



**For Immediate Release**

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## Students Get Hands Dirty in Farm to School Program

### *North Ed Celebrates National Farm to School Month*

**TRAVERSE CITY, Mich.** – Kids are getting their hands dirty at school – and for good reason. Each year, 42.8 million students participate in Farm to School activities that foster a deeper understanding of gardening and nutritional food choices, according to the [National Farm to School Network](#).

Farm to School programs equip students with basic agricultural skills through classroom activities and gardens hosted at school sites, like those offered at several schools throughout Northwest Education Services' (North Ed) five-county district.

North Ed's region spans Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska and Leelanau counties, and its Farm to School team supports programs at Buckley Community Schools; Leland Public School; Northport Public Schools; Suttons Bay Public Schools; and Traverse City Area Public Schools' Courtade Elementary, Central Grade and Westwoods Elementary schools; as well as North Ed's Creekside School.

The program helps promote well-being among children, strong local economies and vibrant local food systems, said Brooke Juday, who serves as North Ed's Farm to School coordinator.

"It is amazing to see the look on a child's face when they eat the food that they planted, cared for and harvested on their own. There is an incredible sense of accomplishment, not just for the student, but for us as educators as well," Juday said. "We also work with school districts to incorporate the foods that are grown on site into their cafeteria menus whenever possible, which is better from both a health and a sustainability perspective."

Through Farm to School programs, not only do students get to plant and cultivate their own crops, but by having the opportunity to enjoy the fresh produce they grow, they learn more about making healthy food choices.

"We often host taste tests with students to let them try new foods and to help them think about the entire process behind how our food gets from the farm to our kitchen tables," said Megan Armstrong, North Ed's nutrition education coordinator. "Locally grown produce doesn't just support our neighbors and our regional food network or economy, but it's better for the environment when you consider transportation, packaging and other waste."

In 2010, Congress declared October National Farm to School Month. The theme for this year's National Farm to School Month is "From Soil to Sea: Nourishing People and Planet."

Each fall, Farm to School participants typically harvest crops that were planted earlier in the year. At Buckley Community Schools, students harvested lettuce and spinach, tomatoes, green peppers and jalapenos, green beans, squash and radishes.

“Our fourth grade students enjoy the Farm to School program,” said JoyceAnn Nuckels, a fourth grade teacher at Buckley. “They love trying new foods and recipes, learning about healthier choices and doing different hands-on activities.”

The Farm to School program also supports Pop-Up Farmers Markets for school communities and the general public, engaging local farmers who set up booths to sell goods. They held one earlier this month at Buckley Community Schools, with another scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 10 near the playground at TCAPS’s Courtade Elementary School, 1111 Rasho Road, Traverse City. The public is welcome between 4-4:30 p.m.

For more info about local Farm to School programs, visit North Ed’s [website](#). More information about Farm to School nationally can be found by visiting the [National Farm to School Network website](#).

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**Photos below:**

*Buckley Community Schools students participate in a pop-up farmers market at their school on Oct. 3. In addition to coordinating the pop-up markets, Northwest Education Services’ Farm to School team supports hands-on activities in several schools regionally to provide students with opportunities to learn more about gardening and nutritional foods.*





