**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**[June]** 2019

***[School Name] Selected For Program to Grow School-wide Farm to School Initiatives***

***[City, State* — School name]** was selected as one of twelve Northeast school teams to attend the 2019-20 Northeast Farm to School Institute. [Shelburne Farms](https://shelburnefarms.org/our-work/for-educators-and-schools) and [NOFA-VT](https://nofavt.org/) offer this year-long professional development program through their [Vermont FEED](https://vtfeed.org) initiative to support selected schools in designing and implementing effective, school-wide Farm to School (FTS) programs—programs that create a culture of wellness, improve food quality and access, engage students in agriculture and nutrition education, and strengthen local food systems.

Thirty million students participate in the National School Lunch Program daily. Lunch shaming, rising school lunch debts, and highly processed foods are trending topics about school cafeterias in today’s media. But school meal programs can—and have—improved, and when FTS is part of those improvements, meal participation increases by 17%. FTS connects schools with their local producers and facilitates getting fresh, whole foods on the lunch tray. As more students eat school meals, school meal program revenue increases, and more local food can be purchased, providing all kids with the chance to participate in the local food system.

"Within weeks [of eating the produce we grew at school], it was getting easier for me to walk up the hill to the garden, my mental health skyrocketed, and I was happy. I know exactly where my food comes from, and it makes me feel good. It makes me feel like I'm involved in it: I've touched it, I've planted it, and I know exactly where it's going." –Emily, Green Mountain Technology & Career Center student.

This year, Congress will be debating reauthorization of the national Child Nutrition Act, also known as the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (CNR). The legislation supports FTS grants to projects like the Northeast Farm to School Institute. The Institute brings selected school teams together for a three-day intensive to build a FTS action plan for their school community. Then, with the support of a coach, they spend the next year putting their plans into action and implementing new programs like farm visits, gardening and cooking activities, serving seasonal foods in the cafeteria, and offering food-based, hands-on science, math, and literacy lessons. Over nine years, the FTS Institute has supported programs at 97 schools and districts, impacting over 102,000 Northeast students.

**[Add boilerplate language about school and quote from a Farm to School team member, principal, administrator, or parent]**

The twelve teams selected for the 2019-20 Northeast Farm to School Institute are: **Academy School**, Brattleboro, VT; **Berne-Knox Westerlo Central School District**, Berne, NY; **Etna-Dixmont School**, Etna, ME; **Innovation Academy Charter School**, Tyngsboro, MA; **Janet S. Munt Family Room**, Burlington, VT; **Naugatuck Public Schools**, Naugatuck, CT; **Providence Public School District**, Providence, RI; **Robert V. Connors Elementary School**, Lewiston, ME; **Russell I. Doig Middle School**, Trumansburg, NY; **Williamstown Middle/High School**, Williamstown, VT; **Windsor Southeast Supervisory Union**, Hartland, VT; **Windham Northeast Supervisory Union**, Westminster, VT.

 [Shelburne Farms](https://shelburnefarms.org) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to cultivate and inspire learning for a sustainable future. That means learning that links knowledge, inquiry, and action to help students build a healthy future for their communities and the planet. Shelburne Farms’ campus is a 1,400-acre working farm, forest, and National Historic Landmark. For information, visit [shelburnefarms.org](http://www.shelburnefarms.org).

[Vermont FEED](https://vtfeed.org/) is a Farm to School partnership project of Shelburne Farms and [Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT)](https://nofavt.org/). Their “3C Model” catalyzes change through the Cafeteria, Classroom, and Community to improve knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors toward healthy eating, local purchasing, and our food system.

**Media Contacts:**

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