



PRESS RELEASE

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About IATP

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy works locally and globally at the intersection of policy and practice to ensure fair and sustainable food, farm and trade systems. IATP is headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota with an office in Washington D.C.

New Farm to School curriculum puts high school students in charge of tapping into healthy, local foods

MINNEAPOLIS – The new Farm to School Youth Leadership Curriculum released today connects high school students with local foods and farmers, while giving them a leadership role in developing their school’s Farm to School program. The first of its type, the curriculum was developed for 11th and 12th grade students by the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) and takes students through the tasks of evaluating school lunch menus, partnering with food service staff, talking to farmers and sourcing local foods—all while fulfilling national and Minnesota curriculum requirements.

“The curriculum was designed not only to teach students about their local food system and connect them with farmers in their community, but also to give them the opportunity to take ownership over their school’s menu,” said IATP’s Senior Program Associate Erin McKee VanSlooten. “We know that despite the rapid growth of Farm to School programs around the country, the legwork of connecting with farmers and sourcing local foods can often be difficult for school staff on top of their day-to-day work. Our curriculum puts that work in students’ hands, while teaching them about their local food scene.”

The Farm to School Youth Leadership Curriculum is comprised of six lessons that can be taught consecutively over a semester or as single lessons or activities to complement other classes. Each lesson contains a lesson summary, facilitator preparation notes, activities, worksheets, recommended optional work and further resources for students and teachers. Lessons include themes such as “School Lunch: How Does it Really Work?” and “Communicating with Producers of Local Foods.”

Natasha Mortensen, agriculture educator and FFA advisor at Morris Area High School, helped write and develop the curriculum from activities she created for her own classroom.

“My students have taken ownership of the Farm to School program in our school, and have developed leadership and team building skills as they completed tasks in learning about our local food system and seasonal availability,” said Mortensen. “This curriculum is both about implementing Farm to School and growing young leaders that understand how to build a program from the ground up.”

Development of the Farm to School Youth Leadership Curriculum was a collaborative process, including consultation with educators, food service professionals and Farm to School experts, supported by the Center for Prevention at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, the John P. and Eleanor R. Yackel Foundation, the Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

“The Center for Prevention has a long history of investment in healthy food environments promotion, in particular the Farm to School programs across Minnesota.” said Janelle Waldock, director at the Center for Prevention at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota. “Programs linking fresh fruits and vegetables to schools can have an enormous impact on student health, learning outcomes and lifelong dietary habits, not to mention positive economic impact for local economies. Empowering students to lead the program themselves, will ensure continued positive outcomes on into the next generation.”

Find the curriculum and associated resources available online at www.iatp.org/f2s-curriculum.

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