



## VERMONT FARM TO SCHOOL

# A Guide for Farm to School Community Action Planning

- INSIDE:**
- Facilitation Tips and Techniques to Successful Meetings
  - Step-by-Step Process for Facilitating Community Farm to School Planning Meetings
  - Community Based Case Studies
  - Templates and Samples of Planning Tools



**DEC. 2010**

**Vermont FEED: Food Education Every Day** a partnership of:



**Food Works at  
Two Rivers Center**



**Northeast Organic  
Farming Association  
of Vermont (NOFA-VT)**



**Shelburne  
Farms**

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# The Purpose of the Guide

## ***STOP! Read this first!***

### ***Is this the right guide for you?***

- It's a starter "how to" for organizing a school committee to develop a Farm to School program at your school.
- It's for any school food service staff, parent, teacher, principal, student, or community member seeking to make changes in their school food environment.
- It's a great way to learn about how other communities have planned and implemented programs.
- It's filled with templates and examples for planning, running meetings, checklists, and other resources.
- It's a PROCESS tool for creating a Farm to School committee.
- It's great for re-evaluating your committee's action plan. Look back to see what you all have planned and see if there is anything you missed.
- It's a step-by-step tool for a community as they go through a planning process.

#### **WHAT IS FARM TO SCHOOL?**

**"Farm to School connects schools (K-12) and local farms with the objectives of serving healthy meals in school cafeterias, improving student nutrition, providing agriculture, health and nutrition education opportunities, and supporting local and regional farmers."**

*—from the National Farm to School Network*

### ***What this guide is not:***

- It's not a "one size fits all" approach to Farm to School.
- It's not a tool for getting local foods into schools. For tips on local purchasing, download the VT FEED Guide for Using Local Foods in Schools at [www.vtfeed.org](http://www.vtfeed.org)
- It doesn't give you all the details of how to teach about food in the classroom or how to cook food in the cafeteria. Check out the curriculum units and the VT FEED Guide for Connecting Farms to Schools and Communities at [www.vtfeed.org](http://www.vtfeed.org)
- It's not intended to address food safety regulations, child nutrition information, nor state and national policies around Farm to School. Check out the National Farm to School website for resources on these topics [www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org)

# What is VT FEED?

VT FEED (Vermont Food Education Every Day) is a partnership of 3 Vermont non-profits: Food Works at Two Rivers Center, the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont, and Shelburne Farms. VT FEED works with schools and communities to raise awareness about healthy food, the role of Vermont farms and farmers, and good nutrition. VT FEED acts as a catalyst for rebuilding healthy food systems, and cultivates links between the classrooms, cafeterias, local farms, and communities.

## Goals of VT FEED:

- Engage communities in active support of their local school and community food system.
- Increase student and teacher knowledge of food, farms and nutrition by developing and testing replicable curriculum that meets the Vermont Framework for Standards and Learning.
- Increase direct marketing opportunities for locally produced foods and improve the eating patterns of school-aged children by developing local purchasing contracts with schools and offering professional development to school food personnel.

## 3 C's Approach to Food in Vermont Schools

VT FEED is designed to help school-age children make informed food choices, improve their diets, and recognize the role local farms play in communities. VT FEED does this by focusing on the three C's: Classroom, Cafeteria, and Community.



**Classroom** – providing standards-based farm, food, and nutrition curriculum and professional development for teachers.



**Cafeteria** – incorporating local and seasonal produce as well as professional development for school food personnel.



**Community** – developing community forums and committees of farmers, partners and other community members.

Together the three C's support healthy children, healthy agriculture and healthy communities.

## National Farm to School Network and the Northeast Region

The National Farm to School Network sprouted from a desire to support community-based food systems, strengthen family farms, and improve student health by reducing childhood obesity. Eight regional lead agencies and national staff provide free training and technical assistance, information services, networking, and support for policy, media and marketing activities. The National Farm to School Network is a collaborative project of the Urban & Environmental Policy Institute at Occidental College and the Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC).

VT FEED as one of the Northeast Regional Leads working with a Northeast Regional Steering Committee, has built a supportive network amongst all 6 New England states and New York to facilitate our individual and collective promotion of Farm to Institution. Our collaborative approach is one key to the success we are experiencing as we promote community vitality—together addressing issues of public health, education, agricultural economics and sustainable communities. This inclusive regional network stimulates the development of strategies and action plans that result in:

- Dynamic local and regional projects to support and grow Farm to Institution programs in the northeast.
- The ability to identify challenges and opportunities that cross state borders and address them together.
- A stronger voice at the federal level to secure funds and promote awareness of the importance of Farm to Institution in the northeast.
- Greater public understanding and support for Farm to Institution that helps marshal regional resources and moves our efforts toward long-term sustainability.



# Contact Information

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VT FEED is a partnership of Food Works at Two Rivers Center, The Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT), and Shelburne Farms.

To contact VT FEED: (802)434-4122 [www.vtfeed.org](http://www.vtfeed.org)

Or follow VT FEED on Facebook.



## **FOOD WORKS AT TWO RIVERS CENTER**

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64 Main Street • Montpelier, VT 05601  
(802) 223-1515 • [www.tworiverscenter.org](http://www.tworiverscenter.org)

Food Works was founded in 1988 to address the crisis of childhood hunger in Vermont. The initial aim was to provide teachers and students with prevention-based skills and knowledge of food through school gardening and nutrition education. Over the years, we have found students hungry for real connection to nature and their local community and have since developed ecological literacy and cultural literacy programs.



## **NOFA-VT**

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Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont  
PO Box 697 • Richmond, VT 05477  
(802) 434-4122 • [www.nofavt.org](http://www.nofavt.org)

NOFA-VT was founded in 1971, and is an organization of farmers, gardeners, and consumers working to promote an economically viable and ecologically sound Vermont food system for the benefit of current and future generations.



## **SHELburnE FARMS**

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1611 Harbor Road • Shelburne, VT 05482  
(802) 985-8686 • [www.shelburnefarms.org](http://www.shelburnefarms.org)

Shelburne Farms is a membership-supported, nonprofit environmental education center, 1,400-acre working farm, and National Historic Landmark in Shelburne, Vermont. The farm serves as an educational resource by practicing a rural land use that is environmentally, economically and culturally sustainable. Its mission is to cultivate a conservation ethic.

# Getting Ready for Action Planning

## **Do your homework**

You may not know it, but there are food activities already happening at your school. Sports teams are selling food items for fundraisers. Classes are serving food for celebrations of birthdays and holidays. The cafeteria is analyzing the nutritional content and trying to meet USDA school meal standards. Classes are taking farm field trips. You may even have a school store that sells snacks afterschool.

Where are children in your school exposed to food choices and food messages? Are these food experiences sending compatible messages?

## **Is there already a committee?**

Ask around to see if there is already a committee at your school that addresses food. Many schools have wellness committees to develop and implement physical activity and nutrition efforts, school-wide or district-wide. See if this (or another similar group) exists and offer to help them. Farm to School can easily springboard off of current wellness initiatives.

## **Focus on the process**

Include many stakeholders from your school community in the discussion and decision-making process for your action plan so that your invested supporters feel responsible for the efforts. Seek out the school food service ideas and support, administrative cooperation, teacher input, student participation, and parent involvement. Get a few of these people together to help prepare for an action plan meeting.

## **Conduct research**

If no group is already gathering info, strike up interest and scan the school food landscape by developing a simple survey for food service, teachers, administrators, parents, and students. Questions you can ask

### **TIP**

**Take the time to get to know what is happening in your school before you start to make an action plan of what to do or what to change.**

**“I had no idea that our school was already doing all these things. We need to first just do a better job of sharing our story with parents and the community before we start anything new. The one new priority for us is including a food related column in our newsletter, because we are already doing it, but nobody knows.”**

*—from a “Needs Assessment”  
focused Farm to School  
committee meeting*



are: Are any teachers using food as a teaching tool in their classrooms (using recipes to teach measurement, following directions, estimations, etc...)? Is the School Food Service trying to introduce new foods to the students? What are the school celebrations happening during the school year? How many are there? What food is being served at these? See the Appendix for the VT FEED Needs Assessment (p. 71), a detailed sample survey to gather information in your school.

### ***Assess the needs***

There are different ways to identify the needs and assets of your school. Whether you perform a SWOT analysis (the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) of the entire school food environment, follow a predesigned Farm to School Needs Assessment, or the VT FEED Farm to School rubric, it is important to start to identify what will be the best path to address these needs. Again, include all those stakeholders. See the appendix for a sample Needs Assessment (p. 71), Farm to School Rubric (p. 66) and SWOT analysis (p. 51).

### ***Find the resources***

As you gather information about your school, also gather information about Farm to School programs and how other schools/districts have been able to incorporate local foods into their school food environment. Seek out groups and programs that can support you and your efforts. See the National Farm to School Network website for examples.

### **Who should be at the table?**

VT FEED believes that representatives from the “Community, Classroom and Cafeteria” must be represented to achieve the goals of a successful farm to school program (see introduction for description of this model p. 2). Together the 3C’s support healthy agriculture and healthy communities. When you are starting to think about bringing a group of people together to take action, keep the 3C’s in mind. Who in your community would be able to give valuable input into your group? Who is a stakeholder that may not be immediately apparent? Who may be able to provide a resource to help support the group?

#### **RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO YOU**

**Vermont FEED (Food  
Education Every Day):  
[www.vtfeed.org](http://www.vtfeed.org)**

**National Farm to School  
Network with Regional  
Lead Agencies available  
to network you with  
programs and people  
in your area: [www.  
farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org)**

**Vermont State Agency  
of Agriculture–Farm  
to School Grant  
Program: [www.  
vermontagriculture.  
com/education/  
farmtoschool/](http://www.vermontagriculture.com/education/farmtoschool/)**



## **Things to consider:**

- Where is the current energy around Farm to School? Are there people in the community that may be interested but unaware of the opportunity to develop a program at your school?
- Is there already a focus on one of the 3C's? For instance, many people are interested in changing food in the Cafeteria, but less interested in bringing students to a local community farm. If so, how can you be sure to bring people representing the other C's to the table?

## **Here are some suggestions of people to include in your group:**

- Teachers
- Parents
- Principals and/or other administrators
- School Food Service providers or employees
- Students (of all ages)
- Farmers
- Gardeners and gardening groups
- School Nurse
- Active community members (don't forget longtime residents and newcomers)
- Local organizations and businesses—such as local restaurant owners, chefs, stores and banks, neighboring schools
- Seniors (helpful to share local knowledge and agriculture experiences)



See VT FEED's "Guide for Using Local Food in Schools" for more ideas.

## **Forming the group**

### ***You are not the first!***

It's important for the group to feel like they are not reinventing the wheel. As you encourage people to gather, share with the group that they will



be a part of over 2,000 Farm to School programs in the nation. Tell them about the network of support and resources available to help them reach their goals. Explain that there is no magic formula for how to start a Farm to School program, since each community is unique. However, there are many examples to look to for advice.



## Councils and committees

### What is your group?

In the end, what your group is called is less important than the work that it accomplishes. However, since you are part of a larger movement of “Farm to School” or “Farm to Cafeteria” programs, you may want to know how other groups self-identify. Here are a few examples.

### FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

As defined by the Community Food Security Coalition ([www.foodsecurity.org](http://www.foodsecurity.org)):

*“Food Policy Councils (FPCs) bring together stakeholders from diverse food-related sectors to examine how the food system is operating and to develop recommendations on how to improve it. FPCs may take many forms, but are typically either commissioned by state or local government, or predominately a grassroots effort. Food policy councils have been successful at educating officials and the public, shaping public policy, improving coordination between existing programs, and starting new programs. Examples include mapping and publicizing local food resources; creating new transit routes to connect underserved areas with full-service grocery stores; persuading government agencies to purchase from local farmers; and organizing community gardens and farmers’ markets.*

*While FPC’s are not a new concept, their structures, practices, and policies are still evolving. Although the first Food Policy Council started 25 years ago in the city of Knoxville, only in the last decade have Food Policy Councils really gained momentum, and today there are almost 50 councils nationwide. “*

There are a number of Food Councils that are looking at their entire community to address challenges in the food system (including food shelves, senior meal sites, and schools). Examples of Councils in Vermont include: the Burlington Food Council, Central Vermont Food Systems Council, and Waterbury/Duxbury Food Council. Within these Councils, there are committees that are addressing food issues within their community's schools. For other examples of Food Policy Councils, check out [www.foodsecurity.org/FPC](http://www.foodsecurity.org/FPC)

### **FARM TO SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Instead of addressing all the food systems issues in your entire community, a Farm to School committee focuses primarily on the school level to create educational opportunities for students to learn more about food, farming, and nutrition and to get local foods available in the school food programs. This includes breakfast, lunch, snack, afterschool meals, celebrations, and community events. If there is no pre-existing committee addressing wellness, school food, or overall health, then you might want to focus on this type of committee.

A Farm to School committee most often focuses on actions by planning events, creating experiences, and working with current teachers and food service. This committee is less likely to address large policy issues, unless they directly impact their schools Farm to School program. This is a great way to rally support from the school community, by holding school harvest festivals, taste testing local foods in the cafeteria, or having farmers visit the classroom. This type of committee is also a great springboard into a larger Food Council model after awareness has been raised.

### **WELLNESS COMMITTEE**

In 2004 the Federal Government issued a mandate through the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act that every school district in the United States develop a Wellness Policy. This mandate called for each school district to form a Wellness Committee and draft a district Wellness Policy that addresses the quality of foods sold during school hours, regularity of physical education, and instruction connected



**SMALL STEPS**

**Once the initial group has gathered to start a farm to school program there may be a lot of energy and ideas. It is important to build on “small successes” and take “small steps”. Keep this in mind while you set your goals. The easier it is for your group to reach its goals, the more likely you are to be successful. Your group can then build off of its successes and demonstrate to the school and community that it is possible to change the school food environment for the better. You’ll find that people will then take notice and want to “join the winning team”!**

**TIP**

**Schedule future meetings as far ahead of time as possible. This way you won’t take up as much time at your meeting setting the time for the next meeting.**

to diet and health. Many Farm to School programs have found their home within Wellness Committees, as Farm to School is an excellent strategy to address childhood health efforts. Contact your school administration to find the point person for your wellness committee.

## **Planning meetings**

### ***Choosing a location, time and date***

Often Farm to School groups meet at the school. If you are meeting in the school be sure to post signs to the meeting room location. Keep in mind that the goal of these meetings is for all to feel welcome. It may be a good idea to have a consistent time and day for the meeting, this way if someone misses a meeting they will know when to join next time. Because you are convening a diverse group of people, scheduling may be a challenge. Be patient and remember that a teacher’s or food service director’s daily schedule is different than a farmer or business owner. Try to make a time that works for all participants.

### ***Meeting space basics***

The ambiance of a meeting space is often more important than you may think. Keep in mind:

- Is the space heated or cooled as needed?
- Is it a quiet space where your group won’t be interrupted?
- Is there space to take notes? (chalk board or flip charts)
- Will there be healthy snacks or a potluck meal?
- Are the chairs large enough for adults? Kindergarten size chairs may be too small!

Be sure to delegate collecting meeting materials. Perhaps someone in the group loves to bake snacks. Or, the school may have pens and flip chart paper available.



## **Facilitation Techniques**

### ***Meeting set-up and flow***

It is important to have everything for the meeting ready to go as the first person arrives. Reserve your meeting space with enough time for set-up. When participants enter the room they will feel eager to engage if they see the space is well prepared. Some things to consider:

- Have the agenda written for everyone to see (on a hand out, chalk board or flip chart paper). Allow participants to add agenda items.
- Develop an agenda that allows a mix of opportunities for participants to engage. Is there group discussion time? Is there time for reflection? Keep in mind a variety of comfort levels that people have when sharing in a group.
- Schedule in a break. Often great discussion happens at the snack table!

### ***Breaking the ice with your group***

As your group is forming it is important to include activities for people to get to know each other. Although this may seem to take up unnecessary time, in the end it will be well worth it to strengthen your group dynamics and bring people closer together. Some of these ideas can be done in 10 minutes at the beginning of a meeting, while others are worth 45 minutes as your group begins to form into a tight-knit working committee. Here are some suggestions:

#### **SHORTER ICEBREAKERS**

- **Food Memory** As your group members introduce themselves ask each participant to share a food memory. They can pick a food that is currently in season and discuss why it is special for them. For example, “My name is Joe and my food memory from the fall is apple pie. My grandma had an orchard and would always make pie with Empire apples.”
- **Grab Bag** Put together a bag of random items that relate to food, farms, schools and the community (for instance a wood-

#### **MEETING ATTENDANCE**

**Be sure to make each meeting the best use of time for all attending. For instance, if the principal or a farmer is interested in participating in your group, he or she may not need to be at every meeting. Gauge if someone needs to be at the meeting based on the agenda and discussion planned. If every person feels each meeting is time well spent, they will be more likely to return!**

#### **HONOR YOUR GROUP TIME**

**Be sure to start and end the meeting on time each time you meet. This consistency will demonstrate to the group that you value their attendance and acknowledge that they have other responsibilities too!**



en spoon, packet of seeds, local newspaper, etc.) Ask participants to pick an item out of the bag and share how it relates to their goals with the Farm to School program. Or, dump the items on a table and let participants pick an item themselves and share.

- **Check In** Allow a time at the beginning of each meeting for participants to share something that they are excited about, something that is on their mind. Be sure to limit the time to share- keep it to less than a minute per participant.

This allows every participant to have their say and then become more focused as the meeting proceeds. Some additional guidelines could be that sharing is optional and that this isn't a time to respond, only to listen.



## GROUP BUILDING AND PRE-PLANNING ACTIVITIES

You might dedicate an entire meeting to one or two of these activities as they are not only important for your group to get to know each other, but they are valuable activities that feed into your planning process.

- **Web Activity** (See full written activity in the Appendix p. 55) How do we know we have everyone we need at our meeting? This activity allows your group to identify all the key stakeholders interested and important to involve in your Farm to School program. Participants then role play the conversation and reactions that these stakeholders would have on a pretend Farm to School effort. This activity does a great job demonstrating the complexity of Farm to School, identifying barriers to moving actions forward, and modeling how the “buck” can be passed when you are trying to solve a problem. It can also be a great way to discuss the importance of group involvement and brainstorm some initial action steps for your school's project



- **Town-wide Food Mapping** (See full written activity in Appendix p. 53) One way to involve your community and fully assess your town resources is to develop a town food map. We have all seen town maps that show hiking trails or historical landmarks. Why not create a map that shows your town's food and farming resources. Where are the farms? Where are the restaurants? Where are the grocery stores or convenience stores? How about the community gardens and farmers markets? Where is the Food Bank?

Seeing all these things laid out together on a town map really gives a sense of how rich your town's food resources are. Mapping your town resources is a great way to assess your food resources but also a great community engagement tool. You can display your map at a public space to build awareness of your committee work. You may even drum up additional committee members from within the community.

- **SWOT** (See full written activity in Appendix p. 51) A SWOT analysis (measuring the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) is traditionally a business tool, but has been successfully adopted by community committees before they undertake a big project. SWOT's are great tools if you are hoping to assess the assets your community has and the potential barriers you might face to succeeding in your endeavor. This tool is well-known and most people may have done it in other settings, so it may be an easy and comfortable activity to get your group thinking together.

## **Checklist of what to have at your meeting**

What to bring to the meeting:

- Flip chart paper
- Multi-colored pens (test the pens before the meeting!)
- Snacks (local and healthy, please!)
- Notetaking supplies for taking meeting minutes.
- Is there a clock in the meeting space? If not, bring a watch





- Name tags if your group doesn't know each other
- Paper and pen for gathering contact information
- Agenda
- Printed Farm to School resources for ideas and examples
- Any supplies you need to run your activities

**TIP**

**Since people respond to personalities in different ways, you may want to trade off who facilitates each meeting. Even if there is only one person that volunteers to consistently run meetings, be sure to open this opportunity up to others to ensure an inclusive environment.**

## ***Roles and tools for group facilitation***

There is a breadth of information available on affective methods for running meetings, just do an online search for “meeting facilitation”. Most people have attended both “good” and “bad” meetings. Here are some tips to help make sure your Farm to School group has positive experiences when they gather.

### **FACILITATOR OR SCRIBE?**

It is often helpful to split up the duties of running a meeting. A scribe can focus on writing information down (on a large flip chart is ideal) and a facilitator can focus on running the meeting and ensuring the group stays on-task. It might also be worth adding a timekeeper if your group is large and highly involved. If you think you might not capture all the important notes on the flipcharts, you may consider a designated notetaker.

### **FACILITATOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

The facilitator of your Farm to School group will provide the leadership and continuity to your meeting. This will help the group feel that they are on-task and meeting goals. Try to make group decisions through consensus rather than majority opinion to keep all participants invested. Remind the group of the key issues they gathered to discuss. Was the original reason the group gathered because parents were concerned about the lack of fresh produce in the cafeteria, but a worm bin is now being discussed? If the meeting goes off topic, bring the group back on-task.

### **BE OPEN TO NEW IDEAS AND ENERGY**

If the primary topic or issue seems to be a sticking point, is there something else the group can tackle? Remember that the point is to take an approach where change can happen, then to build off of success.

**GOOD FACILITATORS ARE:**

- Excellent listeners and observers
- Comfortable in front of groups
- Credible and diplomatic
- Respectful to others ideas
- Not coming in with a personal agenda, or if they do, can override it in the interest of neutral facilitation (step away, take off their facilitation hat, then add their opinion when appropriate)
- Effective in synthesizing issues
- Able to remain positive and energetic for the entire meeting
- Patient

**YOUR ROLE AS A FACILITATOR:**

- **Listen with genuine interest and an openness to others' ideas**
- **Gently but continually focus and re-focus the discussion to keep people on the subject.**
- **Keep control of the group in a subtle way. Let conversations flow, but within the boundaries, so you stay on topic.**
- **Only speak when necessary. Embrace the silence, allow for thought.**
- **Stay aware of the energy level of the group. Watch for non-verbal clues such as facial expressions, posture, involvement, tone of voice, and respond to these clues appropriately.**
- **Allow the group to test their ideas, bouncing them off each other, they will refine and develop their ideas while they talk.**
- **Make sure that everyone's voice is heard.**
- **If someone is talking too much, say "Could you stop for a moment and summarize what you've said, I want to be sure it is recorded and tie it to the rest of the conversation".**
- **Relax and enjoy the process!**

**SCRIBE RESPONSIBILITIES**

The scribe should write down and organize participant's ideas on paper. It is best to use the words of the participants rather than interpret them. Try to capture the details of ideas that are shared and clarify if you don't understand something to ensure accuracy. Don't worry, spelling doesn't



count, notes can be cleaned up later when they are transcribed and sent out to the group. To make the flip chart paper easier to read switch your marker color when a new idea is shared, you can use two or more colors. You may also want to have another person taking notes on computer or a notepad to capture discussion and summarize main ideas.

## ***Techniques for running a successful meeting***

### **INVOLVING STUDENTS**

**It is important to keep in mind how powerful youth voice can be. Remember that one of the primary goals of a Farm to School program is to support healthy eating habits and foster an appreciation and understanding of food and agriculture in students. When appropriate, include student input into your Farm to School group. This may mean having a student attend a meeting, offering a survey in classroom to gain input, or just talking with kids. Their experiences and opinions can often shed light onto important topics that may otherwise be overlooked.**

### **GENERATING IDEAS**

When your group first gathers, people may feel shy and unwilling to express their opinions right away. Brainstorming provides a creative jumpstart to any phase of collaborative planning and implementation. It is not simply designed to create a list--it is a technique intended to generate new ideas through creative group interaction. Remind participants that there is no such thing as a “bad idea” when you brainstorm.

#### **Brainstorm**

In brainstorming, the group participants are asked a specific, open-ended question. Then, participants respond, and the Scribe carefully records all of the ideas. The Facilitator prompts the group to make sure that the ideas keep coming, and that the group members generate ideas. Throughout the brainstorming session, no decisions should be made and participants need to refrain from critiquing the ideas. This is just a free flow of ideas.

There are several techniques for getting the ideas out. Among the most commonly used:

#### **“Shout it out”**

This is the least structured form of brainstorming. In this technique, the question is posed by the Facilitator, and then participants are simply asked to shout out the word or idea that comes to them in response to the question. Ideally, group members responses “pop” out like popcorn, with some ideas building on the idea before it. These ideas are recorded on the flip chart by the Scribe. If the ideas come too quickly, it is the Facilitator’s job to ask the group to pause for a moment so the Scribe can catch up and to be sure everyone has an opportunity to speak.

## “Round Robin”

In this technique, the question is posed by the Facilitator, and then participants are asked to “silently brainstorm” their answers by writing them on their own private notepad or piece of paper. Once enough time has elapsed so that everyone’s writing seems to be slowing down, ask each participant in turn to offer one of their answers. Tell them to offer only ideas that have not yet been said. The Scribe records these on the flip chart. Once you have gone around the circle once and everyone has said one idea, go around again and ask if there are additional, new ideas that no one has said yet. People are allowed to continue to add to their personal list during the process. If a person has an idea to add, they add it when it is their turn. If all of the ideas on a person’s list have already been said, they can “pass” and move on to the next person.



## “Webbing or Cluster Mapping”

Instead of just listing ideas, this more artistic brainstorming strategy allows you to have the free flow of ideas, while grouping these ideas as you go. Some groups may find it easier to first do a “shout it out” version and then cluster the ideas. Start with a facilitator posing a central question in the middle of your large piece of paper. As the ideas begin to flow write them on the paper around your central question. At first just write down the ideas in no real order, just anywhere there is space. After a while, some ideas will obviously start to link together (“taste testing” and “trying new foods” or “school garden” and “kids growing their own food”) while other ideas will stand alone. Circle ideas that seem related and draw a line between ideas. You can use different color markers too to help distinguish the linked ideas. This method can lead to a very busy diagram, but will also allow your group to see how all the ideas link together and even start to map the direction of your groups next steps.



Much of this section is adapted from “Community Action Forums: An Organizers Guide to Participatory Planning” by Delia Clark and Susan Clark, Oct. 2003





# Ready, Set, Let's Plan!

## Developing your community action plan

Now that you have the skills for running an effective meeting you are now ready to dive in and start the planning process.

At this point your group may have met several times and even accomplished a project or two. However, it is always good to have a “road map” in front of you to know if you have met your goals. As mentioned previously, it's important to keep in mind where the energy of the group is. If most people are excited about building a school garden but the group has set the goal of purchasing local potatoes you may want to reconsider your goal.

VT FEED has worked with schools to help guide them through the process of developing a Farm to School action plan. We have found that the development of an action plan can take a small group about two hours and a larger group up to 6 hours (spread over 2-3 meetings). There are pro's and con's to having one and/or multiple meetings and you will have to decide what is right for your group. You don't want to lose key players by having too many meetings which can happen when you spread your planning into multiple sessions, but sometimes a week or two between meetings allows your group some reflection and research time. Look over these suggestions and templates and then you can make the best decision for your committee as to how much time to dedicate to action planning. You will find an action planning template and sample agendas used for these meetings in the Appendix section of this guide.

### ***Tips for working with your group to develop an action plan***

- Set aside two to six hours for your planning process. The development of a good plan will need to take time, but you don't want to wear people out. This is why good facilitation is key (see “Getting





Ready for Action” section in this guide p. 5)

- Make sure that all of the key stakeholders in your group can attend. Because the focus of this meeting is to set long-term goals, it is particularly important to let people know that their attendance is crucial if they would like to have their voice heard in this plan. Reminder: Are there members that represent the 3 C's?
- Follow all of the regular tips for running a meeting! Since this meeting will primarily be focused on doing some “hard work” you may want to bring a special snack or highlight something fun to mix it up.

## ***Running the meeting***

Please see the Sample Action Planning Agendas in the Appendix (p. 60). Of course these agendas should be adapted to fit your needs, but we recommend that you incorporate the following pieces.



### **INTRODUCTION**

If your group doesn't know each other well, then consider an ice-breaker (examples p. 12). But most likely your group has been meeting together for a while and already has a working relationship. Remind the group that there is a specific goal to this meeting, to develop an action plan. Decide how far out you want to plan, 1 year, 3 years, 5 years. We recommend you think about real change over a longer timeline than just one school year by considering at least a 2 year timeframe. But you might only need to spell out all the specifics in your action plan for the first year, as long as your group has thought of some goals and activities to build on in the following years. It is also important to be reasonable about what can get accomplished by people that are already busy.

If needed, also share some stories during this introduction time of other Farm to School projects or even have a guest speaker to set the tone for what a school can



achieve. There are some great examples out there of what other school programs have planned and accomplished (see Case Studies p. 35). Often, people will show the VT FEED “Grow Up Fresh” DVD as an introduction to Farm to School programs. School personnel have said that this has helped focus the group before they begin their own brainstorming. Another great tool for generating enthusiasm is the “5 Reasons Why Kids Will Try New Foods” handout, located in the Appendix (p. 63).

## **LARGE GROUP BRAINSTORM**

Start with some time where everyone can share their wildest dreams. This is a great place to start because people are naturally action oriented. It is also a great way for the group to get excited and vision of the possibilities. Remind your group not to comment on the feasibility of these activities at this time. This is just a brainstorm. Although this may feel a bit chaotic at first it's a great way to get creative energy flowing. A large group brainstorm is also good for everyone in the group to feel that they have had time to share their ideas.

Most people come in with a list of things that they want to see happen. This list can either be created as a whole group or you can ask each individual to write their ideas on post it notes and stick them all up there. Keep in mind the previous tips for brainstorming, incorporate verbal and non-verbal means of sharing ideas to accommodate everyone's comfort level. If you have an overwhelming large list, remind the group that you do not have to do everything listed and you most likely won't even in 10 years. But that brainstorming is very important to see the full picture of what is possible.

If you do end up with a long list, consider refining your list and clumping similar ideas. Sometimes during brainstorming sessions, similar ideas are suggested but said in different ways. For example: you might have one idea that is building school gardens and someone else later mentioned growing food at school. This may be the same or it may not, but take a couple minutes with your group to decide if that is the same idea or not.

You might also decide that you want to prioritize those items that seem the most important and the most achievable. For real life examples of what can be accomplished and the time that it takes, see the Case Studies

### **SAMPLE STARTING QUESTIONS:**

**“What kind of experiences do you want children in your school to have?”**

**“What does your ideal school food community look like?”**

**“5 years from now, what do you want the children to remember and have learned from these experiences?”**

**“5 years from now, how has the school food culture changed?”**



in this guide (p. 35). We recommend waiting to prioritize until after you have crafted a shared vision for their work together. That vision can then be used as a filter to decide what activities stay or go. (See Identify the 3C's below)

**TIP**

**Don't get caught up on wordsmithing your vision statement. A small subcommittee can work on the exact words later, just get agreement on the overall purpose of your group's activities.**

**CREATING A SHARED VISION, MISSION OR PURPOSE STATEMENT**

Put your brainstormed list aside, temporarily. Start discussing what is the overall goal or mission of this committee. Though it seems like that this should be the first step, it is often hard for people to separate their ideas of what to do from their ideas of overall project outcome. Take the time to craft a vision statement. There are several ways to refer to this statement, you may choose to call it a "vision", "mission", or even a "statement of purpose".

As a group, write one overarching vision statement that all your activities will be measured against. This may only take a few minutes if your group is in close agreement of your group's vision, or it might take you awhile to talk about why you are working on Farm to School together.

**IDENTIFY THE 3C'S**

We recommend looking through the brainstorm list you have generated with the group to see if the cafeteria, community and classroom are all represented. An easy way to do this is to go through the list with the group and put a specific "C" (use different colored markers) next to each idea. You may find that there are multiple C's next to one idea. This is fine! If you find that there is an overwhelming amount of one "C". It may be a good idea to discuss if there are opportunities to bring the other C's into the program. See Appendix Group Brainstorm (p. 58) that shows a sample of a brainstorm that has been split into the 3C's.

If you do have a long list, it might be necessary to prioritize the activities. You can do this as a large group or task your small groups to do this. Remind everyone to keep your overarching vision statement in mind. This might also be a good time to bring out the SWOT analysis your group did at an earlier meeting.

- Do you have specific Strengths or Opportunities that you want to capitalize on and will help you prioritize?



- Can your group choose the activities that seem to both align with the overarching vision statement but also seem realistic for your school and community to accomplish?
- Do some of the activities need to happen before other activities?
- Do they build on each other?

Take these considerations into account before you start planning actions.

### **WORKING ON THE ACTION PLAN COMPONENTS**

Please see the Action Plan Template in the Appendix (p. 57) at this point of the meeting. Splitting into small groups at this stage in your process, is a great way to mix things up, get detailed work done, and allows those that are less talkative in front of a large group to engage in a focused task. We recommend breaking the entire group up into three smaller groups, one for each of the 3 C's. Or if you have a really large group, consider multiple groups representing the Classroom, Cafeteria, and Community. It is a good idea to make sure that people are evenly split up in regards to their role at the school. For instance, be sure that at least one teacher is in the "classroom" group, but that other teachers participate in the other groups. We recommend that you have at least three people in each group. If your entire group is smaller than 6-7 people you may want to consider doing this worksheet as one large group. The focus of this worksheet is to set achievable goals for your Action Plan. It will also identify: the action steps for this goal, resources needed, timeline to achieve the goal and who is responsible for this goal. Remind the group that the aim is to make small "doable" steps towards a larger goal. If the long-term goal is to "source 30% local food" or "have a farmer paired with every classroom" you may want to set some easily achievable steps the first year, to eventually get to the larger goals in year 2 or 3. These achievable steps are outlined in the Action Plan Template (p. 57) and modeled in the Sample Action Plan in the Appendix (p. 59).



### **REPORT BACK AND ESTABLISH THE OVERALL ACTION PLAN**

After each small group has had time to identify their goals bring the larger group back together. Allow time for each group to report back. You will most likely find that at least one goal from each group relates some how



to the other groups. This is a good sign—your group is finding synchronicity! All of these smaller goals combined with timelines, resource needs and people in charge are the start to your Action Plan!

If your group is not able to complete this or is not ready to make all the final decisions, consider scheduling a second meeting to finish up. A group might need to step away to reflect on what they have done so far and come back together in a week or two with a fresh perspective to finish up the goals and actions.

### **TYPE UP AND DISTRIBUTE ALL NOTES**

It is important that notes from all meetings are distributed to all committee members, whether or not they attend. You might even assign a small subgroup to finish compiling this plan into a clean and unified document to share internally and with your large school community. Maybe even present your Action Plan to the school board to garner greater support.

Be sure that your group understands that what has been developed can be adjusted if needed, but it will help to guide the entire group forward with developing your program. Also remind people that part of the Action Plan is the documentation of the entire group brainstorm (at the beginning of the meeting). This means that ALL ideas have been recorded to revisit in the future. The beauty of this plan is that once you have accomplished one goal, you can check it off, review the Action Plan and go on to the next!

### **Action Planning Steps: A Review**

- **Get your group together (see p. 7 )**
- **Large group brainstorm (see p. 21)**
- **Write a vision statement (see p. 22)**
- **Identify the 3 C's within the large group brainstorm (see p. 22)**
- **Use action plan template in small groups(see p. 23)**
- **Report back and compile the action plan (see p. 23)**
- **Take time to set up evaluation benchmarks (see page 25)**

# Now What?

Enough talking, let's have some action! But WAIT....

If you have successfully worked with your committee to develop a Farm to School action plan that meets the needs of your school, you are probably ready to get started. But, it may be valuable to think about what happens after you implement your plan.

## How will you know if you have been successful?

Are you measuring your success just by checking items off a list? Are you going to be able to share your successes with your school? Does doing everything on your plan really measure your accomplishments? Or does a not-so-successful activity actually teach you more about how your school works, or what your students want?

Remember to have a discussion with your group about how you will assess your developed action plan. This will allow you enough feedback to know if you have done what you set out to do. Most schools find regular check in meetings (at least twice a year), offer enough reflection and flexibility to continue on with the action plan, while making appropriate updates and edits as they go.

### Reflective questions

- What have we accomplished?
- What have we learned?
- What worked well, and what didn't work very well?
- What would we do different next time?
- Do we want to change any upcoming plans in our action plan based on this discussion?
- How do we evaluate success?

There are very different methods to assess your success, depending on what you are planning to accomplish. For example: If





you are hoping to increase knowledge then you will have to think about how you are measuring that increase in knowledge. Maybe you will ask students specific questions about how many local farms they can identify or to describe what they have learned about healthy food and the impact on their lives. If you are hoping to increase local purchasing by 30%, then maybe all you need to do is set up a tracking system with the food service that quantifies the amount of food coming in from local sources.

A yearly formal assessment process of all the stakeholders can also help in both the evaluation of what has been accomplished and the planning for the next year. This can take the form of a paper survey, an online survey, or a quick poll by phone or person during a school event. If you decide to poll or survey a wider audience, only ask a few key questions 3-10 is ideal. You may even want to have a small subgroup of your committee think about these questions during your action planning process.

Online surveys are easy and often tally the answers for you, but take a little work to set up. Paper surveys are familiar, but require time, writing utensils, and table surface for participants and can often lead to short answers. The verbal polls at events are often really fun and engaging as people enter the school for a harvest festival, for example, but you are usually limited to 2-3 questions.

## **How do you avoid re-inventing the wheel?**

There are lots of schools and communities going through the same planning and implementation process you are. Though each community is unique and should capitalize on its individuality, there is great value for networking with other communities to see what they are doing. You can learn from their successes and mistakes as well as share your story for them.

There is a strong national network of Farm to School programs with resource people in place to support and link programs. The National Farm

to School Network ([www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org)) is a great place to start when you're just getting going, but is also a great place to come back to for more ideas and resources after your program is underway.

Also staying in touch with local Farm to School organizations will keep you abreast of Farm to School happenings in your state, including funding opportunities, recent news, and state-wide gatherings. There are statewide, regional, and national Farm to School conferences and workshops that will allow you and your school the opportunities to develop new skills and ideas, and learn from others. Stay in touch with these happenings and seek out these experiences, they will only make your school's Farm to School program stronger.

## Should you revisit the action plan and revise our goals?

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Yes, Yes, YES! Things change and you need to be nimble enough to adapt to staffing and administrative turnovers, new opportunities, and regulation changes. But don't be so flexible that you easily get off course. Trust that your group has done a good job planning your project, while providing opportunity to adjust along the way. Also, it is okay if you get behind your timeline. Things change; there is no way to avoid it. If you get behind your deadlines, change the deadlines based on your current status. If you get ahead of your timeline; revisit your action plan earlier than you intended and start working on the next set of steps. Stick with it, work together, and have fun!







# Spreading the Word and Building Support

Building support for your Farm to School program is not just a good idea, it is essential to sustaining all the hard work that you and your committee have done. There are many ways to get the word out about your school's Farm to School program. This section shares a variety of strategies to share the exciting news of your efforts. Don't think of it as another thing to do, but more a way to enhance the work you are already doing and in some cases making it easier. By spreading the word, many schools have elicited donations, volunteers, and community awards.

## Marketing your program — getting the word out!

The idea of improving children's nutrition and supporting local farms is easy to sell as a local media story. News outlets like covering feel good stories and school food is one. If you contact them, chances are they'll at least follow up and print information. Contacting local media can go a long way when trying to bring the community in to your program. The more positive media coverage a project receives, the more support it will generate. By collaborating with teachers, school boards, parents, food service staff, administrators, farmers and community members, different aspects of your work can be supported and developed by the appropriate individual and organization. See Sample Press Releases (p. 64).

While marketing your farm to school program, also keep in mind that the best way to publicize your work is through word of mouth. Students, parents, and teachers can help build support when you let them in on your plans, so reach out to all these groups via school newsletters, announcements, teachers, and signs on the lunch line.





### **Things to keep in mind:**

- Make sure you continue to communicate information about your Farm to School lunch program even after changes are in place.
- It is just as important to share the story of what you are planning on doing as it is to share about what activities are done. Put articles in your school newsletter and local paper about your committee planning process, advertise your meeting dates, ask for helpers and committee members, and even publish your final action plan.
- When you're publicizing your work, it's helpful to think about the messages you want to relay to the media, parents, students, and teachers about the program.
- Be sure to send event invitations to your school board and local politicians so they can see the changes you are making.

### **Other ideas for getting the word out:**

- Hold harvest dinners for the community and invite media to see your program changes. Invite the farmers with whom you work to come promote the program and answer questions about their products.
- Launch a quarterly school food newspaper with teachers and students. Students can produce the articles so that the school and community can learn more about your Farm to School program.
- Many communities have email listservs where people post news and events. Join the listserv and share on a regular basis the process your Farm to School work is making in your school and community.
- Present both the activities you are doing (taste tests, farmer field trips, etc.) and the plans you are making. Town events like school board meetings, annual town meeting, and rotary functions are all great places to share your story.

## **Activities for building community**

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Take a couple of minutes to look back over your action plan. What activities are you already doing that you could expand a little by inviting the community to participate?



- Are you offering school-wide tests? Could you offer the same test at your town's harvest festival or town meeting?
- Is your school having a food related celebration? Could you invite seniors from the local nursing home to join the event?
- Are you building a school garden? Could you extend the ask for help beyond your school newsletter to the local paper?
- Are students preparing any academic projects that encompass food, farming and nutrition? Could your local cable access channel have the students present their findings on the air?

Consider all the current ways you are impacting your school's environment and just think a little broader to how to bring those same impacts to your whole town. The potential return on this extra outreach could outweigh the extra time, especially if you end up with more willing committee members to continue the work.

## Fundraising events

No matter where your group is in the Action Planning process, it is always important to think of ways to sustain your efforts with fundraising. There are a number of innovative ways schools can raise funds to purchase and prepare local foods while building community relationships. The more specific you are about what you are raising funds for, often the more generous people are. Some ideas have the benefit of providing opportunities for physical activity for students, while others promote community service, and some even do both! Listed here is a handful of VT FEED's favorite ideas, plus a few tried and true local fundraising methods. When planning any fundraising event, be sure to check with your local authorities regarding any rules or regulations with games of chance or sale of other goods.

**1 Cookbook** Create a school cafeteria cookbook and sell it as part of a yearly fundraiser. Can an English class and art class team up and make a cookbook as an assignment?

**2 Harvest Dinner** Hold a Farm Harvest dinner of local foods to raise money for the school to purchase from local farms.





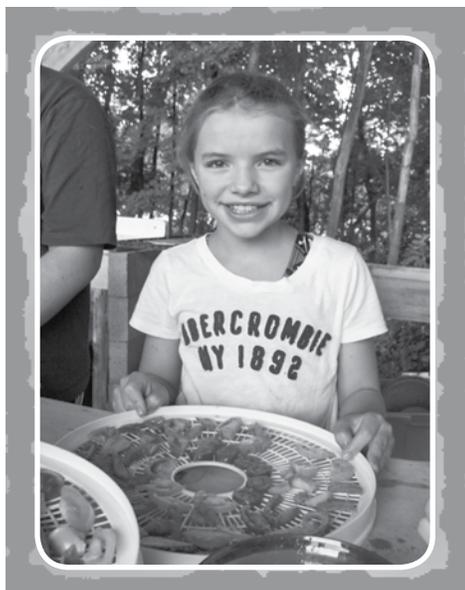
Consider making it a “Localvore Dinner” with all local foods. You can even add some local entertainment.

**3 Calendars** Make a school and town specific calendar that has local events listed, student artwork, photos of local farms, and even harvest related activities. These are fun, colorful and very useful. You might even be able to get a discount on printing at your local print shop.

**4 Community Lunch Café at School** Opening up your cafeteria at lunch time to your community can allow them to see what good things are happening and being served in the cafeteria and also allows your food program to charge adult rates which can generate additional income. Consider doing these once a month or even once a week if it is not too big a burden on the cafeteria.

**5 Selling Seeds** Check with local seed companies to see if they might donate seeds in bulk for your school. This can start out as just a re-packaging of local seeds and turn into an annual seed saving activity.

**6 Selling Seconds** Some local food businesses offer their products (often seconds which are just as delicious but might have minor defects) for free to local groups so they can resell at a discount for their fundraising efforts. Seek out these businesses and see if your community can benefit from their generosity.



**7 Plant Sale** Ask parents to donate plants for a sale. They can divide their perennials and share them with other families. A garden club makes about \$1,000–\$2,000 each year from a sale like this one.

**8 Spring Yard Work** One soccer team offered to rake yards and spread compost at a bargain rate. They had 10 players working 3 half days each, and each boy made \$240.00. Customers were asked to give a donation for the work, and everyone exceeded expectations.

**9 Administrative Fun** Have money jars available into which students and staff place spare change. The school secretary



can count the amount in the jars on a daily basis and post the total. At set increments (for example, \$100, \$200, \$500), the principal and/or vice-principal has to do stunts such as dress as a cheerleader, do cheers, act out a scene from a play, etc. One school earned over \$3,300 in one year.

**10 G.S.T. Auction (goods, services, and talents)** Solicit local businesses (or parents or groups of school children) to donate anything they can offer. One school had a number of items available for auction, including a week at a time share (airfare not included), a week at a cottage, hair care services, a lawn tractor, furniture, food and restaurant gift certificates. This school raised \$20,000. (Remember to set realistic fundraising goals for the size of your community.)

**11 School Garden Raffles** Lots of schools have or are building gardens. What happens to the produce? Some may go to classroom samples or cafeteria taste tests, but some schools are turning them into value-added products and raffling them at school functions. Pumpkins are being turned into pumpkin bread, pumpkin pies, and roasted pumpkin seeds. Tomatoes and basil are being processed as pesto and spaghetti sauce. Sell tickets or products at the front door as parents and community members come into the school for sports games or back to school nights.

**12 Local Restaurant Farm to School Night** Some local restaurants are trying to support their local foods efforts by hosting an annual evening in the restaurant when percentages or all of that's night profits go to the Farm to School efforts. Don't forget to have some information available to all the customers about what your committee is doing.

**13 Sell Vermont Farm to School Arts Cards** Vermont FEED and The Burlington School Food Project have created Vermont Farm to School Arts to celebrate local farms and schools and to provide you with a fundraising opportunity. We invite you to sell note cards depicting 20 original landscapes by 10 Vermont artists to raise money for your school or organization, for instance your own Farm to School program. Your organization will make up to \$4.00 per pack (5 cards/envelopes at \$10 per pack)—a sale of 250 packs of cards would result in up to \$1,000 raised for your organization! Visit [www.vtfeed.org/get-involved/funding-opportunities](http://www.vtfeed.org/get-involved/funding-opportunities) to find out more.





# Case Studies: Stories from the Field

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The following stories are directly from the community members that work with the schools to get more Farm to School type activities embedded into their children's education and meal programs. Most of these communities have been working for years and have experienced the rewards and challenges of this work. Each community has undergone some form of planning process to sustain their efforts. Read, enjoy and learn from the practitioners doing this good work!



## Sharon Elementary School, Vermont

*Keenan Haley*

Keenan Haley is a Third Grade Teacher at Sharon Elementary School. He has been working, along with a team of school employees and volunteers to increase Farm to School activities in his school for many years. He has become the Co-Farm to School Coordinator and Chair of his School Wellness Committee.

### **How long has your Farm to School project been underway?**

Our school started to get involved in Farm to School work about 7 years ago. We started working with VT FEED in 2004, then we were awarded a Vermont Farm to School implementation grant in 2009.

### **How did your community get started in Farm to School?**

Our food service person at the time (2003) and I were interested in exploring the idea of purchasing a CSA to provide local produce to our student population. We attended a meeting where we were introduced to VT FEED. We brought the idea of bringing in the VT FEED folks to help us with staff development to our building administrator. She supported us. At this point we also purchased our first CSA with a local farm. That was the start of it all.

### **Who was involved when you got started?**

Quickly all staff, including the administrator, were on board and committed to doing professional development on Farm to School. We also had support of local farmers in terms of purchasing food for the school.

### **How has your role changed over time?**

Over time my role has changed slightly. I'm now a co-coordinator of the project with another teacher. I also facilitate our Sharon Sprouts group, our Farm to School group that focuses on raising money for our Farm to School program.

### **How has your Farm to School project changed over time?**

What started out as a way to incorporate fresh food into our cafeteria has now penetrated into the classrooms and the community. Not only are we buying local produce, meat, maple syrup, apples, cheese and other items for the cafeteria, but classrooms are doing work around taste tests, farm trips, farmer correspondences, and teaching the 3Rs using farm/food/health education. Our school is convinced that healthy children are more available for learning. But we also know that health and healthy choices need to be taught. We have developed educational gardens for each class-



room and a production garden for the cafeteria. We conduct monthly taste test to help children open student palettes to new foods.

Our community is also invested. A parent started our Sharon Sprouts program. We are determined not to take any money from the general budget or from the food service program. The Sprouts hold monthly farmer's markets in the school cafeteria to raise money that can then be used to help the school purchase local food, help classrooms with field trip expenses based around farming and to help support our school gardens.

Our program continues to evolve. Things are not always perfect, but as a school we are still committed to making this an important part of a child's educational program. Farm to School is a part of our school's culture and we hope to nurture it as it grows.

**Any additional comments, suggestions, or resources you would share with a community just getting started?**

One of the turning points happened when we were hiring two new teachers. The hiring committee was made up of a teacher, the administrator and parents. During an interview one of the parents brought up our commitment to Farm to School. It was at that point I realized that our work in the school was now spreading to the community. It was a powerful moment.



## **Rondout Valley School District - Marbletown Elementary School, New York**

*Nicci Cagan*

Nicci Cagan started out as a concerned parent, is now the Director of From the Ground Up, a member of the PTF (parent, teachers and friends), a member of the Rondout Valley School District Wellness Board, the Farm to School Lead for the Rondout Valley Growers Association, a member of the Steering Committee for Slow Foods Hudson Valley, and a member of Green Visioneer (local businesses envisioning green economies). Her stated primary goal is to build a strong foundation of stakeholders for Farm to School in her area.

### **How long has your Farm to School project been underway?**

Marbletown Elementary built its school garden in July, 2008, which was the genesis of our Farm to School program.

### **How did your community get started in Farm to School?**

I am a parent and an artist with a lifelong love of cooking, fresh food and gardening. I wanted to “create” something for my children and for my community and found myself getting involved at my local elementary school with a desire to bring healthy food into the schools. I founded From the Ground Up with two other parents who shared the goal of building a hands-on garden at the Marbletown Elementary School. We then turned our efforts to improve the school cafeteria, removing styro-foam and unnecessary waste and attempting to get fresh food into the cafeteria. We joined the Wellness Committee at the school and began to meet parents, teachers, administrators, professionals and local, regional and state representatives who had a similar passion.

### **Who was involved when you got started?**

I started with one other parent, who had already been working on the school lunch reform effort and we then formed a group with one additional parent. We got the support of the principal, who helped pave the way for the building of the school garden. We garnered the support of the custodial staff and started interacting with the cafeteria staff. We made the school garden a member of the Rondout Valley Growers Association. I began to meet regularly with the President of the RVGA (who is also a 5th generation farmer). I met the NYS Governor’s Executive Chef, Noah Sheetz in Albany, NY, who agreed to partner with us, which led to participation in numerous events all over the State. We attended a NYS Board of Education meeting and met Julie Holbrook, a school chef and Food Services Director who has successfully executed a Farm to School program in Keene Valley, NY. I then started to join other active food groups in and out of our area, such as Slow Foods Hudson Valley, and attended



conferences with groups such as Vermont FEED and The Farm Based Education Association.

### **How has your role changed over time?**

When I started working with two other moms we did everything to lift the project up, which often meant working all the time at whatever needed to be done at our school. Now I seem to be connecting more on a local, regional and national level to answer questions and connect and direct people. My focus right now is to keep a wide network and create a three-year plan for From The Ground Up as the Farm to School wing of RVGA. I hold events, support teams and connect people and do fund-raising as well as work to implement cafeteria and classroom programming.

### **How has your Farm to School project changed over time?**

We started with one garden in one school and are now working within both the district and the mid-Hudson Valley region in multiple ways to create a region-wide transformation.

### **Any additional comments, suggestions, or resources you would share with a community just getting started?**

What I love about getting involved in Farm to School is: bringing healthy real food to our kids; helping kids to understand their interconnectedness to the environment; creating living economies for our farmers and community members; building community; engaging the senses; and offering an opportunity to celebrate our region's bounty. The ways we come together and grow has been the passion that has carried me forward. Meeting with like-minded people at every level, has been the way that our program has become empowered. Little projects—like a garden, a PTF plant/seed sale, or a food event have been the milestones of our advancement. Early on we received a garden grant for \$500 from The National Gardening Association (the grant sponsor was HomeDepot).

It is important to be on the Wellness Committee. On the Wellness Committee we changed policy used to hire a new Food Service Director with Farm to School experience. It is important to lead by the examples of others—such as Vermont FEED—and tailor what we learn to the specific needs of our community.



## Hartland Elementary School, Vermont

*Peter Allison*

Peter Allison is the Coordinator of the Hartland Farm to School (FTS) Program and also the Director of the Upper Valley FTS Network. He has become an important player in Farm to School work in Vermont, being contacted as a resource for workshops, speaking engagements, and developing a multi-state plan.

### **How long has your Farm to School project been underway?**

The formal FTS program started in the spring of 2007, when Hartland Elementary School received a FTS Grant and I was hired as the coordinator. However, the school has a long history of teacher, parent and community involvement in food-related activities, like farm field trips, farmers coming to school, tastings, and sourcing local food for the school cafeteria (corn in the fall, syrup in spring, sometimes some berries grown by a teacher).

### **How did your community get started in Farm to School?**

The Coordinated School and Community Health Committee, made up of the school nurse, guidance counselors, and community members applied for the grant and served as the initial FTS committee, along with the food service director and some teachers. Our initial focus was to set monthly agricultural themes, and then build a series of activities around those themes. The themes included things like: apples, root vegetables, whole grains, dairy, maple syrup, and spring greens. Activities included a display in our central foyer, taste tests, food featured in a cafeteria meal, field trips and classroom activities. We did as many of these activities each month as possible.

### **Who was involved when you got started?**

The initial team included the people mentioned above, school nurse, guidance counselor, and community members. The community members were two parents, two farmers, leader of a local community organization—some wearing many hats (one farmer is a parent; one farmer is a para-educator at the school). The principal was always kept up to date and played a role in communicating the program to parents and staff through newsletters and meetings. Several teachers took a great interest and were involved in particular projects: Spanish teacher in our salsa project, art teacher in many projects, family and consumer science in gardening and cooking activities. The custodians were critical in identifying the site for our gardens and hoop house. The food service director would indicate what foods she wanted purchased. Farmers were involved in planning field trips and Farm to School days.

### **How has your role changed over time?**

In the first two years, I played a key role in every aspect of the program—setting up displays, ordering food (and sometimes delivering it), conducting taste tests, arranging and leading field trips and class activities, and communicating to various stakeholders. I was able to involve college interns during parts of the first three years as well, and they took on some of the in-class activities and creating displays. Over time, I have worked myself out of many of the day to day roles—in part because of budget cuts that eliminated funding; in part because we have established a more formal FTS Committee that is taking a leadership role.

### **How has your Farm to School project changed over time?**

Our FTS Program has many components: sourcing local food for the school lunch, field trips, classroom activities, school garden and community events. We hold an annual Hartland Farm Fest—this will be our fourth year that raises funds for our FTS program, and an annual HES Salsa Sale using locally grown food and prepared by locally grown kids—with labels that they design. Each year, the program emphasizes one or another aspect of the program. In general I would say that more people are taking ownership of different components of the program and that through this diversity of involvement there is a growing strength and resiliency emerging that we hope will sustain the program through changes in personnel and funding.

### **Any additional comments, suggestions, or resources you would share with a community just getting started?**

We were one of 25 programs in the nation in 2008 to win the National Victory Against Hunger Award that came with a \$1000 check. Senators Leahy and Senator Sanders, and Agricultural Secretary Roger Albee have all been to our Hartland Farm Fest. We have a website with more information: [www.hartlandfarm2school.org](http://www.hartlandfarm2school.org) and lots of pictures.



## Martha's Vineyard Public Schools, Massachusetts

*Noli Taylor*

Noli Taylor is the Coordinator of Island Grown Schools, a program of Island Grown Initiative, and oversees program based school staff, the gleaning program, coordinates fundraising and media efforts, and works with the superintendents office, the cafeteria staff, and principals to propel the big picture work needed to have district-wide program.

### How long has your Farm to School project been underway?

Three years this month! We started in December of 2007.

### How did your community get started in Farm to School?

A number of people began approaching our non-profit farm advocacy organization, asking when we were going to start doing work around schools and food. We held a community meeting, not knowing which direction the program should take, and there was a big turn out, with everyone from the superintendent to farmers to cafeteria directors to parents and kids and teachers and chefs.

We realized the community was ready for this program, and kept up with community meetings once a month. Each of our seven schools developed their own working groups, and over the course of the first year each school began this program in their own way. By the end of the next school year we had installed gardens at all of our schools and were scrambling to keep up with teacher demand, garden maintenance, coordinating work with school chefs, and farm field trips.

At this point we had one stipend coordinator and another stipend enrichment coordinator, and realized we couldn't keep up with the momentum behind the program with just the two of us. We received a \$25,000 grant from a family foundation and decided to keep our stipends low and offer a \$250/month "volunteer stipend" to someone to be the program coordinator at each of our schools. We hired a mix of parents, educators, and gardeners, and this is our core team now, bringing the program to life at each of our schools.

### Who was involved when you got started?

Each school had a different founding team. The high school was mostly students with a couple teachers, and most elementary schools started with mostly parents and a few principals and teachers. They talked through different ways to begin the program at their school, and worked with us to take first steps.



Farmers weren't in the core teams but did come to meetings and made connections with the cafeteria directors, which quickly "bore fruit". The farmers realized they had things to sell at the end of the season and not enough market for it, and the cafeteria directors realized they could buy local, fresh produce at the same or cheaper prices than they were spending for food from far away. These relationships have continued to grow and now six of our seven schools are offering locally grown foods on a regular basis.

### **How has your role changed over time?**

I've moved from lots of on the ground work to coordinating work.

### **How has your Farm to School project changed over time?**

It has grown at a break-neck speed, and now is becoming truly integrated into our K-12 school system at all seven island schools.

### **Any additional comments, suggestions, or resources you would share with a community just getting started?**

One of the best things we've done, I think, is to start a gleaning program for our schools. Farms contact us when they have food they aren't able to harvest, for one reason or another, and we send an email alert out to a group of community volunteers who've signed up to be part of the program at various tabling events and at the schools. We then deliver the food free to schools, and whatever the schools can't accept we bring to low income housing developments, low income seniors, senior centers, and the local jail.

We started this program last fall and have harvested 10,000 pounds of food. This has done more than anything else to really change the menus in our schools—the cafeteria directors are so happy to have the free food, the volunteers love being a part of it, we bring classes out whenever we can to help glean and they are then excited to eat the food in their meals back at school, and the farmers are glad that the food they've worked hard to grow will actually be eaten!

Another great thing is a partnership we've developed with a local restaurant. They are doing fundraising dinners for us, using all local ingredients and getting donated wine, charging \$100/plate, in the spring and fall. The first dinner, which we had in the fall, raised \$9200 and was totally sold out! This is a really nice partnership, and something I would suggest other groups cultivate in their communities—good PR for the restaurant, and great to have a source of funding support in the private sector.



## **Burlington School District, Vermont**

*Doug Davis*

Doug Davis is the School Food Service Director of the Burlington Schools. He has become one of the biggest Farm to School advocates on the East Coast and is contacted regularly for speaking engagements from all over the country. He works tirelessly on incorporating community participation into his meal program and getting local products served in his cafeteria. He sees his role as “the person who needs to balance the importance of making food accessible to all students while maintaining a solvent program.” He applies this to FTS by working with farmers, staff, faculty, parents and businesses to create opportunities to include local food and food system education into his program.

### **How long has your Farm to School project been underway?**

Our program began in 2003 in one of our schools and now encompasses our entire district.

### **How did your community get started in Farm to School?**

A grant was secured by Shelburne Farms to work on connecting our school, community and food system. This led to a survey at a town meeting—this survey showed community interest in the idea of improving school food. We used this opportunity to build lasting relationships with farmers and other local partners.

### **Who was involved when you got started?**

It began with a parent, a VT FEED member and myself, but soon after, the district administration and a city government group became involved. Over the course of several months many people came together to form the Burlington Food Council and by the end of the first year we had many people including teachers, farmers, and community organizations. By the end of our second year, we had local restaurants and businesses, and the city recreation department.

### **How has your role changed over time?**

My overall purchasing mind set has changed as has my attitude towards what I believe students will or will not eat. I also spend a lot more time working with the community and with state and national organizations to move FTS forward. We also focus a lot more time on building processes, training our staff and improving our facilities.

### **How has your Farm to School project changed over time?**

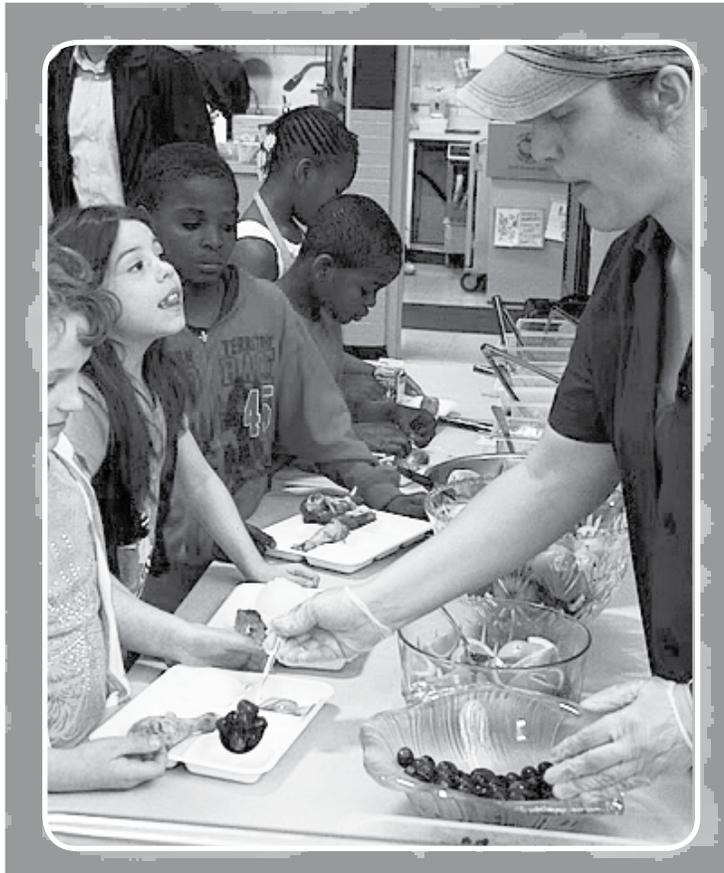
We are no longer generally recognized as a school food service operation. We now are a FTS operation that connects our schools, farms and community members into a program that benefits everyone. We also are much more respected in our schools as an integral part of the educational process.



### **Any additional comments, suggestions, or resources you would share with a community just getting started?**

By starting slowly and taking deliberate steps to get our program ready to accept and excel on the changes we desired we were able to bring everyone along. Many food service employees feel overwhelmed, under trained and disrespected—it is vital that they feel that what they are doing benefits the child’s ability to learn and excel.

By including local businesses, we learn from them some very important lessons about the marketplace while giving them insight to our industry—one most people do not understand. If I had to choose two things that could have held us back, but instead launched us forward they would have to be our district administrators. They supported us at every turn and encouraged us to try new things even empowering us to fail, knowing that what we were doing is so worthwhile. Secondly—Shelburne Farms/VT FEED—there is no doubt that this partnership will be looked upon as one that changed the course of FTS for the better.





## Lincoln County, Maine

*Amy Winston*

Amy Winston is a community economic development organizer and started working on Farm to School when she was the Lincoln County Economic Director, based at Coastal Enterprises Incorporated. Along with an activist parent, she co-organized the Farm to School project FARMS (Focus on Agriculture in Rural Maine Schools) as a county economic development initiative. She has worked to identify strategic partners (banks, restaurants, pediatricians, etc...), provided technical assistance, and worked with superintendents, district school boards, food service directors, growers, and school health advisory committees to build support for FTS activities and integrate FTS into school wellness policies.

### **How long has your Farm to School project been underway?**

Roughly 5 years (2005-2010).

### **How did your community get started in Farm to School?**

As county economic development director, I promoted a cultural approach to responsible development that would not be divisive in an area where development was controversial and had not been defined by the community. I identified partners with complimentary interests, specifically a parent that was interested in nutrition and was concerned about vending machines. I shared my plans to develop a purchasing program between farms and fishermen to keep dollars circulating locally, and preserve working landscapes. This fit in with her interest in anti-obesity intervention. We then approached a local pediatrician who had gotten involved in organic gardening and the school health coordinator for a local school district. We researched existing models (Maine Harvest Lunch, Wisconsin Homegrown Lunch, VT FEED, Washington Youth Harvest, Edible Schoolyard) and decided on a course of action. We approached the principal about doing classroom and schoolwide taste tests and harvest lunch events and met the head cook for the largest school in the district. The cook agreed to scale a classroom taste test up to serve to the whole school. We wrote a grant for taste tests and harvest lunch events, and polled teachers interested in volunteering to host a taste test.

Once the taste tests were underway and successful we partnered with the local co-op to develop a distribution/purchasing project. Farmers and RC&D council attended our planning meetings as well, and we planned a fall forum, with food service employees, farmers, pediatricians, the PTO, the principal and teachers. 200 people attended from many districts including local elected officials, school board members, superintendent, Department of Agriculture and Education staff. The Co-op donated food and local caterer donated labor to create a model school lunch smorgasbord. We held a follow-up roundtable to problem solve challenges and 75 people attended. Issue groups were developed on production, agriculture and marketing, alternative revenue/cost/development, education/curriculum integration. We continued with another follow up



event at a local farm. Out of the first issue group, came a plan to pilot direct purchase of preselected fruits/vegetables and to develop specific next steps and a plan for developing a contract with farmers for fall purchasing.

### **Who was involved when you got started?**

County development director, interested parent, retired pediatrician; expanded to school health coordinator; then principal, 4 teachers, kitchen team leader (head cook). Our group then expanded to local food co-op co-managers, 2 farmers, non-profit farm exec director, and RCD council director. Later, an extension educator provided in-class presentations with curriculum she developed.

### **How has your role changed over time?**

My job has changed from County Economic Development Director to Farm to School/Institution Project Developer. I became regional-co-lead for the National Farm to School Network and delved even more deeply into state level organizing work. I stepped back from the local work as I saw the farms and schools taking it on themselves with just some monitoring by the school health coordinator. I provide leadership in the statewide work group and am chairing a policy subcommittee to advance policy in Maine.

### **How has your Farm to School project changed over time?**

One of the founders has become a district Farm to School coordinator. Several of the original partners continue to practice Farm to School as a part of their workplan at different districts or nonprofits where they work. The farmers that were involved in the organizing were not the ones that were able to contract with the schools. They still sell for taste tests and help with educational activities. In response to feedback from school nutrition programs, the economic development office saw the need for processing of products and culinary trainings for foodservice, and to coordinate production and distribution. A food hub project started in an economically distressed community in the county which is rich in natural resources and has low jobs opportunities with a recent factory closure.

### **Any additional comments, suggestions, or resources you would share with a community just getting started?**

We had a unique approach—Farm to School as economic development and community health. We had a variety of means to support the program with grants and local business support (bank, health insurance) along with, fundraisers and community dinners. Our schools also sustained the purchasing in their budget without continued additional fund from the project.





# Appendix



# SWOT

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

SWOT's are a great tool for analyzing and planning for business, projects, personal endeavors or any overarching group planning. In Farm to School, they are key for identifying the internal and external elements that could be helpful and/or a hindrance to your committee's success. This will help you identify assets and barriers to achieving your anticipated outcomes. This exercise can be significant before you start your detailed action planning process, as it helps identify whether your group's goals are attainable.

### Directions

1. Identify your group's goals.
2. Create a 4 blocked chart or just use 4 separate pieces of paper and list headers of STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, and THREATS
3. Explain the difference to your group between these 4 categories
  - **Strengths** are internal attributes within your school, community, committee, program that are helpful to achieving your group's goals. These need to be maintained, built upon, or leveraged.
  - **Weaknesses** are the internal attributes within your school, community, committee, program that are harmful to achieving your group's goals. These need to be remedied, changed or stopped.
  - **Opportunities** are the external conditions that are helpful to achieving your group's objectives. These need to be prioritized, captured, and optimized.
  - **Threats** are the external conditions that are harmful to achieving your group's goals. These need to be countered, minimized, or managed.
4. First have your group work on Strengths, trying to list all that exist. Then move onto Weaknesses. Constantly reminding your group that these are the internal attributes.
5. Next, start to answer the "what might be" question by listing the opportunities. Some people consider opportunities as the potential future strengths of your group or program. Then list the external threats, also could be considered the potential future weaknesses.

6. After you have exhausted your minds of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, start to develop your action plan. As you choose an action, refer back to your SWOT and ask yourself :

- a. How can we use our strengths?
- b. How can we avoid or stop our weaknesses?
- c. How can we utilize each opportunity?
- d. How can we defend against each threat?

Here is a sample chart that explains a SWOT:

	<b>Positive/helpful to achieving the goal</b>	<b>Negative/harmful to achieving the goal</b>
Internal Attributes of school, community, committee, program	<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <p>Things that are good now, maintain them, build on them and use as leverage</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <p>Things that are bad now, remedy, change or stop them</p>
External conditions in environment that impact your school, community, committee, program	<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <p>Things that are good for the future, prioritize them, capture them, build on them and optimize</p>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <p>Things that are bad for the future, put in plans to manage them or counter them</p>

(adapted from a variety of business tools)

# Town-wide Food Mapping

One way to involve your community and fully assess your town resources is to develop a town food map. We have all see town maps that show hiking trails or historical landmarks, why not create a map that shows your town's food and farming resources. Where are the farms? Where are the restaurants? Where are the grocery stores or convenience stores? How about the community gardens and farmers market? How does your town food system relate to your neighboring towns? Any in-home businesses that do kitchen processing going on, like jelly or cookies?

This activity will help your group not only visually assess your local food related resources, but will open a dialogue within your group of your community's access or lack of access to food and farming inside and outside of your community. It is also a wonderful educational resource for students to fill out and investigate their community while identifying their community resources.

## **Supplies**

- Large Map of Town – this can either be a large photocopied and enlarged version of a map from your town offices, or you can just draw a shape that is approximately the size and dimensions of your town on a large piece of flipchart paper. If you end up drawing one, put some obvious landmarks (like roadways, waterways) to give everyone in your group some bearings to work from. Leave room around the edges of your map for writing.
- Other large pieces of paper
- Markers, pencils, and other writing utensils
- Some small pieces of paper or post it notes to tack onto map

## **Directions**

- Have your group first brainstorm a list of farms and food producers in your town. Then brainstorm the list of places people access food in your town (schools, grocery stores, restaurants).
- With your long list of food related locations, plot these sites on your map and identify these resources with written labels.
- Next start to draw arrows of the direction that people travel out of your town to access food (maybe at the large superstore grocery down the main road, 3 towns over or to your neighboring city for the food coop).
- Outside of your town boundary, somewhere on the outside edge, make reference to

these places outside of your community that people rely on for access to food.

- While looking at your map, but on another large piece of paper, start to answer the following questions.
  - “What are our communities food, farming, and nutrition greatest assets?”
  - “What are we lacking? What are our food system weaknesses?”
  - “What patterns do we see emerging as to how food is moved or provided in our community?”
  - “What does this map tell us as we try to plan and build our Farm to School program?”

Post this somewhere where your group can add to it over time.

## Extensions

**Consider posting it in a community space and ask for more feedback. Your committee doesn't know everything that there is in your town. Mapping your town resources is a great way to assess your food resources but also a great community engagement tool. Someone is going to ask you why you are doing this.... And right there you have that community member ready to hear all about the school food work your committee is working on. How about having this map up at the next town meeting and ask the community if you missed anything? Inevitably, community members will share with you historical food connections too. “Bertha used to run a great little café down there next to the town hall, but it burned down back in 82’. I bet most folks now don’t even know that?” This can easily turn into a rich cultural history of your town. Do you**

**know why there are all those apple trees by the firehouse? Or how the line of maple trees that lines main street used to be the site of the annual maple syrup festival in the early 1900’s?**



# What are the roles of the players in your school food system?

## School Food System Webbing Activity

### Objective

- To identify the players and their roles in your current school food system.
- To strategize who is missing and some action steps that can be taken to include fresh local food, and to involve your community in making these changes.

### Materials

- 5x7 inch index cards (or similar cards)
- Yarn or pins, ball of yarn, dark marker
- A list of people's roles in the school food system. At least include: food service director, administrator, school board, parent, student, nurse, teacher, and farmer. Some other community members to include could be: food coop, restaurant, local distributor and so on.

### Procedure

Write each individual role on an individual card. Attach the yarn or pins so the card can be worn by participants.

In a group, hand out the cards to participants to wear.

Ask each participant to act out/speak for the role they receive. For example, if an adult receives the 'student' card, the adult will act out complaining about the food, or loving the candy fundraisers, or buying lunch only on pizza day. Or maybe the students have ideas of what they want to see differently.

Start this demonstration with the student who gets the end of the ball of yarn. The student makes a statement and, while continuing to hold the end of the yarn, throws the ball of yarn to another participant who has a role that the student thinks could help his or her problem. Each participant holds the yarn and passes the ball of yarn to build the web. Do this until the conversation comes to a natural stopping point.

Example: The student may only like pizza lunches and requests pizza every day. She throws the ball to the food service director who could make that happen. The food service director states that she does not think pizza every day is that healthy. She throws the ball to the nurse, (as she hangs onto the yarn) who she asks to help teach the students about healthy choices in the cafeteria.

There are several outcomes that can result in discussion:

- A web of yarn is created and participants realize how everyone is interconnected and has to participate in school food change.
- A key person/role was left out by not receiving the yarn, or by not being on the cards in the first place.
- A key person is left holding the ball (of yarn) multiple times and is perceived as responsible for most of the problems or solutions.
- Participants come up with a few ideas while “passing the buck/yarn” that they can implement at their school.
- Participants realize that a school food system is complex.
- Participants start getting over the barriers of communicating with all the players in the school food system.



# ACTION PLANNING TEMPLATE

**CIRCLE ONE: COMMUNITY CLASSROOM CAFETERIA**

**FARM TO SCHOOL VISION:**

STRATEGY	ACTION STEPS	RESOURCES NEEDED	TIMELINE	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE? (LEAD PERSON & GROUP MEMBERS)

**LONG TERM IDEAS & GOALS:**

# **SAMPLE**

## **Large Group Brainstorm**

### **Organized by 3 C's (Cafeteria, Classroom, Community)**

#### **Cafeteria**

- Pictures of farmers in the cafeteria-food comes from people
- Build a root cellar (see Action Planning Template p. 59 )
- Increase fruits and vegetables served and eaten
- Food made from scratch
- Kids aware of waste- thinking about composting
- Kids finish lunch
- Fundraise to buy a freezer (see Action Planning Template p. 59 )
- Lunchtime pace slow down- more like Thanksgiving meal
- Tie into seasonality of our food
- Find additional storage facilities in the community (see Action Planning Template p. 59)
- Kids involved in food preparation at school
- How do we buy food year round?- explore formal/informal options
- More nutrition education available to students (and school community- about funding of school lunch program)

#### **Classroom**

- Students bring food made from home/ snacks less processed
- Students talking about food and where it comes from
- Knowledge of our farming history and heritage
- Food literacy/ how food gets from seed to table
- Adoption of expertise by students/ opportunities for mentoring & sharing with others
- Kids touching food/ encountering new foods, more familiar with local foods & knowing about different foods
- Know/ familiar with parts of food and how it gets to be the food we eat
- Tie into seasonality of our food
- Math linkages- food preparation teaching opportunities
- Begin the discussion of why buy local?
- Create student-centered projects around food- empowering

#### **Community**

- More connections between kids and farms in community
- Respect for people growing food
- Put a face on farming and community food production
- Get kids on farms
- Food security issues (source, access, skills)
- Our town is an ag community- can we feed our local community and address food security issues
- How can we/What skills are needed to be food self-sufficient as a community?
- Willing to support/fundraise for the school FTS program: community events, harvest dinners, food making

# SAMPLE - ACTION PLANNING TEMPLATE

**CIRCLE ONE: CAFETERIA CLASSROOM COMMUNITY**

**FARM TO SCHOOL VISION:**

STRATEGY	ACTION STEPS	RESOURCES NEEDED	TIMELINE	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE? (LEAD PERSON & GROUP MEMBERS)
Build A School Root Cellar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check with Principal and Janitorial staff about location</li> <li>• Verify size needed for storage from food service</li> <li>• Inquire with teachers about curriculum connections</li> <li>• Check with local lumber company for donations</li> <li>• Find local resource for tips on building a root cellar</li> <li>• Set timeline for construction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplies for construction</li> <li>• Location of site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verify resources and site by April 1st</li> <li>• Verify if there will be student involvement by April 1st</li> <li>• Complete construction by June 1st</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Susie will work with principal to find location</li> <li>• Susie will work to find local resources</li> <li>• Ed will work with teachers to inquire about curriculum connections/construction involvement</li> <li>• Ed will work with food service to see how much space is needed</li> </ul>
Fundraise to buy an additional refrigerator/freezer for the cafeteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look into state and federal equipment grants</li> <li>• Verify space, size and capacity of what we can use in the kitchen</li> <li>• Brainstorm community event to bring attention and funds to this project</li> <li>• Price and spec out exactly what we want</li> <li>• Talk to building maintenance to see what power is available and needed for this</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funds(grant and community fundraising)</li> <li>• Approval</li> <li>• Electricity capacity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant dependent</li> <li>• Fundraising event in fall and winter to get new equipment in spring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joan will spec out the equipment they need and will look through catalogs and website to choose what will work in her kitchen</li> <li>• Joan will contact the state about grant funds</li> <li>• Susie will start to work with parent group to plan fundraising event</li> <li>• Ed will ask the principal and maintenance about the electricity and approval</li> </ul>
Consider additional storage facilities in community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey community for where additional storage exists (refrigerated, frozen, and ware-house)</li> <li>• Look into regulations school must follow and outside storage facility must follow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let's start on this after we find out about buying an additional refrigerator for the cafeteria first</li> </ul>	
<p><b>LONG TERM IDEAS &amp; GOALS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These storage facilities could be used for other purposes than just for the school. We might be able to link this to a greater community storage need. But we don't want that to slow us down from getting what we want.</li> <li>• Monitoring the root cellar conditions (moisture, temperature, pressure) needs to be considered and could be linked to a class project</li> <li>• We should write an article about our storage projects for the local paper as a way to spread the word, canvas for community support and funding , and to see if any other local projects are working on the same issue.</li> </ul>				

# Sample Agenda #1

This is a great agenda for a smaller working group (under 10 people) that have been working together already and know they are coming together to develop an action plan. This is designed as a 2 hour meeting, and is a very directed discussion.

## AGENDA

### FARM TO SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

#### DEVELOPING THE ACTION PLAN

- 15 minutes    **HISTORY** to date of committee, and overview of what group is trying to accomplish
- 30 minutes    **FARM TO SCHOOL VISIONING BRAINSTORM**
- What Farm to School work is currently happening in our school?
  - What are the possibilities for the future?
- 30 minutes    **ACTION PLANNING** with the 3 C's  
Breakout into 3 groups (Classroom, Cafeteria, Community)
- Define and prioritize actions
  - Using Action Planning template, create steps to accomplish actions
- 5 minute      **BREAK**
- 30 minutes    **REPORT BACK AND DISCUSS**
- Each breakout group reports back on their discussion and action planning
  - Action plans are recorded on one master planning document
  - Open discussion
  - Large group refines the action plan: who does what and timeline to reach goals
- 10 minutes    **NEXT STEPS AND WRAP UP**

# Sample Agenda #2

This agenda is for a larger group that may not be well acquainted. It is also for a group that is still trying to figure out who they are and the work they want to do together. This is designed over two 2-hour meetings. In some cases, it may be helpful for the group to meet 3 or more times to have enough participation and time to formulate a solid plan.

## AGENDA

### FARM TO SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING (PART 1 OF 2): DEVELOPING OUR SHARED VISION AND ACTIONS

15 minutes    **INTRODUCTIONS** Name, who you are and what you hope to see come out of our committee visioning session.

*Facilitator note: Go around circle and give everyone a minute to answer this. To keep it short, you may have to remind people to keep their reports to 2 sentences.*

15 - 30 min.    **DEFINE FARM TO SCHOOL** Using either existing materials, resources online or guest speaker, explain and answer questions about Farm to School.

30 minutes    **WHAT DO WE WANT OUR FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM TO LOOK LIKE?**

*Facilitator note: Conduct a large group brainstorm of what all the possibilities are for your school's Farm to School program – Dream Big. There are no bad ideas here. If you get stuck for ideas, look at the resources and case studies that exist on Farm to School websites or in this guide. Keep track of your long list on large flipchart paper. When you reach the time limit or your group feels they have finished the brainstorm, set aside this long list but still keep it visible to your group. You will be coming back to this list shortly.*

30 minutes    **WHAT IS OUR OVERALL GOAL?** What is the big picture outcome we want to see in our school?

*Facilitator note: Craft a vision statement that all your schools activities can be measured against. If you need, break into smaller groups to work on this statement and then report back and merge your statements. Make sure your whole group is in agreement as to what you are trying to accomplish.*

BREAK or END of First Meeting (if end, take 10 minutes to wrap up, schedule next meeting and share agenda for next meeting)

No matter if you are planning a second meeting or this is just the second half of your first meeting, make sure you have refreshed everyone on what happened during the first half of this planning process. If you have new people at this second meeting that were not part of the first half, take a couple of minutes at the beginning to get everyone “on the same page”.

## AGENDA

### FARM TO SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING (PART 2 OF 2): DEVELOPING OUR SHARED VISION AND ACTIONS

#### RESTART MEETING

#### 15 minutes **CLUMPING AND REFINING YOUR BRAINSTORM LIST**

*Facilitator note: Have your group review your long brainstormed list. Clump similar things (is school gardens on there twice, or maybe it says kids learning to cook and teaching cooking skills in class). Put like things together, but don't over clump.*

#### 15 minutes **PRIORITIZE YOUR BRAINSTORM**

*Facilitator note: Now with your groups vision statement in mind, it is time to prioritize the list. Each person gets 3 or 5 votes for what they think is the most important to be done. What got the most votes? What key things came out as the most important. Take a minute to compare them to the vision statement. Do these things fit together well? Do they cover all 3 C's? Do these have an obvious flow between them? Can your group choose the activities that seem to both align with the overarching statement but also seem realistic for your school and community to accomplish? Do some of the activities need to happen before other activities? Do they build on each other?*

#### 30 minutes **OVERALL TIMEFRAME AND OVERARCHING ANNUAL THEMES**

*Facilitator note: As a group decide if you are working on a 2 year, 3 year, or 5 year timeframe. Looking over your prioritized list of activities, do obvious themes emerge for each year? Do you want to spend the first year building awareness and then the next year, make lots of infrastructure changes? Does education and communication seem to be needed before you do a lot of menu changes? Think about the order that some of the activities should be done. Decide on the actions your group is tackling and over how many years. Take the 1st years activities, divide them up among small groups.*

#### 30 minutes **SMALL GROUP ACTION PLANNING**

*Facilitator note: Using the action planning template, have the small groups think through actions for what needs to get done, the resources that are needed, under what deadlines, and who is going to accomplish them.*

#### 30 minutes **REPORT BACK AND COMPILE PLAN**

*Facilitator note: Have groups report back as you build a comprehensive action plan on a master copy in front of everyone for the 1st year only. Decide on not only activities to be accomplished, but who is working on them and when they will be completed by. As time allows, have your committee work on plans for years to come, but in less detail as you do not know what changes you will want to make after completing your 1st year.*

# 5 Reasons Kids Will Try New Foods

## 1. PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Meeting the farmer or getting to know a grower makes a personal connection to the food. They are more willing to try a food if they have a relationship with the person that grew it.

*"My son wouldn't eat broccoli until he met Farmer Dave. At the farmers market, Farmer Dave told my son how good his broccoli was, and my son thought Farmer Dave was so cool, that he ate the broccoli. Now I tell him that all our broccoli is from Farmer Dave (even if it isn't)."*

## 2. PRIDE IN PRODUCTION

When a child plants, tends, and harvests from a garden they are proud of what their hard work has created. They not only eat it, they want to share it with everyone.

*3rd grade girl harvests corn from school garden that they she helped plant the spring before. The corn cobs are very small, underformed, and a little sad looking. But she enthusiastically pulls back the husks to discover the 10 kernels that have fully formed. She rushes to her teacher saying, "look, look, look. Can I eat it now?"*

*8th grader who's science class partnered with the wood science/technology teacher to build sprout boxes, sprout the seeds and sell the sprouts to the cafeteria, drags her friends not in the class into her science room outside of class time to show the sprouts and give each of them a sprout salad when her she thinks no one is around. She is heard saying, "you HAVE to try this. These sprouts are sooo good. Sprouts are the absolute best. I love em." This coming from a girl that had never had a sprout a month before.*

## 3. IF THEY SERVE IT, THEY WILL EAT IT

Students that are able to prepare food from its raw state and serve it to their peers, not only will eat the foods, but will become the biggest advertisers and food pushers. Introducing new foods, always works best when it is through positive peer pressure, than from a teacher, parent, or other adult.

*Middle school students helping prepare food samples of local products with the help of school food service are enthusiastic to walk around the cafeteria with small Dixie cups of "taste tests", strongly encouraging these samples on all their peers. They also love to survey their peers as to who actually tried, and who liked it. Many students have been positively pressured to try cabbage carrot salad, or gazpacho from a peer.*

## 4. ENTHUSIASM TO SHARE INFORMATION

When a child returns from visiting a farm, a kitchen, a garden, or any other community resource that grows or prepares food, they can't wait to tell their parents, grandparents, or anyone that will listen.

*A 2nd grade class visits a strawberry farm on a school field trip and gets to pick sweet ripe strawberries. The farmer invites them back to the pick-your-own farm with their families. Eight out of 20 of those students returned that weekend with their parents in tow to show them the farm and to show them where and what they picked and ate.*

## 5. SENSE OF PLACE AND COMMUNITY HERITAGE

Children understand and are usually proud of their regional identities based on climatically appropriate food from where they live. It gives them an identity to relate to and communicate to others.

*A 2nd grader who has just returned from a farm field trip to a dairy farm in Vermont, rushes to her mom afterschool to tell her that she got to see where milk comes from that goes into making cheese and ice cream. She proceeded to explain that she thinks that people from Vermont are stronger and sometimes even taller because we make and drink so much milk here. She concluded her observation with , "we are a dairy state, you know".*



# Name of Your School Here

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## N E W S R E L E A S E

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Insert Date Here

Contact: Your Name Here

Your Phone Number

### **NAME OF EVENT HERE**

**Your Town, VT** - On February 19, about [number and grade of students] students from [name of your school] in [name of your town] will participate in a taste test sponsored by the [school or district] food service department and [anyone else involved]. The students will be offered samples of [type of dish] and [type of dish] that will be prepared by [grade level] students and Food Service staff. [Grade level] students will also conduct surveys with participants to determine whether or not the new food should be incorporated into the school's lunch menu.

Results will then be tabulated by [whoever will do the tabulating]. Events like this one have been occurring [how often] for [how long] at [your school] with great results. Since the beginning of the taste test program [these food items] have been incorporated into the school lunch menu, with a particular emphasis on locally grown, healthy food choices.

**YOUR SCHOOL'S ADDRESS HERE**

# Name of Your School Here

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## N E W S R E L E A S E

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Insert Date Here

Contact: Your Name Here

Your Phone Number

**Your Town, VT** – Friday, November 26 [school's name] School hosted its annual Harvest Festival. The school was bustling with excited students and friendly community faces. The lunch time event featured food harvested from local farms, as well as music performed and art made by the students themselves. Students participated in the planning, making and serving of the food, helping to create the menu and cooking alongside Food Service staff. They also decorated the cafeteria with beautifully drawn harvest scenes. A Bountiful Harvest mural, to remain on permanent display outside the cafeteria, was unveiled.

The feast included [enter foods eaten here]. [Grade level] students conducted surveys throughout the feast, and in this way, the Food Service received a bounty of positive feedback about this year's event. [Quote from student or food service worker]

Other activities included [these]. [School's name] School is a [what kind of school] in [town]. This is the [number] year of the Harvest Festival. For more information, please contact [contact information].

**YOUR SCHOOL'S ADDRESS HERE**

# Farm to School Rubric

**SCHOOL NAME** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

**FTS MEMBERS COMPLETING RUBRIC** \_\_\_\_\_

The rubric on the following pages is designed to help schools or districts assess the stage of their Farm to School program. This can help inform action planning to identify what next steps might be taken to deepen the program and give it greater staying power. It can also be used to identify readiness for Farm to School grants and needs for technical assistance.

The rubric is broken into four sections: Cafeteria, Classroom, Community, and Integration. To use the rubric, go through each indicator (listed in the gray column on the left hand side) and circle the description (column 1, 2, 3, or 4) that best matches the current state of your Farm to School program. In some cases part of the description might apply to your program and part of it might not, or you might feel that your program falls somewhere between two descriptions. In that case, circle the one description that most fully describes your program, but also underline any parts of the adjacent description that also apply to your program.

While this rubric is designed as a general tool for all Farm to School programs, there will certainly be aspects of your program that may not show up in the indicators or descriptions. Feel free to add language in the appropriate section or indicator that more fully describes your program. This rubric is simply a starting point for you to create a quick snapshot of your Farm to School program, so please adapt it to be useful for your needs.

This assessment can be done by a team leader (gathering input as needed from food service staff, faculty, and community members), or collaboratively by a team. A collaborative assessment is likely to most accurately capture current practice and can help launch collaborative action planning.

# Section I: Cafeteria

INDICATOR	1	2	3	4
<b>SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE STAFF ENGAGEMENT</b>	School food service is interested in the creation of a farm to school program.	School food service representative regularly attends farm to school committee meetings and activities.	School food service staff play active role in developing the farm to school program.	Multiple (or all) food service staff work with faculty, administration, and community members to coordinate farm to school efforts.
<b>PURCHASING</b>	Possibilities for incorporating local food into the menu identified and/or resources to help source local food identified.	Local sources of food identified and several local foods piloted in school meals.	Local food regularly incorporated into menu for school year  School food service can adapt to fluctuating sources of local food and can adapt their budget as necessary.	Annual purchasing contracts have been established between local farmers and the school.  System in place to sustain the purchase of local food consistently; new local food sources evaluated regularly.
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE &amp; PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	School food service has begun to identify infrastructure and professional development needs and changes to be made to incorporate local food into menu.	Infrastructure changes initiated or being planned.  Professional development opportunities provided for school food service staff.	Infrastructure changes allow for incorporation of more local foods.  All school food service staff have opportunities for professional development.	Food Program infrastructure can sustain processing, cooking, and serving local foods over the long term.  Plan in place for ongoing evaluations of infrastructure and professional development needs as local food purchasing increases.
<b>CLASSROOM &amp; COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS</b>	School food service interested in conducting taste tests and/or can identify possibilities for engaging faculty and students in the farm to school program.	School food service works with farm to school committee to gain feedback from students on the farm to school program, such as recipes that incorporate local food.	School food service works with farm to school committee on taste tests, curriculum integration, and community farm to school events.	Community members, students, and school staff see the school food program as an integral part of the school and community.

## Section II: Classroom

INDICATOR	1	2	3	4
<b>FACULTY INVOLVEMENT</b>	Faculty interested in creation of farm to school program.	Faculty representative regularly attends farm to school committee meetings or does regular farm to school activities.	Faculty representatives help to plan and implement farm to school activities beyond their own classroom.  Faculty have opportunities for farm to school professional development.	Multiple faculty members work with food service staff, administration, and community members to coordinate farm to school efforts.  All faculty have ongoing professional development opportunities.
<b>INTEGRATING WITH CURRICULUM</b>	Faculty have taught lessons or units integrating FFN topics.	Local sources of food identified and several local foods piloted in school meals.	All grades have taught lessons or units integrating FFN.	School has a coordinated approach to integrating FFN into curriculum across all grades and in multiple disciplines.
<b>GROWING &amp; COOKING</b>	Faculty provide experiences for students to grow, harvest, and cook food.	Infrastructure changes initiated or being planned.  Professional development opportunities provided for school food service staff.	Experiences growing, harvesting, and cooking are integral to teachers' units and reaching established goals for learning.	School has a coordinated approach to providing students with experiences growing, harvesting, and cooking food; each grade provides opportunities for new experiences that build off of previous grades.
<b>CAFETERIA &amp; COMMUNITY AS RESOURCE</b>	Faculty have connected classroom learning with the cafeteria or community.	School food service works with farm to school committee to gain feedback from students on the farm to school program, such as recipes that incorporate local food.	Faculty connect cafeteria taste tests with classroom learning.  Teachers consider school food program a resource.  Students have experiences with local farms/farmers/food producers.	School has a coordinated approach to connecting cafeteria taste tests with classroom learning.  School has a coordinated approach to providing students experiences with local farms/farmers/food producers.

## Section III: Community

INDICATOR	1	2	3	4
<b>COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT</b>	Community members (including local organizations) interested in the creation of a farm to school program. Community members (including parents and organizations) can identify possibilities for community involvement in a farm to school program.	Community members have committed to be a resource for farm to school program.	Community members actively participate on farm to school committee and provide help with fundraising, classroom and cafeteria activities, or field trips.	A network of community members has been established to provide on-going help with fundraising, classroom and cafeteria activities, and field trips.  The farm to school program is linked to community events.
<b>PARENTS</b>	Parents interested in creation of farm to school program.	Parents have opportunities to get involved in farm to school efforts (taste tests, farm to school committee, etc.).  Parent representative regularly attends farm to school committee meetings or participates in farm to school activities.	Parents actively participate in a range of farm to school activities (taste tests, field trips, classroom activities, fundraising, cafeteria, etc.).	PTO/PTA or other parent organizations have made long-term commitment to farm to school program.  A network of parents has been established to provide ongoing support.
<b>FARMS &amp; COMMUNITY-BASED PURCHASING</b>	Farmers interested in partnering with school.	Farmers, food producers, and local food-based businesses have offered to sell a product for school meals.	School is sourcing product from local farmers, food producers, and food-based businesses at multiple times during the school year.	Long-term relationships established between local farms, food producers, and food-based businesses for sourcing food throughout the school year.
<b>COMMUNITY EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES (BUSINESSES, NON-PROFITS, GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, CIVIC GROUPS, ETC.)</b>	Community members interested in partnering with school.	Community members and organizations offer to be resource for school educational opportunities (field trips, etc.).	School is using community members and organizations as resource for educational opportunities during the school year.	Long-term relationships established between community members and organizations to provide educational opportunities throughout the school year.

## Section IV: Integrating Cafeteria, Classroom, Community

INDICATOR	1	2	3	4
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT</b>	School administration is interested in the creation of a farm to school program.	Administration is in regular contact with farm to school activities and/or farm to school committee.	Administration supports staff-wide farm to school professional development and participates in farm to school activities.	Administration supports inclusion of farm to school tasks into job descriptions and/or provides release time for staff to do farm to school work.  Administration is a resource to other school administrators on how to start and sustain a farm to school program.
<b>SCHOOL CULTURE</b>	There is general interest in the school community in the creation of a farm to school program.	A farm to school committee has been created and is active with representation from school administration, faculty, and community members.	School community members continually revisit their farm to school action plan and develop ideas for the future.  All school community members are provided on-going opportunities for farm to school professional development.	School community members feel farm to school is integral part of school, part of "who they are."  School is showcased as farm to school model for district or state.  School community members share farm to school best practices at local, regional, or national level.  When new school staff are hired, interest in and ability to contribute to farm to school program is considered as a hiring criterion.
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>	Communication about farm to school takes place within peer groups (faculty, administration, school food service, parents, community members). This one is confusing compared to next one.	Some members of school community are aware of farm to school program.  School community members start to communicate about farm to school across peer groups.	Most members of school community are aware of farm to school program.  Vehicles for communication across peer groups have been established (such as meetings, e-mail list, newsletters, website, etc.)	All members of the school community are aware of farm to school program.  System in place for communicating about farm to school that allows everyone to have access to information.
<b>FUNDING</b>	Funding possibilities identified to launch farm to school program.	Initial funding secured to support farm to school efforts.	Diversified sources of funding developed to sustain farm to school.	System for funding in place that can sustain farm to school program over the long-term.



## Vermont FEED Farm-to-School Needs Assessment

For Office Use:

Name of Lead Applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Name of School/District \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

1. What are the goals of your school's Food/Wellness committee?

2. In table below, please circle the number that best describes each audiences level of awareness, involvement, and support for your committee.

AUDIENCE	Awareness (1= unaware,			Involvement (1= not involved,			Supportive (1=not supportive,		
Students	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Parents	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Teachers	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Food Service	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Principal	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
School Board	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3

3. Wellness Policy will be required by all Vermont school districts by 2006-07. What has your school/district done to address this issue?

4. In a couple brief sentences, please describe the strategies your committee thinks it will use to sustain the above listed goals in your school. (attach extra pages if you need more space)

5. Is there any nutrition/food/wellness curriculum currently being taught in your school? \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_ YES  
If yes, who is teaching them, when and how often, and what topics are being covering?

Instructor \_\_\_\_\_ Grade(s) Reached \_\_\_\_\_ Frequency \_\_\_\_\_  
Topics covered \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor \_\_\_\_\_ Grade(s) Reached \_\_\_\_\_ Frequency \_\_\_\_\_  
Topics covered \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor \_\_\_\_\_ Grade(s) Reached \_\_\_\_\_ Frequency \_\_\_\_\_  
Topics covered \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor \_\_\_\_\_ Grade(s) Reached \_\_\_\_\_ Frequency \_\_\_\_\_  
Topics covered \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor \_\_\_\_\_ Grade(s) Reached \_\_\_\_\_ Frequency \_\_\_\_\_  
Topics covered \_\_\_\_\_

If you need more space, please attach extra pages...

6. Is there any agriculture/farming/gardening lessons currently being taught in your school? \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_ YES  
If yes, who is teaching them, when and how often and what topics are being covered?

Instructor \_\_\_\_\_ Grade(s) Reached \_\_\_\_\_ Frequency \_\_\_\_\_  
Topics covered \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor \_\_\_\_\_ Grade(s) Reached \_\_\_\_\_ Frequency \_\_\_\_\_  
Topics covered \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor \_\_\_\_\_ Grade(s) Reached \_\_\_\_\_ Frequency \_\_\_\_\_  
Topics covered \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor \_\_\_\_\_ Grade(s) Reached \_\_\_\_\_ Frequency \_\_\_\_\_  
Topics covered \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor \_\_\_\_\_ Grade(s) Reached \_\_\_\_\_ Frequency \_\_\_\_\_  
Topics covered \_\_\_\_\_

If you need more space, please attach extra pages...

7. Do any classes currently visit local farms/gardens/food producers off school grounds? \_\_\_NO \_\_\_YES

8. Where do they go? Please list the farms and gardens being used, how they are used, and who is leading these experiences.

9. Does your school have school gardens onsite? \_\_\_NO \_\_\_YES.  
If yes, who is the lead contact for the garden? (name and contact information

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone/Email \_\_\_\_\_

10: What is the purpose of the gardens? (classes, summer program, cafeteria, etc....)

11. Are there any other health or agriculture programs in place that we should be aware of?  
If yes, please describe them ...

12. Who is your food service contract with? (Independent, In-house, food management co., etc...)

13. Who makes the decisions about food purchasing and menu planning?

14. Are any foods currently being purchased locally? \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_ YES  
If yes, fill in table below.

PRODUCT	WHEN	FROM WHERE	HOW USED (salad bar, frozen, taste tests, etc...)
carrots	when available	Black river produce	finger food and soup
Lettuce and tomatoes	September	Tom at Fiver Farm, Barre VT	Sandwich bar

15. Are your food service staff interested in buying more local produce? \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_ YES  
Why or why not?

16. Are there any special promotions/events offered through your food service? \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_ YES  
If yes, please list them. (ex: "nutrition education week", "5-a-day", "International Food Day", etc...)

17. How are these promotions and events advertised?

- School Newsletter
- Morning Announcements
- Online School Menu
- Mail home announcements
- Monthly Menu
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

18. Has your school tried any changes in the school food program in the past 2 years? \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_ YES  
If Yes, please describe the changes and how well they were received.

19. Please describe the relationship between the food service staff and the teaching staff? Is there currently any coordination?

20. Do students currently have input into the school food program,? \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_ YES  
If yes, what method of input? (surveys, conversation, student forum,, etc....)

21. What are your top 4 concerns about your school food system? (this would include breakfast, lunch, snacks, afterschool, bake sales, fundraisers, classroom events, etc...)

A.

B.

C.

D.

22. Do you have vending machines in your school? \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_ YES

If yes, what is being vended, who is operating the vending, and who can buy the products and when?

23. Does your school offer ala carte options in the cafeteria? \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_ YES

If yes, who operates it and who can buy the products and when?

24. Do you have a school store that sells food? \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_ YES

If yes, who is operating it, who supplies the food, and when can food be purchased?

25. Please describe your cafeteria:

Table shape \_\_\_\_\_ Number of tables \_\_\_\_\_ Cafeteria Capacity \_\_\_\_\_

Is the cafeteria used for other school day activities? \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_ YES

If yes, what purpose and does this limit food service in anyway?

26. Are there opportunities for parents to get involved in school-wide efforts? \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_ YES

If yes, what are the current opportunities?

27. Please name at least 4 farms and /or agricultural resources in your town.

A.

B.

C.

D.

28. Please name 4 community resources in your town which could be utilized or could partner with a school farm/food/nutrition project.

A.

B.

C.

D.

29. Does your school have any relationship with other local schools or colleges? \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_ YES  
If yes, please describe.