

Gibson County Complete Plan for Farm to School Initiative Now Available

Starting in 2020, the Northwest Tennessee Local Food Network (LFN), a local nonprofit organization, began a partnership with the Trenton Special School District and 4 other school districts in Gibson County to publish and implement the Gibson County Farm to School Action Plan involving all 20 schools in the county.



Gibson County

“The opportunity to work with the Northwest Tennessee Local Food Network and the five area school districts forms a partnership that provides our students local produce,” state Lisa Seiber-Garland, School Nutrition Director, Trenton Special School District. “This collaboration is a win-win for both school districts and local farmers. We hope to continue these partnerships for years to come.”

By working with area farmers, students, parents, school administration, and LFN Farm to School consultants, the Gibson County Farm to School Teams assessed current assets and needs, promoted increased collaboration between multiple stakeholders, connected interested farmers to school cafeteria managers helping identify and develop supply chain & processing mechanisms, incorporated Farm-to-School education activities into curriculum planning, and created a marketing plan to educate the public on the benefits of a thriving Farm to School Program in Gibson County.

The team formed an incredible vision, *“The Gibson County Farm to School Initiative is a collaboration of five school districts dedicated to utilizing fresh and local produce that fosters nutrition education and healthy lifestyles through secured partnerships between the community and local farmers.”*

Gibson County School Farm to School Planning Team defines local within 150-mile radius of the Trenton Special School District’s main office in Trenton, Tennessee. The parameters touch several state borders including Kentucky, Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Alabama. This is a big win for regional farmers and students who consume their locally grown & processed foods.

The following Farm to School advocates participated in the Gibson County Farm to School Planning Teams during the 2020-2021 school year: 1) **Bradford Special School District F2S Team (BSSD)**: Dana Garner, Charles Cowen, Chris Griffin, Kyle Gehring, Buni Wendt; 2) **Gibson County Special School District F2S Team (GCSSD)**: Megan Sanford, Derek Norman, Rory Hinson, Matthew Denton, Anessa Ladd, Paige Garner, Amy Richardson; 3) **Humboldt City Schools F2S Team (HCS)**: Jordan Fondren, Carla Brown, Brittanie Doaks, Debbie Sheehan, Jason Wiles, Amanda Love; 4) **Milan Special School District F2S Team (MSSD)**: Vickie Dunaway, Candi Collier, Tymikia Glenn, Emil Burluson, Sherry Scruggs, Seth Lee, Julie Ward, Christina Griffith, Kate Smith; 5) **Trenton Special School District F2S Team (TSSD)**: Lisa Seiber-Garland, Helen

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Branum, Tim Haney, Tracy Simmons; 6) **Northwest Tennessee Local Food Network Farm to School Consultants (NWTNLFN)**: Samantha Goyret, Caroline Ideus, Ashley Kite-Rowland, and Lori Littleton.

Through the formation of the Gibson County F2S Planning Teams, they continue to seek partnerships with community stakeholders to determine the tools, training, and technical assistance needed to create an integrated farm to school program that will not only educate and benefit our students, but positively impact the community by increasing access to healthy, local food in the schools.

The team seeks schools and their communities to take action by encouraging working on collective Farm to School goals over the next 3 years. The four components of the 5 Gibson County School District's Farm to School initiatives are: 1) **Education**: integration of food-related education into the regular, standards-based curriculum and out of classroom opportunities for students and families; 2) **Growing Food**: students and staff engage in hands-on learning through growing food and connecting to local and global communities and environment; 3) **Cafeteria**: local foods are sourced, purchased, promoted, and served in the school environment; and 4) **Community Engagement and Staying Power**: the community is actively ingrained in the culture of the school and community in supporting and sustaining Farm to School initiatives. Download your copy of the Gibson County Farm to School Action Plan at nwtlnfn.org/programs/farm-to-school.

Community involvement is valued and appreciated as Gibson County Schools Farm to School Initiative continues to expand opportunities for students' hands-on learning.

"This Farm to School Planning process could not have been possible without the support from the USDA's Farm to School Planning Grant awarded to the Trenton Special School District in 2020," stated Samantha Goyret, NWTNLFN Farm to School consultant. "USDA's funding has been VITAL to support the Northwest Tennessee Local Food Network, 5 Gibson County School Districts, farmers, and connection with local entities and businesses as we have initiated, expanded, and kicked-off our farm to school efforts in Northwest Tennessee."

What part will you partake in getting in on the action? How will you support the Gibson County Farm to School Initiative's vision and goals?

The Northwest Tennessee Local Food Network's mission is to serve as a catalyst for a thriving and equitable local food system that is accessible to ALL. Join us virtually on Applesauce Day, Sunday, September 19th at 2pm via facebook. Visit us at nwtlnfn.org.



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Near-Term Gibson County Farm to School Goals: Over the next 3-5 years, these goals will move Gibson County School Districts toward the long-term vision.



Educational Goals: 1) Increase the number of nutrition lessons about locally-grown or seasonal food in the school; 2) Take students on field trips to local farms or ranches; 3) Connect farmers with schools through experiential learning opportunities; 4) Provide more Farm to School curriculum resources and training opportunities for teachers.

Growing Food Goals: 1) Engage students with hands-on learning experiences and foster leadership skills; 2) Improve school based Growing Food programs; 3) Increase school grown produce and products in the cafeteria; 4) Seek financial stability to sustain school based Growing Food programs.

Cafeteria Goals: 1) Incorporate school garden produce and school farm products in cafeteria food and afterschool snacks; 2) Train and involve School Food Nutrition staff in Farm to School (F2S) menu AND school product development; 3) Include local foods in special event meals - Local Food Taste Tests, national themed lunches and breakfasts, holidays, etc.; 4) Develop kitchen infrastructure and equipment to more easily prepare local food items; 5) Create a local food procurement manual.

Community Engagement and Staying Power Goals: 1) Build a network of community stakeholders 2) Build school-wide awareness of Farm to School initiatives; 3) Seek financial stability for Farm to School programming.

The GIBSON COUNTY FARM TO SCHOOL ACTION PLAN CAN BE DOWNLOADED HERE:

<https://nwtlnfn.org/programs/farm-to-school/>

DIRECT LINK TO ACTION PLAN: <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/viewer.html?pdfurl=https%3A%2F%2Fnwtlnfn.org%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2FFINAL-2021-Gibson-County-Action-Plan.pdf&clen=11796346&chunk=true>

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