



A guide to building
integrated farm to
school programs



Connecting Classrooms, Cafeterias, Communities



A FARM TO SCHOOL PROJECT
of NOFA-VT and Shelburne Farms



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Overview

Purpose and Use of this Guide

This Vermont FEED Guide is intended to support school communities in developing robust, long-lasting, and integrated farm to school programs, addressing whole school change. It reflects 20 years of practice, evaluative research, and innovation in the field. It is, in fact, the ninth farm to school resource that VT FEED has created since 2000.

It is an updated compilation of earlier resources and offers new approaches and tools to help your school community successfully grow your farm to school program.



This guide is primarily intended for a multidisciplinary team of individuals working within the K-12 system: school nutrition staff, teachers, administrators, students, community members, and members of support organizations. Each school community will have a different level of experience and familiarity with farm to school. This resource can support a team as they align their existing activities to their school culture and community priorities, while also sustaining the changes.

The guide is organized around farm to school action planning, a step-by-step process to help you assemble a team, identify shared goals, and plan and conduct strategic activities. In addition, it provides valuable content on classroom curriculum, school meal programs, and community building. These are critical areas for action and influence. Finally, the guide is filled with useful templates, curricular design strategies, and creative ways to communicate and celebrate farm to school success. Revisit the tools and templates as your program develops or as you plan each new school year.

A robust, long-lasting, and integrated farm to school program should be able to:

- Maximize equitable student access to fresh, nutritious, locally grown foods
- Educate students about food systems and healthy eating habits through hands-on and community-based experiences
- Support and grow market opportunities for local producers and processors.

What Is Farm to School?

Farm to school (FTS) is a program, policy, or initiative that intentionally connects students, school communities, and local farms with the goals of improving student nutrition and academic outcomes, strengthening local food systems, and protecting the environment. Comprehensive FTS programming includes strategies that are integrated across the cafeteria, classroom, and community, such as: serving fresh and local meals in cafeterias; offering food, farm, and nutrition education in the classroom; and building school relationships with farms and community organizations. Through FTS, students develop positive relationships with food

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“enriches the connection communities have with fresh, healthy food and local food producers by changing food purchasing and education practices at schools and early care and education sites.

Students gain access to healthy, local foods as well as education opportunities such as school gardens, cooking lessons, and farm field trips. Farm to school empowers children and their families to make informed food choices while strengthening the local economy and contributing to vibrant communities.”

—National Farm to School Network

and an understanding of how their food choices impact their bodies, the environment, and their communities—lessons and habits that will last a lifetime.

43,000 schools in all 50 states have farm to school programs today, reaching 20 million students and spending \$789 million a year on local food.

Because of their value to students and schools, farm to school efforts have been growing across the country. [The USDA Farm to School Census](#) reports that programs have grown from a handful of schools in the late 1990s to nearly 43,000 schools in all 50 states today, reaching more than 20 million students. Collectively, those schools are spending \$789 million a year on local food. In Vermont schools, \$915,000 was spent on local food in the 2013–2014 school year, out of \$16 million total.

WHO IS BEING SERVED BY U.S. SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAMS?

14.6 million students eat **SCHOOL BREAKFAST** each day, 2.4 billion breakfasts annually

30.4 million students eat **SCHOOL LUNCH** each day, 5 billion lunches annually

Sources: “Economic Contribution and Potential Impact of Local Food Purchases Made by Vermont Schools,” Center for Rural Studies, University of Vermont, 2017; National statistics based on schools reporting to the 2015 USDA FTS Census.



And there's so much room to grow! [The United States serves approximately 31 million students each school day](#). That's 7.4 billion breakfasts and lunches served in a year! The scale of these food programs presents tremendous opportunities to feed more fresh, healthy food to hungry kids and to shift how all our students think about food and nutrition.

Note: Farm to school is growing in early childhood education, too—in center- and family-based child care settings, preschools, Head Start programs, and home visiting programs. Early childhood professionals may find the action planning tools and templates useful in their program development and in forging enhanced connections with public schools.

Benefits of Farm to School

The long-term benefits of farm to school are many. There are health and education benefits to students, as well as positive impact on the local economy, the natural environment, and the greater community. The National Farm to School Network has compiled country-wide research into a short brief, [The Benefits of Farm School](#) (April 2017), excerpted here. See the brief for source citations.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Each dollar invested in farm to school contributes an additional \$0.06-\$2.16 to the economy; one state saw a \$1.4 million annual contribution.
- Individual farmers see an average 5% increase in income from farm to school sales and establish a long-term revenue stream.

PUBLIC HEALTH

- Farm to school activities support the development of healthy eating habits for children while improving family food security by boosting the quality of school meal programs.
- When schools offer school gardens, 44% of students eat more fruits and vegetables; when schools serve local food, 33% of students eat more fruits and vegetables.

EDUCATION

- Overall academic achievement in K-12 is enhanced, including grades and test scores; more opportunities for physical activity and social and emotional growth; increase in engagement.
- FTS offers innovative teaching platforms for core subjects, such as science, math, and language arts in PreK-12 settings, and greater opportunity for necessary experiential and hands-on learning.

ENVIRONMENT

- Waste of local food is reduced, both on the production side and the plate waste side; overall food waste decreases due to farm to school activities.
- FTS supports environmentally sound, sustainable and socially just food production, processing, packaging, transportation, and marketing.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- FTS increases community awareness about and interest in purchasing local foods and foods served in school cafeterias.
- FTS increases support from parents and community for healthier school meals—connecting community and schools.

3Cs Model of Change

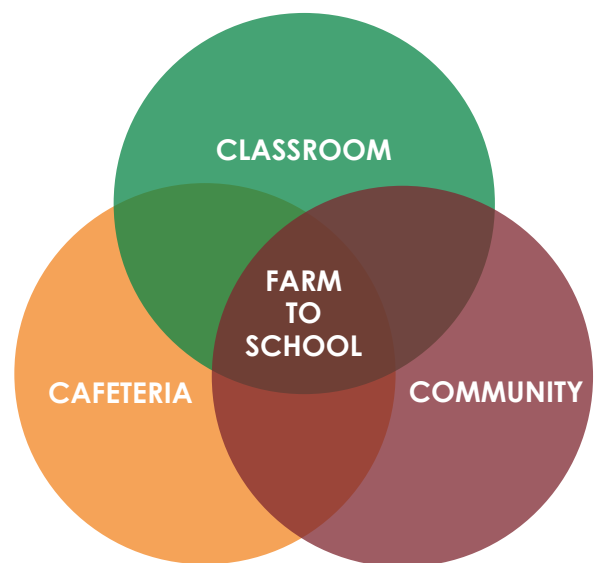
Farm to School is a comprehensive strategy that extends beyond serving a local product in the cafeteria. The “3 Cs” approach, which VT FEED developed in 2000, has taken root across the country as a successful model of change that integrates efforts in the cafeteria, the classroom, and the community to achieve robust and sustainable FTS programs.

VT FEED has found that the most successful programs are not “add-ons” (separate programs that run outside the regular policies, systems, and curricula of a school), but integrated throughout school culture. This requires collaboration among administration, food service, students, families, and teachers. Ideally, farm to school can link school wellness policies, nutrition programs, curriculum reform efforts, family-school-community partnerships, student voice, nurse, guidance, and after-school programs.

The school cafeteria is a major hub of activity. It can be the largest classroom in the school because it is a powerful educational environment connecting with every student. Farm to school programs demonstrate that nutrition and the cafeteria are integral to the school day and the education of the whole student. School cafeterias also can support

The school cafeteria is the largest classroom in the school. It can be a powerful educational environment that connects with every student.

the local food economy by buying from local farmers to incorporate healthy, local, and seasonal foods into school meals; connecting the expertise of school nutrition staff with food and nutrition education initiatives; reducing waste; encouraging



The 3 Cs of farm to school

Farm to school is most successful and enduring when it is integrated into the cafeteria, classroom, and community.

student feedback; and making nutritious food accessible to all students. When school meals are produced sustainably, taste great, are nutritious, and support the local economy, everyone wins!

In the classroom, FTS education provides a real-life context for learning across all disciplines—science, math, art, language arts, social studies, and more. Classroom learning can be extended by engaging students both in hands-on community projects (building community gardens, visiting a local farm, volunteering with a local food pantry), and with the cafeteria (running taste tests for new recipes, learning culinary skills alongside school nutrition staff). Activities like these introduce students to new foods and empower students to make healthy food choices that last a lifetime. Farm to school naturally dovetails with the broader 4 Cs model in education: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity.



“With the right interventions, we can give every child a chance to get the nourishment and support they need to thrive and grow. When our children eat healthy foods, we know that they grow stronger brains and they’re better able to learn. When children are well fed, they have fewer discipline incidents and are able to engage in learning. We know that the best food we can give them is fresh food: unprocessed, full of nutrients straight from our farms to their plates.”

—Rebecca Holcombe
Former Vermont Secretary of Education





Making FTS connections within the community builds partnerships outside the school for place-based learning and garners community support for school initiatives. Youth have opportunities to learn about how their food is produced and to develop their own agency for creating change. Farmers build relationships with schools and other local institutions that allow them to expand into new wholesale markets and boost the local economy. Community dinners, service learning projects, and harvest festivals involve parents, families, and the whole community in building a food culture committed to healthy and sustainable food choices.



Action Planning

This chapter guides a team of school-based changemakers through a step-by-step planning process to expand and grow their farm to school program. A number of tools utilized in the planning process are highlighted and linked to the appendices. Your team should review the process and tools and then decide how best to use this chapter based on where you are in adopting farm to school ideas throughout your school community.

WHAT IS IN THIS CHAPTER?

Step 1: Build

- Build your team
- Ask, listen, learn
- Assess current FTS efforts

Step 2: Plan

- Create your shared values statement
- Set goals
- Prioritize activities

Step 3: Act

- Dig in
- Spread the word
- Celebrate

Step 4: Adapt

- Reflect and revise

RELATED APPENDICES

- Farm to School Rubric
- Farm to School Action Planning
- Impact & Feasibility Analysis
- Communications Planning Template
- Communications & Outreach Planning

Action Planning

Farm to school (FTS) efforts will be successful and long-lasting if you take the time to: (1) build buy-in within your school and community; (2) build and align your team around a shared goal; (3) identify roles; and (4) prioritize activities based on the available resources, impact, and feasibility.

Additionally, you may want to learn from the successes and challenges of others who have embarked on their own FTS journeys. There is lots of research and data to help guide you in the right direction. Action planning conversations allow a school team

to think about the work they are taking on within the larger school context, finding points of integration with existing priorities and needs. The process calls for continual reflection on where you have success or challenges, and adjusting your strategies as you learn along the way.

1 Build

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The first step in the action planning process is to build a committed team. After you have your team in place, you want to build a strong base of information about what is happening at your school directly or indirectly connected to FTS, so you fully assess your starting point before making FTS plans.

BUILD YOUR TEAM

When you start assembling a team (or begin rebuilding one) to grow farm to school, keep the 3 Cs in mind. Having team members from within the cafeteria, classroom, and community will greatly increase the likelihood of success in your action planning process. Many schools may already have a group that has been working on FTS or wellness, but possibly that group needs a “refresh” with some new planning and new team members.



Farm to school action planning is actually a cycle of planning, acting, building, adapting—then repeating!

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Teams should be made up of individuals representing different roles in the school, including:

- School nutrition staff (food service directors, school chefs, kitchen managers)
- Classroom teachers and other staff
- School principals and vice principals
- School nurses
- Parents, school boards, or community members
- School superintendents, business managers, and curriculum coordinators (if planning for a district-wide initiative)
- Community partners
- Families and caregivers
- Students
- Food producers, processors, and businesses

Involve students as much as you can. Their voices can be powerful, and their experiences and opinions can often shed light on important aspects that adults may overlook. Additionally, students may be the best communicators of the positive changes underway. They might attend meetings, conduct

student surveys, offer feedback on new menu options, plan events, or educate younger students and their own families.

When forming a team, consider these questions:

- What skills or experience do you need on your team? What skills or experience do your potential members have?
- Who is already doing farm to school activities in your school? Is there a team member who can be a strong leader/influencer to really “rally the troops”?
- Are there people who might be interested in your work but don’t know about it? Talk with them about how farm to school can help them achieve their own goals.
- Who in your community would have valuable input or resources to help support your team or connect you with others?
- What existing groups would be interested in your outcomes, e.g., wellness committees, sustainability clubs, food councils, and Parent



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Teacher Organizations (PTOs)? In some schools, the FTS team is a subcommittee of a broader health or wellness committee or PTO.

- How will your farm to school efforts reflect the diversity of your school and community? Are there new and different voices that could be included at the beginning of your planning process? Are there key individuals who can help you connect with more diverse groups?

As your team begins to meet, remind them that they are part of a growing state and national network that has resources to support you. (See “Connecting to Resources,” in *Community* chapter, p.76.) Your team may want to talk with or visit other schools in your region that have FTS programs.

Some farm to school teams have developed a “hub and spoke” model for their meetings: Working groups (the “spokes”) take on specific tasks and meet with interested members. A representative from each working group then meets regularly with the other representatives (the “hub”) to share what is happening and to align efforts.

As your team is forming, it is important to take time to build trust and respect. The norms for how a team functions are an important indicator of how successful that team will be. Having norms that reinforce safety within a team, where people feel comfortable speaking up, is the best predictor of a team’s success. In addition, take time to appreciate the contributions of your team members, and allow some time for socializing. Most volunteers appreciate the social component of volunteering. Simple relationship-building activities ranging from 10 to 45 minutes can be done during team meetings.

Organize Successful Meetings

One of the keys to a successful team is well-facilitated, effective meetings. With your team, brainstorm the characteristics of meetings they’ve enjoyed and meetings they haven’t. From this list, set your best practices and protocols. Here are a few tips:

Facilitation: Designate a facilitator to provide leadership and continuity to your meetings, and to keep your team on task and on time to meet goals. A good facilitator is an active listener who crafts agendas, sets up meeting spaces, and ensures clear communication with all members.

Agendas: Have clear meeting agendas with expected outcomes. Not every team member may need to be present at every meeting.

Notes: A note taker can focus on capturing information, decisions, and next steps while the facilitator runs the meeting. Consider designating a timekeeper if your group is large and highly involved. Share written notes with those who can’t attend frequently, but who want to stay involved.

Scheduling: Set regular meetings so members can plan ahead. If diverse schedules prevent everyone interested from attending, consider having your meeting before or after other meetings, like a staff meeting or a PTO meeting. Schedule some meetings at a time when community and school nutrition personnel can attend.

Communication: Clear and effective communication helps create a welcoming environment where people feel comfortable sharing, are respectful of others, and value all ideas and perspectives.

Snacks and Fun: Offer healthy snacks and remember to have fun!

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ASK, LISTEN, LEARN

Before you begin setting goals for your FTS programming, take stock of what is already happening and use that information to prioritize and determine your next steps.

Food activities are probably already happening at your school. The PTO may have a food-related fall fundraiser. Some classes may be using indoor growing lights or the school garden for science experiments. The cafeteria might have a federal Fresh



Fruit and Vegetable Program that provides snacks during the day. Perhaps some classes are taking farm field trips. You may even have a school store that sells snacks after school. All of these activities are potential opportunities to highlight fresh and local foods, and to build partnerships between the cafeteria, classroom, and community.

This is also the time to seek out voices that are often underrepresented in action planning for school activities. Is there a gathering or meeting of parents in your community involving English lan-

Seek out voices that are often underrepresented in planning school activities.

guage learners (ELL)? Could you connect with families that are part of afterschool or other youth development

programs? Have you included special educators, behavioral support staff, and ELL teachers? What activities or goals are already happening within these communities that farm to school could support? Ask around the school to identify these opportunities.

ASSESS CURRENT FTS EFFORTS

The Farm to School Rubric (see Appendix, p. 79) is a tool designed to help schools assess the depth and breadth of their farm to school activities. The rubric informs your action planning and identifies where you can deepen the program and make it long-lasting. The rubric can also help you identify your team’s needs for technical assistance, or determine whether you are ready to find more resources and take action. It is also a great way to inform your team of activities that are already happening in the school.

To complete the rubric, consider where your school stands in each of the indicators listed, and circle the appropriate box. (See example of a completed Cafeteria rubric below.) You can complete the first three sections of the rubric—Cafeteria, Classroom, and Community—as a team, or you can assign each component to the person or persons most knowledgeable in that area. Bring the team together after the three sections are complete to share the answers. Then, as a team, complete the fourth section, Staying Power.

The rubric is a dynamic planning tool that can and should be revisited regularly—at least once a year is recommended. You will find that progress may

move both forward and backward as the result of your action steps, changes in personnel, or other factors. Don't be discouraged!

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Once the rubric is completed, you can begin prioritizing areas where you would like to grow in both the short and long term. To build momentum, plan for growth in both areas where your FTS efforts are just “emerging,” and where they are “developing” or “deepening.”

EXAMPLE: FTS Rubric, Section 1: Cafeteria

Indicator	Emerging	Developing	Deepening	Thriving
School Nutrition Staff Engagement	School nutrition staff are interested in the creation of a farm to school program.	School nutrition staff representative regularly attends farm to school committee meetings and activities.	School nutrition staff play an active role in developing the farm to school program.	The director/manager and/or several school nutrition staff work with faculty, administration, and community members to coordinate farm to school efforts and programming.
Local Procurement	Possibilities for incorporating local food into the menu and/or resources to help source local food have been identified.	Local sources of food identified and several local foods purchased via informal bid procedure and incorporated in school meals. School nutrition staff are trained and able to purchase local product through standard buying/bidding practices.	Local food regularly incorporated into menu for school year. School nutrition staff can adapt to fluctuating sources of local food, are regularly purchasing local foods through proper procurement methods, and can adapt their budget as necessary.	Annual purchasing contracts have been established between local farmers and the school. System in place to sustain the purchase of local food consistently; new local food sources evaluated regularly.
Infrastructure & Professional Development	School nutrition staff have begun to identify infrastructure and professional development needs, and identify what changes are needed to make to incorporate local food into the meal program.	Infrastructure changes initiated or being planned. Professional development opportunities provided for school nutrition staff.	Infrastructure changes allow for incorporation of more local foods. All school nutrition staff have opportunities for professional development.	Food program infrastructure can sustain processing, cooking, and serving local foods over the long term. Plan in place for ongoing evaluations of infrastructure and professional development needs as local food purchasing increases.
Classroom & Community Connections	School nutrition staff are interested in conducting taste tests and/or can identify the possibilities for engaging faculty and students in nutrition education and the farm to school program.	School nutrition staff work with farm to school committee to gain feedback from students on the farm to school program, and how to best incorporate nutrition education activities.	School nutrition staff work on taste tests, curriculum integration, and community farm to school events.	Community members, students, and school staff see the school food program as an integral part of the school and community and of the educational programming.

CREATE YOUR SHARED VALUES STATEMENT

Many people come to a farm to school meeting with lists of activities that they want to see happen, and it can be hard to focus first on the overall vision. However, it is important for your team to develop a shared purpose and a shared understanding of the challenges you want to address, so that your selected activities will lead to the outcomes you want. Sharing your values is a positive way to frame solutions to challenges your team sees.

It is time to draft your team’s farm to school values statement. Have each team member write down what they value most about food, education, and your community (e.g., healthy kids, vibrant local economy, connection to the community). Next, look for alignment among the individual values, and combine or reword them where you can. Also look at the mission or vision statement of your school or district (most have one). It can be strategic to align your own statement with existing school priorities. For example, “healthy kids,” “engaged citizens,” or “vibrant communities” are common school priorities that your work can support. Construct a sentence or two that links your shared values together. This shared statement will be the basis for setting your FTS goals.

Here are a few examples of FTS team values statements:

At our high school, we work to create authentic interactions with our local food system as a means to help students explore the importance of environmental and economic sustainability, personal well-being and nutrition, and connection to community (both people and resources). We seek to build more bridges between the school cafeteria—and its commitment to locally sourced, “from-scratch” meals—and classrooms to accomplish this goal.

At our middle school, we support a FTS program that fosters student ownership of healthy eating habits that also develop connections to (and stewardship of) their community, their environment, and their local economy.

We nourish our children with food that enhances our community’s pride and directly connects to academic and lifelong learning.

SET GOALS

Now you have a values statement as a compass for your FTS efforts, and a completed rubric identifying where FTS currently stands (and where there’s room to grow). You are ready to set specific goals.

The goals should be statements that address the outcomes you hope to achieve. Use active verbs, like *introduce*, *increase*, or *develop*, combined with a noun (i.e., what you want to introduce, increase, or develop). Make sure everyone understands the goals as written and make them as measurable and time specific as you can.

To help you set your goals, review your completed FTS rubric and your values statement. Where do you see opportunities, assets, and resources to build on? Where are there gaps that you wish to address? How do your goals get you closer to where you want to be?

Brainstorm a list of goals, then review the list with the team to ensure the goals represent all 3 Cs: the cafeteria, classroom, and community.

The Action Planning Template will help you record your goals and what you need to implement them. (See Appendix, pp. 84–87, and example on facing page.) It is aligned with the FTS rubric with sections for Cafeteria, Classroom, and Community, as well as a final page for Staying Power. Each

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section suggests just one or two specific goals, with their associated action steps, roles, timelines, and resources needed.

The two-goal limit encourages you to recognize what is reasonable to accomplish during a busy school year. Use the long-term goals section at the bottom of each page to capture ideas for future years. Try to consider a one- to two-year time-frame when setting goals.

Keep your goals realistic. For example, if your team is just getting started, setting an aggressive first-year goal to increase local foods in the cafeteria to 30% may set your team up for disappointment and frustration. Instead, set goals that will require incremental changes that are more likely to be

Goals that require incremental changes are more likely to be successful and will build momentum and trust in your school.

successful. This will build momentum and trust in your school. Also, set goals that your team can accomplish themselves, before tackling systemic initiatives engaging lots of people.

Finally, before you move on to identifying activities, double-check that the goals align with your values statement.

EXAMPLE:

FTS Action Planning, Section 1: Cafeteria

Goals	Action Steps	Person(s) Responsible (Lead person/ group member)	Timeline	Technical Assistance/ Resources Needed
Incorporate one local product a month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Harvest of the Month materials • Have "Try-It" Tuesdays • Offer on menu next week 	FTS Coordinator and Nutrition Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan this spring • Start next fall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FTS Coordinators • School Nutrition Director • Harvest of the Month materials
Increase student meal participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve marketing of meal program • Have students help design menu • Choose student ambassadors for meal program 	Nutrition Director and teacher partner	Starting this fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Color ink on menu • Digital & print menus • Find class to partner on menu design • T-shirts & vests for ambassadors

Long-term Ideas & Goals for Future School Years

- Research and make a plan for universal meals
- Establish a parent education program on food preparation

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PRIORITIZE ACTIVITIES

An activity is a specific effort, action, or set of steps to accomplish a goal. As you've been developing your action plan, your team has probably been generating plenty of activity ideas: composting, building gardens, cooking in the classroom, visiting farms, etc. Most of your farm to school time will ultimately be spent doing these tangible activities, and they will give your team a great sense of accomplishment. However, be careful that activities do not drive your process. You want to take on activities that will help you reach your agreed-upon goals.

Look at your goals and brainstorm what kind of activities might help you reach those goals. To decide which ones to include in your action plan for the coming year, start prioritizing your list. Combine redundant or similar ideas. Utilize the Impact & Feasibility Analysis Tool (see Appendix, p. 88) to help your team move more quickly and strategically through the decision-making process. Which activities will have the highest benefit or impact for the least effort, time, and cost? This will help you match actions to your capacity, and stay realistic about timing. It can also make your decisions feel less personal to anyone whose ideas aren't selected.

As you prioritize activities, consider:

- **Your team's energy.** Where are your team's energy and interests? If most people are excited about building a school garden but the team has identified offering afterschool cooking classes as an important activity, expand your team to include individuals excited about cooking.
- **Your capacity.** Do your activities match your capacity? Building a year-round greenhouse takes a lot more effort than building an outdoor garden.

- **Momentum.** Will the activity give you early success, credibility, visibility, and momentum for your bigger plans?
- **Resources.** Do you have the resources immediately available for this activity?
- **Urgency.** Does this activity address an immediate need or is it an opportunity with a short time frame?
- **Logical sequencing.** Do certain activities need to happen before others?
- **Your whole team.** Do your activities reflect the whole team's agreed-upon direction and not the interest of one person's focus?
- **Impact.** Which activities will have the greatest impact toward achieving your vision?

Now you can begin to fill in the Action Planning template with specifics (see Appendix, p. 84–87): what activities are required to reach your goal; who will be responsible for the task; what are the specifics to accomplish the tasks; what is the timeline for when work will be accomplished; and what technical assistance or resources would be helpful. If you have a large team, we recommend breaking up into smaller groups, one for each of the 3 Cs, plus a fourth to address staying power. Bring the full team back together and allow time for reporting on progress. You will most likely find that at least one activity from each group relates somehow to the other groups. This is a good sign—your team is finding synchronicity.

Now you have an action plan. It can be adjusted as needed, but it will help to guide your farm to school program, communicate your activities with the school community, and keep your team on track. Remind the team that all ideas from your initial brainstorm have been recorded and will be revisited in the future.



3 Act

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DIG IN

With a plan in place, it is time to dig in and take action. The best first step is to take a step. You have planned for this, you have lined up your partners, and you are ready.

Don't go for the biggest effort first. Choose a sure win to pump everyone up and keep them engaged, or an activity that has high visibility in your community. Consider whether the action might be able to help leverage other actions.

Identify a good photo opportunity to highlight your first step. For example, students cooking or working in a garden or food service receiving the first delivery of local produce would make nice photos to share. Perhaps this positive image could be on the cover of your local paper or school's social

media page. Sharing what you are doing is just as important as taking your action steps. Don't let communicating about your activities be a forgotten step; integrate communications into your activities to build support.

Review and Adapt

After you have completed the first few tasks, get your partners together to evaluate and reaffirm that you are headed in the right direction. Be prepared to deal with any unintended results of your actions. Has one of your activities gotten more attention than you expected? Is it worth putting more energy toward it before you move on to your next action? Observe and reflect on each activity. Being adaptable may lead you to some unexpected but even more powerful outcomes.

As your team gets farther along in the activities, be sure to establish an ongoing structure where team members can share, reflect, and adapt as the work unfolds. Being honest in your reflections as to what is not working is just as important as attending to

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what is working. If one of your activities doesn't go well, consider what you may be able to learn from this. Some of your most important next steps can emerge from failed first attempts.

Time Frames, Roles, and Accountability

When you created your action plan, you created timelines and deadlines. Honor these time frames, but don't be afraid to adapt them as you get into the work. Holding to unnecessary deadlines can turn team members off or burn people out. Remember that your action plan is a road map to get you where you want to go over time, but it is okay if detours emerge along the way. Just keep a steady but healthy pace for everyone.

Your action plan is a road map to get you where you want to go over time, but it is okay if detours emerge. Just keep a steady, healthy pace.

A steady pace will also help your group be accountable to their plans. Hold monthly or quarterly check-in meetings so your whole team knows that they are accountable to one another.

Consider any new team roles that might be emerging. Who on your team will remember to share the stories in the school newsletter or town paper? Has someone emerged as the natural leader of your group? Who is going to keep the action plan in mind and keep the group on track?

SPREAD THE WORD

By spreading the word, schools elicit donations, volunteers, and community recognition and support. Building support for your FTS program is essential in sustaining all the hard work that your team has done. In a research study conducted by Vermont FEED with school principals across Vermont (see *Staying Power* chapter, p. 27), communication about farm to school has been identified as one of the key factors leading to long-term staying power of a farm to school initiative. Think of it as a way to enhance the work underway. In many cases, it will make that work easier. A good outreach or communications plan can go a long way in ensuring that the bulk of the work does not rest on the shoulders of only a few volunteers. Find a team member who is excited by communications to fill this role.

Transparency builds trust. Organize your internal communications to make it easy for all committee members to access meeting notes, regardless of attendance, and make sure the school community knows that these notes are available to anyone interested. You might consider sharing a version of your action plan with the larger school community. Teams that have presented their plan to their school board and PTO have garnered greater buy-in.

Often the best way to publicize your work is through word of mouth. Students, families, and teachers can help build support when you let them in on your plans. Reach out to all these groups via school newsletters, announcements, teachers, and signs on the lunch line.

Communication Considerations

- Ask your school if there are any school- or district-based procedures or policies about sharing information with the media or on social media.

- Think about the messages you want to relay to the media, families, students, and teachers about the program as well as what you would like them to do with that information.
- It is just as important to share the story of what you are planning on doing as it is to share what activities are done. Use social media, your school newsletter, and the local paper to communicate your committee's plans, advertise your meeting dates, and ask for volunteers.
- Invite the media to your events, such as harvest dinners. Invite your farmers to speak about their products and promote your work. Consider partnering with another group at your school that already is hosting a program and add on to their event. At the dinner, offer and highlight locally sourced food prepared in your cafeteria.
- Continue to communicate information about your meal program even after changes are in place.
- Be sure to send event invitations to your school board and elected officials so they can see the changes you are making.
- Launch a quarterly school food newsletter or social media campaign with students so the school community can learn more about your program.
- Many communities have email lists where you can share the progress of your farm to school efforts.
- Present your FTS activities at city and town events such as school board meetings, Town Meeting, and rotary club meetings.

Vermont FEED has created two simple communications tools that can help you spread the word about your school's plans and activities to the audiences you need to reach. (See Appendix, Communications Planning Template, pp. 89–90, and Communications & Outreach Planning, pp.

5 Tips for Getting Press Coverage

GET TO KNOW LOCAL PRESS.

Read your local paper and media to get a sense for the kinds of stories they cover. Try to connect your story to big local issues and themes. Learn your paper's editorial calendar, including how much advance notice it needs for stories or announcements. (It's often three weeks!)

GET TO KNOW LOCAL REPORTERS.

Who covers the news for your town or school? Reach out to them with an email or phone call. Meet up for coffee and tell reporters about your program, or invite them for a tour of the garden and lunch at school. Be available to answer questions.

SHARE GREAT STORIES.

Offer content through stories or events and include a "hook" to draw in the reader. Share photographs and multimedia. Send copies of posters, fliers, and other materials. Practice your elevator pitch and arm yourself with great stories about impact and results.

DEVELOP A MEDIA KIT.

A media kit makes it easier for media to cover your project. Assemble basic information about your project (include key quotes and stories to illustrate the importance of your program), photographs, logo, and contact information. Have it ready to send out at a moment's notice, or post it online so reporters can find it easily at any time.

SHARE THE LOVE.

Have people involved in your project (students, community members) write stories, blogs, and editorials for the local paper or social media. And tell the world about the coverage you've received! Join your state's farm to school email list to post events.

STEP 1
STEP 2
STEP 3: ACT
STEP 4

91–92.) Developing a relationship with your local media can go a long way when trying to bring the community into your program.

CELEBRATE

Celebrations to honor and mark your achievements are important and fun activities to have in your action plan. Whether you host a school community dinner, participate an existing town parade, or exhibit artwork and photos in the school, there are lots of creative ways to commemorate achievements. Look for celebration opportunities within your existing action plan, where you can recognize the work that has been done, in small and big ways. If one of your goals is to get awareness-building articles in the school newsletter, for example,

share images of students cooking or taste testing to educate readers *and* honor the student work. Celebrations do not need to be stand-alone events. Incorporating them into existing events or communications will often get more attention.

Many schools want to host a BIG BANG event to really draw attention to their program. These can be very fun and popular, but don't underestimate the amount of work they take to pull together. If you decide to host a large event, look for ways that it can fulfill multiple objectives. Maybe your school French teacher is already planning a school-wide French night. Could you partner with them to turn your cafeteria into a French Bistro with student waitstaff delivering homemade healthy French treats?



STEP 1

STEP 2

STEP 3: ACT

STEP 4

It might be wiser to look for smaller, more frequent ways to celebrate. Hang a banner in the cafeteria? Be part of a small daily or weekly activity in your school? For example, you might pick a student each day to share one food fact on your school loud-speaker during morning messages. Continue to partner with existing activities. Have students prepare and serve tasty local dishes at school events or meetings to highlight school food changes.

Look for smaller, more frequent ways to celebrate and work with partners. Appreciation is a form of celebration!

Consider participating in “harvest of the month” activities or celebrations that may already exist in your state. These pro-

grams often have fun resources available, such as posters, tabletop signs, recipes, or sample articles. Most of the work is done for you; you just have to adapt it for your school and community.

Appreciation is a form of celebration. Appreciate those who are on the front lines making changes, and the volunteers giving their time and expertise, and the decision makers (school administration, local leaders, state legislators), who are supporting your efforts—or who might one day.

It can be more impactful for your school and community to have five small ways to celebrate and bring out the Farm to School message than to host a single big event each year.

EXAMPLE

To celebrate the end of a math and social studies unit on understanding community and economy, one school hosts a school-based “farmers market.” Students set up

Creative Celebrations

- Share photos of your activities in school newsletters and town papers.
- Make a float for a town parade.
- Have a healthy snack table at your Back to School night, highlighting the types of snacks that you are encouraging for the school year.
- Host a community FTS dinner before a school event.
- Share a video of students talking about what they have learned.
- Invite parents or local community groups to get a student-led tour of the school gardens and celebrate with homemade pizza that includes the garden produce.
- Invite farmers to your school and ask students to present their projects or cooking creations to the farmer who grew that food.
- Create an award for school or community members who are helping with your FTS activities.
- Highlight a new cafeteria food item in your newsletter with a recipe.
- Include community partners in school-wide volunteer celebrations.

stands with classroom-made local food items and small handmade crafts. They then invite teachers, parents, and community members to come and purchase their goods (\$0.50 an item) as they transform their gymnasium into an indoor market. Students then do a cost analysis on their items, looking at gross and net income. Finally, they donate their proceeds to the local food shelf or another food- or farm-related charity.

4 Adapt

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4
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REFLECT AND REVISE

After you have worked with your team to develop and implement a farm to school action plan, you will want to learn from your activities and determine whether they were successful. Take time to reflect on both your successes and your challenges.

Here are some prompting questions to consider with your team when reflecting on your FTS work:

- Did we accomplish what we set out to do? Why or why not?
- What worked well and what didn't work very well? Why?
- What do we want to do more of and what would we do differently next time?
- How can we get feedback from students and others in our school community?
- Do we want to change any upcoming plans in our action plan based on this discussion?

It is absolutely necessary to revisit and potentially revise your action plan at the end of each year (or sooner) to assess what has been working well, and what has been challenging. Revisit your goals, their accompanying activities, and the timeline your team set to accomplish your plans. Things change, and you need to be nimble enough to adapt to staffing and administrative turnovers, new opportunities, and regulation changes. But don't be so flexible that you easily get off course. Trust that your team has done a good job planning your project, while allowing for adjustments along the way.

Revisit your FTS rubric and discuss what progress you have made to deepen your program. Plot any progress you have made on a new rubric. Also, revisit who is on your team and consider whether there are any new people you want to invite to help in your next steps. Review your long-term goals and identify what might be possible to include in next year's plans. Stick with it, work together, and have fun!

Farm to School Rubric

School Name _____ Date _____

FTS MEMBERS COMPLETING RUBRIC:

The rubric on the following pages is designed to help schools or districts assess the stage of their farm to school program. This can help inform action planning to identify what next steps might be taken to deepen the program and give it greater staying power. It can also be used to identify readiness for farm to school grants and needs for technical assistance.

The rubric is broken into four sections: Cafeteria, Classroom, Community, and Staying Power. To use the rubric, go through each indicator and identify the description that best matches the current state of your farm to school program. In some cases part of the description might apply to your program and part of it might not, or you might feel that your program falls somewhere between two descriptions. In that case, choose the one description that most fully describes your program, but also highlight any parts of the adjacent description that may apply to your program. Use the blank column to further describe or clarify any responses.

While this rubric is designed as a general tool for all farm to school programs, there will certainly be aspects of your program that may not show up in the indicators or descriptions. Feel free to add language in the appropriate section or blank column that more fully describes your program. This rubric is simply a starting point for you to create a quick snapshot of your farm to school program, so please adapt it to be useful for your needs.

This assessment can be done by an individual (gathering input as needed from food service staff, faculty, and community members), or collaboratively, by a team. A collaborative assessment will likely lead to the most accurate picture of current practices, and can encourage more strategic action planning.

FTS Rubric, Section 1: Cafeteria

Indicator	Emerging	Developing	Deepening	Thriving
School Nutrition Staff Engagement	School nutrition staff are interested in the creation of a farm to school program.	School nutrition staff representative regularly attends farm to school committee meetings and activities.	School nutrition staff play an active role in developing the farm to school program.	The director/manager and/or several school nutrition staff work with faculty, administration, and community members to coordinate farm to school efforts and programming.
Local Procurement	Possibilities for incorporating local food resources to help source local food have been identified.	Local sources of food identified and several local foods purchased via informal bid procedure and incorporated in school meals. School nutrition staff are trained and able to purchase local product through standard buying/bidding practices.	Local food regularly incorporated into menu for school year. School nutrition staff can adapt to fluctuating sources of local food, are regularly purchasing local foods through proper procurement methods, and can adapt their budget as necessary.	Annual purchasing contracts have been established between local farmers and the school. There is a system in place to sustain the purchase of local food consistently; new local food sources evaluated regularly.
Infrastructure & Professional Development	School nutrition staff have begun to identify what changes are needed to incorporate local food into the meal program, including infrastructure upgrades, professional development offerings, etc.	Infrastructure changes have been initiated or are being planned. Professional development opportunities are provided for school nutrition staff.	Infrastructure changes allow for incorporation of more local foods. All school nutrition staff have opportunities for professional development.	Food program infrastructure can process, cook, and serve local foods over the long-term. A plan is in place for ongoing evaluations of infrastructure and professional development needs as local food purchasing increases.
Classroom & Community Connections	School nutrition staff are interested in conducting taste tests and/or can identify the possibilities for engaging faculty and students in nutrition education and the farm to school program.	School nutrition staff work with farm to school committee to gain feedback from students on the farm to school program, and how to best incorporate nutrition education activities.	School nutrition staff work with farm to school committee on taste tests, curriculum integration, and community farm to school events.	Community members, students, and school staff see the school food program as an integral part of the school and community and of the educational programming.

FTS Rubric, Section 2: Classroom

Indicator	Emerging	Developing	Deepening	Thriving
Faculty Involvement	Faculty are interested in creation of farm to school program.	Faculty representative regularly attends farm to school committee meetings or does regular farm to school activities.	Faculty representatives help to plan and implement farm to school activities beyond their own classrooms. Faculty have opportunities for farm to school professional development.	Multiple faculty members work with school nutrition staff, administration, and community members to coordinate farm to school efforts. All faculty have ongoing professional development opportunities.
Integrating with Curriculum	Faculty can identify possibilities for integrating food, farm, and nutrition (FFN) topics into curriculum (including wellness, food studies, gardening, etc.).	Some faculty teach lessons or units integrating FFN topics.	Most grades teach lessons or units integrating FFN.	School has a coordinated approach to integrating FFN into curriculum across all grades and in multiple disciplines.
Experiential Learning Opportunities	Faculty can identify possibilities for using hands-on experiences (growing, cooking, gardening, etc.) as learning experiences.	Some faculty provide experiences through which students can engage in hands-on learning experiences related to FFN.	Most faculty provide hands-on learning experiences that are embedded within larger units of study and support established goals for learning.	School has a coordinated approach to providing students with hands-on learning experiences; each grade provides opportunities for scaffolded experiences that build from grade to grade.
Cafeteria & Community as Resource	Faculty have an interest in connecting their classroom to the cafeteria and community (farms, producers, etc.).	Faculty have connected classroom learning with the cafeteria or community. Some grade levels have experiences with local farms/farmers/food producers (field trips, etc.).	Faculty connect cafeteria taste tests with classroom learning. Teachers consider school food program as a nutrition and food education resource. Students have experiences with local farms/farmers/food producers (field trips, class visits, etc.).	School has a coordinated approach to connecting cafeteria taste tests with classroom learning. School has a coordinated approach to providing students experiences with local farms/farmers/food producers.

FTS Rubric, Section 3: Community

Indicator	Emerging	Developing	Deepening	Thriving
Community Engagement	Community members (including local organizations) interested in the creation of a farm to school program. Community members (including parents and organizations) can identify possibilities for community involvement in a farm to school program.	Community members have committed to be a resource for farm to school program.	Community members actively participate on farm to school committee and provide help with fundraising, classroom and cafeteria activities, or field trips.	A network of community members has been established to provide ongoing help with fundraising, classroom and cafeteria activities, and field trips. The farm to school program is linked to community events.
Family Engagement	Families interested in creation of farm to school program.	Families have opportunities to get involved in farm to school efforts (taste tests, farm to school committee, etc.). Family representatives regularly attend farm to school committee meetings or participate in farm to school activities.	Families actively participate in a range of farm to school activities (taste tests, field trips, classroom activities, fundraising, cafeteria, etc.).	PTO/PTA or other family organizations have made long-term commitment to farm to school program. A network of families has been established to provide ongoing support.
Farms & Community-based Purchasing	Farmers/producers interested in partnering with school.	Farmers, food producers, and local food-based businesses have offered to sell a product for school meals.	School is sourcing product from local farmers, food producers, and food-based businesses at multiple times during the school year.	Long-term relationships established between local farms, food producers, and food-based businesses for sourcing food and providing food- and nutrition-based experiences throughout the school year.
Community Educational Opportunities (businesses, nonprofits, government agencies, civic groups, etc.)	Community members interested in partnering with school.	Community members and organizations offer to be resource for school educational opportunities (field trips, farm visits, class speakers, etc.).	School is using community members and organizations as resource for educational opportunities during the school year.	Long-term relationships established between community members and organizations to provide educational opportunities throughout the school year.

FTS Rubric, Section 4: Staying Power

Indicator	Emerging	Developing	Deepening	Thriving
Administrative Support	School administration is interested in the creation of a farm to school program.	Administration is in regular contact with farm to school activities and/or farm to school committee.	Administration supports staff-wide farm to school professional development and participates in farm to school activities.	Administration supports inclusion of farm to school tasks into job descriptions and/or provides release time for staff to do farm to school work. Administration is a resource to other school administrators on how to start and sustain a farm to school program.
School Culture	There is general interest in the school community in the creation of a farm to school program.	A farm to school committee has been created and is active, with representation from school administration, school nutrition staff, faculty, and community members.	School community members continually revisit their farm to school action plan and develop ideas for the future. All school community members are provided ongoing opportunities for farm to school professional development. School community has waste reduction strategies that meet state guidelines and are implemented school-wide (classroom, cafeteria, events, etc.).	School community members feel farm to school is integral part of school, part of "who they are." School is showcased as farm to school model for district or state, and school practices are shared at local, regional, or national level. When new school staff are hired, interest in and ability to contribute to farm to school program are considered as hiring criteria.
Communication	Communication about farm to school takes place within peer groups (faculty, administration, school food service, families, community members).	Some members of school community are aware of farm to school program. School community members start to communicate about farm to school across peer groups.	Most members of school community are aware of farm to school program. Vehicles for communication across peer groups have been established (such as meetings, email list, newsletters, website, etc.).	All members of the school community are aware of farm to school program. System in place for communicating about farm to school that allows everyone to have access to information.
Funding/Resources	Funding or resource possibilities identified to launch farm to school program.	Initial funding or resources secured to support farm to school efforts.	Diversified sources of funding and resources developed to sustain farm to school.	System for funding and access to resources in place that can sustain farm to school program over the long term.

FTS Action Planning, Section 1: Cafeteria

Review indicators in rubric to help inform your goals

Goals	Action Steps <small>(What needs to be done now?)</small>	Person(s) Responsible <small>(Lead person/group member)</small>	Timeline <small>(By when do items need to be done?)</small>	Technical Assistance/ Resources Needed

Long-Term Ideas & Goals for Future School Years

FTS Action Planning, Section 2: Classroom

Review indicators in rubric to help inform your goals

Goals	Action Steps <small>(What needs to be done now?)</small>	Person(s) Responsible <small>(Lead person/group member)</small>	Timeline <small>(By when do items need to be done?)</small>	Technical Assistance/ Resources Needed

Long-Term Ideas & Goals for Future School Years

FTS Action Planning, Section 3: Community

Review indicators in rubric to help inform your goals

Goals	Action Steps <small>(What needs to be done now?)</small>	Person(s) Responsible <small>(Lead person/group member)</small>	Timeline <small>(By when do items need to be done?)</small>	Technical Assistance/ Resources Needed

Long-Term Ideas & Goals for Future School Years

FTS Action Planning, Section 4: Staying Power

Review indicators in rubric to help inform your goals

Goals	Action Steps <small>(What needs to be done now?)</small>	Person(s) Responsible <small>(Lead person/group member)</small>	Timeline <small>(By when do items need to be done?)</small>	Technical Assistance/ Resources Needed

Long-Term Ideas & Goals for Future School Years

Impact & Feasibility Analysis

In order to set priorities on what actions to do first, you can use this simple “impact and feasibility analysis” tool to facilitate a group discussion. It is similar to a cost-benefit analysis that helps you prioritize, match actions to your capacity, and stay realistic about timing.

AS YOU PRIORITIZE YOUR ACTIVITIES, KEEP IN MIND:

- School community support (where has there been the most energy, interest?)
- Potential uptake (are resources immediately available for this activity?)
- Urgency (does this address an immediate need or is it an opportunity with a short time frame?)
- Logical sequencing (do certain activities need to happen before others?)
- Momentum (will the activity give you early success? credibility and visibility for your bigger plans?)
- Champions (is there a champion ready to make it happen?)
- Mission (does this further your FTS mission and goals?)
- Cost (does it offer good value in terms of cost?)
- Quality of ideas (Are these activities easily doable and broadly supported? Do they have high visibility and value?)

STEP 1: Write each activity on a separate sticky note.

STEP 2: Clarify what it would take to make each idea happen; be specific as to the time, people, and resources that would be required.

STEP 3: Sort your ideas using the matrix at right (it can be drawn easily on easel paper). As a team, place each activity in the box where it best belongs.

STEP 4: Identify your priorities based on higher impact and higher feasibility.

Value and Benefits	High	1st CHOICES high value, visibility, and broad support	2nd CHOICES probably worth it
	Low	3rd CHOICES easy, but of less value	4th CHOICES not worth it
		Easy/Cheap	Hard/ Expensive
		Effort and Cost	

PRIORITY SETTING MATRIX

Depending on which quadrant an activity lands in, it will become clear which ones are more feasible and will have a greater impact. Make these your first priority. Activities that have less impact, but that are easy to accomplish, can help you build momentum. Activities that have the greatest impact but that are less feasible may be added to your action plan as future projects.

Communications Planning Template

Communications Goal: _____

Audience(s)	Beliefs & Interests	Calls to Action	Messages	Channels/Connectors
Who do you want to reach?	What do they care about and know regarding FTS?	What do you want them to do?	What messages will resonate?	How can you reach them? Who can help?

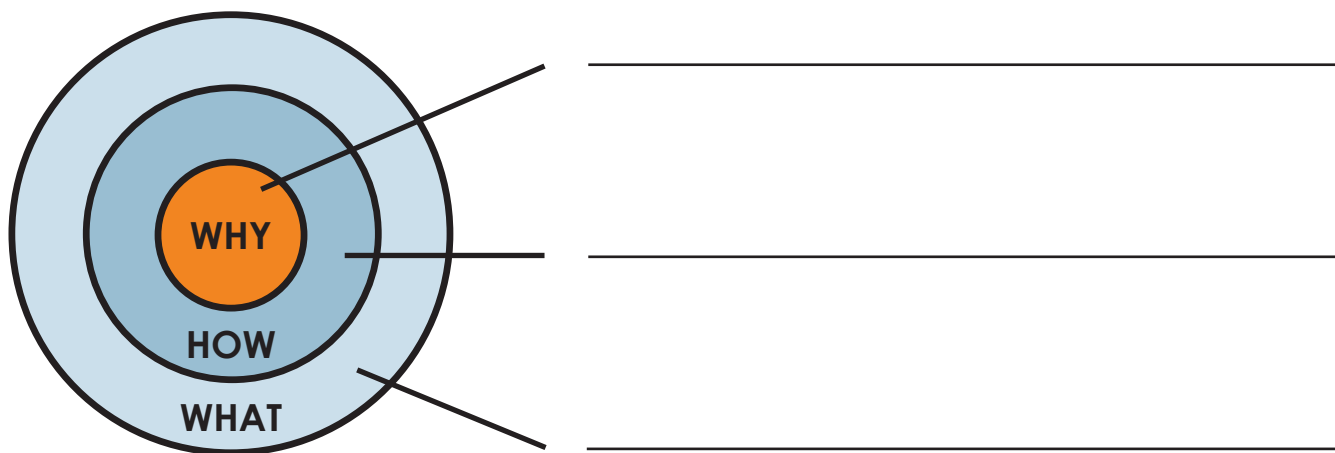
Communications Planning Template continued

Audience(s) Who do you want to reach?	Beliefs & Interests What do they care about and know regarding FTS?	Calls to Action What do you want them to do?	Messages What messages will resonate?	Channels/Connectors How can you reach them? Who can help?

Communications & Outreach Planning

1 KNOW YOURSELF

Articulate the **Why, How, and What** of your Farm to School program.



Write an **Elevator Pitch** for your program—a short (50- to 100-word) description of what you believe, what you’re doing, and why it matters.

Identify a **Communications Goal** (e.g., increase food awareness, publicize event).

continued

2 IDENTIFY YOUR AUDIENCES & NETWORKS

Brainstorm the different groups and demographics in your community (however you define it—school community, town, region, etc.) and focus in on the ones that you are trying to reach in order to advance your particular communications goal.

- **Community Network:** Formal (e.g., church members, historic society) or informal (e.g., neighbors, diner regulars) groups in your community
- **Connectors:** People who represent “hubs” (connect to many different networks, groups, or people) or “bridges” (link disconnected groups) within the community
- **Audience:** Group or demographic that you are trying to reach (e.g., elementary students, PTO members, parents, city council)

3 IDENTIFY YOUR CALLS TO ACTION

Identify what you would like each audience to do after receiving your message and communications. (See sidebar.)

3. Calls to Action

- Sign up for email list
- Purchase school lunches
- Cook healthy meals
- Follow on social media
- Tell a friend
- Donate money
- Volunteer to help
- Read a story or blog post
- Take a class

4 ARTICULATE YOUR KEY MESSAGES

Key messages are the main points that you want to convey through your communications. They are a balance between what you want to convey and the context or tailoring that will make it relevant to a particular audience. Even if your call to action is the same for different audiences, your key messages may not be.

Example key messages for meal program participation

- **For Parents:** Meal program is healthy, affordable, and will save you time and effort.
- **For Teachers:** Meals are delicious and your participation will set an important example.
- **For Students:** Meals taste great and it’s cool to eat school lunch.

5 IDENTIFY THE BEST COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS & OPPORTUNITIES

Now that you know what you want to say, choose the communications channels that your audiences use and that will maximize reach, efficiency, and impact. (See sidebar.)

5. Channels & Opportunities

- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- Local newspaper
- School news
- Signs and bulletin boards
- Table tents, placemats
- Connectors
- Posters and postcards
- Blogs and websites
- Tables at events
- Sidewalk chalk
- Email lists and forums
- T-shirts
- Trusted messengers
- Pick-up and drop-off times
- Community events
- Community centers (libraries, restaurants)
- Contests and promotions
- Group meetings

VT FEED

Vermont Food Education Every Day (VT FEED) began in 2000 as a collaborative farm to school project of three nonprofits: the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT), Foodworks at Two Rivers, and Shelburne Farms. Today, Shelburne Farms and NOFA-VT provide leadership, resources, and support to an evolving farm to school movement, providing hundreds of school communities and producers with technical assistance, educational resources, and professional development in order to increase local, healthy food choices.

VT FEED believes that:

- In a sustainable food system, everyone has access to nutritious, healthy, affordable foods and opportunities to produce it.
- Students who are well-fed with nutritious foods are able to be more engaged and successful in their learning.
- Farm to school gives students the knowledge, skills, and values to make healthy choices for themselves and their communities.
- Local food systems are essential to the health of the local economy, environment, and communities.
- A healthy food system is critical to a sustainable future.
- School systems change when a diversity of partners and the school community align to invest in creating change together.



Shelburne Farms is a nonprofit education organization whose mission is to inspire and cultivate learning for a sustainable future. That means learning that empowers students to build a healthy future for their communities and the planet. Located on Abenaki land, Shelburne Farms' home campus is a 1,400-acre working farm, forest, and National Historic Landmark.



The Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont is a nonprofit association of farmers, gardeners, and consumers. Its mission is to promote organic practices to build an economically viable, ecologically sound, and socially just Vermont agricultural system that benefits all living things.



This guide is lovingly dedicated to

ENID WONNACOTT

(1961-2019)

Enid planted, tended, and nurtured the VT FEED project during her entire tenure as executive director of NOFA-Vermont. Her passion for agriculture, dedication to our communities, and love for Vermont were unparalleled. The seeds that Enid planted will forever nourish us.

Thank you, Enid!



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of NOFA-VT and Shelburne Farms



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