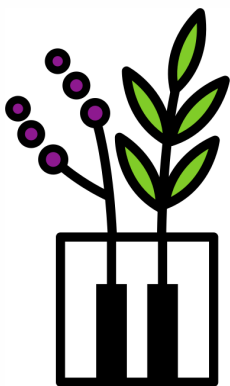


Linking Lessons to Lunch:

A Teacher's Guide to Farm to School

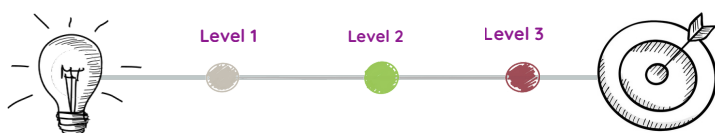
Strong teacher-cafeteria partnerships create a vibrant, educational, and healthy food environment.

By connecting classroom learning with cafeteria experiences, schools can foster lifelong healthy habits and a deeper appreciation for local food systems.



**SPROUT & SAVOR
NUTRITION**

Farm to School on a Spectrum



1. **Introductory:** Classroom discussions, simple taste tests
2. **Developing:** Menu tie-ins, local produce highlights
3. **Advanced:** Cafeteria regularly sources from farms, school gardens supply the cafeteria



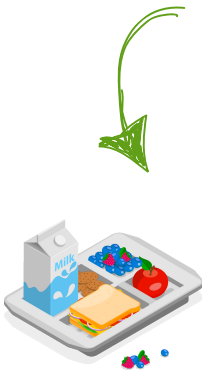


SPROUT & SAVOR
NUTRITION

WHAT DRIVES MENU DECISIONS

Meal Pattern
Requirements Daily

Reimbursement
Breakdown



Breakfast: Must offer 3 meal components → Grain/MMA, Fruit & Milk

Lunch: Must offer 5 meal components → Grain, MMA, Fruit, Vegetable & Milk

School Districts receive...

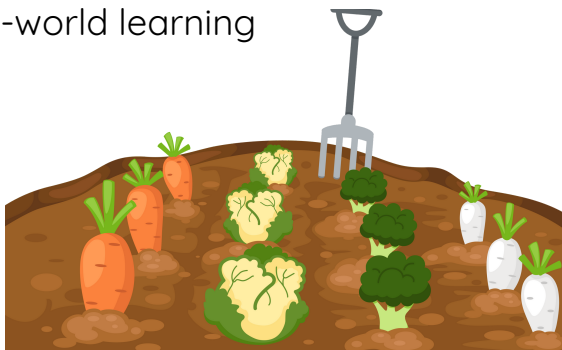
~\$3 for breakfast to cover all 3 meal components

and

No more than \$5 per lunch to cover all 5 meal components + labor

What Strong Partnerships Look Like

- Regular communication and mutual support between teachers and nutrition staff
- Teachers contribute engagement and learning; FSD brings food expertise
- Shared successes: increased student participation and enhanced real-world learning



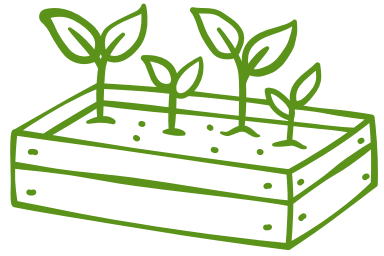
Ways Teachers Can Support Farm to School

- Host classroom taste tests of upcoming menu items
- Run school-wide food polls and share results with the cafeteria
- Align lessons with cafeteria offerings (e.g., Harvest of the Month)
- Research food history, culture, nutrition, and science in class
- Invite farmers or food service staff as guest speakers
- Create posters, videos, or campaigns to promote local foods
- Start student-led garden with culinary herbs, fruits or vegetables

Conversation Starter & Decision Tree



TALKING POINTS FOR TEACHERS:



Partnering with Your Food Service Director

Align classroom activities with cafeteria menus so students see, taste, and learn—repeated exposure builds excitement for healthy foods.

Seasonality & Local Foods

“Which seasonal fruits/vegetables will be on the menu this month?”

“Are there local farmers we can highlight in lessons?”

Nutrition & Food Education

“Could my class explore the nutrition benefits of an upcoming menu item?”

“Can we align a classroom cooking activity with a cafeteria recipe?”

Taste Tests & Student Voice

“Can students give feedback on new foods through polls or taste tests?”

“Would that help you decide what to add to the menu?”

Commodities & Planning Ahead

“Which USDA Foods are planned, and when? Could we build lessons around them?”

Gardening & Cooking Connections

“Could we grow herbs/veggies for the cafeteria?”

“Which recipes on the menu would fit best for a cooking demonstration in the classroom?”

Collaboration & Support

“What barriers do you face with fresh/local foods?”

“Would student-led research or marketing help?”

EXAMPLES OF STRONG PARTNERSHIPS



- **Seasonal Spotlight:** A 4th grade class studies apples in science and math, designs posters about local varieties, and the cafeteria features those same apples in a crisp at lunch.
- **Taste Test Teamwork:** Middle school students sample a roasted chickpea recipe in class, give feedback, and then see the dish debut on the cafeteria menu the following week.
- **Menu Planning Tie-In:** Teachers learn broccoli will be served in March and align a nutrition lesson, cooking demo, and garden activity so students experience it before tasting it at lunch.
- **Student Marketing Crew:** High school marketing or art students create flyers, table tents, and social media posts to promote the cafeteria's "Harvest of the Month."
- **Garden-to-Tray Connection:** Students grow basil in the school garden; the cafeteria uses it in pasta sauce, while teachers connect it to lessons on plant life cycles.
- **Food & Culture Integration:** During a world cultures unit, students research regional recipes. The cafeteria serves one adapted to USDA standards for students to try.
- **Survey & Poll Collaboration:** Students run a school-wide poll on favorite fruits and vegetables, sharing the results with the FSD to inform future menu choices.
- **Commodities Connection:** A teacher learns beans will be served using USDA Foods; students complete a science lab with beans before enjoying a bean chili in the cafeteria.



SPROUT & SAVOR NUTRITION



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Meet Lauren

Lauren supports schools and local food producers in implementing Farm to School programs by integrating sustainable foods and guiding compliance for easier procurement!

“Lettuce turnip the beet in school nutrition!”



Looking to turnip the beet in your district?

Here are some examples of services we offer.

K-12 Schools Farm-to-School Program Development and Scratch Compliance

Lauren empowers schools with the knowledge and tools to implement long-lasting, sustainable changes in their nutrition programs. Ready to start purchasing local produce and cooking with raw ingredients? Lauren provides support in scratch recipe compliance, staff in- service trainings, grant writing, local procurement, starting a salad bar, and more.

Food Producer and Farmer Technical Assistance

Individualized school nutrition compliance and procurement support for small “mom & pop” shops and food hubs/farm.

Marketing Strategies for School Districts and Vendors

Are you a school district and would like help with beautifying your menus and newsletters or need help marketing farm-to-school ingredients? Or a vendor who needs help with making their spec sheets or bid packets stand out? We’ve got you covered!