

Healthy nutritional practices have great impact not only on the acute and chronic health of the children that we serve¹ but also on the local and global environment that they will one day inherit². In adolescence through adulthood, suboptimal nutrient intake is associated with obesity, diabetes, heart disease and stroke³, other chronic diseases, as well as poor academic performance and behavior⁴. Nutrition curriculum should be integrated into the cafeteria, math, science and art curriculum where possible. Acquiring the skills to understand how food is grown, where it is sourced, how it is broken down and utilized in the body and which foods in what quantities are healthy to consume is paramount to the foundation of a healthy lifespan.

Greenwich Public Schools, along with other public institutions across the state have significant buying power which has the potential to reform the food system, create opportunities for small, local farmers, support sustainable farming practices, provide fair compensation and treatment of food chain workers, advance the humane treatment of animals, reward and incentivize the principles of environmental stewardship (in relation to use of water, pesticide, and soil management). We can reduce our carbon footprint, for instance, by utilizing reusable utensils and trays, limiting food waste, increasing composting, and increasing access to fresh fruits, vegetables and healthy foods. In adopting the core values of models like the Good Food Purchasing Program, Greenwich Public Schools will support a regional food system that is ecologically viable and sound, socially responsible, and will increase the availability of local, sustainable food.

In order for Greenwich Public Schools to achieve that vision it needs to adopt new core values to guide its planning and purchasing processes:

1. **Optimal Nutrition** – we will promote health and well-being in our students by increasing portions of fresh vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and legumes while reducing portions of meat and dairy; reducing salt, white sugar and high fructose corn syrup, refined grains, saturated and animal fats, fried foods and added oils; and by eliminating highly processed meats, artificial additives and chemical preservatives. We will create and promote curriculum in schools that informs students about food and nutrition.
2. **Local Economies** – we aim to support small to mid-sized agricultural and food processing enterprises in our local area.
3. **Environmental Sustainability** – we aim to support farmers that use sustainable farming practices that include: 1) reduce or eliminate synthetic pesticides and fertilizers by using the least toxic crop protectants; 2) conservation of soil and water; 3) avoid the use of hormones, antibiotics, and genetic engineering; 4) protection and enhancement of wildlife habitat and biodiversity; 5) and minimization of on-farm energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.
4. **Valued Workforce** – we aim to support those enterprises that provide a safe and healthy working environment and fair compensation for all food chain workers. We embrace these values in our internal food production and service team.
5. **Animal Welfare** – we aim to support those that provide healthy and humane care for farm animals including: cage-free, grass-fed, well-tended, humanely slaughtered animals.

References

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