website at www.farmtoschool.org
Introduction & Outline

• Benefits of farm to school
• How farm to school touches the school community
• Role of school administrators in farm to school
• How to integrate farm to school into curriculum
• A farm to school case study for administrators: Worms in Schools?
**Note for Audience**

Farm to School Definition: Farm to school is the practice of connecting schools (K-12) and early care education settings with local food producers with the objectives of serving local, healthy foods in school cafeterias; improving student nutrition; providing agriculture, health and nutrition education opportunities;

F2S has 4 distinct components – Local or regional procurement, School gardens, food and agriculture curriculum, and experiential education such as farm tours, cooking demonstrations, and taste tests.

The Farm to School approach – when taken in it’s entirety - is the HOLISTIC APPROACH WE NEEDED TO PROMOTE. Not just one of these strategies, BUT ALL OF THEM TOGETHER to enable lasting change.
Note for Audience

Below is a summary of research findings on six key benefit areas of garden-based learning for children, youth, adults, and families:

1. Nutrition Awareness  
2. Environmental Awareness  
3. Learning Achievements  
4. Life Skills  
5. Health and Wellness  
6. Community Building and Social Connections

Recent studies demonstrate the link between healthy diets and academic achievement, prompting many school leaders to recognize the importance of healthy eating education and healthy food access as a core strategy for increasing overall student wellness and achievement.

Quantitative studies showed positive outcomes of school-gardening initiatives in the areas of science achievement and food behavior (Blair 2009). Science achievement of 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students was studied using a sample of 647 students from 7 elementary schools in Temple, TX. Students in the experimental group participated in school gardening activities as part of their science curriculum in addition to using traditional classroom-based methods. In contrast, students in the control group were taught science using traditional classroom-based methods only. Students in the experimental group scored significantly higher on the science achievement test compared to the students in the control group (Klemmer et.al. 2005).

Researchers surveyed around 5000 Canadian fifth grade students and their parents as part of the Children's Lifestyle and School-Performance Study. A standardized literacy assessment was administered to the children. Students with an increased fruit and vegetable intake and less caloric intake from fat were significantly less likely to fail the literacy assessment. "We demonstrated that above and beyond socioeconomic factors, diet quality is important to academic performance," the authors conclude. "These findings support the broader implementation and investment in effective school nutrition programs that have the potential to improve student's diet quality, academic performance, and, over the long term, their health." 3


Source: http://blogs.cornell.edu/garden/grow-your-program/research-that-supports-our-work/highlights-from-journal-articles/
Farm to School and Student Health

- Improvement in K-12 eating behaviors
- Increase in knowledge and awareness about gardening, agriculture, and healthy eating
- Demonstrated willingness to try new foods

Note to Presenter
The following notes are from the National Farm to School Network Fact Sheet “The Benefits of Farm to School.” The link to this fact sheet can be found below.

Note for Audience
Improvement in K-12 eating behaviors, including choosing healthier options in cafeteria; consuming more fruits and vegetables through Farm to School meals (+0.99 to +1.3 servings / day) and at home; consuming less of unhealthy foods and sodas; reducing screen time; and increasing physical activity.

Increase in knowledge and awareness about gardening, agriculture, healthy eating, local foods and seasonality (in early care and K-12 settings). Provides children with understanding of agriculture and the environment; improves life skills, self-esteem, social skills and behavior.

Demonstrated willingness to try out new foods and healthier options (in early care and K-12 settings).

Fruit and vegetable consumption of 337 2nd–5th grader in 3 LA elementary schools participating in the salad bar program and the USDA reimbursable lunch program were interviewed pre/post salad bar intervention utilizing a food recall questionnaire. Results indicated a salad bar as a lunch menu option in the USDA reimbursable lunch program can significantly increase the frequency of fruit and vegetable consumption by elementary-school children living in low-income households.1

To determine whether self-service salad bars vs. pre-portioned servings impacted fruit and vegetable consumption, 294 students in grades 1-5 were randomly selected from 2 schools with salad bars and 2 with pre-portioned servings. Fruit and vegetable consumption was positively related to the number and variety of fruit and vegetable items offered at salad bars.2


Note for Audience
Attendance equals income for schools. Therefore, healthy children have economic impact on school.

CHAMP, Child Health Assessment and Monitoring Program, report on School Absenteeism and Children’s Health in North Carolina from 2007-09 revealed the following key findings:

Based on parental report, students with greater absenteeism (two or more weeks) due to illness or injury compared to students with lower absenteeism (less than two weeks) were found to be:

- more likely to make mostly C’s, D’s, or F’s (27% vs. 15%);
- rated as in fair or poor general health (12% vs. 3%) and dental health (12% vs. 7%);
- more likely to have special health care needs (31% vs. 9%);
- more likely to live in a household experiencing issues with food insecurity (24% vs. 8%).

Note for Audience

According to USDA Farm to School Census results released in 2013, school districts nation-wide that bought local products in the 2011-2012 school year spent an estimated $2,586,684,645 on school food, with $354,599,266 of that directed locally.
Note to Presenter
The following notes are from the National Farm to School Network Fact Sheet “The Benefits of Farm to School.” The link to this fact sheet can be found below.

Note for Audience:
Food Service Morale - Improved food service staff motivation and morale; increased knowledge and interest in local food preparation, seasonal recipes, and interacting with teachers to strengthen classroom-cafeteria connections.

Food Service Operations - Improvements in food service operations, such as increased cafeteria offerings of fruits and vegetables; development of new seasonal recipes, and changes in cafeteria waste management policies.

Meal Participation - Increase in student meal participation from of 3% to 16% (average +9%) due to Farm to School programming, generating increased revenue through school meal programs.

Parents and families - Facilitate education about nutrition, food, and agriculture in and out of the classroom.

Communities – Improve the health of the community. Develop community support and awareness about local food systems. Money spent on local food in schools stays within the local economy.

Farmers - Average 5% increase in income from Farm to School sales for individual farmers.

Role of Administrators:
School Wellness & Farm to School

School administrators…

• Make important decisions and tip support around campus

• Make for great farm to school and wellness program advocates

• Can impede or succeed a program

• Provide top down support that encourages the sustainability of farm
to school programs

Note to Presenter
Teamwork is key. You can show this video about how three Minnesota school
districts built their farm to school team around the support of administrators.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z6BQ-___L6cg
Note for Audience:

**Principals** - Can guide and support staff, mobilize parents and get the community involved.

**School Board and Wellness Committees** - Help shape policies that support your Farm to School efforts, and can help you fulfill requirements of your district’s Wellness Policy. These committees are responsible for establishing guidelines and policies on the nutrition standards for school meals, ala carte items, and food sold outside the cafeteria and available during after school programs.

**Parents / PTA / Community Members** - Parents and even other community members often have an established understanding of school politics, policies, and programs, making them poised to assist or even lead the charge in establishing farm to school connections. They can approach food service, school administrators, and school boards with suggestions for change; they can volunteer in the classroom or cafeteria to help put changes into motion; and they can support these goals outside of the school by supporting local farms, and modeling desired dietary and exercise behaviors.

**Extension** – Cooperative Extension Systems are administered by each state’s Land-Grant University System. Programs are available in all 50 states and Washington D.C. and most have states have local or regional Extension offices that are staffed by one or more experts, often referred to as Extension agents or Extension educators.

**AmeriCorps** - The goal of the AmeriCorps Farm to School program is to provide an innovative approach to decreasing childhood obesity by promoting healthy eating habits in students and increasing access to local foods in schools. The program provides two half-time AmeriCorps members per site – a local food procurement member and a nutrition education member.

**Leaders of agricultural organizations** – represent and are often responsible for communication to large groups of producers; may provide promotional services for their members as well. These leaders can help schools, colleges, distributors, and processors identify local sources of foods and help their members understand farm to school opportunities.

Parents, Wellness Committee, Ag. Organizations: http://farmtoschool.cce.cornell.edu/files/all/fts_toolkit_oct07_chapter_3.pdf
Note for Audience:

School Administrators, such as superintendents, business administrators, principals, members of Boards of Education, and others responsible for the well-being of the school. At the K-12 level, budgets and accountability are two of administrations’ top concerns and thus, things necessarily taken into consideration when farm to school opportunities are presented to them. Because of these concerns it is very important that food service directors keep accurate records, and follow appropriate accounting procedures and bidding rules and regulations. It is also important that directors work with their farm to school partners to honestly discuss costs with administrators and communicate benefits of farm to school connections to districts.

Some benefits of farm to school include opportunities to: improve the health and academic outcomes of students; financially support the communities; develop new and/or stronger relationships between the school and community members; and, consequently, enhance the school’s public relations. By supporting local farms and distributors, schools help keep and recycle tax dollars within the community. As such, schools can be seen as giving these dollars back to the communities in which they are based and through which it is supported.

Additionally, as school personnel connect farmers, processors and distributors, parents, and other stakeholders, through the development and implementation of a farm to school program, members of the school district not previously acquainted often get to know one another and develop a sense of community. School news venues (websites and mailings) as well as local papers are great resources for letting parents and community members know about the positive outcomes of these school-based efforts. Through relationship building and outreach, farm to school efforts can help administrators build support for the school district.2

Teachers don’t want ‘one more thing’ on plate, emphasize how f2s integrates nicely into current goals, and it’s NOT a new program like STEM or NCLB. Show how it parallels what school already does. Farm to school could be the cross curriculum project that could be integrated into the whole school; which will meet state standards, which could reduce, human resource demands on the teachers.

http://farmtoschool.cce.cornell.edu/files/all/fts_toolkit_oct07_full.pdf
Connecting with Administrators: Anecdote

“Farm to school projects can be shared by multiple classes of students, crossing all curriculum for all ages. For example, the wellness class starts the garden idea and planning, the shop classes build the raised beds, the art class paint bird houses and planters, the math class figures out the inventory cost and weighs the produce, English journals about the garden plants, and the science class researchs the genetics, hybrid varieties of plants, beneficial insects, and the life cycles of plants and insects. Projects are presented at the science fair and fresh food is provided in the cafeteria.”

-Patti Armbrister
Hinsdale, Montana
Note for Audience:
On an average day in Davis, California, each elementary school in the Davis Joint Unified School District (DJUSD) generates approximately 140 pounds of waste from student lunches:

• This is enough for every school to fill two-thirds of a dumpster with trash from lunch each school day, 176 days of the year.
• Slightly more than 100 pounds of the daily lunch waste is food.
• On a yearly basis, that adds up to 9.2 tons per school, about as much as would fill nine dumpsters at each of the eight elementary schools in Davis.
• Almost one-fourth of all the “trash” thrown away every day is edible food—unopened packaged hot-lunch items such as burritos and bags of carrots, full cartons of milk, and untouched apples.
• Compostable food waste is also generated every lunch period—about 15 pounds from each school.

This food waste can be fed to worms or put in a compost pile, thus reducing the waste stream, cutting disposal costs, and providing students with hands-on learning activities that can be used to meet State standards. The Davis Joint Unified School District Food Waste Diversion Project includes vermicomposting, composting, food rescue efforts, and a switch to an offer-vs.-serve food service plan. The organic wastes generated from student lunches were composted or vermicomposted.

Harvest of the Month – Can focus on composting or vermicomposting the food scraps/kitchen waste from Harvest of the Month fruits and vegetables. Harvest of the Month is designed to motivate and empower students to increase consumption and enjoyment of fruits and vegetables. Harvest of the Month features a different produce item each month.

Farmer Visits – Can ask visiting farmer to talk about large-scale composting methods on the farm.
Science Curriculum – Fits nicely with biology curriculum, specifically the concept of decomposition.
Note for Audience:
One of the schools at Davis Joint Unified, Pioneer Elementary School, introduced a salad bar. The salad bar, which is called the “Crunch Lunch,” was offered as an alternative to the hot lunch. Students are given the choice between the hot lunch and a salad with fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables.

• The salad bar was tremendously popular: an average of 179 students, with as many as 300, choosing a salad every day it was offered. The number of hot lunches served declined from an average of 235 the previous year to 114 after the Crunch Lunch was available.
  • Remarkably, the food waste portion of the lunch waste stream at Pioneer decreased in volume by more than one-third after introduction of the salad bar.
  • The edible food being thrown away decreased by more than 60 percent—34 pounds of unopened packaged food and whole fruits were thrown away daily before the Crunch Lunch was available; only 14 pounds per day, after its introduction. Students clearly throw away less food when they are given the choice of a salad for lunch.
  • Each of the school sites were able to successfully divert food waste and implement effective composting systems for handling that waste.
  • Two of the three schools significantly reduced the total school waste stream, achieving 47 percent and 50 percent reductions by the end of the pilot year and saving the district $6,230 in disposal fees alone.
  • This does not include savings generated by decreasing the time the custodian spends handling lunch waste or reducing the trash bags and cans used.
  • Because the reductions were phased in over the course of the school year, it is projected that continuing the project for the 2001-2002 school year at the same three sites could save the district $13,675 in disposal fees.
  • That is equivalent to an approximate savings of $6.60 per student. Multiplied across the school district, the savings would be even more significant!
Note for Audience:

There are a number of levels at which you can integrate farm to school into programs, ranging from full curriculum changes and integration with community (Will Allen at Growing Power in Milwaukee) down to minor changes in lesson plans, and everything in between.

**Salad Bar** – When offered multiple fruit and vegetable choices, children respond by trying new items, incorporating greater variety into their diets, and increasing their daily consumption of fruits and vegetables. The benefit of salad bars in schools extends beyond the healthy foods consumed during the breakfast or lunch hour. Increased daily access to a variety of fruits and vegetables provides a personal experience about choices that can shape behavior far beyond the school lunch line. Children learn to make decisions that carry over outside of school, providing a platform for a lifetime of healthy snack and meal choices.

**Taste Tests** - Introduce new flavors in the cafeteria and classroom. Schools can create healthier food environments by encouraging children to try new and different foods, many of which are grown and produced locally.

**Spring Planters** - Small projects planted in planters in early spring that can be harvested before school is out (i.e., spinach or lettuce greens)

**Farmer Visits** – Meet your farmer classroom visits enable students to engage with the people who grow, raise and produce food in a focused educational setting. During these visits, farmers discuss what a typical day in their life is like throughout the seasons, and talk about the products they grow or raise on their farms. Visits also involve a tasting of the farmer or producers products, interactive question and answer sessions, and perhaps even visual aids.

**Chef Demonstrations** - Here’s how cooking demos work: an administrator or teacher contacts a volunteer chef. The chef comes to the classroom prepared with food and supplies. The cooking demos normally range from one hour to one and a half hours. Local food cooking demonstrations have multiple benefits including: Creating positive relationships with fresh, healthy food, teaching children about local farms, using cooking as a learning tool. It also gives children an opportunity to express themselves and use descriptive language. What did that herb smell like? Which part of this dish did you like best?

Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools: [http://saladbars2schools.org/](http://saladbars2schools.org/)
Farmer Visits: [http://www.grownyc.org/greenmarket/education/classroom](http://www.grownyc.org/greenmarket/education/classroom)
Note for Audience:

With these programs, someone comes to the school/classroom to visit and teach or work with students or even teach in the garden. Some of these programs (like AmeriCorps) require funding – but often PTO/PTA can fundraise for these.

**AmeriCorps** – (Slide 13, as well) The goal of the AmeriCorps Farm to School program is to provide an innovative approach to decreasing childhood obesity by promoting healthy eating habits in students and increasing access to local foods in schools. The program provides two half-time AmeriCorps members per site – a local food procurement member and a nutrition education member.

**Extension** – (slide 13, as well) Cooperative Extension Systems are administered by each state’s Land-Grant University System. Programs are available in all 50 states and Washington D.C. and most have states have local or regional Extension offices that are staffed by one or more experts, often referred to as Extension agents or Extension educators.

**Ag in the Classroom** - Agriculture in the Classroom programs are implemented by state-operated programs. mission of Agriculture in the Classroom is to "increase agricultural literacy through K-12 education." An agriculturally literate person is defined as "one who understands and can communicate the source and value of agriculture as it affects quality of life." Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) programs seek to improve student achievement by applying authentic, agricultural-based content as the context to teach core curriculum concepts in science, social studies, language arts and nutrition.

**Parents / PTA / Community Members** - (Slide 13, as well) Parents and even other community members often have an established understanding of school politics, policies, and programs, making them poised to assist or even lead the charge in establishing farm to school connections. They can approach food service, school administrators, and school boards with suggestions for change; they can volunteer in the classroom or cafeteria to help put changes into motion; and they can support these goals outside of the school by supporting local farms, and modeling desired dietary and exercise behaviors.

Ag in the Classroom: [http://www.agclassroom.org/about/index.htm](http://www.agclassroom.org/about/index.htm)
Parents, Community Members: [http://farmtoschool.cce.cornell.edu/files/all/fts_toolkit_oct07_chapter_3.pdf](http://farmtoschool.cce.cornell.edu/files/all/fts_toolkit_oct07_chapter_3.pdf)
Note for Audience:
If you get the ear of an administrator, what do you want them to know?
Farm to school can improve schools performance and provide students with the tools to have healthy physical, mental and academic lifestyles in the future.
Note to the Audience:

Now I would like to share with you some farm to school resources available through the National Farm to School Network:

• National Farm to School Network’s website is www.farmtoschool.org and is a great starting point for your farm to school journey.

• The website contains many helpful resources including an interactive, clickable map to help you best connect with farm to school people, organizations and resources in your state.

• Monthly “Lunch Bites” webinars that share detailed farm to school information and are archived on the website

• Join the network to receive regular news and updates on farm to school

• Search the website for informational resources, webinars, events, and conferences

• Click on the map and connect with your state leads and regional lead agencies who can assist you.
Note for Audience:
Premier conference for all things farm to school and beyond. This is a great opportunity to network with farm to school practitioners and learn about best practices, tools and resources.

The National Farm to Cafeteria Conference: Powering Up will convene a diverse group of stakeholders from across the farm to cafeteria movement—more than 1,000 food service professionals, farmers, educators, youth leaders, policy makers, advocates, state/federal agency professionals, entrepreneurs, public health professionals and others—working to source local food for institutional cafeterias and foster a culture of food and agricultural literacy across America. The farm to cafeteria movement is at the forefront of the fight to end obesity and strengthen local food systems.
October is National Farm to School Month

More information at www.farmtoschoolmonth.org

Note to Presenter:
National Farm to School month occurs each October. If you are hosting a training in August, September or October (or if Farm to School Month is relevant to your audience) please include this slide. Otherwise, please delete this slide if it is untimely.

Note for Audience:
In October we are celebrating National Farm to School Month. This is a great opportunity for you to start or highlight your farm to school activities.
Note for Audience:
This training is part of the Peer Leader Network of the National Farm to School Network, and funded through Newman's Own Foundation. We would like you to please complete an evaluation form at the end of the training today. The evaluation form will provide us feedback on this training, but it will also allow you the opportunity for future one-on-one training with a farm to school expert.

Note to Presenter:
Please hand the evaluation forms out to the audience at the beginning of the presentation. If that is not possible, please hand them out when you transition to this slide and explain the content. Encourage attendees to fill out as much of the evaluation as they are able to, with a reminder that comments/suggestions are greatly appreciated. Collect all evaluations and send them in for data collation.
Thank You!

Name:
Title:
Organization:
Phone:
E-mail:
Website:

Note to Presenter(s):
Please customize this slide with your contact information and the logo of your organization (if applicable).