Campaign for Food Literacy

Virtual Launch Event
Feb 6, 2023
An Act to Promote Food Literacy

Senator Lewis & Rep. Vargas have filed An Act to promote food literacy (SD.1348 / HD.2580)

The bill would:

- Add food literacy to the list of topics that students should learn about in school
- Ask DESE to identify appropriate materials & provide professional development
- Establish a Food Literacy Trust Fund that could be used by schools
- Enable DESE to convene a working group of educators and others with expertise in the food system
Senator Lewis
Fifth Middlesex
District of Massachusetts
MA Food System Collaborative

The Collaborative is a **statewide nonprofit** focusing on food policy issues through research, network building, and advocacy.

We move forward the recommendations in the **MA Local Food Action Plan**, including one to bring back food system education to schools.
Our Process

Conducted interviews with teachers, nonprofit educators & state agencies

Published the report on food system education in MA

Identified a Steering Committee to guide this Campaign
What We Learned

It is critical that students learn about

- nutrition
- agriculture
- food justice
- culinary skills

in science, social studies, wellness, and math classes, and in the cafeteria, school garden, and community.
Challenges Remain

- Food literacy is not included in most state frameworks or tested on the MCAS.
- Teachers struggle to find high-quality, culturally appropriate, curriculum-aligned lessons.
- Many teachers feel unprepared to teach about the food system.
- Many schools don’t have funds for materials for food literacy lessons.
Campaign Goal

Every K - 12 student to have access to education about the food system in school so they can make informed decisions that will positively impact the health of:

- Themselves
- Their communities
- The environment
Organizations that Support Food Literacy

American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts
Backyard Growers
Berkshire Grown, Inc.
Chicopee FRESH
ChopChop Family
CISA (Community involved in Sustaining Agriculture)
CommonWealth Kitchen
Everett Community Growers
Farm Direct Coop
FoodCorps
Gardening The Community
Greenfield Housing Authority
Groundwork Somerville
Grow Food Northampton
Growing Places
Health Equity Partnership of North Central Mass Inc (CHNA9)
Healthy Chelsea
Hilltown Community Development Corporation
Island Grown Initiative
Just Roots
Lowell Public Schools Food and Nutrition Services
Massachusetts Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (MAND)
Massachusetts Association for Health, Physical Education Recreation and Dance
Massachusetts Environmental Education Society
Massachusetts Envirothon
Massachusetts Farm to School
Massachusetts Healthy School Lunch Coalition

Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
Massachusetts PTA
Massachusetts Seafood Collaborative
Massachusetts State Grange
Mill City Grows
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project
Northeast Organic Farming Association/Mass Chapter
Northern Berkshire Community Coalition
Project Bread
Regional Environmental Council
Salem Food for All
Seeds of Solidarity
South Shore Permaculture
Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership (SEMAP)
STEAMandarin
Sustainable CAPE
Sustainable Nantucket
Terra Cura, Inc.
The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts
The Food Project
The Food Voice
The Greater Boston Food Bank
The Marion Institute
The Trustees of Reservations
Worcester County Food Bank
World Farmers
Youth School of Liberation
An Act to Promote Food Literacy

The food literacy bill would eliminate many of the barriers to providing food literacy. It would:

● Enable teachers to justify including food literacy lessons
● Make high quality lessons easy to access
● Provide professional development
● Provide funding for schools
The Impact of Food Literacy

Rebecca Cline, Parent Champion, Curley K-8 School, Jamaica Plain

Karen Murphy, Science and Special Education Teacher, Summit Academy, part of Amherst-Pelham Regional High School, Amherst

Colette Piotrowski, Junior, Northampton High School

Emily Armstrong, Education Director, Island Grown Initiative, Martha’s Vineyard

Sally Sampson, Founder, Chop Chop Family
Rebecca Cline
Parent Champion
Curley K-8 School
Jamaica Plain
Curley Gardens – Classroom Projects

K & 1st Grades
- Raised Bed #1 – KO/K1
- Raised Bed #2 – 1st/McDavitt
- Raised Bed #3 – KO/K1
- Containers – KO/K1

2nd Grade (Nason)
Monarch Garden/K Grades
(Goldstein)

2nd Grade (Nason)
Monarch Garden/K Grades
(Goldstein)

Outdoor Classroom
- Raised Bed #1 – 6th-8th/Youman
- Raised Bed #2 – 6th-8th/Youman
- Raised Bed #3 – CASP/Mercado
- Roof Garden – 6th-8th/Youman
- Rock Garden – 6th-8th/Youman
- SEL 3rd-5th/Nason

Daria’s Garden/5th Grade
(Nason & Youman)

K2/1st Grade Science
(Mehari)
Occupational Therapy
(Van Clef/Herrera)

Science (Mehari)
Kindergarteners plant herbs, then touch, smell, and taste plants that season food.

6th–8th grade Gardening and Art elective

Building low boxes for easy access
Food Science at Summit Academy

- Curriculum developed by Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture, with the goal of “transforming the way America eats and farms by creating a healthy, sustainable food system.”

- We study the food system from seed to table
  - botanical and historical origin of our foods
  - how food reflects identity
  - the science of flavor and food engineering
  - resilient agriculture
  - raised and sold microgreens to school food service for school lunches
What We Eat

In small groups, students:
- Dissect food plants and classify the parts we eat (fruit, roots, flower, leaf, stem)
- Use plant parts and provided ingredients to create a salad and dressing
- Use qualitative, rather than judgemental taste and texture descriptions
- Practice knife skills
- Read, analyze, and then write food reviews
- Grow and compare fresh vs. dried herbs
- Make observations about what people eat around the world
Seed-to-Table Project

- Choose a food plant to grow and nurture
- Research the origin and history of this plant
- Harvest the food and make a meal to share
- Document and reflect on the experience - stages, rewards, challenges

Our school greenhouse

Indoor classroom grow rack
Student Projects

Stir fry and salsa with students’ jalapenos
Student Seed-to-Table Projects

Mint chocolate chip ice-cream

Charcuterie board with student’s basil cream cheese
How Cultures Choose Food

- Food as medicine
- Food to celebrate and remember history
- Food to build community
- Edibility and Taboos
  - What is considered taboo in one culture is valid in another (approaching unfamiliar foods in a non-judgemental way)

Food-grade crickets served creatively by a student
Sustainable Agricultural Practices

Concept map of a farm ecosystem

Students build a compost bin for our food waste
NEF Grant Work - Northampton High School

- Northampton Education Fund (NEF) funded the development and implementation of *Plant Science and Food Justice* course at the High School for spring 2023.
- Enrolled students learn about their place in global and local food systems and the impacts these systems have on people, the environment, and society.
- Enrolled students apply scientific knowledge and indigenous teachings to plant and grow vegetables, herbs, annuals, and perennials in school greenhouse space.
Northampton High School and Community

- Though there is no on-site garden, NHS students will travel to community partner, Grow Food Northampton, to plant seedlings in the Community Garden.
  - All produce harvested from the Giving Garden will be donated to local food shelters and food pantries.
- Importance of applying classroom teaching to local communities and the world around us.
Emily Armstrong
Education Director
Island Grown Initiative
Martha’s Vineyard
Every subject can be taught through the lens of food, gardens and farms.
Diverse learners have success with hands-on learning.
Sally Sampson
Founder
Chop Chop Family
Recipe Ratios

Sometimes, you need to adjust the size of a recipe so that it can fit in your small pot for three people. But when he or she is making a vinaigrette, she can often double the recipe while keeping the ratios of the basic vinaigrette stable. The basic vinaigrette recipe is 1:3, but for our Make-It-Your-Way Vinaigrette, we use a ratio of 2:1, which means for every 2 measures of oil, there is 1 measure of vinegar.

Solve these problems using the vinaigrette ratio of 2:1.

1. A recipe requires using 4 teaspoons of oil and 4 teaspoons of vinegar. How much vinaigrette do they need to make the recipe?

2. A chef wants to scale a recipe using 2 cups of oil to 4 cups of vinegar. How much oil is needed to make the vinaigrette?

3. A chef is preparing to make a sauce for a large party and needs to scale up the recipe to make 10 cups of vinaigrette. If the original recipe calls for 2 cups of oil, how much oil is needed to make the vinaigrette?

Vinaigrette History and Geography

The use of oil and vinegar to flavor vegetables dates back to ancient Greece and Rome. Greek cuisine is famous for its emphasis on fresh ingredients and simple cooking methods. The Romans, on the other hand, introduced sauces—meat, wine, and herbs. Brined chicken, garlic, and oil were often used to make a simple vinaigrette.

By the late 18th century, vinaigrettes became more elaborate andwere often served as a condiment or a dressing for salads.

Depicted on the French word “vinaigrette,” meaning vinegar, vinaigrettes are typically considered as a French dish. Berries, basil, and lemon are the three French dressing flavors popular in the summer. “Vinaigrette” is a French term that means a salad dressing made from vinegar.
Support the Campaign for Food Literacy - Today!

Reach out to your legislator about food literacy and ask them to co-sponsor this bill, An Act to promote food literacy (SD.1348 / HD.2580).

Sign your organization on to support our campaign at this link.

Reach out if you are a teacher and would like to host a tour of legislators.

Be ready to testify and attend hearings and other events when they are scheduled.
Support the Campaign for Food Literacy – in Spring 2023

FY 2024 Budget Ask

1. Funding for DESE
   a. Food Literacy Coordinator
   b. Expand the Massachusetts School Wellness Coaching Program
   c. Professional development opportunities
   d. A pilot grant for school districts to hire district-level food literacy coordinators

2. Funding for MDAR
   a. Agricultural Literacy Coordinator
   b. Workshops for teachers
   c. Funds for field trips
Thank you

For more information

Email Brittany Peats at: brittany@mafoodsystem.org

See more on our website: mafoodsystem.org