



Feeding Bodies. Fueling Minds.™

Dear Representative Kristi Pursell and Senator Heather Gustafson,

The Minnesota School Nutrition Association (MSNA) urges you to support the Farm to School & Early Care Bills, H.F. 2043 (Pursell) & S.F. 2158 (Gustafson) and include it in the final Agricultural Finance Omnibus bill.

Farm to School is vital to healthy school meals because of its unique benefits. It creates the perfect trifecta. It's good for kids. It's good for farmers. It's good for local communities.

Farm to School is good for our kids. Serving healthy farm fresh foods in our schools gives students the nutrition for them to learn and grow. The link between the food kids eat and their educational and health outcomes is becoming increasingly clear. Access to fresh, healthy food, starting as young as possible, fuels brain development and shapes food preferences over a lifetime.

Farm to School is good for farmers. Farmers growing foods for their local communities is a rapidly growing important area of Minnesota agriculture that needs public support and investment to expand markets. Many of the farmers that we purchase from have local ties to our schools. Farm to School gives farmers a large, stable, predictable market that they can plan for in advance. It also allows them to grow value-added crops that boost the bottom line and keep more families living on and caring for the land.

Farm to School is good for local economies. A study out of Oregon showed that for every dollar spent on Farm to School programs, \$2.16 is generated in additional economic activity for the local economy. The Farm to School bill would not only support farmers directly, it would also give small businesses and entrepreneurs in Greater Minnesota a boost in revitalizing their communities.

This Farm to School & Early Care bill is a worthy investment that supports the health of our children, the health of our family farms and the health of our local communities. Minnesotans can easily agree that this makes sense for our state to grow our statewide Farm to School program through our public support and public investment.

Please support and vote "yes" on the Farm to School & Early Care bills.

Sincerely,
Cheryl Pick
President
MSNA

Darcy Stueber
Public Policy Chair
MSNA

Margaret I. Winchell
Executive Director
MSNA