

# Farm-to-table movement goes to school

October 11 2019, by Len Canter, Healthday Reporter

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(HealthDay)—There's a healthy new twist in the farm-to-table movement: Getting farm-fresh food to school lunchrooms and even having students grow their own crops as part of learning.

Colorado was a pioneer in passing the "Farm-to-School Healthy Kids Act" in 2010. The move was designed to increase the use of local farm and ranch products in school food service programs to both improve childhood nutrition and strengthen the state's agricultural economy. Today, a handful of other states have similar programs.

Some schools also have added programs for *growing* food to their curriculum. An example is in place at Community School 55 in New York's South Bronx, thanks to the Green Bronx Machine. Educator Stephen Ritz founded the nonprofit as an after-school alternative program for high schoolers. It's fully integrated into the core curriculum from kindergarten through [high school](#). Students have grown tens of thousands of pounds of vegetables that go from classroom-to-community.

Ritz turned an underutilized library into the National Health, Wellness and Learning Center, considered the nation's first career technical education elementary school. The program features a year-round, indoor vertical farm that grows crops regardless of the weather, and a [food processing](#) and training kitchen with solar and alternative energy generators. It has served as a model for schools in many areas of the country. You can learn more at [greenbronxmachine.org](http://greenbronxmachine.org).

National organizations are also devoted to developing [farm](#)-to-[school](#) programs. You can learn more and become inspired by the National Farm to School Network at [farmtoschool.org](http://farmtoschool.org) and, for the youngest "growers," at Farm to Preschool at [farmtopreschool.org](http://farmtopreschool.org).

**More information:** The National Farm to School Network has a detailed section for [starting a program](#) in your community.

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Citation: Farm-to-table movement goes to school (2019, October 11) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-10-farm-to-table-movement-school.html>

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