



PENNSYLVANIA
FARM TO SCHOOL
NETWORK

2020-2025

STRATEGIC PLAN

Since 2017, the Pennsylvania Farm to School Network has collaborated to advance farm to school opportunities across the state. To do this work more effectively and equitably, members of the network recognized the need to better define the group's structure, leadership, goals and strategies. In late 2020, members of the network convened in a series of virtual meetings to develop a strategic plan that will drive the work of the network for the next five years. This draft strategic plan was shared on a webinar with over 100 attendees and discussed in detail with more than 35 people across the state in the form of small group discussions organized by sector (farmers/suppliers, educators/administrators, food service, and support organizations/community members). Feedback from those sessions was incorporated into this final version of the strategic plan, which will guide the network in working toward its ultimate vision.



PENNSYLVANIA FARM TO SCHOOL NETWORK VISION AND MISSION



Vision

Every child in Pennsylvania is meaningfully connected to and nourished by thriving and resilient community food systems.

Mission

Leverage and build upon our collective resources and shared vision to cultivate farm to school and farm to early care and education (ECE) initiatives that:

- create opportunities for all children across the state to grow, learn about and enjoy eating Pennsylvania foods;
- increase market opportunities for Pennsylvania producers;
- connect growers, schools, ECE sites and community members around food

Goal 1

BUILD AND ACTIVATE A STRONG, SUSTAINABLE FARM TO SCHOOL NETWORK

Finalize and implement a robust network structure

- Create formal leadership team opportunities and processes, ensuring representation from various agencies and backgrounds
- Define and communicate membership and participation opportunities across the network
- Identify and apply for opportunities for collaborative funding to support network administration and activities
- Develop systems to communicate and coordinate with associated networks/organizations to align activities

Increase diverse representation within the network

- Identify and communicate mechanisms and opportunities for engagement with the network, including priority participation from populations most impacted by farm to school/ECE (students, teachers, families, producers, school food professionals)
- Seek funding to compensate network participants who would not otherwise be paid for their time.

Increase broad network reach and awareness of farm to school/ECE through coordinated communications and diverse communication channels

- Utilize strategic plan as outreach and engagement tool
- Develop tools for consistent and coordinated external communication, including: website, newsletter (existing), and shared branding and communications guidelines

Create systems to track progress and evaluate impact of network

- Identify target impact metrics, existing data and opportunities for data collection
- Analyze demographic data to ensure programs are reaching communities with the greatest need
- Leverage existing programs (including PA Farm to School Grant Program) to increase data collection

Strengthen network relationships with individuals and groups doing related work

- Create alignment with the Commission for Agricultural Education Excellence, which focuses on workforce development; and Keystone Kids Go!, which focuses on improving the health and wellness of Pennsylvania children in ECE settings
- Strengthen network relationships with producers, producer support organizations and other food system stakeholders
- Integrate farm to school into broader food systems efforts and initiatives (e.g., Pasa's foodshed map, universal school meal campaigns, nutrition assistance and access programs)



Goal 2

SUPPORT INCREASED AND ENHANCED FARM TO SCHOOL/EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION IMPLEMENTATION

Increase accessibility of farm to school/ECE resources

- Create comprehensive, centrally located database for vetted farm to school/ECE resources
- Utilize database to facilitate sharing of resources across districts and organizations

Provide culturally appropriate professional development, training and resources to support and connect key stakeholder groups in advancing farm to school/ECE, including: school/ECE educators and administrators; child nutrition professionals; and producers

- Identify and target 3–5 key signature programs that reach key priority stakeholders and increase reach and robustness of these programs. Potential programs include:
 - Harvest of the Month
 - PA Preferred Days
 - Farm to Institution Grower Sessions
 - Farm to School Institute Pilot (2021)
 - Farm to Child Nutrition Summit (2021/2022)
 - Farm to ECE in GO NAP SACC
- Target reach and programming to schools/ECEs with limited financial resources that may be systemically underfunded

Develop ways to elevate and celebrate farm to school/ECE participation

- Establish a farm to school/ECE recognition program that includes farmers and suppliers
- Expand promotions around Pennsylvania Farm to School Month or consider switching to a Pennsylvania Farm to School Week
- Highlight farm to school success stories on the website and in network communications





Goal 3

STRENGTHEN AND BUILD SUSTAINABILITY FOR STATEWIDE FARM TO SCHOOL POLICY

Develop a state farm to school/ECE policy agenda and goals that includes and/or aligns with related issues, such as increasing infrastructure support for farmers and strengthening Child Nutrition Programs

Increase reach and sustainability of PA Farm to School Grants

- Secure sustainable funding for the state farm to school grant program
- Utilize data analysis and diversified outreach approach to increase equitable access to grant resources
- Tie grant funding to school health and wellness programs

Develop and implement an increased reimbursement incentive program for local products in child nutrition programs that is efficient and feasible for participants

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information, visit pafarmtoschool.org. To connect with the Pennsylvania Farm to School Network, please contact The Food Trust via email: pafarmtoschool@thefoodtrust.org