

HB 2038 Vote 'Yes' for Farm to School and School Gardens!



Rather than cutting farm to school and school garden funding, as proposed in the Governor's 2017 draft budget, **every effort should be made to increase support** for this important work.

Oregon is a leader.

Oregon's nationally-recognized Farm to School and School Garden program provides funding for school districts to buy and serve local foods, and for districts and partner organizations to educate children about food, gardens, and agriculture. These programs have many benefits, including:

- Create market opportunities for Oregon's farmers, fishers, ranchers and food processors
- Increase children's consumption of fruits and vegetables and shape life-long healthy eating habits
- Bridge urban-rural divides, and bring Oregon's coastline inland

53% of Oregon kids rely on schools for healthy meals.

For many of Oregon's most vulnerable children, school meals are the healthiest and most consistent meals in their day and week. Even when they do have money for food, low-income families often cannot afford vegetables, so introducing kids to new healthy vegetables through garden and cafeteria programs has a profound impact on their diets.

For every \$1 schools spend on local food, nearly \$2 are returned to the economy.

Schools that buy local have generated millions for Oregon's communities. With support from Oregon's Farm to School and School Garden grant program, schools can continue building relationships with producers all over the state, and bringing nutritious, local food to students.



Farm to School Funds Help Parkdale Orchard Sell More Fruit

Randy Kiyokawa sees multiple benefits from working with public schools

Randy Kiyokawa
Owner of Kiyokawa Farms
Parkdale, Oregon

Ten years ago we started working with Portland Public Schools. The volume that they requested at that time, for us, was quite a lot. Our partnership with farm to school has done a couple of big things for our business. It's allowed us to sell more of our smaller and medium sized fruits, because that's the size the schools want. And, it's helped us get more exposure.

We have about 120 varieties of apples, and one of them has red flesh. A few years ago, I started to sneak one or two of these red-flesh apples into a box. So then it was a novelty when a kid would bite into an apple and it would be red. Parents started calling me and asking me how they can get more of these apples, and then I could tell them about our farm stands and farmers' markets. Once a parent approached me to say that their child never liked apples before

until having one of our apples in their school lunch.

We work with schools in Portland and Hood River, and all the folks at all the schools have been great to work with. The chefs can give really helpful feedback, like "The kids aren't taking the green apples," or "This variety isn't as crunchy, can we switch it out," and it helps both of us be successful. Having a good open discussion from the cooks, to the purchasers, to the growers, is a benefit for everyone involved in this partnership.

It would be a great thing if schools could buy more local food through farm to school programs. Not only would kids be eating much more nutritional food, it would expose more people to the diverse amount of product we have in Oregon. And it would increase options for growers.

At one point, it wasn't cool to be a farmer. Now it's this trendy new thing. What we are doing is good for the environment, as well as the local economy.

In the 2016-17 school year, more than 140 school districts serving 90% of Oregon school meals are including healthy, local food with help from Oregon's Farm to School and School Garden grant program.

We could be doing so much more.

Imagine the benefits to our economy if more than a few cents per kid, per day was spent on local ingredients. Imagine if every school had a garden where kids could have a hands-on approach to STEM classes. Imagine if all kids grew up knowing where food comes from, and how to grow their own.

Every dime we spend on Farm to School and School Gardens makes a difference to Oregon kids who deserve a diet of healthy, local food, and to Oregon's farmers, ranchers, fishers, and food processors who depend on stable customers.

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