The Farm to School Leadership Team Agreement

In April 2011, 11 people from organizations engaged in Farm to School efforts were invited to attend a meeting to discuss the benefits of a statewide team. They agreed to work together. This document comprises a team agreement as a basis for shared leadership, responsibility, and accountability.

Charter Members

Melissa Anderson, Minnesota School Nutrition Association
JoAnne Berkenkamp, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Tikki Brown, Minnesota Department of Human Services
Adam Czech, USDA Rural Development
Kathy Draeger, Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships
Paul Hugunin, Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Deb Lukkonen, Minnesota Department of Education
Helene Murray, Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture
Alison Rotel, Blue Cross Blue Shield
Lisa Gemlo, Minnesota Department of Health
Stephanie Heim, University of Minnesota Extension

PURPOSE

Fostering a spirit of collaboration to support Farm to School efforts in Minnesota

Through this collaboration we will:

• Build a strong foundation for innovative approaches to increase the use of locally grown products in our schools thus contributing to healthier children and a stronger Minnesota economy.
• Facilitate a rich pooling of ideas and resources that can result in more effective communication and ultimately positive results that could not be done by any one partner, all while reducing the burden of leadership on any single entity.
• Build upon unprecedented success of past collaborations that we anticipate will lead to successes not seen in any other state.
• Optimize the current fiscal realities of our economy and the ever evolving resource allocation priorities offering new opportunities that are best executed through strong partnerships.
• Support innovation at the local level and embrace respectful, transparent communication with Minnesota communities.

We believe Minnesota has a vibrant future ahead for Farm to School and we acknowledge that partner priorities may change and new partners and leaders will emerge as the work evolves. We recognize that by partnering, we provide a state level platform of collaboration to achieve shared goals.

MISSION

The Farm to School Leadership Team works through partnerships across Minnesota to build Farm to School initiatives that help kids eat healthy, support nearby farmers, foster economic vitality, and strengthen communities.
PRINCIPLES

• The statewide Farm to School Leadership Team supports the following as part of a high performing team. Together we will:
  • Build relationships,
  • Coordinate and collaborate on efforts,
  • Respect multiple approaches,
  • Contribute to strong internal communication,
  • Avoid duplication

JOINT ACTIONS

• These approaches to joint action are highly supported by team members:
  • Highlighting what’s going on now
  • Identifying strategic needs and gaps
  • Encouraging action and communication
  • Collaborating and/or coordinating efforts when appropriate
  • Communicating jointly when appropriate

This document will be reviewed on an annual basis.
Original Letter of Invitation and Purpose

February 2011
Dear ________,

We invite you, or a representative from your organization, to join a statewide Farm to School Leadership Team. This team is being formed as part of a larger Minnesota Farm to School network in order to maximize resources, improve communication and collaboration, and ultimately maximize the impact of Farm to School in our state. We intend to build upon the strong foundation that has already been laid. Examples of this strong foundation follow.

The first example is a current collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS), University of Minnesota (U of M) Extension, Minnesota School Nutrition Association (MSNA) and other partners to improve school meals through training and increased access to affordable and local foods as well as through policy and systemic changes that impact school meals served to students. This collaborative project, called Great Trays, is funded by two grants from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

A second example is the collaboration of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) and MSNA in connection with MDH through funding for the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP). This funding allowed local public health agencies along with technical assistance from IATP to begin Farm to School initiatives in several communities across Minnesota. Another example is a Specialty Crop Block Grant, garnered by the U of M Extension with counsel from a steering committee, which allowed for intensive Farm to School programs to start-up in three diverse communities in the state. One more example involved the U of M Extension, U of M Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships, Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA), Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota (SFA), IATP and others to conduct five regional Farm to Cafeteria workshops throughout the state resulting in innumerable start-ups of Farm to School.

While we are thrilled that Farm to School programs have spawned throughout the state, we acknowledge that there are bigger challenges that lie ahead to sustain the work. The issues that arise from aggregation, simple processing and distribution of local foods for institutions will take a more diverse and somewhat unchartered problem-solving approach to address. Additionally, current fiscal realities of our economy and the ever evolving resource allocation priorities offer new opportunities that can only be optimized through strong collaborations and partnerships. For these reasons and many more we would like to invite you to an initial meeting on April 14 from 9:30-11:00. The purpose and intentions for the leadership team have been drafted for your review and are attached. We hope you will join us. Please contact us if you have any questions and to let us know if you are able to attend this initial meeting.

Stephanie Heim
Farm To School Coordinator
University of Minnesota Extension

Lisa Gemlo
Farm To School Planner
Minnesota Department of Health
PURPOSE

The statewide Farm to School Leadership Team, as part of a larger Farm to School Network, has been formed to foster a spirit of cross-agency collaboration and provide an environment conducive to and supportive of Farm to School efforts in Minnesota.

Through this collaboration we will:

• Build a strong foundation for innovative approaches to increase the use of locally grown products in our schools thus contributing to healthier children and a stronger Minnesota economy.

• Facilitate a rich pooling of ideas and resources that can result in more effective communication and ultimately positive results that could not be done by any one partner, all while reducing the burden of leadership on any single entity.

• Build upon unprecedented success of past collaborations that we anticipate will lead to successes not seen in any other state.

• Optimize the current fiscal realities of our economy and the ever evolving resource allocation priorities offering new opportunities that are best executed through strong partnerships.

We believe Minnesota has a vibrant future ahead for Farm to School and we acknowledge that partner priorities may change and new partners and leaders will emerge as the work evolves. We recognize that by partnering, we provide a state level platform of collaboration to achieve shared goals.
Membership Application and Process

Membership Application

Organization: ___________________________ Name: ___________________________

Email: ___________________________ Telephone: ___________________________

Address: ___________________________ Website: ___________________________

Please answer YES or NO to the following questions.

1. The Farm to School Leadership Team meets six times per year in the metro area for 2 hours. Additionally, team members plan 1-2 meetings each year with the coordinator. Planning calls average 45-60 minutes. Will you be able to make this time commitment? ____ Yes _____ No

2. Farm to School Leadership Team members are selected based on their statewide or regional reach in Minnesota. Does your organization work statewide and/or regionally? ___ Yes _____ No  Please explain: ____________________________________________

3. Would your organization’s representative to the team be able to influence systems within their organization? ___ Yes _____ No  Please explain: ____________________________________________

Please answer the following questions.

4. Why is your organization interested in joining the Farm to School Leadership Team?

5. How does your organization align with the team’s purpose, mission, principles and approaches to joint action? (See team agreement below)

6. Describe how your organization will bring in new constituents and different perspectives than those already represented on the team. (See team agreement below)

7. The Farm to School Leadership Team is interested in working with organizations that will carry the broader Farm to School message to positively influence their networks. Tell us how your organization would coordinate with other organizations to advocate and spread a broader message.

Process

1. Organization/partner nomination brought forward by current team member.

2. Organization/partner completes membership form and sends to coordinator.

3. Coordinator and planning team build membership discussion into next meeting agenda.

4. Team to discuss and evaluate organization/partner using criteria within membership form. (*If team member is not able to join the regularly scheduled meeting, this team member will send their comments to coordinator a minimum of one day before the scheduled meeting.)

5. After the meeting, each organization has one week to vote yes and or no. Votes will be sent to coordinator.

• If an organization/partner receives majority votes (2/3 or 66%), then coordinator will extend an invite for this organization/partner to join the team. If an organization fails to respond within one week or chooses not to vote, this will count as a ‘no’ vote. If an organization/partner does not receive a majority vote, the coordinator will summarize the team’s discussion and comments and communicate back to the organization/partner within two weeks of the meet.
URL’S FOR HYPERLINKED RESOURCES

USDA Farm to School Census (p 5):
https://farmtoschoolcensus.fns.usda.gov/find-your-school-district/minnesota

Farm to School: An Overview of Policy and Training Opportunities in Minnesota (p 5, 8, 33):

Integrative Leadership Framework (p 5):

Interaction Institute for Social Change (p 9):
http://interactioninstitute.org/means-and-ends/

Farm to School: Growing Our Future (p 17, 34):
http://www.extension.umn.edu/food/farm-to-school/about/documentary/

Minnesota Department of Health’s Statewide Health Improvement Program (p 18, 32):
http://www.health.state.mn.us/ship/

Healthy, Local Foods Exhibit - Farm to School: Good for Children, Farmers, and Communities (p 18, 35):
http://misadocuments.info/HLFreportWEB.pdf

USDA Farm to School Grants (p 18, 35): http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/grant-awards

Farm to Institutions: A Producer Perspective (p 18):
http://www.iatp.org/blog/201506/farm-to-institutions-a-producer-perspective

Minnesota Food Charter (p 19, 35): http://mnfoodcharter.com/

Great Trays™ Partnership (p 19, 32):
http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/chp/cdrr/nutrition/greattrays/results.html

Farm to School Youth Leadership Curriculum (p 19, 35):

Farm to Childcare Curriculum Package (p 19, 35):
http://www.iatp.org/documents/farm-to-childcare-curriculum-package

USDA Local Food Procurement training (p 19): http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/procuring-local-foods

School Gardens 101 training series (p 19):
http://www.extension.umn.edu/food/farm-to-school/school-gardens/local-resources/

http://minnesota.agclassroom.org/educator/garden.cfm

Minnesota School Garden & Farm to Cafeteria Safety manual (p 19):
https://www.co.olmsted.mn.us/OCPHS/reports/Pages/MNSchoolGardenandFarmToCafeteriaSafety.aspx

Minnesota Schoolyard Gardens Conference (p 19, 36):
Minnesota Department of Agriculture’s Farm to School Grant Program (p 20, 32):
http://www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/grants/mnfarmitoschool.aspx


Farm to school program (p 32):

Making the Farm / School Connection: Opportunities and Barriers to Greater Use of Locally-Grown Produce in Public Schools (p 32):
http://www.farmtoschool.org/resources-main/m-mm-making-the-farm-school-connection-aking-the-farm-school-connection-aking-the-farm-school-connec

Minnesota School Foodservice Director Survey: Farm-to-School (p 32):

Minnesota Farm to School Toolkit for School Foodservice (p 32): http://www.extension.umn.edu/food/farm-to-school/procurement/foodservice/

Diverse team (p 32):
http://www.extension.umn.edu/food/farm-to-school/procurement/foodservice/acknowledgements/


Farm to School in Minnesota: A Survey of School Food Service Leaders (p 33):

The Economic Impact of Farm-to-School Lunch Programs: A Central Minnesota Example (p 33):

Food Safety fact sheets (p 33):
http://www.extension.umn.edu/food/farm-to-school/procurement/producers/food-safety/

Making the Connections for Minnesota-Grown Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (p 33):
http://www.extension.umn.edu/food/farm-to-school/fresh-fruit-and-vegetable-program/index.html

I Dig My Farmer - Farm to School promotional materials (p 33): http://lunchprogram.iatp.org/

Farm to School in Minnesota: Third Annual Survey of School Food Service Leaders (p 33):

Legal Issues Impacting Farm to School and School Gardens in Minnesota (p 33):

Grower Perspectives on Farm to School in Minnesota (p 33):

Report of the University of Minnesota Humphrey School Farm to School Policy Work (p 33):
Downloadable toolkit of farm to school resources (p 34):
http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/chp/cdrr/nutrition/FTS/stepbystep.html

Food Safety Fact Sheet: Safe Use of Salad Bars in Schools (p 34):

Farm to School in Minnesota: Fourth Annual Survey of School Food Service Leaders (p 34):
http://www.iatp.org/documents/farm-to-school-in-minnesota

Minnesota Grown Wholesale Database (p 34):
http://minnesotagrown.com/members-retailers/wholesale-directory/

A Field Guide to Salad Bars in Schools (p 34):
http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/chp/cdrr/nutrition/docsandpdf/guidetosbinschools.pdf

Farm to School So Fresh, So Easy (p 34):
http://www.extension.umn.edu/food/farm-to-school/procurement/foodservice/online-trainings/

Eat Smart Food Contest (p 35):

Assessing the Potential Northwest Minnesota Farm-to-Institution Market (p 35):
http://www.extension.umn.edu/community/research/reports/docs/Assessing-potential-farm-to-institution-market.pdf

Farm to Child Care Training of Trainers (p 35): http://www.renewingthecountryside.org/farm_to_school

Assessing the Potential Farm-to Institution Market in Central and Northeast Minnesota (p 35):

Building Minnesota’s Farm to Institution Markets A Producer Survey (p 36):
http://www.iatp.org/documents/building-minnesota%E2%80%99s-farm-to-institution-markets

Farm to Childcare video (p 36):
http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/groups/communications/documents/unzip/033990/index.html