



Farm *to* School

COALITION OF NC

2019 - 2021 Report

A close-up photograph of a child's face, smiling and holding several large, orange carrots. The child is wearing a blue shirt and a dark jacket. The background is a grassy field.

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Look for spotlight questions to think through how to engage and explore ideas to share!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our schools, food systems, and communities have been challenged on numerous fronts over the last few years. We want to acknowledge those challenges and the extraordinary response made by so many to pull together collective action and continue to support farm to school efforts. This report highlights some amazing success stories across our state that have provided a beacon of hope.

Our state has been negatively impacted by hurricanes, tornadoes, ice and snow storms, late frosts, extreme temperatures, droughts, and flooding. Climate change is not only causing property damage and farm destruction but also loss of life, health and economic issues, and crises for communities by straining local resources and capacity. Farms are depended on to provide needed food to fuel and nourish families. Schools are often the lighthouses in the midst of the storm providing safety, refuge, sustenance, and support. In the midst of this devastation, North Carolina communities have shown amazing resiliency in ongoing response and recovery.

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) public health pandemic put schools at the epicenter of community challenges and response. Protecting our children's health, both physical and social-emotional, while dealing with mass shutdowns, employment crises, supply chain issues, health care system overload, the significant loss of lives across our state, nation, and world has challenged all school academic, nutrition, health, and support professionals. By Executive Order, Governor Cooper closed North Carolina schools on March 2020. Within 48 hours, our schools, despite limited resources, rallied staff and community partners and mobilized to provide meals for pick-up and delivery, transition from in-person to virtual instruction, and provide outreach to families in an effort to ensure that children continued to learn, grow, and thrive.

Additionally, in 2020, our state and nation experienced growing racial tensions, conflicts, violence, and protests. This turmoil further impacted our schools, families, and communities already strained by the dramatic COVID-19 shifts and realities of our daily world. As a result, the Farm to School Coalition of NC (F2SCNC) intensified focus, connecting frequently to collectively work through our own commitment to racial equity. We have committed to thread racial equity through our programming and name it explicitly in our stated values and practices.

The Farm to School Coalition of North Carolina is committed to bringing communities together through farm to school efforts and ensuring all students, farmers, school staff, and families have the opportunity to participate. Farm to school provides vital connections for local agriculture, schools, and partners and numerous benefits for students, educators, farmers, families, and communities. Through farm to school efforts, all kids can have access to nutritious, high-quality, local food so they are ready to learn and grow. Experiential farm to school activities enhance classroom education through hands-on learning related to food, health, agriculture, and nutrition. Buying from local producers and processors creates new jobs and market opportunities, strengthens the local economy, and builds community engagement. Please join and support the Farm to School Coalition of North Carolina in our efforts to expand and enhance farm to school across the state to reach all schools and communities and champion the work of our schools, educators, school nutrition professionals, farmers, students, and families as the heroes they are day in and day out.

WHAT IS FARM TO SCHOOL (F2S)

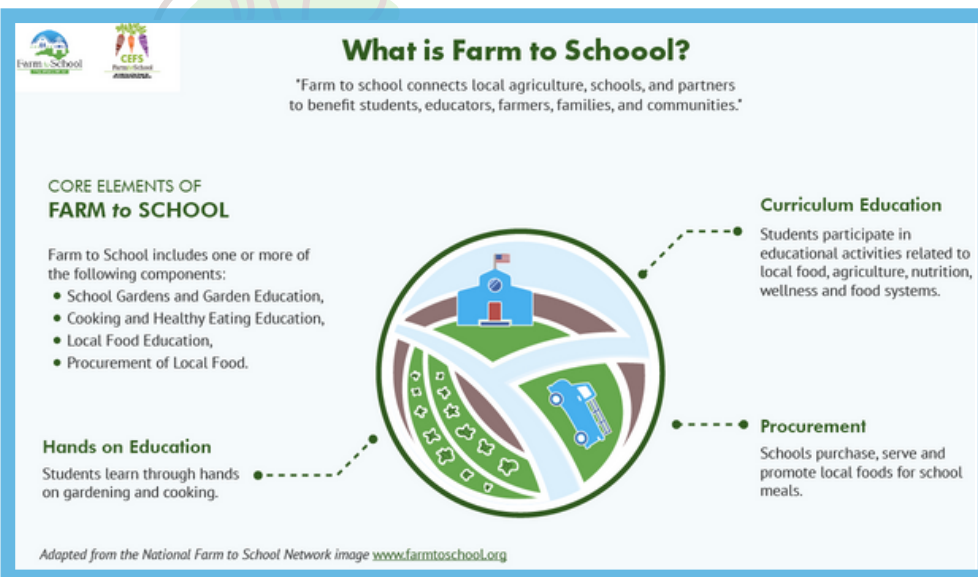
Farm to school (F2S) is the integration of food and agriculture literacy and experience into schools, connecting students, schools, and local agriculture, toward student and community wellness, economic prosperity, and food security. Farm to school implementation varies across settings but is always asset-based, building on strengths and local culture, and always includes one or more of the following components:

Cooking and healthy eating education

Purchasing and/or promotion of local food for School Nutrition Programs

Local food and food systems education

School gardens and garden-based education



Doing the work of farm to school (F2S) also involves sustainability practices to integrate the work into the culture of schools and communities as well as an explicit and integrated racial equity lens to ensure the work serves all children and moves our education and food systems toward justice and food sovereignty.



WHO WE ARE

The Farm to School Coalition of NC is a collective of state agency and not-for-profit representatives that are committed to advancing farm to school across NC.

VISION

The F2SCNC forecasts a farm to school effort in every North Carolina county. We foresee young people who participate in F2S will benefit from evidence-based activities. In addition, by engaging young people, local farmers, school systems, and whole communities in the growing, distributing, and promoting of healthy foods, we envision a vibrant and robust food system whereby everyone affiliated with the school community has knowledge of and access to locally produced, nutritious foods, resulting in healthier citizens, communities, and economies.









MISSION

The Farm to School Coalition of NC seeks to expand and strengthen farm to school initiatives across the state through network development, advancement, and education.



VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The statewide Farm to School Coalition of NC supports the following as part of a high-performing team. Together we will,

-  Address gaps and avoid duplication in farm to school programming.
-  Share farm to school best practices.
-  Coordinate and collaborate on farm to school efforts.
-  Respect multiple approaches.
-  Strive to improve access to the components of farm to school.
-  Network and build relationships.
-  Increase the consumption of locally grown healthy food by our students.
-  Communicate clearly via diverse methods and strategies.

As of 2022, the Farm to School Coalition of NC is updating our mission, vision, values, and guiding principles.

F2SCNC HISTORY

The Farm to School Coalition of NC (F2SCNC) began in 2011, with several planning meetings conducted in 2012. The coalition identified numerous existing areas of successful programming throughout North Carolina and explored where collaborative efforts could increase the reach and impact of farm to school. In November of 2013, the coalition was awarded funding through the USDA Farm to School Grant Program and hosted six stakeholder meetings across the state to assess opportunities. The ideas from these meetings framed the launch of efforts that continue today, expanding and enriching farm to school for all children across NC.



Current 2022

Tracey Bates (founding partner)
NC Department of Public Instruction

Diane Beth (founding partner)
NC Department of Health and Human Services

Kirsten Blackburn
Center for Environmental Farming Systems,
NC Cooperative Extension NCSU

Valerie Green
Orange County Schools

Janet Williams Johnson
NC Department of Public Instruction, SNA-NC

Farzi Katkhordeh
North Carolina Department
of Public Instruction

Morgan King
NC Cooperative Extension NCSU

Ruth McDowell
Edgecombe County Public Schools, SNA-NC

Tessa Thraves (founding partner)
Center for Environmental Farming Systems,
NC Cooperative Extension NCSU

Jennifer Trippe
Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project

Gwen Turner
NC Department of Public Instruction

Past

Arneisha Smallwood
Center for Environmental Farming Systems/NC Cooperative Extension

Anupama Joshi
National Farm to School Network & Blue Sky Foundation

Beth Mack
Chartwells UNC-Charlotte

Brandy Starnes, Gary Gay, Heather Barnes (founding partner)
NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services

Gwen Hill, Jessica Sparks-Mussulin, Brittany Wager, Emily Jackson (founding partner)
ASAP (Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project)

Katie Rainwater, Phil Daye, Caroline Hundley
FoodCorps North Carolina

Chuck Bridger
The North Carolina Public Health Foundation

Crystal Smith, Liz Driscoll (founding partner)
NC Cooperative Extension

Edna Chirico
Green Teacher Network Charlotte

Nick Wood, Jared Cates, Rochelle Sparko
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association

Laurie Stradley (founding partner)
NC Center for Health & Wellness at UNC Asheville

Michelle Futrell
NC Department of Health & Human Services

Robert Van Dyke, Reno Polombit, Zoe McKay-Tucker
NC Department of Public Instruction

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation of North Carolina (BCBSFNC) awarded the Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS) funding from 2018-2021 to continue and expand its farm to school work with partners and collaborations toward the goals of building capacity in both local farm to school practitioners AND the state level Farm to School Coalition of North Carolina.

This current grant work has been crafted around a theory of change (ToC) model that is based in systems change, identifying that multiple vectors of work are required to create lasting and impactful change, and no one entry point is adequate without the others. Our entry points of change include:

STRENGTHENING THE HUMAN INFRASTRUCTURE OF RELATIONSHIPS AND NETWORKS DEDICATED TO FARM TO SCHOOL IN NORTH CAROLINA

SHARING HOW-TOS AND TOOLS, EXPANDING THE KNOWLEDGE AND CULTURE OF F2S

HIGHLIGHTING ALTERNATIVE MODELS, NOT JUST THE SUCCESSES OF THOSE, BUT ALL THE LEARNED LESSONS FROM TRYING SOMETHING NEW

INCREASING ADVOCACY, FUNDING, AND VISIBILITY FOR DEDICATED FARM TO SCHOOL EFFORTS



Theory of Change

Networking and Relationships

Policy and Advocacy

Farm to School

Alternative Models

Culture Change and Learning

The Theory of Change: Change requires work from many different angles. Similarly, farm to school best begins where we have strengths and assets to build out, moving towards an integrated practice.

Farm to school is most impactful where work in all the components is strong. Research confirms integrated farm to school practices can have numerous, positive life-long impacts for children and communities.

PROCESS TIMELINE



AWARD HISTORY

What we love about farm to school is that we start with our particular strengths. Some Local Education Agencies (LEAs) focus on garden and nutrition education in the classroom, while others develop relationships with local farmers to provide fresh produce in School Nutrition Programs. Adapted from Georgia's Golden Radish and with the help of Georgia Organics, the 2019 Farm to School Awards Program was launched to highlight how LEAs in North Carolina engage in farm to school and share out successes and learned lessons.













Awards Development Advisory Team pictured: Zoe McKay Tucker (NCDPI), Anupama Joshi (National Farm to School Network), Phil Daye (FoodCorps NC), Rochelle Sparko (CFSA), James Keaton (Durham Public Schools), Ruth McDowell (Edgecombe County Public Schools), Jade Berry-James (NCSU)

Not pictured: Arneisha Smallwood (CEFS), Caroline Stover (CEFS), Tracey Bates (NCDPI), Emily Jackson (ASAP), Tessa Thraves (CEFS), Robert Parker (Brunswick County Schools), Paula Delucca (Wake County Public School System), Heather Barnes (NCDA&CS), Gary Gay (NCDA&CS), Liz Driscoll (NC Extension)

AWARD CRITERIA

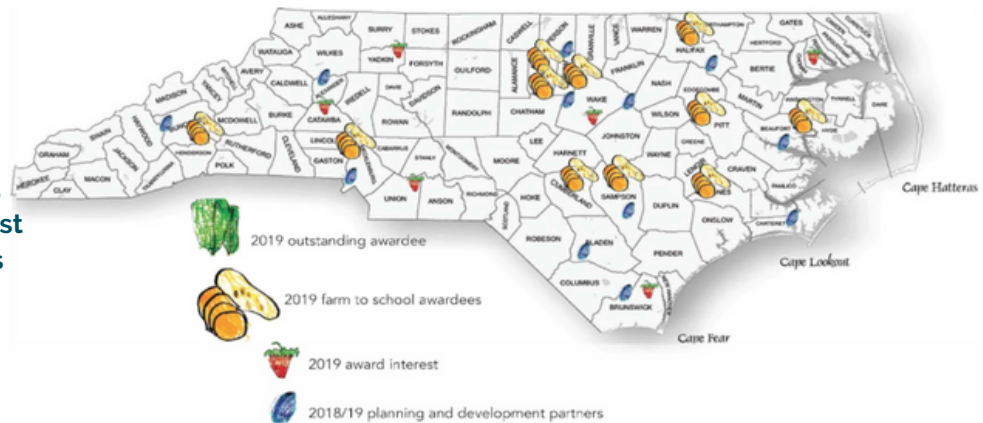
To provide a map of the numerous entry points for farm to school, the awards criteria was broken down into multiple areas of work, both to measure the specific areas of effort and to inspire creative avenues for beginning new or deepening existing areas of impact.

PROCUREMENT			SUSTAINABLE ENGAGEMENT	
 Local Food Purchasing: School Nutrition purchases local food for school nutrition programs <i>*purchase from farms who identify as historically underutilized businesses; buy and promote culturally relevant foods</i>	 Local Food Recipes & Taste Tests: Local food recipes are used in school nutrition programs and taste tests expose students to local foods. <i>*share POC cultural history and current food traditions</i>	 Farmer & Food partners: Students are connected to farmers and experience school visits from farmers or farm field trips <i>*partner with farms who identify as historically underutilized businesses, exploring knowledge & history of POC agriculture</i>	 Healthy, Local Food Environment: Schools engage in programs and promotions for healthy school and community environments <i>*display images of current POC and women farmers and the rich cultural history of POC farmers</i>	 Training: Farm to school trainings offered, attended, and supported (such as Culinary Institute) <i>*attend, support, offer trainings in Racial Equity to teachers and F2s partners focusing on bringing a racial equity lens to F2s work</i>
EDUCATION				
 Classroom Curriculum: Lessons offer Food Systems; Agriculture; Local Food Nutrition, Health, & Wellbeing <i>*teach the knowledge & history of POC food and ag</i>	 Hands-on Cooking: Students are connected to hands-on cooking of local foods through safe food preparation (such as Jr. Chef competition) <i>*explore POC cultural history and current food traditions and cooking practices</i>	 Hands-on Gardening: Edible gardens located on school grounds or nearby are used by classes <i>*explore different plants related to cultural growing, foodways, or practices</i>	 Community Engagement: Schools and/or LEAs engage community partners in farm to school activities (such as work with Local Food Councils) <i>*prioritize POC leadership and collective work in working with community members</i>	 Policy: Farm to school is named explicitly in school and LEA-level written policies/practices <i>*address racial equity at the school board level and develop school-centered resiliency strategies for emergency times</i>
Racial Equity: Visibility of equity principles related to farm to school, across criteria: racial equity addressed in policies, educational practices, and the whole school environment; *RE example possibilities in each category, such as attend, support, and offer trainings in Racial Equity for Nutrition and School staff or address Racial Equity issues at the school board level. Please share how YOU address Racial Equity across farm to school efforts! <i>**POC stands for people of color</i>				

Farm to School 2019 Summit and Inaugural Farm to School Awards

AWARD HIGHLIGHTS

Many communities in North Carolina engage in farm to school. We are excited to share a few examples. Below shows just a few ways North Carolina public schools engage and advance farm to school across the state.



Networking and Relationships

- Halifax County took the entire School Nutrition Staff to a day of professional development at a local food hub and processing plant and met local farmers.
- Cumberland County Schools held farm to table community dinners.
- Durham Public Schools partnered with the Durham County Health Department Durham's Innovative Nutrition Education (DINE) Program.

Policy and Advocacy

- Asheville City Schools, Lenoir County Schools, and Halifax County Schools created policies about wellness and farm to school initiatives for Pre-k.
- The Lenoir County Schools, School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) developed policy related to farm to school.
- Orange County Public Schools established a relationship with the Orange County Food Council Food Access workgroup with the goal to increase local foods.

Alternative Models

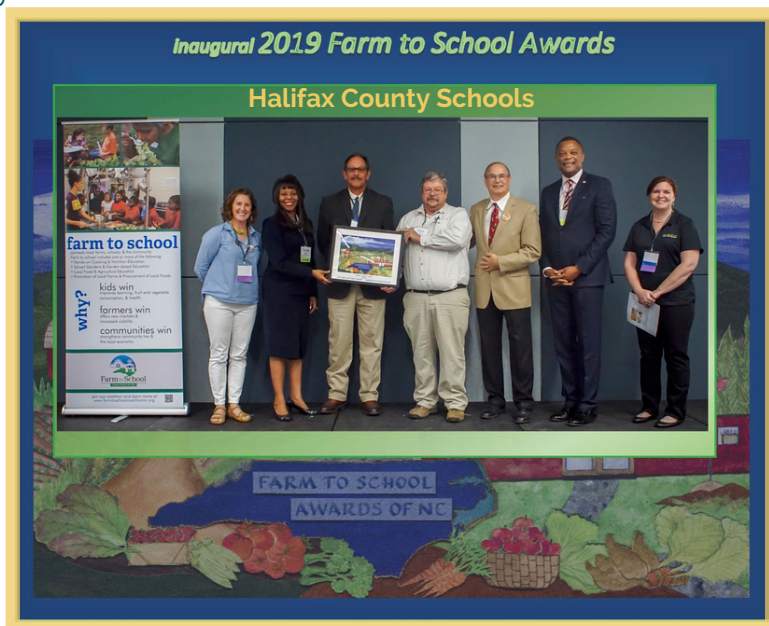
- Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools and Durham Public Schools initiated a composting program.
- Halifax County Schools and Durham Public Schools established school-owned farms.
- Beaufort County Schools helped Southside Farms attain GAP certification and utilized a USDA Farm to School Grant to repurpose the school central kitchen into a cook-chill processing facility.

Culture Change and Learning

- Asheville City Schools integrated all subjects of the Common Core curriculum into cooking and gardening classes.
- Sampson County Schools partnered with Cooperative Extension EFNEP to teach 200 3rd graders and participate in the NC Jr. Chef Competition with high school students.

2019 Awardees

Asheville City Schools
 Beaufort County Schools
 Chapel Hill/Carrboro City Schools
 Cumberland County Schools
 Durham Public Schools
 Edgecombe County Public Schools
 Halifax County Schools
 Kannapolis City Schools
 Lenoir County Public Schools
 Orange County Schools
 Sampson County Schools



Where did your farm to school work start? What partnerships and processes support the integration and impact of your different areas of work?

2019 F2SCNC SUMMIT

Multiple statewide surveys in 2017 and 2018 named the need for a state convening as the top desired action for the Farm to School Coalition of North Carolina. Out of this, we developed a two-day summit, offering concurrent sessions, hands-on activities, exhibits, an awards ceremony, and local foods lunch as well as pre-summit field trips with half and full day intensive workshops.

Summit Goals:



Provide educational and networking opportunities



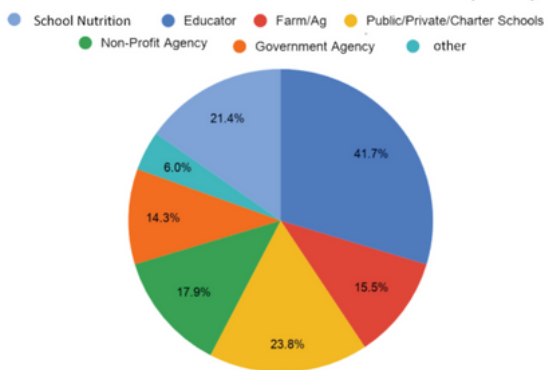
Address all components of farm to school



Celebrate stakeholders with the inaugural Farm to School Awards

2019 F2S SUMMIT ATTENDEES

2019 F2S Summit Attendees Affiliation (n=84)



COMMITMENT TO YOUTH LEADERSHIP



Two Junior Chef finalist teams, from Apex High and Hobbton High, presented in a session and were recognized by the NC School State Superintendent at the Awards Ceremony.



A CEFS Food Youth Initiative youth leader, Jose Godinez, co-led a session.



The school choir from Dillard Academy sang at the Awards Ceremony.



Two CEFS summer interns for farm to school, Amira Ishak and Tiera George, helped make the summit possible!

CENTERING RACIAL EQUITY

- 3** Pre-summit field trips at black-owned farms/centers
- 1** All-day intensive workshop on racial equity in farm to school
- 1** Summit session on racial equity in farm to school (the largest attended session)

2019 F2S SUMMIT ATTENDEES



of Thursday's workshops and field trips were led or co-led by BIPOC session presenters or owners of farms and childcare centers



of Friday's sessions were led or co-led by Black, Indigenous, People Of Color presenters (BIPOC)



of all presenters were people of color

Clearly gatherings are joyful and rich learning spaces: How will we continue to stay connected and build relationships in safe, affordable, and meaningful ways? How can we celebrate F2SCNC Awardees and F2S heroes best?



LOCAL FOOD PROCUREMENT WORKSHOPS

For School Nutrition:

In March of 2019, the F2SCNC organized and hosted six Local Food Procurement trainings presented by the NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) for more than 100 School Nutrition administrators and non-profit partners.

For Farmers:

In the summer of 2021, a multi-organizational team of 12 individuals from NC participated in a four-day train the trainer workshop to support North Carolina farmers and food hubs interested in selling product to schools.

GARDEN WORKSHOPS

In 2019, the F2SCNC held three trainings, reaching 110 educators. The trainings were in Johnston County, Guilford County, and Wake County.



"I LOVED this workshop and was so glad to be a part of it. I usually have PD, but this was different. It was something I was truly interested in and I am so excited to spread the word about school gardens."



"My principal and CDC were not initially on board because they thought this was only geared towards elementary students. People need to understand this will work at ANY grade level."



"I've been purchasing through the Farm to School program for years and almost didn't go, but I learned so much today and can't recommend it enough. Everyone should attend this!"

RACIAL EQUITY WORKSHOPS

2019:

- 2 workshops
- 36 participants
- 20 counties represented

"Very powerful. Every little bit of the training was helpful, every exercise has some applicability. I already have a training debrief scheduled with two other teachers at my school."

2020:

- 5 90-minute, weekly, online workshop series
- 145 unique participants, 55 average weekly
- 33 counties and 5 states represented

"I cannot adequately express my gratitude. I wish everyone had access to such an experience. I will recommend this to other organizations and initiatives. So needed, especially now. Thank you, thank you, thank you."

2021:

- 5 2-hour, monthly, online workshop series
- 5 follow-up implementation discussion sessions
- 89 unique participants, 45 average monthly
- 50 counties, 6 states, and 3 countries represented

How have you built a community of practice to support incorporating learnings into your daily implementation of farm to school?

PUBLIC AWARENESS, ENGAGEMENT & ADVOCACY

NC FARMS FOR NC KIDS POLICY COALITION

The benefits of hands-on cooking, gardening and nutrition, food systems, and environmental education and literacy are numerous and well-documented. We seek to share broadly the benefits of farm to school – for kids, farmers, and communities – with all our engaged partners as well as local, state, and national leaders who make decisions that can support all aspects of our work, from the ability of North Carolina farmers to sell locally-grown food to School Nutrition Programs to the number of kids who can plant seeds and chop vegetables with their own hands.

In 2018, multiple advocacy organizations, including the F2SCNC, partnered to pursue opportunities to support schools and North Carolina farmers through farm to school. The leadership team met monthly from 2019 through March 2020, as well as hosted much larger quarterly gatherings for a broader stakeholder group. The broad coalition gatherings brought together an average of 35 attendees from over 25 organizations. Led by NCPTA, Carolina Farm Stewardship Association (CFSA), Food Insight Group, CEFS, and the NC Alliance for Health, these gatherings created a collective space to educate and listen to stakeholder needs related to local procurement and farm to school programming and promotion, as well as build relationships across organizations and agencies committed to this work. Under the title "NC Farms for NC Kids" (F4K) Coalition, the partners outlined, proposed, and advocated for farm to school legislation.

The F4K leadership team presented at all seven regional listening sessions NCDA&CS held for School Nutrition administrators in spring 2019. Pressing issues identified by School Nutrition professionals:

- Funding from the State budget
- Seat time for meals
- Staff pay

2019 Listening Sessions

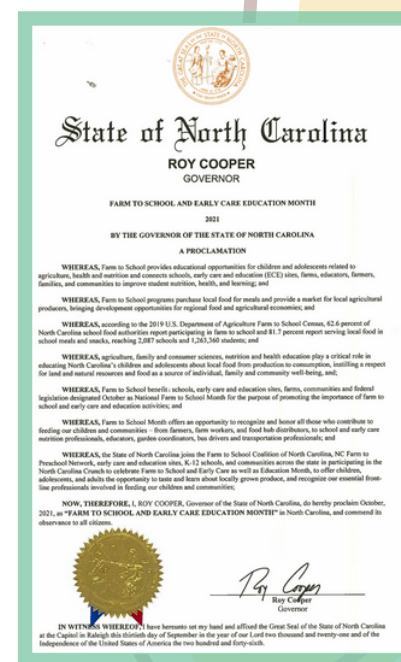
Blue counties signify 2019 Local Procurement trainings



PROCLAMATIONS FOR FARM TO SCHOOL MONTH AND FARM TO SUMMER WEEK

Governor Roy Cooper proclaimed July 8-12, 2019 as Farm to Summer Week in North Carolina and declared October as Farm to School and Early Care Education Month in North Carolina in 2019 and 2021.

How have you engaged local leaders to learn about and support farm to school?



NC CRUNCH

The NC Crunch, co-hosted by the F2SCNC and the NC Farm to Preschool Network and organized by the Growing Minds program at Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP), celebrates agriculture, nutrition, and farm to school activities for Farm to School and Early Care and Education Month in October.

Annual NC Crunch events offer youth and adults an opportunity to taste and learn about locally-grown North Carolina produce as well as honor all those who contribute to feeding our kids and communities – from farmers, farmworkers, and food hub distributors, to school and early care nutrition professionals, educators, garden coordinators, bus drivers, and transportation professionals.



2019 NC Crunch

- **48** counties and the Cherokee Qualla Boundary represented
- **288,823+** kids and adults crunched into North Carolina-grown produce

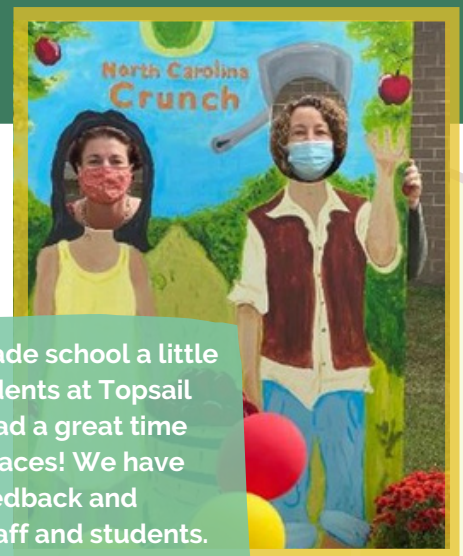
2020 NC Crunch

- **45** counties represented
- **221,164+** kids and adults crunched into North Carolina-grown produce

2021 NC Crunch

- **43** counties represented
- **126,657+** kids and adults crunched into North Carolina-grown produce

"Our CTE department made school a little more normal for the students at Topsail High School. Everyone had a great time and had smiles on their faces! We have had so much positive feedback and appreciation from our staff and students. Thank you for giving us an outlet to promote NC agriculture and also help our students find some fun in school again."



NETWORKS AND MEDIA

The F2SCNC has a website, social media, and e-letter where you can find resources, events, grants, etc. related to farm to school. In our e-letter, we consistently incorporate racial equity resources, which regularly includes webinars, articles, and videos about racial equity in the food system.



This Week in Farm to School
February 17, 2022

Farm to school connects local agriculture, schools, and partners to benefit students, educators, farmers, families, and communities.

WEBINARS & EVENTS



How have you celebrated the NC Crunch in the past and what are your ideas for the future?

NC JR. CHEF COMPETITION OVERVIEW

For the North Carolina Jr. Chef Competition, teams of 2-4 high school students (grades 9-12) create a recipe for a school lunch entrée that -

- adheres to National School Lunch Program guidelines,
- includes at least two North Carolina-grown ingredients and one USDA Foods item, and
- meets student taste preferences.

Teams are evaluated and recognized for their ability -

- to work as members of a team, and
- to demonstrate skills in recipe development, food preparation and safety, marketing, public presentation, organization, and local food systems knowledge.

Student members of the first, second, and third-place teams at the state and regional level are offered scholarships to attend Sullivan University in Kentucky.



FINALIST TEAMS

Apex High,   
Wake County Public School System

Ashe County High.,  
Ashe County Schools

Asheville High, 
Asheville City Schools

Clyde A. Erwin High,  
Buncombe County Schools

East Chapel Hill High,   
Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools

Hayesville High,  
Clay County Schools (2 teams)

Hobbs High, 
Sampson County Schools

Parkwood High,  
Union County Public Schools

Southern Lee High, 
Lee County Schools

Swain County High,  
Swain County Schools

 **2019 finalist team**

 **2020 finalist team**

 **2021 finalist team**

NC JR. CHEF IMPACTS

NC Jr. Chef teams competed and placed in the Southeast Jr. Chef Competition in both 2019 (1st place) and 2021 (2nd place), winning full tuition to attend Sullivan University. The North Carolina Jr. Chef Competition affords students an opportunity to apply lessons learned in the classroom to a real-world application in creating recipes for school meals. The 6-serving recipes will be converted into quantity recipes for School Nutrition Programs.

The teams have been able to build and enhance leadership skills through not only the competition but also through presentations at Thrive NC, the School Nutrition Association of North Carolina Annual Conference, NC Career and Technical Education Conference, and the Farm to School of North Carolina Summit.

How can farm to school increase awareness and access to career paths in food systems?

STUDENT WELLNESS CIRCLES OVERVIEW

During the Summer of 2021, 24 students from across North Carolina who were interested in and working already in farm to school, racial justice, environmental justice, food policy, gardens, and cooking gathered together to form student wellness circles in their communities. The goal of these groups was to contribute to wellness policies in their schools. The group met six times throughout the summer and participated in a larger "visioning meeting."

During the visioning meeting in June 2021, students engaged with professionals working in student wellness to craft a Student-led Wellness Committee pilot for 2020/2021.. Student-led Wellness Committees would leverage farm to school relationships and student leadership to enhance school environments..

"I am very interested in social justice and educating myself and others about the world around me. I love leading others and being in front of other people presenting because of the thrill it gives me and how I am able to influence other people through my words. I like learning about cultures and history because of how much there is to learn and put into perspective."

"I am interested in these topics because I go to a school where students come from many different backgrounds and family situations. I would love to be a part of finding new ways to make more opportunities and better experiences for everyone despite external circumstances."

In the fall of 2021, six students volunteered to pivot and reimagine the student wellness committee project given pandemic challenges to starting local school projects.

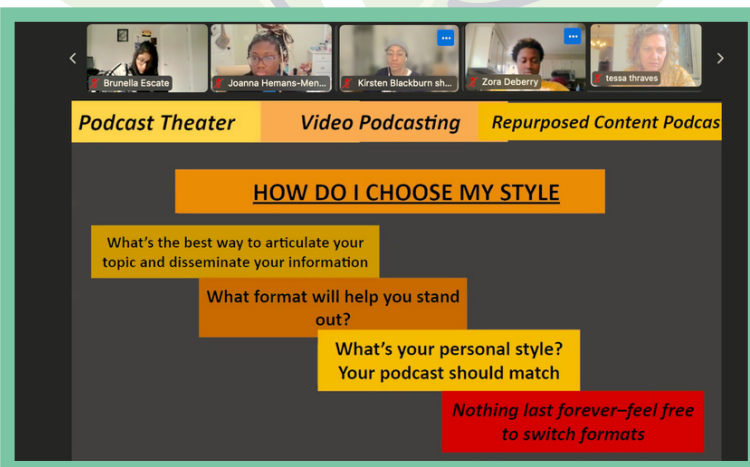
WORK TEAMS

Next steps for the project evolved into a podcast designed to increase student engagement and excitement. The student leadership team defined five starting topics:

- School food policy,
- School food inclusivity,
- Food justice,
- Climate justice, and
- School culture,

i am Zora

*I am from pound cake with strawberries, banana pudding, and grits
I am from Aunties, Uncles and play cousins
I am from my auntie who sells jewelry, my grandmother who is no longer with us,
and my sister who is an aspiring nurse
I am from watching television--the sound of the laughter of my family, cooking--the smell of hot oil, and dancing-- the sound of music I can feel deep in my heart
I am from she/he/they, African Americans that descended from slaves, and so many jokes to tell
I am from protests, demands of the organizers, and murals on old buildings
I am from the sound of rain against my window, the laughter of my friends and family, and the smell of freshly baked cookies
I am equity, kindness, and justice
I am Zora, exactly like the author, Zoraaaaaa to my closest friends, and Zora Shae to my aunties and grandmother*



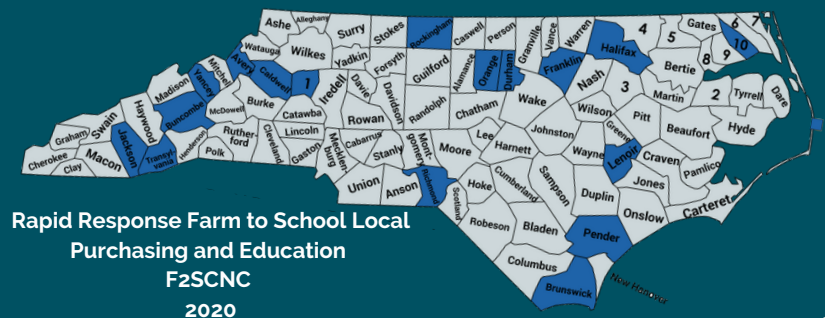
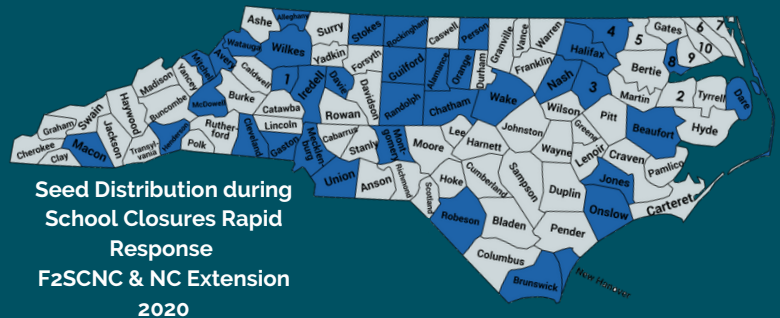
How can farm to school increase youth involvement in our communities?

COVID RELIEF OVERVIEW

In response to COVID, we sought to respond collaboratively to multiple and changing community-identified needs:

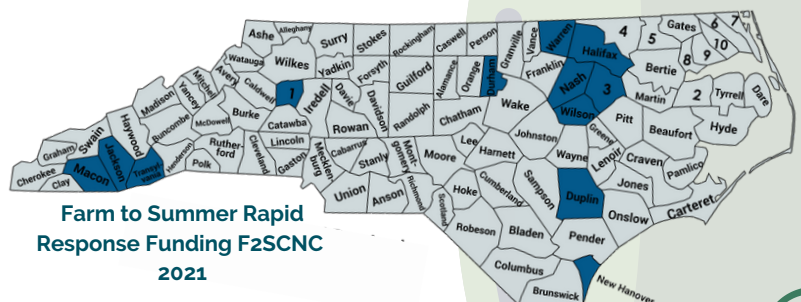
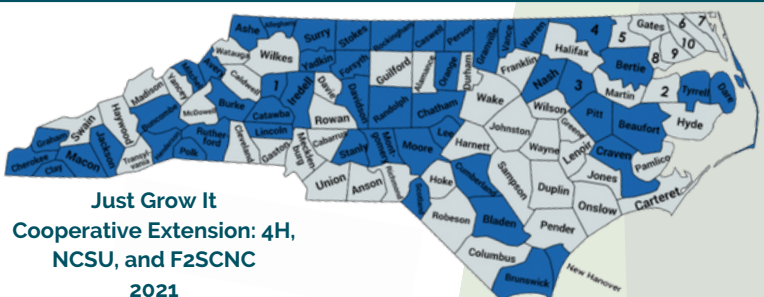
2020 Goals

- Support at-home education for students during school closures in partnership with local Extension offices and School Nutrition Programs. Provide seed educational kits for remote-learning students.
- Share resources and information on free, safe meals available for children from schools and community organizations.
- Highlight School Nutrition Teams keeping students fed during school closures, even while negotiating staffing and supply chain challenges.
- Provide rapid response funding to School Nutrition Programs to facilitate farm to school efforts - purchasing, preparing, and serving local foods in school meals, offering farm to school educational enrichment, and supporting school gardens for students.



2021 Goals

- Build on the success of the 2020 seed distribution programming by connecting to more teachers in more counties with more extensive programming, tools, and resources.
- Build on progress to address local supply chain challenges by supporting School Nutrition in local purchasing and partnerships, placing emphasis on farm to summer when the broadest selection of produce is available and outdoor learning connections are most accessible.
- Provide rapid response funding to Summer Nutrition Program Sponsors to facilitate farm to summer efforts, purchasing, preparing, and serving local foods in summer meals, providing farm to summer educational enrichment, and supporting outdoor education and gardening.



Where have your experiences through COVID strengthened your partnerships and creative thinking?

LEARNED LESSONS DURING COVID

During weather-related crises as well as during COVID, we have seen supply chains break and people stretched beyond reasonable capacity. What we have also seen, however, is that local and regional relationships, like the multi-sector partnerships that farm to school fosters, provide links to vital resources. Schools deeply tied to local farmers, not-for-profits, local businesses, and their county agencies have more easily and more quickly accessed the human and material resources vital to the care, recovery, and resilience of whole communities.

POTENTIAL NEW AREAS OF WORK

Student Wellness Pilot Project

Students are eager to attend Pass the Mic Youth's Podcast Reporting Institute, a project out of NC-4H co-led by NCSU students, in the Winter of 2022 to expand their knowledge about podcasting and launch a North Carolina high school student-run podcast connecting the dots between farm to school and wellness.

Procurement Pilot

Local food purchasing by schools is popular in our agricultural state. While we have numerous procurement pathways for local food, few are viable for small and BIPOC farmers. A small group of foodhub owners, farmers, and School Nutrition administrators are exploring how a pilot project might create opportunities.

Universal School Meals

The North Carolina Alliance for Health, School Nutrition Association of NC, and Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation of NC are committed to advocating for universal meals in North Carolina, providing free meals to all students and also supporting School Nutrition Programs.

CONTINUATION OF EXISTING IMPACTFUL PROGRAMS

NC Jr. Chef

Jr. Chef engages students in creative and collaborative work in food and opens up possibilities for culinary studies. Expanding culinary programs can continue to nurture the exploration of food career paths.

NC Crunch

NC Crunch celebrates local produce and community connections in highly visible ways, engaging students, farmers, families, educators, and organizations. Schools across NC have come to look forward to this annual event.



RE-ENVISION THE F2S AWARDS PROGRAM

The Farm to School Awards program was embraced by Local Education Authorities for highlighting the amazing work in farm to school happening across the state. However, the labor involved in compiling the needed data was burdensome and often out of scope for School Nutrition Administrators. Cooperative Extension provides touch points in gardening education, nutrition education, and farmer connections and is potentially the partner to provide cross programming connections for collecting both data and stories celebrating farm to school.

RE-INSTITUTE THE F2S SUMMIT

100 percent of responding attendees at the 2019 Farm to School Summit desired an annual farm to school summit. COVID has interrupted planning for a face to face gathering but during these years we have learned many ways to provide rich virtual connections. Whether virtual or in-person, NC farm to school practitioners clearly benefit from and wish to connect with each other for shared learning..

FARM TO SCHOOL COALITION OF NORTH CAROLINA

HOW TO JOIN

Stay in touch and let us know how you engage in farm to school by following us on Facebook and Instagram. If you'd like to join one of our working groups or connect further with other North Carolina Farm to School friends, join our listserv by contacting us at info@farmtoschoolcoalitionnc.com.

GRATITUDE

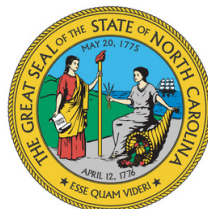
Multiple people have held this coalition together directly over time, and others have supported its work through policy and funding.

Our sincere thanks to Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation of North Carolina for their financial and thought-partner support over the last decade of work in farm to school.

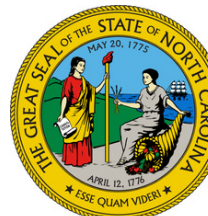


EDGECOMBE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Futures Reimagined



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**
Division of Child and Family Well-Being



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**
Division of Public Health

