

HB 2579 Vote 'Yes' for Farm to School and School Gardens!



Last school year, with an investment of \$1.6 million by the legislature, Oregon schools purchased Oregon foods valued at \$14 million, including \$1.3 million of fresh fruits and vegetables, reaching 240,000 students. **We could be doing even more.**

What does HB 2579 do?

Oregon's nationally-recognized Farm to School Grant Program (funded by HB 2038 in 2017) provides funding for:

1. school districts to buy and serve Oregon foods, and
2. districts and partner organizations to educate children about food, gardens, and agriculture.

HB 2579 requests the renewal of \$4.5 million and an additional \$500,000 for a total of \$5 million to:

- Provide \$4.6 million for schools to buy more food from more Oregon farmers, ranchers and processors and \$1.1 million for farm and garden based education;
- Expand service to 50 early care and pre-K sites, and 120 summer meal programs, to reach our youngest, most vulnerable eaters; and
- Provide technical assistance to stakeholders and conduct program evaluation.

Farm + School = Win! Win! Win!

Farmers win: Last school year, this program helped put \$14 million dollars into the pockets of Oregon producers and their distributors. Schools represent a significant market opportunity for producers, with huge potential impacts for rural livelihoods.

Kids win: Kids can't learn when they're hungry. Farm to School is a proven strategy for providing reliable food access, and increasing consumption of fruit and vegetables in school meals and at home. Tastings and gardening activities enhance classroom curricula through hands-on learning in food, agriculture, health, and nutrition.

Communities win: Food is a connector. Farm to School benefits students, teachers, administrators, parents and producers, providing opportunities to build family and community engagement. Buying from local producers and processors creates new jobs and relationships, strengthening Oregon's economy and culture.

From the Willamette Valley to Curry County, farms, schools and kids are benefiting from Farm to School and School Garden Grants.

Salem-Keizer plants the seeds of science

Through their school gardens, the Salem-Keizer Education Foundation has been able to bring students, families, and educators together. The gardens have become a center of STEM learning for students as well as community education through the Urban AgFest— a celebration that reaches more than 1,000 students and their families.

Bend-La Pine schools go “whole-hog”

Through the support of Oregon’s farm to school grant dollars, the Bend-La Pine school district was able to partner with the FFA to bring the experience of rearing, butchering, and preparing whole animals to students. Two of the individuals who have graduated from this program went on to work at local butcheries.

A new market for Hermiston watermelons

Sam Pollock and Sons have found a customer-base for late-season watermelons that he might not otherwise sell. While grocery store sales peter out

at the end of summer, melon season goes through September, when schools are in session and looking for healthy fruits to bring to their cafeterias. In 2016, the Pollocks sold \$3,842 worth of fruit to schools with active farm to school programs.

Port Orford fish lands in school cafeterias

When Port Orford Sustainable Seafood needed a customer for some surplus catch, they called Rogue Valley Farm to School. Within an hour of the request, and through the support of Oregon farm to school grant dollars, the organization was able to supply Oregon-caught seafood to schools in south-central Oregon.

Reviving agricultural education in Condon

Despite being an agricultural region, agricultural education in Condon has been a victim of budget cuts. When the East John Day Watershed Council received a grant to revive K-12 agricultural education, the kids and the whole community rejoiced, and pulled together for a greenhouse-raising. The Watershed Council partnered with the school district and local farms, ranches, and businesses to educate kids and the community about local agriculture.

Over half of Oregon kids rely on schools for healthy meals.

For many of Oregon’s most vulnerable children, school meals are the healthiest and most reliable they receive. Introducing kids to local, delicious vegetables through garden and cafeteria programs has a profound impact on their diets now and for the future. An increase in funding would expand the program to include summer meals and pre-k students, creating consistent access to fresh, nutritious, delicious local foods for young people across our state and throughout the year.

Oregon’s Farm to School Grant Program has many benefits, including:

- Creating market opportunities for Oregon’s farmers, fishers, ranchers and food processors
- Increasing children’s consumption of fruits and vegetables and shaping life-long healthy eating habits
- Bridging urban-rural divides, and bringing Oregon’s coastline inland

Every dollar we spend on Farm to School and School Gardens makes a difference to Oregon kids who deserve a steady diet of healthy, local food, and to Oregon’s agricultural community who depend on strong domestic markets to grow their businesses.

→ For every \$1 schools spend on local food, \$2 are returned to Oregon’s economy.



To learn more, contact:

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