



The Farm to School Program (FSP)

of The Office of the State Superintendent of Education



***Local Procurement
Experiential Learning
School-based Education
Professional Development***

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What is the Farm to School Program (FSP) of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education?

The FSP was established through the D.C. Healthy Schools Act (2010) and is housed within the Division of Wellness and Nutrition Services under Nutrition Programs. Our mission, which aligns with that of the Farm to School Program of the United States Department of Agriculture, is to increase the amount of local food being served in District schools and to incorporate nutrition education into schools through field trips, gardening, taste tests, and other hands-on activities. The FSP is implemented by the Farm to School Specialist and has four main focus areas: local procurement, experiential learning, school-based education, and professional development. The FSP fosters community collaboration across all focus areas by working with a variety of local partners to support schools as they create and grow their farm to school activities.

Local Procurement

The FSP assists schools in purchasing local food by connecting vendors and food service directors to local farmers, thereby increasing the amount of local food served as part of school meals. As defined in the Healthy Schools Act, the term “local” includes foods grown or minimally processed in North Carolina, West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland, the District of Columbia, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. The FSP encourages schools and vendors to choose local food items from Maryland, Virginia, and DC. The FSP also convenes a local procurement work group through which vendors and food service directors can collaborate and share best practices.



Experiential Learning

The FSP assists schools in providing hands-on nutrition education experiences to their students by connecting them with community organizations and local farms. Through these efforts, students are able to take field trips to teaching and working farms in DC, Maryland, and Virginia where they meet the farmers and learn about what it means to grow food and raise animals. To further support the schools, farmers are also encouraged to visit the schools to meet the students and see how their products are being prepared and served as a part of the National School Lunch Program.

School-Based Education

The FSP assists schools in incorporating farm to school concepts into the school environment by connecting them with community partners offering services such as cooking demonstrations and nutrition lessons. OSSE also has promotional materials, such as the “Serving Up Local” posters, available for schools to use when advertising the FSP throughout their campuses. The FSP coordinates district-wide events to celebrate local foods such as Strawberries & Salad Greens Day and works on Growing Healthy Schools Week with the School Garden Program and other community partners.

Professional Development

In order to ensure that all school staff and community members are knowledgeable on the messages of farm to school, the FSP offers a variety of professional development opportunities for teachers, principals, vendors, foodservice directors, school administrators, and community organizations. Local procurement, experiential learning and classroom education specific trainings are available, as well as a general introduction to OSSE’s FSP, including the steps to initiating farm to school on your campus. A number of trainings are led in conjunction with the School Garden Program. Trainings are held at both the OSSE office and at various off-site locations, including school campuses, and webinars are available online for certain topics.