Background on Farm to School (F2S):
F2S programs aim to increase the use of locally grown produce and food products in school meals. Typically, these programs are housed in state departments of education and/or agriculture.

More than 3,800 school districts across the nation are leading F2S activities. Thirty-six states have proposed or enacted legislation to establish or encourage statewide F2S programs.

Responsibilities for state F2S programs may include developing clear guidelines and regulations for farmers and schools, creating asset maps and databases of local farmers, awarding funds to support F2S, forming task forces, conducting pilots and trainings, leading promotional campaigns and more.

One study of Farm to School pilot programs found that for every $1 spent on local food returned a total of $1.86 into the local economy.²

Why Louisiana Needs Farm to School:
• Louisiana has an estimated 29,000 farms spanning 8 million acres of land.³
• The National School Lunch Program served 92 million lunches to Louisiana students in 2012.⁴ Given that youth consume a large portion of their calories at school, it is important that school meals are nutritious and provide substantial servings of fruits and vegetables.
• Only 16 out of Louisiana’s 70 school districts reported F2S activities for the 2011-2012 school year.¹
• Almost 40% of Louisiana youth (ages 10-17) are overweight or obese.⁵
• Among Louisiana high school students, 81% ate vegetables less than two times per day and 76% consumed fruit less than two times per day.⁶

Louisiana’s Overall Health Rank, based on America’s Health Rankings: 48th

Other Farm to School & Diet Indicators⁷:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Indicator</th>
<th>Louisiana's Rank</th>
<th>Prevalence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obesity</td>
<td>50th</td>
<td>35% of adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>48th</td>
<td>12% of adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiovascular Deaths</td>
<td>46th</td>
<td>319 deaths per 100,000 pop.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example of a Farm to School State Law:
Florida CS/SB 140 (2010) established the Florida Farm Fresh Schools Program that requires the Department of Education to work with the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to create policies that promote the use of fresh, local foods in school food service programs.

Projected Costs:
• Funds may be necessary to employ a full-time F2S Program Lead within a state department, though an existing employee could be reassigned.
• F2S grants are available at the federal level.

Next Steps for Louisiana:
Louisiana can establish a F2S program under the leadership of state departments of agriculture and/or education to promote healthy school meals and support small and large local farmers.

Photo courtesy of Greening Healthy Baton Rouge
Tulane PRC stock photo
- The Impact -

**Strengths**

- F2S programs increase access to fresh, local produce in schools and consumption of fruits and vegetables.\(^8,9\)
- Through F2S programs, students can receive education about agricultural systems and the origins of their food.
- Schools may save money by purchasing local foods that are in season.\(^10\)
- Farmers receive about 16 cents from traditional food purchases. F2S has the potential to increase profits for local farmers.\(^11\)
- Following the implementation of the healthier USDA school lunch standards, vegetable consumption has increased significantly and more students are selecting fruit during school meals.\(^12\)

**Barriers**

- Louisiana needs to establish specific standards and regulations for F2S and seek long-term funds for program sustainability.
- In order to sell to schools, farmers must obtain expensive agricultural certifications and insurance coverage that are unaffordable to most small farmers.
- Schools may lack adequate equipment to prepare local, unprocessed foods.\(^2\)

---

Additional research briefs on Louisiana Public Health Strategies can be found at prc.tulane.edu/publications

Project Staff:
Mary Kathryn Poole, poolemarykathryn@gmail.com, 985-502-7294
Naomi King Englar, nking2@tulane.edu, 504-988-7410

The Prevention Research Center at Tulane University
1440 Canal St., Ste. 2301 New Orleans, LA 70112
@TulanePRC facebook.com/TulanePRC

The Prevention Research Center at Tulane University is a member of the Prevention Research Centers Program, supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, under cooperative agreement #U48-DP-001948.

---

**References**

7. United Health Foundation. (2013). *America's Health Rankings: A Call to Action for Individuals and Their Communities*.