

Farm to School Connections Meeting

February 21, 2008

In Attendance: Jaime Baird, Eva Ringstrom, Rebecca Sayre, Sylvia Kantor, Kerri Cechovic, James Blair, Joe Carlton, Acacia Larson, Jesse Schofield, Danyelle Okesanjo, Katherine Chesson, Amy Berg

Local Farms-Healthy Kids Update (HB 2798/SB 6483)

The bills have passed both the House and Senate with nearly unanimous support. Legislators love the bill, citing the health benefits, creation of new markets, and bolstering of local economies as reasons for their support. Mo McBroom, lobbyist for the Washington Environmental Council is amazed by the breadth of support received. It is seen as a win/win/win for producers, processors, and kids.

The funds allotted in the House budget are significantly lower than the original request of \$5m, but given that this is not a budget year and that the economy is weak, there is an optimistic/realistic view being taken regarding the efforts to get this program off the ground.

Currently the House budget has allotted 1m for the full program

House Budget:

- 150k to set up a statewide Farm to School program
- 400k to develop a state-wide Fresh Fruits and Vegetables program
- 350k for a Farm to Food Bank pilot program
- 100k to develop E.B.T technology for farmer's markets
- Funding for WIC/Senior farmers market programs is not in this budget

Senate Budget: Advocates are working to increase funding to 2m and retain the WIC/Senior farmer's market funding at the existing level.

Action: Please call the Legislative Hotline this week at 1-800-562-6000 and leave a message calling for full-funding of Local Farms-Healthy Kids. The hotline is open from 8 am to 8 pm.

Sylvia: What are the prospects for funding in '09?

Kerri: It depends on the election and many other factors. But, getting the policy passed and funded this year will lay a good foundation for future expansion.

Eva: Who will administer the Fresh Fruits and Veg. program?

Kerri: It should be out of the Department of Agriculture. There will be two full time staff for Farm to School. *But, please let me double check on this and I will get back to you.*

Sylvia: Fresh Fruits and Veg. should go through the Farm to School program.

Educator's Perspectives

Rebecca: What are the challenges with obtaining local ingredients for your lessons?

Acacia Larson: Harvest of the Season

The Harvest of the Season program used to get some ingredients from Full Circle Farms, but we had a personal contact and I think that the farm has grown so much in recent years that this is currently not available. HoS teaches 1,000 kids/ year and this is not large enough to order from a mid-size farm, such as Full Circle. I have been working to diversify our farm sources. We have worked with 21 Acres for the last two sessions. Vincent from 21 Acres brokered with other farms and was able to provide radishes, lettuce and other early produce. We plan to collaborate with the Children's Garden this upcoming session.

I get my food weekly. A standard quantity is 30 lbs. of salad per week

Jaime: That's about the right size to fit in the back of a car.

James: What training is available to teachers who use HoS cooking kits?

Acacia: There is a 30 minute training. Teacher concerns are that the program can be messy and that there is a fair amount of paper work required. I would like to get more parental feedback than I do. We send out a brochure, but there is no specific feedback section. That is something to consider.

Eva: How many kits are used per week?

Acacia: the cooking kits live at the school for two weeks and are shared by the teachers. I only do two sessions four times a year, as I am part-time.

Joe Carlton: Food \$ense

CHANGE (Cultivating Health and Nutrition through Garden Education) is part of the state-wide Food \$ense curriculum. I teach a series of ten lessons for K-6, however I don't teach any 6th graders. The focus is nutrients, the food pyramid—which is more complex than the traditional FDA food pyramid. <http://www.mypyramid.gov/> and the connection to the natural environment

Eva: Kids don't really get the new food pyramid.

Joe: They pretty much get it.

Joe: We try to incorporate gardening, as much as possible, within the guidelines of our funding. This program is offered in 25 of Washington's 39 counties and a few tribal nations. I teach in King County currently. When I taught in Pierce County last year, there was a cool community garden that was a great resource.

Sylvia: How do you teach gardening w/o a garden?

Joe: We use gardening flats in the classroom (vs. the old-school milk jug, which was problematic, for many reasons.)

Kerri: Do kids take the plants home?

Joe: Well, they often die. But the flats are better at maintaining plants over winter break, etc. than the jugs. We are trying. Peas and carrots have been fairly successful.

Sylvia: I just learned that the King County Sheriff is willing to give away grow lights to legitimate recipients.

Eva Ringstrom: Eat Better, Feel Better

My program is a pilot that is being conducted in 5 schools. I work in two schools: Concord Elementary and Van Asselt Elementary. It is a wellness program that incorporates wellness in to existing curriculum vs. a gardening program. We make the gardening connection when we can, but I do not teach a specific curriculum. For example we just did a meal in conjunction with a colonial history class that included johnny cakes and succotash. I also coordinate after school events, such as international cooking.

The biggest challenge I face with time and resources is developing multi-lingual materials. At Concord, many families speak Spanish at home and at Van Asselt, there are 5 major languages.

Concord is located near Mara farms, which is a community garden associated with Solid ground's Lettuce Link program. Located in South Park, Mara is the only working farm within Seattle. At Mara, they are developing, in conjunction with the IslandWood camp on Bainbridge Island, a curriculum called Plant your Feet in Stewardship. This program teaches 5th graders the links between personal health and being a steward of the community and the environment.

Example: The link between the natural water cycle and the body water cycle.

Challenges for all educators include: access to cooking/prep facilities, i.e. a sink in the classroom, lack of space, kitchen restrictions, individual kitchen rules, (perceived and real) competition with union food service workers when attempting to serve food to students.

Sylvia: How does the city of Berkeley, CA get around the union issue?

Eva: Ann Cooper "the Renegade Lunch Lady," may be a resource.

Lessons

Acacia: Fresh seasonal cooking with cooking kits. Kits contain six sets of all things needed to prep and serve no heat cooking recipes. There is a lesson binder and newsletter in each kit. The binder walks one through the origin and history of the featured food, (This lesson was on carrots) for the teacher to orient the class. This is followed by pictures and a story of the local farm that produced the food, hand washing and cooking with a graphic recipe. All materials are available online. <http://king.wsu.edu/nutrition/HarvestoftheSeason.htm>

Joe: Healthy Soil, Healthy People. This demonstrates the links between the soil and what we put in our bodies. Food \$ense teaches that no food is bad, rather that some are more nutritious than others. Joe walked through the path from how the rocks and minerals in the soil are broken down by living things; resulting in vitamins and minerals in carrots and other food. He explained how this is illustrated in the classroom by having the kids make a poster of all the things they think are in soil. A differentiation is given between soil and dirt.

Food \$ense lessons are one –hour long and often include a chance for kids to construct a sculpture with shredded wheat, carrots and raisins. The surprise for many is that they then get to eat their sculpture and it is healthy!

Kerri: do you have pictures?

Joe: No, we need photo releases for the kids? Maybe we can just take pictures of the sculptures.

<http://nutrition.wsu.edu/foodsense/>

Eva: I often tie my lessons to the science that the kids are currently learning i.e. photosynthesis, etc. Most recently I have based the lessons off of the Plant your Feet in Stewardship curriculum, but my work is a collaboration with the teacher, and the classes are an hour long. As mentioned above, a recent lesson was the link between the natural water cycle and the body water cycle—precipitation→ hydration→ evaporation is similar to drinking water→ being hydrated and better able to grow/function → sweating and losing water in the body... The kids then draw a map of the body water cycle and receive a handout on foods that contain lots of water, such as apples and carrots, beets. Eva has props that she was unable to bring to the meeting that show the urine of a hydrated person, a dehydrated person and the blood of each. Apparently this visual is very effective and gross enough to be very popular with 5th graders!

http://depts.washington.edu/uwecor/projects/eatbetter_feelbetter.htm

Rebecca: What do you do to ensure that the curriculum meets with state learning requirements?

Acacia: The level of learning is different from child to child. Some kids come from a home where they may have never heard of a recipe. It helps to explain that a recipe is the directions for cooking food. Harvest of the Season is based on the EALR'S, but is not affiliated at this time. Once the program is finalized, we may get it certified.

Joe: CHANGE is built on EALR's requirements

James: I am surprised that the EALR's are not required.

Acacia: My program federal, using FDA money, making this possible.

Joe: My program has lots of little footnotes on what we can and cannot do. We cannot garden, buy tools to garden, etc because of funding restrictions. We work closely with teachers to develop plans that meet the program requirements. but still teach the lessons to students.

Sylvia: Do you find that families often say they have no time to cook?

Eva: We try to teach the 5th graders things they can choose/make on their own or encourage an adult to buy for them.

Rebecca: What is needed to expand these types of programs in Washington?

Acacia: Money. Funds are finite and won't last. My program is an entitlement program, so every low-income school is eligible. Funds get channeled by limiting what is done.

Rebecca: What can be done to tailor the lessons to different ages?

Joe: Older kids get more tangible, hands-on examples.

Danyelle: I am here to learn, so I can develop a once a week after school curriculum for Earth Service Corps. This has been very helpful.

James: I highly recommend that people look into French Fries and the Food System
<http://www.kidsgardeningstore.com/21-4041.html>

Acacia: And the Sustainable food Systems curriculum
<http://www.round-river.com/curriculumhome.html>

