



# Evaluation for Transformation: A User Guide

## Framework for Farm to School Evaluation

*Evaluation for Transformation: A Cross Sectoral Evaluation Framework for Farm to School* is intended to be a resource for farm to school / farm to preschool planning, evaluation, research and reporting. It provides:

- Common language for defining farm to school core and supplemental elements, touch points and actors.
- History of the farm to school movement
- Guidance on program articulation and tools to track implementation.
- A comprehensive literature review on farm to school and farm to preschool outcomes for four sectors: public health, community economic development, education and environmental quality.
- Priority outcomes, indicators and measures for all four sectors.
- Compilation of evaluation and implementation tools and resources.
- Cross-sector connections.

## How to Use the Evaluation Framework

Users at different levels — program, research and policy— can use the evaluation framework to:

- **Gather Ideas** - When developing or redesigning program goals, activities and strategies, use the framework as a resource for ideas to impact multiple sectors. Researchers and external evaluators can use the research priorities to identify and guide research questions and study designs. Grant program administrators and funders can align funding priorities and reporting requirements with framework themes.
- **Document Activities and Impact** – Program administrators, evaluators, researchers and grant administrators can use program articulation resources for documenting activities (such as spreadsheet matrices, logic model and theory of change development guides) and prioritized outcomes and indicators for documenting impacts.
- **Expand Activities** – Program administrators can identify existing activities within the framework and explore ideas for expansion as well as measurements. For example, if current efforts focus on school nutrition staff skill building, consider expanding to support student knowledge of local foods in the cafeteria or to engage families in creating culturally-specific recipes using local foods.
- **Find Resources** – The appendices in the evaluation framework and the [National Farm to School Network](#) website provide various resources on farm to school evaluation - program development guides, how-to manuals on evaluation, measurement tools, farm to school implementation and abstracts for relevant peer-reviewed journal articles.

### CORE ELEMENTS OF FARM to SCHOOL



The core elements of farm to school and farm to preschool include: procurement of local and regional food products, gardening and education (food and farm related).

## Farm to school by sector

Multiple sectors within the school and larger community are needed to ensure farm to school success. The evaluation framework is structured by sector (public health, community economic development, education and environmental quality) to facilitate a deeper understanding of outcomes by sectors, as well as to highlight cross-sectoral connections.



**Public Health:** How does farm to school contribute to public health outcomes?

- Providing all preschool and school children and their families equitable access to healthy, local food and food education.
- Promoting health and wellness through local foods in schools /preschools.
- Supporting children’s development of healthy eating habits.
- Bolstering a school nutrition program’s efforts to address child and family food insecurity.



**Community Economic Development :** How does farm to school contribute to community economic development outcomes?

- Creating new economic opportunities for local and regional producers.
- Encouraging market diversification.
- Providing job, income or skill expansion in the local food system.
- Establishing and expanding deeper relationships between producers, buyers, learners and educators.



**Education:** How does farm to school contribute to education outcomes?

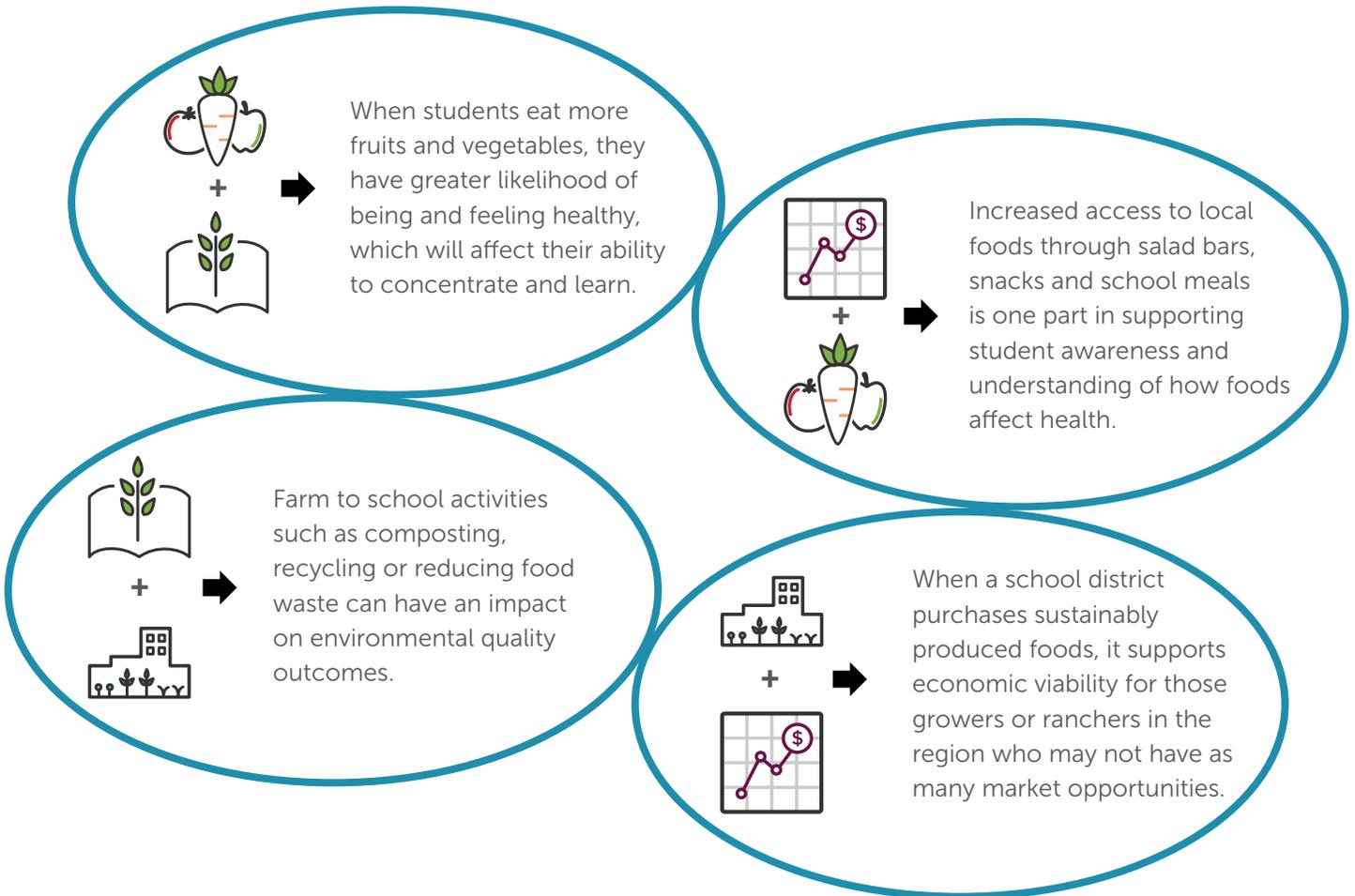
- Improving student academic achievement.
- Enhancing learning environments for teaching core content.
- Increasing student knowledge of specific content areas.
- Supporting children’s development of learning skills and social or emotional development.
- Engaging parents or caregivers through field trips, gardening and food preparation homework.



**Environmental Quality:** How does farm to school contribute to environmental quality outcomes?

- Encouraging children to learn environmental attitudes and behaviors.
- Creating green-spaces such as gardens and naturescapes.
- Supporting producers who help steward natural environments.

## Cross-sectoral connections and collaborations:



## Farm to school by user level

The evaluation framework provides guidance for users engaged at the program site, research and policy levels.



### Program site level users may include:

- Food service professionals
- Educator, teachers administrators
- Farmers, laborers, processors, distributors
- Community supporters
- Nonprofit staff
- Funders



### Research level users may include:

- Researchers
- College professors
- Land grant university staff
- Extension agents
- Federal and state agencies
- Funders



### Policy level users may include:

- School board members
- City, county level elected officials
- Local, state and federal agencies
- Policy advocates
- Policy makers and staff
- Funders

Use the template below for interpreting prioritized outcomes, indicators and measures to be used in the ways described earlier.

<p><b>LEVEL</b></p> 	<p><b>Example summary of priority outcomes, indicators and measures at the research-level</b></p>																
<p><b>PRIORITY OUTCOME</b></p> <p>Changes or benefits that result from activities and projects. Short-term outcomes are the most closely associated with program activities. Intermediate outcomes result from short-term outcomes. Long-term outcomes evolve from the previous two outcomes. Most of the outcomes listed are considered intermediate to long-term outcomes.</p>																	
<p><b>INDICATOR</b></p> <p>State of a particular subsystem to help understand “performance” indicator is one that reflects how well it is working and anticipate potential breakdowns</p>	<p><b>Sector</b>  Education</p>																
<p><b>MEASURE 1, 2, ETC.</b></p> <p>Measures are different aspects that can help understand the indicator</p>	<p><b>Priority Outcome</b> Farm to school activities support student educational success</p>																
<p><b>ASSOCIATED CORE ELEMENTS</b></p> <p>Procurement, gardening or education activities</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>Indicator(s)</b></td> <td><b>1: Student readiness to learn</b></td> <td><b>2: Student engagement and academic behaviors</b></td> <td><b>3: Student academic mindset</b></td> <td><b>4: Student academic competency gains</b></td> </tr> </table>				<b>Indicator(s)</b>	<b>1: Student readiness to learn</b>	<b>2: Student engagement and academic behaviors</b>	<b>3: Student academic mindset</b>	<b>4: Student academic competency gains</b>								
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<p><b>SAMPLE TOOLS</b></p> <p>Refers the reader to existing tools, data collection</p>																	



**NATIONAL FARM to SCHOOL NETWORK**

The **National Farm to School Network** is an information, advocacy and networking hub for communities working to bring local food sourcing and food and agriculture education into schools and preschools.