

Whole Child Advisory Group

MEETING MINUTES FEBRUARY 23, 2024

WELCOME AND HEALTHY EATING TRIVIA:

Jessica Horowitz-Moore welcomed all members and recognized new members and student members attending. Jessica introduced herself, the Chief of Student and Academic Supports for the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce. She noted the topic for the day's agenda which focused on nutrition and healthy eating. Team members from the Office of Nutrition were attending as presenters as well as school district staff to talk about healthy eating.

Members participated in a healthy eating trivia challenge with questions on subjects such as MyPlate, food allergies and fruit requirements.

WHOLE CHILD KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS: FARM TO SCHOOL

Elizabeth Douglass, Assistant Administrator and Hannah Hart, Education Program Consultant in the Office of Nutrition spoke about farm to school and supporting the whole child through classrooms, cafeterias, and the community.

Members were asked the question, What do you think of when you hear farm-to-school?

- Classroom gardens/raised garden beds
- Fresh food for kids at school
- Locally growing items

Farm To School – focuses on 3 main pillars

- Local purchasing – foods purchased locally and served in school as part of a meal
 - No USDA set definition for “local” – up to the state and school to determine how to define local food. Lots of eligibility depending on location.
 - Provides increased access to healthy foods.
 - Helps to support community by purchasing from local farmers.
- Gardening – various types across schools or classrooms, outside gardens or a hydroponic garden.
 - Provides a hands-on activity, children learn where food comes from.
 - Food produced in school can be used in meal programs or for things like a snack for taste test opportunities for students.
- Food, Nutrition, and Agriculture Education
 - Teaches children about healthy food choices, an opportunity to develop other taste preferences.

- Provides educational opportunities to learn about careers involving food.

Members were polled as to if their school(s) were participating in a farm to school program. Five members knew of that in their schools.

Farm to School in Ohio by the numbers – a survey by USDA to gauge the participation level of farm to school. The last survey from 2019 showed that 58.3% of schools indicated participation in farm to school activities. This came out to 1,422 schools and 866,823 students. New data will be available following a 2023 survey.

Why participate? Benefits of farm to school include

- **Kids** become involved as well as parents can become involved. Children have increased consumption of fresh food and the opportunity to be involved with activities related to health, agriculture, and nutrition.
- **Farmers** benefit from schools purchasing their food and the profits can then be used toward additional farm operations.
- **Communities** benefit because farm to school involves students, families, farmers, and other community members. Schools may spend their food dollars locally which can create new jobs and strengthen local economies.

Photos of the 2022 Great Apple Food Crunch were shared.

School Gardens – ways to grow produce.

- Can be outside (greenhouse type) or indoor hydroponic grow gardens for those that lack outdoor space.
- Provides a variety of learning options (can involve math and science, robotics). Need a school champion (teacher or other to be involved for this to work).
- 25.2% of schools have edible gardens.
 - ✓ Over 50% of schools use the product grown in their classroom lessons.
 - ✓ Just under 50% of schools use what they grow in a school meal program.
 - ✓ Close to 12% of schools either sell or donate their harvest to outside entities. There are some regulations as to what can be donated which may determine how the school uses what they grow.

Education and Career Development – a school garden can create a lot of opportunities for innovative teaching. Can incorporate language arts, foreign language, history, media gets involved. There is no academic area that could not be incorporated into school gardening.

Farm to School Careers in Ohio – Ohio ranks 9th in states that have farm to school programs. This is engaging as it allows students that might not have an agricultural background to be involved. Finding new and innovative ways for students to be involved is exciting. One in seven workers in Ohio are employed in the agriculture sector.

Mahoning Community Technical Center- has culinary arts training and works with the school

garden program. The school garden grows things that can be turned into products used in the school cafeteria for students to eat for their school meals.

- A school often can't grow enough of a product for the entire school's consumption but can use portions of it to incorporate in other products used for lunch (coleslaw, cucumbers made into pickles for the salad bar, etc.)
- Small ways to get involved that make a big impact – students realize what they are doing in the garden makes a difference, makes them feel special/sense of pride and gives them a sense of responsibility.

Definition of Local for Ohio:

- Within Franklin County
- Within a 100-mile radius
- Within the State of Ohio

Farm to School in Ohio – the Numbers:

- Fruit is the largest grown item in Ohio at 52% (apples being the most locally grown fruit used in schools). Probably closer to 90 or 100%.
- Vegetables grown locally and consumed at schools are at 44%
- Dairy (61.8%) – also likely higher due to the way dairy is procured.
- Last is protein at under 9%.
- 17 million is invested in local food in Ohio.
- Schools spend about 14% of their food service budget on local food - would like to see that increase.

Local Food Purchasing Options – several ways of purchasing food locally from direct purchasing from a farmer, food hubs, farmer's market (good for the Amish community), produce auctions, all the way down to a school garden.

- Food hubs are either for profit or non-profits who aggregate food from small farmers (i.e., school needs 1,000 pallets of bell peppers and one farmer alone cannot provide so the food hub gets from several farmers and provides to school)

Farm to School: Community- includes childcare programs, summer food programs/extends to all community nutrition programs.

Community Development: includes job creation and economic development (See Community Development slide for photo): A food service director purchased a steer from a junior fair auction. Student raised the steer and were able to provide the end product to their community and school (used as hamburger in spaghetti sauce and tacos). Added benefits:

- Local food purchasing can create additional jobs for the community.
- Money invested in farm to school helps to stimulate the local economy.
- They learn how to grow the food, process it and how to make it into something tasty.
 - Taking something from a seed to plate is a different experience.

- Have a different opinion after growing something personally (helps increase vegetables that children like to eat).
- Partnering with a community organization provides children access to this type of programming and has an increase in participation from about 1.3% to 15%.
- Healthier school food environment, greater varieties of produce.
- Increase in fruit and vegetable consumption/more nutrient dense food.
- Lower transportation costs/safer food due to product traceability.
- Working with growers provides differing varieties children like.
- Improvement in early childhood and carries over into adulthood.
- Increase in healthy and decrease in unhealthy foods (33% eat more fruits and vegetables).

Farm to School State Formula Grant – Office of Nutrition received this grant whose purpose is improve supply chain resiliency and increase educational opportunities for participating children. This is seen in the following ways:

- Coordination – used to hire a full-time farm to school coordinator (school champion at the state level), made an enormous difference
- Food, Nutritional and Agriculture Education
- Supply Chain Supports – one of the biggest problems – getting the food particularly from farmers
- Harvest of the Month – ways to promote a particular product

Grow Ohio Grant Opportunity – first time award for the Office of Nutrition

Purpose is to provide local innovative equitable opportunities for participating students for farm to school products (such as outdoor or indoor school gardens, fabrications of local school producers, food literacy activities). Goals are to increase relationships between Ohio food producers and child nutrition program sponsors and increase the amount of school-grown foods served in USDA meal programs.

Have a food safety focus with this grant – not only that from farmers but that grown in the school for student consumption. Want to see more food grown by students served to students. Need to have safety plans in place, maybe the food service director popping in to check on things.

On any kind of school food programming, think about the needs and capacity of district (plan for what is in season (work with local growers), look at school district culture/what they like, relationships – always those willing to help, work with local farmer, promote program). More people learn what you do, the more excited they become. Think of different skills/abilities program can benefit (i.e., hand-eye coordination can be gained from gardening).

2023 Farm to School Grant – no real budget in federal for this program except this grant. Schools and organizations that received the grant for this year are:

- Hamilton Urban Garden Systems (HUGS)

- River Valley Local School District – Caledonia
- Steubenville City Schools – Steubenville
- West Branch Local School District – Beilot
- Youngstown City School District – Youngstown

Get Connected: A list of organizations (see slide) that can provide training, resources, and technical assistance in starting a farm to school program was shared. The staff of the Office of Nutrition are available for any additional questions, feel free to reach out if needed (contact information available on the PowerPoint presentation).

WHOLE CHILD IMPLEMENTATION: GREEN STEaM CULTIVATING THE FIFTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Shana Wydra and Heather Hoover with Steubenville City Schools presented what farm to school looks like in their district. Everything they do, they try to tie in to PreK-12th grade – tie in their farm to school program with their stem and career tech pathways.

Were awarded two USDA Farm To School grants: awarded a planning grant in the fall of 2019 and an implementation grant in the fall of 2023.

Facts about Steubenville City Schools district:

- Student enrollment is 2,874
 - Of that 855 students are open enrolled (do not live within Steubenville City schools).
 - Important because the district is 6 miles – small district.
 - Some students are from West Virginia.
 - Drives the district to offer the best programming they can.
- City school district in a rural county (Jefferson county)
 - 100% of their students are eligible for free or reduced lunch.
 - One grocery store is within the district but not near the high school or three of their elementaries.
- Purpose of the grant is to not only teach students but also parents how to grow fresh food if not easily accessible.

2014 Shana was hired as a STEM director.

- From Higher Ed background, wasn't sure what she was doing (had a career tech background).
- Started in the high school – went well but found excitement was with young children.
- Began working with Heather, who was based in the elementary school, to create programming for the young children.
- In 2015, through the Department of Education, sent out interest surveys and found agriculture was ranked as one of the top 3 choices over all grade levels.

- Inquired as to why they chose this and found many had never been to a farm or knew what produce was. Something that really needed to introduce to their students.
- Influx of student enrollment warranted reopening an elementary school that was being used as school board office.
 - Became 100% STEM school (McKinley STEM Academy)
 - Didn't hire any new staff – hired from within only but still had to apply and submit a resume.
 - Built a greenhouse with funding from the USDA grant and community funding.
- Since 2014, realized that students have enough knowledge about clean energy and the environment/have grown up with this, that they want career-tech pathway -know these are the jobs out there.
- Created a career pathways program.
 - Shana shared a list of their career pathways available to students (see slide).
- Several popular programs have come out of the career pathways with the help of their Ohio State extension office in Jefferson County.
 - Great Apple Crunch – 2019 was first year and 100% of the district participated (close to 3,000 apples were delivered to their district)
 - Chick Quest – involves all grade levels and another popular program
 - Adopt A Cow – at the elementary level
 - **Complete list available on the slide**
- Projects Completed with funding from the USDA grant:
 - 24 x 36 greenhouse installed at McKinley STEM Academy
 - All buildings have hydroponic systems that allow students to grow lettuce, basil, tomatoes, and cucumbers which are used in school meals.
 - By offering the greenhouses downtown, making more accessible to the community.
 - Final stages of building a STEM center (a skywalk connects the school and the center) and building a greenhouse adjacent to the STEM center
 - Opening May 1, will have state of the art classrooms.
 - Includes a school-based health clinic for students as well as mental health counselors (have mental health services in all buildings).
 - **Videos were shared that showed what they have accomplished.**

Aviation had always been the top career choice in the past, being close to Pittsburgh airport.

- Have a career tech teacher that is a certified pilot - helped drive that program.
- 4 students have their pilot's license from graduating from the program.
- Pilots from Pittsburgh airport use their flight simulator.

STeAM Learning Center – pursuing LEEDv4 BDC School certification (holistic green building). **A video of what is happening in their greenhouses was shown.**

Tower Gardens -when they received the grant in 2019 started with one tower garden in the STEM building and added an additional 9, now every additional building in the district has 2 - 4 tower gardens.

- Started with lettuces and did tasteful dipping (with ranch dressing).
- Kale is still not a favorite but make a lot of kale smoothies on Tasteful Tuesdays (add banana and pineapple to help with taste) for PreK – 4th grade-variety of activities.
- Pesto dip made with parsley is a favorite on bread made from the kitchen - parents ask for the recipe.

Greenhouse cleanout in May – plant tomatoes, peppers, and cucumbers in their Beta Bucket system. Come in on Tuesdays during summer and monitor so will be ready to harvest when they return to school in the fall.

Cornfield - they turn into a corn maze after corn is harvested. Started a small plot (4 x 6) – approx. 22 corn stalks. Second year planted about 54, last year, over 200 cornstalks were planted.

Master Gardeners: team up with master gardeners from the OSU extension office (services Jefferson and Harrison counties). Provides a wealth of information and resources.

- Recently teamed with students to transplant a massive aloe plant.
 - Different ways to see what worked – dirt, water, just laid out to dry.
 - Incorporated project with math lessons with older students (fractions – i.e., percentage that survived by each method).
 - Planted 31,000 seeds with elementary students (incorporated a fraction lesson – how many were sprouting; how many were not).

Spoons Across America – a **FREE** comprehensive, holistic curriculum for 1st – 5th grades.

- Sent a kit with cutting boards, plastic knives, an electric skillet, books that accompany the activity (My Plate lessons).
- Asked for feedback and you get additional materials.

Great Apple Crunch - after the program, parents were asked to submit a kid-friendly apple recipe. Students voted on which to make. Had a taste test and winning recipe received a golden spatula.

Farm to School Month – link up with local farmers and animals are brought in to visit with students. Have chick hatching but don't see full grown chicken and can during these visits.

- Texas Roadhouse educational program – pay \$5 per student. Have lunch there and they talk about how the field comes to the table (where your beef products are coming from). Tour the kitchen, see schematic of cow and how the parts are broken down, talk about types of grain and what cow should be fed, etc.

Poinsettias and Harvest Sales – don't grow in their greenhouses but team up with local poinsettia farm to sell out of their greenhouses. Have Harvest Sales on Fridays - sell quart

bags of lettuce for \$2, corn, cucumbers, zucchini, and tomatoes. Team up with some of the local restaurants who buy their basil since it's cheap.

Adopt a Cow – through the OSU Extension office – virtually adopt a cow. Incorporates the whole agricultural spectrum. Pipeline into their career program.

4-H Chick Quest – hatch in incubator and keep outside in aluminum tub (approx. 5 – 6 weeks). Incorporates science, technology, engineering, and math skills. Video was shared. Attend a class and they give you everything free that is needed to start. Passed some eggs along to high school which they hatched.

4-H:

- Out of 3,000 students, started with about 18-20 participants in 4-H.
- Misconception that you need a farm animal but just need a still project (i.e. growing seedlings)
- Teamed up with the extension office and now up to 80 members. Local parents (some out of the district) with farms, house the animal (pigs, chickens) for those wanting to work with one.
- Equestrian program – don't have the facilities to have a program but those that are involved and meet the criteria (GPA, no disciplinary issues, etc.) were recognized and could earn a varsity letter (i.e. horseback riding). Hope to have a stable someday.
- 4-H Club went to Disney in October (majority went to Imagination Camp). **Video shared.**
 - Participated in activities at Epot or Animal Kingdom
 - Many students had never been and wouldn't have been able to as a child without this program due to financial cost.

Gardening Together on Tuesdays – program in the summer caring for the beta bucket plants. Not a drop-off/parents must also participate (2 hours).

Questions:

- Is this FFA? Getting into FFA in the high school/co-chairing with them, belong to Educator Rising (grow your own, teacher apprentice program) and Future Farmers of America.
- 4-H meetings held when? Most meetings are after school – activities embedded in school programs. In summer, meet once/week.
- Do students that graduated from the district have an interest in returning to the district to teach? Starting to see that now. 50% of current staff are Steubenville City Schools graduates.
 - Higher Education has a Grow Your Own paraprofessional grant that ties in with the programs - a partnership between student and teacher. Students can receive a grant/loan for college. Have 4 years to finish and 6 years to get a job back in their home district.

Contact Heather or Shana if any other questions (information available on their closing slide).

WHOLE CHILD COLLABORATION: REGION 8 COMPREHENSIVE CENTER

Region 8 staff led an affinity activity to engage in what was learned during the day's meeting surrounding whole child, nutrition, and healthy eating. The goal was for members to bring back one action step from today's meeting or another question.

Participants were broken up into small groups. Each group was given a question to address regarding what they learned from the day's presentations. (Refer to handout) Groups shared out after and results will be shared separately with advisory group members.

WRAP UP AND NEXT STEPS:

A QR code that contains questions was available for members to provide feedback on the meeting – helps to plan future meetings-want them to be beneficial and engaging for members with things to take back to your district or organization and begin to implement and create changes.

A reminder to members to **sign in and out – particularly if you want a certificate of attendance** (a time in and out is needed for a certificate).

Jessica Horowitz-Moore announced that next month is the **Dean's Compact for Exceptional Children conference**. The conference focuses on everything related to special needs students pre-K through college. This year added an extra day, **March 12, a free event which will focus on mental health**. A keynote speaker will be talking about pre-service, students studying to be teachers – what they need to know about mental health for students. Location is at the OCLC conference center in Dublin. Jessica will get the information to Jared to share with members.