



The Farm to School Approach in K12

AS OF 2024-2025, THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (PDA) CONTINUES TO ADVANCE AND EXPAND ITS FARM TO SCHOOL INITIATIVES ACROSS THE STATE, SUPPORTING PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN FOSTERING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN LOCAL AGRICULTURE AND SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAMS.



Farm to School efforts in Pennsylvania for the 2024-2025 school year:

- State Funding for Farm to School initiatives has been increased to support the integration of locally grown foods into school cafeterias. This includes funding for **training, procurement, and infrastructure improvements** to help schools purchase from local farms and support educational activities like school gardens. Schools may access grants for **Farm to School** projects, allowing them to purchase local produce, meats, and dairy, as well as create educational programs and school gardens that promote food literacy.
- **Rise in Practitioner Support and Community Collaboration**
 - School administrators and/or operators familiar with implementing FTS programming within their school community
 - School food service/school nutrition staff with experience procuring local food
 - Community members involved in FTS programming (gardens, nutrition/food education)
 - Farmers/growers/producers who work with schools by hosting farm tour visits, going to classrooms for educational programming and/or selling their products to schools
 - Educators who have experience with integrating farm to school activities in a classroom setting. Professionals who work directly with practitioners and have a basic understanding of FTS and how to support FTS practitioners in their efforts to enhance FTS within their community



Expanded Partnerships with Local Farms

- PDA has strengthened its partnerships with **local farmers, food producers, and distributors** to ensure that schools have a reliable supply of fresh, nutritious, and seasonal foods.
- New programs have been launched to facilitate **direct farm-to-school purchases**, ensuring that school districts can access local produce and other agricultural products with fewer barriers, helping to increase the use of local foods in school meal programs.
- **PA Preferred Days 2024** - The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA), in partnership with the Pennsylvania Farm to School Network encourages schools to participate in PA Preferred Days. PA Preferred Days encourages and incentivizes schools to choose one day during National Farm to School Month in October to commit to serving as many Pennsylvania grown and produced products as possible.



GASD Food Services initiates FTS in it's Menu Program:

- Taking the first steps and goal setting started in the in 22-23 school year for the Food Services Team at GASD. Several projects were planned in Family Consumer Science Classroom and the Café at the Middle School:
 - Demonstration cooking using local ingredients and sampling
 - Student driven menu development using local ingredients. Winning meal is placed on the monthly menu in the cafe
 - NSLP and SBP Education and Review: “How to Make a Meal”
- FFVP (Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program) grant was awarded to one of the elementary schools and local produce was procured to support the program



GASD FTS Involvement and Expansion:

- In the 23-24 SY, the Food Services Department further developed the FTS program and became an active member of the PAFTS Network. Participated in membership meetings, webinars and the PAFTS Summit in Gibsonia PA.
 - Became active in the **Pennsylvania Harvest of the Month (PA HOM)**. The program developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and Project PA (Penn State University) to promote local agricultural products each month through schools, child and adult care centers/day care homes, and summer feeding sites. The program aims to provide participants with local, healthy products while supporting Pennsylvania farmers and producers.
 - **GASD Wellness Committee and FTS shared initiatives:**
 - ❑ October Farm to School Day - Apple Crunch Day
 - ❑ Go for the Greens
 - ❑ Local Dairy - Smoothie Day





GASD FTS Partnerships and Vendors:

- ▶ Developing local community partnerships with vendors you can trust and rely on is key in program development. Since the 23-24 school year, GASD Food Services has established solid relationships with local vendors and producers to support program integrity and creativity.
 - ❑ Scheid's Produce
 - ❑ Hollabaugh Bros. Farms
 - ❑ Mud College Farm
 - ❑ Bucher Meats
 - ❑ Rutters Dairy



GASD FTS Collaboration:

- ▶ **GASD Food Services involvement in PA Farm to School Network's (PFSN) June virtual open houses. The concept is designed to** connect educators, operators and practitioners to have meaningful discussions in goal setting, best practices, policy, and community engagement.



GASD FTS Success Stories:



The food service department at Gettysburg Area School District has taken its program outside the cafeteria and into the middle school Family Consumer Sciences (FCS) classroom. Nicholas Milone, Food Service Director, wanted to expand the school menu and thought what better way than to involve the students who eat the food every day. Latino Fusion Cuisine using local ingredients!





2024-2025 Warrior Wellness Night

Wednesday, April 9, 2025

Try local produce from Hollabaugh Bros., Inc and Mud College Farm in “Local Farm to School”
Sample students’ favorites foods of the past and present through “Cafeteria Classics”
The nutrition team demonstrates easy, tasty recipes for families called “Cena di Famiglia”

Time: 5-7:30 PM

Location: Gettysburg Area Middle School

37 Lefever St., Gettysburg, PA 17325

FOOD & NUTRITION/PHYSICAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES/SOCIAL HEALTH SERVICES

Experience 30-minute classes, whether it’s yoga in the small gym or heart-pumping fun activities

Get in on the action in the main gym with three dynamic stations for pickleball, basketball and an obstacle course by Parkour Gettysburg. Meet multiple organizations like Healthy Adams County, South Central Community Action Programs (SCCAP) - The Gleaning Project, Early Learning Resource Center with information for WIC & Family Services, and Ruth’s Harvest!

Join us for a Gettysburg Area School District wellness event designed to promote healthy living through nutrition and exercise! Plus many other interactive activities & giveaways!





PENNSYLVANIA
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Additional PAFTS Network Information:

- ▶ Federal opportunities right now - protect SNAP-Ed
- ▶ Statewide opportunities - Keystone Fresh Act
- ▶ PA farm to school network opportunities in general (to stay updated and engage further)
- ▶ -virtual open house June 12
- ▶ -subscribe to the newsletter
- ▶ -strategic plan input survey