



Independent School District No. 51

Foley Public Schools Child Nutrition Services

Cheryl Pick, Child Nutrition Director

February 28, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of Foley Public Schools, we are writing to express our support for the Farm to School & Early Care Bills, H.F.2043 (Pursell) & S.F.2158 (Gustafson) and include it in the final Agricultural Finance Omnibus bill.

Farm to School is often described as being a big WIN for students, farmers, and the economy, and our school district can attest to just how true this is. Since 2010, Foley schools has partnered with local farms to source Minnesota Grown and raise foods for our school meals and the impact of our local purchasing has reached far beyond our lunch trays. Keeping dollars local within our state is very important as well.

Farm to School is good for our kids because it gives them access to and knowledge of healthy local foods. Access to fresh, healthy food, starting it as young as possible, fuels brain development and shapes food preference over a lifetime. We have a summer food program in our district and as part of our program we offer a local farmers market where the child gets a ticket with their meal and after they eat, they can bring their ticket to the market and choose some fresh fruit and/or vegetable. They are also given information on how they can eat this food. This is so appreciative to our families and exposing them at a young age.

Farm to School is good for farmers. Farmers growing foods for their local communities is a rapidly growing important area for Minnesota agriculture that needs public support and investment to expand markets. We have 4 local farms that reach out to our district on what our needs will be in the school district and are willing to plant these needs. Migrant and women farmers are included with farmers we work with. We are so fortunate with the demographic location to make this possible.

I am asking you to support the farm to schools bills, HF 2043 and SF 2158. These bills grow our statewide farm to school program that is needed for the health of our kids and wellbeing of our farmers. These bills will provide critical support to help Minnesota schools and farms expand Farm to School efforts across the state.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Pick
Director of Child Nutrition
Foley Public Schools
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