

RECIPES FOR SUCCESS

Multi-District Case Study: Local Foods in Maine Schools



This *Multi-District Case Study* has been prepared for Cultivating Community as an addendum to the **Recipes for Success** project. For more information about this report or the **Recipes for Success** project, contact Cultivating Community's Executive Director, Craig Lapine, at craig@cultivatingcommunity.org.

Data collection (interviews) and compilation of the *Multi-District Case Study* were completed by Amanda Beal, Cultivating Community Board Member.



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Purpose of the Case Studies

In the past decade, interest in growing the amount of local foods served in schools in Maine has increased steadily. Many innovative school food service directors have been at the front of this movement, finding creative ways to work with local food producers. The purpose for this case study is:

- 1) To look more closely at what motivates food service directors from various types of communities with various sized school districts to work to incorporate more local foods into their school meal programs
- 2) To document how, despite budgetary and other constraints, they are achieving this goal
- 3) To better understand what type of reinforcement or assistance would be most helpful for school nutrition programs to receive from the school, the greater community and other supporting entities

Knowing that challenges and solutions may be different in each setting, we hope that documenting and sharing their strategies can promote information sharing that will spark ideas – big and small – for other school nutrition programs who are seeking creative options.

Summary of Findings

Five food service directors with widely varying backgrounds and districts were interviewed for this report and one striking finding was their agreement on why they were motivated to source and serve local produce: they want to know where the food they serve comes from, and they want their students to understand where food comes from, too. This is no small task in the world we live in, and driving this change from the seat of the food service director is both rewarding and difficult. Many factors are at play inside and outside the walls of the school that support a convenience/commodity based system. Yet, as can be seen by the numerous ideas shared by the case study participants, there are ways to look at this system critically and creatively and seek opportunities to make progress in the link between our schools, farmers and fishermen.

One of the greatest needs of the school nutrition programs is to have the school and the greater communities recognize the challenges they face, and to acknowledge the progress they are able to achieve, despite these difficulties. In particular, support and encouragement from the school community in the form of fostering more classroom-to-cafeteria connections helps increase the visibility of their efforts. It also helps demonstrate to students both that different pathways for food to travel are possible and shortening the producer to plate chain on an economic, social, environmental and health related basis can be accomplished.

The food service directors identify several infrastructure needs, including more cold and dry storage space, updated (or in some cases any) processing equipment and greenhouse space. There are other types of support that most nutrition service programs may benefit from. Assistance with marketing the local foods that they do serve and providing staff training opportunities geared toward working with whole, fresh foods are opportunities that the Department of Education and other supportive organizations could help to address on a local, regional or statewide level.

Finally, it is encouraging to see that there are collaborative efforts underway between districts, as this creates dialog and momentum to bolster the progress already underway.

Matrix Outline

- **District Demographics (approximate data)**

- Rural, Urban, Suburban?
- # of staff
- # of schools
- # of students
- # of students utilizing school nutrition program
- % of students that qualify for free/reduced meals
- Of those students that qualify for free/reduced meals, what % are utilizing?
- # of staff who eat SNP meals

- **School Nutrition Program Basics**

- Do you serve both breakfast and lunch?
- What is the approximate length of your lunch period?
- So you have a central kitchen or full kitchens in each school?

- **Local Foods Activities & Analysis**

- Appeal or motivation for wanting to serve local foods?
- Which locally produced foods have you purchased and served?
- Are there any classroom-cafeteria connections in your schools?
- What do you do to market your local foods?
- Taste testing?
- Successes?
- Challenges?
- What infrastructure needs have to be met in your school district in order to include more local foods?
- What creative solutions have you found to cost-save?
- Do you feel you get support from administration, parents, businesses and others to incorporate local foods into your menu?
- Student involvement?
- Do you serve any local fish?
- If you have a School Garden program(s) in your district, is it connected to the nutrition program?
- Other...

School District 1	School District 2	School District 3	School District 4	School District 5
DISTRICT DEMOGRAPHICS (<i>approximate stats</i>)				
Rural, Urban, Suburban?				
Rural	Suburban/Rural	Rural	Urban/Suburban	Rural
# of staff				
15 full-time	16 full-time / 8 subs	49 full-time / 39 part-time	20 full-time / 48 part-time	16 full-time
# of schools				
5	4	13 (2 consolidated RSUs)	16	6
# of students				
2000	1300	3950 (3000 RSU A/950 RSU B)	7000	1200
# of students utilizing school nutrition program				
1700	780	2600	3700	850
% of students that qualify for free/reduced meals				
50% (HS 47% / EI 63% / MS 51%)	10%	63% / 54% (RSU A/RSU B)	49%	55%
Of those students that qualify for free/reduced meals, what % are utilizing?				
80%	95%	70% / 65% (RSU A/RSU "B")	60%	85%
# of staff who eat SNP meals?				
lunch 10%	lunch 10%	low	lunch 25%	lunch 10%

School District 1	School District 2	School District 3	School District 4	School District 5
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SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM BASICS

Do you serve both breakfast and lunch?

Yes	Breakfast in MS and HS only	Yes	Breakfast in all but 1 school	Yes
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What is the approximate length of your lunch period?

20 min	25 min	20-25 min	20-25 min	23-25 min
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Do you have a central kitchen or full kitchens in each school?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All 5 schools have own production kitchens. We used to have satellite kitchens, but did away with this model because food would get cold when transported throughout our geographically spread-out district. • Some specialization still exists: one 90 student school is where we roast chickens, and most baked goods are made from scratch at the HS or MS kitchens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are full kitchens in each school, but some production is centralized/ specialized: spaghetti sauce is made at the HS, then shipped out to other schools. • Salad bar prep happens at the MS. There is a salad bar in every school on a cycle menu. The school garden provides carrots, cherry tomatoes, cucumbers and lettuce. • In September and October, we harvest basil to make pesto and we serve nasturtiums. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have 2 production kitchens within a large geographic area, and have centralized baking: scratch, cookies, squares, cornbread, cakes (no hydrogenated oils, egg whites only). • The MS & HS each has a slightly different purpose, as they were updated differently since it is expensive to replace equipment (focused on increasing equipment all around over the next year). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to a central kitchen, there is a full kitchen in the HS, and one elementary school kitchen can almost stand by itself. • Three MS's & other elementary schools are 'heat and serve' and supplied from the central kitchen. • One HS does baking for the other, and the central kitchen will do large batch items like spaghetti sauce for everyone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 2 production kitchens in the district, and both do almost the same things. • The HS menu a little different than MS, but not by much.
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School District 1	School District 2	School District 3	School District 4	School District 5
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LOCAL FOODS ACTIVITIES & ANALYSIS

Appeal or motivation for wanting to serve local foods?

<p>It's the right thing to do. There is a lot of energy and opportunity in our district, which we are tapping into. The School Health Coordinator and Wellness Committee are on board. Our new community kitchen and our culinary arts program offer more potential to connect our goals to other parts of the school/ community.</p>	<p>Wanting to serve real, safe foods to kids; to control the nutritional health of students through assuring healthfulness of the food we serve; and to support the local economy. We would like to build nutrition awareness and education for kids by serving healthy, local foods.</p>	<p>Wanting to know where food comes from – there are so many recalls in food service, especially in produce. At least by knowing our growers, even if not certified organic, we can be aware of what they're using/spraying on the food. There are some local growers that we won't buy from because they choose to spray heavily, and it's good to have the information to make that choice. We would ultimately like to incorporate more local and organic food.</p>	<p>To gain credibility with parents by serving truly healthy food, and also to have more control over nutritional content. It's also good to support the local economy by being able to provide local food producers with another market.</p>	<p>In our rural school district, this is a good way to help students understand where food comes from. Serving local foods is a way to educate students about where food comes from and to offer fresh and healthy food choices.</p>
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Which locally produced foods have you purchased and served?

<p>Corn, apples, potatoes, milk. We would eventually like to do local items on the salad bar for the whole district, but will need to start smaller.</p>	<p>Fish, hamburger, eggs, apples, milk, bread, some produce, and whatever we can utilize from the school garden, like pumpkin soup on Halloween. We had a great carrot crop last year, which allowed us to serve our carrots after the 1st snow in December, and a week before school vacation we offered carrot cupcakes.</p>	<p>Year round: squash, apples; some local beef, milk. Fall: corn, tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots, cabbage. As we find more growers in the area, this year we plan to source potatoes; winter cabbage, carrots and onions (based on conversations with growers this past winter). We are also connected with year-round greenhouse greens growers in West Paris.</p>	<p>Apples, blueberries, strawberries, muskmelons, delicata squash, zucchini, broccoli, lettuce/salad mix, potatoes, cherry tomatoes, grass-fed beef patties, dry beans, milk, haddock and whole grain pizza crust from a local baker.</p>	<p>Apples, milk, meat, corn, tomatoes, cucumbers and blueberries.</p>
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School District 1	School District 2	School District 3	School District 4	School District 5
Are there any classroom-cafeteria connections in your schools?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not formally, but we do need a classroom connection. When corn shucking became a burden, principals rallied students, but there could be an ongoing education component in a way that doesn't demand more time, just different approaches. • Our blogs could be talked about in the classroom. • A few teachers are interested in doing related curriculum, but most teachers are overwhelmed and don't know how to start and we haven't been able to give them the tools. • The other factor is that the culture needs to change – teachers are still giving out candy bars as rewards, despite the school policy that prohibits that. • Phys ed teachers are also demanding more time, so there are multiple issues that the school needs to balance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some connections exist with the garden. • The School Nutrition Director has started guest presenting as part of the HS nutrition class for freshmen. These presentations have explored what kind of food is out there and what the food industry is doing. Last year, we did a whole series based on the film <i>Supersize Me</i>. The next discussion will focus around the film <i>King Corn</i>. In these discussions, the goal is to treat students like consumers and help them to develop skills in that area, not just to talk about protein, micronutrients, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is some curriculum established around the school gardens: Language Arts (a research project and then an oral and visual presentation of vegetables students wanted to plant), Art (developing signage), Science, Math, Social Studies. • The link to the school nutrition program has been a missed educational opportunity. • Health and Consumer Science are beginning to tap in through a grant that will integrate more fruits and vegetables into their curriculum. • Science has done a taste testing flight of apples and students have recorded what they want to see on the lunch salad bar. • Participating in these activities are all based on teacher initiative and are not written into the curriculum - we're not there yet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district celebrated a weeklong Maine Harvest Lunch by featuring local foods in the district's elementary and middle school cafeterias. One elementary school served carrots and red potatoes grown by students in the schoolyard. Students at 2 elementary schools shucked and split 1,200 ears of corn, which was cooked and served at the district's elementary schools as part of the harvest lunches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No - the Health teachers are more concerned about sexual education and nutrition is something they don't feel they have a lot of time to address. • There is no Home Ec type class, and therefore no hands-on cooking education/ instruction in our schools.

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What do you do to market your local foods?				
<p>We haven't marketed very well in the past.</p>	<p>Include information on the printed menu, in the title of the food - "Local" or "Maine."</p>	<p>Through the printed menu; next year our website will be ready, and we will include information about our local food links. We've tried to attract newspaper interest, but our stories have not been sensational enough for the reporter. This is probably a weak link that most school nutrition directors struggle with. We are working to develop a cycle menu so we can spend less time on the basic menu and more on it when we need to highlight something special.</p>	<p>We label local foods on our menus and put out a special flyer for the Maine Harvest Lunch, but have not labeled on the food-line.</p>	<p>We identify local products on the print and website menu; and have a special blurb on the back of the September menu about the value of local foods.</p>
Taste Testing?				
<p>We have offered samples after-school in the cafeteria.</p>	<p>We have done this a couple of times during year in all schools, usually with garden produce: tomatillos, sliced cukes, carrots, nasturtiums.</p>	<p>Our MS/HS has a group of 20 or so students that participate in recipe development. They have provided instant feedback and what they want to see on the menu.</p>	<p>We've offered some limited taste-testing at the high school.</p>	<p>We have done taste-testing in the garden but not in the cafeteria since meal time is limited.</p>
How many local foods events per year/which?				
<p>The Maine Harvest Lunch (a mini-grant from our local Healthy Maine Partnership helped us to get started with this).</p>	<p>During the Maine Harvest Lunch, we do taste-testing with local foods all week; We celebrate Halloween with local pumpkin soup.</p>	<p>We have celebrated the Maine Harvest Lunch later, in October. We were able to move from one day to a week-long menu (helped but a farmer who is able to reduce the food prep by offering corn cut and boxed for school).</p>	<p>The Maine Harvest Lunch is part of our school district's commitment to using local foods in its school lunch program. We celebrate this annual event, as well as have regular monthly local chili and local chowder days.</p>	<p>We provide a week-long Maine Harvest Lunch menu.</p>

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Successes?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With a fruit & veggie grant, we discovered that kids do want more of these foods and many are not really getting them at home. We were also able to work with a dietician, offer staff trainings, recipes and host a monthly blog. We also had staff who would do research and then gave presentations to approximately 400 students on various fruits and vegetables. This whole program was well received, and we also saw a lot of energy at our opening ceremony from participating parents and other community members and local restaurants. • HS kids hosting sampling/taste testing is helping to encourage student learning about food. • We're seeing a shift in preference – It seems that kids are looking for more home cooked meals, for example, the biggest days are baked chicken. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with the local apple orchard has been great, and our local egg producer is terrific to work with too. • Our last Maine Harvest Lunch week was a real success. • Our garden group wants is planning a celebration again this year which will happen in conjunction with the MHL, bringing in farmers, teaching students to shuck corn. • Our school garden program is definitely a success, and offers many opportunities to teach in garden, around the compost bins, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waiting to celebrate our Maine Harvest Lunch day in October was good , as it gave us a chance to get rolling with the new school year. Students had time to settle in and then were able to help with the late harvest meal, featuring: chili, baked beans, butternut squash and sliced apples. • Seeing kids recognize and understand the difference that eating local foods can make, and learning about the food system. • We are doing a better job of communicating where things come from. • Knowing that there is support for these changes in community – parents are catching on and we now have a small farmers market starting up in the district on Fridays. • Thanks to more demand to let people know where food is coming from (within a 100 mile radius, what's from South America, etc.) it has been encouraging Sysco and other large distributors to better track and label catalog items. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry beans on the menu were well accepted. • We are working to reduce sodium content and other additives through our scratch recipes. • During the 2009-10 school year, nearly 22 percent of the district's total food budget was spent on local produce. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The taste/texture of food is improved by working with fresh, local ingredients. • Helping kids to understand where food comes from. • Helping to support viable businesses in our own community. • Getting good PR/press for our efforts. • Relationships with growers can be mutually supportive - for example, our apple grower family is interested in community health issues, and wants to help support our garden program . • Working with our regional food service director coop is helpful because it is an efficient means of communication. It has helped to identify local producers and it gives them a communication conduit back to group when they have product to offer.

School District 1	School District 2	School District 3	School District 4	School District 5
Challenges?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better marketing: Overall, we would like to see more staff participation in meal program; did a survey – some like what’s served, some don’t. It’s hard to make changes and still charge only the expected \$3.50/meal, but then staff will pay \$9.00 for a sandwich at a local market and won’t question it. Students will buy a slice of pizza for \$2.50 up the street when it’s only \$1.50 here, and we’re using the exact same ingredients/distributor. We can work at marketing the local products as better for you. • Staffing resources: Labor is our biggest expense. Yet, there is a difference between a cook and a chef, and to use fresh, local foods we really need ‘chefs’ who can be creative. Until a recent grant provided additional training resources, many of our staff had never cooked cauliflower – we were able to have a dietician cook with staff monthly and also create an educational blog. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture – The biggest challenge is overcoming the belief that we can’t do this. Our priority is to work to provide better food, which isn’t always going to be convenient. In order to be successful we have to keep looking for solutions. How we’ve done business/ our predominant belief system/ standard mode of operation needs to shift. • Access – It takes multiple steps to get there, and sometimes it takes investing to find product at a reasonable price, but once relationships are developed it gets easier. This is not going to be the most important thing on a typical director's plate - some need to be convinced. Some ‘one-stop-shop’ distributors are now doing better with local food offerings, but you still have to look for items. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery/Transportation – Some local producers deliver, but the nutrition director also has to do some pick-up. • Access – Greens have been hard to find. We have received a grant for fresh fruits and vegetables for 6 schools in the coming year, and are hoping to access more local products that we have not been offered at wholesale price (still hoping growers can meet us half-way on price – even slightly blemished products can work). Both Farm Fresh Connection and Crown of Maine don’t deliver in our area, but we are hoping they will expand their area in the future. Sourcing on our own is a challenge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing resources – Skill level of staff: we’ve worked to do more training with staff around prepping fresh foods – they are open to it, but it’s definitely more work all around. • Access – Sourcing food is a challenge because of the additional time and energy necessary to track down. Events through the MSFSA, Healthy Maine Partnerships mini-grants have helped us to connect to producers. • Delivery/Transportation – This still presents as a challenge at times. • Policy - We need to see legislation pass that allows us to use up to 10% of commodities dollars toward local product purchasing (Chellie Pingree has talked about this). Also, Maine lacks the capacity to get local meat processed, which needs to be addressed at a policy level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access – It has been difficult to find out where producers are, and some are fearful of volume we want. Also, we have had problems when producers have said they will sell to us, then find another deal or prioritize farm stand customers. Weather, the tomato blight and excess rain in 2009 created unexpected short supply. We would like to purchase from a local CSA, but our fiscal department won’t allow (not allowed to pay for produce in advance with federal funds). FFC and Crown of Maine don’t travel into area. Rural with low population density. As mentioned under successes, the regional food service directors co-op is helpful, but could perhaps do more if there were a local foods committee. • Delivery/Transportation – This is a big need, especially since we have big district geographically.

School District 1	School District 2	School District 3	School District 4	School District 5
Challenges? – <i>continued...</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation: Environment is important – if the cafeteria looks institutional, it’s less appealing. Also, we’re set up to hand things to kids. We need to have a café environment where students make choices and is set up to be more participatory (toast their own bagel). Need more staff training in appearance/presentation of food. • Access to local foods: We want to offer more – the 1st year we tried to buy local apples was very difficult. It was time-consuming to figure out how to get them, how to connect, deal with transportation. It’s hard to make initial connections, but one of our goals is to establish long-term relationships that invite local farmers to “adopt a salad bar.” 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidation – We are in the midst of a huge job, bringing 3 different contracts together as part of the RSU consolidation process – merging with common language, staff, protocols for managing labor and food, etc. It presents an opportunity to make changes, too, as we decide which school can be a hub instead of each school ‘reinventing the wheel’ (example: what equipment can be moved from one school to another?). Beginning the consolidation process last year made it difficult to keep local connections going and seek new ones. • Policy – On the local level, many are aware that we want supportive policies added to wellness policy requirements, which we hope will be revisited next year with reauthorization – reauthorization will be the key for all states. • Staffing Resources – As 50-60 year olds are aging out, incoming staff have less experience with fresh food. We need people with skills AND creativity. Also, we need to emphasize/train staff to think about presentation - this is very important! 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture – We need to find a way to push back on fears around serving Maine shrimp because of some student allergies, and worries about bones in fish/fish chowder.

School District 1	School District 2	School District 3	School District 4	School District 5
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What infrastructure needs have to be met in your school district in order to include more local foods?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lot of our equipment is over 40 years old, and we don't own equipment to flash freeze, process, etc. • We also lack adequate storage. • There are different seasons for crops, and our school kitchen is not designed to accommodate this. (Fortunately, we are scheduled for a big remodel next year, which I expect will bring labor savings since we spend a lot of time moving things around and backfilling.) • We still do a lot with commodities since we have to use these to keep our budget in line, but our program has changed since I took over 6 years ago, as I've added more fruits and vegetables. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need more support around our school garden program to maximize the connection to the cafeteria. We would like to have a coordinator. But realistically, what comes first – a flourishing garden then a coordinator or vice versa? Once this is successful, we know the school committee will value it, but building it is a lot of work and takes time. • Also harvest of garden is tricky, but this is a key to making it easier for Nutrition Directors to have accessible, local affordable options...it makes it really convenient in terms of finding local food. It's also a great resource for teachers, which increases the benefit to the school even more. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are excited that there is a greenhouse going in at our Special Ed learning center. Yet, this is a self-contained school that is only accessible to kids at that school. Multiple school hoop houses are on our wish list. • Also, kitchens need processing, freezing and storage capacity. We would like to have the ability to process in summer when farmers have glut, but need labor to pay for it. We do have the internal capacity to train staff to do this, and a large freezer in one school. • We are having conversations with a neighboring Superintendent and others to determine if there is storage out there for more root vegetables. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need more refrigeration rather than more freezer space, and different culinary tools and equipment to help speed up processing. • We are addressing one infrastructure need by securing grant funding to purchase equipment and train staff to preserve local foods. That will make it possible to purchase local produce in bulk during the harvest months and freeze it for use throughout the school year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need more institutional recipes for using local foods. • We also need more labor, and more reimbursement per meal.
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School District 1	School District 2	School District 3	School District 4	School District 5
What creative solutions have you found to cost-save?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have spent a lot of time applying for grants, which has helped to introduce more fresh fruits and vegetables. • Increased the price of cookies and so we can charge less for fruit. • Pricing individual ala carte items higher if bought as a singular item (we would rather they purchase as reimbursable meal). • We do a lot with commodities. • To help with the sourcing/time issue, we plan to invite every farmer in surrounding towns to the school to talk about how we can do more. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiating with local growers and working with distributors to look for seconds and other lower cost items. • Grant writing/fundraising (for example, selling, bouquets of flowers and pottery from 4th graders at farmers market). • Working with the regional food service director co-op helps to leverage a bit – representing 30 schools, we can go out to bid as a group for dairy, meat, bread, paper, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking larger than just our district - we're part of food service director buying co-op, but the group is too spread out to have big buying power so we're trying to work with neighboring districts more closely. • We can't afford to serve local fruits and vegetables every week, but do try to serve them when not as cost prohibitive. • We worked on delivery routes with an apple vendor that linked 6 school districts. It became more cost effective for them when they could do a loop. They're at a level of production now where they can sell through SYSCO. This eliminates one invoice a week for us, which is also important. • We do a 50/50 mix of scratch cooking (varies by week/day) and found that we can make some items from scratch more affordably, but are still on a learning curve with fresh veggies like butternut squash, how to bake beans, etc. • We bought a whole cow for ground beef and other cuts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have obtained some grant funding. • Some local food substitutions have been relatively cost neutral or better (fresh carrots only a penny more per serving/substituting 10% of the diced tomatoes in a spaghetti sauce with summer squash in reduces cost). • Because of available storage, we are able to buy larger amounts at a time, which allows us to take advantage of what's on the market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We were able to find an affordable source of meat through the regional food service director buying co-op. We hope to have vendors come in and connect this way. • Apples purchased through the co-op are actually less expensive than through SYSCO. • We try to buy low processed foods that we can just wash and serve (blueberries, apples).

School District 1	School District 2	School District 3	School District 4	School District 5
Do you feel you get support from administration, parents, businesses & others to incorporate local foods in your menu?				
<p>Administration, yes - our Assistant Superintendant is supportive of curriculum changes, along with our new School Health Coordinator who will also take over our Wellness Committee. We have policies in place for healthy snacks. We generally haven't heard very much from the parents in the past. We do have local business and non-profit support. Our Healthy Maine Partnership has helped in multiple ways.</p>	<p>Sometimes yes/sometimes no (that includes admin, faculty, and parents). We're ready for another champion, and are excited that our new Superintendent is on board and actively helping with grant ideas. Our school committee approved our garden, but haven't been involved or showed interest beyond that. Many teachers appreciate the school garden, but aren't out there helping with weeding and maintenance. Our Healthy Maine Partnership, the Let's Go program and our local hardware store have been great.</p>	<p>There's not enough positive feedback for food service in general. We would like to see more adults eating with kids and modeling good choices vs. just going through line and heading to the teachers room - teachers, admin, board members, parents could all help with this. No local business/non-profit support yet (likely a result of not asking). Next year, I would like to find time to visit Rotary, but perhaps parents could all help with this outreach as well. Local farmers have been great in the past, donating decorations.</p>	<p>Yes, our Administrators are always very excited about our efforts to serve local foods. As for faculty, I still don't think they see the connection to making local foods/nutrition education part of classroom activities instead of just part of lunch. Parents generally don't notice that it's happening. Local businesses, including farms, and non profits have been mostly accommodating. Our Healthy Maine Partnership has been helpful, as well.</p>	<p>School board members are very supportive, along with 3 community members, several faculty. Local farms have been very supportive, along with two substantial businesses in the area and our Healthy Maine Partnership.</p>
Student involvement?				
<p>A student advisory group was spearheaded by the school nurse (supported by a Healthy Maine Partnership grant). They wanted changes in cafeteria, so the kitchen manager now meets with them weekly and we've discovered that some things we provide are just not marketed well (veggie burgers) and we've also added yogurt, etc. to the milk machine. We took iceberg lettuce out and brought romaine and spinach in. They've also held after-school sampling activities in the cafeteria.</p>	<p>We have a student group at the HS that is run by the food service director. They hold meetings and tasting forums to tell us what they think about nutrition, food selections and what they're interested in. Each year, we get a group of students going.</p>	<p>Students were interviewed earlier this year and we are working on putting together a student advisory board to do things like lead taste testing and assist in the kitchen. This should get off the ground next year. In one MS, there is a group that wants to do this.</p>	<p>No, not yet, but we have a new staff person coming on board, and creating this connection will be one of their responsibilities.</p>	<p>Not in the nutrition program itself, but we do have a garden program enrichment group. We have tried to get more HS students involved but have not yet been successful; we would still like to get them more involved.</p>

School District 1	School District 2	School District 3	School District 4	School District 5
Do you serve any local fish?				
No - We hadn't thought about, but it's not so far-fetched; the price is not as far off as you would think.	Yes - One of our substitute's husbands fishes and she brings in haddock and makes chowder as a monthly item.	No - we haven't yet but it is a goal.	Yes - Haddock.	No - We've thought about it, but have met allergy concerns from nurses with shrimp.
If you have a School Garden program(s) in your district, is it connected to the nutrition program?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We do have one, but it has never produced food to bring into kitchen. It is more of a community project that we have had for years. • I would like to see school gardens throughout district that are integrated into curriculum and connected to the kitchens. • I would also love to have students come in and work with kitchen staff - it's all part of the educational process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes - we have an extensive garden and are bringing some food into the cafeteria, although we would like to grow more and do more. • In our school garden, our alumni association funds a position for a high school student to work part-time every year. • The 9th grade does an annual community service day where 50 kids come to work in the garden. • There is also a community service requirement for HS students, and some students elect to come to the garden to help. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a small garden at our MS, and another at a MS/HS. • We would love to see a greenhouse, and more opportunities for the kids to make connections. • Some food at one school goes on the salad bar in September, and we work to plan with the teacher in charge to get the crops/timing right. The other garden is a little different – families tend garden through summer in addition to teachers and students, and they are able to take product home. • There are a lot of conversations happening around how we can do more. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have 4 school gardens in the district, most small and integrated into the curriculum, but none of the food is coming into the kitchen at this time. • One school received a grant from a Healthy Maine Partnership and seeds from a retailer to start the garden last spring. Another school received a private donation of a raised garden bed and a grant from a hardware store which helped to build a second bed. Students were involved in every part of these project, from planting to harvesting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes - our Special Ed program and 5th grade Science class cultivates a garden and then does a number of things with the produce – dehydrates, freezes, does taste testing. • Occasionally tomatoes or other excess produce makes its way to the kitchen.

School District 1	School District 2	School District 3	School District 4	School District 5
Other...				
			<p>The Fruits and Vegetables Galore class (by Mary Moody) could be adapted to working with local/seasonal products - it would be great to provide this training for every district or at least to offer regional trainings.</p>	<p>To support what we are trying to do, we need to have more education for general population. So many people still don't really understand value of buying local. One of our farmer/community members articulates this well but there needs to be more of that.</p>

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