

ORGANIZING YOUR FIRST FARM TO SCHOOL MEETING

WHO TO INVITE:

- School district nutrition director and school staff
- Principal
- Teachers
- Students and student groups
(i.e.: Agriculture Education, Horticulture, Culinary, 4-H, Environmental)
- Parents
- School board members
- School nurse
- Farmers
- Georgia Organics and other community organizations
- Cooperative Extension representatives
- County Board of Health representatives
- Master Gardeners and local landscapers
- Garden and hardware stores
- Local restaurants and chefs
- Philanthropic organizations



Sample Agenda for your First Farm to School Community Meeting

[Date, location]

Objective of meeting: to explore opportunities, challenges for a [your school district] program, and to begin to create a unified, comprehensive vision for growing the movement.

10 min. Welcome and overview of Farm to School

15 min. General overview of existing farm to school activities within [your community/school district]

45 min. Small group discussions
(6-8 people per group)

A. What are the benefits of a Farm to School program? What is your vision of a Farm to School program?

B. Opportunities, challenges and solutions for increasing "food, farm and nutrition" curriculum in [your school district/school] (includes gardens, farm field trips, cooking classes, etc)

C. Opportunities, challenges and solutions for increasing fresh, local food into the cafeteria

D. Community resources that can support Farm to School

20 min. Report out and discussion
What were the main highlights? What were some activities that everyone can agree on?

15 min. Next Steps
Will you create a working group? Who will help take the group to the next step? Who will lead the next meeting and when is it?



GENERAL ORGANIZING TIPS

FIND COMMON GROUND.

While it is critical to have representatives from across the school food system participate in this meeting, it is important to leave the meeting with an understanding of which goals most of you agree on. Knowing this will help you achieve some early successes with your program.

SERVE APPETIZERS OR SUPPER.

Providing some fresh, local food is the perfect way to encourage people to attend this meeting, and both help participants understand that eating local is delicious and healthy! Local restaurants or the culinary class might help with donations.

WORK WITH A LARGER GROUP.

Virtually all successful farm to school projects have an organization that is actively taking the lead in developing the project. This can be a community or non-profit organization, a farmer organization, a PTA, or a university-related group. It can also be a committee made up of members from a number of organizations.

TAKE THE TIME TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS.

Successful farm to school projects result in relationships of mutual respect and trust among the participants. In most instances, these projects require farmers and school nutrition staff to venture into new areas, requiring an investment of time and energy. Taking the time to understand each other's perspectives and abilities will help ensure that you create an effective, sustainable project.

TAKE BABY STEPS.

Many projects fail due to rushed, incomplete planning- very few suffer from too much planning. Know that a series of meetings will be necessary to develop this project. On the flip side, be sure to plan a few fun, easy activities early on so you don't drown in the planning.

THIS PROJECT WILL EVENTUALLY REQUIRE FUNDING.

As you identify your goals, identify possible funding sources as you are gathering information about farming and school food service in your area.