



Invite your Legislator to Crunch!

Webinar
August 17, 2023
August 29, 2023



Introductions

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FoodCorps



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CT Department of
Education



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CT & Plainville Public Schools





Invite your legislators to CRUNCH!

Are you planning exciting farm-to-school or school nutrition activities? Want to showcase them to your community's leaders?

Join the CT Farm to School Collaborative and FoodCorps for a webinar on engaging elected officials and leaders to support your efforts!



August 17th & 29th at 2:00-3:00pm on zoom

The meetings will be recorded and shared!



Objectives:

- Inspire attendees to connect with local elected officials to support farm to school and school nutrition locally and statewide
- Provide guidance & resources for inviting elected officials to farm to school activities
- Share experiences engaging elected officials in farm to school



Agenda:

- Overview of CT Grown for CT Kids & other timely school nutrition happenings!
- The Why & How of Engaging Policy Makers
- Resources to support you!
- Sharing Experiences

Manchester Summer
Meals & Dip Into
Summer Site
JUST YESTERDAY!

**Think of the last experience you had
at an in-person event that felt
meaningful to you.**

What words come to mind?

My How Things Have Changed!



- What started as one week a year to highlight Farm to School is now so much more!
- Let's look at where we've come from first.....

Connecticut Grown for Connecticut Kids Week September 30-October 4, 2013



The State Department of Education wants to hear about the delicious, locally grown items you are serving in your cafeterias. In addition to highlighting items on your menu, consider the following suggestion to help you celebrate the great things you do and reach out to make the classroom to cafeteria connection.

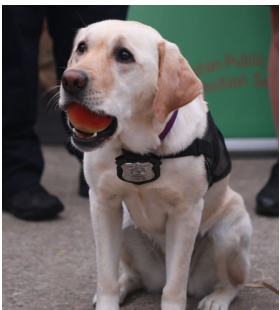
1. The designated book for the 2013 Ag Literacy Campaign is **Who Grew My Soup?** Sponsored by the Connecticut Agriculture Education Foundation, it targets grades K-4. It comes with a lesson plan for the teacher. Connect with one or more K-4th grade classrooms and find a teacher interested in having the book read in their class. If you are one of the lucky districts that have a Regional Ag Ed Program, contact the director to see if one of their students can volunteer to read the book. Your high school might also have a list of students willing to volunteer their time to meet community service requirements. You or one of your staff can be the volunteer reader too!
2. Contact me and I will get you the Volunteer Reader Form through the CT Coordinator for Ag in the Classroom. A copy of the book and corresponding activities will be sent to you.
3. Use the USDA recipe for Vegetable Soup. A cup of soup provides a half cup serving of vegetables (can be used as additional vegetables for your week). Prepare using locally grown produce as available. Serve on the same day the book is being read in the classroom.
4. Students will be thrilled to see the same soup from the story being served in the cafeteria that day. Bet you get a lot of kids to try it!
5. Invite me to your event! I am the new Farm to School representative for the State Department of Education and I would love to see what great things are going on in your district- Monica Pacheco, monica_pacheco@ct.gov





CT Grown for CT Kids Week

- Has grown from a brief announcement about the week to multiple ways to celebrate, toolkits, media campaigns, and the Crunch event and more
- Even during the height of the pandemic, virtual events, tools kept the spirit of the week going
- A team of stakeholders work on promoting and supporting school celebrations

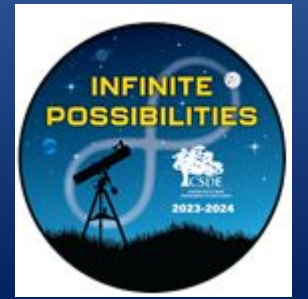




Look where we are now!

- CT Grown for CT Kids Week
- Farm to School Month
- CT Grown for CT Kids Grants- \$1,000,000
- Local Food for Schools Incentive Program- \$1,873,000
- State Local Food Incentive Regulation- TBD
- Supply Chain Assistance Funds- Round 4 coming soon- \$11,474,000
- SMART Funds SY 22-23- \$30,000,000 + \$60,000,000
- STABLE Funds SY 23-24- \$16,000,000

Telling Your Story



- Your story has power:
 - Share your work with your school community
 - Share your work with the greater community so people want to see these programs continue
 - Legislators need to know to support the funding

Use our step-by-step Social Media Toolkit to promote your projects on your media platforms!

CLICK HERE FOR SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLKIT



Telling Your Story



- Local legislators, Boards of Education, administrators, politicians need to see the impact of these programs
- Nothing is more impactful than a visit to a school, site and seeing the work in action!



Goals for legislator & elected official engagement!

1. Building awareness of what is happening and the impact of farm to school and school meals in CT (including recent legislative wins!)
2. Building support for policies and funding that increase access to food education and nourishing school meals



The meaning of this moment

- Gratitude and proof of impact of farm to school investments
- Our quest for permanency of School Meals for All in CT
- Relationship building is a forever thing!



New Britain Students testify for farm to school
Feb 2023

“

Experience Share!

Ashley Carl, Plainville Community Schools &
School Nutrition Association of CT



”

“

This is about kids who otherwise wouldn't know where their food comes from. We planted some garden beds in East Hartford and many of the students didn't realize that a carrot grew underground (...) I look forward to continuing to support [this bill] as it makes its way through.

”



**– Rep. Jeff Currey, District 11
(Representing East Hartford)**

Step 1:

Who are my state legislators?

(By town)

Step 2:
What does my
community have
going on?
What story does
that tell?



Step 3: Engage legislators

- Before:
 - Email invite: Follow-up email or phone call before event
 - Invite local press
- During:
 - Share highlights of your efforts - Rose, Thorns, Buds
- After:
 - Follow-up resources
 - Thank you



Best Practices

- **Keep it simple!**
 - ◆ Identify a day-of point person for guests
 - ◆ Outline some thoughts to share ahead of time
 - ◆ Identify opportunities to engage in the event
- **Take photos**
- **Follow-up thank you and next opportunity to engage**
- **Don't give-up!**



Resources

- [Legislator Event Toolkit](#)

Templates:

- [Sample Invitation Email](#)
- Sample thank you email

General:

- [CT Grown for CT Kids Week Boilerplate Language](#)
- [CT Grown for CT Kids Grant Overview](#)

Resources:

- Handouts to share ahead of after the visit

CT Farm to School Legislator Event Toolkit

Table of Contents:

Templates:

- [Sample Invitation Email](#)
- [Sample Thank You email](#)

General:

- [CT Grown for CT Kids Week Information & Resources](#)
- [CT Grown for CT Kids Grant Overview](#)
- [CT Grown for CT Kids Grant program talking points](#)
- [Farm to School Fact Sheet](#)

Tracking:

- [Post event Form](#)

Invite for Legislators

[District/Organization Letterhead/Logo]

Dear Rep/Senator _____,

I am writing to cordially invite you to an event we are organizing in celebration of **National Farm to School Month** and **CT-Grown-for-CT-Kids-Week** (October 3rd-7th). Our event is on [date] and will include [activities]. There will be opportunities to meet key stakeholders and engage with students.

The event details are as follows:

Date:

Time:

Location:

Time to TRY it on!

The Activity: Practice Sharing Your WHY

Take two minutes to reflect individually on:

- Why are school meals and farm to school important to YOU?
- What have YOU experienced?
- What have you seen and WHY is that important to YOU?

The Activity: Practice Sharing Your WHY

In your breakout room:

1. Introduce yourself
2. Imagine your partner is a legislator. In 2 minutes, introduce yourself and share why farm to school/school meals is important to you personally

We will keep time!

3. Switch - 2nd person shares in 2 minutes



Reflections

What did that feel like?

What resonated in the other person's share?

What will stick with you?

Thank you!



Who	Reach out to us for...	How
Dawn	1:1 support reaching out to elected officials, reading draft emails, visiting with you, supporting next steps and conversations post visit	dawn.crayco@foodcorps.org
Monica	The technical stuff, messaging, to invite to come alongside other guests, questions about other districts/programs and the state	monica.pacheco@ct.gov
Ashley	Advice, troubleshooting, encouragement & cheerleading	carla@plainvilleschools.org

Reflection

What is one thing you are taking away from this webinar?



Jonathan Rosser, service member with Delta EATS, leads a lesson in the garden. (Shaw, MS)



Sarah Lavallee and Ellie Vance harvest carrots at FoodCorps Maine's state orientation. (Falmouth, ME)

Delicious and nutritious school lunch. (Waynesboro, GA)



Sra Feigelman, FoodCorps service member with Ecospaces Education and Philip's Education Partners, leads a garden exploration lesson in their outdoor growing space. (Newark, NJ)