

GREAT FARM TO SCHOOL TRANSFORMATION

Arkansas Farm to School Month 2021

This year, Arkansas Farm to School Month is themed “Connecting Schools, Farms, and the Community to Local Food,” and there are many ways to get involved!

Don't forget to share with us the activities you have planned. Visit our website to learn more: arfarmtoschool.org/about/farm-to-school-month/.

Fall is a transitional season between the dog days of summer and chilly days of winter. It's a time of cleaning out summer crops, planting cool weather crops, and preparing for the winter. As October is Arkansas Farm to School Month, it is the perfect time to transform your school garden and cafeteria space, and connect with the community.

Join other schools across the state in participating in this year's Great Farm to School Transformation! All schools who submit before and after photos to this survey will receive an Arkansas Farm to School Month 2021 certificate and be featured on the Arkansas Farm to School Facebook page. Six schools will be randomly selected to receive a 30 minute farm to school consultation with the Arkansas Department of Agriculture's Farm to School Team in November. **The deadline for submissions is October 31, 2021.**

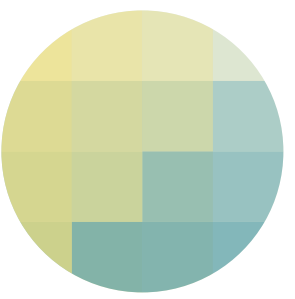
Not sure what kind of transformation your school needs? Remember that the school garden and cafeteria transformations can be bite-sized! Any amount is making a difference in your student's understanding of the local food system.



Some examples of ways to transform the school garden include painting a mural or walkway pavers, transitioning summer crops to fall and winter, mulching the walkways, creating plant labels using wood or rocks, or adding more sensory experiences to the garden so it is accessible to all students, even those in a wheelchair!

If you are looking to transform your cafeteria, have you thought about decorating the walls with student artwork?

Students could make posters of their favorite food. Other decoration ideas include displays of healthy food items, MyPlate posters, and local food/farm features.



Fayetteville School District
Photo courtesy of FPS Seed to Student.

Another way to transform the cafeteria is to include more student voice in the meal experience by allowing the students to create a name for a menu item.

You could invite a nearby farmer to speak or reach out to your county Family and Consumer Science County Agent for other nutrition-related resources.

You could procure a local food item and include it on your district's menu, or host a taste test. You could even feature a 100% locally grown menu for a day. Local can span the whole plate; fruit, vegetables, grain, protein, and dairy are all great options.

Don't forget to tell the whole school about the special day!

These transformations can be big or small; what matters is the impact it has on Arkansas students.

Lastly, don't forget to connect with and include your community in the festivities by reaching out to local artists, other schools in your district, local farmers and chefs, and your county's Cooperative Extension Office.

Invite your state senator and representative to visit your school in October to celebrate Arkansas Farm to School Month with your students.

Good luck with your transformations! We can't wait to see all that you are going to do for Arkansas Farm to School Month 2021.

Visit our website to learn more and find other ways to participate in the celebration.



Linda Childers Knapp Elementary, Springdale
Photo courtesy of FoodCorps Arkansas.

