



September 16, 2025

Joint Committee on Education
24 Beacon Street
Rooms 511B and 473G
Boston MA 02133

RE: H.735 / S.392 An Act to promote food literacy

Dear Chairs Gordon and Lewis, and Members of the Committee:

The Massachusetts Food System Collaborative is pleased to offer this written testimony in support of H.735 / S.392, An Act to promote food literacy, on behalf of the Campaign for Food Literacy. The Massachusetts Food System Collaborative was established to promote, monitor, and facilitate implementation of the [Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan](#), accepted by the state in 2015. The Collaborative leads collective action towards a sustainable, equitable, resilient local food system through advocacy campaigns and networks. We work with hundreds of food system partners across the Commonwealth who help us identify our legislative priorities, including food system education.

Expanding food literacy in K - 12 schools in Massachusetts is critical to the long-term health of students, communities, and the environment. Although some students learn about the food system in the classroom, cafeteria or school garden, because food literacy concepts like nutrition, agriculture, food justice, and more are not comprehensively included in most state frameworks, not every student in Massachusetts has access to high-quality education about the food system. This lack of access creates an inequitable system whereby some students leave their K - 12 educational career armed with knowledge about the food system and nutrition, and some do not.

Students who are food literate are equipped to make food choices that benefit their own health, the health of their communities, and to make choices that can positively affect their environment. These students are also more likely to become civically engaged in their community, or to consider careers in the food system. Adding food literacy concepts to all frameworks would assist students in their career development journeys, by making opportunities in the local food system more visible and accessible to them. This, in combination with H.121 / S.61, An Act Relative to Urban Farmland, could lead to further economic impact as some students graduate from high school and get started in food production.

H.735 / S.392 would help overcome the challenges to implementing food literacy by adding these concepts to the list of topics that students should learn about in school. To help teachers implement these new lessons, the bills will ask the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to help identify high quality lessons, provide professional development activities, and enable the funding of a Food Literacy Trust Fund to help schools fund this programming.



DESE has demonstrated a commitment over the last several years to promoting food literacy; facilitating the Local Food System Education Task Force, incorporating food literacy concepts into the wellness policy assessment used in the school wellness coaching program, and completing an audit of nutrition related food literacy curricula. Passing this legislation would ensure that this commitment continues even in the event of staff turnover at DESE.

Teaching students about food, agriculture and nutrition is especially important in light of cuts to federal programs, including [Northeast Food for Schools](#), which allowed schools to purchase \$3.5 million of food from local producers, and upcoming cuts to federally funded nutrition education and safety net programs, such as SNAP-Ed.

The Collaborative is available to provide additional information and connections to practitioners and advocates who can offer specific insights on this legislation, at the pleasure of the Committee. We respectfully urge the Committee to report these bills out favorably.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Miller, Policy Director

On behalf of the members of the Campaign for Food Literacy:

Allston Brighton Health Collaborative, Boston
American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts, Danvers
Backyard Growers, Gloucester
Berkshire Grown, Inc., Great Barrington
Brockton Parents Initiative/ Let's Make Friends, Brockton
Change is Simple, Inc., Beverly
Chicopee FRESH, Chicopee
ChopChop Family, Natick
CISA (Community involved in Sustaining Agriculture), South Deerfield
Common Threads, National
CommonWealth Kitchen, Boston
Coonamessett Farm Foundation, Inc. (CFF), East Falmouth
El Buen Samaritano Food Program Inc., Worcester
Everett Community Growers, Everett
Farm Direct Coop, Marblehead
Farm Education, Inc., Sheffield
FoodCorps, Statewide
Food Link, Arlington
Friends of Holly Hill Farm, Cohasset
Gardening The Community, Springfield
Greenfield Housing Authority, Greenfield



Groundwork Somerville, Somerville
Grow Food Northampton, Northampton
Growing Healthy Garden Program, North Adams
Growing Places, Leominster
Health Equity Partnership of North Central Mass Inc (CHNA9), Westminster
Healthy Chelsea, Chelsea
Healthy Communities Capital Consulting, Cambridge
Hilltown Community Development Corporation, Chesterfield
Island Grown Initiative, Tisbury
Just Roots, Greenfield
Kids in Nutrition, Boston/National
Live & Learn Health Coaching and Nutrition Education, Norfolk
Lowell Public Schools Food and Nutrition Services, Lowell
Massachusetts Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (MAND), Needham
Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom, Marlborough
Massachusetts Association for Health, Physical Education Recreation and Dance, Attleboro
Massachusetts Environmental Education Society, Boston
Massachusetts Envirothon, Massachusetts
Massachusetts Farm to School, Boston
Massachusetts Healthy School Lunch Coalition, Malden
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Boston
Massachusetts PTA, Lexington
Massachusetts School Nurse Organization (MSNO), Marlboro
Massachusetts Seafood Collaborative, Boston
Massachusetts State Grange, Rutland
MCSM / CFCE, Turners Falls, Montague
Mill City Grows, Lowell
Moon In The Pond Farm, Sheffield
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, Beverly
Northeast Organic Farming Association/Mass Chapter, Springfield
Northern Berkshire Community Coalition, North Adams
Project Bread, East Boston
Regional Environmental Council, Worcester
Revere CARES Coalition, Revere
Roots Rising, Pittsfield
Route 2 Roots Wellness, Taunton
Salem Food Policy Council, Salem
Seeds of Solidarity, Orange
South Shore Permaculture, Norwell
Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership (SEMAP), S. Dartmouth
STEAMandarin, Bedford
Sustainable CAPE, Truro
Sustainable Food & Farming Program, UMass Amherst, Amherst
Sustainable Nantucket, Nantucket
Terra Cura Inc., Plymouth



The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, Hatfield
The Food Project, Lynn and Boston
The Food Voice, Cohasset
The Greater Boston Food Bank, Boston
The Livestock Institute of Southern New England, Westport
The Marion Institute, Marion
The Trustees of Reservations, Boston
Three Sisters Garden Project, Ipswich
We Grow Microgreens, Hyde Park
Worcester County Food Bank, Worcester County
World Farmers, Lancaster
Youth School of Liberation, Brockton